

# With the Chime of Wedding Bells

Converted from the short story "With the Chime of Wedding Bells"

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### Characters

1. CALLIOPE JOHNSON- sweet, young woman. Engaged to be married that day to THOMAS RAMIREZ. Convict.
2. PRESLEY JONES- the best friend of CALLIOPE JOHNSON. Has fewer morals but loves her best friend. Maid of honor. Convict.
3. THOMAS RAMIREZ- Fiancé to CALLIOPE JOHNSON. Handsome, brilliant man. Undeserving of what will occur.

### Setting

The duration of the play will take place within a small hotel room next door to a church in Bakersfield, California. The room is primarily barren, although it is a high-class hotel. The room consists of one California king size bed, nightstands, one dresser, and a single desk. The adjoining bathroom featured in the play is on the smaller side, and consists of a waterfall shower, toilet, wall length mirror, and marble-topped sink. All scenes are in the present, occurring as they are described. The only exception to the setting is for the scene 2, which will be described at the beginning of the scene.

### Playwriter's Message to the Audience

Throughout the play, there will be instances in which many questions will be aroused within the mind. It is advised to watch the play with an open mind and expect that most questions will be answered. The short story the play is based upon is nothing but a single section from the novel *Chasing Wedding Bells*. The converted version is meant to introduce the major conflicts of the whole novel in a short amount of time. To enjoy the play most, it is necessary to lose all but the advised expectations. Happy watching.

Scene 1:

*Calliope Johnson is alone, laying on the cold tile floor with her head leaning against the bed. Her hair spills around her face. Her hair and makeup are done, transforming her into the perfect bride. She can be seen pulling her knees closer to her chest in a state of panic.*

CALLIOPE JOHNSON

How can I move forward with this? How can I live a life that is not mine? In a way in which I am not happy? I hear the church bells ringing; yet all I can hear is my future slipping away. I hear the bells, and I know that I am not meant to walk down that aisle. I should be going home to Alex, not walking down an aisle to Thomas. Oh, what to do!

*PRESLEY JONES enters the room. The sound of her heels clicking against the tile floor resonates throughout the theater.*

PRESLEY JONES

Calliope? What's going on babe? Is everything all right?

CALLIOPE

I can't go through with it...

*PRESLEY notices the panicked state her best friend is in. Uncertainty flickers across*

*PRESLEY's face.*

PRESLEY

[aside.]

What is going on with her? We've been planning this for months. What could someone have said to change her mind?

[now speaking to CALLIOPE to try and talk some sense into her.]

You can't back out now. You know that. We need that money!

*PRESLEY begins to show frustration on her face. Her hands are placed on her hips, with one of her knees bent to relieve the pressure of her extremely high heels. PRESLEY begins to occupy herself by pulling out CALLIOPE's wedding gown.*

CALLIOPE

[aside.]

Okay, she's mad. I'm the reason we're even in this mess, but it is still my whole future I'm signing away. She's upset, yet I am the one who must give up the love of my life for someone I only see as a close friend. How do I make her see that I cannot be married without love?

[to PRESLEY in a moment of desperation.]

You know what I have always dreamed of? I want to get married in a small town to the love of my life. I want some white makeshift isle. I want sunflowers and daisies; not roses or any of that old traditional stuff. I don't want the that ball gown that Thomas is calling a wedding dress. I just want a white sundress, something I can be comfortable in for my special day. I don't need a room full of people dressed fancy; I need a few good friends and my family wearing blue jeans and button ups. I don't even want the stupid veil you picked out. I wanted a crown of daises. I want to see the love of my life waiting for me in some blue jeans and Doc Martens. Not some expensive tuxedo. You should know that. I don't want what this with Thomas; I want the wedding of my dreams with Alex. I don't want this; you want this.

PRESLEY

[with a condescending attitude towards CALLIOPE.]

