



Restaurant Version

PRE-SHOW

(Preston, Idaho. The Curly Potato Restaurant. As the audience enters, JACK, an elderly Maitre d' welcomes them and shows them to their tables.)

JACK

(ad lib.)

Welcome to The Curly Potato - Preston, Idaho's only establishment for fine dining! I'm Jack your Maitre d'. How many in your party? Yes, right this way. Your server will be by shortly to take your order. If you need anything please let me know. (etc.)

(JOE CHRISTIANSEN, a waiter in his 20s, is intently focused on setting a table in his section. He carefully adjusts the place settings and measures everything with a tape measure. Once the audience is seated and the play is ready to begin, JACK tries to sneak past JOE.)

COURSE ONE – Starter

JOE

Jacque! When and where's our meeting?

JACK

Yes, it's receding. But it isn't polite to point out. It may happen to you too.

JOE

No, I said "when and where's out meeting."

JACK

I don't think it bears repeating. I heard...

JOE

No! Our meeting. Our meeting!

JACK

Oh, why didn't you say so? Finish setting up your table first.

JOE

Okay. It'll just be a few minutes! Isn't it looking great?

JACK

Yes, your father would be very proud.

JOE

You think so?

(JACK exits to the front of the restaurant. JOE confides in the patrons.)

I'm gonna be a Maitre d'. Like my Dad, Joseph Christiansen. Perhaps you've heard of him? No? Well...

MY DAD LOVED BEING A MAITRE D'.

(A man in a tuxedo appears behind a podium. This is the memory of JOE'S FATHER.)

HIS MAITRE D'-ING CAME NATURALLY.
HE LOVED GREETING AND SEATING.
HE LOVED SEEING PEOPLE EATING.
HE LOVED POINTING TO THE POWDER ROOM
SHOULD A LADY INQUIRE.

(JOE'S FATHER seats two LADIES at a table.)

A WONDERFUL HOST
 BUT WHAT HE REALLY LOVED MOST
 WAS SETTING DESSERTS ON FIRE!

(He ignites a dessert. The LADIES applaud then exit during the next verse.)

MY DAD LOVED BEING A MAITRE D'
 BUT THAT WAS NOT HIS ONLY SPECIALTY.
 CHOREOGRAPHER, CREATOR,
 COMPOSER, ORCHESTRATOR

(JOE'S FATHER is writing a score, and dancing.)

HE LONGED TO USE HIS GIFT
 TO UPLIFT AND INSPIRE!

(He kneels. A light shines down on him. Epiphany!)

SO HE PONDERED AND HE PRAYED
 AND CAME UP WITH A PARADE
 A PARADE OF DESSERTS ON FIRE!

(Two WAITERS enter with trays.)

WAITERS
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 OOH!

(JOE'S FATHER steps to the front.)

JOE'S FATHER
 HERE WE GO!
 YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.
 STAND AT ATTENTION,
 WAIT FOR MY CUE...
 PLIÉ RELEVÉ!
 RAISE THOSE TRAYS!
 WITH A TWIST OF THE WRIST,
 A FLICK OF THE BIC
 SET DESSERTS A BLAZE!

(JOE'S FATHER and the WAITERS dance around the dining room.)

WAITERS

DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 BANANAS FOSTER, BAKED ALASKA, CHERRIES JUBILEE!
 MARCHING THROUGH THE DINING ROOM
 IN PERFECT SYNCRONICITY.
 AAH! OOH!

JOE

MY DAD LOVED BEING A MAITRE D'
 BUT HE WAS NOT IMMUNE TO TREACHERY.
 THO' HE TRUSTED HIS HEAD WAITER
 HIS HEAD WAITER WAS A TRAITOR!
 A TRAITOR WHO BELIEVED
 HIS MAITRE D'-ING COULD BE GREATER!
 SO IMAGINE DAD'S SURPRISE
 WHEN RIGHT BEFORE HIS EYES
 THAT WAITER BEGAN TO IMPROVISE!

(The sequence is performed again, but this time the HEAD
 WAITER tries to steal the show with a funky dance.)

HEAD WAITER

MOVE YOUR HIPS!
 SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT!
 LEAP TO THE LEFT!

JOE'S FATHER

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GO STRAIGHT!

(The HEAD WAITER begins to dance more wildly.)

JOE

'ROUND THE FLAMBÉ TROLLEY
 HE SKIPPED AND DIPPED
 HIS FLAMING TRAY
 OF BANANA'S FOSTER DRIPPED.
 AND THEN... HE SLIPPED!

WAITER AND JOE'S FATHER

HE SLIPPED! AAH! OOH!

JOE

BOTTLES OF WINE
 AND CANS OF STERNO
 COLLIDED AND IGNITED

IN A BLAZING INFERNO!

HEAD WAITER

SOMEONE HELP!

WAITER 2

IT'S OUT OF CONTROL!

ALL

PUT OUT THE FIRE!
BEFORE IT GROWS HIGHER!
OR THE CART STARTS TO ROLL!

(A flaming cart rolls through the dining room. The WAITERS panic, running in all directions.)

DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
BANANA'S FOSTER, BAKED ALASKA, CHERRIES JUBILEE
SPEEDING THROUGH THE DINING ROOM
IN A CLOUD OF SMOKE AND FRUIT DEBRIS!

(Everyone begins to move in slow motion. During the next lyric, JOE'S FATHER chases the cart across the stage and leaps into the wings.)

JOE

MY DAD LOVED BEING A MAITRE D'.
HE KNEW WHAT TO DO INSTINCTIVELY.
THOUGH IT WASN'T HIS FOLLY
SOMEONE HAD TO STOP THAT TROLLEY
AND HEROS ARE BORN
WHEN SITUATIONS TURN DIRE.
SO MY FATHER DID HIS PART
AND THREW HIMSELF BEFORE THE CART

WAITERS

OOOO!
OOOO!
OOOO!
AAAA!
HEROS ARE BORN!
OO!
OO!
OO!

(There is a burst of light from the wings.)

HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO PUT OUT THAT FIRE.

WAITERS

PUT OUT THAT FIRE! PUT OUT THAT FIRE!

ALL

BANANAS FOSTER, BAKED ALASKA, CHERRIES JUBILEE!
THAT MAN WILL BE REMEMBERED

(They raise their lighters and hold them aloft.)

JOE
AS THE GREATEST MAITRE D'!

(JACK crosses to the front of the restaurant. ELAINE CHRISTIANSEN, a Midwestern woman with a sunny disposition, enters the restaurant.)

ELAINE
Good Afternoon, Jack!

JACK
Elaine, thanks for coming. I hate to pull you away from your patients.

ELAINE
Oh, that's all right! I needed to get out of the office and enjoy this beautiful day!

JACK
But it's raining.

ELAINE
And gosh knows we need the moisture! Tomorrow the Syringas will be in full bloom! It's days like this I thank the Lord I live in Idaho! So, how did Joe take the news?

JACK
I haven't told him yet. I've been playing deaf all afternoon. Something's not right with that boy. He's been setting that same table for the past half an hour.

ELAINE
You were right to call me!

(ELAINE makes her way through the dining room, greeting the patrons as she goes. Ad. Lib.)

Oh Hello! How are you feeling today? Good? The Prozac must be working! Hello! How's your little boy? Are you still having trouble getting him to take his pills? Well, as Mary Poppins said, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." Of course give him that much sugar and he'll really need his Ritalin!

(She laughs at her own joke. She sees JOE.)

Joe, honey!

JOE
Mother! What are you doing here?

ELAINE

Can't a mother stop by to visit her handsome son? How are you feeling?

JACK

I'm great. I'm going to have my meeting with Jacque in a few minutes. I think he's finally ready to retire and name me as the new Maitre d'! Look, I bought him a retirement present. It's a calendar. "The World's 12 Best Restaurants." The cover is Le Cirque in New York City. Isn't it beautiful?

ELAINE

It's lovely! And your table looks perfect!

JOE

(going back to his table setting)

Thank you. But it's not ready just yet... I thought I fixed this fork. But it still looks crooked on the table. Is it bent? Maybe it's bent. Does this fork look bent to you?

ELAINE

(extremely concerned)

Joe! Did you take your medication this morning?

JOE

Oh! I must have forgot.

ELAINE

That's not like you! To change your routine.

(She takes out a pill and offers it to Joe.)

JOE

(declining the pill)

I've been so busy getting ready in case I have to start tonight!

ELAINE

(trying another tactic)

Yes... About that. I was just speaking with Jack...

JOE

Jacque.

ELAINE

Yes dear, Jacque said that that he is retiring...

JOE

I knew it!

ELAINE

Wait dear, there's more...Jack, Jacque, is retiring because the Curly Potato...

JOE

Pomme Frisse.

ELAINE

Yes, dear. The restaurant...has been sold to some developers who want to tear it down and build a mall.

JOE

But the mall will have a restaurant.

ELAINE

No dear, malls have food courts.

JOE

But, I was supposed to be the next Maitre d'.

ELAINE

Do you want your Prozac now?

(JOE nods. ELAINE hands him a pill.)

Don't worry Sweetheart, you'll find something else that you like to do. Like accounting.

JOE

Accounting?

ELAINE

It's just like Maria in the Sound of Music. She thought she wanted to be a big time nun when what she really wanted was to stay at home with the Von Trapp children.

JOE

But she went to Switzerland...

ELAINE

Well there were Nazis...

JOE

Maybe if I went to another town with restaurants...

ELAINE

Another town?

JOE
Maybe Pocatello or Salt Lake City...

ELAINE
Honey.

JOE
Or Billings... or Denver...

ELAINE
Just sit down for a minute...

JOE
(looking at calendar)
or New York City! There are a lot of fancy restaurants in New York City!

ELAINE
Now don't be silly dear. You don't want to go to New York City; it's filled with crazy people. They're not like the nice people here in Preston.

JOE
That's why I should go! I don't fit in here. I'm not like these people.

ELAINE
Sure you are! You're just more creative.

JOE
Jacque! I need to take the rest of the day off. I have to pack. I'm going to New York City!

(JOE exits)

ELAINE
Joe!

JACK
(entering)
New York? He's going to New York?

ELAINE
Oh, dear.

JACK
Ah, it'll be good for the boy.

ELAINE

Good for him? Who's going to remind him to take his medication?

JACK

I think he's plenty good at taking those pills.

ELAINE

He's good as long as he keeps his routine.

JACK

Too good if you ask me. Elaine, all that medication can't be good for him. Why in my day...

ELAINE

Jack. Remember who you're talking to. This is my area of expertise

IN THE PAST THOSE WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS
WERE DESTINED FOR DESTITUTION, INCARCERATION,
OR A LIFE ON THE STAGE.
BUT THANKS TO PHARMACEUTICAL TECHNOLOGIES
WE ARE ENTERING A MEDICATED,
CELEBRATED GOLDEN AGE.

Did you know that since I opened my practice and began working with the children in this community the Preston public school system has become one of the best in the state?

(ELAINE moves through the tables and finds her patients now all grown-up and living happy successful lives.)

I TESTED A CHILD
WHO WOULD STARE AT THE SKY
WATCH CLOUDS ROLLING BY
DISTRACTED BY BUGS AND FLOWERS.
PRESCRIBED A PILL.
WHAT A THRILL!
NOW HE CAN FOCUS FOR HOURS!

I MET WITH A GIRL
WITH A VIOLENT STREAK,
AT IT'S PEAK,
SHE LOVED TO HURL HER PLAYTHINGS!
PRESCRIBED A PILL.
NOW SHE SITS STILL.
SHE LOVES TO PUT AWAY THINGS!

HELPING CHILDREN.

START WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG,
 THAT'S WHEN YOU PLANT THE SEED.
 WATCH THEIR CONFIDENCE GROW
 THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW
 YOU'RE HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED.

I WORKED WITH A BOY
 OH, THE PROBLEMS HE HAD,
 JUST LIKE HIS DAD,
 TROUBLED, BUT CREATIVE AND WITTY.
 I PRESCRIBED A PILL,
 THO' IMPERFECT, STILL

(JOE enters with a suitcase.)

