Additional Reading

Distressing Scene in a Hotel \I say, laddie!" said Archie.

\Sir?" replied the desk-clerk alertly. All the employees of the Hotel Cos-mopolis were alert. It was one of the things on which Mr Daniel Brewster, the proprietor, insisted. And as he was always wandering about the lobby of the hotel keeping a personal eye on affairs, it was never safe to relax.

\I want to see the manager."

\Is there anything I could do, sir?"

Archie looked at him doubtfully.

\Well, as a matter of fact, my dear old desk-clerk," he said, \I want to kick up a row, and it hardly seems fair to get you into it. Why you, I mean to say? I want to see the manager."

At this point a massive, grey-haired man, who had been standing close by, joined in the conversation.

\I am the manager," he said.

His eye was cold and hostile. Daniel Brewster was ready for combat. What he had overheard had shocked him to the core of his being. The Hotel Cosmopolis was his own private, personal property, and the thing dearest to him in the world, after his daughter Lucille. He prided himself on the fact that this hotel was not like other New York hotels, which were run by impersonal companies and shareholders and boards of directors, and consequently lacked the paternal touch which made the Cosmopolis what it was. At other hotels things went wrong, and clients complained. At the Cosmopolis things never went wrong, because he was on the spot to see that they didn’t, and as a result clients never complained. Yet here was this long thin, string-bean of an Englishman actually registering annoyance and dissatisfaction before his very eyes.

\What is your complaint?" he inquired coldly.

\Listen, old thing! I came over to this country to nose about in search of a job, because there doesn’t seem what you might call a general demand for my services in England."

\I would prefer to postpone the story of your life," Mr. Brewster said coldly, \and be informed what is your specific complaint against the Hotel Cosmopolis."

\Of course, yes. The jolly old hotel. I’m coming to that. Well, it was like this. A chappie on the boat told me that this was the best place to stop at in New York."

\He was quite right," said Mr Brewster.

\Was he, by Jove! Well, all I can say, then, is that the other New York hotels must be pretty mouldy, if this is the best of the lot! I took a room here last night," said Archie, \and there was a beastly tap outside somewhere which went drip-drip-drip all night and kept me awake."

Mr Brewster’s annoyance deepened. Not even the most paternal hotel-pro-prietor can keep an eye on every tap in his establishment.

\Drip-drip-drip!" repeated Archie firmly. \And I put my boots outside the door when I went to bed, and this morning they hadn’t been touched. I give you my solemn word ! Not touched."

\Naturally," said Mr Brewster. \My employees are honest."

\But I wanted them cleaned, dash it!"

\There is a shoe-shining parlour in the basement. At the Cosmopolis shoes left outside bedroom doors are not cleaned."

\Then I think the Cosmopolis is a rotten hotel!"

\In that case," he said, \I must ask you to give up your room."

\I’m going to give it up! I wouldn’t stay in the bally place another minute." Mr Brewster walked away, and Archie charged round to the cashier’s desk to get his bill. It had been his intention in any case to leave the hotel that morning, though for dramatic purposes he concealed it. One of the letters of introduction which he had brought over from England had resulted in an invitation from a Mrs

van Tuyl to her house-party at Miami, and he had decided to go there at once. \Well," mused Archie, on his way to the station, \one thing’s certain. I’ll

never set foot in that place again!"

But nothing in this world is certain.

From: P.G. Wodehouse ‘‘Indiscreti