

~ SECOND TIME'S A CHARM ~

One Act Play by Stanley Dyrector

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~ PREFACE ~

‘SECOND TIME’S A CHARM’ was first produced in Boca Raton, Florida to a warm reception. This play is a comedy about two couples who are friends. The two husbands, Phil and Steve, are rivals. One unbeknownst to the other, has an agenda which is central to the heart of this play.

Peggy, who is married to Steve, naively thinks he is loyal and puts him on a pedestal. During the play, we shall see how Phil’s wife Abby, discovers that relationships are not all what they seem to be.

CAST of CHARACTERS

- STEVE - a die-hard lothario.
- ABBY - Phil’s wife; loyal with a sense of humor.
- PEGGY - Steve’s wife; a peacemaker, genuine.
- PHIL - an Archie Bunker, hard of hearing and paranoid.

~ SCENE 1 ~

There is a sense of urgency throughout the play.

NIGHT: While parking his car, Steve spots his dear friend Abby walking on the sidewalk. Disembarking from his car, he quickly secures the doors with a click of his alarm device and hurries after her.

STEVE: Abby! Abby! Wait up!

ABBY: Oh, Steve. I just parked. We didn't want to be late. Where'd you park?

STEVE: *(indicates where he parked.)* Back there. Abby don't rush off.

ABBY: *(preoccupied)* The parking around here —

STEVE: Sucks. Restricted. Always. Abb, will ya hold on—

ABBY: *(checks cell, walks)* Traffic on Wilshire was horrendous. What'd you say?

STEVE: We are never alone.

ABBY: Yes, of course. You're with Peggy. I'm with Phil.

STEVE: Oh, yes, the Great Phil.

ABBY: He didn't feel like driving tonight. I was elected.

STEVE: Yeah, terrific. No third wheel.

ABBY: Pardon?

STEVE: Abby, do you realize the first time I ever saw your face was over thirty-five years ago, at your sister Connie's wedding?

ABBY: Connie. Tsk. Has it been that long?

STEVE: Yeah. I worked with Jack for years, before they got married. I was almost his Best Man. Didn't you know that?

ABBY: No. No, I didn't. The past...it's like a dream. He's been gone for...how long... the years fly. And Connie my, sweet sis —

STEVE: You don't remember me dancing with you...to that song?

ABBY: We should go. Song?

STEVE: (*vividly*) I remember it like it was yesterday. Band was a trio and a guy, singer, in bell bottom tux, thought he was Tom Jones. Your hair was long and hung down to the tips of your shoulders, smell of lilacs; your crystal earrings, I saw rainbows in ‘em. Song was “*Brand New*”.

ABBY: (*beat*) Oh my... (*sighs*)

STEVE: Yes, you remember it, eh? (*sings*) “I sing this song ‘cause you make me feel...”

ABBY: (*sings*) “Brand New”. The Stylistics. Oh my gosh. Phil’s got two left feet. I danced. Thrilled me like bubbles in a champagne glass. Song touched me so. I had to.

STEVE: That night my heart was new born. All because of...it was the last time I ever held you...
(*amorously*) Precious love. Kiss me! —

ABBY: What!? Steve what are — you crazy? What’s come over you, behaving like a —

STEVE: I never forgot us — those moments —

ABBY: But you’re ridiculous. We’re seniors —

STEVE: Junior Flips, once! — Don’t you remember?

ABBY: Oh, malarkey. Steve! Oh for goodness sake get a hold of yourself. You look like some wild-eyed —
(*laughs*)

Ha. Yes, your flair for the dramatic. Always the card.

STEVE: Yeah, I’m playing that card now.

ABBY: Tut. You’ve had your fun — but we’ve got to giddyap, we’ve got responsibilities.

STEVE: I want a kiss first. —

ABBY: What? Are you drunk?

STEVE: Intoxicated by you.

ABBY: Nonsense. Time to —
(*he goes for her lips, she turns face away*)
No, not on the lips! Okay. On the cheek.
(*points to her cheek*) Right here.

STEVE: C'mon Abby. Why not lips. I love you!

ABBY: (*giggles*) I love you too, Steve — but you need some breath freshener.

STEVE: What? Ouch!

