

Chapter 35 – Angela and Peadar are Married

The week went by quickly. Angela and Katie had to go to Maeve's to try on and pick up their respective gowns. Both had appointments at the hairdresser on Friday afternoon. Peadar wanted to host a rehearsal dinner at Fitzgerald's after the rehearsal on Friday evening. With the tremendous reinforcement he had from his friends and colleagues. Peadar was on cloud nine all week. As the senior professors passed each other in the corridors they seemed to giggle at each other. The craic was mighty in the Lantern on that Saturday afternoon.

The rehearsal dinner was to be a subdued affair although Sean and Katie had been working together to roast the bride and the groom. Angela and Sean had gifts for the wedding party. Fr. Jim would be there to say some humorous things on behalf of Peadar's students.

On Wednesday afternoon Katie and Angela arrived at Maeve's Dress Barn. Maeve greeted them with her usual enthusiasm. She had the kettle on for tea. She had an assistant help Angela with her gown. When she stepped out of the changing room, both Maeve and Katie gasped with pleasure. Angela looked absolutely beautiful. Maeve walked around and examined every stitch. "You have kept your figure well Angela; this fit is perfect. Don't overeat between now and Saturday."

"What do you think, mom?"

"Angela walked in front of the mirror, turned to the right and turned to the left, adjusted her veil slightly, examined her train in the mirror, and declared it perfect. She hugged Maeve with tears in her eyes. "It's the most beautiful dress I have ever seen and I can't believe I am wearing it." The material was the same as Katie's wedding gown except for a vest of fine lace woven delicately into the fabric from the waist to the bodice. The dress was sleeveless with the fabric falling ever so slightly over her shoulder. Her veil of slightly fluffed chiffon hung almost to her waist. Maeve said that this dress is now an original. She took a couple of photographs for her catalogue.

Katie was next and tried on the vermilion gown that she ordered. It, too, was fitted perfectly. Vermilion is a very soft color, not quite pink and not quite red. On Katie it was outstanding. It picked up some of the natural red in her hair and made her blue eyes really stand out. There were no ruffles. Katie is not a ruffle person. When she stepped out of the changing room, it was Angela's turn to gasp with Maeve. Katie looked beautiful.

"When you get your hair done, tell them that they should emphasize the red and leave the curls." She still wore the style given to her by Gay Byrne's hairdressers. It perfectly fit the contours of her face but it needed to be trimmed back a bit.

After changing back into street clothes, Katie followed Maeve into her office for a cup of tea. Angela excused herself to the ladies' room. When Angela was out of earshot, Katie asked Maeve to send her the bill for the wedding dress.

“Why, asked Maeve. Isn’t her husband a gentleman of means?”

“Indeed he is but did you not know that I was the wealthiest woman in Ireland at least for a few weeks.”

“And then you gave it all away.”

“It didn’t mean that much to me. And I think I am still the wealthiest woman in Ireland and my mom is one of my major assets. I want to do this for her.”

“Do you know how much these things cost?”

“I know very well. As you know, I have been in a dozen wedding parties.”

“Why did you give all the money away?”

“I didn’t need it and it wouldn’t have done either Shane or me much good. You know that I am not known to be vengeful, but I do get angry. My way of dealing with that rage is to take all of their money and do things with it that are totally removed from their world view. Shane and I still control the money but I have the help of a Board of Directors and a legal framework that protects the money even from me. For the rest of our lives and for generations long after we are gone, that money will be doing good. University College, Galway, will become a center of learning that will rival the great universities of the world. And only God knows whatever else we can do. I am thrilled with the decision. Also, some big time donations are coming into the foundation from people like Bono and Gay Byrne.”

“Good Lord, I must be growing crazy. I’m beginning to understand you. I’m sure the Morrigan will be pleased.”

“Shane was getting worried about my affection for the Morrigan. I told him if God can use people like us, genuine vessels of clay, to do good, so what if he uses a black raven every once in a while. After all it is centuries since she’s been in battle and what she did for us, as big as it turned out for us, must have been for her a minor skirmish.

