

COUSIN AMY'S DINER

By Jerry Rabushka

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CHARACTERS

JORDAN	the manager of a small diner
HAILEY	a waitress, high school student
VANESSA	a waitress, high school student
CUSTOMER #1	(male or female)
CUSTOMER #2	(male)
COOK	(female)
MOM	
DAD	
CHILD 1	(M or F)
CHILD 2	(older than Child 1, M or F)
OFFICER SMITH	(M or F)
OFFICER CABASAS	(M or F)
DEREK	a prisoner, convicted of murder
MOTHER	an elderly woman in her 80s or 90s
ESSIE	Her daughter
ANNA	15 years old, a famous singer/actress
UNCLE WILLY	her manager.
NON SPEAKING CUSTOMERS	may be added if desired

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Jordan, Vanessa, Hailey, and Customer #2 remain on stage for the entire play. The other roles can be doubled if desired, so this play can be done with a cast of 9 or 10 or as many as 17.

PROPS

Cell phone, other restaurant supplies as noted.

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The set is “Cousin Amy’s Diner,” a small family owned restaurant. On stage are the front counter and a few sets of tables & chairs. This can be set up in any way that best suits your stage, however one possibility is put the counter towards the side, near what would be the door of the diner, then you have the rest of the stage for your tables and chairs. Pick your own décor. An “old tyme” or “50’s” décor is an option, or use your ideas from your city or school as a decorating theme. It should look like the place has been in business for a long time.

As the play opens, on stage are HAILEY and VANESSA, the waitresses, who are wiping down some dirty tables, but they’re not too happy about it, plus the two CUSTOMERS, who are sitting at separate tables. Other customers can be dining as well if there is space on stage. Tables can have the usual . . . ketchup, mustard, condiments, etc. On a smaller stage just a couple tables can give the impression of a larger environment. You will need some usual restaurant supplies such as plates, cups, napkins, salt shakers, etc, as well as some food to serve the customers.

HAILEY: (*SHE’s wiping a table, or the counter, or cleaning something, unhappily.*) He is just like my mom. Clean this! Wipe that! Who cares? You just come in here and eat. Who needs it clean?

VANESSA: I bet Beyonce never has to clean up after herself. Let alone after other people. She gets the rest of Destiny’s Child to do it.

HAILEY: You know what I’d like to see? Beyonce, Britney, and Alannis Morissette losing all their money and put to work as busgirls. And then I can take their place. (*SHE starts to sing a popular song.*)

VANESSA: (*Nobody likes her singing, VANESSA tries to stop her with some difficulty, perhaps shoving a napkin in her mouth, or at least sitting her down to quell her enthusiasm.*) Hailey, you will never take their place.

CUSTOMER #1: If the concert is over, could you please bring me another napkin or two?

HAILEY: I’m busy. The manager’s making me clean up.

CUSTOMER #1: Miss . . .

HAILEY: Look, he’s my boss, if you don’t like it, take it up with him!

CUSTOMER #1: *(goes to HAILEY's table and squeezes out some ketchup on it)* Here. Clean that up. *(goes to the counter and picks up some napkins, plunks them on HAILEY's table)* You might need these, and then you can bring me what's left over.

HAILEY: And yet, you get none for yourself.

VANESSA: *(squirts some mustard on the table)* It's really dirty now, Hailey. You've got your work cut out for you.

HAILEY: Let's add some salt! *(SHE shakes salt on the table)*

VANESSA: And pepper! This is yummy! *(to CUSTOMER #1 as THEY stir it all up)* Why don't you come dip your sandwich in here!

HAILEY: Then we won't have to clean it up! And here I thought this job was boring.

JORDAN: *(enters and is appalled)* Hailey! Vanessa! What are you doing?

HAILEY: *(mocking him)* Hailey! Vanessa! Are we waitresses or golden retrievers?

JORDAN: A golden retriever would never waste good food. *(goes over to them and whispers)* What is going on here?

VANESSA: Hailey just got carried away. That's all.

HAILEY: *Hailey* did? You added the pepper!

VANESSA: You started it!

JORDAN: Do I have to finish it? Now get a rag and wipe this up. *(HE hits his fist on the table for emphasis, right into the mixture.)* Uh . . . eeeewww. Get a rag. Now.

VANESSA: *(SHE gets him a rag and tosses it on the table but doesn't offer to help.)* Oh, and table number six needs napkins.

JORDAN: Well, get some!

HAILEY: Sorry. It's break time!

(VANESSA and HAILEY exit.)

