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White dresses, traditional songs date back centuries

Bridesmaids originally acted as decoys for the groom when he and his best men attempted to kidnap the bride

By **Moriah Balingit**
 Freelance Reporter

For those who missed the grand finale of "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire?" and for those who aren't completely steeped in American wedding culture, the notion of hideous bridesmaid dresses and other bizarre customs may seem a tad erroneous. But many of these traditions have origins that date back hundreds of years.

According to <http://www.bridestuff.com>, the popular wedding rhyme that requires a bride and groom to obtain "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and a silver sixpence in your shoe" originated in the Victorian era. "Something old" was worn in hopes that the bride and groom would sustain their friendships from when they were still bachelors and bachelorettes; "something borrowed" was usually an item of import to the bride's family — such as a family heirloom — which the bride had to return eventually to ensure good luck;

"something blue" has its origins in Israeli weddings, when brides wore blue ribbons in their hair to symbolize fidelity; and the "silver sixpence" was to ensure wealth for the newlyweds.

And why does Billy Idol sing about a "White Wedding?" According to [bridestuff.com](http://www.bridestuff.com), the first-known white wedding dress in Europe was worn by Anne of Brittany for her marriage to Louis XII in 1499. Before that, women usually just wore their best dress. In China and Japan, white wedding dresses were worn to symbolize mourning for the bride's departure from her family. By the 20th century, white had come to symbolize the joy of the wedding day.

According to <http://www.amom-slove.com>, a bridesmaid's place in the wedding originated in a bizarre kidnapping ritual in which the man and his best men (hence the term "best man") would attempt to abduct the bride-to-be. Bridesmaids were supposed to dress like the bride to act as decoys. In ancient Rome, the bridesmaids acted as decoys for evil spirits. According to modern convention, bridesmaids are dressed in less flattering dresses to not "outshine" the bride.

The placement of the bride and groom also originated in this kidnapping ritual, according to the Web site for Kendrick's Designer Images. In the original custom, when the bride was kidnapped, she was placed on her groom's left side for protection. Additionally, grooms had to leave their right side open in case they had to draw their sword.

The dreaded meeting of in-laws is hardly a modern convention. In fact, the honeymoon was originally a month the newlywed couple spent in seclusion drinking honeyed wine and hiding from their new in-laws, who might attempt to separate them.

Richard Wagner's Bridal Chorus is the bona fide wedding song, which was written in 1848 for Lohengrin, an opera based on a German legend. Nearly as popular is Felix Mendelssohn's Wedding March. Both songs were popularized by Victoria, princess of Great Britain and Empress of Germany, when she used them in her marriage to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, according to <http://www.hell-vetica.com>.

Moriah Balingit is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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Big day shouldn't be big hassle

Only 187 days until the big day. my wedding. It sounds like plenty of time to sort everything out, but the ulcers in my stomach and the streaks of gray hair don't agree.

Well, it's not that bad. I don't really have ulcers or gray hair, but planning a wedding, especially while in college, does carry a lot of stress.

My gift to you is some practical advice for planning a wedding while going to school, especially if you are getting married outside of Eugene.

First things first: Make sure you have time off during the week. You will have to make a lot of phone calls and go to a lot of appointments. Many wedding vendors will not meet on the weekends, so you will have to accommodate their weekday and evening availability.

I can't count on three hands how many classes I have missed to drive to Portland for meeting after meeting.

Keep in mind all of the meetings involved with each vendor, such as your photographer. First you will have a meeting to view their work and talk about prices. Then you meet again to sign the contract. A third meeting is necessary to talk about the type and style of photos you want. Don't forget the meeting at the photography location to go over where and how the photos will be taken. That is just for one of the many vendors at your wedding.

Before you kick into full wedding planning, you should decide on a few things with your fiancé.

Do you want your wedding indoors or outdoors? Do you want the ceremony



Lisa Catto
 Bridezilla

and reception at the same location or separate ones? Which city do you want to get married in?

Also set a preliminary budget, pick a style or theme for your wedding and outline a rough guest list.

All of these decisions will help you eliminate places and vendors quickly. If you are inviting 350 guests and want an outdoor wedding, the church that seats 50 will not work for you.

When it comes time to talk to different vendors, ask a lot of questions and compare the company to others.

We found a ceremony/reception location that seemed great. It was only five minutes from where I grew up, and it had indoor and outdoor facilities to protect from the fickle Oregon

weather. The price even included the wedding cake, alcohol, decorations and all of the food. What a great deal — or so we thought.

Once we began breaking down the price, we found that they were charging quite a bit more than other locations we were looking at. It just seemed like a better deal because one price included almost everything.

The only reason we came to that conclusion was because we were looking at other places and compared all of them.

If you are thinking of a summer wedding, start looking at vendors before the big bridal shows in January. Many of them offer specials for booking during the bridal show, and if you have already looked at their work or location, you can sign with them guilt free. They also fill their availability rather quickly after the shows.

I have a few last pieces of critical advice.

Remember that the wedding is just one day, emotionally and financially. Don't stress your relationship over the wedding — it isn't worth starting your new life on the wrong foot. Also, don't break your bank over the wedding. You will probably have a lot of financial responsibility afterward like a honeymoon, a house or even student loans.

Secondly, make the wedding about you and your fiancé. I know that sounds cheesy, but it will be more special if you incorporate things that both of you love and pieces of your personality.

Our wedding invitations have our family crests on them, along with our ring bearer's pillow. My fiancé, the "Rocky" freak, might walk down the aisle to the movie's theme song (if he's lucky), while I will be escorted down by bagpipes. Our guests may think we are crazy, but I will enjoy it.

These little things that reflect our personalities make me even more excited for the wedding.

Planning a wedding can be a lot of fun and a lot of stress. But once it's over, you don't have to worry about it again — unless you get remarried.

Contact the crime/health/safety reporter at lisacatto@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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