

Too Many Cooks

Looking back it had all started the morning following her Engagement Party .

Donna had hardly finished her breakfast when her mother Celine asked about a date for the wedding. " We would need to get started now to book a hotel venue that will dictate the date of the Wedding. Now we dont want anything too shabby. Your cousin Anne had hers in the Whitford Arms. -very third rate her mother commented. And the food was very mediocre . We want something better for you dear. Since your father and I will be footing the bill we thought the five star Royal Marine Hotel in Bray would do nicely . Mrs Higgins daughter in the Rotary Club had her daughters wedding there and apparently it was excellant. We have a lot to organise so I have already made an appointment with the Weddings Functions manager for this afternoon at 2pm." The Royal We became the order of the day.

"But mother Donna interjected Gary and I thought we would like just a small reception for family only in the local GAA club. Since Gary plays for them we would get a good discount . Nonsense replied her mother we cant have outside caters we would never live it down . That is far too common. We would be the talk of the town and branded cheap skates no you just leave it to me dear. Anyway what do men know your father and Gary will do as their told. We will keep that appointment this afternoon her mother dictated ." This wedding was going to be planned with military precision if Celine had anything to do with it.

Later her Aunt Margaret called in for a coffee and the next topic of conversation was of course the Church. "You will be wanting it in St Mels Cathedral her Aunt suggested. It has a lovely big aisle just perfect for the long Train you will be having. They have a gorgeous organ you know Celine and I hear you can book the choir as well. Perfect for the photographs said her mother . Your Charles is well in with the Bishop isnt he. Sure promise him a generous donation and he can do the ceremony . I will Get Charles on it ASAP. agreed her aunt and you can book the choir while you are at it ordered Celine. " "But Mum said Donna we wanted the marriage ceremony to be in Garys local church. Not nearly big enough for all the guests her mother scoffed and far too parochial. After all it is your big day and we want to make a lasting impression. I know you will want my Joyce to be your chief bridesmaid along with your other five cousins keep it in the family, I am sure Gary can find five male cousins to stand in and act as ushers. her Aunt Margaret suggested. It will look good in the photographs ."Donna's heart sank she had planned to ask Garys sister her best friend Mary to be the only Bridesmaid. She was in a quandary. "Margaret you and Jane will come along to the hotel this afternoon. I would value your input said her mother. "

By the end of the afternoon despite Donnas protests the Ballroom in the Royal Marine Hotel was booked for the 29th May for 400 guests. An appointment was made to sample the 7 course taster menu the following week. Her Dad had been roped in to sample the wines and champagnes on offer including the Pimms drinks reception with orders from his wife that only the best would do and woe betide him if he got it wrong. Celine as per usual would have the final say.

The Cathedral choir, Organists and the Priests were booked and Charles as per instructions had twisted the Bishops arm to perform the ceremony.

Celine then turned her attention to the flowers. With sister Joanne and Donna in tow a visit to a renowned florist in Dublin was arranged. Donna again had wanted a simple

posy but Joanne had insisted that a fall of lilies was the in thing and nothing would do that each of the six bridesmaids would have large hoops and baskets of flowers - the latest trend apparently. Buttonholers for the men were chosen and huge flower arrangements for the cathedral and hotel ballroom including a floral arch and bower at the entrance to both. After all it was a Cathedral and had to be decked accordingly with posies on each aisle pew. Donna dreaded to think of the cost. It would probably have furnished a whole room in their new house for them. She thought lilies were funeral. Next on the list was the Wedding Limousines. Only silver Rolls Royce from Dublin would do, white was far too tacky insisted her Aunt Olivia who's husband just happened to own a car dealership and was able to pull strings. If truth be told his life would not have been worth living if he hadn't. Gary had suggested that his father's Sierra would polish up nicely thank you but of course that had been rejected on the basis that you could not expect Donna to arrive at the Cathedral and traverse the red carpet in a crumpled gown.

Speaking of gowns that was turning out to be a nightmare. They had had appointments with ten different Bridal Boutiques and with all four Aunts and all six Bridesmaids in tow it was horrendous. Everyone had an opinion long, short, ballet length, short sleeve. Long sleeve, scoop neck, round neck not to mention the colours - white, blush, oyster, cream, on and on it went. Then of course there was the style bouffant, slimline, backless. Then the material satin, chiffon, silk, organza to name but a few. Next up for discussion were the embellishments diamonds, pearls, diamantes etc. Donna's head was in a spin as she tried on dress after dress, one made her look too skinny, another too fat, another too matronly was every one else's opinion. All she wanted was something simple that she would maybe be able to adapt and wear at another time. It appeared to her that the higher the price the more her mother liked it. All the aunts agreed that with a long veil, train and tiara in keeping with the Cathedral only a long white dress would do otherwise the Town would talk with plenty of sparkle thrown in for good measure. Matching stilettos were added which Donna was doubtful she could even walk in. Donna was so brow beaten at the end that she gave in and agreed to her mother's choice which in her eyes made her look like 'Little Bow Peep', Dear knows what Gary would think of it. As to the bridesmaids the aunts agreed that full length royal purple gowns of varying styles designed to suit the wearer would be commissioned. "So regal" her Mother announced. Only Phillip Tracy Hats and Paul Costello designed outfits were deemed suitable for the ladies of the family.

The situation did not improve with the invitations. Only Gold embossed would do especially designed by the local calligrapher. 400 were ordered much to Donna's dismay as an aunts collective decided that anybody who was anybody in the district would be invited and given a day to remember. Family honour was at stake and every relation no matter how far out was invited. Some of them Donna had never heard of or met. Well her mother pronounced "I have been to countless family Weddings and it is about time I got my money back. Look on it as an investment for your future. I think we should let it be known that cash gifts would be the most acceptable although of course if pushed the Wedding List at Brown and Thomas could be used." In addition with 400 hundred guests a five tier Wedding Cake was a must.

Next on Celine's To do List was the photographer. Her best friend Valerie suggested she use the Dublin photographer who had done the McCartney Wedding at Castle Leslie and so be it.

Of course only Peter Mark would be suitable for the hairstyles with the make up artist from Game of Thrones commissioned for the day. With a Tiara only an "Up Do" would suit. Her hair was one of her best features and Gary liked it best long and flowing and that was why at the make up, spray tan and hair rehearsal Donna looked in the mirror, squinting through false eyelashes, did not recognise herself and promptly burst into tears. Her mother and the Aunts dismissed it as pre Wedding nerves and that was before her nails were buffed and painted within an inch of their lives.

The final straw came when Gary was informed that only top hat and tails from Louis Copeland would be required for the men. Donna had suggested that tweed suits were the in thing at the moment. Her mother scoffed at this stating "Have you looked at your fathers corporation lately. He would look ridiculous like a sheep farmer and Gary would look like a country bumpkin." Gary hit the roof and threatened to walk. But Gary had a backbone of steel.

Two days before the Wedding the young couple flew out to the Greek Island of Rhodes and were married in a little church beside a beach near the Greek village of Lindos. It was left to Garys sister to break the news to Donnas family. On their Wedding night the hotel singer sang Frank Sinatra's "I did it My Way" Donna and Gary grinned at each other and were more than ready to face the music back home where there would be Hell to pay and where no doubt Celine would be like a bat out of Hell.

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