HE'S OFF TO NEW YORK CITY!

(JOE says goodbye to JACK then turns to his mother.)

Tell you what...

WE'LL GIVE IT THREE MONTHS
 YOU CAN GIVE IT A GO
 AND AFTER THREE MONTHS
 IF YOU'VE NOTHING TO SHOW
 WE'LL WELCOME YOU BACK
 BACK TO IDAHO!

(She gives him a kiss.)

Agreed?

JOE

Agreed.

(JOE exits.)

ELAINE

HELPING CHILDREN.
 START WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG,
 SOMEONE MUST TAKE THE LEAD.
 FIGURING THEM OUT
 WELL, THAT'S HALF THE FUN
 TEACH 'EM TO WALK
 AND SOON THEY WILL RUN
 BUT WHAT I LOVE MOST

WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE
IS HELPING MY JOSEPH SUCCEED!

Maybe I should have given him 60 milligrams...

(New York City. JOE enters as if he has just stepped out of a motel ready to start his day.)

CAB DRIVER (SFX)

Watch where you're going!

(DESIRÉE a prostitute is waiting on the street corner.)

DESIRÉE

Hey baby. How you doin'?

JOE

I'm doing well. How are you?

DESIRÉE

Great. What's your name, sugar?

JOE

Joe. Joe Christiansen.

DESIRÉE

Hello JoJo. I'm Desirée.

JOE

Are you French?

DESIRÉE

No, I'm a Pisces.

(beat)

Where you from baby?

JOE

Idaho.

DESIRÉE

You da ho? No, I da ho.

(laughs)

Oh that's good!

(shaking his hand)

So nice to meet you.

JOE

(sanitizing his hand with some Purell)

Is there a drugstore near here?

DESIRÉE

Mm hm. I'll show you. This is my favorite drug store.

JOE

Wow! It's two stories high!

(reading)

Duane Reade.

DESIRÉE

You can get the Trojan hundred count value pack for just eighteen dollars. Hey Gloria! I brought you a customer!

GLORIA

(from behind the pharmacy counter)

Thanks Desi.

DESIRÉE

(to Joe)

See you later cutie.

(JOE enters the Duane Reade and approaches the pharmacy counter. GLORIA an attractive but quirky young lady greets him.)

JOE

Hi. The name is Christiansen. Joe Christiansen.

GLORIA

GOOD MORNING, MR. CHRISTIANSEN...

ONE MOMENT, MR. CHRISTIANSEN.

I'LL BE WITH YOU RIGHT AWAY.

(She finishes up what she's doing)

How can I help you?

JOE

I need a prescription filled.

GLORIA

Are you in our system?

JOE
(handing her the prescription)

No, I just moved here.

(During their conversation GLORIA fills Joe's prescription.)

GLORIA
Really? What brings you to New York?

JOE
I'm going to be a great Maitre d' like my father. At a fancy restaurant like Le Cirque!

GLORIA
Le Cirque? That's a great restaurant.

JOE
I know. And I'm going to make a flaming dessert parade to honor my father.

GLORIA
You make flaming desserts? With fire?

JOE
Yep. But you have to be careful. My father was killed in a flaming bananas foster accident.

GLORIA
Oh that's awful! Did you see it happen?

JOE
No, I was very young. But my mother told me about it.

GLORIA
Wow. You're a very interesting person.

NICE TO MEET YOU MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
(handing him a bag)
HERE'S YOUR PRESCRIPTION MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
WHEN YOU TAKE THESE PILLS, REMEMBER
TO TAKE THEM WITH A MEAL.
DON'T OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY
OR GET BEHIND THE WHEEL
OF AN AUTOMOBILE.

JOE
It's a deal! I'm gonna go find a job! See ya!

GLORIA
 I'LL SEE YOU, MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
 HAVE A LOVELY DAY.

(JOE steps into a restaurant for a job interview he shakes the
 RESTAURANT MANAGER's hand and gives him his resume.)

RESTAURANT MANAGER
 GOOD TO MEET YOU, MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
 PLEASE BE SEATED MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
 THANKS FOR DROPPING BY TODAY.

JOE
 (pointing to resume)
 PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF JOSEPH CHRISTIANSEN?
 HE WAS A MAITRE D' IN PRESTON
 THAT IS MY HOMETOWN
 HE MADE A PARADE IN IDAHO.
 A PARADE OF GREAT RENOWN!
 DON'T YOU WANT TO WRITE THIS DOWN?

(RESTAURANT MANAGER stands and shakes JOE's hand.)

RESTAURANT MANAGER
 IF WE NEED YOU MR. CHRISTIANSEN
 WE HAVE YOUR RESUMÉ.

JOE
 (disappointed)

Okay.

(JOE returns to Duane Reade. DESIRÉE enters.)

DESIRÉE
 HOW YOU DOIN', MR. RICHARDSON?

JOE
 Christiansen.

DESIRÉE
 THAT'S RIGHT YOUR NAME IS CHRISTIANSEN.
 YOU CAN CALL ME DESIRÉE.

JOE
 Yes, I remember. Hello Desirée.

DESIRÉE

Why the long face? You havin' a hard day?

(JOE nods.)

HONEY, I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY
MAKE YOU GRIN FROM EAR TO EAR
NO ONE'S EVER BEEN DISSATISFIED
WITH WHAT I GOT RIGHT HERE
...AND IN THE REAR...

(snaps her fingers)

HEY!

JOE

(awkward)

I have an appointment.

(looking at watch)

10:40.

(to GLORIA)

Hi. The name is Christiansen. Joe Christiansen.

GLORIA

GOOD MORNING, MR. CHRISTIANSEN.

How goes the job hunting? Have you found a restaurant?

JOE

No, it's more difficult than I expected.

GLORIA

I know, nothing's easy in New York. It took me weeks to get this job. But keep at it, it'll happen.

(handing JOE his bag)

HERE'S YOUR

Purell, Handi-wipes, and twelve pack of Bic lighters

MR. CHRISTIANSEN.

HAVE A LOVELY DAY.

JOE

Okay!

(JOE steps into a restaurant and meets another MANAGER.)

RESTAURANT MANAGER

GOOD TO MEET YOU MISTER CHRISTIANSEN.

JOE
 (pointing to the resume)
 And I've attached an addendum of desserts I've set on fire.

RESTAURANT MANAGER
 IF WE NEED YOU MISTER CHRISTIANSEN
 WE HAVE YOUR RESUMÉ.

JOE
 Okay.

(JOE returns to the Duane Reade. DESIRÉE enters.)

DESIRÉE
 Hey!

JOE
 I have an appointment.

DESIRÉE
 Well if you change your mind baby,
 YOU CAN CALL FOR DESIRÉE!

JOE
 10:40!

GLORIA
 GOOD MORNING, MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
 HAVE A LOVELY DAY.

RESTAURANT MANAGER
 GOOD TO MEET YOU, MISTER CHRISTIANSEN
 WE HAVE YOUR RESUMÉ.

DESIRÉE
 YOU CAN CALL FOR DESIRÉE! HEY!

GLORIA
GOOD MORNING,
MR. CHRISTIANSEN

HAVE A LOVELY DAY.

GOOD MORNING,
MR. CHRISTIANSEN

HAVE A LOVELY DAY.

GOOD MORNING,
MR. CHRISTIANSEN

HAVE A LOVELY DAY.

MANAGER

GOOD TO MEET YOU,
MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
PLEASE HAVE A SEAT

WE HAVE YOUR RESUMÉ.

GOOD TO MEET YOU,
MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
PLEASE HAVE A SEAT

WE HAVE YOUR RESUMÉ.

GOOD TO MEET YOU,
MR. CHRISTIANSEN.
PLEASE HAVE A SEAT

DESIRÉE

MR. CHRISTIANSEN,

CALL FOR

DESIRÉE! HEY!

MR. CHRISTIANSEN,

CALL FOR

DESIRÉE! HEY!

MR. CHRISTIANSEN,

CALL

GLORIA

And be sure to let me know when you get hired. I love getting dressed up and going to a fancy restaurant!

JOE

(oblivious)

Okay.

(JOE exits, GLORIA gazes longingly. DESIRÉE enters.)

DESIRÉE

Ugh. What a mess. Gloria, I need some of those handi-wipes.

(GLORIA continues to gaze.)

Helloooo?

GLORIA

Huh?

DESIRÉE

I need some handi-wipes. I got some... stuff on my hands.

GLORIA

Sure thing. Oh. We're all out.

DESIRÉE
All out?

GLORIA
Yes, Mr. Christiansen bought the last of them.

DESIRÉE
Well give me some hand sanitizer.

GLORIA
Sure... oh.

DESIRÉE
Those too?

GLORIA
Yeah.

(GLORIA tears off a paper towel and hands it to DESIRÉE.)

DESIRÉE
That guy is a weird one.

GLORIA
Oh, I think he's nice.

DESIRÉE
Nice, sure. But he's strange. Coming in here every morning. Buying the same thing. How many bottles of Purell and packages of Handi Wipes does one person need?

GLORIA
I like it. There's something to be said for consistency.

DAD ALWAYS MISSED MY RECITALS.
MOM FORGOT TO PICK ME UP AFTER SCHOOL.
BOYFRIENDS SAY THEY'LL CALL.
THEY DON'T.
SAY THEY'LL MAKE COMMITMENTS.
THEY WON'T.
AND THEN THERE'S MR. CHRISTIANSEN
THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE....

EACH MORNING MR. CHRISTIANSEN,
TEN FORTY ON THE DOT.
SO CONSTANT AND PREDICTABLE.
TO ME THAT SAYS A LOT.

"GOOD MORNING, MR. CHRISTIANSEN"
 THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS SAY.
 I LOOK UP AND SEE HIM SMILING.
 WHAT A WAY TO START THE DAY!

BUT DOES HE REALLY HEAR ME?
 AM I REALLY BEING SEEN?
 DOES HE UNDERSTAND ME?
 OR AM I JUST PART OF HIS ROUTINE?

I LOVE YOU, MR. CHRISTIANSEN!
 HOW LONG MUST THIS GO ON?
 I WONDER MR. CHRISTIANSEN...
 CLUELESS MR. CHRISTIANSEN...
 WILL YOU NOTICE WHEN I'M GONE!

(GLORIA looks at her watch, whispers in DESIRÉE's ear, takes off her lab coat and gives it to DESIRÉE who puts it on and steps behind the pharmacy counter. GLORIA exits. JOE Enters.)

JOE

Hi. The name is Christiansen. Joe Christiansen.

DESIRÉE

Hold on a second honey.

JOE

Wha? Where's Gloria?!

DESIRÉE

Didn't you hear? Gloria doesn't work here no more.

JOE

(increasingly anxious)

But Gloria's my pharmacist! Where has she gone?

DESIRÉE

(shrugs)

Dunno.

JOE

Are you sure she's not in the back? Sometimes she goes to the back. Did you check in the back?

DESIRÉE

I said, she doesn't work here no more. I work here now.

JOE

Well, can you call her, and tell her its Joe...Mr. Christiansen. And that I need my prescription?

DESIRÉE

Maybe I could fill it for you.

JOE

No! You're not a pharmacist.

DESIRÉE

I could be.

JOE

(storming out of the pharmacy)

No! Only Gloria can fill my prescription! Only Gloria can fill my prescription!

GLORIA

(entering from the back)

Was that him?

DESIRÉE

Mm hm.

GLORIA

And you told him I wasn't here?

DESIRÉE

Mm hm.

GLORIA

Well, did he care? What did he say?

DESIRÉE

(excited for Gloria)

He said, "Only you could fill his prescription!"

GLORIA

He did? That's wonderful!

(She runs to the door.)

Where did he go?

DESIRÉE

I don't know, he was crazy. He ran out of here, shouting, "Only Gloria can fill my prescription!"

GLORIA

What exactly did you say to him?

DESIRÉE

I told him you didn't work here any more and I didn't know where you went.

