

## **Comparative Research Exercise**

### **Facts**

Tom Gold and Sally Jackson met online through a dating website. They fell head over heels for each other, and after dating for only two months, they decided to get married. After considering different options, they decided to ask one of Sally's friends, Jason, to perform the ceremony at Tom's family farm in Lake George, NY. Jason had recently been ordained online as a minister of the Spiritual Humanism clergy only so that he could celebrate the marriage of his younger sister. The Spiritual Humanism clergy is a non-denominational online church that allows anyone to become an ordained minister. Jason gladly agreed to marry Tom and Sally.

Before the ceremony, Tom and Sally obtained a marriage license. On the wedding day, a small group of friends and family were present to witness the ceremony and share their best wishes with the newlyweds. The next day, Jason diligently filed the signed marriage certificate with the town clerk office in Lake George.

Unfortunately, things did not work out between Tom and Sally, and they separated only a few months after getting married.

About six months after Sally left him, Tom met Julia. They have been seeing each other for almost a year. Tom told Julia he wanted to marry her, and so he would get a divorce from Sally as soon as possible. However, Julia refuses to marry a divorcee. Julia is a religious person and she wants to get married in a catholic church. She does not think it would be possible to do so if Tom is divorced. Julia said she would only consider Tom's marriage proposal if he got his previous marriage annulled.

### **Question:**

Advise Tom Gold on the validity of his marriage to Sally.