

“Resort”

By Dave McClain

An experienced restaurant reviewer’s latest assignment gives him more than he bargained for – and less.

The young woman walked across the restaurant towards John's table. She was completely nude, except for the flip-flops on her feet and the gold chain around her waist. John, who was also nude, swallowed hard and slid his chair just a little further under for the formica table where he was sitting... and he was very thankful for the cheap plastic table cloth which overflowed the 4-top almost far to reach his hips.

"Hi, I'm Cynthia. May I take your order?"

"Um, yeah... I'll have the sirloin steak, medium, with the baked beans and... c-corn... corn." He cleared his throat nervously. "I'd also like the potato soup and the chef's salad with Italian dressing."

As soon as the 20-year-old waitress with the large breasts finished scribbling on her pad, she asked if he would like anything to drink besides the water that sat untouched and sweating on his table.

"No. Thanks," John said as he handed the menu back to the waitress. His eyes lingered on the colorful restaurant logo at the top of the otherwise plainly printed menu. "The Raw and the Cooked," it said. "Good name for a restaurant at a nudist resort," John thought. "Clever." As Cynthia walked away, John resisted the urge to stare at her ass. His car was older than that ass.

John was a stocky, bearded man of 35. He didn't work out very much, but he managed to keep himself in pretty good shape. He was fairly comfortable with his own body, but when it came to putting it on public display... not so much. Except for a couple brief relationships, no one had seen him naked since he and his wife divorced five years earlier. Since then, he had pretty much buried himself in his work.

Instead of gawking at Cynthia, John allowed his eyes to scan the restaurant. He flipped open his iPad and began typing. He looked back and forth between the screen and his... unusual surroundings. Below where he had recorded the restaurant's hours, to make it easier to write his review later, he added a few key phrases.

metal-framed chairs w/black padding, 2 doz tbls, 1/3 full, good food smell, no booths - open space, white walls, painted mural w/families by lake - slightly amateurish, but pleasant.

"I guess I can skip the usual comments about the appearance of the staff," he mused.

John never would've come here on his own. It was his crazy editor, Francisco, wanting to "expand the horizons of the magazine", "spice things up a bit", "boost circulation". John had reviewed lots of different kinds of restaurants – in seven states! And two foreign countries! But he had never been anywhere like this before! John only agreed to take the assignment when Francisco told him this resort was having their annual open house and he could check out the restaurant fully clothed. Wrong week! Wrong week? John wondered if that had been on purpose. Shit, it didn't matter anymore. He was here now and Francisco had cut him absolutely no slack when John called his cell to tell him about the mix-up. "And your deadline is still tomorrow," Francisco had said. John thought he heard the boss chuckle a little as John was ending the call. Putz. He'd like to see Francisco out here! Wait a minute. Scratch that.

John noticed Cynthia carrying a tray with a salad plate and soup bowl on it. Her breasts were jiggling slightly as she walked. He felt a little movement between his legs and he started to panic. "Think baseball," he thought to himself. He had heard that somewhere. "Think baseball! Baseball!" He hadn't gotten far into the Star-Spangled Banner before his appetizers appeared on the table in front of him.

“More water?” Cynthia asked.

“Ah, yeah, sure,” John said keeping his eyes on his food. “Thank you.”

He didn’t even remember finally drinking that water, but the glass was empty alright.

Cynthia paused, then started to bend over the table reaching for the glass.

“Oh! Let me get that for you,” John blurted out, but she had already picked up the glass.

“O’er the ramparts we watched...”

Cynthia smiled politely and left the table. John started on his soup. Before he knew it, Cynthia was returning with his water.

“...our flag was still there...”

“Oh, say, Cynthia? Can I get an actual soup spoon?”

“I’m sorry. I thought... I gave you a teaspoon, didn’t I? I’ll be right back.”

“Baseball is NOT helping,” John thought to himself.

Cynthia returned and quietly laid the spoon on the table as John checked his voice mail.

