

Canaan Wedding

by  
John Dowgin

Catholic Mass entrance music. A priest's podium sits downstage left, illuminated by a spot.

The PRIEST enters. Aged, wise, and not taking any business from the likes of you. As he moves to the podium, someone in the audience catches his attention by chuckling, coughing, or enacting some other perceived transgression. The Priest stops, stares them down, gives them the "I've got my eye on you" sign, reaches the podium, and opens today's reading.

(Note: If the actor playing the Priest can be trusted to do so, he should continue to give this audience member grief throughout the performance.)

PRIEST

On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee.

Lights rise upstage right. JESUS CHRIST, PETER, ANDREW, and JUDAS enter.

PRIEST

Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus had come with his disciples.

TIFFANY, a cater waitress carrying a tray of drinks, enters from the opposite side of the stage, hands Jesus his place card, and exits.

PRIEST

But whence they arrived, a single place card remained, and it did read J. Christ and Guest.

JUDAS

I thought we were all invited!

JESUS

Maybe the reception's just family?

PETER

There's Saul! He's not even Jewish!

JESUS

OK, OK, fine! Let he who never misread an invitation cast the first stone.

JUDAS

Why do you talk like that lately?

ANDREW

Yeah, who made you the king of the Jews?

The sounds of a raucous party become audible, and the lights up on the reception hall's bar area.

PRIEST

And there was wailing and gnashing of teeth, as the apostles knew the bar to be open, and not cash. From the foyer, the apostles couldst see the bar, couldst see that the bar was good, said that it was good, and lo it was good.

Onstage comes the shrieking MARY.

MARY

Jesus Christ, there you are!

The apostles roll their eyes.

JESUS

Sorry, Mom, I forgot the invitation.

MARY

Oh for God's sake, do I have to nail things to your hands! What the hell are the Pips doing here?

JESUS

I thought they were invited.

MARY

Are you stoned? They can live with two guests who reek of fish, not thirteen! Now pick one and get in here!

(Leaves from whence she came,  
muttering.)

Forty hours of labor next to a donkey for this crap...

PRIEST

And so did Jesus nod to Peter - to absolutely no one's surprise.

JESUS

Sorry, guys, it only goes till five. We'll hook up with you later.

Jesus and Peter follow Mary into the reception hall, leaving Andrew and Judas.

PRIEST

And the remaining apostles did congregate over a smoke, then depart for Matthew's crib, since he, as a tax collector, had the nicest setup on which to watch the game. But Andrew and Judas remained.

JUDAS

Dude, that party's huge. Nobody in there knows everyone else.

ANDREW

Judas, don't you ever get tired of trying to sneak things over on people?

JUDAS

Two words. Open. Bar.

PRIEST

And did Simon and Judas return to the reception via the service entrance.

The Bartender, BOONE, not having a very good day, enters and moves behind the bar. The FATHER OF THE BRIDE, having a worse day, follows.

PRIEST

The reception's bar of openness had come at great expense to the bride's father, who was at this time in deep converse with the bar's tender, known across Galilee by the name of Boone.

BOONE

Look, sir, your deposit was five hundred silver pieces.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Right! And your brochure said that gets me four hours of open bar!

BOONE

Normally, yes, but your new in-laws put down booze like a Roman legion!

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Look, buddy I paid five hundred silver pieces for four hours of open bar, and you're not getting another copper shekel from me! If you decide it's time to go cash, then you tell that drunken horde!

The Father of the Bride storms off.

PRIEST

Thus did the bride's father storm off towards the band, intent on reminding them of their strict "No Chicken Dance" agreement.

BOONE

What am I gonna do? Those luses went though my whiskey, mead and wine faster than a cock could crow three times!

PRIEST

Boone did gaze upon his paltry stock: two jugs of wine and a lone tray of hors d'ouvres. And whence Boone did look up, he saw two jokers approaching the bar whom he had not set eyes on all night.

Judas and Andrew belly up to the bar.

JUDAS

Sup, bro.

BOONE

Sup. You guys hit traffic or something?

JUDAS

Hm?

BOONE

You guys are late. Haven't seen either of you all night.

JUDAS

Oh, dude. Some Carthaginian jackknifed his elephant on the Palestinian Causeway. Disaster.

BOONE

You guys Palestinian?

JUDAS

Nah.

ANDREW

Yep.

An interminable pause.

JUDAS

Me, not originally. This guy, yeah.

BOONE

(To Andrew.)

Hey, me too! What high school did you go to?

JUDAS

Tell you what, boss, two wines, please.

BOONE

No problem. Four gold pieces.

JUDAS

I thought the bar was open.

BOONE

Yeah. For guests.

Andrew starts to leave, but Judas turns him around and sits him right down.

JUDAS

Ha! Oh, dude, I'm totally sorry. You think cause we're late, and we're, you know, not sure where we're from, that we're...

BOONE

Deadbeats?

JUDAS

Right. Totally. Except we're totally not.

Jesus enters, places his hands on Judas and Andrew's shoulders.

JESUS

Hey, how did you two...

JUDAS

JC! We were just looking for you!

BOONE

These guys with you?

(Jesus gives the 'yeah, sort of' shrug to Boone.)

One round. And only cause you're with this guy. He seems nice.

JESUS

OK, guys, after this you should probably va-moose. I'm on thin ice with mother as...

MARY (OFFSTAGE)

JESUS! THERE'S SOMEONE YOU SHOULD MEET!

PRIEST

And Jesus did turn to find his mother waving him towards a young woman whose face wouldst scareth mongrel dogs away from ground beef.

JESUS

She's in rare form today.