ABBY: I couldn't resist. I love you in my own way. We are married, you know? —
(*starts off*)

STEVE: What's that got to do with anything? My newborn heart woke up again tonight when I saw you. I'm not drinkin'. I'm not on drugs — I'm not nuts.
(*unseen by her sprays Binaca in mouth*) I need a real Kiss. (*advances towards her*)
Well, actually I am nuts...about you!

ABBY: No.

STEVE: Why not. This is our chance. I'm not talkin' Won Ton backwards, you know. Go for it!

ABBY: Won Ton backwards? Oh, I get it. It's Cantonese — for NOT NOW. Cute joke. Jokester. You're always the life of the party. We've had a romp. Now let's go.

STEVE: Hold time, Abby, I'm serious as a heart attack. I'm not talking Einstein. You can figure it out. Let's live before we die.

ABBY: Yes, laugh before we cry. Okay, no bromides, please. I find it unacceptable to cheat — cheat on a friend, let alone cheat on my own husband, yet. Please, before Phil and Peggy have a fit.

STEVE: She will not! She has her act together. And you know that. Peg can handle anything. Phil's the loose cannon.

ABBY: He — worries. Just a bit more than most...

STEVE: Trying to excuse him. I like your alibis. Doin' it for him for years.

ABBY: (*exasperated*)
Steve, you're acting more weird than silly, you clown.

STEVE: How's about I throw a ball on my nose and balance it like a seal? Because he's got you trained. He treats you like his servant; waiting on him hand and foot while he's chomping at the bit, watchin' TV, his Laker games and football, instead of just holding your hand. Don't deny it 'cause I see it every time Peg'n me 're over.

ABBY: Steven, — I don't know about you — is it a full moon?

STEVE: *(dead on, great passion)*
Because I'm in love with you? What's the crime!

ABBY: You're supposed to be in love with your wife. Peggy. Remember her?

STEVE: I am. Call tonight Kismet. Destiny. Yes, like planets coming together. We'll run off together. *(lightly)*
You have lots of money doncha,— can take us to Rio de Janeiro, Hawaii, Fiji, to Paradise. We'll have a blast. Live the life of the rich and famous. La Dolce Vita!

ABBY: Oh, yes, crazy person, we'll do it next year. Let's make a dash now. Our spouses're waiting.

STEVE: Abby, you're a killjoy.

ABBY: Better that than a cheater.

STEVE: You don't dig me? Tell me to my face.

ABBY: Dig you? Steve, this isn't the 60's and Free Love. We're old friends. Do I have to use a broad brush? I'm not interested in your frivolous— advances.

STEVE: Frivolous? What advances? I want to kiss you smack dab on the lips.

ABBY: Will this cease? Don't you understand English? I — I don't like to kiss on the lips.

STEVE: Wow. Am I asking you to go to bed with me? Have I ever asked you? No. I just want one of those wet juicy Abby kisses on my lips, swappin' spits with ya, chew your chewing gum if you're chewin'— what's so terrible, you're acting like some vestal virgin.

ABBY: Ha, ha, that'll be the day, Don Quixote. And you're like a teenager struck by puppy love. I've got two grown children and three grandchildren.

STEVE: So be sophisticated. Be like the French. Parlez-moi d'Amour.

ABBY: Tsk. Please. I'm just an old fashioned square. Don't you get it? I'm out of touch with today's reality, with today's — fads.

STEVE: Baloney.
(a beat)

Salami. You're always keeping in step — using things your son recommends — like an iPod, a computer, a fancy cellphone — the Zeitgeist of the day.

ABBY: Joey's my son. It's his generation.

STEVE: Yeah. The ME generation. So kiss me on the cheek and I'll kiss you on yours and we'll call it even Steven.

ABBY: Steven, I thank you for the choice.
(they kiss each other on the cheek)

STEVE: Why is it I feel like I got hamburger instead of steak?

ABBY: Tch. Give an inch take an arm. Phil'll have a hemorrhage wondering where I am. Screening'll start without us. I dropped him in front of the theater, so he'd save a place for all of us.

STEVE: Whoa. Peg got there first, I'll bet.

ABBY: Don't you love her? She's so good to you. Are you on the outs?

STEVE: No!

