

A Matchmaker's Journey

*Pemberley
to
Dublin*

Catherine Hemingway

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Pemberley to Dublin

A Matchmaker's Journey

By

Catherine Hemingway

Also by the Author

The Matchmaker of Pemberley
An Amorous Sequel to All Jane Austen's Novels

Dedication

TO MY IRISH ANCESTORS

“The heart of Ireland can be found in the voices of its poets.”

Chapter 1

SOME MIGHT CONSIDER A PLAIN face and aloof manner to be a deficit for a single woman of marriageable age, but the Honourable Miss Catherine Carteret considered it to be her second greatest asset; her first being a brilliant and inquisitive mind that valued scholarship and learning over the rules imposed by society. Fortunately, she was born into wealth and had no requirement to marry which was exactly her intention to never do.

As the firstborn child of Viscount Dalrymple, she enjoyed the privileges of wealth and consequence as well as the support of her rather shy, introverted, intellectual father who recognised the unique qualities of his gifted daughter early in her development. On the other hand, her mother despaired of her daughter's focus on education rather than learning her place in society and eventually finding a suitable match, a priority for any eligible young woman, even if she lacked beauty and was disinterested in fashion and social graces. Her parent's marriage had been one of compromise with each party extracting those necessities from the relationship that would allow them to thrive despite the limitations of the other.

Henry Carteret was born a second son with no prospect of an inheritance and was therefore allowed to pursue his intellectual interests in ancient languages, history, antiquities, and the sciences, with the prospect of creating an endowment at Trinity College in Dublin that would provide him a respectable title as a dean of one of the schools and a means of income. The plan was disrupted when his older brother, William, heir to the estate and an avid horseman, had the misfortune of falling from his horse and breaking his neck in

a hunting accident leaving behind his wife, Martha, and a young daughter, Margaret. Henry, a bachelor at the time, inherited the title and was thrust into the role of managing the family estate, Rathclare Hall, and tasked with building the family's wealth and prosperity.

Miss Caroline Walsh was from the Old English landed gentry that had claimed property in Ireland two centuries earlier and built large, prosperous estates, but later fell victim to the vicissitudes of ever-changing laws on the part of the English Parliament that limited the fortunes of both Irish Protestants and Catholics alike. She had determined to leverage her modest dowry and ensure her place in society by means of a well-connected marriage and was abundantly endowed with finely composed features, a graceful figure, and captivating manners which were exceeded only by an acute ambition to achieve social prominence. The shy new viscount was no match for her wiles and quickly fell in line behind a woman quite happy to guide him towards increased wealth and distinction in local society. That he had no special aspirations towards either was of little consequence and so they had settled into their separate roles; he pursued his scholarly interests while she pursued an endless array of prosperous connections and social engagements.

Two years after the birth of their daughter, Catherine, she delivered a son named Charles, thus fulfilling the primary duty of a married woman to produce an heir and secure the longevity of the family line through inheritance. The success and prosperity of her children became the focus of her life. Martha, now widowed, moved to Rathclare Park, a smaller home on the family estate, to raise her daughter but succumbed to a fever when Margaret was eight years old, and the child moved back to Rathclare Hall under the care of her aunt and uncle.

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“Catherine, my dear, would it surprise you to learn that you can expect a gentleman caller, a recent acquaintance we made in Bath? Surely you remember Colonel Fitzwilliam who stood up for Sir Thomas Bertram when he married our cousin, Elizabeth Elliot. I have

just received a note that he recently arrived in Dublin and plans to call on you tomorrow.”

“Of course, I remember him, Mamma, but why do you infer that he will be calling on me? We made his acquaintance at the same time, and I think we may presume he wishes to make a courtesy call on both of us.”

“Come, come, my dear Catherine, of course he is calling on you. After all, you were the one who broke from your usual custom by accepting his invitation to dance during the reception we gave at the Royal Crescent, and you engaged in extended conversations with him at several other social gatherings. He was quite attentive to you despite your usual pattern of discouraging suitors with your aloofness and disinterest; it would appear you were not entirely successful at discouraging his attentions. I must say I was greatly relieved that you did not try to make a fool of him when he invited you to dance, and I was surprised you even accepted the offer; I held my breath for fear that you might practice your usual method of discouraging partners by turning the wrong way or stepping on his toes. Really, my dear, you should make more of an effort to encourage eligible suitors.”

“Mamma, just because I danced with him once in Bath and found his society agreeable enough to engage in a few interesting conversations, you can hardly consider him to be a suitor let alone infer that his reason for making a social call during his travels has anything at all to do with courtship.”

“Catherine, you may say whatever you will, but you cannot deny that by all appearances you enjoyed your conversations with him; he seems genial and well informed, his looks are agreeable, his address impeccable, his manners pleasing, he dresses well, and is very much the gentleman, not to mention the fact that he is the son of an earl. Even your cousin, Elizabeth, remarked on his eligibility and rank despite his being a second son, and I do believe if she had not been cheated out of her inheritance and left in an impoverished state by that scoundrel Sir William Elliot, I venture she might have aimed to secure him for herself.”

“Ah yes, a second son, in need of marrying an heiress to ensure his standard of living and guarantee his future. Perhaps we may view

him more accurately as just another of society's fortune hunters, but, really, it makes no difference, as you know full well that I have no intention of marrying, so if that is his reason for calling, he will be sorely disappointed to have gone to the bother."

"Catherine, is it too much to ask that you make yourself agreeable, extend basic social courtesies to the gentleman, and be open to his attentions? He does you a great honour by travelling so far to pay a call and I shall not have you spurn him because of your stubborn and obstinate decision to remain single. It is unbecoming an eligible young lady of consequence and you have an obligation to your family to reconcile yourself to the prospect of marriage. If your father were still alive, he would support me on this topic to be sure. He set aside a sizeable dowry for just such a purpose, not to support your life as a spinster, whatever you may think."

