



The Restaurant of Many Orders

By *Miyazawa Kenji*

Translated by *Tony* @ [Translations & Such](#)

Once there were two young gentlemen deep in the mountains, among the dry leaves. They were dressed just like British soldiers and carried shiny guns. With them were two dogs that looked like polar bears. One of them said something like this:

“What’s wrong with these mountains? We haven’t seen a single bird nor beast! I wish something would show up so that I could shoot it. *Bang! Baang!*”

“Wouldn’t it be nice to put a couple of bullets into the yellow belly of a deer about now! To watch it spin about a couple of times before it fell down dead!”

They were deep in the mountains. So deep, in fact, that even their hunter guide had gotten lost and wandered off. So deep, in fact, that even those dogs that looked like polar bears both got dizzy, and howled, and foamed at the mouth, and dropped dead.

“Well there goes 2,400 yen!” said one of the men, peeling back his dog’s eyelid.

“Well mine was 2,800 yen!” said the other man, his head lowered in regret.

The first gentleman went pale, and he carefully watched the other gentleman’s expression as he said, “I think we should head back.”

“I think we should head back, too. The weather has gotten cold, and I’ve gotten hungry.”

“Well then let’s call it quits. On the way back, we can stop by that inn we stayed at yesterday and buy some game birds.”

“They had rabbit, too, didn’t they? It’ll be just as if we hunted them ourselves. Well, let’s get going, then.”

But wouldn’t you know, they had no idea which direction would get them back. The wind howled, the grass rustled, the leaves whispered, the trees creaked.

“I’m so hungry! I’ve had a pain in my side since a while back.”

“Me, too. I hope we don’t have to walk much further.”

“I hope so, too. Oh, what shall we do? I really want something to eat!”

“I really want something to eat, too!”

The two gentlemen carried on like that as they walked through the

rustling grass.

Glancing behind, one of them saw an impressive Western-style house. At its entrance was a sign:

RESTAURANT
WILDCAT HOUSE

“This is perfect! There’s a place to eat right here! Let’s go in!”

“Well now, I wonder what a restaurant is doing in a place like this? But I guess they serve food here...”

“Of course they do! That’s what the sign says!”

“Well then, let’s go in. I’m so hungry I could faint.”

The two of them stood at the entranceway. It was quite impressive, made of white porcelain bricks. There was also a glass door with gold writing that said:

All are welcome. Please come in for a free meal.

The two hunters were overjoyed, and said:

“Well do you see that? What a wonderful place the world is. We had a bad time earlier today, but now look how lucky we are! Not

only did we find a restaurant, but one with free food!”

“That’s right! The sign says that they’ll make us a free meal!”

They pushed open the door and went inside, entering a hallway. On the other side of the glass door was written:

We especially welcome our fat and young customers.

The two were thrilled to be especially welcomed.

“Hey! We’re doubly welcome!”

“That’s right! We’re both fat *and* young!”

Marching down the hallway, they next came to a door painted blue.

“What an odd house. I wonder why it has so many doors?”

“This is the Russian style. All houses in cold places or in the mountains are built like this.”

As they began to open the door, they noticed something written in yellow above them:

This is a restaurant with many orders. Please be patient.

“They’re that busy, all the way up here in the mountains?”

“Well, sure. Even down in Tokyo, none of the big restaurants are on the main streets!”

As they were talking they opened the door. On the other side was written:

We really have many orders. Please be patient with each one.

One of the gentlemen grimaced, “Well now, what do you think that means?”

“Well, I’m sure it means that they have a lot of orders, and each one takes a lot of time to prepare, so please be patient.”

“I’m sure that’s it. I hope we get to the dining room soon.”

“Yes, I’d like a seat at a table.”

But wouldn’t you know, instead they came upon another door. Next to it was a mirror, and below that a brush with a long handle. On the door, written in red, was:

Please fix your hair, and remove the mud from your boots.

“Well that’s reasonable. Before we came in I didn’t think this would be such a nice place, being up here in the mountains.”

“They’re quite strict about manners. They must get many important guests.”

So the two of them straightened up their hair, and brushed the mud from their boots.

Then, an amazing thing. Just as they replaced the brush to its shelf, it faded away and a wind whooshed into the room. The two were startled, and huddling close to each other threw open the door and hurried through to the next room. Both of them thought that if they didn't soon raise their spirits with something hot to eat, then something terrible would happen.

They again found something strange written on the other side of the door:

Please leave your guns and ammunition here.

Just next to the message was a black table.

“Well, of course. We don't need guns to eat.”

“They must really have some important guests here.”

The two removed their guns and their ammunition belts and placed them on the table.

Next there was a black door.

Please remove your hats and overcoats and shoes.

“What do you think?”

“I guess we have to. There sure must be important guests in here.”

The two hung their hats and overcoats on a peg and removed their

shoes, and flapped through the door. On the other side, it said:

Please leave here any tie pins, cuff links, eyeglasses, wallets, or other metal objects. Especially sharp ones.

Next to the door was an impressive safe, painted black and with its door open. There was even a key.

