

The Schmooze

Stories with a Yiddish Twist

MICHAEL EISNER (EX-DISNEY CEO) SAYS, “THE HARDEST ARTIST TO FIND IS A BEAUTIFUL, FUNNY WOMAN”...SUCH “NARISHKEIT”*

*The Yiddish word for “foolishness” is “narishkeit.”

A beautiful woman is a “krassavitseh.”

The Yiddish words for “beauty” are “krassaviseh,” “shainkeit,” and “yefayfeyeh.”

The Yiddish words meaning “An idea occurred to me” are “Es iz mir eingefalen a plan.”

by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe



Syosset, New York

Michael Eisner made a controversial comment at the Aspen Ideas Festival. He was on-stage with Goldie Hawn and said, “From my position, the hardest artist to find is a BEAUTIFUL, FUNNY WOMAN.” He followed the statement with, “boy am I going to get in trouble. I know this goes online...I know women who have been told they’re beautiful, they win Miss Arkansas, they don’t even have to get attention other than with their looks.”

He continues, “So they don’t tell a joke. In the history of the motion-picture business, the number of beautiful women - a Lucille Ball - that are funny, is impossible to find.”

Andrew Metcalfe replied, “Michael Eisner thinks it’s hard to find a funny beautiful woman. Ridiculous. A funny woman is automatically beautiful.”

Lynn Hirschberg (“Mega-Midler,” The New York Times Magazine, Oct. 8, 2000) wrote, “Women respond to the intimacy of the medium [TV]--they want to see Roseanne struggle with her kids the way they struggle with their kids; they like that Candice Bergen may have been great at her job but a mess at her personal life; they respond when Helen Hunt spars with her husband over the purchase of a couch on ‘Mad About You.’”

In my opinion, there are a lot of women who meet both criteria--funny and easy on the “oygn” (eyes). Some examples:

Phyllis Diller was beautiful with her signature cigarette holder and shoes, chosen to make her legs look bony and unattractive. She embraced odd-fashion statements which were designed to exaggerate (“megazem zayn”) notions of feminine beauty.

HUMOR: “Always be nice to your children because they are the ones who will choose your rest home.”

“Burt Reynolds once asked me out I was in his room.”

“I used to be young and ugly. Now, I’m old and gorgeous.”

FRAN DRESCHER (The Nanny)

With big hair, short and colorful skirts and an instantly recognizable voice (“kol”), Fran Drescher won America’s hearts as a flashy girl from Flushing in “The Nanny.”

HUMOR:

“I’m not Meryl Streep. I’m a pretty girl with a funny voice. It’s an odd combination, but that’s the package.”

Sylvia Fine: Darling, taking hormones is a natural thing. Your Aunt Addie and your Uncle Artie both took them.

Fran Sheffield:

Ma, that’s because Aunt Addie “was” Uncle Artie.

Sylvia Fine: Shhh. She’s collecting 2 social security checks.

SARAH SILVERMAN

“Silverman pushes boundaries and focuses her comedy on social taboos

such as racism, religion, and sexism. She gets away with it partly because she looks so winsome.” (New York Magazine, June 1, 2009). She has been described as “the beautiful Jewish girl your mom always wanted you to marry. You just might want to tell Silverman to keep her thoughts to herself when she meets the boy’s folks...”di tate-mame.”

TINA FEY

American actress, comedian, writer, and producer. She is best known for her work on Saturday Night Live and 30 Rock.

HUMOR

“If you retain nothing else, always remember the most important rule of beauty, which is: ‘Who cares?’”

“I know for sure that a hard-boiled egg is two points on Weight Watchers.”

“The Mother’s Prayer For Its Daughter”:

First, Lord: No tattoos. May neither Chinese symbols for truth nor Winnie-the-Pooh holding the FSU logo stain her tender haunches.”

BEA ARTHUR (“The Golden Girls”)

Arthur said she had always identified with petite Ida Lupino, despite the fact that Arthur at age 12 was five feet nine and one half inches. (Ida Lupino was blond and cute and could play the piano and sing in bars.) She said, “When I’m onstage, I can look like Ida Lupino if I want to!”

