

What Christian Authors are Saying about Grace Livingston Hill:

Grace Livingston Hill, often referred to as the “Queen of Christian Romance,” has given millions of readers timeless Christian novels, offering inspiration, romance, and adventure. The simple message in each of her books reminds us that God has the answer to all our questions.

—Wanda E. Brunstetter, *New York Times* bestselling author

I've long been a fan of Grace Livingston Hill. Her romance and attention to detail has always captivated me—even as a young girl. I'm excited to see these books will continue to be available to new generations and highly recommend them to readers who haven't yet tried them. And for those of you like me who have read the books, I hope you'll revisit the stories and fall in love with them all over again.

—Tracie Peterson, award-winning, bestselling author of the *Song of Alaska* and *Striking a Match* series

Grace Livingston Hill's books are a treasured part of my young adult years. There was such bedrock faith to them along with the fun. Her heroines were intrepid yet vulnerable. Her heroes were pure of heart and noble (unless they needed to be reformed of course). And the books were often adventures. Just writing this makes me want to hunt down and read again a few of my favorites.

—Mary Connealy, Carol Award-winning author of *Cowboy Christmas* and the *Lassoed in Texas* series

Grace Livingston Hill books were a big part of my life, from the time I was a teenager and onward. My mother loved her books and shared them with me and my sisters. We always knew we could find an engaging, uplifting story between the covers. And her stories are still enjoyable and encouraging. It's hard to pick a favorite, but *The Girl from Montana* and *Marcia Schuyler* are two of my favorites. Terrific stories!

—Susan Page Davis, author of *Maine Brides* and *The Ladies' Shooting Club* series

The hero, in Grace Livingston Hill's timeless romantic novels, is always a hero. The heroine is always a strong woman who stands up for her beliefs. He is always handsome; she is always beautiful. And an inviting message of faith is woven throughout each story without preaching. These enduring stories will continue to delight a new generation of readers—just as they did for our great-grandmothers.

—Suzanne Woods Fisher, bestselling author of the *Lancaster County Secret* series

As a young reader just beginning to know what romance was all about, I was introduced to Grace Livingston Hill's books. She created great characters with interesting backgrounds and then plopped them down into fascinating settings where they managed to get into romantic pickles that kept me reading until the love-conquers-all endings. Her romance-filled stories showed this young aspiring writer that yes, love can make the fictional world go round.

—Ann H. Gabhart, award-winning author

My grandmother was an avid reader, and Grace Livingston Hill's books lined her shelves for the years of my childhood and adolescence. Once I dipped into one of them, I was hooked. Years of reading Hill's stories without a doubt influenced my own desire to become a storyteller, and it's with great fondness that I remember many of her titles.

—Tracy L. Higley, author of *Garden of Madness*

If you've enjoyed the classic works of writers like Jane Austen and Georgette Heyer, it is way past time for you to discover the inspirational stories of Grace Livingston Hill!

—Anna Schmidt, award-winning author of the Women of Pinecraft series

Ah, Grace Livingstone Hill! Can any other writer compare? Her lyrical, majestic tone, her vivid descriptions. . .they melt the heart of readers from every generation. Some of my fondest memories from years gone by involve curling up in my mother's chair and reading her Grace Livingston Hill romances. They swept me away to places unknown and reminded me that writers—especially writers of faith—could truly impact their world.

—Janice Hanna Thompson, author of the Weddings by Bella series

Grace Livingston Hill's stories are like taking a stroll through a garden in the spring: refreshing, fragrant, and delightful—a place you'll never want to leave.

—MaryLu Tyndall, Christy nominee and author of the Surrender to Destiny series

Enduring stories of hope, triumph over adversity, and true sacrificial love await every time you pick up a Grace Livingston Hill romance.

—Erica Vetsch, author of *A Bride's Portrait of Dodge City, Kansas*

Grace
Livingston
Hill

*America's Best-Loved
Storyteller*

THE BELOVED STRANGER



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Chapter 1

1930s Eastern America

Sherrill stood before the long mirror and surveyed herself critically in her bridal array.

Rich creamy satin shimmering, sheathing her slender self, drifting down in luscious waves across the old Chinese blue of the priceless rug on which she stood! Misty white veil like a cloud about her shoulders, caught by the frosty cap of rare lace about her sweet forehead, clasped by the wreath of orange blossoms in their thick green and white perfection, flowers born to nestle in soft mists of tulle and deepen the whiteness, the only flower utterly at home with rich old lace.

