

Sol Interferes With Cupid

Another Humorous Jewish Story

By ED CAHN

SOL BERGER looked at his watch, and, deciding that it was near enough to closing time to warrant it, dismissed his stenographer for the day.

"You better go it quick home, Miss Keonig," he said, kindly, "all day you been worrying me, so tired and pale you look it. If we didn't be so busy, I would already sent you home long ago. I guess maybe you got it such a headache—yes? I don't wonder at it, believe me. The waist business many times gived it me a headache too."

Miss Keonig smiled wanly and tried to thank him. "I'm awful sorry you noticed it," she stammered, "it's nothing, but I think I will go home anyway."

Just then the door burst open and Mrs. Berger came into the office. Her usually tranquil face was flushed with excitement and she was quite breathless. Sol stared at her in undisguised amazement.

"Esther! What's the trouble? Are you sick? Did you lost it your diamond brooch? Never in all my lifetime did you rush into *mein* office during business hours, like that!"

"Sol!" she cried as soon as Miss Keonig had gone, "Aunt Rachel has a beau! A young fellow! I don't believe he is twenty-five, if he is that. She is in love with him. *Oi Oy!* Sol, what shall we do about it?"

Sol stared at her as if she had taken leave of her senses while she fanned herself with her handkerchief, meanwhile talking as fast as she could make her tongue go.

"I came to tell you as quick as I could. I ran every step of the way from the car. Didn't I always say that old woman would do something foolish yet? No fool like an old fool, and she is certainly old—seventy-three if she is a minute."

"You know I went to the matinee this afternoon and I got there just as the curtain was going up, so the house was dark and she didn't see me, but if it had been lit up like everything she wouldn't a seen me anyhow, she was that full of this here beau of hers."

"Two girls sat next to me and I soon noticed them giggling, and no wonder! Just beyond them sat Aunt Rachel, all togged up like a girl of fifteen, and she was holding hands with the young loafer! Why Sol, so sure as I am alive, he is young enough to be her grandson."

"First, I thought it was some friend of hers, but Sol, the way they acted would sicken a cat. She is crazy in love with him, a blind man could see that, and he is making a fool out of her. I just simply could not forget them, I never saw a thing that was going on on the stage."

"As soon as the show was over, I quick put on my things and stepped back into the crowd. I went out just behind them and I heard him call her sweetheart! Think of it, Sol! A old woman, all wrinkles and—"

"Seventy-five thousand dollars," finished Sol. "While you are here taking up my time from business, Esther, don't forget it the money what Uncle Isaac left her. I bet that it what reconciles that young grave-robber to maybe a lot more wrinkles."

"Oh, I know it. Why didn't Uncle Isaac leave the money to the Orphans' Home? Then we shouldn't have to worry about baby lovers of the foolish old woman. If he knew this, he'd turn in his grave. Oh, I am so worried, but anyhow I'm glad I found it out."

"Well, I aint," said Sol, heavily. "You know I always say when ignorance is comfortable, to know somethings is a nonsense. Now, I suppose I shall hear it for breakfast, dinner and supper, nothing else but Aunt Rachel. It aint none of our business, Esther, and all we got to do is to let her alone. Don't you worry. She wouldn't maybe left us anythings, anyhow."

"Sham! I don't care if she don't, I'm satisfied as I am, but I hate to think of how everybody will laugh at us. It will be in all the papers. The yellower the paper the redder will be the headlines and the more about it. They always make everything ten times worse than what it is—and look how bad this is to begin with! Already I can see it in the morning paper—'Boy of Twenty-three Weds Woman of Seventy-three, Worth Seventy-five Thousand Dollars!!!' Yes, and that hateful Sadie Englebrecht and everybody will be tickled to death to think that we won't get nothing when she dies."

"Don't say nothing more! I heard it already

four times too much. Bridges you are crossing again long before they are built, or even the contracts let for them yet. Anyhow, if she is in love with him, she is in love with him, and that's allus, and if she gets married, she gets married, and I can't help it—can I? You better go it home and see about dinner, Esther, and let other people's *thorheit* alone."

"In one minute, Sol. Just as we were coming out of the lobby, Sam Posner comes along and sees this fellow, and calls out to him that he wants to see him. He calls back that he will be at his office to-morrow, and he should see him there. I don't think that Sam noticed in the crowd who the boy was with. I know he did see me. Now, Sol, I want you to find out from Sam who he is."

"So Posner knows him, hey? If there is any kind of trouble, that there feller is sure to be in it. Maybe, it is a good thing this time, Essie. If that ghoul is in this business maybe we can yet do somethings. Sam is coming in again at six o'clock and I'll ask him."

