

## 18. The Platter

*(In the manager's office of a very expensive store. #1, a customer, is waiting. #2, the manager, enters.)*

**#2:** Good afternoon. I'm Mr./Ms. Upson. *(Sits down at the desk.)* What can I do for you?

**#1:** I bought this... *(Holds up a platter.)*

**#2:** *(Notices something on the monitor sitting on his/her desk.)* Yes, I'm sure you have a fascinating story, but I have to take care of something important at this moment. Excuse me. *(Dials the phone.)* Walters, Upson here. I'm sitting at my desk looking at my monitor and guess what I see? *(Pause)* No, you'd like to think that I see an orderly store, but look over in the watch section. Please tell me that it's just my imagination and you didn't allow that Madonna person in here to shop again. *(Pause)* I don't care. You let her in, you ask her to leave. Do it now! *(Hangs up.)*

**#1:** I didn't mean to eavesdrop, but are you throwing out Madonna? The Madonna?

**#2:** There was another, but she died several millennia ago? So I am referring to the...for lack of a better description, the singer.

**#1:** What did she do?

**#2:** Nothing. We allow some of those show business people to shop here, but she...well, she shows a little too much skin for our taste

**#1:** Boy, you all are strict.

**#2:** Yes, we are. Now, what seems to be your problem?

**#1:** I bought this platter here for my parents' anniversary. You said you'd engrave it and send it to me when it was done.

**#2:** Since you have it with you, I'm assuming we did that.

**#1:** Yes, you did.

**#2:** So you're here to congratulate us on a job well done?

**#1:** Not exactly. You made a mistake when you engraved it.

**#2:** I doubt that. Let me see the platter. *(#1 hands #2 the platter.) (#2 looks it over.)* It looks fine to me. I see no problem.

**#1:** You're joking, right? Did you read it?

**#2:** Of course I did.

**#1:** *(Takes the platter back and reads it.)* Let me get this straight, you find nothing wrong with, "March 30. Happy Anniversary, MOP and Pop?"

**#2:** No, I don't.

**#1:** *(Pause)* Is English your native language? Who calls their mother Mop?!

**#2:** Let me ask you something. Do you know what's just outside our front door?

**#1:** Rodeo Drive.

**#2:** Exactly. That means that we are quite exclusive and cater to what can be a very diverse and sometimes unusual clientele. The nicknames these people have for their parents run the gamut from A-Z and then some. There was even one man who referred to his mother as his "cuddle-buddy." A name reeking with Freudian overtones. You yourself refer to your father as "Pop." If I'm not mistaken, a "pop" is a carbonated beverage, not a parental figure.

**#1:** A lot of people refer to their fathers as "Pop."

**#2:** Perhaps, so maybe some people do refer to their mothers as "Mop", n'est pas?

**#1:** Fine, I'll give you that point.

**#2:** Of course you will.

**#1:** But I don't call my mother "Mop." Face it, your engraver made a mistake.

**#2:** Assuming that's true, what do you want from me?

**#1:** What do I want?

**#2:** Is that a tough question? Should I use smaller words?

**#1:** No, it's not a tough question. It is however, ridiculous.

- What I want is for you to fix it! I want you to change it to read "Mom and Pop."
- #2: Fine, what do you suggest? Should we use a big eraser or perhaps try some whiteout.
- #1: I'm not following you.
- #2: As if you could. *(Holds up the platter.)* This is platinum. The names are etched in. We can't just change them.
- #1: Then get me a new platter.
- #2: That leads us to problem number two. This platter was a sale item.
- #1: Sale?! That platter cost me a thousand dollars.
- #2: Like I said, a sale item. *(Shows #1 his/her watch.)* See this watch? The minute hand costs a thousand dollars. We offered these platters for sale until we realized no one with taste would buy them. So we lowered the price and if I'm not mistaken, you got the last.
- #1: So you're saying you won't replace it?
- #2: Finally, a spark of understanding.
- #1: What am I supposed to do about the inscription?
- #2: Well, since this is a serving platter, maybe if you cover the inscription with food, no one will notice.
- #1: You're not helping.
- #2: OK, just so you won't think that I'm the cold, caustic, unfeeling store manager that I actually am, I'm going to make an exchange for you. *(Reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a little box and opens it.)* I will exchange your platter for these.
- #1: What are they?
- #2: Solid gold toothpicks. They were a novelty item several years ago. They actually sell for \$600 dollars apiece, but I'll make it a straight trade.
- #1: You expect me to give my parents toothpicks for their anniversary?!
- #2: Why not? If you're a typical example of your family's lineage, I'm sure your parents would enjoy a good pick

