

Chapter 58

Michelle's Wedding

The next month was a hectic one for Michael and Amanda. They had four weddings to attend, plus plan their own. Reginald and Rosa were first. Even though the Lobo-Rojo family was content to wait a few months, after all, they had been waiting for three years already, Reginald wanted the wedding to take place as quickly as possible. He kept saying he had waited those three years to marry Rosa and he had been remiss in being a daddy to Hernando. Jokingly, he added that he wanted to marry Rosa before she realized that she could do better. This argument convinced the Lobo-Rojos to agree to a relatively quick wedding especially since Hernando was now weaned and they knew that Rosa would start going into her heat cycles shortly.

After the wedding, Reginald moved Rosa and Hernando into the Reynard estate and offered her family a place there as well; however, Alejandro said no because he believed a married couple didn't need family around all the time, especially during the first couple of years of adjustment. Instead of accepting Reginald's offer of a home, Alejandro accepted an offer of financial assistance in opening a cabinetry business with Reginald as a silent partner.

Six days after Reginald and Rosa got married, Michelle and Albert had their wedding. Albert had asked Michael to be his witness because Michael had been instrumental in Michelle overcoming her fear of males in general and caracals in particular, especially Albert. It had been a long hard road to convince Michelle that she had misjudged caracals because of the caracal who had raped her but, thanks to Michael's threat the first time she and Albert had spent any time alone together, she had learned that she shouldn't judge caracals by her rapist. She also learned that beneath his brash, boisterous exterior, Albert was a warm, caring, loving man who would do anything he could to make her happy.

While she was planning her wedding, Michelle was torn in her choice of a maid/matron-of-honor. She initially asked her sister, Janet, but Janet said that, even though they were roommates and sisters, she didn't think she'd be a very good choice to be Michelle's witness because she was still carrying some animosity toward caracals because of Michelle's rape. Janet added that Albert was starting to make her change her mind about caracals, though.

One day, while at lunch with Wanda and Bertha, Michelle mentioned her dilemma. Because they were busy planning their own weddings, they suggested Amanda for the honor. After lunch, Michelle walked over to Amanda's desk and quietly asked her to be her witness. When Michelle asked her, at first, Amanda was overjoyed then, she was worried.

"Michelle," Amanda said, "what about Janet? Shouldn't you ask her?"

“I did. She said that she still doesn’t like caracals because of my rapist. So, she suggested that I should ask someone else.”

Looking at them, Amanda asked, “What about Wanda and Bertha? You’ve known them longer than you’ve known me.”

“They’re too busy planning their own weddings.”

Smiling impishly, Amanda said, “So, I was your fourth choice?”

“Now, Amanda, you know my first choice had to be Janet. You would have been next but, I thought you and Michael would have been too busy planning your own wedding. I asked Bertha and Wanda but their weddings are next week. They suggested you because your wedding isn’t planned for another three months. So, would you be my maid-of-honor?”

The begging look on Michelle’s face was almost comical and caused Amanda’s grin to grow as she said, “Of course I’ll do it, Michelle. I was just, how did Michael say it, rattling your chain.” Michelle looked at Amanda questioningly and Amanda said, “Michael explained it to me. Believe me when I say you don’t want to know.”

Smiling, Michelle said, “Knowing Michael, no, I don’t.”

On the night before the wedding, the rehearsal was held and the Pantheras hosted the rehearsal dinner. The dinner was up to Tigresa’s usual standards and everyone complimented her culinary talents. Michelle, Janet, and Albert, all of whom lived half-a-world away from their respective families, were especially effusive in their praise of the dinner. As they ate, Michael noticed that, even though Michelle and Albert sat close to one another, Janet stayed as far away from them as possible. He chalked this up to her desire to give her sister some breathing room with Albert. Janet wasn’t unfriendly; she was just distant and aloof. Michael thought that perhaps Janet was concerned that, after Michelle and Albert were married, she’d be living by herself.

Anne spent most of her time with Michael and Amanda but, she made friends with everyone else, especially Michelle. Anne was fascinated by Michelle's pregnant belly. She kept touching it and laughing when the cub inside would kick.

Anne looked up at Michelle and asked, "You gots baby?"

Michelle replied, "Yes, I do."

"You like dat?"

Michelle smiled and looked at Albert as she said, "Yes, sweetie. I like it very much."

