

Abdication? Don't bet on it!

HER MAJESTY would not be amused. Yesterday it was reported that the bookmaker Coral had slashed the odds of the Queen stepping down before the end of the year from 3-1 to 1-2, before suspending betting entirely, after an unknown gambler in Windsor wagered £200 on her abdication.

The company feared that the unusually large bet could be a result of 'insider knowledge'.

It may sound like a bizarre thing on which to bet, but, in fact, such 'novelty' punts are increasingly common. Coral's website is taking bets on whether the Duchess of Cambridge's second pregnancy will be with twins (20-1) or even triplets (100-1).

William Hill, meanwhile, is taking bets on the next presenter of Newsnight after Jeremy Paxman retires. The favourite is Eddie Mair, at 4-1.

HER wedding dress was elegant, her hair woven in an intricate style and her groom handsome in his suit. As Kirsten Evans beamed for the photographer and gazed at her husband Aman, it's all too easy to imagine this was a dream wedding.

Far from it, though. Kirsten may have been in love with him for almost 15 years, but throughout all that time Aman had been concealing a terrible secret. He was still married to his first wife. And not only that, he had six children with her — four of them conceived while Kirsten and Aman had been a couple.

It's a story of duplicity, deceit and emotional manipulation. Aman had been adept at covering his tracks, but slowly his web of lies began to disintegrate. Kirsten was repelled by the thought of his physical and emotional infidelity, but there were cultural issues, too.

She was a white, middle-class Christian who had long dreamed of a big wedding. Aman was a Muslim, as was his secret wife and family.

Aman was outwardly devout. He prayed five times a day, eschewed pork and alcohol and encouraged his vivacious blonde fiancée to stop wearing 'revealing' clothes and cover up. But all the while, it seems, he had distorted the principles of the Muslim faith, in which men are allowed more

by Antonia Hoyle

than one wife, providing they are treated fairly. Here was a man who was truly living a double life. The discovery of this almost broke Kirsten.

Brought up in Bridgend, she had a comfortable, sheltered childhood. She dreamed of nothing more than falling in love and having lots of children.

So, when handsome Aman crashed into her life after a chance meeting in a local club in September 1991, 17-year-old Kirsten was thrilled.

She admits she was intoxicated by the glamour of Mauritius-born Aman's lifestyle. At the age of just 24, he owned a string of designer clothes shops. Intelligent, charismatic and witty, before long he filled her every waking thought.

'I found him exotic and worldly,' says Kirsten, now 39 and a beautician. 'I'd never even eaten a curry before. But he laughed off my innocence. Certainly, his background didn't have a big impact on our early relationship.'

Six months later, however, Aman dropped a bombshell: his religious parents had forced him into an arranged marriage when he was 18 to a 16-year-old called Zabeen. They were separated and had two sons aged two and three.

'He said his parents had pressured him into it, they were divorcing and he wanted to be with me,' says Kirsten. 'I was shocked, but believed him.'

Little did she know that, even as he told her this, Zabeen was pregnant with Aman's third child.

It was at this time that he proposed to Kirsten. Naive and blinded by the overwhelming power of this first love affair, she accepted.

Unsurprisingly, her concerned parents warned her to stay away. Her company director father was particularly worried about the man his daughter had fallen so deeply for.

'My father was so hurt. But he just said: "Be careful, Kirsten,"' she says. 'My parents were wary about the fact he had a failed marriage and two children. However, like any teenager, I was reluctant to listen. It pains me to say it, but Aman drove a wedge between my parents and me.'

So much so that shortly afterwards Kirsten moved out of her family home and into a rented property.

To gain Aman's approval, she started to modify her behaviour: she stopped drinking alcohol and wore flowing dresses instead of pencil skirts.

'I was tempted to convert to please him, but reluctant to lose my identity altogether,' she says. 'But no matter how hard I tried, it was never enough. Aman told me I was fat and worthless, that I lacked discipline.'

Slowly, Kirsten became more and more isolated from her friends and family. 'People tried to warn me, but I wouldn't listen,' she says.

Then she found out she was pregnant. Aged just 20, it was unplanned. Her parents were horrified.

'They were so furious when I told them I was pregnant they didn't speak to me for three months,' she says.

And so, three years after she had



Heartbroken: Kirsten finally got the courage to leave her lying husband

predictable. When she stopped crying, Kirsten packed her bags and left with Zak. Staying with a friend at first, she soon found a little house to rent nearby and tried to get over her heartbreak.

Aman begged and pleaded for her to return and, for eight weeks, her resolve remained strong.

