Lovereading.co.uk
Helping you choose your next book

You loved your last book...but what are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

Four Weddings and a Fiasco

Written by Catherine Ferguson

Published by AVON

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

This novel is entirely a work of fiction.
The names, characters and incidents portrayed in it are
the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to
actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is
entirely coincidental.

AVON

A division of HarperCollins*Publishers*
1 London Bridge Street
London
SE1 9GF

www.harpercollins.co.uk

A Paperback Original 2016

Copyright © Catherine Ferguson 2016

Catherine Ferguson asserts the moral right to
be identified as the author of this work

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-0-00-816361-7

Set in Minion by Palimpsest Book Production Limited,
Falkirk, Stirlingshire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted,
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior
permission of the publishers.



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC™ C007454

FSC™ is a non-profit international organisation established to promote
the responsible management of the world's forests. Products carrying the
FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come
from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and
ecological needs of present and future generations,
and other controlled sources.

Find out more about HarperCollins and the environment at
www.harpercollins.co.uk/green

Prologue

Some moments in life stay with you.

A vivid memory, full of colour and texture, which, years later, still has the power to make the breath catch in your throat thinking of it.

Of course, they're not always the moments you'd *expect* to live on in your mind.

I can't remember a thing about my first kiss, for example. Nor can I recall what I ate for breakfast the morning I turned twenty-one. And as for my first day in the job as a shy, newly qualified photographer at the advertising agency all those years ago? Well, stomach-churning nerves probably crowded out the details of that particular milestone.

But that moment with my sister, laughing and clinging onto each other, jumping up and down like five-year-olds who've overdosed on gummy bears?

That was one of those moments . . .

I'd called in at our local printer's in Willows Edge on the way home to collect the glossy leaflets we'd designed for our brand new business. The brown package lay on the passenger seat, one of the leaflets taped to the front, and every time I glanced over and saw the words, Sister Act Photography, printed in that elegant, curly script we'd chosen, a little bubble of excitement rose up in me.

When I arrived home, Sienna's car was parked outside. My sister – at twenty-one, almost a decade younger than me – was still living at home with Mum. But we'd decided to use my house as our business headquarters, so she had a key.

I let myself in, yelling, 'I'm back!' and I was about to run upstairs when Sienna appeared in the hallway.

'Got a surprise for you,' she said, her eyes sparkling.

Curious, I followed her through to the living room.

'To celebrate you starting up the business.' Stepping to one side, she gestured with a flourish. 'Ta-dah!'

I could hardly believe my eyes.

There was a piano in my living room.

'What do you think?' asked Sienna eagerly, beaming at my amazed delight. 'You always said you wanted to learn how to play. Well, now you can!'

'Wow. Thank you.' I shook my head and laughed. 'But how could you afford it?'

Sienna was fresh out of college where, like me, she had studied photography. Hardly Miss Moneybags. A lump rose in my throat.

She shrugged. 'A friend wanted rid of it so I persuaded him to sell it to me for a ridiculously low price. Do you like it?'

'Like it? I love it!' I said, attempting 'Chopsticks' through slightly blurry eyes and hitting the wrong notes entirely.

'Bloody hell!' she groaned. 'You definitely need lessons.'

I shrugged. 'Even Chopin had to start somewhere.'

'Are they the leaflets?' She pointed at the package under my arm.

Nodding, I opened it up and passed one to her. She stared at it with glee. 'You know, you really are a chip off the old block.'

We smiled at each other, remembering Dad and his various business ventures, some a great success and a few frankly disastrous.

'You, too,' I said, but Sienna shook her head.

'I'd never have the balls to go it alone. Not without you taking the lead, Big Sis!'

I leaned over her shoulder and we read the leaflet together, poring over it as though we didn't already know the words off by heart.

'Oh, my God, Katy. It's official.' She turned to me, her eyes shining. 'We *are* Sister Act Photography!'

'Yeah, watch out world, here we come,' I grinned.

We looked at each other, mad-eyed, and squealed in unison.

