Symbols and Traditions of Marriage

1. Father Giving Away the Bride (2nd Floor)

Origin: Back when weddings were arranged without the consent of those who were actually getting married, daughters acted as a currency by which the father could use to pay off debts, acquire new property or goods, or even move the family to a higher social sphere. Thus, the father would literally “give away” his daughter, like any other piece of property, in exchange for something else.

Symbol: Money or Chest of Gold??

1. Groom Forbidden to See Bride Before Ceremony (4th Floor)

Origin: Due to the nature of arranged marriages, grooms were often not even allowed to see their bride until the wedding ceremony itself, lest they find the woman to their distaste and forego the wedding.

Symbol: A blindfold

1. The Wedding Veil (5th Floor)

Origin: The wedding veil—traditionally so opaque that the bride’s face was hidden—was used so that the groom would not be able to see the bride until the ceremony was finished in case he found her unattractive.

Symbol: A white wedding veil

1. The Best Man (7th Floor)

Origin: Men who were not restrained by arranged marriages would sometimes make arrangements of their own, kidnapping their woman of choice. To aid them in the abduction, the groom would take along a friend, preferably the friend who was the “best” at fighting or wielding a weapon.

Symbol: A rope and dagger?

1. The Ball and Chain (9th Floor)

Meaning: The phrase “ball and chain” has long been a slang term referring to a man’s wife, carrying the connotation that a man in a marriage was enslaved as if a prisoner.

Symbol: A ball and chain