- when they finish their vittles.
- #1: That should just about do it. Look, you can keep the toothpicks. I've decided to give my parents something much better for their anniversary.
- #2: And what is that?
- #1: You.
- #2: I'm sorry, I don't understand.
- #1: Of course you don't. I'll explain and go slowly so you can get every word. My parents have their own very successful law firm. My mother is also a consumer advocate and handles many cases in that area. You remember that "exclusive" clothing store, I believe it was just up the block from here, that refused to wait on a woman they saw as the "wrong kind" for the store.
- #2: Yes.
- #1: Well, my mother was that woman's attorney and, let's put it this way, that "wrong kind" of woman — now owns that store.
- #2: That was...your mother?
- #1: Old "Mop" herself. And I'm going to hand her this store and you on a badly engraved platter.
- #2: I don't think...
- #1: Well, maybe you should because by the time my mother's done, I will get satisfaction and the next thing you say to a customer will probably be "Would you like fries with that?"
- #2: You know sir/ma'am, there's no real reason to bother your mother. I just remembered that we do have another platter we can get. It's a little more expensive \$5000...
- #1: I'm not paying any more.
- #2: No, of course you're not. It'll be a...straight trade. I'll... even get it engraved. Correctly.
- #1: Of course you will. I'd appreciate that. My address is on the sales slip. Have it sent over by five — the latest.
- #2: Certainly.
- #1: Thank you. *(Starts to exit, then comes back to #2.)* You

know, I've got something stuck in my tooth. You wouldn't happen to have a toothpick, would you? (#2 holds up the box with the gold toothpicks, takes one and puts it in his/her mouth.) Today turned out to be a pretty good day after all, don't you think? Bye.

## 19. The Roommate

(In a living room. #1 enters. He/she has come home from a long day's work. #1 looks around. The apartment is a mess. #1 puts his/her things down and starts to straighten a little. #2 enters.)

- #2: I thought I heard someone out here.  
#1: Is it too much to ask for you to straighten this place up?  
#2: I did.  
#1: You call this straight?  
#2: Yes. You should have seen it this morning.  
#1: And what did that look like?  
#2: I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you. (No response.) Well, someone's in a bad mood. What happened? You miss your visit from the Happy Elf today?  
#1: No, I'm just tired of sharing an apartment with a pig.  
#2: I'm not a pig. I'm messy. There's a difference.  
#1: Sorry. I didn't know that filth came in gradations.  
#2: See, pigs are dirty and unclean. I'm not. I'm just not tidy.  
#1: Well, keep trying. I'm sure you'll hit the top of the grunge scale before too long.  
#2: What is your problem?  
#1: (Sits on the couch.) I've had a long day at work and all I wanted to do was come home and unwind.  
#2: So...unwind.  
#1: Where? The apartment is full of...you and your debris. (Lifts a blanket off a pile of newspapers on the couch.) Like this! Don't you think you can get rid of some of these?  
#2: No. I haven't read them all yet. I don't want to miss what's going on.  
#1: They've been lying around here forever.  
#2: They have not.  
#1: (Takes a paper from the pile.) Really? (Reads the paper.) "Allies Invade Normandy"? (Lifting up another paper) Or