

Essay on cultural event assignment

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Last month I was invited to a wedding of my old college friend Diana. We used to be rather close during our studies there. We stayed in touch since our graduation, mostly over the internet. But frankly speaking I had been surprised when I got a phone call from her inviting me to her wedding. I had not hesitated for a minute whether I would go. Two days later I had found an invitation card at my mailbox and booked a plane ticket from Korea to US. And here I was, two weeks later, sitting on a bench in a local church of a town where Diana was born.

The first thing that surprised me was how much people were invited. I surmised that there were around a thousand of them. I looked around trying to see someone I know but I failed to find a single familiar face.

“ Big crowd, ha?” I heard a female voice just about my ear. I turned my head to a nice looking woman sitting next to me. She was wearing a little extravagant orange hat and had the most kind eyes that I had ever seen before.

I smiled to her, trying to come up with some answer. But before I said something, she held out her hand and told me, “ I’m Jackie.” I shook her hand and introduced myself. That’s how I met her. Before we had time to say one more word, the front door opened, and people began to stand up. I turned my head expecting to see Diana with her father. But instead I saw three angels – three little girls carrying tiny baskets.

The church’s organist began to play, and the flower girls, as Jackie referred to them, began their walk down the aisle scattering it with rose petals from their baskets. I had never seen anything so touching and marvelously wonderful before! I saw people’s eyes sparkling with emotion, and I’m pretty

sure I was looking just like them then. Next the groom escorted by his parents processed, then bridesmaids with the groomsmen in pairs.

Bridesmaids were wearing the same beige dresses and groomsmen wearing tuxes with boutonnieres of peonies on them. Then the priest processed to the altar and the ceremony began.

I remembered Diana to be nice looking. But that day she looked ever more beautiful I could imagine. She was wearing a long white dress with a lace beaded veil. So tiny, compared to her tall father, she was walking down the aisle with a very peaceful smile on her face.

After Diana's father transferred her hand into her future husband's hand, the couple ascended the steps up onto the altar with the priest. Jackie explained to me that this ritual is symbolic of taking the relationship of the couple to a higher level on their wedding day.

It was a very interesting feeling; everything was so new for me, because I never had had an opportunity to assist an American wedding before.

And then began the most beautiful part of the ceremony which I would never forget. Diana and her future husband Dane pronounced their wedding vows written by themselves. Diana promised to knit him as much pairs of socks as needed to keep his feet warm. Dane promised to take her a basket of snowdrops every spring before the snow is gone. Not every phrase they were saying made sense either for me or for some other guests. But the way Diana and Dane looked at each other, made me understand that every single word said today meant a lot for them.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the wedding official asked if anyone present knew of any just cause why this man and this woman might not be

legally married. Another surprise for me. Jackie, who became my personal guide through this wedding by that time, told that was also one of the wedding traditions. And I remember that though that flashed in my head about how strange their traditions are, and how different from ours. Getting no response, the official asked Diana and Dane to exchange wedding rings; and from that moment on, Diana and Dane became husband and wife. Diana and Dane kissed and the ceremony was over.

As the newlyweds leave the church we were showering them with autumn leaves. When Jackie had told me that were supposed to throw something at Diana and Dane, I did not really believe her at once. But still, I was taking part in that wedding ritual too. Jackie explained me the meaning of it. She told that it's an ancient tradition – showering the couple with uncooked rice as they leave the ceremony, and it's thought that by throwing it on them they would be bestowed with fertility and had many children. She also told that this church forbids to use rice concerning about the safety of the birds, and throwing autumn leaves is a beautiful and more safe alternative. When I had told Jackie that in our country's wedding traditions we had a ritual similar to that one, she got rather interested with it and asked me to tell her more. And I did while we were driven to Dane parents' house where the wedding reception would take place.

As we had reached our destination, we passed a so called “reception line” where every guest was given a chance to congratulate a happy couple personally. I was not prepared for that either, and when it was my turn to hug Diana and shake hands with Dane, I could not come up with the appropriate words, so I just wished them happiness and told them to take

care of each other. Diana was very happy to see me, and Dane thanked me for accepting their invitation and taking such a long flight.

All the guests were supposed to sign in the guest book. Jackie told that the guest book keeps even more memories than wedding pictures. After signing a guest book, we were invited to take a cocktail hour at the opened terrace of the house where drinks and appetizers were served. There were also special “ gift tables” where your put your presents for the couple. I took Campari for me and some Martini based long drink for Jackie and we took our time continuing to compare our countries’ wedding traditions.

I knew that American wedding lasts longer than a traditional wedding in Korea, but I was not going assist the whole of it. But since I had met Jackie I wished the wedding lasted the longest possible.

After a cocktail hour we were invited to the venue where we took our places according to the seating chart. There we were supposed to spend the rest of the wedding with 5-course meal, dances and other entertainments.

What else I found interesting in the American wedding traditions is that everything around you reflected Diana’s style. The flowers, the linens, the tableware, the menu choices, the centerpieces, even music, groom’s and groomsmen’ boutonnieres, bridesmaids’ dresses – that all was designed in her own unique style. That’s the first important thing I understood about the American weddings. Wedding day in America is exactly about the bride and the groom, and only for them.

My place at the wedding table was next to Jackie. As we had taken our places and introduced ourselves to people who share the table with us, there was a time for a best man’s and maid of honor’s toasts. Then there were

other traditional speeches and toasts given to the new couple by different people. They all wished them every happiness and understanding in their future family life, some of them told some sweet and funny stories about them. I remembered some college stories and gave a speech too. Jackie told me I was very eloquent.

Another beautiful tradition I've seen was a daughter-father and a mother-son dance after the first dance of a couple. Diana danced with her father to the Sinatra's " Moon River". As Jackie was a friend of childhood of Diana's, she told me that was a song Diana's dad always sang to her at night.

Then there were dances and dances, the traditional cutting of the cake and the bouquet tossing. I could never imagine people staying enthusiastic about the wedding event for such a long time. At midnight some guests got a second breath. And fun lasted so long that, by the time I got to hotel, I was exhausted.

I had caught some time to speak to Diana, before she and her husband left on a honeymoon. I looked at her sparkling eyes and I that was the time I've learned something more about American wedding. In Korea marriage is more about joining of two families rather than about joining of two people, but for America the opposite is true. I told Diana, " Thank you". She asked what was it, I was thanking her for. I did not answer then. But I'm pretty sure, Diana got the answer 3 month later, when she found in her mailbox an invitation to my wedding with Jackie.