

WAITING by Donna Kaz © 2013

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Doug McKenna.....Busboy/Writer-Comedian, 20's
Eddie Lepidus.....Waiter/Actor, 30's
Jade Bayer.....Waitress/Actress, late 30's
Mark Michaels.....Waiter/Actor-Singer, 30's
Sherry Russo.....Waitress/Actress-Dancer, 20's
Howard.....Manager/Owner, 40's
Lucy Trask.....Waitress/Actress, 20's
MAN, WOMAN 1, WOMAN 2.....playing various customers, and staff

THE SETTING

A large restaurant in New York City called The Great White Cafe. We see only a portion of the vast seating area that contains three or four tables with chairs. Directly upstage center is a side station. To the left and right of the side station are swinging doors to the kitchen, one clearly marked "IN" and the other marked "OUT". The walls of the restaurant are laden with autographed pictures of famous theatre people, some taken inside the restaurant with the manager HOWARD. A Juke Box stage left.

TIME

The present.

PRODUCTION NOTES

With the exception of HOWARD and LUCY, the STAFF of the restaurant also double as the CUSTOMERS. This is indicated in the text whenever the character's name appears in parenthesis. They are assisted by THREE ACTORS, (MAN, WOMAN 1, WOMAN 2), who also play various CUSTOMERS and STAFF. Whenever the restaurant is busy the entire STAFF constantly moves across the stage with drinks and plates, putting down checks and busing tables. HOWARD is either at the front desk seating customers, in the kitchen or roaming the restaurant. This will result in everyone being on stage most of the time.

The ushers who help the audience find their seats should act more like restaurant hosts and say things like "Enjoy your dinner" as they seat people. The program should resemble a menu and list each actor's restaurant experience.

The play is performed without an intermission.

Act I

Scene 1

In the BLACKOUT we hear exciting and anticipatory music played by a large orchestra. It is a hodgepodge of familiar tunes from the overtures of famous American musicals. During the music the lights come up dramatically and a spotlight finds each of the waiters as they enter the restaurant in the following order: DOUG, EDDIE, JADE, MARK, and SHERRY. DOUG rehearses part of his stand up routine, EDDIE goes over a Shakespearean monologue, JADE memorizes lines, MARK sings with the music, SHERRY dances. As the overture comes to an abrupt end the waiters freeze. PAUSE. HOWARD enters.

HOWARD

I'm Howard. I'm the boss around here. People jump when I say 'jump' and pick up when I say 'pick up'.

(The WAITERS immediately jump up run into the kitchen)

HOWARD (CONTINUED)

It takes a special kind of person to work in this restaurant. Someone with drive, perseverance and a lot of talent. This is no two-star clip joint, this is Broadway. And when you're on Broadway, you gotta be the best. I love the kids who work for me. But I would never let them know that. If I did, I'd be asking for it. They'd start walking all over me. I own this restaurant. I don't put up with shit.

(HOWARD puts money in the Juke Box and "Another Op'nin', Another Show" 1 blares loudly. The WAITERS enter and change into their work clothes to the music. Each WAITER wears a white shirt, black trousers, black shoes, black tie and white apron. They set up their sections and exit. The music fades into the sound of a bus pulling up and screeching to a stop. LUCY enters)

LUCY

Is this the last stop? Is this New York City? It is? (Shouting) Hello New York! I have traveled nine hundred miles to get here. I was born with something great inside of me and I'm here to let it out! I'm gonna let it out by singing. I'm gonna let it out by dancin'! I gonna let it out by acting my guts out! Hey mister, point me towards Broadway because I am going to be a...

WOMAN 2/HOSTESS

(Entering) Can I help you?

LUCY

Do you have any waitressing jobs available?

WOMAN 2

Fill out this form.

(LUCY starts to fill out form. The HOSTESS gets on the intercom and calls down to the office.)

WOMAN 2

(to LUCY) Have you worked in New York before?

LUCY

I just moved here from Illinois. But I have experience...I used to work...

WOMAN 2

(On phone) Howard, pick up. Howard. Howard, I have a girl here about a job. Well, Cindy quit last night so we need someone to fill her shifts. Blonde. Dirty blonde. Ah...kind of brown actually. (Pause) Yes. (Pause) Yes. (Pause) Oh, come on! (Pause) OK. (Hangs up)
He'll be right up. You can wait at this table.

(The HOSTESS brings LUCY to an empty table and goes to exit out the IN door of the kitchen just as HOWARD enters through it. HOWARD circles LUCY's table and sits.)

HOWARD

You an actress?

LUCY

No. I mean yes. I just moved to New York.

HOWARD

Most of my people are in theatre. Pain in the ass. Always leaving to do some shitty show and then wanting their job back when it closes. How do you work under pressure?

LUCY

Very well.

