

TONY

Written by

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"Drink heavily with locals whenever possible."

- *Anthony Bourdain*

EXT. OCEAN. DAY.

The Atlantic on a blustery winter day. Roiling and vast. Magnificent. Mysterious. Menacing.

Waves crash onto a desolate beach. The sound of the surf builds, louder and louder, until we--

SNAP TO BLACK.

A FAMILIAR FACE fills the frame...

A rogue with a twinkle in his eye, but thirty years younger than we're used to, and with hair down to his shoulders.

This is ANTHONY BOURDAIN, aged 20. Or, to those who knew him back then, simply TONY.

TONY

You guys might not want to admit
it, but I know you have regrets.
Everyone does. Except me.

He grins. And as he talks, we pull back to reveal...

INT. BOURDAIN HOME. KITCHEN. EVENING.

Tony sits at a Formica table, talking to we don't know who.

TONY

It's the pirate's life for me, man.
I'm gonna have a grand adventure.
Gonna suck the marrow out. Every
single sinewy bloody morsel, washed
down with ice cold beer. And we all
know I can't do that here. I mean,
it's not that bad, in a provincial,
bourgeois, quasi-shithole kind of
way. But there's so much else to
explore. So many nooks and crannies
in the world, and so little time! I
could get hit by a bus tomorrow, or
a meteor could wipe out all of
Jersey in an instant, which may be
a blessing. But that's why I gotta
get out there, gotta go go go and
see what I find before it's too
late. Right?

He smiles, sure he just sold the room on his pitch.

He didn't. His parents, GLADYS and PIERRE, have listened patiently. She scowling at the stove in an apron, he with a glass of red and a sympathetic smile.

GLADYS

The only thing you're going to explore is the job I got you in Hackensack.

Tony deflates, looks to his silent dad with pleading eyes. Pierre straightens up, clears his throat.

PIERRE

I think Tony makes some good points.

Gladys spins on him with a wooden spoon. He flinches.

GLADYS

Your son's sole purpose in life is to take drugs and try to get his nether regions touched by that harlot he calls a girlfriend. He needs direction. Discipline. For once, Pierre, I'd like some support-

Tony bails. He's heard this fight a million times before.

INT. BOURDAIN HOME. TONY'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Tony slams the door behind him, flops onto the bed. Surrounded by a teenage nest of books, records, Tintin comics, Iggy Pop and the Stooges posters.

Tony listens to his mother still yelling downstairs. He feels the sting of her every word, on the verge of tears.

Vulnerable and sensitive, but also full of rage. A raw nerve.

He sits up, knee shaking. A self-protective restlessness kicking in...

Rather than be overwhelmed by his feelings... *he runs--*

He throws together a bag. A beat-up copy of Heart of Darkness, a few Tintins, some Iggy records, a notebook, pens, a bathing suit, tanning oil.

He gets dressed for the journey in a garish baby blue suit.

INT. BOURDAIN HOME. STAIRCASE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony creeps downstairs, bag slung over his shoulder.

He looks to the kitchen. Gladys is cooking, her back to him.

He looks to the living room. Pierre sits in an armchair, listening to opera on a hi-fi, staring at him knowingly.

Tony puts a finger to his mouth: *shh*. Pierre hesitates, then nods, in cahoots. Tony mouths:

TONY

Merçi.

Pierre bites his thumb at Tony, who bites his thumb back. A father-son inside joke. And Tony slips out the front door...

EXT. BOURDAIN HOME. CONTINUOUS.

Tony grabs his bike and escapes.

He speeds down his childhood street, flanked by soaring elms and respectable suburban homes. Not exactly a quasi-shithole.

EXT. BROAD AVENUE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony smokes as he races down the main drag of Leonia, New Jersey. Ignoring it all. A grocer. A druggist. A florist. A young mother pushing a stroller. An old man with his dog.

Anytown, USA. Lovely, for most people. But not for Tony...

EXT. HIRAM'S ROADSTAND. LATER.

Tony screeches into the parking lot of a roadside joint. The sign reads: "Hiram's French Fried Hot Dogs, Since 1932".

INT. HIRAM'S ROADSTAND. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony sidles up to the counter, sighs deeply. His anxiety and anger subsiding. He's in his happy place at last.

The OWNER gives him a knowing nod.

*

OWNER

Two chili cheese!

Tony the regular looks into the kitchen, watches his favorite meal being assembled--

Slice of American cheese on a bun, thrown under the broiler. Hot dog pulled from bubbling fry grease, plopped on the bun. On top, a loving ladle of chili. Presto: the perfect food.

Tony takes his first bite, and immediately relaxes. *Heaven.*

EXT. HIRAM'S ROADSTAND. LATER.

Satiated, Tony stands on the side of the road, traffic whizzing by, smoking another cig, bony thumb outstretched.

A VW bus approaches, something straight out of Woodstock.

Tony grins, throwing his bike in the trunk. *Here we go.*

TITLE CARD: **SUMMER, 1975**

CREDITS ROLL over The Stooges's "Search And Destroy"...

INT./EXT. VW BUS. LATER.

The VW bus crosses the George Washington Bridge.

Tony looks longingly down the Hudson at the New York City skyline. We think the bus might take a right and head south for the City. But it bangs a left, heading north on I-95.

INT./EXT. VARIOUS CARS. LATER.

Tony hitchhikes in a series of cars, his bike taking up more and more space in each. He watches out the window at the glories of New England:

Welcome to Connecticut, the Constitution State. Madison, Mystic, the under-appreciated coastline.

Welcome to Rhode Island, the Ocean State. Providence, The Big Blue Bug, a 58-foot fiberglass termite right on the highway.

Massachusetts Welcomes You, the Bay State. Fall River, the Bourne Bridge, out to the tip of Cape Cod as the CREDITS END.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK. CONTINUOUS.

Tony, renegade on the loose, can't contain his excitement.

TONY

Nancy's gonna flip her shit, man.
She thinks I'm stuck in Jersey for
the summer. Fuck that!

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

Nancy and me, we're partners in
crime. Part of a storied lineage.
Antony and Cleopatra, Heloise and
Abelard, fuckin' Bonnie and Clyde.

The DRIVER takes a deep breath, regretting picking this guy
up. In his own world, Tony lights another cig.

He watches through the window as they buzz past a sign:
PROVINCETOWN - 5 MILES.

TONY (CONT'D)

Did you know the Pilgrims landed in
Provincetown first? The whole
Plymouth Rock story is bullshit!
They ran aground on their way to
Virginia, and of course, were
complete assholes to the natives.
But the locals kicked their white
asses all the way to Plymouth,
where they fared a bit better, so
that became the official press
release. Turns out most of American
history is predicated on a lie.

As Tony waxes on, the driver steps on the gas...

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. LATER.

Tony hops out of the truck, grabs his bike from the back.

He breathes in the sea air of Provincetown, Massachusetts.

He walks his bike down the main drag of this funky beach
town. Past dive bars. Clam shacks. Penny candy stores. A sex
toy shop. Tourists, locals, old, young, gay, straight.

A strange paradise. Exactly what Tony was looking for...

EXT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony locks up his bike.

He gazes through the window of a slice joint at a YOUNG WOMAN
behind the counter, her nose in a paperback.

She exudes a quiet strength and confidence. The type of 21-
year-old who seems like a grown-ass woman to a boy like Tony.

This is NANCY, his great love.

INT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. CONTINUOUS.

Tony strides into the shop, expecting Nancy to jump for joy.

But she's too engrossed in her book to notice him. Play It As It Lays by Joan Didion.

He sneaks up with a finger gun drawn, Bonnie and Clyde style.

TONY
Stick 'em up!

She freezes, then lowers the book. Her jaw drops. Tony grins.

TONY (CONT'D)
Hey Bonnie.

NANCY
Tony. What are you doing here?

TONY
What does it look like I'm doin'?
Empty the register, nice and slow.

Nancy taps into her deep well of patience with Tony's antics.

NANCY
I can't talk now. I'm working.

But Tony doesn't listen.

TONY
C'mon, it's not busy. Give Clyde a
slice of cheese before he pumps you
full o' lead.

Tony grins. But Nancy's unamused, hands him a slice of pizza.

NANCY
For the road.

Tony plays it cool, winks on his way out. She rolls her eyes.

EXT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. CONTINUOUS.

As soon as he's outside, Tony's bubble of excitement bursts. That was not the reaction he was expecting...

But he quickly buries his doubts, snaps on a confident grin.

He tries the pizza, groans. Then chucks it into a trash can.

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. CONTINUOUS.

Tony lights a joint as he struts down the town docks.

He passes working fishing boats, weathered FISHERMEN gutting fish, smoking, chatting in a foreign language.

A grizzled OLDER GENT, his face a leathery map of years at sea, sits on a bench, plucking an odd-looking guitar.

This is Portuguese P-Town, but Tony doesn't know that yet...

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. RAILING. CONTINUOUS.

Tony smokes, gazing over the harbor to Long Point Lighthouse.

With no one watching, a sadness comes over him, the raw nerve sensitivity. A stare far too world-weary for his 20 years.

He looks down at two sharp rocks jutting out of the Atlantic.

Waves crash against them, as though inviting him to jump.

He stares at the churning water, both beautiful and sinister.

The sound of the surf builds, louder and louder...

Suddenly he climbs up onto the wooden fence. Stands atop it.

He closes his eyes...

And he JUMPS--

In SLOW MOTION, he flies through the air, his blue suit flapping in the wind, his mouth opening to scream...

But suddenly he's back at the railing, completely dry.

He shakes himself out of his trance, and spins to go--

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

Two beers are yanked from a bucket of ice.

Tony's grin is back as he helps himself at a lawn party he definitely wasn't invited to. Then makes a fast getaway.

EXT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. CONTINUOUS.

Tony returns as Nancy locks up, waving a friendly goodbye to a GUY IN A SNOOPY T-SHIRT, late 20s, a co-worker.

Tony glares at the guy as he goes, hit by a wave of jealousy. Then steps up to proudly present his pilfered beers to Nancy.

NANCY
Where'd you get these?

TONY
A magician never reveals his secrets.

She shakes her head, walks ahead of him, Tony at her heels...

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. CONTINUOUS.

He hustles after her, both sipping beers, surrounded by the constant street party that is P-Town.

Tony and Nancy's banter is fast, furious. They're both used to being the smartest person in the room. Kindred spirits.

TONY
Who the fuck was that guy?

NANCY
You know you don't have to be an asshole to everyone you meet? He's my boss. And he's really nice.

TONY
He's a 30-year-old man in a Snoopy t-shirt. If anyone's the asshole...

NANCY
You used to love Snoopy.

TONY
Sure, until I discovered R. Crumb. Right after I learned to crawl.

NANCY
Oh, so it was some other asshole who spent the entire last night of school pontificating about how Lucy and the football is a more apt metaphor for the human condition than Sisyphus and the rock?

TONY
I have no recollection of that.

NANCY
Of course not, you blacked out.

TONY

But it sounds kinda brilliant.

NANCY

And totally insufferable.

TONY

That's my middle name, baby!
Anthony Kinda Brilliant and Totally
Insufferable Bourdain. Nice ring to
it.

Nancy can't help but smile. Tony is a lot, but he can also be
charming. At times.

NANCY

Tony, why are you here? Seriously.

*

TONY

You know P-Town used to be an
artist colony? Some of my favorite
writers have spilled ink out here.
Mailer, Kerouac, O'Neill, Vonnegut.

Nancy's nodding. She knows all this already.

NANCY

Mary Oliver still lives here.

TONY

Seriously? Fucking cool. How's that
poem you like go? "Despair..."

NANCY

"Tell me about despair, yours, and
I will tell you mine. Meanwhile the
world goes on."

TONY

I love when you talk dirty to me.

*

Tony gazes at Nancy lovingly. She blushes. She's getting
lured back into his orbit, but tries to stand her ground.

*

*

NANCY

What happened to staying in Jersey
for the summer? We were gonna give
each other space, remember?

*

*

*

TONY

Hey, I brought you a gift!

*

He pulls out a baggie of pills. She rolls her eyes.

*

TONY (CONT'D)

The Times named Vassar the number
one Qualuude college in America.

He offers her one. Nancy's tempted, but catches herself--

NANCY

Tony, I'm trying to be good.

TONY

Fuck off. We have the rest of our
lives to be good.

Tony shakes the pills at her with a shit-eating grin. And a
mischievous grin of her own spreads over Nancy's face...

NANCY

On one condition. For one night,
you promise not to be a prick.

Off Tony's smile, we SMASH CUT TO CLOSE-UPS OF:

Mouths popping ludes, taking shots. Lude, shot, lude, shot...

INT. COLONY TAP. LATER.

An old-school Masshole dive filled with maritime flotsam and
Red Sox jetsam. Faded pictures of fishermen, a jukebox in the
corner, a wooden bar that will probably give you a splinter.

At the jukebox, Tony flips through, a kid in a candy store.

TONY

Hell yes.

He makes his selection: Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On".

Tony grooves onto the dance floor, peacocking for Nancy. He's
not a good dancer, but he's committed, and she clearly gets a
kick out of him. Sometimes.

Tony pulls Nancy off her barstool and into a twirl. They slow
dance, drunk and high, two peas in a pod.

As the music swells, Tony sings along with abandon--

TONY (CONT'D)

*And giving yourself to me can never
be wrong / If the love is true!*

Nancy laughs, pushing him away playfully.

TONY (CONT'D)

Sorry Bonnie. You can't get rid of
me that easy. You like me too much.

Nancy smiles, pushes him away again.

NANCY

Fuck you. Clyde.

Tony melts. She called him by his nickname! All six-feet-four
inches of him gaze down at her. They're about to kiss, when--

A motley crew of BADASSES bursts in. Ripped jeans, tats, hoop
earrings. A merry band of pirates. And the cool kids in town.

Tony and Nancy keep dancing, but he can't take his eyes off
them. Their leader, early 30s, handlebar mustache, thick
glasses, paunch, shakes hands with every barfly, the de-facto
mayor of P-Town. This is DIMITRI.

The Boston-strong BARTENDER hands Dimitri two free shots. He
downs them, then pays respects to a SLEEPING OLD MAN with a
SLEEPING OLD DOG at his feet. They both grumble awake, then
pass out again. We'll meet them again later...

Suddenly, ABBA's "Honey, Honey" takes over the jukebox--

And Tony loses it. He instantly flips from Mr. Romantic to a
tornado of misplaced rage.

TONY

The fuck? Who put this shit on?!

NANCY

Relax, it's just ABBA.

TONY

It is not "just ABBA"! It's lowest-
common-denominator sonic drivel.

TYRONE, 30s, a hulking, brawny mass, heads back from the
jukebox to join the cool kids at their corner table.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hey! I hate this saccharine Swedish
shit with every fiber of my being!

Tyrone stops. Not a guy you want to fuck with.

TYRONE

Do we have a problem?

NANCY

I'm so sorry-

TONY

Fuck yeah we do! Putting ABBA on
should be a crime in the state of
Massachusetts. Somebody call the
governor!

Tyrone shakes his head, continues to his table. The whole bar
is watching Tony's temper tantrum. And Nancy's had enough.

NANCY

I'm gonna go.

TONY

What? Wait.

NANCY

Remember the one condition?

TONY

It's not my fault these philistines
have shit taste!

NANCY

Let's just talk tomorrow, OK? We
have a share house up the street.
41 Commercial, gray, yellow trim.

TONY

Whatever. Just go.

Nancy's being kind, but Tony's being his own worst enemy, yet
again. And she's tired of it. He doesn't even watch her go.

Tony makes a beeline to the jukebox and tries to change the
song. When it won't change, he kicks the jukebox. Hard.

Tony's spinning out of control. Dimitri steps in.

DIMITRI

Hey man. Relax. Don't yuck our yum.

TONY

Fuck's that supposed to mean?!

Tony seems about to get violent, when Tyrone grabs him--

EXT. COLONY TAP. CONTINUOUS.

And throws him out onto the sidewalk. Then heads back inside.

Tony scrambles to his feet, yelling after him--

TONY
ABBA sucks ass!

But the door is closed. And no one gives a shit.

Tony deflates. Abandoned by his great love, thrown out on his ass. Bottom of the barrel. *

But then he hears something. The faint crash of waves... *

EXT. HARBOR BEACH. CONTINUOUS.

Tony stares out at the Atlantic. Moonlit, but foreboding.

He's alone. No one to fall back on. He looks utterly hopeless. Until his restlessness kicks back in, and-- *

He runs.

He strips off his blue suit, dumps it in a pile on the sand. And dives buck naked into the pitch black water. *

INT. OCEAN. CONTINUOUS.

