

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 a 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

This is it? It looks like a mansion.

VIOLET

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

Violet approaches the doors, bereft of handles, checks her watch, then recomposes herself in anticipation. On cue, a door opens slightly as a sharply attired woman with hair in a striking French roll smiles with extravagant warmth, ushering them in.

INT: VESTIBULE

Charlotte and the three guests stand before a second similar set of massive doors.

CHARLOTTE

Hello. Welcome to The Restaurant. May I see your membership cards, please?

VIOLET

There you are.

Violet hands her a glossy gold card engraved only with "Violet Mayhew".

VIOLET

I've brought my two guests, as promised.

Adam rests his hand on Evelyn's shoulder. Evelyn grimaces and pulls away, returning to the refuge of her phone. Charlotte inspects the card, glances downward, then smiles warmly at Violet as she returns it to him.

CHARLOTTE

Welcome back, Ms. Mayhew. 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.

The double doors open automatically, into an opulent foyer.

INT: LOBBY

Charlotte leads the three past 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 up the staircase. Adam's eyes steal one last glance at the guard.

They pass through an archway into a dining room.

INT: DINING ROOM

Four tables are staggered throughout the small dining room. At two candle-lit tables, elegant couples engage in whispers over crystal-cupped wine and porcelain plates of gourmet fare. Charlotte leads Violet's party to an 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 requires a membership?

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

VIOLET  
 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.

Charlotte returns and places 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.

Evelyn 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)  
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.

Charlotte leaves as the three peruse the menus.

ADAM

What, no specials?

VIOLET

Adam, at The Restaurant, everything  
is a special.

EVELYN

(pulling one ear bud out)  
Really? A children's menu?

ADAM

(leaning to read her menu)  
Come now, Evie. These look good.  
Viennese sausage with buttery

ADAM  
mashed potato. Rustic Italian  
meatballs in linguini. Mmmm, or a  
simmering bowl of onion-seaweed  
Japanese gyūdon, that sounds  
interesting!

EVELYN  
Seaweed? Really, Dad?

Evelyn puts her headphones back in and looks intently at her phone. Adam sighs and picks up his menu. He scans the menu, and furrows his brows in slight 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 and leans casually against the wall.

ADAM

Violet! This is the men's roo...

Adam purses his lips in silent frustration. Violet leans casually against the wall.

VIOLET

Seriously, Adam? You're overreacting.

ADAM

(desperately)

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 people!

(feels his stomach)

Oh my god. I'm going to be sick.

Adam claws at his head, his eyes searching for answers that aren't there. He stumbles, but Violet, prepared, manages to catch him. Violet claws Adam's shoulders firmly and gives him a small shake.

VIOLET

Darling, pull yourself together! I vouched for you, damn it! My reputation is on the line here. I spend half a million dollars a year on my membership, and by God, if I lose it, I'll never get it back - and I don't mean the money. I mean I'll never eat here again.

Adam desperately resists Violet's grip.

ADAM

But... they're cannibals! You're a cannibal! 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, eating people is one thing, but 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 in 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 out the door, followed by a white-aproned waist.

Adam spies toward the center of the kitchen. The burly CHEF, sporting a horseshoe moustache 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's 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, gently. 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 guests react with silence, ended by a melodious giggle.

WOMAN AT TABLE

Yes! Sinful, isn't it? And so good.

The woman tosses a morsel of meat into her mouth, chewing with sass. Her friends all laugh. Adam pulls away.



MAN AT TABLE  
Must be his first time.

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

ADAM  
They are killing people back there!  
And not just people, babies! How  
could you bring me here? And my  
daughter! I'm going to put a stop  
to this!

Adam spins and hesitates abruptly, as Charlotte approaches, busy uncorking a bottle of wine.

CHARLOTTE  
Is everything all right, Miss  
Mayhew?

Charlotte glances with understanding 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:

Grimy hands latch onto his shoulders and pull him backward.

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

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  
Daddy, the meatballs are so good.  
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 meatball on a fork. Adam stiffens, taking the fork slowly. Violet nods slightly and makes a small "try it" motion with his hands. Adam reluctantly scrapes a tiny bit of meatball off his fork. His brows lower as his eyes bulge. He looks around in amazement.

ADAM  
This is good. God, forgive me,  
but...

Adam devours the rest of the meatball in one bite. His eyes roll upward as he chews.

ADAM  
(with a stuffed mouth)  
Mmmm... It's so good.

Violet leans back and sighs happily. Adam leans over to Evelyn, pointing.

ADAM  
Say, is that... Justin Bieber?

Evelyn snaps her head around to see a bewildered guard. Adam quickly stabs a meatball off her plate. Charlotte purses her lips and points at Adam. Evelyn turns back.

ADAM  
(chomping down)  
Mmmmm!!!

EVELYN  
(playfully shrieking)  
Daddy!!!

Adam hands Evelyn back the fork. Evelyn is still giggling while starting in on her food. Adam scoots his chair over and hugs her, earning yet another giggle in protest. He picks up the menu and Violet waves Charlotte over.

ADAM  
I'd like to order the Imperial New Yorker tenderloin with Bordelaise sauce, and why don't you throw in a side of the roasted Malaysian sweetbread. I'm curious.

CHARLOTTE  
Yes, of course, Mr. Felix. Will that be all?

ADAM  
Could I also get a membership application please?

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