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Friend Husband

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PUBLISHERS CHICAGO

L. BRAUNHOLD DEL.

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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

FRIEND HUSBAND

A COMEDY

BY

IRVING DALE

AUTHOR OF

"Souvenir Spoons," "Tickets Please," etc.



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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FRIEND HUSBAND

CHARACTERS.

NELLIE FERGUSON *The Wife*
JANE FERGUSON *Her Sister-in-law*

TIME—*The Present.*

PLACE—*Mrs. Ferguson's living room.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

JANE—A very neat appearing woman of thirty. No frills.

NELLIE—Younger than Jane and rather doll-babyish.

PROPERTIES.

Table, desk with chair, several large easy chairs, couch, etc., to make well furnished living room. Newspaper for Jane; pen, ink and colored stationery for Nellie; gentleman's picture in frame on desk; a woman's white glove tied in tissue paper, a door key, a vase with note written on Nellie's stationery, inside.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of the stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc.; 1 *E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance, etc.; *D. F.*, door in flat or scene running across the back of the stage; 1 *G.*, first groove, etc. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

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FRIEND HUSBAND

SCENE: *A well furnished room. Mantel at rear. Table-desk a little to R. of C. and placed at an angle so that the front may be seen. There is a chair at the desk and a larger one on the other side. At the L. is a couch. The door is at L.*

JANE *is seated in the big chair, reading a newspaper with scareheads of "Divorce" and "Scandal."*

NELLIE *sits at desk writing. She tears up the note on which she is working, takes a fresh sheet (the paper to be of a pronounced color), nibbles at the end of her pen-holder for a minute, looking into space the while—then—*

NELLIE. What on earth shall I say to the woman?

JANE (*hardly looking up*). Oh, say any old thing.

NELLIE. Don't be absurd, Jane. One doesn't write "any old thing" to a woman whose husband has just eloped with an actress.

JANE. Tell her you are sorry, of course.

NELLIE. How can I? You know as well as I do that Jim Cheuneville is an awful seamp. (*Leaning forward.*) Why, I've heard that he even—no, I can't tell you dear—you're not married and you wouldn't understand. Believe me, she is well rid of him.

JANE (*a bit disappointed*). Then by all means congratulate her.

NELLIE. No, that would be rubbing it in.

JANE. Oh, don't bother to write at all.

NELLIE. Why, Jane, you told me to write.

JANE (*turning around*). I told you? Nonsense. I merely suggested that you write. Besides, I didn't dream you were going to make such an awful fuss over it.

NELLIE. I'm not making a fuss. But I can't sit down and just "dash off a few lines" to a woman who is on the verge of a divorce. Poor Mrs. Cheuneville. Think of her

husband running off with that horrid creature—a second-rate actress.

JANE (*going back to her paper*). Foolish. He ought to have taken a really good one while he was about it.

NELLIE (*taking up a picture that is on the desk*). Oh, Fred, Fred, if you were to cut up like that, I'd crawl into a lonely corner and die.

JANE (*rising*). Fiddlesticks! You make me so tired. You haven't any more backbone than a jelly-fish—not a bit. Why, I believe if Fred were to knock you down, you'd pick yourself up and cry for more.

NELLIE. Because I'm married to your brother doesn't give you the right to insult me, Jane.

JANE. I didn't insult you—

NELLIE (*almost in tears*). You did. You called me a jelly-fish. I'm sure they are nasty, slippery things.

JANE (*coming over to her*). There, there, don't mind me. I'm a sour-tempered old maid.

NELLIE. I can't help it if I'm not aggressive and self-assertive.

JANE. Of course you can't. Only it does seem a pity sometimes that you haven't got a little more spunk. (*Pause.*) I wonder—I wonder what you really would do if—

NELLIE. If what?

JANE. Why, if Fred were to lam-a-loose a bit.

NELLIE. Lam-a-loose?