Anne looked at Albert and asked, "He baby daddy?"

"Yes, he is, Anne."

"You luh hin?"

"Yes, I do. That's why I'm marrying him tomorrow."

Anne walked over to Amanda and touched Amanda's belly. She looked curiously at Amanda and said, "Manna? You gots baby, too?"

With a shocked look on her face, Amanda said, "No, sweetie. Why do you think that?"

"Her gots baby and her gone get married. You gone get married, too. So, you gots baby, too. Yes?"

Amanda looked at Michael, saw him grinning like a mule eating briars, and said, "Michael doesn't want me to get pregnant before we get married."

"Y?"

"He says he loves me and wants to wait until we get married before I get pregnant."

"Oh." Then, Anne toddled off to play with one of the other children.

After dinner, following Humanimal tradition, Michael and Albert each took one of Michelle's arms and escorted her out of the Panthera house. They led her to Michael's car and all three got in to the cheers of everyone in attendance, except Janet who stood there and watched with a somewhat sad look on her face. Michael noticed the look and became a little concerned about what it meant. He knew that Janet and Michelle hadn't been apart for more than a few hours ever since Janet was born. He didn't have long to think about Janet because he had to drive them over to his apartment.

When they arrived at Michael's apartment, Albert relinquished Michelle to Michael's care. After giving her a good-night kiss, Albert turned to Michael and said, "I know I don't need to say this to you, Michael, but, traditions must be kept. Therefore, I tell you, 'Protect and defend her. Do not let her escape. When you bring her to the wedding tomorrow, she is to be totally untouched.'" Albert stopped here to stifle a small laugh. He continued, "And ready to join me in my bed as pure as she is at this very moment."

Michael took a quick look at Michelle's belly and responded according to tradition. "Albert, my friend, I will protect and defend her to the best of my ability. I will sleep by the door to prevent her from escaping. When we arrive at the wedding tomorrow, she will be untouched and ready to join you in your marriage bed as pure as she is at this very moment." They shook hands and Albert left to go home and prepare for the wedding.

After Albert left, Michael turned to Michelle and saw her smiling. "What's so funny?" He asked.

"Traditions. They can be ridiculously funny at times."

"Don't laugh at traditions. They serve a purpose. Take marriage traditions. Traditional human marriage vows served an important purpose. Each partner said the same thing. But, about a hundred years before I was born, some people decided that the traditional vows made women subservient to men. No doubt that was because, at that time, most men believed they were. That's because they didn't pay attention to the vows. Both partners promised to love, honor, cherish, and obey the other no matter what the future held, good or bad. They also promised to place their partner above all others, friends, parents, siblings, family, strangers, children, everyone. If we humans had followed these marriage vows to the letter, there likely would have been more happiness in our marriages."

"What kind of vows are you and Amanda going to exchange?"

"Whatever kind of vows she wants to exchange."

"Don't you want to have a say in it?"

Michael smiled and said, "I've already had my say. I have a feeling that she is going to go with traditional Humanimal vows, though."

"Why do you say that?"

"I've spoken with Mr. Fuchs numerous times. He's implied that he's a traditionalist. So, I have no doubt that Amanda is, too."

After sleeping on a pallet by the door, Michael awoke a bit sore. It had been years, over 20,000 to be exact, since he had felt a need or desire to sleep on the floor. It was one of the very few times he had ever felt older than 22-years-old. After lying there for a few seconds, he got up and started cooking breakfast for him and Michelle.

As he cooked, he heard a sound, turned and saw a very pregnant serval standing in the doorway. When Michelle saw him, she laughed causing him to frown. "What's so funny?" He

asked.

“Go look at yourself in the mirror.”

Michael walked into the bathroom, looked in the mirror and laughed. One side of his face was red and wrinkled from lying on the blanket he had slept on. His hair looked like he had stuck his finger in a light socket. He washed his face and combed his hair as he thought how lucky Humanimals were to have fur on their face to cover any problems such as he was experiencing.

After they finished eating breakfast, Michelle dabbed her mouth with a napkin and said, “That was quite good. What do you call it?”

“It’s an old family recipe. It’s called ham, grits, toast and jam, and scrambled eggs. You won’t believe how hard it was to find real grits and we’re living in an area of the country where grits were very popular when I was growing up.”

“Grits?”