ANDREW

What did you expect? You're a single thirty year-old at a wedding with his mom.

JUDAS

Seriously, dude. She's going to ferret out chicks like Samson at a hairdressers' convention.

JESUS

How many times do I have to tell her, I'm not at the right place in my life! Boone! Hit me!

(Boone pours Jesus a drink,  
which he inhales.)  
Oh, I needed that. Look, you guys gotta run, OK?

Jesus leaves.

JUDAS

Whatever.

Tiffany enters and heads to the bar  
carrying an empty tray of hors  
d'ouvres.

PRIEST

At this time the cater waitress, known far and wide across  
Galilee as Tiffany - and further and wider across Byzantium  
as Desiree, but that's another story - returned.

TIFFANY

Boone, more hors d'ouvres.

BOONE

Great, this is our last tray and we've got three hours left!

TIFFANY

What do you want me to do? These people eat like Goliath!

BOONE

I don't know, walk slow!

JUDAS

Um, you know...

BOONE

Are you still here?

JUDAS

Funny. Look. We might be able to help you out with your  
little food problem.

(Andrew looks at Judas like  
he's insane.)

Well, not us, per se...

PRIEST

Even in Biblical times, the conversational use of Latin  
branded someone a total dick.

JUDAS

But, um... we may know a guy. If you've got more wine back  
there.

Boone begrudgingly pours Judas another  
glass. Judas waves offstage to Jesus.

ANDREW

You're dragging JC into this?

JUDAS

Hell yes! He promised open bar, he's gonna follow through!

ANDREW

Unbelievable. I'll see you at Matt's.

Andrew exits as Jesus enters.

JESUS

What's his beef?

JUDAS

Ah, you know Andy. Panties in a bunch over nothing. Anyway, JC, listen...

Judas whispers something in Jesus's ear.

JESUS

Now?

JUDAS

Dude, they're in a total bind.

JESUS

All right. Once.

(To Tiffany.)

Miss, could I have a canapé, please?

TIFFANY

Suuuuuure yooooooooou caaaaaaaaaaaaaan...

BOONE

Walk slow, you idiot! I said walk slow!

Jesus takes the last canapé and exits.

PRIEST

Jesus tookest his canapé into the restroom. And when he returned, he bore trays of canapés, which he did lay on the bar.

Jesus reenters, laying two full stocked trays of canapés on the bar.

TIFFANY

I do not want to know where those came from

Tiffany carries off the canapés. Boone turns to Jesus.



BOONE

Who are you?

JESUS

It's just, you know, something I do. Anyhow.

MARY (OFFSTAGE)

JESUS, THEY'RE ABOUT TO TOSS THE GARTER!

Jesus sighs, exits.

PRIEST

And did Jesus return to his table to participate in arcane rituals perpetrated across the ages for reasons long forgotten by the participants.

(The Priest stops, looks at his garments and the podium's adornments, shrugs, and carries on.)

Time passed. Judas passed out. Boone's stock passed empty. And Boone did gaze upon his sundial, and saw that there was an hour left in the reception, an hour that the groom's liquor-swilling brethren would be forced to pass without wine.

Judas lays across the bar, half-sliding off his stool, as Tiffany reenters.

BOONE

We've got problems.

JUDAS

Jush shuch yer filfy mouf... You dunna know from probluhms, smarf guy...

TIFFANY

Well... maybe no one will want more wine!

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

(Offstage)

A toast! Everyone, get a glass of wine!

JUDAS

Probluhms, Iz gots more probluhms in mize littl finger WHOA!

Mary runs on, knocking Judas from his stool.

MARY

Barkeeper, line up a toast!

BOONE

We're dry.

MARY

Oh, dear.

TIFFANY

We've got canapes!

MARY

Keep these people busy for a second.

BOONE

Keep them busy? They make the Sodomites look like a temperance union!

Tiffany looks up and smiles.

PRIEST

And, lo, a miracle did occur; Tiffany had an idea. She scurried to the bandleader and, unbuttoning the top notches of her frock, leaned into him in a manner some might call 'suggestively'.

Tiffany does everything the Priest describes, running towards the audience and leaning in towards the imaginary band leader.

TIFFANY

Excuse me, mister bandleader, do you take requests?

PRIEST

The band leader obeyed Tiffany's bosom, which many had seen was good, said was good, and lo, was good. And he did strike up his cohorts into the one thing couldst distract drunken wedding guests from a barren bar.

"The Chicken Dance" plays. The Father of the Bride runs on, screams for the band to stop, but is ignored and eventually runs off. Mary finds Jesus sitting over a glass of water.

JESUS

Come on, you parted for Moses! Come on!

MARY

They have no wine.

JESUS

Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

Jesus and Mary freeze in tableau.

PRIEST

And lo did Mary rip Jesus a new one.

Jesus runs to the bar.

JESUS

Get me six waterpots, containing two or three firkins apiece.

BOONE

What the hell is a firkin?

JESUS

Just get me some water!

JUDAS (ON THE FLOOR)

I'ze gotz six frickin firkins right here...

PRIEST

And Boone did bring Jesus the waterpots, and Jesus did his thing.

JESUS

Serve it.

BOONE

The water?

JESUS

Trust me.

PRIEST

Boone did so, and lo the guests did sip the finest wine to ever pass their lips. Although, honestly, they would have done shots of lighter fluid at that point.

The Father of the Bride approaches Boone.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the cheaper wine when the guests have become drunk. You have kept the good wine until now!

BOONE

Yeah, well...

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

You wasted my money on wine this good when these troglodytes would have drunk the blue crap from a barber's shop? You're going to hear from my lawyers!

The Father of the Bride storms off past the Priest.