GLORIA

Desi! You were just supposed to say I wasn't here.

DESIRÉE

Oh. Sorry.

GLORIA

Oh, Dear.

(A different Duane Reade.)

JOE

Hi. The name is Christiansen. Joe Christiansen. Is there a pharmacist named Gloria here?

(JOE storms out of that Duane Reade. Multiple Duane Reade signs light up all over the stage.)

THERE ARE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE
DUANE READE LOCATIONS IN MANHATTAN.
BRONX: THIRTEEN, BROOKLYN: TWENTY-EIGHT,
QUEENS: THIRTY-SEVEN
AND UNTIL I'VE CHECKED THEM ALL,
TWO HUNDRED AND ELEVEN,
EVERYTHING ELSE WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT.

(One by one the Duane Reade signs disappear.)

JOE

Hi. The name is Joe. Joe Christiansen. Is there a pharmacist named Gloria here?

Hi. Joe. Joe Christiansen. A pharmacist named Gloria here? Joe Christiansen. Pharmacist named Gloria? Joe. Pharmacist. Gloria?

(Until there is just one left.)

Store number 211 on the corner of Broadway and West 4th. The last Duane Reade in New York...and no Gloria.

(The last Duane Reade sign fades out.)

JOE

WHERE IS THE GIRL
IN THE WHITE COTTON LAB COAT?
HOW COULD SHE GO
WITHOUT SAYING GOOD BYE?
I MISS HER SO
AND HER WHITE COTTON LAB COAT...

(smiling and remembering)

WITH THE WHITE PLASTIC BUTTONS
AND THE THREE REINFORCED POCKETS
AND THE DUANE READE LOGO IN BLUE AND RED,
BUT SHE'D SOWN IT ON WITH WHITE THREAD INSTEAD.
QUALITY THREAD, MAYBE THREE OR FOUR PLY.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE ANTI-DEPRESSANTS, I'D CRY.

WHERE IS THE GIRL
WHO FILLED MY PRESCRIPTION?
THE ONE WHO MADE SURE
EV'RY TABLET WAS THERE.
SHE HAD A CURE
THAT DEFIES ALL DESCRIPTION.
HER EYES WERE HYPNOTIZING.
HER VOICE WAS TRANQUILIZING.
SHE HAD A MOOD STABILIZING WAY OF STYLING HER HAIR.

(taking out a bottle of pills.)

I'LL JUST TAKE MY MEDICATION
LIKE I'VE DONE SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.
I'LL FORGET THIS STRANGE FIXATION,
I WON'T THINK ON IT ANYMORE.
I'LL FIND ANOTHER PHARMACIST,
I'LL FIND ANOTHER STORE.
ANOTHER PHARMACY, ANOTHER PHARMACIST,
ANOTHER GLOR...I...A...

(JOE pauses for a moment reluctant to take the pills.)

WHERE IS THE GIRL
IN THE WHITE COTTON LAB COAT?
SHE LOVED TO TIGHTEN

MY CHILD PROOF CAP.

THE WORLD WAS RIGHT IN
 THAT WHITE COTTON LAB COAT
 WITH THE WHITE PLASTIC BUTTONS,
 AND THE THREE REINFORCED POCKETS,
 AND TWO BALLPOINT PENS:
 ONE BLACK, ONE BLUE.
 BUT I THINK THAT THE BLUE PEN
 HAD BLACK INK TOO!
 AND A PACK OF TIC TACS
 THAT SHE KEPT IN HER SLACKS,
 WHITE COTTON SLACKS,
 WHITE SPEARMINT TIC TACS,
 THAT RATTLED WHEN SHE WALKED
 FROM THE FRONT TO THE BACK,
 TO GET ME MY ANAFRANIL,
 MY PAXIL, MY PROZAC!

(looking at almost empty bottle of Prozac)

NO EXPLANATION.
 NOT EVEN A NOTE.
 WHERE IS SHE NOW
 THAT I NEED MY MEDICATION
 TO FORGET HER
 THE GIRL IN THE WHITE COTTON LAB COAT?

(RIVER, a middle-aged hippy dippy dude enters carrying a
 window box filled with marijuana plants and bumps into JOE.)

RIVER

Whoa dude! You almost made me drop my crop!

JOE

(about to cry)

I'm really sorry.

RIVER

Hey man, that's all right.

JOE

Oh, okay. Well I'm still really sorry.

RIVER

Hold up. Are you okay? You're not going to do anything crazy.

JOE

No, I'm not crazy. I've had tests done. I'm creative.

RIVER

That's awesome! I'm creative too.

JOE

You are?

RIVER

Yeah, I run my own holistic tearoom. I brew all my own teas. And I paint.

JOE

I make desserts and I set them on fire.

RIVER

That's awesome!

JOE

(spoken in one long ramble)

Well, it was going to be awesome. But, I've been living in a crummy motel and I'm running out of money because I've been systematically searching every Duane Reade drugstore in greater New York City metropolitan area looking for my pharmacist for the past four weeks when I should have been looking for a job. Now I'm going to have to move back to Idaho and live with my Mother and I'll never be a great Maitre d', or lead a parade to honor my father who was killed in a freak flaming bananas foster accident.

RIVER

Whoa! You've gone to every Duane Reade in New York?

JOE

The city not the state...Do you think I should finish the state?

RIVER

You sound like totally organized -you want a job man?

JOE

Yes!

Course II Soup & Salad

(Elaine's phone rings. JOE is calling from River's Tearoom.)

ELAINE
Christiansen residence! Elaine speaking!

JOE
Hello!

ELAINE
Oh, Hello dear!

JOE
Guess what? I got a job!

ELAINE
As a Maitre d'?

JOE
A tea sommelier.

ELAINE
In a fancy restaurant?

JOE
It's more like a café.

ELAINE
Honey, if you wanted to work at a Starbucks we're getting one here in Preston.

JOE
I need to get some New York food and beverage experience under my belt. So I'm starting with beverages and then I can work my way up to food.

ELAINE
Okay... You remember our agreement.

JOE
Of course. But, I think things are going to pick up. I'm working in Greenwich Village. It's such an exciting place. Everyone is so creative!

ELAINE
That's wonderful. Now, I'm sending you a new prescription. Make sure your pharmacist reads my notes.

JOE

My pharmacist...

(Lights up on GLORIA sitting at her Duane Reade counter looking at the clock.)

GLORIA

10:40!

(beat. She sighs.)

DESIRÉE

Honey, it's been weeks, he's not coming here anymore.

GLORIA

I know.

DESIRÉE

Why don't you take a peak at his records? Find out where he lives.

GLORIA

I already did. He just moved here and was living in a motel. I called but he's not there anymore.

DESIRÉE

Well, you talked to him every day. Didn't he give you a clue?

GLORIA

He didn't say much. Just that he wanted to be a Maitre d' like his father. At a great restaurant... at a great restaurant like... Le Cirque! Thank you Desi! Can you watch the counter? I'm gonna take my lunch break!

DESIRÉE

But it's 10:43 AM!

GLORIA

Then my brunch break!

(GLORIA exits. Lights up on River's holistic tearoom. RIVER enters. JOE is mixing ingredients in a coffee cup.)

RIVER

Hey man, I made some brownies. You want one?

(JOE is focused on his task and doesn't hear.)

Brownie, dude?

RIVER

What? Oh, no thanks.

JOE

Whatcha doin'?

RIVER

I have a new idea for a dessert.
 (He holds up the coffee mug.)
 Cocoa Christiansen! It has cocoa, nutmeg, whipped cream and...
 (setting the drink on fire)
 Kahlua!

RIVER

I once had a girlfriend named Kahlua.

JOE

Don't you think that will blend nicely with the other flavors? I'm not sure if a drink qualifies as a dessert though'. I'm not feeling very inspired.

RIVER

You need to get a muse man.

JOE

A muse?

RIVER

Yeah, all great artists have muses.

JOE

What do they do?

RIVER

Inspiration, man! When you're in a rut, a muse will lift you out of your slump.

JOE

I used to know someone like that. But she disappeared.

RIVER

Like a forest nymph?

JOE

No, like a pharmacist. Maybe I should go back to that Duane Reade where we met, see if they know anything more...

RIVER

Nah. You gotta move on man. You don't want a fickle muse. Let go of the negativity of the past. You need someone dependable like my muse.

JOE

You have a muse?

RIVER

Man, she's awesome.

JOE

How'd you find her?

RIVER

She just came to me. Sometimes you just gotta think out of the box.

SOME GIRLS ARE CLUELESS.
SOME ARE SCHOLASTIC.
SOME GIRLS ARE SAD
AND SOME - ENTHUSIASTIC!
BUT NONE IS AS PERFECT
OR SURPRISINGLY ELASTIC
AS A GIRL THAT'S MADE OF PLASTIC!

JOE

Plastic?

RIVER

There's nothing like the feel of vinyl, man.
SOME GIRLS COME EARLY.
SOME GIRLS RUN LATE.
SOME GIRLS DON'T SHOW
EVEN THOUGH YOU HAD A DATE.
BUT ONE GIRL WHO'LL NEVER,
NEVER EVER MAKE YOU WAIT
IS A GIRL YOU CAN INFLATE!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY HER DINNER
OR TAKE HER DANCING AT THE CLUB.
WHEN YOU COME HOME AT NIGHT
SHE'LL ALWAYS BE THERE,
RIGHT WHERE YOU LEFT HER,

LYING IN THE BEDROOM
OR FLOATING IN THE TUB.

Floating...floating...

SOME GIRLS ARE FUSSY
"DON'T TOUCH MY HAIR!"
SOME GIRLS ARE STURDY
THEY CAN TAKE SOME WEAR AND TEAR.
BUT THE ONLY GIRL I KNOW
YOU CAN PATCH AND REPAIR
IS A GIRL THAT'S FILLED WITH AIR.
WITH AIR!

JOE

(taking out pill bottle)

Oh... I don't know...it's all so depressing.

RIVER

Whoa... What are those?

(taking the bottle and reading the label)

Side effects may include dry mouth, drowsiness, and nightmares. Where did you get these, dude?

JOE

My mother gives me prescriptions...

RIVER

(holding up a bag of colorful pills)

These are my prescriptions... You wanna trade?

JOE

Oh no, I take certain pills at certain times. I have to be care...

RIVER

No it's cool man, I'll trade you a

(reading Joe's bottle)

an-a-fra-nil... for a...

(going through his bag)

a pink and orange one! These are the best. I take them all the time. They really bring out your creativity. All the great artists use them.

JOE

Well, maybe just one.

RIVER

They're great when you watch a movie.

JOE

Like Raisinettes?

RIVER

No, like Fantasia. Check out my movie collection and pick something you like.

JOE

(looking through River's movies)

Pink Floyd- The Wall, Altered States, The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour, The Sound of Music... Hey, I used to love this when I was a kid.

RIVER

Pop it on!

(Joe puts the movie in the player. JOE and RIVER look out over the audience watching the movie. We hear the music for the opening scene of the Sound of Music. The pills are taking effect.)

JOE

My mother loves Julie Andrews. We watched all her albums and listened to all her movies.

RIVER

I wonder if they make a doll of her.

JOE

(starting to feel the effect of the pill)

Yeah, she'd make a great muse.

ALL THROUGH THE DAY
I THINK OF HER
AND I SOFTLY WHISPER HER NAME
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT
I DREAM OF HER
AND EV'RY DREAM IS THE SAME!

SHE IS SPINNING.
SPINNING WHERE EVER SHE GOES
RISING UP TO THE TIPS OF HER TOES.
AT THE PRINCE'S BALL
WITH A CHIMNEY SWEEP
ON A MOUNTAIN TOP
DOES SHE EVER SLEEP?
NO! SHE IS ALWAYS SPINNING!

(Psychedelic lighting. GLORIA dressed as a young JULIE ANDREWS in her Sound of Music frock enters and sits next to JOE.)

JOE
(tripping, he whispers)
River!... Julie Andrews is sitting next to me!

RIVER
Cooooool.

