

MARITAL BLISS

by  
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INT. CHURCH - FOYER - DAY

A hand, well manicured except for the one torn, bloody, pinky nail, pounds on a door marked "Bridal Chamber."

The hand is replaced with a head half full of rollers belonging to IVA LEVY (28).

IVA  
Madeleine! Unlock the door. The wedding is about to start.

Loud sobs answer her from behind the door.

Iva sighs and turns around to lean her back against the door. She wears only a corset, panties and thigh high stockings on her buxom frame.

She kicks the door in a fit of temper.

IVA (CONT'D)  
Maddie! You open this door right now! Do you hear me?

Something thumps against the door from the other side.

MADELEINE (O.S.)  
I can't go out there looking like this!

PRESTON (O.S.)  
What's going on back here?  
Everyone's waiting.

Iva spins to look at PRESTON SAUNDERS (32), the definition of gorgeous hunk, as he slips out of the sanctuary.

Iva tries to cover herself, but has nothing so gives up.

IVA  
How determined are you to get married today? Try it again tomorrow?

Iva gives him a hopeful shrug.

PRESTON  
You can't be serious. There are over five hundred people out there waiting.

At his statement, a fresh round of sobs starts.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

What's the deal?

IVA

Her dress makes her look fat.  
'Cause she managed to gain so much  
weight in the twelve hours since  
she last tried it on.

PRESTON

That's ridiculous. She's what? A  
size zero?

He pounds on the door.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

Madeleine? Open the door.

IVA

'Cause that worked so well when I  
tried it.

He looks at Iva and shrugs.

PRESTON

So we just leave her in there.

Iva sucks in a surprised breath.

IVA

I can't go out there looking like  
this. I'm in my underwear!

Preston slowly peruses her body and gives her a wicked grin.

PRESTON

I dunno. You look darn good to me  
like that. Besides, why get all  
gussied up when I'm just gonna  
ungussy you later.

He steps closer, invading her space. Tips her chin back with  
a finger. Iva stares at him, love shining in her eyes.

She shakes her head, coming to her senses.

IVA

I don't put on the dress, you don't  
get to take it off.

He steps closer, pressing her into the door.

PRESTON  
There's nothing I can say to  
persuade you otherwise?

Iva looks really tempted. She takes a shaky breath and pushes him away.

Preston kisses her forehead then sighs and backs off. He pulls a lock picking kit from his tuxedo pocket.

Iva raises an eyebrow.

IVA  
I thought we agreed to leave work  
at home.

PRESTON  
You want the dress, right?

She nods.

He makes short work of opening the door.

PRESTON (CONT'D)  
Where?

Iva nods a direction. Pulls the final rollers from her hair.

Preston yanks open the door and ducks inside.

Madeleine's sobs stop for a surprised moment, then start up even louder.

MADELEINE (O.S.)  
You have to talk to Iva. I can't go  
out there looking like a blimp.  
Iva...she...pulls it off. I can't.

Iva deflates at the comment. She slouches against the wall and fights tears.

Preston reappears with Iva's bridal gown.

He takes one look at Iva's sad face and plants a tender kiss on her lips. When they part, he gives her a tender smile. Brushes a stray curl off her forehead.

PRESTON  
I love you.

Iva smiles tentatively. He unfastens the gown's top hook. Looks at it with a frown.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

How do you get in this thing?

She balances with his shoulders and steps in the gown. He slides it up and refastens a couple of the buttons.

IVA

That can't be all of them.

He looks at the long row running down her back.

PRESTON

All of these? There's gotta be two hundred buttons here.

IVA

Two hundred and fifty three.

PRESTON

What if I just button strategic ones? Easy in, easy out.

IVA

Yeah. It's the easy out I'm worried about in front of everyone we know. Besides, it won't fit right.

Preston sighs and kneels behind her. Buttons each one.

PRESTON

I hope you're not too attached to these buttons. I see a knife in their not so distant future.

INT. CHURCH - SANCTUARY - DAY

Hundreds of GUESTS chatter and fidget.

Bored GROOMSMEN joke amongst themselves at the altar.

In the front, two sets of parents, MILICENT (50s) and GEORGE LEVY (60s) and NANCI (50s) and JIM SAUNDERS (50s) whisper among themselves.

