

Everything She Thought She Wanted: A Novel

By Elizabeth Buchan

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No one has captured the complexities of marriage at middle age better than Elizabeth Buchan. Now she is back with another irresistibly entertaining and thoughtful tale of two women at the crossroads—of love, of freedom—who wonder, Where does happiness lie?

It is the summer of 1959 when forty-two-year-old Barbara Beeching, a married mother of two grown-up children, meets Alexander Liberty. Adored by her family and admired by her friends, Barbara never imagined that an unexpected, tender, and surprisingly passionate affair with a much younger man was on the horizon. Will she allow it to destroy the only life she's ever known?

Forty years later, thirty-five-year-old Siena Grant is at a very different crossroads. Immersed in her challenging career as a television fashion consultant, Siena does not believe that happiness requires having children. But her husband, Charlie, disagrees. Can Siena give Charlie the family life he craves without sacrificing her ambition or well-ordered life? Or will children give her a kind of joy she's never experienced before?

Decades separate Barbara and Siena—years in which the lives of women and the battle of the sexes have changed substantially. Or have they?

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
The separate stories of two women--one a career-driven late-20th-century professional and the other a 1950s housewife--are awkwardly juxtaposed in this third novel by British author Buchan (*Revenge of the Middle-Aged Woman*; *The Good Wife Strikes Back*). Thirty-five-year-old Siena Grant enjoys a life that many women only dream of. A highly successful fashion consultant with her own business, a magazine column, a book deal and an American television show, Siena is also married to a loving, sensitive man. She and Charlie live in a trendy flat and enjoy intimate little suppers. What more could anybody want? For starters, Charlie is dreaming of a country home and children--not a life that appeals to the oh-so-chic Siena. Meanwhile, in 1959, 42-year-old Barbara Beeching, a married mother of two grown children, lives with her pilot husband, Ryder, in a charming country home and hosts the most delightful little parties. Perfect partners, Barbara and Ryder survived the atrocities of war over England and now face the rest of their lives as Ryder thinks of retirement and Barbara thinks of... Alexander Liberty, a hunky psychiatry student whose passion for her takes her by surprise. The ungainly setup--the two stories only glancingly connect at the novel's conclusion--is partly mitigated by Buchan's warm writing and her realistic portrayal of the choices women continue to face, but this isn't quite up to the standard of her previous two outings.
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From Booklist
With just the right blend of heartfelt feminism and humor, British author Buchan (*Revenge of the Middle-Aged Woman*, 2003) crafts another women's-crisis story that accurately captures the doubts and fears about personal fulfillment experienced and rarely resolved by two generations of women. The drama begins with Sienna, a young, successful British fashion consultant in the present, whose "psycho-situation" with her husband, Charlie, centers on his desire for children and hers to pursue a television opportunity in the U.S. Then the camera pans to Barbara, who, in 1959, meets an attractive younger man and suddenly finds her life as a well-groomed farmwife constricting. In alternating chapters, Buchan uses these two women's experiences to portray women's changing values in the twentieth century, from home and family to career and family, and the difficulties real women have in balancing their suddenly disparate priorities. Without falling into trite stereotypes, Buchan affectionately reveals Sienna and Barbara in a thoughtful melange of scenes that most women will find compelling. *Jennifer Baker*
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Review
"Honestly explores the difficulties of marriage . . . while at the same time depicting the difficult moments of motherhood along with the quiet joys.” —**The Washington Post**

"We all have secret pleasures. For this reader, English author Elizabeth Buchan spells delight. What makes Buchan such a joy to read is her ability to take familiar material and probe it for new insights. For well-done domestic drama, there's only one writer for this reader: Elizabeth Buchan." —**Dierdre Donahue**, **USA Today**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Princess Bequette:

This Everything She Thought She Wanted: A Novel are generally reliable for you who want to be described as a successful person, why. The key reason why of this Everything She Thought She Wanted: A Novel can be on the list of great books you must have is definitely giving you more than just simple looking at food but feed you actually with information that perhaps will shock your prior knowledge. This book is handy, you can bring it everywhere and whenever your conditions at e-book and printed ones. Beside that this Everything She Thought She Wanted: A Novel forcing you to have an enormous of experience such as rich vocabulary, giving you test of critical thinking that could it useful in your day activity. So , let's have it and luxuriate in reading.

Ronald Dotson:

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