

Bridesmaid spends a lot but never gets the groom

By LOUISE LEVITT
Always a bridesmaid, never a bride. That is the standard complaint of wedding attendants. But I don't even want to be a bridesmaid anymore.

It isn't that I'm jealous of my friends who walk down the aisle in white. I certainly wish them all the happiness in the world, and am perfectly willing to join in the "oohs" and "aahs" of congratulation, send a wedding present and wear an envious expression when talking to the bride-to-be.

I don't even mind continually buying bridesmaid's dresses. Al-

though I must admit I now own five dresses—practically identical—in blue, pink, aqua, green and yellow which look exactly what they are and are useful for no other occasion. But my budget is holding out and there's always the attic when my closet gets too crowded.

I don't object to giving up the time needed to participate. Being a bridesmaid can take almost as much time as getting married. First, there's shopping for the dress. Then, any self-respecting bridesmaid is expected to join the bride-to-be while she shops for her own outfit and trousseau.

There's that intangible thing

known as moral support. Suddenly, the girl who always seemed to be so independent can't make a decision for herself. She has to consult everyone within telephoning distance. Naturally, that includes the bridesmaid.

There are numerous showers, parties, and luncheons. After a while, I begin to feel as though my mouth will be permanently frozen into a smile. Then of course there is the wedding rehearsal, the ceremony itself and the reception. But all this isn't too bad.

My major objections to being a bridesmaid fall into two categories—relatives and ushers. Relatives are usually darlings. It's certainly understandable and they'll want to praise Mary, their favorite niece, cousin or grandchild—even if they haven't seen her since she was two years old. But sooner or later, they all seem to bring up the same old topic. "When are you going to get married, like Mary?" Frequently, the relatives look on the wedding as a personal accomplishment. As soon as it's over, they're looking for another candidate.

Which brings me to my second complaint—ushers. The bride-to-be inevitably hopes—even if subconsciously—that her friends will get married too. What better place for a girl to meet her future husband than a wedding?

So weeks before the ceremony, the bride begins planning which bridesmaid she'll fix up with which usher. I'm sure some of the ushers are very nice. I have a sneaking suspicion many of them take a dim view of the whole idea.

TIME TO GIVE UP

But I never get the nice ones. For days I am told about Charlie who just happened to be the groom's roommate in college or a distant cousin or childhood friend. He invariably lives 1,000 miles away so I've never met him. Charlie is described as every girl's dream. I'll just love him, I'm told.

Unfortunately, I don't love Charlie. He always turns out to be interested in exactly the things I despise. We stumble through conversation—at the pre-ceremony parties and the reception. As if this weren't enough, the minute the bride gets back from her honeymoon, she calls to ask how did I like Charlie and when am I seeing him again and why doesn't she invite the two of us over for dinner so we could get better acquainted.



Mrs. Kevin Madore, the former Vera Jean Bowles
George Wetton Photo

Groom must share costs

Young George Groom may think that his financial responsibilities don't start until after he says "I do", and tradition does call for the bride and her parents to bear most of the cost of a wedding. But there are several items which young George is expected to arrange and pay for.

Of course, he has already bought the bride's engagement ring and her wedding ring. And he's probably purchased a gift for his bride, paid the marriage license fee and a doctor's fee for a medical examination. However, he usually pays for the bride's bouquet and her going-away corsage, flowers for their mothers, and boutonnières

for men in the wedding party. If it's a formal wedding he generally presents the required gloves, ascots or ties to the best man and ushers and gifts which serve to thank them for their support on this big day. If the wedding takes place away from their hometown, the bridegroom should arrange accommodations for his best man and ushers.

The bridegroom also takes care of the fee of the clergyman. This can run to \$100 if the wedding is large, but generally the range is \$10 to \$25.

And, the bridegroom can give

a bachelor dinner for his friends. He foots the bill for that too.

It is up to the groom's parents to pay for the clothes they will wear at the wedding, plus any traveling expenses and accommodation bills. If they wish, the groom's parents can offer to give the dinner preceding or following the wedding rehearsal—even though this is usually a responsibility of the bride's parents.

Once the wedding is over, the groom assumes his new responsibilities by paying for the wedding trip.

LONG SEPARATION
Imagine getting married and then not seeing your new wife or husband for 11 months. That's what happens each year in the little Italian town of San Giovanni in Fiore, Italy. The town is poor and most youths seek a living elsewhere, and return at the end of the year for their brides.

JUNIOR BRIDESMAID
A member of the bride's or groom's family who is too old to be a flower girl and too young to be a bridesmaid, may be a junior bridesmaid. She is usually between 10 and 14, and in the procession, walks in front of the bridesmaids.

MOD LOOK
One trend which may be showing signs of growing among bridal designs is the so-called "mod look," it began in Great Britain—in the wake of excitement over the Beatles—and may become popular in this country.



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