

A CHRISTMAS WEDDING

An original screenplay
by Louise Geraghty

FIRST FIFTEEN PAGES

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Louise Geraghty
E: writer@screenlouise.com
T: +353 87 665 2691

Peter MacFarlane
E: Peter@macfarlane-chard.co.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7636 7750

EXT. DUBLIN DOCKLANDS FINANCIAL AREA - DAY

CAPTION: DUBLIN, IRELAND

The glass and steel structures of commerce. Be-suited workers stream towards the start of their day, past a giant outdoor Christmas tree.

In the midst of this flow of very twenty-first century humanity, a classical fairy-tale PRINCE, in tights and tunic, bows sweepingly before a PRINCESS, in ballgown and cone hat with a streaming veil.

The Princess curtsies to the Prince, who kneels before her and gallantly presents her with a scoop of ice-cream from a garish tub of Kingdom Ice-Cream.

A PHOTOGRAPHER circles the pair, ad-libbing encouragement while two young female MODELS in leggings, branded t-shirts and Santa hats hand out tiny tubs of the same ice-cream.

AISLING SHERIDAN (30), in a camel coat and surely uncomfortable high-heels, pauses to look at the Prince and Princess. She smiles the smile of someone living this very dream. A Model offers her a tub of ice-cream but she declines, smiling, and goes on her way.

Behind her the Prince accidentally drops a large blob of ice-cream on the Princess's gown. Aghast and furious, she scoops it up with her hand and fires it back at him.

The Prince loses it and throws the ice-cream tub on the ground, shouting at the Princess who starts slap-hitting him while the photographer tries to break it up.

Oblivious, Aisling keeps going and enters the revolving doors of one of the glass and steel buildings. A plaque on the wall reads "Williams & Jacob Investment Managers".

INT. WILLIAMS & JACOB LOBBY - DAY

An expanse of cool marble and glass with a Reception Desk and designer seating. Two PEOPLE are dressing a large Christmas tree by the window. Aisling crosses the lobby and waves a greeting to the Receptionist. She gets to the lifts and enters an open one. The doors close.

*TITLE CARD, WEDDING-INVITATION STYLE:
EIGHTEEN DAYS TO WEDDING*

INT. WILLIAMS & JACOB CORRIDOR - DAY

The lift doors ping open and Aisling gets out.

INT. AISLING'S OFFICE - DAY

Aisling comes in to the busy but organized office. On the desk is a framed picture of her with CARL (30), faces close together, smiling. Beside it is a postal box.

AISLING

Ooh, deliveries!

She picks up a scissors and starts opening the box. TARA (31), a woman who never met a business suit she couldn't elevate with frills, appears at the door.

TARA

Hi. Saw your hill-walking pictures on Facebook. Beautiful. No wonder Carl always looks so fit.

AISLING

Yeah, he loves Glendalough. Is that the new blouse? It's lovely.

TARA

Oh, thanks. This more wedding stuff?

Aisling takes a emerald-green paper cone out of the box, embellished with the initials A and C.

AISLING

Silver snowflake confetti.

TARA

Is there anything more romantic than a Christmas wedding? It's going to be so perfect. You beautiful in your dress, and Carl so handsome in his morning suit.

AISLING

I know.

TARA

With those broad shoulders...

Aisling sniffs the confetti cone.

AISLING

And it's very slightly lavender scented.

TARA

Isn't that Carl's favourite flower? I love that he has a favourite flower!

AISLING

Me too.

TARA

So I was thinking of getting blonde highlights.

AISLING

Before the wedding? Absolutely not!

TARA

Just a few.

AISLING

And what if it all goes wrong and they come out orange or green or something? Tara you're a bridesmaid, you have responsibilities! No highlights, no lowlights, and no changing that conditioner don't like!

TARA

Okay...

Aisling sees FINBAR WILLIAMS (60), expensively suited, pass the door.

AISLING

Oh, Finbar!

She hurries out after him, clutching the confetti cone.

INT. WILLIAMS & JACOB CORRIDOR - DAY

Finbar doesn't slow until Aisling catches up with him.

AISLING

Finbar! Hi.

FINBAR

Aisling.

AISLING

I just wondered if you got my email? I know John hasn't technically left yet, but I'd really love the chance to join your team.

Realizing she's still holding the confetti cone, she quickly hides it behind her back.

