

PERFECTLY PROPER The best man is kept a busy man

Etiquette, humm? Whatever happened to the "correct" way of doing things? Even weddings, it seems have become looser and looser. No one knows quite what's expected anymore.

There really is a role for each person who attends a wedding to play, rituals laid down through the years for a purpose: to give the bride and groom a smooth start to their new life.

Have you been asked to be a best man or bridesmaid? Just what is expected of you, aside from paying for your formalwear? Here is a runsheet of what to do at your next wedding, even if you're simply an invited guest.

THE BEST MAN

The joke is to get the groom to the church in time, and it's true that it's one of the best man's duties. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Yes, we all know about those rehearsal dinners the night before, as best man, you can subtly help the groom by fetching him a soda water to alternate with his glasses of champagne.

A tradition that's often forgotten is the collective gift to the

groom from his attendants. It's up to the best man to coordinate the effort. This is an important gesture, since any gift from these closest of friends is likely to be especially cherished by the groom.

All of the best man's duties are geared toward making the groom's life a little easier. Out-of-town guests coming? The best man can help arrange accommodations for them. If it's to be hotels, find a range of price choices.

During the ceremony, he's in charge of holding the bride's ring till the appropriate moment. That means not misplacing it or getting it stuck on one of his fingers!

The best man also signs the marriage certificate and gives the clergyman his donation on behalf

of the groom (\$20 to \$100, depending on the size of the wedding).

The best man also is in charge of coordinating the transportation of the couple will use to get to the reception.

At the reception, his duties, include proposing the first toast, reading congratulatory telegrams, announcing the cutting of the cake and circulating among the guests, perhaps fetching hors d'oeuvres for the grandparents. He then dances with the bride, after the groom, her father and the groom's father have.

When it's all over, he drives the couple to the airport and arranges the return of the groom's and ushers' rented tuxedos.

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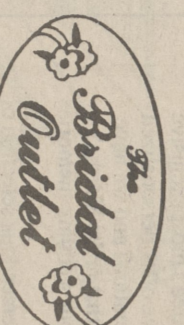
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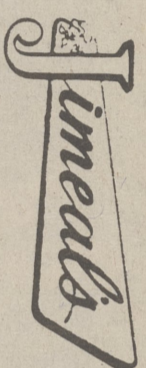


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GIFT IDEAS Choose jewelry as a special gift

Gifts of jewelry symbolize that which is beautiful, timeless and of paramount importance — and as such are ideal for your wedding. The bride and groom will want to select special gifts for each other and for your attendants. It is also appropriate for you to receive jewelry from your parents and guests.

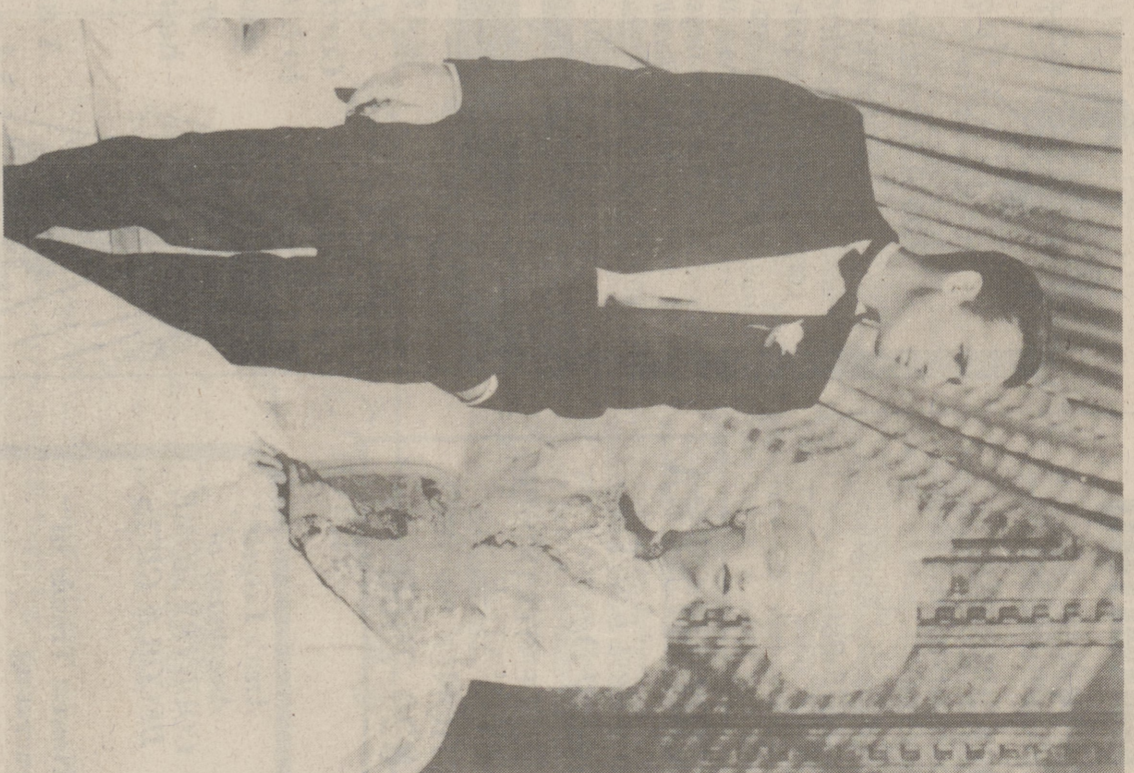
Ideal gifts for the bride to give the groom are a good watch or pair of gold cuff links. As with all wedding gifts, engraving the date of the occasion and a few sentimental words is appropriate.