"Mamma, at seven and twenty I am well past the courtship years of an 'eligible young lady'. I am committed to my work and my studies, which my father fully approved and supported, and I shall not trade that in to become the possession of a husband and brood mare for a gaggle of children. You know my feelings on this, and I have the means to stand by this decision thanks to my father. Will you please relent on this subject at last? I will happily demonstrate all the necessary courtesies to Colonel Fitzwilliam when he arrives tomorrow as I do find his society agreeable, but you must limit your expectations of that leading to anything more than a friendly exchange of goodwill. He is a man of information and an engaging conversationalist with whom I enjoyed some rather lively discussions when we met in Bath, but that is all you can expect. Does he say what time we may expect him?"

"He will come at teatime in the afternoon, and I admonish you to dress appropriately for our guest. None of this grey you seem to favour these days. Wear the pretty green dress with the lace trim I just had made; it is a becoming colour on you, and have Bridget do your hair up. Really, it is distressing you pay so little attention to your appearance."

What her mother said was quite true. She learned to take advantage of her tall, thin frame, unremarkable complexion, and lank brown hair dressed as unfashionably as her gowns, to go largely

unnoticed when she had entered her adolescence and experienced the pressure of the rites of passage associated with becoming an eligible young lady in society. Towards that end she came to realise early on that being a purposefully clumsy dance partner would ensure she was asked infrequently. That she was considered plain of looks, awkward, shy, and aloof added to her coat of armour and discouraged attention from suitors. The more she eschewed the demands made by society the more it freed her to pursue her own interests, which she did with great appetite and relish.

Foremost, she had learned from a very early age that she had a great aptitude for languages. Her first had been learning the local Irish language, a Gaelic dialect, that was forbidden to be spoken by the servants but was used frequently when no one was around to observe it. Her mind was like a sponge, and she learned vocabulary and pronunciation effortlessly which she kept to herself, as it amused her to eavesdrop when she was within hearing of the servants, and only accidentally revealed it to them at the age of four when she asked a question of the maid who was dressing her. Thereafter the staff were careful not to speak it around her, but by then it was too late, and they were far too unobservant to realise when she was nearby, so it became her little secret.

What was not a secret was her precocity for Latin and Greek, languages that her father favoured to study and speak with his friends from Trinity College. While he was now a viscount, he had lost none of his interest and enthusiasm for studying ancient scrolls and antiquities. When he first heard Catherine speak in Latin, he assumed she was merely parroting sounds that she did not understand. When she began to recite passages and ask about their meanings at the age of six, he knew that she was intellectually gifted in a very significant way. It was so remarkable that when his scholarly friends from Trinity came to call, she was invited to demonstrate her proficiency almost as a parlor trick. His friends were amazed and encouraging much to his wife's chagrin, who considered her precocity unseemly and meant to discourage the demonstrations.

By the time she was ten she was conversant in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese along with Greek and Latin. When a

visiting German professor came to call, she quickly developed an aptitude for that language as well. She kept the Gaelic as her little secret knowing neither of her parents would approve since it was a forbidden language. Her interests were not limited to languages for, like her father, she loved antiquities and history, including translating manuscripts and annotating scrolls from ancient times. She had an aptitude for the sciences as well and took particular interest in the medicinal use of plants and herbs keeping a personal garden near the kitchen garden.

Her father felt an obligation to allow her to develop her gifts and was relieved when his son reached an age so that officially engaging a tutor would be tolerated by his wife without disquieting her, thus giving him an opening to include Catherine in the lessons. Lady Dalrymple much preferred to have her daughter focus on learning music, drawing or watercolour taught by highly trained masters, as well as the finer points of sewing, needle point, and country dances alongside other young ladies her age. The French language and even a little Italian were acceptable to demonstrate a worldly education, but Catherine's natural facility on that front far exceeded those of any local teacher. Calling on neighbours and receiving guests was another of her mother's priorities in which Catherine grudgingly participated. Conversation about the weather and roads, the latest fashions, upcoming balls, social excursions, and teas, all were tedious, unwelcome events, and a distraction from her studies. At her father's insistence, she was allowed to join her brother and his tutor in the mornings before her mother demanded her daughter's time for the rest of the day.

Her brother had neither her drive nor appetite for studies being rambunctious by nature and easily distracted. Conjugating Latin verbs and translating simple sentences seemed a worthless occupation to Charles who far preferred outdoor activities like riding, hunting, and fishing. He displayed all the airs of a traditional country gentleman matched by a natural amiability that made him widely admired in social circles. Taking after his mother, his pleasing countenance and agreeable address ensured the attention of many highly eligible young ladies and when he came of age, his father had arranged a match with Augusta Byrne, a socially prominent

descendant of an Old English, Protestant family long established as large estate owners near Dublin, who was perfectly suited to marry Charles and carry on the family dynasty.

Much to her mother-in-law's delight, Augusta was predisposed to enjoy the role of a leading socialite who eagerly engaged in planning and participating in events that her sister-in-law abhorred. She had a large coterie of friends and delighted in identifying eligible suitors and plotting matches that would advance the social standing of those closest to her, requiring her to stay abreast of all the latest news and gossip which she did with relish. When her father-in-law fell ill and passed away unexpectedly, she enthusiastically embraced the role of Viscountess Dalrymple along with her young husband, Charles, and fulfilled her duty by providing two sons, William and Henry, now aged 7 and 5.

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When the housekeeper announced the arrival of Colonel Fitzwilliam and showed him into the drawing room, Lady Dalrymple welcomed him and immediately sent for Catherine. She was met with a bow and an amiable smile by the gentleman; his face reflecting the healthy glow of exercise, the aftermath of having arrived on horseback, and exhibiting the relaxed, affable goodwill that seemed to permeate all his social encounters.

"How kind of you to call on us, Colonel Fitzwilliam. We are delighted to see you, are we not, Catherine?" said the viscountess with far more warmth and enthusiasm than she usually demonstrated towards new acquaintances.

"Yes, Mamma," replied Catherine with an edge of impatience in her voice. "May I ask what brings you to Dublin, Colonel? Are you here on business or leisure pursuits?"

