

LOVE

Letters from a Bintel Brief

זי האָט אַלס עלטער מיידעל
חתונה געהאַט מיט אַן
ווערטהער וועלדע איהר פֿון
אַלס אַ שטעטל
צייטונג וועלדע איהר פֿון
סײַן נאָך לעבן
אַזוי ניעדערשטעכטיג
וואָס וואָס פֿון



צו דיר, צו דיר אין שטילע נעכט,
צו דיר אין טאָגען קלאַנג,
צו דיר אין ליערעל וואָס איך פֿלעכט,
צו דיר פֿקיהט מיין געדאַנק! -

Postcard bearing a Yiddish love poem, 1906.

1906

Dear Editor,

I am a young man of twenty-one; I have a seventeen-year-old cousin, and she and her parents would like me to marry her. I like the girl. She's educated, American-born, not bad-looking. But she's quite small.

That is the drawback: for her age, she is very short. And I happen to be tall. So when we walk down the street together, people look at us as a poorly matched couple. Another thing: she is very religious, and I am a freethinker. I ask you, esteemed Editor, could this lead to an unpleasant life if we were to marry? I wait impatiently for your answer.

Sympathetic

In short, my love for him is cooling off gradually. I'm suffering terribly because my feelings for him are changing. In Europe, where everyone admired him and all the girls envied me, he looked different. But, here, I see before me another person.

I haven't the courage to tell him, and I can't even talk about it to my parents. He still loves me with all his heart and I don't know what to do. I choke it all up inside myself, and I beg you to help me with advice in my desperate situation.

Respectfully,

A Worried Reader

GLOSSARY

Greenhorn:

A person who is naïve or easily tricked. It is often used as a derogatory term for a person who is in a new place and is unfamiliar with the language and customs.