

I Do Not

By Elodie Foray

CHARACTERS

Maria – the bride. Naïve, excitable, impulsive, and strong willed. To summarise: a handful.

Anneli – Maria's maid of honour. A very tired realist, trying to steer a very excited and then very stressed bride.

Grandma Pat – Maria's grandmother. An extremely patient woman with an open mind and dry wit.

Christopher – Maria's uncle (and Grandma Pat's son). Unashamedly camp and proudly gay. A throwback to a classic lovie and doing absolutely nothing to hid it.

Laura – Maria's mum (and Grandma Pat's daughter). A cool mum, but sometimes blunt and self-centred.

Terri – Laura's current partner. Into things like juice cleanses and regularly aligning her chakras.

Callum – the groom. A hopeless romantic but emotionally immature. A nerd at school who filled out.

Cillian – Callum's dad. Grumpy, Irish and quite bitter as a person.

Janine – Callum's mum (and Cillian's ex-wife). Runs a nail salon, a little shallow but means well.

Richard – Callum's best man. A Labrador of a man; genuinely a good guy.

Darren – Callum's younger brother. A classic awkward teenager; antisocial and hates everything and everyone, other than Maria.

Stacey – a waitress. Quiet, but smart.

Carol – the celebrant. Believes wholeheartedly in what she does. Probably a hippie.

ACT ONESCENE 1

An empty hotel room.

MARIA (OS)

(whispering)

Go, go, go!

ANNELI (OS)

No one's chasing us, Maria!

MARIA (OS)

Hurry up anyway, before anyone sees me!

ANNELI and MARIA burst into the room. MARIA is in a wedding dress and ANNELI is dressed as a bridesmaid.

MARIA

Lock the door!

ANNELI locks the door. MARIA begins pacing.

ANNELI

Maria...Mari!

MARIA

Don't talk to me! Your face is already saying things I don't want to hear right now! The door is locked right?

ANNELI

Yes, the door's locked.

MARIA

You're sure no one can come in.

ANNELI

Yes, I'm sure! Just calm down and listen for a second!

MARIA

Calm down? I've just-

(indicating to the wedding dress)

and you're telling me to calm down! As if 'calm down' ever worked, anyway!

ANNELI

Should I hit you instead then?

MARIA gives her a look.

MARIA

You'd lose that fight. Especially today.

ANNELI

You're probably right.

MARIA

What if they figure out where we are? What if someone has a skeleton key? Maybe we should break the lock or something – make it impossible for anyone to get in.

ANNELI

Yeah, but then it'd be impossible to get out and I'd be stuck here, with you, forever. I've literally locked it from the inside, no one is getting in.

MARIA's phone on the side starts to vibrate.

MARIA

Ah! No! Don't answer it!

ANNELI

I wasn't going to!

MARIA grabs the phone.

MARIA

Aaahh!

MARIA runs off stage, into the bathroom, throws the phone down the toilet and then flushes the chain. She re-enters.

ANNELI

Did you just-

MARIA

Can we go? Please! I don't want to be anywhere where anyone can find me right now.

ANNELI's phone vibrates in her hand. She looks at it.

ANNELI

Oh.

MARIA

What?

ANNELI

At this rate, they might not even be looking for you.

MARIA

What do you mean?

ANNELI

Callum hasn't turned up yet either...

MARIA

What?

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 2

A small room near the ceremony room, for pre-wedding checks. CALLUM, the groom, is with his dad, CILLIAN. CALLUM is continuously trying to tie his tie and continuously failing.

CALLUM

I can't believe I'm doing this. *(beat.)* I feel sick. Am I supposed to feel sick?

CILLIAN

I felt sick the day I married your mother.

CALLUM

Sorry if I don't consider that a particularly good omen. Oh, I really don't feel good.

CALLUM holds still for a moment, as though he is considering whether he is about to throw up or not.

CALLUM

Oh god. I thought you're supposed to have butterflies on your wedding day, but this feels more like getting on a rollercoaster.

CALLUM is now struggling to undo a monumental knot in his tie.

CILLIAN

I thought you didn't like rollercoasters. Don't pull too hard on that.

CALLUM

Exactly! I only ever get on them if someone forces me to!

CILLIAN

Oh, yes! Remember when we went to Peppa Pig Land for your brother's birthday and you were screaming blue murder about getting on that little train-

CALLUM

Yes, of course I remember! But that's the point! I just used the word 'forced'. That's not good, is it? Oh god, maybe this is a mistake! No, no, it's totally normal to get cold feet. Everyone goes through this. This is fine, right? Right, dad?

CILLIAN

The heart wants what the heart wants, Callum-

CALLUM

(interrupting)

So, it is fine?

CILLIAN

But sometimes the heart doesn't know what it needs.

CALLUM

So, it's not fine?

CILLIAN

I couldn't say, son.

CALLUM

Come on, dad, I could really use some fatherly advice right about now!

CILLIAN

All I'd say is there isn't a more expensive mistake to undo than a wedding.

CALLUM

I don't care about the money, dad!

CILLIAN

Not now you don't.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 3

Another room in the hotel. The wedding party is gathered outside the ceremony room, mingling. A classic mixture of close friends, family, and distant relatives. There is a waitress, STACEY, with a tray of champagne flutes. CHRISTOPHER, the uncle of the bride, approaches.

CHRISTOPHER

Hi there, I don't suppose you have anything to nibble on, do you?

STACEY shakes her head.

CHRISTOPHER

Really? Nothing? Not even some nuts?

STACEY shakes her head again.

CHRISTOPHER

Some nuts, for goodness sake!

CHRISTOPHER throws up his hands and walks away. He then returns to take a champagne flute. DARREN is standing a short distance away from STACEY. He is separate from everyone else and on his phone, avoiding having to interact with anyone, but occasionally flicking his gaze over to STACEY. CILLIAN makes a bee line for STACEY and the tray, just as JANINE does the same. They freeze and glare at each other. The following exchange is ice cold.

JANINE

Cillian.

CILLIAN

Janine.

JANINE

Where's Callum, Cillian?

CILLIAN

He's getting ready. I'm just getting him a drink, Janine.

JANINE

Make sure no one drinks too much, Cillian.

CILLIAN

What's that supposed to mean, Janine?

JANINE

Nothing, Cillian.

CILLIAN

Janine.

JANINE

Cillian.

They both take their glasses and walk away in the opposite directions. CHRISTOPHER sits down next to GRANDMA PAT.

CHRISTOPHER

According to the mute waitress over there, there's absolutely nothing to eat. Nothing. How much did Maria pay for this place? And they don't even have any posh crisps? Not a single lightly fondled peanut?

GRANDMA PAT

You're not going to die of starvation, Christopher. Don't be such a little bitch.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

GRANDMA PAT

You heard.

CHRISTOPHER

You can't talk like that here.

GRANDMA PAT

I think you'll find I can talk however I bloody well choose.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, then, don't be sexist.

GRANDMA PAT

How am I being sexist?

CHRISTOPHER

Calling me a bitch. Implying that female dogs are inferior. That's sexist.

GRANDMA PAT

Oh, for goodness sake. As if I could be sexist. What with you and your sister, I deserve some sort of honorary liberal arts degree in Gender Politics, or something equally as socialist.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't get an award for being not shit.

GRANDMA PAT

Well, you wouldn't get one regardless. *(beat.)* Even if there was one. *(beat.)* And the only applicant was you.

CHRISTOPHER

How dare you!

GRANDMA PAT

Quite easily. I've got a Fisherman's Friend somewhere in here. Will that shut you up?

She starts to root around in her bag, finds one and offers it to him.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't be ridiculous, mother.

GRANDMA PAT

Suit yourself.

She pops it in her mouth.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want my mouth to taste like the inside of a 1920s medicine cabinet. It'll ruin the taste of the whiskey that I'm inevitably going to start drinking a copious amount of once all of this is done.

GRANDMA PAT

Very evocative. Your education has clearly served you well.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, I'm very grateful.

GRANDMA PAT

You should be. Your father and I seriously discussed putting you to work as a chimney sweep when you were a child. You were sort shaped like one of those brushes that they use, and it would've saved us a fortune.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, but look at me now.

GRANDMA PAT

Yes. Look at you now.

CHRISTOPHER

One of these days mother, I'm going to ship you off to a home and lock the door, so I never have to hear such hurtful things again.

GRANDMA PAT

I welcome the peace.

CHRISTOPHER

You know, if my stomach decides to begin its own little jazz solo during the vows, then I'll be carting you off all the sooner.

GRANDMA PAT

Oh really? And why's that then?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, if you hadn't forgotten your glasses on three separate times this morning, then maybe I would have had time to grab something to eat before we left.

GRANDMA PAT

Oh, no you don't! When you picked me up you were already running late. I had nothing to do with it! You're just terrible at time keeping, you always have been. You must take after your father.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe you just don't remember.

GRANDMA PAT

What, because I'm old?

CHRISTOPHER

Exactly. Your memory is about as reliable as the village bus, if I remember correctly. Which I do. Because I'm not old.

GRANDMA PAT

And your time keeping is about as reliable as the National Rail, which I would argue is considerably worse.

CHRISTOPHER

Touché, mother, touché.

Swap to; DARREN approaches STACEY.

DARREN

This is all a bit shit, isn't it?

STACEY

What is?

DARREN

All of it.

STACEY

I quite like weddings, actually.

DARREN

Wow, that's really sad.

STACEY

Oh.

DARREN walks away.

STACEY

Uhm, okay. Bye...

CILLIAN re-enters and finds DARREN.

CILLIAN

Darren, do you have any scissors on you?

DARREN

Why?

CILLIAN

Because I've asked you, and as much as I'd like to believe you don't, I know that you probably do, that's why. Now answer the question!

DARREN

Is this some kind of trap?

CILLIAN

No.

DARREN glares at CILLIAN for moment.

CILLIAN

If you do, then I'll let you drink tonight.

DARREN

I was already planning on it.

CILLIAN

Fine, then you can use my card!

DARREN

Deal.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 4

Back to CALLUM and CILLIAN, as before. As CILLIAN talks, he begins to cut the tie with the impossible knot from CALLUM's neck.

CALLUM

Be careful, I don't want to bleed all over my suit.

CILLIAN

Listen, Callum. Sometimes, instead of doing the right thing and listening to their heads, people go through with these things, and it'll eat away at you until you realise you've become old and grey and somehow you've wasted your entire life with the wrong person. And then it'll be too late.

CALLUM is now free. CILLIAN takes off his own tie and starts putting it on CALLUM.

CALLUM

Thanks. But how do you know if it's the wrong person?

CILLIAN

Is she really the right person?

CALLUM

I mean, she's not perfect, she's got her fair share of...quirks, but then, so does everyone.

CILLIAN

Yes, but are all those little, annoying habits going to get less annoying or are you going to end up getting so damned irritated by her chewing with her damned mouth hanging open all the goddamn time, like some kind of brain-dead sloth, that eventually you have to fight the urge to drive the butter knife directly into her gut!

As CILLIAN speaks he ties the tie in an aggressive fashion.

CALLUM

Maria doesn't chew with her mouth open, she's actually a very quiet eater.

CILLIAN

You know what I mean. There must be some things that she does that drive you crazy.

CALLUM

Nothing that isn't easily ignored. Like I said, everyone has habits.

CILLIAN

Not all habits are created equal.

CALLUM looks at himself in the mirror for a moment, adjusting his tie.

