

Wedding Hells

by Mia Sundby

"This wedding is some hell," Jeff sighed, swigging from what might have been his fourth glass of champagne. Maybe it was the alcohol but he had a strange sense of *deja-vu* as he looked on to see the bride and groom weeping into each other's faces. The bride was a distressingly plain-looking woman, wearing a sparkly white wedding dress which *definitely* should have been equipped with some straps. The groom was vaguely familiar, he thought, though similarly unplaceable. White skin, brown hair, ill-fitting suit.

God, was it just him or had he been here before?

He realised that he must've spoken out loud as a young woman turned to look at him. She, at least, was different. Though, 'different' was the only word that came to mind.

She had bright blue hair chopped into a shaggy mess which had been squished up into a bun, her ears were covered in glittery piercings --one of which he could have sworn was a pitchfork--, and she was wearing a black slip dress with bright white chunky, spiked trainers, all of which gave off the impression that she'd forgotten the wedding was today.

Despite all of this, though, she smiled as she looked at him. Jeff smiled back, thin-lipped, and turned back to the happy couple. Or, he *thought* they were happy, anyway. They were doing rather a lot of crying.

To his dismay, though, the blue-haired woman took this as a signal to chat. As she shuffled closer to him, he groaned inwardly, desperately trying to come up with some way to excuse himself.

Too late. The blue-haired woman reached him, and grinned.

"You must be new here," she said in an undertone.

He frowned. "What?"

"New, you must be new." She said, a little louder.

A few people in the crowd turned around to scowl in their general direction, and Jeff attempted to shrink into his own suit.

Blue Hair, however, waved a hand dismissively and continued speaking at a barely-whisper. "Oh, don't worry about them."

Jeff was worried about many things, chief among them the blue-haired crazy lady stood beside him. She was quite tiny, he realised. All of her height must come from those ridiculous chunky trainers. Reluctantly, he glanced down at her.

"What do you mean I must be new?"

She was still smiling that friendly, over-bearing smile, as she said, "Oh! Newly dead."

Jeff stared. He cleared his throat.

"Sorry, what?"

Blue Hair offered him an expression of great impatience. "You're dead, Jeff. This is hell."

The champagne suddenly didn't seem to like sitting in his stomach and proceeded to make a beeline for his oesophagus. A faint choking sound which was probably supposed to be words made its way out of his open mouth.

Blue Hair ploughed on, still smiling. "Oh, well, not *Hell* 'hell', but one of them. Your hell, anyway." Apparently taking his silence for offence, Blue Hair stroked his shoulder, giving it a comforting squeeze. "Oh, don't worry, Jeff, you're not the only one! There's quite a few people whose hells are weddings." She laughed, eyeing the couple. "Funny, really, isn't it? It's a celebration of love and companionship and two --or more-- people coming together to dedicate themselves to each other... And people *hate* it! I mean," she turned, her eyes bugging out in exaggeration, "*Really* hate it. And you're one of them."

Finally, Jeff stammered a response. "What... What about you?"

Blue Hair's hand flew to her mouth. "Oh, I'm so sorry! No, this isn't my hell. I quite like it here, actually, I think wedding's are just *lovely*." She spared a wistful glance out into the room, then back at Jeff. When she smiled, her teeth were just a little too sharp. "No, I just work here. I'm your assigned torturer, Jeff. It's truly a pleasure to meet you."