Tony swims down into the depths below.

He holds his breath an impossibly long time. He propels himself deeper, relentlessly searching...

But before we know what exactly he's looking for, or even if this is reality or some sort of vision, we SNAP TO--

EXT. BEACH. THE NEXT MORNING. *

Tony jolts up, blinded by the sun, hungover as hell. He squints down the beach, sees a family of four staring at him. *

TONY
Mornin'! *

The parents cover the kids' eyes and turn away, disgusted. *

Tony's confused until he remembers - he's buck naked. *

He scrambles to cover himself with his crumpled suit, when-- *

NANCY (O.S.)
Hey Botticelli! Coffee! *

Nancy's on the porch of a dilapidated gray-shingled house with yellow trim. The share house. Tony scampers up to her. *

INT. SHARE HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony busts in. Plates piled in the sink. A rusty spring poking out of the ratty couch. A frat basement on the beach.

TONY
Well isn't this a delight?

NANCY
Coffee's in the pot.

TONY
You are a goddess, sent from above
to quench the thirst of my soul.

Tony goes in for a morning kiss. She awkwardly turns a cheek.

NANCY
Tony, let's talk.

Instead, he pours coffee and gives himself a grand tour, opening up the fridge, cupboards, you name it.

TONY
That bar last night was the real deal, huh? Felt like Ahab used to rage there. Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum, know what I mean?

NANCY
Can you sit for a second please?

He's not listening, excited as he checks the place out. She sits on the couch, growing tired of his antics.

TONY
This place is a gem! So many bedrooms! Ours, your sister's... wait, is this an extra? We could turn it into a black light room like at school! Couple lava lamps-

NANCY
TONY SHUT THE FUCK UP AND SIT DOWN!

Tony stops short, sees she's serious. He sits. Nancy exhales.

NANCY (CONT'D)
There's a reason I didn't invite you this summer. We need to stop seeing each other. Like, for good.

For once, Tony's at a loss for words.

NANCY (CONT'D)

We've been together since I was 17.
I need space. I need to grow. I'm
not sure I can do that with you.

TONY

But you love me. I love you. We're
Bonnie and Clyde.

For a second, we see the vulnerable boy behind Tony's
bluster. Nancy softens. She loves him, but needs to do this.

NANCY

Look, I'm not saying we can't hang
out at all, OK? I'm just saying-

But Tony rejects the olive branch. His armor snaps back on.

TONY

Are your parents behind this?
Buncha joyless, Stepford-wife
vulgarians. Or your supposedly
perfect sister who smokes weed like
a fucking chimney-

NANCY

Tony. This is my decision. We're
just not good for each other.

TONY

Bull-fucking-shit! I'm the best
thing that ever happened to you.
But all this time, you've been a
fox in the henhouse. Benedict
Arnold. *Et tu, Brute!*

NANCY

You're not listening! You never
fucking listen. This isn't about
you. I want this, for myself.

Tony heads for the door, in a huff.

TONY

Cool. Have fun "growing". Sounds
boring as shit. I'll be out on my
own, carpe-ing the fucking diem.
Have a nice life, Nancy!

He dramatically SLAMS the door behind him.

PRE-LAP: Serge Gainsbourg's "Bonnie and Clyde"...

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony bombs down the street, distraught but trying to keep his head high. But then--

He spots a couple holding hands. Another, arm-in-arm. Another making out on a park bench. Salt in the wound...

EXT. BIG VIN'S LIQUOR. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony emerges with a 30-rack of Narragansett Lager, and immediately pops open a can, takes a long swig.

EXT. RACE POINT BEACH. LATER.

Families and couples frolic on a gorgeous beach day.

But in their midst sits Tony, slugging a beer in jeans and reading Heart of Darkness.

He finishes the beer, crushes the can, then lets out an enormous belch. He gets some glares of disgust. And grins.

He lies back on the sand, closes his eyes...

LATER.

And wakes up burnt to a crisp. A freshly cooked lobster.

EXT. BIG VIN'S LIQUOR. LATER.

Tony busts out again, scowling, fresh 30-rack in hand.

He pulls out a cold beer to ice his brutal sunburn.

EXT. CLAM SHACK. LATER.

The sun is setting and Tony is wasted.

He takes a bite of a fried clam roll. Makes a face. Grabs some Tabasco, salt and pepper, starts to doctor it.

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Tony, a shitfaced Romeo, shouts up to a second floor window--

TONY

Nancy-o, oh Nancy-o! I had a great day. Without you!

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

Except for that clam roll. That
clam roll was deeply mediocre. What
light through yonder share house
window breaks? It is the East, and
Nancy is the sun. Arise, you bitch-

*
*
*

The window slides open. Nancy leans out, book in hand.

NANCY

Did you just call me a bitch?

TONY

What? No. Shakespeare did.

NANCY

Apologize. Right now.

TONY

I'm not going to apologize! I just
need to crash. Can I borrow a
couch? Please?!

NANCY

No!

TONY

We can be roommates. I'll pay rent!

NANCY

You don't have a job!

TONY

I do have a job. I'm a writer!

Nancy just stares at him.

TONY (CONT'D)

OK. I'll work in a restaurant. No
one here can cook for shit. I'll
show this town how a true Frenchman
cooks!

*
*

NANCY

You're half French. Half Jersey.

TONY

Je suis complètement français!

Tony's making a scene. A light goes on in an adjacent house.

Nancy the empath takes pity on him.

NANCY

OK, OK. You can sleep on the couch.
You just have to shut up and stop-

But Tony's not listening again. He's on Planet Tony.

TONY

Attention, mes amis! You heard it
here first! *Je vais chercher* a
fuckin' job, get my fuckin' girl
back, and we'll live happily ever-

Nancy gives up. And SLAMS the window shut.

Tony frowns, a plastered yet determined look in his eye...

*

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

He stumbles back into town, searching for help wanted signs.

Nothing... nothing... until... he finds one!

A restaurant. *Ciro's*.

He pounds on the door, oblivious to the fact that it's three
in the morning.

TONY

I! Need! A! Fucking! Job!

He curls up in the doorway, muttering. And passes out.

PRE-LAP: The sound of a key opening a lock...

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FRONT DOOR. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony, looking much worse for wear, opens his eyes to see a
MAN standing over him, unlocking the front door.

TONY

Hey! I'm here for the help wanted-

Tony stops. It's Dimitri, the cool kid leader from the Colony
Tap, glaring down at him. He heads inside, shuts the door.

*

*

TONY (CONT'D)

Great.

Tony slumps back, head pounding. Suddenly the door swings
open, sending Tony flat onto his back.

Dimitri looms over him. And offers a mug of coffee.

DIMITRI
Boss'll be in soon.

Tony scrambles up to take the coffee.

TONY
My man! Say, could I take a piss-

SLAM.

Tony plops onto the curb. He takes a long pull of coffee, surprised by Dimitri's small but kind gesture.

LATER.

Tony stares at the bottom of the now-empty cup. The sun's fully up. He's roasting.

CIRO (O.S.)
The fuck are you?

Tony looks to see the eponymous restaurant owner, 40s, Masshole, all pomp, no circumstance. This is CIRO.

TONY
I'm here for the help wanted sign?

Ciro heads inside. But leaves the door open. So Tony follows--

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

And stumbles into a tourist trap, New England-Rusty-Scupper-sea-shanty themed. Buoys, hurricane lamps, red-and-white tablecloths, oyster crackers all over the dining room. And more of the same on a back deck overlooking the harbor.

CIRO
You look like a bum. I got enough bums. What do I need you for?

Tony nips at Ciro's heels as he goes about his morning routine: checking the reservation book, counting cash from the register, lighting up yet another Marlboro Red.

Tony chases, delivering a pitch that Ciro largely ignores.

TONY
Well sir, to be brutally honest,
I'm an excellent chef. I don't mean
to brag, but it comes naturally to
me, you know, as a Frenchman. *C'est
facile pour moi.* You speak French?
Cool if you don't.
(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

Most people don't. Anyways my dad was born in France and taught me how to cook when I was a kid. And I've been to France, twice, and eaten at some of the great temples of *haute cuisine*, including La Pyramide. You know La Pyramide? Actually, my parents ate there. My mom made me and my brother wait in the hot car reading Tintin. My dad wanted us to come in, and it was this big drag out fight. But my mom won. Surprise, surprise. She left us to bake and suffocate while she ate the best food on the planet. But whatever! Point is, I picked up the fundamentals of classic technique, through, like, parking lot osmosis. And back at home, me and my dad, we would cook together most nights. Made every single dish out of Julia Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking - both volumes. This one time, we cooked *lapin* - that's rabbit - with a mustard cream sauce. And I have to tell you, this sauce was epic. You wanna know the secret? Two words: Grey. Poupon. From Dijon, France, home of the best *moutarde* in the world. My dad buys it imported, at this tiny French place in Secaucus. You know why French mustard is better than American? A dash of white wine. So simple! Anyways, I think *lapin à la dijonnaise* could be a huge hit here. I'd be happy to let you put it on the menu, as long as we write it out in French. Or, I guess we could call it "Tony and Pierre's Famous Mustard Sauce". Pierre is my dad. We can discuss the language later, but I'm good as long as the word "Tony" and/or "Pierre" is on there.

Ciro finally looks at the kid. Takes a long drag off his cig.

CIRO

Do you have any experience working in an actual restaurant?

TONY

Well... not literally, but-

CIRO
I got just the right spot for you.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

A Mount Everest of filthy dishes, piled in a large industrial sink. Tony stands over them.

CIRO
Congrats Grey Poupon. You're hired.

Ciro gives him a pat - more like a shove - and walks off.

Tony looks at the dishes, encrusted in chunks of food and grime. *What has he gotten himself into?*

Tony surveys his new territory, a long hallway of a kitchen.

At one end, there's a door out to an alley, and at the other, a Dutch door to the restaurant floor. Tony's station, the illustrious sink, is nearest the alley; next to him is a cold food station, then two lobster steamers, a few deep fryers, a range, and a broiler. Below all these, a row of low-boy fridges, and above, the pass, where plates get passed to servers on the floor. Rust is noticeable everywhere, and it's clean enough, barely. Basically, this is not La Grenouille.

Dimitri comes up the basement stairs, carrying a plastic tub.

TONY
Hey man, you know I know how to cook? No offense, but this shit is pretty menial. I could help you out with some new menu items, whatever you need.

Without a word, Dimitri comes over and turns the water on, which pours onto the plates. Tony releases a woe-is-me sigh.

TYRONE (O.S.)
What up, Mel!

And with that, here comes the cavalry, all the cool kids from the bar, AKA the kitchen crew of Ciro's:

It's Tyrone the burly ABBA fan, second-in-command; LYDIA, goddess of clam chowder, single mom; and SAL, Salvadoran line cook, a real hound dog.

LYDIA
You work here now, Mel? Sweet Jesus, I'm so sorry.

Sal gives Tony a hearty slap on the ass.

SAL

Mel! *Pequeño hijo de puta!*

Tony's overwhelmed, but tries to ingratiate himself.

TONY

Hey, I'm Tony. Who's Mel?

The cooks burst out laughing. Tony smiles, but he can tell that Mel is not exactly a term of endearment.

Then they all get ready for service. In some kitchens, this is a quiet, meditative act. In this one, it's a damn party.

Sal pours a plastic quart container of piss-colored beer. Lydia makes a jug of Long Island Iced Tea. Dimitri swigs from a handle of Jim Beam. Tyrone does a bump of coke off the back of his hand, in plain sight.

ABBA's "Dancing Queen" bursts out of a boombox. Tony groans.

TYRONE

You got a problem, Mel?

But he's learned his lesson. Shakes his head no.

They get to work. Dimitri filets a swordfish; Tyrone butchers a side of beef; Lydia makes chowder; and Sal rips through vats of shellfish, deveining shrimp and debearding mussels.

Tony struggles through the plates, scalding his hands and covering himself in muck.

LATER.

Tony scrubs away. He's spent, burnt, and sweaty, when--

DIMITRI

That's family!

The staff lines up as Sal lays out homemade *pupusas*.

TONY

Wait. Is this food free?

Tyrone glares at him. *Fucking Mel.*

*

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony joins the other chefs, sits on a milk crate and digs in.

TONY

Whoa, these are delicious! What are they?

Everyone stares at Tony.

SAL

Pupusas, Mel.

They all shake their heads as Dimitri joins them.

DIMITRI

National dish of El Salvador. Most of us like to cook something personal for family meals.

LYDIA

Yo chef, finish about the train girl!

Tyrone and Sal mumble in agreement through full mouths as Dimitri grins sheepishly and takes a seat.

DIMITRI

Alright, where was I?

SAL

The bathroom, man! The good shit.

DIMITRI

Oh, right. Well we still had like three stops 'til we got back to Antwerp, so I'm taking my time, enjoying this young lady, who was quite attractive, if I do say so myself. But she's really rushing it, like wham bam, thank you ma'am. And I didn't speak any Dutch, French or German, and I don't even know which one she speaks, so we're kind of at an impasse. And then we're pulling into the next station, and she just bolts, leaves me in the bathroom with my dick in my hand, literally.

SAL

Tu pequena y sucia pinga!

DIMITRI

A tu mama parece gustarle!

The chefs guffaw at the inside joke. Tony is lost.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

When I get back to my seat, there's a dude getting on and sitting next to her! A huge, hulking Belgian, not to be trifled with.

LYDIA

A married woman! You dog.

DIMITRI

The rest of the trip, I'm guilt-ridden, thinking I should go apologize to the guy, fall on my sword. But then right before the last stop, she comes over and kisses me on the cheek, in broad daylight, and hands me her number. And the guy like, shrugs. Turns out it was her brother all along!

The gang is loving it, laughing. Tony tries to chuckle along.

TYRONE

So you saw her again?

DIMITRI

Took her out a few times, 'til she got tired of me like they all do.

The chefs compliment Dimitri on the story.

Tony, feeling left out, jumps into the ensuing silence.

TONY

One time, Nancy and me - that's my girlfriend - we made out on the subway in New York. We were wasted and just couldn't wait, so we went at it. Everyone was staring, so fucking jealous. There was this one loser who looked like he was about to whip it out and jerk off. He was probably homeless. And I was like, "Fuck off, man!" It was awesome.

Crickets.

*

LYDIA

Maybe stick to dishes, Mel.

SAL

Yeah Mel, no more talking.

TYRONE

What you got against homeless
people, Mel?

Tony can't stand it anymore.

TONY

My name's Tony, OK? What the hell
does Mel mean anyway?

SAL

It's short for '*mal carne*'. Means
bad meat, *amigo*.

Tony absorbs this, tries not to show the hurt.

DIMITRI

Alright, kids. Back in.

They all follow their leader back inside, Tony last.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. MOMENTS LATER.

Ciro the tyrant leads a pre-service meeting with the whole
staff - chefs, servers and bartenders alike.

CIRO

Speed is all that matters. Knock
shit out, get it on the table,
don't be a douchebag.

*
*

Tony checks the other chefs. They've heard this all before.

CIRO (CONT'D)

What else? We got a wedding on the
deck late. Oh, and push the haddock
special.

DIMITRI

Haddock's going on six days old. We
can't serve that.

CIRO

Well where's this week's order? Did
you call the guy?

DIMITRI

Three times. Did you call the guy
about cleaning the hood?

CIRO

Who are you, my fuckin' wife?

DIMITRI

That hood's a fire hazard 'til it gets cleaned, Ciro.

CIRO

Now you sound like my fuckin' ex-wife! You do your job, I'll do mine. Everybody, haddock!

Dimitri frowns, tired of fighting this fight.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

The mid-dinner rush, the kitchen crew going full throttle.

But Tony's way behind, barely keeping his head above water, a massive pile of dishes in the sink.

TYRONE

Need more sizzle platters, Mel!

TONY

Shit, OK. I'm on it.

TYRONE

Now, Mel. I need them fucking now!

Sal notices Tony is drowning, so he steps off his station and starts washing dishes.

LYDIA

The Salvadoran Stallion comin' in hot!

Tony nods thanks at Sal. Sal nods back - this is what they do, they help each other out. An unspoken rule.

Just then, a CLAMOR from the dining room floor--

Everyone turns to see a parade of wedding party guests, post-ceremony, high and hungry. The GROOM in a tangerine tux and ruffle shirt, the BRIDE in a pristine white wedding gown.

The group heads to the back deck, but the bride hangs back, peering into the kitchen through the Dutch door.

BRIDE

Hi there.

She stares at Sal with undeniable fuck-me eyes.

SAL

Hola.