Sherrill stooped to the marble shelf beneath the tall mirror and picked up a hand mirror, turning herself this way and that to get a glimpse of every side. There seemed to be no possible fault to be found anywhere. The whole

Grace Livingston Hill

outfit was a work of art.

“It’s lovely, isn’t it, Gemmie?” she said brightly to the elderly woman who had served her aunt for thirty years as maid. “Now, hand me the bouquet. I want to see how it all looks together. It isn’t fair not to be able to get the effect of one’s self after taking all this trouble to make it a pleasant sight for other people.”

The old servant smiled.

“What quaint things you do say, Miss Sherry!” she said as she untied the box containing the bridal bouquet. “But don’t you think maybe you should leave the flowers in the box till you get to the church? They might get a bit crushed.”

“No, Gemmie, I’ll be very careful. I want to see how pretty they look with the dress and everything. Aren’t they lovely?”

She took the great sheaf of roses gracefully on one arm and posed, laughing brightly into the mirror, the tip of one silver shoe advancing beneath the ivory satin, her eyes like two stars, her lips in the curves of a lovely mischievous child; then, advancing the other silver-shod foot, she hummed a bar of the wedding march.

“Now, am I quite all right, Gemmie?” she asked again.

“You are the prettiest bride I ever set eyes on,” said the woman, looking at the sweet, fair girl wistfully. “Ef I’d had a daughter, I could have asked no better for her than that she should look like you in her wedding dress,” and Gemmie wiped a furtive tear from one corner of her

THE BELOVED STRANGER

eye over the thought of the daughter she never had had.

“There, there, Gemmie, don’t go to getting sentimental!” cried Sherrill with a quick little catch in her own breath, and a sudden wistful longing in her breast for the mother she never had known. “Now, I’m quite all right, Gemmie, and you’re to run right down and get Stanley to take you over to the church. I want you to be sure and get the seat I picked out for you, where you can see everything every minute. I’m depending on you, you know, to tell me every detail afterward—and Gemmie, don’t forget the funny things, too. I wouldn’t want to miss them, you know. Be sure to describe how Miss Hollister looks in her funny old bonnet with the ostrich plume.”

“Oh now, Miss Sherrill, I couldn’t be looking after things like that when you was getting married,” rebuked the woman.

“Oh yes, you could, Gemmie, you’ve got the loveliest sense of humor! And I want to know *everything*! Nobody else will understand, but you do, so now run away quick!”

“But I couldn’t be leaving you alone,” protested the woman with distress in her voice. “It’ll be plenty of time for me to be going after you have left. Your aunt Pat said for me to stay by you.”

“You have, Gemmie; you’ve stayed as long as I had need of you, and just everything is done. You couldn’t put another touch to me anywhere, and I’d rather know you are on your way to that nice seat I asked the tall, dark usher to put you in. So please go, Gemmie, right away!”

Grace Livingston Hill

The fact is, Gemmie, I'd really like just a few minutes alone all by myself before I go. I've been so busy I couldn't get calm, and I need to look into my own eyes and say good-bye to myself before I stop being a girl and become a married woman. It really is a kind of scary thing, you know, Gemmie, now that I'm this close to it. I don't know how I ever had the courage to promise I'd do it!" and she laughed a bright little trill full of joyous anticipation.

"You poor lamb!" said the older woman with sudden yearning in her voice; the old, anticipating and pitying the trials of the young. "I do hope he'll be good to you."

"Be good to me!" exclaimed Sherrill happily. "Who? Carter? Why, of course, Gemmie. He's wonderful to me. He's almost ridiculous he's so careful of me. I'm just wondering how it's going to be to have someone always fussing over me when I've been on my own for so many years. Why, you know, Gemmie, these last six months I've been with Aunt Pat are the first time I've had anybody who really cared where I went or what I did since my mother died when I was ten years old. So you don't need to worry about me. There, now, you've spread that train out just as smooth as can be; please go at once. I'm getting very nervous about you, really, Gemmie!"

"But I'll be needed, Miss Sherry, to help you down to the car when it comes for you."

"No, you won't, Gemmie. Just send that little new maid up to the door to knock when the car is ready. I can catch up my own train and carry it perfectly well. I don't

THE BELOVED STRANGER

want to be preened and spread out like a peacock. It'll be bad enough when I get to the church and have to be in a parade. Truly, Gemmie, I want to be alone now."

