

The Wedding Trifle



by Jane Malone

THE WEDDING TRIFLE

-a play in five acts

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SYNOPSIS

Set in the Southern Highlands of NSW, the day before a country wedding, a bride discovers her hitherto happily married parents have separated. Needless to say, this is going to make family photos somewhat difficult. A psychologist by trade, she attempts to broker a reconciliation. In vain. Tempers flare, fishnets tear and acrimony turns to alimony as hopes for a happy day crumble faster than the overcooked wedding cake. And as the shortcomings of her parents' marriage are revealed, the bride's forced to confront her buried concerns about her relationship with the groom. Do they have what it takes to live Happily Ever After?

SETTING

The Southern Highlands, a popular weekend destination from Sydney.

STAGE

The interior of a country barn, renovated as tourist accommodation. A small mezzanine area serves as the loft.

TIME

Last weekend

CHARACTERS

Katrina- early 30s

Lockie- early 30s

Claire- late 50s

Doug- late 50s

Rick- 40 something

Bethany- early 30s, trying to look early 20s.

Happy families are all alike;
every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Tolstoy

ACT ONE

KATRINA and LOCKIE enter, LOCKIE carrying a long plastic dress bag on a coat hanger. They are mid-conversation.

KATRINA: *(laughing)* I'm just not sure if I can genuinely promise to take you in sickness.

LOCKIE: So you'll love me for better or worse, richer or poorer, 'blank' and in health? If I get cancer, or swine flu or some sort of pus skin thing that makes my arms flail about and my eyes roll to the back of my head, you're out of here?

KATRINA: No! I'm totally there if you're *really* sick.

LOCKIE: If I'm *really* sick?

KATRINA: You know you're a hypochondriac.

LOCKIE: When have I been a hypochondriac?? That flu I had last month?

KATRINA: It was a sniffle.

LOCKIE: I almost died.

KATRINA: You had a cold.

LOCKIE: They were going to admit me to the respiratory ward!

KATRINA: And yet they sent you home with Herron.

Oh...Come here. I love you. And I'm totally there to dress your icky skin thing and tape down your arms whilst trying to gaze into your rolling about eyes.

He laughs, and hangs up the dress bag.

LOCKIE: Are you planning on growing six inches in the next two days?

KATRINA: But I am wearing killer heels, I know how much you like me up high.

She stands on tip-toes and kisses him.

LOCKIE: I always feel a little nervous when I hear 'killer' heels. Who's dying?

Katrina laughs and takes in her surrounds.

KATRINA: What do you think he meant by 'almost finished'?

LOCKIE: Paint's dry.

KATRINA: Not bad for an old hay barn.

He tries to see up into the mezzanine.

LOCKIE: Must be a bed up there.

KATRINA: Maybe we could have a little roll in the hay...

LOCKIE: What about your mother?

KATRINA: Where did she go anyway? She just sort of vanished as soon as we got off the bus. I've just worked out what he means by almost finished (*She mimics the yet to be introduced manager Rick*) 'Completely refurbished, easily sleeps four. You'll be our first guests!... Just one little thing. No bathroom!'

Lockie points out the window.

KATRINA: What? Like an outhouse?

LOCKIE: You booked the eco resort.

KATRINA: I thought it would be less eco, more resort.

LOCKIE: Maybe it would be if we had a room in the main building.

KATRINA: Oh... There's a sweet little track down there.

Maybe we can go for a walk later?

LOCKIE: You know, I'm not sure if I can genuinely take you in 'Health'.

KATRINA: What do you mean?

LOCKIE: Specifically, when you're on a health kick. Yoga, weights, walking, carrots. Alarms at dawn, shuffle, shuffle, stretch, bang, pant, pant... An hour later, 'Morning!! It's the most gorgeous day!!' I haven't slept past dawn for a month. I wouldn't mind so much if you just did it yourself, but whenever you go on one, I have to go on one too. It's like conscription. But into the Health Corp.

KATRINA: Well is that it then? If you're not sure you can

take me in health, and I definitely don't want you in sickness, should we not bother?

LOCKIE: I Lockie, take you Katrina, in sickness and in blank.

KATRINA: I Katrina, take you Lockie, in blank and in health. We really are a perfect match.

Claire enters, carrying overnight bag.

CLAIRE: Knock knock

KATRINA: Here she is!

CLAIRE: The natives are superb. I was thinking I might email the ABC and get a tip off to Costa from 'Gardening Australia'

Katrina takes her bag.

KATRINA: What have you got in here?

Struggling under its weight she hands it to Lockie.

CLAIRE: Probably my thermos.

KATRINA: Your thermos?

CLAIRE: Just a little green tea. Anti-freeze for aging. And more environmentally friendly to not be always boiling the kettle. So it really is green. Get it! Well this is ... roomy.

KATRINA: They lost our booking.

CLAIRE: *(relieved)* Well we can go somewhere else.

KATRINA: Ideally, but there's some sort of music festival on tonight and every hotel's booked out.

