

Expectation PDF (Limited Copy)

Anna Hope



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Expectation Summary

Navigating dreams, choices, and the weight of reality.

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About the book

In Anna Hope's compelling novel "Expectation", the lives of three women—Hannah, Lissa, and Cate—intertwine amidst the backdrop of contemporary London, exploring the complexities of friendship, ambition, and the societal pressures surrounding love and motherhood. As they navigate their thirties, each grapples with the weight of their expectations versus the reality of their lives, ultimately revealing how dreams can shift and transform over time. Hope's evocative prose captures the universal struggle to find fulfillment in a world that often feels unyielding, inviting readers to reflect on their own aspirations and the unexpected paths their lives may take. With rich character development and an exploration of the profound connections that define us, "Expectation" is a poignant reminder that life is as much about the journey as it is about the destination.

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About the author

Anna Hope is an accomplished British author known for her evocative storytelling and deep exploration of human emotions in her literary works. Born in Manchester and educated at the University of Cambridge, she has carved out a niche in contemporary fiction with her rich narratives that often intertwine personal struggle with broader societal themes. Hope gained prominence with her debut novel, "Wake", which was well-received for its lyrical prose and intricate character development. Her subsequent works, including "The Ballroom" and "Expectation", further showcase her ability to delve into the lives of women navigating the complexities of love, loss, and identity in modern society. In addition to her novels, Hope's talent extends to theatre, having written plays that reflect her keen understanding of human connection, making her a notable figure in the landscape of contemporary literature.

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Summary Content List

Chapter 1: London Fields

Chapter 2: 2010

Chapter 3: Abjections

Chapter 4: 2010

Chapter 5: Soulmates

Chapter 6: 2010

Chapter 7: Resistance

Chapter 8: 2010

Chapter 9: True North

Chapter 10: 2010

Chapter 11: London

Chapter 12: 2010

Chapter 13: Bras

Chapter 14: 2010

Chapter 15: Hens

Chapter 16: 2010

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Chapter 17: Epithalamium

Chapter 18: 2011

Chapter 19: 2012

Chapter 20: London Fields

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Chapter 1 Summary: London Fields

In the first chapter of Anna Hope's "Expectation," we are introduced to three women—Hannah, Cate, and Lissa—who are navigating their lives in London Fields during mid-May 2004. As the story opens, Hannah and Cate enjoy a quiet Saturday morning, preparing breakfast in their shabby yet cozy house filled with warmth and memories. Within these walls, they feel a sense of ownership and comfort despite their negligent upkeep, creating a space that is cherished more for its sentiment than its appearance.

Lissa, their housemate, represents a vibrant contrast. She is often out late working at a pub and indulging in nightlife, epitomizing youthful energy. As Hannah and Cate venture to the local market, they relish the early morning serenity before the hustle of crowds takes over. They purchase delightful treats—almond croissants, cheeses, and wine—setting the stage for a leisurely picnic in the park later on. Their day unfolds slowly in the park's charming atmosphere, with laughter, food, and a deep appreciation for their current carefree life, filled with art, music, and the exploration of London.

The narrative glides into philosophical territory, touching on themes of privilege, gentrification, and the passage of time. The friends embody a sense of youthful exuberance, coupled with an undercurrent of concern for their futures and societal issues. They are aware of their position within a larger tidal wave of immigrants and the creeping gentrification, yet they



immerse themselves in their current happiness and the simplicity of shared moments.

Amidst idyllic moments, Hope contrasts their present with the ticking clock of adulthood. Despite being in their late twenties and feeling pressure to define their roles as women, they hold onto a sense of potential and belief that life is still unfolding before them. Their conversations reveal the weight of societal expectations regarding family, career, and identity compared to the ease of friendship and the solace it brings.

As the chapter transitions towards 2010, we delve into each woman's life. The lightness of 2004 fades into the complexities of adulthood. Hannah grapples with her fertility treatments and the emotional toll of wanting a child. She holds the vials of medication, weighing the significance of the moment and reflecting on past promises. Cate, now a mother, faces the challenges of early motherhood, loneliness, and pressures from her husband. Lissa, still in the acting world, finds it increasingly difficult to find meaningful roles while navigating ageist prejudices and insecurity in her career.

Through vivid character portrayals and relatable struggles, Hope captures the essence of friendships evolving over time, emphasizing the trials and tribulations faced by women in contemporary society. The juxtaposition of their past carefree days with the weight of their current realities highlights

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key themes of expectation, identity, and the pursuit of happiness, setting the tone for a poignant exploration of women's lives and aspirations throughout the narrative.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 2010

In Chapter 2 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narratives of three women—Hannah, Cate, and Lissa—unfold, each brimming with their unique challenges and hopes, intertwined by their friendships and the struggles of modern womanhood.

Hannah's journey begins with a poignant moment as she administers an injection, a ritual she is all too familiar with due to her attempts at IVF with her partner, Nathan. She reflects on their previous intimate moments associated with this process and how things have shifted. Despite the emotional weight she carries, she presents a brave front as she meets her friend Lissa in a bustling square, where the two engage in light banter about life, auditions, and the struggles of women in the arts. Lissa urges Hannah to talk about her journey, revealing the pressures they both face in a male-dominated industry. The subtext of their conversation hints at Hannah's profound struggle with fertility, making her promises about "no more" IVF particularly heavy.

Across town, Cate encapsulates a different struggle as a new mother. She faces the grueling demands of parenting, sleep deprivation, and the emotional weight of her own expectations. Her internal monologue reveals her feelings of inadequacy, especially when contrasting her experience with those of her husband, Sam, who appears more capable and composed. Their



interactions convey a sense of hostility and misunderstanding, as Cate grapples with feelings of isolation, detailing her bonds with her son and the anxieties that they breed.

Meanwhile, Lissa navigates the realms of acting, caught between her aspirations and the harsh realities of the industry. In a casting waiting room filled with tension and competition, she feels the weight of societal expectations and the scrutiny that comes with being a woman in her thirties. Her fears surface about her personal and professional inadequacies, poignantly underscored by her recent call to her long-time friend Nathan, leading to a moment of joy when she learns about her casting in a Chekhov role.

