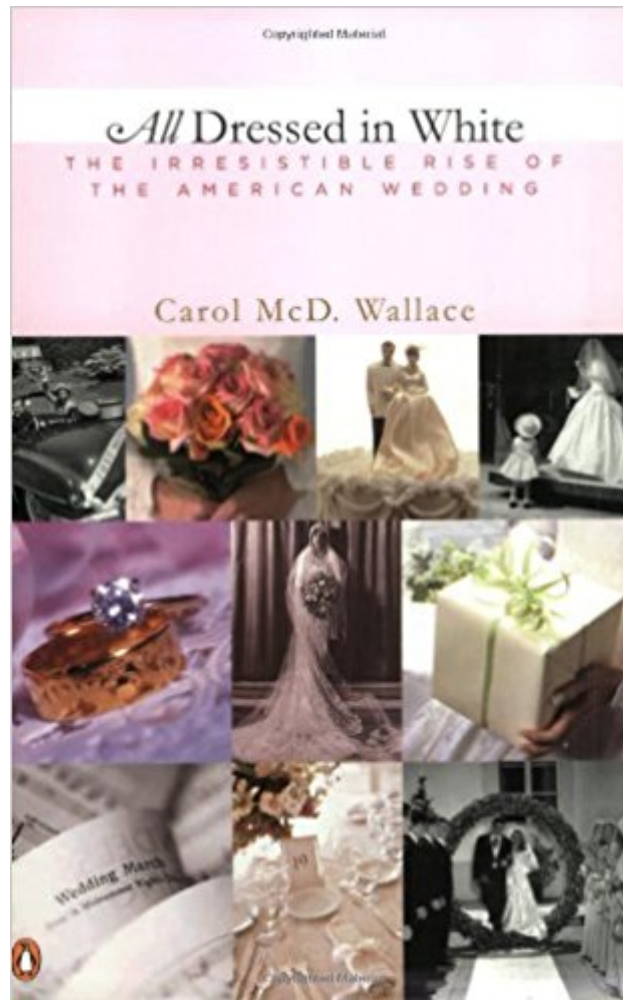


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All Dressed In White: The Irresistible Rise Of The American Wedding



Synopsis

Everybody loves a wedding, and in *All Dressed in White* Carol McD. Wallace celebrates the delicious history and the eternal allure of our favorite rite of passage. In the past 150 years the wedding has gone from discreet private ceremony to elaborate public event, yet the fundamentals remain the same—weddings are the only social events in America where matters of money, sex, and class are brought to the fore. The growth of the middle class and the development of the popular media play a role in Wallace's tale, as does the eternal vision of the White Dress in its metamorphosis from gown to costume. Wallace's captivating narrative spans the range of weddings, from pioneer ceremonies in the Wild West to Princess Grace's stately nuptials in Monaco, from Old New York to contemporary Las Vegas. At once frivolous and learned, irreverent and sentimental, *All Dressed in White* is a ravishing read for brides, their friends, and devotees of American traditions.

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Customer Reviews

So much that the bride-to-be takes for granted today—the expensive white dress, multi-tiered cake, sit-down dinner, open bar, live band—would have shocked the bride of yesteryear. In the early 19th century, weddings were private affairs, usually held at home. Food, if there was any, was prepared by the mother or the bride; extravagant wedding gifts from friends were unheard of; and brides chose dresses that could be re-worn. In this history of 150 years of the American wedding, Wallace (co-author of *To Marry an English Lord* and *The Official Preppy Handbook*) focuses on the pageantry to show how the now-expected princess-for-a-day event grew to be the norm. "The story

of the white wedding in America," she writes, "has... been a story of assimilation and standardization." Wallace demonstrates how social mores, technological advancements and plain old crass commercialism (in the late 1920s, "businesses began to regard brides as potential profit centers") have transformed weddings, often taking them to ridiculous heights (remember the "brocade jackets with velvet lapels" and "shirtfronts exploding into ruffles" of the 1970s groom?). Using examples ranging from simple war-time ceremonies to Toni Braxton's 2002 Tiffany & Co.'s-themed wedding, Wallace details such intricacies as the lace on the gown or the choosing of bridal colors and attendants (but she barely mentions the ceremony's religious aspects or the events surrounding the wedding). This exploration of traditions and their metamorphosis will amuse and enlighten not just brides, but anyone who's been beleaguered by tedious champagne toasts and dry wedding cake. Photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Wallace takes a fascinating backward glance at the transformation of the American wedding. Evolving from a simple family ceremony into an unbelievably expensive and often garish extravaganza, the distinctive American wedding has become a ritual that in many ways defines our tendency toward cultural excess. Analyzing exactly how and why the ceremony began to supplant the idea of the marriage itself, the author provides delightful details of a wide spectrum of weddings through the decades. Along the way, the social significance of sex, class, money, and all the singularly American ritualistic trimmings are examined in depth. Given the constant barrage of media attention accorded to contemporary weddings, this captivating slice of American popular culture will appeal to a broad spectrum of wedding watchers. Margaret Flanagan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book was such a fun read preparing for my wedding. I read aloud some of it to my parents and fiancée, I learned a lot and really enjoyed reading this. Well written and fascinating information on the American wedding.

Great book seller!

This is a good book if you are doing research on modern weddings, from about 1880 until now. Unfortunately I was looking for information about American weddings in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, so this book didn't really work for me. I would also have liked more research on the

customs and rituals of weddings, such as exchanging rings and the post-vow kiss. Still, there is some good info here and the writing style is clear and easy to understand.

Perfect research book for museum clothing... thanks from Duffy's

Women's history, sociology, economics - popular culture! This book is a multi-course meal that is interesting for many reasons. It is amazing to see how a confluence of culture and business have turned a few ,marketing ideas into "traditions" for an entire culture and/or world. Wallace is able to deftly narrate how culture and economics have combined to give us the "Irrestistable American Wedding" which is now exported the world over. People planning a wedding may feel relief that all their "must-haves" have a recent past and were dreamed up by an industry for consumption. But history buffs will find much more in these pages.

Not because it tells you how to plan or what has to be in your wedding, but because it tells you how all these "traditions" came into practice. There is so much pressure to have every last detail planned out and executed perfectly or else... or else... or else what? When I went to plan our wedding I completely freaked with the burden of decisions, I knew I didn't want everyone else's wedding but I wasn't sure what I'd like to have. And I felt like whatever I chose had to have as much meaning as the thousands of years of tradition that I thought were behind the "white wedding." Boy was this book an eye-opener. That it's a quick, easy read doesn't hurt either. Her structure falls apart a bit at the end, mostly because she obviously enjoys weddings and loses her critic's focus. I think the first three chapters are indispensible to anyone planning a wedding, and the excerpts from "Little Women" got me misty-eyed.

I found this book to be fascinating. I would have been completely comfortable with the weddings of the 19th century. Quiet celebrations with no fanfare. After reading this book, it's easy to see the evolution to the now expected performing elephants at receptions! This book is an eye-opener and I would strongly suggest it to all brides-to-be. It might help them to realize what their priorities are instead of getting caught up in the commercialism that is so abundant today.

I really enjoyed this book and it's description of weddings prior to (and after) 1950. So many interesting turn of events and what was important when. It helped me think of a few ideas to incorporate in our upcoming wedding and helped me eliminate many that were just a product of

consumerism and that meant nothing to us, but were

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