



PRESS RELEASE

AISLING LTD

Seán Harnett

‘BUSINESSMEN ARE THE NEW REVOLUTIONARIES’ is the mantra of Lawrence Cooley, the founder of Dublin-based IT consultancy Aisling Ltd. Visionary, iconoclast and idealist, the 33-year-old Cooley has been dubbed the ‘Buddha of Irish Business’ by the media. An erstwhile socialist, Cooley is now an avid capitalist who believes that business is about more than turning profits: it’s about changing the world.

In July 2000 Eoin Cullen is hired to ‘take ownership of Aisling’s corporate story’ as the company’s content specialist. Cullen has been at the coalface of the Irish IT explosion from the beginning—starting out with *Wake.com*, an online magazine where the four-strong staff worked out of a cramped room off Baggott Street, fuelled by gourmet coffee and the belief that they could prise open the ‘global communications hegemony’. Aisling is the nebbish Cullen’s fourth job in five years, however, and he is keen to get his head down and prove himself with this successful young company.

From the start, Cullen is wary of the bullish Cooley and his messianic behaviour; sceptical about the company’s group-hug culture and his boss’s megalomaniacal tendencies, he still badly wants to believe in Aisling. But it soon emerges that there is at least one malcontent in the ranks who thinks Aisling’s philosophy is ‘f**king new-age hoodoo voodoo’, and Cullen becomes aware that there’s more than meets the eye to the firm’s office politics.

In Lawrence Cooley, Seán Harnett has created a metaphor for a nation struggling to find a moral justification for its success and its embracing of capitalism. Cullen, on the other hand—favoured prey of evangelists; obsessed with the immense, dark new world he sees unfolding on the Internet—is our guide. Through his richly ambiguous retelling of the story we find out Cullen has his own ideas of how to deal with the pressure, and the temptation of believing in Cooley’s revolutionary fervour. Less than a year after he joins, Aisling is alienating its staff, losing clients, and haemorrhaging cash. In an effort to rebuild morale, Cooley takes his senior executives shark-fishing off the coast of West Cork, giving Cullen the perfect opportunity to unleash his bitterness.

Aisling Ltd is a must-read for anyone who has ever been tempted to murder their boss. Harnett uses a corporate-manual structure and ‘case studies’ to satirise the business culture prevalent at the turn of the millennium, when it seemed as if there would be no limit (and no consequences) to the country’s rapid economic growth. Written in sparse, sardonic prose, *Aisling Ltd* is also the first novel to depict the excitement, idealism and hubris that fed the Celtic Tiger.

‘An exciting read ... How refreshing to read a book about contemporary Ireland handled with such finesse.’

KELLY SULLIVAN, author of *Winter Bayou*

'*Aisling Ltd* offers an enjoyable Irish take on the dot-com phenomenon, when companies with the most spurious of business plans—or is that Mission Statements—could see their fortunes rise and rise on expectations alone. The novel is centred around an IT consultancy company whose core competencies remain as vague as a corporate keynote speech. *Aisling* will have anyone who lived and worked through the late '90s IT boom guessing which Irish IT firms appear in disguise, and more to the point, which amalgam of Irish tech gurus the "Buddha of Irish business" Lawrence Cooley is based upon.'

KARLIN LILLINGTON, technology writer for *The Irish Times*

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Seán Harnett was born in Dublin in 1973 and moved to Terryglass, Co. Tipperary, when he was eleven. After completing his secondary education at Borrisokane Community College, Seán spent a year in Waterford Regional Technical College, followed by a year in the University of East Anglia, Norwich, before returning to Dublin to study for a BA in Communication Studies at Dublin City University.

He graduated with first-class honours in 1995, and although he expected he would have to move to London to find work, he was almost immediately offered a job as a Web-editor in the Computing Services department of University College Dublin. He remained in the IT/Internet sector for the next six years. In early 2001 he quit his job in a Galway-based telecommunications startup to travel, visiting the USA, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and India.

On returning to Ireland in late 2001, Seán worked as a freelance technical writer for two years and began to write *Aisling Ltd* at the end of 2002. He currently works in Galway–Mayo Institute of Technology, and lives with his partner in Athenry. *Aisling Ltd* is his first novel.

PUBLICATION DATE

21 February 2006

PAPERBACK PRICE

€12.99

FURTHER INFORMATION/INTERVIEWS

To arrange an interview with Seán Harnett or for more information, please contact Marsha Swan at Hag's Head Press. Mob. 087-6591491 email publicity@hagsheadpress.com

WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SAYING ABOUT

AISLING LTD

by Seán Harnett

‘*Aisling Ltd* is entirely convincing and engaging; an exciting tale written with flair and talent by a young Irish author who seems guaranteed to have a bright future ahead.’

—*Village magazine*

‘This is the novel that IT people all over the world have been waiting for.’

—Vincent Banville, *The Irish Examiner*

‘Harnett tells a good story that’s full of twists and turns ... A sharp debut by a writer who shows real promise.’

—*Ireland on Sunday*

‘a hugely enjoyable parody of an earnestly idealistic young businessman who is equal parts Holden Caulfield and Tom Ripley’

—*Capital Magazine*

‘an uncompromising look at new corporate philosophy at the height of the dot.com boom in Dublin ... [*Aisling Ltd*] takes you to places you may recognise but then turns your expectations upside down’

—*Totally Dublin*

‘If you survived a dot.com crash – and there are plenty who did – then you’ll enjoy revisiting the milieu in this light and easily digestible thriller.’

—*The Sunday Business Post*

Aisling Ltd retails at €12.99 (pbk) and is distributed by Columbia Mercer Distribution. ISBN: 0-9551264-0-1 ISBN-13: 978-0-9551264-0-6

Trade rep: Robert Towers, 2 The Crescent, Monkstown, Co. Dublin tel. 01-2806532 fax 01-2806020 email rtowers@indigo.ie

Distribution: Columbia Mercer Distribution, 55A Spruce Ave, Stillorgan Ind Pk, Blackrock, Co. Dublin tel. 01-2942560 fax 01-2942564

Publicity: Marsha Swan, Hag's Head Press mob. 087-6591491 email publicity@hagsheadpress.com