CALLUM

(beat.) She does leave her nail clippings in the sink when she's done cutting them. And sometimes they end up on the floor and I have to Hoover them up.

CILLIAN

Well, that's disgusting. I mean, that's basic hygiene.

CALLUM

And I keep asking her to stop but she doesn't.

CILLIAN

Exactly! If she can't do even that, then what hope is there? And that's what married life is; living with those kinds of habits every. Single. Day. Are you really willing to put up with cleaning up literal parts of her body for the rest of your life?

CALLUM sits down, overwhelmed.

CALLUM

I'm supposed to love her for everything that she is, but...she always tells me the endings of films whilst we're watching them and it drives me crazy, and she's always criticising my clothes. And I really, really can't stand it when she sings in the shower. She sounds so happy but I just hate it. I hate it! I don't think I'm supposed to hate the things that bring her happiness, dad!

As he speaks, CALLUM starts to re-tie the new tie that CILLIAN has put on him.

CILLIAN

You're telling me! Your mother used to spend two hours in Boots only looking at lipsticks, and there I am, standing around like a complete idiot thinking we were just grabbing some paracetamol and a meal deal. And then she would always pick the exact same colour! And it was always called something ridiculous like, prawn pink or naughty nude. What makes a colour naughty anyway? And don't get my started hair! All the hair, everywhere. Everywhere! The bath, the sink, the bed. The inside of my sock. Once I thought I saw a rat, jumped out of my skin, probably lost years off my life, only for her to come along, shrieking with laughter and telling me that it was actually an extension. I thought extensions were things you added onto your house, not piles of fake hair. Did you know that, Callum? And she kept trying to do a manicure on me, because apparently my hands are too rough, and I kept telling her to leave me alone and that I didn't want her putting all her weird creams all over my-

CALLUM

Alright, alright, dad. I get it.

CILLIAN

Sorry, it's just that woman really-

CALLUM

Yeah, I know, but if you could focus on the more pressing issue at hand here, I'd really appreciate it.

CILLIAN

Well, it seems to me like you've been listening to your heart and ignoring what your head has been telling you.

CALLUM

Dread! That's what I'm feeling right now!

CILLIAN

Well, I could have told you that.

CALLUM

Oh god, this isn't what's supposed to happen. We've both put so much time and effort into this. All of our friends are here. Grandma Pat is here. Oh god, what's she going to say when she finds out that I've...

CILLIAN

She's not even your grandmother.

CALLUM

Yeah, but still!

CALLUM has now repeated his earlier mistake and has created a knot that cannot be undone.

CILLIAN

When it isn't right, it isn't right. Good on you for being man enough to realise that, instead of condemning yourself to a lifetime of misery.

CALLUM

I just never imagined it going wrong.

CILLIAN begins to cut CALLUM out of the tie again. There is a knock at the door. RICHARD enters.

RICHARD

Hiya guys-

(spots the mangled tie)

Is that your tie?

CALLUM

No...

RICHARD

Groom's got to do what I groom's got to do, I guess. Just wanted to let you guys know that things are running a little bit late at the moment, so keep chilling and I'll let you know when we're ready for you. It's all looking great by the way! I think it's going to be a real corker!

CALLUM

Uh, Richard.

RICHARD

Yeah, buddy?

CALLUM

I've got some bad news...

RICHARD

Nothing we can't fix, I'm sure. Do you need a new tie? You can have mine.

RICHARD starts to take his tie off.

CALLUM

It's not that. I've been thinking about it and, I think I've changed my mind.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 5

Back to the wedding party, who continue to wait. There is an air of restlessness.

CHRISTOPHER

What is taking them so long? I could eat a horse.

GRANDMA PAT

No, you couldn't. You would order the horse, it would arrive and then as usual, you would take a few mouthfuls, throw your hands up and announce that you just couldn't eat another bite.

CHRISTOPHER

What if she's changed her mind?

GRANDMA PAT

Impulsive decisions, in this family? Surely not.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, if she has maybe we could go straight through and start the wedding breakfast. Or wedding dinner at this rate.

GRANDMA PAT

It would be a waste. Your generation have no idea about the concept of frugality.

CHRISTOPHER

You're right, for once mother, it would be a waste! Maybe we should take a vote.

GRANDMA PAT

What do you-

CHRISTOPHER stands up and faces everyone.

CHRISTOPHER

Hello, esteemed friends and family of the happy couple. As I'm sure you have all noticed, there have been substantial delays on the Marriage 25.

He waits a moment to see if the joke has landed. He looks unimpressed that no one is laughing.

CHRISTOPHER

Marriage 25? M25?...Ugh, never mind. Now I put it to you that we have been through enough already! I personally started going on a diet three months ago so I could fit into this suit, and I've put contact lenses in for the first time in a year, and I had to drag this old bag out of the house far too early this morning and *on top of that*, I had to parallel park. Parallel park, ladies, gentlemen and queers! I'm sure you all have similar stories to share. If there is to be no wedding-

The entire party looks startled and confused.

JANINE

Who said there isn't going to be a wedding?

GRANDMA PAT

No one, he's just being dramatic. Yet again.

JANINE

Oh.

GRANDMA PAT

You get used to it. Pay him absolutely no heed. You'll only encourage him.

CHRISTOPHER

All I'm saying, is that we need a Plan B. The question remains: what happens to the food? There are members of staff of this fine establishment who have put themselves through at least two years of catering college for this, and who have toiled over a hot stove purely for our culinary enjoyment. And what? Are we just going to say 'no, thank you' to their possibly and hopefully delicious offerings? No! As my ancient and often gaseous mother has always told me, 'Waste Not, Want Not.'

DARREN walks up to CHRISTOPHER.

DARREN

(quietly)

You're embarrassing yourself.

CILLIAN returns to the room, looking shifty.

JANINE

What's going on, Cillian? What's taking so long? I'd like to go in and see my son.

CILLIAN

Not now, Janine!

(addressing the room)

I think whilst we wait I should give everyone a taste of my speech. Just in case there continues to be setbacks and we have to cut something for time. If I do it now then-

JANINE

Don't be ridiculous, Cillian!

TERRI

Why is everyone talking as though this wedding isn't happening?

CILLIAN

I just think it would be a shame if for some reason no one got to hear it.

CHRISTOPHER

That's what I've been trying to say about the food!

GRANDMA PAT

(to JANINE)

How do men always manage to turn every event into a genital measuring competition?

JANINE

(agreeing) I know. *(to CILLIAN)* Cillian, what you actually mean is that it would be a shame if, for some reason, you weren't able to share with everyone what you think is the complete mind-blowing comedy of your speech.

CILLIAN

Your words, not mine. Any objections? Right, okay.

CILLIAN takes out a bunch of cue cards from his pocket. They are laminated. He makes his way to the front of the room.

JANINE

Sit down, Cillian. You're making an arse of yourself!

CILLIAN

Will you stop saying my name all the time, Janine! I've got eyes, I can see that you're talking to me. There's no need for Cillian this and Cillian that. I'm not a child!

JANINE

Oh really? Could've fooled me.

CILLIAN

You know, it's snide comments like that that remind me why I divorced you in the first place. As if I needed reminding.

JANINE

Oh, *you* divorced me, did you?

CILLIAN

That's how I remember it.

JANINE

Well well well, that's news to me. Is that what you've been telling everyone? That *you* divorced *me*?

CILLIAN

What else would I say, Janine?

JANINE stands up.

JANINE

Ladies and gentlemen, it appears that you have all been misinformed-

CHRISTOPHER

That's it, I can't wait any longer. I need a voulevant! I'm going to find a voulevant! There must be one somewhere.

CHRISTOPHER starts looking for a server. In his haste he bumps into TERRI and spills his flute of champagne on her.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, I am so sorry. I'm such a klutz.

TERRI

It's fine, it's fine.

TERRI dabs herself. CHRISTOPHER looks around for something to clean up with. He sees his own pocket square but doesn't offer it. TERRI notices.

CHRISTOPHER

Sorry, it's just it's Vivienne Westwood and my husband would murder me if I came home with it smelling like booze.

TERRI

No, that's okay. This is BLOKE, so...

CHRISTOPHER

Sorry?

TERRI

BLOKE? The fashion house? Their collection during Paris Fashion Week was all anyone could talk about. I would know, I was there. You must have heard of them. Surely?

CHRISTOPHER

BLOKE. Yes, of course. BLOKE. Love them. Love BLOKE.

CHRISTOPHER holds out his hand.

CHRISTOPHER

Christopher, uncle of the bride.

TERRI

Yes, I know – Laura's told me all about you. I'm Terri.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, *you're* Terri! I can't believe it's taken us this long to finally meet!

TERRI

Yes, well, I'm sure Laura's told you we're not in the country very often these days, and with all the travelling, on the rare occasions that we are home, we just like to keep ourselves to ourselves.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, it's lovely to finally meet the dyke-in-law.

TERRI

Sorry?

CHRISTOPHER

I said it's lovely to meet-

TERRI

Did you just call me a dyke?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, yes. Oh, it's okay, I'm the fag of the family. So don't worry, we're in the same boat! We gays must stick together, n'est pas? Laura doesn't count, obviously.

TERRI

Why?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, she's still trying to convince everyone that she's 'bisexual', right? She doesn't get to sail on the ship if she won't hoist the flag, so to speak.

TERRI

Right, yes, only I don't know how much I like being called a dyke, actually.

The celebrant, CAROL enters.

CAROL

Ladies and gentlemen, I know we're experiencing some delays, but if we all gather our energies into the Union Room then I have no doubt that the spirits of our bride and groom will be irresistibly drawn to us and that the ceremony will begin without further impediment. And then the true magic can begin.

CILLIAN

What did she just say?

CHRISTOPHER

What a load of a shit.

GRANDMA PAT

So, it's going to be that kind of wedding, is it.

GRANDMA PAT gets herself to her feet.

CHRISTOPHER

Finally! Action!

GRANDMA PAT

Come on, you ancient woman, let's go.

CHRISTOPHER

Hey! You can't recycle my own insults back onto me!

GRANDMA PAT

I think I just did.

CHRISTOPHER and GRANDMA PAT exit. STACEY has been lingering with her tray and DARREN approaches her again. He's wearing sunglasses.

DARREN

I've got my dad's credit card.

STACEY

Oh, right.

DARREN

Which means I can drink whatever I want.

STACEY

Oh. How old are you?

DARREN

(boasting)

Sixteen.

STACEY

That's two years too young.

DARREN

Yeah, I know.

STACEY

You know I have to report you if I see you drinking now, right?

DARREN

What? No! No! Don't do that!

STACEY

I'm sorry, it's policy. I could lose my job if I don't. I wish you hadn't told me.

DARREN

Shit! Shit! I'm eighteen. No, I'm twenty-one. Yeah! I just still feel like I'm sixteen!

STACEY

Oh, okay. What year were you born?

DARREN

Uh. Two thousand and...I have to go now.

DARREN quickly exits.

STACEY

Okay, bye.

STACEY giggles to herself.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 6

RICHARD is on the phone to ANNELI. ANNELI is sat on a toilet, with the lid down.

RICHARD

Are you serious?

ANNELI

Yep.

RICHARD

She's not coming.

ANNELI

Yep.

RICHARD silently pumps his fist in victory, in a 'get in' sort of fashion.

RICHARD

Oh, thank god!

ANNELI

What do you mean?

RICHARD

I've got some good news for you.