“Hi, John! This is Gladys,” John heard the caller say. “Gladys Spellman. I’m sorry we keep missing each other. I looked at the pics in your Email, I read the lease and I really would like to rent that room in your house. My lease is up at the end of next week, so I could move in as early as the 5th. Well, I guess all we really need to do is get together and see if we’re a good fit to be roommates. I’m working today and tomorrow, but I’m off Monday. So... call me back and we’ll figure out when to link up... tag, you’re it.”

John hadn’t even thought about renting the extra room in his house to a woman until Gladys called. She seemed nice. But, still – a woman? “Well, it worked on ‘Melrose Place’”, he thought. “Besides, I seem to be doing all sorts of new things now, so maybe it’s worth considering. After all, I do need the money. Would I be still be dealing with Francisco – and sitting here – naked – to review a restaurant at a nudist resort if I didn’t need the money?”

John picked up his soup spoon. He looked at it. Clean. He took a deep breath to better smell the soup. John wasn’t a fan of potato soup, but that was the only soup they had today... and it didn’t smell half bad. When he tasted that first spoonful, he couldn’t help but let a small “mmm” emanate from his throat. He quickly finished his soup and typed some more notes into his tablet. Now... the salad.

small = medium, ham - NOT processed, cheese – 2 kinds – cubed, egg, cherry toms, lettuce – fresh

Then, John’s steak dinner arrived.

well-seasoned (tastes like summer - ?), beans – smoky flav, corn – no salt needed...

John cleaned his plate.

“Here’s your check, sir,” he heard Cynthia say, as she laid a hand-written bill on the table. “Whenever you’re ready, I’ll be your cashier.”

John took his magazine’s credit card out of the wallet he had sitting on the table next to him and laid the card on the top of the bill. “This was a really good meal,” he said, a hint of surprise in his voice. “Could I meet the chef?”

“I’ll see if she’s available, sir.” As Cynthia walked away, John made a few more notes in his tablet.

A minute later, he looked up and saw a woman walking towards him. She was around 40. In spite of her average-sized chest, he could tell she was naked under her full canvas apron. She was pretty...ish and had a great smile. “I hear you liked my food,” the chef said, as she approached the table, wiping her hands on a small towel. John wasn’t sure of the proper etiquette in the situation, so he kept his seat.

“Yes, I did! I really did!”

“You sound surprised.”

“No, no, no, I didn’t mean it like that. It’s just that I...”

“Yeah, I know. The place doesn’t look like much, but the resort is growing and the owner is working on plans to renovate and expand the restaurant. I guess you could say hiring me is part of his plan too.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I was assistant to the head chef at Bernie’s Restaurant – in the city – until the owner decided to retire and close the place.”

“I see. And how long did you work there?”

“Why? You hiring?” she laughed.

“No, just curious.”

The chef hesitated. She was tired from working, but there was something different about this customer... this man. He had an innocent earnestness about him – and he liked her cooking! Besides, she liked men with beards.

“I’ll tell you what. Let me finish up in the kitchen and I’ll be right out. Ten minutes?”

“Sounds good. Mind if I wait here?”

“No problem.”

“Oh, my name’s John. Well, friends call me Jack.”

The chef laughed. It was a robust, but feminine laugh. The laugh of someone who genuinely enjoyed life – especially the little tricks it plays on us sometimes. “My name is Jill. Nice to meet you, Jack.”

Jack laughed too and, without thinking, he stood up to shake Jill’s hand. “Nice to meet you too, Jill!”

“Okay, wait here and I’ll be right back.”

“I’ll be here.” Jack sat back down and then realized what he had just done. He was naked and he had just stood up to meet a woman who was also naked. Well, except for her apron. That was a first – for Jack anyway. Then he looked around at the few people who remained in the restaurant and he realized something: The whole time he had been sitting there, as people were eating their meals, leaving the restaurant and new people entering, no one had really been looking at anyone – at least, not in the way that Jack would’ve expected at a place like this. And he wasn’t even looking at people the same way as when he came in. He could even see Cynthia over in the corner doing her side work. No big deal, really. There’s really nothing sexual about any of this. Jack grabbed his pad and start making more notes.

