

# don't look now but...

## The Perfect Hostess

IT'S A PITY that when God gave the Filipino that beautiful trait of hospitality He also administered doses of extreme humility to him. Hospitality and extreme humility just don't mix. When they do, the result isn't too appetizing and that's saying it literally. Just take, for example, You. Let's say that you are on one of your visits to a friend's house. You are there because you probably need help with your homework or you just want to talk. That's all. But what happens next makes you wonder sometimes whether you are being mistaken for a starving nomad or one of those Home Inspectors (if there ever was one) who look over other people's houses from roof to floor and who are perfectly willing to hang homeowners for a speck of dirt on the divan. That's saying it too bluntly, I guess, but what really gets your goat is the way the people you visit almost always apologize for most things in the house like how Junior's toys are lying around and why they haven't been able to put them away yet, what with big sister being sick and father staying overtime in the office and the maids home for fiesta etc., etc., which are probably true and which all amount to just one idea: the house is topsyturvy. So what? You probably would not have noticed it at all had they not mentioned it first. Or, if you did, that's nothing to get riled up about. After all, you went there to have your homework fixed. That's not all yet. The way they try to stuff you up with pop drinks and cookies and fruits 'N' nuts, makes you wonder: Do I look this thin? The way mother goes back and forth to the kitchen, preparing all those drinks and eats makes you want to shout: "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! The coke ain't the thing, is it?"

--"Have a seat, please. Junior,

entertain your friend while I prepare something. Boy! Boy! Here, buy some cokes at Pantlong's and hurry. . . . Where in heaven's name did Trining put that (1 \$%) tray. T-r-i-n-g-g-g-g-g-g! . . ."

That is the way it is and it happens everytime. Everybody is uncomfortable. The host is uncomfortable making all that fuss and the visitor is uncomfortable, too, for being the cause of all the rumpus. The hardest part is nobody ever gets around to telling one another how much they do not enjoy the whole show. Each party is playing its role perfectly. The hostess is just perfect: she is hospitality come to life. The visitor is just as perfect with his well-timed smiles and his innocuous ah's and hmms . . . appearing to be pleased while all the time wishing he were in a kinder hell.

## The Criticism Phobia

Criticism is like castor oil. Some people take it despite its terrible taste knowing that it will do them good eventually while others don't take it at all because they can't suffer its terrible taste despite the fact that it will do them good eventually. In the latter case, allusion must be made to people who can't relax the moment they hear something unfavorable said of them, no matter how small. Of course, they are few in number but they do exist. Your first thought would be that you don't usually find this kind among poor people who are too busy thinking about when and where the next meal will come from, peo-

ple with a lot of kids running around, making a mess of everything, people with too much homework to do, people who are too darned busy to give a darn about what other people think of them. But, come to think of it, everybody has time enough to indulge in self-pity and petty recriminations. And that doesn't exclude you. As a matter of fact, people from all walks of life suffer from this, one way or another, and trying to avoid it is often as hopeless as throwing a sheet of paper against a strong gust of wind.

These criticism-shy unfortunates get nothing but headaches because they not only can't relax when they are actually criticized but they go over every detail long after the

critic has consigned his smashing utterances to the four winds. "Do you know what that drip said just the other day about my nose? She said God could have done better if He weren't too busy about a lot more important things. What do you think hers looks like? I'll take flattened drums anytime!" Etc., etc.

There's another version of this sensitivity which is not so rampant but which you can discover if you try hard enough. This sensitivity is present in that kind of person who tries to scour the minds of her acquaintances and analyze their contents in relation to herself, always. Take this girl Lindy. You and she are walking one day in the corridors and you meet Mrs. Cruz, your instructor in Biology, who is frowning at that time. The moment the instructor is out of hearing, Lindy goes in to one of her common vindictive tirades: "Imagine, she didn't even smile at us. What does she think of us, sheets of transparent glass that she can just see through? Remember the time she wanted that orchid plant from me and how sweet she was to me then? Why, I never. . ." Lindy, sweet-sour Lindy, perhaps she just had a quarrel with her husband or maybe one of her kids is sick. Hurting you is probably farthest from her thoughts, believe me.

There are a lot of people who try to make mountains out of molehills or molehills out of mountains. For all you know you might be one of them. Take care lest you outrace your age or have a nervous breakdown. §

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