JANE. Yes, you know—look at other women. I wonder if you really would crawl into a corner and die. But what is the use of wondering. I'm about as likely to marry as Fred is to bother his head about women.

NELLIE. I don't know about that—

JANE. You think I've a chance?

NELLIE. I wasn't thinking about you at all. I was thinking about Fred.

JANE. Are you beginning to suspect him already?

NELLIE. Nothing could ever make me suspect Fred of anything improper. He is different from other men.

JANE. That is what all married women *say*, and they are the first to turn on their husbands at the slightest appearance of wrong doing.

NELLIE. *I never would.* Fred and I were discussing the subject this morning and he said that it was the unfounded suspicions of many wives that drove their husbands into doing things they otherwise would never think of doing. I think he is right. My faith in him is so strong—why, only this morning, as I watched him from the window—

JANE. Shaking him a day-day. I saw you. You've done it all three mornings I've been here.

NELLIE. I wasn't shaking him a day-day. I was waving him a kiss. He deliberately turned to look after a tall blond woman—a bleached blonde, too. She had on thin stockings and held her skirt very high.

JANE. Cause and effect, my dear. Come, let me sit down. We'll see what kind of a note I can manage.

NELLIE (*rising*). You ought to be glad you're a single woman, Jane.

JANE. I am. Now let me think. (*Reading briskly as she writes.*) "My dear Mrs. Cheuneville—"

NELLIE (*at JANE'S left and in C.*). Oh, no, no. (*Very sympathetically.*) "My dear Mrs. Cheuneville."

JANE. That's what I've got.

NELLIE. I know; but it's the way you said it.

JANE (*imitating*). "My dear Mrs. Cheuneville: Is it any help to know that loving thoughts are with you in your trouble—"

NELLIE. Would you say "trouble.?"

JANE. Why not?

NELLIE. Doesn't it sound a little too sympathetic?

JANE. Considering that she's well rid of her man, perhaps it does. (*Tears up the note and writes again.*) "My dear Mrs. Cheuneville: Is it any help to know that you have our loving thoughts? Sincerely." How's that?

NELLIE. That's good.

JANE. Shall I sign your name or mine?

NELLIE. Sign, "Nellie and Jane Ferguson."

JANE. My dear, we're not doing a sister act.

NELLIE. Oh, well, sign your own, then. It's such a relief to get it over. I felt that I ought to write something, yet I couldn't think what.

JANE (*who has enclosed letter in an envelope*). Where is it she lives—Clement Lane?

NELLIE (*looking over the paper*). Let's see—yes, 74 Clement Lane.

JANE (*blots the envelope vigorously*). Where do you keep your stamps?

NELLIE. Right there—the second drawer on your left. No, no; Fred locked that this morning. See if he put the stamps in the top drawer.

JANE. I don't find them.

(*They both go through the various drawers without success. Finally they come back to the locked drawer.*)

NELLIE. Well, they must be in here. He didn't take them out.

JANE. What did he lock it for, anyway?

NELLIE. I don't know. He told me not to open it.

JANE. Told you not to open it. Did you see him put anything in there?

NELLIE. No. He just told me he had locked the drawer and said I was not to open it.

JANE. I should think you would be wild with curiosity to see what's in here. (*Jiggles the drawer.*) Besides, you need the stamps.

NELLIE. Give me the letter. I'll go out and post it. I can get a stamp at the drug store.

JANE. How foolish, when there are some here. Did he make you *promise* not to open it?

NELLIE. Well, not exactly promise. He said, "Now, little woman" (*shaking her finger in imitation*), I don't want you to look in that drawer."

JANE (*sits and picks up the paper*). That settles it; you won't.

NELLIE (*heading toward the door with the letter*). I

would be likely to catch more cold if I were to go out, wouldn't I? (*She coughs slightly.* JANE *conceals her amusement.*) We could just get the stamps and not look to see what else is there.