Jack was still typing when Jill returned to the table. When he looked up, he was shocked at what he saw. Horrified, even. She was wearing... clothes!

Jill noticed Jack’s expression change. “What’s wrong, Jack?”

“You’re... and I’m... I mean...”

“I’m off work now and I’m going to drive home. Outside that big gate over there, most people like other people to wear clothes. Now, do you want to walk me to my car so we can chat a bit more?”

“Yes, but I’m... I’m still naked!”

“Yeah, you and every other guy around here.” She leaned towards him. “I promise not to stare.”

Jack let out a nervous chuckle. He realized he was being silly and he stood up slowly.

Jill looked down where Jack had been sitting. Now it was her turn to be horrified.

“Dora the Explorer?!?”

Jill was referring to the towel Jack had been sitting on.

“Oh, yeah, that,” Jack tried not to get embarrassed all over again. “I’ve never been here before and I didn’t know that people sat on towels in this restaurant. They couldn’t seat me so I went back over to that little store next to the office and bought the only towel they had left.”

Jill let out that laugh again. “That’s funny!” Then she looked back at Jack’s seat and noticed that he had the towel draped over the chair in an unusual way. She looked concerned. “You were sitting on Dora’s face, Jack! That’s not very nice.”

A look of both horror and humor spread across Jack’s face, just as the corner of Jill’s lip turned up and formed a naughty smile. They both laughed a little and Jack grabbed the towel off the chair.

“I guess I’m just not a very nice person. Are you still going to let me walk you to your car?”

“Ummm...” Jill pretended to consider Jack’s question. “I’ll think about it on the way.”

They both smiled and headed out of the restaurant. Jack started walking toward the visitor parking.

Jill nodded in the other direction. “No, Jack. Go up the hill.”

They stopped, looked at each other and laughed at Jill’s unintentional joke.

“I mean... resort employees park up there behind the restaurant. Up that little hill there.”

“Well, alright then. Up the hill we go.”

As they walked to Jill’s car, Jack resumed asking her about her work history, with a combination of professional and personal curiosity. By the time they got to Jill’s car, she had gotten Jack to share some details about himself, but he remained guarded during the conversation.

“I have a confession to make,” Jack sighed.

“I know,” interrupted Jill.

Not hearing her, Jack continued, “I came here today because...”

“I mean, I know why you’re here, Jack.”

“You do?”

“Cynthia told me that there was some guy typing things into his iPad the whole time he was eating. I cooked in three different restaurants in the city before I came here, Jack. I know what you were doing. You’re reviewing our restaurant.”

“Whew! I’m glad that doesn’t bother you.”

“Just don’t tell your editor that we had this conversation.”

“No problem. Believe me, I’m not planning on telling him any more about this experience than absolutely necessary! But there is something else.”

“What’s that?”

“I’d like to see you again. Would you mind putting your number in my phone?”

“I’d be happy to,” said Jill. Jack unlocked his phone and handed it to her.

Jill typed in her number, but then a confused look spread across her face. “Why do you have my number in your phone already?”

“What? I don’t. I just met you. Let me see that.” Jack reached out his hand and took back his phone and looked at the screen. “That’s not your number. That’s the number of some woman who has been calling about renting a room in my house.”

“Is her name Gladys Spellman?”

“How did you know that?”

“That’s me! Gladys Jillian Spellman! I go by my middle name! So you’re... John Gensler?”

“My friends call me Jack.”

“Wow!”

“Well, I’ve been saying I was all set to rent to you if it seemed like we’d get along... so... waddya say?”

“Well, we have seen each other naked. That does have a way of breaking down barriers.”

“Umm... technically... you WERE wearing an apron.”

“True. True. But when I cook at home... sometimes I don’t.”

Jack held out his hand. “Welcome, roomie.”

“Thank you! Oh, there’s just one more thing. My daughter. She has her own place, but she comes by to visit me a lot and sometimes she spends the night.”

“That sounds fine. I look forward to meeting her.”

“You already have, said Jill. Just then she looked back down the hill. “Oh! There she is now! Cynthia!”

“Oh, boy.”