

(Name of Project)

by
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by
(Current Writer, date)

Name (of company, if applicable)
Address
Phone Number

THE SEX LIFE OF WAITERS

By

Glenn English

"Sex As A Weapon"

(Pilot Episode)

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Glenn English
475 West 57th Street, #24C2
New York, NY 10019
Glennenglishnyc@gmail.com
646-286-4465

THE SEX LIFE OF WAITERSEPISODE 1 - "SEX AS A WEAPON"

INT. DARYL AND TASHA'S APARTMENT, MANHATTAN - MORNING

A tiny, dilapidated one bedroom in the East Village.

Framed pictures on the walls of actors and posters from Off-Off Broadway shows.

A COCK ROACH crawls across one of the posters, as we PUSH PAST, through the open bedroom door to sounds of sex.

Daryl and Tasha are in bed, in the semi-darkness, wrestling under the sheets. Then, something goes wrong.

He sits up abruptly in bed, snapping on a lamp.

TASHA

What's wrong?

DARYL

Nothing.

TASHA

Really? One minute we're fucking and the next you turn on the light -
- I think that means something's wrong.

Daryl swings his legs over the side of the bed.

DARYL

Nothing's wrong. It's just, I don't know, we were there so late-

TASHA

-I know, it's early-

DARYL

-and they just sit there *forever!*

Tasha slides over to Daryl, touches his back.

TASHA

Come on, just fuck me and forget about it.

DARYL

They just *suck!* People always suck.

Frustrated, Tasha moves away, rolling her eyes.

TASHA
Some people suck, not everybody.

DARYL
They do in *that* place.

TASHA
So get another job.

DARYL
I can't expend the energy.

TASHA
Don't know what you're saving it
for.

Sliding her hands under the sheet, Tasha starts masturbating.

DARYL
It's just the way things were going
last spring, I thought this would
be it, this was my final year as a
waiter, I could finally hang up my
apron. And obviously it's not,
obviously it's going to go on until
I don't know..what are you doing?

TASHA
I was almost there..

DARYL
..I'm telling you about my night
and you're *playing with yourself?*

TASHA
Somebodies got to do it.

DARYL
I'm talking to you!

TASHA
Go ahead, I can multi-task.

Daryl lifts the sheet, miffed but also turned on.

DARYL
Can't believe you're doing this.

TASHA
You've watched before.

DARYL
Yeah, but that was kinky, you're
doing this to spite me.

TASHA
 Maybe you could "lend a hand."

Daryl drops the sheet, looking away - no deal.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 Or *maybe* I should fuck someone
 else?

DARYL
 Oh. Is that a threat?

TASHA
 We never see each other anymore,
 I'm horny and I want to get off!
 What's *your* problem?

Tasha keeps at it, her tone becoming seductive.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 I got a new client this week. A
 strange one. Want to know what I do
 to him?

DARYL
 Lemme' guess. You beat him up?

TASHA
 Nope.

DARYL
 Isn't that the usual deal?

TASHA
 Not this guy, he's different.

Daryl starts taking the bait, in spite of himself.

DARYL
 So what do you do?

TASHA
 I smoke. I put on men's pajamas and
 I smoke and I let him admire my
 feet. Everybody likes my feet.

Tasha slides one of her exquisite feet towards Daryl - the
 girl *really* could have been a foot model.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 You used to like them too.

DARYL
 What happens then?

TASHA

He starts touching himself - the way I'm doing now.

Daryl's hooked now and Tasha starts reeling him in.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Wouldn't you like to touch me there too? Come on, what are you waiting for?

Buttons pushed, Daryl gets back under the sheet.

DARYL

You're really twisted, you know that?

TASHA

So are you, that's why you're with me.

Engines revved, they go at it with a vengeance. Sex. Sparks.

TASHA (CONT'D)

That's it. That's it. Go! Yeah. Oh God. *I'm coming.*

EXT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, MANHATTAN - LATER THAT MORNING

To establish.

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, MANHATTAN - MOMENTS LATER

PETE and ZORGE are folding napkins, still in street clothes.

ZORGE

You did not say that to Blaine Maxwell!

PETE

Why not? By the light of day he may be "Blaine Maxwell, star of stage and screen", but by the light of Cleo's he's "Blaine Maxwell, big drunk, big fag, big WHORE!" You'll notice the billing is *slightly different.*

ZORGE

But what happens when you run into him here?

PETE
I'll just pretend like it never
happened.

Zorge laughs derisively - this is NOT a good plan.

ZORGE
Oh, *my*.

PETE
Blaine Maxwell was so blasted he
won't remember.