JANE. "*We!*" What have I got to do with it? It's no concern of mine. Where's the key?

NELLIE. I don't know. (*Looks over the desk.*)

JANE (*helping her look*). What kind of a key is it?

NELLIE. It's a large—no, it's a small—I don't know, I'm sure, what it looks like. I never use the old thing. (*Crest-fallen.*) Well, I can't find it. He must have taken it with him.

JANE (*after a moment, pointing to the drawer above*). Perhaps, by pulling this top drawer 'way out, you can get at that one.

NELLIE (*brightening*). Good. Go ahead and try.

JANE. Go ahead yourself. I'm not going to do your dirty work for you.

NELLIE (*starts to pull out the drawer, then stops*). Oh, I don't dare. Fred will be angry.

JANE. Perhaps it will be better not to. The letter can wait.

NELLIE (*thinking it over*). If the note is to do any good, it ought to go at once. (*With determination.*) I must have those stamps.

JANE. Just a minute. Did Fred say not to open the drawer, or not to look in it?

NELLIE. He said (*shaking her finger as before*) "Now, little woman, I don't want"—what difference does it make what he said?

JANE. Why, if he said not to open it, by pulling this (*pointing to the top drawer*) one out, you won't be opening that one.

NELLIE. Oh, I see. I can look in the drawer without opening it. I am sure he didn't say anything about looking—I was just not to open it. Here goes. (*She pulls out the upper drawer. They both lean forward eagerly. NELLIE pushes JANE away.*) I'll get the stamp, Jane. I'm his

wife, you know. (*She pokes around a minute and then pulls out a key, a Japanese vase with a small neck and a package tied up in tissue paper. JANE names them as they are handed to her and places them on the desk.*)

JANE. A key! A vase! A package!

NELLIE. My goodness!

JANE. For Heaven's sake! (*Both reach for the package. NELLIE gets it.*)

NELLIE. Jane, let me. (*She looks it all over, then unties the package and brings out a woman's white glove, large and rather soiled.*) A woman's glove. (*Tries it on.*) It's not mine. I wear a five and a half and this is a seven if it's a day. (*Smells it.*) Gasoline! I wonder where he got it. What on earth did he lock it up for?

JANE (*holding up the key. NELLIE does not see her.*) What a funny looking key. Do you recognize it?

NELLIE. No, I don't. (*Suspiciously.*) Why do you suppose he wanted to hide those things from me?

JANE. How do I know? The glove and the key might go together, but where does the vase fit in?

NELLIE. What do you mean by the glove and the key going together?

JANE (*laughing slyly*). Why the key might belong to the one who belongs to the glove.

NELLIE. But the glove belongs to some woman. What is he doing with her key? It's a door key! Oh, Jane! (*She drops on sofa L. overcome by the horrible suspicion.*)

JANE (*has examined the vase and discovered a rolled-up paper of the same color as the note paper they have been using. She unrolls it, find it's a letter, then hurriedly rolls it up again and slips it into the vase. As her back has been to NELLIE, NELLIE does not see the performance.*) I've seen that vase before.

NELLIE (*hardly able to speak*). It's mine. Fred gave it to me before we were married. It belongs over there on the mantel. I hadn't missed it.

JANE (*places the vase on the desk. She turns and sees*

NELLIE *with her face buried in her hands*). Why, Nellie, what is the matter? (*Tries to raise her head.*)

NELLIE. Oh, go away!

JANE. Nellie dear—

NELLIE (*jumping up and going C.*). Leave me alone, I say!

JANE (*following*). Now, Nellie, don't be silly—

NELLIE (*turns on her. JANE backs away toward the desk in mock alarm.*) Silly! Silly! I'm not silly, I'm mad—mad clear through. Oh, what a fool I've been to think Fred different than other men. We have been married less than a year and already he treasures some other woman's glove. (*Throws the glove on the floor and stamps on it.*) Oh, what a fool I've been!