ABBY: She'd never dream of cheating.

STEVE: This isn't cheating. Oh, Abby, why can't I be in love with you? Where is it written that I can only love one woman in my life?

ABBY: It's in our marriage vows, in the bible's Ten Commandments. That's the way it is.

STEVE: I got kids. You got kids. We love 'em — your answer is so — provincial. Lame. Be real. Why can't I love you? Why? —

ABBY: Because this is different. Other dear lives are involved —

STEVE: There! You see — you are interested!—

ABBY: Like a candle in the wind.

STEVE: No, so help me. It's simple. Why do you make it criminal? It should be natural.—

ABBY: Ha. Because I'm not perplexed about this. I'm not a slut.

STEVE: Huh???

ABBY: One thing leads to another. We see that kind of behavior every day. Shining examples for our grandkids to look up to: Politicians, the ultra rich and arrogant, men with power, loose women, — how they behave. The mistresses, the deception — and it's disgusting.

STEVE: *(with fire)*

Wrongo! I am not a politician. I am not some yo-yo hittin' on you. I'm not the flavor of the day! Some kook on TV on 48 Hours, looking to knock off his wife because of a mistress.

ABBY: I am in love with my husband...Phil.
(gestures to go)

STEVE: Really? You mean all you love are them?

ABBY: What do you mean, them?

STEVE: Phil and your kids. Grandkids.

ABBY: No.

STEVE: No what?

ABBY: I mean yes. Yes. They are, the most important of all to me — in the whole wide world. Please, you're making this extremely difficult. I've loyalties. Phil and Peggy.
(sarcastically) Peggy, who happens to be your wife seven days of the week!

STEVE: Whoopee! Did I get your Irish up? I'm not dumb. Lady, you want a kiss, you need love. You need affection.

ABBY: Ha! The trouble with you is — you think the grass is greener on the other side.

STEVE: Because I don't see Astro Turf.

ABBY: Stop! Stop it this instant. This inane talk. Please! Please!

STEVE: What do you mean inane? I'm pouring my —

ABBY: *(tears well up)* Can we just vamoose!

Lights fade

~ SCENE 2 ~

Lights come up in front of a theater

PHIL: Gee, where the hell were you, what took you so long? I was gonna call out the Marines! You just got here in the nick of time. —

ABBY: Phil, I didn't mean to worry you. I suppose, I — was careless and misjudged the — time...

PEGGY: *(to Steve)* You had problems parking, sweetheart?

STEVE: Um, yeah, yes, just a skosh. Funny how you think things're going to go smooth — and there'll be no problems — but there always are.

PEGGY: Abb, your eyes're red? —

ABBY: *(sigh)* It's that LA smog. —

PEGGY: Yes. —

PHIL: I thought my wife got kidnapped. —

STEVE: Abby? In Beverly Hills? Streets were logjammed with cars. Didn't you hear horns honking?

PEGGY: Yes, of course, we did...because of the buzz on this film. There's a big turn out.—

PHIL: I didn't hear honking.—

ABBY: Phil, most streets are — permit parking.

PHIL: Why didn't you use my handicap permit. It's what it's there for. Just walk like a cripple. Do I have to show you? *(limps)*

ABBY: It's against the law.

PHIL: What're you talkin' law-shmaw. Nobody'd know. You're a respectable white lady.

ABBY: Phil, please.

PEGGY: *(to calm uptight Phil)* You're my favorite friends. We have time to spare. We're spending it together.

PHIL: I rushed here. Practically ran. I'm outta breath.

ABBY: No, you didn't. I dropped you off right there, by the sign.

PHIL: I still rushed and felt like I was in a marathon.

ABBY: Peggy, we appreciate your kind invitation.—

PEGGY: I know you do. —

PHIL: Wake up Abby! I told her all that stuff while we was waitin' a year and a day for yuz. Look at this big line! Where did all these weirdos come from?!

ABBY: Shoosh! It's a free country.

STEVE: *(to distract Phil)* Phil, did you hear this one? So this penguin walks into a bar and orders a drink. Then he's gotta go to the bathroom and he tells the bartender to reserve the barstool next to his, because his brother's coming in. So the bartender says, "What's he look like?"