The bride smiles, and moves on to join the wedding party. *

TYRONE

The Stallion strikes again!

The kitchen crew chuckles as they get back to work... *

LATER.

The end of the night. The rush has died down. Tony's gotten a handle on the dishes, but he looks beaten down.

Just then, LAUGHTER and OOHS and AAHS from the back door--

Tony sees Lydia and Tyrone thoroughly enjoying the view...

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. CONTINUOUS.

Tony pokes his head between Lydia and Tyrone. His eyes go wide. We hear Sal's GRUNTS and the bride's SQUEALS.

LYDIA

Now that's a wedding night.

The crew is delighted, disgusted, and scandalized. Tony looks on with a growing sense of awe. Just then--

DIMITRI (O.S.)

Tips! Piping hot, fresh tips.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

The crew scurries back in as a waitress hands Dimitri a tip jar filled with cash. He passes each cook their share.

Tony approaches warily. He got his ass kicked today. Is he gonna get a tip? Or even get fired?

Dimitri hands Tony a few bucks. Not a fortune, but something. *

DIMITRI

See you tomorrow, Mel.

Tony smiles. He survived his first day.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Nancy reads on the ratty couch - Orlando by Virginia Woolf. Her roommates - her sister ROBIN (23, no bullshit) and MIKE (20, stoner) - share a joint. *

Tony knocks as he swings open the door, grocery bag in hand.

TONY
Comrades! Who's hungry?

The roommates all look up.

MIKE
Dude, I could eat a horse!

ROBIN
What the fuck is he doing here? Am
I hallucinating?

TONY
Pleasure to see you Robin, as
always.

NANCY
Tony, you can't just barge in here.
This is Mike, our new roommate. And
we're about to go to Spiritus.

TONY
That pizza tastes like a cheesy
dump. Have some self respect. I'll
make you something.

Nancy eyes Tony suspiciously as he unpacks the groceries.

NANCY
What, you're robbing the A&P now?

TONY
I paid for this meal with my hard
earned money, thank you very much.

ROBIN
The delinquent got a job? That jay
was laced with something for sure.

Tony passes out three cold beers.

TONY
Friends new and old, give me ten
minutes and I'll blow your minds.

Mike snags a beer. Robin shoots a look at Nancy, who shrugs.

LATER.

A fried egg slides onto a pile of melted cheese and bread.

Tony finishes plating four of them, carries them over.

MIKE

Fuck yeah!

He lunges for a plate, but Tony dodges him, walks right by.

TONY

Sorry sir, we'll be dining *al fresco* this evening.

He pushes through a screen door onto the porch...

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. PORCH. CONTINUOUS.

Nancy and Robin begrudgingly follow Mike outside, where Tony's setting up four places at a picnic table.

TONY

You know what's special about a beach house?

He waits for an answer as he lights a candle, but none comes.

TONY (CONT'D)

The fucking beach, you heathens.

He steps back to reveal the table, overlooking the moonlit beach. It's beautiful.

But everyone's stoned or pissed. Mike rushes to the table.

MIKE

Grilled cheese, fuck yeah!

TONY

That, my friend, is called a *croque madame*.

*

Mike chows down. Nancy and Robin sit, frown at their plates.

NANCY

Does the recipe call for American cheese?

TONY

It calls for *gruyère*, *bien sûr*, but we're in the wilds of Cape Cod, and necessity is the mother of invention, as they say.

NANCY

Necessity may also have birthed some crap over the years.

TONY

Perhaps. But look at this farm
fresh egg-

NANCY

A cheap parlor trick. Everything's
better with an egg on it.

TONY

I can't argue with the truth.

*

Tony grins at Nancy, who can't help but smile. They're still
formidable sparring partners.

*

TONY (CONT'D)

Now, if you guys want more cooking
like this, I'd be happy to oblige,
on one condition: you let me call
this house my humble abode.

ROBIN

What? No! Absolutely not.

MIKE

If he pays rent and cooks like
this, I'm in.

Tony makes prayer hands at Nancy. She hesitates, still has a
soft spot for him...

*

ROBIN

Mom and dad will kill you, Nancy.

NANCY

But he's got nowhere else to go...

ROBIN

That's not your problem!

NANCY

Tony, just stay in your own room,
and away from mine, OK?

TONY

Cross my heart and hope to die.

He waits hopefully... finally Nancy nods, her kindness
winning out. Tony celebrates. Robin glares.

*

ROBIN

You pay rent. On fucking time.

Tony salutes, then digs into his food, victorious for now.

But Nancy still doesn't touch her food. She's torn between her compassion for Tony, and keeping him at arm's length...

INT. SHARE HOUSE. TONY'S BEDROOM. MORNING.

Tony wakes up in the extra bedroom, hungover but happy.

He is now a card-carrying member of the share house!

INT. SHARE HOUSE. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Coffee drips into a pot.

Tony waits, showered and ready for work. When Nancy emerges, bed-headed, he grabs a mug and makes it just the way she likes it. Cream and two sugars.

TONY
Mornin', m'lady.

She takes the mug, barely looking at him.

TONY (CONT'D)
Come eat at Ciro's some time.
Food's nothing special, but the
people are actually pretty cool.

Nancy shrugs. Tony, desperate, doubles down--

TONY (CONT'D)
They have your favorite! Lobster
with drawn butter. Admittedly
pretty hard to fuck up, but still.

She nods noncommittally, then wanders back to her room. *

Not the romantic moment Tony wanted. But he's gotta go...

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Tony grabs his trusty bike and cruises into town. He's got a job, and he's gonna get his girl back. Things are looking up!

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony strides in. Dimitri doesn't look up, instead focusing on the NY Times crossword puzzle.

DIMITRI
You're late, Mel.

TONY

What? It's eleven on the dot.

DIMITRI

Early is on time, on time is late.

Dimitri turns back to his crossword. Tony deflates.

As he settles in at the sink, Lydia arrives with her daughter ANNIE, 9, who she sets up on a milk crate in the corner, then heads to her station.

LYDIA

Mel, this is Annie. She'll tell you if she needs anything. Don't be an asshole.

TONY

Oh... Hey.

Annie stares at him, as she starts to work on making a friendship bracelet. Tony, uncomfortable, crosses to Lydia.

TONY (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm not really, like, a kid kinda guy.

LYDIA

Don't worry, she's not really a Mel kinda kid.

She gives him a fake smile and gets to work.

LATER.

Tony scrubs his way through a sink full of pots, determined to get into Dimitri's good graces.

He brings a pot over to Dimitri, singing a ditty--

TONY

Mr. Clean, Mr. Clean.

Dimitri doesn't even look at him.

DIMITRI

Don't talk. Just work.

Tony straightens up, goes back to the sink.

LATER.

Closing time. Tony counts his tips, looking a little less destroyed than last night.

The chefs head out together, leaving Tony behind with barely a wave. But he brushes it off, heads out the door.

EXT. CLAPPS POND. LATER.

A bonfire, ashes floating into the sky over a tranquil pond. *

Tony drops his bike, struts over to Nancy, Robin and friends sitting around the flames, passing a joint, making s'mores.

Tony tries to catch Nancy's eye, but she's focused on the dude next to her, laughing at his jokes. Tony looks closer--

It's that Snoopy fuck from Spiritus.

ROBIN

Anyone wanna see Jaws this weekend?

Tony scoffs loudly. Nancy finally notices him. *

NANCY

What? You have a problem with Jaws?

TONY

No problem at all. Of course I want to see it. Very subversive cinema. *Nouvelle vague* in style. Italian neorealist in substance. If Godard and Fellini had a baby, it'd sure as shit be fucking Jaws.

He gets a couple chuckles, but Nancy isn't impressed.

NANCY

For the record, Fellini is not a neorealist. And you are a snob.

She gets even more chuckles, including from Snoopy. Everyone follows her lead, going back to their conversations.

Tony turns to stare out at the dark, glassy pond, feeling rejected, his anger simmering.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Another day, another dish. Tony scrubs away. He just might be getting the hang of it. But then-- *

Sal slides a plastic tub across the floor, landing at Tony's feet. He looks down at hundreds of shrimp in their shells.

A new task Tony has no idea how to do. He gets to work...

LATER.

A mound of shrimp sits piled high, peeled and deveined.

The end of service. Tony's apron is covered in shrimp gunk. He watches the crew gear up to go out for drinks again.

Feeling shunned by his other friends, Tony takes a shot.

TONY

You guys going out tonight?

They all stop and stare. *This guy.* Finally, Lydia shrugs.

LYDIA

You can't come out with us dressed like that, Mel.

SAL

Yeah Mel, *huelas como el coño de una abuela.*

TYRONE

Take some pride in your appearance, Mel.

Tony grins. And happily pulls off his disgusting apron...

INT. COLONY TAP. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony follows Tyrone, Lydia, and Sal into the Colony Tap. He basks in the glow of the crew's usual warm reception.

But as they post up at their corner table, Tony spots Nancy and co at the bar. He hesitates, torn between the kitchen crew and his great love...

And he chooses Nancy.

He elbows his way through the crowd to stand near her group.

ROBIN

You fucking reek, dude.

NANCY

Robin, give us a minute.

Robin shrugs and turns away. Tony flashes a flirtatious grin.

TONY

Hey Bonnie. How's your night?

But Nancy's not in a flirting mood.

NANCY

Your mom called the house.

The mention of his mother's name makes Tony go white.

TONY

What? When? How?

NANCY

She called my parents. They told her where you were.

TONY

Well, what the fuck did she want?

NANCY

To know if her son was alive.

TONY

And what the fuck did you tell her?

NANCY

That you were!

Tony scoffs. He's getting moody, self-righteous.

TONY

I can't believe you did that.

NANCY

Man, relax. I was just trying to help.

TONY

How is ratting me out helping?

NANCY

Ratting you out? Your mom was freaking out, I calmed her down. It's not fucking about you!

Tony's stung, but he deserves the tough love. She softens.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I know this break up thing was my idea, but it's hard for me too. Let's just try to be friends, OK?

She smiles at him, but for Tony, that's a fate worse than death. She turns back to her group.

Tony, distraught but trying to hide it, returns to the chefs.

Lydia watched the whole thing go down. She gets up.

LYDIA
Come with me, Mel.

EXT. COLONY TAP. MOMENTS LATER.

Lydia and Tony smoke out on Commercial Street.

LYDIA
Who was that?

TONY
Nobody.

Lydia shoots him a look.

TONY (CONT'D)
My girlfriend. Ex-girlfriend.

Lydia nods, can't help but have some sympathy for the kid.

LYDIA
If that girl doesn't want you, then
she doesn't deserve you.

Tony's surprised. Just then, Nancy and friends bust out of the bar. She ignores him, but Mike waves.

MIKE
We're hitting A-House, bro!

ROBIN
He's not invited.

Tony and Nancy catch each other's eyes. Both so sensitive and vulnerable. Raw nerves, trying to protect themselves.

LYDIA
You can't be so desperate, Mel.
There are tons of reasons why my ex
and I broke up. But the main one
was he was needy as fuck. He was
also a deadbeat junkie. I'm just
saying, play it cool. It's the only
way to get her back.

Tony watches longingly as Nancy disappears around a corner.

TONY
Maybe I should just go home.

LYDIA
The world is bigger than her, Mel.
I assure you.

Tony nods, grateful for the guidance, but still burdened by his feelings. With Tony, everything's an opera.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's go have some fun.

Tony considers, torn...

INT. POST OFFICE CAFE AND CABARET. LATER.

The kitchen crew takes seats in a tiny upstairs theater.

And Tony's right there with them. He decided to stay.

He checks out the mixed crowd. Gay, straight, young, ancient.

Lydia passes out tequila shots, hands one to Tony. They cheers and down their shots as the lights go down...

A spotlight hits the empty stage...

ABBA's "Fernando" blasts from speakers, bass pounding...

Tony groans, but Lydia elbows him, nods at the stage--

Where a hulking drag queen in a sequined dress struts into the light. It's none other than Tyrone.

Tony's jaw drops as Tyrone starts to lip synch expertly. The crowd goes crazy.

TYRONE
*Can you hear the drums Fernando? /
I remember long ago another starry
night like this / In the firelight
Fernando...*

Lydia and the crew stand, clap and dance. Tony joins them.

Tyrone sees Tony enjoying it. He winks at him. Tony smiles.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. AFTERNOON.

Tony's back at work, elbow deep in soapy water. He's silently scrubbing up a storm. A veritable dishwashing machine.

Until Sal motions to join him at his station.

SAL
Hey culo. Ven acqui.

Tony dries his hands as he crosses to Sal, a mound of oysters in front of him. Sal's a shellfish magician, and he's going to teach Tony his tricks.

SAL (CONT'D)
Tu viendo?

Tony nods as Sal puts a shucking knife into the hinge of an oyster, shimmies the blade across to cut the muscle, slides the knife under the body and pops open the upper shell, exposing the gelatinous, otherworldly oyster below.

SAL (CONT'D)
Your turn.

He hands Tony the knife and an oyster. Tony hesitates, but then dives in... and is surprisingly not bad! He struggles with the slippery blade, but manages to open the oyster.

SAL (CONT'D)
You done this before?

TONY
Not since I was twelve.

Nearby, Dimitri eavesdrops, surprised that Tony has shellfish experience. Tony and Sal both slurp back an oyster.

TONY (CONT'D)
First time I had an oyster, that's probably the best meal I ever had. On a boat in France. The only way to enjoy a bivalve.

DIMITRI
Maybe if you liked to work as much as you like to talk, you could be a halfway decent cook some day.

Tony heads back to the sink, but glances at Dimitri. There was a tiny hint of encouragement in there.

The kitchen phone rings loudly. Tyrone picks it up.

TYRONE
Ciro's.

As he listens, a grin spreads across his face. He puts his hand over the receiver, calling out in a high-pitched voice--

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Oh, Dimitri! My boy! Your mommy wants to know if you drank your milk and took your nap...

The crew laughs. Dimitri shakes his head, used to everyone making fun of him for his mom's incessant calling.

He picks up the phone, a paragon of sweetness and patience.

DIMITRI

Hi, Mama. How was your day?

Tony clocks this, Dimitri being kind to his mom...

LATER.

Post-service, the rest of the crew heads out, but rather than join them, Tony stays behind to practice his shucking skills.

He's slowly getting better, faster, as he opens oyster after oyster after oyster.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Tony pours his own coffee and is quickly out the door.

Nancy watches from the window as he bikes to work, paying her no mind. She's used to him hanging on her every word.

She's not sure how she feels about newly independent Tony...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

As Tony walks in, Dimitri glances at the clock - 10:58 AM.

Tony nods to Dimitri and goes straight to work.

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. LATER.

Another family meal, everyone on milk crates, listening to Tony, mid-story.

TONY

Turns out she thought I was her
boyfriend the whole time. I had no
clue, just thought it was my lucky
night!

Silence, until... Lydia laughs! The whole crew joins in, even Dimitri. Could it be? Is Tony actually making friends?

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

At the end of another shift, everyone's heading home when Dimitri pulls Tony aside.

DIMITRI

Hey. Meet me tomorrow early. 5 AM.

TONY

For what?

DIMITRI

Don't be late, Tony.

Tony can't help but smile. Dimitri called him by his name.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Nancy reads on the couch - The Dispossessed by Ursula LeGuin. She occasionally hits the marijuana night cap Mike and Robin are sharing.

Tony arrives, exhausted from his long day at work.

TONY

Evening, folks.

He heads to his room, Nancy eyeing him from behind her book.

ROBIN

Not in the mood to steal our spliff tonight?

TONY

Gotta crash. Early morning. Sweet dreams!

His door shuts. Nancy's surprised again by Tony's new sense of purpose, a real commitment to his work...

And something new flashes across her eyes - envy.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. TONY'S BEDROOM. LATER.

Tony lies in bed, ready for his big day tomorrow.

This is the first time we've seen him going to bed neither drunk nor high. A triumph.

LATER.

Tony jolts awake to sunlight in his eyes. *Shit.* He's late.

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Tony bursts through the front door and stops short--

The whole house is floating in the middle of the Atlantic.

Tony's stunned. It's a gorgeous day, golden hour light. He watches as a flock of seagulls skims the ocean's surface.

But in the distance, a wall of water rises up...

The wave barrels toward Tony, but he's frozen. His mouth opens to scream, but no sound comes. He's terrified. When--

PRELAP: BEEP BEEP BEEP...

INT. SHARE HOUSE. TONY'S BEDROOM. MORNING.

Tony jolts again, back to reality. Hits the alarm. 4:30 AM.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

In the pitch black, Tony races down the road, excited to beat Dimitri to the door.

