

A minor royal wedding - but no showboating romance; Princess Eugenie, youngest daughter of Sarah Ferguson and Prince Andrew, has coped with her share of scandal and strife. Her wedding to long-term boyfriend Jack will bring her a 'pillar of support,' writes Julia Molony Sunday Independent August 26, 2018

But if their marriage was already rocky, abundant rumours of Fergie's infidelity finally torpedoed it. In 1993, the couple announced their separation, in the face of growing scandal, which prompted the Queen to take the unprecedented step of making her displeasure about the whole furore known.

"In view of the media speculation which the Queen finds especially undesirable during the general election campaign, Her Majesty is issuing the following statement," her press office said. "Last week, lawyers acting for the Duchess of York initiated discussions about a formal separation for the Duke and Duchess. These discussions are not yet completed and nothing will be said until they are. The Queen hopes that the media will spare the Duke and Duchess of York and their children any intrusion."

Such hopes, however, were quickly dashed. Soon after the announcement The Sun newspaper published photos of Fergie, who was still officially married to Prince Andrew, reclining on a sun lounger in the South of France, having her feet kissed and fondled by Texan financial adviser John Bryan.

The ensuing disgrace saw Fergie effectively banished from The Firm.

Princess Margaret, it is alleged, wrote to her to say, "You have done more to bring shame on the royal family than could ever have been imagined. Not once have you hung your head in embarrassment, even for a minute. Clearly you have never considered the damage you are doing us all. How dare you discredit us?" And rumour has it that Prince Philip's antipathy for her is so great that to this day, he refuses to be in the same room as her.

For her own part, Fergie has always put a more positive spin on things. According to her, her priority has always been to maintain friendly relations with the in-laws.

"When I met with Her Majesty about (the divorce), she asked, 'What do you require, Sarah?' and I said, 'Your friendship' - which I think amazed her because everyone said I would demand a big settlement. But I wanted to be able to say, 'Her Majesty is my friend' - not fight her, nor have lawyers saying, 'Look, she is greedy'. I left my marriage knowing I'd have to work. I have."

And so, following her divorce, Sarah gamely did her best to leverage her profile into a career (she was a long-standing ambassador for Weight Watchers, and she penned children's books). She also was at pains to maintain a warm relationship with her ex-husband.

"A table can't stand on three legs, really," she told Hello. "So you have the Duke and I, and the two girls. We're a family unit and we lead by example... We support each other emotionally and we support each other health wise. At least every two weeks we sit down and communicate, the four of us."

At a certain point, however, she made the ill-fated decision to use her good favour with Andrew for her own gain. In 2010 she was caught in a tabloid sting, when she offered a journalist posing as a foreign businessman access to her influential husband for a fee of £500,000.

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