

Strike Day

written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

Janine, Melissa, and Jacob drink coffee in the lounge.

JANINE

I had to make a sign up sheet for my three good markers- I tried to sneak the off-brand ones into the art bin and the kids rioted. It was actually very scary.

MELISSA

(scoffing)

Those kids know their markers. It's like trying to pass off Chicken City as Danny's Wok- it's insulting.

TALKING HEAD

JANINE

The district sent me my budget for the semester yesterday and I thought that they accidentally left off a zero, so I emailed them. It turns out they accidentally *added* a digit and thanked me for catching their mistake.

Janine looks proud of herself for a second, smiles, remembers the circumstances, and gets serious again.

INT. LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA

Supplies are the least of my worries right now. My overhead lights keep going out and I have to stand on my desk playing electrician because Mr. Johnson's always busy with Reversy Toilet.

Melissa shoots Mr. Johnson a dirty look. He stands in the corner holding his mop and looks wistfully into the distance.

MR. JOHNSON

It's my white whale...

JACOB

"Happiness will never come to those who fail to appreciate what they already have."

Melissa raises an eyebrow at Jacob.

(CONTINUED)

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JACOB (CONT'D)

I'm teaching my Buddhism unit right now and it really helps to put things into perspective. You two seem tense- reflect with me.

Jacob takes Janine's hand and closes his eyes. Janine tentatively closes her eyes and Melissa looks unimpressed. Jacob takes deep breaths. Melissa dumps some salt in Jacob's coffee while his eyes are closed. Janine opens one eye, sees Melissa's judgmental face, and sheepishly slides her hand out of Jacob's. Ava enters and sees Jacob "asleep".

AVA

BOO!

Jacob jumps, startled, and Ava laughs.

AVA (CONT'D)

Is Janine telling her only story again? Not even my extra strength melatonin puts me to sleep that fast, and the stuff *I* get is *under* the counter, if you know what I mean.

Ava winks at the camera and opens the snack cabinet. Melissa chuckles to herself and Janine glances at the camera, embarrassed. Jacob takes a sip of his coffee.

JACOB

Okay, who finally took my sea moss suggestion? This tastes incredible!

Jacob eagerly takes another huge swig of his coffee. Melissa looks confused and mildly concerned. Ava pulls a granola bar out of a box labeled "Janine" and looks at it in disgust.

AVA

You need new stories *and* new snacks. Even *I* know better than to take Melissa's food and Gregory with that twenty-six inch waist of his clearly doesn't eat, which makes your weird bars the only option in here.

Melissa nods as if to say "that's right".

JACOB

I just went to Costco, so I have a bulk box of my kale chips if anyone wants some.

No one in the room acknowledges this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANINE

(timidly)

Well, Ava, they are my bars, so maybe you could...bring in your own snacks.

AVA

(laughing)

Girl, maybe you are funny. Why would I bring in my own food when taking it from you is almost as fun as taking candy from a baby?

Ava turns to leave with a granola bar in hand. Janine looks dejected, Jacob grimaces, and Melissa shakes her head and drinks her coffee. Ava suddenly stops in the doorway and turns around.

AVA (CONT'D)

Oh, I was supposed to tell y'all that the lunch ladies are going on strike, so, consider yourselves told. It'll be like the Hunger Games! I always liked that Effie lady.

MELISSA

(groaning)

Again? Is it already that time of year?

TALKING HEAD

MELISSA

This is the third time the cafeteria staff have gone on strike. Listen, I get it, but the district *doesn't* care. It's like a middle child trying to get their parents' attention; they're just not a priority.

Melissa shrugs gloomily as if to say "what can you do?"

INT. LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

JACOB

You know, I commend those brave workers for rising up against a broken system-

Janine puts her hand in front of Jacob's face to cut him off.

JANINE

Ava, how are the kids supposed to eat?

AVA

(shrugging)

Why are you asking me?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AVA (CONT'D)

Everyone knows I'm just a gorgeous figurehead. Tell them to order UberEats or something. May the odds be ever in your favor or whatever!

Ava laughs to herself as she leaves, Janine looks defeated and slightly shocked, and Melissa puts her hand to her forehead like she's getting a migraine. Mr. Johnson holds up 3 fingers and whistles.

