**He Won’t Marry Me**

By Dave Carley

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**Synopsis:**

A bride-to-be is shopping for a church. Her needs are so simple: a centre aisle, a little Beyonce for the service, and the removal of anything and anyone she deems unsightly from the immediate vicinity. To her shock, she discovers the Minister does not share her vision.

**The Cast:**

BRIDE, mid to late-twenties  
MINISTER - any age, but definitely older and wiser

**Dave Carley**

Dave Carley is a Toronto-based playwright. His plays have had over 450 productions across Canada and the United States and in many countries around the world. They include *Writing with our Feet* (nominated for the Canada’s prestigious Governor General’s Award); *Taking Liberties*; *Orchidelirium*; and an adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s *The Edible Woman*. For more on Dave, and to read his plays online, go to [www.davecarley.com](http://www.davecarley.com)

**Play history:**

He Won't Marry Me premiered at Acme Theatre New Works Winter Festival, Maynard, Massachusetts, January 2010. It was next produced at Panoply Festival, Huntsville, Alabama, May 2010; and subsequently at a number of other festivals in the USA, including The Storefront Theatre's 2015 short play festival in North Carolina (Judy Simpson Cook, Artistic Director). Another recent production was at The Puzzle: Marble's Festival of New Work, Marble Collegiate Church, New York City, June 2013. The director of that production was Justin Bennett and the cast was Alex Sunderhaus and Dennis Ryan. It has a number of productions since then.

**He Won’t Marry Me**

*BRIDE is standing on the steps of a church, in a minor rage. She is talking on her cellphone. She holds a wedding dress*.

BRIDE: He won’t marry me! He kicked me out! That’s the third one this week!

What do you mean, ‘Was it something I said’? He starting going nuts on me and all I asked him was

*(Lighting change. Inside the sanctuary.)*

…Do those benches move?

MINISTER: Pardon?

BRIDE: Those benches. Because right now, you don’t have a centre aisle.

MINISTER: True, there’s no centre aisle/

BRIDE: Surely you don’t expect me to come down the side.

MINISTER: The *pews* don’t move.

BRIDE: Well, that will affect the price, won’t it.

MINISTER: Pardon?

BRIDE: The price. That’s an essential feature you’re lacking. A Centre aisle. And while we’re on ‘lacking’ – uh hello - parking?

MINISTER: We’re a downtown church, there’s a city lot a block east/

BRIDE: My point is, you don’t have your own parking.

MINISTER: Ms *(Consults)* Harris – when is your Intended getting here?

BRIDE: My what?

MINISTER: The gentleman you’re marrying?

BRIDE: Josh is out golfing. He’s leaving all this to me. He says churches give him the creeps. It’s the God thing.

MINISTER: What about ‘the God Thing’?!

BRIDE: He doesn’t believe.

MINISTER: Do you?

BRIDE: Sure, why not.

MINISTER: ‘Why not.’ *(Pause.)* Does your young man understand that if he’s to be married here he has to take a four week course?

BRIDE: In what!?

MINISTER: It’s called ‘Preparation for Marriage’.

BRIDE: Oh, we don’t need that. We’re living together. What, you’re going to tell him to put down the toilet seat? I’ve got him prepared, don’t worry about that.

MINISTER: It’s required.

BRIDE: Damn right.

MINISTER: I mean, the course.

BRIDE: When is it?

MINISTER: Saturday mornings.

BRIDE: Out of luck, it’s his holy time. Golf. But I’ll come. Is it extra?

MINISTER: It’s free.

BRIDE: You mean, included in the rental, don’t you?

MINISTER: I suppose that’s what I mean.

BRIDE: Now you were saying something earlier about photographs.

MINISTER: We don’t allow them during the ceremony.

BRIDE: We’re just supposed to ‘remember’?

MINISTER: Marriage is a sacrament.

BRIDE: Whatever.

MINISTER: Some things shouldn’t be interrupted by flashes.

BRIDE: They don’t have to flash.

MINISTER: Or whirrs or clicks - nooo cameras.

BRIDE: What about cellphones? You can’t ban people from holding up their/

MINISTER: I’ll stop the service if they do.

BRIDE: Aren’t you the tough one. So I can’t do even one selfie during the whole ceremony?

MINISTER: Absolutely not!

BRIDE: That was a joke Father. Like I’m going to take a selfie. I’ll be too busy remembering.

MINISTER: I’m actually not a priest, I’m a/

BRIDE: By the way, we don’t need an organist.

MINISTER: It’s “included”.

BRIDE: Joshua says organ music makes him nervous. We thought we’d play a CD at some point during the “sacrament” and his sister can sing.

MINISTER: Okay, that’s do-able, is she classically trained or/

BRIDE: Karaoke, mostly.

