BRIDE-TO-BE HAS LOST HER MEMORY

She has a picture of her American boyfriend as a constant reminder —and he phones her every day

NYONE would think that with just a few months to before the day I'm to be arried in Las Vegas, I should feeling on top of the world. nstead, a haunting fear troubles wherever I am and whatever I'm ng.

am afraid I'll completely forget the man is to be my husband.

That may sound absurd, but it's the ul predicament I find myself in after a accident two years ago which has left with amnesia.

was 27 at the time and working in adver- ig and promotional work, though I now my own company.

d been doing a promotion and was ing home from Gloucester to St Anne's .30 a.m.

was doing 70 m.p.h. in the third lane the motorway when, to my amazement, eone ran across the carriageway right in it of me.

Stumbled clear

swerved into the central reservation, lost trol and skidded back across the carriage-

after ploughing into three trees, my car— rand new MGB — plunged down a 30- t ravine.

olice later said it was amazing that I sn't killed, but in fact I was able to climb of the wreckage and stumble clear.

was shocked and felt terrible pains down back.

t the hospital in Stoke-on-Trent it was nfirmed that there were no bones broken, ough the bruising was so bad on my ck and neck that I found it almost im- ssible to lie down.

I was kept in overnight and went home t day to recuperate.

Although I'd been told it could be as ch as a year before I could return to rk, I went back after six months, for I'd t moved into a new house I was burdened with the.. rtgage.

io I started up a business St Anne's.

I rented a small shop at t and advertised for up- d-coming artists to display ir work there on a com- ssion basis. From there I nt into promotional work.

But though my visible in- ries healed up, my memory oblems became more and ore of an intrusion into my e.

mbarrassing

It began when people ould stop me in the street th a "Hi, Val" and begin chat.

Sometimes I was faced th the embarrassing situa- n of having to ask if I iew them, for I honestly uldn't say who they were though they often turned out to be lifelong acquaintances.

When friends and family noticed how apparently absent-minded I'd became, they suggested I wrote things down.

But although I'd write long lists of things to remember, sometimes I'd forget I'd written them.

My doctor suggested therapy might help.

I had sessions at a clinic where specialists tried to pinpoint the possible causes of these memory lapses, without success.

I don't have total loss of memory. For long spells I'm fine. It's just that on occasions I am unable to recall certain events for no apparent reason.

Over the past year these lapses have become more frequent.

Fortunately I seem able to cope with business matters and on only one occasion has a memory lapse caused problems and led to a total disaster.

I was doing the promotional work for an exhibition in London where a lot of publicity was involved.

But I clean forgot to release any information to the Press and, as a result the exhibition was a flop.

However, the memory lapses occur most often in personal matters.

I missed the opportunity of being presented to the Duke of Kent on one occasion.



Val

"A motor accident was the start of my troubles. My car skidded off the road, hit three trees and then plunged into a ravine."

New drug

He was on the Isle of Man as guest at the King's Cup air rally and going to present two paintings of astronauts to a couple of U.S. astronauts who were attending.

I was to be presented to him as agent for the artists who painted the pictures.

I was really looking forward to it—but I never got there. Instead, I went out shopping, having forgotten all about it.

It was in search of a cure that I met John, the man I plan to marry later this year.

I'd heard on the radio a programme about amnesia and it mentioned a drug being researched in America that was proving highly successful.

I was unable to trace it in this country, so when a friend said she was off to Los Angeles for a holiday in July this year, I decided to go with her and make inquiries over there.

THE PROBLEM I FACED

The feature that presents a moving human predicament told by someone close to the heart of it.

Her own story

by Val Hall

In Los Angeles I contacted a newspaper reporter I knew.

I asked him if he could put me in touch with anyone who might help and he suggested John, who's a reporter and writer in Hollywood.

He came to see me at my hotel and on our second meeting, the next evening, he asked me to marry him!

At first I thought he was joking, but he went on to say that he'd fallen in love with me as soon as he set eyes on me the previous night.

He convinced me he was serious and by the fourth night of my stay, I realised I'd fallen in love, too, and so accepted his proposal.

I hadn't traced the drug—but I'd found a husband!

But once I returned to Britain my problems returned. John calls every night just to remind me that we're going to be wed in Las Vegas in November.

At first he hadn't understood the full effect of my amnesia — but now he's realised what it could mean.

I'm haunted by the fear I could forget him altogether.

I have a photograph which I keep looking at and his regular phone calls help a tremendous amount—but my complaint is taking a frightening new turn.

More success

I'm finding it difficult to retain emotions and although I love John, I just wonder how I'll feel about him by the time I see him again.

Once we're married we'll be living in America and I hope I'll have more success in finding the drug to help me.

If I do, and I'm able to recover my memory, I wouldn't mind if the nightmares of the past couple of years become just faded recollections—for I'll have much happier things to store in my mind.