ACT 1

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Janine, Melissa, and Jacob leave the lounge.

JANINE

Okay, what are we gonna do about this? School lunch is the only hot meal a lot of these kids get.

JACOB

I don't think anyone heard me before, but I have a bulk box of kale chips- we could give the kids some of those?

MELISSA

Oh, we heard you.

JANINE

Kale chips are not a meal. Eating those just reminds you how much you want *real* food; we need an actual solution.

Jacob shrugs in agreement, sort of unable to deny this.

TALKING HEAD

JACOB

I know I should like them, but those chips are awful. No one will take them and they've been in my trunk for a week.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA

Listen, I have enough on my plate right now to worry about putting something on theirs.

They approach the front desk as they walk down the hall. Ava leans against it eating the granola bar she stole and scrolls on her phone. She overhears the teachers' complaints.

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CONTINUED:

AVA

Oh my goddd, just make the kids cook for themselves- they can basically do anything once they're like, eight. I lived by myself in middle school; my parents were just suffocating me.

JACOB

That sounds...illegal?

Ava rolls her eyes.

JANINE

Actually, I hate to say it but Ava might be on to something...

AVA

I don't know why y'all are still surprised that I have the best ideas. I don't even know what I said but I know it was better than anything you've come up with.

Janine purses her lips and ignores Ava's statement.

JANINE

I'm saying why don't we have the kids cook for each other? Some can be chefs and some can be servers, it'll be like a fun restaurant unit for them!

JACOB

Yes! We can just use what they already have in the kitchen. It'll be like the Great British Bake Off.

Jacob looks at Melissa.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Or Cutthroat Kitchen.

Melissa scoffs.

MELISSA

You may look like an off-brand Bobby Flay, but you wouldn't even be able to handle *smelling* a piece of baloney.

Jacob makes an exaggerated offended face.

JACOB

I may have a delicate constitution, but I can handle being around meat.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACOB (CONT'D)

And I'd actually love to see how they
took my sustainability suggestions!

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Jacob hands one of the lunch ladies a binder labeled
"Sustainable Substitutions". He leaves, she looks at one
page, and goes to throw it in the trash. She pauses for a
second, then throws it into the recycling and nods. She looks
proud of herself for making the environmental choice.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

JANINE

Alright, I think we can do this!

MELISSA

Who's we? You two have fun with this.

Melissa walks off and leaves Jacob and Janine standing with
Ava.

AVA

Ha! She gags you every time.

Janine looks at the camera, annoyed, and walks away.

INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Janine abruptly enters Gregory's classroom, where he sits at
his desk.

JANINE

Red alert- lunch ladies are on strike,
we have a plan to save the day,
Melissa's not on board. Help?

GREGORY

(dryly)
Really? *Melissa* doesn't want to be part
of a plan that's likely complex and
overly optimistic?

JANINE

Right.

Gregory leans back in his chair and calmly waves over two
girls who are rehearsing a play together.

GREGORY

I got it covered.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Gregory hides around a corner with the two girls. He sees Melissa walk out of her classroom and sends them into the hallway. Their speaking is loud and robotic.

KENNEDY

Wow, my stomach is rumbling.

MONET

Too bad there's no lunch today. I think I might pass out.

KENNEDY

That's probably like, child endan-

She stops mid-word and looks down at a slip of paper with the script Gregory has given her, struggling to pronounce it. Gregory grimaces as he watches them.

MONET

(whispering)
Endangerment.

KENNEDY

(loudly)
Endangerment.

Gregory nods in relief. Melissa overhears the kids talking, stops in her tracks, and looks up, spotting Gregory peeking around the corner. He ducks behind the wall and Melissa approaches him in his hiding spot, where he stands with one leg against the wall. He coughs and pretends to flip through an empty binder.

MELISSA

Alright, Eddie. Using child actors is a low blow, but unfortunately as a Schemmenti, I have no choice but to respect it.

GREGORY

I don't know what you're talking about... but does that mean you'll help with Janine's plan?

MELISSA

Help is a strong word. Don't expect me to be running the show in there- the last thing I need is *another* job I'm not getting paid for.

