



## Best Man to Wed?

*Penny Jordan*

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### SUBSTITUTE LOVER?

Poppy Carlton: Cousin to the groom. She is devastated when Chris falls in love and marries someone else. She will never love again.

James Carlton: The groom's older brother—and best man. Mocking and cynical, he is the exact opposite of fun-loving Chris.

James taunts Poppy that she should find herself a real man and leave her adolescent fantasies behind. He is not averse to showing her just what real passion is about. But how can he be sure that her response is for him? Perhaps she's just using him as a substitute for his brother...

## Best Man to Wed? Details

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## From Reader Review Best Man to Wed? for online ebook

### boogenhagen says

Re Best Man to Wed - Penny Jordan continues on with her Bride's Bouquet series in her second book of the trilogy.

Brace yourself HP Voyager's, this is gonna get a little squicky.

The 22 yr old h is the cousin of the groom who got married in first book. His smug priggish bride is the one who 'tripped' and set the cat among the pigeons by having her three bridesmaids all catch her bouquet in an attempt to save it.

Like every book in this series, the secondary characters smug manipulations are all over the place. As the h's mother is the aunt of both the groom and the H, plus her new cousin-in-law is determined to drag every single lady around her into marital purgatory, there is no use running away because this h is related to everybody.

We learned in the first book that this h had an unrequited love for the groom who married the first book's heroine's stepdaughter. PJ tells us this was a childhood crush for the h that began at twelve and was somewhat encouraged by both families over the years, as they all have a common interest in the family business and wouldn't mind having those ties strengthened.

Except the groom's older brother, who is the head of the family firm and continually berates and belittles the h about her huge crush on his brother. It appears he doesn't want any closer familial connections than exist already.

The h is pretty sure the H is resentful of the fact that her mother holds enough shares in the firm to get the h a job in company as an interpreter and honestly the h had wanted to go off on her own when she left school. But in typical semi-incestuous PJ fashion, circumstances force the h to stay in the family circumference to be bullied and verbally abused by the H and patronized by the rest of the priggish nematode pustules.

When the story starts, the h is burning her mementos of the now married groom and the H shows up to bully, insult and belittle the h some more. (Every word out of his mouth is nasty, the h is pretty sad, cause all she does is cry about it.) The H also has to explain about a company trip too.

Evidently there is a company business trip to Italy coming up and the H and the h are the only one's attending it. When we get to the conference, the hotel is over booked and the h and H are forced to share a room.

Amidst all the massive insults and accusations that the h is a pathetic, unattractive, childish homewrecker out to destroy his brother's marriage, the H manages to forcibly seduce the h a few times. (Warning, the first time the h was asleep and the second time it was very non-consensual until the h's Treacherous Body Syndrome kicked in.)

In retaliation, the h announces that she thought the H was actually his brother and that is why she eventually responded. It doesn't go over very well.

When we get back to England, the rumor of the h and H's extra curricular activities fly around the office because of the shared hotel room and then the h turns up pregnant. A swift marriage is immediately arranged, with the entire family 'delighted' that the H and h are in love and expecting a baby.

Cue up the priggish snot bride cousin in law, who whines because the H's brother doesn't want a baby yet and she is just dying to have one.

The H and h have a short Italian honeymoon with one round of the lurve club that is physically satisfying, but produces huge mopey moments on the h's part, cause now she loves the H and he is actively avoiding her.

The h figures her life and marriage are doomed and resolves to love her baby and ignore everything else and then she and the H's brother get into a car accident when he drives her home from work. There is a baking baby scare when the h can't feel the baby moving anymore and the h has hysterics, kicks the H's brother out of her room and demands they find the H.

The H shows up, full of remorse for being mean to the h because of his jealousy over her loving his brother. As the baby starts to wiggle around, the H declares he loves the h and has since she fell in love with his brother at 12 and he was 19 or so.

(Which is very creepy, because we are told the 15 yr old H was bathing the 7 year old h at one point in the story and that just squicks me out, because he keeps calling her childish and child throughout the book and then he wants a daughter.)

