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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/227/2021_2022__E5_A4_A7_E5_AD_A6_E8_8B_B1_E8_c82_227606.htm TextA young man finds it very difficult to say no to a woman as a result he gets into trouble. The restaurant to which he has agreed to take his luncheon date is far too expensive for his small pocketbook. How, then, will he be able to avoid the embarrassing situation?THE LUNCHEONW.Somerset MaughamI caught sight of her at the play, and in answer to her beckoning I went over during the interval and sat down beside her. It was long since I had last seen her, and if someone had not mentioned her name I hardly think I would have recognised her. She addressed me brightly."Well, its many years since we first met. How time does fly! Were none of us getting any younger. Do you remember the first time I saw you? You asked me to luncheon."Did I remember?It was twenty years ago and I was living in Paris. I had a tiny apartment in the Latin Quarter overlooking a cemetery, and I was earning barely enough money to keep body and soul together. She had read a book of mine and had written to me about it. I answered, thanking her, and presently I received from her another letter saying that she was passing through Paris and would like to have a chat with me. but her time was limited, and the only free moment she had was on the following Thursday. she was spending the morning at the Luxembourg and would I give her a little luncheon at Foyots afterwards? Foyots is a restaurant at which the French senators eat, and it was so far beyond my means

that I had never even thought of going there. But I was flattered, and I was too young to have learned to say no to a woman. (Few men, I may add, learn this until they are too old to make it of any consequence to a woman what they say.) I had eight francs (gold francs) to last me the rest of the month, and a modest luncheon should not cost more than fifteen. If I cut out coffee for the next two weeks I could manage well enough. I answered that I would meet my friend -- by correspondence -- at Foyots on Thursday at half past twelve. She was not so young as I expected and in appearance imposing rather than attractive, she was, in fact, a woman of forty (a charming age, but not one that excites a sudden and devastating passion at first sight), and she gave me the impression of having more teeth, white and large and even, than were necessary for any practical purpose. She was talkative, but since she seemed inclined to talk about me I was prepared to be an attentive listener. I was startled when the bill of fare was brought, for the prices were a great deal higher than I had anticipated. But she reassured me. "I never eat anything for luncheon," she said. "Oh, don't say that!" I answered generously. "I never eat more than one thing. I think people eat far too much nowadays. A little fish, perhaps. I wonder if they have any salmon. Well, it was early in the year for salmon and it was not on the bill of fare, but I asked the waiter if there was any. Yes, a beautiful salmon had just come in, it was the first they had had. I ordered it for my guest. The waiter asked her if she would have something while it was being cooked." "No," she answered, "I never eat more than one thing. Unless you have a little caviare. I never mind caviare." My heart

sank a little. I knew I could not afford caviare, but I could not very well tell her that. I told the waiter by all means to bring caviare. For myself I chose the cheapest dish on the menu and that was a mutton chop." I think you are unwise to eat meat," she said. " I dont know how you can expect to work after eating heavy things like chops. I dont believe in overloading my stomach." Then came the question of drink. "I never drink anything for luncheon," she said. "Neither do I," I answered promptly. "Except whiter wine," she proceeded as though I had not spoken. "These French white wines are so light. Theyre wonderful for the digestion." "What would you like?" I asked, hospitable still, but not exactly effusive. She gave me a bright and amicable flash of her white teeth. "My doctor wont let me drink anything but champagne." I fancy I turned a trifle pale. I ordered half a bottle. I mentioned casually that my doctor had absolutely forbidden me to drink champagne. "What are you going to drink, then?" "Water." She ate the caviare and she ate the salmon. She talked gaily of art and literature and music. But I wondered what the bill would come to. When my mutton chop arrived she took me quite seriously to task. "I see that youre in the habit of eating a heavy luncheon. Im sure its a mistake. Why dont you follow my example and just eat one thing? Im sure youd feel ever so much better for it." "I am only going to eat one thing." I said, as the waiter came again with the bill of fare. She waved him aside with an airy gesture. "No, no, I never eat anything for luncheon. Just a bite, I never want more than that, and I eat that more as an excuse for conversation than anything else. I couldnt possibly eat anything more unless they had some of

