**He Won’t Marry Me**by Dave Carley  
[dcarley@sympatico.ca](mailto:dcarley@sympatico.ca)

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**Synopsis:**

A bride-to-be is shopping for a church. Her needs are simple: a centre aisle, a little Beyoncé to holy-up 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 nuptial vision.

**The Cast:**

BRIDE – mid-to late twenties  
MINISTER – any age. Not robed but maybe dog-collared

**The Setting:**

Behind a church

**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 Canada’s Governor General’s Award); *Taking Liberties*; *Conservatives in Love*; and an adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s *The Edible Woman*. His latest drama, *Hope is a Bird*, trains its binoculars on a possibly extinct species. For more on Dave, and to read many of his plays online, go to [www.davecarley.com](http://www.davecarley.com)

**He Won’t Marry Me**

MINISTER is out behind his church. Looking a bit furtive because he’s taking a smoke break and the optics aren’t great. Also, he’s having trouble even lighting his cigarette. His zippo is dry or his matches are damp.

BRIDE rushes on. She’s holding a mass of fluffy material – probably mosquito netting – her wedding dress.

BRIDE:

Father! Father! There you are! The secretary said you were out here meditating. You don’t look like you’re meditating. Father! Are you smoking!?

MINISTER:

*(Hiding cigarette)* No.

BRIDE:

I think you are.

MINISTER:

I’m not smoking.

BRIDE:

Be honest.

MINISTER:

Technically I’m not smoking.

BRIDE:

Are you even allowed to smoke?

MINISTER:

Yes. But I’m not.

BRIDE:

It sets a very, very bad example to children, Father. But I’m not here to judge you.

MINISTER:

Well that’s a relief. Why are you here?

BRIDE:

Isn’t it obvious. I’m getting married. And I need a church. I’ve haven’t been having much luck. I’m hoping you can help me. After first answering a few questions about the venue and ceremony, of course.

MINISTER:

Ohhhkay. Do you want to go inside and discuss/

BRIDE:

Out here’s fine. *(May have a notebook.)* Let’s start with the wooden benches.

MINISTER:

What wooden benches.

BRIDE:

The ones I saw in the church. Are they moveable?

MINISTER:

The pews? No. Is there a problem?

BRIDE:

Yes Father, there’s a big problem. Your church doesn’t have a centre aisle. Every bride has the right to walk down a centre aisle with her adoring family on the right and her fiancé’s family passed out on the left.

MINISTER:

It’s not a huge church and the side aisle is perfectly visible to all.

BRIDE:

No centre aisle will affect the price, I’m assuming.

MINISTER:

Ms - ?

BRIDE:

Sorry Father, excuse my manners, Jennifer. Harris. *(Slight bow.)*

MINISTER:

First of all, I’m not actually a Father. You keep calling me that but that’s another denomination. Most people call me Phil. Jennifer, is your Intended here?

BRIDE:

*(Looking around.)* Gosh no he’s not, Phil.

MINISTER:

Is he part of this uh process?

BRIDE:

He’s leaving all the planning to me. He’s out golfing. He says churches give him the creeps. It’s the God stuff. This can go no further *(indicates heavens above)* but he doesn’t believe.

MINISTER:

Do you?

BRIDE:

Devoutly.

MINISTER:

Does your fiancé 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’ve been living together for years. Anyway, what are you going to tell him? Put the toilet seat down? Trust me, I’ve prepared him.

MINISTER:

It’s required.

BRIDE:

Damn right it is.

MINISTER:

I mean, the course.

BRIDE:

When is it?

MINISTER:

Saturday mornings.

BRIDE:

Uh uh. That’s his holy time. Golf. But I’ll come. Is it extra?

MINISTER:

It’s free.

BRIDE:

You mean, ‘included in the rental’. Now, on your church website, you said something negative about photographs.

MINISTER:

We don’t allow them during the ceremony.

BRIDE:

We’re just supposed to ‘remember’?

MINISTER:

The marriage ceremony shouldn’t be interrupted by flashes.

BRIDE:

Cameras don’t have to flash.

MINISTER:

Or whirrs or clicks.

BRIDE:

You can’t ban people from holding up their phones.

MINISTER:

I’ll stop the service if they do.

BRIDE:

So I can’t even do a selfie during the ceremony?

MINISTER:

Absolutely not!

BRIDE:

That was a joke, Padre. Like I’m going to have time for a selfie. I’ll be too busy ‘remembering’. By the way, we don’t need an organist.

MINISTER:

It’s ‘included’.

BRIDE:

Josh says organ music makes him nervous. His sister is going to sing.

MINISTER:

Is she classically trained?

BRIDE:

Karaoke.

MINISTER:

Should I ask what song you want -

BRIDE:

‘Wind Beneath My Wings’.

MINISTER:

No.

BRIDE:

It’s very spiritual.

MINISTER:

No.

BRIDE:

Not a Midler fan?

