

After the Princess of Monaco tries to flee three times before tying the knot, women who DID pull out of their weddings at the last minute tell their emotionally charged stories

# Confessions of the bolting brides



Picture: FRANCOIS MORI

Pre-wedding nerves: Princess Charlene is said to have tried to flee

wanted to call them too, to give them my side of the story, but I knew he was hurting and left him to it. My own mother refused to speak to me. I think it was because she was embarrassed at having to tell many of her friends who were on the guest list that the wedding was off.

All our friends took Charles's side; I was pretty much on my own. But I had Matt and he supported me through everything. Not long after my separation with Charles, he split up with his girlfriend and we became a couple immediately.

That was nine years ago and Matt and I have been together ever since. We had children first and then, three years ago, got married at a castle in the South of France with just 37 adult guests and their children. It was perfect.

Life with Matt is lovely. Charles and I would have ended up in the divorce courts, so cancelling the wedding was the best decision I ever made.



**JUSTINE HULL, 37,** is a public relations consultant and lives in Essex with husband John, 40, a farmer. Justine says:

JOHN and I met 14 years ago in a local pub. He was a young farmer, bags of fun and I was instantly attracted to him. We were crazy about each other, but when he asked me to marry him after just three months I refused, saying it was too soon.

He proposed again six months later in Paris in August 1999 and this time I said 'Yes'.

We planned to marry in October 2001, giving us time to save some money. But in June that year John was feeling very run down and we noticed he had lumps on his glands.

Thinking it must be glandular fever, he eventually had some blood

tests. We were devastated to discover he actually had leukaemia and the consultant was unable to say if he'd live.

It was a hideous time of uncertainty, so we cancelled our wedding to focus on John's health. For a year he had chemotherapy and radiotherapy, then in September 2002 we got the news he was in remission, although he had to remain on chemotherapy pills for a further 18 months as a safeguard.

Early in 2003 we started planning the wedding again with a date set for October that year, and forged ahead with booking the church and reception venue. But despite being thrilled at John's recovery I was plagued with doubts about the wedding that just wouldn't disappear.

The leukaemia had traumatised both of us and, as you'd expect, it had changed John. I didn't doubt

my love for him, but I did doubt the timing of our wedding and felt we were rushing to try to make up for lost time.

Our relationship, though strong, had taken a good battering and was at an all-time low. One morning, two months before the wedding, we argued yet again and I told John that, as much as it broke my heart, we shouldn't go through with the wedding until we'd had time to recover from what we'd been through.

We were both devastated and there were a lot of tears, but we knew it was the right decision. It actually confirmed to John that cancer had affected him mentally more than he'd realised.

Our friends and family were very upset too — they'd wanted us to have the happy ending after such a horrible few years. But they understood that we were traumatised by

John's illness and that we needed time to recover.

John and I simply had to get back on an even keel before we could marry. As a farmer, he was used to being physically strong and active. To have that stripped away by cancer and chemotherapy affected him mentally more than either of us had realised. It took a long time to build himself back up and, of course, we lived in constant fear that the leukaemia would return.

But we always believed that one day we'd get married. We hadn't fallen out of love, we had just hit a big bump along the way and it knocked us back.

It wasn't until early 2006, by which time we'd tackled the emotional impact of cancer, John was feeling much stronger and our relationship was back on track, that it finally felt right to plan our wedding for a third time. I remember taking my dress material down from the loft one day and thinking: 'This is definitely it now.'

We married on September 23, 2006, in a very emotional ceremony. I remember John squeezing my hand very tightly, especially during the 'in sickness and in health' vows.

Everyone was so relieved that John had survived and we'd found happiness again. I have no regrets that I cancelled our second wedding. In the end, we married when it felt 100 per cent right for both of us.

Interviews:  
SADIE NICHOLAS and JILL FOSTER

## Shock and ore: Olympic gold is really silver

IF SHAKESPEARE had been around today to say 'all that glitters is not gold' he might well be talking about the medals awarded to Olympic winners.

Such is the eye-watering price of gold that the Olympics' ultimate prizes haven't been made of the real stuff since 1912. These days they are at least 92.5 per cent silver.

Although the design of Olympic medals is

supposedly up to the host city, there are still rules. That includes not only the metallic composition (92.5 per cent being the minimum amount of precious metal allowed), but also that the gold medal be plated with at least 6g of gold — 3mm thick and 6cm in diameter.

The silver medal is 92.5 per cent silver with the remainder copper, and bronze medals are made from copper, tin and zinc.

Mining company Rio Tinto — which extracts minerals from Mongolia and Utah — has started delivering the raw ore to the UK.

The Royal Mint will fashion the extracted metal into about 4,700 medals for the 36 disciplines at 302 events at the 2012 Games.

Which, thanks to the Olympic standards, will mean champions will have a lasting laurel that won't rust — or turn their neck green.