The h is delighted that the H really does love her and all of his abuse was because of his frustrated passion. The h swears her true love back and we leave the two of them happily united. We get a little epilogue where the h has a baby girl right before Christmas and the h drops a card to the last unmarried bridesmaid as a little sequel baiting for the next story.

This one was kinda creepy and I never realized it until I reread it. The H was waaaay too interested in a little kid and his abuse until he and the family bullied the h into dependent marital compliance was just weird. I thought it strange that the H seemed to determined to bullying the h into being as childish as possible and so I wasn't feeling the lurve too much on this.

Then there is the whole first cousin issue with the mother's being sisters and the over involvement of the entire family in pimping the h out to the H, without regard to maybe sending the h out of the nest to get some maturity. So overall I recommend skipping this one, avoiding the squicky creepy feeling and finding a better HPlania outing.

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### **StMargarets says**

I'm going to have to read this again, because as you can see from the bookshelves, there is so much going on. This is classic Penny Jordan - a heroine that doesn't know her own mind (and has a traitorous body) and a hero that is alpha to the max. I can't decide between 3 and 4 stars because he's just so mean to her (but then she's a drip half the time). Honestly, these people. Read it. You won't be bored.

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## **Cecilia says**

[ (as in the fact that he's been nurturing some heavy-duty unrequited love for the heroine for many years)  
(hide spoiler)]

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## **MBR says**

I can almost always count on a good old Harlequin novel to take me on an emotional rollercoaster ride from which I wouldn't want to get off. Penny Jordan is a favorite Harlequin author of mine and I am sure many fans of the Harlequin line are bound to feel the same. Though I have done most of my Harlequin crazed phase of reading prior to the start of my review site, this is one novel by Penny Jordan that I seemed to have missed, a fact I am glad that I have rectified when I started on this one on a whim today.

22 year old Poppy Carlton has had her dreams crushed when her cousin Chris Carlton who has been the man of her dreams since she had turned 12 years of age marries another. Forced to grow up and get her head out of the clouds, Poppy is horrified when her virginal body responds in an appalling manner to James Carlton's caresses. James is her beloved Chris's elder brother, the forbidding and formidable version to the sunny and easy going nature of Chris who occupies her thoughts night and day – or so Poppy tries telling herself.

8 years older than Poppy, James is a man who keeps his emotions close to himself apart from tearing into Poppy's infatuation when it comes to his younger brother. When consequences of their nights of passion together forces Poppy to acknowledge her feelings towards the brother who is a match for her in everyway, Poppy fears that she might be just a little bit too late in accepting that James is the one and only for her.

I love stories where the hero has always been in love with the heroine but somehow was overshadowed by the heroine's infatuation with another man presumably a relative of the hero's. James is a mouthwateringly alluring hero and Poppy though at first grated on my nerves with her self pitying nature made up for it beautifully when she freely expresses her need for James bringing the poor guy to his knees.

And this one certainly managed to be an emotion wrenching read and I loved the effect the story had on my emotions as I read along. Though this might not be a feminist's idea of how a romance should be, this is romance in its most old-fashioned form, the reason why I fell in love with the world of romance in the first place. Recommended for fans of the Harlequin genre and fans of Penny Jordan.

## **Rating=4/5**

Original review posted at MBR's Realm of Romance

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## **KC says**

Poor James had it b-a-a-d for Poppy. I felt bad for him because Poppy made no attempt to hide her love for Chris, his married younger brother. At one point, she even tells James—in a moment of panic and self-defense—that she'd used him as a substitute for Chris in bed. Ouch! James might have been a little short with Poppy at times, but I totally understood his frustration.

Poppy's immaturity made it difficult for her to see how James was clearly the superior catch. In a way, I think it's a blessing Chris drew Poppy's attention first. She really needed time to mature and, therefore, appreciate the hard-to-handle James.

It would be an understatement to say that these two had high levels of emotional fireworks and sexual tension between them. I just wish they had not been first cousins, but marriage between close cousins is apparently widely accepted in England. Oh well, Poppy finally sees the light and the two have their HEA!