As the chapter weaves between the lives of these three women, themes of motherhood, ambition, connection, and the societal pressures that accompany their choices come to the forefront. They share laughter over drinks and cigarettes, echoing a camaraderie that becomes a refuge amidst their individual struggles. Their paths converge in a broader conversation about femininity, career, and family, subtly tracing the deep-seated longing for agency and fulfillment in a world that often sidelines women's narratives. Through Hannah, Cate, and Lissa, Hope captures the vivid tapestry of modern womanhood, laden with hopes, fears, and enduring friendships, building a compelling critique of societal expectations placed upon women and the profound strength found within their relationships.



Chapter 3: Abjections

In Chapter 3 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narrative weaves between the lives of Lissa and Hannah, exploring their personal challenges and the complexities of friendship and feminism in the backdrop of 1995. The chapter opens in a university seminar called Feminisms, where Lissa, a carefree and somewhat superficial character, attends for its social appeal rather than a genuine interest in the subject, believing that feminism's work is complete. Her lack of preparation for the class symbolizes a broader theme of disconnection from the complexities of adult life and women's issues.

Lissa is contrasted sharply with Hannah, her seminar partner, who comes from a more troubled background, having not gained admission to Oxford and feeling out of place among her privileged peers. Hannah's perspective is deeply infused with her experiences of class struggle; her observations about the social divisions among students reveal her keen understanding of identity and belonging. When Lissa invites Hannah to her room to prepare their presentation, their initial awkwardness unfolds into a budding friendship

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Chapter 4 Summary: 2010

In Chapter 4 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, we delve into the lives of Hannah and Lissa, two friends grappling with the complexities of adulthood and their evolving relationships. The chapter opens with Hannah at a fishmonger in a bustling market, reflecting on the changes in her life since she moved to the area. She recalls the past when a Jamaican man owned the shop and how a community campaign tried to save his business from a developer's grasp. Despite these memories stirring a sense of loss, Hannah appreciates her current life filled with boisterous market energy and a newfound routine.

Hannah is particularly burdened with the emotional weight of her ongoing IVF treatments and the daily trials of being surrounded by pregnant women. She expertly hides her feelings, especially when her closest friend, Cate, announces her own pregnancy. The hormonal shifts from her medical regimen lead to physical discomforts like sweating and anxiety, yet she strives to maintain an outwardly composed persona.

As she returns to her flat, Hannah reflects on her home, filled with memories of her and her husband, Nathan. The details of their life together render both a sense of achievement and sorrow. As she prepares dinner and awaits Nathan's return, the absence of children in their lives is palpable. Hannah feels a deep longing for Nathan's presence as she battles her urge to cry—a



poignant reminder of the struggles they face together as they try to conceive.

In contrast, Lissa's storyline unfolds as she navigates her own romantic endeavors. After reconnecting with Hannah, Lissa has chosen to step out in search of a partner through online dating. The chapter highlights her experiences with different men, some disappointing, some fleeting, until she finally meets a chef who piques her interest. Their connection blossoms quickly, reflecting a raw and honest chemistry that Lissa finds comforting. However, this relationship takes an unexpected turn as Lissa discovers she is pregnant just months later, thrusting her into an unanticipated future.

The chapter artfully contrasts the overwhelming pressures Hannah faces regarding motherhood with Lissa's simultaneous journey toward unexpected motherhood herself. Themes of friendship, the societal pressures around family life, the emotional burden of fertility struggles, and the uncertainty of relationships are woven throughout, creating a rich tapestry of modern womanhood. Hannah's poignant internal struggles and Lissa's whirlwind romance showcase the vast spectrum of experiences that women navigate in their quest for fulfillment, acceptance, and love. The juxtaposition of Hannah's desire for stability with her ongoing heartache against Lissa's impulsive decisions and their consequences encapsulates the tensions between hope and reality, underscoring the novel's exploration of expectation versus life's unpredictable turns.



Chapter 5 Summary: Soulmates

In Chapter 5 of "Expectation," titled "Soulmates" and set between 2008 and 2009, we delve into the lives of three women—Cate, Hannah, and Lissa—as they navigate love, loss, and the complexities of motherhood. The chapter opens dramatically on the night of Hannah's wedding, where Cate, feeling uninhibited, engages in a one-night stand with Nathan's cousin, a banker. Their physical relationship becomes a recurring escape for Cate, limited to fleeting encounters devoid of emotional ties. Despite the thrill, Cate feels a mix of shame and longing, acknowledging the absence of a meaningful connection in her life since her breakup with Lucy nearly a decade ago.

When Nathan abruptly stops contacting Cate to inform her he's engaged, she faces a crossroads. At thirty-three, she reflects on the void this arrangement has left in her life. In search of genuine connection, she turns to Guardian Soulmates and embarks on a series of disappointing and frustrating dates that expose her vulnerabilities and fears about love.

Desperate for a change, she seeks help from Lissa to improve her dating profile, which results in a renewed sense of hope. Eventually, she meets a more promising match, a chef who engages with her on both a personal and intellectual level. The two share a beautiful connection over drinks and food, leading to a successful night that transforms both their lives: three months later, Cate finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, then married, and living a



life she feels was chosen for her.

Flipping to 2010, we see Cate as a new mother struggling with her identity. As she prepares for a trip to see Hannah, she handles the emotional complexities of motherhood and the lingering doubts about her choices. Sam, her partner, is skeptical about her desire to see Hannah, questioning her motivations. Despite misgivings, Cate packs for their outing, showcasing the challenges of motherhood through her frantic preparations and self-doubt.

On the train ride to Hampstead, Cate wrestles with fears for her child, Tom, feeling a sense of duty and isolation navigate her new role. As she finally reconnects with Hannah, who is visibly polished and detached, Cate's internal struggle continues. Hannah, who is wrestling with her own hormonal changes and the stresses of trying to conceive, contrasts sharply with Cate's chaotic home life.

