Bourne toWrite... creative writing workshops

# Strange Tech

by Jane Hill

'I hope this video camera works.'

A promise was all well and good, but he'd spent the last three hours hanging lights and microphones around the church, and Mikey was feeling very uncomfortable. His van had been stolen the previous week, along with all his equipment. The police had been useless.

'What's the point of all the bloody CCTV everywhere?' he'd fumed at the desk sergeant, who'd looked at Mikey before mumbling, 'Do you have insurance?'

Mikey had snapped, trying not to shout.

'Of course I do! It's taken me years to get my collection together... Insurance won't help!'

A clipboard, form and pen had been pushed towards him in the metal tray beneath the 'Speak Here' window.

'There's a crime number at the top which you'll need for insurance claims.'

Seething, Mikey had grabbed the proffered items and sat on the uncomfortable bench to fill in the form. The upshot of the theft was that he'd had to hire unfamiliar equipment to record Hazel's wedding. Not good. The camera bleeped, and a tiny red light appeared above the buttons.

'Does that mean it's working, or...?' he muttered as he grabbed his phone to Google the instructions.

'Habadee, habadaa, badum, badum... Hmmm... Ooh, this'll do...'

It was then that Mikey realised he was being watched as he chatted away to himself. The man looked like a vicar, but try as he might, Mikey couldn't recall the guy's name, so he smiled weakly.

'Are you well, young man?' the vicar asked.

Mikey blushed. 'Yes, thank you, Father.'

'Call me Stephen. And you are...?'

‘Mikey,’ he replied. ‘I’m meant to be filming my best friend’s wedding, but it’s all new equipment that I’m not used to, and I don’t know if it’s going to work. I had to look up the instructions for this thing, and there will be many tears before bedtime if I have to tell Hazel that everything is useless!’

Mikey ran out of breath.

‘Goodness me,’ said Stephen. ‘You’ve got yourself into a state, haven’t you?’

Mikey nodded.

Stephen continued, ‘I have a little technical know-how. I was a roadie in a previous life, so I’m sure we can sort all this out between us. Now, where’s your console?’

Mikey led Stephen to his set-up in a pew and flipped the switch to ‘On’. There was a loud, clunky buzz as the desk sprang into life. Stephen smiled at Mikey again.

‘This all looks perfect to me. Are you transmitting the visuals via the church Wi-Fi or Bluetooth?’

Mikey’s expression went blank.

‘I’m still figuring it out, to be honest. I’ve literally just hired the gear without having a chance to test it. I was looking up what the red light means, and then you appeared.’

Stephen chuckled. ‘Let me see.’

He fiddled with a dial.

‘There. You can run everything via Wi-Fi, and the SD card will retain any remote information. Press this green button to film while you watch the fold-out screen.’

He demonstrated as he spoke, and Mikey breathed a huge sigh of relief. He thanked Stephen profusely for his help, adding that he’d see him at 4.30 for the wedding.

At 4.15, Mikey was in his element, filming the arrival of the invited guests, along with the groom and best man. At 4.25, he checked his watch and stayed outside the door, as he wanted to film his best friend during the final minutes before she became Mrs Wendover. He felt a tap on his shoulder and turned to see someone in a dog collar.

Confused, he asked, ‘Where’s Stephen? Isn’t he officiating?’

‘Stephen?’ the man asked. ‘I’m the Reverend Tony Johns, and I don’t know where you got the idea that I’m called Stephen.’

Completely bemused, Mikey gave his second weak smile of the day.

‘No, sorry. Neither do I… Sorry, sir… Oh, excuse me—here she comes! I just hope this damn video camera works!’