

CERTAIN ENOUGH

Written by Kay Hart

FEATURE SCREENPLAY



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FADE IN:

BLACK.

Rain. Not gentle rain. The relentless English kind. Water beating gutters, pavements, windows. Somewhere in the distance --

CHURCH BELLS. One. Two. Three.

MARA (V.O.)

They tell you rain on your wedding day is good luck.

A beat.

MARA (V.O.)

People tell brides a lot of stupid things.

EXT. COUNTRY CHURCH - DAWN

A narrow stone church rises against a bruised sky. Ivory roses and eucalyptus have been tied to the iron gate. Pale ribbon hangs heavy with rain. A WHITE WEDDING INVITATION skates along the gutter and catches against the kerb.

MARA BENNETT & ELLIOT WARD. Tomorrow.

MARA (V.O.)

They also tell you not to see each other the night before.

CUT TO:

INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - PREVIOUS EVENING

Wedding admin has colonised the table: place cards, ribbon, an emergency sewing kit, three pens that no longer work. MARA BENNETT, 29, competent until competence becomes a coping mechanism, checks a list she has already checked. ELLIOT WARD, 31, an architectural technician with dry humour and an instinct for making himself smaller when he is worried, is losing an argument with FLORENCE, 4, Mara's daughter.

FLORENCE

The moon is mashed potato.

ELLIOT

Cheese. Everybody knows that.

FLORENCE

Mashed potato.

ELLIOT

Compelling evidence. I withdraw.

Florence accepts victory and goes back to drawing on the back of a wedding programme. Mara watches Elliot. He catches her.

ELLIOT

What?

MARA

I'm trying to work out whether
marrying you means I have to live
with this level of intellectual
surrender.

ELLIOT

Only on lunar dairy disputes.

His phone BUZZES. Elliot glances at the screen, then turns
it face-down. A small thing. Mara notices because Mara
notices small things.

MARA

Everything okay?

ELLIOT

Yeah. Just tired.

He smiles. It is convincing enough that she lets it go.
Florence holds up her drawing: three stick figures beneath
an enormous yellow moon.

FLORENCE

That is me. That is Mummy. That is
Elliot.

ELLIOT

Why am I the shortest?

FLORENCE

Because you complained.

Mara laughs. Elliot puts a hand to his heart, wounded.
This is ordinary. That matters.

INT. FLORENCE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Florence is tucked beneath a duvet, still fighting sleep.
Elliot sits on the edge of the bed while Mara leans in the
doorway.

FLORENCE

Why are you sleeping at Grandma
Claire's?

ELLIOT

Apparently seeing the bride before
the wedding is bad luck.

FLORENCE

You're seeing her now.

ELLIOT

Then we've ruined everything.

MARA

Excellent. Saves on catering.

Florence giggles. Elliot kisses her forehead.

ELLIOT

See you tomorrow, Flo. Very early.
In a stupid suit.

FLORENCE

With the shiny shoes.

ELLIOT
Cruel but accurate.

INT. MARA'S HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Elliot pulls on his coat. Mara fixes his collar without thinking. He lets her.

MARA
If you change your mind, tell me
before I put the dress on.

ELLIOT
I'm not changing my mind.

MARA
Good. The dress is difficult to get
out of.

ELLIOT
Threat or promise?

MARA
Text when you get to Claire's.

ELLIOT
Always.

They kiss. Elliot opens the front door, then pauses.
Across the dark street, nothing moves. Still, he watches
for one second too long.

MARA
El?
He looks back.

ELLIOT
See you tomorrow.
He leaves. Mara watches until he turns the corner.

INT. MARA'S BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

Dark. A mobile phone illuminates Mara's face. 04:17. Her
last message to Elliot: "Home? x" Sent 11:42 PM. One tick.
Mara refreshes. Nothing. She calls. One ring. Then --

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
The person you are calling is not
available --

She hangs up. Calls again. Same. Her eyes shift to the
chair where tomorrow's dress hangs beneath a garment
cover.

MARA (V.O.)
Nobody tells you what to do if the
groom disappears.

INT. MARA'S LANDING - MOMENTS LATER

Mara passes Florence's half-open door. Florence sleeps
diagonally across the bed, one hand wrapped around a
stuffed fox. Mara pauses. Her face softens. Then her phone
vibrates. CLAIRE WARD - CALLING.

MARA

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CLAIRE AND PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

CLAIRE WARD, late fifties, stands barefoot in a dressing gown. She is frightened. That tells Mara more than the words do.

CLAIRE

Mara... is Elliot with you?

Silence.

MARA

No.

Claire closes her eyes.

CLAIRE

Right.

MARA

Why are you asking me that?

CLAIRE

His bed hasn't been slept in.