GREGORY

Fair enough.

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TALKING HEAD

1

GREGORY

Melissa does have a point; our job title may be "teacher," but that's actually code for "you'll be doing the job of six people and getting paid the same as a high schooler working at Burger King".

Gregory scratches his head and squints into the distance as if he's trying to remember why the job is worth it.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Janine talks to Barbara outside her classroom.

JANINE

Hey Barbara, did you hear about the lunch ladies' strike?

BARBARA

Again? Things just never change around here.

Barbara shakes her head.

JANINE

Trust me, I know. But we came up with a plan to at least get the kids fed today- we're gonna do a restaurant unit! The kids can cook and serve each other.

Barbara lights up.

BARBARA

This sounds like an excellent opportunity for my etiquette lesson!

TALKING HEAD

BARBARA

I have been looking for a reason to do my etiquette lesson for *weeks*! Elegance has become a lost art- I knew things were going downhill when they removed cursive from the curriculum.

Barbara crosses her arm and makes a "tsk" sound.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

We used to be a country. A proper country.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

JANINE

Yes, totally! I would love to watch a master at work, you are just so classy.

Barbara smiles and waves off Janine's compliment with false humility as she straightens her posture and pats her hair. Janine attempts to imitate her but it looks unnatural.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Do you want to be in charge of getting the kids ready to be waiters?

BARBARA

By the time I'm done they won't just be waiters; those children will have the grace of swans and the precision of surgeons when serving those plates!

Barbara holds up her hands as if painting a picture and looks up, imagining this scene; Janine looks at the camera, overly impressed.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Janine, Jacob, and Gregory stand together.

JANINE

Alright guys, everyone is on board, so let's make this happen.

JACOB

Should we do one of those sports things? Where they put their hands in the air and shout something inspiring? It feels like we should do one of those sports things.

Gregory makes a face at the camera, cringing at this comment.

JANINE

Yeah, that feels right.

They huddle up and put their hands together.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Uh...cafeteria on three.

GREGORY

Oh yeah, that's inspiring.

JANINE

I'm on the spot, okay?

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GREGORY

How about...kitchen takeover on three.

JACOB

Yeah, let's go with that.

JANINE

Fine. One, two three-

ALL

Kitchen takeover!

Jacob pumps his fist in the air, whoops, and does a little hop. The hallway is silent.

JACOB

Sorry, that really got me fired up.
Let's go team?

JANINE

Okay, everyone just get their kids to
the cafeteria.

Gregory nods. They disperse in different directions towards their classrooms.

ACT 2

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Melissa enters the chaotic cafeteria with her kids, where the rest of the teachers try to wrangle their classes. She takes in the scene and sighs.

MELISSA

(to herself)

Alright.

Melissa claps loudly five times and the cafeteria goes silent before the kids respond back with the same claps. Janine looks around in amazement.

JANINE

(whispering)

I literally just got the chills. Did
anyone else just get the chills?

Jacob widens his eyes and nods in agreement.

MELISSA

Master chef juniors with me and super
servers with Mrs. Howard. Let's go!

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The kids fall in line. Melissa, Jacob and Gregory take some of them to the kitchen while Janine and the rest of the kids stay in the cafeteria and gather around Barbara.

BARBARA

Children, this is no small task. Today will be a lesson in dining etiquette, grace under pressure, and *impeccable* service. Are you ready?

KIDS

Yes!

JANINE

Yes!

Janine stands in the group of kids, blending in, and looks excitedly at the camera.

TALKING HEAD

JANINE

It looks like the rest of the teachers kind of have everything covered, so I'm gonna immerse myself with the kids to make sure they're adjusting well.

Janine smiles excitedly.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Melissa, Gregory, Jacob, and the kids enter the kitchen. Melissa takes charge.

MELISSA

Gregory, get the kids some aprons. And make sure you hide the knives *and* forks. My cousin's kid launched one into his sister's eye once. Nightmare. So sporks only.

Gregory looks slightly concerned but complies. Melissa turns to Jacob, looking slightly devious.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

You sure you can handle how the sausage gets made?

JACOB

They don't...literally...make them here, right?