CLAIRE: Have you made any calls?

KATRINA: Well....no, but do you really want to get back on the bus, and back into town, and settled into another hotel?

CLAIRE: If it means we'll have a good night's sleep.

KATRINA: You'll be fine. We don't snore.

LOCKIE: Speak for yourself.

KATRINA: Heavy breathing. Due to your presence beside me in bed. We're first on the list in case a room comes up

in the main house.

CLAIRE: Why don't I just make a few calls?

KATRINA: It's almost dark. I've got a Filofax full of wedding stuff to get through. It's just one night.

CLAIRE: It's going to be cold later as well.

KATRINA: There's a fireplace.

LOCKIE: But no chimney.

Claire looks at him.

LOCKIE: It's an eco resort.

CLAIRE: Great so we'll all freeze to death. So much for global warming! Well at least we've got view. A Barn with a View. Of ... *(she looks to the foreground)* a completely dilapidated other barn... A barn with a view of a barn. With apologies to E.M.Forster.

She strains right looking in the direction of the main house.

KATRINA: Looks pretty dreadful doesn't it?

LOCKIE: Hard to tell from here.

KATRINA: Why don't we go for a walk so we can have a closer look? I'm trying to convince Lockie of the benefits of healthy living Claire. Isn't it true that too much work and not enough walk can lead to premature aging and near terminal respiratory tract infections?

LOCKIE: And too much walk and not enough rest can lead to a near terminal relationship.

Claire is still straining to see the main house.

KATRINA: Earth to Claire. You're not still worried about your speech are you? Will you please just forget about it. Doug can make his from the both of you.

LOCKIE: You can practice your orations from the loft when he gets...

KATRINA: *(To Lockie)* Ssshhh.

CLAIRE: A mother's perspective's different. I've just been spending far too much time thinking about it and

it's all become one big mess. I'm not going to look at it at all now until tomorrow, at which time I'm sure some sort of mother of the bride iambic pentameter inspired genius will emerge. Where's the bathroom?

KATRINA: About four hundred yards that way.

CLAIRE: Like an outhouse? I'll have to cut down on my tea.

Claire exits.

Lockie does a reverse dive onto the couch.

LOCKIE: Sleeeeeeeep....

KATRINA: Is timetabled in five hours.

LOCKIE: I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to being married.

KATRINA: That's sweet.

LOCKIE: So we can have a life again.

She groans, then sits beside him.

KATRINA: If you could plan this whole thing again, how would you do it?

LOCKIE: Bungi.

KATRINA: But you're scared of heights.

LOCKIE: Not as scared as I am of standing at the end of the aisle with everyone looking at me.

KATRINA: O sweetheart, they're only looking at you because I'm not there yet.

LOCKIE: Just make sure you're not late.

KATRINA: Me?

LOCKIE: I'm on the lookout for payback.

She smiles.

KATRINA: I think I'd get married in this.

She indicates her vintage clothing.

LOCKIE: You look good in that.

KATRINA: Not as good as I'm going to look in that.

LOCKIE: There's no TV either.

KATRINA: We'll have to talk to each other.

LOCKIE: We've been talking, or rather, your mother's been talking and I've been listening, for the last two and a half hours. I wonder if I could stomach a beer.

KATRINA: Have you finally recovered?

LOCKIE: Not sure. But the simple act of opening a bottle might help.

KATRINA: My poor buck. Oh. There's no mini-bar.

LOCKIE: Doug's going to love that.

KATRINA: Shhh.

She double-checks Claire's absence.

KATRINA: It's a surprise.

LOCKIE: What?

KATRINA: Tonight's dinner.

LOCKIE: Why?

KATRINA: We've barely been in the same room over the last few months. Doug's been spending most nights in town, Claire's busy with the renovation, I just thought it would be nice.

LOCKIE: I still find it strange that you call your parents by their first names.

KATRINA: We're a normal family.

LOCKIE: Every family thinks their family is a normal family.

KATRINA: Yes, but we are. Hey, this is a sofa bed. Maybe we won't need the extra room? Save the cash..??

LOCKIE: Is your father's snoring anything like yours?

She giggles.

KATRINA: Look at my nails!

He takes her hand.

LOCKIE: Nice.

She sees his.

KATRINA: You told me you were going to get a manicure.

LOCKIE: I haven't had time.

KATRINA: But I want our hands to look nice in the ring shot. And what happened to the promised 'manscaping'? Facial, hair, eyebrows..

She ruffles his hair, and strokes his face.

LOCKIE: I never agreed to eyebrows. I might have got around to it if I hadn't have to spend the last week trying to locate things in my own study.

KATRINA: Our own study.

LOCKIE: I'm serious. Working from home's going to be hard enough without chasing my books round the room. Since when did you like books in alphabetical order anyway? I though we were both committed to Dewy Decimal.

KATRINA: Alphabetical's better.