ANNELI

I literally cannot imagine what would constitute good news right now.

RICHARD

I'll give you three guesses.

ANNELI

I don't know! Have you and Maria have actually joined forces and this is just an attempt to make me go grey ten years earlier than planned?

RICHARD

I think you'd look good grey, actually.

ANNELI

Richard, I'm warning you, if you've done all of this because of some weird fetish-

RICHARD

It's not that, obviously. Two more guesses.

ANNELI

Is this all just an elaborate ruse so we don't have to sit through Cillian's probably offensive father of the bride speech?

RICHARD

What about mine? You wouldn't want to be deprived of the joy of my genuinely hilarious speech.

ANNELI

It's okay, you can give me a private performance later.

RICHARD

(suddenly very interested)

Oh yeah?

ANNELI

Yeah, you can even make it a double bill. Act one, speech. Act two, the terrible and irresponsible things that the wedding party get up to once they're too drunk to think sensibly.

RICHARD

Maybe I could change Maria's mind. Let me speak to her!

ANNELI

Ah, now he's motivated. Stop distracting me, I'm so stressed that I'm horny, but I'm also too stressed to be horny, which is all very confusing and that's really helping no one right now. So, what's the actual supposed good news.

RICHARD

I was just with Callum and he's basically reached the same conclusion as Maria.

ANNELI

Fuck off.

RICHARD

Nope.

ANNELI

Shut the fuck up.

RICHARD

Not planning on it.

ANNELI

Fuck me!

RICHARD

Now that on the other hand...

ANNELI

Those absolute shit nuggets! Argh!

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 7

The congregation are bustling and talking. GRANDMA PAT is sat, not really engaging. CHRISTOPHER is next to her.

GRANDMA PAT

I thought that vacant woman said we'd be starting soon.

CHRISTOPHER

Supposedly.

GRANDMA PAT

She smells like patchouli.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay...

GRANDMA PAT

I don't like patchouli.

CHRISTOPHER

Wonderful. I'll let her know.

GRANDMA PAT

Hm. I'll be getting embalmed before this is done. Can't they just get on with it?

CHRISTOPHER

It happens to us all though, doesn't it? Not the embalming thing. Simon and I argued on our big day. I told him he was being a queen, which he was, and he threatened to throw a vase of flowers at me, which he did. I had to stand under the hand drier for twenty minutes with my waistcoat, but you can still see the stain in the photos!

GRANDMA PAT

I reckon it isn't going to happen. It's past 3 o'clock for goodness sake. Who gets married after 3 o'clock? Does no one have any decency or values anymore? There are certain things that just shouldn't happen past teatime.

CHRISTOPHER

You're such a cynic.

GRANDMA PAT

No, I've just been around a little longer than you have.

CHRISTOPHER

That really doesn't need to be stated.

GRANDMA PAT

Yes, yes, aren't I old, aren't I just so past it, etcetera, etcetera.

CHRISTOPHER

Want to put money on it?

GRANDMA PAT

On me being past it?

CHRISTOPHER

No, well...no, on whether this actually goes ahead or not.

GRANDMA PAT

On my own granddaughter's wedding day! Christopher!

CHRISTOPHER

I'll take that as a no then.

GRANDMA PAT

You can't be trusted.

CHRISTOPHER

You mean you're still feeling sore from the last time.

GRANDMA PAT

I'm sure you rigged it.

CHRISTOPHER

Or maybe I have excellent intuition.

GRANDMA PAT

I think you took advantage of poor Beryl. She barely understands what gay is. All she knows is that you were very interested in her knitting and were happy to watch Poldark with her.

CHRISTOPHER

It's not my fault I'm incredibly charismatic.

GRANDMA PAT

Said the serpent to Eve.

CHRISTOPHER

Anyway, that win cost me dearly. I never want to step foot into that crochet nightmare again. I'd give you your money back if I could get that time back. Do you know there are litter trays in front of all of the toilets? Not the toilet doors. The actual toilets. She says it's so they don't get lonely when she has to spend a penny. Think about that! She shits with her cats!

GRANDMA PAT

Good, I'm glad you suffered. I'm never getting that money back.

CHRISTOPHER

How about you try and win it back now? Just a fiver?

GRANDMA PAT

No.

CHRISTOPHER

Shame, I could've done with a new Monstera.

LAURA enters and TERRI makes her way to her.

LAURA

Hi love, you okay? Fending for yourself alright? Sorry I have to keep leaving you.

TERRI

That's okay. Did you manage to find her?

LAURA

No, not yet. But Anneli's with her, and she's more of a mother to Maria than I am, so I'm sure she'll be fine. She's probably just being dramatic; it runs in the family.

TERRI

I'm sure it'll be alright. This theme is really something, isn't it? Disney meets Marvel is a quite a bold choice.

LAURA

Oh, don't. I cannot tell you how hard I tried to persuade her not to go for something quite so, kitsch.

TERRI

It's not kitsch though, is it? It's, well...

LAURA

Tacky, I know. So, who have you met?

TERRI

Some of your cousins, and some people who I think don't actually know the bride or the groom, and your brother.

LAURA

Oh, Christopher? That's a shame. How was he?

TERRI

Yes...fine. He's a very vibrant personality, isn't he?

LAURA

What does that mean? Oh god, what's he done?

TERRI

Nothing too bad.

LAURA

Now I know you're lying. Tell me, Terri.

TERRI

Well, he split his champagne on me and called me a dyke.

LAURA

Are you serious? Oh my god. Right. That's it.

LAURA spots CHRISTOPHER and makes her way towards him, with TERRI following behind.

LAURA

Hi mum.

GRANDMA PAT

Hello, Laurie. Oh, hello Terri.

TERRI

Hello Pat, how are you?

GRANDMA PAT

Oh yes, never better.

CHRISTOPHER

Is anyone going to ask me how I am?

LAURA

Chris, Terri tells me you've been calling her a dyke.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, I suppose I did.

LAURA

Don't be so blasé about it! That's completely out of order!

CHRISTOPHER

It was a joke! I'm sorry if it offended you, but it's not wrong, is it?

LAURA

You're such a little shit! As if I would ever dream of walking up to Simon and calling him...some kind of slur.

CHRISTOPHER

Like what?

LAURA

What?

CHRISTOPHER

Give me an example.

LAURA

I'm not doing that. I'm actually an adult.

CHRISTOPHER

Really?

LAURA

Unlike you I don't get off being an offensive arsehole!

CHRISTOPHER

What, just because you're afraid to say something we've probably heard a hundred times already? You think he'd get upset at 'fag', or 'fairy', or god forbid, 'bender'? Simon wouldn't bat an eyelid because he knows who he is, and he's not ashamed of it!

LAURA

Alright! Fine! I wouldn't go up to Simon and start calling him a big fat bender, would I?!

The rest of the wedding party hears this and there is a moment of uncomfortable silence.

CHRISTOPHER

There we go!

TERRI

Honey, I really don't think / that kind of language is...

LAURA

(still talking to CHRISTOPHER)

/ Can you just be a grown up for one second. Mum, tell him!

CHRISTOPHER

Calm down, carpet muncher.

LAURA

Excuse me?

CHRISTOPHER

(indicating to the floor)

Oh my, look at the lovely print on this one. Mmm, looks delicious. You better get your fill now, before the ceremony begins.

LAURA kicks CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER

What the hell do you think you're doing?

LAURA

Calling you a fudge packer would just be an insult to the hard-working people who toil daily to bring us delicious, soft, buttery treats.

CHRISTOPHER

What are you talking about? I thought that was only eating cows that made you mad, not pussy.

LAURA

Is that an attempt at some kind of shit foot and mouth disease joke?

CHRISTOPHER

It is literally funnier than anything you have ever said. Apart from when you tried to tell me you weren't a muff diver.

LAURA

If you're trying to imply that I'm not bisexual, then you can shut your bloody mouth!

CHRISTOPHER

You're just pretending because you know you'll never be able to out-gay me! Admit it!

LAURA

It's not a competition, Christopher!

CHRISTOPHER

(under LAURA talking)

Admit it, admit it, admit it.

LAURA

Christopher!

CHRISTOPHER

Then how come you're still managing to lose?

LAURA kicks CHRISTOPHER again. CHRISTOPHER punches LAURA in the arm. LAURA jabs CHRISTOPHER in the stomach.

CHRISTOPHER

Ow! Mum! Make her stop!

GRANDMPA PAT

I wipe my hands of both of you.

(to TERRI)

You know when it came to my attention that both of my children were gay-

LAURA

I'm not gay, mum!

GRANDMA PAT

-that both of my children weren't straight, I thought what a wonderful opportunity this will be to show the world how they're just like everyone else. And then things like this happen and I have to send out a silent apology to the whole community for what a let-down these two are.

TERRI

I may have to join you in that. This wedding needs to happen before they undo years of hard work between the two of them. Léon will be livid.

GRANDMA PAT

Who's Léon?

TERRI

My therapist.

DARREN is standing in a corner, holding a drink. STACEY approaches him, still with her tray.

STACEY

Hi.

DARREN

Hi.

STACEY

What are you drinking?

DARREN

Nothing.

STACEY

Nothing?

DARREN

Yeah, nothing.

STACEY

Are you sure it hasn't got alcohol in it?

DARREN

No!

STACEY dips her finger in DARREN's drink and tastes it.

DARREN

Hey!

STACEY

It tastes like alcohol.

DARREN

Dad said I could have one, okay! Just one!

STACEY

Why are you asking your dad?

DARREN

Because of what you said. Reporting me and everything.

STACEY

Oh. But it's fine.

DARREN

What?

STACEY

Because you're twenty-one, right? That's what you said.

DARREN

Oh. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I am.

STACEY

If you're twenty-one then you can drink whatever you want.

DARREN

Yeah, of course I can. I know.

STACEY

Except I do have to ask you for ID. I have to ID anyone who looks younger than twenty-five. It's the law.

DARREN

But. I don't have any ID.

STACEY

Oh. Then I suppose I will have to report you.

DARREN

Oh god, please don't! Please! I'm begging you! I'm watching the girl of my dreams get married and this is the only thing keeping me sane!

STACEY

That's really sad.

STACEY peers at DARREN.

STACEY

Oh, hang on.

DARREN

What?

STACEY

You know, you don't look twenty-one.

DARREN

I know!

STACEY

You look at least thirty-three.

DARREN

What?

STACEY

Yeah. At least. Would you like some more champagne, sir?

DARREN cannot keep up with this game of cat and mouse.

DARREN

Right. Yeah. I have to go now. Again.

STACEY.

Okay, love you.

DARREN

Love you too. Wait. What?

STACEY

What?

CILLIAN approaches and hands DARREN back his scissors.

CILLIAN

Your scissors. And don't let me catch you with those again.

DARREN

Shut up, dad!

DARREN quickly exits.

CILLIAN

Teenagers.

STACEY

Yeah.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 8

A hotel room. Back with MARIA, who is on her own, but talking in the direction of the bathroom, where ANNELI is.

MARIA

Seriously! Late to his own wedding. That's so bloody typical.

ANNELI returns.

MARIA

So?

ANNELI

I tried, but no one answered.

MARIA

He's always like this; always lecturing me about being late but really, he's way worse than me! I can't believe this!

ANNELI looks at her phone and frowns. It is some expert acting.

ANNELI

I don't think he's running late.

MARIA

What do you mean?

ANNELI

Richard's just messaged me.

