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Bridesmaid horror stories.

Simone Ellin

Special to the Jewish Times

In the film *27 Dresses* when actress Katherin Heigl opens her closet to display the ugliest bridesmaid dresses imaginable, many female movie-goers felt her pain. Bridesmaid dresses are notoriously unattractive. When some friends become brides-to-be, they often seem to take leave of their style and senses. Still, most bridesmaids grin and bear it, never sharing their true feelings. Until now!

Jobi Zink of Patterson Park, has been a bridesmaid six times, including three times in one year. "My friend Andrea," says Ms. Zink, "chose powder blue polyester dresses with matching jackets. The bridesmaids were three brunettes with brown eyes and one red head with brown eyes. Andrea chose powder blue to match the eyes of her fiancé. She didn't care that it didn't match any of our eye colors," she recalls. "The wedding was Orthodox, so even though it was outside in June, we had to wear our jackets throughout the ceremony. We were even required to wear the jackets during the party, even though men and women danced separately," reveals Ms. Zink.

"Then there was 'Million Dollar Amy,'" says Ms. Zink. "Whether it was the engagement party, the shower, or the bachelorette party, the ten bridesmaids,

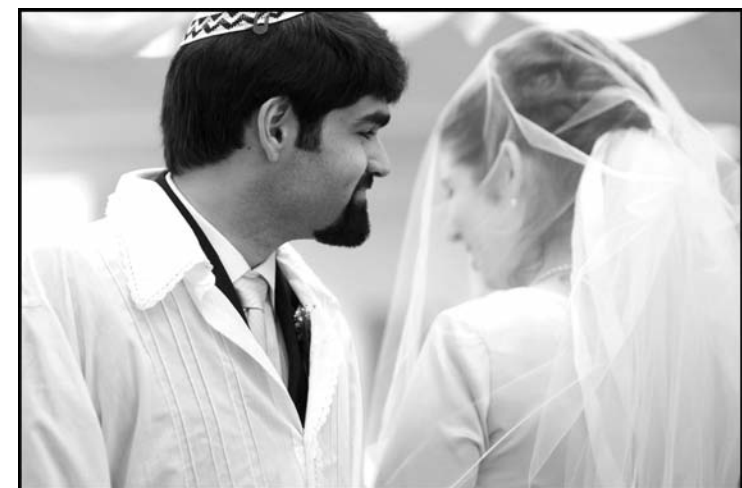
including myself, were always writing checks for \$1,000!"

"For Amy's wedding the dress was a standard navy blue, but during the service we had to wear these itchy, polyester jackets that didn't hide anything," Ms. Zink exclaims. "As the wedding got closer the bride and her mother became more and more ridiculous in their demands. The week of the wedding they decided the bridesmaids should be navy blue from head to toe — navy blue finger nails, navy blue dyed shoes, and navy blue hose. Then, for our thank-you gifts, we received hideous pewter-colored handbags that didn't even match the blue theme. We were supposed to bring it to the wedding but I forgot mine," confides Ms. Zink.

When Ms. Zink herself married, she tried to be kind to her bridesmaids. "I made them wear matching dresses," she admits, "but in my opinion, they didn't clash with anyone's skin or hair color. They were cranberry and the wedding was in the fall. I bought necklaces and earrings for them, and they could wear any nail polish they liked. And yes, I know my friends are still grumbling about me," she adds with a chuckle.

One woman (name withheld) from Timonium who has been a bridesmaid an excessive ten times, recalls when she agreed to be a bridesmaid against her better judgment. "I had only been out of college a few years and I really couldn't afford being a bridesmaid again. I declined nicely, but the friend later heard me talking about needing to buy a dress for a holiday

AFTER ALL, EVERYONE KNOWS BRIDESMAID DRESSES CAN NEVER BE WORN AGAIN!



KIRSTEN BECKERMAN WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

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party, and she got mad. So I agreed to do it," she says. "The dress was florescent orange with matching dyed orange shoes. As the date for the wedding got closer, I got a call from one of the other bridesmaids who revealed that the wedding had been called off. So I was stuck with this ugly dress and ugly shoes that I couldn't afford and that I would never wear again," she relates.

Some brides are determined to break the "bridezilla" stereotype. Lauren Silberman of Catonsville recalls the biggest pre-wedding argument she had with her mother was about bridesmaid dresses. "I wanted them to use black dresses they already had. Most of my bridesmaids were from out of town, and they had to travel up to Baltimore and pay for hotel rooms. I didn't want them to spend so much money. But my mom was adamant that they had to match for the pictures," explains Ms. Silberman. "So I went home to Memphis for Thanksgiving, and saw two of my bridesmaids, and to my surprise, both of them said, 'We totally want bridesmaid dresses!' And when they heard that my wedding had a retro theme, they were especially excited," says Ms. Silberman. "We ended up finding these 1940's style black, cocktail length dresses that were not too expensive. Even though I went into this believing that no one ever wears a bridesmaid dress more than once, I know for a fact that at least one of my bridesmaids has worn her dress again," says Ms. Silberman. "And my mom was right. The pictures looked great!" □

Simone Ellin is the Director of Marketing at the Jewish Museum of Maryland.



Jobi Zink and one of her many ugly bridesmaid dresses.



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