'He would cry and cry, insisting the baby was the result of a one-night stand he'd had with Zabeen, who

'His family visited and I had to hide in the bedroom'

meant nothing to him, that it was me he wanted.

'I know — every cliché in the book. I was so angry. But I was also vulnerable and alone. There's no way I could cope with the baby without him. Besides, I wanted to believe him. I loved him.'

So Kirsten made the biggest — and some would say most foolish — decision of her life. She decided to go back to her cheating fiancé. Years of emotional turmoil followed.

However, at first all was quiet. 'Aman never mentioned his new baby with Zabeen and spent most of his time with me, though we hadn't yet moved in together,' says Kirsten.

'He would bring his sons by Zabeen to see me all the time. I adored them.'

Yet he was reluctant to introduce his fiancée to the rest of his family. If they visited unexpectedly while she was at Aman's home, he would make her run upstairs and hide in his bedroom until they had left.

Hurt, Kirsten assumed it was because she wasn't Muslim and he was ashamed of her. The possibility of him leading a double life never crossed her mind.

Despite his behaviour, she still felt they could make a fresh start. They moved into an elegant four-bedroom house together and Aman introduced her to his parents for the first time.

'But his mother wouldn't admit I existed to her friends,' says Kirsten. 'She was embarrassed by me.'

'Looking back, she and his father obviously knew he was still with Zabeen and hated lying to cover for their son's indiscretions.'

In October 1994, Aman agreed they would finally get married. But it was far from the big, white wedding Kirsten had dreamed of. He invited an imam to his house to conduct the *nikah*, a Muslim marriage ceremony that is not legally binding in Britain.

'It was over in five minutes and just felt surreal,' says Kirsten. None of her family were present, but at least, she thought, she finally had a ring on her finger.

Despite Aman's rare display of commitment, it didn't take long for old wounds in their relationship to emerge again.

He claimed to be away 'on business' for days at a time, but Kirsten would hear from the few friends with whom she kept in touch that he had been

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'Friends tried to warn me, but I wouldn't listen'

met him, Kirsten had virtually no one left in her life who would tell her Aman's behaviour was unacceptable.

The joy of her son's birth in August 1994 soothed any misgivings she had. Enchanted by baby Zak, Aman and Kirsten found a new closeness.

Then came the first of many bombshells. One afternoon, as Kirsten held two-month-old Zak in her arms, the phone rang. It was Aman's first wife, Zabeen.

Kirsten braced herself. They had spoken on the phone once before, but only in the most cursory way. However, nothing could have prepared her for what was to come next.

After a pause, Zabeen said simply: 'Tell Aman I've just given birth to his baby girl.' In fact, she was their fourth child.

'I was dumbstruck,' says Kirsten. 'I started shaking violently, but tried desperately to keep calm. After all, I was holding little Zak in my arms. Then Zabeen said "You don't know, do you?" and I dropped the phone.'

What followed next was all too

Shattering moment Kirsten found her husband had ANOTHER wife – and SIX children



Fairy tale: Kirsten and Aman on their wedding day in July 2007, with their daughter Iman

seen with Zabeen. Confronting him, however, brought no answers. 'He accused me of being paranoid and ungrateful for questioning his absence,' she says.

Then came yet another humiliation. In 2001, an acquaintance told Kirsten that Zabeen was pregnant with Aman's fifth child.

Surely, you might ask, after all this, why didn't Kirsten just leave her duplicitous partner?

But Aman's manipulative tendencies and sustained criticism had left her broken and lacking in self-esteem.

'He said he was under pressure from his family to make it work with Zabeen,' says Kirsten. 'And while I felt deflated and angry, I loved him too much to leave and he was relentless in his determination to make me stay.'

'He alternated between telling me

I was the most wonderful woman in the world and making me believe I'd be nothing without him. It was a game to him.

'He wore me down until my confidence was shattered. I didn't know what to believe and began to feel I didn't deserve any better.'

Unbelievably, Kirsten managed to ignore the overwhelming evidence of Aman's betrayals and focused on their life together and their son.

'He was a diligent father — Zak adored him — and he was so romantic,' says Kirsten. 'He'd whisk me off to Paris at a moment's notice. On my 30th birthday he bought me a VW Beetle convertible.'

'And he told me Zabeen wouldn't let him visit the children because he was with me. So even when he disappeared, I told myself he wasn't with her.'

Kirsten became pregnant again

and their daughter, Iman, was born in January 2006. Aman's tenderness to her and their newborn baby gave Kirsten the courage to press for a 'proper' marriage. She begged him to make their union legal with a civil ceremony.