"I have a great affection for Ireland and make it a practice to visit as often as I can. I was stationed in Dublin in 1796 when there were concerns about the arrival of a French fleet to support a Catholic uprising, and the experience stirred my fascination with the locale and its residents. Dublin is one of the most splendid capitols in northern Europe with its great courtyards and buildings; Trinity

College and College Green; the grandeur of the Parliament building outshines its rival in London, in my opinion; and the Royal Exchange, Four Courts with its dome and rotunda, the Dame Street theatre district, all make for compelling reasons to visit. I find the wide streets and squares are much to be admired with assorted bridges and walkways along the banks of the Liffey. Politicians and professors, merchants and sailors, actors and musicians, fashionable gentlemen and ladies are all to be found here. I was recently told that the heart of Ireland can be found in the voices of its poets, and I have a great fondness for poetry,” he replied with the slightest of smiles and a nod to Catherine.

“Do tell us news of our new acquaintances in Bath. We were ever so pleased to attend the engagement party of your cousin, Miss Darcy, to Dr. James Baldwin. Have their nuptials taken place since last we met?” asked the viscountess. “They were such a delightful young couple. I have always maintained that marriage brings great felicity to both families while the newlyweds emit a special radiance that emanates to all in their orbit; indeed, the blessings of marriage are considerable, would you agree, Colonel?”

“Indeed,” he replied. “My darling cousin, Georgianna, and Dr. Baldwin took their vows at the family estate of Pemberley in Derbyshire earlier this month and it was a joyous occasion. In fact, the true felicity to which you refer extended its reach to another young couple, Mrs. Darcy’s sister, Miss Kitty Bennet; she became engaged to Mr. Thomas Baldwin, the brother of the groom, to the delight of all the families involved. It was announced just prior to the wedding and the new Mrs. Baldwin will now have a permanent connection with her dearest friend, Miss Bennet, as her future sister-in-law, and both will reside near each other in Bath. It seems marriage may have been a contagious element in that fair city when you consider the courtship and marriage of Sir Thomas Bertram to your cousin, Miss Elizabeth Elliot, followed shortly by the engagements of the Misses Darcy and Bennet.”

“How delightful!” exclaimed the viscountess. “What a happy outcome for all, do you not agree, Catherine? Indeed, who knows what might follow should the marriage contagion continue to spread beyond Bath,” smiled her mother.

“I am certain there are some who must have immunity from such a contagion, Mamma,” replied her daughter, while making a concerted effort to conceal her perturbation with her mother for encouraging and prolonging this line of conversation. While Colonel Fitzwilliam’s presence was not unwelcome, this point of discussion and her mother’s enthusiasm for the topic was.

Perhaps sensing her sentiments, the colonel suggested that he would take great pleasure in seeing the grounds of the estate if Miss Carteret was agreeable to guiding the tour. “I remember hearing from Lady Bertram that during her stay, you took much pleasure in walking in the gardens and did so often. I would greatly enjoy a tour if you’re amenable to the idea of an outing?”

“Of course, Catherine, you must extend the courtesy of a tour of the grounds to Colonel Fitzwilliam,” exhorted her mother. “It is such a lovely day, you should enjoy the favourable weather, and I will have tea served when you return from your walk. Do take your time for there is no hurry on my account.”

With relief Catherine acquiesced to the scheme, donning a straw bergère with green ribbons and proceeded from the drawing room through a door that led outside to a large garden that was immaculately manicured with hedges enclosing flowers, separated by brick walkways leading to a small pond and beyond that an open woodland.

“May I ask how long since you arrived in Dublin?” asked Catherine.

“Just a few days ago. It has been almost two years since my last visit, and I felt a desire to acquaint myself with the country. I have plans to travel south to Waterford and then west to Connacht. I have a longing to visit Waterford Glassworks which is said to create the finest quality crystal in the world, and I understand touring the facility is quite a remarkable experience; I greatly enjoy observing artisans at work and I am interested in the manufacturing process that combines flint and crown glass to enhance the optical properties of both; science and art working together.

“I have you to thank for my interest in visiting Connacht after being schooled in the existence of an Irish pirate queen and her negotiations with Queen Elizabeth more than two centuries ago. I am

quite intrigued to hear the folklore and learn more of the history behind the story of Grace O'Malley. I consider it a worthwhile undertaking to pursue the legend of such an adventurous female buccaneer and shall report back to you on any salacious intrigues that I happen to uncover if you like?"

"I am all astonishment that my revealing the story of Grace O'Malley had such an impact on you, Colonel, especially to have inspired an adventurous journey to such a remote place. Shall I take care to guard against sharing other historical records with you lest you feel compelled to rush off on impetuous quests for information on little-known characters in history?"

"Indeed, I hope you do continue sharing such anecdotes as will inspire my appetite for adventure. I should be vastly disappointed if you withheld these intriguing references that are so readily at hand to you as a student of history. From whence is your interest derived? It is unusual to find such a well-educated woman as you and I wonder at the source of your studies and exposure to subjects such as history. Were you introduced to science and mathematics as well? Languages perhaps?"

"My father was a gifted intellectual and linguist closely associated with Trinity College and promoted my education from an early age when he discovered I had a unique facility for languages. Although education was frowned upon for young ladies, as we are expected to be docile, obedient, fragile things dependent on men, he recognised that my unusual gifts deserved development, much to my mother's vexation.

"She was adamant that my brother and I both be instructed in manners, speech, dress, and dance, but from there our paths were to diverge. He was to be taught science, mathematics, arts, language, and literature while my focus was to be on making myself pleasing to potential suitors and minimising my educational pursuits which were considered unattractive and unwarranted. As I was no beauty and eager to learn, I resisted the direction given by my mother, and my father, who took pity on my plight, arranged for me to join my brother in studies when a tutor was brought in to advance his education. My father interceded with my mother to ensure my mornings were dedicated to learning and my afternoons devoted to

living up to her expectations, as well as those of society at large, as evidenced by the ceaseless visits between neighbours, endless dinners, entertainments, and balls. I was highly successful in my educational endeavours and managed to subvert my mother's goals whenever possible."

