

## Going over the Top

*2 well-to-do men recline at table having just finished a good meal*

Nathan: Ahh...Lovely meal, Simon (burps). Pardon me. Your people have excelled themselves as usual.

Simon: Thank you, Nathan. As you know I do my best. Good wine, good food, good company is what I always say...the 3 ingredients of a first rate dinner party.

Nathan: Well you've certainly got all three ingredients here. I've not tasted such good wine since a banquet I went to for my cousin's wedding in Cana. And as for the food I've rarely tasted such wonderful stuff.

Simon: And the company?

Nathan: Well, certainly intriguing. You do have the knack of getting interesting people together.

Simon: You know what I always say, Nathan, you never know when you might need a few friends in high places. It never harms to cultivate new acquaintances. It was only the other week that Caiaphas was able to drop in on one of my modest do's...

Nathan: What not *the Caiphas*?

Simon: One and the same.

Nathan: I'm impressed. Your guest of honour tonight seems to be quite a rum type. Do you expect any advantage from having him here?

Simon: Who?

*Nathan points*

Simon: Oh him. Hardly a guest of honour. Actually I'd quite forgotten I'd invited him. But you know who he is don't you?

Nathan: Well I know who it looks like. But I scarce expected him to get an invitation here.

Simon: Well, as I said, it never harms to cultivate new acquaintances. And he has caused a bit of a stir.

Nathan: I'll grant you that but look at the rabble who follow him about. Not really the types you'd want to have associated with your rather discreet and delicate gatherings, Simon. I mean, you've always had good standards, haven't you. No riff-raff. That's your unwritten rule.

Simon: Yes, I'm glad I have that reputation but even so he has quite an attraction for people. A regular magnet. They say people flock to hear him speak. I wouldn't mind that kind of influence.

Nathan: I see what you mean. Are you hoping to pick up a few speech making techniques.

Simon: Maybe. I don't know. But he has an amazing ability to communicate with people. It might do me no harm at all to be able to say I know him, if you know what I mean.

Nathan: Never know when a bit of influence in the right places might come in handy. He might be strange but he is striking. People will remember him...and you by association,

eh? I get your thinking.

Simon: Talking of strange but striking, who *is that woman?*  
(Points)

Nathan: Oh that's just Simeon's wife, you know, from the market.

Simon: No not her. (*Points in different direction*) Her

Nathan: Good grief. How did she get in here? Surely you didn't invite here. I didn't realise it was going to be one of those sort of parties.

Simon: (*Flustered*) *It wasn't meant to be. It isn't. I didn't invite her. Oh my ...for goodness sakes...what are people going to say. Nathan, my whole reputation is on the line here. What are people going to think? My dinner parties are the talk of the town...*

Nathan: Well if they haven't been they certainly will be now. You know what she is...what she does...?

Simon: (*Angrily*) Of course I know what she does. There's hardly anyone in the town who doesn't know. Many of them from personal experience. I'm surprised *he doesn't know-he must do, surely? Oh, Nathan, what am I going to do?*

Nathan: Have her thrown out, I imagine.

Simon: Yes, of course, you're right. I can't imagine what possessed her to come here.

Nathan: From what I hear quite a lot has possessed her.

Simon: What? Oh I see what you mean. But you're right. I'll send for Elias to get her thrown out.

Nathan: Too late.

Simon: What? Oh, no! What *is she doing*?

Nathan: It looks very much like she is button-holing your guest of honour.

Simon: I told you he's not a guest of honour. Just someone who might be ..useful to know...at some future occasion.

Nathan: Well she certainly seems to know him already, if you ask me.

Simon: What extraordinary behaviour. What is she doing?

Nathan: Weeping.

Simon: Why?

Nathan: Got me.

Simon: What is she doing now, for goodness sake.

Nathan: Well, I'd say she is wiping his feet with ... with her hair. And kissing them

Simon: For goodness sake, why?

Nathan: Got me. And I'd say she's pouring that rather expensive smelling perfume she came in with over his feet.

Simon: This is really going too far. What kind of crazy behaviour is this. The woman's obviously completely mad. No one goes over the top like that. I mean the man is a complete unknown. You just don't behave like that. It's...it's ...obscene. It's quite beyond the pale. What can she possibly hope to achieve by acting in such an extravagant way? And what is he thinking of?

Nathan: Well, he certainly seems to have made an impact on her for some reason.

Simon: He made an impact on me...well enough for me to think he's make an intriguing dinner guest. But there is such a thing as going over the top.

Nathan: And no-one could accuse you of that, Simon.