The woman reluctantly went away at last, and Sherrill locked her door and went back to her mirror, watching herself as she advanced slowly, silver step after silver step, in time to the softly hummed wedding march. But when she was near to the glass, Sherrill's eyes looked straight into their own depths long and earnestly.

"Am I really glad," she thought to herself, "that I'm going out of myself into a grown-up married person? Am I perfectly sure that I'm not just a bit frightened at it all? Of course Carter McArthur is the handsomest man I ever met, the most brilliant talker, the most courteous gentleman, and I've been crazy about him ever since I first met him. Of course he treats me just like a queen, and I trust him absolutely. I know he'll always be just the same graceful lover all my life. And yet, somehow, I feel all of a sudden just the least bit scared. Does any girl *ever* know any man *perfectly*?"

She looked deep into her own eyes and wondered. If she only had a mother to talk to these last few minutes!

Of course there was Aunt Pat. But Aunt Pat had never been married. How could Aunt Pat know how a girl felt the last few minutes before the ceremony? And Aunt Pat was on her way to the church now. She was all crippled up with rheumatism and wanted to get there in a leisurely way and not have to get out of the car before

Grace Livingston Hill

a gaping crowd. She had planned to slip in the side door and wait in the vestry room till almost time for the ceremony and then have one of her numerous nephews, summoned to the old house for the occasion to be ushers, bring her in. Aunt Pat wouldn't have understood anyhow. She was a good sport with a great sense of humor, but she wouldn't have understood this queer feeling Sherrill was experiencing.

When one stopped to think of it, right on the brink of doing it, it was a rather awful thing to just give your life up to the keeping of another! She hadn't known Carter but six short months. Of course he was wonderful. Everybody said he was wonderful, and he had always been so to her. Her heart thrilled even now at the thought of him, the way he called her "Beautiful!" bending down and just touching her forehead with his lips, as though she were almost too sacred to touch lightly. The way his hair waved above his forehead. The slow way he smiled, and the light that came in his hazel eyes when he looked at her. They thrilled her tremendously. Oh, there wasn't any doubt in her mind whatsoever that she was deeply in love with him. She didn't question that for an instant. It was just the thought of merging her life into his and always being a part of him. No, it wasn't that either, for that thrilled her, too, with an exquisite kind of joy, to think of never having to be separated from him anymore. What was it that sent a quiver of fear through her heart just at this last minute alone? She couldn't tell.

THE BELOVED STRANGER

She had tried to talk to Gemmie about it once the day before, and Gemmie had said all girls felt “queer” at the thought of being married. All nice girls, that is. Sherrill couldn’t see why that had anything to do with the matter. It wasn’t a matter of nicety. Gemmie was talking about a shrinking shyness probably, and it wasn’t that at all. It was a great awesomeness at the thought of the miracle of two lives wrought into one, two souls putting aside all others and becoming one perfect life.

It made Sherrill feel suddenly so unworthy to have been chosen, so childish and immature for such a wonder. One must be so perfect to have a right to be a part of such a great union. And Carter was so wonderful! Such a super-man!

Suddenly she dropped upon one silken knee and bowed her lovely mist-veiled head.

“Dear God,” she prayed softly, long lashes lying on velvet cheeks, gold tendrils of hair glinting out from under lacy cap, “oh, dear God, make me good enough for him!” and then, hesitantly in a quick little frightened breath, “Keep me from making any awful mistakes!”

Then, having shriven her ignorant young soul, she buried her face softly, gently, in the baby roses of her bouquet and drew a long happy breath, feeling her fright and burden roll away, her happy heart spring up to meet the great new change that was about to come upon her life.

She came softly to her feet, the great bouquet still

Grace Livingston Hill

in her clasp, and glanced hurriedly at the little turquoise enamel clock on her dressing table. There was plenty of time. She had promised to show herself to Mary, the cook, after she was dressed. Mary had broken her kneecap the week before and was confined to her bed. She had mourned distressedly that she could not see Miss Sherrill in her wedding dress. So Sherrill had promised her. It had been one of the reasons why she had gotten rid of Gemmie. She knew Gemmie would protest at her going about in her wedding veil for a mere servant!

But there was no reason in the world why she couldn't do it. Most of the people of the house were gone to the church. The bridesmaids left just before Gemmie, and Aunt Pat before them. Sherrill herself had watched the ushers leave while Gemmie was fixing her veil. Of course they had to be there ages before anyone else.

