



LOST FOR Words

There was an ambulance outside Mr. Krankowitz's house. Oh dear! As the children of Sunny Lane stared, two paramedics rapped on the old man's door.

Fishel and Faivish Friedman tried to peek inside the house. The paramedics shut the door firmly behind them.

"What's going on?" called Moishy Morris from across the street.

"We can't say," replied Fishel. He didn't let on that the reason he couldn't say was that he didn't have any idea.

"It's top secret," declared Faivish grandly.

"Oh," said Moishy, somewhat awed.

Miriam Morris piped up.

"Is Mr. Krankowitz deaded?"

"Shhh! *Chas v'shalom*," Moishy said quickly. "We don't know what happened. Hopefully it isn't anything serious."

Two minutes later, the paramedics emerged. They were pushing Mr. Krankowitz in a wheelchair. To Moishy's old man looked the same as usual.

"Hey! You're bumping me," he yelled at paramedics. He waved his cane.

"Sorry, sir, the sidewalk is uneven," replied one of the men. But he slowed down.

"What are you slowing down for? Get a move on, will you!" ordered Mr. Krankowitz.

The paramedics exchanged a look. The sooner they were rid of this patient, the better. Just before they wheeled him into the ambulance, Mr. Krankowitz remembered his rosebushes.

"Hey, you!" he yelled at Fishel and Faivish. "Keep an eye on my roses, will you!"

Just as he said, "eye," one of the paramedics sneezed and drowned out his words. Fishel was sure he'd said "tie." His mother sometimes tied back the bushes in her garden to keep them neat. *I suppose Mr. Krankowitz wants me to tie his roses back*, he thought.

"All right! I'll take care of it, don't worry," he called back.

"They'll need lots of watering," shouted the old man, but his wheelchair went bumpity-bump just then. Faivish thought he'd said "slaughtering." *I guess he means I should slaughter them. Like, cut off the dead heads like Mommy does with her lilies.*

"No problem," he shouted back.

The ambulance sped away.

Mr. Faigelbaum went across the road to alert Jolly Solly. The clown would know how to make sure the old man was taken care of properly.

Later that afternoon, Fishel and Faivish remembered the jobs Mr. Krankowitz had asked them to do. Fishel went to look for something to tie back the roses with. He couldn't find any string, so he took an old belt instead. Faivish couldn't find any pruning shears, but decided the kitchen scissors would do just as well. Off the troublesome two went, armed with their "tools."

Fishel tried to tie back the rose bushes at the same time as Faivish tried to prune them.

"Move! You're pushing me!" snarled Fishel.

"Oh yeah? For the record, I got here first."

"Didn't!"

"Did!"

Suddenly, a loud yell made the brothers freeze.

"Who's attacking my rosebushes?"

Uh-oh. It was Mr. Krankowitz! He was already back from the hospital. He was in Jolly Solly's car, without the wheelchair.

"It was a false alarm!" announced Jolly Solly happily. "The

hospital suspected some kind of virus, but it wasn't."

Mr. Krankowitz, however, wasn't paying attention. He was marching up his front path furiously. Fishel and Faivish shrank back.

"Er... I was trying to tie back the roses, like you said," squeaked Fishel.

"And I was trying to prune them," added Faivish.

Mr. Krankowitz stared at them.

"Tie them back? What on earth for? And as for pruning — they don't need any pruning at the moment."

"But you told us—"

"It was a false alarm!" announced Jolly Solly happily. "The hospital suspected some kind of virus, but it wasn't"

"You said—"

The old man waved his cane. "Don't you go putting words into my mouth! All they need is a bit of watering."

"I'm sure Fishel and Faivish would like to help with that," Jolly Solly said. "After all, you've just had an unpleasant scare. Why don't I make you a nice cup of tea?"

To the brothers' amazement, the old man allowed the clown to steer him indoors.

Fishel and Faivish went to borrow watering cans from their mother. Jolly Solly came to see how they were getting on.

"Good job, guys," he smiled. "I think this deserves a treat."

He extracted one candy from behind Fishel's ear, and another from Faivish's shirt pocket.

And then, with a cheerful wave, he was off — head over heels, of course! **jr.**

