

"Dearly Beloved"

by

Donald Steele

CHARACTERS

JONATHAN - 40 years old

MARIAN - his mother

A bedroom in Marian's house in Downer's Grove, Illinois. Jonathan's wedding day.
Afternoon. Now.

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A bedroom. Afternoon. JONATHAN is sitting in a chair. HE is dressed in a nice stylish suit. HE has a boutonniere on his lapel. In a moment his mother MARIAN enters, also nicely dressed and wearing a corsage.

MARIAN

We're waiting for you. What's the hold up?

JONATHAN

I can't do it mother.

MARIAN

Do what?

JONATHAN

That downstairs. What everybody's here for.

MARIAN

You...want me to tell them to go home?

JONATHAN

You'd like that.

MARIAN

Meaning what?

JONATHAN

Then you wouldn't have to go through with being the hostess of my gay wedding.

MARIAN

Did I or did I not say you could have the ceremony in my backyard? Was that me or wasn't it?

JONATHAN

Only so you didn't have to say you had it in your house.

MARIAN

The house was going to be used in case the weather was bad. As back up. I'm having the reception in the house. Or have you failed to notice the tables set up for the buffet? And the flowers everywhere? I have been nothing but supportive.

JONATHAN

Only because you knew I wouldn't go through with it.

MARIAN

And I would know that how? Lots of things I am but psychic isn't one of them.

JONATHAN

Because I never follow through on anything.

MARIAN

I'm confused. I thought we were talking about you.

JONATHAN

I have a tendency to run out of steam. I do.

MARIAN

And that's why you're a successful interior decorator whose been featured in Architectural Digest 5 times? You run out of steam and pack up your follow through so houses and apartments and summer homes all over have rooms half wallpapered? Sofas half upholstered? Rugs...

JONATHAN

I said tendency.

MARIAN

You and Andrew have been together for 17 years. If that's not follow through.

JONATHAN

Well today my tendency is in full bloom. Today I

am running out of steam. Today I am all out of follow through.

MARIAN

Today.

JONATHAN

Today. Right now. This minute.

HE exhales making a hissing sound.

MARIAN

What the hell is that?

JONATHAN

The sound of me running out of steam.

MARIAN

Get up. Get downstairs. Your father and I raised you better than this.

JONATHAN

I can't do it.

MARIAN

Are you now suddenly paralyzed as well as having been taken over by some alien entity that looks like you but isn't you?

JONATHAN

I can't do this to Andrew.

MARIAN

Do what? The only thing you're doing to Andrew is making him wait.

JONATHAN

This.

MARIAN

Humiliate him? Jilt him? Leave him at the altar?

JONATHAN

I thought I knew what I was doing when I suggested this. But now...

MARIAN

"But now...?"

JONATHAN

Now I don't think I do. I don't think I ever did.

MARIAN

What did you think you were doing? When you were interviewing caterers? Discussing flower arrangements with the florist? Sending out 68 invitations all of which were RSVPed in the positive?

JONATHAN

Not this. Not what it's become today.

MARIAN

And what has it become today? Other than a potentially embarrassing disaster.

JONATHAN

I wanted today to be about love, to be an act of love. I wanted to get married as an act of love.

MARIAN

And it is. Downstairs waiting for you in front of 97 people is a man who loves you. Who I am so so so happy you love.

JONATHAN

You are?

MARIAN

Oh God yes. I like him much more than any of the girls you ever dated.

JONATHAN

You do?

MARIAN

Not that I didn't like them. On the whole. Karen was sweet. But with everyone of them I thought, "He could do so much better." And you did. Andrew.

JONATHAN

I can't do this to you.

MARIAN

Do what? Make me go downstairs and face 97 people who are waiting for vows, food, and cake...

JONATHAN

Cake is food.

MARIAN

Yes I know that. I have been to a few weddings. I was planning to go to this one. In my backyard. Like you thought would be so nice when I suggested it. I did not think I would have to go downstairs to tell everyone Oops Jonathan has had a breakdown, but don't let that stop you, go ahead help yourself to the Lobster Newburgh and cut

into that cake which I gladly paid for that cost more than a lot of people's monthly mortgage.

JONATHAN

Don't you see what today has become?

MARIAN

A disaster.

JONATHAN

No. It's political. This is a political act I am committing. I didn't want it be a political act.

MARIAN

How could it not be?

JONATHAN

And that doesn't bother you?

MARIAN

You are gay Jonathan. I am the mother of a gay son. I am a mother who was planning on hostessing the wedding of her gay son. I may not have marched in the streets protesting a war - any war - but I would say doing today here what I was planning on doing here today, watching happily as you and Andrew took your vows, leading toasts, celebrating this, does have some political overtones to it. And I am also the mother of a son who isn't gay. And a daughter who isn't. And as with them when they met someone, met The Someone, loved The Someone, lived

MARIAN (Cont.)

with The Someone, married The Someone, I put aside whatever hesitations I might have had, any fears, any objections, and I embraced fully - or as fully as I could given the person I was being asked to embrace - and accepted what I was being offered.

JONATHAN

What objections could you have had with the people Susan and Paul married?

MARIAN

Susan could have done better. And I don't mean that euphemistically. But I wasn't the one marrying Gary.

JONATHAN

But when Susan and Paul got married, it wasn't a protest.

MARIAN

You don't think so?

JONATHAN

It was?

MARIAN

Paul's wife is nice enough and all, and I do think she is an awfully good mother. No complaints there. But I have never really taken to her. And your brother knew that.

JONATHAN

How? You didn't say...something?

MARIAN

You know me.

JONATHAN

Yeah I do. You said something?

MARIAN

He has eyes. He can see. You see how I am with Andrew? Do I act like that with Beverly?

JONATHAN

(Realizing.)
No. No you don't.

MARIAN

And your brother sees that too. I felt a bit when they got married - and not in my backyard I remind you - I felt Paul was saying, "So there" to me. And if that wasn't an act of protest I don't know what is.

JONATHAN

But I want Andrew to think I'm marrying him out of love.

MARIAN

He does. He will. As soon as you show up downstairs. The second he sees your face. Downstairs. Where he is waiting. Like we all are.

JONATHAN

I don't want anger to be part of this.

MARIAN

I'm angry. Anger will be part of my day.

JONATHAN

Angry about what?

MARIAN

That there are people who think this is wrong. My motive in offering you the use of my backyard, the backyard you used to play in when you were little, where I could watch you out my back window, wasn't exactly pure. I'm angry that people could see you and Andrew together, love each other as much as you do, as much as you have for 17 years, and hate you. They may say they don't hate you, just the act, what you represent. They hate you. Nobody is going to tell me that God doesn't love you and who you love. This is my act of protest today. This is my March on Selma. This is my bus. This is my March on Washington. Don't take today away from me. I love you and there is no

where else on the face of this planet, in this country, for you to get married but in my backyard where I watched you take your first footsteps.

JONATHAN

And that anger won't get in your way?

MARIAN

No. The only anger that could get in my way today is theirs. Don't let them spoil this day. Don't let them get in your way. You haven't so far. Don't start now.

THEY embrace.

JONATHAN

Let's go downstairs and have ourselves a gay wedding. Gay in every sense.

SHE straightens his tie.

MARIAN

There now. Picture perfect.

JONATHAN

Just one thing.

MARIAN

What?

JONATHAN

How did you get Father Brodeski to officiate?

MARIAN

I told him if he wanted the money for that big new stained glass window he could be a really good Christian and think for himself.

THEY exit.

THE END