

## The wedding

### *Characters*

*MARÍA - the bride*

*TONY - The groom*

*CARMEN - María's mother*

*PACO - María's father*

*IVÁN - the groom's best man*

*ISABELLE - María's maid of honour*

*WAITER*

*CHILDREN*

*It is a big room, nicely decorated, with a corridor in the centre that goes to a small stage like a little altar, and to both sides of the corridor there are tables set for a wedding reception, with flowers, with napkins elegantly folded over the plates and nice decorations all around. MARÍA, the bride, talks to CARMEN and ISABELLE, who orbit around her.*

**MARÍA:** *(pacing up and down)* I can't believe Father Patrick hasn't even called to say where he was.

**ISABELLE:** He must be on his way, quite possibly driving, and you know you don't drive and talk on the phone, don't you worry María.

**MARÍA:** Telling me not to worry, doesn't actually help, Isabelle!

**ISABELLE:** And what do you want me to say!? I am just trying to help, María.

**MARÍA:** Do you want to help? Why don't you go and fix those garlands up by the altar? I want everything to be perfect.

**CARMEN:** But, hija, they already look nice!

**ISABELLE:** It's alright, Carmen, I will make sure they look extremely perfect! *(Happy to put some distance between herself and the bride goes up the little stage and starts meddling with the flowers)*

**CARMEN:** Bueno, I am going to sit down, eh?

**MARÍA:** *(still pacing up and down)* How can you sit in a moment like this?

**CARMEN:** When you get to my age, it is very easy, hija.

**MARÍA:** Well, I simply can't! I am going to see if anyone has heard from Father Patrick... And the guests! Where are the guests!?

**CARMEN:** *(standing up slowly)* The guests are the least of your worries. You need your priest, but most importantly you need your groom.

**MARÍA:** Mamá! You are not helping either!!

**CARMEN:** Nothing helps when you are nervous like that. Vamos, let's go and try to find somebody, so this wedding actually happens. *(And putting her arm around María's arm, gently leads her towards the right side of the stage.)*

**MARÍA:** Ok... *(looking back)* Isabelle, when you finish with the flowers, can you go to the kitchen and see how things are there?

**ISABELLE:** Sure, sure! *(stops messing with the flowers as soon as mother and daughter have left)* Finally. Why on earth did I accept to be maid of honour?

*A young and attractive man dressed up comes in looking at his phone. Then he notices Isabelle on the stage and puts the phone away.*

**IVÁN:** Vaya vaya, well well! Española o scottish?

**ISABELLE:** *(Eying him up, with a distant attitude)*. Scottish, thank you very much, and you must be Tony's best man.

**IVÁN:** At your service!

**ISABELLE:** We will see about that.

**IVÁN:** Guapa, don't be so distant. *(Walking towards the stage)* I did not mean to be rude. Truth is I have been stuck in the house for weeks and now I see such a beautiful woman on my first day out! Is this not a reason to be happy? *(He is now in front of her, at very close distance. Makes a pause while smiling very exaggeratedly.)* Iván, nice to meet you! *(Then*

*tries to kiss her in the cheek, but she ungracefully avoids him.)*

**ISABELLE:** Not even the hand you are getting from me. Don't forget we still are in crisis.

**IVÁN:** You mean by the flu?

**ISABELLE:** The virus, yes. We shouldn't be here, the quarantine should still apply, but I suppose this was important...

**IVÁN:** Seeing you has made it important, indeed.

**ISABELLE:** But I am not kissing or touching anybody, specially you.

**IVÁN:** Eh! I am no worse than anybody! *(Then laughs a little)*  
But fair enough, I was really fed up with staying indoors, as precautionary measure, imagine if I caught it and had to stay home even longer!!

*The groom walks in. He looks a bit stressed.*

**TONY:** Some guests have started to arrive, but not even half the family is here. The priest has not called or said when he will be arriving. María is totally freaking out and doing my head in.

