

Waiter From Hell

Remember when eating out was a relaxing experience? Someone else cooked for you, served you and cleaned up after you. All you had to do was chew, swallow and pay. No longer, though. Today you feel like a laboratory rat who has to struggle through a maze every time it wants a chunk of cheese.

“Good evening,” the maitre said. “Table for four?”

“Yes, thank you.”

“Smoking or non?”

“Nonsmoking.”

“Would you prefer to dine indoors or outdoors this evening?”

“I guess indoors would be good.”

“Very well, sir,” he said. “Would you like to be seated in the main dining room or our lovely solarium¹⁾?”

“Uh, let me see. . . uh. . .”

“I can give you a table with a lovely view in our lovely solarium.”

“I think the solarium would be lovely,” I said. We followed him here.

“Now, would you prefer a view over looking the golf course, the sunset on the lake or the majestic²⁾ mountains to the west?”

“Whatever you recommend,” I said. Let him make a decision for a change, I thought.

He sat us by a window facing the golf course, the lake or the mountains. I couldn't tell which because it was dark outside.

Then a young man better dressed and better looking than any of us presented himself at our table. “Good evening, my name is Paul, and I'll be your waiter this evening. Would you like a few minutes before I take your order?”

“No,” I said. “I'm just a meat-and-potatoes guy, so I'll have the filet and a baked potato.”

“Soup or salad?”

“Salad.”

“We have a mixed-green salad, hearts of palm or a very fine endive salad with baby shrimp.”

“Just a mixed-green salad, okay?”

“Whatever you say, sir. Dressing?”

I didn't want to make another decision. “Whatever you've got will be fine.”

“We have creamy Italian, blue cheese, vinaigrette³⁾, Thousand Island, honey Dijon, ranch. . .”

“Just bring me one.”

“Creamy Italian is our house specialty. Would that be all right, sir?”

“Yeah.” I was curt.

“And your baked potato. . .”

I knew what was coming. “I just want the baked potato dry, you understand? I don't

want anything on it. ”

“No butter? No sour cream? ”

“No. ”

“No chives? ”

“No. Don't you understand English? ” I shouted. “I don't want anything on it. Just bring me a baked potato and a steak. ”

“Would you prefer the six-, eight-or 12-ounce steak, sir? ” “Whatever. ” “Would you like that rare, medium rare, medium, medium well or well done? ”

“Pauly Boy, ” I said, “you are really starting to get me steamed. ”

“Which brings up the vegetables, sir? Would you like steamed broccoli⁴⁾, creamed corn, diced carrots. . . ”

That did it. I threw my napkin to the floor, stood up, put my face right in his arrogant⁵⁾ kisser and said, “How'd you like to settle this outside? ”

“Fine with me, sir. Would you prefer the parking lot, the side alley or the street in front of the restaurant? ” “I prefer right here, ” I said, and sucker-punched him.

He ducked, then countered with a left hook right under my eye. It was the first time all night he hadn't offered me a selection. I collapsed semiconscious⁶⁾ into my chair.

I felt my tie being loosened, my collar unbuttoned, hands slapping my face. When I regained my senses, I saw the very concerned maitre right in front of my nose. He apologized and offered to buy me a drink, call the paramedics⁷⁾— whatever I wanted.

“No, no, ” I said. “I'll be all right. Just bring me a glass of water. ”

“Yes, sir, right away, ” He said. “Would you prefer imported mineral water, sparkling water⁸⁾ or soda with a wedge of lime? ”

来自地狱的侍者

还记得不记得过去外出吃饭是件宽心愉快的事情？有人为你掌勺、服务，你走后又为你收拾桌子。而你所要做的只是咀嚼、吞咽和付账。可是这已成了过去。今天外出吃饭，你就像一只实验室里的老鼠，为了得到一块奶酪，你不得不在迷宫中四处乱窜。

“晚上好，”领班说。“四位？”

“是的，谢谢。”

“吸不吸烟？”

“不吸。”