JANE (*in a carefully sweet voice*). Listen, dear—

NELLIE (*in a rage. JANE runs back of the desk*). Don't speak to me. If it hadn't been for you I never would have thought of opening that drawer. It was you who was curious to see what was in there, not me. Oh, I know your nasty, catty ways. You never do anything yourself, you merely suggest. Some one else does the work and gets all the blame. (*JANE tries to call her attention to the vase by pushing it toward her.*) You're tickled to death that I'm miserable. You never liked me anyway. I know you never did. Nothing would suit you better than to have me get a divorce. Then you could have Fred all to yourself. (*JANE gives the vase another push.*) Stop that! But I won't get a divorce! I'll lead him a dog's life! I'll show you whether I'm a jelly fish or not! I won't give him a minute's peace! Oh, I hate him! I hate him! I hate him! (*JANE puts out her hand to give the vase another push. NELLIE in her rage gets ahead of her and grabs the vase and holds it as if to throw it. JANE, thinking she is going to be hit, runs up stage, crying, "Don't, there is a letter in there!" But she is too late. NELLIE throws the vase with all her might on the floor, then drops into the chair at the desk in a torrent of tears.*)

JANE (*holding up her hands*). The deluge! (*She comes*

down and looks for the letter. She finds it among the broken pieces of the vase. She goes to NELLIE.) Look, Nellie; look here. There was a letter from Fred (NELLIE is interested) and it is for you.

NELLIE. For me? (*Sits up and wipes her eyes.*)

JANE. Yes, perhaps it explains the whole business.

NELLIE (*getting up and standing C.*). Let me see it. Why, it's on my note paper. He must have written it there at the desk.

JANE. Yes, and it's dated today.

NELLIE (*reading*). "Dear Nellie: You don't know it, but you are going to be the victim of an experiment. I've been wondering what you would do if I were to lock a drawer—say of this very desk—and ask you particularly not to open it. (*They look at each other.*) I wonder if you would be the least little bit disturbed if you were to find a woman's glove in the drawer?"

JANE. Disturbed! Ahem!

NELLIE (*continuing*). "For the success of the experiment you must see the glove first and read this letter afterward. How am I to manage that? I know! I'll just wrap the glove in paper. (You see I am counting upon your being curious.) Now I'll slip this note into the vase that is over there on the mantel. Perhaps you won't examine that too closely at first. Then I'll put the vase with the note and the glove in the drawer and lock it. An inspiration! I'll put my latch key into the drawer. That also will make you curious. There's more than one way to get into a drawer." (*They look at each other again and JANE laughs.*) "I'm awaiting the result with interest. Fred. P. S.—I forgot to say that I found the glove in the street car last night." (*After a pause.*) Jane, were you in on this—this experiment?

JANE. Good heavens, no! But I did suspect a trick when you found the drawer locked.

NELLIE. What a precious little fool I've been. Don't tell Fred how silly I was, will you?

JANE (*laughing*). Not even about crawling off in a corner to die?

NELLIE (*putting her hand over JANE'S mouth*). Oh, don't! Now promise you won't tell him.

JANE (*makes unintelligible noises*).

NELLIE (*shaking JANE slightly*). Promise!

JANE (*breaking away*). How can I with your hand over my mouth? I promise.

NELLIE. You're a darling! (*Kisses JANE.*)

CURTAIN.

By Way of the Secret Passage

By LINDSEY BARBEE.

Price 25 Cents

Comedy-drama in 3 acts; 1 male, 11 females. The character of John Harvey can easily be assumed by a girl if it is not desirable to have a man in the cast. Time, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours. Scene: 1 interior. Characters: Mrs. Sherman, the hostess. Betty Drew, her niece. Ruth, Alice and Rita, guests. Hannah, a maid. Madame Drew, of revolutionary days. Annette, Caroline and Elizabeth, her daughters. Wenonah, an Indian maid. John Harvey, of the Patriot army.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Betty's engagement dance on Christmas night. The portrait of Mrs. Elizabeth Drew. Betty's great-great-grandmother. The story of Mistress Elizabeth's romantic career. Ghosts of the happy pair haunt the room each Christmas night. Rita falls asleep in a chair and dreams a dream.

