

# Chapter 3.

In the chapter of "The Last One at the Wedding," the narrator wakes up in a hospital after a car accident, grappling with injuries including a broken arm and ribs. He's relieved that no one else was harmed, but his long-standing record of accident-free driving was shattered. He faces uncertainty about his job as a UPS driver; while a union representative reassures him, a corporate representative hints that the investigation into the accident is ongoing and his future remains unclear. A reporter visits, suggesting management's negligence contributed to his accident due to poor working conditions, but he takes ownership of his mistake, insisting on his training and responsibility.

After three nights in the hospital, he returns home to a life drastically altered. Left with nothing to do, he becomes frustrated with daytime television and spirals into negativity, isolating himself. The accident weighs heavily on his mind, especially the mysterious encounter with a stranger who resembled his daughter Maggie's friend Aidan, leaving him with guilt for not seeking clarity.

When his sister Tammy calls, asking him to watch Abigail, his niece, he initially declines, feeling unfit due to his injury. However, he wakes to find Abigail there and reluctantly agrees to take care of her. They spend their time together watching documentaries, with Abigail increasingly asserting her presence in his home. He notices changes in her since they last met, highlighting her growth and her resilience.

They reminisce about family memories as Abigail begins exploring Maggie's old belongings, particularly stuffed animals. The narrator unexpectedly suggests that Abigail take whatever she wants, recognizing the void left by Maggie's absence. Despite a sense of despondency, an urge to escape his dark thoughts prompts him to take Abigail out for an adventure. They journey through familiar places, including the site of his accident and personal landmarks from his past, seeking to create new memories.

Their explorations lead to a bonding experience as they indulge in various activities culminating in a memorable trip to a canoeing site on the Delaware River. There, they navigate the gentle waters together, fostering a connection that momentarily alleviates the narrator's anxiety about the accident and its ramifications. As summer nears its end, he wishes for more time to spend with Abigail, realizing the importance of cherishing these moments.