

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT

REAL-LIFE
TALES
OF
WEDDING-
NIGHT
MISHAPS

Like the wedding itself, your first night of marital bliss might not be, well, so blissful. The limo driver may run out of gas, or not even show. The hotel AC can break—or go on overdrive. Your husband's friends might decide your room is the perfect place for the after-party, and the after-after-party. And we haven't even gotten to what happens—or doesn't—between the sheets. Here, brides share their stories of evening encounters that, while not exactly romantic, were nothing less than memorable.

WRITER
KIM SCHWORM ACOSTA
ILLUSTRATOR
EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

HOTEL HOOKUPS

Chilled champagne, chocolate-covered strawberries, rose petals sprinkled on the bed—these classic symbols of romance will never go out of style. Want something more innovative? Today, hotels take pride in putting together a first night that's as special as the couple celebrating it. Here, a few of our favorite offerings:

FOR TOUCHY TWOSOMES: If you're game and ready to grope, you'll love the Get a Room package at the Pacific Palisades in Vancouver. This funky hotel offers guests glow-in-the-dark body paint and a bedside black light, the better to see your anatomical artistry. And where else would breakfast be served but in bed? pacificpalisadeshotel.com.

FOR ORIGINAL THINKERS: Consult with the "romance sommelier" at the 70 Park Avenue Hotel in New York. Whether it involves candy hearts, handcuffs, or something else to make your fantasy come true, no request goes unfulfilled—as long as it's legal. 70parkave.com.

FOR NEW ACERS: Surrounded by the red rocks of northern Arizona and the music of flutes, newlyweds at the Enchantment Resort in Sedona receive a Native American marriage blessing by a local tribal elder, anointment with sacred cattail pollen, and a prayer for a happy future. enchantmentresort.com.

FOR WATER BABIES: At nearly all 42 Ritz-Carlton hotels worldwide, couples can request a specialty soak for two on arrival. In Cancún, you'll melt in a Margarita Bath—fresh limes, margarita flowers, floating votives, and a big pitcher of guess what? At the St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., resort, the Great Bay bath comes with aqua-blue

seaweed, sea sponge, shells, a CD of soothing sea sounds, and Sea Breezes for sipping. ritzcarlton.com.

FOR SWEET-TOOTHED HONEYES: New York's Hotel Roger Williams satisfies sugar cravings with its seduction sampler (M&Ms, honey-dipped strawberries, port). Dessert continues with a vanilla-scented candle, massage oil ... and a vivid imagination. hotelrogerwilliams.com.

FOR ME-TARZAN-YOU-JANE TYPES: At Caves Branch Lodge, you'll spelunk to ecstasy in a Belize jungle. With a guide leading the way, you'll rappel down 300 feet to an underground cavern. There, a candlelit

chamber complete with champagne and a bed strewn with flowers awaits. cavesbranch.com.

FOR A STORYBOOK ENDING: Barnsley Gardens, a spa resort in Georgia's Blue Ridge Mountains, has its very own fairy godmother who makes wishes come true, from a bathtub filled with rose petals to romantic feasts for two in the woods. barnsleyresort.com.

FOR KIDS AT HEART: The Twist and Shout package at the sleek Hotel Helix in Washington, DC, comes with the classic game of Twister, massage oil, champagne, and Häagen-Dazs (but no spoons!). hotelhelix.com.

"We got married at my husband's parents' beach house. After the reception, when mostly everyone else left, we invited a few of our closest friends to stay for an after-party. With my girlfriends egging me on, **I brought out a box from the garage, full of papers from Troy's ex-girlfriend**—love letters, poems, photos, lists of names for their future children, things like that. I made him start a bonfire so I could destroy it all. Before long, the police came to investigate the illegal fire on the beach. And the next day, Troy's parents got a ticket for starting a fire outside their home." —Patty, Hilton Head, SC

"We got to the hotel and ordered a romantic midnight snack of champagne, oysters, and devil's food cake. I didn't want to admit to Joel but I wasn't feeling very good—I'd had too much to drink and was exhausted from the day's excitement. **All I really wanted to do was go to sleep.** But I couldn't disappoint him: He was expecting a night to remember, and I was determined to give it to him. I went to the bathroom, splashed cold water on my face, and sat down on the floor for a minute. Unfortunately, I fell asleep right there on the rug. Joel came in after a while to check on me, found me sprawled out but okay, and proceeded to eat the entire meal all by himself." —Diane, Phoenix

"Jack and I got married in a very romantic but aging castle hotel in Scotland. For the wedding night we booked the master suite, and Jack's parents booked the only other guest room. All the dancing and accompanying vibrations in the main hall must have been too much for the place, because **the ceiling fell down in my in-laws' room** during the reception. None of the other hotels in the area had any vacancies, so Jack and I let his parents share the suite with us—they slept in the bed, we took the sofa." —Jamie, Milwaukee

