

THE WEDDING PRESENT

By Carolyn West

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CAST: HANNAH and PHOEBE

SETTING: The ladies lounge in a church.

AT RISE: HANNAH straightens out her dress, a wedding dress. PHOEBE, a teenager, wearing a bridesmaid's gown, chews gum.

HANNAH: It's almost time. Are you ready?

PHOEBE: Yes.

HANNAH: Let me take a look. Turn around. **(PHOEBE does as SHE is told. SHE is obviously uncomfortable in what SHE's wearing.)**

PHOEBE: I feel stupid,

HANNAH: You look wonderful. But don't slouch. And straighten your skirt. If you want me to redo your make-up for you, I will.

PHOEBE: No thanks.

HANNAH: I'm so glad we picked this color for you instead of that drab black you're always wearing. With your hair this way, it makes you look normal. I only wish you had let me wax your upper lip. **(PHOEBE blows a bubble with her gum. HANNAH stops talking abruptly and stares at PHOEBE for a moment.)** Phoebe, you're chewing gum.

PHOEBE: Uh-huh.

HANNAH: You'll just have to spit it out.

PHOEBE: Why?

HANNAH: We're in a church.

PHOEBE: I'll stop blowing bubbles.

HANNAH: You can't chew gum when you walk down the aisle.

PHOEBE: Is there some kind of commandment against it?

HANNAH: Phoebe.

PHOEBE: I won't chew. I'll stick it up between my cheek and my teeth.

HANNAH: You'll look like a one-sided chipmunk.

PHOEBE: I'll put it under my tongue.

HANNAH: No. You'll start chewing absentmindedly during the ceremony. I'll be in the middle of my vows and I'll hear the smack, smack, smack of your gum. When I was a child and I had gum, my parents would yell holy terror if I dared chew with my mouth open. I don't know how your mother can stand...

PHOEBE: **(interrupting)** Don't talk about my mom.

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HANNAH: No. No. You're right. I'm sorry. I like your mom, really I do.
And I'm not trying to replace her. I just want to be your friend.

PHOEBE: Uh-huh.

HANNAH: I think we can be great friends. Best friends maybe.

PHOEBE: Right.

HANNAH: I'm not that much older than you. I'm sure we have the same tastes in lots of things. You can borrow my clothes and CD's. We'll hang out and talk sometimes about boys and things like that. We'll be like sisters.

PHOEBE: My sister, huh?

HANNAH: Yes.

PHOEBE: Married to my father?

HANNAH: All right, not sisters. But we can be friends, can't we?

PHOEBE: Sure.

HANNAH: And as a friend, I'm asking you to please spit out the gum.

PHOEBE: I'll think about it.

HANNAH: We don't have that much time. People are expecting us.

PHOEBE: Don't remind me.

HANNAH: You want the day to be perfect, don't you? For your father's sake. Think of him standing up there in front of everyone, waiting for the two women he loves most in the world. Here you come, with your dress and your hair, looking as pretty as porcelain. Will he notice that? No. He'll see his daughter looking like a cow chewing her cud.

PHOEBE: Hey!

HANNAH: And you do look pretty today. Honestly Phoebe, I just want people to see how beautiful you truly are.

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