ZORGE
Don't count on it. And why am I the
only one pulling the tags out of
these napkins?

PETE
'Cause you're the only one who
cares.

The restaurant phones start ringing, they ignore them.

ZORGE
Well, I ran into Blaine one night
and I thought he was too hammered
to remember anything, but he walked
in here two days later and gave me
no end of shit! He didn't like the
table, he didn't like the wine, I
was lucky I didn't get canned.

PETE
Really? The star-fucker didn't give
a good performance?

Zorge makes an ugly face, throwing a napkin at Pete.

ZORGE
Uggh! I would never fuck Blaine
Maxwell, he's disgusting!

PETE
I would if I could get something
out of it. Like a part in a movie.

ZORGE
Darling, stars don't put people
like us in movies. They come in
here, abuse us, tip like shit and
try to pick us up on the outside.
(MORE)

ZORGE (CONT'D)
 Afterwards it's "La-la-la" and they
 don't recognize you the following
 week.

PETE
 Hmm, sounds like the voice of
experience to me.

They finally notice the relentless ringing of the phones.

ZORGE
 God, what time is it?

PETE
 10:45. Can't these people get a
 life?

DUNCAN blows through the door carrying a large book and a
 canvas bag - he's as big a drama queen as they come.

DUNCAN
 Can SOMEBODY answer the phone
 around here?!

ZORGE
 It's not eleven o'clock yet.

DUNCAN
 So?

PETE
 We don't answer the phone till
 eleven, that's the rule.

DUNCAN
 Petey, I'm the *Maitre Diva* and I
 make the rules around here.

ZORGE
 They're calling for reservations,
 we don't have the book.

Duncan hurls the bag and book at Zorge with contempt.

DUNCAN
 Here's the *bag*, here's the *book*,
 ANSWER THE FUCKING PHONE!

Zorge catches the book and scrambles to the phone.

PETE
 What are you doing here so early?

DUNCAN
Covering for Troy, he's got some
"herpes episode", and can't even
walk.

Pete covers his crotch with his hands in mock pain.

PETE
Oh, bad visual. Nice of you to
announce it to the world.

DUNCAN
You didn't hear it from me.

PETE
So, you're working a double.

DUNCAN
All day and all night.

PETE
Us too. Gee, can't wait.

Duncan thumbs through the napkins, bully of the block.

DUNCAN
You are pulling the tags off those
napkins I hope?

PETE
Of course. Oh, and Bill was looking
for you earlier. He wants you
upstairs. *Right away.*

DUNCAN
Great. Just great!

Pete starts ripping tags as Duncan flies out the door.

ZORGE
He can't even *walk*?

INT. BASEMENT OF BOCCO RESTAURANT - A LITTLE LATER.

Chef AUGUST ROSES is in his office, hunched over a cook book.

He chops up lines of cocaine with sweaty, pudgy hands.

A PORTER pounds on the office door, startling him.

PORTER (V.O.)
Chef? Chef, are you in there?

AUGUST

Not now, *not* now! I'm busy!

August rolls up a twenty - he's looking pretty shaky.

Leaning over, he sucks up the coke across Julia Child's face.

INT. SAMANTHA'S APARTMENT, UPTOWN - LATER THAT MORNING

CU of CONNIE, wearing a towel in the bathroom mirror

She listens to Samantha on the phone in the next room.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Really? You're serious now, this isn't some artificial sunlight you're blowing up my back door? *I'm opening for Machiavelli at Webster Hall next month?* And it's a done deal? BABY, THAT'S FANTASTIC, I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WE PULLED IT OFF! No, no, of course I believed it was going to happen, it's just when I saw their website this morning and those Pussycat Doll knockoffs from Denmark were listed as the openers, well, I started having doubts.

Connie smiles in the mirror, a study in skepticism.

SAMANTHA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

'Course I have faith in you, don't I always? Right, right, go ahead, take the other call, we'll talk about the details later.

*

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Samantha bounces around the room in her bathrobe, elated.

Connie stands in the BG, leaning in the bathroom doorway.

SAMANTHA

I got it, *I got it*, I GOT IT! Did you hear? *Did you hear?*

Sam hangs up the phone as Connie comes into focus.

CONNIE

Yeah, heard that story before.

SAMANTHA
This time it's for real.

CONNIE
How do you know?

SAMANTHA
Just got a *feeling*.

CONNIE
Really? And what part of your body
is this feeling coming from? Your
head? Or someplace *lower*?

SAMANTHA
Not as low you think.

CONNIE
You don't know what I'm thinking.