MINISTER: *(Scared, very scared.)* What is she planning to sing?

BRIDE: ‘Wind Beneath My Wings’.

MINISTER: No.

BRIDE: It’s very spiritual.

MINISTER: No.

BRIDE: No?

MINISTER: No. Do you have a fallback position?

BRIDE: Beyonce, ‘Halo’.

MINISTER: I’ll give you a list of hymns. And no dancing down the aisle when you enter.

BRIDE: God no. That was so July 2009.

MINISTER: Why did you bring your dress with you?

BRIDE: I thought you might have some ideas.

MINISTER: You thought/

BRIDE: You must see a lot of wedding dresses…

MINISTER: Fashion consulting isn’t really part of the “package”.

BRIDE: I need a man’s opinion. Oh, I knowwww, you’re celibate but/

MINISTER: I’m married with two kids.

BRIDE: Does the Pope know?

MINISTER: This is a Methodist church. And I don’t know about dresses. I could care less about dresses. I don’t even think God cares about dresses. You can get married naked for all I care.

BRIDE: Now that’s interesting. I can’t have Bette Midler or Beyonce, I can’t have a centre aisle, I can’t have photographs but I *can* say ‘I do’ with Marge and Joni hanging out.

MINISTER: I was not being serious.

BRIDE: I’m not paying you to not be serious.

MINISTER: At this point, you’re not paying me at all.

BRIDE: What does that mean?

MINISTER: I don’t think this is the right place for you and your absentee toilet seat replacing golfer to get married.

BRIDE: Dude. Slow down. We can work this out. Dialogue with me. I run off at the mouth. I need to get married in a church. It won’t seem real if I don’t. I want a real marriage, I want to have that, it will make things - real… And I do believe in God and everything, maybe not exactly the way you do, but I do believe, I mean, can’t we all believe in our own way?

MINISTER: Like ‘God is a puppy’?

BRIDE: I prefer kittens but, yeah.

*(Pause. MINISTER summons his last ounces of calm.)*

MINISTER: Is there anything else.

BRIDE: Just one thing.

MINISTER: What.

BRIDE: The rubbies on the church lawn.

MINISTER: The rubbies/

BRIDE: I counted fifteen of them.

MINISTER: Those “rubbies” are homeless people. They’re clients of our community services programs, they are why we’re here/

BRIDE: I’m assuming they’ll be moved, the day of.

MINISTER: Get out.

BRIDE: Pardon.

MINISTER: I said, Get out.

BRIDE: Get out.

MINISTER: Get out of my office, get out of my church, GET OUT.

BRIDE: Sir.

MINISTER: GET OUT!

BRIDE: That is not a Christian response.

MINISTER: GET OUT OR I WILL ASK GOD TO SMITE YOUR BOYFRIEND WITH A BOLT OF LIGHTNING ON THE 18TH HOLE

BRIDE: Father. Manage your anger.

*(BRIDE stands up with her dress, and starts to walk out. She turns back to MINISTER with dignity.)*

There is a story in the Bible. It was at the holy temple which, I might add, had a centre aisle. The Parasites were going to cast the bride out. But Jesus said, ‘Suffer the little brides, they know not what they do, yellow black and white we are precious in His sight Wind Beneath my Wings Halo Halo Halo.’

*(BRIDE has exited, pulling out her cellphone. Lights change, and are now the same as at the start.)*

…Like I said - he won’t marry me! He kicked me out! That’s the third one this week! Why do you keep saying, ‘Was it something I said’? Oh oh, there he is, I’ll call you back.

*(MINISTER has appeared.)*

MINISTER: Come back in.

*(BRIDE indicates “me?”)*

I’m sorry I yelled. It was wrong. I’ll marry you.

*(Negotiations are lightning fast.)*

BRIDE: Really?

MINISTER: Yes.

BRIDE: Seriously.

MINISTER: Yes.

BRIDE: Centre Aisle?

MINISTER: No

BRIDE: Wind Beneath My Wings?

MINISTER: Halo.

BRIDE: The Course?

MINISTER: Mandatory. I’ll move it to Thursday night for Josh.

BRIDE: The dress?

MINISTER: It’s perfect. They aren’t parasites, they’re Pharisees. No photographs. The clients stay. As you so aptly put it, “We’re all precious in His sight” and that includes you - and them. Deal?

BRIDE: Deal.

MINISTER: Let’s go in and do the paperwork.

*(BRIDE and MINISTER head off, back into the sanctuary.)*

BRIDE: You really can’t move those benches.

MINISTER: No.

BRIDE: Do you take Mastercard?

MINISTER: A cheque is fine.

*(Basically off.)*

BRIDE: You were joking about getting Josh struck down by lightning right.

Can you revoke that? I’m a bit superstitious…

*(Black.)*

**The End.**