

# THE MAN WHO HEARD IT BEFORE.

M. W. WALTER.

(SOLO AND DUET.)

EDWARD HOLST.

*Allegretto*

1. You tell him a joke you re-lie-d on as new, He smiles in a wea-ri-some way.  
2. The girl whom you woo in your ten-der-est tone, Whose heart you are seek-ing to gain.

From a com-e-dy now you re-cite him a bit, He saw it, he says, in a play.  
List-ens cold-ly to all you may have to pro-est, Seems on-ly to wish you'd re-frain.

You give him a sto-ry that nev-er yet failed To set all who heard in a roar;  
You seek for some-thing to tal-ly true, And e'en the the-ater us ex-plore;

He needs half a pre-vent and turns him a-way, And mur-murs, 'I've heard it be-fore.'  
It's all of no use, and you bid her good-bye, You see she has heard it be-fore. Ah!

*DUET - Moderato*

How sad it must be to go on-ward like this, With noth-ing on earth to en-joy;

And nev-er make a my one hap-py your-self, And on-ly find things to an-noy.

His life, like an or-ange whose juic-es are gone, 'Tis a dry, emp-ty shell, and no more;

A - las! he is much to be pit-ied, not blamed, The man who has heard it be-fore;

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# A GIRL WHO SUITED

Charles Abbott was not used to buying diamonds. If he had been he might not have made such a fuss over the one he lost. Still, the way he lost that was enough to make any man out of sorts, no matter if he had had a whole jewelry store to fall back on.

The young woman to whom Abbott had given the diamond, set in an engagement ring, eloped with another man just two weeks before the day set for her marriage to Abbott. Abbott hated to lose the woman, but he hated still more to lose the ring. As soon as he could find out, from the young woman's astonished relatives, where the deserter had gone, he wrote and asked her what she had done with the ring.

"Della Surry has it, 24 June street," was the telegraphic brevity received in reply.

Abbott did not know Della Surry, but he construed the telegram to mean that she lived at the address given, so he called there in further pursuit of the diamond. Della wore the ring into the room. Abbott recognized it, and paid his respects to the diamond rather than to Della. Presently he showed her the telegram. Della seemed mystified and Abbott hastened to explain.

"The 'it' referred to is that diamond ring you wear," he said bluntly. "It is mine. I want it."

Della drew the ring from her finger and read the inscription.

"Dear me," she said. "Was Josie engaged to you, too?"

"I don't know what you mean by 'too,'" said Abbott, "but she was engaged to me."

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Della.

"Nothing, except to try to get my ring back."

"I am sorry for you," said Della, "but I really don't see how I can help you. It is not polite to give away things that have been given you by your friends."

"Josie did not appear to be troubled by any such conscientious scruples," commented Abbott, bitterly.

"Perhaps not. But she probably considered the ring hers to do what she pleased with. I don't feel that way about it. The sweet little note Josie sent me along with her present endears it to me immeasurably and makes me feel that it would be an insult to our friendship to dispose of it under any circumstances whatsoever."

"All that is probably very touching," rejoined Abbott, "but somehow it doesn't touch me worth a cent. It strikes me that Josie might have found a few endearing associations of her own clustering round an engagement ring, and that she would have hated to part with it."

"Oh, but she had to give it to somebody," cried Della. "She couldn't keep it. Her husband wouldn't have liked that at all. He wouldn't have let her keep it. He is awfully peculiar. He is a missionary, and missionaries seem to have such funny ideas in the matter of previous engagements. Why, he made Josie give away every one of the rings she had at the time of their marriage. He said if she kept them they might crop up at odd times as material evidence of Josie's former entanglements, and would be likely to give him uncomfortable thoughts even when he got as far away as China. He was afraid to risk that, he said, because if such memories got on his mind they might interfere with his work among the natives. Did you ever hear anything so absurd?"

Abbott leaned back weakly. "He made her give up all her rings?" he gasped. "How many did she have, in Heaven's name?"

"Four," said Della, "beside yours and the missionary's."

"And were they all engagement rings?"

"I presume so. At any rate, they were all engraved with inscriptions similar to this. One of them said 'H. K. to J. B.' Another, 'M. C. to J. B.' and another—well, I forget what the initials were on the other two, but anyway, they all looked suspicious."

"What did she do with them?" asked Abbott. "Did she give them all to you?"

"Oh, no," explained Della, volubly. "She gave them to four other girls. You see, there were six of us girls who had been great cronies from our school days. A long while ago, when we were still little school girls, we made an agreement that as each of us got married she should divide her engagement rings and other presents among the rest of the team. If one of us happened not to have rings enough to go round, they were to be given to the girls who owned the least jewelry, so as to try to even up our stock. Josie was the first of us to marry. Fortunately she had just rings enough to treat the crowd, so nobody can complain of being slighted."

