

Tip for Tameka from one who survived a jilt trip

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Tameka Foster was apparently stunned after her R&B star fiance, Usher, nixed their swanky wedding just hours before it was due to take place in the Hamptons.

Sources claim the 38-year-old beauty was "marching around, cursing" on Saturday when she realized she'd been dumped by the father of her unborn child.

It's a bride's worst nightmare to be jilted, and, whatever Usher's reasons for calling it off, even the most jaded celebrity watcher will feel sympathy for Foster.

Nowhere in the countless bridal magazines, packed with frothy tips and suggestions, will you find a section on ways to cope when your man leaves you stranded at the altar.

But, as successful New York City business woman Nicole Liakeas (nee Contos) can testify, it doesn't have to be a monumental disaster.

Liakeas is the poster child for spurned brides. She made international headlines when her fiance, Tasos Michael, skipped the ceremony and jetted off on their honeymoon alone.

Less than an hour after the best man broke the devastating news on the steps of the Greek Orthodox cathedral, she was dancing to Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" at the glitzy \$130,000 reception, which went ahead with 350 guests - but without the groom.

"Yes, I was in shock," recalls Liakeas, 37, now happily married to a doctor, with two daughters, and the owner of Manhattan's Smooth Synergy Spa. "But I didn't want everything to go to waste. Somehow I just dealt with it and thought: 'I have to move forward.'"

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Nicole Liakeas found happiness after being dumped.

A decade later, she is happier than ever and considers the episode a lucky escape. "If we had gotten married, we would have been divorced by now," she adds. "Usher's fiancée has to stay positive like I did."

Unlike some broken-hearted brides, Liakeas chose not to sue her former fiance to recoup the cost of the wedding. "It was punishment enough that he had to live with the consequences," she explains.

Leading Manhattan lawyer Harriet Newman Cohen said most absent grooms face up to their actions and pay the tab.

"However, it's a good idea for both the bride and groom to have their names on the contracts with caterers, florists and so on," she warns. "It can get very ugly when someone pulls out."

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