JORDAN: *(as HE's wiping up, CUSTOMER #1 is eyeing him in disbelief. JORDAN wipes everything into a bus tub, feeling pretty angry and stupid, then goes to the counter and brings some napkins, trying to brush off the entire experience. JORDAN accidentally knocks over some water onto CUSTOMER as HE places the napkins, but smiles sweetly and acts like nothing went wrong. [Be careful and don't use too much water, if any!])* Thank you for dining with us tonight. I'm Jordan, the manager. How was everything?

CUSTOMER #1: *(not impressed, and trying to dry himself off, also acting as if nothing "happened")* Well, Jordan-the-manager, it was great! Well, no it wasn't. Too buttery, really. Too salty. Too greasy. Too many trans-fats. Gotta watch your trans-fats these days. Looks like you aren't!

(JORDAN is slightly insulted but lets it go.)

Oh, and the service?

JORDAN: *(looks off stage, uncomfortably)* Top notch, I'm sure!

CUSTOMER #1: *(a little contemptuous)* Everyone!

JORDAN: Everyone, top notch! Glad to hear it!

CUSTOMER #1: Everyone's rude. Everyone's, thoughtless.

Everyone's, inconsiderate. I haven't been treated so shamefully since my parole officer took my magazines.

JORDAN: Well unlike prison, you're free to go.

CUSTOMER #1: It was a *Newsweek*. He was mad that I was on the front page.

JORDAN: Please accept my sincerest apologies for anything we've overlooked. I hope you'll try us again.

CUSTOMER #1: Sure! Who wouldn't want a second case of food poisoning? Vomiting, diarrhea . . . What's not to love? Of course I'll be back. *(pokes JORDAN)* Trans-fats live here. *(getting up and handing JORDAN the check, which is already on the table)* I did time for credit card fraud. So if you charge me, there's a lady in Boston that's paying for it. *(exits)*

(JORDAN goes to the counter, muttering.)

HAILEY: *(enters, whisks over to the table and checks it out)* Cheap.

Didn't even leave a tip.

JORDAN: Hailey! Vanessa! Come here.

CUSTOMER #2: Stop yelling, I'm trying to eat. *(more quietly)* It's hard enough as it is.

JORDAN: We have some service issues to resolve.

CUSTOMER #2: What's with the margarine? Didn't they ban trans-fats statewide? I should sue!

JORDAN: You want cheap eats? You get trans-fats.

CUSTOMER #2: You're killing us.

JORDAN: Look at it this way: with the money you're saving on the butter, you'll be able to afford a really nice funeral. *(HE takes away CUSTOMER's bread.)*

CUSTOMER #2: Hey!

JORDAN: Sorry. I don't want your death on my head. Hailey! Vanessa! Now!

VANESSA: *(enters)* Jordan! Calm down.

HAILEY: What? I have customers on my back. *(calling back to someone offstage)* Wait a minute! Cheez!

CUSTOMER #2: *(sarcastic, to HAILEY)* More margarine, please.

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HAILEY: I'm in a meeting! *(throws over a couple packets of margarine, which if they don't land on the table, the CUSTOMER should pick up)*
Here.

JORDAN: It's okay. He'll die soon anyway. Look. It's time to make some changes around here. Business is down. And everyone blames your attitude.

HAILEY: My attitude! If they don't like it, they can eat somewhere else!

VANESSA: *(indicating CUSTOMER #2)* He still comes here. Every day.

HAILEY: If you want a better attitude, Jordan, you might reflect that desire in my so-called wages.

JORDAN: I think the raise comes as a result of a more positive attitude.

VANESSA: Nope. Here's how it works. No raise, we're unpleasant.

(goes to Customer #2 to be an example and grabs his plate) Are you done or are you just going to pick at it all day? *(puts the plate back)*

HAILEY: Small raise, we're tolerable. *(goes to CUSTOMER again, grabs his plate.)* Finished? No one else made it through. *(puts his plate back)*

(CUSTOMER tries to eat quickly so no one takes it again.)

VANESSA: Medium raise, we're nice. *(to CUSTOMER, again taking the plate)* Anything else I can get you?

(CUSTOMER tries to respond, but SHE won't let him answer.)

No? Good.

CUSTOMER #2: Give that back!

HAILEY: Big raise, I'm your best friend. *(to CUSTOMER, taking plate from VANESSA and plopping it down in front of CUSTOMER)* Here's my cell number. If there's anything I can get you, feel free to call.

(after this, HAILEY and VANESSA cross back to the counter)

JORDAN: *(has a great idea, and wants to force it on the waitresses)*

From now on we're going to treat our customers like family! When people come here, I want them to feel at home. Our slogan is going to be, "You're part of our family." We're turning over a new leaf!