MARIA

Saying what? What's happened?

ANNELI

He's just written 'He's changed his mind. Sorry.'

MARIA grabs the phone.

MARIA

Let me see! Why has he put a kissy face at the end?

ANNELI

I don't know, I think he's just stressed.

MARIA

'Changed his mind'!! What the actual fuck? Could this day get any worse?

ANNELI takes the phone back.

ANNELI

Isn't this a good thing?

MARIA

How is my fiancé not turning up, a good thing?

ANNELI

Well, it means he won't be too devastated. It's like, mutual.

MARIA

I want him to be devastated! What was even the point of saying 'yes', if standing him up wasn't going to devastate him?

ANNELI

Woah. That's a bit dark.

MARIA

No, I mean, I didn't agree to marry him just so I could hurt him. But, I don't know...I didn't expect him not to care.

ANNELI

When he finds out won't he probably feel exactly the same way as you?

MARIA

He's probably just copying me. He must've got wind of what I was going to do and decided to do the same. The man isn't capable of a single original thought.

ANNELI

Bit harsh.

MARIA

Are you seriously going to side with him?

ANNELI

Do you think I'd be here, with you, enabling your escape if I was on *his* side?

MARIA

I can't believe he isn't going to turn up. What's everyone going to think? How long do you think they'll wait?

ANNELI checks her phone again.

ANNELI

Your mum has tried calling me fifty-three times. I'm not kidding. Fifty-three. And Janine has left three voicemails. Oh, here comes another one.

ANNELI puts her phone away.

MARIA

Janine's only left three voicemails? Jesus, she tried harder when she thought I was going to miss her bloody nail appointment. This day is a disaster! I just want to walk away and forget everything, but now Callum's making it about him and my own mother-in-law couldn't give less of a shit. Next you'll be telling me that mum's actually made other plans with the Yoga ladies.

ANNELI

She's not technically your mother-in-law. You just opted out of that, remember?

MARIA

Thank goodness!

ANNELI

Ugh, your mum is ringing me again. When I agreed to be your maid of honour, this is not what I was signing up for.

MARIA

She'll run out of battery eventually. You know, I actually bought her a portable charger for her birthday and she never uses it!

ANNELI

Your point being?

MARIA

She deserves having her calls ignored.

ANNELI

Who knew that runaway brides were so grumpy. Maria, I really should answer this and let someone know what's going on.

MARIA

No! Don't you dare! I don't want to talk to her. You know what she's like; she'll convince you to put her on loudspeaker and then she'll use her siren mum song to get me back. You know what, *she* should marry Callum, she's the one who's obsessed with him. What is it with mums and boyfriends?

ANNELI

At least then all my planning wouldn't go to waste. I was excited for that locally poached pheasant on a cloud of artisan flora...and I chose some cracking voulevants.

MARIA

Are you trying to make me feel bad right now?

ANNELI

Jesus, no. But you have essentially just lifted that beautiful dress of yours, shat in my hands and asked me to deal with it. I'm holding your shit, okay? I'm just not fully enjoying experience, surprisingly enough.

MARIA

You're disgusting.

ANNELI

You're the one whose shat on me.

MARIA

Is that really how you feel?

ANNELI

A bit. But I'm here, aren't I? So don't start looking like that.
Mari...Mari. I'd much rather be dealing with this mess right now than the undeniably worse future mess when you realise your mistake after the legally binding signy signy bit. That would be a whole different volume of faeces.

MARIA

You're the best. This is why you're my maid of honour and Josie isn't. She would have crumbled immediately; she just wouldn't have been able to handle the pressure.

ANNELI

That sounds way too much like you've planned this.

MARIA

No, obviously I chose you because I love you.

ANNELI

Yeah, and I love you. But I'm taking that honeymoon as payment, that's for sure.

MARIA sits down.

MARIA

I'm tired.

ANNELI

Well, we don't have to leave right now. Maybe have a little lie down, and I really should go and let everyone know what's happened.

MARIA

You're not leaving me!

ANNELI

Don't be a baby. If you're big enough to abandon your own wedding, you're big enough to sit on your own for a bit.

MARIA

What if mum convinces you to tell her where I am? She'll drag me kicking and screaming up that aisle, I know it. Ugh, it's giving me first-day-of-Brownies flashbacks.

ANNELI

I won't tell her. Worse comes to worst, you can lock the door and barricade it with a chair or something. *(beat.)* Look, even if, for whatever reason Callum deserves this, there are a lot of people out there who just came to see a couple they probably care about having a lovely day. *(beat.)* Apart from Darren.

MARIA

Apart from Darren.

ANNELI

Yeah, I'm pretty sure he's just here in the hopes that everything will crash and burn. He's probably got a swarm of bees ready, just in case.

MARIA

And now he's going to get what he wants!

ANNELI

Well, unless you're going to marry him instead, he won't get exactly what he wants.

MARIA

Gross.

ANNELI

You know it's true. Ok, I'm going to go now. Sort this circus out.

MARIA

No, wait, wait... *(having an idea)* oh. Oh! I'm coming with you!

ANNELI

You're coming with me?

MARIA

Yeah!

ANNELI

Do not tell me you've changed your mind. I've just gotten used to holding this particular stinker, so don't tell me I've been holding it for nothing!

MARIA

No, of course I haven't changed my mind. Can you imagine?

ANNELI

Hah, yeah. Imagine making a very sudden, last minute decision that goes against everything you've previously said.

MARIA

I've gotten this far and I really have no intention of turning back.

ANNELI

Okay, and you reckon the next course of action is going straight into the middle of the fray that you've just escaped? You've poked a bear, a whole family of bears in fact, and now you want to go and check to make sure they're awake and happy?

MARIA

At the moment I'm the bad guy, right? Think about it.

MARIA makes a little groom and a vicar with her fingers.

MARIA

I'm the groom, *(as the groom)* "uhm, hello vicar, could you tell everyone that I've changed my mind", *(as the vicar)* "yes, of course, my son", *(as the groom)* "thanks, see ya!". And then the vicar goes to the congregation and he's like *(as the vicar)* "ladies and gentlemen I regret to inform you that there won't be a wedding today" and then everyone's like, "okay, that's fair enough, pub?" Right?

ANNELI

Right...

MARIA

But then! If it's the other way round! *(as the groom)* "where is she?", *(as the vicar)* "it would appear that she has stood you up. That bitch!" and then everyone's like "burn the witch! What a horrible person! Fuck women!"

ANNELI

Uh, I don't know about that. What's the point you're trying to make, exactly?

MARIA

Somehow, when you think about it in your head, the bride standing up the groom looks way worse than if the vicar makes an awkward announcement on behalf of the groom. People judge a runaway bride way more harshly!

ANNELI

Maybe?

MARIA

But if we know for a fact that Callum isn't going to be there, which we do, and as long as Callum hasn't told Carol and she hasn't shuffled on to deliver the bad news then I don't have to be the bad guy!

ANNELI

Mari, this doesn't seem like the thoughts of a sane person. Have you taken your meds today?

MARIA

Yes, of course of I have! Just think about it! Callum is going to be the one to stand this poor, sweet bride up! (*melodramatic*) And I'll be devastated and heartbroken, but look so beautifully sad, and eventually I'll be okay, and maybe, just maybe one day I'll learn to love again.

ANNELI

Wow. Are you secretly a bit of a psychopath?

MARIA

You said it yourself, today took a lot of planning and everyone is here for me. So we might as well give them a show!

ANNELI

I shouldn't be surprised. You were way too enthusiastic about dissection at school.

MARIA

You can't tell me it isn't a brilliant idea!

ANNELI

It isn't a brilliant idea.

MARIA

Come on! Isn't friendship basically the most sacred union of all?
Through sickness and through health, for better and for worse?

ANNELI

You're definitely sick.

MARIA

Yeah, but if I hadn't taken the lead during dissection then you would've
had to cut up that poor little froggy all on your own. You should be
thanking me.

ANNELI

I want a divorce.

MARIA

You know I'm right. Plus, I know you've been practising your walk.
Wouldn't want Richard to miss that...

ANNELI

What are you talking about?

*MARIA does a kissy face, copying the emoji. ANNELI looks at her phone as it starts ringing again.
MARIA grabs it and answers it.*

MARIA

Hi mum, yeah, it's me. I know, I know. I just lost an earring and I
couldn't bear the idea of...yeah, I've found it now. Got myself into a bit
of a tizz. You know what I'm like. Had to re-trace all of my steps from
this morning; I've been all over town! Yeah, I know we're running late,
yeah, we're on our way now. Are you sure you don't want to walk me
down the aisle? No, yeah, was just checking. Yeah I know, it's my big
day and the idea of 'giving someone away' it outdated and
misogynistic- Have I heard from Callum? What kind of question is that?
It's our wedding day, it would be bad luck...whatever it is I'm sure it
can wait until afterwards. Got to go, Ann needs her battery to film
everything. She forgot her portable charger.

MARIA signals to ANNELI to big up the mythical charger.

ANNELI

(deadpan) Yes, it's usually so useful. The best present I could ever have
asked for. How could I have forgotten it?

MARIA gives ANNELI a thumbs up.

MARIA

Okay, see you soon!

MARIA hangs up and hands the phone back.

MARIA

I think she was trying to tell me about Callum.

ANNELI

Like any good mum would! *(beat.)* Are we actually doing this?

MARIA

Yup! How do I look?

ANNELI

Like a woman who has absolutely lost the plot.

MARIA

I said, *how do I look?*

ANNELI

Like a beautiful, blushing bride ready for her big day...and also a woman who has absolutely, completely and undeniably lost the plot.

MARIA leaves the room and ANNELI watches her, takes a deep breath and follows her.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 9

Everyone is seated in the ceremony room. CAROL is standing at the front of the room. She nods and The Wedding March begins to play. ANNELI walks down the aisle.

CAROL

Everyone, please be upstanding for the bride.

Everyone stands. MARIA enters and walks down the aisle, doing her best to look glowing and gracious. As she approaches the front, CALLUM and RICHARD arrive in a hurry, with CALLUM doing a final adjustment to his tie, which is actually RICHARD's tie. They spot each other. MARIA stops in her tracks. So does CALLUM.

CALLUM

Maria!

MARIA

Callum!

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWOSCENE 1

A continuation of Act 1, Scene 9.

MARIA

Callum! What the hell are you doing here?

CALLUM

What are you doing here?

CAROL

(cracking a joke)

I'm pretty sure you're both here to marry each other. That's what my invitation said anyway!

MARIA

I thought you weren't coming?

CALLUM

I thought you weren't!

MARIA

Can you actually say something instead of just copying me? Again! This was my idea and as always, you've stolen it!

CALLUM

I don't know what you're talking about!

MARIA

(quietly, so only CALLUM can hear)

A little birdie told me that you were planning on standing me up today.

CALLUM

Funny that, I heard a similar birdie saying the same thing.

MARIA

Well I'm here, aren't I?

CALLUM

And so am I.

MARIA

Colour me surprised.

CALLUM

What are you trying to say?

MARIA

That you're the kind of man who doesn't take his commitments seriously.

CALLUM

But you've done exactly the same thing! Who told you anyway?

MARIA

Who told you?

They both realise and slowly turn to glare at their respective best friends. CAROL shuffles closer.

CAROL

Shall I continue? The joy of unity awaits.

MARIA

No! Because I know for a fact that he doesn't want to marry me! I have evidence! Anneli, show them the message!