Do you know how many women would kill for what you're getting? Most would kill for the groom to want such an expensive wedding- especially one that he can afford! This wedding must be close to a hundred grand already. Most girls don't even spend a quarter of that! You're lucky enough to get all but the horse-drawn carriage!

CALLIOPE

[with sadness seeping into her voice.]

I just can't do it Pres. I'm giving up my whole future. It's easy for you to agree with this wedding when you don't have anything to lose from it. The money would be bailing you out of your problems, not mine. I did my time. Why am I continuing to be punished?

*PRESLEY moves closer to CALLIOPE before speaking.*

PRESLEY

[enraged and determined.]

You crashed the car. You ran the man over. You were the one that got us caught Calliope. You could have moved on and left him there! Instead, you tattled to the police like the little girl you are. We didn't have to go through any of this! You have got to stop living in that fantasy world of yours!

*CALLIOPE glares up at PRESLEY from the floor.*

CALLIOPE

Are you ever going to forgive me for calling the police? Why shouldn't I have called? He had a family! You should know that Presley, we had to look them in the eyes every day of the trial. You didn't even get in nearly as much trouble as I did. Yes, you have to pay money to the family. Boo hoo, so do I. You got one year for the coke, that I didn't even know you had mind you, while I got stuck doing two years for damn vehicular manslaughter!

*PRESLEY attempts to cut CALLIOPE off, but CALLIOPE keeps talking.*

CALLIOPE

[continued.]

I did two damn years in a Texas state prison! Can you imagine what two years was like when you were complaining about how bad one year was? You keep throwing this in my face like I'll ever be able to forget. I will have to live every day of my life knowing I killed a man. You don't forget that.

*PRESLEY attempts to cut CALLIOPE off again, but CALLIOPE doesn't allow her to.*

CALLIOPE

[continued.]

I can't help that you just wanted to leave him there! I can't help that you decided to deal drugs! I can't help that you brought your friend's stuff with us! Why wouldn't you just tell me that you were struggling so much? Or at the very least warn me so I could have gotten it away from us before I called 911? I would've sold mama's house to bail you out if I knew...

*Pain flickers across CALLIOPE's face as she finished speaking, hurt by her best friend's secretiveness.*

PRESLEY

[with an unhidden rage towards CALLIOPE.]

How could I warn you! You're a damn rat!

*CALLIOPE stands and quickly closes the small distance between herself and PRESLEY.*

*CALLIOPE raises her fist and connects with PRESLEY's nose. CALLIOPE's rage could be seen through her tense posture and facial expressions.*

PRESLEY

[gasping between hits.]

Please...Stop...

*CALLIOPE continues to swing and hit PRESLEY, totaling ten hits so far. PRESLEY managed to reach and get a hand up enough to weakly grab CALLIOPE by the throat. CALLIOPE barely flinches at being grabbed. PRESLEY's eyes begin to appear bruised due to minor change in lighting.*

PRESLEY

[choking on blood from her nose.]

Stop! Please stop! I'm sorry!"

*PRESLEY begins to appear physically drained, as if she was near the brink of becoming unconscious. Her body relaxes slightly due to fatigue. PRESLEY drags her hands across the floor quickly, cutting herself on a letter opener.*

CALLIOPE

[out of breath.]

*How dare you blame me for everything! I lost everything and still tried to make it right!*

*PRESLEY brings the blade like item down and it plunges into the tissue of CALLIOPE's thigh.*

CALLIOPE

[shrieking in pain.]

GAH!

*CALLIOPE quickly yanks the blade out with one movement, and immediately brings it down again quickly, connecting with PRESLEY's flesh. The letter opener lodges itself between PRESLEY's third and fourth rib. CALLIOPE, slow in movement due to her bleeding thigh, grabs*

*the thickest pillow she can find. PRESLEY lays on the ground gasping for air. Gurgling noises can be heard from the blood entering her lungs.*

CALLIOPE

[speaking to PRESLEY's corpse].

