



If only I'd known...

I married MR NASTY



And you reckon your old man's rubbish..?

By Lucie Hayman, 28, from Bristol

My gorgeous wedding dress with its beaded bodice hung on the front of the wardrobe. It was the night before my wedding, and everything was ready – well, except me.

'Am I doing the right thing?' I said as my mum Margaret, 62, came into my bedroom.

'Oh, love,' she smiled. 'It's last-minute jitters. Every bride has them.'

After all, Mum knew a thing or two about happy marriages. She and Dad had been wed 22 years before he lost his battle with Alzheimer's.

His death, six months earlier on Christmas Day 2004, had brought us even closer. Mum even offered us £10,000 from her £52,000 inheritance. 'Your dad would've wanted it,'

as he'd said! 'Why lie?' I'd cried. 'I thought the age gap would bother you,' he mumbled. I was hurt, but Mum said it was endearing. 'He just didn't want to lose you,' she insisted. I prayed it was love, not deceit, that'd made him lie. So our wedding day went ahead. And it was lovely. Me and Steve carried on living in the house which I half-owned with Mum.

A baby would've made it complete. And when it didn't happen, Mum gave us £6,000 for IVF – in May 2006. Bless her! Only when I still didn't conceive,



With Mum She bailed out – then attacked

she insisted. 'He'd be glad you've found someone like Steve.'

Mention of my lovely dad in the same breath as Steve stung somehow – it didn't seem right. And yet the minute we met in a bar near Glasgow in November 2003, I'd been so sure.

Within three days, Steve Smith, 30, proposed. Seven years younger than him, I fell for his confidence. So in August 2004 he moved in with us in Bristol. He'd been a rock, steering us through Dad's funeral. But as the wedding got nearer, niggling doubts swelled. We'd had to get our birth certificates to book the church. 'Let's have a look,' I'd teased. Then I clocked his date of birth – 19 October 1965 – making him nearly 40, not 30

I felt like I'd let her down. 'You can try again,' she wasn't so sure. Steve searched for answers the bottom of a pint glass. In a matter of months, he went from kind and devoted, to arrogant, unreliable boozier. He even lied to me when sacked from work...

I'd gone to meet him from chef's job at Sainsbury's. When I'd got there, though, his boss had told me he'd been sacked months before. 'What's he playing at?' I asked Mum. Then a few weeks later, Steve had the bailiffs at the door demanding £1,000. Thank God Mum stumped the cash before they started taking our possessions.

But she shouldn't get out of scrap. Still didn't grudge took on a job to the Mal...

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No fairytale ending Our wonderful wedding day. A couple of years later, I cut up my beautiful dress as the divorce papers were issued...

icer to Steve. But he just got nastier. One night, after a night's boozing, he came home, started some argument. Suddenly, he was not across the kitchen. Pinned me to the wall, a knife to my throat. 'Please...' I said. But his eyes flashed evil. After a few seconds, he let me go. I ran upstairs, gasping for breath. What'd happened to my hubby? We tried counselling. 'I had a difficult childhood,' Steve whined. A few weeks later, in October 2007, a letter from a debt-collection agency arrived. Steve had taken out another loan, this time for £800. Did he expect poor Mum to bail him out again? I'd had enough. I packed Steve's bags. Sent him a text telling him it was over. At 10pm, he came back drunk. He was in the front door before I had time to stop him. Like a madman, he flew into the kitchen. Mum reached for her mobile, but Steve was quicker. I watched stunned as I saw his hands wrap round her neck, choking her. Mum! 'Steve! No!' I cried as Mum's eyes bulged, terrified. 'You're going to kill her.' With all the strength I could

muster, I dragged him off her, bundled him out the door. Panting with adrenaline and exhaustion, I dialled 999. The police were there in minutes, picked up Steve outside. He was released on bail, texted me begging for forgiveness. No way. Not now. Wasn't it enough the amount of money he'd had off Mum? Now he'd almost killed her! The next day, though, a letter arrived addressed to all three of us. It looked

as I read the contents. Steve had applied for a £70,000 loan secured on our house. He'd faked our signatures, even sent off our passports as ID! Apparently, he was buying a pub in town. First I'd heard of it! By the time he'd handed himself into the police, he'd already racked up another debt – spending over £1,700 in a hotel then doing a bunk. I got my solicitors to issue

official. I ripped it open, gasped as I read the contents. Steve had applied for a £70,000 loan secured on our house. He'd faked our signatures, even sent off our passports as ID! Apparently, he was buying a pub in town. In February he was sentenced to a year in prison. Steve told the court he felt 'emasculated' by me and Mum. But that's ridiculous. We only ever showed him love and kindness. And look how he repaid us.

Computer creep

Steve also began a tirade of attacks on Lucie via his computer...

- Breaking into Lucie's Facebook account, he changed her e-mail address to babykillerstreet.bristol
- He stated Lucie's interests as: My f***** mum.
- He added: If I find you with anyone, watch out...
- In threatening messages, he suggested Lucie shouldn't leave her mum on her own...

