

**RESTAURANTS
AT BEAUTIFUL TIMES
BY
DAVE MCGINNIS**



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TIME: Yesterday at 12:39 pm, Eastern Daylight Time.

PLACE: The steakhouse 1.4 miles to the west. (Drive north and take the first left. Head west for 1.4 miles.)

CHARACTERS:

Jean: Male, older than Myceneaus. Fairly grizzled in appearance.

Myceneaus: Male, younger than Jean. Bright-eyed young man.

Head Man: Male, any age. Well-dressed, crisp.

Rich Man: A rich man. Might be a tad obese; one can never be too sure about these things.

The set should be simple. A table, a chair, a rope hung from the fly/ceiling/rafters, and some clutter in Jean and Myceneaus' area.

THE STAGE IS DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS.

THE FIRST CONSISTS OF A TABLE WITH ONE CHAIR. ON THE TABLE SITS AN EMPTY PLATE WITH SILVERWARE AND AN EMPTY GLASS. THE LIGHTING IS BRIGHT AND CHEERY.

THE SECOND IS DARK AND SPARSE. PIECES OF TRASH CAN BE SEEN FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER.

AT RISE: JEAN AND MYCENEAEUS, CLAD IN PITIFUL RAGS, FILTER THROUGH THE TRASH. AS THEY DO, THE RICH MAN SITS AT HIS TABLE AND BANGS A FORK. THE HEAD MAN ENTERS AND STANDS CENTER. HE ADDRESSES THE GENERAL CROWD.

Head Man

Tonight's order!!

(Removes a piece of paper and reads. Jean and Myceneaus freeze.)

One order of food and one order of drink! RETRIEVE!!

(Jean and Myceneaus stand at attention.)

Jean and Myceneaus

Yes, sir! Drink, sir! The man is better and needs his drink!

(Head Man exits.)

Myceneaus

Jena... Jean!

Jean

I heard. Another order. Prepare it.

Myceneaus

Have you ever seen the other place?

Jean

One order of food. Where do we keep the food? I put it away, and it moves, but when it moves it never moves to-

Myceneaus

I see the light when the line comes down. I can see the shiny object. The circle...orb...I'm not sure. The light comes down from-

Jean

What to drink? What would such a man drink? Where is his usual?

Myceneaus

It reflects itself. Have you ever looked up there, Jean?

(Jean is busy.)

I have. Reflects everything. Makes it brighter.

Jean

Where is it?

Myceneaus

I saw my wrinkles for the first time yesterday. On my hands. Have you ever looked at your hands, Jean? Taken the time to-?

Jean

Where is the usual?

Myceneaus

Ralph took it when-

Jean

To where?

(Myceneaus points up.)

Oh my god. It's...it's...gone. But how are we to-?

Myceneaus

He sent it to the upper room. The other room. I love the sound of the clicking shoe...on the shiny floor...reflecting the light of the crystals.

Jean

Myceneaus! We have to find the usual! The usual now! You look up to no end, and I understand; we were all young once; so be it, but the bottle will be on the ground, in the dirt! You have to-

Myceneaus

So find it.

Jean

I'm trying. If you would help me, then-

Myceneaus

I'm tired of... Find it.

Jean

Ralph told me to find it. Ralph told me he didn't care, that the man in the other room could starve, but-

Myceneaus

And why can't he?

Jean

But Ralph is still here. He sits under this...all of it.

(Removes a hunk of meat from the trash.)

And I am tired of rolling over him in my sleep! We bring the order of food! WE give the order of drink! Get the order of-

(Head Man enters.)

Head Man

The drink is required!

Jean

Yes, sir! Drink, sir! The man is better and needs his drink!

(The Head Man approaches Myceneaus.)

Head Man

So quiet.

Jean

No, sir; he simply-

Head Man

Such voices I hear from in this room all hours of the night...such riotous things they say, but what now? Silence. A wretched shame. No drink from such a quiet room. I don't know how I'll live with myself.

(To Jean)

Why are you holding the one called Ralph?

(Jean drops Ralph.)

Do you plan on handling the other man's food with your hands now? They've rolled and lathered in the one called Ralph, and I'm not sure of how sanitary such a thing could be. What do you think, Mike?

(No response.)

Mike? What do you think?

Myceneaus

M...Myceneaus...sir.

Head Man

That's what I said, Mike.

Jean

Myce-

Head Man

Is it right for this...Jean or whatever he is...to manhandle the other man's food with Ralph all over him? How am I to take the other man his food drenched in the leftovers of the one called Ralph? Unsanitary. Another trial that I must face. And do you know my tribulations? Who do you think watches the other man as he eats an unsatisfactory meal? Who hears the complaints? That responsibility comes with this uniform! I bear it so you won't have to! This hat! This badge! These well-polished jackboots! They are your first, last, and only line of defense against the rage of the other man!

(To Myceneaus)

Have you imagined, in the dark recesses of that cavernous skull, the gut-wrenching agony of such a charge?

(Myceneaus nods.)

Then so be it! You think on my job, do you?

Jean

What kind of food, sir? If we do not know what kind, then-

Head Man

Do you imagine yourself serving the other man with a jovial smile?

(Myceneaus struggles not to speak.)

Jean

And how large of a glass has the other man-?

Head Man

Stuffing your servant's slacks into your captain's boots every morning? Do you dream of it?

(Myceneaus struggles harder.)

Jean

The food is all we know, sir! What specifically could we-?

Head Man

Passing under the chandelier with a polished tray of usual food?

Myceneaus

Oh my holy light, YES!

Jean

We have no drink! The drink is gone!!

Myceneaus

It's called a chandelier!! The magic of such a word!! So ELEGANT!

Jean

Ralph took it before he turned into meat! He moved it! Took it!

Head Man

You sand-bagging rope-climber!!

Myceneaus

The light! I've seen it! Light in the trap door!

Head Man

Where did the Ralph put the drink?

Jean

I cannot ask him, sir. He never told me, and now he is meat.

Head Man

How am I supposed to serve the other man when you lower slime do nothing! You live in the finest conditions people of your kind could ask; I take all the verbal abuse that man can fire, but you lose the drink. And who is to answer for this? Not I! NO! I do not answer for such transgressions! I am off to live on a boat! I am off to search for the sun! I am off to become another unhappy old person waiting to climb through death's window!!

(Throws his hat to the ground.)

I shall now exit with zest!