

Conviction

by Matt Potter

"Cancel everything!"

Their jaws drop. Tears well in my father's eyes.

"You've turned this into a circus!" I say. I fold my arms and glare.

My mother lays her pen on top of the seating plan. "And disappoint your father?" she says. "When that's all he's looked forward to throughout his illness?"

Dad sniffs. I don't look at him.

I jab the plan with my finger. "You've put all my anorexic friends on the table nearest the buffet," I say. "And all my bulimic friends on the other side of the room *away* from the buffet *and* the toilets."

"There's no point wasting good food," says Mum.

Flicking my veil behind my shoulder, I stomp out of the room and into my bedroom, slamming the door behind me.

I slump on the bed, twisting on my bottom so my head hits the pillow and my feet, in their dental assistant-like white, rest at the other end, beneath the cross on the wall.

Mum taps on the door and stands in the doorway.

"Sirên," she says, using the Christian name I'm giving up. "This going away party is the last time we'll be able to do anything like this. Soon you'll be in the convent. Have a heart and let us do this the way it should be done."

She looks at me doe-eyed.

"At least while your father's still with us."

I roll my eyes. People think being a Christian means you'll put up with anything.

