



The Best Man

Grace Livingston Hill

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Pursued by men desperate for secret information that could threaten national security, Cyril Gordon seeks refuge in a church, stumbles into a wedding, and is mistaken for the best man.

The Best Man Details

Date : Published February 1st 1986 by Living Books (first published 1914)

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Author : Grace Livingston Hill

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From Reader Review The Best Man for online ebook

Thom Swennes says

Do you believe in love at first sight? In The Best Man by Grace L. Hill she takes this precept a few steps further. This story was first published in 1908 and, in my opinion, is far ahead of its time in both style and concept. Cyril Gordon, a secret agent unlike the rather blundering Pinkerton agents that spied for the Union during and after the Civil War, resembles more the 007 of Ian Fleming. Sent on a mission to obtain a damaging document, gets tied up in a domestic intrigue and marriage. The story is fast-paced and (at points) bordering on exciting. Except for the lack of explicit sexual innuendos and active violence it could almost pass for a more contemporary work. This story is of a marriage born of necessity flowers into an undying love in less than thirty-six hours. This is the first work I've read by Grace Livingston Hill (1865-1947) the author of more than 100 novels and innumerable short stories. Grace Hill isn't as widely known as her writing talents should suggest and I would readily read more if I ever get the chance. I highly recommend this to everyone that loves an old style book with old style values.

Kathie says

What a delightful surprise. I had never heard of this author but happened upon The Best Man while looking for an audio book.

Cyril Morgan is a government agent sent to retrieve a stolen coded message that will endanger national security. He escapes from a dinner party with the message but in his escape he gets involved in a wedding. Instead of standing in as the best man he finds himself married to the bride. His pursuers continue to follow him but now he feels he has the additional responsibility for a new bride. A woman he does not know and who has seemed unhappy and ill even at the wedding. How does that happen? The intended groom has been living abroad for a number of years and no one questions his appearance.

There is suspense, intrigue, blackmail, and a chase in an unpredictable plot. The characters are likable as the improbable romance develops.

Eliza says

This was suspenseful, sweet and clean! I really enjoyed it. I like that they don't kiss at all until they're [completley] married. You'll understand what I mean if you read it.

-1 star for the whole instalove thing

Julia says

First Reading 2011: I enjoyed the intrigue and suspense of this story, and loved the developing relationship between the bride and groom. It's fun to see proved, once again, that a wholesome novel with characters of

integrity can still be exciting and absorbing.

Second Reading 2015: I loved this tale just as much as in the first reading. It had been long enough that I had forgotten most of the story's details, even though I did remember the ending. Still fun, entertaining, and suspenseful.

AlegnaB † says

[love-at-first-sight (hide spoiler)]

Sarah Brazytis says

Synopsis:

Cyril Gordon, a member of the Secret Service, is sent on a highly sensitive, dangerous mission to retrieve a document stolen by criminals - criminals cloaked in fine suits and ties. But when these men find themselves bereft of their booty, their response will send Cyril on a wild escape that takes him to a strange place of refuge...a wedding.

What we loved:

This story line was a joy! At one point in the reading, we were all literally sitting on the edge of our seats, eyes bulging! It is so exciting, so thrilling - and, in the end, so sweet. Cyril is a great guy, absolutely one of our favorite fictional men; the supporting cast acts perfectly in character, and propels the plot forward at a breathless pace.

What we hated:

George. Disgusting fellow. Glad to see the back end of him!

What made us laugh:

How could you not? Just wait till you read the part about Cyril and the dog - or Cyril reading the newspaper to Julia Bentley!

What made us cry:

Cyril is so gallant and sweet - the absolute gentleman. When an especially wonderful event takes place at the end, you can get really choked up.

Warnings and caveats:

None! Clean and relaxing read, in terms of content.

Anita says

Marvelous, old-fashioned romantic tale,

Linda Hoover says

Unusual plot and very enjoyable.

Lin Stepp says

Another Grace Livingston Hill title - originally published in 1914.

This one started right away with intrigue, a secret service officer caught in a quandry, with a charming twist of how in trying to escape capture he ends up in a wedding ... and, unbelievable, is thought to be the groom. Then the girl's own story of intrigue comes out as the two combine ... making for a truly charming read.

Wendy Sparkes says

4.5 *

A Secret Service Agent.

A Blackmailed Bride.

And a chase across the countryside!

Those who loved will also enjoy this one, another edge-of-your-seat *How are they going to get out of this?* tale!

Janelle says

This is too good. It's keeping me up at night!

Despite the continuous improbabilities of the story, the impossibly chivalrous hero and angelic heroine, I really enjoyed this tale. It was lovely to read a story where you know there will be justice and a happy ever after.

The LibriVox narrator was excellent too.

Sara says

I was on a Grace Livingston Hill kick a while back and read several of her novels. They are always quaint and old-fashioned, sometimes a little preachy, but almost always a nice relaxing read.

Victoria Lynn says

One of my other favorite GLH. This one features a young man who is a spy for the government, which makes it even better!

Wendy S. Delmater says

Cyril Gordon, a secret service man, gets roped into an unintentional marriage as he flees from people intent on killing him. The bride has not seen the soon-to-be groom in ten years and the wedding goes forward. He's an honorable man and conflicted about the marriage, to say the least. His mission is a matter of life and death, but he's accepted the charge to care for this woman, at least until he can leave her with her people and explain...unless the real bridegroom shows up first! And how can he explain his duplicity without revealing his ultra-secret mission? And why does his temporary bride, whom he's never met before the ceremony, seem to hate him so much?

Celia Hathaway is marrying against her will, blackmailed into it. She has no idea that she married Cyril, not the horrible man who's threatening her family. So when she finds her new husband to be kind and honorable, and solicitous instead of selfish and cruel, she's amazed. And he's actually good looking rather than the pudgy and dissolute tyrant she was expecting. She feels like a traitor to slowly find she enjoys his presence. She could even like the fellow, if it had not been for all those evil letters!

And then Cyril's pursuers put them both in danger before there's time to explain.

So the plot to this romance is insanely far-fetched, but Grace Livingston Hill makes it work. It's a fun romp, marred only by the depiction of taken-for-granted black servants that grates on the modern ear and heart but was nevertheless regrettably typical for the time period.

Hannah says

I loved this story! I didn't know Hill wrote anything so edge-of-your-seat, and I loved the suspense of wondering if Cyril's pursuers would catch up with him before he got his unintended bride to safety. It was an unusual and unpredictable plot, and the ending was downright pleasure.

I listened to the free LibriVox recording.
