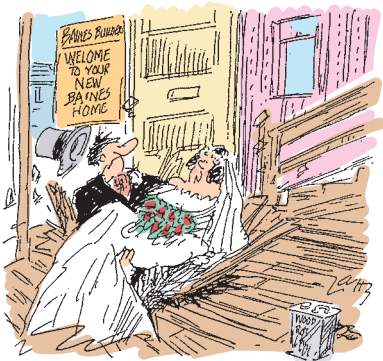


Over the threshold



In Roman times, **stumbling over the threshold** was a bad omen and so brides were always carried. Some Red Indian tribes, the Chinese and the Abyssinians also carried brides over the threshold. It may have represented a vulnerable boundary, or relate to the days when marriage meant capture of the woman. The **threshold** was also sacred to the Roman goddess, *Vesta*, whose handmaidens had to take a vow of chastity. Brides may have been carried across to ensure they did not profane her territory