The chapter zeroes in on Hannah's emotional burdens while she interacts warmly yet cautiously with Tom, marking the distance that has formed between the two friends. As their conversation unfolds, Cate's candid vulnerability emerges, exposing her feelings of inadequacy and fear about parenthood. This prompts Hannah to suggest that Cate seek help for her emotional struggles, highlighting the chapter's exploration of mental health in the context of motherhood.



The narrative closes on Lissa, who embarks on a new chapter of her life as she begins rehearsals for "Uncle Vanya." Through Lissa's preparations, the chapter underscores the juxtaposition of artistic ambitions against the backdrop of personal challenges faced by each woman. Themes of societal expectations, personal fulfillment, and the quest for connection are richly woven throughout the narrative, painting a textured picture of love and the expectations placed upon women in different stages of life.

Aspect	Details
Title	Soulmates
Timeline	2008 to 2009
Main Characters	Cate, Hannah, Lissa
Setting	Various locations, including a wedding, a dating site, and a train ride
Key Events	Hannah's wedding night, where Cate has a one-night stand. Cate's relationship with Nathan ends, prompting her to seek meaningful connections. Cate uses Guardian Soulmates, leading to disappointing dates. Improved dating profile suggests hope; she meets a chef, leading to a relationship and pregnancy. Cate's struggles with motherhood and identity unfold as she prepares to visit Hannah. Cate and Hannah's reunion reveals their personal challenges and emotional distances.
Themes	

Aspect	Details
	Love and loss Complexities of motherhood Mental health Societal expectations vs. personal fulfillment Quest for connection
Character Development	Cate navigates her identity as a new mother while confronting feelings of inadequacy. Hannah faces her own struggles with the pressures of conception. Lissa balances her artistic ambitions with personal challenges.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of seeking genuine connection amidst life's expectations

Critical Interpretation: In the whirlwind of life's expectations and experiences you might find yourself, like Cate, yearning for meaningful connections beyond fleeting encounters. This chapter reminds you that reaching out, stepping out of your comfort zone, and embracing vulnerability can lead you to profound relationships that enrich your existence. Don't shy away from exploring new avenues, whether it's through new experiences or connections with others, as these journeys can reshape your perspective on love, fulfillment, and identity, ultimately guiding you towards a life infused with deeper understanding and joy.



Chapter 6: 2010

In Chapter 6 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narrative flows seamlessly between vignettes of the lives of Cate, Hannah, and Lissa, revealing their struggles, friendships, and aspirations amidst the challenges of motherhood, fertility, and personal growth.

The chapter opens with Cate, a young mother, determined to visit her friend Hannah in London. Though struggling with fatigue and the demands of caring for her energetic toddler, Tom, her excitement shines through as she prepares for the trip. There's a palpable tension in her relationship with Sam, her partner, who seems skeptical of her journey. Cate's reflective thoughts during her passage through the city illustrate her internal battles—she fights against tiredness and self-doubt, longing for the vibrancy of London and a connection with Hannah, who misses Tom. When she finally arrives at the Heath, there's an immediate contrast between her anxiousness and the buoyant atmosphere surrounding her. This contrast highlights the underlying theme of motherhood's isolation against the backdrop of communal celebration.

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Chapter 7 Summary: Resistance

In Chapter 7 of "Expectation," we find Cate navigating the aftermath of her university exams and the complexities of her emotional landscape. After finishing her finals, she is met with a chaotic but celebratory scene involving her friends, where joy quickly mingles with her own feelings of emptiness. As she grapples with delayed grief from her mother's death and mental health issues that led her to take Prozac, she reflects on the uncertainty of her future. Having to vacate her university room, she realizes she has nowhere to return – her father is in Spain, and her sister is in Canada.

Cate moves to London to stay with Hannah, who is immersed in her own life and new job. Their casual conversations highlight Cate's feelings of inadequacy as she struggles to find direction. In contrast, Hannah seems to thrive, bringing up thoughts of financial security and career aspirations that only serve to remind Cate of her own stagnation and inner turmoil.

When Cate receives her degree results, she is surprisingly pleased to learn that she has scraped a first, a milestone she deems accidental. There's a moment of deep longing as she wishes she could share the news with her late mother. A new opportunity arises when her friend Hesther invites her to Brighton, where she starts anew, sharing a flat with the unconventional Lucy. Lucy embodies a free-spirited, activist lifestyle that sparks a shift in Cate. Their friendship blossoms as they engage in protests and discussions



about societal change.

As Cate finds new joy in reading and participating in activist actions, she begins to reclaim her voice that felt lost during her time at Oxford. Her relationship with Lucy deepens, eventually leading to a passionate exploration of their connection, marked by love, intimacy, and a sense of awakening.

In a parallel storyline taking place in 2010, Cate is now a mother to Tom but finds herself profoundly depressed and overwhelmed. A doctor's visit reveals her struggle with postpartum depression, leading her back to the possibility of taking anti-depressants. In the process of searching for help, memories of Lucy surface, highlighting the contrast between Cate's vibrant past and her current state of despair.

Meanwhile, Hannah faces her own emotional crisis as she navigates IVF procedures with her partner, Nathan. The narrative reveals the tension in their relationship as they confront the harsh realities of potential motherhood. Amidst their struggles to conceive, Hannah grapples with loss and the pressure of hope, which ultimately leads to more heartache.

This chapter beautifully weaves together themes of grief, resilience, identity, and the search for meaningful connections. Cate and Hannah both strive to carve out their paths amid societal expectations and personal demons,

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emphasizing the complexities of womanhood and the poignant nature of friendship during pivotal life transitions. The intertwining narratives of longing and anxiety reflect a shared experience of contemporary women navigating life's unpredictable tides.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Reclaiming Your Voice Amidst Chaos

Critical Interpretation: In the whirlwind of life's unpredictable events, you may often find yourself feeling lost or inadequate, just like Cate did after her university exams. This chapter reminds you that amidst feelings of emptiness and uncertainty, there lies an opportunity to reclaim your voice and seek joy in new connections. Like Cate's transformative friendship with Lucy, it encourages you to embrace change and engage with your passions. Engaging in self-discovery and advocacy not only empowers you to reclaim your identity but also fosters deep, meaningful relationships that inspire growth and resilience. Allow yourself to navigate through challenges, seek help when needed, and remember that it's never too late to find your path and share your voice with the world.

