

# CHAPTER 1

## *When SEX Was a Silent and Secret Word*

It may be hard for some of you to believe, but when I was a child, I grew up completely innocent of sex and had no idea where babies came from.

Nowadays with sex education, television and computers, young people can easily find out all their questions if their parents don't tell them.

Thank goodness a pregnant lady does not have to hide her baby bump anymore by wearing an unattractive voluminous smock. When I was walking around heavily pregnant, my smock used to make me waddle slightly from side to side. I felt bad enough, without this tent thing making me feel like an elephant.

Today, girls are very lucky and do not have to rush into marriage. Some of you may live with a partner, but in those days, *nice girls* did not dare to do that, as it was known as '*living in sin*.'

It was the custom – if you hadn't already – to announce your engagement at your twenty-first birthday party or you would be known as being '*on the shelf*'. This was a fate that every girl dreaded and so many rushed into marriage to escape being labelled.

However, things have now relaxed and you can '*try before you buy*'.

Oh! How I wish I could have done that!

It would have saved me from being virtually thrown into the deep end on my wedding night with Stan.

Two weeks before the wedding, my sister Sue asked me if there was something wrong.

How well she knew me! She was excited, as she was going to be the bridesmaid and looked divine in her empire line aqua chiffon gown with a bodice of white guipure lace. Mum had gone to a lot of trouble making it and also identical dresses but with puffed sleeves for the two little flower girls, who were Stan's nieces. So after deep thought, I decided to confess in sisterly confidence that I did not know if I was rushing into things. I really wished I could have told her the main reason why I had cold feet but felt it had to be my own private secret.

Sue smiled and said, 'You just have an attack of pre-wedding jitters. Don't worry, Linnie.'

But I did worry. I wondered why on Earth I was doing this? Did I really love this man?

I certainly did not have the same feelings for him as I had experienced with Joel, my first real love, or even with the teenage crush I had on Malcolm when still at school.

I felt that there was no real chemistry or passionate desire between Stan and me. It was more like a close friendship but I hoped it would blossom into a special kind of love, once we had consummated our marriage.

Of course, in those days, as expected, I was still a virgin and had high expectations of what was going to happen on our wedding night. Being brought up a strict Anglican I believed that marriage was a sacrament of life-long vows, a very serious commitment indeed, and so I thought that being with an experienced man thirteen years older I would have nothing to fear.

Things would somehow be different as he would protect me and I would never be emotionally hurt again. I had had enough of being swept off my feet and was looking for a safe and secure life, as I could not stand my heart to be broken again.

To make matters worse, I had to admit that I still had feelings for Joel, but it was too late to pull out now! Stan and I had had our pre-wedding appointment with the vicar, and Mum and Dad had already spent a lot of money in advance booking the reception and their new outfits. By now, most guests had accepted their wedding invitations and some had already sent gifts!

Eight months before, I had already had my twenty-first birthday party and had not announced an engagement and so

I knew everyone was pleased that I would no longer be *on the shelf*.

‘Wow! What a mess!’ The only thing I could do now was to try and come to terms with there being no hope ever, for Joel and me, to be a couple. There was no other choice.

I had to go through with the wedding and the sooner the better.

But unfortunately that night, I had a vivid most wonderful dream of when I first met Joel.

Oh! My goodness! What was I going to do now? *Yikes!*

The next day I felt guilt-stricken, as unplanned repeated snippets of my dream kept popping up unexpectedly into my brain.

How could this be happening to me as when I had woken up, I had decided to forget all about it?

However, my dream had suddenly become a nightmare and so my mind quickly responded to my request by making me think of the immediate future.

Sue had arranged a kitchen tea for me with close friends and some of the girls from the insurance office where I had worked in the city. I had already left my job. Stan did not want me to carry on working, as it was the norm for a wife to stay home and be content with household duties. The office staff had generously farewelled me with a very smart table lamp. It was the latest thing, rather than a standard lamp, and I knew I would miss them all so much.

I had momentarily forgotten about the kitchen tea, but the fact was, it was on *tomorrow!*

Mum was planning to make scones, sausage rolls and butterfly cakes – now known as butterfly CUP cakes – and Sue had already bought plenty of McWilliam’s Cream Sherry and lemonade for those who didn’t drink alcohol. I had offered to help them but they both refused saying that I had enough on my mind. They were so kind and, of course, didn’t know of the latest trauma that I had successfully dealt with. So I used this opportunity to busy myself and go through my trousseau.

Stan lived in the house across the road from us with his elderly mother Mildred who was about to move into a granny flat at the home of one her daughters. So everything was really in place for us, except I had bought new bed linen, towels and blankets. Unfortunately, I had recently overheard June from next door

telling Mum, '*Stan's a good catch!*' It made me feel uncomfortable for Mildred's sake, having to leave the house she thought was hers without her son. I knew she already didn't like me and three would definitely be a crowd.

