

THE MENU

Written by

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BLACK

We hear the SOUND of foghorns. Waves lapping against the shore. Harbor boats. Sea birds.

HARD CUT TO:

A young COUPLE standing alone on the docks of a city waterfront. They're dressed elegantly for a big night out.

MARGOT (late 20s, think Elizabeth Olsen) stares off, a little bored. TYLER (early 30s) drums his hand against his leg impatiently. His eyes dart around, a little panicked.

TYLER

What time is it?

Margot looks at her watch nonchalantly.

MARGOT

It is...6:26.

TYLER

Shit.

MARGOT

Tyler, relax.

TYLER

No, this is bad.

MARGOT

Will you stop?

TYLER

Well, where is everybody?

MARGOT

I'm sure they'll be here. You're positive we're in the right place?

TYLER

Yes. I followed the directions on the website exactly.

MARGOT

Okay, well, then chill. We've still got four minutes.

Tyler is unconvinced. Margot lights a cigarette. Tyler notices and grimaces disapprovingly.

TYLER
Babe, please don't smoke. It'll
kill your palette.

MARGOT
Then my palette will die happy.

TYLER
Hey.
(insistent)
Margot.

Tyler's tone stops Margot in her tracks. She looks at him.
The mood is suddenly a little tense. He's dead serious.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Tonight is special. The flavor
profiles are going to be very
delicate. And right now you're
ruining your ability to appreciate
them with your disgusting habit.
(beat)
Now please put out your cigarette.

After an edgy silence, Margot stamps out her cigarette.

MARGOT
Fine.
(under her breath)
Jesus.

TYLER
Thank you.

A FOGHORN blows close by, startling both of them. A small but
tastefully appointed BOAT is pulling into the harbor.
Polished wood and brass from bow to stern.

MARGOT
That's gotta be it, right?

TYLER
(relieved sigh)
Oh, thank God.

MARGOT
Will that thing even fit all of us?

TYLER
Oh for sure. It's a small group.
There's only 12 seats in the place.

MARGOT
How the hell does a restaurant that
only serves 12 people a night
manage to turn a profit?

TYLER
450 a head, that's how.

Margot nearly does a double-take.

MARGOT
(a little too loud)
You're fucking joking.

TYLER
Shh. Please don't ruin this by
talking price, okay? Just go with
the flow. Let it be magical.

Margot just chuckles and shrugs.

MARGOT
Hey, it's your money.

A LIMOUSINE pulls into the dock and parks. The doors open and
about six DUDES in their late 30s/early 40s get out. They're
rich businessmen of the nerd-bro variety. Very Silicon
Valley. It looks like they've already had a drink or two.

DUDE #1
--and then this piece of shit tries
to punt the RFP back to my stack.

DUDE #2
Hey, I make no apologies!

The tech bros all laugh heartily at their office in-joke.

ANGLE ON Tyler, who shakes his head, annoyed.

TYLER
Great. A power tasting. They'll be
wasted by the *amuse*.

MARGOT
Looks like they're ahead of
schedule.

TYLER
(going off on a rant)
These "New Money" tech assholes
always poison the room.
(MORE)

TYLER (CONT'D)
The focus should be on the menu
progression but they're barely
aware of what they're eating--

As Tyler's rant fades into BACKGROUND NOISE, Margot glances to her right and sees an OLDER COUPLE getting out of a Town Car. The OLDER MAN (60s) gets the door for his WIFE (also 60s). As he does, he turns and briefly locks eyes with Margot. He seems to recognize her.

Margot's eyes dart away almost instantly.

MARGOT
(under her breath)
Fuck.

Tyler, meanwhile, is just finishing up his jeremiad.

TYLER
--and then they post on Yelp that
it was "overrated."
(notices Margot)
What's wrong?

Margot suddenly snaps back to the present.

MARGOT
Huh? Nothing.
(changing subject)
Looks like the Wonka-boat is ready.

The BOAT has maneuvered up to the dock and a finely dressed BOATMAN lowers a gangway. He walks across to shore and calls to his passengers:

BOATMAN
All aboard for Hawthorn!

ANGLE ON Tyler, amazed by the boat and the luxuriousness of it all.

TYLER
Fucking rad.

By now, the majority of the evening's guests have arrived. They all begin filing onto the boat.

As they board, the passengers hand the boatman fancy TICKETS.

While Tyler and Margot walk up the gangway, Tyler sees something behind them and quickly averts his eyes.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Whoa. Don't look.

MARGOT

Huh?

Margot immediately looks and sees a MIDDLE AGED MAN in a bow tie and hip tortoise shell glasses and his DATE.

TYLER

I said don't look.

MARGOT

What am I supposed to not be looking at?

TYLER

Ted Bloom.

MARGOT

Who's Ted Bloom?

TYLER

Shh.

(beat)

Food critic for *Esquire*. Just play it cool.

MARGOT

You're the one freaking out.

TYLER

He's running his Top 100 list this month. I bet this place makes the 5 spot. He doesn't usually double up with San Pellegrino but for Slowik he'd make an exception.

MARGOT

I have no idea what any of the words you just said meant.

TYLER

(ignores her, excited)

Shit, man. Ted Bloom. As if this night wasn't insane enough.

INT. BOAT - EARLY EVENING

Margot and Tyler step inside the main cabin of the boat. It's like something out of a fairy tale. Brass fixtures. Small tables with linen tablecloths. Floral arrangements.

Maurice Ravel's "*Une barque sur l'océan*" PLAYS softly and dreamily on a sound system.

TYLER
(stepping inside)
Wow. Unbelievable.

A finely dressed CAPTAIN appears INTO FRAME to greet his passengers as they arrive.

CAPTAIN
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome.
Please sit or stand wherever you
feel comfortable. It's a brief 30
minute ride to Hawthorn. And we
will endeavor to make your journey
as pleasurable as possible.

Tyler is on cloud nine, grinning like a little kid.

TYLER
(turning to Margot)
It's like a fairy tale.

Margot nods. She looks not quite as comfortable as her date.

As Margot and Tyler keep walking we hang back and see the next group of passengers: actor DANIEL RADCLIFFE and his ASSISTANT, a male in his mid 20s.

As soon as Radcliffe steps on the boat we see his face drop. He turns to his assistant and whispers:

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
No. Uh-uh. I change my mind.

ASSISTANT
Just get in the boat.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Dude, no way. I wanted dinner, not
fucking *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

ASSISTANT
It's on an island. We can't swim to
it.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
I get claustrophobic. You know
this. I'm not going to be able to--

A WAITER suddenly approaches to greet the celebrity.

WAITER
Mr. Radcliffe, welcome.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
 (suddenly "on")
 Ahoy! Avast me hearties! Let's hope
 she's seaworthy, eh?

Radcliffe nervously grabs a flute of champagne from the
 waiter's tray and downs it in one anxious gulp.

The camera SWINGS back to Margot and Tyler, who have found
 two plush seats by the window. Tyler rubs his hands together
 nervously.

TYLER
 I have to say: I'm weirdly nervous.

MARGOT
 To eat dinner?

TYLER
 (laughs)
 I know! It's crazy.
 (sees Daniel Radcliffe)
 Whoa, is that--?

At that moment, a very formal WAITER approaches with an
 elegant tray of champagne flutes.

WAITER
 Good evening. Chef Slowik would
 like to welcome you aboard with a
 glass of 2005 Henri Gouturbe
Special Club Champagne. Rich pear
 and apple notes. Crisp. Refreshing.
 A beautiful wine to luxuriate in
 while you take in our ravishing
 Puget Sound scenery.

Tyler and Margot gingerly take their champagne flutes.

TYLER
 Thank you so much.

MARGOT
 Thanks.
 (to Tyler)
 Why is Harry Potter here?

A SECOND WAITER steps forward holding a tray containing two
 elegant porcelain spoons with food in them.

WAITER #2
 And just a small bite to savor with
 your wine.
 (MORE)

WAITER #2 (CONT'D)
 Silverbrite salmon caviar harvested
 right here from the Sound. And
 that's served with a smoked Hood
 River oyster, an oysterleaf cream,
 and a pale ale "air." Enjoy.

Tyler and Margot take their spoons.

TYLER
 Beautiful. Thank you.

The waiters leave. Margot stares at her spoon.

MARGOT
 I literally forgot everything he
 just said.

TYLER
 It's salmon roe, an oyster, and the
 foamy part is a pale ale "air."

MARGOT
 "Air"?

TYLER
 It's like a beer foam.

MARGOT
 Why don't they just say beer foam
 then?

Tyler is too busy greedily devouring his tiny bite to answer.

TYLER
 Mmm. Oh my god.

Margot cautiously tries it and nods her head.

MARGOT
 Mmm. It's good.
 (beat)
 I'd be happy with just the oyster,
 though. I love oysters.

TYLER
 No no, it's the balance of the
 products together. You need the
 richness of the cream and the
 mouthfeel of the roe.

MARGOT
 Please don't say "mouthfeel."

Tyler smiles with excitement and takes Margot's hand.

TYLER

You're really in for something special tonight, Margot. Chef Slowik is the shit right now. Two James Beard Awards. Number 5 on the World's 50. The most exciting voice in New American cuisine, hands down.

MARGOT

How quickly you forget Guy Fieri.

TYLER

(totally ignores her joke)
His story's incredible. He cut his teeth with Keller at the French Laundry and then at 25 he becomes the head development chef at the Fat Duck. He opens his own place in New York, gets two Michelin stars in his first year and then -- boom.

MARGOT

Boom?

TYLER

He disappears. Just vanishes off the face of the Earth. For, like, years.

MARGOT

Doing what?

TYLER

No one knows. It's some kung fu movie shit. Some say he's in Lyon. Some say Hanoi. No interviews, no photographs, no nothing. He's a phantom. Cut to three years later. Our boy Ted Bloom over there...

Margot glances at Bloom, who is in the midst of consuming his spoonful of food with a comical degree of pleasure.

TYLER (CONT'D)

...is here in Seattle for a food convention. He's tired of slurping lukewarm veal consommé so he leaves the convention tent and finds a food truck on the waterfront selling Korean tacos.

(MORE)

TYLER (CONT'D)

He buys one, takes one bite, loses his mind, and looks inside the truck to see who's manning the grill. It's Damian Slowik.

MARGOT

Who's Damian Slowik?

TYLER

(annoyed)

Babe, the chef. The guy I've been talking about.

MARGOT

Oh. Right.

TYLER

Within weeks, every investor in the city is hounding Slowik. But he plays it cool. He says he'll only run a kitchen again on three conditions:

(counting them on fingers)

One: total menu autonomy. Two: space to garden and forage. And Three: complete privacy. So some angel investor says, "Hello, I happen to own a small, remote island in the Sound if you're up for it." And they all lived happily ever after. Incredible, right?

MARGOT

I guess. But why would anyone want to spend their entire waking life on a tiny island cooking for rich strangers? What kind of happy ending is that?

Tyler eyes Margot and smiles condescendingly.

TYLER

Margot, can I ask you something?

MARGOT

Yeah. You can just ask. You don't have to ask if you can ask.

TYLER

Do you love what you do for a living?

Margot stares at Tyler blankly for a moment.

MARGOT

No.

TYLER

Me neither. But this guy does. And when you love what you do -- I mean really love it -- nothing else matters. Trust me. This guy's got it made.

As Margot ponders this notion, a waiter returns.

WAITER #2

May I take your spoons?

TYLER

Yes, please. Amazing. Utterly ethereal.

Margot hands over her spoon. As she does, she glances again at the OLDER MAN she saw earlier. He is looking at his phone while his wife quietly sips champagne.

ANGLE ON Margot as she looks away.

Tyler puts his arm around Margot lovingly.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Having fun yet?

MARGOT

(smiles slyly)

I've had worse times, I suppose.

Behind them, the dot-com businessman are posing for a photo with a very uncomfortable looking Daniel Radcliffe.

Margot and Tyler stare out the window of the boat. It's still light out and Puget Sound sparkles in the late summer sun.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Well, it's not ugly.

TYLER

It certainly isn't.

Daniel Radcliffe pulls himself away from the dot-com guys long enough to desperately gesture for yet another drink.

Tyler smiles warmly.

TYLER (CONT'D)
This is already the best night. And
just think: It hasn't even started
yet.

Margot smiles. But it feels a little false.

EXT. PUGET SOUND - EARLY EVENING

The small boat travels steadily through the Sound.

EXT. HAWTHORN DOCK - EARLY EVENING

The spotless wooden deck of Hawthorn Island. In the background, we see the main building of Hawthorn Restaurant, a gleaming, rustic-yet-modernist jewel box.

A line of SERVERS and FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF line the dock, ready to greet their guests as the boat arrives.

The GANGWAY lands with a thud on the dock.

Daniel Radcliffe and his assistant are the first to walk down.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
(fake smiling)
Thank fucking Christ.

ASSISTANT
Smile.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
(still fake smiling)
I am smiling.

ASSISTANT
Smile bigger. Last movie flopped.

Radcliffe and his assistant pass and we stay with Margot and Tyler, directly behind them. Margot appears a little unnerved by all the pomp.

MARGOT
Jesus. This is like prom.

TYLER
Yeah. Except at the end of this
night I'll get laid.

MARGOT
Ew. Gross, Tyler.

The restaurant's captain, a somewhat severe Nordic woman named ELSA is checking all of the guests' names from a list as they arrive.

When Margot and Tyler reach Elsa in line, she smiles coldly.

ELSA
Welcome to Hawthorn, Mister
Ledford. And Miss--
 (looks at Margot
 quizzically)
Westervelt?

Margot, equally puzzled, looks at Tyler.

TYLER
Oh, uh--
 (laughs nervously)
Right. Sorry. There was actually a
change of plans. This is not Miss
Westervelt, this is Miss, um--

MARGOT
I'm Margot. Hi.

Elsa examines first Tyler then Margot with a trace of suspicion. She smiles tightly.

ELSA
Margot. Welcome.
 (beat)
We'll endeavor to make your evening
as pleasant as possible. Right this
way.

Elsa ushers them ahead. Tyler leans forward and whispers to Margot:

TYLER
Sorry. That was, uh--
 (laughs)
That was a little awkward.

MARGOT
 (smiles)
It's fine. I understand.

EXT. GREAT LAWN - EARLY EVENING

The guests are all assembled on a beautiful expansive lawn behind the restaurant.