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FRONT DOOR. MOMENTS LATER.

But of course, Dimitri is waiting for him as Tony screeches to the finish line.

He hands Tony an empty sack.

TONY
What's this for?

Dimitri just smiles...

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. MOMENTS LATER.

The duo ambles down the docks in the pre-dawn blue.

While the rest of P-Town is asleep, the harbor is abuzz, like Grand Central Station at rush hour. Fishing boats arrive and depart, men hauling nets, repairing ropes, gutting fish.

Dimitri leads them to a particularly rough and tumble vessel, waving to the salty dogs aboard.

DIMITRI
*No início da porra da manhã,
 rapazes!*

Lo and behold, Dimitri speaks fluent Portuguese too.

He jumps aboard the boat, signaling for Tony to follow--

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
*Este é Tony. Ele é um merda mas eu
 ainda gosto dele.*

The salty dogs laugh heartily at Tony. Tony hasn't a clue what Dimitri is saying, so he chuckles along.

Among the fishermen, Tony notices the same grizzled older gent who was playing the odd guitar the other day.

Dimitri gives him a loving handshake. This is JOAQUIM.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
Joaquim. Como você está meu amigo?

JOAQUIM
Nunca melhor.

Joaquim smiles, throws open an industrial-sized cooler, starts pulling out giant octopuses and squids, still alive and wriggling, tossing them right onto the deck of the boat.

Dimitri squats over the sea creatures. Inspects each one with a laser focus, like a jeweler assessing diamonds.

Then he points at the largest squid of all. A real monster.

DIMITRI
Obrigado, senhores!
 (then, to Tony)
 Get the sack.

Dimitri goes as Tony steps up with the sack. Stands over the squirming squid, not sure how to even start to pick it up...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

Tony and Dimitri return, Tony slinging the sack onto the counter. They suit up in aprons.

DIMITRI
 Onion, garlic, tomatoes, celery,
 bell peppers, carrots, Yukon golds.

Tony nods and scurries down the back stairs.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN FRIDGE. MOMENTS LATER.

In the frigid walk-in, Tony assembles Dimitri's list, trying to hold it all in his hands at once...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

As Tony reaches the top step, he trips and the vegetables go flying. Dimitri smiles.

DIMITRI

And now I give you perhaps the most
important lesson a cook can learn.
The marsupial pouch.

Tony looks at him askance while Dimitri demonstrates. He lifts up his apron to create a makeshift pouch.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

You try.

Tony makes his own apron pouch, then picks up the veggies and puts them in. A perfect carrying trick.

Tony and Dimitri share a smile, a sweet mentor/mentee moment. Which promptly makes Tony uncomfortable, so--

*

TONY

You speak any other languages,
other than fuckin' Portuguese?

Dimitri smiles. But instead of answering, he puts a worn tape in the boombox and presses play. A soaring aria: "Liebestod" from Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde". Tony lights up.

TONY (CONT'D)

I used to listen to this with my
dad. I love when the french horns-

DIMITRI

Get chopping.

And so Tony does, clumsily. Dimitri sets himself up nearby, pulling the giant squid from the sack and expertly cleaning, gutting, and slicing it.

The two work silently side-by-side, in concert, despite the chasm between their skill levels.

Dimitri turns on two burners, flames shooting up.

In a large pan, he sweats the veggies in olive oil, while in another, he sears the squid.

He deglazes the squid pan with red wine, scraping the bottom of the pan for the good bits.

He slams a large stock pot on the range, combines the good bits with the veggies and the squid, then adds more red wine, GLUG GLUG GLUG...

Tony watches wide-eyed. He has a feeling this cooking is different from the slapdash kind usually done at Ciro's.

This food is personal. It's being cooked with love.

Dimitri turns the burner to low and steps back.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
Eight hours and it's done.

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony and Dimitri perch on milk crates, sharing a pot of coffee as the sun comes up.

Tony lights a cig. Dimitri motions for one.

DIMITRI
Post-coital.

Tony grins. They smoke quietly, watching the sunrise. Then--

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
Spanish, French, Italian, German,
Russian, and enough Portuguese to
pick out squid with.

TONY
World traveler.

DIMITRI
Actually just the kitchen of Hotel
Le Negresco in Nice. Like the
friggin' U.N. in there. Cleaned
dishes for a year before they even
gave me a potato to peel. Learned
more in that year than I ever have.

TONY
You learned to cook in the French
Riviera and you wound up here? The
fuck happened?

But Dimitri just smiles, not ready to open up.

TONY (CONT'D)
Well you must be a damn good
dishwasher.

DIMITRI
I used to think I was damn good at
a lot of things. But I've learned I
know nothing in this life, and
that's a great place to start.

Tony ponders that, but the silence makes him anxious, so--

TONY
I went to France a couple times,
when I was a kid. Visited my dad's
family, my mom made us do a bunch
of tourist shit. But I always
remember that first oyster...

Tony trails off, also unsure if he's ready to be vulnerable.

DIMITRI
How'd it taste?

Tony takes a long drag, thinks before he speaks for once.

TONY
Slimy. Salty. But also... like the
future.

Tony eyes Dimitri, worried he said too much. But he smiles.

DIMITRI
You got a way with words, I'll give
you that.

Tony blushes, flattered. Dimitri stubs out his cig, stands.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
All right. Naptime.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

Dimitri stretches out on a banquette, and Tony follows suit.
Both snore almost instantly.

LATER.

Tony wakes up. Dimitri is gone.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

Tony comes in bleary-eyed. Dimitri nods to him.

DIMITRI
Keep this morning to yourself. It's
a surprise.

Tony nods, just as the cavalry returns - Tyrone, Lydia, Sal.

TYRONE
Mel, you motherfucker!

Sal, as usual, gives Tony a hearty slap on the ass.

But this time, Tony gives him one right back. Sal loves it.

SAL
Ooh! *Sucia pequena zorra de mierda!*

TONY
(to Lydia)
What did this shithead call me?

LYDIA
I believe the rough translation
would be "dirty little fuck slut".

Tony turns back to Sal.

TONY
*Hier soir, j'ai baisé ta grand-mère
avec ma bite de T-rex!*

A chorus of "oohs" erupts from the other cooks. Sal has no idea what Tony said but assumes it's dirty. He and Tony give each other a high-five.

Tyrone looks towards the pot on the stove.

TYRONE
Oh baby, somethin' smells good.

LYDIA
Have a feeling I know what it is...

Sal tries to take off the lid, but Dimitri swats him away.

DIMITRI
No peeking, *culo!*

And they all get to work to prep for service...

LATER.

Time for family meal. Dimitri stands at the stove with his hand on the pot lid, a master showman.

DIMITRI
Ladies and gentlemen, and Sal, may
I present... Portuguese Squid Stew!

He whisks away the lid. Everyone cheers. Their favorite.

The cooks hungrily ladle the stew into bowls and tear off big hunks of Portuguese bread to sop it up.

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. LATER.

They're out on the milk crates again, but instead of the usual locker room talk, they all eat in reverential silence.

When food is that good, there are no words.

Dimitri raises his bottle of Jim Beam. A toast.

DIMITRI
To Sal, as he gets ready to move on
to greener pastures. To the
horniest oyster shucker in the
history of oyster shuckers. May
there be many more blushing brides
in your future. You dirty ass dog.

SAL
Woof woof!

LYDIA
You have a sex addiction and you
need professional help.

SAL
Nunca!

TYRONE
I'll miss you, my little Salvadoran
Stallion.

ALL
To Sal!

They raise their various vessels of alcohol and cheers.

DIMITRI
All right kids. Back in.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Tony has taken over Sal's old station, shucking oysters and clams with aplomb. He stops to wipe his brow, when he sees--

*
*

The whole kitchen has turned into a pirate ship.

Planks and barrels and rope. The crew all in tattered rags, swords tucked in their sash belts. Lydia has a wooden leg.

Dimitri has been watching Tony shuck, impressed. He uses a hook hand to tip his tricorner hat. Tony grins, when--

From outside - BANG BANG BANG!!!

Tony ducks, thinking cannons are incoming.

DIMITRI
Pencils down, mateys!

They all put down their knives, turn off their burners and race out to the floor. Tony chases them to the--

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. BACK DECK. CONTINUOUS.

Where 4th of July fireworks explode over the harbor.

The cooks stand together, all back in their kitchen whites.

They watch in silent wonder, the night sky aflame. A moment of unity and camaraderie.

Tony looks around. This is his new family.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

Tony and the crew wipe down surfaces, still riding high.

TONY
Anyone wanna hang tomorrow?

The crew looks at him askance.

TYRONE
There's a reason it's called a day off, Mel.

LYDIA
Yeah Mel, no offense, but I got an actual life I have to deal with.

SAL
*Lo siento hombre, estoy a la caza
de la vagina.*

The crew laughs heartily. Tony chuckles along, but he's clearly disappointed.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Tony busts in, hoping for an afterparty. But the living room is empty. He slumps.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. TONY'S ROOM. LATER.

Tony crashes onto the bed. He stares at the ceiling, eyes wide, mind racing. So much energy, but no one to talk to.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. KITCHEN. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony bounds in, excited to see Mike, stuffing a donut in his face as he leaves for the day.

TONY
Hey man! Wanna hit the beach?

But Mike waves and is gone. Tony sighs.

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. PORCH. LATER.

Tony sits on the porch, sipping coffee, staring at the ocean.

A lovely way to spend a day off. But not for Tony...

His knee starts shaking. The restlessness returning...

And so he runs.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. LATER.

Tony races his bike through the constant street carnival of town, too anxious to notice the fun swirling around him...

EXT. PROVINCETOWN BIKE PATHS. LATER.

Tony's finally alone, speeding through Beech Forest, past Clapps Pond, by Hatches Harbor, and all the way out to--

EXT. RACE POINT LIGHTHOUSE. LATER.

*

Tony tries to sit still against the base of the lighthouse.

He scribbles in his notebook. But he's not writing--

It's all doodles, mostly sex organs. He's talented, but it's as juvenile as it gets.

He looks at his work, profoundly disappointed in himself. His anger rising again...

He rips out the page. Then lights it on fire.

He lets it go and watches the flame float down to the ground.

*

INT. PILGRIM MONUMENT. LATER.

Tony climbs a never-ending stone spiral staircase.

He reaches the top of the tower, takes in the impressive view of the town and harbor. It's objectively gorgeous. But Tony isn't able to appreciate it. He shrugs. *I've seen better...*

INT. COMMERCIAL STREET. LATER.

Biking back down the main drag, Tony spots Nancy and Robin on roller skates, laughing as they glide unsteadily toward him.

*

He sits up as he cruises toward them, puffs out his chest.

But when he passes them, they don't even notice. He deflates.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. TONY'S ROOM. LATER.

Tony collapses on the bed, lets out a huge sigh.

He eyes the sunset out the window. It's only early evening, but Tony doesn't know what to do with himself.

*

*

So he rolls over and sleeps.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony shuffles in, bed-headed and somehow even more exhausted. A shitty day off.

He finds his replacement waiting at the sink, and immediately scowls at him. He's 17, preppy, wide-eyed. This is RICHARD.

DIMITRI

Tony, Richard. Richard, Tony.

TONY

Welcome. I hope you're a masochist.

Richard stares blankly, mental gears grinding...

RICHARD

My parents are Episcopalian. So I guess I'm that?

Tony glares, channeling all his negative energy towards the new guy. Then he smacks him on the shoulder. Hard.

TONY

Good fucking luck, Ricky Ricardo.

Richard, now forever "Ricky Ricardo", shrugs, confused...

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. LATER.

Tony smokes alone, stewing in his bad mood.

LYDIA (O.S.)

Just sit quietly, please! I'll get you a snack when I can.

Tony turns to see Lydia deposit Annie onto a milk crate, then rush back inside.

The girl stares back at Tony stone-faced. Hard to tell who's grumpier. Tony thinks...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN FRIDGE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony scans the shelves, pulls out a few ingredients.

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER.

A sloppy PB&J, jelly oozing over the sides of white bread, is set on the milk crate opposite Annie. She looks up from her friendship bracelet.

TONY

Somebody order a snack?

The girl grins. And digs in. Tony watches, spirits lifted.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

The kitchen at full tilt. Dimitri calling orders, Tyrone at the broiler, Lydia on clam chowder.

Richard's at the sink - so many dishes, so totally fucked.

TYRONE

Ricky! I need more plates! Now!

But Richard doesn't know how to dig himself out.

Tony notices, and without a word he drops his shucking and does what Sal always did for him - he helps.

Richard gives Tony a silent thanks. Tony nods back - this is what they do.

Dimitri watches Tony being a team player. And a new emotion crosses Dimitri's face - pride.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. LATER.

After closing, Tony rides his bike home, a good day.

Dimitri breezes past him on his bike, picking up speed.

DIMITRI

Follow me!

Tony has no idea where they're going, but he chases after Dimitri onto a dark road headed out of town...

EXT. DIRT ROAD. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony races down a dirt path lined with scrub pines, Dimitri in the distance. They're headed for a clearing up ahead...

EXT. PROVINCETOWN DUNES. CONTINUOUS.

Suddenly the path changes from dirt to sand. Tony's bike starts to sink, Dimitri going up a steep hill ahead...

TONY

Wait up, man!

But Dimitri keeps going, disappearing over the hill...

Tony tries to climb the hill on the bike, but it's wobbly...

He finally crashes into the sand, takes the bike and walks...

Until he gets to the top of the hill, and looks out at a jaw-dropping sight, bathed in the glow of the full moon:

Sand dunes as far as the eye can see. Gently rolling mounds stretching down to the Atlantic. Wild, feral, uninhabited.

Like the Sahara on the beach.

In the distance, Tony spies a BEACH SHACK, candlelight flickering in its windows, faint music caught in the breeze.

And Dimitri's bike parked out front.

INT. BEACH SHACK. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony swings open the door to find a makeshift bar, packed to the gills with Portuguese people drinking and making merry.

DIMITRI

You made it!

Dimitri escorts Tony in, shaking hands with his constituents - the Portuguese fishermen from the docks, who swill red wine, their wives perched playfully on their laps.

Tony follows Dimitri to a corner table, a prime spot.

TONY

What the fuck is this place?

DIMITRI

My neighborhood bar.

TONY

You... live near here?

Dimitri grins. The woman of the house, BEATRIZ, 30s, Portuguese, ethereal, approaches. She pours them two glasses of wine, shares a smile with Dimitri.

BEATRIZ

Feliz que voce esta aqui.

DIMITRI

Feliz por estar de volta.

She goes. Tony clocks the serious, unrequited fuck energy.

TONY

Who the hell was that?

DIMITRI

Drink your wine, dickhead.

Tony shakes his head. Dimitri calls to an adjacent table--

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Howard!

It's the SLEEPING OLD MAN from the Colony Tap. But this time he's wide awake, riding a colossal red wine wave.

HOWARD

Dimitri you bastard! Get over here.

Dimitri heads to Howard's table to pay his respects.

DIMITRI

Howard, meet my friend Tony.

Tony clocks this term: "friend". He smiles, extends a hand...

But then a dog BARKS viciously at Tony, baring his teeth--

HOWARD

Cutty! Heel.

The dog sits. A fat, slobbering black lab.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

That's Cuttyhunk. He's a peach unless you're a prick.

DIMITRI

Tony, this man taught me everything I know.

Howard throws his arm around Dimitri's shoulder, out of affection but also to keep from falling over.

HOWARD

A lie! Fib! Fabrication! Falsehood! Fiction! Fable!... All true.

DIMITRI

Howard is a seafood master. The Portuguese Stew? His.

TONY

Wow. Extremely fucking delicious, sir.

Howard takes an elaborate bow.

DIMITRI

Every Labor Day, he used to throw the best party of the summer.

(MORE)

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

A clambake out on the town beach
for the real P-Towners. Everybody
came out for it. It was a tradition
like no other. A beautiful thing.

HOWARD

Now these greedy fucks are wringin'
the place dry. That cocksucker
Ciro's got his fist so far up our
asses, might as well call us Howdy
Doody.

Tony and Dimitri laugh as Howard actually does fall over. As they help him up...

The plucking of a guitar brings a hush over the crowd--

In the corner, a small band starts up. A regular guitar, a cello, and Joaquim on his odd guitar - a Portuguese guitar.

Beatriz steps up and begins to belt out a mournful ballad in Portuguese. The crowd is mesmerized, Tony included.

This is *fado*, and it's gorgeous and heartbreaking.

Tony glances over, stunned to see Dimitri silently weeping.

TONY

You OK there, pal?