(discreetly indicates Phil) Ladies and Gents, meet Archie Bunker!—

PHIL: Abby, don't shoosh me, you stupid idiot! — Whadd'ya say, Steve?

STEVE: Say? Abby's smart —

PHIL: Speak up — all I see is your lips movin'. You read books like that too?

STEVE: Um, yes. All I said — It's hard to be nostalgic when you have A.D.D?

(Phil gives him a puzzled stare)

PHIL: What kind've movie is this?—

PEGGY: It's a French film.—

PHIL: Damn subtitles!—

PEGGY: No, it's in English.—

STEVE: C'est la vie.—

PHIL: Aww, crap. French speak funny, anyway. It's why the bloody Brits call 'em frogs. *(does a broad frog imitation)* Croak, croak, croak.

STEVE: You're a barrel full of laughs, Phil.

PHIL: Think so? Glad someone appreciates my great talents. I sure as cockey-doodydandy don't get it at home. Who was the guy who said you're never a hero in your own home town?

PEGGY: Wasn't it Matthew referring to Jesus?

PHIL: Nah. No way! That was me! I said it first! ahead of every single person, about Ted Williams - fightin' Boston newspapers bustin' his chops for twenty years not appreciatin' him.

ABBY: My husband's a wealth of trivia.

STEVE: Say, Phil, see the Patriots destroy the Giants the other day? —

PHIL: Ha. Mark my words. I'm an expert! They were lucky!

STEVE: Not with their Monster End!—

PHIL: Pshew! Chalk one up for you.

STEVE: Till Father Time catches up with him. Or a tackle, with a bone crunchin' concussion zonks him out and that's all she wrote.

PHIL: Yeah, well, maybe.

STEVE: No maybe's. When athletes get old.—

PHIL: It's bull. Excuse my language, ladies, but that's really a crock of horseshit! In the ring, the squared circle — it's what — it's what it's called by the experts, ahem! — Old Mister George Foreman, on his comeback trail, took on Michael Moorer, the champ, and old George hits him a shot in the head — KLAMBOOEY! Knocks his lights out big time 'n sends him beddy-bye winning his heavyweight title back, when he's forty-five year old.

STEVE: (*meant for Abby*) Go figure. Shows, when you're old don't mean your dead.

ABBY: So, Peg - What did you do about your car?

PEGGY: After I did the taxes, I took the car and drove all the way out to El Monte to get repairs.

ABBY: With Steve?

PEGGY: Gracious, no. By myself. Are we attached by the hip? (*Abby laughs*) I know what the car needs. It's like a child. It needed a tune up. So how was Chicago? Your visit with your daughter? How were the kids? Was the weather kind?

ABBY: Sharon's doing great. She and John fuss about balancing their budget.

PEGGY: Who doesn't?

ABBY: They wanted us to stay with them. But we decided better, the Hyatt. —

PHIL: Didn't the Samoans buy out that place?

ABBY: Peg, she's got her hands full with Andy. He's such a doll. A bundle of energy who can't sit still.

PHIL: Ah, he's an annoying Noodnik. Takes after you, Abby.

PEGGY: Oh Phil, please, don't be such a Grinch.

STEVE: (*quietly*) Yeah.

ABBY: (*indicating Phil*) Pay him no mind. Andy's adorable. He's my ray of sunshine. Peggy, Spring in Chicago's, heavenly. I'll show you pictures. Oh, maybe right now. Line's not moving.

PEGGY: I'd love to see them.

ABBY: Here, look, four years old. Has the cutest dimples doesn't he?

PHIL: (*points to cheek, grins*) Takes after me.

PEGGY: Oh, sure.

PHIL: Abby, move! The line's going and you're standing there like a lox without a bagel. Shake a leg!—

PEGGY: Hold your horses, please. Abby's showing me more pictures of your grandson —

STEVE: Don't crack the whip, Phil. Give her a break. — Peg, hon', they're moving. —

PHIL: Chop chop. It's stampede time, girls. Bulls're runnin' at Pamplona. Every man for himself. Who wants a big head sitting in front of me? Drive me bonkers and send me back to Coney Island. Steve, you must've gotten that in your job. You know, people without your smarts — leaping in front of you — telling you what to do all the time! (*Steve winces*)