LOCKIE: But I don't remember authors. Just colours and shapes: Buildings. Sport. Dinosaurs.

KATRINA: Have I told you how cute I think it is that you've kept your children's books?

LOCKIE: Don't change the subject. We have to work out the study or we'll spend the next fifty years fighting. Not only about books, but the Centrelink payouts I'll be supporting us on cause I won't have been able to get any work done. Since when did you become such a control freak anyway?

KATRINA: I've always been a control freak. I just feel so loved now I feel secure enough to show it.

LOCKIE: Mmmm...

KATRINA: It's true. I've never felt more relaxed about being obsessive.

Doug enters, whistling to the tune of 'Here Comes Bride.'

DOUG: Da da da dum. Da da da da dum. Da da da da da da da da da dum.

Doug hugs and kisses Katrina.

DOUG: And how's the groom?

He shakes his hand warmly.

DOUG: You still smell like bourbon.

LOCKIE: My deodorant.

DOUG: How was it?

LOCKIE: Pretty quiet.

KATRINA: What with the harbour cruise, the strippers, mud wrestling, jagermeister...

Doug laughs.

LOCKIE: Ping pong balls.

DOUG: Ping pong balls?

LOCKIE: Joking. Let me take your bag.

DOUG: Where are we?

KATRINA: 'Rick's Retreat Southern Highlands: The fastest way to slow down.'

DOUG: Yes I read that on the side of the shuttle bus that I just had to take here from the carpark. Why would you build a carpark that far from the resort? The whole idea of leasing a prestige car is so everyone can see you arriving in it.

KATRINA: It's to discourage you from driving. What *has* happened to all your clothes?

DOUG: You only get one chance at midlife crisis. Wouldn't want to precipitate an end of life crisis by not having a full blown crisis midlife.

KATRINA: Isn't it a bit big?

DOUG: It is now. Been working out at the gym downstairs.

LOCKIE: Hear you've got quite the pad Doug.

DOUG: Nothing special. View of the park, rooftop pool, a thousand remotes. DVD, CD, LG, HD. Sometimes feel like James Bond. Na Na Na Na Na Na Num..*(He sings the theme song and points an imaginary remote control, as if it's a gun)* And I'm getting into these home delivered meals. They're lean. And they're almost cuisine. Have to get you over. Preferably on a Tuesday night as that's when

they're delivered. So this is an eco resort eh? Looks slightly less glossy than in those supplements that come with the Fin. Sparse isn't it? Obviously not offsetting enough emissions to afford a television. What's this?

Picks up the prayer bell and dongs it.

DOUG: Happy hour?

Katrina and Lockie share a look.

DOUG: You know, I've never really understood the appeal of Bowral. Antiques. Bric-a-brac. What the hell's bric-a-brac? And whoever said it was only two hours from Sydney hasn't had to drive down here on a Friday night. The Southern Highlands as the weekend destination de rigueur is proof of women's dominance over men. If we had our way we'd go somewhere with simpler food, convenient parking and twenty-four hour access to high quality sport. If men ran the world we'd do weekends away at the Stadium.

Claire enters.

CLAIRE: That bathroom may not be an environmental hazard, but it's certainly a safety hazard, I almost fell in.

Claire and Doug are shocked to see each other.

KATRINA: Surprise!

CLAIRE: What's going on?

KATRINA: I thought we could all have dinner together....

Katrina notices the tension.

KATRINA: What's wrong?

CLAIRE: Nothing, nothing. I just thought your father had to work tonight that's all.

KATRINA: It's been months since we've even been in the same room. Thought it would be nice if we could all dine together the night before the night before.

CLAIRE: What a great idea.

DOUG: Wonderful.

KATRINA: Talk about old times, get some advice about marriage, you can give Lockie a few tips Doug!

Pause.

DOUG: Don't know if we'll have enough time. Are we all in here together are we?

Pause.

KATRINA: I'm going to ask the manager for another room.

CLAIRE: What a good idea. Excuse me. I dropped something.

Claire exits stage left

KATRINA: Is she alright?

DOUG: Probably just tired. Carers' Fatigue's pretty tiring.

KATRINA: Doug.

DOUG: Well it is. By definition. Fatiguing.

KATRINA: She just said in the car she's never felt better.

He walks downstage, and inhales.

Katrina and Lockie watch him closely.

DOUG: *(covering)* So what do you think of the renovation Lockie?

LOCKIE: Not bad.

Doug isn't listening.

He looks downstage.

DOUG: That old barn doesn't look very eco does it? Looks like something out of Mad Max.

He walks upstage, still distracted.

DOUG: And how do we get up there? Levitate?

KATRINA: We have to get a ladder. What else is on the 'almost finished' list? Coffee, blankets...

LOCKIE: Beer.

Lockie exits, Doug glances for Claire.

DOUG: Well isn't this fine.

KATRINA: Please be nice to Lockie.

DOUG: I am nice.

KATRINA: And even consider forgiving him for not asking you if he could marry me.