Then came another body blow. Aman finally confessed: they couldn't wed because he was still married to Zabeen.

'He said their divorce had never been finalised because of an administrative error,' says Kirsten. 'Looking back it was an obvious lie, but I was so hurt and shattered I just wept with anger. I couldn't process the level of his deceit. We stayed up all night arguing.'

Newly emboldened, a resolute Kirsten insisted she fill out and file his divorce papers. The decree absolute came through a month before they wed in July 2007.

Despite everything, their wedding was a traditional affair: a civil ceremony in a sprawling country house. Kirsten wore an ivory silk dress. There was a three-tier cake and a harpist.

'None of his family except his eldest son came,' says Kirsten.

Life settled into a familiar pattern: family trips to theme parks, film nights on the sofa and Aman was always there for bath-time.

But this leopard hadn't changed his spots.

After another five-day business trip in early 2008, a suspicious Kirsten went online and discovered via an ancestry website she'd used years before after learning of Aman's previous indiscretions, that he had fathered a sixth child with Zabeen just a month before Iman was born.

'I went ballistic,' she says. 'He'd made a mockery of our marriage. He admitted he had slept with Zabeen — just once, of course.'

'He locked me in our bedroom and cried for hours, begging me not to leave.'

'At that moment, the scales were lifted from my eyes. I didn't love this man any more. But my self-esteem was in tatters and I had a family to support. So, I stayed.'

It was the worst thing she could have done. For Aman believed she'd never leave him and he became not only contemptuous, but terrifyingly callous.

'He wanted to have sex four times a week and if I refused he'd say there was something wrong with me,' she says.

'He didn't come home until late. I was sure he was still sleeping with

Zabeen. I felt trapped and worthless and depressed. But I didn't have the confidence to leave.'

Then, one desperate night, Kirsten found the website Women Scorned, which provides emotional and legal support for wives wronged by their husbands.

'I finally felt someone was on my side. As I read other women's stories, I realised I had a choice and I could leave Aman,' she says.

First, she had to talk to Zak, who was by then 19. 'I was terrified he'd take his father's side,' says Kirsten.

Instead, Zak made an astonishing admission: he'd known about his father's secret life since he'd been just six when he had found Zabeen in bed with his father.

Aman had told Zak that it would destroy his mother if she knew the truth. The burden of all those years of secrecy finally released, Zak told his mother he wanted her to end the marriage with his father.

That evening Kirsten told her husband to leave. 'I said he was a compulsive liar and I couldn't stand the sight of him.'

'He said I was frigid and fat and that no one would ever want to be with me again. For once, I didn't

'Our six-year-old found him in bed with his first wife'

cry. He'd broken my heart so many times I had no tears left, only a sense of relief.'

Kirsten is filing for divorce. Sadly, her father died in 2010, but she is close to her mother again.

'She said she'd always known Aman was a liar, but there was no point in telling me because I wouldn't listen,' says Kirsten. 'I only wish I'd seen through his lies quicker.'

The Mail contacted Aman, now 46, earlier this week. He told us: 'I was completely committed to Kirsten. Am I the only man in the world who has gone back to an ex? I don't think I am.'

'They were just flings and, of course, I felt bad about it. I regret my behaviour.'

'I didn't tell Zak to keep quiet, but I did say it wasn't a good idea to tell his mother I was visiting my former wife to see the children.'

'I never went back to Zabeen after I got engaged to Kirsten.'

■ www.women-scorned.co.uk

Phone hacking and a load of porkies

AMONG various eyebrow-raising items Charlie Brooks, husband of Rebekah Brooks, is accused of attempting to hide from police investigating phone-hacking at News International, is a newsletter from the British Kunekune Pig Society.

The pamphlet, dated May 2011, was found in one of two bags dumped in a rubbish bin in the garage at the couple's London flat, alongside an extensive collection of pornographic DVDs. But what on earth is the British Kunekune Pig Society — and what was its newsletter doing in Brooks's bin?

On its website, the BKKPS describes itself as a non-

profit organisation which 'oversees the pedigree birth and pig registers within the UK'. Founded in 1993, its aims include 'encouraging the breeding and owning of kunekune pigs'.

The kunekune is a domestic pig originating from New Zealand and was first imported to the UK two decades ago. Its name means 'fat and round pig' in Maori. Notable for their soft, furry coat and modest size — they usually reach a height of 2ft — they are popular as pets thanks to their placid nature. Sam Jones from the BKKPS says: 'We're pleased at the publicity. Hopefully a few people will look us up!'