

Nov. 1946
Arkay News

From the
Erma Bombeck
Online Museum
at the
University of Dayton
(www.ErmaMuseum.org)

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Arkay News are located in
the Rike's Historical
Collection in the
Special Collections and
Archives at Wright State
University.

Your Order?

—Erma Fiste

I don't know about other people, but one of my favorite habits is eating . . . especially excess eating.

From the appearance of Rike's Soda Fountain at 8:35 every morning, I don't think I'm alone. Here is a personal account of the event.

Twenty minutes before the first bell, I am stumbling through the entrance of Rike's. (It is a well known fact by this time that the only reason I am early is because the bus schedule gives me a choice of being early or coming in at noon.) Two co-workers call to me from the Soda Fountain, asking me to join them for breakfast. Peering over the glass enclosure, I explain to them that I do not fully awake until 10:30 a.m., and if they persist in this nonsense of smiling and speaking in the morning, I will be forced to associate with people of more intelligent intellect. They giggle childishly, knowing I haven't a brain in my head at this hour of the morning.

"I've had breakfast," I mumble. They ignore me and go back to their coffee. Sensing my popularity, I walk through the entrance and secure a tray. I drink the glass of water, and entertain myself by picking out "The Bells of St. Marys" with my silverware against the water glass. At last the procession moves. At the end of the line, I find myself with two large rolls, a tumbler of orange juice, and a cup of coffee. Now for my friends. In the process of peering around posts and tables, I spill scalding coffee down the back of my supervisor, accidentally trip a waitress who is accepting bids on an egg and toast combination, and spill the contents of my purse on the floor while squeezing my size fourteen anatomy through a space designed to accommodate a size ten.

I start to pick up the contents of my purse, stopping only at intervals to explain to curious bystanders that some of the best families in the city eat their breakfasts on their hands and knees.

At last I spy my associates and waltz over to their table, balancing the remainder of my coffee in one hand, the orange juice in my other hand, and a roll between my teeth. "Show off," they bark, "sit down."

My head is reeling and from a distance I hear the sound of bells . . . bells . . . bells! I realize I am late for work. With a flighty leap I am on my feet, running toward the exit. I collide with another waitress and I find myself on the floor again with an egg between us. This is the end. With a forced smile I make a gesture toward the plate. "My, isn't this cozy? Which part of the egg will you have—the white, or the yolk?"

My friends are leaving the fountain. "Don't mind her," they say, "she hasn't a brain in her head." So in that case, just keep on enjoying your breakfasts at Rike's and forget everything you've just read!