**ISABELLE:** *(Slightly surprised)* Have you seen the bride before the wedding!?

**TONY:** Isabelle, we live together, of course I have. In fact, I have been seeing her a lot lately.

**IVÁN:** *(with playful tone)* By the sounds of it, a bit too much!?

**TONY:** *(looks at him and takes a second to reply)* The stupid virus...

**IVÁN:** Ha!

*A bunch of kids come in unexpectedly and run around the chairs, yelling and being noisy. Then as they come, they go leaving the three on stage mildly surprised.*

**TONY:** Who are these kids?

**IVÁN:** Don't know, maybe children of María's cousins..

**ISABELLE:** Oh, if guests have started to arrive, food will be needed soon. I am going to check in the kitchen! *(Leaves the stage)*

**IVÁN:** *(sighs very loudly)* She is very pretty. Is she with someone?

**TONY:** Don't know, don't think so.

**IVÁN:** Good!

**TONY:** I thought you were with Inés!

**IVÁN:** Eh? No, no. That was never a serious thing and the virus killed it.

**TONY:** What? The virus has killed Inés?

**IVÁN:** What!? No, man! The virus killed it, whatever it was we had! She was forced to stay at my place for some days, as one of her flatmates was actually infected by the virus and so she

needed somewhere to stay while they recovered or whatever... Well, it turns out that we were not meant to live together or stay together for longer than one night or even to be together at all. Every time I said something she would act like I was an idiot or go mad for no reason and then she had to share her opinions on everything or on how I was better doing stuff differently... it really got me, man! She went back to her flat before the period of quarantine of her flatmate, so now she is ill too!

**TONY:** Wow, sorry, man!

**IVÁN:** Don't be. It is the way it is. Apparently in China, because of their isolation time, there has been an increase in the divorce files.

**TONY:** Actually (*lowering the tone of voice*) I get it.

**IVÁN:** What are you talking about, man? You are about to marry María.

**TONY:** I know, and I love her, but these past weeks that we had to stay in, she was starting to get on my nerves too, like really get on them.

**IVÁN:** Bah, probably she was stressed because of all this wedding thing. Women are control freaks and a wedding is a massive thing for them.

**TONY:** I know, you are right.

**IVÁN:** Sure, man! And also, add to that the thought of, maybe, having to postpone and everything!

**TONY:** We are breaking the rule, it should have been postponed, I am surprised the restaurant didn't stay closed.

*A WAITER comes in.*

**WAITER:** Sir, can I bring you something to drink?

**IVÁN:** I will have a Martini, but keep the olive, I don't like them.

**WAITER:** Yes, sir. And you?

**TONY:** A whisky, with some ice, thank you.

**WAITER:** Yes, sir. Right away. *(Starts to go back out)*

**TONY:** Waiter!

**WAITER:** *(stops and turns around to look at TONY)* Yes, sir?

**TONY:** Has Father Patrick called?

**WAITER:** No, sir.

**TONY:** And how are we doing for guests?

**WAITER:** Some guests are waiting in the garden. We have been instructed by your bride's friend that they wait outside until the priest arrives. So the aperitif has started, to keep them entertained.

**TONY:** Great, thank you.

*WAITER walks away from the stage and TONY looks concerned to IVÁN. Before he says anything, the group of children returns, playing and yelling, getting under the tables and exiting the stage to the other side.*

**TONY:** María must be totally freaking out.

**IVÁN:** (*nodding*) Quite possibly, let's say hello to the brave guests that have made it.

*They leave the stage and then CARMEN comes in accompanied by an older man, her husband, the two of them arguing heatedly.*

**PACO:** We should have postponed the wedding.

**CARMEN:** Are you crazy!?

**PACO:** We would lose some money, but not that much. Half of the guests cannot make it or have chosen not to come. And who can blame them!?

**CARMEN:** I know, and poor Marta held up in Italy.

**PACO:** It was foolish to think that she would make it to the wedding. Things in Italy have been worse for longer!

**CARMEN:** But María... her wedding, all the preparations...

**PACO:** It was selfish of her to go ahead with the wedding!

*MARÍA comes in from the back of the stage followed by ISABELLE. She looks upset.*

**MARÍA:** Mamá! Marta just called, she is stuck in the airport!!

**CARMEN:** I know, hija. I am sorry.

**MARÍA:** How could she!?

**PACO:** It is not like she has a choice, no?

**MARÍA:** But why!? Why did she not try to come by train, by bus... walking even!?

**ISABELLE:** María, you are being a bit unfair...

**MARÍA:** Am I? I don't think so! Who chose to leave her family and go to live to another country?

**CARMEN:** Bueno, I am going to sit down, eh?

**MARÍA:** Who is the one that has stayed around to help mum and dad?

**PACO:** Oye, we are not so old that we need you to take care of us, watch what you say, girl!

**MARÍA:** I know, but you will be at some point and it will be me, the one that didn't leave her family and her country, that will have to stay around you and take care of you.