Elsa stands before them. She smiles and addresses the group:

ELSA

Welcome to Hawthorn. You are all part of an enormously special evening. First of all, we recognize it is not easy to secure a reservation at our restaurant.

(smiles)

That alone makes you pretty special, doesn't it?

The group laughs nervously.

ELSA (CONT'D)

But more than that, tonight is not like other nights. Tonight's menu will be different. Unusual. Tonight we will tell you a story we've never told before. And one we'll never tell again. So let me warn you now: Wonderful surprises await you all.

ANGLE ON the excited FACES of the various guests.

ELSA (CONT'D)

But first...

(beat, proud)

Let me introduce you to our home.

VARIOUS BEAUTIFUL SHOTS OF THE ISLAND: Trees, wild plants, gentle waves on rocks, dragonflies buzzing through the reeds.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Hawthorn Island is spread across a cozy 12 acres of forest and pasture. Our principal investor purchased the island in 1989 but we prefer to think of it as ownerless. As wild. As a natural outgrowth of the sea and the air.

ANGLE ON Margot rolling her eyes at this pretentious speech. Tyler notices her derision and nudges her a little.

ELSA (CONT'D)

And indeed, wild sea beans, salmonberries, and sea lettuce grow abundantly on our shores and are readily foraged. Meanwhile, our garden...

Elsa gestures to a garden and greenhouse to her left. It is being tended to by a small but diligent staff.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 ...supplies us with abundant fruits
 and vegetables year round. And as
 you can see, we're harvesting
 manila clams right off our
 shoreline.

Elsa turns to her right and waves at a GUY IN A BOAT off the
 shore. He waves back, as if on cue.

The guests wave as well. Daniel Radcliffe cups his hands over
 his mouth and calls out to the fisherman:

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
 Keep looking! We're starved!

Everyone laughs at what the famous guy said.

ELSA
 Right this way, and I'll show you
 the rest of our facilities.

Elsa begins walking away.

MARGOT
 (quietly, to Tyler)
 Soooo there's a restaurant at the
 end of all this, right?

TYLER
 Huh? Oh stop. Come on. I don't want
 to fall behind.

EXT. SMOKEHOUSE

The group gathers behind Elsa, who removes a giant KEY RING
 from her pocket. She finds the smokehouse key and opens the
 door.

INT. SMOKEHOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The group gathers into a fairly compact room where LARGE
 SLABS of meat and fish hang on VERY SHARP hooks. We see close
 ups of the reddened moist meat and the fish's dead eyes.

ELSA
 The smokehouse at Hawthorne mixes
 the old-style tradition of a
 British smokery with the needs of a
 modern luxury restaurant.
 (MORE)

ELSA (CONT'D)

Our dairy cow meat is aged for an astonishing 152 days, at which point the protein strands in the muscle tissue have relaxed to the point of supreme tenderness.

DUDE #1

What happens if you serve it on the 153rd day? All hell breaks loose?

He and his boys laugh.

Elsa gives a tight smile and answers in her comically cold, Scandinavian fashion:

ELSA

Ah, well, I suppose the bacteria, having breached the interior of the meat, would then introduce itself to the customer's bloodstream and produce a series of unpleasant symptoms. From there, the pathogen would spread into the customer's spinal cord membranes, at which point he or she would become incapacitated and shortly thereafter expire.

Pause. The Dude is silent.

ELSA (CONT'D)

So, yes, all hell breaks loose.

Elsa laughs.

They all laugh.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Good thing we're professionals, yes? Let's continue.

INT. ROOT CELLAR - EARLY EVENING

A somewhat dark, dank, wood-panelled cellar.

ELSA

This is our root cellar, where we store winter vegetables, preserves, and seeds. And also various nuts, which Chef Slowik uses liberally in his menu for their textural possibilities.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

(smiles)

I should maybe mention at this point I have a severe nut allergy.

Everyone laughs.

ELSA

(smiles)

Yes, we know. That won't be a problem.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT LAWN

The group follows Elsa as the tour continues.

MARGOT

You're loving this, aren't you?

TYLER

I'm in heaven. And I don't want to jinx it, but I think by the end you'll really appreciate this experience too.

Margot links arms with him. Tyler likes it.

The camera pans down the line, stopping on the older couple, RICHARD and his wife ANNE. Richard fiddles with his phone, irritated.

RICHARD

No goddamned service.

ANNE

It's lovely out here isn't it?

RICHARD

We better be back on the mainland by 11. I have a call with Japan.

ANNE

You have a call at 11?

RICHARD

(terse)

It's 4 there, Anne.

The camera pans to the front of the line. Ted Bloom, the Esquire food critic is taking notes.

ELSA
Writing good things, I hope, Mr.
Bloom. Not like what you wrote
about our friends at Mercia.

TED BLOOM
(laughs mischievously)
Mercia? Now, be fair, I wrote a
very kind review of Mercia.

ELSA
(smiles)
Not completely, Mr. Bloom. Not
completely.

ELSA opens a door.

INT. THE BUNKS - EARLY EVENING

The group is led into what basically looks like a military
barracks. Beds line the walls. There is an area to shower and
go to the bathroom. It feels cold, but lived in.

MARGOT
What is this?

ELSA
This is where our staff lives.

DUDE #2
Wait, what? You guys live here?

ELSA
Yes.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
You mean you hang out here during
the day.

ELSA
No. We live here.

TYLER
Total commitment. Love it.

DUDE #1
What if someone doesn't want to
live in the barracks?

ELSA
We're family. Why wouldn't you want
to live with your family?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

People get older and then they
don't live with their families
anymore?

(to the group)

Right? That's what happens except
in, like, weird Italian families.

AMAZON DUDE #2

Gotta go with Potter on that one.

ELSA

A common mission bonds us, and that
mission is running a world class
restaurant. We work 80 hours a week
if we're lucky. And we're never
lucky. Each day starts at six, with
five hours of prep work per day.
And while we might be ready for
tonight's service, we still have to
start fermenting vegetables for
next month, and gathering fresh
ingredients for a menu that could
change in an instant. And then you
have 4 hours for pre-service prep.
After dinner is served, and the
guests have all engorged
themselves, we break down and clean
the kitchen, scrub all the floors,
wipe everything down, and that's
another 2 hours. At that point,
it's well past midnight. It is best
people stay here.

DUDE #2

Isn't there, like, burnout?

ELSA

Burnout?

DUDE #3

Like, at our office, if we get
tired we have nap rooms.

Elsa delivers another slight wince.

ELSA

Chef Slowik holds himself to the
highest standard in every single
detail of every single task, and he
demands the same of anybody who has
the honor of working at his
restaurant. He never...naps. So we
don't...nap.

Daniel Radcliffe looks out the window. ANGLE ON a small, charming cottage perched on a hill set away from the bunks.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Who lives there?

ELSA
Chef Slowik.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Ah. Are we seeing that next?

ELSA
(terse)
No. Even we aren't allowed in Chef Slowik's cottage.

Suddenly she smiles big. It's a little terrifying.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Who's hungry?

EXT. HAWTHORN RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant's exterior is fairly unassuming but in a classically simple way. It's trying to be unassuming and not showy. And it blends in with the Island's other surroundings.

ELSA
Ladies and gentlemen, you will find your names at your table settings. Please do not switch seats.
(to Margot)
Miss...

MARGOT
Mills.

ELSA
Miss Mills you will be sitting in Miss Westervelt's seat. Enjoy.

The group enters Hawthorn.

As the group goes to their seats, Elsa quietly, and without anyone noticing, removes her key ring from her pocket and locks the restaurant door from the inside.

We hear the CLICK of the lock.

INT. HAWTHORN RESTAURANT - EVENING

The interior is high-end yet rustic and intimate. However, what goes on inside -- the meticulous preparation of food and attention to every little detail -- is anything but casual. It's formal and stiff, a touch sad even.

The group sees 12 tables set up throughout the minimalist dining room with tastefully designed name placards telling them where to sit.

When the group enters we see LINDA, a sad-looking husk of a woman in her early 60s who seems, if not already drunk, pretty close.

LINDA
(to entering guests,
quietly)
Welcome. Welcome.

People are mildly confused by Linda, but find their tables.

The Amazon gang is at one table. Tyler and Margot are at another. The businessman (Richard) and his wife (Anne) are at another table. Richard's seat is positioned in such a way that he is facing Margot.

RICHARD
(to Anne)
Switch seats with me.

ANNE
She said not to switch.

RICHARD
I don't give a fuck what some
hostess said. Switch seats.

ANNE
Why?

RICHARD
I want to have a better view of the
water.

This is a weird request because both Richard and Anne's seats are behind one of the restaurant's walls, which is just a glass window that overlooks the Puget Sound. Everyone has a view of the water.

ANNE
(sighs)
Fine.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"AMUSE BOUCHE"

One of the highlights of the restaurant is that the kitchen is behind the dining area. Diners can see the sous chefs and cooks and servers working. It's very cool to watch it all.

ELSA

(to the diners)

Feel free to observe the cooks as they create. We like to break down the barriers between kitchen and customer.

Guests are free to walk into the kitchen and observe, but, really, they shouldn't. And they look nervous about the prospect of doing so.

Not Tyler, though, who enters the kitchen with Margot while the cooks prepare the *amuse-bouche* course. One SOUS CHEF is spooning a cold snow-like flavored powder onto a plate.

TYLER

Do you do that with the Pacojet?

The sous chef, through a pained smile...

SOUS CHEF

Yes.

Tyler smiles, pleased with himself, and turns to Margot.

TYLER

A Pacojet can powderize cold ingredients without thawing them.

Several of the cooks hear this and wince but continue cooking.

SOUS CHEF

You know your stuff, Mr. Gilfoy.

TYLER

(excited)

You know my name?

SOUS CHEF

We know our stuff, too. Why don't you take a seat.

CUT TO Linda, who still sits alone with an empty wine glass. Elsa approaches with a bottle of red.

ELSA
More Zinfandel, madam?

Linda nods yes and Elsa pours.

Back at Tyler and Margot's table, Tyler sits back down.

TYLER
Babe, they knew my name. It's like...fuck! The attention to detail is unbelievable!

MARGOT
Your name's on the table, Tyler.

TYLER
Shh, there he is.

It's at this point that we get our first look at CHEF DAMIEN SLOWIK, Mid 40s, six-foot, brooding and intense (think Michael Fassbender). Chef Slowik is dialed in, going from station to station as his cooks diligently do their work.

Elsa approaches Chef Slowik as he tastes a *sofrito* from a spoon. She talks softly to him. We don't hear exactly what is said, but he looks in Margot's direction.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Is he looking at us? How cool is that?

MARGOT
Easy, Tyler.

But Margot also looks at Chef Slowik, and for a brief moment they lock eyes and connect. Chef Slowik breaks eye contact, nods at Elsa, and resumes cooking.

Several servers appear at the front of the house, and in perfect choreography approach each table with the AMUSE-BOUCHE, a small bite-sized dish, not the first course but a way for the restaurant to say hello to the guests.

SERVER
This is a pine nut tuile cone filled with a Shuksan strawberry *sofrito* and a goat's milk snow.

Tyler pops it in his mouth and is in heaven.

TYLER
Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Margot, oh my God.

MARGOT
It's pretty good.

TYLER
It's amazing.

Margot looks out the window and notices the BOAT they came in on leaving the dock and heading back to the mainland.

MARGOT
See ya later, boat.

TYLER
(smiles, watching boat)
Catch you in four hours, bud.

The boat sails slowly into the encroaching twilight.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"FIRST COURSE"

CLOSE ON Chef Slowik's face as he inspects the first course. He closes his eyes, leaving them closed for an extended beat, and then he suddenly opens them.

CHEF SLOWIK
(to himself)
Okay.

We follow Chef Slowik out of the kitchen and into the dining room. He stops and surveys the room.

Chef Slowik lifts his hands and loudly claps, just once. It's thunderous and it prompts everything to STOP. His staff STOPS. All conversations between guests STOP.

He stands in front of the diners and stares at them smiling a closed-mouth smile. It's now, in this instant, that we get a sense that this is his show. All revolves around him. He is the sun in this galaxy.

CLOSE ON Chef Slowik.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Welcome to Hawthorne. My name is Damian Slowik and tonight it will be our pleasure to feed you. Over the next several hours, each of you will ingest fat, salt, sugar, and various plants and animals at a brisk but fair pace. That much is unavoidable.
(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
But as the evening progresses, I
have to beg of you all one thing:
(pause, smiles)
Do not eat.

Chef Slowik pauses again to let this sink in.

ON THE PATRONS, who look very confused, especially Daniel Radcliffe. Tyler, however, is just lapping this up.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Taste, savor, and consider every
morsel that goes into your mouth
and stomach. But do not eat. Our
menu is far too precious for that.

A few GUESTS exchange mildly intimidated glances. MARGOT, meanwhile, arches an eyebrow at the pomposity.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
A few brief notes: Some of you may
have noticed the presence of a
camera crew.

ANGLE ON a small hipster-ish CAMERA CREW near the kitchen filming them all at this very moment.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
They will be filming us tonight as
part of a television documentary
series. As such, they are here only
to document. And a crucial document
it is.

We see SLOWIK from the unrendered-footage POV of the handheld camera, which he looks right into while he speaks:

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
They have promised not to intrude
upon our dining experience. I take
that promise very seriously. And I
pray they do as well.

A few members of the CAMERA CREW glance at each other and nervously smile.

Slowik turns back to his diners and instructs them:

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Open your eyes. Look around you.
Breathe deeply. Accept it. Accept
all of it.
(beat)
And on that note...
(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
 (smiles)
 Food.

A series of SERVERS arrive in perfect formation carrying perfectly manicured plates.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
 Our first course is called "The
 Island."

The servers place the plates on the diners' tables. We see one of the PLATES in a gorgeous, slo-mo product shot CU.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "'THE ISLAND' - foraged plants, manila clam, seawater"

On the plate is a smooth, icy rock. Various beautiful samples of flora rest artfully on the rock along with a few succulent little jewels of clam meat. As Slowik speaks we cut between these various elements in loving ECU:

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
 On the plates before you are
 various plants from the island.
 They have been placed on rocks from
 the shore that are covered in
 barely frozen filtered seawater. As
 you eat, the frozen seawater will
 melt and season the fresh manila
 clam meat.