Mara is already pulling on clothes.

MARA

When did you last see him?

CLAIRE

Around ten. Maybe half ten. He was reading.

MARA

Was he okay?

Claire takes too long.

MARA

Claire.

CLAIRE

He seemed... quiet.

MARA

Quiet how?

CLAIRE

Not himself.

Mara closes her eyes.

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAWN

Headlights cut through rain. Mara drives. Fast. Her engagement ring catches the passing lights.

MARA (V.O.)

Not himself. It can mean everything. Which means it explains nothing.

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE: CERTAIN ENOUGH

EXT. CLAIRE AND PHIL'S HOUSE - MORNING

The rain has weakened to drizzle. Mara's car pulls up badly against the kerb. She is out before the engine fully stops. Claire opens the front door before Mara reaches it. No greeting. They hug. Not delicately. Claire holds on. That frightens Mara more than anything.

MARA

Where's Phil?

CLAIRE

Driving around.

MARA

Where?

CLAIRE

Anywhere Elliot might go.

MARA

And the police?

A look.

CLAIRE

They said because he's an adult and there's no evidence--

Mara pushes inside.

MARA

There is evidence.

CLAIRE

What evidence?

MARA

Elliot doesn't leave without his phone.

INT. CLAIRE AND PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The phone sits exactly where promised. Black screen. Beside it: A ceramic mug. Half an inch of cold tea. A paperback. Face-down. Mara looks at all three like they're pieces of a crime scene.

CLAIRE

I haven't touched anything.

Mara nods. Picks up the book. A paperback about perception and memory, several passages highlighted. A bookmark halfway through.

MARA

You said he was reading this?

CLAIRE

I think so.

Mara touches the tea. Cold.

MARA

What was he wearing?

CLAIRE

Mara--

MARA

Please.

CLAIRE

Jeans. Grey hoodie.

MARA

Coat?

CLAIRE

Gone.

MARA

Shoes?

CLAIRE

His boots.

Mara looks toward the hallway.

MARA

Wallet?

They both look.

INT. ELLIOT'S OLD BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Unmade but not chaotic. Laptop. Architecture books. Camera lenses. Notebooks. A small scale model half-finished on the desk. The strange archaeology of somebody's ordinary life. Mara goes straight to the desk. Wallet. Cards. Cash.

MARA

He left it.

Claire stands in the doorway.

CLAIRE

Maybe he just went for a walk.

Mara looks at her.

MARA

Without money or his phone?

Nothing. Mara scans the room.

MARA

What else is missing?

CLAIRE

I don't know.

Mara turns slowly. Bed. Wardrobe. Desk. Shelf. A half-packed WEEKEND BAG sits near the wardrobe. Mara kneels beside it. Inside: Shirt. Toiletries. A tie. Wedding things. She touches the tie. Her face changes.

CLAIRE

He'd started packing yesterday.

MARA

So he wasn't planning to run from the wedding.

CLAIRE
I never said he was.

MARA
Someone will.
Claire watches her.

CLAIRE
Mara--

MARA
They will.
She stands.

MARA
Someone will say cold feet. Someone
else will hear that he's had
episodes before and decide that
explains everything. Then they'll
stop looking properly.

CLAIRE
Nobody is going to stop looking.

MARA
Good.
Mara scans the room again.

MARA
When did he take his medication?
Claire's expression flickers. Mara catches it.

MARA
Did he?

CLAIRE
Yesterday morning.

MARA
You're sure?

CLAIRE
I saw him.
A beat.

MARA
And the night before?

CLAIRE
Yes.

Mara nods. Files that away. Not relieved. Just informed.
She moves to the desk. Something catches her eye. A small
velvet ring box. She opens it. Empty. Her breathing stops.

MARA
Where's the ring?

CLAIRE
What?
She crosses over. Looks.

CLAIRE

He had it in there yesterday.
Mara stares at the empty indentation.

MARA

He took the wedding ring.
Claire absorbs this.

MARA

He leaves his phone.
He leaves his wallet. He leaves the clothes he needs tomorrow. But he takes the ring.

CLAIRE

What does that mean?
Mara closes the box.

MARA

I don't know.
Beat.

MARA

But it means he didn't forget where
he was going.

EXT. ELLIOT'S STREET - LATER

A POLICE CAR sits outside. Mara stands beneath an umbrella with a POLICE CONSTABLE in his forties. Claire nearby.

CONSTABLE

Has he ever gone missing before?

MARA

Not like this.

CONSTABLE

Has he wandered while unwell?

Mara's eyes sharpen.

MARA

Sometimes he's gone somewhere
because he was distressed.

CONSTABLE

Right.

He writes something. Mara watches the pen.

MARA

That's not what I said. The
constable looks up.