“Oh, that’s right. You’re not from this part of the country.”

Michelle laughed and said, “Michael, I’m not even from this country. I’m from Moozambique. My parents moved here shortly after I was born.”

“Oh, I didn’t realize. I knew your ancestors were from southern Africa, I mean, Afurica. I guess I thought your direct ancestors were from zoos and pets here in Amurica 19,000 years ago.”

“Most serval Humanimals ancestors were living in zoos when the changing started but, most of my direct ancestors were living in Afurica. Now, what are grits.”

“Grits are dried corn kernels that are ground up. They aren’t ground as fine as flour or even as fine as corn meal; they’re ground kind of coarse. Grits, being dried corn, will absorb a lot of water while they cook and release corn starch which fills you rather quickly. If you let them cool, they’ll bind together and you can cut them up and fry them. My mother used to do that. Fried grits are pretty good actually but, I wouldn’t want to live off them.”

Michael looked at Michelle and saw a familiar look on her face. It was the look Amanda would give him when he went into “teacher mode”. “Don’t look at me like that,” he said.

“I didn’t ask for the history of these grits. I was just curious as to what they are.”

“I know. I just figured you would ask more questions and I went ahead and answered them.

“What time is everyone coming over to get you ready for the wedding?”

“They aren’t coming here. They aren’t supposed to know where I am.”

Michael snickered for a moment before saying, “Right. We were all at the rehearsal dinner; they saw me help Albert ‘kidnap’ you and I know Amanda knows where I live.”

“Tradition, Michael. Remember what you said about it?”

This time, Michael laughed openly. “Yeah. You’re right.

“So, where are you and Albert planning to go on your honeymoon?”

“All of Albert’s family lives in Afurica; we’re going to visit his family after we visit my mom and dad Chickago.” She got a little misty-eyed as she said, “I wish they could come to the wedding. It won’t seem like an official wedding if dad doesn’t do the traditional challenge.”

“If you’d like, I could ask Dr. Leo to challenge Albert’s qualifications.”

“Thank you, Michael, but no. I haven’t seen my parents since I moved to Catlanna four years ago. I’d rather not have Albert challenged if it isn’t my dad doing the challenging.”

“I was just a suggestion.”

“I know. Thank you.”

The wedding was to take place at 0730 but, in order for Michelle to be ready on time, she had to be at the chapel no later than 0400. The convoluted route that they had to travel to get there required them leaving by 0230. Michael looked at the map that Albert had given him with the route highlighted and laughed. He thought it looked like an eel trying to get off of a fishing line. He also noted that the route took them by several of sights of Catlanna, including the Michael Thomson Mysterious Mountain National Park.

After driving for an hour and a half, Michael and Michelle arrived at the chapel and were greeted by three very excited women who took control of Michelle and led her into the chapel and the dressing room. Michael dutifully stood outside of the door as tradition dictated and waited for Amanda, Wanda, and Bertha to invite him into the room after Michelle was dressed. When he walked into the room, he gave a low whistle when he saw Michelle’s wedding dress. The hem of the dress reached half-way down her calves. The sleeves reached to the middle of

her forearms. The neckline was a squared circle that was high in the back but plunged to expose the tops of her modest breasts(1). Even though it wasn't super tight, it didn't hide her advanced pregnancy. Michelle had opted to not wear a veil because of her pregnancy. She wore black flat sole shoes but no hosiery.

When Michael entered the dressing room, Michelle was sitting in a chair so Bertha could prepare her hair. This was a bit of a surprise to Michael because he had never imagined Bertha as a beautician not because he didn't believe she could do it but because he'd only known her as a secretary at SoGa Industries. As she worked on Michelle's hair, Bertha explained to Michael that, besides being abusive, her ex-husband was stingy to the extreme. He would spend several thousand Yenars on luxuries that he wanted but he refused to give her even one Yonar for her to take care of herself. So, she taught herself to cut and style hair. Her sons were her victims when they were a lot younger. Bertha worked on Michelle's hair for about forty-five minutes and when she finished, Michelle's hair looked like it had been done by a beautician that charged over 200 Yenars an hour.

Finally, Michelle stood as her bride's maids left to assume their positions at the altar. She turned toward Michael, held out her arms, and said, "All right, Michael, it's time to tie my arms."

"Easy or difficult?"

"What do you mean?"