Tyler smiles and whispers to Margot a little too loudly:

TYLER
 This is what the guy was fishing
 for earlier in the--

The room is silent. Chef Slowik stares right at Tyler with a withering glare. Tyler sits back in his seat, mortified.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 Sorry.

CHEF SLOWIK
 (smiles)
 It's perfectly all right.

Chef Slowik turns back to the rest of his diners.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Here is the most important thing to remember about this dish: We, the people on this island, are not important. None of us. The island and the nutrients it provides exist in their most perfect state without us gathering them, without us manipulating them, and without any of you digesting them. In that sense, what happens in this room is meaningless compared to what happens outside in the soil and the water and the air. And so this dish is a testament both to nature's perfection and to our own irrelevance within it.

(smiles warmly)

Enjoy.

ANGLE ON Margot's bemused reaction.

MARGOT

Cheery thought.

TYLER

(beyond happy)

This is insane.

Tyler holds his phone just so and snaps a shot of his plate. He does this with everything that arrives at the table.

TYLER (CONT'D)

It's almost too beautiful to eat.

Margot looks at her plant-covered rock warily.

MARGOT

Agreed. I would happily not eat it.

TYLER

Hey, you don't think Chef's pissed at me, right? Because of the whisper?

MARGOT

You don't have to address him as "Chef," Tyler. And no, I doubt he's even aware of your existence.

Tyler keeps his eyes fixed on CHEF SLOWIK, who is intensely directing his staff in the open kitchen.

TYLER
I know. It's just, I kind of want
him to...ya know.

MARGOT
To what? To like you?

TYLER
(laughs)
Yeah. Kinda.

MARGOT
You're a customer. You're paying
him to serve you. It doesn't matter
whether he likes you or not.

Tyler nods, then considers this. He looks mildly offended.

TYLER
Wait. What does that mean?

MARGOT
(rolls her eyes)
Nothing. Just enjoy your food.

We swing over to Radcliffe and his assistant. Neither of them
is eating. They're just staring at their perfect plates.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
So, like, literally don't eat?

ASSISTANT
No, I think he meant it
figuratively. Like, don't just
stuff your face. Really think about
it first. Or something.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Okay.
(beat)
So, just to be clear, I am eating
this now?

ASSISTANT
Yes, Daniel.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Lovely.

Radcliffe grabs a clam and tosses it in his mouth.

We glide over to Ted Bloom and his date as they eat the dish
with expressions of pure ecstasy.

DATE

Astonishing.

TED BLOOM

The flavors are very clean. Very...
(searches for word)
Oceanic.

DATE

That's the word I was going to use
too.

TED BLOOM

In every sense it is truly oceanic.
You're eating the ocean.

DATE

(nods)
You're eating the ocean.

TED BLOOM

(nods)
You're eating the ocean.

We quickly move on to the table full of tech bros. Clearly ignoring Chef's advice, they are in fact purely eating and not thinking or talking at all about what they're stuffing in their faces. They're not even looking at their plates.

The four men talk over each other loudly. They're very drunk.

DUDE #1

--whoa whoa wait, she didn't call
you again, did she? Stop eating
your fucking otter food and tell me
she didn't call you.

DUDE #2

Of course she did.

DUDE #4

Bro, I'm telling you as a coworker
and as a friend: damaged goods.

DUDE #2

Whoa hold up. I said she called. I
never said I answered.

The whole table explodes with laughter.

ANGLE ON Elsa, who is standing against the wall near the
table. She watches them with utter contempt.

We leave Elsa and circle over to the older couple, Richard and Anne.

They eat in total silence with nothing to say to each other. They don't even make eye contact. Or show any emotion about what they're eating. Zero passion or affection.

We hang on this awkward, cold silence for a moment before gliding into the bustling open kitchen where the next course is being prepared.

Chef Slowik looks up from the food on the pass and steals a glance at MARGOT who is all the way across the room, eating. He just stares at her with a concerned look. Then he shakes it off and turns to face his team.

CHEF SLOWIK
I want plating in five.

WHOLE TEAM
(in unison)
Yes, Chef!

CU of a COOK shot from BELOW as he concentrates as hard as anyone has ever concentrated on plating a dish. We see the DOCUMENTARY CREW is also filming this moment.

EXT. HAWTHORN ISLAND - TWILIGHT

Darkness descends on the island. We see the restaurant from afar, its bay windows glowing with warm light. But out here, amongst the barely visible water and trees, all is quiet save for the lonesome call of a distant loon.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"BREAD SERVICE"

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Margot and Tyler chat as they wait for the next course.

MARGOT
I guess I don't really get the
whole tasting menu thing. The food
is so tiny and cold and it just
keeps coming and coming and--

Tyler sees Chef Slowik emerging from the kitchen and rudely shushes Margot to be quiet.

TYLER
Shh! Here he comes.

Chef Slowik claps again. Margot jumps a little, startled.

MARGOT
Is he going to keep doing that?

Everyone quiets down and waits for Slowik to speak. He waits in silence for a few moments. Too many moments. And then:

CHEF SLOWIK
Bread has existed in some form for over 12,000 years in every culture in the world, and in particular amongst the very poorest of people. For the peasant class, bread was the only hope, the only chance of sustenance at the edge of life. It is, and always has been, the food of the common man. And you, my guests, are not the common man. Thus, tonight you do not get bread.

SHALE PLATES are set down on the table. Where bread would normally be there is just an empty space. Around the edges of the empty space are various delicious looking creams, emulsions, pickles, and accoutrements. Again we see this all in gorgeous, slo-mo product shot CU.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "BREADLESS BREAD PLATE: no bread, savory accompaniments."

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
It is in this spirit that I invite you to please enjoy the unaccompanied accompaniments.

ANGLE ON Margot's confused and mildly offended face.

Daniel Radcliffe stares at his plate and smiles, bewildered.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Is he fucking serious?

ASSISTANT
I guess so.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Bread is literally the best food. In fact it's not even really close.

ASSISTANT

I guess it's their gimmick or something? I dunno.

Over at their table, Ted Bloom and his date chuckle with self-satisfied amusement.

TED BLOOM

I have to say, I actually think this is a wickedly clever conceit.

DATE

Isn't it outrageous?

TED BLOOM

Fiendishly imaginative.

DATE

Diabolical.

Bloom furrows his brow and pokes at one of the sauces with his spoon.

TED BLOOM

Although I will say, the emulsion here does look slightly broken.

DATE

Yes, it's a disappointment.

TED BLOOM

And you really--
 (looks around, lowers
 voice)
 You really shouldn't see that in a restaurant of this quality.

DATE

No. Definitely not.

TED BLOOM

Minor quibble. But there it is.

We rejoin Margot and Tyler at their table.

TYLER

Look at this. He's such a bad-ass. The way he weaves these historical allegories into his food.

MARGOT

Wait, you like this? He's basically insulting us, isn't he?

TYLER

No no no, you don't get it. It's a concept.

MARGOT

I know what a concept is, Tyler.

TYLER

(shakes head)

No, trust me. He's just telling a story. That's what makes his food so exciting. He's not just a chef, Margot. He's a storyteller. And he doesn't give a fuck about the rules.

MARGOT

Yeah, well, call me the girl next door but maybe some rules you should give a fuck about.

Tyler takes her hand, kisses it, and smiles mischievously.

TYLER

My dearest, no one would ever call you the girl next door.

Over at the table full of inebriated dot com bros, the lack of bread is not being met enthusiastically.

DUDE #1

(laughs)

What is this?

DUDE #4

This is, like, the world's most--
(laughing, under his
breath)
--retarded bread course.

His drunk buddies laugh while playfully shushing him.

DUDE #4 (CONT'D)

I just can't with this. I'm sorry.
I just can't.

Dude #4 sees Elsa and waves her over. She stares at him icily, then smiles and walks over.

ELSA

Is everything to your liking, sir?

DUDE #4

Hi. Look, this is very clever and funny and whatever but, you know who we are, right?

ELSA

Yes.

DUDE #4

You do? You know who we are?

ELSA

Yes. I know who you are.

DUDE #4

Great. We'd like some bread now.

ELSA

No.

The other dudes chuckle at the sheer temerity of this response.

DUDE #4

Did you say "no?"

ELSA

I did say "no," yes.

He smiles and leans in to whisper to Elsa.

DUDE #4

(quietly)

Listen, Sweetie. You know we work with Doug Verrick, right?

ELSA

No. You work for Mr. Verrick.

DUDE #4

(smiles)

Well, don't we all?

Elsa looks at him.

DUDE #4 (CONT'D)

See what I'm saying? Now, if you please, why don't you go earn your tip and get us some fucking bread.

Elsa leans in even closer and whispers in his ear.

ELSA

You will eat less than you desire
and more than you deserve.

Elsa walks away and leaves the Dude just sitting there,
stunned and bewildered as to what's just happened.

Back at Radcliffe's table, they are busy enjoying the
accoutrements.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

I have to say, the shit around the
total fucking absence of bread is
crazy good.

ASSISTANT

Mmm. Amazing.

Radcliffe suddenly looks down at the table, a bit forlorn.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Brendan?

ASSISTANT

Yeah?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Do you think I don't deserve bread?

The assistant takes in a deep breath think about this.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (CONT'D)

That is way too long a pause.

They both laugh.

Meanwhile, back at Ted Bloom's table:

TED BLOOM

I bake my own bread at home, of
course.

DATE

Oh, do you?

TED BLOOM

Yes, it's excellent. Very rustic.
Peasant style loaves. Yeasty. Very
yeasty. I love yeasty bread.

DATE

Mmm. I love a good, yeasty bread.

Elsa walks over with another, just slightly larger container of the broken emulsion Bloom quietly complained to his date about earlier and sets in on the table.

ELSA

Mr. Bloom, here is another broken emulsion. Courtesy of Chef Slowik.

TED BLOOM

Oh. I -- thank you.

He laughs nervously. His critic's eye doesn't quite know what to make of this.

TED BLOOM (CONT'D)

How...playful.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chef Slowik walks up to his mother's table. There is no food in front of her. Only wine.

He kneels down and gently takes her hand in his. She turns to look at him with wounded, glazed eyes.

He smiles warmly at his mother with a look of shared understanding. She tentatively smiles back at her son.

Chef Slowik kisses his mother, stands, and walks into...

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Chef Slowik stops at the pass. He looks at his watch and then quietly addresses his team:

CHEF SLOWIK

Plating in three, my friends.

WHOLE TEAM

(in unison)

Yes, Chef!

EXT. THE ISLAND - EVENING

Tall, spindly evergreen trees shiver in the cold darkness.

ECU of a nocturnal barred owl perched on a limb, its glassy black eyes scanning the island floor until...

Suddenly, spotting something, it takes flight...

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"THIRD COURSE"

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Richard sits there waiting for his next course. He looks at his PHONE and shakes his head, annoyed.

ANNE

It's an island, Richard.

RICHARD

Yes, I know it's an island. I'm not an idiot.

Anne just sits there silently and stares off.

Across the room, Margot glances over at Richard and Anne's table. She looks at Anne staring off. Anne feels Margot's eyes on her. Anne then looks at Margot and Margot looks away.

ANNE

I think that girl was staring at me. Does she know us?

RICHARD

Of course not.

We hear Chef Slowik's familiar CLAP as he enters the dining room to announce the next course. The room goes quiet.

CHEF SLOWIK

The next course is called "Memory."
And that's what it is meant to evoke. A memory. So let me tell you one of mine. When I was a child, every Tuesday night was Taco Night. My mother would make them.

He steps over to his mother's table and places his hand on her shoulder.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

This is my mother here. As you can see, she is quite drunk.

She barely seems aware that he's talking about her.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

When I was 7 years old, my father came home late one Tuesday. He had missed Taco Night, you see.

(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

My mother screamed at my father. At which point he proceeded to wrap a telephone cord around her neck and pull it tight. To make him stop, I stabbed him in the thigh with a pair of kitchen scissors.

(to Linda)

Do you remember that, mother?

His mother doesn't react at all, just drinks.

A few of the diners glance at each other uneasily.

The one person he seems to be getting through to -- finally -- is Margot, who watches him intently.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

It was, as you can imagine, a memorable Taco Night. And here, we have our own play on Taco Night.

Servers place the PLATES down on the tables. On the plates are beautifully cooked chicken thighs with a small pair of scissors stuck in them. The plates themselves are made of tightly coiled telephone cords.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "'MEMORY' - chicken thighs al pastor, smoked pineapple salsa, tortillas"

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

On the plate you have house-smoked Bresse chicken thighs al pastor. In the bowl you have our house-made tortillas.

A BOWL of tortillas is set on each table.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

The images on the tortillas have been made using a computer-controlled laser cutting and engraving machine developed, as it happens, by our friends at Imigel...

He gestures to the table of tech bros, who look at each other, a bit puzzled.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

We hope the images on the tortillas will evoke pungent memories for all of you. Enjoy.

At Richard and Anne's table, Anne is examining the tortillas. The first tortilla has the words "WELCOME BACK, MR. LIEBRANDT" engraved on it.

She picks it up to reveal the second tortilla, which has been engraved with a B&W image of a man who looks like Richard sitting at a restaurant table with a young woman. The restaurant looks a lot like Hawthorn. Beneath that, another tortilla adorned with another image of Richard, this time sitting at dinner with another young woman. There are three more similar tortillas beneath that.

Anne stares at them, stunned and perplexed.

ANNE
What are these?

RICHARD
(turning red)
I have no idea.

ANNE
Richard, who--
(examining)
Is this you?

RICHARD
No.

ANNE
No, it is. It is you.
(examines further)
Here. At this restaurant.

Richard shrugs and shakes his head.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Richard, who are these people?

RICHARD
How the hell should I know? It's
faked. Some sort of stupid joke.

He grabs the tortillas from his wife's hands.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
This whole place is a fucking joke.

Anne just stares at him.

Over at the table full of tech bros, a similar moment of discovery is taking place. Their tortillas have all been laser-printed with what appear to be dense blocks of formatted text, like business records.

They stare at them, drunk and dumbstruck.

DUDE #2
What the fuck...?

DUDE #3
Are these--? How did they get
these?

One of them angrily slams the tortilla on the table.

DUDE #1
That's it. Fuck this.

He waves Elsa over. She complies, with a smile.

ELSA
Can I help you, sir?

DUDE #1
What the hell are these?

