

TV Show 115

Chapter 115: The Gap Between People

Inside the restaurant.

"What's wrong?"

Monica asked.

Rachel had already guessed the reason and, feeling embarrassed, covered her eyes with her hand.

"It looks like our great surgeon isn't very good at math."

Ross swayed his head smugly and mocked, "He only tipped 4%."

"So?"

Adam responded indifferently.

"So, he's being stingy."

Ross scoffed. "The standard is 15%. With so many of us, it should be 20%. At the very least, it shouldn't be less than 10%. What kind of tip is 4%?"

"Is tipping mandatory?"

Adam countered, "Is it legally required?"

"Of course!"

Ross exclaimed. "It's a way to show gratitude to the server. Rachel, you're a waitress. What do you think?"

"Ahem."

Rachel cleared her throat and muttered under her breath, "That's my dad."

"That's your dad?"

Ross shouted. "Doesn't his behavior bother you?"

"Enough."

Seeing that Ross was relentless, Rachel snapped, "If he ever came to my café, someone would definitely spit in his coffee. I've told him a million times, but he just won't change."

"Why should he change?"

Adam interjected. "It's you guys who need to change."

"What?!"

Rachel and Ross exclaimed in unison.

"Tipping is just a custom, and over time, it's turned into a bad habit. It's not mandatory. If it were, not tipping would be considered dining and dashing."

Adam explained, "It originated in Europe. Initially, it was just a way to thank good service and show off wealth. But now, it has evolved into an obligation, with specific percentages, and if you tip too little, you're judged. Some servers even retaliate by contaminating food. If that's not a bad habit, what is?"

"How can you call it a bad habit?"

Ross argued, "It's just redirecting part of the meal cost directly to the server instead of the restaurant. As long as you tip appropriately—"

"What does 'appropriate' mean?"

Adam interrupted. "10%, 15%, 20% of the bill? Can you guarantee that every server has the same expectations? What if you tip 15%, but they expect 20%? Even if you give the highest 20%, what if they think they're exceptionally good-looking and provide outstanding service—will they demand even more?"

Don't say it's impossible. The fact that tipping percentages have risen from 10% to 15% to 20% proves otherwise. And if they're dissatisfied, your food might get tampered with!

People go out to eat to enjoy themselves. Should they really have to guess what each server at each restaurant expects, and worry whether their food has been spit in?

Instead of dealing with this mess, why not just eliminate this bad habit? Include a fixed service charge in the bill and have the restaurant distribute it.

That way, servers won't have unrealistic expectations or conflicts of interest with customers, and food cleanliness will improve significantly.

Besides, isn't serving customers a server's job?

Hiring servers to serve customers is the restaurant's responsibility. Otherwise, should customers serve themselves? This isn't a buffet or takeout!

And why should customers have to calculate tips every time? Isn't the whole point of business to make things easier for customers?

Fixed service charges are a global standard. You're the ones disrupting the system!"

"You're wrong, you're wrong..."

Ross was at a loss for words and could only repeat his denial like a broken record, unwilling to accept Adam's "twisted logic."

"Adam, tipping is an established custom. As long as it's within a reasonable range, it's acceptable."

Monica reasoned, "What you're saying is too extreme."

"Exactly!"

Ross's eyes lit up. "You're too extreme. There aren't that many people who are that greedy! At least, I've never met one."

"Oh, really?"

Adam smirked. "You've never met one? Funny, because I heard someone—every time they stay at a hotel—not only takes all the complimentary toiletries but also keeps asking the staff for extra toilet paper rolls, and even unscrews the bedside lamp bulbs to take home..."

"MONICA!!!"

Ross couldn't take it anymore, his face burning with embarrassment.

That someone was obviously him!

He could usually justify it, saying it was within his rights. No matter how much the hotel staff disliked it, they could only keep their complaints to themselves. And, being smart, he never stayed at the same hotel twice.

But just moments ago, he had criticized Leonard for being cheap because he tipped too little. And since tipping isn't actually mandatory, even if the servers were upset, they could only get back at him next time.

So, what's the difference between the two situations?

None.

And that realization made him uncomfortable.

"I never told Adam! I swear!"

Monica quickly raised her hands, refusing to take the blame.

"Alright, I was just making a point."

Adam chuckled. "Leonard is a cardiothoracic surgeon at NYU Medical Center. His annual income is ten times yours. Do you really think he cares about a few dollars in tips? He spent \$500 tonight. Does that sound cheap?"

Of course not! Just like you don't actually need those extra rolls of toilet paper or light bulbs!

As long as it's within the rules, people can make their own choices. Just don't judge others based on that or turn it into a moral issue—it's pointless."

"What are you guys talking about?"

At that moment, Leonard returned and asked curiously.

"Nothing, nothing!"

Ross quickly tried to cover up, glancing nervously at Adam.

"Nothing."

Adam smiled, brushing it off.

Half of what he said was true.

In his eyes, the tipping culture in America was like the wedding gift money culture in his past life—driven higher and higher by a few people until it became an unbearable burden for the majority.

Nobody wanted to receive those "red bomb" invitations, but they had no choice but to accept them.

If you didn't give enough, you'd be judged and humiliated. And here, tipping too little meant risking spit in your food or even being judged by "righteous" friends.

It was undeniably a bad habit.

As for whether Leonard was resisting tipping out of principle or just being cheap... well, Adam wasn't sure. He was just flattering him.

Why didn't he expose what had just happened?

He had already done enough direct flattery tonight. It was better to let Rachel mention it casually later—that would seem more natural and sincere.

After all, he was doing everything he could to prolong his life and avoid an early death.

To comfort himself, he borrowed Leonard's words to Sheldon: "This is just an unavoidable part of social interaction. Even if you don't like it, you have to play along."

Still, a little flattery and sweet talk were far better than facing the consequences of being too blunt.

"Let's go."

Leonard, in a great mood, wrapped up the dinner.

As an attending physician in a major department at a top hospital, he was used to interns constantly flattering him. Normally, he wouldn't even notice it.

But people are different.

Adam was talented, wealthy, and ambitious. He was also a close friend of Leonard's precious daughter.

Flattery from a bright young man like him?

It just hit differently.