The bridesmaids and maid of honor had the two rooms next to her own, with only her deep closet between, and there were doors opening from room to room so that all the rooms were connected around the circle and back to Aunt Pat's room, which was across the hall from her own. It had been one of the idiosyncrasies of the old lady that in case of burglars it would be nice to be able to go from room to room without going into the hall.

So the rooms were arranged in a wide horseshoe with the back hall behind the top of the loop, the middle room being a sitting room or library, with three bedrooms on either side. Nothing would be easier than for her to go

THE BELOVED STRANGER

swiftly, lightly, through the two rooms beyond her own, and through the door at the farther end of the second room into the back hall that led to the servants' quarters. That would save her going through the front hall and being seen by any prying servants set to keep track of her till she reached the church. It was a beautiful idea to let old Mary see how she looked, and why shouldn't she do it?

Stepping quickly over to the door that separated her room from the next, she slid the bolt back and turned the knob cautiously, listening; then she swung the door noiselessly open.

Yes, it was as she supposed; the girls were gone. The room was dimly lit by the two wall sconces over the dressing table. She could see Linda's street shoes with the tan stockings stuffed into them standing across the room near the bureau. She knew them by the curious cross straps of the sandal-like fastening. Linda's hat was on the bed, with the jacket of her silk ensemble half covering it. Linda was always careless, and of course the maids were too busy to have been in here yet to clean up. The closet door was open, and she saw Cassie's suitcase yawning wide open on the floor where Cassie had left it in her haste. The white initials C.A.B. cried out a greeting as she crept stealthily by. Cassie had been late in arriving. She always was. And there was Carol's lovely imported fitted bag open on the dressing table, all speaking of the haste of their owners.

Betty and Doris and Jane had been put in the second

Grace Livingston Hill

room, with Rena, the maid of honor whom Aunt Pat had wanted her to ask because she was the daughter of an old friend. It was rather funny having a maid of honor whom one hadn't met, for she hadn't arrived yet when Sherrill had gone to her room to dress, but assurance had come over the telephone that she was on her way in spite of a flat tire, so there had been nothing to worry about. Who or what Rena was like did not matter. She would be wholly engaged in eyeing her dear bridegroom's face. What did it matter who maid-of-honored her, so long as Aunt Pat was pleased?

Sherrill paused as she stepped into this second room. It was absolutely dark, but strangely enough the door to the left, opening into the middle room, had been left open. That was curious. Hadn't Carter been put in there to dress? Surely that was the arrangement, to save him coming garbed all the way from the city! But of course he was gone long ago! She had heard him arrange to be early at the church to meet the best man, who had been making some last arrangements about their stateroom on the ship. That was it! Carter had gone, and the girls, probably not even knowing that he occupied that room, had gone out that way through the other door into the hall.

So Sherrill, her soft train swung lightly over her arm, the mist of lace gathered into the billow that Gemmie had arranged for her convenience in going down stairs, and the great sheaf of roses and valley-lilies held

THE BELOVED STRANGER

gracefully over her other arm, stepped confidently into the room. She looked furtively toward the open door, where a brilliant overhead light was burning, sure that the room was empty, unless some servant was hovering about watching for her to appear.

She hesitated, stepping lightly, the soft satin making no sound of going more than if she had been a bit of thistle down. Then suddenly she stopped short and held her breath, for she had come in full sight of the great gilt-framed pier glass that was set between the two windows at the back of the room, and in it was mirrored the full-length figure of her bridegroom arranging his tie with impatient fingers and staring critically into the glass, just as she had been doing but a moment before.

A great wave of tenderness swept over her for him, a kind of guilty joy that she could have this last vision of him as himself before their lives merged, a picture that she felt would live with her throughout the long years of life.

How dear he looked! How shining his dark hair, the wave over his forehead! There wasn't any man, not *any* man, *anywhere* as handsome—and *good*, she breathed softly to herself—as Carter, *her man*!

She held herself back into the shadow, held her very breath lest he should turn and see her there, for—wasn't there a tradition that it was bad luck for the bride to show herself in her wedding garments to the groom before he saw her first in the church? Softly she withdrew one

Grace Livingston Hill

foot and swayed a little farther away from the patch of light in the doorway. He would be gone in just a minute, of course, and then she could go on and give Mary her glimpse and hurry back without being seen by anyone. She dared not retreat further lest he should hear her step and find out that she had been watching him. It was fun to be here and see him when he didn't know. But sometime, oh sometime in the dear future that was ahead of them, she would tell him how she had watched him, and loved him, and how all the little fright that had clutched her heart a few minutes before had been melted away by this dear glimpse of him.

