



Sean gave Benson and his family a dismissive glance and announced, “We have no tables for you in the main hall. There’s a small table in the corridor that would be enough for your whole family. Tuck in now; dinner is about to be served.”

All eyes in the room turned towards Benson and his family as if they were some strange-looking aliens who had just descended on earth.

While everybody sat in the main hall, which was the Peony Hall, Benson and his family had to squeeze themselves to fit into the miserable, tiny table in the corridor.

Nothing could be more humiliating than to be treated like some downbeat outcasts. How they had wanted to walk away from the banquet, snubbing all the

insults. Nonetheless, Benson and his family put up with the embarrassment with gritted teeth and clenched fists. They did not want to be seen as impertinent and rude, simply walking away from his dad's birthday banquet.

They walked over to the lone table in the corridor and sat down, under the mocking eyes of their guests and relatives.

The banquet had officially begun!

The guests at the banquet were treated to a sumptuous feast with successive delectable, mouth-watering gourmet dishes. All except for the solitary table in the corridor.

They waited till the guests had finished their last round of desserts, yet there was still no food served on their table.

When the dinner was almost finished, Samuel came over and ordered the servers to serve the leftovers to Benson and his family.

As if it was the final straw, Benson and his family could not contain their rage and resentment anymore. What do they take us for? Beggars or dogs that are only entitled to leftovers?

As if he had reached the tipping point, Benson gave an uncharacteristic scowl and stood up abruptly from the table. "Let's go," he urged stoutly. "We're done with the banquet."

Sean was merrily clinking glasses with some of his most distinguished guests at his banquet when Samuel approached him and whispered in his ear, "Dad, Benson, and his family have skipped the dinner and left the banquet. They'd seemed rather

displeased.”

“Huh! Serves them right for giving me a rotten pill for my birthday. What are they thinking? Are they really here to celebrate or to curse me? Why should I feed them with all the wonderful food? I’d rather feed the dogs.”

...

The moment they exited the hotel, Leah, who was bitter, lashed out at Nathan.

“Look at you and your dumb idea. We’d assigned you the task of finding a suitable birthday present for Sean. What the hell were you thinking, presenting him with an embarrassing pill as a gift? Thanks for making us look like a fool in front of everybody, making them feed us with leftovers as if we were some kind of beggars. What an ingenious idea of yours!”

Penny tried to placate her mother, “I’m sure that Nathan hadn’t intended so, Mum.”

“Let’s stop arguing.” Benson suggested gloomily, “We’ve utterly embarrassed ourselves in front of our friends and relatives today. I’m sure that dad would only find us more repulsive than ever. Our situation would only take a turn for the worse.”

“Just calm down, everybody. Soon they’ll be knocking at our door, begging us for the pill,” Nathan asserted.

Penny shot him a rueful smile, “Come on, Nathan. We’ve had enough of your nonsense. How could that be possible?”

“Didn’t they just throw the pill away in front of everyone? What makes you think that they would eat their words and beg us for it?”

“Even if grandpa would fall sick, he has the cash and means to seek out the best medical treatment. He doesn’t need your pill at all.”

But Nathan had no qualms about his prediction, “Just relax, I’m convinced they’ll eat humble pie and return to us for the pill.”

His assuring demeanor was no different from when he had predicted Mr. Harvey’s appearance for his apology.

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Penny and her family were befuddled by his words. What made him so sure of his prediction?

Their thoughts were interrupted when Queenie

mewled pitifully, “Queenie is hungry, Papa. When can we have our lunch? I saw them having so much food on their tables earlier! It makes me so hungry.”

Queenie was referring to the scrumptious and appetizing food that was served at Sean’s seventieth birthday banquet. The exhaustive list was made up of glamorous and expensive dishes that had included Wagyu beef, foie gras, caviar, abalone, lobsters, and many more. Any single dish could cost them a month to even a whopping full year’s salary, burning a hole in their pockets.

“Those dishes are far too expensive, Queenie. We can’t afford them.” Penny explained to her daughter, “Mama will cook you something else when we get home.”

But Nathan insisted, “What makes you think that we can’t afford them? Come on, let’s treat ourselves to a

good meal today.”

“But we don’t have the money, Nathan...” Penny trailed off in a diffident tone.

“Don’t worry, let me pay for the meal. I do have a few pennies for that,” Nathan reassured her.

Though he was never obsessed with money and wealth, Nathan was pretty sure that he had a bankroll of up to tens of millions. It had all meant nothing to him, as they were just figures.

Cloud Palace - the most expensive restaurant in Channing.

It was situated at the highest level of the highest building in Channing - The Pinnacle.

The upscale restaurant overlooked the most

brehtaking panoramic view of Channing, boasting the most premium ingredients and the most accomplished chefs who would whip up dishes that could swoon your palate with delight.

Cloud Palace was exclusive, being available to only those who could boast excessive wealth, power, and status.