MINISTER:

Not a Midler fan. Do you have a fallback?

BRIDE:

Beyoncé. ‘Halo’.

MINISTER:

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

BRIDE:

God no. That is so 2009.

MINISTER:

Why did you bring your dress?

BRIDE:

I thought you might have some ideas. You must see a lot of them.

MINISTER

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

BRIDE:

I need a man’s opinion. Oh, I know you’re celibate but/

MINISTER:

I’m married with two kids.

BRIDE:

Does the Pope know?

MINISTER:

As I said, that’s another denomination. I’m Baptist. We’re allowed to have kids. Dozens, if we want. And I don’t know about dresses. I could care less about dresses. To be honest, I don’t think God even cares about dresses. You could get married naked for all I care.

BRIDE:

Now isn’t that interesting. I can’t have a centre aisle, I can’t have photographs, I can’t have Bette or Beyoncé - but I CAN say I do with Junie and Joni in full view.

MINISTER:

I was not being serious.

BRIDE:

I’m not paying you to be not serious.

MINISTER:

At this point you’re not paying me at all. I’m sorry – Jennifer - I really don’t think this is the right place for you and your absentee toilet-trained golfer to get married. *(Starts to leave.)*

BRIDE:

Fath – sir – Phil, wait. Wait. Please. We can work this out. I’m sorry. I run off at the mouth. It’s my bridal nerves. Reverend Phil: I need to get married. In a church.

MINISTER:

Why.

BRIDE:

Because it won’t seem real otherwise. I want a real marriage I mean a real wedding. And I do believe in God and everything, maybe not the exact same way you do, but I do believe.

MINISTER:

Like God is a puppy?

BRIDE:

I prefer kittens. That was a joke. I’ll stop joking.

*(Pause as MINISTER summons his last ounce of charity.)*

MINISTER:

Is there anything else, Jennifer.

BRIDE:

Just one thing.

MINISTER:

What.

BRIDE:

The rubbies on the church lawn.

MINISTER:

The rubbies/

BRIDE:

I counted five.

MINISTER:

They are not rubbies. They are homeless people. They are clients of our community services.

BRIDE:

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

MINISTER:

Get out.

BRIDE:

Pardon.

MINISTER:

I said, ‘get out’.

BRIDE:

We are out.

MINISTER:

Well I’m going in. You’re staying out. *(Starts walking off.)*

BRIDE:

Phil!

MINISTER:

Don’t follow me. Stay there. Don’t ever darken my door again OR I WILL ASK GOD TO SMITE YOUR FIANCE WITH A BOLT OF LIGHTNING ON THE 18TH HOLE HAVE A GOOD DAY! (Leaving.)

BRIDE:

*(After him.)* 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 now what they do, Wind Beneath my Wings Halo Halo Halo! *(To herself.)* Wow, he’s really leaving. *(Pulls out phone, calls.)*

He won’t marry me! He kicked me out! That’s the third one today! No Josh it wasn’t something I said well it might have been my fault, a little bit my fault, oh oh he’s coming back. *(Hangs up.)*

MINISTER:

*(Returning.)* Let’s go in and we can discuss your wedding.

BRIDE:

*(Looks around.)* You talking to me.

MINISTER:

I shouldn’t have yelled. And I would like you and Josh to get married. I’ll do it.

BRIDE:

Seriously.

MINISTER:

Marriage is sacramental. Important. Holy. What kind of padre father reverend would I be if I denied that to someone who genuinely wants it. And I think under all your yammering, you do.

BRIDE:

I do.

MINISTER:

I know. Come on.

BRIDE:

*(Fast negotiations.)* Centre aisle?

MINISTER:

No.

BRIDE:

‘Wind Beneath my Wings’?

MINISTER:

Halo.

BRIDE:

The Preparation Course?

MINISTER:

Mandatory. I’ll move it to Thursday night for Josh. Does he golf Thursday nights?

BRIDE:

Pickleball.

MINISTER:

Wednesday night.

BRIDE:

The dress?

MINISTER:

It’s lovely. They aren’t parasites, they’re Pharisees. No photographs. Our clients stay. They love weddings. I’ll ask them to line up and throw confetti when you come out. Deal?

BRIDE:

Deal.

MINISTER:

*(Moving off.)* Let’s go do the paperwork.

BRIDE:

*(Moving off with him.)* You know when you said that thing about Josh getting struck down? I’m a little superstitious. Can you revoke it?

MINISTER:

You’ll have to run backwards twice around the church.

BRIDE:

Nahh. Really?

MINISTER:

Yup. You might as well get started.

BRIDE:

*(Turns, is poised to run backwards. Then gets it.)* Ohhhhh.

MINISTER:

Gotcha. Puts his arm out.

*(They are exiting.)*

BRIDE:

By the way, you forgot your cigarettes.

MINISTER:

I don’t smoke…

(They exit.)

**The End.**