

SIPOS. You know, he's got troubles too. How can we know everything that's bothering him?

HORVATH. But what have I done to him? I deserve better. I've been here nine years and never have we had a problem. We've been close I'd like to think and now all of a sudden, he's at me, and at me all week...

Molnar  
SIPOS. Perhaps you're exaggerating.

HORVATH. Everything that happens seems to be my fault.

SIPOS. Is that so? And what about when he yelled at me yesterday? Why don't you just leave him alone. How do you know what's eating him? Maybe there's trouble at home.

KADAR. Why would you say that?

SIPOS. *(Looking at him)* I don't know. I'm just saying that, perhaps... How should I know? Besides it's none of my business.

KADAR. Who's staying to decorate the windows?

HORVATH. I certainly don't know. *(With a jerk of his hand towards the office)* Why don't you ask him.

*(Goes upstairs to the balcony.)*

SIPOS. Are you staying, Mr. Kadar?

KADAR. If I'm required.

SIPOS. How about you, Miss Ritter?

MISS RITTER. I haven't been asked...lately.

*(Shoots a look at KADAR.)*

Molnar  
SIPOS. Mr. Hammerschmidt said he wanted the Christmas lights put up tonight.

MISS RITTER. Sorry, I can't help. I've got a date for the movies.

SIPOS. What are you going to see?

MISS RITTER. What difference does it make to you? You're no movie fan. Tell me honestly, Sipos, when was the last time you went to the movies?

SIPOS. Hmmm...let me see. *(Remembering:)* Ah yes, it was an epic, all about the crusades I think. There were armies and battles and cities falling. That was a picture for you. And the organ player was excellent.

MISS RITTER. Organ player?

SIPOS. Well yes, of course, it was a "classic" film, not one these noisy new "talkies."

MISS RITTER. Ah yes, that explains it. I probably wasn't even born yet.

SIPOS. I suppose that's...possible. How old are you now Miss Ritter?

MISS RITTER. Well that's a rather indiscreet question but if you must know, twenty-five.

MISS MOLNAR. *(The cashier. Head down. Appears to be adding up the receipts:)* Well, THAT doesn't add up.

MISS RITTER. Did you say something, Betty?

MISS MOLNAR. *(Looks up.)* Me? No, I'm just counting.

MISS RITTER. Oh, really.

MISS MOLNAR. *(Without looking up.)* Yes, I'm adding it up and try as I may; it still comes out to at LEAST thirty.

MISS RITTER. What?

MISS MOLNAR. *(Blandly:)* The receipts.

*(Goes on counting.)*

MISS RITTER. Sipos dear, don't look down on the pictures. Lots of very intellectual people go to the movies.

SIPOS. I don't look down on the pictures, my dear Miss Ritter. It's just that unfortunately I don't get the chance to see many. And be-

lieve me, it's pretty embarrassing when I go to a party and everybody talks about a certain movie or movie star and I just have no idea what they're talking about.

**MISS RITTER.** *(Laughs.)* Well, I would have never guessed. Sipos the party goer, the man about town.

**SIPOS.** *(With a slight reprimand.)* Sarcasm Miss Ritter? A little girl such as yourself might consider being a bit less judgmental don't you think?

**MISS RITTER.** Is that in your humble opinion?

**SIPOS.** I do so try to be humble.

**MISS RITTER.** I bow to your sage advice.

**SIPOS.** Ah, now you're over-rating me. I'm hardly a sage. But then again, to you it might appear that way.

*(The phone rings.)*

**MISS MOLNAR.** *(Picks up the phone.)* Hammerschmidt's...just a moment, please. *(To the clerks:)* For the boss.

**KADAR.** *(Standing nearest to the office, knocks and opens the door.)* Telephone, sir.

*(Goes behind counter.)*

**HAMMERSCHMIDT.** *(Comes out, goes to cashiers' desk and picks up phone.)* Hello? ... Yes, dear...you know I'm not able to go—yes, I told you earlier today that we're staying late to dress the windows... You just go along without me. Are the children going with you too? ... Oh, I see. *(Slightly irritated.)* No, I don't know how long we're going to be... I can't predict when I'll be home exactly... What?... Where did it go?... I gave you cash this morning...oh alright, I'll send some more money over to you with the delivery boy...and what?... Yes I can do that too... You should see Arpad in a little bit.

*(Puts down the phone.)*

Where's Arpad?

**KADAR.** He hasn't returned yet, sir.

*(HORVATH has meanwhile come downstairs from the balcony and is puttering around at the counter.)*

**HAMMERSCHMIDT.** Not back yet? He only had three deliveries to make and he's not back yet? I'll throw him out, that's what I'll do.

**HORVATH.** I'll go if you like, Mr. Hammerschmidt.

**HAMMERSCHMIDT.** No, not you Mr. Horvath thank you very much. I don't wish to inconvenience you as I know how busy you are.

Mr. Kadar, will you be good enough to take a bottle of the Lentheric Toujour and... Miss Molnar, give me a hundred from the drawer, please...

**MISS MOLNAR.** Yes, sir.

*(Handing him the money.)*

**HAMMERSCHMIDT.** And this to Mrs. Hammerschmidt.

**KADAR.** It would be my pleasure sir.

*(He quickly takes a bottle from the shelf and starts wrapping it up.)*

*(Silence.)*

**SIPOS.** Excuse me, Mr. Hammerschmidt, who's staying to dress the windows?

**HAMMERSCHMIDT.** *(Has been looking out the street door absent-mindedly:)* What did you say?

**SIPOS.** I was just wondering, sir, who you want to have stay to dress the windows?

**HAMMERSCHMIDT.** Oh yes... *(Preoccupied:)* Well...settle it among yourselves. Whoever would like to stay should stay.

**HORVATH.** I think Sipos, Kadar and I can manage between us. The girls can go.