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Chapter 8 Summary: 2010

In Chapter 8 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narrative weaves together the lives of four women—Cate, Lissa, Hannah, and Dea—each grappling with personal struggles, aspirations, and the complexities of relationships.

The chapter opens with Cate feeling the weight of postnatal depression as she sits at her kitchen table, contemplating a bottle of antidepressants. A recent visit to the doctor leaves her in a haze of memories about her traumatic caesarean birth of her son, Tom. Her reflections unveil past friendships, particularly with Lucy Skein, an activist she lost touch with after a transformative but tumultuous experience in Seattle during a WTO protest. Memories of their shared adventures create a sense of longing and isolation within Cate as she grapples with motherhood, loneliness, and the haunting absence of a former self.

Her desire to reconnect with Lucy leads her to search online for any trace of her old friend, a reminder of her youthful idealism. However, her exploration is interrupted by an unwelcome visit from Alice, Tom's grandmother, who arrives with the intent to offer support but inadvertently exposes Cate's inner turmoil. This tension between her desire for help and the overwhelming weight of her depression highlights a recurring theme: the struggle between seeking connection and the fear of vulnerability.



Meanwhile, Lissa, struggling with her acting career and the pressures of directing, confronts her own demons, stemming from relationships past and present. Her reflections on Declan, a former partner who symbolized both freedom and cruelty, reveal her battle with self-worth and ambition. The rehearsal environment is charged with competitive energy, and Lissa finds herself questioning her talent and place among her colleagues, particularly when comparing herself to the brilliant Johnny, who exudes both allure and distance.

Hannah, embarked upon an IVF journey with her partner Nathan, experiences the weight of hope and despair. The emotional rollercoaster of that process exposes the fragility of her dreams for children and highlights the strain on her relationship with Nathan. Hannah's preoccupation with the embryos reflects her inner struggle, a tangible representation of her desire for motherhood intertwined with fear of loss. When she finally learns that her embryos will not be preserved, a sense of profound grief washes over her.

Dea, a new acquaintance of Cate, emerges at a playgroup, contrasting Cate's isolation with a sense of camaraderie. Their connection hints at the possibility of friendship blossoming from shared experiences of motherhood, while also showcasing the unpredictability of parenthood and societal comparisons.



Each character's journey in this chapter explores themes of identity, friendship, trauma, and motherhood, painting a vivid picture of women navigating their expectations and realities. The intertwining narratives create a rich tapestry of lives impacted by their pasts, revealing how connections—both missed and cherished—shape their choices and paths forward. The weight of expectations, both external and self-imposed, serves as a backdrop against which each woman's struggle unfolds, ultimately leading them toward growth, understanding, and the possibility of hope.

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Chapter 9: True North

In Chapter 9 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the lives of two young girls, Hannah and Cate, are intricately woven together through their shared experience of academic rivalry and burgeoning friendship. The chapter begins in 1987 when they are twelve and encounter each other in a top English class taught by Miss Riley. Initially, they are wary of each other, sizing one another up after competing for the highest marks in their English exams. Over time, their rivalry evolves into a supportive friendship, catalyzed by a school trip that encourages them to bond over their backgrounds and families.

Hannah lives in a modest home on a council estate, while Cate enjoys a more comfortable life in a larger house, highlighting the contrasts between their socioeconomic backgrounds. The chapter dives deep into their contrasting family dynamics, showcasing the warmth and affection present in Cate's home—where music and dancing fill the space—compared to Hannah's more restrained upbringing. As their friendship develops, they discover shared interests in literature, rebellion against societal norms, and

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Chapter 10 Summary: 2010

In Chapter 10 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narrative unfolds through the distinct perspectives of Cate, Lissa, and Hannah, revealing their intertwined lives, struggles, and a quest for connection amidst the chaos of motherhood and personal aspirations.

The chapter opens with Cate, who feels an unsettling mix of emotions as she navigates her new role as a mother. Taking care of her son Tom, she finds herself at a bus stop, contemplating her independence while feeling the weight of her responsibilities. She forgoes mundane tasks like laundry and instead wanders through town, seeking a sense of freedom and rediscovering herself. As she stops for coffee, she notices a protest stall advocating against rising tuition fees, prompting memories of her past and a longing for her pre-motherhood identity.

Tension builds as she grapples with feelings of loss and fear while reflecting on her life choices, especially concerning her son and her relationship with her mother-in-law, Alice. A poignant moment occurs when she feels a suffocating wave of grief, manifesting her worries about being a mother and her perceived failures. This inner turmoil is interrupted by a chance meeting with Dea, a fellow mother from her playgroup. Their encounter offers a glimpse of camaraderie as they share their struggles and vulnerabilities in a light-hearted manner, symbolizing the need for support among mothers.



Meanwhile, Lissa's storyline captures her experiences in theater, revealing the pressure and emotional challenges she faces as an actress. Lissa must confront her own insecurities in acting, especially in scenes directed by the demanding Klara. As she struggles to embrace her inner emotions on stage, she experiences a moment of electric tension with Johnny, another cast member, which unravels her composed façade. The rehearsal setting exposes her vulnerabilities and desire for validation, echoing the broader themes of the pursuit of creativity and self-discovery within the arts.

Hannah's narrative delves into her relationship with Nathan, her husband, and the hardships they endure in their attempts to conceive. In a stark contrast, Nathan expresses frustration over their failed IVF attempts, revealing a rift as he feels constrained by Hannah's obsessive focus on fertility. Their conversation outside a pub highlights the emotional strain and pressure they face, with Nathan feeling lost amidst the fertility treatments. Hannah's past experiences of having had a termination surface, anchoring her character's tumultuous feelings about motherhood and her shifting desires.

As the chapter progresses, the three women—Cate, Lissa, and Hannah—navigate their distinct but relatable struggles, intertwined by the challenges of motherhood, the strain of expectations, and the search for personal identity. The complexities of their emotional landscapes are rich



and multifaceted, encapsulating the realities of balancing aspirations and responsibilities.