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MELISSA

You've never seen the meat grinder? It's huge, you can't miss it.

Jacob's face pales; he looks queasy but tries to put on a brave face.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Relax. They get everything frozen, like hospital food.

TALKING HEAD

MELISSA

My cousin Marty sells the old food from Panera that's "unfit for consumption" to hospitals. We all know that stuff never *really* expires.

Melissa shrugs.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

He turns a good profit.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Melissa opens the fridge. Inside are three bins of meat labeled beef, turkey, and "?". Jacob looks queasy and points to the last bin.

JACOB

What are the chances that one is tofu?

MELISSA

I don't like your odds, pal.

TALKING HEAD

JACOB

I'm fine with meat eaters, I just don't support their lifestyle. I have meat eating friends! I just think tofu should be the default. Do what you want at home, but don't force it on the kids.

Jacob looks confident in his statement, then realizes how he sounds and opens his mouth to say something but is cut off.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

The children walk in a line with their backs straight and their chins up, holding paper napkins on their arms like fancy waiters. Janine is at the end of the line, and Barbara talks to the girl in front of her.

BARBARA

Very nice posture, but bring your arm up higher, like Janine.

IMANI

Who's Janine?

BARBARA

I mean, Miss Teagues.

TALKING HEAD

BARBARA

Sometimes I forget that Janine is an adult.

INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Janine beams with pride after Barbara's compliment and doesn't seem to care that she called her Janine to Imani.

TALKING HEAD

JANINE

I mean, Imani clearly doesn't know what she's doing, she's an amateur!

Janine realizes that she's talking about a kid.

JANINE (CONT'D)

She is also eight years old and doing a wonderful job learning.

Janine looks slightly bashful.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Not everyone can do it perfectly on their first try.

Janine looks slightly smug.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Melissa takes one of the bins out of the fridge and places it on the counter.

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MELISSA

Listen, this stuff doesn't have any more chemicals in it than your blue raspberry vape does.

JACOB

(under his breath)

As if I would ever get blue razz...it's so...artificial.

MELISSA

Oh, because -

Melissa snatches Jacob's brightly colored vape out of his back pocket to read the name.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Peach mint ice is so much better.

Jacob snatches it back from her frantically and looks around at the kids who saw the interaction.

JACOB

It's an anxiety pen!

Jayden, a tiny first grader, looks at the camera and shakes his head. He turns to Jacob and Melissa. He's wearing a huge apron that drags on the ground.

JAYDEN

I know what a vape is. What am I, five?

JACOB

You're six...

JAYDEN

My dog Maya tried to eat my mom's vape once. She had to go to the dog hospital. My mom said that Maya went on a girl's trip with my hamster, but I know she's dead.

Jacob's jaw drops slightly, surprised.

JAYDEN (CONT'D)

You should really be careful about what you put in your body, Mr. C.

Jayden shuffles back to his cooking station, where he immediately eats a piece of bread off the ground. Melissa cackles while Jacob looks at the camera, ashamed, and stuffs his vape back in his pocket.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Barbara observes a table of two sets of boys and girls. The girls have spork packets in front of them.

DANIEL

Nia, may I get that for you?

Nia nods as Daniel gingerly takes her spork packet and holds it gently in front of him before slamming it repeatedly on the table to get the spork out. He presents the spork to Nia, who blushes. The other kids look at them, impressed.

BARBARA

Very good, Daniel! Done like a true gentleman.

TALKING HEAD

BARBARA

It's important that the children learn good manners early on. Thanks to Gerald, I haven't touched a car door or the back of a chair in 20 years. Do you think my nails would look this good otherwise?

Barbara proudly shows off her impeccable manicure.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Gregory stands at a kitchen work station next to his kids as they all work on making PB&J's. He painstakingly trims the edges of his sandwich with the side of a spork, which is going well until the especially runny peanut butter starts leaking out. He looks like he's about to scream but covers his mouth with his fist and glances at the camera before walking over to Jacob and Melissa with the peanut butter jar.

GREGORY

Hey, is there like, a thicker peanut butter the kids can use? Some of them are...having trouble with this one.

He glances at the camera, embarrassed.