Dimitri smiles, as if to say: you'll understand one day.
Tony's smug grin disappears.

The song ends. The crowd erupts. Tony leans over to Dimitri--

TONY (CONT'D)

What was she singing about?

Dimitri shrugs. One of the fishermen overhears him, says a single word in Portuguese.

FISHERMAN

Anseio.

Dimitri nods solemnly, then translates it for Tony.

DIMITRI

Longing.

LATER.

The band is cooking and everyone dances, pouring wine into each other's mouths using *porrón*, the glass wine pitchers.

Dimitri and Tony are wasted, euphoric, missing each other's mouths, pouring wine on each other.

Tony notices Dimitri making eyes at Beatriz.

TONY
Go dance with her!

Dimitri pushes him away playfully, gulping wine. Then--

Howard, outside for a smoke break, kicks in the door, a fat cigar in his teeth--

HOWARD
STRIPERS!

The whole place hoots and hollers, busting down the door, running for the beach.

Tony is mystified but chases anyway...

EXT. BEACH SHACK. CONTINUOUS.

Howard is the first one down by the ocean, casting a rod into the surf, where HUNDREDS OF FISH shimmer in the moonlight.

An army of Portuguese fishermen sprint to the shore, hopping into small boats to putter out into the ocean.

Dimitri drags Tony into a boat, as Howard reels in an impossibly huge striped bass...

EXT. BOAT. CONTINUOUS.

A flotilla makes its way out into open water.

Dimitri and the men dip nets overboard, pulling in stripers, covering the decks with fish.

TONY
What the fuck is happening?!

DIMITRI
Striper run! Once in a blue moon.

A fisherman shoves a loaf of Portuguese bread into Tony's hands, gesturing for him to throw some overboard.

Tony tosses hunks of bread into the water, and the stripers flock to it. An all-out feeding frenzy.

TONY
This is insane!

Dimitri hands Tony a net, as in: shut up and get to work.

Tony scoops fish after fish into the boat, giddy...

EXT. BEACH SHACK. LATER.

Hundreds of fish lie piled on the sand. A bonfire roars nearby, casting long shadows in the moonlight.

Tony studies Dimitri and Howard as they clean, gut and filet fish after fish, part of an assembly line of fishermen prepping them to be cooked simply over the open flame.

A fisherman hands Tony a fish carcass - head, bones and tail - and motions toward a pile of other carcasses. Tony tosses his onto the pile as the fisherman hands him another.

He may be a rookie, but Tony's part of the team.

LATER.

Tony plops down on the sand between Dimitri and Howard. They eat the fish with their hands, washing it down with wine.

Everyone's quiet, relishing the meal's simplicity. Even Cutty has a serving, chowing down at Howard's feet.

It's the best thing Tony's ever tasted. A perfect moment. *

For the first time, he feels like he's a part of something larger than himself...

EXT. DIRT ROAD. LATER.

Tony bikes home, a huge striper slung over his shoulder.

He's in no rush, a languorous victory lap, pedaling by the light of the moon.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Tony bangs in with the fish.

Nancy is of course reading - Giovanni's Room by James Baldwin. But the room is otherwise empty. *

TONY
Nance! You have to try this! *

Tony crashes into the kitchen, a bull in a china shop. Nancy rolls her eyes. *

TONY (CONT'D) *

I just had, like, an enlightenment level food experience. Under the bodhi tree type shit. Where is everyone? *

Tony flops the fish onto the counter, starts opening drawers, looking for something. *

NANCY *

Still out. I bailed. *

TONY *

You hungry? *

NANCY *

Not particularly. *

TONY *

Trust me. This fish is gonna blow your goddamn skull open. *

NANCY *

Oh, when you put it like that... *

Nancy's got her guard up. Tony stops, looks her in the eye. *

TONY *

Nancy Putkowski, if you'd do me the honor, I'd like to make you dinner. *

He grins at her, charmingly. She sighs, considering. *

NANCY *

Fine. But I can't be out late. I have to work tomorrow. *

TONY *

That's my girl. I need a halfway decent knife though. Field trip! *

NANCY *

Wait, what? *

But he's already out the door. She groans, but follows. *

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER. *

Tony rides his bike, the striper back on his shoulder, and Nancy now perched precariously on the handlebars. *

TONY

We were in this shack on the beach,
but it was also in the middle of
this huge desert somehow. And
everyone was dancing and getting
shitfaced and singing *fado*.

As they make slow progress, she holds on for dear life...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

A shaft of light falls onto the tile floor.

TONY

Here we are. Where the proverbial
sausage is made.

The overhead fluorescents flicker on. Tony grins with pride
from the doorway, Nancy behind him. The kitchen is pristine,
peaceful. A sacred space.

Tony flops the striper onto a counter, grabs a knife.

He tries to filet the fish, putting on a big show for Nancy.
He slips, almost cuts his hand. Nancy looks unamused.

TONY (CONT'D)

Everyone was like, in it. In the
moment, helping. I was a pretty
essential cog in the machine
though. Without me, the whole ship
would have gone down.

NANCY

Glad to see your ego hasn't shrunk.

TONY

What fun would that be?

Tony slathers butter and a few shakes of paprika on the fish,
a couple sprigs of parsley, then tosses it into the oven.

TONY (CONT'D)

10 minutes and it's done!

Off Nancy, still skeptical but charmed by his enthusiasm...

LATER.

Tony pulls the striper out of the oven, crisped from the
broiler, smelling and looking divine.

He makes Nancy a plate, holds his breath as she takes a hesitant bite. She finally softens, impressed.

NANCY

Not bad. For a dishwasher.

Tony grins from ear to ear. She looks around the kitchen.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You really like this place, huh?

Tony tries to think of a joke, but just nods, sincere.

NANCY (CONT'D)

It's cool you found something. I feel like my whole summer's been, like, holding Robin's hair back.

TONY

You'll find something you like.

NANCY

Maybe. I'm just happy for you, that's all.

TONY

Thanks.

They share a smile, their eyes locked for a moment too long.

NANCY

You been writing at all?

Tony nods, looks at his feet. Nancy knows he's lying.

NANCY (CONT'D)

If you want to keep calling yourself a writer, you actually have to write.

TONY

I know! I've just been busy.

An ex-lover's quarrel. Tension right below the surface.

Tony tries to keep the mood light and flirtatious. He opens the lowboy, takes out a tub of ice cream.

TONY (CONT'D)

I'm waiting for the spirit to move me. Patience is a virtue.

NANCY

I've always been bigger on vices
than virtues, I'm afraid.

Grins spread on both their faces, as the old banter returns--

TONY

You and me both, sister. I'm a big
gluttony guy, personally.

NANCY

Oh, you should try sloth. It's a
delight.

He spoons some ice cream, takes a bite.

TONY

You're into sloth? Wait 'til you
get a taste of lust. You'll never
go back.

He then offers her a spoonful. She considers, but instead of
taking the spoon, she opens wide...

Tony hesitates, then feeds Nancy. An intimate, sexy moment.

NANCY

I think I kinda miss this.

His heart jumps, but he tries to hide it.

TONY

I thought you wanted space.

NANCY

I do. But that doesn't mean I don't
want to hang out once in a while.

He nods, confused but faking it. They stare at the floor.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Is it me or is it bright in here?

A mischievous smile grows on her face. She takes off out the
alley door. Tony chases, leaving the kitchen in tatters--

EXT. BEACH. CONTINUOUS.

Tony struggles to keep up as Nancy laughs over her shoulder,
running onto the dark beach, pulling off her clothes.

He stumbles, kicking off his shoes and yanking off his shirt
as she dives buck naked into the ocean. He races after her--

EXT. OCEAN. CONTINUOUS.

They hug in the ocean, bobbing in the moonlight, giggling.

NANCY

How are you not cold?!

TONY

Ice in my veins, Bonnie. I'm a cold-blooded killer, ready to strike.

NANCY

Shut up, Clyde.

Tony grins. The nickname! He takes her hand, swims to shore.

EXT. BEACH. CONTINUOUS.

Tony runs and grabs his shirt from the sand, swaddles Nancy in it as she shivers.

NANCY

Thank you.

Tony nods. He holds her close, gazes at her, totally present.

For once, he's not on Planet Tony.

She's surprised, touched. She gazes back at him...

And they finally kiss. A kiss weeks in the making...

And as they get hot and heavy, we pan to the full moon...

INT. SHARE HOUSE. NANCY'S ROOM. LATER.

Tony jolts awake in the dark. He gets his bearings -- surrounded by books. Naked, sandy.

But Nancy's nowhere to be found.

INT. SHARE HOUSE. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony shuffles in to find Nancy drinking tea by herself.

TONY

What are you doing? Come to bed.

NANCY

In a minute.

Something's off. The magic of last night has dissipated.

TONY

You OK?

She nods, but avoids his eyes. He watches her, thinks.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hey, wanna go to Wellfleet one of these days? Apparently you can dig clams out of the sand yourself.

She shrugs.

TONY (CONT'D)

What's wrong? Did you not have fun last night?

NANCY

Of course. But... I don't want it to change things, OK?

He's deeply confused.

TONY

I thought you said you wanted to hang out more.

NANCY

Yeah, and then we hung out. A lot.

He shakes his head, anger starting to bubble.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I don't want to lead you on and... I'm just confused.

TONY

Well that makes two of us.

Tony's reeling, deeply stung.

NANCY

I'm gonna go back to bed. Do you mind crashing in your room?

She smiles meekly and heads to her room, shuts the door.

Tony stands by himself, staring into space.

He's the most vulnerable we've seen him. He might even cry.

He senses the restlessness coming on... but rather than feel the feelings, his anger explodes--

He picks up Nancy's tea cup and SMASHES it. *

Grabs a plate from the sink and smashes it too. And another. *

Until he's throwing open cabinets, pulling out plates, bowls, glasses, fully trashing the kitchen, a tornado of rage.

The roommates hear the ruckus and rush out--

ROBIN

Tony!! What the fuck?!

He stops, panting. Everyone is glaring at him, stunned. *

NANCY

I'm done! Get out! Get the fuck out
of this house. NOW!

Tony storms out of the house, destruction in his wake.

EXT. BEACH. LATER.

He smokes alone, scowling out at the ocean, a raw nerve yet again. The anger now entangled with regret and despair.

He eyes the glowing end of his cig. He brings it closer to
get a better look... then closer to his face... And closer... *

Until it's right between his eyes, ready to burn a hole in
his head.

The burning ember touches his skin. He revels in the searing
pain, a moment of pure self-destruction. *

But when it becomes too much--

He FLICKS away the butt, wincing. A red burn on his forehead.

He slams down to the sand, and glares up at the stars.

EXT. NIGHT SKY. CONTINUOUS.

Suddenly Tony is falling through the air in SLOW MOTION...

His clothes flap in the wind. His mouth is open...

But this time, sound comes... A blood-curdling scream--

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony jolts awake to see Dimitri smiling over him.

DIMITRI

Cleaned up after your little
afterparty. You're welcome.

*
*

Tony sits up on the banquette, nods thanks. The burn mark is gone. Dimitri stops.

*

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Jesus. Who shat on your parade?

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER.

They sit on their usual milk crates, smoking.

TONY

I don't know, man. We've been on-
again-off-again for a while, but
this feels different.

*
*
*

DIMITRI

I've been there, Tony. Cheated on,
fired, lost people, knocked on my
ass six ways from Sunday. Some dark
places, man.

Tony looks at him, recognizes a kindred spirit.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

I got one word for you. Work. Don't
give it time to fester. Just work.

Tony considers. Dimitri smokes.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

When I got my first kitchen gig, a
real shithole, worse than this
place even, I was in a bad way. But
I just poured myself into it.
Worked my ass off twelve hours a
day with a bunch of other fuck ups.
And it snapped me right out of it.

Tony nods. Dimitri stubs out his cig.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

But things really changed when I
fell in love with it. You gotta
find something you're passionate
about, man. Something you want to
get good at. And just dive in.

Tony takes a long drag, taking in the advice.

And we enter a **MONTAGE** of the next few weeks:

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

In Dimitri's closet-sized office, Tony dives in.

He pulls the culinary bibles off the shelf, wiping off dust.

Larousse's Gastronomique, Escoffier's La Guide Culinaire,
Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

While everyone eats family meal in the alley, Tony eats inside alone, an ancient cookbook open in front of him.

He's inhaling the literature, a human culinary sponge.

LATER.

After service, everyone else departs for bed or the bar.

Tony stays behind at his station, poring over Larousse. *

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Late that night, an exhausted Tony returns to find his backpack packed for him, sitting outside a locked door. *Shit.* *

But that's not going to get him down. He gives an obligatory finger to Nancy *et al*, and turns back on his bike...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony dumps his backpack in a corner.

He turns off the lights and settles in on a banquette...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. THE NEXT MORNING.

Wearing the same clothes from yesterday, Tony works his way through the egg section of Escoffier.

We see old illustrations of French egg preparations, followed by Tony's slightly wonky attempts:

Oeufs Balzac, Oeufs Belle Helene, Oeufs Benedictine...

Tony wipes his brow. So many *oeufs*, so little time...

Oeufs Benoiton, Oeufs en Berceau, Oeufs Bercy...

Tony's work starts to resemble the drawings. Improvement... *

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. LATER.

Late night, the restaurant long since empty. Tony snores on a banquette, Larousse open on his chest. High-end homeless.

EXT. BEACH. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony takes a bath in the ocean, lathering himself with soap.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

Now "clean", Tony goes full Dimitri-mode: Wagner on the boombox, NY Times crossword, black coffee.

Dimitri walks in, stops short. Tony barely looks up.

TONY

Early is on time, chef.

Dimitri smiles, shakes his head.

LATER.

As the crew preps, Tony leans over the open Larousse, his long, stringy hair falling onto the page. He flicks it away.

He sees himself in a mirror. Touches his hair, not loving it. *

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. LATER.

Tony on a milk crate. Annie working on a bracelet in the corner. Lydia approaches him with kitchen shears.

LYDIA

You sure, Mel?

He nods, a cig between his lips. She starts to snip...

LATER.

Lydia cuts one last hair and steps aside to reveal:

Tony, shaven and shorn, a new man.

TONY

Where's the boss? Does she approve?

Tony turns to... Annie, who furrows her brow, considering...

ANNIE
You look less dirty.

*

The crew CHEERS from the doorway. Tony takes a bow.

INT. COLONY TAP. ANOTHER NIGHT.

The cool kids are back at their corner table. And right there in the middle, holding court, is Tony.

His transformation is complete: not only short hair, but a pierced ear, scrimshaw rings, and a sleeveless chef's jacket. *

He downs a shot, then another, having the time of his life...

EXT. BEACH. LATER.

Tony lies on the sand and looks up at the starry sky.

Out here on the tip of Cape Cod, with no light pollution, everything is visible. Orion. The Milky Way. Spectacular.

Tony gazes up at the cathedral of light, inspired...

END MONTAGE.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony scribbles on a legal pad, Escoffier and a coffee in front of him as Dimitri walks in.

DIMITRI
Got a plan for today? Gonna make us
mommy's meatloaf?

TONY
Setting my sights a little higher.

DIMITRI
Need help?

TONY
I got it, chef.

Tony barely looks up. Dimitri nods, smiles.

LATER.

The whole crew is busy with prep work as Tony is focused on a complicated dish at his station. More elements than we've seen. And he's using a piping bag to paint with a sauce.

Dimitri shoots him a look. Tony nods, nervous.

*

DIMITRI
That's family!

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER.

A plate of old school French *haute cuisine*.

*

Lydia eyes the food with deep skepticism, possibly disgust.

*

TONY
Today I'm serving *Gigot D'Agneau a la Française*, from Larousse.

The chefs shrug, dig in. Tony holds his breath...

*

DIMITRI
Delicious, Tony.

Tony exhales, grinning. Tyrone and Lydia are less impressed.

TYRONE
Yeah, Mel. You nailed the recipe.

LYDIA
Yup. Not a lot of you in here, but it's official, you can read.

The chefs laugh. Tony deflates.

He heads back inside without eating, his outsize ego bruised.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATE THAT NIGHT.

*

Tony's alone, poring over a text, determined to show them up.

*

But he's fading, rubbing his eyes. Until he gets an idea...

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. LATER.

Tony smokes in the doorway.

Down the alley comes a face we've seen from the Colony Tap, the Boston-strong bartender, BOBBY. They make a quick handoff... a sack of white powder in exchange for cash.

Tony immediately rips a key bump and gets back to the books.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. ANOTHER NIGHT.