I'm sorry this is how it had to end. I didn't want to do this twice. I wanted to move on. I wanted to live life with my best friend. I just don't want to sign my whole life away over one accident. Especially not when it got so bad because of your own crimes. I'm so sorry...

CALLIOPE's body language gives away sincerity, with hunched over shoulders and tears running down her face. Wedding bells can be heard chiming again in the distance.

CALLIOPE

[to herself.]

The bells! I'm supposed to be getting married in an hour. My family must be wondering where I am by now. I was supposed to meet the photographer over an hour ago; that must be why they sent Presley. Oh, Presley! How can I go on without you? You were practically my sister!

*CALLIOPE begins to slowly pull herself up. She almost collapses in the process. She made her way to PRESLEY's feet and grabs a hold of them. CALLIOPE proceeds to drag her towards the adjoining bathroom. After dumping the body into the bathroom, she begins to limp her way towards the nightstand, unstable on her injured leg. She pulled out the travel sewing kit from the drawer.*

CALLIOPE

Just perfect, a sewing kit meant for that damn dress. I can't believe it all comes back to that dress.



*She pulls out a needle and some thread, quickly beginning to stitch the bleeding wound on her thigh.*

CALLIOPE

Gah!

*CALLIOPE screams bloody murder with each stitch.*

CALLIOPE

[mumbling.]

Is there any other pain like this? I would rather go through childbirth a hundred more times than even finishing these stitches once...

*The door to the hotel room opens on the right side of the stage, THOMAS RAMIREZ enters. His gaping mouth hangs open upon seeing his bride to be still stitching her wound.*

THOMAS RAMIREZ

[with love and concern.]

What happened to you? Why didn't you call me so we could get you to a doctor?

CALLIOPE

[with fear and shame.]

It isn't really a big deal. I figured I could save time by just handling it myself...

*Thomas stares at his bride as she finishes her stitching. Thomas makes eye contact with her bleeding knuckles.*

THOMAS

Wait. What happened to your hands? Were you fighting? Who did this to you?

CALLIOPE

[aside while THOMAS stares expectantly.]

How do I explain this? If I tell the truth, I will go back to prison. If I say nothing, I'll go to prison when they find Presley's body. If I lie, Thomas will know. What to do!

THOMAS

[to CALLIOPE.]

You need to wash that. It'll get infected if you don't sterilize it.

*THOMAS quickly begins walking towards the bathroom. CALLIOPE stutters, trying to figure out how to stop him but coming up empty. THOMAS opens the door while CALLIOPE waits on the bed. THOMAS takes an audible breath upon the body.*

THOMAS

What the hell happened?

CALLIOPE

[aside.]

I can't lie, he deserves the truth. He's already seen the body. There's no turning back now. At least then he'll know if he is going to marry a murderer.

[to THOMAS.]

I got mad. We fought over Texas. She pushed it too far, so I hit her. It escalated. She probably thought I was going to kill her, so she stabbed me. I didn't even think about what I was doing when I reacted.

*A look of disgust crosses his face, THOMAS opens his mouth to speak and closes it again without saying a word.*

CALLIOPE

What should I do? I don't blame you if you call the police; I just don't know what to do....

*CALLIOPE begins to sob.*

THOMAS

[with venom in his voice.]

I'm calling the police. You will wait here, if not, the hotel's guards will detain you. As you can imagine, I have a bit of work to do to cancel everything for the wedding you just destroyed!

*CALLIOPE begins to fall asleep on the bed while waiting for the police to arrive. She clearly struggles to stay awake, as she adjusts and fidgets to stay conscious.*

[end scene 1.]

Scene 2

*The walls are painted white, clearly made of some sort of concrete. The room is bare with nothing but a toilet and a bed. She is in what appears to be a prison cell. CALLIOPE is alone, barely regaining consciousness. She quickly sits up.*

CALLIOPE

Dear God! I'm still in Texas. It was all just a dream... Just a dream...

[end play.]