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### **Loata93 says**

the beginning/first half of this book is terrible. I hated it. the heroine had my blood boiling at how stupid she was. I didn't give it 1star only because the story gets better halfway through. the hero could have helped his case too if he wasn't such a big jerk

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### **Aou says**

3,5 stars

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### **iamGamz says**

Poppy grew up with her cousins, James and his brother, Chris. All through her first 11 years she worshipped James, who is 8 years older than she is. But when she turned 12, she noticed Chris and decided that she loved him. Her worship for James turned to dislike that grew to almost hatred over the years.

So, for 10 years she held on to the love she felt for Chris, while reviling James. Until Chris got married to Sally and she was forced to take a business trip to Italy with James.

That trip forced Poppy into close quarters with James which led to an intimacy that was as unexpected as it was unwanted.

Poppy annoyed the bejeezus out of me. All she did was whine about her love for Chris. I couldn't dislike James for calling her out on her immaturity, although he was a bit cruel at times.

You knew from James' interactions with Poppy that he was in love with her and her thoughtlessness kept hurting him over and over. She truly was a clueless child.

While I was frustrated with the h, I still loved the book. It was a great story and the sex scenes were almost hot. I mean there was oral for goodness sake! A must read if for nothing else but that. LoL!

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### **RomanceLover99 says**

This book was kind of dull and flat.....boring! It was obvious to the reader that the hero loved the heroine however, I found the heroine to be annoyingly immature. She's 22, old enough to realize that her "love" for

the hero's brother was going to cause a lot of people to feel uncomfortable yet, she still acted like a 14 year old throwing a temper tantrum. The hero of this book was okay but the heroine was annoying and I had a hard time finding anything to like about her.

It's obvious that this book is apart of a series, which includes secondary characters from this book. I only mention this because I have no desire whatsoever to read about the other characters' stir because of how boring I found this book to be.

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### **Penny Watson says**

This is quite possibly the most torturous HP I have ever read.

I almost DNFed at 60% but I stuck with it just to see what happened.

The dialogue was basically this for more than half the book...

Poppy: But I can't...I can't...

James: You begged ME!

Over and over and over again.

Also, the hero was a complete asshole until almost the final page of the book. I need a much earlier turn-around on the asshole-to-grovel-to-hero issue. Waiting until the last page doesn't cut it.

Here is the order of my hatred...

1. James
2. Poppy
3. Chris
4. Sally

Chris and Sally were really just irritating, but I included them anyway.

So, in conclusion...If you want to torture yourself, go for it. I think I'll avoid Penny Jordan books from now on.

\*whimper\*

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### **Jenny says**

Heroine is devastated when her childhood love falls in love and marries someone else. She ends up finding comfort in the arms of James Carlton the groom's older brother. One night stand gets complicated when she gets pregnant and James proposes marriage.

Good love story. U could tell right from the start that hero was crazy for Poppy and her blind devotion to Chris drove me crazy. But if u like a smitten hero read this!

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### **Jacqueline says**

Is he unbuttoning her dress or pinching her nipple? You decide.

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### **Vintage says**

It's been a while since I read this, but the hero, and I use that term very lightly, was just mean. Cruel.

No fun.

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### **Leona says**

Meh....I thought the plot line was interesting...the whole unrequited love...falling for the brother instead...kind of story.

But I couldn't get past:

- 1) the immature, whiny, sniveling, heroine..Dear heavens did she get annoying
- 2) demanding passive/aggressive Hero who happened to cross the line of sexual harassment.
- 3) the whole first cousin angle....major ick factor for me.
- 4) the pregnancy and forced marriage plot...

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### **Chantal ❤? says**

This book was the best in this series.

The hero has been in love faithfully with the heroine since they are young.

She was very confusing to understand with her love for his now married brother.

I loved the way he was with her. You could tell how much he loved her and was hurt by her words and behaviour.

I just wanted to hit her!

He was a great guy and was doing his best not to get hurt but it was hard when he finally getting a chance with her.

He took his chance and did it pay off!?

Read it and see.

Very enjoyable book. I have reread this book over 5 times.

