

English Theatre Club – “The Plaza Hotel” Suite 719 New York, 1968

by Neil Simon



A story guide for “Plaza Hotel”

The characters we are going to meet in the play are: Norma (mother), Roy (father), Benny (the bridegroom and their son), Gonzales (the Mexican bellboy), Mr Eisler, Mrs Eisler, (Suzy's parents) and Suzy (the bride.)

The summary of the story is: Norma is very worried about the wedding since her son Benny, the bridegroom refuses to come out of the bathroom and get married. Ben's reason for locking himself up in the bathroom is that he feels uncomfortable in his wedding suit, he dislikes the pretentiousness of the “Plaza Hotel” and he does not want to do everything his mother wants. Norma calls her husband Roy, the father of the bridegroom for help. Instead of Roy there comes Gonzales, the Mexican bellboy. His role is twofold: on the one hand he offers comic relief from the continuing conflict and at the same time he presents a much more humane and understanding male character than Roy.

Let's have a look at Roy. He's in a suit tie, and he's angry. He doesn't like paying all the money for the wedding. He is a volatile man. He has a short temper. He is really concerned about the cost of the wedding:

Liquor, salami sandwiches, photographer for 300 dollars, musicians.... Norma rips her stockings and freaks out and insists that she has to buy another pair. She is very concerned about how she looks. Norma is self-involved and seems to only care about herself. Roy points out that the stockings are no big deal because with Benny in the bathroom there is no wedding. And it is at this moment that Roy runs into the door to break it down with his shoulder. Instead he thinks he has broken his arm.

A little later when Gonzales tries to help he asks Ben to knock twice on the door answering his questions on whether he really loves Suzy and wants to marry her..... Mr Eisler, Suzy's father, calls to ask for explanations on their delay. Roy and Norma are trying hard to gain time wondering at the same time what may have gone wrong with their own wedding. In this way they want to find a possible reason for his son's negative attitude. They accept they have had a difficult marriage, arguing and disagreeing on almost everything. However, the wedding causes some stress probably but they see they do love each other in the end.

Benny appears to be afraid that he and Suzy will become like his parents. Surprisingly enough, when Suzy says to Benny to “chill out” he walks out of the bathroom and says “I'm ready now!” On the other hand, Norma has been doing everything she possibly can to get her son out of the bathroom yet Suzy just comes along and tells him to “chill out” and he does. So she says, “That's the brilliant understanding between two young people.” Is there going to be a wedding after all? And, is it going to take place at the “Plaza Hotel?”