JULIE
ALL THROUGH THE DAY
YOU THINK OF ME!

JOE
I AM HERE ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE!

JULIE
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT
YOU DREAM OF ME!

JOE
THERE IS NOTHING I WOULD NOT GIVE...
TO SEE YOU SPINNING!

JULIE
A SPINNING JULIE SHOW!

JOE
WITH ALL THE JULIES I KNOW

JULIE
MARY POPPINS, GUENEVERE
ELIZA DOLITTLE

JOE
WILL APPEAR!

JULIE
CINDERELLA

JOE
WEARING JUST ONE SHOE!

JULIE
MILLIE! MARIA! VICTORIA!

JOE
 AND VICTOR TOO!
 ALL MY JULIE'S SPINNING!

(JOE, JULIE and RIVER dance.)

JULIE
 (obbligato "lonely goat herder")
 AH HA HA HA AH HA HA HA HA!
 AH HA HA HA AH HA HA HA HA!
 AH HA HA HA AH HA HA HA HA!

RIVER & JOE
 JULIE! JULIE!
 JULIE! JULIE!
 JULIE! JULIE!

(Joe's phone rings. The dance continues through the phone call.)

ELAINE
 Hello dear, It's your mother. I just remembered...

JOE
 Mother! I've found her! My muse!

ELAINE
 Your muse?

JOE
 It's Julie Andrews!!

ELAINE
 The actress?

JOE
 Yes!

JULIE
 (singing the chorus)
 DO TI TI LA DO DO TI SO!

ELAINE
 I'm a little confused, Joe. How did you meet Julie Andrews?

JOE
 WE ARE SPINNING!

ELAINE
 Where are you?

JOE
I'm in Austria! With the Von Trapps!

JULIE
(obbligato "the hills are alive with the")
AH AAH AH HA HA AH HA HA HA HA HA !

ELAINE
Joe what's a matter with you? Have you been taking your medication?

JOE
Yes! And River was nice enough to share!

RIVER
SPINNING! SPINNING!

ELAINE
What does that mean? What have you taken?

JOE
The one's you sent me.

RIVER
And the pink and orange.

JOE
And the pink and orange!

ELAINE	RIVER	JULIE
I didn't send you any pink and ora... Oh.	WHOA!	AH AH
HONEY, YOU'RE HAVING	I'M SPINNING!	AH AH!
HALLUCINATIONS		
SHE'S NOT REALLY THERE.		AH AH
CALL AN AMBULANCE.	WHOA!	AH AH!
TELL THEM YOU'RE HAVING	I'M SPINNING!	
HALLUCINATIONS AND NEED		AH AH
IMMEDIATE CARE.		AH AH!
DIAL NINE ONE ONE, SON!		
You need to have your stomach pumped!		

JOE
Okay, okay.

(dialing)
Helooo 9111? I'd like to have my stomach pumped! I'm at 214 St. Marks Place. You can't miss me
I AM SPINNING!

(JOE, RIVER and JULIE start spinning.)

JOE	RIVER	JULIE	ELAINE
SPINNING WITH	SPINNING!	(goat herder)	HONEY, YOU'RE
JOOOO-LIE.	JOOLIE!	AH HA HA!	HAVING
SHE'S SPINNING WITH	SPINNING	AH HA HA!	HALLUCINATIONS
RIVER AND ME	WITH JOOLIE!		SHE'S NOT REALLY
I'M HER GREATEST FAN		(It's may! etc.)	THERE.
A THOROUGHLY	GREATEST FAN!	AH AY!	CALL AN AMBULANCE.
MODERN MAN		AH AY!	TELL THEM YOU'RE
I'M HER ARTHUR	MODERN MAN!	AH HA	HAVING HALLUCI-
AND HER LANCELOT	OH MAN!	HA HA	NATIONS AND NEED
MAYBE SHE'LL PLAY ME	WHOA MAN!	HAAAAHT!	IMMEDIATE CARE.
"LE JAZZ HOT"	AS WE'RE		OH JOE! GO JOE!
AS WE'RE SPINNING!	SPINNING!	SPINNING!	INSTEAD OF SPINNING!

(Police lights start flashing.)

COP

Did someone here call 911? Hey, stop spinning! I said stop spinning!

(Blackout. Lights up on ELAINE.)

ELAINE

HELPING CHILDREN.
 START WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG,
 SOMEONE MUST TAKE THE LEAD.
 FIGURING THEM OUT
 WELL, THAT'S HALF THE FUN
 TEACH 'EM TO WALK
 AND SOON THEY WILL RUN
 BUT WHAT I LOVE MOST
 WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE
 IS HELPING MY JOSEPH SUCCEED!

(Lights up on an emergency waiting room. MR. YASHINOYA, a middle aged Japanese man, sits by JOE.)

YASHINOYA

(moaning)

Ooooooh.

(pause)

Aaaaaaaaah!

(pause)

Uhhhhhhhh!

JOE
Are you okay?

YASHINOYA
Okay.

(pause)

Ohhhhhhh!

JOE
Are you sure?

YASHINOYA
I just need stomach pump. Bad fish.

JOE
Oh, I just had my stomach pumped. You'll feel better after.

YASHINOYA
I know. Pump stomach many time.

JOE
Why?

YASHINOYA
Someone have to eat leftover sushi. But now I get behind in my work. I need help. Run cash register, clean bowl, count chopstick...

JOE
You own a restaurant?

YASHINOYA
Speedy Happy Noodle Shop and Internet Café.

JOE
Really? I'm in the biz too. I work at a tearoom.
(realizing what happened)
Well, I worked at a tearoom. But I took some bad pills and had to get my stomach pumped and they arrested my friend and mentor River and charged him with two counts of possession and four counts of manufacturing an illegal substance and closed down his tearoom. Now I'm going to have to move back to Idaho and live with my mother and I'll never be a great Maitre d', or lead a parade to honor my father who was killed in a freak flaming Bananas Foster accident.

YASHINOYA
So you have experience with tea?

JOE

Yes.

YASHINOYA

Hmmm. You want job? Good hour, okay pay, and all the day-old sushi you can eat!

JOE

Sounds great!

(Blackout. Sound of phone ringing. Lights up on ELAINE in Preston.)

ELAINE

Christiansen residence. Elaine speaking.

(Lights up on The Speedy Happy Noodle Shop and Internet Café.)

JOE

Hello, Mother.

ELAINE

Joe! I'm so glad you called! I have some exciting news! There is a new restaurant opening up in town, it's called Applebee's and they said they will have a position for a host. So you will have someplace to work when you get back!

JOE

But I've just started a new job!

ELAINE

A new job?

JOE

Yeah! I'm working in a Japanese restaurant!

YASHINOYA

(entering)

Now pay attention, the secret to preparing noodle soup...

JOE

I gotta run.

ELAINE

But what about Applebees!

YASHINOYA

Attention!

Bye!
 (to Yashinoya)
 Sorry.

YASHINOYA
 You must always stay alert in the noodle shop. Keep one eye on the door. Keep one eye on the register. And keep the other eye on the noodle.

JOE
 But that's three eyes...

YASHINOYA
 Noodle server must have thousand eyes! Know you surroundings. Door open, you ready with menu.

(demonstrating)
 Take you order!

JOE
 Um, Mr. Yashinoya?

YASHINOYA
 Yes?

JOE
 I want to show you something.

(JOE shows YASHINOYA a tray of fortune cookies with fuses.)

I call it Fortune Cookies Christiansen!

(JOE takes out his lighter.)

YASHINOYA
 (interrupting)
 You need get girlfriend.

JOE
 Well, I would like to find a muse.

YASHINOYA
 A moose?

JOE

No a muse, it's the woman who inspires your work. I knew this pharmacist at this Duane Reade uptown...

YASHINOYA

Uptown?

JOE

Well, on 42nd street. I was thinking I should go back there to see if...

YASHINOYA

Don't waste time! We got computer with internet! You find moose in the chatroom.

JOE

The Chatroom?

(MR. YASHINOYA seats JOE in front of a computer.)

YASHINOYA

THERE'S SOMEONE FOR EV'RYONE
IN THE CHATROOM.
NO MATTER WHAT THING YOU LIKE TO DO.
YOU MAY LIKE SUCKING TOES
OR WEARING BABY CLOTHES .
IN CHATROOM YOU FIND
SOMEONE LIKE THAT TOO!

IN THE CHATROOM!

HURRY, WHY YOU WAIT?
IN THE CHATROOM!
YOU CAN GO ON DATE!

THERE'S SOMEONE FOR EV'RYONE
IN THE CHATROOM.
AND SOMETIME THEY CHATTING IN THE NUDE!
IF YOU THINK SHE IS YOUR TYPE
YOU SAY, "HEY, LET'S CAM ON SKYPE"
GOOD TO CHECK.
MAKE SURE SHE NOT A DUDE.

IN THE CHATROOM!
IT'S EASY AND IT'S QUICK
IN THE CHATROOM!
JUST POINT AND DOUBLE CLICK

CHATROOM LADIES
(at their computers)

IN THE CHATROOM!

IN THE CHATROOM!

CHATROOM LADIES
IN THE CHATROOM!

IN THE CHATROOM!

SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND!
IT'S GONNA BLOW YOUR MIND!

IN THE CHATROOM!
FANTASIES COME TRUE!
IN THE CHATROOM!
YOU FIND THE GIRL FOR YOU!

CHATROOM LADIES
IN THE CHATROOM!

IN THE CHATROOM!

(Lights focus on D.D. a sexy woman at her computer.)

YASHINOYA & D.D.
IN THE CHATROOM!

D.D.
WOMAN SEEKING MAN!

YASHINOYA & D.D.
IN THE CHATROOM!

YASHINOYA
WE DO IT IN JAPAN!

YASHINOYA & D.D.
IN THE CHATROOM!

D.D.
I'LL FIND WHAT I'M DREAMING OF!

ALL
IN THE CHATROOM!
YOU CAN FALL IN LOVE!

D.D.
Hi. MaitreD2000.

JOE
(surprised)
That was fast.
(types)
Hello
(reads)
"Delicious Dish"
(to self, impressed, a little jealous.)
That's a good screen name.

You can call me D.D. for short. D.D.
 Hi D.D. I'm Joe. JOE
 So Joe, you're a Maitre d'? D.D.
 Um... JOE
 Tell her you Maitre d'. YASHINOYA
 (looking over Joe's shoulder)
 But I'm... JOE
 Tell her! YASHINOYA
 Yes, I'm a Maitre d' JOE
 I knew it! I think that is sooooo sexy! D.D.
 Really? JOE
 Oh yeah, I love a man in a tux. So, What restaurant do you work at? D.D.
 Um. Le Cirque? JOE
 Le Cirque? That's a great restaurant! Do you meet a lot of famous people? D.D.
 Sure... JOE
 Like who? D.D.
 Um, you know.... Brad Pitt, Salma Hay... ek, and Jaiz. JOE

DELICIOUS DISH

That's amazing! Don't you have any questions you'd like to ask me?

JOE

(pausing to think, then types)

What's your favorite dessert?

D.D.

Cherries Jubilee.

JOE

Mine too!

D.D.

So, tell me Joe. If I came to your restaurant. Where would you be?

JOE

Um, usually at the entrance to the dining room. At my podium.

D.D.

At your podium. What would you say to me when I came up to your podium?

JOE

Um, "Do you have a reservation?"

D.D.

"DO I HAVE A RESERVATION?"

"I do."

A TABLE FOR ONE."

What would you do next?

JOE

Well, Id look at the list and find your reservation.

DELICIOUS DISH

Did you find it?

JOE

Yes.

D.D.

"YOU FOUND MY RESERVATION!

"A TABLE FOR ONE."

Then what?

JOE

I'd show you to your table.

D.D.

SHOW ME MY TABLE
OH, BABY.
LEAD AND I'LL FOLLOW YOU THERE!
SHOW ME MY TABLE
OH, BABY.
SHOW ME THEN PULL OUT MY CHAIR.