I grabbed her arms and yelled, 'We're going into business!' At which point we started jumping up and down, singing raucously, 'We're going into business! We're going into business!'

I caught a glimpse of us in the mirror above the fireplace.

Two sisters.

Two blonde heads.

Sienna's hair so pale it was almost white, chopped in a short style that highlighted her porcelain skin, blue eyes and small, delicate features. She had a look of Dad when she laughed like that.

And me.

The protective big sister. Taller than Sienna and not quite so fine-featured. My own hair a darker, caramel blonde, shoulder-length. The image of Mum, in photos from the Seventies, with my almond-shaped green eyes, larger nose and fuller lips.

Both of us laughing, almost hysterical with excitement, high on the feeling that we were balanced on the brink of something really special . . .

I grabbed my camera and captured the moment with a selfie.

It's a brilliant photo, if I say so myself.

But it's packed away in a box now with other photos of my sister.

Back then, life seemed so full of promise.

We'd lost our lovely dad six months earlier and it had been tough for us all, especially Mum. I'd long had dreams of setting up on my own as a wedding photographer, and Dad's death was the catalyst for me handing in my notice at the advertising agency

in London and moving back to Willows Edge, the village where I'd grown up. I needed to be there for Mum and Sienna. It felt odd leaving the bustle of the capital for the rather sleepy village of my childhood but it was only an hour's drive from London, so I could easily stay in touch with all my friends there.

Planning my new venture had given us all something to occupy our minds. It even brought the occasional sparkle back into Mum's eyes, especially when Sienna took up my offer to join me in the business.

And so Sister Act Photography was born.

It felt like a healthy new start.

We were beginning a new adventure together. Two sisters, as close as siblings could possibly be.

Blissfully unaware that our happy optimism wasn't going to last.

And that a catastrophic blow, which I could never have foreseen happening in a million years, would soon tear our relationship apart . . .

Two years later . . .

A Spring Wedding

ONE

'Ooh, this is cosy!' says Andrea, simultaneously adjusting her bra for better effect and getting her stiletto stuck in the lawn.

Her enhanced cleavage has Ron's eyes out on stalks.

I have to admit, I'm grateful for the reprieve.

I've been dodging Ron's slightly moist clutches from the moment I walked into their house and followed them out into the back garden.

Ron is the original Space Invader.

Not that he goes around blasting aliens to smithereens in a very 1970s computer game sort of way. He just *crowds* you, so you spend the entire time (subtly) backing away until you eventually find yourself in the next room.

Ron and Andrea live in my cul-de-sac. Despite being well past the first flush of youth, they're known around here as a couple who like to have fun. And their snowdrops are definitely looking perky today.

I glance around the garden, looking for the best place to get down to it.

'Can we do it against the fence?' I instruct, aiming as always for 'friendly but firm'.

As they obligingly reposition themselves, I compliment Andrea

on her dress and laughingly suggest that Ron might be boxing a little above his weight there. (I'm only half-joking about this. And I know Ron won't take offence. He has an ego the size of a small Baltic state.)

The point is, couples can be quite shy about throwing off their inhibitions, so a joke can really break the ice.

I'm trying to relax and just go with it, but it's not easy when my mind keeps drifting to the backlog of work I need to tackle when I get home.

'It's like that dress Lucy Mecklenburgh wore at the Baftas,' says Andrea, breaking away from Ron to do a little twirl. It's a strapless mini, heavily embellished with large silver and bronze sequins. A little over the top for a bleak, parky February afternoon, but Andrea does have the figure for it.

I nod, pretending I know what she's talking about.

But Andrea is not fooled. (I probably should have looked more impressed.)

'Lucy Mecklenburgh?' She frowns. 'You know, the Towie girls? Jess Wright? Ferne McCann? Danielle Armstrong?'

I look at her, confused, feeling like I'm in an exam I haven't revised for.

I shake my head apologetically. 'Sorry, no. Is Towie an area of London?'

