



On our wedding day, July 23. All the planning craziness paid off!



# “The day I wasn’t a cancer patient”

*Glamour editor Erin Zammett wanted to make her wedding about love (and dancing!), not about her ongoing battle with leukemia.*

**I**n November 2001 Erin Zammett, now 27, was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), a cancer that until recently proved fatal for many patients. For more than three years, she has chronicled her experiences in these pages—including, in April 2003, the shocking news of her older sister Melissa’s diagnosis of Hodgkin’s lymphoma. But for one glorious day, Erin and her sister shelved their struggles with cancer to celebrate life.

**JULY 20, 2005**

## I’m scaring myself!

Three days till the wedding and I’ve officially become one of those brides I used to laugh at. Today alone I’ve freaked out about the program (Melissa misspelled the organist’s name); the hotel gift baskets (my mom bought the wrong apples; Granny Smith goes with my burgundy/lime color scheme, McIntosh does not); and my shoes (too tight!). I know, I know: I have cancer; how can I be so shallow? But because I’m in remission, thank God, it’s easy to forget I have a life-threatening disease, and not so easy to forget that the printer screwed up the menus.

**JULY 22, 2005**

## How could I not cry?

Tonight was the rehearsal dinner; Nick and I held it at the beach, complete with a tent set up on the boardwalk and place

cards I made out of shells. Before we introduced our wedding party, I toasted Dr. Mauro, the oncologist I visit in Portland, Oregon, and his wife, Anne, the designer who created my wedding gown. Saying the words “my doctor” as I raised my glass reminded me that I have cancer, and I started crying. So did everyone. I’m sure Martha Stewart would not approve of inviting your oncologist to your wedding—too depressing. Even Dr. Mauro was wary. “Cancer should be the furthest thing from your mind on your wedding day,” he said. But if it weren’t for him, I might not even *be* here.

**JULY 24, 2005**

## Wedding bliss

It’s the morning after our wedding and I’m still on a high. “We pulled it off!” my mom said at brunch. And we did. One of my bridesmaids called it a “catalog day”—as in, if you could order the perfect sunny, humidity-free summer day out of the Pottery Barn catalog, it would have been that day.

We had a little drama early on. I’d picked out very sexy, boob-y Vera Wang bridesmaid dresses, and Melissa has serious boobs—DD serious. With tan lines. So when the make-up artist helping us get ready at my parents’ house offered to airbrush them, Melissa agreed. My bridesmaids and I watched in horror as her chest went from porcelain white to orange. But we didn’t say a word; Melissa’s been through hell this year (she spent a month in a hospital for a stem-cell transplant), and if she wanted bronzed boobs, who were we to stop

COUSINS PHOTOGRAPHY. STILL: CHRISTOPHER GALLO



Having a special moment with my dress



At St. Patrick's



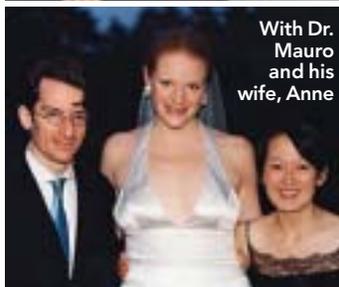
My sister Melissa couldn't resist!



We did it! Here we are leaving the church; our wedding party threw rose petals.



With Melissa and Meghan



With Dr. Mauro and his wife, Anne



Dancing with my dad

her? Then our younger sister, Meghan, came in and said, "Um, are you joking?" As I walked out of the room, Melissa was leaning over the sink, rubbing her chest with a dish towel.

Before we left the house, Andrew, our two-year-old ring bearer (Melissa's son), said I looked like a "pincess." And I felt like one, especially since I got to wear fancy Chopard jewelry. One of my friends works there, and she got them to lend

me diamond-and-pearl earrings and a bracelet. My "something borrowed" cost more than my entire wedding!

The ceremony was at St. Patrick's Church in my hometown, Huntington, New York. I'd never seen the place so packed, and it was all I could do not to screech and wave my way down the aisle (apparently my Grandma Del, a former Radio City Rockette, did just that during our processional). As Nick and I sat up at the altar listening to the priest's Irish brogue, we squeezed each other's hands. When we were dating we used to joke that if the cancer ever got really bad, we'd marry immediately. That way if I died, he'd get proper sympathy—which he wouldn't have received if he were "just" my boyfriend. Check that off our list.

At our reception at The Woodlands, an elegant old mansion on a golf course, Nick and I floated around, greeting our guests, posing for pictures and eating as much as possible—everyone told us you never eat at your own wedding, and we were determined to prove them wrong. And we danced all night long. This was a breakthrough for Nick, who usually runs for cover whenever he hears a beat. But he was the happiest and most carefree I'd ever seen him. *Everyone* was.

At brunch, people gushed about what we'd done in lieu of favors: Little cards on the dinner plates that said we'd made

a donation to Oregon Health & Science University, where Dr. Mauro works. They also told us they were surprised at how un-cancery and purely fun the wedding was. Phew! Our guests have been inundated with my cancer for four years, and I'd vowed we'd all just party that night. And we did.

**AUGUST 2, 2005**  
**For better (and worse)**

We're in Maui at the Four Seasons, a total splurge, and I'm lying on a chaise lounge that's more like a bed. The beach attendant just spritzed me with Evian and offered me frozen grapes. Not bad for a Tuesday morning. We've been in Hawaii for six days, and the only time I've thought about cancer so far was yesterday, when a woman came up to our table at the pool and asked, "Erin?" She recognized me from my *Glamour* column. It was pretty cool to be spotted (I felt like a cancer-lebrity!), but when the waiter asked what it was all about, I didn't get into it. I'm on vacation from CML. And I'm living it up because I know once we're home, the reality of my life will set in. People will wonder if I'm going to be able to start a family and the truth is, I'll be wondering too.

Nick and I agreed we'd give ourselves a year before we seriously think about kids. But it's hard not to worry now. Staying on Gleevec, the drug that's put me in remission, during pregnancy is a threat to the fetus; going off it is a threat to the mother (many patients who stop taking it relapse). It's a cancer catch-22, to say the least. But whenever I get overwhelmed, I try to remember how lucky I am to have Nick. We're family now. And no matter what, we always will be. ©



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For past installments of Erin's diary, go to [glamour.com](http://glamour.com).