

FADE IN

EXT: OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - EVENING

VIOLET, stepping confidently in pumps and glittering jewelry, arm-leads ADAM, a middle-aged man attired in a bespoke suit and nervous face, to towering, finely carved wood double doors of a Victorian-era mansion. EVELYN, a pre-teen girl sporting a sundress and smartphone, waits a few paces behind, in her own world.

ADAM

Violet? This is a mansion.

VIOLET

My dear Adam! Everything about tonight will be extraordinary. Trust me, this is it.

Violet reaches the doors, bereft of handles, checks her watch, then recomposes herself in anticipation.

Adam rests his hand on Evelyn's shoulder. Evelyn grimaces and pulls away, returning to the refuge of her phone.

ADAM

Put your phone away. Best behavior! Make a good impression.

EVELYN

Why, cause she's rich?

ADAM

Evelyn!

Adam hears Violet clear her throat, then turns to see the hostess, CHARLOTTE, at the mansion entrance, observing patiently, and grimaces. Charlotte turns her attention to Violet.

CHARLOTTE

Welcome back, Ms. Mayhew!

VIOLET

I've brought my two guests, as promised.

CHARLOTTE

It is very nice to meet you, Mr. Felix, Miss Felix. My name is Charlotte, and I will be taking care of you this evening. Please, come this way.

INT: LOBBY

Charlotte leads the three into an opulent foyer. Adam takes it all in, but then barely avoids bumping into a vigilant SECURITY GUARD wearing a suit and headset, his menacing arms crossed. Evelyn trails behind, texting on her phone, head down. Charlotte and her guests continue toward an archway leading into the dining room. Adam's eyes steal one last glance at the guard.

INT: DINING ROOM

At two small tables, each in a neighboring room, elegant couples engage in whispers over crystal-cupped wine and porcelain plates of gourmet fare. Charlotte guides the guests to the seats at the end of the dining room's long, unoccupied table. Adam pulls a chair out for Evelyn who squats with indifference. Charlotte passes the adults a pair of slender wine menus.

CHARLOTTE

I'll give you a moment to peruse
our wines.

Charlotte dips her head then pivots toward another table.

ADAM

(leaning towards Violet)
What kind of restaurant is this?

VIOLET

Only the most exclusive restaurant
in the world. It's never in the
same place twice. My first time was
in Malta. Clarence brought me.

ADAM

Clarence? Your brother?

VIOLET

Yes, when were yachting in the
Baltic he was just raving about
this place. It was only a short
flight and I wanted to show him my
new jet. The food - absolutely
transformative, I'm telling you --
wait until you try it, Adam.

ADAM

Sounds like we're in for a treat,
Evelyn.

EVELYN
 (not looking up from her
 phone)
 Yeah, okay.

Adam glances apologetically to a suddenly distracted Violet.

CHARLOTTE
 Have we made a selection?

Adam busies himself with the rather expensive wine menu.

VIOLET
 We'll have a bottle of the 2009
 Chateau Haut-Brion, my treat.

Adam looks up, nods, and slumps back in relief.

CHARLOTTE
 Right away. And for Miss Felix?

EVELYN
 A Sprite?

CHARLOTTE
 Of course.

A COOK steps alongside Charlotte, placing a small plate with three crostini on the table. The crostini appear to be topped with thin slices of beef, sage, and a balsamic reduction.

CHARLOTTE
 Compliments of the chef. Enjoy.

After Charlotte and the cook leave, Evelyn immediately reaches for a crostini.

EVEYLN
 Finally! I'm starving!

Adam gently slaps Evelyn on the wrist.

ADAM
 Ett-ett-ett! We don't just shove
 fine cuisine into our mouths! No,
 we must enjoy it with our minds as
 well as our stomachs.

Evelyn groans loudly and leans way back in her chair, staring at the ceiling. Adam smiles.

ADAM

First we admire the presentation.
Beautiful. Delicate! Look how
finely sliced the strawberries are!

(beat)

And is this... beef? Lamb?

Evelyn sighs loudly, and puts on her headphones, shoulders
scrunched, eyes buried in her phone. Adam chuckles, slightly
embarrassed, and looks at Violet.

ADAM

Kids these days.

VIOLET

(squeezing Adam's hand,
leaning in)

You worry too much, my dear! We
used to be like that, remember?
Except without the cell phones.

Charlotte returns and pours the wine, leaving the bottle on
the table. She splashes Evelyn's soda over ice, then hands
them each a menu.