HOWARD

If you had 9 tables and they all had to be outta here at 8 o'clock and they came in at say...7:30, do you think you could handle it?

LUCY

Sure.

HOWARD

We have a sort of form test here. Just a few questions we ask about serving food and other things. Kind of to check you out at waitressing. OK?

LUCY

OK.

(HOSTESS brings out a bell, form test and cigarette for HOWARD. During the test HOWARD will ring the bell when LUCY either answers incorrectly or when she hesitates too long on an answer. DOUG enters and lights HOWARD'S cigarette. DOUG quickly exits and the test begins.)

HOWARD

What is a Chef salad?

LUCY

Um...it's with turkey...

HOWARD

(Rings bell) What garnishes go on a whiskey sour?

LUCY

Um...

HOWARD

(Rings bell) What does 86 mean?

LUCY

That you ran out of it!

HOWARD

On which side are the forks placed in relation to the plate? (Rings bell)
What is a Sombrero?

LUCY

A hat!

HOWARD

Is a margarita shaken or stirred?

LUCY

Shaken.

HOWARD

(Rings bell) OK, good. Now here's our menu. Look at it and tell me which items are cold and which items are hot.

(LUCY goes down the menu. HOWARD becomes preoccupied with checking out the HOSTESS)

LUCY

Ah, hot roast beef is hot. Cold chicken salad is cold. Hot tortellini is hot. Hot salmon platter is obviously hot...

(HOWARD rips the menu out of her hand)

HOWARD

OK, stop. Now here's a check.

(DOUG comes out of the kitchen and hands LUCY a check. The STAFF, minus JADE, enter)

HOWARD

Are you still with me? Now, I'm going to pretend that I'm a customer and you take my order.

(DOUG pulls the chair out from under LUCY so that she is forced to stand up)

HOWARD

I'll have a cheeseburger, medium-rare with vegetables instead of the french fries. A small spinach salad with french dressing on the side. To drink, I'd like a vodka martini straight up with a twist and bring me some water when you get a chance. OK, give me the check.

(HOWARD rips the check from LUCY's hand and proceeds to mark it with a red pen)

HOWARD

You forgot to indicate what kind of cheese is on the burger and there is nothing here that indicates the martini is straight up and...where's my water?

(The STAFF collectively "Tsk, tsk, tsk" at LUCY)

HOWARD

OK. Now I'm going to list a bunch of things and you tell me what I'm listing. Somebody get Jade out here now.

(EDDIE opens the kitchen door and calls "JADE!". A few CUSTOMERS enter and the HOSTESS seats them. JADE enters from kitchen stubbing out a cigarette. SHE carries some large cards on which are written the answers to HOWARD's questions. JADE holds the cards up so that HOWARD can see them but LUCY cannot. This game is played exactly like the TV game show "\$10,000 Pyramid". JADE holds up the first card which reads "RED WINES")

HOWARD (CONTINUED)

Chianti, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chateau Rothschilds...

LUCY

Wines!

HOWARD

Beaujolais Village...

LUCY

Wines.

HOWARD

Medoc, Merlot...um...claret!

LUCY

Types of wine!

HOWARD

More specific!

LUCY

Wines people order with dinner?

MAN (AS DAY WAITER)

(Shouts out) White or...!!!

LUCY

Red wines!

HOWARD

(To the DAY WAITER) You! Come over here.

(The DAY WAITER approaches)

You're fired! Sherry make sure he turns in his apron.

(The DAY WAITER takes off his apron and exits. (Card reads: "THINGS YOU HEAR IN THE KITCHEN")

HOWARD

"Pick up!" "Carry out!" "86 the key lime pie!" "I lost the dupe..."

LUCY

Things you hear in the kitchen!

(Card reads: "APPETIZERS")

HOWARD

Clams on the half shell, duck pate, nachos...

LUCY

First courses! Starters!

HOWARD

Close enough. Next card!

(Card reads: "HOLLANDAISE SAUCE")

HOWARD

Egg yolks, butter, lemon juice, salt, a little water...

LUCY

Sauce! Hollandaise sauce!

(Card reads: "THINGS DONE IN THE MIDDLE OF A SHIFT")

HOWARD

Smoking pot, snorting coke, getting drunk, eating desserts, having sex...

LUCY

Things that are bad for you! Things that are illegal. Um... Things that you do after work?

HOWARD

Pass!

(Card reads: "BARTENDERS I'VE SLEPT WITH")

HOWARD

Mark, Ray, Roy, Bill, Bob, Tommy, John.

(JADE senses something is wrong and reads the card.
When she realizes what it says she rips it in half and tosses
it)

JADE

Very funny.

HOWARD

Right. Now pay attention to the big board our lovely hostesses are rolling in right now
because we are about to play "Higher-Lower" in this final segment of the waiting test!

(EDDIE and the HOSTESS enter with the big board and act
as game show HOSTESSES.