Sometime, when he was in one of those gentle moods, and they were all alone—they had had so little time actually alone of late! There had always been so many other things to be done! But sometime, soon perhaps, when he was giving her soft kisses on her eyelids, and in the palm of her hand as he held her fingers back with his own strong ones, then she would draw him down with his face close to hers and tell him how she had watched him, and loved him—!

But—! What was happening? The door of the back hall, which was set next to the nearest window, was opening slowly, without sound, and a face was appearing in the opening! Could it be a servant, having mistaken her way? How blundering! How annoyed he would be to have his privacy broken in upon!

And then the face came into the light and she started.

THE BELOVED STRANGER

It was a face she had seen before, a really pretty face, if the makeup on it had not been so startling. There was something almost haggard about it, too, and wistful, and the eyes were frightened, pleading eyes. They scanned the room hurriedly and rested upon the man, who still stood with his back to the room and his face to the mirror. Then the girl stepped stealthily within the room and closed the door as noiselessly as she had opened it.

Who was it? Sherrill held her breath and stared. Then swift memory brought the answer. Why, that was Miss Prentiss, Carter's secretary! But surely no one had invited her! Carter had said she was comparatively new in the office. He had not put her name on the list. How dared she follow him here? Had something come up at the last minute, some business matter that she felt he must know about before he left for his trip to Europe? But surely no one could have directed her to follow him to the room where he was dressing!

This all went swiftly through Sherrill's mind as she stood that instant and watched the expression on the girl's face, that hungry desperate look, and something warned her with uncanny prescience. So Sherrill stood holding that foolish bouquet of baby roses and swinging lily-bells during what seemed an eon of time, till suddenly Carter McArthur saw something in the mirror and swung around, a frozen look of horror and anger on his handsome face, and faced the other girl.

"What are you doing here, Arla?" he rumbled in an

Grace Livingston Hill

angry whisper, and his bride, standing within the shadow, trembled so that all the little lily-bells swayed in the dark and trembled with her. She had never heard him speak in a voice like that. She shivered a little, and a sudden thought like a dart swept through her. Was it conceivable that he would ever speak so to her? But—of course this intruder ought to be rebuked!

“I have come because I cannot let this thing go on!” said the girl in a desperate voice. “I have tried to do as you told me. Oh, I have tried with all my might”—and her voice broke in a helpless little sob—“but I can’t do it. It isn’t *right!*”

“Be still, can’t you? You will rouse the house. Do you want to bring disgrace upon us all?”

“If that is the only way,” said the girl desperately, lifting lovely darkly circled eyes to his face, and suddenly putting her hands up with a caressing motion and stealing them around his neck—desperate clinging arms that held him fast.

“I can’t give you up, Cart! I can’t! I *can’t!* You promised me so long ago you would marry me, and you’ve always been putting me off—and now—*this! I can’t!*”

“Hush!” said the man sternly with a note of desperation in his voice. “You are making me hate you, don’t you know that? Don’t you know that no good whatever can come of this either for me or yourself? How did you get here anyway? Have you no shame? Who saw you? Tell me quick!”

THE BELOVED STRANGER

“Nobody saw me,” breathed the girl between sobs. “I came up the fire escape and along the back hall. This was the room I came to that day to take dictation for you when you had a sprained ankle and had to stay out here. Don’t you remember? Oh, Cart! You told me then that someday you and I would have a house just like this. Have you forgotten how you kissed my fingers, and the palm of my hand, when they all had gone away and left us to work?”

“Hush!” said the man, his face stern with agony. “No, I haven’t forgotten! You know I haven’t forgotten! I’ve explained it all to you over and over again. I thought you were reasonable. I thought you understood that this was necessary in order to save all that I have worked so hard to gain.”

“Oh, but Cart! I’ve tried to, but I can’t! I cannot give you up!”

“You won’t have to give me up,” he soothed impatiently. “We’ll see each other every day as soon as I get back from this trip. We’ll really be closer together than if we were married, for there’ll be nothing to hinder us from having good times whenever we like. No household cares or anything. And really, a man’s secretary is nearer—”

There came a sharp imperative tap on the door of the sitting room. McArthur started and pushed the weeping girl from him into a corner.

“Yes?” he said harshly, going over to the door. “Has the car come for me? Well, say, I’ll be there in just a

Grace Livingston Hill

minute. There is plenty of time by my watch. But I'll be right down."