ANNELI

You're not dragging me into whatever fresh hell this is!

MARIA

Fine. I don't need it anyway.

CHRISTOPHER

But he's here now so, surely you can get on with it? Please! I managed to steal one miniscule prawn thing and then the chef saw me and chased me out of the kitchen!

MARIA

No.

CALLUM

Absolutely not!

MARIA

(attempting to cry)

Wow Callum, that's really hurtful!

CALLUM

You're such a hypocrite! I know that you changed your mind before I changed mine!

MARIA

So you did change your mind!

CALLUM

You're missing the point of what I just said!

GRANDMA PAT

Just get on with it!

MARIA

Not now grandma!

LAURA

Don't talk to your grandmother like that!

JANINE

What is going on exactly? Callum?

CALLUM

Mum, Richard told me that Maria was going to stand me up at the altar.

MARIA

And Anneli told me that he was going to stand me up.

JANINE

What of it?

CALLUM

What do you mean, 'what of it'? My fiancé doesn't want to marry me!

GRANDMA PAT

Actually, I think you'll find it's more accurate to say that neither of you want to marry each other.

MARIA and CALLUM look at each other.

CHRISTOPHER

Good. Now, since that's settled shall we go through to the-

GRANDMA PAT

You move from that seat and I will make you come with me to Beryl's. Weekly.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh god, not Beryl's. So many inspirational throw pillows! So. Many. Cats! Not Beryl's.

GRANDMPA PAT

Yes, Beryl's. And Snowball has just had more kittens.

JANINE

Now come on, you two. Let's not be rash and spoil the day for everyone, shall we? We all get cold feet, it's perfectly natural, sweetheart. Maria, I'm sure you're just stressed. I know that you are. Organising a wedding is a huge undertaking-

ANNELI

(under her breath)

It was a huge undertaking for me, actually.

JANINE

-and a groom can't know what a bride has to go through in order to be prepared for her big day. It's enough to give you stress lines, and no one wants that. *(peering at MARIA)* See, if you look closely you can spot them already. And then that's more money for the photographer to photoshop every single picture and it's all too much. And Callum, I know it feels like growing up and it's all very big and scary, but you both want this. You do! You've both thought about this for months now. Do you think if you really didn't want to go through with it, it would be today that you would realise?

LAURA

You tell 'em, Janine!

CALLUM and MARIA shake their heads.

JANINE

Has it been stressful, Maria?

MARIA

Yes, it has.

JANINE

And is it a little bit overwhelming, Callum?

CALLUM

Maybe.

JANINE

Now you two, look at each other.

They do.

JANINE

Hold hands.

They do.

JANINE

And say you're sorry.

There is a silence.

JANINE

(warning)

Callum.

CALLUM

I'm sorry. It's all freaked me out a bit, but you didn't deserve to be stood up.

MARIA gets a bit genuinely emotional.

MARIA

I'm sorry too. I think I got a bit too fixated with the whole theme and making sure everything was perfect and I should have focused more on you. On us.

CALLUM

It's okay. Come here.

They kiss each other and hug. JANINE claps happily.

JANINE

Now, shall we try again?

CALLUM

(to MARIA) Do you want to? I'm game if you are.

MARIA

I do! I really do! Let's get married!

CAROL steps forward.

CAROL

Excellent. Shall we begin?

JANINE

Hold on a minute. We can't just keep going. Imagine the wedding video! It needs to be one graceful, perfect moment. I think we should all take a little thirty minutes to gather our thoughts,

(indicating to MARIA's face)

Maybe sort out what's going on here, and then we can finally do what we all came here to do. Okay?

There is a rumble of agreement from the party.

JANINE

Now shoo! Shoo! It's bad luck to see each other before the vows!
(beat) Oh, I love a wedding!

MARIA and CALLUM EXIT. The rest of the guests fall into animated discussion. STACEY approaches DARREN.

STACEY

This is all a bit exciting, isn't it?

DARREN

What do you want?

STACEY

Nothing.

DARREN

Why did you say that earlier?

STACEY

Say what?

DARREN

You know.

STACEY

No...

DARREN

You said, 'love you'.

STACEY

No, I didn't.

DARREN

Yes, you did.

STACEY

Didn't.

DARREN

Did.

STACEY

Didn't.

DARREN

Did!

STACEY

I didn't!

DARREN

I know what I heard! You did!

STACEY

Okay, I did.

DARREN

Why??

STACEY

I don't know, thought it might be nice to hear it from someone.
Especially since, you know, *she* won't be saying it.

DARREN

That doesn't mean I want you to say it!

STACEY

Wow. I was just trying to do a nice thing. You should be thanking me.

DARREN

I'm not going to thank you.

STACEY

Wait, but you said it back.

DARREN

No, I didn't.

STACEY

You definitely did.

DARREN

...I think my dad's calling me.

STACEY

He's not.

DARREN

I'm going.

STACEY

Okay. Love you.

DARREN

Stop it!

DARREN EXITS. STACEY continues to be entertained.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 2

A small room. MARIA is sitting in front of a mirror, being fussed over by LAURA. ANNELI is watching.

LAURA

I don't know what Janine was saying, I think you look beautiful.

MARIA

Thanks, mum.

LAURA

So, what happened out there?

MARIA

I don't know! I think Janine was right. I think I got a bit overwhelmed. You know how full of stuff my head can get.

LAURA

What stuff?

MARIA

I don't know...thinking about not being single anymore and all of that, and then I had this like, weird little thought about like, what if our core beliefs are actually entirely different and maybe instead of being fun and challenging it's just, not.

LAURA

So, you really did have a proper turn then.

MARIA

Yeah.

LAURA

What changed your mind?

MARIA

I'm not sure. I think I just decided to stop overthinking everything and just go with the flow. You know, like yoga.

LAURA

Oh, sweetheart, you do pay attention to our classes! That's so wonderful to hear. Should we do the whole 'I'm proud of you' speech again? I know we did it this morning, but that feels like such a long time ago.

MARIA

No, it's okay, I remember the gist of it. Something like, I'm perfect and wonderful and this is my day and not to forget that I'm surrounded with love, blah blah blah.

LAURA

That's the one. Although maybe you could do with some more concealer. Right, I'll see if Chris has any.

MARIA

Thanks mum.

LAURA

You're welcome, my angel. Oh, I'm so glad you two are choosing to do this!

MARIA

Yeah, me too!

LAURA

Isn't this so exciting?

ANNELI

Yeah! Can't wait!

LAURA leaves. MARIA turns back to the mirror, in a happy little daze.

ANNELI

Are you really going to go through with this?

MARIA

Come on, Ann.

ANNELI

I'm serious.

MARIA

Yes, I love him. That's all that matters right? I got a bit loopy for a minute but I'm ready now.

ANNELI

You made me go through all of that, just to change your mind. Again? You even said! You even said that that would be ridiculous if you went back on your decision again and now you've gone and done it!

MARIA

As Megara says to Hercules: "People do crazy things when they're in love."

ANNELI

Yeah, but she'd just like, sacrificed herself for him. I mean, I get it, I'd also throw my soul into hell for that man.

MARIA

Demi-god.

ANNELI

Whatever. Delicious animated bimbo boy, Greek demi-god, potato, potato.

MARIA

But it had a happy ending, didn't it? If they can figure their problems out, then I think me and Callum can as well.

ANNELI

Doesn't seem like quite the same scenario.

MARIA

Look, Ann, I love you, I really do. And I'm so grateful for everything you've done, but I don't actually need your approval for this. You're here because I want your support, not because I need you to make my life decisions for me.

ANNELI

Well I'm so glad that now you're not freaking out you've decided that my input doesn't mean anything anymore. Maybe I should have left you in the mess I found you this morning and I'm sure love would have found a way to fix it all anyway, without my help.

MARIA

Don't make this about you, Ann!

ANNELI

That would be impossible since you've made it entirely about you!

MARIA

Seriously, we're going to argue about me making things about myself on my wedding day?

ANNELI

No! We're not. Which is why I'm going to take myself away from this, you're going to get married, probably, and I'll see you afterwards.

MARIA

Okay, fine, that sounds like a pretty good idea actually!

ANNELI

Alright, I'll see you later!

ANNELI leaves. MARIA huffs. LAURA enters.

LAURA

Anneli looks a bit off?

MARIA

She's just not as good with change as I am, that's all.

LAURA

And there has been plenty of that going on today. I'm sure she'll calm down before the ceremony.

MARIA

I hope so.

LAURA

Chris didn't have any concealer, by the way. What's the point in having brother who used to be an Avon representative if he can't even supply skincare on demand?

MARIA

I think you're stereotyping, mum.

LAURA

He's my brother, I can stereotype him if I want to.

LAURA sits down next to MARIA.

LAURA

Are you okay, sweetheart?

MARIA

Yeah. It's still a bit scary though, isn't it? Like, it could all go wrong. We could still be making a mistake. Like you and dad.

LAURA

You know, sweetheart, I loved your dad. I loved your dad much longer than I should have. And although that didn't work out, we still had a lot of good years. And we had you. It's not always useful to measure a marriage, or any relationship by how long it lasts. You should measure it in other ways; how much you've learnt from each other, how you've changed as a person. Worst case scenario, you'll come out of this knowing a bit more about yourself and what you need in a partner.

MARIA

Yeah.

LAURA

For me, it turned out I needed a woman.

MARIA

I thought you said you were bi.

LAURA

(sincerely)

I am. I was joking. Terri being a woman and your dad being a man had nothing to do with it. It was all a lot more complicated than that. But we won't get into that now. Just know that it's okay to be a little unsure sometimes.

MARIA

Okay.

LAURA

And no matter what, I'll always be there to catch you.

MARIA

Thanks mum.

LAURA

But you really should have talked to me before deciding on this theme.

MARIA

What's wrong with it?

LAURA

Everywhere I look there's garish colours and just so much glitter it hurts my eyes. You have to admit, it's not the classiest, is it?

MARIA

I think it is!

LAURA

Well, I'm just saying-

MARIA

My day, my rules!

LAURA

Well, hello there Bridezilla.

MARIA

No! I'm not being a Bridezilla. Just because it's not all themed around yoga and hurgy...herguh...hyaah...

LAURA

Hygge?

MARIA

Yeah, that.

LAURA

No, you're right. It is your day and if little Lego superheroes for placeholders is what makes you happy, then who am I to judge?

MARIA

Exactly! *(beat.)* You're still judging me, aren't you?

LAURA

Yes. Yes, I am.

They laugh.

MARIA

Hey mum. I'm glad you found Terri. I mean, in general, not as in, today.

LAURA

Me too, sweetheart, me too.

MARIA

Even if you are both painfully pretentious sometimes.

LAURA

Hey!

MARIA

You can't deny it! It's a miracle I didn't pop out of your womb a fully certified hipster riding a fixie bike.

LAURA

Since it's your wedding day, I might concede that you may have a point.

MARIA

Correct answer! *(beat.)* I love you, mum.

LAURA

Oh, my sweet little girl, I love you. *(They hug.)* I really really want to give you the 'proud of you' speech again.

MARIA

Go on then.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 3

CALLUM is outside vaping. CILLIAN enters – he's had a little bit too much to drink. He also gets out his vape and joins CALLUM.

CILLIAN

Callum, there you are. Now, I understand that this is a very big day for you, as everyone keeps saying, but I thought we'd talked all of this through earlier. The waters are getting pretty damn muddy.

