



Wife of the Deceased: A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Learning to Live Again

Dawn M. Bell

Dawn M. Bell (Jul 25, 2014)

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Dawn Bell weaves a uniquely personal tale, drawing the reader in as she recounts the process of grieving for her husband.

Dawn M. Bell's heartfelt memoir, *Wife of the Deceased*, is the deeply personal story of her battle with grief following the death of her pilot husband of nearly fifteen years. Not only must she learn to live with the astounding, tragic loss of her best friend, but she must also provide comfort to their young child as her emotional journey erratically unfolds. Telling stories from their past and her present, the author draws the reader in as a friend, sharing her memories, her anger, and her denial.

Dawn Bell was in her late thirties when life as she knew it abruptly ended on September 3, 2010, the day her husband Matthew died tragically while flying for work. As she fills out all the required paperwork following his death, she realizes she's no longer Dawn, but is simply what will eventually be the title of her book: "Wife of the Deceased." Bell depends on extended family and numerous friends to get her through the initial shock as she faces her emotions, and deals with mundane tasks and the upcoming funeral.

The book is comprised of thirty-eight compact chapters. Each is identified by date, such as "September 25, 2010," "June 2011," or "The Third Year Without Matt, September 2012–August 2013." The chronology is an effective demonstration of the author's long journey of healing.

The narrative unfolds at just the right pace, as Bell gains strength and learns to deal with the overwhelming depression of the bad days. Readers will be touched by her emotional interactions with her young daughter, Ava. Also interesting is the author's take on signs she believes she gets from Matthew.

In another nice touch, the author includes italicized "thank yous" to various friends and family, which she sprinkles throughout the text as she recounts good deeds they've done to help her out during this very trying time. Later chapters offer advice to those who've suffered loss and to those who are assisting grievers. According to a statement in the book's front matter, "Ninety percent of net profits will be donated to established programs to combat child abuse, neglect, and sex trafficking."

The author doesn't know why her husband was taken from her, but she has come to this realization: "I try each day to ... honor his memory by being thankful for the years we had him and not be angered by the years we will not."

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (May 4, 2015)

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