

SIPOS

+

Amalia
Parfumerie

counter, in this shop and still you have no idea. Maybe I'm just too old to understand, Amalia dear.

AMALIA. (*Oblivious to his point:*) There, you see... YOU call me Amalia. Plain and simple. Just Amalia. That's my name, Amalia. He's never once called me that. To him I'm Miss A-MAAA-LIA BAAA-lash.

SIPOS. Yes, I'll admit that is a bit formal. Perhaps a little too formal. It's become kind of a joke with him you know, not a good one I'll admit. (AMALIA *stares at him.*) But I guess I can assume you don't see much humor in it.

AMALIA. (*She stares at SIPOS a moment longer, then goes on with her point:*) He sometimes calls Miss Ritter, Mitzi...but maybe I know the reason for that.

SIPOS. And what would that be pray tell?

AMALIA. Because he's having an affair with her.

SIPOS. What?

AMALIA. Sure, why not. I can see it all perfectly.

SIPOS. You need glasses my dear.

AMALIA. You're being kind, Mr. Sipos but a woman can tell these things.

SIPOS. He's not having an affair with anyone, especially Miss Ritter.

AMALIA. What makes you so certain of that?

SIPOS. Miss Ritter has her plate quite full with a fiancé (so to speak) and then of course, there's Mr. Kadar.

AMALIA. Mr. Kadar?

SIPOS. Why yes, of course. They were a "thing" for the longest time. She was his "future." So he told her. But now I believe Miss Ritter has suddenly become Mr. Kadar's awkward past, and a liability at that. He has a different bigger future in that conniving mind of his,

and she's a future he's working very hard on. One might say over-time in fact.

(*Laughs softly.*)

But you mark my words, one of these days that "future" is going to catch up with him, and when it does, there's going to be quite a little scandal in this shop and Mr. Kadar will be standing smack in the middle of it, right up to his neck in "futures."

And as to Miss Ritter and Mr. Horvath, he's just not to her taste at all.

AMALIA. Why? What's wrong with Mr. Horvath?

SIPOS. He's just a little too stable for the likes of her.

AMALIA. Too stable? Why he's one of the most un-stable men I've ever met. The man should be in an institution.

SIPOS. (*Trying to end this conversation:*) Well, whatever you say. Do me a favor now and help me bring the Christmas tree out from the stockroom.

AMALIA. Tell me, Mr. Sipos...

SIPOS. Yes?

AMALIA. Why did Mr. Horvath say that starting Monday, I won't have to bear the sight of him anymore?

SIPOS. He had a fight with the old man...just before the one he had with you.

AMALIA. I didn't know that. He just came into the stockroom and started in on me. What happened?

SIPOS. Oh, I don't want to make too much of it. The old man's been on edge for days. He said something to Horvath, Horvath answered back...one word led to another and Horvath said he would be obliged to make "other arrangements." He quit.

AMALIA. And Mr. Hammerschmidt?

SIPOS. He let him. He said Mr. Horvath was free to make his "other

arrangements" permanent.

AMALIA. And is he really leaving?

SIPOS. No, no of course not...by Monday morning they'll both have forgotten the whole affair...the old man's just jumpy...I'm sure he already regrets the whole thing.

AMALIA. What was it they fought about?

SIPOS. That's just it, nothing. I told you the old man's nervous. He's been impossible this entire week. Yesterday, he gave it to me. And I let him. You know it's pointless for anyone to be rude to me because I don't get insulted. And believe me, Mr. Hammerschmidt has said far worse things to me than he has ever said to Mr. Horvath. For example, the other day he accused me of stealing Eau de Cologne from my counter.

AMALIA. (*Shocked:*) What? What did you say?

SIPOS. I said, "Mr. Hammerschmidt, do I look like the type who uses Eau de Cologne?" And he said, "You probably sell it on the side." And I replied, "Mr. Hammerschmidt, do I look like I have an income on the side selling eau de cologne? Then he yelled at me some more and then he told me that what I look like is the type of person who steals. (*Shrugging his shoulders:*) Well, I said to him, that I can't help.

AMALIA. Mr. Sipos, he didn't really say those things to you?

SIPOS. Yes and then to finish it off he yelled at me that I shouldn't answer back when he's yelling at me.

AMALIA. What did you do then?

SIPOS. (*Smiles.*) I apologized.

AMALIA. You apologized?

SIPOS. Amalia dear, when you're as old as I am with a family to support, you apologize even while you're being yelled at. Please don't think of it as cowardice...think of it as bravery in the face of adversity. And when you compare it to the world at large, does it really matter? All across the world thousands die of starvation every day. In so many places neighboring countries are constantly at war.

We hear all the time of natural disasters causing great devastation. Now think about it, think about a tiny little man in a Parfumerie on Vaci Street in Budapest, Hungary being yelled at by another tiny little man...so what? (*Shrugs his shoulders.*) I have my job.

(*Exits to stockroom.*)

KADAR. (*Coming from the street:*) Amalia, darling.

AMALIA. Hello, Mr. Kadar.

KADAR. I haven't seen you all afternoon.

AMALIA. I've been working in the stockroom. Where have you been?

KADAR. The old man sent me to his house on an errand. (*Whispering:*) Is he still upset?

AMALIA. I think so.

KADAR. Just my luck, of all days.

AMALIA. Why?

KADAR. I was going to ask him for a little advance. But I guess I won't now if he's still being grouchy. Amalia darling, do me a favor...lend me twenty till the first of the month.

AMALIA. I'm sorry, Mr. Kadar but I don't have it.

KADAR. On my word of honor, I'll pay it back on the first. Look I already owe you sixty, if you give me twenty now that'll make a nice even...eighty. I can't promise to pay it ALL back on the first, but sixty for sure and twenty by the sixteenth. On my word of honor.

AMALIA. You promised the last time too.

KADAR. But something unforeseen has happened.

AMALIA. September I loaned you a good deal of money for an "emergency" and you assured me it was just for a few days. Ever since then it seems "unforeseen things" have been happening to you. I needed that money to pay my rent and you promised me you'd pay me back immediately. Now it's been three months and I've been