those giant asparagus. I should be sorry to leave Paris without having some of them." My heart sank. I had seen them in the shops, and I knew that they were horribly expensive. My mouth had often watered at the sight of them. "Madame wants to know if you have any of those giant asparagus," I asked the waiter. I tried with all my might too will him to say no. A happy smile spread over his broad, pries-like face, and he assured me that they had some so large, so splendid, so tender, that it was a marvel. "I'm not in the least hungry," my guest sighed, "but if you insist I don't mind having some asparagus." I ordered them. "Aren't you going to have any?" "No, I never eat asparagus." "I know there are people who don't like them. The fact is, you ruin your taste by all the meat you eat." We waited for the asparagus to be cooked. Panic seized me. It was not a question now how much money I should have left over for the rest of the month, but whether I had enough to pay the bill. It would be embarrassing to find myself ten francs short and be obliged to borrow from my guest. I could not bring myself to do that. I knew exactly how much I had, and if the bill came to more I made up my mind that I would put my hand in my pocket and with a dramatic cry start up and say it had been picked. Of course, it would be awkward if she had not money enough either to pay the bill. Then the only thing would be to leave my watch and say I would come back and pay later. The asparagus appeared. They were enormous, juicy, and appetising. I watched the wicked woman thrust them down her throat in large mouthfuls, and in my polite way I spoke about the condition of the drama in the Balkans. At last the

finished."Coffee?" I said."Yes, just an ice-cream and coffee," she answered.I was past caring now, so I ordered coffee for myself and an ice-cream and coffee for her."You know, theres one thing I thoroughly believe in," she said, as she ate the ice-cream. "One should always get up from a meal feeling one could eat a little more.""Are you still hungry?" I asked faintly."Oh, no, Im not hungry. you see, I dont eat luncheon. I have a cup of coffee in the morning and then dinner, but I never eat more than one thing for luncheon. I was speaking for you.""Oh, I see!"Then a terrible thing happened. While we were waiting for the coffee the head waiter, with an ingratiating smile on his false face, came up to us bearing a large basket full of huge peaches. They had the blush of an innocent girl. they had the rich tone of an Italian landscape. But surely peaches were not in season then? Lord knew what they cost. I knew too -- a little later, for my guest, going on with her conversation, absentmindedly took one."You see, youve filled your stomach with a lot of meat" -- my one miserable little chop -- "and you cant eat any more. But Ive just had a snack and I shall enjoy a peach."The bill came, and when I paid it I found that I had only enough for a quite inadequate tip. Her eyes rested for an instant on the three francs I left for the waiter, and I knew that she thought me mean. But when I walked out of the restaurant I had the whole month before me and not a penny in my pocket."Follow my example," she said as we shook hands, "and never eat more than one thing for luncheon.""Ill do better than that," I retorted. "Ill eat nothing for dinner tonight.""Humorist!" she cried gaily, jumping into a cab. "Youre

quite a humorist!"But I have had my revenge at last. I do not believe that I am a vindictive man, but when the immortal gods take a hand in matter it is pardonable to observe the result with complacency. Today she weighs twenty-one stone.

New Words

luncheon n. & vi. (formal word for) lunch
beckon vt. signal to (sb.) by a motion of the hand or head 向……招手或点头示意
apartment n. a single room. (AmE) flat or a set of rooms 房间；(美)一套公寓住房
Latina. 拉丁的 n. 拉丁文
quarter n. division of a town, esp. one of a special class of people (都市的)区，街
overlook vt. have a view of from above. fail to see or notice 俯视；忽略
presently ad. soon. (AmE) at the present time 不久；(美)目前
chat n., vi. (have) a friendly informal conversation 闲谈，聊天
senator n. a member of a senate 参议员，上议员
means n. money, income, or wealth, esp. large enough to afford all one needs 财富，资产
franc n. the unit of money in France, Belgium. Switzerland, and some other countries 法郎
modest a. not large in quantity, size, value, etc. 不太大的；适度的
imposing a. impressive because of size, appearance, or dignity 仪表堂堂的；宏伟的
attractive a. having the power to attract. pleasing 吸引人的；有魅力的
charming a. very pleasing. fascinating 有魅力的

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