**I Want a Wife by Judy Brady**

1- I belong to that classification of people known as wives. I am A Wife.

And, not altogether incidentally, I am a mother.

2- Not too long ago a male friend of mine appeared on the scene fresh

from a recent divorce. He had one child, who is, of course, with his

ex-wife. He is looking for another wife. As I thought about him while I

was ironing one evening, it suddenly occurred to me that 1, too, would

like to have a wife. Why do I want a wife?

3- I would like to go back to school so that I can become economically

independent, support myself, and, if need be, support those dependent

upon me. I want a wife who will work and send me to school. And while I

am going to school, I want a wife to take care of my children. I want a

wife to keep track of the children's doctor and dentist appointments. And

to keep track of mine, too. I want a wife to make sure my children eat

properly and are kept clean. I want a wife who will wash the children's

clothes and keep them mended. I want a wife who is a good nurturing

attendant to my children, who arranges for their schooling, makes sure

that they have an adequate social life with their peers, takes them to

the park, the zoo, etc. I want a wife who takes care of the children when

they are sick, a wife who arranges to be around when the children need

special care, because, of course, I cannot miss classes at school. My

wife must arrange to lose time at work and not lose the job. It may mean

a small cut in my wife's income from time to time, but I guess I can

tolerate that. Needless to say, my wife will arrange and pay for the care

of the children while my wife is working.

4- I want a wife who will take care of my physical needs. I want a wife

who will keep my house clean. A wife who will pick up after my children,

a wife who will pick up after me. I want a wife who will keep my clothes

clean, ironed, mended, replaced when need be, and who will see to it that

my personal things are kept in their proper place so that I can find what

I need the minute I need it. I want a wife who cooks the meals, a wife

who is a good cook. I want a wife who will plan the menus, do the

necessary grocery shopping, prepare the meals, serve them pleasantly, and

then do the cleaning up while I do my studying. I want a wife who will

care for me when I am sick and sympathize with my pain and loss of time

from school. I want a wife to go along when our family takes a vacation

so that someone can continue to care for me and my children when I need a

rest and change of scene.

5- I want a wife who will not bother me with rambling complaints about a

wife's duties. But I want a wife who will listen to me when I feel the

need to explain a rather difficult point I have come across in my course

studies. And I want a wife who will type my papers for me when I have

written them.

6- I want a wife who will take care of the details of my social life.

When my wife and I are invited out by my friends, I want a wife who will

take care of the baby-sitting arrangements. When I meet people at school

that I like and want to entertain, I want a wife who will have the house

clean, will prepare a special meal, serve it to me and my friends, and

not interrupt when I talk about things that interest me and my friends. I

want a wife who will have arranged that the children are fed and ready

for bed before my guests arrive so that the children do not bother us. I

want a wife who takes care of the needs of my guests so that they feel

comfortable, who makes sure that they have an ashtray, that they are

passed the hors d'oeuvres, that they are offered a second helping of the

food, that their wine glasses are replenished when necessary, that their

coffee is served to them as they like it. And I want a wife who knows

that sometimes I need a night out by myself.

7- I want a wife who is sensitive to my sexual needs, a wife who makes

love passionately and eagerly when I feel like it, a wife who makes sure

that I am satisfied. And, of course, I want a wife who will not demand

sexual attention when I am not in the mood for it. I want a wife who

assumes the complete responsibility for birth control, because I do not

want more children. I want a wife who will remain sexually faithful to me

so that I do not have to clutter up my intellectual life with jealousies.

And I want a wife who understands that my sexual needs may entail more

than strict adherence to monogamy. I must, after all, be able to relate

to people as fully as possible.

8- If, by chance, I find another person more suitable as a wife than the

wife I already have, I want the liberty to replace my present wife with

another one. Naturally, I will expect a fresh, new life; my wife will

take the children and be solely responsible for them so that I am left free.

9- When I am through with school and have a job, I want my wife to quit

working and remain at home so that my wife can more fully and completely

take care of a wife's duties.

10- My God, who wouldn't want a wife?

Discussion Questions

Q1: In reading this essay, does Brady’s writing indicate a woman who lives in today’s society or in the past?

Q2: What do you think are a wife's/husband's duties? Does your description of the duties apply to your parents?

Q3: Why does Brady capitalize the words "A Wife"?

Q4: Judy Brady repeats "I Want a Wife" 29 times throughout the essay. What effect does this anaphora create?

Q5: Is this a description of a wife that crosses all ethnic backgrounds? Explain your answer.

Q6: Observe the sentence structure of "I Want a Wife who will plan the menus....while I do my studying" and discuss the effect of the structure of this long sentence. Where else in the essay does Brady create the same effect?

Q7: Does this sentence "And I want a wife who understands that my sexual needs may entail more than strict adherence to monogamy" coincide with the reason our society has such a high divorce rate? Explain your answer.

Q8: What is Brady's purpose of using a rhetorical question to close the essay?

Q9: Almost every sentence in this essay is ironic. How does Brady reveal her tone through the use of irony? In what way does this tone help Brady make her point?

Q10: Name the categories of a wife's duties that Brady identifies. How does Brady use classification to define the subject, wife? How does she integrate classification and definition to support her argument? What is her argument?