

At the Reception

by Michael Gillan Maxwell

"No weddings, only funerals," he says. He takes a glass of champagne and an appetizer from the server. "Lately, it's memorial services, but our next gig is an actual funeral. A staged, authentic Viking funeral."

"The kind when they set the ship on fire with flaming arrows, or just bury the ship?"

"We only do the flaming arrows kind." he says. "The other kind is tedious."

"How do you even know what to play?"

"Whatever the bereaved requests. We're working up some Viking songs in Old Norse for this gig."

"Now, that's just sad. You'll probably only perform them once."

"Who knows? I think there's a niche for it. We're trying to land gigs at other ceremonies like circumcisions and liposuctions. By the way, these little cocktail weenies totally rock. A tart, yet insouciant bouquet, that doesn't bite back! They should serve these at receptions more often."

"I hate to burst your bubble, but you *do* know that liposuction is a surgical procedure, not a ceremony?"

"Yeah, and so is circumcision when it's done in a hospital. I'm talkin' ritual ceremony, the Big Kahuna of ceremonial circumcisions, the bris."

"Are you insane? Viking songs at a bris?" That's sacrilegious. No self respecting mohel would allow such a thing."

"I don't mean Viking songs at the bris! I'm not *that* mercenary. I just think we should target the bris ceremony as a potential venue for the band. Obviously, we'd need to come up with some appropriate bris material."

"Yeah right." She rolls her eyes. "I'm sure YouTube is bursting with bris material."

"Say what you will," he says. "It beats the Hell out of my regular gig."

"Which is?"

"Dentist," he says. "But that was my mother's dream, not mine. I wanted to be a professional square dance caller. But I can't complain. Look where it got me. I've made a shitload of money but it just doesn't satisfy my inner "arteest." Anyway, my clientele has gotten too freaky for my tastes. Lately, it's rappers and gangbangers wanting diamond studded gold teeth. Yesterday some loan shark asked me to do a double row of implants shaped like shark's teeth. Maybe I should just move to a different neighborhood."

The door near them swings open as the wedding band arrives and starts loading in.

"Check out these dudes," he says. "They're all wearing kilts. Not that there's anything wrong with that, as long as they're wearing underwear. Know anything about them?"

"It's a Scottish bagpipe band," she says.

“I'd invite you to join me in the Highland Fling, but I don't think these are the right shoes.”

“I hope they're not serving haggis for dinner. It makes me gassy.”

“Speaking of which, where'd that wee weenie lassy run off too?”