SAMANTHA
Yeah I do. You've got a dirty mind
and I know *all about it*.

CONNIE
What about the website? And the
Pussycat Dolls from Denmark?

SAMANTHA
Tony says that's just a typo and
they'll fix it.

CONNIE
I don't know why you still believe
him. Oh, that's right - *you think*
he's your boyfriend.

SAMANTHA
Tony *is* my boyfriend!

CONNIE
Right.

Dropping her towel, Connie starts moving in on Sam.

SAMANTHA
What do you think you're doing?

CONNIE
Getting ready to celebrate your
impending stardom.

Connie eases Sam down onto the bed, unties her robe.

SAMANTHA

Baby, there isn't time, I've got to get ready. I've got a rehearsal.

Arching an eyebrow, Connie smirks like a Cheshire cat.

CONNIE

That's one of the perks of being a star - *you get to show up late.*

EXT. BROWNSTONE STAIRS IN BROOKLYN - A LITTLE LATER.

LUCY is passed out on the stairs, victim of another wild night, a half-eaten bag of chips clutched in her hand.

Pigeons gather around her, pecking at the potato chips.

Her cell phone starts ringing in her pocket, she stirs.

LUCY

Hello?

DUNCAN (V.O.)

Where are you, Lucy?

LUCY

Home. Kind of.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

But where are you *supposed* to be?

LUCY

I don't know. Somewhere?

DUNCAN (V.O.)

At WORK, Lucy, you're supposed to be at WORK! As in right now!

Lucy snaps out of it in a hurry - the pigeons go flying!

LUCY

No, no, somebodies covering for me, it's, uh, Connie! That's right, we did a switch, it's in the book!

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, BUSINESS OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Duncan's at his desk, eating this up with a sadistic spoon.

DUNCAN

Sorry, Lucy, I'm looking at the book right now and the switch you're doing with Connie is for next Tuesday.

LUCY (V.O.)

Oh, shit!

DUNCAN

So you better get your ass in here before we open or you're out of a *JOB!* Got it?

LUCY (V.O.)

I'll be right there, I'm so sorry!

Duncan sips a cappuccino and turns back to his computer.

He's logged onto a Buddhist, gay porn site - Duncan smiles.

BILL (O.C.)

Duncan, *what are you doing?*

Duncan panics, dumps his hot coffee in his lap, howling!

DUNCAN

Er, shit, FUCK! Nothing, Bill, nothing, just checking my e-mail.

BILL IRVING looks and sounds like a film noir character.

Shimmering in black and white, Bill holds up an invoice.

BILL

Come in here. *I want to know why we're paying so much for tomatoes.*

DUNCAN

Be right there, Bill.

Duncan shivers, the whole "celluloid thing" is weird.

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

CU of a burly, Mexican hand pounding the pickup bell.

August is jacked up, pissed off and *ready to rumble!*

Zorge runs into the kitchen, now in uniform and apron.

AUGUST

Come on, *come on*, what the fuck is wrong with you?! Are you deaf?

ZORGE

No, but I'm the only one on the floor!

AUGUST

So move your ass faster! This shit is burning up under these lamps!

Zorge grabs multiple plates and heads out, fighting panic.

August screams out orders at the cooks like a combat officer!

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I need three chicken, six lasagna, two quail, four Bocco, one Carbonara and three steak, medium rare! Cook, you bastards, COOK!

Pummeling the bell, August bellows for the waiters.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

Come on, come on, come on! Where the fuck is everybody?!

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, FRONT OF THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Zorge gallops through the packed restaurant with his plates.

Multiple patrons raise their hands and call to him as he goes - Zorge is really sweating bullets at this point.

Pete struggles with the incessantly ringing phones.

ZORGE

Petey, I could *really* use some help out here!

PETE

I can't leave the phones, I don't know where Duncan is! Hello, Bocco, can you hold please?

Lucy appears finally, seeing that lunch is a nightmare!

LUCY

Oh my God, *oh-my-God!*

PETE

Lucy, get up there and change, we need you in the kitchen NOW!

Ducking through a side door, Lucy runs for the changing room.

ZORGE

Lucy, hurry, *please!*

Calls of "Waiter" abound as Zorge flies wild-eyed through the restaurant. And that kitchen bell just *keeps-on-ringing...*

PETE

Bocco, thank you for holding. No, I'm sorry, we have nothing available in pre-theater tonight. Oh, you're calling for Carpenter Jones? Well, *why didn't you say so?*

Making a nasty face, Pete conspicuously hangs up the phone.

PETE (CONT'D)

(Real ghetto)

Got no table fo' you bitch.