MILICENT

What's taking them so long. I hope Preston isn't getting cold feet.

NANCI

No one is getting cold feet, Millie. I'm sure they'll be along at any moment.

MILICENT  
Maybe I should go check.

NANCI  
No!

GEORGE  
No!

Milicent eyes all three of them with an affronted frown.

Nanci quickly lays a comforting hand on her arm.

NANCI  
Let's just give them a moment. They  
can handle whatever is going on.

The organ springs to life under the ORGANIST'S fingers.

The guest look around at the familiar notes of the wedding march. They stand when they see Preston and Iva standing at the door.

Despite the hurriedly tamed curls and no makeup, Iva looks radiant. They exchange loving smiles then start up the aisle.

NANCI (CONT'D)  
Told you.

She and Jim cross back to their side of the aisle.

As Iva and Preston walk toward the altar, the BRIDESMAIDS come out of hiding and scramble down the aisle after them.

The PREACHER gestures for everyone to be seated once Preston and Iva are before him.

PREACHER  
Dearly Beloved, we are gathered  
here today...

Milicent cranes her neck toward the back of the sanctuary with a frown.

George squeezes her hand. She turns the frown on him.

MILICENT  
Where's Madeleine?

PREACHER  
...in Holy Matrimony.

MILICENT  
Psst. Iva.

Iva grits her teeth and ignores her mother. Preston pulls her closer to his side.

George nudges Milicent. Shakes his head.

PREACHER  
Marriage is to be entered into  
solemnly, with reverence and  
understanding.

MILICENT  
Iva? Where's Madeleine? Your sister  
should be here.

The preacher pauses with a questioning look at the couple.

PREACHER  
Should we wait?

IVA AND PRESTON  
No!

MILICENT  
Yes!

Iva grimaces while Preston fights to keep a civilized  
expression on his face.

PRESTON  
She's having wardrobe issues.  
Please continue.

The preacher gives him an are-you-sure-you-want-to-join-that-  
family look. Takes a breath.

The door in the back slams open. MADELEINE LEVY (25), rail  
thin in a baggy size zero gown identical to the other  
bridesmaids except for the sequins emphasizing her flatish  
bosom, rushes down the aisle toward the altar.

MADELEINE  
I can't believe you started without  
me.

Iva turns a disbelieving look on Preston.

IVA  
Is she serious?

MILICENT  
We were waiting for you, doll.

MADELEINE  
Thanks, Mommy.

Milicent gives her a kiss and prods her toward the front.

Iva fights to keep her smile in place as she turns back to  
the preacher. She drops his pitying gaze.

PREACHER

The rings, please.

Preston turns to his BEST MAN who has his ring out and ready.

Iva looks at Madeleine who is busy flirting with a cute guy across the room. She nudges her.

MADELEINE

What?

IVA

Where's Preston's ring?

MADELEINE

I had it.

She checks her nonexistent pockets and tears well up in her eyes.

Iva stares her down. A crocodile tear falls.

Milicent jumps up to hand her a tissue.

MILICENT

It's okay, sweetheart. We'll find it later.

IVA

Mom!

MILICENT

Your guests, Iva. Remember your guests.

Madeleine squeals and digs in her shallow cleavage. Triumphantly holds up the ring.

MADELEINE

Found it!

Showing great restraint, Iva holds out her hand for it. Her sister hands it over.

PREACHER

This ring is a symbol of the covenant the two of you are entering into before God and these witnesses. It is a symbol of your love and your commitment one to another until death do you part...

He sends another confirming glance Preston's way.

Iva's straight posture wilts as she looks at Preston, too.  
He squares his shoulders and turns to face Iva.

PRESTON

I do.

PREACHER

We're not to that part, yet.

Iva smiles up at Preston. Squares her shoulders.

IVA

I do.

They exchange rings. Preston claims her lips in a tender kiss.

PREACHER

Uhh...I...um now pronounce you man  
and wife. Continue kissing the  
bride.

Lost in each other, Preston and Iva hold the kiss while the  
guests stand and applaud. They finally break and turn to face  
the crowd.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

I give you Mr. and Mrs. Preston  
Saunders.

Organ music swells as Preston escorts his wife back up the  
aisle.