

Wifey

Dusty Gavin



Fig. 1 *Wifey* by KKW Fragrances from the KKW Beauty Kimoji Heart BAE Fragrances range, 2019. Promotional image photographed by Vijat Mohindra. © Vijat Mohindra.

- 1 The fragrance *Wifey* by KKW Fragrances was released in 2019 and is recognized by its floral and fruity notes. With top notes of yuzu and violet leaves, middle notes from magnolia to mimosa, and base notes of caramel, whipped cream, and musk, *Wifey* the fragrance is a construction. It is a composition of notes. And, a note of importance is Kim Kardashian. Kim stares squarely at camera, perched on a life-size yellow perfume canister with the text “WIFEY,” but she also sits attendant to her own histories and those that follow. In 2019, as wife to black artist Ye (formerly Kanye West), Kim KW claimed and sold the role of wifey.
- 2 The term “wifey” does not share a single history. It can be dated back to 1786 with the Scottish poet Robert Burns or to Dr. Dre’s 1999 song “Murder Ink.” Oxford Dictionary defines “wifey” as “a condescending way of referring to a person’s wife.” However, my first run-in with the term comes from the title R&B song “Wifey” by N.E.X.T. released in 2000. Its opening hook defines the term of its naming in detail:

You never try me
Always stood right by me
Make living lively highly
Spoken of, my only love, the only one
You're my wifey
Make my life complete
Sweet—but you know when to flip it street
Freak—but only when it comes to me
See—that's why you're my wifey

- 3 She's dedicated, sweet, flips it street, a freak. The "wifey" is not simply a wife. She is a model or caricature of a wife, a down-ass. According to Urban Dictionary, "wifey" is "the girl that is always there for you, the one that you were destined to be with." It is a designation that masquerades as something more endearing than the role of wife. It pretends to take on the same properties of supposed opposite "hubby," but it is more burdened than that. The wifey is more responsible; she has many things to uphold. The "wifey" signifies a new ideal in our contemporary popular culture. This is the nostalgic Valentine heart candy prop upon which Kim Kardashian poches and perches. But what does the "slang" do to "wife" and what does it mean when Kim K lived, sold, and eventually rejected its form and sell?

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Citation Guide

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