Pete switches lines as the calls for "Waiter" intensify.

PETE (CONT'D)

Bocco, thanks for holding.

MEAGAN (V.O.)

Chef Roses, please.

PETE

May I ask who's calling?

MEAGAN (V.O.)

His *wife* is calling, Pete.

PETE

Meagan, this isn't a good time.

INT. HOME OF AUGUST ROSES, UPTOWN - SIMULTANEOUSLY

On a couch is MEAGAN O'TOOLE, her toes freshly painted.

A really BAD talk show throbs on the television in the BG.

MEAGAN

When is it ever? Just put him on the phone.

PETE (V.O.)
It's crazy in here, Meagan, he's
not going to pick up!

MEAGAN
You get my husband on the horn or
I'll get you fired. Understand?

PETE (V.O.)
Please hold.

INT. BOCCO KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

August is frantic, the plates are really piling up now.
Pete's voice comes through the intercom on the wall.

PETE (V.O.)
Chef Roses, I have your wife on the
phone.

AUGUST
What the fuck are you talking
about?! Get your ass back here!

PETE (V.O.)
I said, "I have your wife on the
phone."

AUGUST
Tell that bitch to leave me alone,
I'm in the middle of lunch!

PETE (V.O.)
I don't think she's going to like
that, Chef.

AUGUST
I don't give a shit *what* she likes,
you hear me?!

Zorge charges back into the kitchen, starts grabbing food.
Burning himself on the super-heated plates, Zorge screams.

ZORGE
Oh-my-God!

Food goes flying as Zorge drops an entire order on the floor.

ZORGE (CONT'D)
My hands!

AUGUST

My quail! MY BEAUTIFUL QUAIL! God damn you, what have you done?!

ZORGE

My hands! I'll be scarred for life!

Beyond panic, Gus melts down like a reactor in Chernobyl.

AUGUST

You're going to *pay* for those quail, you understand me? You're going to PAY!

Scalded and terrified, Zorge **bursts** into tears!

Lucy bounds into the kitchen, dressed and ready for action.

LUCY

I'm here for you chef, I'm here!
What can I do?

INT. DARYL AND TASHA'S APARTMENT, A LITTLE LATER

CU on Tasha as she zips herself into a latex cat suit.

DARYL (O.C.)

Do you *have* to wear that stuff when you leave the house?

Tasha really is a fiendish sight in her work clothes.

TASHA

Where do you suggest I change?

DARYL (O.C.)

Duh. At work.

She struts over to him, strikes a pose to get his attention but Daryl's immersed in his laptop.

TASHA

Can't take the chance of running into a client without my fetish gear - it would ruin the illusion and that's what they pay for.

DARYL

I thought they paid for the bruises?

This doesn't work, so Tasha tries another one, he ignores it.

TASHA

That too but the aesthetic is important to them. If getting beaten up was the whole scene, they could just go to Central Park after hours.

Tasha strikes a threatening pose - hot and kinky as it gets.

TASHA (CONT'D)

How do I look?

DARYL

Like the devil himself.

TASHA

Devil never looked *this* good.
(Brilliant switch up)
You ever going to marry me or what?

DARYL

(Taken off guard)
Yeah, well, sure, we've talked about it.

TASHA

I want to talk about it some more.

Tasha slams the laptop shut on Daryl's hands - OUCH!

DARYL

Hey, watch it!

TASHA

Clock's ticking, you know.

DARYL

What clock would that be?

TASHA

My clock. *The clock*. Don't play stupid, it's not flattering.

DARYL

Sure, baby, we're just not set up for it yet - financially, I mean.

TASHA

I'm well aware of that. So I take it you're going to make good on your promise? Get a real job, one with benefits, and cut out this waiter bullshit?

Unsure of the play, Daryl is silent - and it hangs.

TASHA (CONT'D)
You own a calendar?

DARYL
Excuse me?

TASHA
'Cause according to mine we've got five years, three months and 11 days invested in this relationship and I'd like to know when I'm getting a return on it! Sorry if this comes across as bitchy but I seem to remember your telling me that when you turned 35 and this writing thing wasn't happening, you'd try something else, something with a future!

Daryl looks away but she's right, and he knows it.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Daryl, that was *three years ago*. Look, I know you don't like what I do for a living but it keeps us afloat financially while you're writing the great American play. And I don't want to rain on your parade, baby, but you're not the only one around here with a dream.

DARYL
I hear you, Tash.

TASHA
Really? I'm starting to wonder.

INT. SAMANTHA'S APARTMENT, DOWNTOWN - A LITTLE LATER

Connie strokes Sam under the covers - residual good sex.