"A subversive!" he laughed. "How intriguing. I must confess my great curiosity as to ways by which you subverted your mother's efforts to promote you in society. Did you take to your bed and refuse to socialise? How does one conspire to elude these demands for I have often wished to avoid such tedious occurrences myself?"

"By performing all the tasks as poorly as possible, of course, for that is the key," she laughed. "For instance, if you step on enough toes or turn the wrong way in a dance set, you will eventually stop being invited to dance and perhaps be fortunate enough to find your way to the library or study."

"Am I fortunate that you did not subject me to this devious device when I invited you to dance at the reception in Bath where first we met? You danced quite well and were a charming partner which makes me wonder what compelled you to accept my offer?"

"Once I determined to accept your invitation, I made the decision not to embarrass you with unprovoked mistakes meant to discourage you, as it seemed unjustifiable under the circumstances, since you had no way of knowing this was my usual strategy to discourage dance partners. I was surprised when you approached me as I make it a habit to remain as aloof as possible in such settings, and I wondered what motivated you to extend the invitation. Also, my mother would have been terribly vexed if I had embarrassed her at the reception since she was hosting it; I am sure she was excessively concerned that I might do something imprudent from the moment we joined the dance set until it finished."

"Then I shall consider myself lucky to have avoided an embarrassing moment. As to the impetus to extend the invitation, I was curious about your disposition as I had heard of rather ungenerous comments made about you by your cousin, Miss Elizabeth Elliot, Lady Bertram that is, whom your mother had kindly taken under wing after the death of her father. I was merely curious

to determine if your diffidence was imagined or if you had been judged unfairly.”

“Do you think you can apprehend one’s character in the short interval of a country dance?” she asked.

“Perhaps not your full character but I found your conversation as candid as it was amusing, which was unexpected and refreshing, and you did dance very well might I add.”

Catherine managed a small nod of approval and with that they adjourned their discussion to rejoin her mother in the drawing room where tea was being served. As they took their seats there was a noise in the entryway and the housekeeper opened the door followed by the extravagant entrance of a handsome, elegant young woman of graceful bearing who enthusiastically declared, “Dear Mamma, have you heard the latest news of our neighbours, the Brennans? It is quite unexpected I assure you and I wasted not a moment to drop in since I was passing by anyway. Oh dear, my apologies, for I did not know you were receiving guests this afternoon, and a gentleman caller no less. Another unexpected event but most highly welcomed I can assure you. Please forgive the intrusion; I do hope I am not interrupting anything private.”

“Colonel Fitzwilliam, may I introduce you to my daughter-in-law, the Viscountess Dalrymple. Augusta, Colonel Edward Fitzwilliam is a new acquaintance we met in Bath on our last visit, and it happens that he stood up for Sir Thomas Bertram when he married our cousin Elizabeth. He recently arrived in Dublin and has just now made a call on us.”

Catherine’s discomfort at the unexpected arrival of her sister-in-law at this inauspicious moment was exceeded only by her concern that this notorious busybody would not only jump to conclusions about the intentions of the new visitor but insinuate more to the connection than the visit merited. While she always enjoyed her conversations with the colonel and his presence was not unwelcome, she wanted no conjectures on the part of her family as to the motives of his visit or his intentions as they pertained to her. This was equally true regarding him; whatever his purposes were for travelling to Ireland, she wanted no misapprehensions about her interest in him beyond a casual acquaintanceship.

“What an unexpected delight it is to have a gentleman caller visiting my sister-in-law. I marvel at my excellent timing. May I ask how long you’ll be visiting in our fair city, sir?” asked Augusta.

“I have no set time for my visit but do plan a few sojourns to other parts of the country including Waterford,” replied Edward.

“Waterford! How lovely. I have become quite attached to the cut-glass bowl my husband gave me for our anniversary. It is quite spectacular you know. You remember the one, Mamma, I used it to serve punch at Easter when we had the large gathering, and I must say our guests were very impressed with its size and brilliancy, and the dear little serving cups are so delightful to hold. I received ever so many compliments, and we were quite the envy of all our friends I can assure you. You must pay a visit upon your return, Colonel, and report all you learn about the craftsmanship as I am sure my husband, the viscount, will be eager to hear about it; he is excessively interested in all the finest of amenities for entertaining. What an amusing scheme you already have planned for your travels, and I can assure you my husband will be delighted to meet you and learn more of your plans.

“In fact, I stopped by to invite dear Mamma and Catherine to dine with us tomorrow after church. You must promise to join them! I’m sure I can think of nothing that would please my husband more than to make your acquaintance. You can tell us all about our cousin’s new husband, Sir Thomas Bertram, a baronet no less. Indeed, imagine our delight when we learned of Elizabeth’s marriage; I knew that eventually she would enchant someone of rank who would wish to marry such an elegant creature. We had hoped she might find a match during her visit here, even though she was in mourning at the time, but alas, no one quite suited her from amongst our acquaintances, and to think it all happened so quickly; they knew each other for just a month or more. Imagine that? Still, where romance is concerned, time is of no matter, do you not agree? No matter whatsoever. Well, I must be off. Please promise to join us tomorrow, Colonel. I will save my news about the Brennans for later, Mamma. Until tomorrow.” With that Viscountess Dalrymple swept out of the house with a flourish.

Catherine was severely importuned by the entire direction of the conversation and immediately asserted to Colonel Fitzwilliam that he was under no obligation to accept the invitation. She could already foresee her family becoming attached to the notion that his purpose in visiting included courtship and wished to suppress any such extraordinary ideas by all parties involved. She shrank from the idea of extending his acquaintance further than it was already established which could be considered superficial at best.

“We have no wish to interfere with the schemes you may already have designed for tomorrow, Colonel, and you are certainly under no obligation to accommodate my sister-in-law’s invitation considering how unexpectedly it surfaced. Please do not hesitate to decline the offer if you are so inclined so you may pursue your original plans unencumbered, as I am sure my brother and his wife will understand.”

“My dear, your words could be considered impolitic for you are in danger of making our guest feel most unwelcomed which I am sure cannot be your intention,” said Lady Dalrymple to her daughter with a raise of her eyebrows as well as her voice.