“I’m sure she had fun,” said Maeve as Angela was walking into the room.

“Who is that,” asked Angela?

“Oh, just a friend of ours who likes excitement, but avoids the spotlight.”

“Katie, your friends are so wonderful, I can’t tell you what a great time I had at your party. Was she there?”

“A party like that is not her thing. She prefers to live in the shadows but is always there when you need her.”

“Well she missed a great party.”

“I love that Shane threw a party for Peadar, said Maeve. “Wasn’t it brilliant to bring him back for the end of our party? The girls really roasted him.”

“If you were trying to embarrass him, it didn’t work. He loved the attention.”

“I know. That is why we approve of his marriage to you.”

On Friday, Father Jim walked them through the ceremony so that they would know where they are in the ceremony most of the time.

They retired to Fitzgerald’s where laughter rocked the house till dinner’s end. Katie did a piece she put together called, *Bringing Up Mom*, a series of stories of how Katie co-opted her mom’s support for various nefarious adventures. As funny as it was, Katie finished up with a touching tribute to her mom. Before she was born, God asked her which mother she would like. Katie pointed at Angela and said, “I want that one. She is the salt of the earth,”

When Angela responded, she pointed out that Katie would also have a rehearsal dinner and that would be her chance to get even. She also informed everybody that Katie never put anything over on her. Her pattern of parenting was to stand far enough away not to be noticed but to be close enough to rescue the little minx when she got into trouble.

Sean was predictably funny at Peadar’s expense and everyone, including Peadar loved it.

The funniest presentation was by Fr. Jim. He was a spokesman for the students and pointed out that he was a former student of Peadar. He told story after story of how sophomoric, sophomore students can be. He finally saluted a great teacher who fashioned and formed the man that he became. “He is the University’s Mr. Chips. He is the University’s Chuchulain, our champion.”

The party broke up early because everyone had to be up and ready for a wedding Mass at eleven o’clock.

The next morning was very exciting. Shane arrived in a limo rented by Peadar to pick up the bride and maid of honor by half ten. A professional makeup person was there although the amount of makeup required for either Katie or Angela was minimal. A hair stylist did their hair, Angela with a formal upsweep and Katie wearing her hair the normal way but the haircut highlighted her natural beauty with red highlights as Maeve had recommended. Both looked sensational. Shane escorted them to the limo at 10:50.

“Any nerves,” asked Shane.

Angela remembered quivering with nervousness when she married Katie's dad. She had just turned seventeen. She had no nervous concerns this time. She had no idea what she was doing the first time. This time she was a mature woman and she knew that marriage would just solidify what will continue to be a life long romance.

The trip to the chapel took about two minutes. Katie kissed her mom and said, "I'll see you in church."

Shane escorted Katie up the stairs to the lobby of the chapel. Katie would wait there and help Angela. Maeve was there as well to supervise the arrangement of the gown. Some members of the University orchestra were performing Pachabel's Canon in D minor. Shane returned to the car to escort Angela who was radiant as she ascended the stairs. She looked like she could be Katie's slightly older sister. Inside the lobby, Katie arranged her train and her veil and then lined up to lead the procession down the aisle. An usher waved to signal the orchestra that broke out in the prelude to a march by Thurlogh O'Carolan. Katie herself was radiant and looked beautiful in her gown. Few knew that Katie would be the Maid of Honor, and all were startled at the beauty of the woman and the beauty of the gown. When Katie reached the sanctuary, she stepped off to the left hand side. Peadar and Sean were both smiling at her and she nodded slightly to them. The full orchestra picked up on the O'Carolan theme and the beautiful bride walked down the aisle to the beautiful march. Again there were gasps and a whispered buzz from the congregation. Angela was a startling beauty

When they reached the front of the sanctuary Sean led Peadar to Angela. Peadar lifted her veil and he kissed her. Sean walked over to Katie and escorted her into the sanctuary to the kneelers on the left. Fr. Jim came down and greeted them. He saw that all four were thoroughly relaxed and he began the Mass. The lead tenor from the University Chorus led the congregation singing the parts of the Mass using the traditional melodies of the Sunday Mass. The congregational singing was impressive.