CONNIE
We should move to LA.

SAMANTHA
I hate LA.

CONNIE
You just don't like to drive, but that's where the action is, for both of us.

SAMANTHA
Speak for yourself.

CONNIE
Don't be a princess.

SAMANTHA
You like the princess thing, it
gets you hot, that sense of
conquest.

Looking over at the clock, Connie sees the time.

CONNIE
Shit, I gotta' get to work.

Connie bolts out of bed, starts dressing in a hurry.

SAMANTHA
Oh, so now that you've had your way
with me, you're just going to run
out the door? You Chinese girls are
all alike - "fucky, fucky, chop-
chop-chop".

CONNIE
Stereotyping. I'll bring us back
some Peking Duck, how's that?

Pregnant pause from Sam, she starts looking for her robe.

SAMANTHA
Oh, yeah, tonight isn't good for
me. I'm going to be busy.

CONNIE
Doing what? Rehearsing?

SAMANTHA
Shit, I totally forgot about my
rehearsal!

Samantha heads for the bathroom, turns on the shower.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Connie finishes dressing while Sam starts cleaning up.

CONNIE
What are you doing tonight?

SAMANTHA
Got a set, over in Hell's Kitchen.

CONNIE

So I'll come by when I get out.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, no good. The Music Man will be there.

CONNIE

Meaning you have a date with Tony.

SAMANTHA

Whatever.

Ripping the shower curtain back, Connie gives her a look.

CONNIE

You know, you might have the decency to *lie* to me once in a while.

SAMANTHA

I'm sorry, I always heard "honesty was the best policy".

CONNIE

You haven't been straight with me since this whole thing started.

SAMANTHA

And *you* always knew what the deal was here - there's work and there's play.

CONNIE

And that's all I am to you? "Play?"

SAMANTHA

That's not what I'm saying -

CONNIE

- so what *is it* then? Exactly what AM I to you?

SAMANTHA

Look, I'm late, I don't have time for this right now.

CONNIE

No. You never do.

Disgusted and stung, Connie bolts out of the bathroom.

SAMANTHA

Connie, wait - Don't go like that.

Samantha flinches, as the door slams in the BG.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Shit.

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, MANHATTAN - LATER THAT DAY

The lunch crowd gone, Duncan addresses the night crew.

Connie, Pete, Lucy and Daryl are having family meal.

DUNCAN

OK, guys, we're going to be down one tonight at the start, so I want everyone to be on their toes and focused.

CONNIE

What? Somebody got fired?

PETE

Not yet.

DUNCAN

Zorge had a little accident in the kitchen today - because he wasn't *focused* and *paying attention to what he was doing*. No big deal, he'll be back to work next week.

DARYL

Did he cut himself? Or did he get burned?

LUCY

Burned.

DUNCAN

Which is my point here, I don't want to see anybody on *auto pilot*, because that's when things like this happen. We're over booked tonight, it's going to be a little bumpy, so I want you all *present*.

CONNIE

Why are we still taking reservations if we don't have tables to give them?

DUNCAN

Because they're not the sort of people you say "no" to. Look, just turn the tables guys, you make good money here, I don't think that's a lot to ask! Got it?

They all verbalize some form of "yes", though it's clear this little pep talk is a TOTAL load of bullshit.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Great. *Bon Appetite.*

And with that, Duncan is gone with a drama queen flourish.

DARYL

So what *really* happened?

LUCY

It was my fault.

PETE

Shut up, don't be a martyr. We *know* whose fault it was. Lucy was late, we were down one since Tom got fired-

DARYL

-When did *Tom* get fired?-

PETE

-Sunday, and then Duncan disappeared like he always does, we got slammed and Gus let the plates pile up under the heat lamps. And Zorge ran back there and got burned.

DARYL

How bad?

LUCY

Bad enough to go to the hospital.

DARYL

We should take up a collection.

PETE

For what?

DARYL

He's out of work for a week, he might need a little money.

PETE

Sorry, rent's due.

DARYL

Right, for Zorge too. Hey, I don't want to sound melodramatic but it's pretty much "us against the world" around here. *If we don't have each other's backs, then we're really screwed.*

CONNIE

Daryl's right. I'm in for twenty.

Connie throws a bill down on the table, Lucy follows suit.

LUCY

Yeah, it's the least I can do.

DARYL

We can keep an envelope behind the bar. Don't be a tight ass, Pete.

PETE

All right, guess I can spare it.

We hear the sound of the kitchen bell ringing frantically.