FINBAR

Word travels very fast.

AISLING

Well I've been watching for an opportunity like this.

FINBAR

Hmm. I was talking to your future father-in-law at the weekend.

AISLING

Killian?

FINBAR

How many future father-in-laws do you have?

AISLING

Just that one.

 FINBAR

You're marrying into royalty there.
Killian Corcoran is one of the
most connected people in the
country.

 AISLING

His son isn't too bad either.

Finbar grunts a laugh.

 FINBAR

Let's talk in the New Year, after
you get back from your honeymoon.

 AISLING

Yes, great, thanks.

Finbar walks off. Aisling punches the air in front of her
and silver confetti lurches out of the paper cone she'd
forgotten she was holding. She looks down at the mess.

 AISLING (CONT'D)

Oh, it's perfect.

INT. GASTRO-PUB - DAY

The bustling gastro-pub is decorated in soothing shades of
grey, with leafy Christmas embellishments. Aisling sits at
a table with DARINA SHERIDAN (32), dressed in her signature
tailored trouser suit. Both eat their artisan lunches from
slates.

 DARINA

No changing her conditioner before
the wedding.

 (a Beat)

Do you want my opinion as a sister,
as a lawyer or as someone who
watches too much reality television?

 AISLING

Er, sister.

 DARINA

Bridezilla.

 AISLING

Okay lawyer.

 DARINA

Bridezilla.

 AISLING

Someone who watches too much reality
television.

DARINA
Totally reasonable.

AISSLING
Thank-you.

DARINA
So I broke up with Eleanor.

AISSLING
Ohhh. Well, you gave it the full
two weeks.

DARINA
Hey, I was very upset.

AISSLING
Sorry. But two weeks is kind of
your maximum relationship duration,
it was hardly unexpected.

DARINA
Ah, if I wanted a long relationship
I'd get a cat. Or a real house-
plant. I like a bit of a change.

AISSLING
Well you grew up in the right
family, moving house every year.

DARINA
New schools.

AISSLING
New friends.

DARINA
New girlfriends!

AISSLING
Oh come on, shiny new toys one
month and no heating the next?

DARINA
Well I don't miss the no heating.

AISSLING
My kids are going to go to one
school their whole lives and they're
always going to know there'll be
heating.

DARINA
No sleeping with coats on the bed
for them.

AISSLING
And maximum one house move.

DARINA

If they get lost on the way home from school, it'll be because they have a concussion!

AISLING

Not because their address changes too often of them to keep track of.

DARINA

Those kids are going to lead a life of complete predictability, godammit.

AISLING

And by god they're going to love it.

DARINA

Luckily they'll have their Auntie Darina to bring a bit of wild variety into their lives.

AISLING

And luckily their Auntie Darina will have Carl and myself to look after her in her old age.

DARINA

That is the plan.

They toast.

AISLING

Oh, Carl wants me to come straight home tonight for something important.

DARINA

Hmmm, matching cemetery plots?

AISLING

Actually.... he told me his father gave his mother a bracelet just before their wedding.

DARINA

A dragon bracelet?

Aisling laughs.

AISLING

Still, it's romantic. And traditional. And personal. I'll love it.

INT. AISLING AND CARL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The room is tastefully decorated with an eye for detail in shades of grey and paler grey, with a white Christmas tree sporting silver decorations. The front door slams.

CARL

Aisling?

Carl, tastefully suited, comes in carrying a briefcase and a bunch of flowers. He looks nervous.

SERIES OF CUTS:

Carl drops the flowers into a vase on the dining table.

He uncorks a bottle of red wine.

He moves the vase of flowers to the coffee table.

He pours two glasses of red wine.

He reclines on the carefully arranged throw-cushions.

He sits at the table, legs casually crossed.

He takes a rather large drink of his glass of wine.

He reclines in a different position on the throw-cushions.

He tops up his glass to the same level as the other one.

The front door slams and he leaps to his feet.

AISLING

(off)

Carl?

Carl picks up both glasses of wine and takes one last gulp of his own. He smiles fixedly. Aisling comes in.

AISLING (CONT'D)

Hi!

She kisses him lightly. Carl thrusts a wineglass at her.

CARL

I love you.

AISLING

I love you too.

She clinks her wineglass against his.

AISLING (CONT'D)

Is this the red we got in Bordeaux?

