

# Can't believe I said, "I do!"

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Her eyes widened in excitement, exhibiting a blue so deep and liquid that it might have been shining through an unshed tear. Her auburn hair had been swept into an elegant mass of waves and its silky tendrils hung on her shoulders.

A great collective sigh issued from the congregation as Mr. Scott and Tia came walking down the aisle, Tia gliding, Mr. Scott bouncing and beaming. Tia was wearing a very simple white dress and seemed to be emitting a strong, silvery glow. While her radiance usually dimmed everyone by comparison, today it beautified everybody it fell upon. I could hardly believe that the bride was once a small girl with two pigtails with whom I used to play hide-and-seek!

The warm, fuzzy feeling of happiness was kindling inside me as I saw my childhood friend being led up the stairwell by the man of her dreams. It seemed just like yesterday that Tia and I were sitting on the new couch in my living room, sipping hot chocolate on Christmas Eve despite my mother's continuous warnings that we might spill our drinks. A woman's intuition had once again proved itself within minutes when I had accidentally tilted my cup while laughing. I would never forget how Tia had taken the blame on herself to save me from my mother's wrath.

Lost in thought, I did not even realise that the bride and groom had finished making their vows.

Boom!

The bursting of a balloon reverted me back to my surroundings. I smiled as confetti rained down on the couple-to-be. I watched as Harry, the bridegroom, turned to his seven-year old sibling, Crusoe, who was also his best man.

'Looks like he's asking for the ring.' I wondered. 'This s going to be smooth.'

Little did I did know how very wrong I was!

I glanced at Tia, who was waiting patiently. However, after a moment it became as plain as pikestaff that something was not quite right for Crusoe burst into tears. Seconds later, the deep voice of Harry's Uncle Gerald called across the church.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we apologise for the momentary interlude. We require your assistance. Please look around and see if anyone can spot the ring fallen somewhere."

A great murmur swept through the audience. It was then that I cleverly anticipated what had happened - Crusoe had put the ring in along with the confetti into the balloon in order to surprise the bride. Now, even though the ring was missing, the surprise element of his idea was clearly reflected on the bride's face. I was torn between a mad desire to laugh and at the same time felt solemn at the seriousness of the situation, for the wedding could not resume without the ring.

People seemed to have taken the challenge in their stride, dragging and lifting chairs. Some enthusiasts even went down on all fours. Suddenly a freckled teenage girl screeched, "Found it!"

The scavenger hunt came to a dead halt.

“Well, pass it ahead please!” Shouted Harry, sounding relieved.

“Excuse-me?” Replied the girl, looking genuinely confused.

“The ring. We still need to get married, you know!”

“Oh! I am so sorry; I was talking about my earring that fell off earlier!”

“Ahh.” The audience groaned and I chuckled. I realised I should probably go and console the bride, whose face now wore an expression of mingled disbelief and disappointment.

“How could you have let this happen?” I heard her wail to Harry. The rest of her speech was drowned by the animated chatter of an ancient, almost-toothless couple.

Suddenly a bright light pierced the corner of my eye. I looked down and to my delight its source was nothing but the treasure of the treasure hunt. The sparkling heart-shaped pink diamond had been embedded into a ring of platinum with the words ‘forever true’ etched on the metal. I bent down and picked it up gingerly.

“Doesn’t anyone know where the ring is?” Tia’s soft yet desperate plea reached my ears.

“I do!” I declared loudly.

A pin-drop silence followed my announcement.

“I BEG YOUR PARDON!” Yelled Harry, looking mystified.

The temperature seemed to have dropped by ten degrees. A cold draught now swept the room and the tension increased ten-fold.

The implicit meaning of the words I had just spoken dawned on me.

“I’m s..s..sorry. I only meant I’ve found the ring. Isn’t that what the bride asked?” I fumbled, inwardly cursing myself for being such a fool.

The audience erupted in laughter and warmth engulfed the area once again. Crusoe ran up to me.

“Thanks, Andrew!” He smiled.

“Anytime, buddy.”

I returned to my seat as the priest blessed the couple, “I finally pronounce you man and wife!”

I joined in the cheers with gusto. This was one affair I was sure to remember!