

MRS. STRANGE-ADE:

Because—

INEZ:

Because is no reason—

MRS. STRANGE-ADE:

You interrupted, and it isn't polite to speak when—

INEZ:

Indulging in personalities—

MRS. STRANGE-ADE:

It—indul—

INEZ:

Why?

MINA, coming forward:

They're going to clinch, see if they don't— (Stepping up to them)

What are you quarrelling about?

MRS. STRANGE-ADE, astonished:

My dear woman! We are not quarrelling. We are merely discussing a question of precedence.

JOE MANN:

These heated discussions are responsible for the saying that women never get along in—

INEZ:

Go on without preamble, and come to the issue without wounding his self-esteem.

MRS. STRANGE-ADE:

I shall not adopt any MEEK, simpering tactics— (She steels herself to be very blunt) Mr. Mann you cannot prevent our bill, if there is any truth—or—or in—or—

JOE MANN:

I am one of you, ladies— How could there be any truth in that story?

LUCINDA, under her breath:

The old woman! (She looks disgruntled).

(Mrs. Strange-Ade and Inez jump to the conclusion that the insinuation is another insult).

MRS. STRANGE-ADE

One of us! What an insulting insinuation! A man of your reputation!

INEZ:

What do you think of that? It is an outrageous insult!

JOE MANN:

My word of honor— There's not a word of truth in the story. It's blackmail.

MRS. STRANGE-ADE

We are open to conviction— But you can't prove it.

JOE MANN:

Oh, you're from Missouri.

INEZ:

We are not men.

JOE MANN:

Same here.

INEZ:

There is always a doubt in man's subconscious mind. Even when he is convinced.

JOE MANN:

True—woman has never been man's equal (aside) as a doubting Thomas.

MRS. STRANGE-ADE, nettled:

Why isn't she man's equal?

LARZ:

Because tha man he vas create first.

(Mrs. Strange-Ade looks around to locate the voice, and sizes up Larz).

MRS. STRANGE-ADE

Chanteclair has the pip.