Ultimately, they each seek connection and understanding in a world filled with competing obligations, hopes, and dreams, all while confronting their own insecurities and the inevitability of change.

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Chapter 11 Summary: London

In Chapter 11 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, set in August 1997 during the summer of graduation, Hannah arrives in London, profoundly marked by the election of Tony Blair after years of Tory government. She's excited yet self-conscious, meeting her friend Lissa, who greets her with warmth and enthusiasm, making Hannah feel both awed and a bit inadequate. Lissa, vibrant and carefree, shares tales of her new boyfriend, Declan, an Irish actor, highlighting the stark contrasts between their lives.

As they navigate the city, Lissa reveals her aspirations to become an actress and how things are looking up for her career, leaving Hannah grappling with her own uncertainty. They settle into Lissa's home, where Hannah observes the chaotic yet artistic environment filled with books and art, epitomizing Lissa's bohemian lifestyle. The interaction with Lissa's mother, Sarah, introduces a captivating figure, an artist whose beauty and confidence both intimidate and intrigue Hannah.

Tension builds as Hannah witnesses the subtle competition between Lissa and Sarah, reflecting on her yearning for that kind of visceral artful existence. Lissa encourages Hannah to extend her visit, implying that her mother appreciates Hannah's influence on her. In a pivotal moment, Hannah finds herself immersed in the art world at Sarah's exhibition, which is electric and full of life, yet laced with her own insecurities.



The chapter takes a darker turn when Hannah is confronted with Declan, Lissa's boyfriend, whom she meets at the art opening. A moment of undefined recognition rushes through her, hinting at complicated feelings and the shape of relational dynamics yet to unfold.

On the other hand, in 2010, the narrative shifts to Lissa's perspective, where she is now buried in her theater work. She finds herself haunted by memories of her kiss with Nathan, Hannah's husband, as they all navigate their intertwined lives stuck in a cycle of desire, regret, and ambition. The thematic exploration of female friendship, ambition, and the complexities of love and fidelity plays out against the backdrop of Lissa's professional journey marked by growth and the weight of choices made in personal relationships.

By the chapter's end, Hannah, naïve yet hopeful, is planning a getaway with Nathan to rekindle their connection, while Lissa finds herself unable to escape the entangled aftermath of her own decisions, leading to tension that promises to affect their friendships moving forward. The chapter encapsulates the push and pull between aspiration and reality, friendship and fidelity, capturing the essence of growth and the bittersweet nature of navigating adult relationships.



Chapter 12: 2010

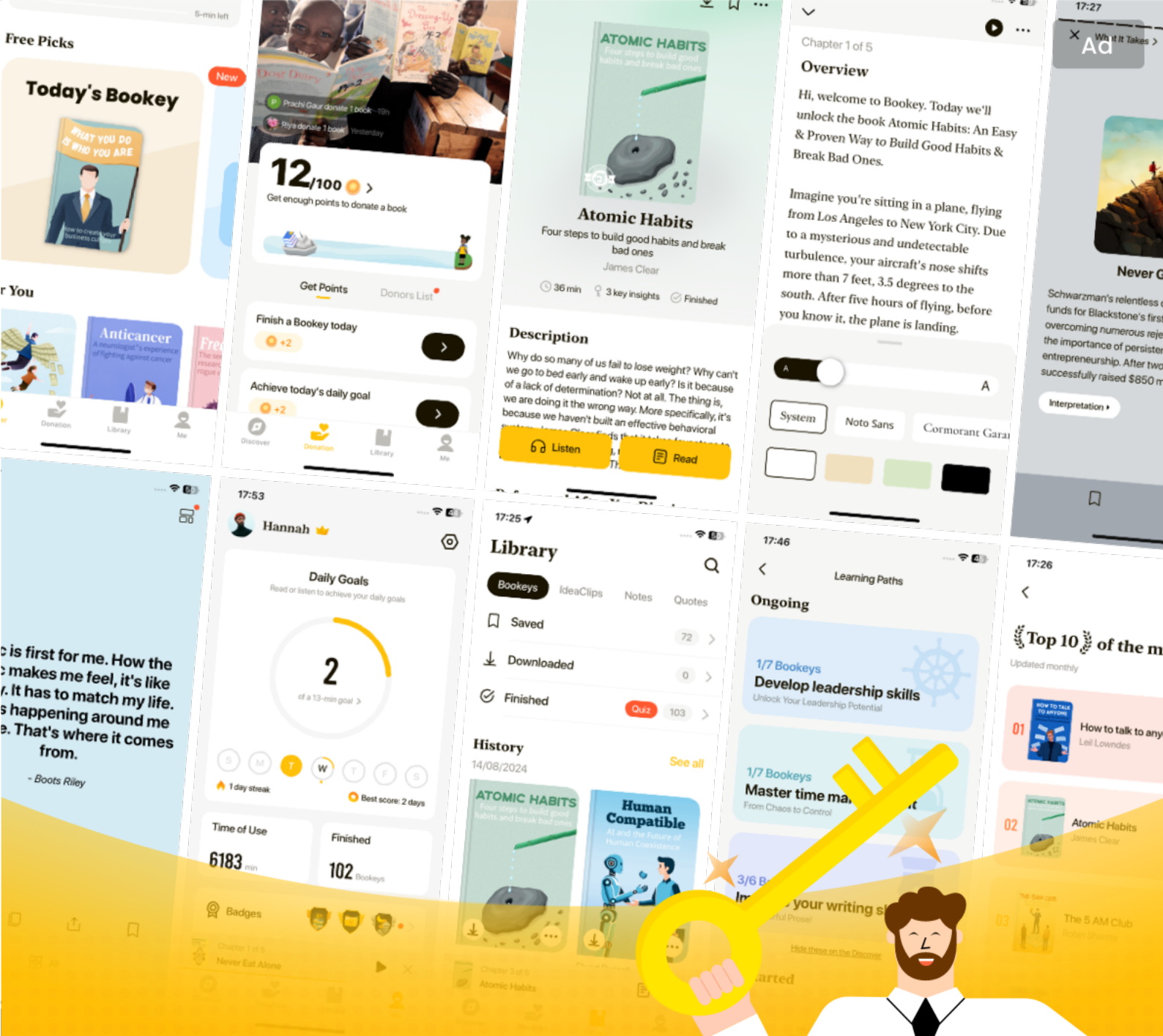
In Chapter 12 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narrative unfolds around the lives of Lissa, Hannah, and Cate, focusing on the complexities of friendships, love, and personal aspirations.

