

Writing Sample – Suzanne Stapleton

Sample 1: In this script sample, Aisling (a chronically single 30-year-old tour boat captain of her late father's boat) and her mother Máire (a gossipy widow) discuss what Aisling is going to do about the fact that the town's claim to fame, and the cornerstone of her line of work - a friendly local shark – turned out to be animatronic, and has broken down.

AISLING

No, there was no obvious branding or anything, but maybe if we crack it open fully? We have to try at least. Dad would have tried.

A moment of silence as the two women allow themselves to fall into nostalgia for a good man gone too soon. Máire looks fondly to the empty setting that is still left for Paul at their table.

MÁIRE

Paul was a go-er, but I don't want you thinking that you have to perform a miracle just because he would have tried it.

AISLING

I'm not doing it just because of that. This was his dream job, and now it's mine, but it's about all of us in town. Livelihoods depend on this.

MÁIRE

He loved that boat, he loved his work, he loved this place. We both know that he *lived* for you, and me.

AISLING

Please tell me you're not trying to turn this back onto me being single I swear--

MÁIRE

I'm just saying! I think he'd be more impressed by you settling down and having an actual life that doesn't revolve around a gang of auld fellas.

Aisling glances surreptitiously at the pocket of her jacket, where the letter is poking just slightly out before rolling her eyes at Máire.

AISLING

Lovely.

A mischievous grin from Máire as she waits for Aisling to raise her glass to her lips.

MÁIRE

I mean, he probably wouldn't have minded if that was your thing but . . .

AISLING

Oh my God!

Shoveling the last of her dinner into her mouth, Aisling scrambles up and pulls her coat on.

AISLING (CONT'D)

I have to go, make sure the class is set up for this meeting. Thanks for dinner; it was only mildly traumatizing.

A glint of satisfaction at a mystery solved from Máire.

She leans down and kisses Máire on the cheek.

MÁIRE

I'll have to work harder at it so.

Sample 2: This comic script sample follows celtic warrior princess Maeve (newly 18, youngest of five daughters, desperate for her Father's approval) as she is summoned before the High King; her dad, Eochaid, after the suspicious death of O'Cuinn, the man he had promised her hand in marriage to.

Panel 3: *Maeve nervously looks around at the assembled people.*

MAEVE: To what do I owe the pleasure of such a late summons? With all my sisters in attendance as well – awfully serious stuff by the looks of things.

Panel 4: *Eochaid holds up a hand to stop Maeve from speaking further.*

EOCHAD: I am not in the mood for your games tonight Maeve. You're in enough trouble as it is, do not make things any worse for yourself.

MAEVE (off): Father, I don't know what you—

Panel 5: *Eochaid explodes forward in his throne, spit flying.*

EOCHAID (blast): **Be Silent.**

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Panel 1: *Maeve looks to her sisters for support, but they do not make eye contact with her as she progresses down the aisle.*

SILENT PANEL

Panel 2: *Eochaid sits back in his chair, imperiously looking down at Maeve.*

EOCHAID: I don't know what exactly you did tonight, but I am no daw fresh to the field. O'Cuinn is dead, and you are suddenly the least eligible woman in the land.

EOCHAID: Convenient, for a woman who protested marriage every step of the way, no?

Panel 3: *Maeve stands defiant at the foot of the dais. Behind her, her sisters wince – probably not the best tack to take with Eochaid.*

MAEVE: I did nothing but what you asked of me. It's not my fault he couldn't take the heat.

Panel 4: *Eochaid steeples his fingers, looking to the crowd now.*

EOCHAID: Look around you. Each of your sisters before you have married and look where we are, where I sit. My position as High King is only ever as strong as the alliances I make.

EOCHAID: Each of their marriages was beneficial to the crown, to our people, and they went without fuss.

Panel 5: *Eochaid stands, his face half shadow.*

EOCHAID: And then, there is you. Impetuous, snarky, self-congratulatory – yet you consider yourself better than them? More fit to rule? Though you could not even do this simple deed?

EOCHAID: Please.

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Panel 1: *They stand toe to toe. Maeve glowers up at Eochaid.*

MAEVE: That is unfair. The rest of my life is not something I take lightly, and neither is my desire to rule. My sisters are loyal subjects and obedient daughters, but I am the only one willing to fight for the role.

Panel 2: *Eochaid's eyes gleam beneath a questioning brow.*

EOCHAID: Are you?

EOCHAID: Prove it.

Panel 3: *Eochaid unsheathes his sword. It is a great sword, a behemoth of a blade.*

SFX: Shhhhhinnk

EOCHAID: You say you are capable, more so than any of the others here. Let us test your mettle.

Sample 3: This sample is fanfiction about the 2nd campaign of popular D&D actual play show Critical Role. In this piece, Beau realises that her best friend and captain Fjord has entered a relationship with Jester and has kept it a secret from her.

Beau pulls her coat more tightly around herself as she trudges forward, eyes peeled for the slightest motion in the vast snowfield. This is probably why she noticed the little glances between Jester, prancing up ahead with Yasha, and Fjord on her left. The fifth time it happens, Beau just catches the darkening green on Fjord's windswept cheeks and it hits her like a ton of bricks.

"You *sneaky little*-" She is promptly cut off as a wide-eyed Fjord claps a hand over her mouth before anyone else can hear her.

"Shhhh *shshshshsh*. All right, will you *keep it down* if I let go?" Fjord pleads and Beau rolls her eyes, ducking low and out from his grip. She promptly thumps him in the shoulder.

"What the hell dude!?" Beau stage whispers, throwing her arms wide. "I thought we were bros! Captain and first mate shit! How could you not tell me! When the hell did *this* happen?" She hits him again for good measure.

“All right, all right, geez. I was going to tell you but I...” Fjord’s eyes drift to Jester’s back and his face softens. “I just wanted to, I don’t know, keep things between us for a bit. Not jinx it.” Beau nods understandingly, thinking of the note tucked in her bags, deliberately keeping her eyes fixed on Fjord and not on Yasha’s long strides.

“I just didn’t think you were there yet, on Rumblecusp it seemed like you were gonna take things slow - don’t get me wrong this is great, I’m super happy for you guys I just, I’m a little surprised I guess.” Beau asks at a whisper, making sure no one in their party at least is listening in. Fjord shrugs.

“I thought so too,” He huffs a sad laugh, “And then she stepped off that pedestal with 5 years of her life just... gone. I didn’t do anything to protect her, even though I promised her Mother that I would.” Beau reaches out, grasping his forearm so he turns to face her.

“Fjord. You can’t blame yourself for that, none of us knew what was going to happen - we do our best to keep each other safe but sometimes we can’t stop things from happening. That’s not on you.” Fjord gives her a forlorn half smile and continues.

“Either way. She stepped off that thing and I realised just how fragile it all is. We put our lives on the line every day and I keep putting things off because the timing is shaky or because I’m still caught up in something with Uk’otoa,” He shakes his head, lamenting his own inaction before going on. “I keep acting like we have all this time to waste but really we don’t, and her losing those years just made it seem so...stupid. Why wait to be happy when we could lose everything without ever really knowing what we had? Why not choose to be happy while we can still make the choice?” Beau is dumbstruck by his simple explanation. He is right, and she knows it.

“That is super fuckin’ insightful, man - Caduceus level wisdom right there.” Beau grins at him, and Fjord waves a hand, ever humble in the face of a genuine compliment.