The groom might surprise the bride with a watch, too, or with fine jewelry. Another popular choice is a frame of sterling silver to hold his picture.

The father of the bride usually gives her a gift of fine jewelry — perhaps diamond earrings or a pearl ecker.

Gifts to your attendants are usually distributed before the wedding. Traditionally, each bridesmaid gets an identical gift, but honor attendants usually receive something a little more special.

Good choices for attendants' gifts include something they can wear on the big day — such as pearl earrings, a diamond hair clip, a gold chain with a heart shaped locket or a lovely bracelet.



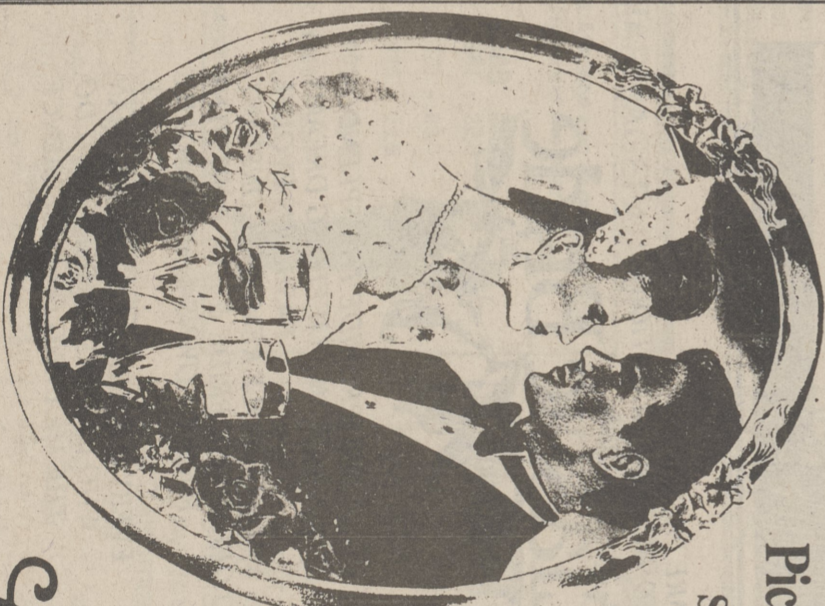
GROOM GORGEOUS - Today's grooms are a dapper set, sporting suits of crisp elegance. Shown above: A formal black tail coat paired with front pleated trousers and a wing collar shirt.

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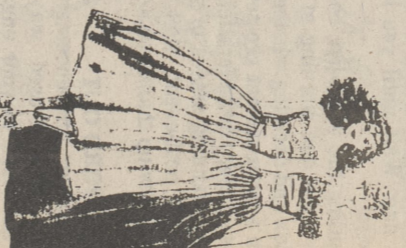
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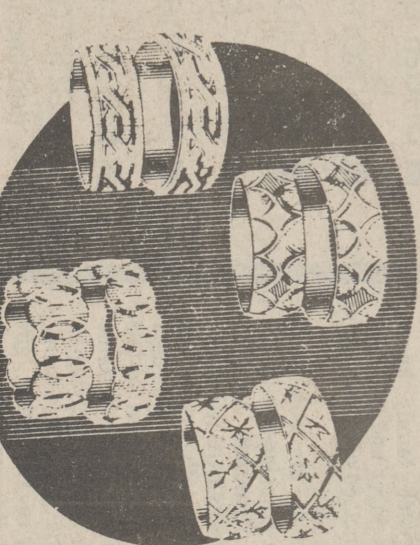
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