Lissa is in a tumultuous emotional space, replaying her kiss with Nathan—Hannah's husband—in her mind while waiting for the fallout. She distracts herself with the theater, growing closer to her cast and their raw performances, fostering a sense of unity among them as they prepare for opening night. Her journey towards personal growth and maturity is marked by a shift in her dynamics with Johnny, a fellow actor, as their relationship begins to soften.

Amidst Lissa's preparation, Hannah reaches out, seeking comfort as her relationship with Nathan falters. They had a fight about their struggles with IVF, with Nathan wanting a break from it all. Lissa finds herself drawn into their turmoil, feeling the weight of Hannah's pain as she sits together with her, and is eventually persuaded to confront Nathan on Hannah's behalf.

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Chapter 13 Summary: Bras

In Chapter 13 of "Expectation," we dive into the intertwining lives of three women—Hannah, Cate, and Lissa—as they navigate love, loss, and complicated friendships amid the backdrop of changing circumstances. The chapter opens in 2008, as Hannah prepares to celebrate her engagement to Nathan at her new flat in London. The atmosphere is warm with friendship as Cate and Lissa arrive, each carrying their own unspoken struggles and insecurities.

Cate, reflecting on her life, grapples with feelings of inadequacy as she observes Hannah's apparent success and the beautiful life she curates. She feels like she's in a race with Hannah that she has ultimately lost. The sight of Hannah's delicate and alluring lingerie stirs feelings of envy and disappointment within Cate. As she reflects on her own life at thirty-three—an uninspiring job, a messy shared house, and the absence of meaningful relationships—her bitterness begins to fester.

Meanwhile, Lissa, who has been gaining momentum in her acting career, receives news of a promising audition, which creates a stark contrast between her hope and Cate's despair. The excitement of potential success hangs in the air, amplifying Cate's feelings of failure. As the chapter progresses, Lissa finds herself caught in the whirlwind of ambition and fleeting hopes, only to miss out on a crucial casting call, leading her to



retreat emotionally.

The narrative unfolds through dinner at Cate's place in 2010, where tensions bubble beneath the surface. Cate's insecurities resurface as she prepares for a dinner party while feeling overwhelmed and out of her depth. The interactions among friends at the table reveal layers of complex relationships, with political discussions that touch upon their individual struggles. As conversations spiral toward contentious topics, Cate's frustrations boil over, leading to a drunken confrontation with a guest, Mark, who embodies the privilege and condescension she loathes.

In parallel, Hannah grapples with her feelings of isolation after Nathan leaves. She seeks solace in her child, Tom, yet feels a deep melancholy as she understands the emotional chasm widening between her and Nathan. This loss manifests during her interactions with Cate, where unspoken words and resentments linger beneath the façade of togetherness. Hannah's struggle culminates on a bridge where she tries to pull Cate away from a dangerous moment, revealing the frail state of their friendships and the weight of their individual burdens.

The chapter ends on a note of uncertainty as Hannah visits a dubious healer, desperate for any sign of hope or clarity regarding her plight. The shift back to Lissa's perspective she feels renewed and empowered after a successful performance, yet she remains conflicted about her feelings for Nathan,

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which leads her to a passionate encounter with him as the reader witnesses the complexities of desire at play.

Through rich character development and interwoven narratives, Chapter 13 uncovers themes of friendship, jealousy, and the profound search for meaning amidst societal expectations and personal failures. The women find themselves at a crossroads, each facing the trials of adulthood, longing for fulfillment in different forms, and ultimately confronting the harsh realities of their lives.

Character	Summary
Hannah	Celebrating engagement in London but feels isolated after Nathan leaves, struggles with emotional distance, and seeks solace in her child while facing uncertainty.
Cate	Feels inadequate compared to Hannah's success, grapples with jealousy and disappointment about her unfulfilling life, leading to an emotional outburst during a dinner party.
Lissa	On the rise in her acting career, experiences hope with potential auditions, faces setbacks that heighten her emotional turmoil, yet feels empowered after a successful performance.
Overall Themes	Intertwined lives of friendship, love, loss, jealousy, societal expectations, and the search for personal fulfillment amidst personal struggles.



Chapter 14 Summary: 2010

In this chapter from "Expectation" by Anna Hope, we see the lives of three close friends, Cate, Hannah, and Lissa, intertwined amid personal struggles and societal issues. The narrative is set against the backdrop of a dinner party that Cate is hosting, which causes her anxiety, exposing her insecurities and sense of inadequacy in social settings. However, her husband Sam's enthusiasm for cooking ignites a moment of joy in her, hinting at the complexities of their relationship.

As the dinner preparation unfolds, the news highlights political unrest in the UK with mounting protests against the rise in student fees, contrasting sharply with the domestic scenes in Cate's home. This juxtaposition amplifies the feeling of disconnection between personal life and wider societal issues.

Hannah, while preparing to join Cate's dinner, grapples with her own unease. She finds herself in a strained relationship with her husband Nathan, which colors her thoughts as they navigate their way to the dinner. Their conversations reveal an emotional chasm growing between them, intensified by their past struggles with infertility, which Hannah keeps hidden from Cate and Lissa.

When they arrive at the dinner, the atmosphere starts off warm, with laughter



and camaraderie shared among the friends and other guests. But as the night progresses, tensions rise, especially when discussions about the protests and political issues unfold. The conversation takes a sharp turn when Cate, feeling the effects of alcohol, reacts defensively to Mark, a guest at the dinner, who makes a patronizing comment about her drinking. Her irate outburst reveals her frustrations not only about the night but also about her life, her unresolved anger, and her fears about motherhood—fears she carries silently.