ELSA
These are tortillas.

DUDE #1
Fuck you. What are these?

ELSA
These are tortillas containing a
chronological record of your
company's multiple worker's rights
infringements in dozens of
factories and warehouses worldwide.

DUDE #1
How did you get these?

ELSA
I'm sorry but Chef doesn't divulge
his recipes.

DUDE #1
This isn't a recipe. This is theft.

Elsa points at the tortillas.

ELSA
No, this is not theft. This is
abuse.

She quietly walks away from the table.

DUDE #1

Do you know how fucked you are?
I'll have you shut down by morning.

ELSA

That won't be necessary.

At Ted Bloom's table, he examines his TORTILLAS. They all feature images of the front exterior of restaurants.

DATE

What are they, Ted?

TED BLOOM

They're -- restaurants.

DATE

Restaurants?

TED BLOOM

That I reviewed.

(beat)

That -- that closed.

He looks at one of the restaurant IMAGES on one of his tortillas. We see from the sign that it's Mercia restaurant.

DATE

Oh. How peculiar.

TED BLOOM

(chuckles nervously)

Odd, isn't it?

Daniel Radcliffe and his assistant examine their tortillas.

ASSISTANT

Are they all the same?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Yeah.

We see what's on every one of their tortillas: an image of the poster for the movie *Victor Frankenstein*.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (CONT'D)

Victor Frankenstein.

ASSISTANT

Guess he's a fan.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

(shakes head)

I don't think so.

Over at Margot and Tyler's table, Tyler examines the tortillas with a crestfallen expression.

MARGOT
What's on them?

TYLER
They're...me. From tonight.
(devastated)
Shit.

Margot takes some of the tortillas from Tyler and examines them. They are all hidden camera shots of Tyler from tonight taking camera phone photos of his food.

MARGOT
Jesus. What is with this guy?

Tyler shakes his head, utterly destroyed.

TYLER
He hates me. I knew it.

MARGOT
Tyler, this means they've been
photographing us. The whole night.

Margot looks around to see where the cameras are hidden. But Tyler doesn't even hear her.

TYLER
God damn it. I don't get what I did
wrong. Should I apologize?

MARGOT
What? Why would you apologize? They
have no right to--

A flustered Tyler angrily cuts her off.

TYLER
Just fucking stop talking and let
me think, okay? I have to make this
right somehow. I have to.

MARGOT
I'll tell you how to make it right:
Send it back.

Tyler glares at her with cold, remorseless eyes.

TYLER

Are you out of your mind? Do you know how long I've been trying to get a reservation here?

MARGOT

No, and I don't care! This is--

TYLER

You don't send shit back to this kitchen, you child. You thank them for even letting you in the door.

Margot reels back, stunned.

MARGOT

What did you just call me?

TYLER

I called you a child because that's what you're fucking acting like.

MARGOT

Tyler, you need to apologize to me right now. You can't talk to me like--

TYLER

Well, yeah, actually I can. Because -- ding dong! -- I'm the one who's paying. So maybe shut the fuck up.

He angrily makes a taco, takes a bite, and then shakes his head in amazement. His rage disappears.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

(chews some more)

Oh my god, this is incredible.

Margot just stares at him, her eyes burning with contempt.

MARGOT

Don't let me interrupt.

She gets up from the table, throws her napkin on her chair, and goes to find the ladies room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

In the empty and dimly lit hallway area, a furious Margot struggles to find the door to the ladies room.

MARGOT
(frustrated, looking
around)
Where the fuck--?

To her right she sees a beautiful SILVER DOOR, ornately
molded in a floral pattern.

For a moment she is transfixed by this stunning, unmarked
door. She reaches out slowly to grab the handle, and then:

ELSA
Can I help you, madam?

Elsa is standing right behind Margot, watching her
disapprovingly.

MARGOT
I'm looking for the ladies room.

ELSA
(guiding with her hand)
Straight down the hall, to your
right.

Margot is about to follow Elsa's directions, but stops and
gestures to the silver door.

MARGOT
What's through this door?

ELSA
(flatly)
Dessert.

INT. LADIES ROOM - EVENING

Margot steps into the spacious, darkly lit, minimally
decorated ladies room. She locks the door behind her.

She stops in the middle of the room and suddenly sits down on
the tiled floor. She is breathing heavily, almost
hyperventilating with rage.

MARGOT
Stop it.

Trying her best to shake it off, she draws one more deep
breath and then wipes the gathering tears from her eyes.

She stands up, straightens her dress, and walks to the sink.

Suddenly the LOCK turns on the door.

Margot whips around, panicked.

The door opens and Chef Slowik walks through. He closes the door behind him and LOCKS it again. He turns to face Margot and smiles.

CHEF SLOWIK

I have already told you who I am.
My name is Damian Slowik and I am
the chef here.

(beat)

Now...

He takes two slow, deliberate steps forward. Margot steps back until her BACK is against the wall.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Margot is speechless.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

I'll ask again. Who. Are. You.

SMASH CUT:

INT. THE GOLDFINCH TAVERN - FLASHBACK

We are still ON MARGOT'S FACE, but she looks less made up and younger. More fresh faced, but also more shy and meek. She sits across from SHARON, 50s, looking very stylish and done up. Maybe it's a tad much.

We are in the restaurant of The Four Seasons Seattle.

SHARON

Who are you?

MARGOT

What do you mean, "Who are you?"

SHARON

Who are you? Who do you want to be?

Margot is flummoxed.

MARGOT

Um...I'm Kristen Rodgers from
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

SHARON

But I don't want you to be Kristen Rodgers from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I don't want to pay \$1000 an hour to spend time with Kristen Rodgers from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. And I sure as shit don't want to fuck Kristen Rodgers from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

MARGOT

(frustrated)

This is stupid.

SHARON

It's only stupid if you want to have the same amount of money in your pocket tomorrow as you did when you showed up at my office. And how much was that?

MARGOT

(meek)

12 dollars.

SHARON

Cool it with the meek shit. If you're going to work for me you've got to spit back. These men just don't want to fuck you. They want a challenge. They want to be called out on their shit. So when they do fuck you it makes them feel like they've won you over. It's an accomplishment. Understand?

Margot glares at Sharon, her eyes now a flash like the Margot we've seen with Tyler, when she says:

MARGOT

You're a real fucking cliché, you know that?

SHARON

There you go. That's who you are for me. I'm not quite sure that girl is going to let me fuck her.

(beat)

So, what's your name?

Margot thinks, and then:

MARGOT

Margot.

Sharon thinks about it.

SHARON
I like it. Why Margot?

MARGOT
That's my mom's name.

SHARON
So you are fucked up.

MARGOT
My mom let everyone---

SHARON
I don't need to hear it. All I need
is an attitude. The suggestion of a
person. Can you give me that?

Margot surveys the fancy dining room with disgust.

MARGOT
I fucking hate places like this.

SHARON
It's some of the best food in the
city.

MARGOT
Yeah, well. I'm more of a
cheeseburger type of girl.

SHARON
(smiles)
Let's try one more time, then, with
confidence: Who are you?

SMASH CUT:

INT. LADIES ROOM AT HAWTHORN - FLASHBACK OVER

MARGOT
(cool, confident)
I'm Margot.

She slips around Chef Slowik and thinks she is about to get out the door, when Chef Slowik grabs her wrist. Hard. Margot shrieks in pain. Chef Slowik stops grabbing her wrist, grabs her arm instead, and raises her sleeve revealing a bad bruise on her wrist.

CHEF SLOWIK
What happened here?

MARGOT

Nothing.

CHEF SLOWIK

You shouldn't be here tonight.

MARGOT

Get your fucking hand off me.

No one talks to him this way. He's impressed, curious. He releases his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. HAWTHORN DINING AREA AND KITCHEN - EVENING

Margot returns to the table with Tyler.

Before she sits, she kisses him, passionately and hard. At the end of their kiss she looks him in the eyes.

MARGOT

(terse)

Watch your mouth, sweetheart. Or I'll smack the taste right out of it. Okay?

TYLER

I -- Okay.

(he likes it)

Sorry.

Richard looks at her from across the way. She catches his eye and winks at him. Richard quickly looks away.

On Radcliffe.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

If I am being honest, the tacos were much better than *Victor Frankenstein*.

ASSISTANT

That's for sure.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

(slightly annoyed)

Not that much better though.

ASSISTANT

(chuckles)

Agree to disagree.

On the Tech DUDES, who are now serious.

DUDE #1

I don't like the feel of this. At all. I want out of here.

DUDE #2

Dude, chill. It's a fucking taco.

DUDE #1

A fucking taco that would hold up in court. And you know it.

DUDE #3

Look, everyone at this table has plausible deniability, okay? If he turns us in, then we--

DUDE #2

If he turns us in, then he turns Verrick in, and then he's just as fucked as we are. We're fine.

His companions look...not quite sure.

DUDE #2 (CONT'D)

(insistent)

Hey. We're fine.

(beat)

Right?

They all sit silently with this thought.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"FOURTH COURSE"

Two SERVERS are on their knees, methodically laying out a plastic tarp over the middle of the dining room floor. Every time they unfold the sheet it's precise. They basically look possessed.

All the patrons watch the unfolding and it's silent except for the sound of the tarp being unraveled.

TED BLOOM

Very interesting.

DATE

It's just very interesting.
Theatrical.

TED BLOOM

I was going to say theatrical. Also minimalist. In the Japanese style.

Margot watches the team unfold the plastic tarp and then looks at Chef Slowik who is looking at her.

When the tarp is fully laid out, Chef Slowik continues to stare at Margot, and then a LOUD CLAP. This time, though, Margot isn't fazed, but she's not exactly NOT scared about what's coming either.

CHEF SLOWIK

I think we are now prepared for our next course, which...

DUDE #2

(stands up, loudly)

Excuse me. But what the fuck is going on here?

CHEF SLOWIK

Elsa.

Elsa calmly walks over to DUDE 2, rears back, and wallops him across the face.

Shock. The first hint of real violence.

Nothing but silence as DUDE #2 writhes in pain, blood gushing from his mouth. Elsa flashes a small but sadistic smile. She's been wanting to do that.

We see reactions from patrons, who now officially know they are into something bad. Except for the Chef's mother, who remains in a numb, drunken stupor.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Thank you, Elsa. Ladies and gentlemen, this is one of my sous chefs: Jeremy.

JEREMY (Late 20s, in good shape, handsome) stands in the middle of the tarp. His posture is perfect. He stares straight ahead, like a soldier.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Jeremy created the dish you are about to eat. It's called "The Mess." Jeremy may I explain "The Mess"?

JEREMY

Yes, chef.

As Chef Slowik talks the camera stays on Jeremy.

CHEF SLOWIK

Jeremy graduated from The Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park. It's widely considered to be the best culinary school in the United States. Jeremy moved his entire life to work for me here at Hawthorn. Isn't that right, Jeremy?

JEREMY

Yes, chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

Jeremy is talented. He's good. But he's not great. And quite frankly, he will never be great. He so desperately wants my job, my position, my prestige. Isn't that right, Jeremy?

JEREMY

Yes, chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

But Jeremy has forsaken everything to achieve that. He works here 20 hours a day. He has no time for friends. No time for family. He can't go to the gym. Or to see a movie. He can't even go to the bank because it's only open when he's working. Jeremy, when's the last time you talked to your mother?

JEREMY

I don't remember, chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

His entire life is service and pressure. Pressure to put out the best food you can. Pressure to please your Chef. Pressure to please the customer. Pressure to please the critics. And even when all goes right, and the food is perfect, and the customers are happy, and the critics are too, there is no way to avoid The Mess.

(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

That is to say, The Mess you make
of your life, of your
body, of your health, of your
sanity, by giving everything you
have to pleasing people
you'll never know.

(beat)

Jeremy, do you like your life?

JEREMY

No, chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

Do you like my life?

Jeremy looks at Chef Slowik. He didn't expect this question.
This is the first time he doesn't seem robotic.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

It's okay, Jeremy. You can answer
the question. Do you like my life?
Not my position. Not my prestige.
But my life.

Jeremy turns his head back to facing forward.

JEREMY

No, chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

Ladies and gentleman, your fourth
course: Sous Chef Jeremy's Mess.

Jeremy removes a PISTOL from the back waistband of his apron
and BLOWS HIS BRAINS OUT. Everyone shrieks as BLOOD SPATTERS
on the walls, the floors, and the faces of the customers and
ON LINDA, who continues to drink.

Jeremy falls dead onto the plastic tarp. Two SERVERS
immediately rush over and roll up the tarp with Jeremy's body
inside. They pick up the rolled-up tarp and cart it away.

At this moment the patrons are presented with a dish called
"The Mess," an artfully messy dish comprised mainly of
ingredients cooked in an industrial pressure cooker.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "'THE MESS' - Pressure-cooked
beef, bone broth, carrots, potatoes, salt. R.I.P Jeremy 1988-
2018"

Everyone is shocked, reeling, with blood on their faces.

The DOCUMENTARY TV CAMERA CREW, stunned, have stopped filming
entirely. Chef Slowik turns to them.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Film.

The camera crew hesitates, in shock.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

(insistent)

Film.

The camera crew hesitantly continues filming.

Chef Slowik returns to the kitchen as if nothing has happened.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Fifth course, on order!

ENTIRE KITCHEN

Yes, chef!

ON Tyler and Margot. Tyler is dazed but about to put a bite of food into his mouth...

MARGOT

(barely getting the words
out)

Put the fucking food down.

Tyler reluctantly does as he's told.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Tyler, what is happening? We have
to get out of here.

On Richard and Anne.

RICHARD

We're leaving. Now.

ANNE

(in shock)

My -- my coat.

RICHARD

Fuck your coat.

Richard and Anne walk to the front door and are stopped by Elsa. Everyone is watching them, to see how this goes.

ELSA

Something wrong?

RICHARD
Get out of my way. We're leaving.

ELSA
Fortunately, the boat will not
return for another 3 hours.

RICHARD
Then I'll call a helicopter.

ELSA
That will be exceedingly difficult
without cellular phone service.

Richard looks ready to physically force his way through the door when two COOKS appear behind Richard and Anne and stand menacingly behind them with giant meat cleavers.

ANNE
Oh Jesus. Richard, just do what
they say, for god's--

RICHARD
(cutting off his wife)
Let me handle this!

ELSA
With which hand?