Those who were filthy rich but lacked the prestige and position in society would be snubbed at Cloud Palace.

Nathan brought Penny and her family to the Pinnacle, taking the exclusive elevator to the top of the building.

Penny and her family were daunted by the poshness of the place when they learned that Nathan was taking them to Cloud Palace for lunch.

“This place looks so fancy and lavish, Penny,” Benson

intercepted nervously. “I guess it would cost a bomb to dine in here.”

“This place is extremely costly; a simple dish could cost up to tens of thousands.” Penny stated taciturnly, “It is one of the most expensive restaurants in Channing, but it doesn’t just cater to the rich, you’ve really got to be somebody in order to dine inside.”

Her words gave Leah the chills as she gasped, “My god, this is as good as daylight robbery. Where would we find the money to dine here? It would cost us our lifetime’s wages to simply have a meal here. Let’s get out of here.”

Nathan tried to allay their worries with a tranquil smile, “Come on, guys. Don’t be silly, how much could a simple meal cost? Just let me take care of the bill.”

With those words, Nathan and company were on their

way into the restaurant.

They were stopped at the entrance by a few men in well-tailored suits, who appeared to be the security of the restaurant. A man who seemed to be their supervisor gave them an unfriendly look and announced, "I'm sorry, according to our dress code, we deny entry to people who are not appropriately attired."

Nathan and company were bemused by what he had said. Despite not being dressed in Gucci, Armani, or some designer labels, they had certainly appeared presentable and well-dressed for the occasion.

A man dressed in a creased tank top, loose crumpled shorts, and flip-flops walked past them and strode into the restaurant casually as if he was walking into a supermarket. Nathan pointed at him and asked the security, "What makes you say that we are

inappropriately dressed? What about him then? Why wasn't he barred from entering?"

"That man is a property magnate who owns dozens of properties. So what if he is dressed in tank tops and flip-flops?" The supervisor sneered, "What makes you think that you're on the same level as him?"

"Do you know how much we charge for our dishes? A simple meal could easily cost you over a hundred grand. This is not a place for paupers like you to dine in."

Penny's life savings were merely over a hundred thousand, which meant that she could hardly afford a decent meal in this place. "Forget it, Nathan. Let's find another place for dinner."

"No, there's no reason for us to leave." Nathan insisted, "This is the first time I'm taking you guys out

for dinner. I insist on treating you guys to a good meal.”

“Hey, you, I want to see your boss. Get him here.”

The supervisor and his men cackled in laughter.

“We have a dozen bosses here, which one are you referring to?” the supervisor laughed a humorless laugh.

“The one who has the final say,” Nathan answered, indifferently.

“I’ll shut down your restaurant if your boss does not appear in front of me in ten minutes’ time,” he warned.

“What a load of hogwash!” The supervisor sniggered, “How dare you talk in such a manner? Do you know who’s our big boss?”

“He’s Thomas Dunn!”

“Get your asses out of here before he throws you out from the window!”

Unbeknownst to Nathan, Thomas Dunn had already submitted his resignation as instructed by Nathan, and he was no longer the armed forces’ chief of Eastern District.

Following his resignation, he bought over Cloud Palace and had now become a businessman cum restaurant owner.

Plucky and big-hearted, he was still a man with significant influence, given his previous post in the armed forces and his resourceful network.

He remained the undisputed big daddy of the Eastern

District.

When he heard that Thomas Dunn was the owner of Cloud Palace, Nathan gravely took out his phone and dialed the number of Thomas Dunn. “It’s me, Thomas. I’m right outside your restaurant.”

Thomas?

The supervisor and his men burst out in another round of laughter. It seemed ludicrous to them that Nathan could come up with such an idiotic idea to pretend that he was on the phone with Mr. Dunn.

Their laughter resonated like those who were watching a hilarious comedy inside a cinema. All of a sudden, a bare-footed man dashed out from the management office of the restaurant towards them. The man was tall and stout with prominent side-burns on his face. He was Thomas Dunn.

A woman ran yelling behind Thomas Dunn with a pair of shoes in her hands. She was his secretary cum foot massager, “Your shoes, Mr. Dunn! You’ve forgotten to put on your shoes...”

Thomas Dunn had been pampering himself to a foot massage when Nathan had called.

He sprang up from his chair like an elastic spring the instant he heard Nathan’s call, scrambling out of his office, without even bothering to put on his shoes.

Overwhelmed by Nathan’s sudden appearance, he greeted him with an unctuous grin, “Welcome to Cloud Palace, Sir!”

The supervisor and his men stood transfixed, as they were utterly lost when they saw the barefooted Thomas Dunn address Nathan as “Sir”.

It turned their mouths wide-opened as bagels and their eyes were almost popping out from their sockets.

“Yes, I am here to try out your restaurant.” Nathan muttered with a disinterested tone, “But your security has barred me from entering because he said that I’m a pauper.”

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