



Single Married Man

by

Joseph A. Mootz

This is a work of fiction. The names, characters, places, incidents, establishments, organizations and dialogues are products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual places, events or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2004 by Joseph A. Mootz

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in critical articles and reviews.

Published By:

Living the Dream Publishing

PMB 173, 8340 N Thornydale #110

Tucson, Arizona, 85741.

www.livingthedreampublishing.com

Dedication

To us single people who living their lives in peace and comfort.

Single Married Man

Ashton Taylor walked into the county courthouse and approached the window marked marriage licenses. He greeted the young lady sitting behind the glass and slid an application through the space between the glass window and the marble countertop.

The young lady flipped the left side of her hair back over her shoulder and silently chewed her gum while she scanned the document.

"Excuse me sir," she said. "I think you've made a mistake. You put the same name and information down for both applicants."

"That's right," Ashton said. "I want to marry myself."

The girl smiled, let out a giggle, and then covered her mouth with her hand.

"Are you serious?" she said. "I mean I don't think we can issue you a license to marry yourself."

"Why not?" Ashton asked. "There's no law against it now that same-sex marriages are legal. I love myself. I'm committed to myself. Why can't I marry myself?"

The girl giggled and covered her mouth again. She looked down at the application, then back up at Ashton, giggled again and then said, "I'll have to get my supervisor."

She stood up, grabbed the application off the counter and then turned around and walked away. Ashton watched as she disappeared behind a

cubicle wall. A few minutes later, she reappeared followed by a middle-aged, balding man wearing a suit and tie and dark rimmed glasses. The man had a determined and serious look on his face.

He slid the application back under the window and said, "We're sorry sir, but we won't be able to issue you a marriage license based on your application at this time."

"Why not?" Ashton asked.

"The law specifically states that we can only issue a license for *two* people to be married," the man replied. "You are only one person, sir."

"Yes, but I am committed to myself," Ashton said. "I want to enjoy the benefits married people enjoy like extra money for health insurance from my employer and two for one discounts at restaurants and travel agents."

The man's expression did not change. "That's something you'll have to take up with the legislature," he said. "We can only issue licenses based on the current law."

A few weeks later after making several futile attempts to get his congressman to listen to his story without breaking into laughter, Ashton Taylor appeared on the courthouse steps again. This time he did not go inside but rather hoisted a two-foot-by-three-foot protest sign over his shoulder and began marching back and forth. The sign read, "EQUAL RIGHTS FOR SINGLE MARRIED MEN."

Occasionally men and women in business attire walked up the steps to the building and glanced at the sign. Ashton watched as one-by-one they smiled and then continued on their way. A few drivers honked their car horns as they drove by, but mostly no one took much notice of Ashton as he paced back and forth.

Around ten o'clock in the morning a white van with a large antenna pulled up to the curb at the bottom of the steps. An attractive woman wearing a neatly pressed jacket and skirt with ample amounts of makeup on her face made her way up the steps towards Ashton. A young man wearing jeans and a T-shirt and sporting a three day growth of beard carried a large camera on his shoulder up the steps behind the woman.

Ashton recognized the woman as a reporter for the local news. She carried a foot long microphone in her hand and introduced herself as Tara Haynes. Ashton introduced himself and shook her hand.

"Can you tell me what you are protesting here?" Haynes asked Ashton.

The cameraman fiddled with the controls on the camera and pointed it at the building away from Ashton.

"I'm being discriminated against," Ashton said. "They won't let me marry myself."

"Oh, we've got to get this on tape," Haynes said. She directed the cameraman to get a close-up of Ashton's face. Then she held the microphone up

to Ashton's chin and asked him to repeat his statement. Ashton did as she said and stared blankly into the camera.

"Tell me what you mean by marrying yourself," Haynes said in her official reporter's voice.

"I love myself and am committed to myself," Ashton said. "I want to make that commitment official and receive the kind of benefits other married people receive."

"What kind of benefits?" Haynes asked.

"You know health benefits and travel retreats for married people and two for one deals at different businesses," Ashton said. "I don't see why I should be denied these benefits just because I'm one person."

"Marriage has traditionally been between a man and a woman," Haynes said. "Why do you feel the need to alter that tradition and marry yourself? Why do you have to emulate someone else's tradition? Why can't you just have your own tradition and live as a single man?"

"Because I'm being treated like a second class citizen," Ashton replied. "People look down on me when I tell them I'm single and they're always trying to set me up with some single friend of theirs. I want to be able to profess my love for myself and have everyone recognize it as a legitimate relationship."

"But don't you think marriage should be between a man and a woman?" Haynes asked. "Don't you think it should be for encouraging a stable family lifestyle for children?"

"Well who's to say I won't have children with myself?" Ashton said. "They're making great strides in reproductive technology these days."

Haynes smiled and looked at the cameraman to make sure he recorded Ashton's statement. The cameraman smiled back and gave her the thumbs up sign.

"So you would like to have children of your own?" Haynes asked.

"Some day, maybe when I'm ready," Ashton said. "I just don't want anyone telling me I can't do something if other people get to do it."

"But isn't a marriage license from the government just a piece of paper with no real meaning?" Haynes asked. "I mean don't the majority of marriages end in divorce because people get married for the wrong reasons?"

"Exactly," Ashton said. "And I'm not getting married for the wrong reasons. I am fully committed to myself and my marriage would never end in divorce."

"A lot of people have said that as they walked down the aisle," Haynes said. "What makes you different?"

"Because I have lived with myself for thirty years," Ashton said. "I've built up an understanding with myself. It's like I know myself inside and out. I even finish my own sentences sometimes."

"But are two-for-one coupons at restaurants really a benefit or are they just a way for restaurant owners to promote their business?" Haynes asked.

"That may be so, but I shouldn't be penalized just because the government won't allow me to get married," Ashton said. "I should get the same benefits as everyone else. Do you know if I went in to a coma I would not even be allowed to visit myself without proof that I was my own spouse?"

Haynes stared long and hard at Ashton.

"We're done here," she said to the cameraman. "I think we've got enough for the human interest story on the six o'clock news."

The next morning Ashton resumed his post on the steps of the courthouse. He marched back and forth with his sign resting on his shoulder. Several drivers honked their car horns and waved to him. One man shouted the words "nut case" through his open window.

An attractive young woman in a flowery print dress stepped out of a cab and walked up the steps. She carried a small wire cage with a large lizard inside. The woman waved at Ashton as she walked towards the courthouse doors. Ashton smiled back at her and watched her as she entered the building. Another cab stopped at the foot of the steps and a man got out with a tiny dog on the end of a leash. He also waved at Ashton as he walked towards the courthouse entrance.

Within an hour a line of people formed on the steps in front of the courthouse entrance. Some had various animals with them, some were by

themselves and others appeared to be in small groups.

The young woman in the print dress came back out of the building and walked towards Ashton. She was crying softly and dabbing her eyes with a kerchief.

"They won't let me marry Harry," she said choking back the tears.

"Excuse me," Ashton said.

"They won't let me marry Harry," she said holding up the cage with the lizard to Ashton's face. "Now how will he visit me in the hospital if I get sick?"

"Lady, you're all ready sick if you want to marry that ugly thing," Ashton said.

He dropped his sign, walked down the steps and hailed a cab.