I had my Chantilly lace wedding dress, veil and headdress hanging in my wardrobe next to my going away outfit, complete with matching new satin-covered shoes, handbag and gloves. They all looked so glamorous.

Also hanging up was my special wedding night white lace nightie and negligee set. It had been so expensive but I had put it on lay-by with four other different coloured sets and couldn't wait to parade it in front of Stan on our special night.

I had new honeymoon clothes and shoes for day and night and started to feel really excited. The year was 1964 and The Beatles group had just been and left Melbourne after a huge success and stayed at the new Southern Cross Hotel (which is no longer there). It was very popular after that and so I was very lucky to get us a booking on the tenth floor.

Last on the list was my toilet bag complete with a spare box of the pill as I did not want to have a baby until I was ready. I had been too embarrassed to discuss contraception with Stan and was already taking them, as my doctor had advised me to try it for a month before the wedding. It was only new on the market and I had been so self-conscious asking him for it and was amazed when the doctor explained to me how it worked. How I wished that I had had the guts to ask him questions about losing my virginity. I had been so sheltered all my life and was so shy and naïve about these things.

The kitchen tea was great fun for most of the time. I received three toasters and thought I would share them with Mum and Sue. The only problem we had was Jennifer, who had had too much sherry.

'Hope you don't have a tough hymen, Lynne. My husband couldn't get his dick inside me on our wedding night. He was gentle but it took three more nights and then I bled like hell!'

Mum was shocked and came rushing in from the kitchen waving a tea towel in her hand. 'That's enough for today, Jennifer. It's time you all went home. Thank you for coming.'

On that note, all the guests happily left and still stifled giggles, trying not to laugh in front of my poor mother as they bid us farewell.

I thanked Mum for the wonderful party whilst helping her with the washing up and was very careful not to mention Jennifer's unfortunate outburst. It was a shame that I could not ask her something that was worrying me but I did not want to antagonise her anymore.

I went into my bedroom and luckily found Sue in there with all the gifts she had brought in from the lounge room and she was still laughing. My little sister was very clever and studying in her final year at university. She had had all types of interesting part-time jobs in the holidays and so was far more worldly wise, compared to me. She was also keeping company with Harvey, a fellow student who was from America. He was very polite and good-looking and so I decided to bite the bullet and ask her the question. I couldn't ask Mum.

'Sue. Can you please tell me what a hymen is? I didn't understand what Jennifer was talking about before and everyone in the room seemed to know what it was, except me.'

Sue did her best not to express surprise and put on a serious but comforting voice and said, 'The biological meaning is that it is a small thin membrane that surrounds the opening of the vagina.'

At that moment I felt absolutely terrible and burst into tears. 'I don't think I have one. I must be a freak!'

'Oh! Lynn timer, every girl has one. It is just you have never looked for it. I suggest you get a torch and a hand mirror. Lie down on the bed and open your legs. To get a good look, use two fingers to part the walls and you will find it at the bottom of your vagina shaped a bit like a half moon. It is very tiny and when you have intercourse with your husband for the first time, it will stretch when his penis penetrates you. Don't worry, just lie back and know that what is happening to you is quite normal. Naturally, you will be nervous the first time and it may be a bit uncomfortable but it gets much better each time and brings you closer together. You will really like it especially when you experience a climax, commonly called COMING! It is an amazing feeling and I should know.'

I suddenly realised that Sue must have *'gone all the way'* with Harvey. *Yikes!*

‘Glad you are on the pill, Lynnie. Single girls like me are not allowed to get a prescription and so Harvey has to use French letters. I have to go now. He is picking me up soon.’

‘Thanks, Sue. I love you so much.’

‘Love you too, Lynnie. Just forget about what Jennifer said. Her case was most unusual.’

All went well with my little sister’s instructions and I finally found that I did have a hymen. Hooray! I was normal! I had really been such an idiot not to find out about these things sooner but how? Also, it explained why I couldn’t fit a Meds tampon inside me. I had very painful and heavy periods and was hoping that tampons would give me more freedom as sanitary napkins left a lot to be desired. I had to wear two at the same time for the first three days of my period and it felt like I had a mattress between my legs. I hated it.

Mum had said, ‘Even the Queen has periods, and so you just have to get on with life.’

It was years later before the endometriosis disorder was discovered.

However, now I knew what to expect on my wedding night and it wasn’t going to be anything to worry about at all. So I naturally thought it would be a piece of cake, for sure.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Wedding Bells*

At long last, the great day had arrived.

It was a lovely sunny day in September and I spent the morning at the hairdressers and afterwards had a bubble bath that Sue had given me as a present. Then she helped me get dressed in my wedding dress and fix the veil on my head so that it wouldn't slip off. She was a fantastic help and made me feel so special as she dabbed some of my new French perfume on me.