"*Dank mein lieb*, for that I will make a fine dinner for you." Depositing a hasty kiss on the end of Sol's nose, Esther departed with a lighter heart.

THAT evening, in spite of everything, Sol was disposed to take Aunt Rachel's love affair philosophically, but Esther was bitterness itself. Sol's news confirmed her worst suspicions, and the tears stood in her eyes as she listened.

"Sam Posner, he tells me this here feller's name is Sapstein and he works by Jaffee & Janowitz, as a clerk. He gets it maybe eighteen dollars a week, but Sam says he aint worth a cent more and comes it of a Kike family what aint no good, neither."

"He is a regular loafer what smokes it them there patent-leather cigarettes, drinks it these here foolish drinks what's ninety-nine per cent. poison and the rest bum boozers, and except when he's out somewhere with Aunt Rachel, goes it with womens what a decent cut-throat aint anxious to be seen with."

"Sam, he never knew that the old lady what he was talking about was any relation to me, and so he goes along and tells me everything what he heard it. And he says, for being such a fool she oughta get married to that feller, and that's what I think, too, Esther."

"He says Sapstein has told all the boys in the district about the rich old lady he has got it on the string and he is showing a diamond fob what Sam swears never cost it a cent less as \$500.00, what he says she give him."

"The boys have got it bets up, ten to one, that Sapstein gets her, or that he don't, and has promised them all a dinner onct he is married. I wonder

what Uncle Isaac would say it to that, when he never would limber up for so much as a glass *Vodka*, let alone champagne wine!"

"Aint that awiul! Oh the poor, foolish old *dopus*. What shall I do? Such disgrace to my mother's sister!" And to Sol's surprise, Esther put her head down on the table and sobbed.

"*Ach!* Esther, the idee wasting it besides worries, tears. Let her go ahead and make it a foolishness, it aint our fault. You know it every woman has got it onct to have a love affair and Uncle Isaac wasn't so awful nice, and he coulda been gooder to her. Maybe Saphead, I mean Sapstein, aint such a bad feller as what Sam says."

"Don't cry, Esther, I heard already of lots of young husbands what turned out good."

"*Jah*, but not to old wives," sobbed Esther, fiercely. "I know Uncle Isaac was about as loving as a boiled potato and about as easy to love as a porky-pine, but Aunt Rachel aint got no business to pick out a b—boy!"

"Why didn't she tell us she wanted to get married? We woulda got her a decent man, if we'd had to go to every *schatchen* in town. We got to stop this nonsense right away, Sol."

"Not much! We don't butt in on this game. Interferers always get no thanks. All we are going to do is to buy them a wedding-present."

"But Sol!"

"No buts about it and we don't butt in."

Seeing he was in earnest, Esther began to sob afresh.

"Esther, enough! Stop it making such a baby of yourself. I give up. You can do it anything you like."

"B—b—but what can I do all alone? Won't you help me, Sol?"

"Yes! Anything, *anything*, only stop it that crying!"

Her point gained, Esther was soothed, and began her campaign.

The next day at noon she telephoned Sol to say that Aunt Rachel was coming to dinner that evening and that he must be home betimes.

AUNT RACHEL was there when he arrived and Esther had only a moment to whisper, "No matter what I say, Sol, don't contradict me."

"Oh, all right. It wouldn't do me no good, anyhow. Have you found out if—"

"Sh! Go and bring her out to dinner." And Esther vanished kitchenward for a last word to Rifka.

"*Well, Gott in Himmel!*" ejaculated Sol at sight of Aunt Rachel, who was bepowdered and befrilled to disguise her too-evident years. "You look a whole lot differenter than what you did the last time I seen you."

She smiled happily, and Esther's entrance saved her vanity for the moment, but the more Sol saw of her make-up and heard of her "new-thought" chatter, the less he thought of her feelings and the more determined he became to save her from her own folly.

Finally, unable to contain himself, and despite warning looks from Esther, he said abruptly, "I heard that you are going to get married, Aunt Rachel."

"*Vass iss?*" cried Aunt Rachel, surprised into her German accent and dropping her fork with a clatter.

Esther felt her worst fears justified as she noted a dull flush mount from the withered chin to the scanty grey hair, but she hastily interposed, "Sol and me didn't believe it, of course. *We* know you got too much sense, but you got good grounds for a libel suit against the people what are talking about you."

"Who?" murmured Aunt Rachel.

"Everybody in the waist district," answered Sol, promptly. "This here feller what's started it is a young dub by the name Sapstein and he aint got any too good a repertashun to begin with."

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