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DAY ONE Fiona McCann and David Shafer at Lisnavagh House, Co Carlow, last Friday.

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREAS PETTERSSON

**T**HE SOMETHING OLD was Lisnavagh House, an ivy-laced Gothic revival mansion in Co Carlow, with beds four-postered and canopied and vast, iron baths deep as rowboats, and side tables laden with ancient artefacts. Our weekend impersonation of landed gentry was assisted by Lisnavagh's actual owners, the gracious William and Emily Bunbury, who ghosted around behind us, making sure the log fires were roaring and the kettle was always on.

We were married in the library, all wood panels and leather spines, sink-in sofas and that wicker wheelchair that turned out to be everyone's favourite. For the ceremony, it was standing-room only, and our best wedding marshal (for yes, there were officially appointed wedding marshals - guests forced into high-vis jackets and given the task of herding the rest around) had to call out in his booming voice as we squeezed in: "Make way for the bride and groom!"

We stood before each other on a rug made by the Beyon - no, wait, my husband's - father, and gave each other rings made by my friend Clara's father, and listened to music made by our friends, and a prayer made by David's Uncle Michael, who conducted our home-made ceremony with charisma and care. And on that rug, among the books, we made a new family of ourselves.

Then everyone in the room, all 150 people, swept us up in all their joy and affection and carried us, me and my beloved (**something new**), into the tent (a word that doesn't quite convey the kaleidoscopic delights of the marquee, with its art deco panels and floral ceiling - just the thing for a high-end peasant wedding). Under that tent we ate like kings. It's even possible that, in one ecstatic moment, my feelings for the African curry eclipsed those for my new husband. And as for our caterer, one Lu Thornely, of Lara Lu Foods, she was a whirlwind in a chequered blue toque, who made it look like nothing could be more fun than to feed 150 people at once (who sat down half an hour before we said they would - sorry about that).

We ate, we drank, and by the time the speeches came along, we were definitely merry. Any takers on how long the speeches lasted? Half an hour, maybe? Forty minutes, tops? Try 74. An hour and a quarter of talking, yet nobody complained, fell asleep or flew into a fiery rage when the post-prandial toasting turned into open-mic at the International.

As for **something borrowed**? It begins with the

dress - not white, no veil, but a 1970s vintage crocheted affair lent to me by Marie Therese, proprietor of Greystone's The Goddess Room, who also sourced my jewellery, a headpiece and a matching bag for good measure. Yet it felt somehow as if the whole day was on loan, the love borrowed from friends and family to be paid back over years, the moments borrowed in corners of the night, in a heart-to-heart with a childhood friend or a booty-shaking turn with my little sister. The time borrowed from everyday life that was made all the more magical and sacred knowing we could not hold onto it forever.

**Something blue?** Believe it or not, this was the sky over Lisnavagh House for most of our wedding day. I probably have Andrea Corr to thank for this: she scheduled her wedding the same day as mine, and probably has more pull with Met Éireann. Either way, we both had sun-kissed wedding days, though I don't think she changed into red Converse halfway through hers, nor found guests in tents in the venue garden two days later. Also blue were my shoes, the trimmings on the highly flammable wedding cake made by my mother, and my comedown at 5am when I realised I hadn't had a proper dance with my father, the man who had a whole room in tears with a song about dances and daughters.

But the blues had their place in a day made up of moments. Moments such as peeking out of the bedroom window as guests arrived, and watching his college room-mate drinking Pimm's cups with Mr Brady from next door. Such as my uncles breaking into barbershop harmonies at every opportunity, and heckling at the speeches. Such as the unconfirmed reports of one of the night's diehard dancers crawling across the floor like a snarling tiger as the sun came up on the morning after.

Such as looking at this man standing before me as we made our promises, my best friend and biggest fan, the one who fine-tunes my sentences and pours me my morning coffee, the one who wraps me in his warm arms when I'm snorting all over my wedding dress and loves me like no other, this man standing before me in his sharp grey suit, all dashing and wide-eyed and beloved, promising to be on my team forever. For life. Our life. It feels like something old and something new, for once not borrowed but mine to keep, and right now, anything but blue.

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Fionnuala and Enda Kenny at home in Castlebar, page 10



Pop style, James O'Neill, page 14



Pregnant style, page 16

#### ON THE COVER

The Flynns, potato growers in Rush, Co Dublin. From left, Eric, Eoghan, Vinny, Fergal, Paud, Gerry, Lar, Padraig, Cathal and (on machine) Paul. See page 57.