CHARLOTTE

Feel free to take your time
deciding. I'll be back in a little
while.

ADAM

There are no specials?

Violet giggles endearingly, enjoying Adam's innocence.

CHARLOTTE

Sir, here at The Restaurant,
everything is special.

Charlotte leaves as the three peruse the menus.

EVELYN

(pulling one ear bud out)
Seriously? A kid's menu?

Adam tries to see but Violet's fingers caress his ear
distractingly. Evelyn's forehead crinkles.

EVELYN

Handburger and French eyes?

ADAM
It really says that?

Adam takes the menu and scans it as Evelyn puts her earbuds back in. He then glances at his own menu, furrowing his brows in matching confusion. He chuckles a little.

ADAM
What is this? A themed restaurant?
Authentic Greek peasant salad,
male, aged 37? Charred Chinese
forearm fillet with wonton crisps?
Toddler Tartare? Really?

VIOLET
Oh, no, it's legit. Exactly as
advertised. Like I said, food like
you've never had before.

Her radiant gaze stiffens in anticipation.

ADAM
But this is... but... so
then... Oh, my God. Oh God. I'm
going to be sick.

Violet's face darkens as Adam stumbles out of his chair and rushes to the bathroom. Evelyn pulls a ear bud out of her ear and looks at Violet.

EVELYN
What's with Dad?

VIOLET
Oh, I'm sure it's nothing. Just
wait here while I go check on him.

Violet hesitates, looks down, then pops a crostini into her mouth with a cheeky grin and saunters away.

INT: MEN'S BATHROOM

Adam stands in front of the mirror, leaning on the sink, breathing heavily. He splashes water on his face, trying not to panic. Violet opens the door, walks over to Adam, and runs her fingers across his back.

VIOLET
Sweetheart, come back to dinner.

ADAM
(desperately)

ADAM
It's a joke, right? You're just
joking with me. Violet, please tell
me you're joking.

VIOLET
No, I'm not.

ADAM
But... but you're eating ...

Adam claws at his head, his eyes searching for answers that aren't there. He stumbles, but Violet, prepared, manages to catch him. Violet places her hands on either side of Adam's head, her fingers caressing soothingly.

VIOLET
Darling, pull yourself together! I
vouched for you! The Restaurant is
really, really exclusive! Besides,
I thought you were open-minded. You
didn't even try the food!

Adam straightens.

ADAM
Oh, gee, sorry I forgot to tell you
that I'm on a strict NO-HUMAN DIET!
(beat)
I mean... oh, my God, Toddler
Tartare?!

Adam pulls away from Violet in revulsion, who raises his hands in nonchalant concession.

VIOLET
OK, I'll admit, that one grosses me
out. I mean, raw meat? Ick. And I
know it's safe 'cause it's prepared
very fresh and all, but... it's so
slimy.

ADAM
Prepared... fresh?

VIOLET
Oh yes, very fresh.

Adam cocks his head, then dashes out the bathroom door.

VIOLET
Oh, Adam.

INT: KITCHEN

A cart steamrolls toward the door with a cook in tow.

COOK

The hand salad's on the way, chef!

Adam dodges behind a coat rack.

A pot containing a hand ringed with fresh greens rolls by, followed by a white-aproned waist.

Adam spies toward the center of the kitchen. The burly CHEF, sporting a horseshoe mustache and a blood-spattered white apron, stacks severed limbs dispassionately onto his steel table, butcher knife at the ready. In the far corner, another COOK sorts through piles of fresh vegetables amidst buckets of gore.

The chef glances suddenly toward Adam, who winces.

A short, grizzly DELIVERY MAN in jeans taps his foot nearby.

DELIVERY MAN

Hey, I got two more in the truck!
Where ya want 'em?

CHEF

(gesturing behind him)
Oh, next week's rotisserie special!
Put them in the back. We'll prep
them later.

The delivery man proceeds to the backroom.

Adam periscopes and sees the glassy eyes of a meaty-armed baby in a potato sack, drifting away on the man's shoulder. Adam watches the chef get back to his work then slips past, into the backroom.

INT: BACKROOM

Adam steps into room and pivots right, only to see the delivery man underhand-pitching a closed potato sack into an open freezer. He flips the door shut.

CHEF

I said gently! Don't bruise the
meat!

The chef stands near the backroom entrance, annoyed, still gripping his butcher knife.

ADAM
Oh my god!

