

The Wedding Stumble

The proposal, when it came, was a blinder. They'd both woken when the alarm sounded, Jeff more reluctantly than Chuck. Not that Chuck was a morning person either, by any means; he just had more – “grit,” Jeff would say. “Resignation,” Chuck would reply. Chuck worked at Holland Printing, Jeff was massage therapist at a nearby salon. Jeff, stretched beneath the sheets, hearing Chuck start the coffeepot.

He knew he had just enough time to shower while Chuck exercised – pushups and situps, in sets of 25 totalling a hundred each, then yoga stretches. He paused in the doorway to watch. Strong arms lifting broad back and shaggy dark head off the floor: up and down, up and down. He waited for Chuck to turn over so he could pleasure in a front view. The look of concentration; the short dark beard and pelt of soft brown running down the chest; his cock – not big, but nice and thick, nestling in his bush... (“Why do you exercise naked?” Jeff had once asked. “Because I like to,” Chuck replied.) Chuck caught him looking, shot him a quick wolfish smile.

They talked plans for the next few days. Jeff's housemates Tad and Melissa were due back that Sunday night. They grumbled when Jeff brought Chuck to sleep over. “But they want to move after they get married in September,” Jeff said. “Or sooner. They looked at a house in Astoria last week and sounded really excited. Then you could move in!”

“I could.”

“It's all they talk about: wedding, wedding, wedding. And fight over.”

“I can imagine.”

“That's where they are this weekend; at her family's with a lawyer, working out the pre-nup.”

Chuck seemed to retreat inside his own thoughts for a moment. He lay his hands flat on the table. “Speaking of that, there's something I've been trying to work up the nerve to tell you, for weeks now.” He took Jeff's hand. “I want to marry you.”

“What?”

“I love you, and I want to marry you.” He was blushing bright red. His voice was flat, but he looked, straight and intense, into Jeff's eyes, without flinching.

“Oh, my – But why're you so embarrassed? You're totally red.”

“It's the most overused phrase in the language; and I hate clichés.”

“What is?” Jeff cluelessly asked.