"We were on our way out of the reception hall when I suddenly realized that **I'd left the envelope with all the wedding checks on a table.** Jerry and I rushed back inside just as the caterer's crew was sweeping the last of the table garbage into huge black trash bags. We went through all of the bags, but didn't find the envelope. It was pouring rain, but we went out back to the dumpsters and spent the next two hours sorting through another dozen bags—in our wedding clothes. Finally, at 3:30 in the morning, we found the envelope and drove straight to an ATM." —Francine, Portland, ME

"After Ron cut the wedding cake using my family's heirloom knife, he got this funny look on his face. I looked down at the cake and saw red—he'd practically sliced off his finger. We raced to the emergency room with his hand wrapped in a tablecloth. Despite his pain, my husband kept me laughing. Guess you could say we were both in stitches that night." —Katherine, Albany, NY

Going from having sex once a month to once a week causes the same amount of happiness as getting a \$50,000-a-year raise.—from "Money, Sex and Happiness: an Empirical Study," from the *Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 2003

"We had an early flight the next morning, so we stayed at a hotel near the airport. As we were starting to really enjoy ourselves, we heard someone insert a card key in the lock and try to force the door. We lay **in bed, frozen**, until finally Brian got up. He opened the door a crack and there stood a startled pilot, staring, until my husband told him to go find another room." —*Kerri, Gales Ferry, CT*

"The toilet-papered trees, For Sale sign in our front yard, and empty boxes on the roof were bad enough. But when Todd and I got inside our house and I went to get some water, I realized—too late—that our friends had taped down the kitchen-sink sprayer, so my dress got drenched. They even short-sheeted our bed. Finally, around 2 A.M., just as we were drifting to sleep, fireworks went off—two hundred screamers, plus two thousand firecrackers! The moral of the story? **Don't tell anyone where you're staying on your wedding night.**" —*Stacy, Lander, WY*

38%
of women say
that besides touch, sound plays
the largest role in pleasure during
sex; 51% of men say **sight**. —*queendom.com*

"James and I partied hard at the wedding, so **sex in the limo seemed like a great idea**. We were pretty klutzy about the whole thing though; at one point, I kicked off my shoe and it hit the glass separating us and the driver. He rolled down the window, and I stammered, 'How do you change the radio station?' He answered and rolled the window back up, and we picked up where we left off." —*Lisa, Houston*

"We were fast asleep at our hotel when an earthquake struck—not uncommon where we live in southern California. Michael jumped up and hurdled over me toward the door yelling 'We gotta get out of here!' Problem was, **he was stark naked, and the door closed** behind him. Fortunately, I was still in the room, so I grabbed two robes and joined him and the dozens of other hotel guests in a mass evacuation. The next morning, Michael bragged to our friends, 'Yeah, I told her I'd make the earth move.'" —*Milana, Westchester, CA*

"After our Las Vegas reception, Wayne and I headed back to our honeymoon suite with a couple of good friends. Sometime around four in the morning, our pals **turned on the Jacuzzi in the middle of our bedroom** and left. Of course, it was too romantic to pass up. Shortly after we got in, though, we were so tired, we passed out. I woke up to find my husband's nose just above the waterline, blowing bubbles as he snored." —*Jenni, Long Beach, CA*

"Since our reception was in the city, we planned on taking a taxi to our hotel at the end of the night. We said good-bye to everyone and grabbed a cab. After we got in, I remembered that **I had no cash to pay the fare**. And neither did Roger. We sat there, laughing, not quite sure what to do. Then it hit me: Look in the wedding-gift envelopes! I opened the first one: a check. The second one: a check. We hit pay dirt with the fifth envelope: a crisp fifty from Roger's aunt. We both yelled out, "Thanks, Aunt Dee!" —*Regina, New York*

IN THE MOOD

AFTER WHAT WILL NO DOUBT be the longest, most emotional day of your life, you may want little more than a comfy place to rest and someone to help you remove the 371 bobby pins in your hair. Chances are, your brand-new husband has other ideas. Here, some tools to help heat up the night:

> **Beaded thong:** Part cotton undies, part beaded necklace—it's silly and sexy and comes in pretty colors like garnet. \$48, shopisabella.com.

> **Massage candles:** Not your typical tapers, these flammers in stimulating scents like eucalyptus and sage combine wax and massage oil. Just light 'em up, watch 'em melt, and start smoothing. \$10; lava-lotion.com.

> **Mini Mile High kit:** Going straight from the reception to the runway? This discreet case comes with two condoms, lubricant, and a personal massager. The rest is up to you. \$22; uncommongoods.com.

> **The Little Bit Naughty Book of Sex Positions**, by Siobhan Kelly: The Moulin Rouge, the Big L, the Mexican Wave—they're all here, with play-by-play instructions. \$10; ulyssespress.com.

> **The Kama Sutra Deck: 50 Ways to Love Your Lover**, by Julianne Balmain. Have him pick a card, any card—each comes with a verse from the *Kama Sutra* and hands-on advice. Positions, please! \$10.47; amazon.com.