CALLUM

I know, sorry dad. Things change.

CILLIAN

Apparently so, son, apparently so.

They both stand and smoke in silence for a moment.

CILLIAN

It's just that I've spent a lot of time on this speech and all of this to'ing and fro'ing is very stressful for me. Delivery is key; I need to be in the right frame of mind for it. But you keep messing with the day – one moment I am doing the speech, the next moment I'm not.

CALLUM

Yeah, I get it, dad. Thanks.

CILLIAN

It's just that your mother doesn't think that I'm funny, or good, at anything, actually and I need to see her face when she realises that-

CALLUM

Yeah, I said I get it, dad.

CILLIAN

Alright son. You having a good time? Ready to wave goodbye to singledom?

CALLUM

I haven't been single for two years.

CILLIAN

Quite right, son, quite right.

CALLUM

What you said earlier, did you mean it? Do you really think I'm making a mistake?

CILLIAN

All I can say is that I've never been happier than I have been since leaving your mother.

CALLUM

Right, right...But are you really, actually-

CILLIAN

I'll see you inside. Knock 'em dead, son.

CILLIAN leaves. CHRISTOPHER comes out to light a cigarette. He tries, but his lighter doesn't work.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you have a light?

CALLUM

No, I only vape.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh. How modern.

CALLUM

Yeah. Apparently it's supposed to be better for you than smoking.

CHRISTOPHER

At least I know exactly what's in here that's slowly killing me. Those things are a mystery.

CALLUM

True.

CHRISTOPHER

And I find it so strange, walking past some big builder-type man and then walking through the cloud of candy floss flavoured vapour behind him. I mean, I love the contradiction of it, so unexpected.

CALLUM

Yeah. Dad goes for strawberry daiquiri, which doesn't really seem like a very 'him' flavour...

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, he seems more like he'd go for a tobacco-stained ceiling and a flat lager kind of scent.

CALLUM

(light-hearted) That is my dad you're talking about.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, sorry. I seem to be offending everyone today.

CALLUM

No, you're okay. You're definitely right, except replace the lager with some kind of weird old man ale.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't suppose you have anything to eat, do you?

CALLUM

I've got some gum?

CHRISTOPHER

What flavour?

CALLUM

(checking)

Uh, I've got watermelon hubba bubba.

CHRISTOPHER

Ugh, it'll have to do.

CALLUM hands CHRISTOPHER a piece of gum. CHRISTOPHER puts it in his mouth and savours it for a moment.

CHRISTOPHER

So, are you feeling ready, after all of that?

CALLUM

Yeah, I think so.

CHRISTOPHER

You know, when I got married I just remember feeling so grateful. I still remember when it wasn't an option for someone like me.

CALLUM

I thought it was legalised ages ago?

CHRISTOPHER

It's one of those things that seems a lifetime ago, but it was only about 10 years ago, 2013, I think. Somewhere around then anyway.

CALLUM

Wow.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, well, I don't think today is quite the right timing for discussing the politics of gay rights, but yes, wow indeed.

CALLUM

And has it gone well for you? Marriage?

CHRISTOPHER

I like to think so. It's just business as usual most of the time. Dog walks, watering the plants, forever discussing what we should have for dinner. Simon's an amazing cook.

CALLUM

How come he's not here today?

CHRISTOPHER

Someone had to look after the little terrors.

CHRISTOPHER gets his phone out, finds a photo and shows CALLUM.

CHRISTOPHER

That's him, and those are our fur babies; Archibald and The Countess.

CALLUM

They're really cute.

CHRISTOPHER

They really are, but spoilt. So spoilt. But yeah, most of the time I don't think about it, to be honest, the fact that I'm married. It's just on days like this, I remember how thankful I am that I am at all. Trust me, if you weren't allowed to do this, you'd want to even more. It suddenly matters a whole hell of a lot.

CALLUM

Yeah, guess it would. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

For what?

CALLUM

Don't know. Talking to me?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, don't be so tragically adorable. It's your wedding day!

CALLUM

Yeah!

CHRISTOPHER

Right, I'm going back in. This gum provided me momentary pleasure, but now it's actually made things worse. It's like my stomach is expecting something and now it's angry that I've tricked it.

CALLUM

Yeah, sorry about that.

CHRISTOPHER

It's fine, just hurry up and get married so that I can actually eat. Please!

CALLUM

Will do!

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you!

CHRISTOPHER exits.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 4

The same room CALLUM got ready in. RICHARD is trying to make a tie out of the two ones that have been shorn in half. ANNELI walks in to find him.

ANNELI

There you are!

RICHARD

And here you are. We really need to stop meeting-

ANNELI

Yeah, no time for the cute flirting right now.

RICHARD

Oh.

ANNELI

Later.

RICHARD

Really?

ANNELI

Can you just focus on something else for a minute?

RICHARD

I can, I just don't want to.

ANNELI

I need you to do me a favour.

RICHARD

What kind of favour?

ANNELI

Only a small one.

RICHARD

There's nothing small about this-no, right, sorry. We're focussing. Your stress horn is wearing off on me. What do you need?

ANNELI

I want you to throw the rings away. Like, down a drain or something.

RICHARD

(sarcastically) Oh, yeah, sure, no problem.

ANNELI

I'm not joking, Richard!

RICHARD

You know there's no way I'm doing that, right? That's crazy talk. They're really expensive and they're pretty essential for the whole wedding thing that we're doing now!

ANNELI

Yeah, don't you think I know that? You don't need to mansplain to me what a wedding ring is to me, Richard.

RICHARD

I wasn't man-

ANNELI

We can discuss the ins and outs of misguided male authority later. Right now I just need you to say 'Yes Anneli, whatever you want Anneli, let me flush the rings down the toilet for you Anneli'. Except don't do it down the toilet, they would be way too easy to get back.

RICHARD

Why would I do that?

ANNELI

(trying to convey the orgasm innuendo)

Because you want me to...laugh at your speech, instead of pretending to laugh.

RICHARD

Wait. You can choose which one?

ANNELI

Depends how hard I can be bothered to make you work.

RICHARD

I'm a really hard worker. No, no! Stop distracting me, you siren! Why would I throw the rings away? Everything is fine now.

ANNELI

But it's not though, is it? All that stuff that happened earlier, that hasn't just suddenly not happened. They still both decided for a good chunk of the day that they didn't actually want to get married.

RICHARD

Yeah, but then they realised they were just being idiots.

ANNELI

Which part? Which bit was them being idiots?

RICHARD

I don't want to have to mansplain this to you, but the bit where they decided they didn't want to get married. I mean, I get a cold sweat just from choosing something from a menu, so I can't imagine how nerve-racking it must be to fully commit your life to someone else's.

ANNELI

Not a fan of commitment, are you?

RICHARD

Uh, no. That's not what I said.

ANNELI

It's been noted.

RICHARD

Shit. But that's irrelevant right now. Right now I'm saying that they had a moment of doubt and now they're back on track.

ANNELI

I'm not so sure. The fact that Maria had gotten as far as she did without turning back speaks volumes. Like, she was fine. She'd cancelled her own wedding and she was fine!

RICHARD

Look. Anneli. I know it may seem like I'm only here, talking with you so that I can get my mits on your fine fine curves-

ANNELI

That's such a weird way of putting it.

RICHARD

But I do actually like you. And, I can see you're struggling. I don't know if you have some kind of horrible wedding-related trauma, beyond what you've had to deal with today – which is a lot, by the way, but. They've made their decision. They're adults and it's up to them to make their own mistakes. I think you need to have a shot of something strong and let go. Have a bit of faith. Trust in them.

ANNELI

That just feels too hard.

RICHARD

Why?

ANNELI

(beat.) I don't want to see her in pain, and I'm scared that this will end in tears. Tears that I'll have to wipe up because she's my best friend and I love her. You know she had a go at me earlier, about trying to make today about me, and I'm still here, trying to save her!

RICHARD

She's lucky to have you.

ANNELI

Yeah, but I'm lucky to have her too. She's seen me through my own fair share of shit. Or carried my own fair share of shit, I should say.

RICHARD

She's carried your shit?

ANNELI

No, not literally.

RICHARD

Okay, I was going to say. I thought Callum and I were close, but I've never carried his shit. Oh wait. No, wait. Have I?

ANNELI

No judgement here. Sometimes you got to do what you got to do.

RICHARD looks at his watch.

RICHARD

And you know what we've got to do? We've got to go.

ANNELI

Yeah, I know.

RICHARD

Hey, Ann.

ANNELI

Yeah?

RICHARD

How about we go and watch two people we bloody adore, create some kind of eternal bond in front of all their friends and family? And we'll try to enjoy it and maybe we'll even shed a little tear, because actually, it's all a little bit beautiful. How does that sound?

ANNELI

Yeah. Okay. I guess we could try.

RICHARD holds out his hand and ANNELI takes it, and they exit.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 5

The ceremony room. Everyone is in their seats. The Wedding March begins again. CALLUM stands, waiting. There is a hushed silence. The silence continues. No one enters.

CALLUM

Are you seriously kidding me? Not again-

ANNELI enters.

GRANDMA PAT

Ha! I win! Cough up!

CHRISTOPHER

It's not over yet, you dried old prune.

GRANDMA PAT

It will be soon, you misshapen trout.

ANNELI begins walking down the aisle. STACEY quietly sits down next to DARREN.

STACEY

(whispering)

Hi.

DARREN

Oh god! Why are you doing this to me?

STACEY

I just thought you might like some support whilst you watch the girl of your dreams get married.

DARREN

Shut up! I can't believe I told you that!

STACEY

She's a lot younger than you, isn't she?

DARREN

What?

STACEY

Well, you being thirty-three and all. Are you a bit of a cougar? What's the male version of a cougar?

DARREN

Just shut up!

STACEY

Do you want to hold my hand? For support?

DARREN

No!

STACEY

Okay. Here if you need me, though.

ANNELI takes her place at the front of the room.

CAROL

Please be upstanding for the bride, again.

Everyone stands, other than GRANDMA PAT.

GRANDMA PAT

(quietly)

Come on, come on, come on...

MARIA finally enters and begins to walk down the aisle.

GRANDMA PAT

Yes!

CHRISTOPHER

Dammit!

GRANDMA PAT

My money, please.

CHRISTOPHER

What deal with the devil did you make?

GRANDMA PAT

None, he just owes me one.

CHRISTOPHER rifles in his pocket and gives GRANDMA PAT a £20 note.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you even need it for? You should be clearing stuff out, not buying more.

GRANDMA PAT

One more pip out of you and you can wave goodbye to your inheritance. Whereas I will be waving hello to a beautiful new monstrous.

CHRISTOPHER

You mean Monstera.

GRANDMA PAT

I said what I said.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't even know what it is!

GRANDMA PAT

Doesn't matter.

GRANDMA PAT kisses the £20 and pockets it.

CAROL

Thank you. You may all sit. Phew, I can't believe we've finally made it here. Before we start, if I may, I just wanted to say that this is actually my one hundredth ceremony as a celebrant and I'm just so happy that we all get to share this moment together. I've brought so many couples together and today feels like such an achievement for me, as well as for Maria and Callum. Now, Maria and Callum have prepared their own vows to share with us today. Callum, would you like to start?

CALLUM gets out his vows and calms himself before starting.