MELISSA

Oh, yeah! Check the peanut butter section-

Melissa points to a cabinet.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Do you prefer crunchy or smooth? Organic maybe?

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Gregory opens the cabinet as Melissa talks and is greeted by dust bunnies and a pile of old ketchup packets. He stares at the camera, realizing Melissa was joking.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Grab the artisanal jam while you're at it! They hand make it every morning.

Melissa laughs at the ridiculousness of Gregory's request as he walks back to his station in defeat. He throws out his first attempt and restarts on a new sandwich. The bread immediately tears as he takes it out of the bag, but he tries to remain calm. Then he watches a kid put a peanut butter spork directly into the jam jar and loses it. He drags his hand down his face and walks out of the kitchen before immediately returning.

GREGORY

(to himself)

Get a grip, Eddie.

One of the kids shows Gregory her perfect sandwich as he comes back in.

KAELIN

Is it good, Mr. Eddie?

Gregory looks impressed, jealous, and slightly angry. His eye twitches and he smiles through his teeth.

GREGORY

Yeah, it's good. How did you get the peanut butter to-

Kaelin walks away smiling while Gregory desperately tries to examine her work over her shoulder.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob and Melissa work on assembling a lasagna. Jacob has clipped his nose with a pink claw clip and is hesitantly pouring a bag of shredded cheese over the baking tray.

MELISSA

Really? It's not gonna kill you.

JACOB

I'm lactose intolerant! The smell is bad enough as it is even without the subtle notes of animal cruelty.

MELISSA

First of all, this is ShopRite cheese. It doesn't smell like anything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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MELISSA (CONT'D)

Second of all, "lactose intolerance" has only existed for like, 5 years. It's made up!

JACOB

Yeah, right. Big Dairy has you right where they want you. Alternatives might be a little more expensive, but it's worth it.

MELISSA

That's what Big Soy wants you to think. Next thing you know they'll be selling you "grass milk" and you'll be all over it. You're just a pawn in their game...

Melissa shakes her head as she continues to assemble the lasagna. Jacob looks slightly shaken by this comment, not having considered the motivations of the alternative milk industry.

JACOB

(to himself)

I've actually heard good things about grass milk...

Jacob looks alarmed, questioning everything.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Barbara watches the kids with her arms crossed and gives nods of approval while they practice holding two lunch trays at once. Jacob comes out of the kitchen looking green.

JACOB

Hey Barbara, I was thinking I could help out with your lesson here...I think just being in there has undone my good karma from twelve years of veganism.

Jacob puts his hands on his knees and gulps, feeling sick. Barbara looks grossed out and glances at the camera.

TALKING HEAD

BARBARA

Sometimes I give the kids "very important," *special* jobs to keep them from...getting in each other's way.

Barbara smiles.

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BARBARA (CONT'D)
Tissue tester, crayon collector, plant
protector...

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A boy crosses his arms and stands in front of a small potted flower, intensely guarding it. Barbara looks at him from her desk and gives him a big thumbs up, to which he nods with a straight face and continues to stare forward, serious.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

BARBARA
(earnestly)
Actually, Jacob, I have a very
important, *special* job that I think only
you can handle- but only if you're up
for it, of course.

Jacob straightens up, curious.

JACOB
Of course. I can handle it.

Barbara nods and puts her hands on his shoulders.

BARBARA
You are now the sole and solemn steward
of the cafeteria. You are the last line
of defense between the chaos that is
that hallway and the sanctuary that is
this lunchroom. Do you think you're
ready for this?

Jacob nods emphatically and stands up super straight, like a Buckingham palace guard, looking past Barbara into the distance as if he was born to do this. Barbara looks at the camera over Jacob's shoulder, closes her eyes, and nods.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Melissa and Gregory help their kids finish up the cooking.

MELISSA
Okay Eddie, how's the PB&J production
going? Because our lasagnas over here
are looking mighty fine.

Melissa motions to a tray of lasagna fresh out of the oven and high fives one of the kids helping her.

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JAYDEN

I put a special ingredient in there.

Melissa raises her eyebrows and glances at the camera before setting the tray apart from the rest.

MELISSA

Oh! We're actually gonna set this one aside for now.