In his homily, Fr. Jim talked about how human love was a reflection of the love God has for us and how we discover God Himself by discovering each other. God has partially revealed himself to us by revealing something of mystery of who he is in an incredible act of love. Men and women spend a lifetime discovering and revealing to each other the mystery of who they are and that sharing is also an incredible act of love.

He then called the bride and groom to the center of the sanctuary where they exchanged their vows. They then exchanged their wedding rings, gold bands engraved with an ancient Celtic design.

They pronounced their vows and the prayer with the exchange of rings loud enough to be heard throughout the congregation. When Father Jim announced, I now pronounce you husband and wife. The congregation rose as one and applauded and each of the ministers in the sanctuary came down and gave their blessing by an imposition of hands.

At the offertory, Sean and Katie walked down to the center of the chapel for the gifts and carried them back to Fr. Jim.

The liturgy was beautifully celebrated and impressive to both to the ministers present and guests who were not catholic. At the final blessing of the bride and groom, Fr. Jim announced, “Ladies and gentlemen, I now present to you Mr. and Mrs. Peadar McDermott.” Angela and Peadar kissed and the church broke out in cheer and applause.

They marched out to the strains of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony which Katie had also requested for her wedding.

Peadar and Angela greeted all of their guests, all of whom wanted to kiss Angela. They then greeted Sean and Katie who received her share of kisses as well. Maeve slipped up and whispered in her ear, “That was so friggin beautiful I’m going to church again tomorrow, only I am coming here.” When everyone came through they moved down the stairs to the applause of the crowd. The limo would take them over to Sean’s studio for photos and the crowd retreated to the Faculty Dining Room in the commissary. Shane escorted Mairead Hurley and they would join the respective mates after they arrived.

The faculty dining room looked elegant. At the beginning of the cocktail hour, Dr. Nolan greeted the crowd and welcomed all to University College, Galway, and the Home of the Peadar McDermott Chair of Irish Literature.

The room was decorated for a truly festive event as Peadar requested. The harpist played beautifully, people mingled, drink was taken, conversation shared. It was the next step in a great day for Peadar and Angela. Before long, the bride and groom arrived and mingled with the guests. Sean and Shane exchanged escorts. Shane told Katie how stunningly beautiful she looked and Katie replied by suggesting that he cleaned up pretty well himself. They indulged in a quick kiss and a hug and then went off to join the crowd.

Angela and Peadar were positively radiant. He was the Peadar of old, the most dignified man in the room and yet, the life of the party. Angela met current and past Teasachs, minor politicians, professors from other universities, and the other three golfers that played with Peadar at Lahinch, and their benefactor, the President of the Sorbonne. All of these were new people in her life, Peadar’s friends, and her easy way with them made him very proud.

The Maitre d’ called them to dinner. Archbishop Manning said grace, offered his own blessing on the couple, and then read a Papal Blessing conveying the greetings of Pope John Paul. Fr. Jim introduced the ministers who were seated with their wives at a table nearby the podium. There was no head table, a special request of Angela. She wanted to be near her friends who arrived in two busses from Leveegee. They were very impressed with the beauty of the Mass and the elegance of this reception. Most of all they were impressed with their dear friend.

The meal was wonderful. Guests had a choice of steak, lobster, or both.

Finally, the house band was great. Peadar wanted Irish dance music and he got it in spades. He wanted ballads for slow dancing and there was plenty of that. The baritone singer was really good and drew a tear from many eyes.

The day was a whirl for Angela. Never in her wildest dreams could she have imagined that this would be her day, a day she shared with a man who would be the love of the rest of her life. She danced, visited all the tables, and shared it all with Peadar for she was now Mrs. Peadar McDermott.

During a break in the dancing after the dessert, Peadar asked for everyone's attention. "We are leaving the party now but that doesn't mean you have to leave. In fact, no one should leave until every drop of drink is taken. Stay and enjoy everything. This is a day of great happiness for Angela and me and a big part of our joy is that you are here to share it with us. Thank you." The craic was mighty in Galway that day.