HUMOR:

Rose: What a day. I had the saddest clients.

Dorothy: You work at grief counseling. What do you expect, comedians?

Dorothy enters, crosses the living room.

Dorothy: I taught a class today--the finest in Dade County - two girls had shaved heads and three boys had green hair.

Coco: They’re expressing themselves.

Dorothy: And I expressed myself. I told them to leave: They were too ugly to look at. Now the parents are mad. A father came in in a three piece suit and defended Tiffany, a bald girl with a nose

ring.

BETTE MIDLER (Miss M)

Midler wrote in AARP Magazine (October/November 2012): Beauty Ain't Pretty. "You should be very careful about who does your mani-pedi, because you can really screw your toes up. You should stop beating your hair into submission, even if you don't like it. Everyone should exfoliate, every day, even guys. More than two drinks a day will ruin your skin. And if you don't have a full-length mirror, you're going to get fat. Period."

LUCILLE BALL

Molly Haskell ("50 years and millions of reruns later, why does America still love Lucy?," mm, September/October 2001), wrote, "To an ever-growing number of fans, Lucille Ball will never grow old (or even up!): She will always be a furry-headed 40ish clown schlepping around her New York apartment, scheming to get through, around, under the radar of her macho husband, Ricky Ricardo, played by her real-life husband, Desi Arnaz."

HUMOR:

"The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age."

"Once in his life, every man is entitled to fall madly in love with a gorgeous red head" ("royt kop").

"A man who correctly guesses a woman's age may be smart, but he's not very bright."

ROSEANNE BARR

Barr bills herself as "domestic goddess." She says her comedy is about married ("khasene gehat") couples that love each other and yet can't stand each other.

HUMOR:

"My husband asked me if we have any cheese puffs. Like he can't go and lift that couch cushion up himself."

"My husband wanted more space, so I locked him out of the house."

"My kids have a game they play on family vacations. They like to count

("tseylin") how many Dairy Queens we pass before I grab the wheel and force the car off the road."

SARAH BERNHARD

Bernhard does parodies of famous ("barimt") women--Bette Midler, Tina Turner, Jackie Kennedy, and Marilyn Monroe. She talks about her childhood ("kindhayt"), pokes fun at commercials and clothing ("klayder") fashions. She can be coarse ("grob") and vulnerable.

HUMOR:

"I love sleeping on a full-length mirror."

[to a heckler in the audience]: "What do you want, Billy Crystal shtick?"

[on Madonna]: "I'm studying Cabala...and, you know, a lot of other people are studying as well. I don't take direct responsibility for that. But you know, Madonna is studying Cabala. Honey, if it's given her wisdom and insight...I would rather run into her at a Cabala event than in a disco in Miami."

MARJORIE GOTTLIEB WOLFE loves all humor, whether it comes from a beautiful woman, or a "mieskeit"--an ugly person. She particularly enjoys jokes about children:

Teacher to class at a Russian school in the "alt" (old) days:

Q. "What happened in 1799?"

SILENCE

TEACHER: "1799 was the birthday of our great poet Pushkin. Now what happened in 1812?"

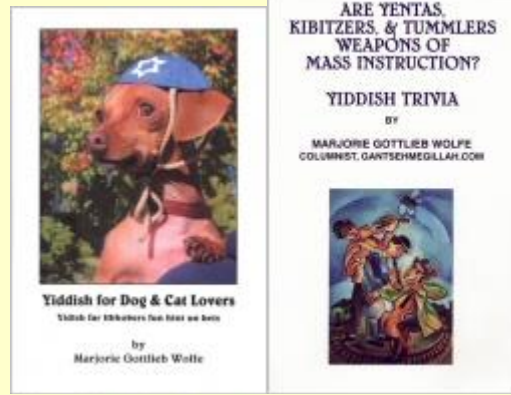
Little Moishe's hand shoots up.

"Pushkin's bar mitzvah."

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**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of
two books:**



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and
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