RICHARD
What?

ELSA
With which hand will you handle
this? Left or right?

RICHARD
What the fuck are you saying?

ELSA
Shall we choose?

RICHARD
Whu--? Choose?

ELSA
Very well, Cullin. Right hand.

One of the cooks with a meat cleaver, CULLIN, grabs Richard, puts his right hand down on a table and chops it off.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 (to the room)
 You try to leave, you lose an
 appendage. Questions?

ANGLE ON a petrified Daniel Radcliffe and his assistant as
 they numbly watch this scene transpire.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
 This is happening, then?

ASSISTANT
 I think so.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
 Right.
 (terrified beat)
 Brilliant.

At Ted Bloom's table, they seem not entirely convinced yet.

DATE
 (shaking)
 Is it -- are they pretending?

ON RICHARD who is writhing in pain and wraps a napkin after
 napkin around his bleeding wrist.

TED BLOOM
 (scared)
 If so, they're very good.

At Margot and Tyler's table. Margot watches in quiet, stunned
 silence as a blood-spattered Tyler quietly eats his food. To
 Margot's horror, he seems to be actually enjoying it.

It is clear to Margot now that she is facing this alone.

Elsa walks over to Margot.

ELSA
 Ms. Mills, please join Chef Slowik
 in the kitchen.

MARGOT
 Wh-what?

ELSA
 Chef would like you to join him in
 the kitchen now.
 (insistent)
Right now.

She suddenly stands and walks slowly but purposefully towards the kitchen with Elsa.

Margot ignores her and walks to the kitchen entrance. Some COOKS with knives attempt to stand in her way, but Chef Slowik waves them aside. Margot is now face to face with Chef Slowik.

He doesn't flinch. It's as if he's been expecting her.

CHEF SLOWIK

Who are you?

MARGOT

Why are you doing this?

CHEF SLOWIK

Who are you?

MARGOT

I told you.

CHEF SLOWIK

Who are you?

MARGOT

I'm Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK

I've served many Margots. You are not a Margot. Who are you?

MARGOT

What does it matter?

CHEF SLOWIK

It matters because this menu, this guest list, this entire evening, has been painstakingly planned by myself and the staff of this kitchen. And you were not a part of that plan. Hence, you are throwing everything off and making my menu imperfect. In order to proceed, I need to know where to seat you: With us or with them?

MARGOT

And if I answer correctly, you'll let me live?

CHEF SLOWIK

(casually, while cooking)

Oh, no, we're all dying.

(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(to the kitchen)
Isn't that right?

ENTIRE KITCHEN
Yes, Chef!

CHEF SLOWIK
The only question is: Do you want
to die with those who give of
themselves or those who take?

MARGOT
You're crazy.

Chef Slowik looks at her, eyes intense.

CHEF SLOWIK
No, I am feeling quite well.

He CLAPS.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Plating in five!

ENTIRE KITCHEN
Yes, Chef!

Chef Slowik picks up a KITCHEN TIMER and starts fiddling with
it while he speaks to Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK
(setting timer)
I understand a decision like this
takes time. We don't make fast food
here at Hawthorn. So I'm putting 15
minutes on the timer. That is how
long you have to decide: our side
or theirs. In the meantime, please
return to your seat.
(sincere)
The next dish is exquisite.

As Margot walks through the kitchen to go back to her seat,
she sees Elsa emerge from the room with the SILVER DOOR. She
is with Chef Slowik's mother, Linda, who is so drunk she
needs to hang on Elsa's arm to stay upright.

Margot quickly hides behind a corner, watching.

Elsa removes her key ring and locks the door with a heavier
looking, special key.

LINDA
(mumbly, incoherent)
Thank you, Elsa. For showing me.

ELSA
My pleasure, Mrs. Slowik.

Linda looks into Elsa's eyes.

LINDA
A beautiful room to die.

ELSA
Indeed, Mrs. Slowik.

ON MARGOT, who looks at the door.

Elsa and Linda walk a little more. Linda stops.

LINDA
I was a bad mother because I
couldn't have been a good one.

ELSA
I understand, Mrs. Slowik.

LINDA
He strangled me with more than
telephone cords, you know?

ELSA
Let's go back to the dining room,
Mrs. Slowik.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Elsa escorts Linda to her seat.

Margot enters and sits. Tyler stares at her, wide-eyed.

TYLER
Did you get a kitchen course? You
did, didn't you? God damn it, it's
not fucking fair, why do you get a
kitchen course?
(calming himself)
What was it, anyway? Protein or
veg?

Margot just stares at this monster, utterly bewildered.

Chef Slowik enters the dining room and looks at the guests. Some of whom have dried blood on them, all of whom look horrified.

CHEF SLOWIK
 (charming, like nothing
 has happened)
 You all look lovely this evening.
 Thank you again so much for
 deciding to spend your night with
 us. Before we continue, are there
 any questions about me or Hawthorn
 or why none of us are getting out
 of here alive tonight?

This is the first time everyone is hearing this news. It's silent.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
 No questions?

People are hesitant to raise their hands. Tyler does.

TYLER
 Was that star anise I detected in
 the stew?

DUDE #2
That's the question you ask?

Tyler stares at Chef Slowik reverentially, but gets no warmth in return.

CHEF SLOWIK
 Yes, it was.

Daniel Radcliffe raises his hand.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
 Yes?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
 (terrified)
 I suppose I -- yes, I would like to
 know why this is happening.

CHEF SLOWIK
 That all depends. Some of you were
 chosen because of what you've done.

We CUT between the FACES of Richard, the tech bros, and Ted Bloom.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Others because they've lived as
complacent bystanders.

We CUT between the FACES of Anne, Ted Bloom's date, and
Radcliffe's assistant.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
But this shouldn't be a surprise to
any of you. Mr. Liebrandt, for
instance, knows the misery he's
caused. And Mr. Bloom knows the
damage he's done to so many
livelihoods.

TED BLOOM
Now, wait a moment. I've been very--

CHEF SLOWIK
(cuts him off violently)
You don't talk.

At that moment, a SERVER approaches Ted Bloom's table and
sets an even LARGER NEW CONTAINER of the broken emulsion
down.

SERVER
Your broken emulsion, sir.

Ted Bloom stares at the new, comically large container set
before him. How is this happening?

Chef Slowik turns to the weary and terrified CAMERA CREW to
make sure they're getting this. He motions with his hand for
them to tilt the CAMERA up for a better shot. And then he
speaks:

CHEF SLOWIK
What happens here tonight is
nothing. This is just white people
killing white people. One day soon,
the real change will come, and
everyone you know -- all of your
kind -- will be buried. And we'll
be too dead to see it.
(ponders this, shrugs)
But that's the price you pay for
being first.

At Margot's table, Elsa appears, bends down, and gestures to
the KITCHEN TIMER in her hand.

ELSA
(quietly, to Margot)
Ten minutes to decide, Miss Mills.

Elsa walks away. Margot sits for a moment with the information she's just been given. And then, suddenly overcome with frustration at her situation:

MARGOT
(antagonistic)
I have a question.

Chef Slowik turns to Margot. He seems to have more patience and interest in what she has to say.

CHEF SLOWIK
Yes, Margot?

MARGOT
Why do you deserve to die?

CHEF SLOWIK
(smiles knowingly)
Yes, well, that is an excellent question. I deserve to die because I've devoted my life to serving the class of people you see now in my restaurant.

DUDE #3
(quietly)
It's not your restaurant.

CHEF SLOWIK
Come again?

DUDE #3
(louder now, confident)
It's not your restaurant.

TYLER
(seething)
Don't talk to him that way.

Chef ignores Tyler completely and gazes at the tech bro.

CHEF SLOWIK
You're right.
(to the other diners)
He's right. It's not mine. Doug Verrick owns this island. He owns this restaurant. And seeing as how this restaurant is my life, Doug Verrick owns me.
(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
All of which is complicated by the
fact that I currently own Doug
Verrick.

Chef gestures to Elsa and two cooks open a locked pantry door near the kitchen entrance. From behind the door, they pull out a man, mid-50s, Jeff Bezos-looking, who is hog-tied and gagged. This is DOUG VERRICK.

The man is thrown into the center of the dining room.

Chef Slowik, picks up Doug Verrick's right hand, which is missing all of his fingers.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Now, the first finger we cut off
was due to Elsa's no-escape rule.
Doug Verrick is a very determined
man. The thumb was punishment for
how Doug Verrick would, at times,
question my menu. He would even
request substitutions, even
though...

He bends down and gets into Doug Verrick's face.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(horrifying scream)
THERE ARE NO SUBSTITUTIONS AT
HAWTHORN!!!! This brings us to the
other three fingers. They were to
get the incriminating information
we found on your taco. Was the taco
to your liking by the way,
gentlemen?

The tech bros, in shock, nod their heads.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
I thought so. You see, Doug Verrick
will not live to see tomorrow, but
his wife, his children, and his
empire will. That is, until the SEC
and FBI receive what I've sent them
this morning.

Chef Slowik begins walking to the tech bros. In a desperate attempt to escape, Doug Verrick lunge-crawls toward the restaurant's entrance. It's pathetic. It's too slow and he has no chance to get away. He gets as far as Margot's feet, and he's stopped by one of the cooks with meat cleavers.

Doug Verrick is then dragged away.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
 (To the cooks with
 cleavers)
 Outside. Loud followed by quiet,
 please.

The cooks drag Doug Verrick outside. We can't see them. And during the following sequence we stay in the restaurant.

DUDE #1
 You are fucking--

CHEF SLOWIK
 Shh. Just listen.

DUDE #2
 This is...

CHEF SLOWIK
 I said listen.

A pause and then...

DOUG VERRICK (O.C.)
 (pain)
 AHHHHHHHHH!!!!

Pause.

DOUG VERRICK (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 (fading now)
 Ahhhhhhhh.....

Chef waits for it to be over. He takes a few seconds to make sure there are no more screams, and then...

CHEF SLOWIK
 Do you hear that silence? Listen.
 (beat)
 Do you hear it?
 (beat, tranquil)
 That silence means I'm free.

He smiles and closes his eyes. He looks serene.

ON MARGOT who notices how peaceful he looks.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"FIFTH COURSE"

Margot and Tyler sit there, in total silence. Margot filled with dread, and Tyler filled with excitement for the next course.

TYLER

I'd say about three more savory courses and then dessert. Maybe a pre-dessert course before the actual dessert. What Chef would call a palate cleanser.

Margot is too numb to even hear him babbling.

Elsa walks by their table with the kitchen timer and bends down.

ELSA

Five minutes to decide, Miss Mills.

Elsa walks away and Margot closes her eyes, barely coping.

Suddenly, A LOUD CLAP. Margot opens her eyes again.

Chef Slowik goes right into it:

CHEF SLOWIK

The dark. We fear it. But some of the most beautiful and most interesting ideas emerge from the dark: the elegant glow of a firefly, the image of a singing boy emerging from the darkened canvass of a Caravaggio. And now, one of Hawthorn's signature dishes: "The Blackout." This has been a staple at our restaurant since day one. I spent years perfecting it, and it's what Mr. Bloom once said...

TED BLOOM

(numbly)

Put you on the map.

CHEF SLOWIK

That's right.

The servers bring out the dishes and place them in front of the patrons. Why eat if they are going to die?

Chef Slowik sees them not eating, and then, in perhaps the most angry he will ever be, and the loudest he will ever shout, he screams:

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

EAT!!!!

They begin eating. And you know what? It IS good. After a few beats, a server arrives with a crate and places it in the center of the dining room.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Oh, a late addition. In our test kitchen last week, we discovered that the blackout dish is best eaten in a literal blackout...With our friend here: a black, saw-scaled pit viper.

A venomous BLACK SNAKE emerges from the crate and suddenly the lights GO OUT.

The screen is TOTALLY BLACK.

Over the black screen a SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: 'THE BLACKOUT' - black squid ink rice, black charred veal, blackened parsnip, black snake."

In complete darkness, we hear screaming, clanging, and the hiss of the snake. People are clearly destroying the dining room, trying to get away from a snake they can't see. We hear what sounds like two snake bites followed by two shrieks of pain.

Elsa turns on the lights.

The dining room is in disarray. People are in tears. Some are on the table tops.

ON A SNAKE that slithers around a corner.

TECH DUDES #2 and #3 are foaming at the mouth, going through anaphylactic shock. The snake has bitten both of them.

Elsa calmly walks up to Tech Dude #1, holding an anti-venom shot.

ELSA
Which one deserves to suffer more?

Dudes #2 and #3 look at him, like, please don't choose me.

Dude #1 hesitates.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Time's running out. Which one deserves to suffer more?

Dude #1 points to Dude #2, who lets out a gurgled...

DUDE #2

Fuck you.

To Tech Dude 1's surprise, Elsa stabs Tech Dude #2 in the heart with the needle, releasing the anti-venom. Tech Dude #3 clenches up and dies.

DUDE #1

(referring to Tech Dude
#2)

But I said he should suffer more.

ELSA

That's why we let him live.

On Margot. She's shaking with fear. She looks over at Tyler and sees he has cleaned his plate.

TYLER

How does he manage all of the
elements...?

Margot slaps Tyler in the face. Hard. He looks shocked and dazed. It barely seems to register with him what's happening.

We hear a BEEPING sound off-screen that grows closer and closer. Elsa appears, holding the kitchen timer that Chef Slowik set earlier.

ELSA

Your fifteen minutes are up. Chef
will speak with you now.

TYLER

May I speak to Chef as well?

ELSA

You may not.

Elsa gestures to the back of the kitchen. Margot begins to walk in that direction, but Elsa stops her with her HAND.

ELSA (CONT'D)

The young lady will not interfere
with Chef's menu. If she tries, I
will eliminate her.

Elsa moves her hand and lets Margot pass.

Margot walks through the kitchen, and as she does she locks eyes with a Sous Chef that doesn't seem to be in complete lock step with everyone. That's odd. He seems almost, well, normal.

Margot is guided by two cooks toward a door that leads to Chef Slowik's office. She knocks. We hear Chef's voice inside.

CHEF SLOWIK (O.S.)
Come in.

She opens the door and as she does we...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL ROOM--FLASHBACK

Margot opens a door to room 1707. She is dressed chicly. Not like how you'd picture an escort: tight black jeans, white t-shirt, a leather coat. She looks cool. Much more mature than when we first saw her with Sharon.

