

# Old man deodorant

by Matt Potter

Pink-faced, he glowered in the corner, champagne in hand.

"I didn't realise just *how* much you'd got around," he said. "You'd only had five men when we got together."

That was twenty-three years ago.

What could I say? Sorry my sex life has turned into a gay cliché? None of these men meant anything to me?

*Bring something that will remind me of you, the invitation said. I'm turning fifty.*

Even with the noise of the thousand men in the room, I could hear Jasper's angry breathing. Had I really fucked them all?

"Who's that anaemic-looking group over there?" Jasper pointed to a pale-faced quartet. Even in the middle of the room, they looked backlit.

"I think they're dead," I said. "You want me to ask?"

Jasper looked away. My heart lurched inside my chest. I wanted to put my arm around him but didn't dare.

"I'm surprised you haven't fucked yourself to death, too," he added, "given your record."

I would have said, *Well, I've given it my best*, but a well-known face walked in. Conversation lulled, just a second, as he made his way through the crowd.

He — the newest guest — was well known for a long-running series of so-bad-they-were-unintentionally-funny TV commercials. *Buck*, he'd say, holding a deodorant stick at the camera. *For the man in you.*

"You fucked old man deodorant?" Jasper smiled. Now *my* face turned pink.

Jasper downed his champagne. "I'm gonna see if I can score," he said. "Some freebies."