A pivotal moment occurs when Hannah, sensing Cate's distress, steps outside to look for her and encounters her friend standing precariously on a bridge, ready to let her anger and hurt spill into the abyss. This confrontation between Hannah and Cate delves deep into themes of motherhood, regret, loss, and the hidden pain of friendship and expectation. Their raw, candid exchange exposes the darkness within their personal struggles, which until then, had been masked behind smiles and polite conversations.

Ultimately, this chapter explores complex themes such as motherhood, friendship, identity, disappointment, and societal pressures. Each character's turmoil reflects a broader narrative about navigating the expectations placed on women, both personally and socially, against the backdrop of contemporary challenges. As they navigate their relationships, the intersection of personal and political amplifies their experiences, making for a gripping and emotionally engaging narrative.



Chapter 15: Hens

In Chapter 15 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the story transitions between 2008 and 2010, focusing on the lives and emotional landscapes of three friends: Hannah, Lissa, and Cate. The chapter begins with Hannah preparing for her upcoming wedding and desiring a holiday with her two best friends instead of a traditional hen do. Her excitement leads them to a villa in Greece, symbolizing her desire for care-free moments amid the impending responsibilities of marriage. Each day is filled with sun-soaked joy as they enjoy their time together, from long beach days to intimate dinners. Yet, as the week winds down, underlying tensions surface.

Lissa grapples with feelings of inadequacy and frustration about her career and financial struggles. The idyllic vacation juxtaposes her inner turmoil, which is exacerbated by the reality check of returning to her mundane life as she realizes she needs to ask her ex for financial help again. The once-peaceful trip morphs into a scene of emotional collision during their final night in Greece, where a drunken argument erupts between Lissa and Cate, exposing deeper resentments and feelings of jealousy.

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Chapter 16 Summary: 2010

In Chapter 16 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, we delve into the emotional turmoil faced by Cate, Hannah, and Lissa as they navigate love, betrayal, and their intertwined pasts. The chapter opens with Cate feeling the weight of her strained relationship with Sam, who is distant and withdrawn since a dinner that has changed everything. Despite her attempts to reach out to her friend Hannah, who seems to be in deep pain, she receives no response. Cate grapples with feelings of guilt and confusion about her own identity, especially as she reflects on a past love—Lucy Skein—who still occupies her thoughts.

As winter settles in, Cate's parenting becomes increasingly fraught. Her frustrations manifest in outbursts towards her young son, Tom, highlighting her struggle with her mental health and sense of self. Sam, noticing her distress, confronts her about prescription pills for anti-depressants and a potential romantic connection to Lucy. This leads to a raw conversation about identity and past choices that shakes their marriage to its core. Sam's reaction to Cate's emotional revelations hints at a fracture that may be too deep to mend.

Meanwhile, Hannah finds herself wrestling with her own demons during a visit to her brother Jim and his family over Christmas. Surrounded by the warmth of their new baby, Rosie, Hannah feels isolated and overshadowed



amidst the apparent joy. The weight of her losses and the betrayal of her husband Nathan, with whom she suspects her friend Lissa is involved, render her overwhelmed—straddling the line between her polite, composed exterior and the chaotic, painful emotions bubbling beneath.

Lissa, too, is caught in a spiral of conflicting desires. She is navigating her own feelings for Nathan while striving to maintain her relationship with Hannah and Cate. Unbeknownst to the others, she has crossed an emotional boundary that threatens to unravel their friendship. Conversations among the three women reveal cracks in their once-solid bond, as the past looms over the present like a dark cloud.

When New Year's Eve arrives, Hannah's world shifts dramatically upon discovering Nathan's betrayal with Lissa, thrusting her into a state of shock and despair. In the aftermath of the revelations during a phone call with Cate, the emotional ramifications resonate deeply. Instead of seeking solace together, Cate and Sam's interactions become strained as they grapple with guilt and conflicting loyalties.

Lissa's final moments reveal her as a tragic character, facing the consequences of her reckless choices. Her interaction with Nathan, filled with tension and unspoken regrets, culminates in a painful confrontation, solidifying a cycle of heartbreak that affects them all.



This chapter artfully captures the themes of isolation, identity, and the complexities of love and friendship. Each character is portrayed with nuance, reflecting the turbulent emotions that stem from unresolved pasts and present betrayals, leaving them to contemplate what love means in a fractured world.

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Chapter 17 Summary: Epithalamium

In Chapter 17 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the intertwining lives of Lissa, Hannah, and Cate unfold against the backdrop of love, loss, and the complexities of friendship. The chapter begins on a bright Saturday in May, as Lissa and Cate prepare for Hannah's wedding. Lissa grapples with her feelings for Nathan, Hannah's fiancée, reflecting on their past and her desire to be noticed. As Hannah walks down the aisle, Lissa feels a wave of humility and love for her friend, overshadowed by her own insecurities.

Post-ceremony, the atmosphere is filled with celebration, but Cate is lost in thoughts of loss, missing her father and contemplating her late lover Lucy. The day's joy is contrasted with Cate's grief, reminding readers of the bittersweet nature of love and life. Hannah, enveloped in happiness, expresses her love for her friends, showcasing how marriage transcends the couple, radiating love and hope.

In the subsequent section set in 2011, Lissa wrestles with her solitude, finding herself in a life of artistic pursuits and financial struggles. She's haunted by her broken relationships and the emotional toll of her choices, particularly regarding Nathan and Hannah. Cate is now evolving, finding joy in her motherhood with Tom, progressing in her career, while also grappling with the shadows of her past. The arrival of an email about Lucy reignites feelings of loss and nostalgia for Cate, contrasting her more settled life.



Simultaneously, Hannah is portrayed in a state of emotional transition, maintaining her independence while contemplating her identity and desires after separating from Nathan. Her journey leads her to a place of unexpected choices, such as an unplanned pregnancy, showcasing her complexity and vulnerability.

As Lissa confronts her mother Sarah's illness—stage four cancer—it sparks a critical examination of their relationship. Tensions surface as Lissa reflects on her mother's choices, her own fears of loss, and the painful legacy of their past. The women's connections are palpably strained yet resilient, revealing the intricate layers of friendship as they navigate through grief, support, and love.

