

Laila Miller, 22 is a beauty consultant at a department store. She lives with husband Nick, 25, a part-time accountant and their daughter Lara, two, in Preston, Lancashire.

LAILA SAYS: Nick never listens to me. I'll tell him something one minute and he's forgotten it the next, so people must have thought I was mad to trust him to arrange our wedding all by himself – and in just three weeks. There were times when I did wonder what I'd let myself in for.

We met four years ago and hit it off immediately. He proposed in a restaurant in Greece only three months later and, although I was surprised, I said yes straight away. Five months later, I became pregnant with Lara and everything seemed perfect. We started saving for our big day, but weddings are so expensive and we never seemed to have enough money.

One night, we were on the internet when we saw an advert for the TV programme. It offered couples £12,000 to pay for the wedding of their dreams, with the catch that only the groom is allowed to arrange it. We didn't think we had anything to lose so we sent them an email. I never imagined that just two weeks later, I'd be sitting in a lawyer's office promising the TV company I'd have no contact with Nick while he arranged our wedding for three weeks' time.

I knew what kind of wedding I wanted – a classy black and white one with a 1940s vintage theme – absolutely no pink and no frills. In fact, I'd already bought myself a white, fitted dress from eBay and hoped that I'd be allowed to wear that. But the producers told me and Nick that any previous plans we had must be abandoned. Nick had to start with a clean slate.

The waiting around was dreadful. Nick went to live with his mum and we weren't even allowed to talk on the phone. I had sleepless nights wondering what he was planning. I kept having visions of an awful, big, pink meringue dress – I felt sick. At one stage, Nick sent out invitations to throw me off the scent. They were for a pirate-theme wedding and my heart sank when I saw them. I burst into tears because I know Nick's sense of humour and I thought it would be just the kind of thing he'd arrange. And if it involved having to wear a big pirate dress, I knew there was no way I could go through with it.

Thankfully, it was a hoax. But the dress he chose was pink and it was a meringue. However, when I saw it for the first time, I loved it. He did me proud. It wasn't tacky, it was a subtle blush pink and I felt like a princess. My bridesmaids then asked me what colour I'd hate them to be wearing, and I said: 'hot pink'. Of course, Nick had chosen the most vivid cerise you've ever seen. But they all looked gorgeous.

On the morning of the wedding I was very nervous. I was looking forward to seeing Nick but I had no idea what he had in store. When the doorbell rang I looked outside and there was a Cinderella glass carriage waiting – the same one that Jordan had at her wedding. I screamed. I'd always wanted a vintage car, or at least a tasteful horse and carriage, but this was something else. I couldn't help laughing though. It wasn't what I expected but I didn't mind. I was just happy to be getting married. The ceremony was very emotional. I cried all the way up the aisle

Would you trust your man to arrange your wedding day – all by himself? That was the task set for several grooms-to-be in a new BBC3 show **Don't Tell The Bride**. Jill Foster meets one of the brave couples

Don't you dare ruin my day!



Laila in her fairy-tale transport



Pretty in pink: with bridesmaids



Nick, left, with best man, Steve

and it was so good to see Nick again. Afterwards, he had another surprise in store. He whisked me off in a helicopter to the reception. Nick is afraid of heights so it was really lovely of him to do that for me.

I don't have any regrets. It could have been a total disaster, but the only thing I'd have done differently would be to have had a photographer. But we have it all on film and our guests took more than 900 pictures. I'm particularly thankful for having taken part in the show because, the day after the wedding, my beloved grandma died. She'd been at the wedding the day before and I'm so grateful that she was able to see us get married in such style. I'll never forget it.

NICK SAYS: I was really shocked when I found out we'd been picked for the programme. I was happy for Laila because it would mean she'd get the chance to have the wedding of her

dreams. But I've never felt as much pressure in my life. I wasn't sure I wanted to take part in it.

Moving out for three weeks was tough. I hadn't lived with my mum for five years and so going back to a single bed and my old life was really lonely. Laila's my best friend and I missed her badly. But I knew I had to get this right. I had visions of Laila wearing the wrong dress and saying, 'He's ruined my life!' To help me, I recruited my best man, Steve, who I've known since I was a child. But to be honest, he was next to useless at helping me make decisions. He kept picking out curtain material and saying, 'What about this for a dress?' I had to take him to one side and say, 'Give it a rest, mate'. He's great, but I was already feeling the heat.

At first, I got really lucky. The vicar at the church where I grew up agreed to marry us at short notice. Then I found a really beautiful hotel in the countryside that could cater for

receptions. I thought, 'This is easy'. But then I had to choose the dress. I knew what I had in mind but wasn't sure how it would translate in the shop.

Steve and I looked at all these white dresses and I tried to imagine Laila in them. I knew I wanted something that would make her look like a princess and when I saw the pink one, it just felt right. It didn't even occur to me that it might be a problem because it was pink. I liked it and I was confident Laila would, too.

The worst part about the whole thing was the seating plan. It was a nightmare.

My parents are divorced and you know what families are like – you have to be careful who you sit next to who. Then, the budget began to run out and I knew I wouldn't be able to buy dresses for all five bridesmaids. I dreaded having to tell two of them that they couldn't be bridesmaids and I was really worried about how they'd react when I agreed to meet them for a chat. When I told them, they looked like they were going to kill me. Then one suggested they could buy their own dresses. It was a godsend.

On the morning of the ceremony I was feeling pretty good about things. I thought everything was going to plan, and then someone mentioned transport for the bridesmaids and my mother-in-law. I hadn't arranged anything. Neither had Steve. Laila was on her way and her bridesmaids and mother were stuck at home. A few frantic phone calls were made and thankfully they managed to get taxis in time, but it meant the ceremony was an hour and a half late. It was the only thing that went wrong, though – it could have been so much worse! ■

Don't Tell The Bride, BBC3, Tuesdays, 9pm.