Even Ron laughs at that. It's clear I need to get out more.

The thing is, if it's not on the nine o'clock news, I tend not to know about it. I force myself to watch the news, just so I know what's happening outside the narrow confines of my world. But work consumes practically every other waking minute in my life these days – mainly because I really need the money.

I think of Dominic's recent, late-night phone calls and a dark cloud descends. His tone is friendly on the surface but the sense of threat is all too evident. I've started letting the phone go to answer machine in the evenings, even though I know from experience that he's not going to give up that easily.

Suddenly aware Andrea and Ron are staring at me, awaiting instructions, I force a jolly smile. 'Right, can you put your hand on Ron's chest? That's right. Lovely!'

There's a peculiar intimacy to these open-air encounters with my clients, Ron and Andrea being a case in point. Peculiar in that generally, we're not much more than friendly acquaintances.

I place my hand on Ron's leg. 'Could you move slightly sideways so Andrea can . . . that's it. Lovely!'

He gives me a full-on, teeth-whitened smile that's obviously designed to render me helpless with lust but actually makes me want to giggle. 'Would you like *my* hand on *her* chest?' he growls suggestively, leaning closer.

'Ha-ha! That won't be necessary, Ron.' I leap nimbly away.

I've never been keen on threesomes in the back garden. Not since the time a wasp landed on the bloke's ear, just as the woman was moving in to nuzzle his neck. The insect did its worst, which resulted in the man being carted off to hospital, suffering mild anaphylactic shock.

The shock to my bank balance was much worse.

No engagement photo. No payment.

I cross the lawn and ask them to stand under the willow tree, which I think will provide a perfect frame. Having snapped a dozen or so, I study them in the camera's viewfinder.

Great. Job's a good 'un. I can now dash home to finish the photo editing I was working on until the early hours. Plus, I need to take delivery of a completed album, which the print company promised would arrive in today's post, so that I can send it off to the bride as a matter of urgency. Rose, the bride, is lovely, but during the wedding preparations, she had a tendency to get very stressed if everything didn't go exactly according to plan. She's apparently organised a party so that everyone can see the photos for the first time – and I really don't want a hysterical bride shouting down the phone that her family gathering is ruined because she didn't get the album in time.

Andrea offers me a coffee and normally, I'd stay to chat out of politeness, but I have too much to do. Also, because it's a freebie session, I don't feel quite so bad having to rush off.

When they asked me to take their wedding photographs, I invited them round and showed them some of my sample albums.

'Ooh, lovely,' enthused Andrea. Then she said something that sounded like, 'We're having a Cayman Cannier wedding.'

'Oh?' Cayman Cannier? It sounded swish. And expensive. 'Is he your wedding planner? This – er – Cayman person?'

Andrea looked at me blankly. 'No. *Kim* and *Kanye*,' she said, enunciating the words very slowly for the benefit of the idiot in the room.

Light dawned. 'Oh, Kim Kardashian and – erm—' I frowned, clicking my fingers. 'Kanye Thingy!'

'Kayne West, yes.' She beamed. 'Everyone's coming dressed as a celebrity.'

'Gosh. Right.'

'My dress is to die for. Just like Kim's.' She clasped her hands over her chest. 'And Ron's going to look *ever* so sexy.'

She twinkled at Ron, who merely grunted. (I couldn't tell if he was agreeing or just expressing weary resignation.)

I nodded as my mind went into boggle overdrive.

Rapper Ron? Now there was an image to conjure up.

A disturbing vision flashed into my mind. Ron. In dropped-crotch trackies and dark glasses. Alarming grannies and flexing his 'swag' to the max.

Should make for an interesting album.

I'd gone out of the room to turn up the heating, at which point Ron oozed into the kitchen after me and started telling me about his new camera and how he'd love me to give him a few pointers. Then he'd 'charmed' me into agreeing to take some engagement photos as a little extra freebie.

Actually, it wasn't his 'charm' that swung it.

He'd been wafting garlic over me as he waxed lyrical about his