"Easy to untie or difficult to untie?"

"Oh, easy."

"All right." He tied her wrists together and said, "Don't worry about how it looks. All you'll have to do is this." Michael took her arms and shook them very gently. "And you're untied." Michelle watched in amazement as the ropes seemingly untied themselves.

"How did you do that?"

"It's an old magician's illusion. I used it on Reginald Reynard, III, when I took him to see Amanda when she was in the hospital. He never did realize he wasn't really tied up. I could teach it to you but it would take about a year before you understood the basics. It took me three years to learn it. I've already shown Albert so you don't have to worry."

Michael and Michelle left the changing room and walked to the door leading to the sanctuary of the chapel. He retied her wrists as they listened to the Padre start the wedding ceremony. After several minutes, the doors opened and they could hear the opening strains of

the Humanimal Wedding March.(2) Holding the end of the rope just tight enough to give the impression that he was forcing her down the aisle, Michael led Michelle toward the altar. When they reached the bottom of the dais, they stopped and waited to be acknowledged.

The Padre, the honey badger that had almost married Amanda to Reginald Reynard, III, finally reached the acknowledgment portion of the ceremony and said, “Who brings this woman to be wed?”

Michael replied, “I bring her, Padre.”

“Please bring her to the altar.”

Michael, followed by Michelle, ascended the three steps that led to the altar. He handed the end of the rope to the Padre and stepped between Michelle and Albert. The Padre, with the rope still in his hand, turned toward Michael and said, “What is your name?”

“Michael Edwin Thomson, Padre.”

“What is your role in this wedding?”

“I am friend to the bridegroom and his witness, Padre.”

“You brought this woman to be married to your friend. Did she stay at your home last night, Michael Edwin Thomson?”

“She did, Padre.”

“Did she attempt to escape from your home, Michael Edwin Thomson?”

“No, Padre.”

“How do you know this, Michael Edwin Thomson?”

“I slept by the door to prevent her from escaping, Padre.”

“During her stay with you was she untouched by you or any other, Michael Edwin Thomson.”

“She was untouched by anyone, Padre.”

“Michael Edwin Thomson, did you see to her every need during her stay with you?”

“I did, Padre.”

“What needs did she have, Michael Edwin Thomson?”

““I gave her a comfortable place to sleep, food to eat when she was hungry, something to drink when she was thirsty, and a place to bathe herself.”

After Michael answered these questions, the Padre turned to Michelle and asked, “Michelle Antoinette Tierboskat, do you come to this union willingly or forcibly?”

Michelle smiled at Albert and said, “Willingly, Padre.”

The Padre turned to the congregation and said, “The couple before me have stated that they are joining willingly . If anyone has just cause to believe that these two should not be wed, speak now or forever hold your peace.”

Janet stood and vehemently said, “I object!”

Michelle looked at her sister and, under her breath, said, “Janet, no. I’ve finally found someone who has made me forget what happened to me.”

The Padre said, “What is your objection?”

Janet glared at Albert and said, “When my sister was 14, she was raped by a caracal. He never paid for that crime. I don’t believe that this one loves my sister. He just sees her as someone to bear his young.”

Just as Janet finished speaking, the doors to the sanctuary opened and a cheetah stepped in and said, “I object to this wedding!”

Everyone was taken by surprise. The Padre looked at the cheetah and said, “Who are you and what is your objection?”

“I am Henry Earl Ingulule. I am Michelle’s stepfather.”

Henry Earl Ingulule looked at Albert and said, “Caracal, when my daughter was 14 she was raped by a caracal. Tell me why I should sanction this union.”

Albert responded, saying, “Sir, I will answer your challenge the same way I would answer Janet. I don’t know why you have all of a sudden started to dislike me again but, I’m not the caracal that raped Michelle. I have loved her from the moment I laid eyes on her. However, every time I spoke to her, I could see abject fear in her eyes even though she knew nothing about me.

“Eventually, I met Michael, my friend of the groom. He became friends with Michelle’s friend of honor, Amanda Fuchs. One day, Michael and I were to meet at Bruno’s and because of circumstances, I got a chance to talk with Michelle. Even though I could see she was still scared of me, she talked to me a little. Later that night, even though she didn’t really want to, she allowed me to give her a ride home. Of course, it helped that Michael had promised her that he would beat me to within an inch of my life if I didn’t treat her with respect.” Everyone laughed

at this revelation. “Needless to say, I did as he wanted.

