Wholly Matrimony

By Kandie S. Kelley

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STORY OF THE PLAY

After years of waiting for a traditional marriage proposal, Caroline's had it. When she takes matters into her own hands and plans a "surprise" wedding at her family's vacation home, side-splitting mayhem is set in motion. This wedding, hardly the dream variety, has all the same trappings as a surprise birthday party: secrets, shrewd planning, and timing gone awry.

Grudgingly participating in the scheme is her practical best friend and maid of honor, Beth, who questions everything from her bridesmaid dress (which she refers to as a fuchsia tortilla)-to the jumping out from behind sofas every time a car drives by. Beth's favorite thing to question, however, is marriage itself.

Caroline also must contend with her boozy mother, Ann, and her favorite uncle, Issy, a cross-dressing host of a wacky children's puppet show, as well as his puppets and their smart-aleck remarks.

As a result, this bride-to-be has more stress than most. Not only is there a wedding to plan, which is usually enough to send a bride off the deep end, but whether or not her groom will even show. And if he does arrive, will he go along with her scheme? About 90 minutes.

“Get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee.”
(All’s Well That Ends Well 1.1.212-13.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 3 w)

BETH ROSE: The maid of honor.

CAROLINE SWENSON: The bride.

ANN SWENSON: The bride's mother.

ISSY SWENSON: The bride's uncle.

TONY: The handyman/minister.

TIME

The present.

SETTING

The "great room," as Caroline's father used to call it, of the Wrexham House, the Swenson summer home. It has the feel of a mountain cabin with the obligatory taxidermy and plaid blankets. The room contains a bar, barstools, and a sofa and chairs.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: CAROLINE, in jeans, a t-shirt, and a wedding veil, and ANN are hiding in the semi-dark behind furniture. BETH enters juggling a wedding gift, her fuchsia bridesmaid dress, and her suitcase.)

CAROLINE and ANN: *(Leaping out as BETH enters.)* Surprise!

(ANN switches on the LIGHTS.)

CAROLINE: Beth?
BETH: *(Struggling with her suitcase, etc.)* I could use a little help here...
CAROLINE: You're early.

(ANN and CAROLINE help her bring in the suitcase, etc.)

BETH: You thought I was Keith?
ANN: *(Embracing BETH.)* When Caroline told me you were coming, I nearly wept. Honestly. I nearly did.
CAROLINE: Not really...but on the small chance you were...
ANN: Tears almost fell. Tell her, Honey. Tell her how I almost cried with joy.
BETH: *(To ANN.)* We had lunch just last week—
ANN: But how long has it been since you've come here, here to the Wrexham House? Ages. Eons—
BETH: Not since I was a kid. *(To CAROLINE.)* When I saw the lights were out, I almost turned around.
ANN: *(Clutching both CAROLINE and BETH's hands.)* Now, here we are, all together again.
CAROLINE: *(Spotting gift.)* You shouldn't have—
ANN: Of course she should have.
BETH: *(To CAROLINE.)* Seriously, I almost left. I thought you might've changed your mind.

CAROLINE: We had to hide. He could just show anytime. He could...he's been known—
BETH: I told Andrew 5 p.m. tomorrow. Just like you said. And Andrew always sticks to the plan.
CAROLINE: You mean he always does what you say...
BETH: He takes my suggestions.
CAROLINE: Did they take your suggestion and go to Eagle Lake?
BETH: Camping and fishing as we speak. I can see them now—Andrew's going nuts with the bug spray, dousing for, I don't know, probably the tenth time every exposed inch of his pale skin, and Keith's probably working on his—
CAROLINE: —tenth beer.
BETH: At least.
ANN: Who wants a drink? Ever have a grasshopper? We've been drinking them for years. It's officially the Wrexham House drink.
BETH: I don't drink.

(ANN ignores BETH and sets about making the drinks.)

CAROLINE: So...they're about an hour and a half away?
BETH: I guess...probably more with traffic.
CAROLINE: Traffic? Up here?
BETH: You never know.
ANN: Oh, we're lucky if one car drives by in an hour, Honey.
BETH: If Andrew gets him to leave by three-thirty tomorrow, we're golden.
CAROLINE: Big if...
BETH: Andrew will figure out a way to make sure the timing's perfect. You know that.
ANN: And why haven't you married this boy?
CAROLINE: If Keith decides he's not ready to go, it won't matter what Andrew says.
BETH: Andrew can be very persuasive.
CAROLINE: Then why haven't you said yes by now? I mean, how many times does the guy have to propose?
BETH: Marriage isn't my thing.

ANN: Is marriage a thing? I've never thought about it like that before.
CAROLINE: You're my best friend, but I swear, even I would have dumped you after that last one.
BETH: He shouldn't have risked it.
CAROLINE: Oh my God, I would have been so happy if Keith had proposed that way.
BETH: Cliché. That's what it was. A total cliché. *(SHE notices a three-tiered cake on the bar.)* That looks good.
ANN: Chocolate with brandy sauce!
CAROLINE: We still have to decorate it—and I've barely started the roses for the gazebo...
BETH: We're decorating a cake?
CAROLINE: Come on, it'll be fun.
BETH: I'm an accountant...the only thing I can decorate is someone's tax schedule. Where's Issy?
CAROLINE: Issy'll be here.
BETH: When? I want to psyche myself up.
CAROLINE: He was supposed to be here this morning. So, he's not really late at all.
BETH: Issy time?
CAROLINE: I'm just happy you're here...
BETH: *(Indicating CAROLINE's veil.)* Why do you have that on?
CAROLINE: You like it? Mom loaned it to me. It's the something borrowed part of something borrowed, something blue... Oh, we still have to tie the ribbon...I bought twenty yards of fuchsia ribbon. There's so much to do.... When's the last time you talked with Andrew?
ANN: Grasshoppers! *(ANN hands the drinks to CAROLINE and BETH.)*
BETH: I tried calling him right before I lost service coming up here. No answer.
ANN: *(After a big swig.)* Aren't they delicious?
BETH: *(Smelling it and making a face.)* Um... Thank you.
ANN: Anything you need, Dear. This is a celebration...and we must celebrate.
CAROLINE: They're probably already headed here. Probably right behind you.

End of Freeview

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