Act II.—Scene 1—The dream of long ago. John Harvey gains an interview with his lady love. The secret mission is made known to Mistress Elizabeth and the marked chart is put into her hands. Shots, pursuit and the secret passage. Scene 2—Where is Elizabeth? The mysterious tapping. Elizabeth makes a dramatic entrance and brings astounding news.

Act III.—Rita awakes. Betty's puzzling absence is discussed. Another mysterious tapping. "He's waiting for me—at the end of the secret passage, the same as in the long, long ago!"

Abbu San of Old Japan

By WALTER BEN HARE.

Price 25 Cents

Comedy-drama in 2 acts; 15 females. Time, about 2 hours. Scene: A simple interior. Characters: Abbu San, daughter of his majesty. Duchess Fuji-no. Lady Yu-giri, Mist of the Evening. O Matsuka San and O Kiku San, maids of honor. Ohano, wife of the bandit chief. Natsu-no, hostess of the inn "Million Welcomes." Okuku, sister of the Ox, a porter at the inn. Umi, Sada and Yasa, peasant maids. Henrietta Dash, an American newswriter. Aunt Paradise, a black mammy. Madam Masago, manager of the players. Ono, her maid of all work.

An absolute novelty in play construction, bristling with incidents and sparkling with comedy. The play is presented after the fashion of "The Yellow Jacket," the stage hands changing scenery in full view of the audience and the manager explaining the action and introducing the different characters from her seat at the side. The star part is particularly suited to the temperament of a pretty little ingenue, the characters of Fuji-no and Mist of the Evening call for heavy and effective dramatic work and old Aunt Paradise who longs for "ole Virginny" is a comedy creation of especial note. Dances and song numbers from Mikado are called for by the text but these may be given or not at the pleasure of the manager. A picturesque and very effective dramatic entertainment with a distinct plot that will interest and amuse any audience. Suitable for schools, colleges, clubs or churches.

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers

154 W. Randolph Street, CHICAGO

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Price 15 Cents Each, Postpaid, Unless Different Price Is Given

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(25c)	17
Women Who Did, 1 hr. (25c)	8 3
Yankee Detective, 3 acts, 2 hrs.	8 3

	M. F.
Wide Enough for Two, 45 min.	5 2
Wrong Baby, 25 min.	8
Yankee Peddler, 1 hr.	7 3

FARCES, COMEDIETAS, Etc.