“I don’t know why she agreed but, Michelle and I started dating. A couple of months later, she and I became lovers. Believe it or not, I didn’t instigate it. Don’t get me wrong, from our first date until the first time we made love, I wanted to make love with her but I was afraid of how she would react. I think she knew that and she showed me she wanted it as much as I did. On the day she found out she was pregnant, I asked her to marry me. Even though she turned me down at first, she decided that I was being sincere and agreed.

“Sir, I don’t know what the future holds for Michelle and me but, I do know that I love her and I want to be there to help her raise our kit. That, sir, is the reason you should sanction our marriage.” Albert looked nervously at Mr. Ingulule but, stood there proudly holding Michelle’s hand.

Mr. Ingulule looked at Albert for several seconds before saying, “Caracal, understand one thing. That young woman standing next to you is not my daughter by blood but that doesn’t mean she isn’t my daughter. I have raised her as my own since she was 5 years old. When she was raped, it hurt me as much as it hurt her and her mother and, just as her real father would have done, I demanded justice for her. When we didn’t get the justice we deserved, it was difficult for me to not take the law into my own hands. But, Michelle told me that she believed that the perpetrator of the crime against her would have to pay for it, sooner or later. Because of what happened to her, you will treat her as if she was the most precious thing in your life. You will place no one above her.” He looked at Janet as he added, “If you will swear that you will do those things, I will withdraw my objection.”

Albert looked at Michelle like she was the rarest and most desirable gem on Earth and said, “Sir, before all of our friends and family, I swear that you will never have to worry about me failing to do as you bid.”

Mr. Ingulule looked pointedly at Janet who said, “I will withdraw my objection as well.”

The Padre nodded and said, “Is there anyone else with just cause as to why these two should not be wed?”

After waiting several seconds, the Padre continued with, “Since there are no other objections, Albert Theodore Rooikat, you have indicated a desire to be mated to the woman standing in front of me. Is this a true statement?”

“Yes, Padre.”

The Padre turned, looked at Michelle, and said, “Michelle Antoinette Tierboskat, you have indicated a desire to be mated to the man standing in front of me. Is this a true statement?”

“Yes, Padre.”

“Turn and face one another.” After they did so, he continued, “Hold hands.” They held

hands. “Albert and Michelle, you have chosen to be mated using the Modern Traditional Binding Ceremony. This ceremony is based on the Traditional Binding Ceremony. The Binding Ceremony is much older than our civilization being almost 10,000 years old. It is said to have originated in an ancient human village that is rumored to have existed less than 50 miles from this very spot when a human prince and a hyena princess were mated by combining traditional human and traditional hyena mating ceremonies. The hyena mating ceremony culminates by binding the wrists of the couple together to show their desire to be bound to one another for the rest of their lives. The ceremony was adopted by the neighboring villages but for entirely different reasons. Many of their warriors would kidnap the daughters of their neighbors and force them into a marriage in which they were virtual slaves, sex slaves to be exact. This is the reason the father of the bride ceremoniously objects to the marriage today and the groom explains why he wishes to have the father’s daughter as his wife.

“The traditions of our different wedding ceremonies are all descended from that first inter-species marriage so many thousands of years ago. The Modern Traditional Binding Ceremony we will perform today is one of those ceremonies. In the Modern Traditional Binding Ceremony, the couple has their wrists bound together. The binding of their wrists, as with the original binding ceremony, shows their undying love for one another and that neither is more important in the relationship than the other.”

Michael paid close attention to the ceremony because he knew that soon he and Amanda would have to decide on the type of wedding ceremony they wanted. As he watched, he saw that the traditions invoked in this particular ceremony were interesting but, he was worried that some aspects, especially binding of the wrists, were too reminiscent of an institution that had ended over 200 years before he was born but, he also knew that it didn’t mean that Michelle would be Albert’s slave; she wouldn’t stand for that for half a heartbeat. As he thought these things, he remembered that Amanda had said something about a “Traditional Modern” wedding but they had been interrupted before she could explain what it was.