“Of course, we would be greatly obliged if you choose to join us tomorrow, Colonel, and I am sure you will be highly gratified to make the acquaintance of my son who is a most charming gentleman and to see the family estate which is quite impressive you know and is much admired. We attend Christ Church services at 11:00 a.m. and can arrange to pick you up in our carriage after the service. Dinner is served early on Sundays as it is necessary to give the servants’ time to themselves later in the day. Some of them are Catholics you know, and I am sure find their way to Papist services where they may, but we must tolerate it as it is difficult to find good Protestant servants for all positions although we do make the effort. Please say you will join us as your companionship will be most welcomed by all of us.”

Colonel Fitzwilliam replied that he was delighted to receive the invitation and not at all indisposed to accept it as he had no pressing plans for the next day and would greatly enjoy a visit to the family seat and a view of the countryside. “I am quite fond of walking and the church is within easy reach of my accommodations; I relish a

morning stroll and will plan to meet you at the end of the service if that is agreeable, so long as it does not importune Miss Carteret for whom, it seems, the entire plan was unanticipated. Perhaps she had other designs for how she would spend her day.”

“I can assure you that it will do my daughter a great deal of good to spend a pleasant afternoon with family and friends rather than locked away in her study as is her usual habit. We shall look for you after the service and arrange for you to join us in our carriage. I am sure you will have a most amusing time, and we will gladly welcome your company for the afternoon, do you not agree, Catherine?”

Chapter 2

“SUCH AN HONOUR TO HAVE you in attendance at our service, Viscount Dalrymple,” exclaimed Reverend Murray as he vigorously shook his hand. “I do hope you approved of the sermon today, after all, we are the beneficiary of your inestimable generosity. Indeed, we would be unable to continue our ongoing work identifying gifted pupils from necessitous Catholic families for scholarships to attend our Protestant Charter Schools. The hedge schools are a scandal but so difficult to stamp out even though they are outlawed, and yet Catholics must receive an education if they are to contribute to society. What better solution than removing the students from their families so they can be educated as Protestants and become advocates for the Church of Ireland? We are in your debt for supporting this vital and worthy cause.”

“Yes, of course,” replied the viscount, as he extracted his hand from the grip of the rector. “We must all do our part to support the

spread of the true faith and allow worthy students to better themselves. Keep up the good work, Mr. Murray.”

“Viscountess, to have you in attendance on such a glorious day is a blessing indeed, and may I be so bold as to say your mere presence elevates the observance of our Lord’s Day to even greater grandeur,” enthused Reverend Murray bowing deeply to Augusta as she passed with a nod.

“Good day to you, Dowager Viscountess. May the blessings of the Lord be with you, and may he hold your beloved husband close to the bosom of his heart. I believe a better man never lived than your dear, departed, husband and you must consider your own sorrow as a mere shadow of the joy with which he was received in heaven. Such felicity to have you among us today; may you be rewarded with good health for the rest of your days. And whom have we here but your charming daughter, the Honourable Miss Carteret, gracing our service. Such a privilege to have you both here today,” he continued to prattle as the dowager acknowledge him with a smile and Catherine gave him a diffident look.

Throughout the service Catherine wondered if Colonel Fitzwilliam was in attendance or still planning to join them for the afternoon. She was vexed by her family for swooping in to include him in their party and discomfited by the prospect of spending time with a man whom she admired for his amiable qualities and lively conversation yet felt intruded upon by his very presence in their midst and the pressures she could see building in the mindset of her family. It was too much to bear and caused a great disturbance to her tranquillity; she had created an orderly life for herself to pursue her interests and, heretofore, managed to regulate her family’s expectations about her future and her decision to never marry. This unplanned disruption was an irritant and a distraction even though it reflected no ill will towards the source of the disturbance.

As they extricated themselves from the obsequious pastor and moved towards the exit Catherine spied Colonel Fitzwilliam standing near a tree on the grounds of the church looking relaxed and genial, exuding good-humour and confidence. He caught her glance and gave her a nod of recognition before stepping forward to join her party. Introductions ensued and the exaggerated enthusiasm of her

brother and his wife as well as her mother left her with an urge to flee the churchyard and abandon them all to their shameless opportunism at her expense. Not that she blamed the colonel who was an unwitting victim of their presumptuous behaviour; nevertheless, his presence had stirred up a tempest of upheaval in her otherwise tranquil world. As there was no escaping her conspiratorial family, she was determined to conceal her vexation knowing that the visitor would soon begin his journey of discovery to other parts of the country and no longer importune her or invigorate false notions of future connections within her family.

Upon their arrival at Rathclare Hall, the family seat, and following a tour of the splendid estate and a discussion of the heredity of the Dalrymple family in Ireland with their connection to the first Earl of Stair in Scotland, the party was seated in the large dining room for the repast when Charles asked Colonel Fitzwilliam about his travel plans.

“I understand from my wife that you have visited our fair country before, Colonel, and that you have plans to travel to the south. I believe Waterford is one of your destinations. Is that what brings you to our shores or are there larger plans at work?” asked Charles, casting a knowing smile to Augusta that made Catherine want to cringe.

“I have several areas of interest during my travels,” replied Colonel Fitzwilliam. “I am eager to visit the Trinity College Library in hopes of seeing the historic *Book of Kells* which I understand is on display there. I am told it is regarded as a national treasure and was put in safekeeping at the college around 1653, but more recently was made available for public viewing. It is said they are uniquely illustrated with brilliant colours, ornate Celtic knots, and images of mythical beasts. That such precious manuscripts have survived to this day is a very compelling reason to make a special trip to see them.”

“Then you are in luck, my good man. Seated next to you is the key to unlocking your private viewing experience for not only does my sister have access to the guardians of these manuscripts you seek, but she is also fluent in Latin and can even serve as your interpreter when viewing them if needed. She is an expert in

antiquities and has many associates at Trinity who rely on her abilities. She knows Greek as well, do you not, Catherine?"

