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Words From a Waiter

by Alane Baird

Technical Journalism Sophomore

HI! I'M WILLY, the waiter. I see you every day but you don't know who I am. To most of my friends I'm a regular college man, but to you girls I'm only the waiter. Waiting presents a problem at times and I'd like to tell you about it. Here's how you look to me.

Watching you from my corner of the dining room is fun. I can fit most of you into types. Lots and lots of things can be told about you when you are eating.

"The race horse type" eats and probably lives on the run. Watch her as she gobbles her food and lopes out of the dining room at a fast trot. Her only comment to me is, "Hurry, hurry." No matter how fast I serve and clear she wants more speed. You can't tell her about crowded kitchens. I try to serve you all as fast as possible.

The opposite of Miss Hurry is the "I don't have class until 4 o'clock" type. She is a most brilliant conversationalist at meals and takes this business of eating very lightly. Maybe you could speed her up a little. You see, I can't leave until all the tables are cleared and I often have one o'clocks. Miss Slowpoke makes everyone late—including Miss Hurry.

Dinner is cold and undesirable by the time the "I want to be with my guy and I'll be eating 15 minutes late" type gets home. She knows that usually there is food no matter what time she comes in. I know there are meetings which are necessary but you interrupt my meal and make others late when you are late. Advance notice would save you a warm plate.

"I'm not too fat to have seconds or thirds" is a comment which creates a fourth type. She has an insatiable appetite and wolfs down food like a football player. Food is bought to serve each of you normal portions with some seconds. I can't manufacture food on the spot, so please don't growl at me when I tell you there are no more seconds.

"The "Oh, but this contains a calorie" type scarcely eats a bit. I carry her plates back almost full. Sometimes she's just Miss General Food Griper and I have no sympathy for her.

You think I'm clumsy when I stumble and drop dishes and trays or spill the silver. I guess you just don't realize how much room

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your chairs take when you push them into the aisles. Your spoons and forks are perched on the edge of your plates and slide off as I pick them up. Soup spoons left in bowls make clearing even harder.

Topics of conversations around the tables continually amuse and amaze me. The center of the conversation is eternally men, men and more men. World affairs are little discussed. Grades run the closet second to men. I once heard a discussion of the word "dilemma" which is exactly what the girls were in.

It's hard to keep from laughing at some of the jokes and stories you tell. Your remarks pointed at me made about someone else are funny, too. Waiting is almost like being behind the scenes at a mystery play. I know what is coming most of the time but still you sometimes surprise me.

Some of my fellow waiters conducted a survey one morning. Twenty-seven girls stumbled down to breakfast. Eighteen of those did nothing but grunt and glare. Six managed a barely civil "good morning" and three actually smiled. Not a very good average. There is a happy ending, however. Word got around among the girls about the survey and things picked up each morning until one particularly sunny day they all sang "Good morning, dear waiters."

Another one of my friends said he wished you would treat us as humans instead of peasants working in the kitchen. I waited in one place for eight months only to be greeted as "hey, waiter" by more than half of the girls. We really are individuals and you can just call me "Willy."