

The Wedding Suit

by Pam Weaver (c)2014

Dee couldn't pinpoint the exact moment when she decided to take the suit back. It could have been when she saw the creases in the back of the jacket after Mark had sat down for a ten second photograph. Or maybe it was when she hung it up and saw the state of the trousers. Each leg looked like a dance band concertina. True he was always in a rush and he had left buying his wedding suit until the last minute but how could she let her one and only son get married looking like that?

Mark was back on duty and not at home until three days before the wedding so there was no chance to discuss the matter with him and she could hardly ask Sally what she thought about it. If it was considered bad luck for the groom to see the bride's dress before the big day, surely the same thing applied in the opposite direction? She searched for the label. Lion Stores, the most expensive shop on the High Street. Dee wasn't impressed. Mark must have paid a small fortune for it. She folded the suit carefully and took it back to the shop.

'I'm afraid,' said the assistant, a rather over made-up woman of uncertain age, 'that I cannot change the suit. You've no receipt. How do I know the suit is one of ours?'

'The label,' Dee pointed out. 'Your store is unique isn't it? At least you claim you are when you advertise.'

Reluctantly the assistant called the Manageress.

'Madam,' the Manageress, a snooty woman who held her head back and peered at the offending garment as if it had a very bad smell, began, 'there is nothing wrong with the suit.'

Dee pointed at the concertina leg.

The Manageress closed her eyes and sighed. 'That's not the suit, it's the material.'

Slightly confused, Dee frowned. 'But surely that's the same thing?'

But the Manageress was implacable. 'We never have complaints. There is nothing wrong with the suit,' she repeated.

'A suit is made of material,' Dee pointed out tetchily. 'Without material there would be no suit and this material is very creased.' But the Manageress refused to budge. Dee could feel herself getting quite cross. How dare they look down their noses at her? 'Give me the name and address of your head office,' she said, raising her voice for the first time.

The Manageress was reluctant, but it was obvious she didn't want a scene. A scrap of paper was

pushed into her hand and Dee was escorted to the door.

Back home, Dee composed a letter. She explained the problem very carefully. It took her the best part of the afternoon to work out what to say and she used three quarters of the Wedgewood blue Basildon Bond pad she kept for best. 'If the suit creases this much,' she wrote politely, 'what will it look like when my son poses for his wedding photographs?' Having photographed the garment and the label, Dee enclosed a self-addressed envelope with the letter to ensure a speedy reply, and the cheque, of course.

A week later, Dee recognised her own handwriting on the envelope as it fell onto the mat. She sat at her kitchen table with her coffee to savour the moment.

'Dear Madam,' the letter said. 'We regret you are dissatisfied, however, as Mrs Gambol, the Manageress, pointed out, Lion Stores suits are second to none. The cut and style are immaculate and the colour is the very latest fashion. We suggest to avoid further creasing, your son should wait until the last minute before putting on his suit.'

Dee almost choked on her digestive biscuit. Then she reached for her note pad once again.

The local paper made her simple request a generous headline. 'Crumpled suit is good enough for local hero,' certainly captured everybody's attention and it sold a lot of newspapers.

The Manageress was given the opportunity to put her side of the story in the next issue. She repeated her first edict and posed outside the front door of Lion Stores. The photograph was a little unflattering, especially as with her dark hair flattened to her head and the unfortunate smudge under her nose, it made her look like somebody else entirely.

It was after that, that the national press began to show interest and 'That's not the suit, it's the material' became the new buzzword.

Dee was slightly surprised when she was asked to give a TV interview, but sitting on the sofa next to Bill Turnbull and Naga Munchetty on the Beeb and then with Loraine over on the other side, she put her case very eloquently.

'Surely they can't expect,' she asked innocently, 'my son to arrive at the church in his boxer shorts and shirt and put his suit on in the car park?'

All the TV presenters agreed that it was ridiculous to ask any man to do that, especially when they heard that he had recently been home on leave after an injury. It was only a mishap on the football field but Loraine seemed positively appalled, and when she held up a picture of the tearful bride-to-be holding a photograph of her soldier fiancée, the whole nation was stirred into action.

Clothwise Fabrics were none too pleased when their shares suddenly plummeted on the stock

market. A furious Board of Directors met to consider legal action against Lion Stores and when their local MP bumped into the Lion Stores MD at the golf club, the intransigence of the Managerial department was suddenly reversed.

When he came back home on leave, Mark was stunned to find a five star wedding all lined up for his big day. Everything from the cake, the reception, the cars and the photographs had been generously donated by those who wanted to make sure that 'one of our boys' had a day to remember. Everyone agreed that his designer suit, personally paid for by the owners of Lion Stores, Clothwise Fabrics and the local MP, was superb with not a crease in sight. Bride and groom were happy to be photographed, videoed and filmed for all the glossies... and a small fee of course.

The world cruise honeymoon was a terrific surprise and the Brigadier (who went to the same golf club) made sure the groom had enough leave to enjoy every minute.

Satisfied at last, Dee kissed her new daughter-in-law and son goodbye. The honeymoon car waited to whisk them to the airport after a wedding most couples could only dream of. Dee waved and smiled but one hundred yards down the road it stopped and reversed back.

'Mum,' said Mark leaning out of the back passenger window. 'Do us one more favour will you? Take that suit back to the shop for me will you? I got it from 'Seconds for Hire' in the High Street.'