As he mused, Michael suddenly became aware that the Padre was no longer talking. He looked at Amanda and saw her glaring at him and indicating the Padre with her head. He cut his eyes around and saw everyone looking at him expectantly. Then, he saw the Padre smiling with his hand extended toward him. It was at that moment that he realized how badly his mind had been wandering as he saw the smiles on Michelle’s, Albert’s, and the Padre’s faces. After smiling sheepishly at them, he retrieved Michelle’s bracelet and handed it to the Padre. As he took the bracelet from Michael, the Padre continued to smile at him. Michael felt at ease even though the smile of a honey badger was a bit unnerving to him.

The Padre continued with the ceremony. He turned to Albert and said, “Albert Theodore Rooikat, do you take Michelle Antoinette Tierboskat to be your lawfully wedded wife?”

Albert answered, “I do.”

“Albert, will you love, honor, cherish, respect, and obey her? Will you see to her every need? Will you do everything in your power to make her happy in public and in private?”

“I will.”

Michael smiled at this vow since Michelle’s pregnancy was proof that Albert had already pleased Michelle in private.

The Padre continued, “Will you place no one above her, not family, not friends, not strangers, not children, no one?”

“I will not.”

The Padre turned to Michelle and repeated the questions to her. After she answered the questions, he handed one of the bracelets to Albert and said, “Place the bracelet on her left wrist and clasp it.” Albert did so. “Now, repeat after me. Michelle Antoinette Tierboskat, with this bracelet, I take you as my wife.”

“Michelle, Antoinette Tierboskat, with this bracelet, I take you as my wife.”

“Let all who see it know you are my wife . . .”

“Let all who see it know you are my wife . . .”

“And unavailable to them . . .”

“And unavailable to them . . .”

“So long as we both shall live.”

“So long as we both shall live.”

Amanda gave the Padre the twin to the bracelet that Albert had placed on Michelle’s wrist. The Padre handed it to Michelle and said, “Now, repeat after me.” He, then, repeated the vows he had said to Albert and Michelle responded appropriately. After Michelle said her vows, the Padre said, “Now, by the power vested in me by God above and the province of Gargia, I now pronounce you to be husband and wife.” He took a quick look at Michelle’s belly before adding, “I’m sure you’ve done it once or twice already but, you may kiss your bride.” When he heard this, it was all Michael could do to not laugh out loud.

Albert and Michelle kissed, turned toward the door, and, to the strains of the Humanimal Wedding March, walked toward the reception room. Their wrists were still bound together because tradition said they must remain bound to each other for at least an hour to ensure a long and happy marriage.

As Groom's Witness and Bride's Witness, Michael and Michelle waited until Albert and Michelle reached the bottom of the stairs before they walked toward one another and, holding hands, descended the steps. Michael and Amanda were followed by Wanda and Robert and then, Bertha and Jonathan. After the wedding party left the chapel, the ushers started escorting everyone out and to the reception room.

1) Humanimal wedding dresses come in any color you could imagine from solid black to snow white. Michelle had chosen powder blue as the color of her dress.

2) The Humanimal wedding march is loosely based on German composer Felix Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" which he composed for an 1842 production of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

3) Humanimals have four major wedding ceremonies. They are the Traditional, Modern Traditional, Traditional Modern, and the Modern. Each of these ceremonies has its own unique traditions. The Traditional ceremony is, perhaps, the least favored in the time of the story because, as was mentioned, the wife is little more than a sex slave to the husband. She is considered little more than property and the children she bears belong to the husband. A few societies still use this ceremony, although it is dying a much deserved death. The Modern Traditional ceremony, the one indicated here, still uses the binding of the partners to show their undying love for one another and their desire for everyone to know they consider themselves to be one person. In this ceremony, the wife is more likely to take her husband's family name, although quite often the wife will incorporate her family name as part of her married name. Normally, the "children" born in this marriage take the family name of the father. In the Traditional Modern ceremony the binding of the wrists is rarely done. This is because the couple getting married think that it isn't necessary to do this to prove they love one another enough to marry. In this ceremony, the wife will either take her husband's family name or incorporate her family name in her married name. The "children" of this union are as likely to be given the mother's family name as the father's. The Modern ceremony is the most liberal of the four. In this ceremony, the wife can choose to take her husband's family name, keep her family name, or incorporate her name with her husband's. It is also quite common for the husband to take his wife's family name, keep his family name, or incorporate his family name with his wife's. There are other ceremonies but they are so rarely used that few people know anything about them.