INT. BOCCO, FRONT OF THE HOUSE - HOURS LATER

Duncan is greeting guests during the pre-theater rush.

DUNCAN

Blaine Maxwell, handsome as ever!

BLAINE and Duncan do the audible, show biz double kiss.

BLAINE

Hello *darling!* How's everything?
Have you been losing weight?

DUNCAN

Flatterer. Pete, take Mr. Maxwell to table fourteen, and send a pizza bread - *immediately!*

Pete puts on a phoney smile to Blaine, who *doesn't* return it.

Heading to table fourteen, they pass Connie carrying a pizza bread to another table, WE STAY WITH HER as she goes.

At the table sit RUTH SIMON and CARPENTER JONES, schmoozing.

CONNIE
Compliments of Bocco.

RUTH SIMON
I'd like to order a drink.

In subtitles we see "Ruth Simon, Manhattan Theater Club".

CONNIE
Sure, what would you like?

RUTH SIMON
Vodka-soda, three pieces of lime.
Carpenter, what are you having?

In subtitles we see "Carpenter Jones, Golden Globe winner".

CARPENTER
Cosmopolitan, *pale*.

Lucy zips past Connie with a tray PACKED with martinis.

LUCY
Behind you, *behind you!*

The waiters almost collide but somehow manage not to.

WE STAY WITH LUCY, as she runs drinks to a large table.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Grey goose martini.

A well dressed, gray haired man looks up and smiles.

STUART WHITE
Yes, that's me.

In subtitles we see "Stuart White, CEO Lincoln Center".

Lucy dodges the animated hands of storytellers, as she delivers the other martinis - it's really nerve wracking.

INT. BOCCO, FRONT OF THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Daryl is taking a complicated food order from a regular.

LANIE
Yeah, I want the tilapia but I don't want the potatoes or the spinach and I *don't* want that sauce.

(MORE)

LANIE (CONT'D)

I want it with broccoli rabe, no oil and a little chopped salad on the side - *no dairy, no butter, no nothing* - just well done and dry as a bone, make sure you tell him NO SAUCE! Shit tastes great but it's instant heartburn.

In subtitles we see - "Lanie Stein, Tony winner".

DARYL

OK, I got it.

LANIE

Why don't you read it back to me? Just to be sure it's right.

Daryl forces a smile but he's *not* having it tonight.

DARYL

Trust me, *I got it.*
(To the other regular)
And for yourself?

ROBERT

I'll have the chicken, just as it is, thank you.

In subtitles - "Robert E. Moses, Academy Award winner, Tony winner, Emmy winner - the whole shebang!".

DARYL

You're welcome.

Connie flies past with loads of plates, a little frantic.

CONNIE

Behind you, *behind you!*

ROBERT

Say, how's your writing going?

DARYL

Not bad - got a call from South Coast Rep last week, looks like they want to do a reading of my latest thing.

ROBERT

That's terrific, they've got a great theater out there, congratulations.

DARYL

Well, it's a reading, who knows if it goes anywhere after that.

Gliding past, Duncan overhears part of their conversation.

ROBERT

This business is *all about connections*, and that's a good one. Let me know how that goes.

DARYL

Thanks, I will.

Duncan gives Daryl the eye, not too happy, he takes off.

LANIE

Why are you so nice to them?

ROBERT

Why not? Doesn't cost anything.

LANIE

It just sets a bad precedent - now we *all* have to be nice.

ROBERT

They've got a hard job. I used to do it, I know. And so did *you* as I recall.

LANIE

That was a *long* time ago.

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, AT THE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Bill sits at the bar, shimmering in a black and white tux.

Engrossed in a crossword, Bill slides his empty glass over.

Multi-tasking with various orders, Pete grabs the empty.

PETE

Another martini, Bill?

BILL

Yeah, sure. And what's a five letter word for the bottom of the social register?

PETE

Have you tried "waiter"?

BILL

No, it doesn't fit. And that's not five letters, it's six.

Shaking up another drink as the waiters call in more orders.

PETE

Oh, right. Silly me.

INT. BOCCO KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Daryl's getting a "talking to" in the bread station.

DUNCAN

Daryl, I'm *not* going to warn you again!

DARYL

It was just chit chat, no big deal.

DUNCAN

You know the rules around here - *no self promotion!*

DARYL

He asked me a question, I was just being polite.

DUNCAN

Rules are rules. Do it again and you're gone!

DARYL

Really? And what about all those donations you get out of these guys for your Zendo? You're going to tell me *that's* not self promotion?

Duncan grabs the collar of Daryl's shirt for emphasis.

