

There Goes the **Bridegroom**

Surprise guest spoils bride's big day

It seems like the perfect wedding.

The bride and groom are waiting in front of the **altar**. Behind the happy couple, the church is full with their friends and family.

'Doesn't she look beautiful?' one guest whispers.

'And he's very handsome!' says another. 'I hear he's very nice.'

'Have they been together long?'

'Only a few months. It's very romantic!'

The **priest** stands next to the bride and groom. He has one last formality to complete. He turns to the congregation .

'Does anyone know any reason why these two people should not be married?'

The priest pauses. The **congregation** waits politely. Nobody expects an answer.

Then a door opens. Everyone turns round. A young woman is standing at the back of the church.

'Stop this wedding now!' she cries.

Who is this woman?

There is a **gasp** from the congregation. They stare in amazement at the woman in the purple dress.

Someone whispers. 'Who is she?'

The bridegroom is still standing in front of the altar. He wipes sweat from his forehead. His face is red.

The bride turns to her fiancée. 'Robert,' she says, in a loud clear voice. 'Who is this woman? Do you know her?'

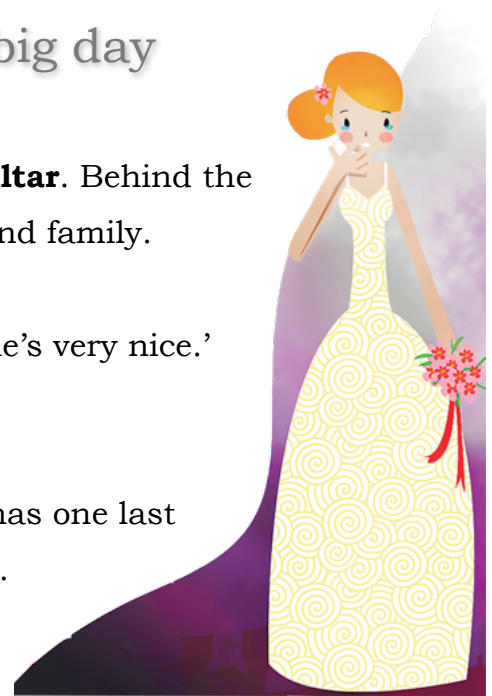
The congregation waits for the answer. Robert coughs. 'I do, yes,' he says.

There is another gasp. The bride waits for an explanation. Robert looks down at his shoes.

The woman in the purple dress calls out 'Tell him, Robbie! Tell him who I am!'

'Who is this woman Robert?'

Robert clears his throat again. 'Let's say she's an old friend' he says.



There is another gasp from the congregation. The woman in the purple dress laughed loudly 'An old friend!'

'What is she doing here?'

'I don't know,' says Robert.

Then the woman speaks. 'I love you, Robert,' she says.

She holds up her hand to the congregation. She is wearing an engagement ring. 'This is what you promised me,' she says. 'I want you to marry me!'

The woman looks at the priest. The priest's mouth falls open.

This bride?

'I can't marry you and him,' says the priest. He points to the bride and bridegroom. 'I can only marry him and her.'



Everyone turns round again. 'That's boring!' says the woman in the purple dress. 'But I have a Plan B!'

The congregation watches as she reaches into her jacket pocket.

She pulls out two airline tickets. 'These are for us, Robbie!' she says calmly. 'We can fly to Las Vegas,'

There is another gasp. Robbie stares into space.

'We can get married in Vegas tonight,' says the woman.

'Come with me now! There's a taxi waiting outside.'

The bridegroom looks at the bride. He looks at the woman.

Finally, he says 'Sorry, everyone. 'But I've always wanted to go to Las Vegas.'

The bridegroom walks back down the aisle. He embraces the woman in the purple dress. 'Let's go!' he says.

Together the bridegroom and the woman in the purple dress walk out of the church. They climb into a waiting taxi.

For a moment everyone **freezes**. Then the bride races back down the aisle after the departing couple. 'Robert!' she cries. 'Come back! You're marrying me!'

But it is too late. The taxi is already driving away in the direction of the airport.

Glossary

Altar - table at front of the church

Congregation - people in a church for a service

Fiancé - person you are going to marry

Freezes - stops moving, as if for a photo

Gasp - open mouthed expression of surprise

Priest - religious minister

Plan B - alternative idea/strategy/plan

Spoils - ruins, makes bad

Stare - look intensely at someone or something

Quick Check: True or false

1. The bride and bridegroom are standing at the altar
2. The priest asks the bride and groom if they like each other
3. A woman comes into the church after the service has started

Understanding

1. Who is standing at the altar?
4. Why does everyone turn around?
5. What does the woman say?
6. What does the bride ask the bridegroom?
7. What does the woman want?
8. Can the priest do this? Why not?
9. Where has the bridegroom always wanted to go? *Las Vegas*
10. Who walks out of the church?

Vocabulary -

What happens at a traditional church wedding service?

Fill the gaps with the words below

The family and friends of the ----- sit on the left of the church. The friends and family of the bridegroom ((the ----- of the bride) sit on the right.

The ----- usually enters the church first. He waits at the front of the church. The priest or vicar also stands in front of the -----.

The bride is the last person to enter the church. When she walks down the aisle the ----- stands.

Finally the minister (vicar, ----- etc) welcomes everyone to his or her church.

priest * aisle * altar * bridegroom * congregation * bride * fiancé