Mid-rush, Tony's amped, clearly coked up. He cooks quickly, rocking to his own beat in his head.

He spins through the kitchen, almost bumping into Lydia carrying a full chowder pot. She clenches her jaw.

Tony works on another culinary experiment of some kind, ignoring his shucking duties as the rush intensifies.

Richard's in the weeds, but Tony doesn't lend a helping hand.

Instead, Tony's focused on Tyrone making a butter sauce...

Tony dips his finger in the sauce to taste. Dimitri does the same. As if by telepathy, they agree: *needs salt*.

Without asking, Tony adds salt to Tyrone's sauce.

Tyrone fumes, catching Lydia's eye. Tony's high on his own supply, and it seems Dimitri is his chief enabler...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER THAT NIGHT.

The kitchen crew wipes down after service. Ciro busts in--

CIRO
Lynn just hit a grand fuckin' slam!

The crew barely looks at him, keeps working.

 CIRO (CONT'D)
What are you, a buncha fuckin'
Yankee fans?

The crew doesn't even look up this time.

CIRO (CONT'D)
Fine. Go fuck yourselves.

He heads toward the door.

CIRO (CONT'D)
Yo Dimitri! You got 48 hours 'til
the biggest cash cow of the summer.
(MORE)

*

*
*

*
*

CIRO (CONT'D)

You better make it the greatest
goddamn beach party in the history
of beach parties, or you're fired!

Dimitri swallows Ciro's cheap shot. And calls to him--

DIMITRI

Can Tony be my *sous* for the party?

*

CIRO

Sue?

DIMITRI

Sous chef? Second-in-command?

CIRO

Oh. Sure, I don't give a fuck. Just
as long as you don't sue me!

Ciro guffaws at his own joke. He stomps out. *What a dick.*

*

Tyrone and Lydia share another annoyed look at Dimitri
favoring Tony. Dimitri doesn't notice, and takes Tony aside.

DIMITRI

Prep in the morning?

TONY

We can start tonight if you want.

DIMITRI

You've been burning the candle on
both ends, man. Take the night off.

TONY

I'm good to start tonight.

DIMITRI

I'm not asking. You need some rest.

Tony nods, grabs his backpack, and heads for the door.

INT. WATER'S EDGE CINEMA. THEATER. LATER.

The iconic movie poster for "Jaws" hangs by the theater door.

Tony eats Twizzlers in the back row, grinning smugly, ready
to hate-watch this piece of shit.

The lights lower...

INT. WATER'S EDGE CINEMA. LOBBY. LATER.

Tony stumbles out, dazed and delighted by the film. *

NANCY (O.S.)

Tony?

Tony spins to see Nancy and Robin. His smile drops. *

ROBIN

Maestro Fellini, gracing the masses
with his presence?

Robin's grin makes Tony fume. And Nancy's clearly still angry
about Tony trashing their kitchen. Tension in the air. *

TONY

Yeah, well. Movie of the summer, or
whatever.

ROBIN

So what'd you think?

Tony squirms. He loved it, but could never admit to that now. *

TONY

Not for me really. *

NANCY

I loved it. *

ROBIN

So good! Except now I can never go
in the ocean. *

TONY

I don't know. Kind of a simple
narrative structure for my taste.

Nancy and Robin stare at him.

ROBIN

Almost didn't recognize you with
the haircut. High and tight.

TONY

Function over form, I'm afraid. Was
getting in my eyes on the line, and
I can't have that. No time,
especially since they promoted me. *

ROBIN

You got a promotion? *

TONY

I'm like the *sous chef* now, or *chef de cuisine*. They asked me to do this labor day party too. Kind of a big deal.

*

ROBIN

Oh yeah, I heard about that. Total ripoff apparently. Twenty bucks for some greasy fried clams.

*

TONY

I'm working on, like, elevating it. You guys should stop by.

*

*

Tony looks to Nancy hopefully, but she just changes subjects.

*

NANCY

Your mom called. Again. You should call her.

*

*

*

Tony nods noncommittally. An awkward moment.

*

TONY

I should get back. Good to see you.

*

*

And Tony bolts.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE. LATER.

A stack of heavy books slam down onto the desk.

Tony rips a key bump, mutters to himself.

TONY

Greasy clams? Fuck that...

He opens up the top culinary text, starts to read.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. THE NEXT MORNING.

Dimitri unlocks the front door, the Times under his elbow.

He crosses to start the coffee, but sees the pot's already half full. He hears faint music. He furrows his brow...

*

*

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS.

Dimitri pushes open the door to find Tony pacing, Larousse in hand, Stooges on the boombox. The desk is covered in cookbooks, scribbled legal pad notes, and a mound of coke.

DIMITRI

This your idea of a night off?

TONY

Finally! I got the menu all figured out.

Dimitri turns down the music.

TONY (CONT'D)

The asshole said he wanted the best beach party ever. So let's give it to him!

*
*

DIMITRI

Tony. Let's not make this harder than it needs to be. Fried clams, fried calamari, hot dogs, burgers-

*
*
*

TONY

Aren't you tired of cooking the same old shit for that fuckhead? Let's show people what we can do. Escoffier. Larousse. Carême!

*
*

DIMITRI

It's a clambake. Not Versailles.

TONY

Come on, man. You're a great chef. An artiste. And that sonovabitch is the Man. You and I know, sometimes, to do anything great, you gotta stick it to the fuckin' Man.

Dimitri's tempted. We see something new in him: inspiration. A light reigniting, after years of going through the motions.

*
*

His sheepish smile slowly spreads into a mischievous grin.

DIMITRI

You know what? Fuck it.

And they're off...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony scours his scribbled notes, the culinary bibles spread over a counter.

TONY

Thinkin' *pâté en croûte* to start, then *gougeres and rillettes de porc-*

Dimitri thinks, then heads for the door.

DIMITRI
We need supplies.

LATER.

Tony chops veggies for *mirepoix*, his skills clearly improved.

DIMITRI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ahoy!

Dimitri arrives with a whole pig slung over his shoulders.

Tony looks at him, mouth agape.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
I know a guy.

Tony chuckles. Of course he does.

Dimitri swings the beast onto a counter. *

A sword-size knife slices through its belly. While Dimitri
butchers, Tony reads off his legal pad, pumped. *
*

TONY
Ok! We've got *canapés de saumon*
fumé, bouillabaisse, coquilles
Saint-Jacques-

DIMITRI
And *pissaladière* and *confit de*
canard and *galettes d'oignon*.

TONY
Added!

Tony scribbles, slugs from the handle of Jim Beam.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'll get started on some puff
pastry for the *croûte* and the
galettes, then-

Dimitri stops on a dime. He turns to Tony with a smile.

TONY (CONT'D)
What?

DIMITRI
Aspic.

TONY

Ass-what?

DIMITRI

Forget plebeian puff pastry. We
boil the hooves and knuckles of
this bad boy, let the broth cool,
and bam, we got the gelatinous
binding agent of the gods.

Dimitri grins, Tony confused. Until it slowly dawns on him--

TONY

Motherfuckin' aspic!

They hug like excited schoolboys. And then--

TONY (CONT'D)

Hold on. I know what we need...

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. LATER.

A fat sack of coke plops into a hand.

Tony pockets the bag in his apron, hands Bobby the bartender
a wad of cash and heads back inside.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN FRIDGE. MOMENTS LATER.

A knife lines up two rails of coke on a crate of potatoes.

Dimitri winces as he watches Tony set it up.

DIMITRI

Haven't put anything up my nose
since the bad ol' days. Summer of
'69, Gstaad.

TONY

Like riding a unicycle, my brother.

Tony hands him an UNCOOKED PIECE OF PENNE, the perfect coke
straw. Tony uses a penne of his own to rip one of the lines.

Dimitri is impressed, but hesitates.

DIMITRI

Fuck me.

TONY

C'mon man. We're on a roll. Let's
keep it goin'!

Dimitri considers, then shrugs and rips a line. Tony grins as he prepares another...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

A huge lobster pot boils violently on the range. Unidentified *
pig parts dance in a stew of thick glop.

Dimitri stirs it with an oar-sized spatula, nursing a cig.
Tony paces circles around him, also chain-smoking. *

They're now in full coke-mode. Sweaty. Red-faced. Weird.

DIMITRI

If this isn't the greatest party in
the history of Provincetown, we'll
fall on our swords like Vatel.

Tony does another line off the counter.

TONY

Vatel?

DIMITRI

Chef at the French court. Banquet
for a couple thousand. April 1671,
I believe. A fish delivery didn't
show up, and the dude killed
himself. That's dedication.

TONY

To Vatel!

Dimitri steps up to take his turn, rips a line.

DIMITRI

To motherfuckin' Vatel...

More laughing, more drugs, until--

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN FRIDGE. LATER.

A kitchen brush elegantly slides over a whole poached salmon.

The walk-in is thick with smoke. But something has changed--

Candles light the space, full of beautifully executed fish
tableaux, and in the corner, an elegant woman dressed in a
Victorian corset dress plays the harp.

Tony and Dimitri are also in 17th century garb - powdered
wigs, culottes, brocade jackets. They smoke long clay pipes.

Tony dips the brush into a bowl of gelatinous aspic, then applies another coat to the salmon.

Dimitri holds a platter of julienned vegetables like a painter's palette. He uses tweezers to apply individual veggies to a tableau-in-progress on the side of the fish.

They step back to admire their work, an elaborate floral scene. They ponder it like art critics.

TONY

Mon frère, I daresay it is
reminiscent of early Van Gogh.

DIMITRI

I'd go so far as to call it Gauguin-
esque.

Tony nods in agreement, then rubs aspic onto his gums.

TONY

We should open a restaurant in New
York. Nobody makes this food any
more. People would bow down to us!

DIMITRI

I'm not goin' to New York, man.

Tony rips another line, not listening.

TONY

We need a show stopper...

DIMITRI

Indeed. A *pièce de résistance*...

Tony nods as Dimitri finishes the Jim Beam. He hands it to
Tony, who sips the last drops. More deep thinking, then--

*
*

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Moses and the Red Sea!

Which clearly makes no sense. So of course Tony jumps up too--

TONY

Dimitri, you're a fucking genius!

He spikes the handle like a football, SHATTERS it. They stop.

DIMITRI

I'll get the broom.

TONY

Yeah.

And they get to work. The harp has been joined by a SOPRANO belting out Wagner as Tony lays out a side of striped bass...

Dimitri constructs a tableau out of olives and bar straws. Israelites in the foreground, Egyptians in hot pursuit...

Tony paces, smoking his clay pipe.

TONY (CONT'D)

This, *mon ami*, is gonna be some
Ancien Régime shit.

DIMITRI

A banquet fit for Marie Antoi-
fucking-nette.

LYDIA (O.S.)

Chef?

They freeze, look up to see Lydia in the doorway.

DIMITRI & TONY

Shit.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Dimitri and Tony, now in their usual work clothes, shuffle up the stairs into the bright kitchen, already full with the crew starting their day.

TYRONE

There they are!

Tyrone, Lydia and Richard stare at Tony and Dimitri, who hang *
their heads like caught schoolboys.

DIMITRI

We were just...

TONY

Prepping. And got a little...

DIMITRI

Carried away.

Tyrone and Lydia share a look, concerned. Richard grins.

RICHARD

Right on.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. LATER.

Ciro holds court at the pre-service line-up, barking orders at the waiters and crew.

 CIRO
86 scallops, 86 sole-

Tony's red eyed and jittery. Like he hasn't slept in days. Dimitri comes up behind him--

 DIMITRI
You good?

 TONY
I'm alive.

Dimitri nods, not faring much better. Ciro continues--

 CIRO
Saturday of Labor Day weekend,
folks. AKA the biggest night of the
fucking summer. So we're adding
four two tops, two more four tops.

 DIMITRI
Sixteen extra covers? Come on,
Ciro. We can't handle that.

 CIRO
Well the phone's ringin' off the
hook, and I'm not turning people
away again like last weekend.

 DIMITRI
We barely made it through last
weekend, man! We almost went down-

 CIRO
Add the fucking tables, numb nuts!

Dimitri bites his tongue, but his blood is boiling...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

The demoralized crew skulks back into the kitchen.

 TYRONE
You better be on point tonight
Tony, or this shit is the Titanic.

 TONY
When am I not on point?

He takes a huge key bump. Lydia and Tyrone share a glance.

DIMITRI

Everyone just have each other's
backs, we'll get through.

The cooks all nod and head to their stations.

LATER.

The rush is starting to hit, more intense and chaotic than
we've ever seen. The whole kitchen is straining when--

Through the pass, Tony sees Nancy, Robin and Mike walk in.

Fuck! She came! And on the craziest night of the summer...

Tony tries to stay calm. He calls out to a WAITRESS--

*

TONY

Hey, can you get a round of Cape
Coddors to table four? On me.

The waitress nods and fetches the drinks for Nancy's table.

*

LYDIA

Wouldn't exactly call that playing
it cool, Mel.

TONY

Called bein' a good host.

LYDIA

More like bein' desperate as fuck.

Tony watches as the drinks arrive at Nancy's table. The
waitress points toward Tony, and Nancy raises her Cape Coddor
in thanks. He tips his cap, watches them drink and chat. But--

*

*

He feels slighted, like he didn't get all the attention he
deserved. So he does something he's never done before--

TONY

Ricky Ricardo! Watch my station.

He walks out onto the floor to interact with customers.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

Tony struts his stuff over to Nancy's table.

MIKE

Thanks for the drinks, dude!

But Tony's focused on Nancy, who ignores him behind her menu.

TONY

Thanks for coming in.

ROBIN

Wasn't our idea. Mike's birthday choice.

MIKE

Fuckin' live for a fried clam.

ROBIN

I tried to warn him. I heard the food sucks.

TONY

Used to. But there's a new chef.

Tony grins. Nancy can't help but smile. She finally looks up.

TONY (CONT'D)

Lobster with drawn butter for the lady?

NANCY

You know me too well.

They share a look. A glimpse of that old connection. *

TONY

Your wish is this chef's command.

He smiles at Nancy again, heads back to the kitchen...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

As soon as Tony's back at his station, Dimitri is in his ear--

DIMITRI

Don't go on the floor during service, man. Especially not tonight. Too much shit goin' on.

Tony nods. The waitress hands Nancy's order to Tyrone-- *

TYRONE

Ordering for table four, AKA Tony's infamous ex: one shrimp, one fried clam, one lobster!

Tony eyes Nancy through the pass. He looks at his station, at the humdrum work of shucking oysters. His wheels turning... *

A lightbulb goes off. A mischievous grin spreading...

*

He rips a big fat key bump, *and he's off.*

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN FRIDGE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony ransacks the walk-in, grabbing mushrooms, shallots, gruyère cheese, cream, eggs. All into his marsupial pouch...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FOOD STORAGE. CONTINUOUS.

Then the pantry for a bottle of cognac and a bag of flour...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

And on to the seafood tank to fish out a lobster...

Ingredients assembled, Tony sets up a makeshift work station. Tyrone and Lydia eye him skeptically. Dimitri leans over--

*

DIMITRI

This for you-know-who?

Tony nods, holds his breath to see if Dimitri will allow it.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Just make it quick. I'll help.

TONY

I got it, chef.

Dimitri retreats, letting Tony ignore his shucking duties to create a complicated off-menu dish for Nancy...

LATER.

The kitchen is going down, while Tony sears lobster tails.

*

TYRONE

Yo Casanova, the fuck you doin' over there?

TONY

Makin' miracles happen, baby.

TYRONE

Why don't you make another miracle happen and shuck some motherfuckin' clams, motherfucker!

Like a mad scientist, Tony places the lobster tails back in the shells and covers them in a mushroom cream sauce.

*
*

DIMITRI

Let me help you, man.

TONY

I got it!

Dimitri's torn, but allows it. He takes over shucking clams while Tony slides the lobster under the broiler.

Meanwhile, Tyrone's got six pans going on the range, filled with hot oil, spattering everywhere...

TYRONE

Where the fuck are my clams, Tony?

DIMITRI

I'm on it!

TYRONE

We hittin' the fuckin' iceberg!

Tyrone stomps to Tony's station and grabs a shucking knife--

Both Dimitri and Tyrone shuck while Tony sprinkles parsley on his magnum opus.

*
*

As Tony goes to the floor to present his masterpiece...

Tyrone's pans spatter all over the range. The oil is smoking now, getting dangerously hot...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

Tony arrives at Nancy's table, the dish behind his back.

TONY

For the lady, may I present...
Lobster Thermidor.

Mike oohs and aahs. Robin frowns. Nancy looks confused.

