

I Will Be Your Server This Evening

SCENE – An upscale restaurant in a very expensive part of town. A table with 4 chairs is positioned center stage.

Characters:

Restaurant Hostess – dressed in a very classy After Five look

Waitperson – An extremely arrogant person, also dressed in an After Five look

Male Diner – Suit, white shirt, tie, but still is uneasy about being in this particular restaurant

Female Diner - Evening dress, high heels, well coifed, tasteful jewelry and a fashionable medium size handbag.

The restaurant hostess leads the male and female diners to the table and they set down.

The WAITPERSON comes up and starts talking to them.

WAITPERSON: Welcome. I will be your server tonight. Have you dined with us before?

MALE DINER: No. It's our first time.

WAITPERSON: Oh, that's adorable. Well, I'm sure you've been to other restaurants, right?

MALE DINER: Uh, sure. Yes.

WAITPERSON: Wonderful;. Well, none of that restaurant experience will help you tonight. Because we do things a little differently here.

MALE DINER: That's O.K. We like different.

WAITPERSON: I'll guide you through the process. First of all, we ask a lot of questions designed to make you feel uncomfortable and insecure. Is everyone at the table O.K. with feeling insecure?

MALE DINER: That's why we go out to eat!

WAITPERSON: Great. We specialize in small plates. Have you heard of small plates?

MALE DINER: Are they like regular plates, but small?

WAITPERSON: That's a terrific guess. But totally wrong. Our small plates are a quite different from other small plates. They're *really* small. Like what pigeons would use if they ate off plates. We recommend getting about a 500 of these plates per person and sharing them. Are you O.K. with sharing?

FEMALE DINER: We've been married for ten years. We have three children, so we know about sharing.

WAITPERSON: No, not just with each other. You're going to be sharing with the entire restaurant.

That older couple in the corner is going to consume a good deal of your food. I'm going to take bites from the better dishes before they even get to your table. Then there's a cat in the kitchen who's so hungry that sometimes I will just be giving you empty plates with trace amounts of cat saliva. I hope you're not feeling hungry.

MALE DINER: We didn't eat dinner before coming here.

WAITPERSON: Hmm. I see. Well, then, you'll probably each need about 800 plates.

You'll see that the menu is divided into four sections: Circle, Ring, Bolgia, and Round. Have you read Dante's *Inferno* since college?

MALE DINER: I'm not sure I read it in college. I was a business major. That's why I can afford to eat here.

WAITPERSON: That's fine. I've read it. When I go over the specials, I'm also going to be using a lot of made-up words. Have you read 'Finnegans Wake'?

MALE DINER: I don't know what that is.

WAITPERSON: No problem. I have a Ph.D. in comprehensive literature. The shankton of wildrange fizzle grass comes with a side of foraged burrbark. That's served on bed of thistledander. Or we have Medallions of Bean Curd with a green fetid cheese sauce.

MALE DINER: Well definitely take both of those.

WAITPERSON: Great. May bring one for each of you, two for those old people, and three for me and the cat.

And also—

You'll notice I don't have a pad of paper. You may think I'm memorizing your order. I am not. I am going to bring you what I want you to have. If I've done my job correctly, you'll feel too insecure to send it back just as you were too insecure to ask me what a “bolgia” was.

FEMALE DINER: We're so excited!

WAITPERSON: Terrific. Can I start you off with a cocktail? Say yes, because I will not stop talking about cocktails until you order a cocktail. Have you had cocktails before?

MALE DINER: (as if trying to remember) Cocktail, cocktail, cocktail, cocktail... 'Yes. I think so. Oops, no. I'm going to say no. No, we have not.

WAITPERSON: That's correct!, because we do cocktails a little differently. Our mixologist takes artisanal moonshine, adds an ice cube larger than the glass it is in, mixes it with something you'd never want in your cocktail – lighter fluid, wood chips, tears of nineteen-eighties Romanian Olympic gymnasts—and then, in the manner of an offended female character in a 1930's film, the mixologist will toss it

right in your face. It's a really refreshing way to start the meal. He pitched Triple A baseball in Woonsocket, RI for a while, so you really feel the face splash.

MALE DINER: Thank you so much. This is going to be great!

WAITPERSON: I'll bring your plates in the order in which they randomly come out of the kitchen, which is how food is served in China. Have you been to China?

MALE DINER: No, but we've been meaning to go.

WAITPERSON: The chef would really prefer it if you had been to China. Since you haven't, he would like you to watch a twenty-minute "webisode" in which he plants gardens in Chinese elementary schools with Chef Chan Yan-tak Did you bring your iPad?

FEMALE DINER: We did.

She takes it out of her purse and shows it to every one.

WAITPERSON: Perfect. Also, the chef would like it if you ate with your left hands, since he is left-handed and that's how he prepares the food. If you space out and forget, don't worry: I have a with which ruler to slap your right hands.

MALE DINER: Innovative.

WAITPERSON: And, just so you know, we also handle tipping a little differently here. instead of your tipping me based on what you think of my service, I will calculate a percentage based on how I think you did as customers. Though, to be honest, I usually forget and just put down 30 per cent.

MALE DINER: We do that, too!

WAITPERSON: Awesome. And, finally, before we get going, you are required to accept my Facebook friend request so that we can diffuse any tension created by this artificial "server-servee" relationship. It would be really awkward for you not to accept the request if you ever wanted to come back.

And you will come back, just so you can proudly answer, “Yes! I've dined with you before!”. So take out your cell phones, iPhones only of course, and accept my request. I'll wait.

Both the male and female diners fiddle with their phones.

FEMALE DINER: Done! By the way, nice profile pic at the wet t-shirt contest, by the way.

WAITPERSON: Thank you. And, remember, my disdain toward you isn't about the so-called “power imbalance” between us. I just think you're unsophisticated, and that is something I detest far more than racism, popular music, and the upper-middle-class suburb I came from.

MALE DINER: Our friends were right. This place is great.

THE END