"Yes," replied Catherine to her brother with a note of exasperation in her voice. Then softening, she directed her attention to the visitor and went on to say she would be happy to arrange a special viewing of the treasured manuscripts during her next visit to the college. "I am sure you will find it a worthwhile application of your time if it does not interfere with your trip to Waterford and journey to Connacht."

"I have no specific time in mind for my journey other than waiting for fair weather when I sail to Waterford and then on to Connacht. My plans are entirely flexible and if I may have the privilege of escorting you to Trinity College and relying on your unique insights, I am certain to learn more with you by my side. I am at your service whenever you wish. You may name the day."

"May I ask what takes you to Connacht?" interjected Viscount Dalrymple. "Waterford in the south has its attractions but the west of Ireland is extremely poor, rather wild I'm afraid, and overrun with Papists who have no love for the British. Surely there can be little of interest to attract you to such an outpost as Connacht."

"Then perhaps you have not heard of Grace O'Malley, the Pirate Queen of Connacht," replied Colonel Fitzwilliam.

Silence followed this announcement momentarily until finally the dowager viscountess, on observing a small smile cross her daughter's face, spoke up. "Pray tell me your trip is not based on some outlandish story told to you by my daughter, Colonel. She will make a knowledgeable guide at Trinity College to see the *Book of Kells* for she is well known and admired there by colleagues of my dear departed husband, but you must consider some of the stories she comes across may be far-fetched and anecdotal at best. I caution you to not subscribe to all the wild tales she comes across in her research, for the western seas are rough and there are few attractions once you arrive in such an outback place. There may be pirates in the region to this day!"

"Mamma, the story of Grace O'Malley is documented not only in Ireland but also in England as it is well known she met with Queen Elizabeth to negotiate the release of her son. I happened to share her history with Colonel Fitzwilliam while we were in Bath and

apparently it captured his imagination; that it spurred his interest to visit Connacht is entirely his own doing,” replied Catherine.

“Ah, you make it sound like a risky and perilous adventure indeed,” he answered, “which intrigues me all the more and further excites my interest to embark on this quest but, let me assure you, I will not be travelling alone and have engaged able-bodied men to accompany me and guarantee my safety, if I find myself confronted with treacherous inhabitants or seafaring pirates. I plan to sail the eastern coast to Waterford as I’ve only seen a portion of it, from there south to Bantry Bay and then on to the western shore to see the Cliffs of Moher which I’m told are very impressive, and from there on to Connacht. I have spent time in Dublin over the years and visited north to Belfast, but this will give me a better view of the entire country, the beauty of which I already greatly admire.”

“Pray tell us what you expect to find in Connacht?” asked Charles. “Surely memories of this pirate queen from over two hundred years ago will be long since lost to folklore. What can there be to discover? Certainly not pirate gold or the spoils of stolen treasure. Such a journey seems a fool’s errand if you will forgive my saying so. If it is adventure you like, you will certainly find it on your journey, but it is a long way to travel in search of intelligence on the existence of a long-lost pirate queen. Did you say Grace O’Malley was her name? To be sure, every soul you meet in Connacht will claim to be an O’Malley descendant once they see a fine British gentleman making inquiries.”

“Perhaps you will be right,” laughed Fitzwilliam, “but my sense of adventure drives me on and why not make an expedition to view your beautiful country from the sea, and uncover local lore along the way, be it in Waterford or Connacht? I expect to have many tales of my journey and will gladly share them with you upon my return.”

Catherine was relieved when the conversation turned to other topics as she felt certain that her mother would harp on the subject later and scold her for setting the idea in motion. Still, she had to admire the aplomb of Colonel Fitzwilliam who managed the entire incident with his usual ease, poise, and composure.

Chapter 3

THE DAY HAD ARRIVED FOR the visit to view the *Book of Kells* at the Trinity College library. Catherine was scheduled to return some Greek manuscripts she had been appending to Edmund Fitzgerald, the Dean of the College of Theology and head of Ancient Languages and Antiquities. She had prearranged to pick up Colonel Fitzwilliam at his lodgings, much to her mother's chagrin.

"Are you prepared to ruin your good name and that of your family?" demanded her mother. "It is positively scandalous for you to ride alone in a carriage with Colonel Fitzwilliam even if it is only a short ride to the college. What can you be thinking?"

"I have long since forsaken any notion of impropriety regarding my comings and goings at the college, Mother, and you know that. I am twenty and seven, well past my formative years, and have been making these trips, unattended, to see Dean Fitzgerald ever since father died. What possible difference can it make for the colonel to ride with me? I am sure our acquaintances have completely lost interest in my comings and goings at the college and if they have not, let them impugn me as they will. I have no intention of giving up my work with Dean Fitzgerald, who is old enough to be my father," replied Catherine.

"Surely the colonel could meet you there rather than riding in the carriage with you unattended?"

"Really, Mamma. It is far more convenient to drive him to our destination than searching for him once I arrive, and he can help carry the manuscripts that I am returning. If people choose to gossip about my independence, let them, for it matters not one whit to me, and I beg your forbearance in this matter."

“Well then, take Bridget with you if you need help with the manuscripts,” insisted her mother.

“I will not take my maid with me and that is final,” declared Catherine emphatically.

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Colonel Fitzwilliam was waiting outside when the carriage pulled up and immediately joined her. “Thank you for offering the ride although it would have been perfectly agreeable for me to meet you there and I do hope riding alone with me will not be considered a breach of decorum by your acquaintances; I am loath to do anything that would impugn your reputation.”

“Be not alarmed about damaging my reputation, Colonel. I can assure you that I have long since breached the boundaries of propriety with my solitary visits to the college. I used to accompany my father to visit his colleagues and have continued to do so since his death bearing the stigma of my unconventional behaviour with pride. I will not be importuned by rumourmongers and have no qualms about raising the suspicions of local gossips by riding in the carriage with you,” she replied with a smile. “I look forward to showing you the library which cannot help but impress. It dates back to 1732 with the Long Room measuring some 65 metres long and housing tens of thousands of books and manuscripts. My dear friend, Dean Edmund Fitzgerald, is a delight and the most well-informed historian you will ever have the pleasure of meeting. His expansive knowledge of ancient languages and antiquities is exceeded only by the unabashed delight he takes when expounding on those subjects, for he is quite a fascinating man despite his years and charms everyone with whom he comes in contact.”