TONY (CONT'D)

Created in 1891 at the Café de Paris by an assistant to Auguste Escoffier, godfather of French *haute cuisine*, to celebrate the opening of the play "*Thermidor*". The play's long forgotten, but the dish lives on. Even in little ol' P-Town.

Tony watches Nancy, so proud, so excited for her to try it...

NANCY

This isn't what I wanted.

TONY

I know. It's better.

NANCY

Is it? Or is it just what you
wanted to make?

Nancy glares. Tony's disappointed her again. A real
relationship rollercoaster between them. He fakes a smile. *

TONY

Well. Have a good night.

He turns to the kitchen, and his face drops. Numb. But then-- *

A FLASH of FIRE emanates from the kitchen--

Followed by a bellowing chorus of FUCKS and SHITS--

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

Tony bursts in to see all six of Tyrone's pans ON FIRE--

Dimitri frantically searches for something--

DIMITRI

Ricky! Did you move the
extinguisher?

RICHARD

Why would I move the extinguisher?

DIMITRI

Fucking find the extinguisher,
Ricky!

Everyone's panicking. Tony looks around, then takes matters
into his own hands. He fills a pot with water at the sink,
and is about to launch the water towards the range, when--

Dimitri sees he's about to do the exact wrong thing--

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Tony, don't!

But it's too late. The water splashes on the grease, and it
only makes the fire worse. Much worse.

Suddenly, the flames SHOOT UPWARD, engulfing the hood--

Which is covered in a thick layer of uncleaned grease, and promptly CATCHES FIRE too--

Now the entire stove and hood are ablaze, a terrifying conflagration bordering on a FIREBALL--

Dimitri finally comes to the rescue with the extinguisher--

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Get back!

Dimitri SPRAYS the range, fire-retardant powder everywhere--

Until the fire is finally out.

The range is fried and the kitchen is blanketed in snowy white foam. Everyone stares at the mess, in shock.

As if things couldn't get any worse, Ciro comes roaring in--

CIRO

Who the fuck did this?!

Everyone is silent, not wanting to point fingers.

CIRO (CONT'D)

Dimitri! Can we keep going?

Dimitri points to the range, which is beyond repair.

CIRO (CONT'D)

Fucking fuckety fuck fuck FUCK!

He kicks a fridge, wincing. And heads back to the floor.

Through the pass, we see him apologizing and ushering customers out, explaining the restaurant has to close.

Back in the kitchen, everyone glares at Tony.

TONY

What? Don't look at me.

LYDIA

Don't you know not to put water on a grease fire?

TONY

I never would have done it if
Tyrone hadn't let the fire start!

TYRONE

It started because I was doin' your job, while you were off doin' whateverthefuck you were doin', high out of your goddamn mind.

TONY

Oh please, you put shit up your nose all the time.

TYRONE

You ever seen me not get the job done? You been coked up and checked out for weeks, jerkin' off to your dusty ass cookbooks. And we been coverin' your limp little dick.

TONY

You, covering *my* dick? I'm constantly bailing you fuckers out!

All the cooks have their arms crossed, on Team Tyrone. Tony
rips off his apron, heads for the door. Tyrone stops him.

*
*

TYRONE

Where you think you're goin'?

*

TONY

Get out of my way, man.

Tony pushes him. Tyrone pushes back. A fight about to start--

DIMITRI (O.S.)

Enough!

They all turn to see Dimitri and Ciro at the door.

CIRO

Who. Did. This?

Silence.

CIRO (CONT'D)

Well, we gotta close 'til we can get a new range, which means two, probably three days. And because no one will come clean, it's coming out of all your paychecks.

LYDIA

Come on! I got a kid to feed-

CIRO

Take it up with the fucknut whose
fault this is.

The crew is stunned. But as Ciro turns to go--

DIMITRI

I did it. It was me.

Ciro stops short.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

I'll pay for it.

A grin curls on Ciro's lips. Like he's been waiting for this
moment a long time.

CIRO

Pack your fuckin' shit. Now.

And he stomps out. The crew looks to Dimitri, confused.

*

DIMITRI

Ciro shouldn't have stacked the
deck, but I shouldn't have let Tony
go off menu. Frankly, Tony and I
have been fucking around too much
recently. And that's on me.

LYDIA

Chef, you've been telling Ciro to
clean the hood for weeks! And you
weren't the dumbass who threw water-

DIMITRI

I don't wanna hear it!

They're all taken aback. That was the first time they've ever
heard Dimitri raise his voice.

Everyone turns to Tony, expecting him to say something.

But Tony just looks at his feet, avoiding their stares.

Dimitri looks at his crew, his friends, one last time.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

Kids, it's been a pleasure.

And with that, he disappears down the back staircase.

LATER.

The crew finishes a deep clean in silence.

Done, Tony tries to get the hell out of there. Before he can--

LYDIA

You're not even gonna apologize,
are you?

Tony looks to the rest of kitchen crew, all staring daggers at him. But rather than admit he made a mistake--

He escapes, putting his head down and busting out the door--

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. CONTINUOUS.

Out of sight, Tony crumples against the wall.

All of the feelings he'd pushed down -- guilt, humiliation,
shame -- crash over him. So he does what he does best...

*
*

He runs.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. CONTINUOUS.

Tony darts down the main drag. He takes a massive key bump, shoving his way through the crowd.

INT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony barges in, looking for Nancy... but no sign of her.

INT. COLONY TAP. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony bursts in, but it's last call. Only a few regulars left.

EXT. ATLANTIC HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony rushes toward Atlantic House, AKA "A-House", P-Town's hottest dance club, some say the oldest gay bar in the country. A sign out front reads: *Atlantic House, Bar, 1798.*

The DEEP BASS of disco shakes the Victorian house's 200-year-old walls, luring Tony in. A perfect place to forget.

He takes one more giant key bump, and ducks into--

INT. ATLANTIC HOUSE. DANCE FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

A nocturnal pleasure palace. Lasers, smoke, a sea of scantily-clad, sweaty bodies pulse in unison.

Tony scans the dance floor, finds his target: Nancy. But--
She's dancing with Snoopy from Spiritus.

Tony seethes. He elbows over to them, grabbing Snoopy by the collar, ripping him away from Nancy. *

TONY
Get the fuck away from her!

SNOOPY
Relax, man!

TONY
You guys fucking? Is that what's
happening here?!

SNOOPY
Get off me!

Tony throws Snoopy against a wall.

NANCY
Tony! Stop it!

But Tony doesn't let go.

NANCY (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you doing? We're
just friends!

Tony considers, then unhands Snoopy.

SNOOPY
Dick.

Tony spins to see the entire bar staring at him. Nancy looks more disappointed in him than ever. It breaks his heart.

Ashamed and furious, he bolts for the door.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET. CONTINUOUS.

Tony staggers out into the night, still running.

He distracts himself with a cig, pulling the smoke in deeply.

He pushes into the post-midnight Saturday crowd, a bacchanalia with a dark edge. A couple makes out ferociously. Another fucks in an alley. A girl pukes right at his feet.

He pulls out his coke. Empty. *Fuck!* *

He collapses on a bench. He's surrounded by people, but he's never felt so alone. A tsunami of feelings -- betrayal, abandonment, anger -- overwhelms him. So he races to--

EXT. COLONY TAP. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony rattles the door, desperately trying to get in. It's locked. He puts his hands up to the glass to peer in.

Bobby's inside, cleaning. Tony bangs on the glass.

INT. COLONY TAP. CONTINUOUS.

Tony pulls himself onto a stool, shaking. A mess of emotions. *

BOBBY
Beer? Shot? Pick your poison.

TONY
What else you got?

BOBBY
Coke, lude, benzo, speed, poppers?
Pharmacy's open, brother.

Tony thinks, in a very dark place. *

TONY
Anything stronger?

INT. COLONY TAP. SUPPLY ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Tony sits on a keg in the crowded back room.

He rolls up his sleeve as Bobby cooks a sticky brown substance with a lighter and spoon next to him.

Tony watches, nervous, but with a tinge of excitement, as Bobby sucks the drug into a syringe, then helps Tony tie his belt around his arm.

Tony breathes as Bobby injects the needle into his vein...

Tony's face instantly melts from pain to pleasure. A tear pools in his eye as he slumps back into the corner. Bliss.

But something stirs him. A pipe next to him has sprung a leak, water spraying onto the floor.

He looks down to see his shoes already in an inch of water.

Suddenly, the door bulges in, creaking its hinges...

Until it bursts with a gush of water--

The Atlantic rushes in, flooding the room--

Tony struggles to keep his head above the rising tide, as the kegs and bottles of booze float around him.

Until he takes one last mouthful of air, and plunges into--

INT. OCEAN. CONTINUOUS.

He's in the depths of the Atlantic again, diving deeper.

We start at his feet, PAN down his body, to his face...

Where we find that Tony isn't 20 anymore. He's now 11. A boy.

BOY TONY swims deeper, darker than we've been. Pitch black.

Until he reaches the ocean floor, where he finds what he's been looking for all along, what he's been diving toward--

The mythological oyster he first tasted from the French sea. He scoops it up, marvels at it...

Oyster in hand, he gazes up at the surface, and sees--

A SPECK OF LIGHT. Tiny, but hopeful. Something to live for...

He swims up and up, the light growing brighter...

Until he suddenly breaks through the surface, transformed back to his 20-year-old self, jubilantly gasping for air--

INT. COLONY TAP. SUPPLY ROOM. THE NEXT MORNING.

Tony wakes with a start, finds himself back among the cases of shitty beer. All dry and just where they were last night.

He moans mightily, in serious pain...

EXT. COLONY TAP. CONTINUOUS.

He trudges out into the day, the sun beginning to rise. The street is eerily quiet. Last night's partiers in bed.

PRE-LAP: The sound of a key opening a lock...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony swings open the door. He surveys the damage from last night. The range is still fucked. A disaster.

*
*

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony looks in. Empty. Any remnants of Dimitri, gone.

*

EXT. DIRT ROAD. MOMENTS LATER.

*

Tony bikes on the dirt path, the one lined with scrub pines.

EXT. PROVINCETOWN DUNES. CONTINUOUS.

Tony walks his bike up the hill of sand, sinking with every step.

*

EXT. BEACH SHACK. MOMENTS LATER.

The *fado* shack is quiet, isolated on the wind-swept dunes.

Tony knocks. The door opens. It's Beatriz. She smiles at him.

TONY

Hello.

Tony peeks behind her. No bar, no party. Just a mattress in the corner.

*

TONY (CONT'D)

Dimitri? Do you know where he is?

Beatriz eyes him. She can tell he's in need of help. So she steps out onto the landing. Points into the distance.

Over several majestic sand dunes - Tony sees a tiny roof.

EXT. DUNE SHACK. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony pushes his bike toward a sagging shack. Even more modest than the *fado* shack, if that's possible.

As he gets closer, he hears music from inside... "Liebestod" from Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde".

*

Tony peers in. A monastic vibe. Mattress. Hot plate. Books.

But no Dimitri.

Tony walks around the back... And there he is, listening to opera, staring at the dunes. *

Sensing Tony, Dimitri pulls a chair next to him. *

Tony sits, lights a cig. Offers Dimitri one. He declines. *

TONY

Last night was fucked up, man.
Fuckin' Tyrone was-

*

DIMITRI

You can go fuck yourself right now
if you're not ready to take some
responsibility for your actions.

Dimitri looks to the dunes. Tony takes a breath. He's not ready to apologize, but he at least accepts some blame.

TONY

OK. I fucked up.

Dimitri tries to read his sincerity. He nods. Tony exhales.

TONY (CONT'D)

I think it's over between me and
Nancy. For real this time-

DIMITRI

I don't give a shit. I lost my job.

*

TONY

Well, OK then. Fuck Ciro. I'll quit
too. Solidarity, man. We can-

Dimitri laughs, shaking his head. *

DIMITRI

You're a fucking child.

TONY

The fuck is up with you, man?

DIMITRI

Tony, you reminded me of myself. I
thought maybe I could help you
learn from my mistakes. But you're
nothing like me, man. You're a
silver spoon kid who's never done a
thing for anyone but himself. And
you just fucked over a lot of
people. Decent people, who're just
trying to find their way.

(MORE)

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
If you can't put yourself in their
shoes, even for a second, then I
can't help you.

Dimitri gets up and heads inside, leaving Tony reeling.

EXT. PROVINCETOWN DUNES. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony walks his bike back over the soaring dunes.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. LATER.

Tony ambles in, still dazed from Dimitri's harsh words.

CIRO (O.S.)
Hey Tweedle Dumbass!

Tony looks up to see Ciro yelling through the pass.

CIRO (CONT'D)
This party's gotta make twice as
much cash cause of your buddy's
fuck up. So get your balls in gear!

Tony can barely muster a nod.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony in the cold, eyeing the fish tableaux, their hard work.

He stares at one in particular - Moses Parting the Red Sea.

The julienned vegetables, the aspic, the olives and the bar
straws, the Israelites and the Egyptians...

Tony shakes his head. Pretty absurd in the cold light of day.

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. CONTINUOUS.

Tony collapses on a milk crate, lights a cig. And stares down
the alley at the distant ocean.

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony stalks down the dock, smoking, a dark cloud of emotion.

Up ahead, he sees a gaggle of Portuguese fishermen sitting on
their boats. It's Labor Day, a holiday, so the men are just
hanging out, eating breakfast, drinking beers, telling jokes.

A moment of celebration for celebration's sake.

At the railing, Tony sees a man with a shock of unruly white hair, watching the rising sun: Howard, with Cutty the dog.

Tony considers Howard, then the happy fishermen...

And a look of determination settles into Tony's eyes.

*

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. RAILING. CONTINUOUS.

At the end of the dock, Tony approaches, clears his throat...

TONY

Howard? I mean, sir?

Cutty sits up. Tony braces for an attack. But the dog nuzzles up to him, friendly for once. Tony pets him, surprised.

Howard glances at Tony, then turns back to the sunrise.

TONY (CONT'D)

I was wondering about the clambake
you did back in the day. How'd you
do it? Like, what was the recipe?

*

Howard turns. He sizes Tony up, peering into his soul.

*

HOWARD

Bake some clams, pass out some
beers, then dance the boogie.

He grins at the memory, then returns to his view. Chat over.
The hell does that mean? Looks like Tony's on his own...

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. CONTINUOUS.

Back at the fishermen, Tony awkwardly interrupts--

TONY

Hey gents. I need fish. *Peixe?* I
need lots of *peixe*. *Por favor*.

*

The men glare at him, silently smoking. So Tony tries to act out his request, gesturing like a drunk charades player.

Nothing. Until Howard strides by--

*

HOWARD

O menino precisa de peixe.

Howard's words immediately make the fishermen get into gear.

They beckon Tony aboard, suddenly rolling out the red carpet.
Tony turns to thank Howard, but he and Cutty are gone.

EXT. PORTUGUESE FISHING BOAT. LATER.

Tony stands on the stern as the boat cruises the open ocean. *

He's enjoying the ride, not sure what he's getting into. *

The boat slows. The fishermen beckon Tony over to the side, enlisting his help pulling up a heavy line-- *

Tony puts his back into it, as they struggle to wrangle a large seaweed-covered CAGE up onto the deck.

TONY

Peixe?

One of the fishermen shakes his head no, grinning wildly.

Then the guy opens the top of the cage to reveal...

A dozen gorgeous LOBSTERS crawling over each other.

The mission clicks. These are lobstermen sharing their catch.

LATER.

The deck of the boat is now covered in lobster traps. Tony watches as they slow down next to ANOTHER BOAT... *

The fishermen gesture for Tony to climb aboard this new vessel. He does, along with some lobster traps.

The boat motors away, Tony waving to his lobster buddies...

EXT. SECOND PORTUGUESE FISHING BOAT. LATER.

Even farther out, land nowhere in sight...

Tony cranks a pulley, pulling up a giant net, which opens, sending a haul of HADDOCK splashing onto the deck.

EXT. THIRD PORTUGUESE FISHING BOAT. LATER.

Tony's on yet another boat, this one's deck covered in mussels and clams, along with the lobster traps and haddock.

As they pull in to shore, Joaquim waits for them on the dock. *

EXT. MACMILLAN WHARF. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony climbs off to greet Joaquim--

TONY

OK. So, there's this clambake, like
a party? Like the *fado* thing.

He dances a little, mimes playing the strange guitar--

TONY (CONT'D)

You know? So I need a bunch of-

JOAQUIM

It's all taken care of.

Don't you know, Joaquim speaks English. Tony's bewildered.

JOAQUIM (CONT'D)

Anything for a friend of Howard.