'You look so beautiful, Lynn timer. Good luck and every happiness for the future.' And she winked at me.

'Thank you so much, Sue. You have been so wonderful. I will miss you.' I gazed into our full-length mirror and suddenly realised that I really did look like a bride!

Then I walked into our comfortable, old, antique-furnished lounge room and immediately smelt the familiar, comforting scent of furniture polish. I stopped briefly at various milestone photos of Sue and me proudly displayed on the mantelpiece and crystal cabinet. I found myself wondering how I could ever leave it and start a new life. I was deep in thought when Dad stood up from his favourite chair and amazed Mum and me. He was actually smiling for a change, with raised eyebrows and bright piercing eyes, staring at me and nodding his approval. We were so thrilled.

However, I was starting to feel a bit nervous as Mum and Sue left for the church before us and Dad said, 'What's the matter, Mack?' (He always called me by my nickname when he was in a good mood.) 'Are you feeling a bit queasy in the tummy?'

I nodded and he immediately came to the rescue by giving me a huge dose of a white chalky medicine. Little did I know that it was really used for diarrhoea. ‘This always does the trick for me.’

And it did!

I felt like a princess riding in the wedding car with its white ribbons on the bonnet as we drove up to the church. Soon we were inside and ready for Dad to escort me to the altar. I could see Stan standing with the vicar and the others waiting for us. He looked very smart in the latest suit and smiled when he saw me and of course I smiled back and the guests were all so happy for us as we passed by them. It was my day and I had made a decision to make a lasting commitment. Therefore, I was determined to enjoy it, no matter what.

Later on, at the wedding reception, the band played, amongst other songs, ‘Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread’ and Gloria, my former singing teacher, caught my eye and looked at me briefly with tears in her eyes. Everyone thought that she was crying tears of joy for me; only I knew she wasn’t. She had known all about Joel and couldn’t help worrying. However, today he was far from my mind. Thank goodness – I was not on the shelf anymore!

When it was time to go, I changed into my going away suit and we waved goodbye to everyone. Our honeymoon was going to begin on the eleventh floor of the Southern Cross Hotel. They had upgraded us to the top floor and I was so excited as I had never stayed at a big city hotel before. I believed our room had a spectacular view of the city lights and I thought it would be so romantic. I had been looking forward to this night for so long.

When in our room, Stan suddenly surprised me by deciding to have a shower, and so I changed into my white lace nightie and negligee set. It was sure to knock the socks off him. I knew Stan would love it. It was so soft and feminine, and I felt like a film star wearing it.

When Stan appeared from his shower, he was wrapped in a big white towel and without giving me a second glance, he signalled for me to have a shower also. I said, ‘I don’t need one as I had a long bubble bath at home, just before the wedding.’ But he insisted.

Under the shower, I had mixed emotions. Firstly, Stan had not even commented on my beautiful nightie and negligee set. Secondly, he made me feel that I was dirty and needed a wash before



we could get close. I thought it was very strange, but then realised that he may be nervous. Of course, I was slightly apprehensive too, but then, I trusted and respected him.

After my shower, I got back into my stunning, white lace outfit, hoping to parade it for Stan as I hoped he would find it irresistible. I was eager to get started and find out what married love-making was all about and what it felt like *to go all the way*. I brushed my long hair smoothly once again, and applied some more Chanel No.5 perfume before stepping back into the bedroom.

Stan was sitting up in bed wearing royal blue and white striped pyjamas and reading a copy of *PIX*, a girlie magazine, with a girl in a brief bikini on the cover. He hardly looked up at me before turning off the bedside lamp. I was speechless! What was wrong? Didn't he want to see me in my beautiful nightie and negligee?

I stumbled into the bed and had to take the negligee off myself. Then Stan lent over and kissed me and asked, 'Are you feeling tired, Lynne, after such a long day?'

I said, 'No, I've had a wonderful day and I am looking forward to ending it beautifully with you.'

Then after several attempts at penetration, Stan stopped and said that he did not want to hurt me and that we would have to try again tomorrow as he had already climaxed. I think that was why I felt an unpleasant sticky warm fluid inside my legs and so wondered why I had had to have the stupid shower in the first place.

My new husband had rolled over and gone to sleep and I was left disappointed, unsatisfied, bewildered and uncomfortable. What had I done? And where were the tissues in this place? I wondered if Gloria had been right in her theory that I had been looking for a father figure. After all, Stan was thirteen years older than me. I went over and over things and reached the conclusion that poor Stan had been nervous and had not wanted to hurt me. I realised that I was very fortunate to have a husband who cared about me and had not taken me by force. There was a whole lifetime ahead of us and so I was determined to make the best of things. As I fell asleep, luckily I managed to put all my negative thoughts of our wedding night right out of my mind but I unfortunately had one terrible thought... *Yikes!*

I hoped I wasn't going to end up like Jennifer!