Abbott straightened up with sudden interest. "I don't wish to appear too inquisitive," he said, "but I should like to know if you are fixed so that you could take care of your friends with the same impartiality in case you took a notion to run off with a foreign missionary?"

"Oh, no," declared Della. "I couldn't do a thing for them. I am not engaged—not even once."

"In that case," said Abbott, "I suppose you mean to hang on to the ring?"

"I should like to. Josie expected me to. I send you this little trifle," she said.

"Trifle?" ejaculated Abbott. "That ring a trifle? Good Lord! Why, it cost \$200."

"You were very foolish to pay that much," returned Della, severely.

"One hundred dollars is as much as any man ought to pay for an engagement ring, no matter how much money he has, and then, if the girl runs away with another man, he won't be out such a tremendous amount. Josie evidently did not realize how extravagant you had been, because that is just what she said. 'Send you this little trifle,' she said, 'and hope you will treasure it and think of me lovingly.' And I am sure, Mr. Abbott, you couldn't expect me to give up the ring after that. It wouldn't be right. It would be unkind of you to ask it. It is the only thing I have to remember the dear girl by."

"That is more I than I've got," said Abbott. "What do you suppose I am going to remember her by?"

"Ah, but you have your broken heart," said Della, consolingly.

"Quite true," assented Abbott, savorfully. "I suppose I ought to get along very well with that."

"Why shouldn't you?" said Della. "All the rest of the men are going to make that do. At any rate, they haven't asked for their rings. You are the first man I ever knew who raised such a row over a little matter of this kind."

"Somebody has to establish a precedent," growled Abbott. "It may as well be me as anybody. Besides, I need the ring. I'll be getting engaged again myself some day before long, and it will come in handy."

Della looked at him reproachfully. "Men are very fickle," she said. "I am glad I am not a man. I am afraid I should be as vacillating as the rest of them. I am disappointed in you. Somehow I had fancied you were going to make yourself very unhappy about Josie for a long time. I am sorry you expect to engage yourself to some one else so soon."

"Oh, if it is my unhappiness you are working for, I may possibly satisfy you by achieving more misery through the latter process than by burying myself in grief for faithless Josie," Abbott replied.

"But I don't want you to be unhappy," protested Della. "That is one reason I don't want you to get engaged again. You will be sure to make a mess of it. I don't want you to do that. I take quite an interest in you and would like to see you do well the next time you make an attempt at matrimony. I want to help you, and in order that I may promote your general welfare I promise to give you back your ring on one condition. As soon as you find a young woman to whom you would like to engage yourself, please let me know, so that I may make a study of her and let you know what kind of a girl she is. I am a good judge of girls. They can't fool me. It will take me only a little while to find out whether she is suited to you or not. If I think she is not, I will not give you your ring, so you will either have to give up the girl or buy another ring."

Abbott combated that suggestion with spirit; he really wanted his diamond and felt strongly inclined to threaten Della with the process of the law if she did not restore it peaceably. She, however, supported her point of view with many ingenious arguments, and he finally agreed to her proposition.

"But I do not wish to lose sight of the ring pending my engagement," he stipulated. "Considering that it is to be mine again at no very remote date, I wish to keep track of it. I would like you to arrange matters so I could see the ring occasionally."

"We can fix that easily," said Della. "You may call here once a week and make sure that the ring is all right."

Abbott began his joint guardianship of the ring on the following Wednesday. For six months he continued to examine it at lessening intervals.

"I think I shall need my ring," he told Della at last.

"Are—are you going to get engaged?" she asked faintly.

"I hope so," said Abbott. "It won't be my fault if I don't. I am going to ask the girl to have me."

"Remember our agreement," she said. "You had better let me see her first, so I can tell you, before you commit yourself, whether she is the right kind."

Abbott strutted across the room conceitedly. "I mean no disrespect to your wisdom," he said, "but I really think I can dispense with your advice. I know the girl well, and she suits me clear down to the ground. She is an awfully funny girl, it is true, but I am head and ears in love with her, just the same."

"Funny?" echoed Della. "In what way is she funny?"

"Oh, she is so very independent. And then she has such queer notions as to what constitutes loyalty to one's friends. As an illustration of her peculiar ideas in that respect, I will tell you of one characteristic thing she did recently. Several months ago a girl friend of hers eloped and gave her as a keepsake a diamond ring which had been given the runaway by one young man out of the half-dozen to whom she happened to be engaged at the time of the elopement. Now, that young man set considerable store by that ring and used his most persuasive arguments on the girl I am in love with, hoping to induce her to restore it to him, but she contended that by so doing she would be showing herself false to her friend, and refused to give it up, except on the most absurd conditions imaginable. But—oh, well, what's the use of finishing the story? What do you think of a girl who would do that? Could you recommend her? Do you think you would like her?"

"I—I'm afraid not," said Della. "I think she must be horrid."

"She is," said Abbott; "perfectly so. I assure you, nevertheless, I want to

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