

RUNG IN WITH THE GOLD SPOONERS

By Sewell Ford



the level now, what's a he Cinderella? And if your boss called you a name like that, would you resign, or throw out your chest and strike for a raise? But, then, maybe it was only some of Mr. Robert's fancy joshin'. Anyway, I'd stand in line waitin' for a thing like that to happen again.

The way it begun was when I runs across this new girl in the filin' room and finds her sniffin' over one of the index cases. She's bitin' her lips to keep from doing it and she's red way up behind her ears; so I knows she's more mad than sorry. I could guess what's happened; for I'd just seen Piddie come out of there lookin' satisfied and important.

"Hello, sis!" says I. "Weepin' over your job so soon?"

"Shut up!" says she.

"Why, how pettish!" says I. "What was Piddie callin' you down for?"

"What's that to you?" says she. "Who are you, anyway?"

"Me?" says I. "Why, I'm the Corrugated's gen'ral grouch dispeller. I'm the official little ray of sunshine. See?" and I bobs my head so she can get a good view of my red thatch.

"Huh!" says she; but she can't help lettin' out a grin, so I sees the cure has begun.

"Don't you mind Piddie," says I. "He don't dare tie the can to you without reportin' higher up. He likes to make a noise like a watchdog, that's all. Next time you give him the merry chuckle."

And, honest, I'd done the same if she'd been wall eyed and toggle jointed, just for the sake of blockin' off his little game.

It wa'n't until a couple of days later, when she shoots over a casual flashlight look as I'm strollin' past, that I takes any partic'lar notice of what a Daisy Maizie she is. There's more or less class to her lines, all right, not to mention a pair of rollin' brown eyes. Course, I sends back the roguish wink, and by the end of the week we was callin' each other by our pet names.

Not that I'm entered reg'lar as a Percy boy, or that I takes this so serious as to miss any meals; but you know how it is. And what if she was a few years older? She seems to like it when I sing out, "Oh, you Theresa!" at her, and once she mussed up my hair when there wa'n't anybody lookin'. In fact, I was almost to the point of thinkin' that I'd been picked as somebody's honey boy, when this Izzy Budheimer shows up as a late entry.

IZZY, he's a third assistant in the stock department, and on twelve a week he sports one of those striped green overcoats and a plush hat with the bow behind. Maybe he wouldn't be listed as a home destroyer; but he has a flossy way with him and he goes around a lot. About the second week I sees him and the new girl gettin' chummier and chummier, and, while she still has a jolly for me now and then, I knows I'm only a side issue. That's what hurt most. So what fool play must I make but go and plunge on a sixty-cent box of mixed choc'lates for her!

As luck would have it, Mr. Roberts spots me comin' out of the 23d-st. candy shop with the package under my arm. You wouldn't think he'd notice a little clue like that, or pick me up on it; but he does.

"How now, Torchy?" says he. "Sweets to the sweet, eh?"

"Uh-huh," says I, and I guess I colors up some.

"What is the fair one's name?" says he.

"Tessie," says I.

"Ah!" says he. "Thus were they ever named: Tessie, Juliet, and Helen of Troy. They're all one. My envious sympathy, Torchy, and may the gods be kind!"

Which is only the brand of hot air Mr. Roberts blows off whenever he has a good lunch under his vest and nothin' heavy on his mind. It don't mean anything at all.

"Troy!" says I. "Can it! This ain't for no up State laundry hand. She comes from Eighth-ave."

WELL, I stows the box away until closin' time, and then waits around the upper corridor for Tessie to show up. Izzy, he spots me and proceeds to improve the time by givin' me an earache about what an important party he is, how he expects to be jumped a notch soon, and about how much he makes nights on the outside, followin' up some checkroom snap or other.

"That's fine!" says I. "But won't you be late gettin' over to Grand-st?"

Izzy was still explainin' how long it was since his folks moved to the West Side, and what swell things they had in the parlor, when Tessie floats out with her new spring lid and princess walkin' suit on. I'm

just shovin' out the peace offerin' and gettin' ready to hand over my smoothest josh, when she brushes past like I was part of the wall decoration, squeals, "Oh, Mr. Budheimer!" and begins showin' Izzy some tickets for the grand annual benefit ball of the Shirtwaist Makers' Union, and tellin' him how she was sellin' 'em for her sister, and what a grand time it was goin' to be.