UNFOLD MY NAPKIN.
OH, BABY.
SHAKE IT OUT AND GIVE IT A SNAP!
UNFOLD MY NAPKIN
OH, BABY.
PLACE IT RIGHT HERE ON MY LAP!

TELL ME THE SPECIALS!
OH, BABY.
TELL ME 'CAUSE I'M AT A LOSS
IS IT CHICKEN OR FISH?
WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DISH?
TELL ME THE SECRET OF YOUR SPECIAL BÉCHAMEL SAUCE!

AT MY TABLE FOR ONE!

Then what?

JOE

Well, then your waiter would take over and I'd go back to my podium. And that would be it... unless you wanted a special dessert.

D.D.

I do! I want Cherries Jubilee!
MAKE MY DESSERT.
OH, BABY.
MIX THE FRUIT WITH THE WINE!

MAKE MY DESSERT!
OH, BABY.
MAKE ME THAT SWEETNESS DIVINE!
SET IT ON FIRE!
OH, BABY!
DO IT! I WON'T SHY AWAY!
SET IT ON FIRE!
OH, BABY!

THE FLAMES DANCE AND FLICKER,
THE SAUCE GETTING THICKER.
GOD, HOW I LOVE A FLAMBÉ!

Wow. JOE

D.D.
AT MY TABLE FOR ONE!
MY TABLE FOR ONE!
Oh that was great, Joe. You're an excellent Maitre d'.

D.D. I think we should meet. JOE

For dinner? D.D.

Okay, dinner. JOE

At Le Cirque. D.D.

Sure. At Le Cirque... JOE
(trapped)

Oh, Joe... D.D.
(flirtily)
WILL I NEED A RESERVATION?

Of course not, I'll take care of that. JOE

D.D.
DON'T NEED A RESERVATION!
A TABLE FOR TWO!
A TABLE WITH YOU!

(Le Cirque. JOE sits with D.D. at a table . ÉMILE the very French
Maitre d' of Le Cirque is at the podium. GLORIA enters.)

ÉMILE

May I help you?

GLORIA

Hi. It's me again, Gloria. I was just wondering if that young man I asked you about. Joe Christiansen. Has he come by yet?

ÉMILE

Like I've told you many times before, I have not seen this Christiansen person.

GLORIA

Well, if for some reason he calls for an interview. And I think he will. Can you give him a note for me?

(She takes out a piece of paper and writes)

ÉMILE

Alright. Whatever.

GLORIA

Thank you.

ÉMILE

(dismissive)

Oui, oui.

(He crumples up the piece of paper once GLORIA has turned.
Focus shifts to JOE and D.D.)

DELICIOUS DISH

Oh my God, Joe. Like this is so exciting! I hope I see somebody famous. And if I do... I can get an introduction from the Maitre...

JOE

D.D.... That's what I wanted to talk to you about...

D.D.

You know you are a lot cuter in person. It's such a relief, it's always so frightening meeting someone face to face for the first time.

JOE

Thank you, you're just as pretty as your picture. But, I wanted to tell...

D.D.

Do you think Sarah Jessica Parker will come again? Didn't you say you saw her last night? Oh wait, that's silly, she wouldn't come to the same restaurant two nights in a row. Unless she's a regular. Is she a regular?

JOE

I don't know, I mean, I don't think she's coming tonight.

D.D.

(cooly)

Well you should know, you're the Maitre...

JOE

D.D. I've been meaning to tell you...

D.D.

Oh my god! Is that Ben Affleck? That's Ben Affleck isn't it!

JOE

No, I think that's a bus boy.

D.D.

Oh. Yeah, you're right. I mean of course you're right you're the Maitre...

JOE

D.D.! I have to tell you something!

D.D.

Of course Joe, you can tell me anything.

JOE

I haven't been completely honest with you.

D.D.

What is it Joe? I'm sure it's nothing I can't handle. What... You're not married are you? Are you married? I mean that would be bad, but I'm sure we could figure something out...

JOE

No, I'm not married.

D.D.

Oh, then what is it... You're not a woman are you? I saw something about that on Oprah, and you do have very delicate features... but one time in college I...

JOE
No, I'm not a woman.

D.D.
Then what is it?

JOE
I'm not a Maitre d'.

D.D.
(shocked)
What?

JOE
But, I'm going to be one. I'm working at...

D.D.
You're not a Maitre d'?

JOE
I'm sorry.

D.D.
Then what are you? Are you at least a head waiter?
(Joe shakes his head)

A sommelier?
(Joe shakes his head)

A busboy?
(Joe shakes his head)

Do you even work at Le Cirque?
(Joe shakes his head)

JOE
I work at a noodle shop.

D.D.
A noodle shop?! So you've never seated Tom Cruise, or Angelina Jolie, or the fat girl from The Facts of Life.

JOE
Natalie? Actually, she came into the noodle shop.

D.D.
I can't believe this is happening! I should have known better!

JOE

Please sit down you're making a scene.

D.D.

The internet is filled with liars, losers and...and... freaks! And another thing, Cherries Jubilee isn't my favorite dessert. It's Raspberry Jello!

(JOE gasps. D.D. storms out.)

JOE

Wait, I can explain! Wait!

(ÉMILE siddles up to the table.)

ÉMILE

Is everything all right?

JOE

(not looking at Émile)

No. My date, who I met on the internet, just dumped me because I lied to her about being a Maitre d', when I'm really just cashier at a noodle shop. Now I'm going to have to move back to Idaho and live with my mother and I'll never be a great Maitre d', or lead a dessert to honor my father who was killed in a freak flaming Bananas Foster accident, or find my muse.

ÉMILE

(amused)

You told her you were a Maitre d'?

JOE

Yes, I know I shouldn't have, she was just so excited by it.

ÉMILE

Yes, women do love a Maitre d'.

JOE

(looks up)

Oh my gosh! You're the Maitre d'!

ÉMILE

Oui, c'est vrai.

(looking Joe over)

So you... want to be... a Maitre d'... like me?

JOE

More than anything in the world.

ÉMILE

I am Émile. Émile Bongoût.

(They shake hands)

JOE

Joe. Joe Christiansen.

ÉMILE

That name. I have heard it before.

JOE

Maybe you know of my father Joseph Christiansen. He was a famous Maitre d' in Idaho. Known best for his dessert parade.

ÉMILE

Yes, that must be it.

(Émile's phone rings.)

One moment please. Good Evening, Le Cirque. Oh, hello Mr. Maccioni. Is it that time of year again? Your oldest? Yes, they grow up so quickly. Would you like me to have the chef make the ravioli that spell out his name like last year? Yes sir, I love birthday parties too.

ÉMILE

Yes sir, I'll get right on it.

(ÉMILE hangs up and begins writing a note.)

JOE

Was that Sirio Mac..

ÉMILE

(thinking)

Teu-deu-deu!

(makes note)

"Make Ravioli spelling... Marco." Is it Marco?

JOE

It's Mario.

ÉMILE

Eh?

JOE

Marco is the second oldest, Mario is the oldest...and Mauro is the youngest.

ÉMILE

How do you know this?

JOE

I know everything about Le Cirque. I know how Mr. Maccioni started it in 1971. He had to be both waiter and host and his wife was the chef and together they shaped it into the icon of fine dining it is today.

ÉMILE

Trés impressive, but do you know... the dining room capacity?

JOE

95

ÉMILE

Bar?

JOE

65

ÉMILE

Waiters?

JOE

16

ÉMILE

Bussers?

JOE

7

ÉMILE

Bartenders

JOE

3

ÉMILE

What wine would you serve with... beef?

JOE

Merlot.

Pork?	ÉMILE
Pinot Noir.	JOE
Poultry?	ÉMILE
Beaujolais.	JOE
Cho-	ÉMILE
Port.	JOE
-colat.	ÉMILE
Our motto?	(beat)
"Where food, fashion and culture converge."	JOE
Are you a hard worker?	ÉMILE
The hardest!	JOE (affecting a French accent)
Oui, a Maitre 'd is an artist!	ÉMILE
I am impressed. You are very knowledgeable and you have the fire but there is one thing you lack.	ÉMILE
Oui?	JOE
Style!	ÉMILE

THERE IS MORE TO BEING A MAITRE D'
 THAN A FLAIR FOR ARRANGING THE CHAIR
 AND A PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF SAUCES
 YOU MUST BE IMMACULATE AS THE DISHES YOU SERVE
 SO EVERYONE KNOWS WHO THE BOSS IS.

Congratulations! I have decided to take you on as my protégé and teach you the Maitre d' style. Come we have no time, Toulouse!

TOULOUSE

Oui, Monsieur.

ÉMILE

(to Joe)

Toulouse is my head waiter.

(to Toulouse)

Toulouse! I do not want to be disturbed!

TOULOUSE

Oui.

ÉMILE

(to Joe)

Part one! Jean Claude Biguine Hair Salon!

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND
 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HAIR.
 ALWAYS USE THE BEST SHAMPOOS
 AND CHOOSE THE RIGHT CONDITIONAIR.
 THEN SLICK IT BACK
 SO NOTHING STICKS UP IN THE AIR.

FOR IF IT MOVES
 THAT IS NO GOOD
 HAIR SHOULD BE STIFF
 AND HARD LIKE WOOD!
 UNDERSTOOD?

JOE

Understood.

ÉMILE

PERFECTION
 WE WANT PERFECTION
 THAT'S PERFECTION WITH A CAPITAL "P"
 SO LISTEN UP AND FOLLOW MY DIRECTION

AND YOU TOO CAN BE LIKE ME.

(He whips out a bottle and hands it to JOE.)

L'oreal Studio Line Pomade!

JOE

But I already have hair gel.

ÉMILE

No! Not gel! Pomade. You use cheap product you look cheap! Part two! Counter de Clinque!

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SKIN.
EACH MORNING WHEN YOU WAKE
FOLLOW MY STRICT REGIMEN:
CLEANSE, SHAVE, EXFOLIATE
AND THEN! YOU CLEANSE AGAIN!

FOR IF I SPOT
A TINY DOT
I GET SO HOT
FOR I AM NOT
GEORGE SEURAT!

JOE

George Seurat?

ÉMILE

He was a pointillist painter. He liked the dots. We do not like dots!

ÉMILE
PERFECTION!

VOICES
AH OO!

SHOOT FOR PERFECTION!

AH OO!

ÉMILE

THAT'S PERFECTION WITH A CAPITAL "P"!
SO LISTEN UP AND FOLLOW MY DIRECTION
AND YOU TOO CAN BE LIKE ME.

Part three!

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CLOTHES
WITHOUT IT'S PRETTY PETALS
A ROSE IS NOT A ROSE.

YOU MUST DRESS FOR SUCCESS
FROM YOUR HEAD DOWN TO YOUR TOES.

THE SOCKS AND SHOES
BY GAULTIER.
THE SHIRT AND TIE
ADELINE ANDRÉ
THE UNDERWEAR

JOE
(looking at price)

Forty bucks!?

ÉMILE
AND FINALLY THE TUX.
THE TUX!

LADIES
AH AH AH AH AH
AH AH AH ...OO!

(As ÉMILE sustains a ridiculously long note, the sales people
gather around JOE. An instant later, JOE emerges in a white tux.)

ÉMILE
Pierre Cardin!

JOE
PERFECTION!
I AM PERFECTION!
PERFECTION WITH
A CAPITAL "P"!

ÉMILE
PERFECTION WITH
A CAPITAL "P"!

LADIES
AH OO!
AH OO!
"P"! "P"!

ÉMILE
AND NOW YOU'VE REACHED THE LEVEL OF PERFECTION
YOU TOO CAN BE A MAITRE D'!

JOE
A MAITRE D'?

ÉMILE
AH OUI!

You have learned so much in such a short time. I have to go to a Maitre d' conference
Friday night and I would like you to act as Maitre d' in my absense.

JOE
Oh, Thank You Emile! Thank you so much for this opportunity!

(JOE starts to feel anxious and takes out a bottle of pills.)

Oh! I'm all out.

ÉMILE

What are those?

