

The Asian Reporter

Volume 29 Number 9
May 6, 2019
ISSN: 1094-9453

The Asian Reporter is published on the first and third Monday each month.

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News Service **Associated Press/Newsfinder**

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MY TURN

Wayne Chan



Keeping tabs on our tabs

I have a strong marriage. I can prove it, too. How's that, you say? How can I possibly know with complete certainty that my wife Maya and I are built to last?

Well, there isn't any written testimony or anything to that effect. It's not based on the opinions of any relationship experts either.

I know our marriage is strong by simply evaluating the type of arguments we usually have nowadays. It's not about money. It's not about fidelity. It's not about our vows to each other.

Hmm ... Maybe it is a little about money. Maybe it's better if I just describe our disagreement with some detail.

A little while ago, Maya and I went out for our weekly date night. We ended up at a local Chinese hot pot restaurant not far from home. There was a line out the door when we arrived, so I put my name on the waitlist and included my phone number so they could text me when our table was ready.

I was really hungry by the time we sat down, so we ordered quickly. I chose the assorted meat hot pot and Maya selected the spicy seafood hot pot. Note: What we were eating really doesn't pertain to the story, but I thought you might be interested. It's what we writers call, "adding color."

Anyway, the meal was terrific as it always is at this restaurant (more color for those who are interested). As we finished, I told Maya I wanted to use the restroom before we left.

Shortly thereafter, I came back to the table and Maya wasn't there, so I scanned the restaurant. I spotted her on the other side near the lobby. She was sitting near the entrance reading e-mails on her phone. I walked over to her, then we went to the car and drove off.

A few minutes into our drive home, I received a call. It was the restaurant.

"Yes, Mr. Chan?" the voice said.

"Yes," I answered.

The voice continued, "It looks like you forgot to pay your bill."

"Really?" I said, sounding incredulous. "I'm so sorry, we'll come back right now."

I swung a U-turn and within a minute we were back in the parking lot of the restaurant. It was still very busy and there were no open parking spots, so I pulled up to the front of the restaurant.

"Why don't you go inside and take care of it?" I said to Maya.

And what followed was a heated conversation in the car.

Maya: Why do I have to go inside?

Wayne: Because there are no parking spaces available.

Maya: Well, why don't you go inside and I'll wait in the car?

Wayne: Because this is your fault!

Maya: My fault? You always pay the check!

Wayne: I usually pay the check. But I was in the restroom!

Maya: Why didn't you pay for it when you came out?

Wayne: Because you weren't at the table! Who leaves the table when they haven't paid?

Maya: You should have paid anyways!

Wayne: I WAS IN THE RESTROOM!!! Do you think the waiter was going to follow me into the restroom and give me the check there?

With a slight grunt, Maya got out of the car and paid the tab. Then she got back in the car and we headed home.

And that's how I know we have a strong marriage. If that's the biggest argument we've had in the last few years, we must be doing okay. We finished the argument and it hasn't come up since.

Well, except when we go out to eat and at the end of the meal, we now both shout, "Don't forget to pay!"

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Netflix announces deal for film about Thailand's cave boys

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The rescue was a rare bit of feel-good news from Thailand, which has been mired in political conflict and heavy-handed military rule for more than a decade. The cave rescue also allowed the government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who had seized power in a 2014 military coup, to share in some glory.

An independent film about the adventure, *The Cave*, was shot soon after the rescue and is supposed to be released later this year.



AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe