

The Freebie

By HappyGirl <michelloyd@aol.com>

Rated: G

Submitted: June 2009

Summary: A lighthearted response to Marcus Rowland's challenge: twenty minutes with Bobby Bigmouth.

Story Size: 931 words (5Kb as text)

My mother likes to curse people. I don't mean the kind of words you aren't allowed to say on television. I mean the kind that wish for bad things to happen to you. Ever since I can remember, my mother has always put curses on me.

She never meant anything by them. It was all in fun. The first one I remember, I must've been maybe six years old. I don't remember what I did ... probably tracked mud on the floor or spilled the milk ... you know, one of them everyday kid troubles. And my mom, she's getting mad, but then it's like she remembers that I'm just a kid and she shouldn't get so mad, so she looks at me and says, "Bobby! You're driving me crazy! May the blue bird of paradise fly up your nose!" And then we both bust out laughing.

None of her curses ever came true. Like, she always used to say, "May you grow up and have children just like you!" Only I don't have kids. And she used to say "Ancient Chinese curse, Bobby ... May you live in interesting times." Well, maybe that one did come true after all. I do live in Metropolis, so, if it ain't interesting times, it's at least an interesting city. Things are always happening here.

No, the real curses my mother put on me she never meant to. The worst curse I got from Mom was from her genes, not her mouth. It's my metabolism. I'm always hungry. It doesn't matter how much I eat, I always want more. Mom was the same way. She was always munching on something, but she was always thin, too, like me.

It wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the second curse. The one she thought would be a blessing, only it backfired. You see, mom sent me to cooking school. That's good for my career. You can always get a job as a cook, especially in the city where most people are too busy to cook for themselves. But, the trouble is, it taught me taste. You know. When I was a kid, I'd eat anything. But now I know good from bad food, and I like the good stuff. But I can't afford it. Not on what I make.

That's where my sideline comes in. The best thing Mom taught me. The thing that makes up for the other two. I can keep a secret. With a nickname like Bobby Bigmouth, you might think that wasn't so. But that's where you'd be wrong. A snitch that can't keep a secret is no good to anybody, leastways himself. It's the law of supply and demand. My information is only worth something to my clients because I don't give it away for free to every schmo I meet. So, with my talent for keeping my ears open and my mouth shut, I manage to get a decent meal ... and by decent I mean the best stuff, not the cheap stuff ... at least once a week.

Clark Kent is my best client. Him and his wife, Lois Lane. Lois was my client before Clark, but it's Clark that gets the best food. The real deal, if you know what I mean. Which is why it's kind of ironic that, because of Clark, I'm about to give away ... for free! ... my best secret ever. The one I've been saving for years, keeping it tucked away, ready to bring it out and share it at just the right moment. Not for money, or for food. No way. I

respect Clark way too much for that, and I know what this secret would do to him in the wrong hands. I was thinking more of using it to get one up on Lois, some day when the timing was just right. Just to see her face when I spring it on her.

But that's not going to happen now, because Clark is lying in the store room of my restaurant, out cold. So, Lois gets this one for free. I loosen Clark's tie and hit the speed dial on my cell.

"Lois, it's Bobby. Don't interrupt, because I don't have time. I need you to get to the restaurant pronto, but first I need to know how to treat Kryptonite poisoning... No, I can't take him to the hospital... Because he's not in the Suit, that's why. He's dressed as Clark... Really? Sunlight? It's that simple? Yeah, okay. I'll get him stripped down and I'll meet you in the back alley. Okay. Bye. Huh? What do you mean how did I know? I've known for years. Think about it, Lois. This is Bobby Bigmouth you're talking to. You don't think I know authentic Shanghai cuisine when I taste it?"

THE END

Bottom dweller's note: Thanks to Marcus for this challenge. The idea was to spend twenty minutes writing a vignette about Bobby. I cheated a little; this took twenty-three minutes to write up, not counting proofreading and checking the dictionary to confirm that, even though Microsoft doesn't know it, schmo is, in fact, a real word. And, of course, I didn't count thinking time, because, really, once you've read the challenge, how can you *not* think about it? That's like not thinking about pink elephants.

Thanks for coming along on my little jaunt.

— Happy