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“My dear, Catherine, how good it is to see you, and this must be the gentleman you mentioned in your note. Welcome to Trinity, sir. Welcome, indeed! You could not find a more accomplished companion to showcase our library than the honourable Miss

Carteret who is a highly esteemed scholar amongst our elite circle of historians and theologians; none better including myself mind you. Such a facility for languages! It's quite remarkable, even when she was a little girl," gushed Dean Fitzgerald whose rosy round face was ebullient with pleasure.

Catherine's cheeks coloured as she spoke; "Dean Fitzgerald, may I introduce Colonel Fitzwilliam, a recent acquaintance I met during a visit to Bath who has just arrived for a tour of Ireland and expressed a wish to view the *Book of Kells* while visiting our fair city. Since I just finished annotating the transcription of the Augustinian manuscript you requested and was preparing to return it to you, I invited him to join me for a tour. I do hope our visit does not importune you?"

"Oh my, no. You are always welcome as is any friend of yours who fancies to engage in a dialogue about our greatest of medieval treasures, miraculously preserved over the centuries. Come, let us commence. When it is on public display it is open only to a single illuminated page, but you shall see all four gospels and the superb illustrations within."

They entered a small windowless room lined with bookshelves featuring a glass cabinet on a small, stone table illuminated from above by a series of suspended lanterns at one end of the room, with an opening in a wall where the famed *Book of Kells* could be viewed through a sliding partition from a larger room on the other side. The book was opened to a folio featuring an illuminated image which was extraordinary for the brilliancy of the colours and intricacy of design.

Dean Fitzgerald explained, "Here you see what many consider to be the chief treasure of the western world, the magnificent *Book of Kells*. The page currently on view is The Chi Rho introducing Matthew's account of the nativity and is the single most famous page in medieval art for its incomparable illustrations. The ornamentation is of such extraordinary fineness and delicacy that the artist's skills have been likened to those of a goldsmith."

Colonel Fitzwilliam gasped with amazement and marvelled at the sumptuousness of the beautiful images before him. "How many artists were involved, do you think?" he asked.

“There were three artists in all that created the major decorated pages,” the dean answered, then, donning white gloves he removed the treasure from the glass cabinet and began slowly and carefully turning pages of the folios explaining as he went. “Here we see symbols of the evangelists representing Matthew as the Man, Mark as the Lion, Luke as the Calf, and John as the Eagle. These are narrative scenes representing the arrest of Christ here, and his temptation by the Devil as you see here. Then we have portraits of Matthew and John, but there are none of Mark or Luke, at least that have survived.”

“Such intricate, interwoven Celtic knotwork motifs around the portraits of the evangelists,” observed Colonel Fitzwilliam. “What type of materials did they use?”

“The codex is written on both sheepskin and vellum,” replied Catherine. “The whiter vellum was used for the ornamentation and the more mottled sheepskin for the script. Four major scribes copied the text into folios that form the larger volumes. Unfortunately, around 30 folios went missing during the medieval and early modern periods.”

“When was the book originally created and how did it come to be here at Trinity College?” asked Fitzwilliam.

“We cannot be sure. A monastery founded by St. Columcille on Iona was raided by Vikings in 806 and the Columban monks sought refuge in a new monastery at Kells in county Meath. There is no way of knowing if the book was produced wholly at Iona or at Kells, or partially at each location. Following the rebellion of 1641, the church at Kells lay in ruins and around 1653 the book was sent to Dublin by the governor of Kells, and it has since resided here at Trinity,” answered the dean.

When the sacred treasure was returned to its place under the glass cabinet, the three adjourned to Dean Fitzgerald’s office where he and Catherine discussed the writings of Augustine of Hippo while Colonel Fitzwilliam listened on with great admiration. Clearly the dean had a great deal of admiration for the knowledge exhibited by Miss Carteret, whom he had known from a tender age reciting Latin passages at the knee of her father.

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“What an extraordinary experience,” enthused the colonel as they climbed into the carriage and began the drive back towards his lodgings. “Before I arrived, I hoped to merely view a notable historical treasure and admire its beauty from afar like any other visitor. Thanks to you, I was privileged to not only see this incomparable, illustrated masterpiece up close, but also to learn about its unique history from two remarkable experts. Dean Fitzgerald is a delightful acquaintance, generous with his time and expertise, and clearly a great admirer of yours. How shall I repay such a service?”

“If you are willing to take the risk and engage in a rather subversive plan that would shock and dismay my mother, I should like to visit a pub. I have always longed to hear local fiddlers, poets, and singers, gathered to share a pint and their stories with their friends and neighbours, and I may never get such an opportunity again. Will you grant me this indulgence?”

A stunned Colonel Fitzwilliam burst into laughter. “At the risk of never being allowed to cross the thresholds of your mother’s or your brother’s homes, how can I deny you? Surely your family will consider it a great transgression, a slur on the family name, and it will put me at great risk of never being allowed to call on you again or relay the stories of the adventures I am about to embark on to Waterford and Connacht.”

Catherine smiled and conspiratorially whispered, “Then we must keep it our secret for I do not wish to obviate the pleasure of hearing the tales of your voyage with all the inherent risks and hazards, considering that I am at least partially responsible for your quest.” She arched an eyebrow waiting for his answer.

He grinned in response and said, “I know a lively place just across from my accommodations, a gathering place for gentry and common folk alike, but safe from unsavoury scoundrels and reprobates. It is a favourite of locals and women are known to join the merrymaking as well. It may be rough and rowdy for your tastes and you must be prepared to quaff a pint of ale if you wish to fit in, unless you have a taste for Irish whiskey instead.”

“Guinness is a notable brewery and a great contributor to the prosperity of Dublin including the restoration of St. Patrick’s Cathedral. I shall be happy to have a taste of the ‘black gold’.”

