

LITTLE HEMINGWAYS

"SHE'S A VERY SMALL BIRD"

Written by

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**TEASER**

EXT. DURROW, IRELAND - DAY

Scarecrows everywhere. Dressed up as literary characters, cartoons, and celebrities. Sticking out of storefront windows. On people's lawns. On top of telephone poles.

Scarecrows everywhere. Not a bird for miles.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
You want me to talk about my  
feelings?

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A cup of tea. Untouched.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
I'm Irish. We don't do that.

ON: COUNSELLER'S EDUCATION DEGREE.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
Now if you want me to question  
authority...absolutely. This degree  
could be a deepfake.

INT. CUMMINS HOUSE, AISHLING'S BEDROOM - DAY

Curtains closed. Darkness.

AISHLING CUMMINS (16) lies on top of her perfectly made bed. Staring at the wall. Lost. Broken. Remote in hand.

A small TV set; streaming service on the main menu, no shows selected.

A clock reads: 3:00pm.

The clock now reads: 8:00pm. The Streaming Service menu still has no shows selected. Aishling is in the same position on the bed.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
Still here? Alright, time to put on  
a happy face...

Aishling's face doesn't change.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
Here's what you need to know. Half  
of this story is completely true.

EXT. DURROW, RIVER - DAY

AISHLING (V.O.)  
And the other half...well...I wish  
it was.

In the town river--a few scarecrows sit in a canoe, beers in  
hand. Above them a Humpty Dumpty Scarecrow sits on a small  
stone bridge. Only a few feet above the water.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
It's not functional depression so  
much as...existence seems pretty  
shit.

THREE KIDS roughhouse.

KID #1 charges at MAX CUMMINS (8). Max flips over. Falls off  
the bridge.

The scene freezes. Max frozen in mid-air. Panic.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
That's my little brother. I'm  
allowed to throw him off a bridge.

The scene unfreezes.

SPLASH.

KID#1  
Is he dead?

Water ripples. Calms. No signs of life.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
These fuckers aren't. End of.

The kids on the bridge--afraid their lives are over...

Max POPS out of the water.

MAX  
I'm okay.

The two kids on the bridge jump up and down.

KID#1/KID#2  
He's not dead! He's not dead!

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, DURROW - DAY

The jovial small town feeling. Neighbours stop in the middle of the street to gossip. Say hello.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
I just want to drink with my  
friends, have a laugh...

Hay bales strewn about the grassy town square. Above this a banner: *The Howya Festival: A Festival of Friendship*. Below this...chaos.

AISHLING (V.O.)  
Avoid any drama.

Aishling Cummins--a far cry from the teenage girl we met on her bed. Five feet--absolute weapon of a person. Her legs hook around THOMAS GASCON (16) like a piggy back from hell. Her fists pummel the shite out of him.

He struggles to keep his balance.

CONNOR O'FARREL (16), resident smart ass, would sleep with himself if he could. He relishes the presence of the crowd.

CONNOR  
Right! Who had twenty on Aishling?  
Fogerty, O'Connell--you're going to  
have to pay up. No! Don't give me  
that look. Sad eyes won't get  
anyone far.  
(off looks)  
Ah lads...we all knew this day  
would come.

PUNCH. THWACK. CLOBBER.

Teenagers surround them (all in Catholic school uniforms)--cheering.

AISHLING  
Come on.

THOMAS  
Get. Off. Me.

Thomas tries to swat her. No success. Aishling's in control. Practically steering him.

AISHLING  
Oy! I warned you.

One hand grabs his face. Her other arm hooks around his neck for balance.

THOMAS  
Stop it!

AISHLING  
Why?

AISHLING (V.O.)  
This particular story is about an apology.

Every word accented by a punch.

AISHLING  
Why. Should. I. Stop. Doing-

THOMAS  
Please! I'm...sorry.

AISHLING  
What?

THOMAS  
I said I'm sorry...you crazy--

Her look silences him. It's a FAKE OUT. Thomas tries to throw her. Aishling swings her weight--CRASH! They collapse to the ground.

