

Flush

by Matt Potter

“Your gums will be red raw and a perfect entry point for HIV,” she said. “Never clean your teeth beforehand if you're going to suck cock.”

I shrank into the kitchen chair. It was 1989. I was seventeen. Two minutes earlier I'd told her I thought I was gay.

“Are you fucking anyone, Dudley?”

She was a sexual health nurse. And, unfortunately, my mother.

“Are you a bottom or a top?”

My eyes stared blankly and my lips clamped shut, stilling the screaming voice inside.

“First impressions really count. You need to make up your mind.”

I shifted in the chair. My mother's favourite child-rearing mantra — *I can talk to my children about anything* — was swallowing me whole.

“No one likes an indecisive sexual partner.”

Oh, I definitely knew I was gay, but my sexual experience amounted to nothing beyond constant furious masturbation and watching men's gymnastics on television. In practical terms, I didn't know one end of a hard-on from another.

“It's a big world out there, and there are plenty of cute, well-hung men just waiting to get into your trousers, sweetie.”

She had never called me *sweetie* before.

She hummed. “Maybe I should give you my old dildo to practice with.”

I stood up. I left the room. I walked outside and down the driveway and to my best friend Daren's house. And vowed to learn all I could about menopause, and assault her with the hair-raising facts just after her first hot flush.