CALLUM

Maria. When I'm with you, you give me the strength of Thor, the courage of Captain America and the confidence of Iron Man. You make me feel invincible like Superman, and although I might not be able to fly, I will still do what I can to protect you and keep you safe. You're the Black Widow to my Incredible Hulk. And when I hear "Avenger's Assemble!", I don't think of a legendary team of superheroes that can't be broken, I think of us.

There is confusion in the room as everyone decides whether this is a good thing or not.

CALLUM

Because we're the legendary team that can't be broken.

CAROL

Beautiful. And Maria.

MARIA has learnt her vows by heart but sounds like she's reading from an autocue.

MARIA

Callum, before we met I thought I wanted Prince Charming. And even though at first I thought you were a bit of a Shrek, eventually I realised that I don't need a prince, I just need you, my Flynn Ryder.

CALLUM looks blank.

MARIA

Remember? He's the one from Tangled.

CALLUM

Is that the Scottish one?

MARIA

No! It's the Rapunzel one!

CALLUM

But isn't she Scottish?

MARIA

No, that's Brave!

CALLUM

Oh yeah, the one with the bear. I like the bear.

MARIA

I'm not finished!

CALLUM

Sorry, sorry.

MARIA

(back to the auto-cue) When I wished upon a star, I didn't realise you'd be who I got, but you make my life a little bit more magical every day.

The wedding party 'aaw's.

CAROL

May the ring bearer please bring forward the rings.

RICHARD steps up and presents the rings.

CAROL

Now, Callum. Please take the ring and hold it at the tip of Maria's finger.

CALLUM takes the ring and places it as told.

CAROL

Now. Repeat after me; I, Callum Patrick-

ANNELI

No!

CAROL

I'm sorry?

ANNELI

I said no!

CAROL

Patrick is your middle name, isn't it?

CALLUM

Yes, it is.

ANNELI

This isn't happening! I'm not letting this happen!

CAROL

I'm sorry but the objection part of a ceremony isn't actually done anymore. It's just one of those things that's remained in television shows and films and the like. So if you could just sit back down, please.

ANNELI

Doesn't matter! I object anyway!

ANNELI lunges forward and grabs the ring, holding it above her head.

MARIA

What are you doing?!

ANNELI

I'm not going to let you do this, Mari. You're right, friendship is the most sacred union of all, and I would be abandoning my vows if I allowed this to go ahead.

MARIA

No! Absolutely not, Ann! Today has been too much already, I'm not having you decide you want a piece of the limelight!

ANNELI

What, because it would take the attention away from you and the absolute spectacle you're making of yourself?

MARIA

Anneli Karlsson, you give me that ring back right now! Just let me marry him!

ANNELI

No!

MARIA begins to go towards ANNELI. ANNELI swallows the ring. The congregation winces. CILLIAN cheers.

MARIA

Right, Richard. Give me the other ring. We are doing this, despite her best efforts to ruin this day for me.

RICHARD looks at MARIA and then at ANNELI. He swallows the other ring.

CALLUM

What the hell, man!

RICHARD

Sorry, some things are more important than a best man speech. Even if it was absolutely killer.

CILLIAN

Mine would've been better!

JANINE

Shut up, Cillian.

MARIA

Why are you doing this? What, are you secretly in love with Callum?
Are you secretly in love with me?

ANNELI

After your behaviour today I don't know how anyone could be in love with you.

CALLUM

Hey, come on-

ANNELI

Oh, and that applies to you too, buddy. You're both an utter embarrassment. If I said to you that my five-year-old niece wanted to marry some kid in her class, do you think I'd give her my blessing? Do you think I'd book the venue for her and order flowers and buy a dress and watch like, five tutorials on Youtube about how to do these wispy bits in my hair? No! Because she's a child! Now if only someone would have told me that I was actually dealing with two children here then I wouldn't have done all of that for this either!

MARIA

You didn't do *everything*.

ANNELI

I did enough to be royally pissed off right now!

CALLUM

But your efforts haven't gone to waste, we want to get married now.
Let us get married!

ANNELI

If you're both so bloody anxious about this, which evidence would suggest that you are, then why the hell are either of you doing it? Huh?

CALLUM

Because we love each other. Because I'm just so, so in love with her.

MARIA

And I can't imagine my life without him. Okay?

ANNELI

No!

MARIA

Will you stop just shouting no at me!

ANNELI

No! Not until I've said my piece. And I am not done! I get it, okay, I get it, we've all grown up with Disney and Kate Middleton and grandmothers, and these weird expectations that we should do as everyone else has done before us and is still currently doing, but we don't actually have to do it. We don't! You guys have lived together for two years. Two years! That's longer than some marriages last. It's a hell of a lot longer than this shit show would go on for. So what difference does it make?

MARIA

There's a lot of tax benefits?

ANNELI

You're not funny, Maria!

CAROL

If I might interject, this is my speciality after all. People choose to get married because it's beautiful. The joining of two hearts into one united force. The formalising of a promise. It's romantic, it's-

ANNELI

(interrupting)

You're biased! And don't even pretend like you don't just want to tick off that one hundredth ceremony and crack open the champagne you've been saving for this very occasion.

CAROL

I don't drink! I just believe in what I do! I believe in marriage!

ANNELI

And I'm sure that's perfect for some people. But clearly it's not right these two. *(to MARIA and CALLUM)* Do you really think your doubts started today? Because I don't. In this room, we have all seen our fair share of marriages that started off optimistic, fall into ruin. Some of them have ended, some of them should end – Janine, I'm looking at you-

CILLIAN

What did you say?

ANNELI

You heard! Just leave him, Janine! Everyone knows that you should.

CHRISTOPHER

Leave him, leave him...

CHRISTOPHER tries to get a chant going but no one joins in.

JANINE

We're already divorced.

ANNELI

Oh. Sorry. I didn't realise. I thought you were just separated.

JANINE

No, definitely divorced. Thank god.

ANNELI

But that's my whole point! None of these marriages planned to go wrong. But they did. Half of the people here have been divorced. Half! Janine and Cillian, divorced. Laura and your dad, divorced. Darren doesn't count because he's you know, too young but-

GRANDMA PAT

Excuse me, I was married for fifty years. Got something to say about that?

ANNELI

Nope, I'm not coming for you, Pat. You're all good.

GRANDMA PAT

It wasn't easy.

ANNELI

I'm sure it wasn't.

GRANDMA PAT

There were times when I could've left him.

ANNELI

I'm sure there were.

GRANDMA PAT

We both made mistakes, but we stuck together through it. Separate beds; life saver.

ANNELI

Okay, so not all marriages go wrong, but a lot of them do. What I'm trying to get you to understand is that love isn't enough, okay. It's not enough to say you love each other. It's not even enough to actually mean it. There are quieter things required to make something like this work. Which means you two have got to figure out where the cracks in your relationship are before you do it, so that you don't end up old, bitter and resentful. *(beat.)* There's no rush, there's no time limit, so there's no need to sprint down the aisle.

CHRISTOPHER stands up.

CHRISTOPHER

You should feel grateful to even be getting married. I don't think about it most of the time. Usually it's just business as usual, walking the dogs-

CALLUM

Um. Chris. Hate to interrupt but you've already said all of this to me. Outside. Like, literally word for word. Remember?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, of course I remember, but that was only to you. Everyone else hasn't heard it yet.

CILLIAN stands.

CILLIAN

Wait, if he gets to do a speech then so should I!

JANINE/LAURA

Sit down!

CILLIAN and CHRISTOPHER sit down. GRANDMA PAT then stands up and 'takes the stage'.

GRANDMA PAT

And another thing!

MARIA

Uh, grandma?

GRANDMA PAT

If I hear one more person moan about getting older, I will take this stick and so help me god I will beat you with it within an inch of your life.

There is another hushed silence.

GRANDMA PAT

That's it, that's all I have to say. Marriage is fine, getting old is fine. It's all fine.

GRANDMA PAT goes to sit down and changes her mind.

GRANDMA PAT

Your crow's feet aren't going to kill you! Your back hurts because you sit on your arses all day. Get over it! And stop insulting every single older person by making out like it's the end of the world. Look at these young people, they're fools! I love them to pieces, but they are. Do I wish I could carry all my shopping all at once sometimes? Of course, but do I want to be like these sweet idiots again? There isn't enough money in the world!

LAURA

Okay, okay, I think that's enough laying into my daughter on what is maybe her wedding day. Do you need some time alone, honey? How about we give these two some privacy.

ANNELI

Again.

MARIA looks at CALLUM. He holds out his hand, she takes it and they exit. ANNELI slumps down into a chair.

ANNELI

Can't wait to do this on repeat until we all die.

CHRISTOPHER approaches her and holds out a packet of cigarettes.

CHRISTOPHER

You look like you could use these.

ANNELI

Thanks, but I haven't smoked since I was like in like, Year 10.

CHRISTOPHER

Take them anyway.

ANNELI accepts the cigarettes.

ANNELI

What I need is a drink. Several drinks. Or maybe some horse tranquiliser. Got any of that?

CHRISTOPHER

No, not on me, sorry.

ANNELI

Shame. *(beat.)* Shit. I swallowed a ring.

CHRISTOPHER

You really did. I can understand why you did.

ANNELI

Yeah?

CHRISTOPHER

Well yes, at this rate I'm probably just going to start eating my own jewellery and then probably myself, 'til there's nothing but this Vivienne Westwood pocket square left.

ANNELI

Oh god, why did they have to go for fancy ones with stones and shit? What's going to happen to it, you know, inside of me?

CHRISTOPHER

You know, I wouldn't Google it if I were you. What will be, will be.

ANNELI

It's a lot easier to be calm about pushing out a piece of metal with pointy bits when it's not you who's going to get the shredded anus.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh sweetheart, my anus has been shredded plenty of times.

ANNELI

Yeah, to be fair mine has too. *(beat.)* I have no idea why I said that. Maybe I will have that cigarette.

ANNELI gets up to leave.

CHRISTOPHER

I'll leave you to it. I'll try and keep the masses at bay.

ANNELI

Thank you.

ANNELI exits.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 6

The smoking area. ANNELI enters, takes out a cigarette and realises she doesn't have a lighter. RICHARD enters.

ANNELI

That guy is absolutely useless.

RICHARD

Who?

ANNELI

Maria's uncle. He said he'd stop anyone from following me.

RICHARD

He passed me a second ago talking about communion wafers and jam.

ANNELI

We're not even in a church.

RICHARD

It's tragic to watch a man lose his mind through his stomach.

ANNELI

I think I'm losing mine as well.

RICHARD

Is it safe to approach?

ANNELI

Not sure.

RICHARD

I'll take my chances.

ANNELI starts puffing on the unlit cigarette.

ANNELI

What do you think they're talking about?

RICHARD

Your cigarette...

ANNELI holds out the packet, thinking that he is asking for one. RICHARD takes one. He begins to smoke it, also unlit.

ANNELI

Do you think they'll go through with it?

RICHARD

I don't know, but you've done everything you can. And more.

ANNELI

Yeah. *(beat.)* Do you think I went a bit too far though?

RICHARD

I think it came from the right place.

ANNELI

So you do think I went too far.

RICHARD

I won't answer that.

ANNELI

Oh god, did I just ruin a wedding? A wedding that I planned!

RICHARD

I won't answer that either.

ANNELI

Probably best. *(beat.)* Maybe I was wrong though. Maybe you were right...maybe I've got some kind of weird problem with weddings and because of it I can't stand to see anyone getting happily married. Oh my god, maybe I am in love with Maria!

RICHARD

That would be a shame.