**CARMEN:** María, hija, don't say anything else that you may regret!

**MARÍA:** No disrespect, mamá, but Marta decided to leave her family behind and show no respect for us and our traditions.

**ISABELLE:** *(to herself)* Is not your whole family from another country!?

**MARÍA:** And then she thinks herself better, like when she thought she was too good for our religion and went on saying she did not believe in the church! But look at her now, living at the doorstep of the Vatican! How hypocritical!

**PACO:** Marta lives in the very south, María, which is nowhere near the Vatican. And you are talking rubbish about your

sister, because you are a little spoiled girl that hates when things don't go her way!

**CARMEN:** Bueno, let's stop this conversation that doesn't go anywhere useful!

**ISABELLE:** I'm going to check on the kitchen.

**MARÍA:** Did you not do that already?

**ISABELLE:** Yeah, to get them started with the aperitifs but, at some point, we will need food or people will be drunk in no time!

**MARÍA:** What people? (*Whining*) Half of those invited haven't turned up!

*ISABELLE escapes leaving the bride with her parents.*

**PACO:** Come on, niña, get a grip of yourself, things are not as bad as you picture them.

**MARÍA:** (*starting to cry like a little girl*) Yes, they are! No guests, no sister, no priest that marries me!

**CARMEN:** At least you still have the groom!

**PACO:** Still, you cannot blame people for wanting to avoid a very dangerous gathering, there is an actual virus going around!

**MARÍA:** (*sobbing loudly*) Yes, but you are here, and you are supposed to be especially vulnerable!

**CARMEN:** Hija, show some respect to your parents!!

**PACO:** No, Carmen, she is right, we could die for coming here, but your daughter is so selfish and self-centered that she does not care about it, she just cares about herself and her little wedding. You know what? I'm out of here! I need a break from your daughter.

**CARMEN:** Ah, now that she is a spoiled brat, she is my daughter!

**PACO:** *(while walking away)* Yes, that is right!

*CARMEN looks at her daughter from her sit, MARÍA crying more and more, goes and sit down beside her mother. While the daughter cries, CARMEN shakes her head in annoyance and pats slightly her daughter's. Then the group of children storm in again, going under tables and standing over chairs before leaving again.*

**CARMEN:** Poor children, they have gone mad with this seclusion thing over the last few weeks and now they have let them out, it's like unleashing the beasts!

**MARÍA:** I hate them! I hate the crazy children and I hate dad and my sister and I hate Father Patrick and the stupid virus that has messed up with my life!!

**CARMEN:** Come, come, don't be so dramatic. Let's go get some fresh air, perhaps we can grab one of the aperitifs, calm down a little bit, hija.

*MARÍA and CARMEN stand up and walk away, the daughter leaning her head in great grief while the mother continues to pat her gently on the shoulder.*

*Then ISABELLE walks in with a glass of wine and a little sandwich followed by IVÁN, who holds another glass. They wander about the space, ISABELLE gracefully and IVÁN following her.*

**IVÁN:** I bet that in the end there will be no wedding at all.

**ISABELLE:** Why do you say so, have you heard from Father Patrick?

**IVÁN:** What? No! I have no clue what is going on with the priest. As far as I know, he is in quarantine in his cell. No, I think so because I have just seen the bride totally losing it.

**ISABELLE:** I know, she has been a bit on edge with this whole business.

**IVÁN:** By the way, where did you get the food? I didn't think they were serving food yet!

**ISABELLE:** I have a way with the cook.

**IVÁN:** Is that right? (*winking an eye in a very exaggerated way*) And would you show me your way?

**ISABELLE:** Don't be vulgar! I meant that I am in charge of the communications with the kitchen and so I got myself a little snack!

**IVÁN:** Sure, in charge of the communications with the kitchen...

**ISABELLE:** Agh, you are so tasteless!

**IVÁN:** Unlike your little snack from the kitchen, right? (

IVÁN follows ISABELLE while winking at her, out of scene.

