

# **WILD WALES by Patricia Evans Cox**

## **Excerpt**

Aisling spoke slowly, more to herself than to Finn. Her voice trailed off, but she snapped back to reality after a few seconds and looked back at Finn across the kitchen.

“I kissed the wrong person, I guess.”

Finn waited for her to go on, but she didn’t.

“How do you lose an entire career from one kiss?”

Aisling smiled, letting the silence speak for her.

“Oh shit,” Finn said slowly. “You didn’t kiss the groom, did you?”

She laughed and pulled the pen out of her hair. “Um, no...not the groom.”

“Then it can’t be that bad. What’s the big deal?”

Aisling ran her fingers through her hair and loosened the waves until they fell over her shoulders. “It was the bride.”

“Wow.” Finn shook her head, smiling, and folded what was left of the charred cardboard box into the trash. “I did not see that one coming.”

“I thought not. Most people don’t.”

Finn smiled and stepped into the living room, then leaned back in as soon as she passed the doorframe.

“This fire is beautiful. Did you do that while I was folding myself into the bathtub?”

Aisling didn’t answer, just walked slowly into the room, where a cheerful fire crackled and warmed the air. When they’d walked into the house an hour ago, it had been empty and dark, but now the entire room looked gilded, as if the firelight had melted into gold over every surface. Once again, the hearth had been swept clean and even the dented copper bucket next to the fireplace had been filled with freshly cut wood. Aisling stared into the flames, then slowly raised her eyes over Finn’s head and up to the ceiling.

“What are you looking at?” Finn said, following her gaze to the cracked plaster ceiling arched above her head, secured at the apex with an unfinished wooden beam.

“Nothing,” Aisling replied, her eyes scanning the room, half expecting to see the golden orbs of light she’d seen in the castle. But there was nothing. “Just a memory, I guess.”