All on a Summer's Day, 40 min.	4 6
April Fools, 30 min.	3
Assessor, The, 10 min.	3 2
Baby Show at Pineville, 20 min.	19
Billy's Chorus Girl, 25 min.	2 3
Billy's Mishap, 20 min.	2 3
Borrowed Luncheon, 20 min.	5
Borrowing Trouble, 20 min.	3 5
Case Against Casey, 40 min.	23
Country Justice, 15 min.	8
Cow that Kicked Chicago, 20 m.	3 2
Divided Attentions, 35 min.	1 4
Dude in a Cyclone, 20 min.	4 2
Family Strike, 20 min.	3 3
First-Class Hotel, 20 min.	4
For Love and Honor, 20 min.	2 1
Fudge and a Burglar, 15 min.	5
Fun in Photo Gallery, 30 min.	6 10
Great Medical Dispensary, 30 m.	6
Great Pumpkin Case, 30 min.	12
Hans Von Smash, 30 min.	4 3
I'm Not Meself at All, 25 min.	3 2
Initiating a Granger, 25 min.	8
Irish Linen Peddler, 40 min.	3 3
Is the Editor In? 20 min.	4 2
Kansas Immigrants, 20 min.	5 1
Men Not Wanted, 30 min.	8
Mike Donovan's Courtship, 15 m.	1 3
Mother Goose's Goslings, 30 m.	7 9
Mrs. Jenkins' Brilliant Idea, 35m.	8
Mrs. Stubbins' Book Agent, 30 m.	3 2
My Wife's Relations, 1 hr.	4 6
Not a Man in the House, 40 m.	5
Pair of Lunatics, 20 min.	1 1
Patsy O'Wang, 35 min.	4 3
Pat, the Apothecary, 35 min.	6 2
Persecuted Dutchman, 30 min.	6 3
Regular Fix, 35 min.	6 4
Second Childhood, 15 min.	2 2
Shadows, 35 min.	2 2
Sing a Song of Seniors, 30 min.	7
Taking Father's Place, 30 min.	5 3
Taming a Tiger, 30 min.	3
That Rascal Pat, 30 min.	3 2
Those Red Envelopes, 25 min.	4 4
Too Much of a Good Thing, 45 min.	3 6
Turn Him Out, 35 min.	3 2
Two Aunts and a Photo, 20 m.	4
Two Gentlemen in a Fix, 15 m.	2
Two Ghosts in White, 20 min.	8
Two of a Kind, 40 min.	2 3
Uncle Dick's Mistake, 20 min.	3 2
Wanted a Correspondent, 45 m.	4 4
Wanted a Hero, 20 min.	1 1

VAUDEVILLE SKETCHES, MONOLOGUES, ETHIOPIAN PLAYS.

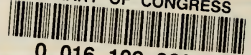
Ax'in' Her Father, 25 min.	2 3
Booster Club of Blackville, 25 m.	10
Breakfast Food for Two, 20 m.	1 1
Cold Finish, 15 min.	2 1
Colored Honeymoon, 25 min.	2 2
Coon Creek Courtship, 15 min.	1 1
Coming Champion, 20 min.	2
Coontown Thirteen Club, 25 m.	14
Counterfeit Bills, 20 min.	1 1
Darktown Fire Brigade, 25 min.	10
Doings of a Dude, 20 min.	2 1
Dutch Cocktail, 20 min.	2
For Reform, 20 min.	4
Fresh Timothy Hay, 20 min.	2 1
Glickman, the Glazier, 25 min.	1 1
Good Mornin' Judge, 35 min.	9 2
Her Hero, 20 min.	1 1
Hey, Rube! 15 min.	1 1
Home Run, 15 min.	1 1
Jumbo Jum, 30 min.	4 3
Little Red School House, 20 m.	4
Love and Lather, 35 min.	3 2
Marriage and After, 10 min.	1
Memphis Mose, 25 min.	5 1
Mischievous Nigger, 25 min.	4 2
Mistaken Miss, 20 min.	1 1
Mr. and Mrs. Fido, 20 min.	1 1
Oh, Doctor! 30 min.	6 2
One Sweetheart for Two, 20 m.	2
Oshkosh Next Week, 20 min.	4
Oyster Stew, 10 min.	2
Pete Yansen's Gurl's Moder, 10m.	1
Pickles for Two, 15 min.	2
Pooh Bah of Peacetown, 35 min.	2 2
Prof. Black's Funnygraph, 15 m.	6
Sham Doctor, 10 min.	4 2
Si and I, 15 min.	1
Special Sale, 15 min.	2
Stage Struck Darcy, 10 min.	2 1
Sunny. Son of Italy, 15 min.	1
Time Table, 20 min.	1 1
Tramp and the Actress, 20 min.	1 1
Troubled by Ghosts, 10 min.	4
Troubles of Rozinski, 15 min.	1
Two Jay Detectives, 15 min.	3
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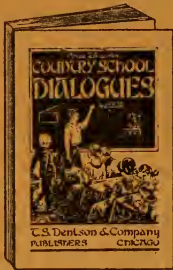
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