When the new arrivals entered the Gerty Browne, the otherwise lively establishment was temporarily hushed as the colonel and his tall, fashionably attired companion appeared. The highly polished wooden bar extended from a wall into a large, old, but well-appointed room filled with patrons on stools at the bar, in worn upholstered booths, and seated at long tables with benches or at small round tables with wooden chairs. As they took a seat at a table near a window, the fiddler picked up his tune again and the din of conversation was restored. A wide-eyed barmaid approached to take their order and appraise the unusual couple in their midst.

“Good day to you, sir. Tis me honour to be serving yourself and the lady so what’s your pleasure?” After receiving the order, she returned shortly gripping two pints of the local favourite stout in her hand.

“Slàinte,” said Fitzwilliam as he raised his glass to which Catherine responded in kind. Her eyes were bright with excitement as she took in their surroundings. The din in the room increased as one patron after another spontaneously broke into song and others joined in. As soon as one song finished another began, or someone stood up to recite a favourite poem extolling the ancient exploits of Queen Medb and battles won by her champion, the boy Cuchulainn, with bawdy verses to make any listener blush.

When a lull occurred, a patron at the bar was heard to say, “Gerty, give us another pint and a song if you please.”

“And I will gladly take payment for your last pint if you please,” replied Gerty who was tending the bar.

“Aye, Gerty. You know meself good for it at the end of the week. Now be a good lass, pour me another pint, and sing us a song for there’s none amongst us can carry a tune so well as you. Sing about the Irish Lacemaker.”

Others in the room joined in to clamour for a song until finally Gerty relented. She was a small, stout, middle-aged woman with round, rosy cheeks and greying hair. As the proprietess, she was in

command of the bar as well as her strong mezzo soprano voice and began singing acapella, filling the room with her sound.

*“Once I was young and pretty,
Blue eyes with dark brown hair
Fair of face I moved with grace,
Living life without a care.*

*“I met an Irish silkie,
Who swore he’d love me true,
He married me and gave to me,
Three bairns who love me too.*

*“My silkie went a roamin’,
My bairns are now full grown,
Tis blessed I was to realise,
My life was now my own.*

*“I became a fine lacemaker,
Learned at my mother’s knee,
I made a start to create the art,
My mother taught to me.*

*“My beauty now is faded,
My hair is grey and snarled,
But I make my lace with a smiling face,
Though my hands be old and gnarled.*

*“My journey’s almost over,
‘Tis advice I will impart,
To play your part with a joyful heart
Make your life a work of art.”*

The crowd joined in to repeat the last line of her song and roared their approval as she finished with her face wreathed in a smile and taking the slightest of bows before raising her hand dismissively. “Who else can offer us some entertainment? Make yourself heard, tis a boisterous crowd here eager to be pleased,” Gerty shouted out.

Catherine, who had been quietly sipping her stout and responding to the atmosphere and liveliness of the crowd, slowly stood up, much to the amazement of every person in the room, none more than Colonel Fitzwilliam. To the shock of all, she began a recitation in the native Irish language which brought a hush to the room, for none expected to hear the words from such an elite,

aristocratic woman. They were in her thrall as she spoke in a clear, clarion voice, her head held high, her complexion flushed, speaking the forbidden language of their ancestors. No one in the room listening to her would ever think her features plain or her manner aloof, especially her escort, Colonel Fitzwilliam. When she finished and sat down, the crowd erupted with applause and murmurs arose while many of the men in the audience stood up, doffed their hats, and approached respectfully to say, “Go raibh maith agat,” Gaelic for ‘thank you’ as the colonel later learned.

When they returned to her carriage, Colonel Fitzwilliam expressed his surprise, admiration, and curiosity. “What did you recite?” he inquired. “I’ve never seen a crowd of people so enthralled.”

“Brigid of Kildaire was a famous and pious noblewoman who converted to Catholicism and began her own monastery, after defying her tyrant father who had offered her as wife to a local king. She became an abbess and some say she was even consecrated as a bishop and practiced priestly duties. I recited the table grace used at her monestary as it seemed to suit a place where food and drink are served. I heard it spoken by some of the servants who worked in our kitchen when I first learned their native language. I’ll recite it for you so you can understand.

*“I should like a great lake of finest ale
For the King of kings
I should like a table of the choicest food
For the family of heaven.
Let the ale be made from the fruits of faith,
And the food be forgiving love.
“I should welcome the poor to my feast,
For they are God’s children.
I should welcome the sick to my feast,
For they are God’s joy.
Let the poor sit with Jesus at the highest place,
And the sick dance with the angels.
“God bless the poor.
God bless the sick.
And bless our human race.*

*God bless our food.
God bless our drink,
All homes, O God, embrace.”*

“Such an apt choice, ‘a lake of the finest ale’. No wonder so many stepped forward to thank you when you finished. I am sure it was the last thing they ever expected to hear, and you were the last person they ever would have expected to recite it. You are truly the most amazing woman of my acquaintance, and I will never forget this most memorable of days, having both seen the *Book of Kells* followed by a trip to the local pub to hear you recite a blessing in a forbidden language. ‘A lake of finest ale’ was inspired.”

With that they parted ways and Catherine sat back in the carriage to enjoy her ebullient spirits all the way back to the estate where she held her secret adventure close from the onslaught of inquiries her mother made about the excursion to Trinity College with Colonel Fitzwilliam.

We hoped you enjoyed this sample. For the full novel, please visit: www.amazon.com

About the Author

CATHERINE KELLY HEMINGWAY IS A literary and visual artist focused on Austenesque novels and pastel portraiture. A retired marketing executive, Catherine debuted her first novel, *The Matchmaker of Pemberley* in 2023 followed by *Pemberley to Dublin*:

A Matchmaker's Journey which released in 2024. Visits to Bath, Chawton, and Winchester rekindled her passion for the remarkable novels and life of Jane Austen. A monthly blog examines the personality dynamics of Austen's characters and how they reflect her own life's experience. If Catherine isn't writing, she is painting, and living out her philosophy to "play your part with a joyful heart, make your life a work of art."

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