"How much?" says Izzy, tryin' hard to choke it back, but losin' the struggle.

"Seventy-five for a double ticket," says Tessie. "That's the kind you want."

"Maybe I would yet, if I could get a partner," says he.

"Ain't that an awful sad case?" says Tessie. "Nobody's teased me very hard, either."

"You'll go with me, yes?" says Izzy.

"It's awful sudden," says she; "but a chance is a chance. Don't send a cab; the folks in the block might think I was putting on."

And me? Why I don't show on the chart at all! Right under my nose she does it, and don't even give me a sideways glance.

"Pooh!" says I. "Pooh, pooh!"

"What a cute little fellah!" says Tessie to him as they crowds into the elevator with the rest of the push.

"Say," says I, makin' a jump for the grating, "you don't need to—"

"Next car!" sings out the Johnny Flip, slammin' the door. Now wa'n't that rubbin' it in?

"Coises!" says I. "Deep coises!" and walks down eleven flights with a temperature that would have



"Ah, Shuck the Coat, and Fancy Vest too!" Says I.

got me condemned by any boiler inspector in the business. The candy? That goes to one of the pie faced maids where I lives.

THE nerve of that Izzy, though! In the mornin' he comes around just like nothin' had happened and wants to know if I'll sub for him on his evenin' job the night he goes to the ball. To show I don't carry any grouch, I says I will; but he offers only half pay and makes me agree to split the tips with him.

"I couldn't afford it, at that," says he, "only this is a kid session and the graft will be light."

It's this checkroom work of his, you know, at one of them swell Fifth-ave. joints where they have an extra night force on call for coming out parties and dinner dances and the like. So while him and Tessie

is enjoyin' themselves with the lady shirtwaist makers, I'm standin' behind the counter wearin' a braided jacket, givin' out check coupons, and stowin' away hats and top coats for Master Reginald and other buddin' sports of the younger set. Seems this is the final blowout of Miss Somebody's afternoon dancin' class, and no one was allowed inside unless Father had his name printed in bright red ink in the social register.

A hot lot of young gold spooners they was too, some of 'em not as old as me by a couple of years, and swellin' around in dinky Tuxes and white kids. One of 'em even hands me in a silver headed cane.

"Careful of that stick, my man," says he.

"Oh, sure!" says I. "Puppah'd be wild if any-thing happened to it, wouldn't he?"

And you should have heard the talk they had as they loaf around the cloakroom between the numbers,—all about the awful things they did at prep school, how they bunked the masters, and smuggled brandied peaches up to their rooms, and rough housed durin' mornin' prayers. Almost made your blood run cold—not.

When they got to discussin' the girls, though, and sayin' how such a one was a "jolly sort," and others was "bloomin' rotters," it made me seasick and it was a relief when they took to whisperin' things I couldn't hear about the chaperons. After intermission they come sneakin' in by twos and threes to hit up their cigarettes.

IT was about eleven-thirty and there was four or five of 'em in the cloakroom, puffin' away languid like real clubmen, when in drifts a young lady all in pink silk and gold net and hails one of the wicked bunch.

"Bobby," says she, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Run on now, Vee," says he. "Told you when I asked you to come that I wasn't a dancing man, y'know."

"Fudge!" says she, stampin' her foot. "You think it's smart to take that pose, don't you? Well, you wait!"

And, say, you talk about your haughty beauts! Why, she was a little the silkiest young queen I ever had a real close view of,—the slimmest feet and

ankles, reg'lar cameo cut face all tinted up natural like a bunch of sweet peas, and a lot of straw colored hair as fine as cobwebs. She was a thoroughbred stunner, this Miss Vee was, and mad all over.

"I haven't been on the floor for four numbers," she goes on. "You just wait!"

"You wouldn't be cad enough to peach on us for smokin', would you?" says Bobby.

"Wouldn't I, though!" says she.

That starts a stampede. All but Bobby chucks away their cigarettes and beats it back to the ball-room. He turns sulky, though.

"Tell ahead," says he. "Who cares? And let's see you get any more dances!"

He's a pasty faced, weak jawed youth with a chronic scowl and a sullen look in his eyes. I should

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