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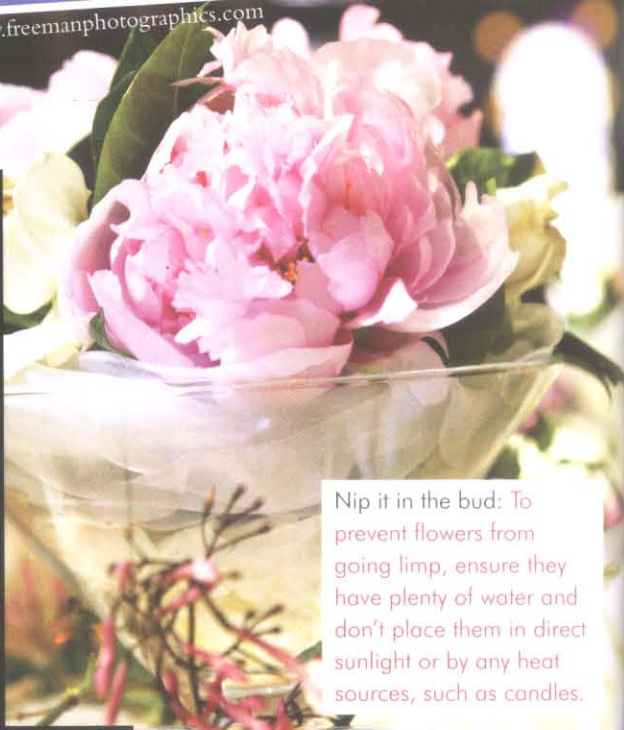


PLUS BEAUTY, VENUES, GROOMS' FASHION, HONEYMOONS AND MORE

THRILLS & SPILLS

They say the course of true love never runs smooth, so we asked five of the UK's wedding planners what to do when disaster strikes.

Read our round-up of big day mishaps and be sure to take it all in your bridal stride...



Nip it in the bud: To prevent flowers from going limp, ensure they have plenty of water and don't place them in direct sunlight or by any heat sources, such as candles.

Bundle of nerves

DAY DILEMMA: Your envisioned state of calm and graceful composure on the big day has taken an unexpected turn. Nerves have taken hold instead, threatening that walk down the aisle and the all-important speeches.

QUICK FIX: "It sounds obvious but some simple deep breathing will help slow the heart down," says Bernadette Chapman of the UK Alliance of Wedding Planners. "On top of that, have some Rescue Remedy to hand, which your planner or bridesmaid can hold for you. When you stroll down the aisle, just forget everyone else is there and focus on your husband-to-be.

"One mistake people make when it comes to the speeches is to not write, or practise, it in advance. My tip is to write words onto little cards, which can act as a prompt if you lose your place."

"Remember rain isn't always a bad thing; it can offer some great photo opportunities, from atmospheric skylines to fun shots under brightly coloured umbrellas"
- Andri Benson

Flower failure

DAY DILEMMA: Wild flowers are all the rage for 2010 and with pretty blooms in place everything's looking peachy - until they wilt. Limp and lifeless flowers: not quite the look you had in mind?

QUICK FIX: "Don't despair," says Andri Benson of Andri Wedding Design. "Some will still be usable so pull out the worst of the wilted blooms and spread the remaining flowers around to fill any gaps. You will be left with smaller arrangements, but ones that will look better.

"For tables, gather assorted vases or even teacups and place any remaining good blooms in them for a country look. Scatter the petals from the limp flowers on to the table tops."

When it rains...

DAY DILEMMA: You've got that al fresco wedding all booked up with a garden to die for, garden games on the itinerary and sunny photos all within reach. And then Mother Nature takes hold, and the heavens open, and when it rains... it pours.

QUICK FIX "It's always best to have a contingency plan in place," advises Andri. "Choose a venue that has alternative indoor space that you'd be happy to move into if it rains. Alternatively, be sure there is a marquee or, at the very least, some kind of pop-up gazebo or tent that will provide cover from the elements if disaster strikes.

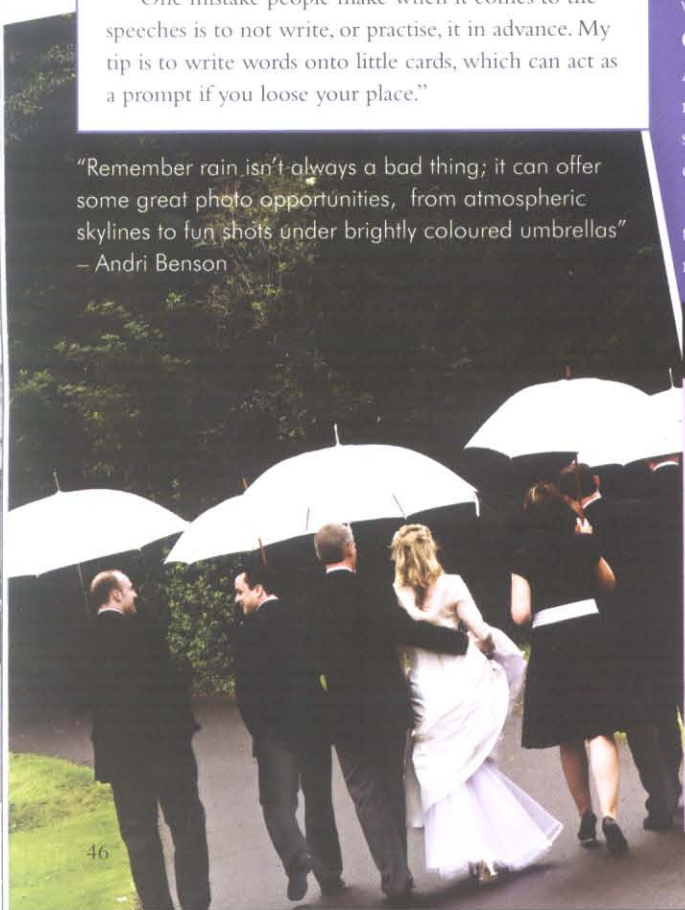
"Beat the elements by hiring or buying umbrellas that coordinate with your theme; have a spare pair of shoes or wellies to avoid mud; and keep a bridesmaid nearby to help hold your dress up if it's trailing on the ground."

