

# **Cassidy Corcoran's Cut-to-the-Chase Everyday Etiquette and Obfuscation Correspondence School\***

To save other unsuspecting kids from the horrors of etiquette school, I offer you my cheat sheet. It is a very good bet that if you follow this, the bright idea to pack you off to manners school will never occur to your parents (unless they are evil or you have evil dead relatives, in which case I can't help you). Believe you me, it's easier to hold in a belch than to be imprisoned in a classroom with no a/c and boring conversation for hours on end. My advice is, be polite and save yourself the torture.

## **Place Settings—Cassidy Corcoran style**

You are the catcher. Your napkin is your mitt (to retrieve any stray meatballs). Your plate is—what else? Home plate! Your soup bowl and service plate have just stolen home and are piled up on home plate. Your drinking glass is in right field; your bread plate is in left field. The batters on deck are 1) your knife, 2) your teaspoon and 3) your soup spoon. Batters coming into home plate are 1) your dinner fork and 2) your salad fork. When it's not on your lap, your napkin is either dusting off home plate or fouling out in left field. If you have a dessert spoon, it's stealing second. Your bread knife just sailed over the second basemen's head and dropped onto your bread plate in left field.

## **Dinner Table Manners**

Drinking from someone else's glass, laughing out loud with your mouth full of broccoli covered in cheese sauce, licking the serving spoon, digging through the breadbasket—**you just made the third out with a man on base**

Elbows on the table, sighing when your mom serves chicken cacciatore—again!, putting disgusting mushrooms into your napkin—**foul ball + nasty comment from your parents about how you are welcome to cook dinner anytime**

Using your napkin instead of your shirtsleeve, no monkey business under the table, refraining from zombie moves to make everyone laugh—**two on base, no outs**

Offering everyone the last roll, chewing with your mouth closed, complimenting the cook, clearing your place without spilling anything—**grand slam**

## **Introducing Yourself**

Giving a non-sanctioned handshake including, but not limited to, the missing hand handshake, the funny freeze, the tickling finger, the knuckle-knocker or the surprise-in-the-palm—**bungled bunt to the pitcher resulting in two out**

Nice firm handshake accompanied by cross-eyed stare, zombie stare, frozen-under-ice stare or any other goofy expression—**foul ball + nasty look from your parents combined with a shoulder squeeze**

Nice firm handshake accompanied by a *sincere* “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”—**home run, bottom of the ninth**

## **Personal Space**

Stepping on someone’s foot, cutting in line, elbowing someone out of the way, running into someone holding a glass of red wine—all without apologizing—**line drive to second base, resulting in double play and two out**

Pointing, getting closer than an arm’s length, spitting a little as you talk—**strike out**

Walking around rather than through two people talking, excusing yourself to other shoppers when you must reach in for the industrial-sized bottle of ketchup in the grocery store, waiting for others to exit the elevator-escalator-bus-train-plane-car-classroom first, apologizing *sincerely* when you crush your sister slightly trying to get out of the car first—**record amount of runs batted in**

## **Saying Sorry and Excuse Me**

Saying phrases like ‘Tough rocks, Goldilocks,’ when you knock someone over in Freeze tag—**pop fly to the pitcher, you steal home. Two out.**

Saying phrases like ‘Excuse you’ to your sister when you reach in underneath her arm to pinch the last tater tot—**foul ball + nasty comment from your parents to give it back or you’ll possibly find yourself in your room without dessert**

Excusing yourself from the table, excusing yourself when you bump into someone, excusing yourself when you sneeze into some part of your arm and apologizing sincerely—**home run into the bleachers**

## **Polite Conversation**

Talking about burping, farting, dead squirrels, putrefaction or anything not conducive to other diner’s appetites—**suicide squeeze resulting in two out**

Asking dinner guests how much their fur coat cost, repeating things your parents didn’t mean for you to hear like how disgusting fur coats are in the first place—**strike out**

Thinking of new ways to talk about the weather, re-telling fond memories from your childhood in which your parents play a starring role, telling newsy tidbits about the school calendar like when the spring art fair is—**home run with two on**

## **Non-verbal Communication**

Whistling through your teeth to summon the waiter, putting your fingers in your mouth to direct someone to the spinach stuck in their own—**ejected from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct**

Shouting ‘Garcon’ with a French accent while twisting an imaginary mustache; using Jim Leyland hand signals to alert someone to syrup on their chin—**foul ball + nasty look from your parents**

Using the intensity of your gaze to draw the waiter to the Cherry Coke dripping off the side of the table; using trampoline eyebrows to let someone know she has a half-incinerated moth wing stuck on her collar; acting like the young lady/gentleman you know yourself to be—**grand slam out of the ballpark**

## **Body functions**

Burping, farting or sneezing without a shield and not excusing yourself—**third strike out bottom of the ninth**

Burping, farting, sneezing without a shield and saying excuse me—**foul ball + nasty look from parents if you grin while saying excuse me**

Excusing yourself from the table and farting in the bathroom (which you later report to your parents)—**two on base, no outs**

Managing to fart and burp without anyone noticing—**home run**

## **Body Odor**

Avoiding the shower or bathtub for three+ days—**strike out**

Pretending to shower or bathe, but just getting your hair wet in the sink—**foul ball + nasty look from parents when they see you’ve used the guest towel to dry your hair**

Bathing, but smelling like microwave popcorn + a fleck of peanut butter in the corner of your mouth—**you made it to first, but runner’s out at second**

Bathing, smelling like air + no food bits on your body—**home run out of the ball park**

\*Correspondence means you don’t have to sit in class!