There was a painful silence. Sherrill could see the other girl shrinking behind a curtain, could hear the painful breathing as she struggled to keep back the sobs, could see the strained attitude of Carter McArthur as he stood stiffly in the middle of the room glaring toward the frail girl.

"Arla, if you love me, you must go away at once," he said sternly, coming toward the girl again, and now he was within the range of the next room, and Sherrill had to shrink farther back into the shadow again lest he should see her.

Suddenly she saw him stoop, put both arms about the other girl, draw her close to him, and put his lips down on hers, hungrily, passionately, kissing her and devouring her with his eyes, just as he had sometimes on rare and precious occasions done to Sherrill! Sherrill clutched her bridal flowers and shivered as she shrank into the shadow and tried to shut the sight out by closing her eyes, yet could not.

A great awful cold had come down upon her heart, caught it with an icy hand, and was slowly squeezing it to death. She wanted to cry out, as in a nightmare, and waken herself—prove that this was only a hideous dream; yet something was stopping her voice and holding her quiet. It must not be that he should hear her, or see her! It must never happen that she should be drawn into this

THE BELOVED STRANGER

dreadful scene. She must keep very still, and it would pass. This awful delirium would pass, and her right mind would return! She was going pretty soon to the church to be married to this man, and all this would be forgotten, and she would be telling him sometime how she had watched him and loved him as he prepared to go forth and meet her, her dear bridegroom! He would be kissing *her* fingers and *her* eyelids this way. . . . But no! She was going crazy! That would never happen! A great wall had come down between them. She knew in her heart that now she would never, never tell him! He would never take her in his arms again, or kiss her lips or eyelids, or call her his! That was over forever. A dream that could not come true.

Then an impassioned voice broke the stillness and cut through to the depths of her being. It was his voice with that beloved quality she knew so well!

“Oh my darling, my darling! I can’t stand to see you suffer so! There will never be any girl like you to me. Why can’t you understand?”

“Then if that is so,” broke out the weeping girl, lifting her head with sudden hope, “come with me now! We can get out the way I came and no one will see us. Let us go away! Leave her and leave the business, and everything. No one will see us! Come!”

The man groaned.

“You will not understand!” he murmured impatiently. “It is not possible! Do you want to see me ruined? This

Grace Livingston Hill

girl is rich! Her fortune and the connection with her family will save me. Sometime later there may come a time when I could go with you—not now!”

Then into the midst of the awfulness there swung a sweet-toned silver sound, a clock just outside the door striking the hour in unmistakable terms, and Carter McArthur started away from the girl, fairly flinging her in his haste, till she huddled down on her knees in the corner sobbing.

“Shut up, can’t you!” said the man wildly as he rushed over to the mirror and began to brush the powder marks from his otherwise immaculate coat. “Can’t you see you’re goading me to desperation? I’ve *got* to go *instantly*! I’m going to be late!”

“And what about me?” wailed the girl. “Would you rather I took poison and lay down in this room to die? Wouldn’t that be a nice thing to meet you when you came back from the church?”

But with a last desperate brush of his coat Carter snapped out the light and swung out into the upper hall, slamming the door significantly behind him and hurrying down the stairs with brisk steps that tried to sound merry for the benefit of the servants in the hall below.

The girl’s voice died away into a helpless little frightened sob, and then all was still.

And Sherrill stood there in the utter darkness trying to think, trying to gather her scattered senses and realize

THE BELOVED STRANGER

what had happened, what might happen next. That something cataclysmic had just taken place that would change all her after life she knew; but just for that first instant or two after she heard her bridegroom's footsteps go down the stairs and out the front door, she had not gotten her bearings. It was all that she could do just then to stand still and clutch her great bouquet while the earth reeled under her trembling feet.

The next instant she heard a sound, soft, scarcely perceptible to any but preternaturally quickened senses, that brought her back to the present, the necessity of the moment and the shortness of time.

The sound was the tiniest possible hint of stirring garments and a stealthy step from the corner where the weeping girl had been flung when the angry, frightened bridegroom made his hasty exit.

Instantly Sherrill was in possession of herself and reaching forward accurately with accustomed fingers, touching the switch that sent a flood of light into the sitting room.

Then Sherrill in her white robes stepped to the doorway and confronted the frightened, cowering, blinking interloper, who fell back against the wall, her hands outspread and groping for the door, her eyes growing wide with horror as she caught the full version of her lover's bride.