JOE

They were Prozac.

ÉMILE

You don't need those. You are perfection!

JOE

Yeh... I am!

ÉMILE

And I think there is a young lady who needs to see your perfection!

(ÉMILE gestures to the door and D.D. enters.)

JOE

D.D.!

D.D.

Joe? Is that you? You... you look like a Maitre d'!

JOE

Yes it's me! And I'm gonna be a Maitre d' D.D!

D.D.

Oh, Joe!!

(D.D. runs into JOE's arms.)

JOE

I'VE GOT THE JOB AND THE GIRL I ADORE!

I DON'T NEED THESE PILLS ANYMORE!

(throwing away his bottle of pills.)

CUZ I'M PERFECTION!

JOE & ÉMILE

ABSOLUTE PERFECTION!

PERFECTION WITH A CAPITAL "P"!

AND NOW I'VE/YOU'VE REACHED

THE LEVEL OF PERFECTION!

LADIES

AH OO!

AH OO!

"P"! "P"!

ALL

I/HE WILL BE A MAITRE D'!

Course III Entrée

(Elaine's phone rings. JOE is calling from his podium at Le Cirque.)

ELAINE

Christiansen residence! Elaine speaking!

JOE

Hello Mother! Guess what?

ELAINE

Oh, Hello Joe! Did you book your return flight?

JOE

I'm a Maitre d'!

ELAINE

You are?

JOE

It's finally happening! Everything I've worked for! I'm a Maitre d', I've found my muse, I don't need to take my pills any more 'cause

I AM PERFECTION
PERFECTION WITH A...

ELAINE

Wait a minute dear... It sounded like you said you don't need to take your pills anymore?

JOE

Yeah, that's what I said. Everything is going so well and I can better enjoy my success without...

ELAINE

Joe? When was the last time you took your pills?

JOE

A couple of days ago. I've been so busy...

ELAINE

Honey, you need to take your medication daily at the very least! You can't just stop. You'll have a rebound!

JOE

Really, It's okay Mother I feel fine.

ELAINE

Sure you do now, but what will tomorrow be like? Joe, we can reduce the dose but you need to do it gradually.

JOE

Mom! I called you to tell you some good news and all you can talk about is stupid pills.

ELAINE

Now honey, there's no reason to get testy. I'm just looking out for you. You need your pills, especially on a stressful night, you don't want to go changing things last minute.

JOE

It's alright. I can handle it.

ELAINE

No, Joe I don't think you can...

JOE

Look. I've gotta go...

ELAINE

Wait, Joe. Are you going to take your pills?

JOE

No. Goodbye Mother.

(ELAINE dials again.)

ELAINE

Hello. When is your next flight to New York City?

(Lights up on the Duane Reade.)

DESIRÉE

So are you excited for girls night? I found this cute little bar...

GLORIA

Why don't we go a little later. I have some errands to run.

DESIRÉE

Errands? And by that you mean you're going to stake out Le Cirque again? Honey, you're obsessed.

GLORIA

I know. I know. I'm being ridiculous.

DESIRÉE

You need to just let that boy go.

GLORIA

Just one last time. Desi. And if he's not there, then I'll move on.

DESIRÉE

You promise? The last time?

GLORIA

Yes.

DESIRÉE

Alright then.

(Le Cirque. JOE is working the room in his white tuxedo.)

JOE

(ad lib.)

Welcome to Le Cirque. Ah Oui. Monsieur. It's so nice to see you again. Toulouse! A bottle of champeigne for the gentleman.

(The phone rings at the podium.)

JOE

Excuse me.

(JOE answers the phone.)

Good evening, Le Cirque! Mr. Maccioni! Yes, I'm excited to be part of the Le Cirque family. I'd be honored to think of you as a father. Just like Marco, Mario and Mauro. What's that? Moe? Sure you can call me Moe. Thank you, Mr. Maccioni. I'll do my very best!

(D.D. enters and admires Joe as he works.)

D.D.

You're doing so good!

JOE

(looking into the dining room with D.D.)

And look at the table settings! Aren't they beautiful? I just wish they wouldn't mess them up.

D.D.

It's breathtaking.

JOE

And I made a new napkin fold for the occasion.

D.D.

(picking up a napkin folded into the shape of a little white lab coat)
They look like little jackets.

JOE

D.D., I'm so glad that you're here to share this amazing evening with me.

D.D.

Me too! And to think that I'm... We're going to meet...

(looking over his arm at the reservation list)

...Ricky Martin* tonight! I wonder if he'll bring his entourage?

JOE

He has an entourage? I better make sure we have enough chairs.

(Joe exits. D.D. gazes at the reservation list.)

<p>* Or whatever big Hollywood star is currently starring on Broadway .</p>

D.D.

Ricky! *

(GLORIA enters.)

Hello.

GLORIA

Oh, Hi. You're not the usual guy who's here.

D.D.

(looking at Gloria's labcoat)

You know Labor Day was two weeks ago.

GLORIA

Uh yes, I wanted to talk to the Maitre d'.

D.D.

Then you'll want to speak to Mr. Christiansen. He'll be back in a moment.

GLORIA

Okay...

(She goes to sit down to wait, double take)

Mr. Who?

D.D.

Mr. Christiansen.

GLORIA

Mr. Joe Christiansen?

D.D.

Yes, do you know him?

GLORIA

Know him? I'm Gloria his pharmacist!

D.D.

Really. Nice to meet you Gloria his pharmacist. I'm D.D.... his girlfriend.

GLORIA

His girlfriend?

D.D.

Yes.

GLORIA

Oh. Um. You know I just rememberd something I have to do. Thanks.

(GLORIA exits as ELAINE enters with a suitcase in her hand.)

D.D.

(looking down her nose)

Are you lost?

ELAINE

Oh, hello. How are you? I'm looking for Joe Christiansen.

D.D.

Joe Christiansen the Maitre d'?

ELAINE

Yes.

D.D.

Well he's very busy right now. Le Cirque is booked solid, so you can't get in without a reservation. And there is a dress code.

ELAINE

He'll have time for me. I'm his mother.

D.D.

Oh! You're Joe's mother! I'm D.D.!

(no reaction from ELAINE)

...his girlfriend.

ELAINE

Oh, you're that internet girl. I thought you had broken up.

D.D.

We were on a break. He didn't tell me you were coming.

ELAINE

I just came to bring him his medication.

D.D.

Oh he doesn't need those anymore. Ever since we got back together he's been on top of the world.

JOE

(returning)

Mom! What are you doing here?

ELAINE

Joe Honey! I wanted to be a part of your big night! And I met your girlfriend Kiki.

D.D.

D.D.

ELAINE

Right, Didi. Would you excuse us for a moment?

D.D.

Sure.

ELAINE

Lovely girl. Is she the reason you stopped taking your medication!?

JOE

No! It was my decision.

ELAINE

(taking a bottle of pills out of the bag)

Well, it's a good thing I brought some with me. Here take two of these!

JOE

Not now mother! I have a lot to do! Those waiters did such a sloppy job setting these tables.

(JOE begins obsessively adjusting the silverware on a table.)

ELAINE

(horrified)

Joe, listen to me! You need your medication!

(JOE is engrossed in his table setting.)

You're acting just like your father!

(Hearing "father" JOE looks up.)

ELAINE

This is exactly how your father would get when he didn't take his medication.

JOE

Dad didn't take medication.

ELAINE

Yes, he did Joe. Just like you he was troubled.

(JOE looks at his mother as if to say "Well?")

YOUR DAD LOVED BEING A MAITRE D'.

(A man in a tuxedo appears behind a podium. This is the memory of JOE'S FATHER. Just like the top of the show. We see the story acted out. But this time we see the real story.)

BUT HE MAITRE D'D OBSESSIVELY.
YOUR FATHER WASN'T ABLE
TO SET A SIMPLE TABLE
HE'D PUSH FORKS AND PLATES AND KNIVES AROUND
WHILE PATRONS STOOD AND WAITED.

(JOE'S FATHER futzes with a table while two LADIES wait impatiently.)

NO ONE COULD DINE.
HIS JOB WAS ON THE LINE.

(The LADIES throw up their hands and exit in disgust.)

HE HAD TO BE MEDICATED.

JOE

But you told me Dad was a great Maitre d'.

ELAINE

Sure honey, but in Preston

YOUR DAD WAS THE ONLY MAITRE D'.

SO HE WAS "GREAT"... COMPARATIVELY.
WHEN HE TOOK HIS MEDICATION
IT HID THE ABERRATION.

(JOE'S FATHER takes a pill and seats two LADIES in a slightly
sedated manner.)

HE WENT ABOUT HIS WORK WITH NO ONE THE WISER.
EV'RYTHING WAS FINE.
THE PATRONS GOT TO DINE.
THANKS TO THE FOLKS AT PFIZER.

JOE

THE FOLKS AT PFIZER?

What about the parade? What about
DESSERTS ON FIRE?

ELAINE

A BOY SHOULD HAVE
RESPECT FOR HIS DAD.
SO I TOLD A LITTLE FIB.
HONEY, PLEASE DON'T BE MAD.
I WAS AT A LOSS.
OUT ON A LIMB.
THE PARADE WASN'T TRUE
BUT I DID IT SO YOU
COULD BE PROUD OF HIM!

JOE

There were no
DESSERTS ON FIRE?

WAITERS
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE?
 DESSERTS ON FIRE?
 NO BANANAS FOSTER, BAKED ALASKA, CHERRIES JUBILEE!

No. ELAINE

JOE
 THEN TELL ME HOW MY FATHER DIED!
 WAS THE FIRE A FANTASY?

ELAINE
 THE FIRE WAS REAL.
 IT STARTED IN THE KITCHEN
 THE STAFF GRABBED THEIR CARAFES
 AND TRIED TO PITCH IN.

(The WAITERS drop what they are doing. Grab the carafes of water off of the tables and run into the kitchen.)

ELAINE
 BUT IT SPREAD TOO FAST.
 THEY REACTED TOO LATE.
 THERE WAS NO OTHER CHOICE
 SOMEONE RAISED HIS VOICE
 AND YELLED

WAITER
 EVACUATE! EVACUATE!

(Everyone runs for the exit.)

ELAINE
 EV'RYONE WENT CRAZY
 STARTED RUNNING ABOUT.
 KNOCKING OVER CHAIRS AND TABLES
 AS THEY TRIED TO GET OUT.

(As everyone evacuates. JOE'S FATHER begins straightening up.)

AND YOUR POOR DAD
 HAD FORGOTTEN HIS MEDS
 DIDN'T RUN FOR THE DOOR
 PICKED FORKS OFF THE FLOOR
 STARTED STRAIGHT'NING UP INSTEAD.

(Everyone begins to move in slow motion. During the next lyric, JOE'S FATHER is surrounded by flames and burned up.)

<p>ELAINE YOUR DAD LOVED BEING A MAITRE D'. BUT I'M SURE HE WENT HAPPILY. FOCUSED ON HIS TABLE SETTING DARLING I'M BETTING HE DIDN'T FEEL A THING AS THE FLAMES WERE GROWING HIGHER. THAT'S HOW YOUR FATHER DIED I'M SORRY THAT I LIED IT WASN'T DESSERTS ON FIRE.</p>	<p>WAITERS 1 & 2 OOOO! OOOO! OOOO! AAAA! DIDN'T FEEL A THING! OO! OO! OO!</p>
--	---

(JOE'S FATHER exits.)

WAITERS
DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
BANANAS FOSTER, BAKED ALASKA, CHERRIES JUBILEE!
THAT MAN WILL BE REMEMBERED...

(JOE stands there stewing. ELAINE, as if nothing has happened, takes out a pill .)

ELAINE
(chipper)
So you see why you need to take your medication? Joe? What's wrong dear?

JOE
I don't believe you! You're a liar!

WAITERS
(lingering from the dream sequence)
YOUR MOM'S A LIAR! YOUR MOM'S A LIAR!