CONSTABLE

Sorry?

MARA

I said sometimes he's gone
somewhere because he was
distressed. I didn't say that's
what happened now.

CONSTABLE
We're just building a picture.

MARA
Then build the whole one.
The officer pauses. Claire looks at Mara.

CONSTABLE
Any recent deterioration in his
mental health?
Mara hesitates. She hates the question because the answer
matters.

MARA
He's been hearing voices. The
constable writes.

MARA
But he's also taking his medication
again. Writes.

MARA
And he knows tomorrow is our
wedding. Writes.

MARA
And he took his wedding ring. The
constable looks up at that.
Finally.

CONSTABLE
He took it?

MARA
Yes.

CONSTABLE
Anything else?
Mara thinks.

MARA
His coat. Boots. No phone. No
wallet.

CONSTABLE
Any reason he'd deliberately leave
the phone?

MARA
Elliot?
She almost laughs. There's no humour in it.

MARA
No.

INT. ELLIOT'S OLD BEDROOM - LATE MORNING

Mara sits alone now. The police have gone. Claire
downstairs. She holds Elliot's phone. Locked. Face ID
useless. She knows the PIN. Her thumb hovers. Stops. She
places it down.

She looks at it.

She types the PIN. Unlocks. Messages. Notes. Browser. Missed calls. Mara opens the messages app. Her own chat sits at the top. She hesitates. Opens it. Recent messages. Normal. A picture she'd sent. A stupid joke. He'd replied with a heart. She scrolls backward. Then stops herself. This isn't what she needs. She searches:

LEAH

A conversation.

Mara's expression hardens reflexively. Then she exhales. Not today. She opens it. Last exchange:

ELLIOT: You busy tonight?

LEAH: Probably why?

ELLIOT: nvm Timestamp:

9:48 PM. Mara stares. She calls Leah from Elliot's phone. It rings.

INTERCUT - INT. LEAH'S FLAT - DAY Leah answers sleepily.

LEAH

Elliot?

MARA

No.

Leah sits up.

LEAH

Mara?

MARA

When did you last speak to him?

Silence. Leah hears something in Mara's voice.

LEAH

Last night.

MARA

What did he want?

LEAH

I don't know.

MARA

He asked if you were busy.

LEAH

Yeah.

MARA

Why?

LEAH

He didn't say.

MARA

Did he call?

LEAH

No.

MARA

Did he come to yours?

LEAH

No.

Mara closes her eyes.

LEAH

What's happened?

MARA

Elliot's missing.

Silence. Then Leah is immediately awake.

LEAH

What?

MARA

His phone's here. Wallet's here.
Nobody's seen him since last night.

LEAH

Have you checked--

She stops. Mara catches it.

MARA

Checked where?

LEAH

Nothing.

Mara goes still.

MARA

Leah.

LEAH

It's probably nothing.

MARA

I don't particularly like that
phrase anymore.

Leah exhales.

LEAH

There's a place he used to go.

MARA

Where?

LEAH

When things got... loud.

Mara grips the phone.

MARA

Where?

EXT. DISUSED RAILWAY FOOTPATH - DAY

Mud. Rainwater. A narrow path swallowed by hedges. Mara walks quickly. Leah's directions play in voice-over from the call.

LEAH (V.O.)

There's an old railway cutting
about twenty minutes from his. He
used to sit there sometimes because
nobody goes down there.

Mara reaches a rusted gate. Climbs over. Her coat snags.
She yanks it free.

EXT. OLD RAILWAY CUTTING - CONTINUOUS

Deep walls of wet stone. Dead tracks removed decades ago.
The place feels wrong. Too quiet.

MARA

Elliot?

Nothing. She continues.

MARA

Elliot! A bird erupts from the
hedge.

Mara jumps. Swears. Keeps moving. Then-- Something grey.
On the ground ahead. Her heart stops. She runs.

A GREY HOODIE. Empty. Soaked. Mara drops beside it.
Touches it. Elliot's. She knows immediately. Her breathing
quickens.

MARA

Elliot?

She stands. Spins.

MARA

ELLIOT!

Nothing. She checks the hoodie. Pockets. One contains-- A
folded piece of paper. Mara opens it with shaking hands.
Three words. Written in Elliot's handwriting:

DON'T FOLLOW ME. Mara stares. Rain dots the ink. A second
line underneath. Smaller. Pressed hard into the page.

I'M NOT ALONE. Mara's face drains.

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

The note sits inside a clear evidence sleeve. Mara sits
opposite DETECTIVE SERGEANT ELLIS, late thirties, careful
eyes. Claire beside her.

ELLIS

You're certain this is his
handwriting?

MARA

Yes.

ELLIS

Both lines?

Mara looks at it again.

MARA

Yes.