The chef cocks his head as he confronts Adam, bewildered, as if just noticing him.

Adam stumbles backward.

INT: KITCHEN

Adam bumps into a carved up human corpse sprawled out over the table. His wobbly legs find purchase as he finds his resolve.

INT: RESTAURANT

Adam rushes up to a nearby occupied table and slams his hands down, rattling plates.

ADAM
(loud and shaky)
Do you know what you are eating?!

The startled couple reacts with silence, ended by a melodious giggle.

WOMAN AT TABLE
I should hope so, at these prices,
but it's so good!

The woman tosses a morsel of meat into her mouth, chewing with sass. Her component laughs as Adam pulls away.

MAN AT TABLE
They seem to be letting just about
anyone in here these days.

The couple laughs again. Violet puts his hand on Adam's shoulder. Adam spins around and pushes Violet into a wall.

ADAM
They're carving up people back
there! And not just people, babies!
How could you bring me here? And my
daughter! How could you?!

CHARLOTTE
Is everything all right, Miss
Mayhew?

Adam spins around to see Charlotte standing behind him.

Charlotte nervously glances toward the frowning security guard, currently blocking the exit.

Violet steps up to Adam and loops her arm around his.

VIOLET
We're fine. Aren't we, darling?

Violet smiles as she leans in to whisper in Adam's ear.

VIOLET
(whispering sternly)
Smile and nod.

Adam sees the security guard talking through his headset.

BEGIN IMAGINING:

Evelyn sits across from Violet. The girl bites a piece of steak from his fork and chews.

VIOLET
Your father was a great man.

Evelyn swallows.

EVELYN
Great tasting!

VIOLET
(chuckling)
You do have some of your father's
humors in you after all!

The two laugh.

END IMAGINING

Adam's vacant eyes witness his imagined horrors. Violet, still at his side, turns her head in concern.

VIOLET
Dear?

Adam blinks, disoriented, and clears his throat, attempting to regain his composure.

BEGIN IMAGINING:

Suddenly, grimy hands latch onto his shoulders and pull him backward. Violet recoils in shock.

INT: KITCHEN

Two cooks hoist Adam onto the steel table as another howls gleefully, tearing off Adam's shirt. The shadowy, ominous chef, rises from behind the table.

CHEF

Looks like we got the catch of the day!

The two cooks cheer in blood-thirsty glee as they hack into Adam's torso with their knives.

END IMAGINING

INT: RESTAURANT

Adam and Violet are standing in the exact same position as they were when Adam imagined being grabbed by the chefs.

VIOLET

Dear?

Violet elbows a terrified Adam in the ribs. He smiles nervously and nods with earnest.

ADAM

Yes, yes, everything is fine.

Violet leads Adam back to their table. Charlotte and the security guard silently observe from a distance.

ADAM

Evelyn?

Adam slows his approach as Evelyn slurps pasta off her fork, her phone and headphones set aside. Adam resolves to sit calmly. Violet joins, maintaining her calm demeanor.

EVELYN

Hi, Daddy. Feeling better?

ADAM

Oh, yes, sweetie, much better.

(beat)

What are you eating?

EVELYN

Spaghetti and footballs, Daddy! You were right. I didn't know food could taste this good.

Evelyn eats another bite. She smiles angelically at her father. Adam sits stiffly in his chair, his hands gripping the seat of the chair, knuckles white.

ADAM
(nodding)
Good. Good. I'm glad.

EVELYN
Here Daddy, try one.

Evelyn, smiling sweetly, hands Adam a football on a fork. Adam stiffens, taking the fork slowly. Violet nods slightly and makes a small "try it" motion with her hands. Adam reluctantly scrapes a tiny bit of football off his fork. His brows lower as he regards the remainder of the football.

Adam takes a larger bite, and his eyes bulge. He looks at Violet in disbelief, then dives into the footballs voraciously, stuffing his face. Evelyn giggles.

EVELYN
Daddy!

Charlotte motions for the guard to follow her out of the dining room. Adam leans back, continuing to chew, his eyes rolling upward.

Violet crosses her arms and smirks.

VIOLET
What happened to your strict
NO-HUMAN diet, darling?

ADAM
(through a stuffed mouth)
Today's my cheat day.

MINUTES LATER:

Evelyn's hand greedily reaches for a football. Suddenly, it gets slapped away.

ADAM
Ett-ett-ett! Cannibalism is bad,
Evie!

Adam snatches the football and pops it into his mouth with a grin.

FADE OUT