DUNCAN

It's all about the color of your shirt, Daryl. 'Cause when you wear a *white* shirt, you get to eat shit, kiss ass and sweep the floor!

Pulling on his own shirt, Duncan hammers home the analogy.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

But I wear the *blue* shirt, and when you wear the *blue* shirt, all of that just magically goes away! So don't do as I do, do-as-I-say.

Kitchen bell is slapped repeatedly, Connie appears in the BG.

CONNIE
Daryl, chef needs you in the
kitchen - he says your order's
fucked up.

INT. BOCCO, FRONT OF THE HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER.

Connie's at a table, flirting with gorgeous EVA MENDEZ.

PETE (V.O.)
I don't think her tits are *all*
that.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
Speaks the queen.

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, AT THE BAR - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Pete still bartending while Duncan sips his sparkling water.

PETE
I'm not a *queen!*

DUNCAN
No, you're a prin-*CESS!*

All of a sudden there's a terrible commotion on the floor.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
What the hell is it now?

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, ON THE FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Lanie Stein is having a full-blown meltdown on Lucy.

LANIE
Look, I was *very* specific, I always
am and this is NOT what I ordered!

LUCY
I'm sorry, Ms. Stein, what do you
want me to do?

LANIE
I *want* you people to do your job
and *fix this!*

ROBERT
Lanie, take it easy.

LANIE

You take it easy, they didn't fuck
up *your* food!

Duncan breezes in like the consummate snake charmer he is.

DUNCAN

What seems to be the problem *doll*?

LANIE

The problem is this shit's SWIMMING
in butter and I specifically said
"no dairy"! What kind of a joint
are you running here?!

Needing a sacrificial lamb, Duncan immediately turns on Lucy.

DUNCAN

Lucy, what's the meaning of this? I
want an explanation *now*!

LUCY

But I didn't take the order!

DUNCAN

You certainly brought the wrong Ms.
Stein the wrong food though, didn't
you?

LANIE

Jesus Christ, don't you know I'm a
diabetic? If I don't eat something
in a hurry, I'm going to go into
shock and I'm going to SUE the
whole bunch of you!

DUNCAN

LUCY!

The restaurant's deadly still now - blood is in the water.

LUCY

It's not my table, it's not my
fault!

DUNCAN

I've had enough of your excuses -
you're fired!

Turning bright red, Lucy runs off the floor in tears.

The restaurant BURSTS into applause and Duncan takes a bow.

Daryl and Connie share a look of disgust - *another casualty*.

INT. BOCCO RESTAURANT, AT THE BAR - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Bill's still working on that clue in the crossword puzzle.

BILL

Oh, I got it.

CLOSE UP of Bill writing the word "loser" into the crossword.

BILL (CONT'D)

"Loser".

INT. BOCCO, FRONT OF THE HOUSE - HOURS LATER

Pete's counting out money - the night's finally over.

The waiters sit with drinks, resignation hanging in the air.

DUNCAN

So what have we all learned from tonight's events? Anybody?

CONNIE

That Lanie Stein's a bitch?

DUNCAN

Yes, but besides that.

PETE

Don't fuck up orders.

Duncan glares at Daryl, who glares back - no love there.

DUNCAN

That, I hope, would be a given.

DARYL

Actually, I think the lesson would be a reminder that *anyone* who walks through that door can get us fired.

DUNCAN

Sorry, Daryl, wrong as usual.

DARYL

You're telling me that's not true?

DUNCAN

I'm *telling you* that what happened this evening is not about *blame*, which the Buddha rightly tells us is a pointless endeavor and makes us incur Karmic debt.

CONNIE

Lucy gets fired for a food order she didn't *take* and you're telling us that wasn't about BLAME?

DUNCAN

It isn't about blame, it's about *tolerance*.

PETE

Really? This I gotta' hear.

DUNCAN

Look, the teachings of the Buddha take years to master so I'm going to give you the Reader's Digest version. The guests here don't have an especially high opinion of food industry workers-

DARYL

-that's an understatement-

DUNCAN

-which is why we have to practice *tolerance* for those who have opinions that differ from ours, opinions that we may even find *repugnant*.

CONNIE

We're turning the other cheek.

DUNCAN

In a manner, yes.

PETE

What are you getting at, Duncan?

DUNCAN

The soul evolves through adversity and service to others - that's it. We grow as spiritual entities when we experience fear, terror, pain and also when we place the interests of others before ourselves.

DARYL

Altruism.

DUNCAN

I'm trying to make a point here.

DARYL

Which is?

DUNCAN

That whatever they throw at us in here - anger, arrogance or even stupidity - we simply have to rise above it. That's why you're here, to evolve, as spirits in a material world.