MARGOT
Hey, babe, are you ready to go to dinner?

PAUL, late 40s, successful, wearing a white collared shirt, jacket, no tie is seated on the corner of the bed. He looks sullen. Lost.

Margot sits next to him and she begins rubbing his back. If she wasn't an escort you'd think she actually cared about the guy.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
What's wrong, babe.

PAUL
I'm just not--I feel so alone.

MARGOT
You're not alone, sweetheart. I'm right here.

PAUL
You're only here because I pay you to be here.

A imperceptible twinge of annoyance in Margot's face.

Margot gets on her knees and gets right in Paul's face.

MARGOT
Listen to me. I am not just here because you pay me. And you pay me a lot.

Margot laughs a little and so does Paul.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Like a shit ton.

Paul laughs more and Margot smiles at him. Their faces are very close together.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Let me tell you something,
sweetheart. I love our time
together. I'm not supposed to tell
you this, but I have learned more
from you and laughed more with you
than anyone I have ever been with.

Paul looks at her as if he is saying a hopeful "Yeah?"

MARGOT (CONT'D)
You are not alone. That's the
dumbest thing you've ever said.

He cries. And then...Margot starts to cry.

PAUL
Why are you crying?

MARGOT
Because you're crying, babe.

She kisses him. Through tears he kisses back. She kisses his forehead.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
C'mon, babe. Whaddaya say? Let's
get dinner.

PAUL
Okay.

She slaps his knees.

MARGOT
Okay. I'm gonna go freshen up.

We follow Margot into the bathroom. As soon as she enters, she is emotionless. Stone-faced she fixes her hair and touches up her makeup.

As she exits the bathroom we:

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHEF SLOWIK'S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY

Margot enters.

The "office" is a completely barren room. No art on the walls, no decoration of any kind. No filing cabinet. No documents. No desk. Just plain white walls, a plain white floor, and a chair in the middle of the room where Chef Slowik sits, perfectly upright and still, his eyes closed.

CHEF SLOWIK
You've made a decision.

MARGOT
I have.

CHEF SLOWIK
And what have you decided?

MARGOT
I - I've decided you're right. I shouldn't be here tonight.

Chef Slowik opens his eyes and looks at Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK
That's funny. I've decided you should.

Margot flinches.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Only, it's even clearer now that you're in the wrong cage.

MARGOT
What cage should I be in?

CHEF SLOWIK
With your own breed, Margot. With the servants. The attendants. The menials. The abused.
(off her furrowed brow)
Oh, you thought I couldn't tell? I know a fellow service industry worker when I see one.

Beat.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Richard Liebrandt. The previously two-handed gentleman at table five. How do you know him?

Margot hesitates.

QUICK FLASH OF: Richard pawing Margot in the back of a luxury car.

BACK TO: Chef Slowik's office.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
You have been looking in his
direction all evening. Now tell me.

MARGOT
He paid me money and then he fucked
me.

CHEF SLOWIK
He paid you money and then he
fucked you. Is that all he did?

QUICK FLASH OF: Richard forcing himself on Margot. She tries to push him off but he grabs her wrist, the one Chef Slowik grabbed earlier, and presses it down against the car seat. His fingers dig into her WRIST with bruising force.

BACK TO: Chef Slowik's office.

MARGOT
(coldly)
No.

CHEF SLOWIK
When was this?

MARGOT
Two weeks ago.

CLOSE ON the faded remains of a bruise on Margot's WRIST.

CHEF SLOWIK
And it's still fresh. That's good.
(smiles)
Freshness is very important in our
business.

Margot hides her wrist. Chef Slowik nods at her.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Come with me. I would like to show
you something.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"SIXTH COURSE"

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Chef Slowik and Margot enter the dining room. Tension and panic hangs in the air. The DINERS look exhausted with dread.

Chef Slowik motions for Margot to stand by his side.

ANGLE ON Tyler, who sees this and is stunned.

Chef Slowik CLAPS once. This time the DINERS are too numb with fear to respond.

CHEF SLOWIK
Ladies and gentlemen, our next
course will be presented by sous
chef Katherine Keller.

KATHERINE steps forward from the kitchen. She takes her place at the center of the dining room and pauses for a moment, savoring the exquisite silence.

She smiles serenely.

KATHERINE
Good evening, everyone. I have a
story for you all. Two years ago,
Damian Slowik tried to fuck me.

She lets this sink in. The room appears taken aback by the announcement.

ANGLE ON Chef Slowik, who is not surprised in the least.

As Katherine continues to speak, the CAMERA slowly SEMI-CIRCLES around her from her profile to her eye-line.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Naturally, I refused his advances.
He was angry, but not dissuaded. A
week later, he tried again. And
again, I refused. This time he was
furious. But he did not fire me.
"That would be unethical," he
thought. No, he just kept me in his
kitchen and refused to look me in
the eye or speak directly to me for
eight months. During which time,
male cooks slowly rose above me in
the ranks. This was unjust. Not
because I deserved to be treated as
an equal. But because I deserved to
be treated as a superior. I am
better than the male commis in this
kitchen.

(MORE)

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

I am better than the male chef de parties. I am better than the male sous chefs.

(beat)

I am better than Chef Slowik. And he knows it.

The CAMERA is now directly in front of Katherine and she looks directly INTO CAMERA, as if she is talking to us.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

I should be the star.

(beat)

But I'm not. Because none of you would buy me in that role. Only men get to be the dark romantic geniuses who suffer for their art. A woman chef is a trooper. A go-getter. She's a mother hen in the kitchen. She makes grandma's recipes with a sly modern twist. A woman chef nourishes. She doesn't challenge.

(beat, smiles into camera)

Isn't that right?

The diners shift uncomfortably in their seats. TED BLOOM quietly nods, as if he agrees with that statement.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

I have been groped, I have been leered at, I have earned more but made less, I have not been featured in one shot this entire evening by that fucking documentary crew...

She points to the terrified DOCUMENTARY CREW. Sure enough, their camera is trained right on Chef Slowik.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

...and all of it was an attempt to humiliate me. Well, I will show you what true humiliation looks like.

(beat)

Our next course is called..."Humiliation." Please enjoy.

Katherine turns and walks back to the kitchen. As she does, she passes by Chef Slowik and stops.

She pulls a small PARING KNIFE from her apron, looks Chef Slowik right in the eye, and stabs the paring knife into his THIGH. He accepts it with a slight wince of pain and nods.

Katherine and Chef Slowik share a long, meaningful hug. There is a deep understanding there that we'll never know.

CHEF SLOWIK
(quietly, to Katherine)
I'm sorry.

Katherine smiles at Chef Slowik. He smiles back. Chef Slowik carefully pulls the BLOODY KNIFE from his thigh. A SERVER is right there with a tray to take it away for him.

A team of SERVERS arrive, but they are not carrying plates. Instead, they carry six PLASTIC DOG BOWLS and place them on the floor. We view one of the dog bowls in a gorgeous, slo-mo product shot CU. Inside rests a gorgeous vision of haute cuisine: classical, elegant, impossibly refined.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "SEVENTH COURSE: 'HUMILIATION' - squid, chorizo, slow-poached egg & pheasant consomme"

The diners exchange nervous glances. Why dog bowls? And why only six?

TED BLOOM
(seeing where this is
going)
Fuck.

Chef Slowik steps forward.

CHEF SLOWIK
This course is designed for our
gentlemen diners alone to enjoy.
(smiles)
Gentlemen, please remove your
pants.

The men sit there, dazed. What did he just say?

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(impatient)
There is simply no time for your
confusion.
(gesturing to staff)
Servers, please assist the
gentlemen with their pants.

The team of servers approach each of the male customers individually. They physically lift the resistant men from their chairs as two COOKS hold cleavers above their heads at a close distance.

RICHARD

Hey! What are you -- get the fuck off me!

A cook threatens Richard with the cleaver.

The servers forcefully remove the pants and underwear of the men. We see in their FACES that they want to resist, but they fear the cooks.

Chef Slowik whispers into Margot's EAR.

CHEF SLOWIK

You don't like this? Just a little.

Margot reacts with no evident emotion, but maybe?

Now that all of the men are completely nude below the waist, Sous Chef Katherine steps forward and orders them:

KATHERINE

Eat. Get down and eat.

The scared men all do as they are told. They begin to scoop up the food from the bowls with their hands.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

No hands.

The cleaver-toting cooks move closer for extra motivation.

The half-nude men then begin to eat directly from the bowls with their mouths. Like dogs.

The CAMERA CREW, also forced at cleaver-point, circle around the men, filming them.

Katherine moves behind Richard as he eats. She pulls a small RIDING WHIP from her apron.

She lifts the whip slowly and methodically above her head, and then brings it down HARD on Richard's back. He shrieks in pain as he eats like a dog.

He tries to resist, but two SERVERS hold him down.

ANGLE ON Margot. She's not quite smiling. But it's clear she's not exactly unhappy about what she's seeing. It feels pretty fucking good, in fact.

Having humiliated them enough, Chef Slowik steps forward and claps his hands once.

CHEF SLOWIK

Enough.

The male diners stop eating, all except for Tyler, who hasn't finished yet and wants to relish every bite.

The servers pull Tyler away from his dog bowl.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Pants on, please.

The men put their pants back on. They're like children. Every ounce of dignity has been drained from them.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Back to your seats.

The men return to their seats. Anne and Ted Bloom's date can't even look at their respective partners.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

In a moment we will proceed. But
I'm afraid our menu tonight cannot
continue as planned until an
unresolved matter is dealt with.

Chef Slowik approaches the diners, stops, and turns to face Tyler, sitting alone at his table.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

You.

Tyler looks around, nervously. His hero is talking to him.

TYLER

(petrified)

M-me?

CHEF SLOWIK

Tell me why you're here.

TYLER

(puzzled)

Why I'm--?

CHEF SLOWIK

Here.

TYLER

Because I-- I wanted to experience
your menu.

CHEF SLOWIK
And what were you told ahead of
time?

Tyler glances at Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(a controlled scream)
**ANSWER ME RIGHT NOW OR I WILL SLIT
YOUR THROAT AND DRAIN YOUR BLOOD
INTO YOUR HANDS.**

TYLER
(flinches, under his
breath)
He hates me...

CHEF SLOWIK
WHAT WERE YOU TOLD AHEAD OF TIME?

TYLER
I was told everyone would die. We
would all die. And tonight would be
the greatest menu ever created.

It dawns on MARGOT what he's saying. He knew. He always knew.

CHEF SLOWIK
You had a date. Not the young woman
here tonight. What happened to her?

TYLER
She broke up with me.

CHEF SLOWIK
And so you brought an escort.
(off Tyler's silence)
Why did you hire an escort?

Tyler is shaking. He really doesn't want to answer this one.
Chef Slowik waits a moment, then leans down to Tyler's eye-
line, inches away from him, and asks again, softly:

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Why did you hire an escort?

TYLER
(stammers it out)
Be-- Because you don't offer
seatings f--for one.

ANGLE ON Margot. Her eyes are filled with malice. Tyler
doesn't dare glance in her direction.

CHEF SLOWIK
You hired an escort knowing she
would die.

TYLER
Yes.

CHEF SLOWIK
And knowing you would die as well.

TYLER
Yes.

CHEF SLOWIK
Are you sorry about this?

TYLER
No.

CHEF SLOWIK
Would you like to change your mind?

TYLER
No.

CHEF SLOWIK
Why not?

TYLER
Because I want to experience the
menu.

CHEF SLOWIK
And you wanted me to know you were
in on tonight's plan.

TYLER
Yes.

CHEF SLOWIK
So that I'd like you. So that I'd
think you were special.

TYLER
Yes.

Chef Slowik stands up straight again. He towers over Tyler.

CHEF SLOWIK
For the past eight months we have
corresponded with you. We swore you
to secrecy. We gave you the
ultimate backstage pass. A glimpse
into our process.
(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

A sense that you were part of our world. We have made you believe you were a "foodie" of the first order. A culinary insider. An elite participant on the cutting edge of American fine dining. And we offered you one final escape from a life of nihilistic self-hatred and depression. Why do you think we would do this? Why do you think we wanted you here?

TYLER

Why?

CHEF SLOWIK

Yes, why?

TYLER

(thinks)

Because I know a lot about food.

Chef Slowik slowly reaches out and places a gentle hand on Tyler's shoulder.

CHEF SLOWIK

No. You don't.

(beat)

That is why we wanted you here.

Tyler's eyes well up with tears.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

It's all right. You can cry. It's a sad story. The mystery has been drained from our art and made people like you -- people with means -- feel knowledgeable and informed about our craft. But you are not. And you never will be. In fact, it turns out you know less about my menu than everyone in this room tonight.

(beat)

Do you know why?

A weeping Tyler can barely respond. Margot's eyes are filled with tears as well. But hers are tears of rage.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Do you know why?

TYLER

Wh-why?

CHEF SLOWIK
Because you don't even get to see
how it ends.

Chef Slowik pulls out a knife and slits Tyler's throat. Tyler drops to the ground, flopping like a fish, and bleeds out into his hands. Just as Chef Slowik threatened.

ANGLE ON Margot, who somehow looks simultaneously nauseated and vindicated by Tyler's violent demise.

As two servers clear Tyler's body, Chef Slowik turns to his others diner with a remorseful expression.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
I want to apologize to you all.
What you just saw was not
originally part of tonight's menu.
We were presented with a problem
and were forced to adjust as best
we could. We strive for perfection,
but there is no such thing. And
that is a hard truth for me to
accept.
(beat)
Please forgive me.

He hangs his head low and walks back toward the kitchen. As he passes Margot, he mutters to her:

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Follow me.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Margot follows Chef Slowik into the kitchen.

CHEF SLOWIK
We have only one more savory course
left in our menu.

Margot has no idea what she is supposed to do with this information. And she's still pretty shaky from what she just witnessed.

MARGOT
O-okay?

CHEF SLOWIK
That means we have to prepare for
our final dessert course.

MARGOT

Why are you telling me this?

CHEF SLOWIK

The final dessert course requires a large barrel that is supposed to be there in the corner of the kitchen.

Chef Slowik points to the CORNER of the kitchen. No barrel.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Do you see a barrel there?

MARGOT

No.

CHEF SLOWIK

Neither do I. It was supposed to be rolled in here from the smokehouse during the last course and placed in that corner by one of our chef de parties. His name is Michael. This is Michael right here.

