

## Origins of beloved customs lie in ancient marriage rites

It happens in every wedding: The bride and groom exchange rings. They share cake. The bride throws her bouquet. But do you know how these customs began?

**THE BRIDE:** A Celebration (Harry N. Abrams, Inc.), a new book by Barbara Tober, Editor-in-Chief of *Bride's* magazine, reveals their sometimes surprising origins.

The bride throws her bouquet so an unmarried friend can "catch" some luck in romance, goes the modern explanation. But the custom actually started as a form of self-defense.

In times past, belief in the mystical value of a bride's adornments prompted friends and strangers alike to try to grab a piece of her outfit. Eventually, some clever bride found

that by flinging her flowers away from herself, the crowd would have something to fight over — and she would escape intact!

The wedding party originally served the various purpose of protecting the bride and groom from the curses of evil-wishers. They dressed in clothes exactly like those of the bride and groom, so the identity of the happy couple was kept secret on the way to the church and until they were safely married.

The first piece of wedding cake is cut and eaten by the bride and groom as a carry-over from the time when the sharing of food or wine often was the marriage.

Teutons, for example, were considered wed after drinking mead together for 30 days. (The word *brideal* comes from *bride-ale*.)

The aisle runner protected the bride from evil spirits who, it was thought, lived below the ground. These demons were also feared to lurk around doorways, hence the bride is carried over the threshold of her new home.

Rice symbolizes the age-old hope that the couple would be as fruitful as the earth. In France, guests shower the bride and groom with wheat; in Morocco, with raisins, figs and dates.

People clink glasses when they toast the bride and groom in order to produce a bell-like sound. (Bells, it was believed, were repellent to the devil.)

"The kiss" as a significant moment in the wedding dates from the Roman Empire. At that time, the betrothal ceremony consisted of a kiss and the exchange of rings, with the kiss being the actual legal bond.

The trousseau, or dowry, was actually an early form of life insurance, since it was meant to ensure that the bride could survive without her husband if the need arose.

Sweet dreams



**LACE, EMBROIDERY, CROCHET, EYELET** — From wedding day to wedding night. White bed linens, brass candleholders and candlelight vow lifetime romance for newlyweds. The bedspread is crocheted cotton while the sheets are trimmed with shimmering embroidery. The mix of textures continues to shams, cases and pillows all in wedding white.

## Elizabeth's store hosts a show for brides-to-be

Brides-to-be got an in-depth look at the glimmer and sparkle of a white wedding Feb. 1.

It was the second annual Bridal Fashion Show put on by Georgetown's Elizabeth's Fashions.

A sell-out, the show featured 19 exhibitors who offered professional and expert advice to brides and their moms—advice on floral arrangements, catering, make-up, invitations, photography, music and gift ideas.

Everyone loaded up on pamphlets for future reference. The show started off with a look at the new and upcoming fashions for spring and summer. There were cool summer dresses and casual wear past suits. There was sexy lingerie modelled by bashful young women who weren't keen on taking off their housecoat to reveal the silky lacy nighties underneath.

During the fashion show, a number of gift certificates were drawn, compliments of the exhibitors. All handy for any bride-to-be.

A large selection of styles and colors of bridesmaid dresses gave young brides an idea of what was available. Even men's fashion jackets were modelled, in colors co-ordinated to match the bridesmaids.

A lovely selection of flattering styles for the mother of the bride were brought on stage, all elegant and feminine. Then, one by one, the highlight of the show appeared, the bridal gowns. There were different styles for different tastes not only in bridal dresses but also in headpieces and floral arrangements, all in the latest styles.

Just as in many a wedding, the hit of the fashion show were the little flower girl and the ring bearer.

The show ended with a finale of all the fashions and styles for a last look on stage. Much hard work and preparation went into the Bridal Fashion Show, once again.

# The Wedding Bells Are Ringing

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