*TONY comes in, accompanied by PACO, both carrying a glass of what seems whisky.*

**TONY:** I know what you mean, Paco. That with women is better to smile and agree, but this time I think I cannot get María's attitude.

**PACO:** Why? What has she done now?

**TONY:** Did you not hear her?

**PACO:** No, I sometimes and conveniently turn my hearing aid down.

**TONY:** Just a minute ago, she went out, accompanied by your girlfriend, to talk to the few guests that have decided to ignore the restrictions to come to our wedding... and out of the blue she started to scream like a crazy woman to the children who were just playing!

**PACO:** (*ironically*) What a delight of a child..

**TONY:** Fair enough, the children were a bit feral, but I suppose that not going to school and having been stuck on the house for weeks does not help a bunch of children to behave.

**PACO:** Quite obviously. María was also a bit feral, as you said.

**TONY:** Truth is that everything is starting to point that we should call off the wedding.

**PACO:** That depends ultimately of you two. Never mind that there are no guests or no priest.

**TONY:** I know.

**PACO:** Tony, be honest. Don't you worry because I am María's father. Quite frankly, Carmen and myself have spoiled her a bit too much and she is a selfish young woman. It is the old story of the parents who had too little and so gave too much to their children...

**TONY:** Maybe. But I am not perfect either.

**PACO:** I know you are not. You have a weak character and you are not the most intelligent person.

**TONY:** Thank you Paco.

**PACO:** But you are a good person.

*In the background some yells and the noise of breaking glasses can be heard. Tony shakes his head slightly.*

**TONY:** Can you hear it now, Paco? It looks like something else is going on out in the garden.

**PACO:** I can hear something, yes, our lovely María, surely... Tony, you are not very intelligent, but you'll make the right decision... And yes, I can say whatever I want because I am old and quite probably today I will catch that damned virus and will die anyway.

**TONY:** Paco, what are you like, don't say that!

*The WAITER comes in.*

**WAITER:** Sir, sorry to disturb you, but I think we have a problem.

**TONY:** What has happened? Has María done something else?

**WAITER:** Not that I know of, sir. I am sorry to inform you that our cook just started to show symptoms of the virus.

**TONY:** What!?

**WAITER:** I am afraid that we need to close and ask everybody to go to their houses and inform the authorities should they show any symptoms too. I will let the others know too.

*The WAITER bows in humble apology and goes away.*

**PACO:** See? That means I was right: I am gonna catch that stupid virus in the failed wedding of my least favourite daughter.

**TONY:** Come on, Paco, let's not be that pessimistic. The wedding may not happen after all, but you are going to go home and isolate yourself and not show any signs of having been infected.

**PACO:** (*ironic again*) Happy days! (*Goes towards the exit of the stage calling out for his wife*) Carmen, mujer, where are you? Carmen it's time to go home and die!

*TONY stays alone for a second, and sits down, with an air of defeat. That moment, IVÁN comes in, tucking his shirt properly and correcting his appearance.*

**IVÁN:** Ah, that woman... *(then notices his friend and sits beside him)*. So it looks like there is not going to be wedding after all. Have you heard the news?

**TONY:** That the cook has the virus and probably we are all infected by now?

**IVÁN:** Not those news, no. Just before the Waiter came out with that bomb, the priest had arrived. It looks like he and your girlfriend have been having some sort of affair. And of course, he did not feel right marrying you two, which was what was holding him up, but then, at the very last minute, he decided to come here after all and propose to María, saying he would quit the ministerial work and provide for them two.

**TONY:** Really? *(In shock and disbelief at the same time)*

**IVÁN:** But María was not moved by that and instead had a nervous breakdown and started to yell to everyone, starting with the priest and continuing with the guests and kids.

**TONY:** Right?

**IVÁN:** So it seems that you are going to enjoy a quieter quarantine this time. If you want to come to mine until the shitstorm passes...

**TONY:** *(still in disbelief)* Right...

*TONY and IVÁN are still sitting down, when the band of children come back in like another storm, going under tables, over chairs and dismantling the good disposition of tableware, napkins, and flowers, and after totally destroying the reception preparations, they go away as they came.*