CARL

Yeah, last bottle.

AISLING

Well we'll have to go back again next year and get more. Oh the confetti came today. And the cones are the exact colours of--

CARL

--the groomsmen's waistcoats and--

AISLING

--the bridesmaid's outfits, yeah. They're--

CARL

--perfect. Let's sit down.

They sit on the couch. She smiles and picks a thread off his sleeve. He takes her hand.

CARL (CONT'D)

Look at us, on the verge of a huge new chapter.

AISLING

I know.

CARL

You're the best thing that's ever happened to me, Aisling.

AISLING

Awwww.

He takes a slug of his wine.

CARL

Getting married is one of life's great milestones. Isn't it? I mean, committing to a life together. Dad jeans and visits to garden centres and a social life that revolves around golf club dinners.

Aisling's smile falters. Carl is getting visibly worked up now.

CARL (CONT'D)

And for you! Of course you'll be a Yummy Mummy, after you lose the baby weight, but you'll be too exhausted to have sex even though we go to bed at nine every night.

AISLING

Carl what's going on? We're not even going to have our first baby until--

CARL

I want to press pause!

AISLING

Pause?

CARL

Just one week, one week off this wedding merry-go-round before we take the biggest step of our lives!

AISLING

What?

CARL

What's one week apart in the face of a possible lifetime together?

AISLING

Apart??

Carl beams at her, a huge weight off his shoulders. Aisling's glass of wine hits the floor and shatters.

INT. DARINA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Darina's apartment does not entertain grey or paler grey. Aisling is face down on the red sofa, bawling her eyes out. Darina, shocked, rubs her back. Aisling sits up.

AISLING

My boss plays golf with Killian, the whole office will know! People'll stop talking when I walk into a room. I'll be that person everybody laughs about behind their back.

DARINA

Carl won't tell anybody, especially not his parents. He's a gobshite but he's not an idiot.

AISLING

Every day people ask me how the wedding's coming along. What'll I tell them? That I may or may not be jilted, but if they come back in a week I'll be able to tell them for sure?

DARINA

Change the subject. Distract them with a shoe compliment. Everybody loves a good shoe compliment.

AISLING

I'll be the jilted bride for the rest of my life. And if I don't tell them, if I wait a week, then I'll be the jilted bride who was so stupid it took her a week to realise she was jilted. At Christmas! For the rest of my life!

DARINA

Stoppit! First of all, everything will be fine. Because Carl barely has enough imagination to get cold feet, he certainly doesn't have enough to call off a wedding.

AISLING

Hey, that's my fian...
(gives it up)
Do you really think so?

DARINA

Yes. And you're not going to have to tell anybody anything. Because you're going to take the week off with... gastroenteritis.

AISLING

Just hole up here for a week and pretend to projectile vomit every time the phone rings?

DARINA

God no. We're getting on a plane to the first place the internet can spit out that has a bar.

Aisling thinks about this.

AISLING

Do you really think everything'll be fine?

*TITLE CARD, WEDDING-INVITATION STYLE:
SEVENTEEN DAYS TO WEDDING (IF THERE STILL IS A WEDDING)*

EXT. SKY - DAY

A plane flies through an azure sky.

AISLING

(over)
Maybe he does want to get married, he just doesn't want to get married to me.

EXT. ITALIAN AIRPORT - DAY

Darina and Aisling emerge from the airport pulling wheelie cases. Darina looks drained.

AISLING

But we've been together for three years, of course he's not going to just throw that away.

EXT. RIVA DEL GARDA, ITALY, DAY

CAPTION: RIVA DEL GARDA, ITALY

A beautiful Italian landscape of tall hills sweeps down to the town of Riva del Garda, set on the northern shore of the crystal-clear Lake Garda.

AISLING

(over)

But if he didn't love me he'd have let his mother drive us apart years ago.

INT. BAR, RIVA DEL GARDA - EVENING

Darina clunks her glass down on the table meaningfully.

DARINA

Aisling. Have you ever heard of the Bechdel test?

The restaurant is decorated in wood and terrazzo. Aisling and Darina sit at a table with a view of the lake.

AISLING

Em, it's where a film has to have two named female characters who have a conversation about something other than a man.

DARINA

And is this holiday going to pass the Bechdel test?

AISLING

Er...

