

Now: The wedding night

In *The Wedding Night*, the story's tension escalates as Freddy approaches a group gathered near the marquee, his torchlight casting jittery shadows across the rain-slick ground. He urgently relays the troubling news—something has gone terribly wrong. The Gardaí (Irish police) have been called, prompted by the account of a waitress who recently regained consciousness. Her disjointed memory, though uncertain, centers on the sighting of an unidentified figure skulking in the shadows near the reception area. While her description lacks clarity, the sheer panic in her voice carries enough weight to unnerve the group. Freddy insists they take her warning seriously, the urgency in his voice cutting through the din of the storm, heightening the mystery of *The Wedding Night*.

Angus is the first to speak, his tone measured but insistent, advocating for caution and urging the others to wait for the police to arrive. He highlights the potential danger of the situation, pointing out that venturing into the darkness could lead to further complications—or worse, harm. To Angus, the idea of confronting an unknown figure without support seems reckless. However, his warnings are met with resistance. Femi, ever the skeptic, dismisses the waitress's account as unreliable, suggesting she might have been confused or hallucinating due to her condition. His nonchalant attitude is matched by Duncan, whose practicality borders on defiance. Duncan points out that given the isolated location and worsening weather, the Gardaí may take hours to arrive, leaving them with little choice but to act on their own if they wish to uncover the truth.

The debate intensifies as Angus grows increasingly exasperated by what he sees as reckless bravado. While he avoids explicitly naming his fear, the word *murder* hangs unspoken in the charged atmosphere. His reluctance to voice it outright only amplifies the unease among the group, as if saying it aloud would make the possibility

undeniable. The tension between caution and impulsivity fractures the group's unity, with each person grappling with their own interpretation of the waitress's warning and the rapidly deteriorating situation.

Freddy, still clutching his torch, shifts uneasily as the conversation unfolds, the flickering beam of light creating an almost surreal backdrop to their heated exchange. The storm continues to rage around them, the wind carrying fragmented echoes of their voices, which are barely audible above the rustling trees and pounding rain. Despite the disagreement, there is an unspoken acknowledgment among them that something darker may be at play. The waitress's description of a shadowy figure, coupled with the eerie isolation of the location, evokes the sense that they are being watched, further fraying their nerves.

As the group deliberates, the tension transforms the wedding's once-festive setting into an unsettling landscape of doubt and fear. What should have been a night of celebration has become something far more ominous, steeped in mystery and distrust. Angus continues to argue for patience, urging them to consider the risks of venturing out without a clear plan or support. Yet, the pull of curiosity and the primal need to confront danger head-on weigh heavily on Femi and Duncan, both of whom seem determined to challenge the unknown.

The chapter crescendos as the group reluctantly begins to consider their next move, their indecision underscored by the oppressive darkness surrounding them. The storm's intensity mirrors the inner turmoil of each individual, as they weigh the risks of waiting against the dangers of acting. Angus's fear, Femi's skepticism, and Duncan's practicality collide in a swirling maelstrom of conflicting emotions. In this charged moment, the story captures the raw edges of human instinct when faced with the unknown—balancing the thin line between bravery and recklessness, between caution and desperation.

As the chapter closes, the group remains locked in a state of suspense, their argument unresolved, their next steps uncertain. The darkness around them feels alive, the unseen threat lurking just out of reach. In this haunting atmosphere, the reader is left

to grapple with the unsettling realization that the group may already be too late to avoid the consequences of whatever—or whoever—is out there waiting in the shadows. The story masterfully blends psychological tension with the primal fear of the unknown, setting the stage for what promises to be a gripping and unpredictable confrontation.

