

From The Tell-Tale Farce by Don Zolidis

From the Tell-Tale Farce

HENRY, 20, a very nervous and innocent young man.

ABIGAIL, 18, his fiancé.

SARAH, 32, her older cousin

1848. Henry has arrived to woo Abigail, who has recently fallen in love with someone else.

The Drawing Room of a very nice house.

HENRY (*too loud*)

I am here to see Miss Dowling.

ABIGAIL

Yes, Henry, we know.

HENRY (*rehearsed*)

You are my angel and I have... missed you...

(he's trying to remember what to say next.)

Like the... like days have become weeks...

ABIGAIL

All right yes yes, I know. I missed you too. You remember my cousin Sarah.

HENRY

Ah yes. How do you do? You are maintaining yourself well. I would never imagine that you are as old as you are.

SARAH (*coolly*)

Nice to see you again, Mr. Whitford.

HENRY

Yes.

(Pause. HENRY looks at ABIGAIL.)

ABIGAIL

Are you planning on saying something else?

HENRY

I'm sorry. I will say something soon. I just have to remember what I was going to say.

ABIGAIL

I can't wait.

(Pause.)

At any moment you may wish to speak.

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HENRY
I'm gathering myself.

ABIGAIL
Excellent. Gather away.
(Pause.)

SARAH
Perhaps I should leave.

HENRY
Not at all. We must always have a chaperone at all times. That might be the best way to preserve your virtue.

ABIGAIL
Yes. Indeed.
(Pause.)

SARAH
This is quite fun.

HENRY
It is, yes.

SARAH
Mr. Whitford, perhaps you would care to engage Miss Dowling in some witty banter?

HENRY
I should like that very much. Who will begin?

SARAH
Abigail?

ABIGAIL
I hear that it might rain soon.

HENRY
I have heard no such thing.

ABIGAIL
That's what I heard.

HENRY
Who did you hear that from?

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ABIGAIL

I don't recall.

HENRY

This is very troubling news. I am not prepared for rain.

ABIGAIL

It's simply rain.

HENRY

Do you know what sort of rain it's supposed to be?

ABIGAIL

I confess I don't recall the specifics.

HENRY

This information is useless to me, then. Why would you even bring rain up if you don't know anything important about that rain? Is it a torrent? Is it a sprinkle? I don't know.

ABIGAIL

I heard simply the word rain. Nothing more beyond that.

HENRY

Nothing more. Are you certain?

SARAH

The weather seems to be too challenging a subject. Perhaps you should talk of love.

HENRY

There are other people present.

SARAH

Again, I'm happy to leave. In fact, I would be thrilled to leave.

HENRY

Not at all. You must remain. I'm a much better conversationalist in groups.

ABIGAIL

I can't wait for our honeymoon.

HENRY

Might I make a comment on your purity?

ABIGAIL

If you must.

(He takes out a small piece of paper.)

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HENRY

I've written it down.

(He reads from it, shaking the paper as he does so.)

'Dearest. You are as the new-fallen snow' -snow. I meant to say snow. I'll start over. 'Dearest. You are the new-fallen snow. As the unworked marble. As the calm seas. As the butterfly new-hatch'd from its cocoon. And like the butterfly and the sea, you have floated near to me. And as the marble and the snow your skin is pure and white. As the snow is. And pure.'

(He stops.)

ABIGAIL

Well that was –

HENRY *(interrupting)*

May I continue? There's more.

ABIGAIL

I think I've got the gist of it actually.

HENRY

Perhaps I should leave it for you to read later.

(He hands her the note.)

ABIGAIL

That's an excellent idea.

HENRY

Very well.

(he gets up.)

This has been a most beguiling meeting between us. I trust that I have fanned the flames of our love properly. Therefore, I will take my leave.

ABIGAIL

You're off already? My grandmother hasn't even had a chance to talk to you.

HENRY

I don't wish to inflame you too much.

ABIGAIL

Oh.

HENRY

Were that the case, our passion might consume us.

SARAH

Oh yes. Most certainly.

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HENRY

And I should like to keep that bottled until our wedding night.

To read the rest of this play, please visit www.playscripts.com