PETE

And I thought I was earning a living.

DUNCAN

That too. Lucy was burned out, she couldn't cut the mustard and she needed to move on. The universe was just *giving her a message*.

DARYL

So by firing her, you were actually doing her a favor.

DUNCAN

Exactly.

The magnitude of Duncan's bull shit knows-no-bounds.

INT. A BAR IN HELL'S KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER.

Samantha's at a mike, playing chords on an acoustic guitar.

SAMANTHA

Hi, my name's Samantha Swank and this is something I wrote a little while back. Think some of you might know it - it's called...

She begins singing a touching love ballad.

THIS CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE CLOSING MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

INT. ZORGE'S APARTMENT IN THE WEST VILLAGE - A LITTLE LATER.

Dressed in pajamas, Zorge is making himself some herbal tea. Fumbling with bandaged hands, he drops the cup on the floor. Cleaning up, Zorge cuts his foot on a shard - he curses.

EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM IN TIMES SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Connie waits for the train, checking her black berry.

A few late night travelers straggle past, one pauses.

Looking up, Connie sees a MAN wriggling his tongue at her.

Pulling out a can of mace, Connie sprays him in the face!

INT. A GAY BAR IN THE MEAT PACKING DISTRICT - A LITTLE LATER.

Pete's having a night cap and checking out the wild life.

He sees someone approaching and conspicuously turns away.

Dressed in leather gear, Blaine Maxwell prowls up to him.

Blaine gives Pete a knowing, lascivious smile.

INT. A BAR IN HELL'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha keeps playing, real emotion working in her voice.

This isn't just a performance, this is about something else.

The bar is silent now, she's really got their attention.

INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE OF PAIN, MANHATTAN - A LITTLE LATER.

Dressed in her cat suit, Tasha's working with a client.

The man is naked, except for a leather hood over his face.

Barking orders and questions, Tasha pummels him repeatedly.

Taking a breath, she rubs her sore arms - *this is hard work!*

EXT. GOLDEN THEATER, MIDTOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Daryl looks up at the marque of a legendary Broadway house.

He turns, smoking, taking in all the theaters on the street.

These are the things that dreams are made of - HIS dreams.

INT. DUNCAN'S APARTMENT, UPTOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Burning candles and incense rest on a tiny Buddhist alter.

Dressed in a silk robe, Duncan settles down on a mat.
He packs a marijuana pipe carefully and lights up.
Assuming the lotus position, Duncan begins to meditate.

EXT. LUCY'S NEIGHBORHOOD IN BROOKLYN - MOMENTS LATER

Lucy walks unsteadily down the sidewalk, clearly drunk.
She passes a homeless man, sleeping in a cardboard tent.
Squinting her ruined eyes, Lucy considers his situation.
Lucy's only *one step away from the street* and she knows it!

INT. BILL IRVING'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Bill sits on his couch with a martini, bleary-eyed.
Playing on his television is a scene from "The Big Sleep".
Shimmering like the old flick, Bill mumbles Boogies's lines.
If it wasn't clear before, this is a man who's stuck in time.

INT. DARYL AND TASHA'S APARTMENT, MANHATTAN - MOMENTS LATER

Daryl sits at his laptop and begins pounding out the work.
Suddenly he's on a roll and the words pour out on the screen.
Glancing at his watch, he realizes Tasha will be home soon.
Lighting a smoke, he keeps at it - *game's not over yet*.

INT. A BAR IN HELL'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha finishes up her song to enthusiastic applause.
She smiles appreciably but something's not quite right.

INT. CONNIE'S APARTMENT, DOWNTOWN - A LITTLE LATER.

Connie's brushing her teeth at the kitchen sink.
As she gargles, the intercom buzzes to her annoyance.

CONNIE
What the fuck is it now?

Connie hits the intercom button, expecting trouble.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Yeah, what do you want?

SAMANTHA (O.C.)
It's me. Can I come up?

EXT. OUTSIDE CONNIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUSLY

CONNIE (O.C.)
Thought you had a date?

SAMANTHA
I'm done with the Music Man.

CONNIE (O.C.)
I've heard that before.

SAMANTHA
Come on, this is a shitty
neighborhood, let me up.

Conspicuous silence from Connie on the other end.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
I want to talk.

CONNIE (O.C.)
You got my Peking Duck?

Samantha smiles, she's still in the driver's seat.

SAMANTHA
No. Got something *better*.

The buzzer sounds and Samantha goes in the door.

FADE TO BLACK.
THE END.

