

NO MATCH: BEATRICE YELL

A couple of men are sitting at the kitchen table, the senior one reading a newspaper. He says, 'Son, that girl Patty or Cathy, whatever her name is, from round the corner is always coming here. Why is she here so often? Do you ask her over or does she bring her racquet over for a game?'

There is a low mumble.

'Don't mumble, son. Speak up! I can't hear you when you mumble'. There is a loud crash of plates from the sink in the corner. Dad raises his voice, 'Another cup of tea, Luv?' An audible sigh follows. 'And more toast?' There is a groan. 'Your Ma says she's asked to see her engagement ring; always a bad sign if you ask me. I gather you two have hit it off, but I hope you haven't told her you love her'.

More mumbling. 'Speak up'.

'Well, she's always telling me she loves me'.

'Have you two been looking in jewellery shops lately?'

'Well...she likes pretty things...'

'Humm...I see. Has she set her heart on a particular ring? Have you mentioned marriage? 'Cos that's a double fault.'

'N...no Dad'.

'But has she?'

'Um, well...yes'.

'Now let's get this straight. Do you love her?'

'Well, I think so, sort of, but...'

'Do you want to get married?'

'N...no, I'm too young. I'm only twenty- seven.'

'That's right. Plenty of time to think about it. Serve her an ace and tell her you promised your dead granny to wait. Tell her '30 – love'. Then he bellows, 'Where's my tea?'

A squeaky voice answers, 'Coming'.

'Have you told her you're not ready for the serious game of matrimony?'

'N...no, Dad.'

'Son, you must speak up and tell her or she'll trap you into it. I can read the signs. You must be absolutely firm, like an official umpire at a tournament. Otherwise, you'll lose game, set and match'.

The lad's mouth drops, his eyes grow large, and he begins to shake. 'Oh, no, I can't'.

'Well now, son, are you a man or a mouse?'

'...Um, I'm not sure...Can you pass me the cheese...'