

Hannah: The Plus-One

During the wedding ceremony, *The Plus-One* feels a distinct sense of separation from the event as she sits among distant relatives, quietly observing from the sidelines. Her attention is split between the unfolding ceremony and the occasional glance at Charlie, her partner, who is deeply immersed in the celebration, interacting with friends and family in ways that make Hannah feel more like an outsider. As the bride, Jules, walks down the aisle, Hannah is struck by a fleeting moment of fear in her expression—a brief look of uncertainty that quickly fades into a bright, assured smile as she reaches her groom, Will. This fleeting moment of vulnerability is not lost on Hannah, who begins to reflect on her own feelings of unease and the complex emotions that come with such an important event.

The ceremony progresses smoothly, set against a stunning backdrop that Hannah can't help but admire. The lavishness of the venue, from the grandiose flowers to the elegant décor, contrasts sharply with her own wedding experiences, subtly highlighting the financial disparities between her life and the luxurious celebration taking place before her. As the ceremony wraps up and the guests are ushered outside, they eagerly toss rose petals into the air, only for the wind to scatter them hurriedly across the lawn. This fleeting, almost chaotic moment sparks a deeper reflection in Hannah about the superstitions surrounding weddings and the ominous atmosphere that seems to linger, amplified by the local lore shared by the bartenders about the venue being haunted. The eerie stories only add to Hannah's growing sense of discomfort, as she contemplates the unpredictable nature of both the day's events and her own internal anxieties.

As she explores the venue further, Hannah's sense of being out of place intensifies. She observes the elaborate setup—each detail meticulously arranged, from the fine china to the sparkling glasses—and feels a profound disconnect from the atmosphere

of wealth and exclusivity. The guests, dressed in stylish and sophisticated outfits, engage in conversations about topics she feels disconnected from, from business ventures to luxury vacations, all of which serve as reminders of her outsider status. When she engages in brief conversations with the other guests, they are polite but superficial, often focusing on wedding hashtags and the social status of the attendees, which only emphasizes her growing sense of alienation. Despite her efforts to participate, she can't shake the feeling that she doesn't belong among these people, as though she is merely playing a role rather than being part of the true celebration.

As the evening progresses, Hannah's discomfort continues to build, and she finds herself retreating into herself. She struggles to find a comfortable space within the wedding's social dynamic, unable to escape the growing tension and awkwardness that seem to follow her every interaction. From the groom's school friends, who make her feel as though she's invisible, to an uncomfortable exchange with Will's parents, every moment seems to reinforce her feelings of being an outsider. This culminates in an unfortunate moment when Charlie, who has been drinking and is slightly tipsy, inadvertently embarrasses her with an offhand comment about her choice of headwear. His thoughtlessness stings, not just because of the comment itself, but because it highlights the distance she feels from him in this environment. It underscores a deeper issue in their relationship—a lack of connection that she had hoped wouldn't be so evident.

Despite her attempts to navigate the social complexities of the wedding with grace, Hannah finds herself struggling with an overwhelming sense of not truly belonging. The anxiety she feels about fitting in is compounded by a more profound realization that she may never feel at home in these circles. Her final exchange with Charlie only intensifies these feelings, leaving her with lingering doubts about her place in both the wedding and in their relationship. As she retreats further into herself, the once joyous occasion becomes a reflective moment, where she questions the authenticity of her connection with both Charlie and the world she is surrounded by. This experience forces her to confront the dissonance between her outward appearance—trying to fit in—and the internal conflict that makes her feel increasingly alienated. The wedding,

which should have been a celebration of love and unity, instead becomes a catalyst for Hannah's realization that perhaps she is more disconnected from her own life than she ever imagined.