JOE
(to waiters)
Shut up! That parts over!
(shouting to Toulouse offstage.)
Toulouse! Tell the kitchen I want desserts! And I want them now! Grab your lighters, we're having a parade!

ELAINE
Joe!

(Lights up on DESIRÉE and GLORIA sitting at a Sports Bar.)

DESIRÉE

So didn't I tell you that a sports bar is the best place to meet guys. Oooh, that one's cute!
And he's checking us out! Hey!

(GLORIA stares out into space.)

What's wrong with you Gloria? You're acting all spacey.

(GLORIA opens up a bottle of pills.)

Girl, what are you doing with those pills?

GLORIA

I just need a Prozac.

DESIRÉE

(Grabbing the pills from Gloria)

Since when do you take Prozac?

GLORIA

Give me those pills Desi.

DESIRÉE

No, not till you tell me what's going on! Look, I know you're upset about not being able
to find that Christiansen guy. But I thought we decided you were going to move on.
You're never going to find him.

GLORIA

He was there.

DESIRÉE

What?

GLORIA

He was there at the restaurant.

DESIRÉE

What happened?

GLORIA

Nothing happened. He's got a girlfriend.

DESIRÉE

Oh, honey. I'm sorry. Well at least you got to see him.

GLORIA

No, I didn't see him. His girlfriend was there. She told me.

DESIRÉE

Wait a second. You found the man you've been searching for... searching for - for three months! ...and you didn't even see him?

GLORIA

No, his girlfriend was there and she said...

DESIRÉE

(getting up and grabbing Gloria)

Na-uh. I don't care what that "girlfriend" said. You have been driving yourself crazy over this guy and you are at least going to talk to him and tell him how you feel!

GLORIA

He's working Desi. I don't want to interrupt him. He's not going to want to talk to me.

DESIRÉE

No. You listen to me. Who made me go see the doctor when I had that burning when I peed?

GLORIA

It was me.

DESIRÉE

Right. And who was it that explained to me the difference between oil and water based lubricant?

GLORIA

Me.

DESIRÉE

Right. And who took a look at those little lesions I got on my...

GLORIA

Okay! I get it. It was me.

DESIRÉE

That's right. It was you. You've always been there for Desirée. And now it's Desirée's turn to be there for you.

GLORIA

But I don't have any lesions...

DESIRÉE

Yes you do girl.

YOU GOT A LESION ON YOUR HEART.
 YOU GOT A BLISTER ON YOUR SOUL.
 YOU GOT TINY BUMPS THAT ITCH REAL BAD.
 YOU KNOW GIRL, LIKE THE ONES I HAD.

BUT I DID NOT GIVE UP THE FIGHT.
 I GAVE IT ONE MORE SHOT.
 AND IN MY CASE IT WAS PENICILLIN.
 BUT YOU SHOULD GO AND TELL HIM YOUR WILLIN'.

AND WHEN HE SEES YOU FACE TO FACE
 HE'LL KNOW JUST HOW YOU FEEL.
 IT'S A PRESCRIPTION YOU CAN'T FILL YOURSELF
 YOU NEED SOME HELP TO REACH THAT HIGHER SHELF.

YOU NEED THE TREATMENT OF HIS LOVE.
 YOU NEED HIS MEDICATED CRÈME.
 YOU GOTTA TAKE HIS WHOLE DRUG REGIMEN
 IF YOU EVER WANT TO LOVE AGAIN.

GLORIA

I'VE GOT A LESION ON MY HEART.

DESIRÉE

ON YOUR HEART.

GLORIA

I'VE GOT A BLISTER ON MY SOUL.

DESIRÉE

ON YOUR SOUL.

GLORIA

I'VE GOT TINY BUMPS THAT ITCH REAL BAD
 BUT NOT LIKE THE ITCHY BUMPS YOU HAD.
 STILL I WILL NOT GIVE UP THIS FIGHT!
 I WILL GIVE IT ONE MORE SHOT.
 AND BY "SHOT" I DON'T MEAN CEPHALOSPORIN.
 I'M GONNA GET THE BOY THAT I'M ADORIN'

BOTH

AND THEN THE LESIONS ON YOUR HEART.

WILL SCAB AND FALL AWAY.
 THE BLISTERS ON YOUR SOUL WILL HEAL.
 YOU'LL HAVE FINE'LY FOUND A LOVE THAT'S REAL.
 THAT'S REAL!

DESIRÉE

Come on!

(We hear the sound of passing sirens.)

Damn! Where are all those fire trucks going?

(Lights up on Le Cirque. The walls and table cloths are scorched.
 Joe enters.)

JOE

WHAT MAKES A DREAM?
 TOUCHES THE HEART
 AND GIVES IT DIRECTION?
 WHAT IS THE SPARK
 THAT LIGHTS UP THE MIND
 AND MAKES A CONNECTION?

STORIES WE'RE TOLD AND REPEAT AS WE GROW-UP?
 TRAITS HANDED DOWN SUDDENLY START TO SHOW-UP...
 STRANGE AS THEY SEEM,
 BUILDING A DREAM.

WHAT KILLS A DREAM?
 CUTS THROUGH THE HEART
 AND RIPS IT ASUNDER?
 WHAT SNUFFS OUT THE SPARK
 DARKENS THE MIND
 DESTROYING THE WONDER?

STORIES WE'RE TOLD AND BELIEVE AS WE GROW-UP
 ARE LIES IN DISGUISE, LOOK TOO CLOSE AND THEY BLOW-UP.
 LOST SELF ESTEEM,
 CRUSHING A DREAM.

LIKE A DRUG THAT FILLS YOUR HEAD
 WITH SELF DECEPTION.
 DREAMS MAKE YOU THINK, DESPITE THE ODDS,
 THAT YOU'RE THE EXCEPTION.

I HAD A DREAM,
 A BEAUTIFUL DREAM,
 BUT NOW I'VE WOKEN.
 AND TRY AS YOU MIGHT

YOU CAN'T SAVE A DREAM
ONCE IT'S BROKEN.

STORIES MUST END, CLOSE THE BOOK, TIME TO GROW-UP.
ADD TO THE PILE, STRIKE A MATCH, WATCH 'EM GO-UP
EASY TO BURN
THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE FOR
LOSING A DREAM
REFUSING TO DREAM
ANYMORE.

ÉMILE

(offstage)

Sacre blu! That fool! What has he done to my restaurant.

(JOE hides under a table. ÉMILE enters and surveys the damage.)

ÉMILE

Mon diu! Where is he! He will never work in this city again!

ELAINE

(entering)

Joe? Joe? Are you in here?

ÉMILE

May I help you?

ELAINE

It is chaotic out there. I'm just glad everyone made it out safely. Bu, I got separated from my son, Joe. I thought I saw him come back in here.

ÉMILE

Joe? Joe Christiansen?

ELAINE

Yes, you know him?

ÉMILE

Unfortunately. I am Émile Bonguit. Maitre d' of Le Cirque.

ELAINE

Oh yes, Joe spoke of you. Nice to meet you!

ÉMILE

Vous êtes la mère de tous les vices.

Oh that's so beautiful. ELAINE

Are you from France? (beat)

No, I'm from up North. ÉMILE

Quebec? ELAINE

Buffalo. ÉMILE

Oh. Well you sound so French. ELAINE

New Yorkers like their Maitre d's French and pretentious. I try to accommodate. ÉMILE

(D.D. enters in her dress smudged with desserts.)

Where is he? D.D.
(angrily to Elaine)

Oh, Hello. Are you alright, dear? ELAINE

No I am not alright. Thanks to your son, I don't think I'll ever be able to enjoy Cherries Jubilee again. Where is he? D.D.

I don't know. I haven't seen him since the fire. I've been looking all over... ELAINE

Oh! Hello. What a handsome tuxedo. D.D.
(noticing ÉMILE, flirting, trying to look better)

You can tell Joe that we're breaking up. D.D.
(to Elaine)

And he's fired. ÉMILE

D.D.
(to Émile)

He's totally crazy.

ELAINE

He's not crazy. He's creative.

D.D.

Not crazy?

WERE YOU HERE TONIGHT?
WHEN HE WENT BESERK?
STARTED SETTING FOOD ON FIRE
AND BURNED DOWN LE CIRQUE?
DO YOU SEE MY DRESS?
DO YOU EVEN CARE?
THERE ARE BITS
OF BANANAS FOSTER IN MY HAIR!

ELAINE

HE WAS JUST UPSET.
HE'D GONE OFF HIS PILLS.
ON A WHIM YOU PERSUADED HIM
TO STOP HIS PILLS.
A STRESSFUL NIGHT.
NO ONE TO BLAME.

(to Émile)

BUT WE'VE LEARNED TO BE CAREFUL
ROUND AN OPEN FLAME.

D.D.

HE'S CRAZY.

ELAINE

CREATIVE.

D.D.

'CAUSE OF HIM I ALMOST DIED.
HE'S CRAZY.

ÉMILE

HE'S CRAZY.

ELAINE

NOW PLEASE DON'T TAKE HER SIDE.

ÉMILE

I KNOW YOUR SON.
AND I'VE SEEN HIS PILLS.
THE AMOUNT OF HIS MEDICATING
GIVES ME CHILLS.

ELAINE

HAVE YOU GOT AN M.D
MONSIEUR BONGUIT?
WHY SHOULD I
TRUST A MAN
IN A MONKEY SUIT?

D.D.

(gasps)

HUH!

ÉMILE

IT'S A NOBLE ART
TO MAITRE D'.
MUCH BETTER THAN YOUR
HOCUS POCUS QUACKERY.

D.D.

YES, I'M WITH HIM.
TOTALLY AGREE.

(stroking Émile's tuxedo lapel)

A DOCTOR'S NOT AS HOT
AS A MAITRE D' .
YOU'RE CRAZY.

ELAINE

I'M CRAZY?
YOU ONLY DATE MAITRE D'S.

D.D.

SO WHAT?

ÉMILE

(to D.D.)

DEAR LADY,
DON'T TOUCH THE CLOTHING, PLEASE.

ELAINE

I KNOW CAUSE I'M A PSYCHIATRIST.

D.D.
A PSYCHIATRIST?

ÉMILE
A PSYCHIATRIST?

D.D.
ARE YOU SAYING THEN, YOU GET TO PICK
WHICH OF US IS A LUNATIC?

ELAINE
I'M SORRY DEAR,
I'M NOT YOUR THERAPIST
BUT YOUR BEHAVIOR HAS THE FLAVOR
OF A FETISHIST.

D.D.
WELL PERHAPS I AM.
THAT MAY BE SO.
BUT AT LEAST I NEVER
TOLD A LIE TO JOE.

ÉMILE
OH!

D.D.
SHE'S A LIAR.

ÉMILE
SHE'S A LIAR?

D.D.
SHE'S CRAZY AND AFRAID
THAT THE FIRE
ONLY HAPPENED
CUZ SHE TOLD HIM HIS DAD MADE A BIG PARADE!

ÉMILE
SHE'S ON TOP OF THE CRAZY LIST.
SOME PSYCHIATRIST!

D.D.
YEAH, A LIE-A TRIST!

ÉMILE
HA! YOU'RE A LIE-A TRIST!

ELAINE
 I ONLY DID WHAT I THOUGHT BEST.
 BEFORE YOU JUDGE YOU SHOULD KNOW THE REST-
 MY HUSBAND DIED
 HE HAD OCD.
 SO I TOLD A LITTLE FIB
 WAS THAT WRONG OF ME?

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?
 MONSIEUR FANCY PANTS.
 YOU'RE A FAKER. HAVE YOU EVER
 EVEN BEEN TO FRANCE?
 YOU'RE CRAZY.

ÉMILE
 I'M CRAZY?

D.D.
 ARE YOU SAYING HE'S NOT FRENCH?
 THAT'S CRAZY!

ELAINE
 OOPS-A-DAISY!
 I THREW IN A MONKEY WRENCH.

D.D.
 (to Émile)
 YOU'RE CRAZY!

ÉMILE
 SHE'S CRAZY!
 THE MOTHER LIKE THE SON!