“Hmmm, I’ll bet they somehow use electricity to cook here. That would make metal objects dangerous. That’s why they say that pointed things in particular should be left here.”

“Yes, that’s surely it. So I guess we’ll have to come back here to pay the bill.”

“Yes, I’m sure we will.”

“Yes, that sounds right.”

The two removed their glasses and their cuff links, put them in the safe, and locked it securely.

A little further down they came to another door, this one with a glass jar in front of it. On the door was written:

Please use the cream in the jar on your face, hands, and feet.

“Now why would we need to use this cream?”

“Well, it’s so cold outside, right? If we go from that cold to a warm

room, our skin could crack and split. The cream is to prevent that. There must really be some important people in there. We may end up dining with royalty!”

The two put the cream on their faces and on their hands, and then took off their socks and put the cream on their feet. When they were done there was a little cream left. They each pretended to apply it to their face, but actually ate it. They then hurriedly opened the door, on the other side of which was written:

Are you sure you applied the cream everywhere? Even your ears?

Below that was another small jar.

“Well indeed, I did forget to put it on my ears. I came close to making them crack and split. The owners here certainly are prepared for everything.”

“Yes, they’ve taken care of every detail. But I just want to get something to eat. I wonder how long these hallways will last?”

They soon came to the next door, which said:

The meal is almost prepared. Less than fifteen minutes now. Please splash the cologne in this bottle on your heads.

In front of the door was a shining golden perfume bottle. They splashed its contents onto their heads. Oddly, it smelled strongly of

vinegar.

“This cologne smells a lot like vinegar. Isn’t that strange?”

“It must be some mistake. Perhaps whoever put it here had a cold, and put the wrong liquid in the bottle.”

They opened the door and went inside. On the other side of the door was written:

We’re sorry that you had to follow so many orders. Rest assured that this is the last one. Please rub plenty of this salt onto your bodies.

Of course right there was a magnificent blue porcelain saltbox. This time the two gulped, and turned their cream-covered faces towards each other.

“Something is wrong here.”

“I think that something is wrong here, too.”

“The ‘many orders’... They were orders for us!”

One said, “I’m starting to think that at this restaurant, they don’t make meals for the people that come, they make the people that come into meals. Th... th... th... that would mean that w... w... w... we...” His teeth started chattering and his body started shivering and he couldn’t speak any further.

The other said, “You mean... w... we... waaah!” He started shaking and he couldn’t speak any further.

“R... run!” said one of the gentlemen, pushing on the door behind them. But don’t you know, the door wouldn’t budge.

Further in was another door. It had two large keyholes, and a silver knife and fork carved into it. Written on it was:

Thank you for coming this far. You both look perfect. Now, please come in...

They could see two blue eyes peering in through the keyholes.

“Oooh!” Shivering, shivering.

“Nooo!” Shivering, shivering.

The two of them started to cry. From beyond the door, they could hear a whispered conversation:

“See? They’ve figured it out. They won’t rub the salt into their bodies.”

“Well of course not. Look at everything the boss wrote! ‘Rest assured that this is the last one’ ... I mean, really now.”

“Ah, who cares? He won’t even leave us a bone to gnaw on.”

“Well that’s true. But even so, if they don’t come through here,

we're the ones who have to do something about it.”

“Let’s try calling them. Excuse me! Dear customers, could you please come this way? The plates are all washed, and the cabbage is salted and prepared. All we have left to do is arrange you and the cabbage on a white plate. Please come quickly!”

“Come on, now, come on! Or perhaps you don’t like salads? If you prefer, we could start a fire and have fried food instead. Regardless, please come quickly!”

The two were so distressed that their faces crumpled up like discarded paper, and seeing each other’s distorted faces made them shiver all the more and start crying out loud. They heard a laughing voice shout from inside.

“Come on in, come on in! If you cry like that you’ll wash the cream off of your faces! Come on in! Yes sir, they’re all ready. We’ll bring them in right away. Come on in, gentlemen!”

“Please come in! Our boss has his napkin around his neck, and is holding his knife and is licking his chops, waiting for you.”

The two cried and cried and cried and cried and cried.

Then, suddenly, from behind them, “Bow! Wow! Grrrr!” It was the two dogs like polar bears, breaking down the door and leaping into

the room. The eyes immediately disappeared from the keyholes, and the dogs growled, running in circles about the room. Then, with a final bark, they pounced on the next door. The door crashed open, and the dogs jumped through as if sucked in.

Beyond the door was a pitch black darkness, and they heard a howling and screeching and a shuffling. Then the room faded away like smoke, and the two were left shivering in the cold in the middle of the tall grass.

Looking about they saw their coats and shoes and purses and tiepins hanging on branches and scattered about among the roots. The wind howled, the grass rustled, the leaves whispered, the trees creaked.

The dogs came back, howling. From behind, they heard, “Sirs! Sirs!” It was their guide in a straw hat, rustling his way towards them through the grass. The two were quite relieved. They ate some rice cakes that their guide had brought them, and returned to Tokyo, stopping only to buy some game birds.

But when they got back even taking a hot bath didn't repair their faces, crumpled up like discarded paper.

The End

