

A Story of Four Sisters & A Wedding Dress

Rebekah was so excited when John asked her to marry him. Shortly after she became engaged, Rebekah came home from college for a Christmas visit. Her youngest sister, Mary, baked a special multi-layered [engagement cake](#) to surprise Rebekah when she arrived from the airport.

While Rebekah was home, we talked about plans for her wedding on May 11, 2013, and practiced making cake pops for their reception. Rebekah asked me to sew her wedding dress, so we also went shopping with her sister, Susanna, to pick out material.

Over the coming months, in the midst of finishing her master's degree, Rebekah made plans for her wedding in Texas. And I sewed her wedding dress at home in North Carolina. Mary (13) had fun serving as [the model](#) for her sister's dress.

I made a small dress out of the leftover material in case Rebekah and John ever had a little girl who might like to play dress-up in a replica of her mother's wedding dress. And Rebekah's other sister, AnnaLeah (17), sewed another little bridal dress for their niece, Vanessa, to give her as a birthday present during our trip back to Texas for four college graduations, a wedding, and two birthdays (including AnnaLeah's 18th birthday on May 15 and Vanessa's 4th birthday on May 28). Although AnnaLeah was very creative and had sewn many things by hand, this was her first sewing project using a sewing machine, and I was so proud of her.

[On May 4, 2013](#), AnnaLeah, Mary, their brother Caleb, and I started out on a road trip from our home in North Carolina to head for the celebrations in Arlington, Texas. While in Georgia, we came upon slowed traffic for a crash up ahead and a truck hit us in such a way that we were spun around and sent backward into the rear of another truck. The back of the car went under the truck when the underride guard failed to withstand the collision.

AnnaLeah and Mary were in the back seat and died as a result – AnnaLeah at the scene of the crash and Mary a few days later. They never got to see their sister get married. In fact, the family was in much confusion and Rebekah was faced with what to do – deciding that it would honor her sisters to continue with the wedding which she knew her sisters had been looking forward to.

The wedding dress had been damaged in the crash and Rebekah's church stepped up to get her a new dress to wear. In fact, our family experienced the love and support of being surrounded and supported by many people from around the country. And so the wedding went forward with joy in the midst of sorrow.

In the aftermath, the family has had a long journey of recovering from our loss. Each of us have handled it in our own way. The wedding dress which I had lovingly sewn for my daughter's special day never served its intended purpose. I had it cleaned and carefully stored. But, for Rebekah, it naturally does not bring to mind cherished memories.

So, when my daughter-in-law suggested that we could donate it to [Allison's Angel Gowns](#) to be re-purposed into bereavement gowns for babies who never go home from the hospital, I cried but immediately felt at peace. At last, the dress would have a purpose in bringing comfort to others who had joined us in our pain of saying good-bye to precious ones gone too soon.

Now, I could let it go . . .