

Vow

by Matt Potter

The smell wafted from the open Bible. I gagged behind my veil, dewy mood shattered.

Cameron picked it from the pages and tried to slide it on my finger but I snatched my hand away.

His eyes searched mine.

"It smells," I whispered.

Father O'Donoghue leaned towards us, sour breath fluttering the tulle. "You got cold feet?"

"There's something wrong with the ring," Cameron said.

A cough rose from the front pew.

"The ring smells, Father," I said.

"What of?" he said. "Formaldehyde?"

My brain blanked. Which word was appropriately churchy?

"Excrement," I said.

No look of recognition spread across his face.

"Shit," I whispered.

"Shit!?" he said too loudly. Murmurs filled the church.

The priest took the ring and sniffed it, then turned to Cameron, raising his eyebrows.

"You buy shit, it's gonna smell like shit," he said. "You should've come to me like I told you and got a good deal with my nephew." He sniffed the ring again then threw it on the floor. Its tinny roll echoed through the church. "Cheap Chinese shit."

He reached into his pocket, pulled out another ring, and tossed it on the open Bible.

Sighing with relief, Cameron took the ring and grabbed my finger.

I pulled away again. "But it's not the ring I chose."

"I am the word of God!" the priest hissed, my veil blowing in my face with such force it tangled in my eyelashes.

Luckily, Father O'Donoghue's other nephew catered the reception.