Chef Slowik points across the kitchen at MICHAEL, the nervous cook Margot noticed before, the one who looked like he hadn't fully bought in. He is facing away and shaking with fear. He knew this moment was coming.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

But Michael didn't do that.

(without looking at
Michael)

Michael, why didn't you do that?

Michael slowly turns to face his boss. He shakes his head. As Michael speaks, Chef Slowik continues to look at Margot.

MICHAEL

I couldn't do it, Chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

You felt guilty.

MICHAEL

Yes, Chef.

CHEF SLOWIK

You felt as if you were doing the wrong thing.

MICHAEL

Yes, Chef.

CHEF SLOWIK
And you didn't want to die.

MICHAEL
No, Chef.

CHEF SLOWIK
I understand. Take off your whites.

Michael, a condemned man, begins slowly removing his chef's whites.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(to Margot)
You shall fetch the barrel instead.

Elsa, who is standing by the kitchen entrance, looks stunned and somewhat enraged by this direction. Her? He's asking her? Margot furrows her brow.

MARGOT
Me?

CHEF SLOWIK
Yes. You remember where the smokehouse is, of course.

MARGOT
I -- yes.

CHEF SLOWIK
Good.

Elsa steps forward. Her tone is subservient but firm.

ELSA
Chef, perhaps a member of the kitchen staff should--

CHEF SLOWIK
No, Elsa. We need to know what side Margot falls on. At this point she knows and has accepted that she is going to die.

On Margot who looks stone-faced.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
So, the end result will be the same. But the context makes all the difference in the world to me and to our menu. Elsa, give her the smokehouse key.

ELSA

Yes, Chef.

Elsa removes her key ring from her pocket and gives Margot the smokehouse key.

Margot hesitates for a moment as Chef Slowik stares at her.

CHEF SLOWIK

Go.

Margot nods.

MARGOT

Yes, Chef.

Chef Slowik watches her go and then turns to face Michael.

EXT. HAWTHORN ISLAND - EVENING

Margot walks out onto the darkened lawn behind the restaurant.

We can see the windows of the kitchen behind her. As she walks, we see a FLASH in the window and the piercing sound of a GUNSHOT. Margot stops and turns to acknowledge what's just happened. So much for Michael.

Margot continues walking across the lawn, lit only by moonlight. We hear the CALLS of insects and night birds around her. It is a clear and beautiful night.

We see in the distance, the patch of WOODS leading to the smokehouse.

Margot walks purposefully. She's actually going through with this. She appears truly committed.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Margot enters the dark forest.

Nestled between a grouping of trees in the distance we see the small SMOKEHOUSE lit by a porch light.

As she cautiously approaches the smokehouse, Margot hears a RUSTLING SOUND in the woods and a distant SNAP.

She stops and turns in the direction of the sound. Nothing.

Margot continues walking until she reaches the:

INT. SMOKEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Margot enters the darkened smokehouse and flips on a small overhead light.

Sure enough, there's the barrel, resting underneath some hanging ocean trout.

She walks toward the barrel as if she's going to retrieve it. But instead she reaches behind the barrel where a fish scaling knife hangs from the wall by a nail.

Margot takes the KNIFE in her palm, partly concealing it behind her wrist. Then she glances up and sees, through the WINDOW, Chef Slowik's COTTAGE bathed in moonlight in the distance.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chef Slowik enters the dining room. It seems he's about to announce the final savory course.

But before he can speak, Daniel Radcliffe stands.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
(scared but brave)
I have something to s-say.

Chef Slowik slowly turns to face Daniel Radcliffe.

Radcliffe is nervous. Petrified, actually. But he summons from within himself all of his power and experience and talent as a performer for this crucial moment.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (CONT'D)
I want you to know that I
understand the general premise of
this evening. Everyone in this room
is being punished. But I don't
believe I deserve to die tonight.
And neither does my friend.

Radcliffe gestures to his assistant, who looks at his employer, surprised.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (CONT'D)
I'm famous. There's nothing I can
do to change that. And with fame
comes fortune. But I feel as though
I have come by my success honestly,
and I have tried along the way to
treat people with compassion and
respect.

(MORE)

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (CONT'D)

I truly do not consider myself any better than anyone else in this room or on this planet. Quite the opposite, in fact.

(beat)

And as for my friend?

Radcliffe looks at his assistant and smiles warmly. His assistant looks up at him and smiles back.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (CONT'D)

I'll tell you about my friend. My wonderful friend. We're here tonight because he surprised me. He thought I'd have fun. It's been a miserable year, you see. I've been very lost. And very afraid. So he brought me here to cheer me up.

(Radcliffe looks at Slowik

-- his smile disappears)

But you know nothing about my friend or his life. You know nothing of his pain. Which is why I implore you: Please let him go.

(beat)

Thank you for listening.

Chef Slowik takes all of this in and nods subtly.

CHEF SLOWIK

Do you wish to know why you are being punished, Daniel?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Yes.

CHEF SLOWIK

I saw the movie *Victor Frankenstein* and I did not enjoy your performance. Nor do I respect you as an artist.

Radcliffe thinks about this and nods.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Okay.

(then)

And...that's it?

CHEF SLOWIK

That's it.

Radcliffe gestures at his assistant.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
And him?

CHEF SLOWIK
(shrugs)
He works for you.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
(thinks about this)
Right.

Chef Slowik shrugs again, as if by way of explanation.

CHEF SLOWIK
I never said this was fair.

Daniel Radcliffe nods sagely.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Well, that's that then.
(grim beat)
Cheers.

Radcliffe sits back down. He looks at his assistant and smiles. His assistant smiles back.

That's that.

They take each other's HAND.

EXT. CHEF SLOWIK'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Margot approaches Chef's small quaint cottage at the edge of the forest. She hesitantly opens the door. Surprisingly the door isn't locked, she enters, and...

THE INTERIOR IS AN EXACT REPLICA OF THE INTERIOR OF THE RESTAURANT

Margot is shocked, taken aback.

MARGOT
Shit.

She looks around and it's just so quiet and so clean. No blood. No nothing. It's what the restaurant would look like if it were closed.

Margot, for reasons she doesn't quite know, takes a seat in her seat from the restaurant. It's quiet and still.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HAWTHORN DINING ROOM--CONTINUOUS

We are now back in the real dining room. Not quiet. People screaming. Daniel Radcliffe's assistant has a cleaver to his throat and he is being forced to feed Daniel nuts, which he is allergic to. It's clear Daniel is having a massive allergic reaction.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "EIGHTH COURSE: 'GONE NUTS' - peanut dashi, peanut foam, peanut curd, peanut brittle, and raw peanuts hand-fed"

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHEF SLOWIK'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Silence. Margot continues to sit. And THEN she starts to breathe more heavily and then begins to cry. It's as if she is now processing everything that has happened and everything that has brought her to this point.

MARGOT
(to herself)
Stop it.

And then Margot remembers that, if this place is the same exact place as the restaurant, that would mean the mysterious SILVER DOOR is in this place. And whatever lurks behind it.

She goes to the door. It's an exact replica of the door from the restaurant. She tries to open it but it's locked.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Fuck.

Suddenly, she hears the front door OPEN.

We see the footfalls of the person stepping inside the cottage. The camera pans up to reveal... Elsa.

ELSA
I told you when you arrived that no one was allowed to enter Chef Slowik's cottage. And yet you have disobeyed this rule.

Margot hides.

ELSA (CONT'D)
I worry about the customers so the chef can worry about the menu. And you have made my job this evening very difficult.

Elsa walks past a hiding Margot.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's not to say I don't find what you are trying to do admirable. A part of me, albeit a small part, respects...

And then Margot darts out and tackles Elsa.

There is a massive tussle. As this happens, We flash back to when Margot was getting roughed up by Mr. Liebrandt. Though we saw her getting manhandled in the flashback, we never saw how it all ended, which was that Margot broke free of him, kicked him in the balls and then punched him with a right hook dead in the face.

At this moment, she manages to get on top of Elsa, and, with the knife from the smokehouse, stabs her right in the chest.

She retrieves a set of keys from Elsa's hip and goes to the door. She tries several keys but then spots one that looks special. It opens the door to a room that is, well...lovely.

INT. THE SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is warmly lit and beautiful inside. What we see are the fragments of an actual life. A young Chef Slowik smiling with his mentors and classmates from culinary school, stacks of recipe books, a photo of him and his mother after what appears to be a graduation of some kind. Chef Slowik is smiling. His mother is stoic.

We see a photo of him at the opening of his first restaurant, and he looks happy.

However, one photo of him, which Margot picks up and holds, is of him opening up Hawthorn. And he looks serious. And everyone looks serious. And the joy from earlier is gone from his face.

Margot notices A RADIO on a shelf across from his desk. Margot dashes towards it and fiddles with the transceiver.

MARGOT

Hello? Is anyone there? Can anyone hear this?

Nothing.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Hello?!?!? CAN ANYONE HEAR THIS!!

Nothing.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
CAN ANYONE FUCKING HEAR ME!!!!

VOICE ON OTHER END
(crackly)
Hello?

MARGOT
Hello? Who is this?

VOICE ON OTHER END
Coast Guard. Who am I talking to?

MARGOT
Thank Christ. Um, I am at the
restaurant. The...Hawthorn. People
are getting murdered. SEND HELP.
SEND HELP!!

VOICE ON OTHER END
Whu--? What did you say?

MARGOT
Just get here! NOW! PLEASE!

VOICE ON OTHER END
Okay, just, uh -- Fuck. Just stay
there. Sit tight.

Margot, relieved, but exhausted and somewhat in shock,
shuffles back out to the dining room.

She sees Elsa, knife sticking out of her stomach, laying dead
on the ground.

She kneels down next to Elsa.

MARGOT
I'm getting out of here, you
psychotic cunt.

Suddenly, Elsa's eyes slowly open.

ELSA
But you haven't had dessert.

Elsa grabs Margot's neck HARD, strangling her. And then
Margot breaks from Elsa's grip and just starts punching her
in the face over and over and over and over as Elsa's blood
spatters on Margot's face. She punches her a few extra times
to really finish the job.

Elsa is now dead dead.

Out of breath, Margot goes back to her seat in the faux dining room. She sits. Exhausted. It's silent.

And then we hear... A CLAP. Margot is startled. And from a speaker, we hear Chef Slowik's voice:

CHEF SLOWIK (O.S.)
Do you like my home?

Margot makes a face like, "Of course this isn't over."

CHEF SLOWIK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Some people say you shouldn't take
your work home with you. And I
wholeheartedly disagree.
(beat)
Go ahead and speak. I can hear you.

MARGOT
You didn't strike me as someone
who's into the whole work/life
balance thing.

CHEF SLOWIK (O.S.)
Yes, well... I think it's about
time you return to the restaurant
don't you? After all, you're
delaying our service. This is an
inconvenience to our guests.

MARGOT
Tell them I'm very sorry.

Beat.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I killed Elsa.

CHEF SLOWIK (O.S.)
Yes, I figured you would. Your
passion to survive is truly
admirable. Useless, in this case,
but admirable.
(beat, thinks)
Tell me: Where does this passion
come from?

MARGOT
I like beating men like you.

CHEF SLOWIK (O.S.)
There is no man like me.

MARGOT

That's the dumbest fucking thing
you've said all night.

We hear Chef Slowik LAUGH softly and knowingly.

CHEF SLOWIK

Please do retrieve that barrel. If
you don't...

The intercom speaker clicks off. He's gone.

Margot slowly rises to her feet and exits the cottage.

INT. HAWTHORN DINING AREA AND KITCHEN

We PAN ACROSS the restaurant. Bodies are strewn everywhere. People are choking, screaming for help. Daniel Radcliffe's assistant's body lies next to Daniel Radcliffe's seat. Radcliffe is barely wheezing in breath. Mrs. Leibbrandt cries over her husband's body. Ted Bloom's date is keeled over in her seat, and Ted Bloom calmly, numbly takes a bite of the leftover food on her plate.

Margot enters the restaurant, rolling the barrel in front of her. She stops to examine the fresh chaos in front of her.

Chef Slowik approaches, examines the barrel, and nods at her.

CHEF SLOWIK

You can leave that there. And have
a seat.

Margot sits at her table, which has been cleaned and perfectly re-set for her in its own special little area.

Chef Slowik walks over to the table and stares at Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Remember.

Pause. He says nothing, just gazes at her.

MARGOT

Remember what?

CHEF SLOWIK

Remember that the hurt in my life
is over, Margot. That's all done
now. The pain is gone.

He holds his HAND directly over the candle on Margot's table. The flame burns his flesh. But he doesn't so much as flinch.

Margot winces.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Chef's Hands. "Asbestos Hands," we
call them. I can carry a cast-iron
pan from a 550 oven to your table
with no protection. That's a cook's
training.

(beat)
But this isn't.

Chef Slowik gently bends down and holds his cheek to the
candle, gradually burning the side of his face. Again, he
does not flinch.

Margot can't watch.

MARGOT
Jesus.

He waits a good ten seconds and then calmly stands upright. A
gruesome burn now spots the side of his face.

CHEF SLOWIK
I can no longer be hurt, Margot.

He reaches down and extinguishes the candle FLAME with his
thumb and forefinger. A stream of smoke trails upward.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
So just accept your fate as I have.
Let it happen.

Outside the large bay windows, a LIGHT is visible from the
water. A small BOAT approaches the dock.

Margot sees it in the corner of her eye and stifles a gasp.

Chef Slowik sees the boat immediately. For the briefest
moment he is frozen with indecision. Even fear. But then a
calm comes over him. He knows what to do.

He looks at Margot, who is pretending not to see the boat. He
smiles.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(to Margot)
So you found our radio. You really
are a peach, aren't you?

Then he turns to face the kitchen.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
(to his staff)
Clear the dining room. Immediately.

SERVERS appear from everywhere and quickly remove bodies and wipe down the bloodied floor. Their work is hyper-fast and spotless.

A SERVER administers an intense, fast-action anti-allergen shot to Radcliffe. His breathing already begins to clear.

Margot glances out the window and sees a single COAST GUARD OFFICER carefully stepping out of his boat onto the dock. He is alone, without backup. Not good.

MARGOT
(quietly, to herself)
No no no.

Chef Slowik sees what Margot sees. He smiles just a little and turns to his remaining diners.