ANNELI looks at him meaningfully.

ANNELI

Yeah, it would...*(beat.)* Your anus is going to be fucked as well.

RICHARD

Woah, I didn't realise that was plan! I mean, I'm not saying I'm not game, because I am, but there's a certain way a lady likes to be approached about these things-

ANNELI

No, I meant because of the ring.

RICHARD

Well usually the ring goes at the front, you know, on the...

ANNELI

No, the bloody wedding ring you swallowed!

RICHARD

Oh, I didn't swallow it.

RICHARD takes the ring out of his pocket.

RICHARD

Just stowed it away in my cheeks and spat it out when no one was looking.

ANNELI

You jammy little hamster, you!

RICHARD

If that's what you're into, baby, I'll be anything you want to be, and today I've been a bad, bad hamster.

ANNELI

And you know what bad hamsters get?

RICHARD

What?

ANNELI

You know, I'm really not sure...

RICHARD

Yeah, me neither. I think they just get left alone in their cage most of the time anyway.

ANNELI

Probably won't do that.

RICHARD

Well that's good to hear. *(beat.)* By the way. All of that, in there...that was...incredibly hot.

ANNELI

Really?

RICHARD

Yeah, I mean it wasn't entirely sane, but something about your conviction really did something to me.

ANNELI

Thanks, I think.

RICHARD and ANNELI look at each other for a moment.

RICHARD

Shall we go back in?

ANNELI

Do we have to?

RICHARD

Yeah.

ANNELI

If I ever get married, which seems increasingly unlikely, I'm just not going to have a maid of honour. Bitches be crazy, you know?

RICHARD

I think maybe in this instance it's just you...you be crazy.

ANNELI

Watch it!

RICHARD

I'm just here giving you difficult truths in a charming package.

ANNELI

Very charming.

ANNELI looks at him, leans over and kisses him on the mouth.

ANNELI

Thank you. *(beat.)* Come on.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 7

MARIA and CALLUM are sat in the small room MARIA was getting ready in earlier. They're facing each other. They stare at each other for a long while, before both bursting into laughter.

MARIA

Could this day get any more ridiculous?

CALLUM

I don't know but I wouldn't tempt fate!

MARIA

(growing more serious)

What do we do?

CALLUM

I don't know.

MARIA

I'm so confused.

CALLUM

Me too. Everyone has so many opinions and they're all different. Plus Anneli and Richard have eaten the rings. Anneli and Richard have eaten the rings. That doesn't sound like a sentence I ever thought I would say on my wedding day.

MARIA

Yeah, didn't see that one coming.

CALLUM

I don't think I saw any of today coming to be honest.

MARIA

Me neither. I do love you, you know.

CALLUM

I know you do. I love you too.

MARIA

So why are we acting so crazy?

CALLUM

People do crazy things when they're in love.

MARIA

Oh my god! You made a Disney reference!

MARIA grabs CALLUM and kisses him hard on the mouth. There's a moment and the two begin taking their clothes off in a frenzied burst.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 8

The wedding room. Everyone is gathered, again. The whole party is tired, CAROL is asleep.

LAURA

How long has it been?

TERRI checks her watch.

TERRI

About half an hour.

LAURA

Should we go and check on them?

TERRI

If she needs you, she'll call.

LAURA

Yeah, you're right.

TERRI

Have you calmed down a bit now then?

LAURA

What do you mean?

TERRI

After all of that with your brother. I've never seen you so, well, immature.

LAURA

I know, I know. It's him, he brings it out of me.

TERRI

Clearly. But why?

LAURA

I don't know. It's just...all the work I've done on myself, you know, with therapy and yoga and all of that, seeing him just puts me right back into being the mousey little sister to the most outspoken and confident teenager I've ever met. Honestly Terri, you should have seen him back then. Just his existence was this big fuck you to all things straight and boring.

TERRI

I can imagine. I think it still is.

LAURA

Yeah.

TERRI

And you express that admiration and gratitude for having such a strong role model by punching him?

LAURA

He did call you a dyke.

TERRI

Yes, he did. At least now I know what I need to do to ruffle your feather.

LAURA

What, get Chris to call you a dyke?

TERRI

No, get Chris to call *you* a dyke.

MARIA and CALLUM enter, holding hands and smiling at each other, looking slightly dishevelled. CALLUM's tie is in a tight knot that will never be undone.

MARIA

We're back!

CAROL wakes up with a start.

CAROL

(half asleep)

Ah! We're gathered here today! No, not yet? Sh, shh...

CALLUM

Sorry about the wait everyone.

CILLIAN

What took you so long?

JANINE

Oh. Best not to ask.

CAROL

And will there be a ceremony today, another ceremony I should say, dare I ask? The one hundredth ceremony in my otherwise untouched record as a well-respected and successful celebrant? Ninety-nine happy couples, soon to be one hundred? Yes?

MARIA

We're really sorry Carol, but no, there won't be. We're not going to get married.

CAROL

Oh. Oh.

MARIA

Not today, anyway. Maybe not ever. Who knows.

CAROL

Right. Okay.

CAROL walks away, unsteadily. CHRISTOPHER holds out his hand to GRANDMA PAT, who hands over the £20.

CHRISTOPHER

(whispering)

Thank you very much.

JANINE

Oh, are you sure sweetheart?

CALLUM

Yes, we're sure.

ANNELI

Oh, thank Christ!

CHRISTOPHER

Now can we *please* EAT SOMETHING!!

MARIA and CALLUM look at each other and shrug.

MARIA

Might as well!

GRANDMA PAT

Finally! I am fucking famished!

CHRISTOPHER

There is a god! Come on mother, lead the way!

LAURA

Not if I get there first!

CHRISTOPHER and LAURA playfully jostle as they exit. TERRI follows behind. As GRANDMA PAT leaves, she catches MARIA.

GRANDMA PAT

You may not be getting married, but I'm still expecting grandchildren, young lady.

MARIA

Uh, yes, grandma.

GRANDMA PAT exits.

CALLUM

Kids?

MARIA

Let's not think about it right now.

CALLUM

Agreed.

CHRISTOPHER (OS)

VOULEVANTS!

GRANDMA PAT (OS)

Grab the tray, Christopher! The whole tray! Don't pussy foot about!

JANINE passes CALLUM and MARIA.

JANINE

Oh you two, wasn't that a rollercoaster. And I know how much you don't like those, Callum. I'm so proud of you, choosing to get off instead of just enduring it.

She hugs CALLUM and moves away.

MARIA

You're scared of rollercoasters?

CALLUM

Yeah.

MARIA

But you've always gotten on them with me.

CALLUM

Yeah, I probably won't be doing that anymore.

MARIA

Okay, fair enough.

She pecks him on the cheek. DARREN goes to CILLIAN.

DARREN

Dad! Have this back.

He hands CILLIAN back his credit card.

CILLIAN

Why? The evening's only just getting started.

DARREN

I know but the waitress. She's haunting me.

CILLIAN

What, her over there?

STACEY is nearby. CILLIAN gives her a wave, she waves back.

DARREN

Yes, her!

CILLIAN

She seems harmless to me.

DARREN

She's out to get me, dad! She's creeping me the hell out.

CILLIAN

Nonsense, son. Don't be ridiculous. There's no way that anyone could out creep you, let's be honest.

CILLIAN goes to MARIA and CALLUM, leaving DARREN alone. STACEY approaches.

STACEY

I hope you enjoy the meal, sir.

DARREN

What have you done to it?

STACEY

Nothing. Champagne?

DARREN

What do you want from me?

STACEY

Nothing. Champagne, sir?

DARREN

Do you want me to admit that I'm underage? Because I am, okay! I'm sixteen and I shouldn't be drinking and I'm sorry!

STACEY

Okay.

DARREN

Are you going to report me?

STACEY

No, of course not. Underage drinking at weddings happens all the time.

DARREN

Then what do you want?!

STACEY

Nothing. Are you sure you don't want any champagne?

DARREN

I'm not touching your bloody champagne!

STACEY

Okay. Love you.

DARREN

No, I'm not falling for that this time!

STACEY

Oh, go on.

DARREN

No, it's weird!

STACEY

Just say it back.

DARREN

I'm going.

STACEY

You'll miss me when I'm gone.

DARREN

Doubt it.

STACEY

Ouch.

DARREN

Bye.

STACEY

Bye. *(beat.)* Love you.

DARREN

Love you too. Shit!!

DARREN exits and STACEY follows.

CILLIAN

Well, it isn't quite the outcome I'd hoped for, but it'll have to do.

CALLUM

Thanks dad.

CILLIAN

I'll be honest son, I haven't enjoyed today one bit.

CALLUM

No, I can see that.

JANINE

Really, Cillian? Does that seem like an appropriate thing to say right now?

CILLIAN

Yes, Janine, it does. I'm just expressing my feelings. You always told me I was too closed off.

JANINE

Well, if these are the feelings that you were keeping bottled up, then maybe you should have left it that way, Cillian.

CILLIAN

Absolutely fucking charming, Janine.

CALLUM

Can you not this now? Please?

JANINE

No, you're right, I'm sorry.

CILLIAN

I didn't even get to do my speech.

JANINE

(reluctantly)

But you can. Everyone is in the room, so they don't really have a choice.

CILLIAN

You're right!

JANINE

Well, yes. And...if there was one thing you were, it was funny.

CILLIAN

How about I run it by you and you can tell me if it needs editing. I doubt it, but just in case.

JANINE

Let's have a look then.

CILLIAN

Let me get a glass. I can't do it without a glass, that's how I've rehearsed it.

JANINE

Alright, I'll be right there.

CILLIAN exits hurriedly.

JANINE

(to CALLUM and MARIA)

I'm taking a bullet for you two.

CALLUM

Thanks mum.

MARIA

Thank you, Janine.

JANINE exit. MARIA goes to ANNELI and they have a big, long hug.

ANNELI

I'm sorry.

MARIA

No, no, I'm sorry. Thank you for holding my poo.

ANNELI

Thank you for finally listening to the voice of reason.

MARIA

Hey hey hey, don't think that this was your idea.

ANNELI

Wasn't it?

MARIA

No, don't say that, then I'm going to start freaking out that the only reason I decided not to go through with this is because you actually planted the idea in my head!

ANNELI

Okay, I won't say it then. Well done for listening to yourself. And I take it back, I don't want a divorce.

MARIA

Good, because I wasn't going to let you have one anyway.

ANNELI

I've got a little surprise for you, for the meal.

MARIA

What?

ANNELI

Let's just say that there's going to be a lot of princesses in attendance.

MARIA

Oh my god! Did you get me a Princess Party? For my wedding?

ANNELI

Yeah, I did. Your mum begged me not to.

MARIA

With Elsa?

ANNELI

With Elsa.

MARIA

Ah! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

RICHARD

(to CALLUM)

I got you an Elvis Impersonator who dresses like Spiderman. He's called The Singing Spidey and it works surprisingly well.

CALLUM

You're the best, man.

MARIA

Come on, come on, come on, let's go! Do you think Uncle Chris would mind if we had Elsa sitting at the head table instead of him?

MARIA grabs CALLUM and they exit. The room is now empty other than ANNELI and RICHARD.

ANNELI

Now...about this speech you were telling me about. Think you could still manage to give me a good giggle?

RICHARD

Yeah, I think so.

ANNELI

Good, let's go.

ANNELI takes RICHARD's hand and they leave in the opposite direction.

BLACK OUT.