The chapter ultimately captures the beauty and fragility of life as Lissa, Hannah, and Cate face their respective challenges. It concludes with hints of transformation and healing, as each character begins to reassess their past and look toward an uncertain but hopeful future, embracing the complexities of their relationships with one another. This segment astutely illustrates the theme of expectation—be it for love, renewal, or reconciliation—as they each stand at a crossroad, negotiating the intersections of their intertwined lives.



Chapter 18: 2011

In Chapter 18 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, we dive into the intertwining lives of Lissa, Hannah, and Cate. The year is 2011, and Lissa is grappling with a sense of loss and emptiness following the unraveling of her relationships with both Hannah and Nathan. Forced into a modeling gig for art students, she struggles with feelings of invisibility and self-doubt. The chapter opens in a life-drawing class, where Lissa disrobes and poses, reflecting on her dwindling finances and emotional state, feeling numb and hollow after significant losses in her life. Her past relationships haunt her, especially after the fallout from her involvement with Nathan, who's now with Hannah.

Amidst these struggles, we find Hannah embarking on a journey of her own to Orkney, seeking escape and reflection. Her experience in the landscape brings up feelings of disconnection—a stark contrast to the expectation of beauty and adventure she had hoped for. Rather than finding solace, she feels lost and frustrated as she confronts remnants of family life that she may never have, contemplating her past faults while addressing her own grief. At

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Chapter 19 Summary: 2012

In Chapter 19 of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, the narrative intertwines the lives of three women—Hannah, Lissa, and Cate—across two significant time frames: the anticipation of childbirth in 2012 and a reunion in 2018.

Hannah, heavily pregnant, struggles with the discomfort of her impending labor. She envisions her unborn daughter as a mystical selkie, symbolizing both wonder and complexity in becoming a mother to a girl. Initially apprehensive about her role, Hannah embraces the idea with growing excitement. She reflects on her relationship with Nathan, the father of her child, who is supportive but whose presence at the birth remains uncertain. As she prepares for the transition into motherhood, she finds solace in her friendship with Cate, who has agreed to be her birth partner.

Fast forward to 2018, Lissa, now living in Mexico City, returns to London for a funeral. She reaches out to Hannah and Cate, yearning to reconnect after years apart. The reunion in the park is filled with nostalgia tinged with disappointment, as small talk fills the spaces where deeper connections once existed. Each woman is accompanied by her daughter, highlighting the passage of time and the changes in their lives since they last gathered together.

As they share food and moments, the conversation gradually shifts to



memories of their past while revealing their current lives. Hannah's pride in her parenting and Lissa's contentment with her independent life evoke moments of intimacy amid the anxiety of aging and worries about the future, reflecting themes of motherhood, friendship, and the weight of societal expectations.

Their reflections also extend to their aging fathers and concerns about the world their children will inherit, blending a joyous picnic atmosphere with deeper worries about familial ties and environmental changes. The chapter concludes with the girls, oblivious to their mothers' complexities, joyfully spinning in the grass—a poignant symbol of innocence, life, and the unbroken cherished moments that connect them, leaving the women to grapple with their intertwining pasts and present realities.

Throughout this rich tapestry of experiences, themes of love, anxiety, gratitude, and the bittersweet nature of friendship resonate, capturing the emotional landscape of women navigating the waves of life's transitions.

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Chapter 20 Summary: London Fields

In this chapter of "Expectation" by Anna Hope, we find Lissa arriving in London for the first time in years, driven by the bittersweet occasion of Laurie's funeral. It's a warm day in mid-May, and as she makes her way to the park, the blooming dog roses in the garden evoke old memories of life and love. She carries a simple picnic in a canvas bag, and though the ambiance teems with life from youth celebrating, Lissa feels the weight of nostalgia as she heads to meet her friends, Cate and Hannah.

The reunion is bittersweet; Lissa immediately feels the gap left by years of separation. Cate arrives, introducing her daughter Poppy to Lissa, while Hannah and her daughter Clara join soon after. Initially, the gathering is filled with awkward small talk—a stark contrast to the depth of connection Lissa had hoped for. It becomes clear that time has changed them; the paths they've walked have grown apart, and the intimacy they once shared is now overshadowed by memories.

However, as the afternoon unfolds and the wine flows, the atmosphere begins to thaw. They share stories about their lives, with Hannah inquiring into Lissa's time in Mexico. The conversation gradually shifts from the mundane to more meaningful exchanges, rekindling a warmth that was nearly extinguished. Lissa speaks fondly about her life, her teaching job, and her love for writing, drawing Hannah closer to an old familiarity. This



shared moment serves as a balm for their fractured friendship, and they find comfort in rediscovering their histories together.

As the children play nearby, the mothers observe them with a mix of joy and longing. Lissa faces a poignant realization about her own choices, feeling the ache of unfulfilled motherhood as she watches the girls enjoy their freedom. Each woman reflects on the passage of time, the physical changes they see in one another, and the worries that plague their minds—concerns about their fathers' declining health, the state of the world, and the legacy they will leave their children. They voice their fears, bonded by the anxiety that seems to ripple through their generation.

Yet, there's also gratitude woven into their reflections. They appreciate small mercies—a loving partner, the morning calm, and fierce connections to their children. These moments of appreciation shine brightly against the backdrop of their worries, grounding them in the present and sparking hope for the future.

As the day wanes, the daughters, filled with youthful exuberance, break away from the gathering and embark on their own joyous adventure—spinning and laughing in the sun. Their innocence and vitality stand in stark contrast to the women's worries, and for a brief moment, Lissa and her friends bask in the beauty of life, caught up in the spinning joy of their children who remind them of simpler times.



The chapter captures themes of nostalgia, the complexity of adult friendships, the burdens of motherhood, and the delicate interplay of worry and gratitude in the face of life's transience. The reunion serves not only as a moment of connection but also as a reminder of the paths taken and the choices made, underlining the bittersweet reality of growing older while still longing for the bonds of youth.

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