



# The Wedding People

Alison Espach

A sharp, tender novel about a woman who arrives at a Newport hotel intending one thing and instead gets swept into the chaos and warmth of a stranger's wedding week. It's funny, surprisingly moving, and full of heart.

**Reading level:** Easy

**Best for:** clubs who love character-driven stories with heart, humor, and a good cry

## Discussion

### WARM-UP

1. What's the coziest spot in your home where you imagined yourself curling up with this book?
2. Was there a moment early on that made you smile or laugh out loud? Share it with us.

### DIGGING IN

1. Phoebe arrives at the Cornwall expecting one kind of escape and finds another. Has a trip or detour ever surprised you by giving you exactly what you needed?
2. The hotel becomes a kind of temporary family for Phoebe. Have you ever felt unexpectedly held by strangers during a hard time?
3. Lila's wedding plans are wonderfully over the top. What's a small ritual or tradition that comforts you, even if it seems silly to others?
4. This book sits with grief and joy at the same table. Did any passage soften something tender in you, and would you want to share it?

### GOING DEEP

1. Phoebe and Lila form a bond no one would have predicted. Who in your life has been a surprising source of comfort, and how did that friendship find you?
2. Without giving anything away, how did the book leave you feeling as you closed it, and did it shift the way you're thinking about your own week ahead?

## On the table

### ☞ **Mini lobster rolls on buttery brioche**

A nod to the Newport coastal setting, served small and shareable for easy passing around the couch

### ☞ **Warm clam chowder in mugs**

Classic New England comfort, perfect for sipping while you talk about Phoebe's seaside week

### 🍪 **Homemade wedding cookies and a slice of vanilla cake**

A cozy wink at the wedding-people themselves, sweet and forgiving

## To sip

### ☞ **Hot spiced apple cider (no alcohol)**

Warm, soothing, and the kind of drink you wrap both hands around

### ☞ **Champagne with a splash of elderflower**

A soft toast to weddings, fresh starts, and the people we meet by accident

### ☞ **Earl Grey with honey and milk**

A hotel-lobby kind of tea, calming and a little fancy

## Run of show

### **7:00 Arrive and settle in**

Greet guests with cider in hand, soft music playing, blankets within reach

### **7:15 Warm-up bites and small talk**

Pass the lobster rolls and let the warmups break the ice gently

### **7:35 Chowder and theme questions**

Move into the theme questions while everyone's cozy with a mug

### **8:15 Dessert and deeper share**

Bring out cookies and cake, ease into the deep questions when the room feels open

### **8:50 Trivia and bookmarks**

Lighten the mood with quick trivia, hand out bookmarks as keepsakes

### **9:10 Scorecards and slow goodbyes**

Fill out scorecards together, refill tea, let people linger

## HOST TIPS

- Have extra blankets and throw pillows on hand so guests can really nestle in
- Keep lighting low: lamps and candles only, no overheads
- Let silences breathe; cozy nights work best when no one feels rushed to fill the air

## Playlist

*soft, golden-hour acoustic with a gentle oceanside hush*

01 The Night We Met - Lord Huron

03 Saltwater - Beach House

05 First Day of My Life - Bright Eyes

07 Such Great Heights - Iron and Wine

02 Landslide - Fleetwood Mac

04 Re: Stacks - Bon Iver

06 Vincent - Don McLean

08 Harvest Moon - Neil Young

# Trivia

1. Who wrote *The Wedding People*? (Alison Espach)
2. In what year was *The Wedding People* published? (2024)
3. In what coastal Rhode Island town is much of the story set? (Newport)
4. What kind of large event is happening at the hotel when Phoebe arrives? (A wedding (a multi-day wedding celebration))
5. What is the name of the bride whose wedding takes over the hotel? (Lila)
6. What was Alison Espach's earlier 2022 novel about young love and grief? (*Notes on Your Sudden Disappearance*)
7. What broad genre best describes *The Wedding People*? (Contemporary literary fiction)
8. What type of setting serves as the main backdrop for the novel? (A grand seaside hotel)

## Rate the book

Coziness ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Heart ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Humor ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Comfort Reread Potential ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Made Me Feel Seen ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book made me feel: \_\_\_\_\_

A scene I want to wrap a blanket around: \_\_\_\_\_

Someone I'd hand this book to next: \_\_\_\_\_

YOU'RE INVITED

## Come Be Our Wedding People

Pull on your softest sweater and join us for chowder, cider, and a warm chat about Alison Espach's *The Wedding People*. Blankets provided, feelings welcome.



**Plan your own book club night**

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