“今晚你愿意在室内还是室外就餐？”

“我想室内要好些。”

“很好，先生，”他说。“你愿意坐在主餐厅呢，还是我们漂亮的阳光厅呢？”

“嗯，让我想想。”

“坐在我们的阳光厅里，你可以欣赏到美丽的景色。”

“我想就在阳光厅吧。”我回答道。然后我们跟着他走了进去。

“那么你是喜欢俯视高尔夫球场、湖畔落日、还是西山奇景呢？”

“随便，”我说。我想就让他决定我们坐在哪儿吧。

他把我们引到一扇窗户前坐下。我也不清楚外面究竟是高尔夫球场，还是湖畔，还是高山，因为天已是漆黑一片。

这时，一位穿得比我们当中任何人都潇洒、长得比我们当中任何人都英俊的年轻人走到了我们的桌前。“晚上好。我叫保罗。今天晚上由我为你们服务。点菜前你们是否需要一点时间？”

“不用了，”我说道。“只是随便吃点东西。我只点鱼片和烤土豆。”

“要不要汤或沙拉？”

“要一个沙拉。”

“我们有绿菜沙拉、棕榈芯沙拉、还有一种精美的小虾拌菊苣沙拉。”

“就点一个绿菜沙拉，好吗？”

“随你的便，先生。调料呢？”

我不想再挑了。“什么都可以。”

“我们有意大利乳酱、蓝奶酪、醋油沙司、千岛酱、第戎蜂蜜、农场果酱……”

“随便一种就行了。”

意大利乳酱是我们店特制的。来点儿好吗，先生？”

“可以。”我生硬地答道。

“另外你的烤土豆……”

我知道他又要说什么了，于是抢道，“我只要干烤土豆，你明白吗？土豆上面什么也不要放。”

“不放黄油？不放奶油？”

“不放。”

“也不放细香葱？”

“不放。难道你听不懂英语吗？”我嚷了起来。“土豆上我什么也不要。就给我上道烤土豆和牛排。”

“那么先生，你是要6盎司、8盎司、还是12盎司的牛排呢？”

“随便。”“你是要三成熟、四成熟、五成熟、六七成熟的，还是完全煎熟的？”

“保罗老弟，”我说道，“你这是快要把我蒸熟了。”

“先生，你点什么蔬菜呢？是来点儿蒸椰菜、玉米糊，还是胡萝卜块儿呢……”

我实在是忍无可忍了，于是一把将餐巾扔到地上，起身离席，直盯着那小子傲慢的面孔说道：“你想不到外面解决？”

“先生，这没问题。你是愿意到停车场、旁边的胡同，还是饭馆前的大街上呢？”

“我看就在这里。”说着我便抽拳向他打去。

他低头闪过，随即以一记左勾拳击中了我的眼睛下部。这是整个晚上他头一次没有给我选择的机会。我昏昏沉沉地栽倒在椅子上。

我感到领带被拉松了，领扣被解开了，脸被人抽打着。当我终于清醒过来时，眼皮底下却换成了原先那十分关切的领班。他不停地对我抱歉着，说要为我买一杯酒，并找护理来——满足我的一切要求。

“不了，不了，”我说。“我没事儿。就给我拿一杯水好了。”

“是的，先生。我马上就办。”他应声道。“你是喜欢进口矿泉水、汽水，还是加酸橙的苏打水？”

NOTE 注释：

solarium [səu'leəriəm] n. 日光室

majestic [mə'dʒestɪk] adj. 宏伟的，庄严的

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

vinaigrette [ˈvɪneɪsət] n. 醋油沙司

broccoli [ˈbrɒkəli] n. 椰菜

arrogant [ˈærəɡənt] adj. 傲慢的，自大的

semiconscious [semiˈkɒnʃəs] adj. 半意识的

paramedic [ˈpærəˌmedɪk] n. 护理人员

sparkling water [ˈspɑːkɪŋ ˈwɔːtə] n. 汽水