Aishling ends up on top. Knee to his throat.

AISHLING  
Insult my brother again. Go on!  
Despite the fact he's almost ten  
years younger than the lot of  
us...and I'll make it my personal  
mission to make sure you remain a  
virgin for as long as possible.  
(beat)  
The only place you'll get a ride is  
in church from Father Murray.

The crowd around them shuts up.

THOMAS  
Won't happen again Aishling.

People move out of her way without question.

Connor collects some money from their peers.

CONNOR

Thanks very much. We appreciate  
your business. Aish--I'll catch up!

No one helps Thomas back up. Connor steps over him. Collects more cash from the crowd.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

For what it's worth Tom--I'd fuck  
for nothing.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Aishling walks through the graveyard gates--not a bother on her. The clink of alcohol in her backpack with each step.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

In the middle of the graveyard JARED DAUGHERTY (16), tumbleweed hair, eternally nice, yet anxiety often pulses through him. Jared stands. Eyes closed. Practicing Tai Chi. A Warrior Stance.

AISHLING (O.S.)

You look like a squirrel trying to  
seduce a chipmunk.

JARED

Woodland creatures would be so  
lucky.

Aishling smirks. Despite herself.

AISHLING (V.O.)

We're never going to end up  
together. But still, there's  
something annoyingly cute about how  
nervous he is when I catch him  
looking at me.

Jared catches Aishling staring at him--he nervously gesticulates--ruining any chance of his tai chi transitions being smooth or calibrated.

AISHLING

Fucking spaz.

TARA SARRE (16) uses a grave as a backrest. She reads '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' as if the world waits on her--because it does.

AISHLING (CONT'D)

In the interest of full disclosure...I gave a beating to one of your newer boyfriends.

TARA

Shall I dump him?

AISHLING (V.O.)

Yes. You fucking should.

AISHLING

Your call Missus. Your business.

TARA

He's very 'hopeful'...but in a scheme-y way. A scheming optimist...which at first I thought 'yeah, let's figure you out' but I don't think I appreciate that in my partners.

(beat, reflective)

I don't want to think that much.

Aishling pulls out a bottle of rum. Jared shakes himself out of a pose.

JARED

When you date five people, I would hope that together they would have all the ideal markers, genetic or otherwise, that would lead one to happiness.

TARA

Lose your bourgeoisie understanding of love Jared. One person simply can't satisfy another.

JARED

Bourge-what?

He heads over to a grave. It reads: 'LYNN DAUGHERTY: Mother, Daughter, Friend'.

JARED (CONT'D)

I want a love that's present.

AISHLING (V.O.)

Dangerous terms and conditions.

He pulls out a spray paint bottle. Spray paints "LIAR" across his mother's grave.

TARA  
Aren't you worried your dad will--

JARED  
Uh...Nah. He'd have to be sober.

AISHLING  
Sounds horrible.

DING! Tara checks her phone.

A TEXT: *Can we talk?*

AISHLING (CONT'D)  
Another one fallen?

TARA  
Fancy wants to have a conversation.

JARED  
Which one is Fancy? Morrison or  
Hughes?

Aishling passes the bottle of rum around.

AISHLING  
No. Nick's 'dick'. Fancy's...Kurt  
Bartlett.

JARED  
How can you be sure?

AISHLING  
Half a bottle of rum.

JARED  
I miss Dan.

AISHLING  
Right?

TARA  
No. Too nice.

JARED  
Still...miss him.

AISHLING  
He loved the shit out of you.

Jared pretends to pour rum out. Mock respect.

TARA  
He loved the idea of me.



JARED  
How can you not love an idea?

AISHLING  
Jared.

JARED  
Yeah?

AISHLING  
Fuck off.

He grins.

AISHLING (CONT'D)  
You should have the lads do a  
written and verbal. Before you give  
out your number. Save you a  
headache.

TARA  
I'm thinking of actually breaking  
up with all of them.

JARED  
Like a cleanse?

TARA  
I mean you make the single thing  
look so appealing. No one bothers  
you.

They share a laugh. Drink.

**END OF TEASER**