D.D.
 AND THAT'S WHY

ÉMILE & D.D.
 HE'S CRAZY.
 AND NOW HE'S ON THE RUN.

ELAINE
 NOT CRAZY!
 HE'S SPECIAL!
 THERE'S A PRICE YOU HAVE TO PAY
 MY JOSEPH'S
 A CHILD

AND HE'S GOING TO STAY THAT WAY!

Wait that's not what I meant. I mean he's my child... and he'll always be...

D.D.

SHE'S CRAZY

ÉMILE

SHE'S CRAZY

ELAINE

MY GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?

(ELAINE slumps in a chair. ÉMILE and D.D. exit quietly.)

HE'S MY BABY.

MY JOSEPH.

HE'S MY ONLY SON.

I WANTED LOTS OF CHILDREN

AND YET I HAD JUST ONE.

I HAVE SO MUCH LOVE INSIDE ME.

I GUESS I LET EMOTIONS GUIDE ME.

WANTING TIME TO SLOW.

AFRAID OF LETTING GO.

I'M HIS MOTHER.

HIS GUARDIAN.

HE HAS ONLY ME

I RAISED HIM WITH MY KNOWLEDGE

OF CHILD PSYCHIATRY.

MAYBE I WAS TOO OPPRESSIVE.

AM I THE ONE WHO'S TOO OBSESSIVE?

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT HE

MAY HAVE GOTTEN THAT FROM ME?

ONLY GOES TO SHOW

IT'S TIME FOR LETTING GO.

LETTING GO.

SUDDENY IT'S CLEAR.

LETTING GO.

I'VE FACED MY BIGGEST FEAR.

JUST LIKE HIS DAD

HE WAS DRAWN TO THE FLAME.

BUT JOE KEPT HIS SENSES.

THE END WASN'T THE SAME.

AND HIS FATHER,

GOD BLESS HIM,
 WONDER WHAT HE'D SAY?
 IF HE WERE STILL WITH US
 HE'D WANT JOE TO HAVE HIS DAY.

HE'D SAY, "DO IT SON! YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT TO.
 DO THE THINGS THAT I COULD NOT DO!
 ONE MORE CHANCE IS ALL YOU NEED
 AND YOUR MOTHER WON'T IMPEDE
 CUZ SHE WANTS YOU TO SUCCEED AND GROW!
 AND SHE'S FIN'LLY LETTING GO!"
 LETTING GO!
 I'M LETTING GO!

(JOE crawls out from under the table.)

Oh Joe! Thank Heavens! You're okay!

JOE

Well. I'm not hurt. But I don't know about okay.

ELAINE

Oh Joe. I'm so sorry. I should never have lied to you. Can you ever forgive me?

(JOE turns away.)

Well... these things take time. But I'm sure once we're back in Idaho we can spend some time...

JOE

I'm not going back to Idaho.

ELAINE

Oh! But wat do you plan to do?

JOE

I don't know. But I know I'm not going back to Idaho.

ELAINE

But honey...

JOE

And it shouldn't matter what I do. Cuz you're letting go. Aren't you?

ELAINE

Yes, that's right. I'm letting go.

(ELAINE goes to pick up her bag. GLORIA enters)

	GLORIA
Good Evening Mr. Christensen.	
	JOE
Gloria?	
	ELAINE
Oh! Hello! Who's this?	
	GLORIA
Oh! Hi. I'm Gloria.	
	ELAINE
I'm Joe's mother. Elaine.	
	GLORIA
How do you do?	
	JOE
Mother.	
	ELAINE
Hm?	
	JOE
Weren't you on your way out?	
	ELAINE
Me?	
(A look from Joe.)	
Oh yes! I was just on my way out. Cuz I'm letting go!	
	GLORIA
It was lovely to meet you!	
	ELAINE
You too. And what a lovely white coat... Is that a pharmacist jacket?	
	GLORIA
Yes. I'm a pharmacist at Duane Reade Drug Store.	
	ELAINE
Oh! How marvelous!	

JOE

Mother!

ELAINE

Right! I'm letting go! Good luck Joe!

(ELAINE exits with great difficulty)

GLORIA

She seems nice.

JOE

What are you doing here?

GLORIA

Well, I always told you I like getting dressed up and going to fancy restaurants.

JOE

(beat)

You were at Le Cirque tonight?

GLORIA

Kind of.

JOE

Kind of?

GLORIA

I came to see you.

JOE

To see me? How did you know I was here?

GLORIA

Oh, Joe. I've been looking all over for you. Ever since that day I pretended not to be there for you, I've been coming to Le Cirque hoping I'd find you again.

JOE

Wait. You pretended to not be at work?

GLORIA

I'm sorry.

JOE

I searched every Duane Reade in the greater New York area.

GLORIA
(more pleased than she should be)

You did?!

JOE

Yes!

GLORIA

Every Duane Reade?

JOE

Yes.

GLORIA

There are over a hundred Duane Reades in the city.

JOE

Two hundred and eleven.

GLORIA

Wow! And you went to all of them?

JOE

Yes.

GLORIA

Even Far Rockaway?

JOE

Yes. But you weren't there! You were at 42nd and 8th.

GLORIA

Yes.

JOE

But why would you do that?

GLORIA

I just wanted to see if you'd notice.

JOE

Of course I noticed. You were my pharmacist.

GLORIA

It's just... You never seemed interested.

JOE
Were you interested...in me?

GLORIA
Of course I was.

JOE
But why?

GLORIA
I don't know. You're cute. And you're so focused and dependable. Every morning at 10:40 AM. A person with those attributes can really go far.

JOE
You think so?

GLORIA
I know so. You became the Maitre d' at Le Cirque.

JOE
For an hour and a half.

GLORIA
Yes...what exactly happened?

JOE
Well, It turns out, my father wasn't a great Maitre d', he didn't make a famous parade and he never saved a bunch of people from a freak flaming bananas foster accident. And when my mother told me tonight, I got a little upset and burned down Le Cirque...

GLORIA
Just a little upset?

JOE
Well it was an accident... but no, I was a lot upset. I mean... He's the reason I wanted to be a Maitre d' in the first place.

GLORIA
What do you want now?

JOE
(coming to a realization)
Well, I... I... I still want to be a Maitre d'.

GLORIA
So be a Maitre d'.

JOE

No one in this city is going to hire the person who burned down the greatest restaurant in New York.

GLORIA

Well, I wouldn't put it on your resume.

JOE

I don't think I could even get a job as a dishwasher. I'm lost. New York was just too much for me.

GLORIA

Why do you have to be a Maitre d' in New York? If being a Maitre d' is what you love, then it shouldn't matter where you do it.

JOE

But where can I go?

GLORIA

WHEN YOU TURN YOUR BACK TO THE CITY
 THAT COLD-HEARTED FAIR-WEATHER FRIEND
 HAVE NO FEAR AS YOU PASS THROUGH THE TUNNEL
 FOR THERE'S A LIGHT SHINING BRIGHT AT THE END.

HOPE FOREVER SPRINGS
 IN NEW JERSEY!
 DREAMS CAN SPREAD THEIR WINGS
 IN NEW JERSEY!
 ANY QUESTION CAN BE ANSWERED.
 ANY MAN CAN FIND HIS MATE.
 EVERYTHING YOU LONG FOR
 IS IN NEW JERSEY!

FROM ROUTE FOUR TO THE SHORE
 EXPLORE NEW JERSEY
 YOU'LL LOVE HER MORE AND MORE
 ADORE NEW JERSEY!
 ADAM HAD THE GARDEN OF EDEN.
 YOU CAN HAVE THE GARDEN STATE!
 EVERYTHING YOU LONG FOR
 IS IN NEW JERSEY!

NEW YORK IS TOUGH AND GRITTY.
 COME TO JERSEY.
 NEW YORK IS, OH! SO PRETTY!
 FROM NEW JERSEY!

THE SUN BEHIND MANHATTAN,
 THE START OF A BRAND NEW DAY!
 YOU'LL POP YOUR CORK AND PROUDLY SAY,
 "FORGET NEW YORK, I HEART N.J.!"

HEY!
 I CAN BE YOUR GUIDE!
 THROUGH NEW JERSEY.
 YOU WANNA SEE WHERE ALEXANDER HAMILTON DIED?
 IT'S TRUE! NEW JERSEY!
 HE GOT SHOT IN THE STOMACH
 FOLLOWING A HEATED DEBATE.
 IT ALL WENT DOWN
 IN WEEHAWKEN, NEW JERSEY.

JOE

You know, you have a wonderful calming affect. Like Prozac.

GLORIA

Thank you.

VOICES

(humming under dialogue)

HMMMM

JOE

If it's all right, Gloria. I'd love to make a dessert for you sometime.

GLORIA

I'd like that. And maybe I could make dinner...

VOICES

IN NEW JERSEY!

(humming under dialogue)

HMMMM

JOE

You cook?

GLORIA

I'm an excellent chef.

JOE

(having a grand idea)

Are there many French restaurants...

VOICES
IN NEW JERSEY?

GLORIA
A few, but I'm sure there's room for one more.

GLORIA
CAN YOU HEAR HER CALL YOU?
“HERE AM I, YOUR SPECIAL STATE!”
EV’RYTHING YOU LONG FOR
IS IN NEW JERSEY!

(The scene shifts to a small bistro in New Jersey. A grand opening sign hangs in the window. JOE is setting the tables. GLORIA runs in with a newspaper in her hand.)

GLORIA
It's here! It's here!

JOE
Let me see!

GLORIA
(passes it to Joe)
You read it.

JOE
I can't read it. You read it.

GLORIA
Together...

JOE & GLORIA
(holding hands)
An unusual new bistro opened up in Hoboken last night.

GLORIA
First time Restaurateur, Joseph Christiansen in collaboration with partner...

JOE
...Chef Gloria White, have created a delightful little eatery that fuses French and Japanese influences to surprising affect.

GLORIA

The homey ambiance, inventive menu, and impeccable service was only matched by the highlight of the evening, a unique flaming dessert presentation held nightly at nine and eleven. Plan your visit accordingly...

JOE & GLORIA

...so as not to miss this unusual spectacle that is unlike any dining experience you will find in the tri-state area: Joseph Christiansen's Flaming Dessert Parade!

DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE
 IN NEW JERSEY!
 NOW I'M HERE WITH YOU
 IN NEW JERSEY!
 THE CLOSEST THING TO HEAVEN
 LIVING IN THIS BLESSED STATE!
 EV'RYTHING YOU LONG FOR
 SAY A PRAYER OR SING A SONG FOR.
 EV'RYTHING YOU LONG FOR IS IN NEW JERSEY!

GLORIA

And now Le Bistro d' Joe is proud to present Joseph Christiansen's Flaming Dessert Parade!

JOE

HERE WE GO!
 YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO
 STAND AT ATTENTION
 WAIT FOR MY CUE.
 PLIE RELEVÉ!
 NOW RAISE THOSE TRAYS,
 WITH A TWIST OF THE WRIST
 A FLICK OF THE BIC
 SET DESSERTS A BLAZE!

ALL

DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!

BANANAS FOSTER!
 BAKED ALASKA!

(Elaine enters in a tuxedo.)

ELAINE

CHERRIES JUBILEE!

ALL
 MARCHING THRU THE DINING ROOM
 IN PERFECT SYNCHRONICITY!

(Dance break and Bows)

ALL
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE!

(Dance break.)

GLORIA
 And now presenting the new dessert sensation...

JOE
 Caramelized Christiansen!

(JOE sets his new dessert creation on fire. Waiters march through the restaurant with flaming desserts for the audience.)

ALL
 CAMELIZED CHRISTIANSEN!
 EV'RY FLAMING PIECE OF FRUIT
 A STICKY SWEET SALUTE.
 GROWING HIGHER AND HIGHER AND HIGHER AND HIGHER!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 DESSERTS ON FIRE! DESSERTS ON FIRE!
 WE LOVE YOU MISTER CHRISTIANSEN
 THE GREATEST MAITRE D'!

(Curtain.)