TALKING HEAD

GREGORY

I'm almost positive the secret ingredient is a booger. It's considered a delicacy in the second grade.

He has a pained look on his face.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

GREGORY

Well I...don't *think* we have any secret ingredients in our sandwiches-

Gregory inspects the kids' sandwiches as best he can.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

But they look good, right guys?

KAELIN

Yeah Mr. Eddie, *ours* look good.

She looks at Gregory's plate.

KAELIN (CONT'D)

But your corners are a little messed up. Just try again!

Gregory looks like he's been shot through the heart.

GREGORY

Let's just get this food finished up, okay?

MELISSA

Time to plate your masterpieces, chefs! Vamanos!

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Ava struts into the cafeteria while texting. Jacob stands by the front table like it's a host stand while he looks down at a clipboard. He stops her with a raised hand as she tries to walk past him.

JACOB

Do you have a reservation?

Jacob is on a power trip with his new "job". Ava looks at him incredulously.

AVA

You're gonna have a reservation at the unemployment office if you don't get me the best seat in the house.

JACOB

We don't usually accept walk-ins...

Jacob looks at Ava's face; she's not having it.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(reluctantly)

But I'll see what I can do.

Jacob walks away as he flips through his clipboard. He shakes his head and mutters to himself.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Everyone thinks they're the exception...

TALKING HEAD

AVA

There is no reservation I can't get.
Carbone Miami, Friday night, last minute
table for six? Yeah. That's unheard of.

INT. OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Ava sits at her desk and spins around in her chair while on the phone.

AVA

Listen, Drake is not gonna be happy when he hears that y'all denied his girlfriend a table...Kat is out this week, I'm his other assistant- try to keep up...Duh, he wants to keep it low-key! Her name is Ava Coleman. It's A-V-

END FLASHBACK

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ACT 3

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Barbara stands among the tables, where the kids who cooked now sit with Melissa.

BARBARA

Thank you chefs for all your hard work!
Now it's time to debut our new cohort of
expertly trained waiters.

Barbara nods at Janine, who stands next to the kitchen door with her arms behind her back. She opens the door and holds it as the waiters file out in a perfect line holding trays of the shoddily constructed sandwiches and lasagna. They set the trays down in front of the other kids with precision, making sure that they are perfectly straight. At one table, the waiters set down a packet of sporks in front of the kids in succession like a choreographed number from a musical, perfectly precise.

MELISSA

Wow Barb, we sort of just got the job
done in there but these kids clearly
went through etiquette boot camp with
you.

Barbara smiles at Melissa.

BARBARA

They are a talented bunch.

Janine suddenly stands behind Barbara where Melissa can't see her.

JANINE

Oh, thank you.

Melissa and Barbara both turn around, surprised that she's there.

JANINE (CONT'D)

All in a day's work.

Janine straightens Melissa's tray and walks over to join the kid waiters, who now stand in a neat line at the edge of the cafeteria looking straight ahead.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Ava sits with her food at a table of students eating lunch. She holds a tiny milk carton and waves down one of the kid waiters.

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AVA

I need a refill of my chocolate milk. I thought these were supposed to be *American* serving sizes. This is basically a shot.

ISAIAH

I regret to inform you that free refills are against cafeteria policy.

AVA

That might be true for the riff-raff, but I know the owner.

ISAIAH

Sorry. I don't make the rules.

Isaiah walks away. Ava makes an annoyed face and turns to the small girl sitting next to her.

AVA

The service has *seriously* gone down hill around here. And you best believe I have the time to leave Yelp reviews.

Ava shakes her head, crosses her arms, and purses her lips. The girl next to her imitates her, aggressively shaking her head and wrapping her arms around herself because she doesn't know how to cross them.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Mr. Johnson cleans up the now empty kitchen. He discovers Gregory's pile of failed sandwiches and shakes his head.

MR. JOHNSON

Just wasteful. I invented the PB&J specifically to be the easiest sandwich to make.

He dumps the pile into his trash bin.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Disgraceful.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Janine walks around the cafeteria and proudly watches the kids eat their lunch. Gregory walks over to her holding a plate with a PB&J on it and wipes a bead of sweat off his forehead. He looks slightly frazzled.

