

Table Manners

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Thomas burped loudly at the table. Father chuckled. Grandma shook her head disapprovingly.

“Thomas!” His mother growled, eyeing her husband grumpily as well. She’d quite had enough of this behavior, and decided to finally fix it.

He burped again, and then he wiped his mouth on the table cloth. “Man, I am so charming!” He chuckled.



“Thomas, unless you want to do the laundry AND you want to start eating out of a dog bowl, I suggest you find some manners.”

“Like what?” Thomas groaned, leaning on the table with both elbows.

“Elbows off the table.”

Thomas lifted his elbows and fidgeted with his napkin.

“The napkin goes on your lap,” Mother ordered, “and no eating with your fingers.”

Thomas sighed and did those two things, too. Peeking out of the corner of his eye at his mom, he grabbed his spoon and started shoveling food into his mouth with his face about two inches off the plate. Speed-eating was fun. He liked to see how much he could get into his mouth at once.

“Whoa, there! I had no idea this was a feeding trough.” Mother laughed. “Try using a fork, sitting up, and closing your mouth when you chew. If you can’t get the fork to your mouth without spilling the food on your lap, you are overloading it.”

“Then it takes forever to eat, and I want to go watch TV.” Thomas whined.

“You will eat properly, and you will stay and have a discussion with us until we are all done with our meals. This is not a drive-through. Eat slowly and neatly, and then help me clear the dishes.”

“But...” Thomas began to protest.

“Dog bowl?” Mother offered.

“No, thank you.” Thomas said softly, which made Grandma smile.

Mother smiled as Thomas lifted a carefully-loaded fork of food to his lips and chewed with his mouth closed. “Excellent. You might still make someone a good husband.”

Father cleared his throat and ate neatly, too. He didn’t get a compliment, though.

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What does Thomas do wrong at the beginning of the story?
 - A. He picks his nose.
 - B. He farts.
 - C. He burps.
 - D. He chews with his mouth open.

2. How does father feel about Thomas' behavior?
 - A. He thinks it is scary.
 - B. He thinks it is funny.
 - C. He is angry about it.
 - D. He doesn't care.

3. Which of these is NOT one of Mother's suggestions?
 - A. chew with your mouth closed
 - B. use a knife to eat your peas
 - C. sit up straight
 - D. put your napkin on your lap

4. Which of these IS one of Mother's suggestions?
 - A. Never pass dishes to your left.
 - B. Fold your napkin into a triangle.
 - C. Be careful to use the right fork for the right course.
 - D. Elbows off the table

5. What does Father try to do at the end of the story?
 - A. He eats nicely to get a compliment.
 - B. He leaves the table.
 - C. He burps, too.
 - D. He falls asleep at the table.

Table Manners – Answer Key

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