

Bridesmaid dresses: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

Bridesmaids are at the bride's mercy. There is no guarantee that the dress will be attractive—or something you'd ever want to wear again. But you pay for a dress, smiling all the while, wear it for a day, take it off, and most likely never look at it again.

I've been lucky that the brides who have asked me to be a bridesmaid have all had exquisite taste. I even wore my dress from my oldest sister's wedding to her first child's baptism. But the bride doesn't show you the dress when she invites you, so you never know what to expect.

When my youngest sister asked me to be her matron of honor for her wedding—which is next weekend—I knew I could trust her.



And, because she has such excellent taste, and because she actually wanted dresses that had sleeves, she decided to ask a seamstress down in Pasadena, Md., to make the dresses for us.

We went for a fitting, the seamstress sketched a gorgeous drawing for some tall, slender model and we picked a fabric. John has been amazed how many trips to Pasadena have been required, as I've been fitted three times and gone once just to learn how to bustle the bride's dress.

Last week I had to make one final trip, this time to pick up my dress. And I decided, since Leo and I have not had any special one-on-one time lately, that I would take him with me.

When we got there, he was curious about everything. He made conversation with the seamstress. He asked her about the different sewing machines. He made silly faces

into her large mirror. He even found a stuffed duck and some colored pencils to play with.

Then I tried on the dress.

“Mama!” Leo said. “You look beautiful in that dress!”

It’s a lovely dress, but I am not being modest when I say that I am sure his is the greatest compliment I’ll receive.

The seamstress, though, just beamed at my son. She was absolutely charmed—and so was I, of course.

After I had hung the dress back on the hanger, Leo pleaded with me to put it back on—“because you look so beautiful in it”—and I told him he’d see me in it again soon enough.

He’s just a child, but his reaction still made me feel good about the time and money I had invested in the dress. Isn’t it amazing, I thought, that my son can recognize the value of a custom-made dress.

Then we stopped for a mother-son lunch date over some Italian wedding soup, one of his favorites, and headed home.

The next morning I was making pancakes and turkey sausage for the boys and I noticed that Leo was watching me.

“Mama,” he said. “Are you wearing the dress from Pasadena?”

I looked down at my faded, frayed, shapeless bathrobe—the one I’ve owned since college and which should have been retired several years ago. I hadn’t showered or combed my hair. I had pancake batter on one sleeve and sausage grease on the other.

“Um, no,” I said. “This is just my bathrobe.”

“Oh,” Leo said. “I thought that was the dress for Aunt Treasa’s wedding.”

Ah.

Well.

At least there's no chance I'll outshine the bride.

Photo by Treasa Beyer

Linking up with Theology is a Verb and Reconciled to You for Worth Revisit Wednesday on Dec. 10, 2014. And here's a photo of me in the dress by request of Allison at Reconciled to You.



Photo by Shane of Apple Tree Studios (the original is better, but I cropped out the best man's face)