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CONTINUED:

JANINE

They're doing pretty good, right? Kids are more capable than people think. I did my mom's taxes for her when I was ten.

As Janine finishes her sentence, a little boy knocks over his milk carton and watches it pour into his lap. Janine and Gregory wince.

GREGORY

Well, nothing's on fire and we haven't had any injuries, so I'd consider that a win.

JANINE

Yeah, I guess that's all we can really ask for. And it seems like they're enjoying the food, too.

GREGORY

Darius eats paper towels when he thinks I can't see him, so it's not like the bar is that high. But yeah. I think they had a good time. This was a really good idea, Janine.

Janine blushes and looks slightly uncomfortable, but enjoys the moment.

JANINE

Thanks. I'm glad it worked out.

They both look at each other admiringly and the air is slightly tense. Both are eager to say something to break the silence.

GREGORY

PB&J?

Gregory holds out the plate towards Janine.

JANINE

Oh my god, did one of the kids make that? It's like, freakishly perfect. I didn't know bread could have corners that sharp...

Janine bends down to examine the sandwich from every angle, amazed at how perfect it is. Gregory begins to smile then feigns nonchalance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GREGORY

Nah, I just threw it together with some of the leftover stuff.

JANINE

I don't think I can eat that. I would feel bad. It's like walking in fresh snow, it physically hurts to ruin it.

Gregory hesitates, then smushes one of the sandwiches and tears it in half. He has a slightly pained expression on his face as he messes up his masterpiece.

GREGORY

There.

Gregory holds up his half of the sandwich.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Bon appetit.

Janine smiles, takes the other half, and bumps it against his. They both take a bite, Janine with both pinkies up, and as they chew a disgusted expression grows on both their faces.

JANINE

Oh that's not-

GREGORY

Oh god-

They run to the nearest trash can and spit the food out, gagging.

JANINE

That's not right-

Gregory has a second wave of nausea and doubles back over the trash can as Janine runs towards the tables of students waving her arms.

JANINE (CONT'D)

DO NOT EAT THE SANDWICHES! THE FOOD'S EXPIRED! OR CONTAMINATED! HONESTLY I'M NOT SURE WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT BUT DEFINITELY DO NOT EAT IT!

The kids sit calmly at the tables and look at Janine with puzzled looks on their faces. One boy licks his fingers as he polishes off his sandwich. Melissa sits at one of the tables with them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MELISSA

Relax. A Philly kid's immune system
could survive the avian flu. Did
everyone enjoy lunch?

The kids cheer.

KIDS

Yeah!

Janine's eyes are wide and she looks around the cafeteria
highly concerned while Gregory continues to heave over the
trash can in the background. Jacob walks over eating his own
sandwich, having missed the commotion.

JACOB

(while chewing)

You know, these sandwiches aren't half
bad. Processed food will obviously kill
us all one day, but I think this peanut
butter actually has live cultures in it.

TAG

Janine cleans up the cafeteria before the next lunch period.
She spots an empty tray on a table and takes it back towards
the kitchen. Mr. Johnson mops outside the kitchen door.

MR. JOHNSON

You don't wanna go in there.

JANINE

I just need to put this tray back.

MR. JOHNSON

She's in a flow state...

Janine gives him a confused look.

JANINE

Okay, I'm actually gonna go a little
insane thinking about a family of lunch
trays in there missing one of its
members, so excuse me, please.

Mr. Johnson shrugs and moves aside. Janine heads into the
kitchen and is immediately greeted by a chaotic scene. A
young girl stands on one of the kitchen counters and shouts
orders at three older boys making sandwiches, waving around a
wooden spoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

KEKE

NOT EVEN MY BROTHER WOULD EAT THOSE
SANDWICHES, AND HE EATS PURINA! START
OVER! AND I SAID. NO. *CRUST!*

Janine looks startled and her jaw drops.

JANINE

Oh wow, okay-

Keke doesn't even notice Janine enter. She continues to wave the wooden spoon, which Janine dodges as she attempts to approach her to get her down from the counter.

TALKING HEAD

MR. JOHNSON

I know a natural born leader when I see one. I love to see a young independent woman finding her mojo.

END OF SHOW