Drunken monkeys

DAY DILEMMA: We all enjoy a little drink - or three - on the big day, it's a party after all. But what's a bride to do when that uncle, bridesmaid or father-in-law has consumed their body weight in bubbly and is getting a little out of hand?

QUICK FIX: "If you have a relative who is a known drinker, let someone from your venue know so that they can keep an eye on them, and you don't have to worry," says Bernadette. "If it's bothering you, get the best man to ask the guest to slow down, or perhaps pour them a coffee to sober up.

"Taking the person for a walk in the fresh air is always a good way to speed up the process - and eating something is a good way to soak up the booze too. If things really go too far, it's OK to politely suggest that they call it a night - just make sure a cab is booked for them."



Words by Laura Binder

Divorced parents reunited

DAY DILEMMA: Just when you thought you were old enough to avoid any awkward parent/child relations, you're faced with bringing your divorced parents back together again: in the same room... on the same table... with their new partners... The joys of modern marriages just never stop giving. Feeling uncomfortable yet?

QUICK FIX: "With any tricky relationship scenario, communication is the key," advises Isabel Smith of Isabel Smith Wedding Design. "Ahead of the day, sit down with each member of the family – and their new partners if applicable – and explain how much it means to you to have everyone there. Ask them to put aside any past differences for one day so that everyone can relax and enjoy it. Sometimes, simply abandoning the idea of a top table and seating people separately can help avoid any awkwardness. Or, why not arrange a coffee the week before the day so they can get used to one another again?"

Monster-in-law

DAY DILEMMA: You watched the Jennifer Lopez flick *Monster-in-Law* and now know what it's like to have your very own meddling mother-in-law whose frank opinions and 'helpful' ways are teetering on sheer interference. For better or worse, action just has to be taken.

QUICK FIX: "Traditionally, weddings have been all about the bride and her family, so mother-in-laws can easily feel sidelined and may try to take back control by interfering in your plans," says Nicola Jones of Brighton Wedding Planner.

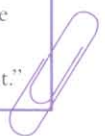
"I would suggest planning a day for the two of you where you shop for something that you would be happy for her to take the lead on, for example favours. While you bond over this, you can also gently remind her that it's your wedding and while you're delighted that she wants to be so involved, ultimately you and your fiancé get to make the final decisions."

Bridesmaid tantrums

DAY DILEMMA: Your usually fabulous friend, sister or cousin (insert culprit here) has turned into a bonafide diva overnight and is stamping her newly purchased heels – making your big day plans that little bit harder. It's handbags at dawn... or is it?

QUICK FIX: "Take a step back and look at it from their point of view," says Nicola. "The likelihood is that they're only worried because they know the day is so important to you and they want to get it right."

"Turn the situation around by keeping them involved in your plans and keep them occupied with specific responsibilities, such as organising the hen night or making sure the flowers have arrived on the day. Before you know it, you'll have turned your bridesmaid-zilla into your personal wedding assistant."



When suppliers go AWOL

DAY DILEMMA: You've been planning those flowers/catering ideas/drinks for months and it never dawned on you that they wouldn't actually arrive. So when the supplier has seemingly fallen off the face of the planet you'll need a plan B – and fast.

QUICK FIX: "Ensure this doesn't happen in the first place by contacting all of your suppliers the week before the wedding to confirm that they have the right address and times, and be sure to get a mobile number," says Ruth Hunter of Finesse Planning. "Ask them what their contingency is if, for any reason, they can't make it. If they have another company they call upon in emergencies, make a note of their details so that if, in the very unlikely event you are let down, you will have a back-up."

USEFUL CONTACTS

Always Andri Wedding Design www.alwaysandri.co.uk
 UK Alliance of Wedding Planners www.ukawp.com
 Isabel Smith Wedding Design www.isabelsmithweddings.co.uk
 Brighton Wedding Planner www.brightonweddingplanner.com
 Finesse Planning www.finesseplanning.co.uk

Little darlings

DAY DILEMMA: You love children, you really do. But one or two are running riot on the day and not only is your wedding cake's balance in major jeopardy, your beloved flowers are too. Patience is wearing thin. What's a bride to do?

QUICK FIX: "If possible, try not to get personally involved," says Ruth. "The best solution is to use a third party who isn't a wedding guest. Speak to your planner or venue manager and see if they are happy to ask the children's parents to calm them down for safety reasons."

"If you haven't planned anything to keep them occupied with, the venue may also be able to provide some kind of entertainment, even if it's just paper and pens. You can then ask the children to draw you a picture and offer a prize for the best one."

We say: Handle any big day disasters in true British style: keep calm and carry on!