Tony breaks into a grateful grin, but Joaquim shoos him away.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. WALK-IN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony grabs potatoes, onions, sausages and corn, piling them
into his marsupial pouch.

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. DIMITRI'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony rummages through Dimitri's desk until he finds the staff
paystubs. He grabs a piece of paper, copying down the info...

EXT. BEACH HOUSE. LATER.

Tony checks his scrap of paper as he approaches a small,
rundown house on the beach.

He rings the doorbell, waits nervously.

The door swings open. It's Annie in her PJs, friendship
bracelet in hand. Tony smiles.

TONY

Hey kiddo. Is your-

ANNIE

MOM!!!

She's gone. And Tony's nerves return, until...

Lydia appears, Long Island Iced Tea in hand. She frowns.

TONY

I just... I need to... I fucked up.
A couple times. More, probably, but
I know that now, and I...

LYDIA

The fuck you tryin' to say, Mel?

TONY

I'm sorry!

That just burst out of him, and Tony's shocked. *

LYDIA

That wasn't so hard, was it?

Relief washes over Tony's face. *

TONY

I have an idea. To make up for
being an idiot. And to get back at
Ciro. But I need your help.

Lydia listens, intrigued...

EXT. TOWN CONDO. LATER.

Tony checks his address paper again at another door. He takes
a deep breath and rings the doorbell.

Tyrone swings the door open, ABBA blaring inside. He glares.

TONY

Hey man. I'm really sorry.

Tyrone immediately softens...

EXT. SHITTY SHARE HOUSE. LATER.

Another address, a different college share house. Tony's more
relaxed, getting used to this. Doorbell, and it's Richard.

Tony smiles, about to apologize...

INT. RESTAURANT. LATER.

Tony waits at the hostess station. The chef finally comes out *
from the kitchen - it's Sal. They share a smile.

INT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. LATER.

Nancy hands a customer their change, a long line behind them.

NANCY

Next!

And up steps Tony. Her face drops.

TONY

I'm sorry. I'm a piece of shit. I
don't deserve you. But I love you.

*
*

Nancy softens. She's never heard Tony apologize. Ever.

TONY (CONT'D)

Sorry, Snoopy.

Tony goes, leaving Nancy and Snoopy stunned.

EXT. SPIRITUS PIZZA. CONTINUOUS.

Tony strides away, grinning, proud of himself. Until--

NANCY (O.S.)

Hey asshole!

Tony spins to find Nancy charging up to him.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You don't get to just say sorry and
absolve yourself like nothing
happened! You-

TONY

I know, I just-

NANCY

No! For once, shut the fuck up and
listen to me!

He stops. Says nothing. Just waits. She takes a breath.

*

NANCY (CONT'D)

You know who you've been reminding
me of? Your mother. The bulldozer,
crushing anyone in her path. You're
too scared to face your own shit,
so you lash out and make everyone's
life a nightmare. You blame her for
everything. You're just like her!

*
*

Tony winces. He knows there's truth in there, and it hurts.

NANCY (CONT'D)

But you're better than that. That's the most heartbreaking part. Underneath the bullshit, I know you're good. And talented. I believe in you, Tony. I know I've been confusing this summer. I just want you to be the person I know you can be, but every time you get close, you become your own worst enemy. And I can't always be there to prop you up, or clean up after you. You have to believe in yourself. If you want to be a writer, then write. If you want to be a cook, do it. Just don't waste your life being a dick.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

He looks at her, moved, appreciative even.

She eyes him, braces for a retort. But he just nods and goes.

Nancy watches him, unsure if she got through.

EXT. BEACH. LATER.

On the sand in front of the share house, Tony sits, scribbling on a legal pad. Pouring himself onto the page.

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony leaves a few folded sheets of legal pad outside the front door, Nancy's name scrawled on the front. A note.

EXT. HARBOR BEACH. LATER.

A shovel hits the sand.

On the beach in front of Ciro's back deck, Tony digs pits, alone. The sun beats down on him. He wipes his brow, checks his watch. The party starts in an hour. He's fucked.

*
*
*

CIRO (O.S.)

Hey ding dong!

Tony looks up to see Ciro leaning over the deck railing.

CIRO (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing?! Where the fuck is the food?!

Tony gulps, up shit creek.

TONY

I already put out the tableaux-

Ciro holds up Moses and the Red Sea, now a half melted pile of goo.

CIRO

This shit? This is not fucking food! Where's the fucking rest?!

Tony points to the corn, sausages, onions and potatoes stacked in the shade under the deck.

TONY

I was gonna start in a minute...

Tony looks out at the ocean, then back towards town...

No one in sight. No one's coming to help him. He's alone.

TONY (CONT'D)

I don't know what happened. They should be here by now-

He stops himself, takes a breath, and takes responsibility.

TONY (CONT'D)

No. This is my fault. I don't know if I can finish in time.

*

CIRO

You little cockbag! I got important people on the way, paying good money for this. You better feed the fuck out of them, or I'll roast you and serve you like a pig at a luau!

*

He stomps off. Tony slumps. He gets back to digging...

*

But just then -- he hears a RUMBLING out over the ocean...

The Portuguese fishing boats! The cavalry is coming!

Elated, Tony drops his shovel and heads to the shore.

CIRO (CONT'D)

Tony! The fuck do you think you're going? I never should have hired you. Fucking bum!

But Tony keeps going, grinning defiantly. He sees Joaquim on the prow of a fishing boat, waving. Tony waves back.

Tony helps the boat land, then joins the fishermen unloading all the seafood. He gives Joaquim a handshake of gratitude.

TONY
Obrigado, amigo.

JOAQUIM
De nada, my friend.

*

Joaquim smiles, but he's distracted by something over Tony's shoulder, towards town. Tony turns, delighted to see--

Even more of the cavalry is coming!

Lydia and Annie trudge onto the beach, carrying ingredients for chowder, Sal close behind with a bucket of shellfish.

Tony hustles to help them carry the supplies.

*

TONY
Thanks for coming, guys.

LYDIA
Don't flatter yourself, Mel. I'm here for revenge.

SAL
And I'm here for the *mami chulas*.

Tony laughs. And as they head down the beach--

TYRONE (O.S.)
Yo, Mel!

Tony spins to see Tyrone with his knives, followed by Richard. Tony grins. They're here. And they've come to help.

*

*

LATER.

Someone presses play on a boombox. THE STOOGES pump out over:

The whole group in action, working as a team.

Tyrone is the floor general. Sal is the master shucker. Lydia makes her chowder. Richard sets up picnic tables.

*

*

Then Tony creates an assembly line to make CLAMBAKE BUNDLES--

*

One person throws down a piece of foil, the next person puts down an ear of corn, the next a linguica link, then two onions and two potatoes, then a slice of haddock, a lobster, and finally the last person wraps it all up into a bundle, punching holes in the foil so the juices can seep out.

The fishermen dig pits and make fires in them, then place huge metal garbage cans over the fires.

As the assembly line fills the cans with the bundles...

Tony spots Dimitri walking towards the crowd. He greets him.

TONY
Glad you came.

Dimitri just nods at him, tension lingering.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry, man.

Dimitri sees Tony's sincerity, claps him on the shoulder.

DIMITRI
How can I help?

TONY
Just take a seat and enjoy.

Tony hands him an oyster, takes one for himself. They "clink" oysters, knock them back in unison. From down the beach-- *

LYDIA
Yo Tony! Stop flirting and get your limp little dick over here!

Tony smiles at Dimitri.

TONY
I gotta get back.

Dimitri nods, letting Tony return to the cooking scrum.

We see:

A blur of hands work together to put on the final touches--

A row of plastic picnic tables set up... red and white checked tablecloths... beach stones hold them in the wind--

The row of trash cans are dug out of the sand... their stainless steel lids opened... hot steam spurting out--

The trash cans - those bubbling cauldrons of goodness - are brought to the tables. Lifted, then upended, spilling out--

Clams. Corn. Lobsters. Linguica. A bounty of land and sea.

The kitchen crew, working in silent concert, applies the secret ingredient: a criminal amount of Old Bay Seasoning.

Meanwhile, a crowd has been slowly gathering - Portuguese, tourists, drag queens. Rich, poor, old, young, gay, straight.

They gather 'round to gaze at the glorious mess of food.

A beat of silent awe. And then, the moment has come...

The moment to pig the fuck out.

Everyone grabs at the food ravenously, with their bare hands.

Yet somehow, no one gets overrun. All get their turn, united in the simple act of enjoying a summer night, eating and drinking on a beach.

The only one who doesn't get it is *Ciro*, alone on the deck.

CIRO

The party's up here, assholes!

No one cares.

CIRO (CONT'D)

Also, this beach belongs to me. And none of you paid the fucking cover!

Finally, a barrel-chested *FISHERMAN* looks up at *Ciro*--

FISHERMAN

This beach belongs to everyone.
Olho do cu!

The guests CHEER. The party for the 1% has become the party for the people. A Provincetown tradition, restored. *

Ciro gives up, slinks off back into his restaurant. *

LATER.

The tip jar makes its way through the crowd, carried by small hands. People stuff bills into it until it's overflowing.

The jar arrives at *Tony* as he finishes an ear of corn. He feels a tug on his pants. *Annie*, carrying the stuffed jar.

TONY

Good work! Bring it to your mom.
She can share it however she wants. *

ANNIE

OK. I made you something, *Mel*. *

She shoves the jar into his hands and digs into her pocket. She pulls out a friendship bracelet. Ties it on his wrist. *

Tony's stunned, more moved than he could have imagined.

TONY
Thanks, kiddo.

But she's already grabbed the jar and is gone. Tony smiles.

He spots Robin and Mike, and makes his way to them--

TONY (CONT'D)
Robin! Where's Nancy?

ROBIN
She stayed home.

Tony deflates a little. Starts to go, but she grabs his arm--

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Hey. Not bad. For a delinquent.

They cheers and share a smile, before Robin and Mike move on.

Tony spots Lydia. She raises the tip jar. He raises his beer.

Tony turns to see Dimitri, wolfing oysters. He rolls over.

TONY
Next summer. You and me. We're
opening in New York. Then Paris.
Then Bangkok! We gotta go go go-

DIMITRI
I'm not goin' anywhere, man.

Tony furrows his brow, confused.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
Some people are happy staying in
one place. But you're a man on the
move. So keep going.

TONY
Fuck you, man-

DIMITRI
I'm serious. Go. I just hope you
find what you're looking for.

Dimitri hands him an oyster. Touched, Tony slurps it down.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
As good as your first?

Tony pauses, then decides to open up, at long last.

TONY

My mom bullies everyone. But when I had that oyster, she got quiet. Everybody's eyes on me. And it gave me something I'd never had. Power.

Tony looks at his feet, ashamed.

TONY (CONT'D)

For the first time, everything felt OK. It was like, if I could keep people's attention, I'd be loved.

Dimitri's touched by Tony's vulnerability. Tony softens more. *

TONY (CONT'D)

I don't know. My mom taught me a lot about cooking. Not just my dad. Maybe she's just trying her best.

DIMITRI

Everyone's got shit. And everyone's got something to teach you.

They share a smile. Then--

SAL

Tony! Tony! SPEECH!!!

Tony waves it off, not wanting to be in the spotlight. But everyone is staring at him expectantly. He has to speak, so--

TONY

Well, I couldn't have done this without you all. Actually, I could have done it without some of you.

Tony points at Richard, gets a laugh. He's still a bit of a dick, even now. But then, earnestly--

TONY (CONT'D)

Dimitri Romanov, Tyrone Hill, Lydia Jenkins, Salvador Mejia, and Ricky Ricardo. I love you guys. I've never come across such hardworking, hard-drinking people. I look up to you more than you'll ever know. You're my heroes. Thank you.

Applause! Tony looks at the crowd, thinks...

TONY (CONT'D)

There's a line in my favorite book, Heart of Darkness.

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

"We live in the flicker - may it
last as long as the old earth keeps
rolling. But darkness was here
yesterday."

He lets that sink in. Then raises his beer for a toast--

TONY (CONT'D)

Tonight, let's try to forget the
darkness. And drink to the flicker!

CROWD

To the flicker!

Tony grins, spotting Howard and Cutty in the crowd--

*

TONY

Now let's pass out some beers and
dance the boogie!

CHEERS! Tony raises a beer at Howard, who raises a flask.

The *fado* band strikes up. Beatriz sings an upbeat samba
banger. Everyone starts dancing, having a grand old time!

During an instrumental interlude, Dimitri approaches Beatriz.
He extends his hand to her. She blushes, takes it. He spins
her, dips her. *This dude can dance.* Love is in the air!

*

*

Tony grins, happy for his buddy. He surveys the scene,
friends new and old, brought together by him, and by food.

He's moved, tears of satisfaction welling up.

But rather than running from it, he stays perfectly still.

A raw nerve, finally giving in, facing himself. He cries.

He looks around. There's one person still missing...

EXT. SHARE HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony knocks, plate of lobster in hand. Nancy opens the door.

*

TONY

Lobster with drawn butter.

From her back pocket, she pulls out his note.

NANCY

Thank you for listening.

He nods.

TONY

Thank you for believing in me.

She nods. He hands her the plate. She picks up the lobster tail. He holds his breath. She takes a bite. *Heaven.*

TONY (CONT'D)

When we get back to school, could I cook for you sometime? Bonnie?

Nancy sighs, considering.

NANCY

Sometimes I think we're perfect for each other. Sometimes... I don't know. Maybe we're too alike.

Tony nods respectfully.

*

NANCY (CONT'D)

But you never know. Life is long. Clyde.

Tony grins. There's still the possibility of a romantic relationship, and that'll do.

*

*

EXT. HARBOR BEACH. LATER.

Tony walks down the beach, a carefree feeling. He picks up a stone, skips it on the water.

*

At the party, he sees Lydia and Annie next to each other in the sand, eating and laughing, happy. He gets an idea...

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Tony picks up the phone, dials a number.

He takes a deep breath as it rings. A WOMAN'S VOICE picks up.

TONY

Mom? Hey, it's me.

EXT. HARBOR BEACH. LATER.

It's dusk, and the party has largely disbanded.

Tyrone, Lydia, Sal, Richard, and Dimitri chat, nursing beers.

*

Tony is conspicuously absent. Until, from the deck--

*

TONY
That's family!

INT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

On the counter, a simple, slutty feast: Chili cheese dogs.
The crew appears in the doorway to discover Tony's work.

TONY
Today I'm serving chili cheese
dogs, from Hiram's Roadstand, a New
Jersey landmark since 1932, where
my parents brought me as a kid.

The crew smiles. *Tony cooked with love.*

EXT. CIRO'S RESTAURANT. ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER.

They sit on their usual milk crates, devouring Tony's family meal, chewing in reverential silence.

It's a messy affair - mouths encrusted in chili, fingers covered in grease. They eat with reckless abandon.

It's a beautiful sight. Tony takes a bite, smiles. And we...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FERRY BOAT. A FEW DAYS LATER.

Tony hauls his backpack and beloved bike onto the top deck.
The ferry departs, its horn BLOWING. A voice behind him--

DIMITRI (O.S.)
Hey Mel!

Tony turns to see Dimitri, Lydia, Annie, Tyrone, Sal, and Richard, waving from the pier. Tony smiles and waves back.

He lights a cig, turns to face the open ocean, and a promising future in the world beyond.

As the boat rounds Long Point Lighthouse, he walks to the rear, smoking. He gazes at P-Town receding in the distance.

He takes a breath. His tempest of emotions is finally calmed.

But then--

Tony looks down at the Atlantic below...

The boat's propellers churning the water hypnotically...

The water gorgeous and overwhelming, alluring and ominous...

The sound of the surf builds, louder and louder...

Suddenly he climbs up onto the railing. Stands atop it.

He closes his eyes...

And he JUMPS--

In SLOW MOTION, he flies through the air, his body completely relaxed. An inevitability to it. A sense of peace.

But just before he hits the water, we--

SNAP TO BLACK.

CREDITS ROLL.

Over Iggy Pop's "The Passenger", we see PHOTOS of Tony's career as a chef and travel show host, intercut with text:

After one more year at Vassar, Tony dropped out to enroll at the Culinary Institute of America.

He married Nancy in 1985. They divorced 20 years later.

He became a celebrated chef in New York City, a renowned author with the publication of his memoir Kitchen Confidential, and a world-famous television personality.

He continued to struggle with his mental health and with addiction. He died by suicide in northern France in 2018.

Tony inspired millions through his celebration of food, travel, culture, and connection. He was a beacon of empathy.

All of which he learned in Provincetown.

LIGHTS OUT.