DARINA

Because I cannot spend seven days talking about a man. And if you want to stay sane then neither can you.

AISLING

But he's the only reason I'm even here. There's a fifty percent chance I've been jilted!

DARINA

No! The word "jilted" is banned.
And so is the word "Carl" until we
get home. If he needs a week away
from you then you're going to take
a week away from him. Give me your
engagement ring.

Pouting, Aisling surrenders her ring.

DARINA (CONT'D)

And no texting.

AISLING

I'm not going to text him first!
And if I can't talk about a man
you can't talk about a woman.

DARINA

What woman would I not talk about?

Aisling looks around and sees Darina's future HOLIDAY
GIRLFRIEND (30s), attractive and alone at another table.

AISLING

Maybe... that one over there.

DARINA

Mmmm. But no, I'm here to support
you.

AISLING

Oh go on.

DARINA

Do you just want to sit here and
mope by yourself?

AISLING

Just for half an hour. Is it too
much to ask?

Darina looks over at the woman. She is attractive...

DARINA

Okay, but just half an hour.

She stands and goes over to the woman. We can't hear what
they say but clearly she makes a good impression.

Aisling sighs again and runs her finger around the rim of
her glass. In front of her another identical, but full,
glass is placed on the table.

She looks up at LEO (33), attractive in a laid-back, doesn't-
own-an-iron kind of way. He's also, as we hear when he
speaks, English.

LEO

Sorry to disturb you, but a gentleman at the bar bought you this drink.

Aisling looks over at the bar and sees a quite attractive MAN in his early fifties sitting alone at the bar. He catches her eye and salutes her with his glass.

AISLING

That's very nice of him, but no, thank-you.

LEO

Don't be so hasty. I happen to know the gentleman in question and he's something kind of special once you get to know him.

AISLING

I'm sure he is, but--

LEO

Really. He's thoughtful, considerate, musical, witty if you count quoting from Monty Python films.

AISLING

Oh I love Monty Python, my Dad's a big fan, we used to watch them on DVD all the time.

LEO

See, you have so much in common!

AISLING

Well, one thing.

On the other side of the bar Darina glances over and sees them. She grins.

LEO

I bet there's more. What's your favourite food?

AISLING

Chocolate cake.

LEO

(disappointed)

Ohhh. He's more of a Thai street food kind of guy, you know, he's a bit more travelled. But don't worry, that's fine.

He picks up the drink sadly.

AISLING

No, I'm travelled! I was in Thailand, and I liked the food!

LEO

It's okay, don't worry about it.

AISLING

Wait, ask me another question.

LEO

Mmm, I don't know, I don't think it's worth--

AISLING

Music! I like lots of music. Name a kind of music and I like it.

LEO

Country and Western.

A Beat.

AISLING

Name another kind of music.

Leo grins.

LEO

Jazz.

AISLING

Love jazz. Louis Armstrong, Amy Winehouse, that guy who played the trumpet.

Leo puts the glass back down on the table.

LEO

I think that's Louis Armstrong twice.

AISLING

Well he's very good.

LEO

Yes he is.

He grins and she grins back. Behind him at the bar, she sees a WOMAN come up to the man at the bar and kiss him. He puts his hand on her shoulder we see his wedding ring.

AISLING

Oh my god, he's married! He's here with his wife and he's sending drinks over to me?

LEO

Oh no, he's not the man who bought you the drink. I am.

She looks at him. Of course.

LEO (CONT'D)

Well I had to think of some way to start a conversation with you.

AISLING

You had to?

LEO

Of course.

AISLING

Em... (laughs). That's very flattering, really, but I'm.. I mean I'm not, I'm...

LEO

Let me guess. Recent breakup?

Aisling freezes, her face crumples thinking about it.

LEO (CONT'D)

That's okay, I understand. It was nice to meet you.

He smiles and goes to walk away, but stops.

LEO (CONT'D)

I'm Leo by the way. You know, just in case you see me around and want to call out "Hey, Leo". Because if you call out "Hey, you" lots of people will look around and it'll be embarrassing. But if you call out "Hey, Leo" only I'll turn around. Oh and there's also a dog called Leo who hangs around a café up by the church, but he'll turn around for anything.

Aisling laughs.

LEO (CONT'D)

And what should I call out if I see you around?

A Beat.

AISLING

Aisling.

LEO

Maybe see you around. Aisling.