CHEF SLOWIK
Ladies and gentlemen, we have an unexpected guest. Unfortunately we are fully booked tonight and cannot accommodate him. You will be tempted to ask him for help. To plead for help, even. This would be unwise. He is outnumbered. He can't help you.

The FACES of the guests look not quite convinced. They exchange conspiratorial glances. They still have a chance here, don't they? They can't let this opportunity pass.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
I can see from your expressions that you don't believe me. You think this might be your only shot and that it's a shot worth taking. But ask yourself if you really want to be responsible for the certain death of an innocent man. A man who did precisely nothing to deserve a gruesome death here tonight.

The guests' FACES have changed now. He's right. The only possible outcome here is an innocent person's murder.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
Be wise. Be kind. Open your hearts and spare this man's life.

The coast guard approaches the door. Chef Slowik nods at a server who opens the door for him. He enters.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Is it safe to enter?

CHEF SLOWIK
Good evening, officer. Of course it is safe. How can I help you?

COAST GUARD OFFICER
I -- well, I got a radio report of a disturbance.

CHEF SLOWIK
A disturbance? Here? No, I don't see how that can be so.

The coast guard officer doesn't quite trust this answer. He looks around the nearly empty dining room.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Uh huh.

CHEF SLOWIK
What kind of disturbance, exactly?

COAST GUARD OFFICER
A violent disturbance, sir. In fact, I don't want to alarm you folks, but there was a report of a possible murder.

At first there is silence. Then Chef Slowik begins to laugh, and one by one the whole staff joins in.

The diners play along with forced smiles, though their hearts aren't in it.

CHEF SLOWIK
(smiles)
No, officer. I assure you there has been no incident of that nature.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Are you the owner of this establishment?

CHEF SLOWIK
Ownership changed hands this evening. But that's a long story. I am the executive chef, and I am in charge here.

(MORE)

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)
I don't wish to be rude but, as you
can see, all is well and we are
right in the middle of our dinner
service.

The officer looks around the dining room, puzzled.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Are these your only guests?

CHEF SLOWIK
Yes, they are. Tonight is a private
event. We are peer-testing a new
concept menu.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
What does that mean?

CHEF SLOWIK
It's complicated to explain.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Okay, well, do you mind if I have a
look around?

CHEF SLOWIK
A look around where? The whole
island? No, that would be a
tremendous inconvenience. You have
already delayed plating of our next
course. And these customers have
paid dearly to be here tonight.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Well, I'm sorry, sir. But I'm
afraid I have to--

CHEF SLOWIK
I needn't remind you that this is
the most respected restaurant in
the region. Numerous very
influential city officials dine
here regularly. The kind of people
you wouldn't want to embarrass. Or
disobey.

The officer considers this. He looks around at the diners,
who seem composed enough.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Did anybody here call in a distress
on the short-wave tonight?

They all shake their heads. Even Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK
We are not in the habit, officer,
of serving our guests short-wave
radios with their meals.

The cooks laugh again.

The Coast Guard Officer notices Daniel Radcliffe, who looks a little worse for wear, but better than before. A glimmer of recognition passes across the officer's face.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Hey, are you--?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
(instantly)
Yes.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Oh. Wow. I -- I'm a big fan. David,
right?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Daniel.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Daniel! Shit. Sorry.

Chef Slowik breaks in.

CHEF SLOWIK
Would you like his autograph?

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Oh -- uh, I mean, I don't want to
bother you.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
(smiles)
It's no bother.

A server arrives with a pen and a piece of receipt paper.
Daniel Radcliffe signs an autograph for him.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Thanks. You're great. Loved that,
uh...what's it called? The
Frankenstein one?

DANIEL RADCLIFFE
Victor Frankenstein.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
Yeah, that's great stuff.

Daniel Radcliffe smiles sadly.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Thank you.

There is a beat of awkward silence, and then:

COAST GUARD OFFICER

Okay. Well, sorry again to bother you folks. I'll be going now, I suppose.

The officer turns and walks back toward the door. But then we see, from his POV, a SMEAR OF BLOOD on the floor, perhaps the only one missed by the wait staff.

The officer stops. And then, in an instant, his hand shoots to his holster and he pulls out his gun. He turns and points it at Chef Slowik.

COAST GUARD OFFICER (CONT'D)

HANDS ABOVE YOUR HEAD, NOW!

Chef Slowik laughs, a little nervously.

CHEF SLOWIK

Are you joking?

COAST GUARD OFFICER

I am not joking, sir!

One of the cooks behind Chef Slowik begins to step forward to protect his master, but Chef Slowik motions him back.

CHEF SLOWIK

No no, we will comply. Clearly there has been some sort of misunderstanding.

COAST GUARD OFFICER

I want you to get down on your knees with your hands up.

(beat)

NOW.

Chef Slowik sees the officer means business. He takes a deep breath and slowly gets on his knees with his hands up.

The officer, very slowly, inches toward Chef Slowik with his gun drawn. Margot is just a few feet away from him now.

When he has almost reached Chef Slowik, the officer suddenly stops. He turns, with his gun pointed, toward Margot's table.

He leans the gun down, clicks the trigger, and a small flame emits from the gun barrel. He lights the extinguished CANDLE on Margot's table with the gun-lighter.

It was all bullshit. Everyone is deflated.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

Fuck me.

The coast guard member holsters the gun, puts on an apron, and joins his comrades by the kitchen.

CHEF SLOWIK

(To the coast guard
member/cook)

Thank you, Henry.

Chef Slowik stands and approaches Margot.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

In a kitchen, everyone works
together or nothing works at all.
You have betrayed our sacred bond
of trust. And you have shown your
craft to be sloppy. You're an
eater. An animal like all the rest.

We see the FACES of the cooks and servers behind Chef Slowik. They know he is right. She has failed the test. She has not lived up to the rigors and standards of the Hawthorn kitchen that they have all devoted their lives to.

Chef Slowik turns his back to Margot and addresses his staff.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

I want plating for the final course
in five.

STAFF

(in unison)

Yes, Chef!

Two cooks unplug the top of the BARREL and tip it on its side. A thick, viscous liquid pours out onto the floor. It appears to be some sort of rendered animal fat.

The remaining DINERS don't even bother lifting their feet. Those who have survived have resigned themselves to their fate. Perhaps, some even feel as if they deserve it.

Margot hangs her head and looks at her table. She knows all is lost. But she doesn't look scared. Or sad. Instead, a kind of quiet simmering anger builds inside her.

MARGOT
(barely audible)
I don't like your food.

No one listening. She's just saying it to herself.

Meanwhile, various SERVERS have begun draping thick sheets of MARSHMALLOWS strung together with candy floss over various diners, who just let it happen.

A SERVER comes over and drapes a MARSHMALLOW sheet over Margot's torso. Margot does nothing to stop her.

We PULL CLOSE on Margot's face.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
(barely audible)
I don't like your food.

No one hears her.

The staff continues to hustle and bustle, creating elaborate, Jackson Pollock-esque platters and swirls of melted chocolate and graham cracker crumbles directly onto the diners' TABLE TOPS.

Finally, as the beautiful, inventive dessert course is nearly finished being built around her, Margot tears off her marshmallow coat and throws it on the floor.

Then she CLAPS, loudly, just like Chef Slowik.

Everyone stops what they are doing. Even Chef Slowik.

He slowly walks into the dining room from the kitchen and glares angrily at Margot.

Margot, unafraid, speaks right to him, loud and clear.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I don't like your food.

Chef Slowik says nothing. Then he slowly steps toward her until he is just a few feet away.

CHEF SLOWIK
What did you say to me?

MARGOT
I said I don't like your food. And
I would like to send it back.

We see the faces of the KITCHEN STAFF. They are shocked, dismayed, and ready to tear Margot to pieces. Chef Slowik takes a deep breath. He's unhappy. But not angry.

CHEF SLOWIK

I am sorry to hear that. What about my food is not to your liking?

Margot draws a deep breath and then lets him have it. We slowly PULL CLOSE on her face as she calmly, coldly, and quite sensibly critiques his entire style of cuisine.

MARGOT

You've taken the joy out of eating. Every dish we've had tonight has been some sort of intellectual exercise rather than something you just want to sit and enjoy.

We again see the faces of his COOKS. They can't believe what she is saying, even if part of them, deep down, might know there is a kernel of truth to it.

But Chef Slowik doesn't react at all. He just listens.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

When I eat your food, it tastes like it was made with no love. Even the hot dishes are cold. And dead. Like they were made by one of those fucking fish hanging in your smoke shack.

A cook moves forward, but chef stops him.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

There is no personality. Only concepts. You are a chef. Your one purpose on this Earth is to serve people food that they will like. And you have failed.

(beat)

Also, you've bored me. And worst of all, you've left me hungry.

Chef Slowik takes all of this in and nods. For the first time, we see a note of doubt in his expression. But it quickly turns to quiet resolve.

CHEF SLOWIK

You're still hungry?

MARGOT

I am.

CHEF SLOWIK
How hungry?

MARGOT
Hungry.

CHEF SLOWIK
What are you hungry for?

MARGOT
What do you have?

CHEF SLOWIK
Everything.

MARGOT
You know what I really want?

CHEF SLOWIK
Tell me.

MARGOT
A cheeseburger.

Chef Slowik thinks about this. He nods.

CHEF SLOWIK
We can do a cheeseburger.

MARGOT
But can you do a good cheeseburger?
I don't want some fancy de-
constructed avant bullshit.

CHEF SLOWIK
I will make you a very good, very
traditional cheeseburger.

MARGOT
I don't think you can.

CHEF SLOWIK
I will make you feel as if you are
eating the first cheeseburger you
ever ate. The cheap one your
parents could barely afford. The
one that tasted better than any
other cheeseburger in the world.

MARGOT
Okay. Then show me.

CHEF SLOWIK
How do you like it cooked?

MARGOT
Medium. American cheese.

CHEF SLOWIK
American cheese is the best cheese
for a cheeseburger because it melts
without splitting.

MARGOT
I know that. And no weird homemade
artisanal ketchup. I want Heinz.

CHEF SLOWIK
I mix together a special sauce
that's equal parts Heinz, mayo, and
hot dog mustard.

MARGOT
That sounds weird.

CHEF SLOWIK
You want it. It's delicious.

MARGOT
How much will this set me back?

CHEF SLOWIK
\$9.95.

MARGOT
A little steep.

CHEF SLOWIK
No. It's worth it.

MARGOT
Then I'll take it.

Chef Slowik nods to her, with respect, and then retreats into
the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Some time has passed. We hear the sound of cooking in the
kitchen. But Chef Slowik is all alone in there. The rest of
the staff is gathered outside the kitchen, waiting.

Meanwhile, Margot sits quietly and patiently, waiting for her
dinner to arrive.

Finally, Chef Slowik arrives and places a plate in front of her. It looks, honest to God, like the best fucking cheeseburger ever.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "SUPPLEMENTAL COURSE: 'A CHEESEBURGER - just a well-made cheeseburger'"

Margot looks at it and nods. Then she picks it up and takes a bite. She closes her eyes and savors the bite for a long glorious beat.

Then she opens her eyes and looks at Chef Slowik.

MARGOT

Now that...is a cheeseburger.

CHEF SLOWIK

Yes. That is a cheeseburger.

They both smile and share this moment together. Then Margot takes a deep breath and exhales.

MARGOT

Unfortunately, my eyes were a little bigger than my stomach.

CHEF SLOWIK

(nods)

I understand.

MARGOT

But I want to take this home with me, chef.

(beat)

Can I get this to go?

Chef Slowik thinks about it. He looks around his restaurant. The sum total of his life's work. The havoc he has caused. The ferocious beauty of his menu. Then he looks back at Margot and nods.

CHEF SLOWIK

Yes, you may. One moment, please.

SMASH CUT TO:

LATER. Chef Slowik hands a TO-GO BAG to Margot. She takes the bag and the two share one last exchange.

CHEF SLOWIK (CONT'D)

Thank you for dining at Hawthorn.

MARGOT
Thank you for everything.
Goodnight.

Margot turns and walks out of the restaurant.

Chef Slowik turns to his last remaining diners.

He CLAPS.

CHEF SLOWIK
Our final dessert course is a play
on the traditional campfire
classic: the s'more.

EXT. HAWTHORN ISLAND - LATER

From afar, we see Margot silently board the coast guard boat
in the dark.

INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - LATER

Margot directs the boat toward the nearest inhabited shore as
steadily as she can with one hand on the wheel.

She gazes wearily into the distance, Hawthorn Island at her
back. We see bright flames rise inside the restaurant.

Margot's other hand comes INTO FRAME holding the leftover
cheeseburger. She takes a bite.

AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"FINAL COURSE"

FADE IN TO:

EXT. HAWTHORN ISLAND - MORNING

Daylight has finally arrived.

The charred remains of Hawthorn Restaurant. It's mainly burnt
foundation now. Firefighters and emergency crew workers
scavenge through the torched and doused shell of what was
once a gleaming palace of high-end cuisine.

We STEADICAM through the wreckage, passing the remains of the
dining room, the remains of the kitchen, and the remains of
the diners and staff.

A SUPERIMPOSED TITLE READS: "FINAL DESSERT COURSE: 'S'MORE' - marshmallow, chocolate, graham cracker, customers, staff, restaurant"

As we continue our STEADICAM journey we finally reach what awaits us at the end: the locked SILVER DOOR.

The door is part of a large black-box like structure about the size of a room. Everything around the box-room has burned away. This is all that remains.

As we continue to STEADICAM in close, law enforcement officers below the door with explosives and it flies open in a hail of smoke.

We STEADICAM in through the door until we are inside the black-box room. When the smoke clears, we see the interior:

A beautiful, perfectly preserved office room like the one in which Margot used the radio. Only this one has three small tables lined up side by side.

On the left-hand table is the camera from the documentary crew along with all of their tapes.

On the right-hand table is Chef Slowik's smiling severed head on a platter.

And on the middle table, which we continue to head RIGHT FOR in STEADICAM are Chef Slowik's two severed hands, which have been positioned so that they are holding, perfectly upright, Chef Slowik's menu, with all of the courses we saw the night before listed in order.

The STEADICAM stops once the MENU fills the ENTIRE FRAME.

A TITLE APPEARS SUPERIMPOSED OVER THE SCREEN: "THE MENU"

THE END