HAILEY: *(not overjoyed)* So when do we start this rotating of foliage?

JORDAN: Now. Right now. That's not a customer anymore. It's your sister. Your mother. Your cousin Derek.

HAILEY: *(takes a very close look at CUSTOMER, turning his head back and forth)* He doesn't look a thing like my mother. My sister . . . maybe in the eyes.

VANESSA: (*thinks it over*) Who has a cousin Derek? Cousin Vinnie, maybe. Cousin Bob, Cousin Leroy.

HAILEY: Derek's a boyfriend name. I'm not dating my cousin. Yuk.

JORDAN: Maybe not, but I expect changes. Or we'll all be out of work.

VANESSA: Good! I'm only here because my mother makes me. Well, driving dad's car through the library window didn't help either. From now on I'm getting all my information online.

HAILEY: My mother wants me to take some responsibility. Whatever.

JORDAN: (*insistent*) Like family!

HAILEY: (*looks at CUSTOMER*) Ew. He looks like my Uncle Warwick, yet with my sister's eyes. He gives me the creeps. And there's always shrimp sauce on his chin.

JORDAN: We don't have shrimp sauce here.

HAILEY: And there isn't a Long John Silvers for miles around.

CUSTOMER #2: (*a little afraid to ask, at this point*) Could someone please refill my soda?

JORDAN: Remember . . . like family.

HAILEY: (*thinks out loud to herself*) Like family . . . like family . . . (*crabby*) Get it yourself.

CUSTOMER #2: Look, I just asked for a—

HAILEY: I'm on my feet all day and you're just sitting there issuing orders like King Frederick the Great of Prussia. Why do I have to drop everything I'm doing just to get your royal highness a refill?

CUSTOMER #2: They *are* free, aren't they?

HAILEY: Yes. And *you're* free . . . to get up and get as many as you like.

CUSTOMER #2: Isn't it your job to get me a drink?

HAILEY: Vanessa, can you get him a refill?

VANESSA: (*tries to steer HAILEY towards the back to get a refill*) You get it! I got it last time! Why can't he just get it himself instead of ordering us around like the Sultan of Soda?

HAILEY: (*whirls VANESSA around to steer her to the soda, who klunks into something, perhaps knocking over a chair*) I always get it. It's your turn.

CUSTOMER #2: Meanwhile, no one is getting me a soda.

HAILEY: No one has as little to do as you, yet you seem oblivious, as usual, to option number three, which is get it on your own.

VANESSA: You might set an example by getting out of that chair instead of ordering us around like Rapunzel.

HAILEY: Vanessa, it's Cinderella. Rapunzel has the hair.

VANESSA: Speaking of which, I need to brush mine. So, Hailey, you need to get the pop. (*whips out a brush and goes at it*)

CUSTOMER #2: I want to see the manager.

HAILEY: (*snotty*) Everyone wants to see the manager. Hey Jordan!

This guy wants to see you and while you're at it, can you bring him a refill? (*grumbling*) I have to do everything around here.

JORDAN: (*totally confused*) What is going on here? (*to VANESSA*) Put that away! The nerve of you to brush your hair where people have to eat!

VANESSA: Dandruff, salt, whatever.

CUSTOMER #2: I made a simple request. And they attacked me.

JORDAN: (*to the WAITRESSES*) Did you not hear what I said about customer service?

HAILEY: (*not sure why HE's upset*) You said to treat customers just like family.

JORDAN: And?

HAILEY: (*explaining, politely*) Well, that's pretty much what our family does. If mom asks for something, we don't just *get it for her*.

VANESSA: I mean, eventually we get it, but it takes about ten minutes of squabbling first.

HAILEY: So, do we get a raise now?

JORDAN: Look. *This is what I want you to do. (to CUSTOMER, walking to his table)* Ask me for a refill.

CUSTOMER #2: I'm afraid to.

JORDAN: Ask me for a refill. I want to show them how to provide excellent customer service.

CUSTOMER #2: Uh . . .

JORDAN: (*threatening*) Do it!

CUSTOMER #2: May I please have a refill on my soda?

JORDAN: (*changes to a smile*) Sure, I'll get that for you right away! (*lifts cup . . . plunks it right back down . . . to the staff*) See?

VANESSA: That's cool, but that never happens with my family.

HAILEY: Mine either. (*JORDAN starts to walk back to the counter but the CUSTOMER calls him back.*)

CUSTOMER #2: Oh. You have to call me honey.

JORDAN: (*stopped in his tracks but doesn't yet turn around*) I have to what?

CUSTOMER #2: (*more insistent*) You have to call me honey.

JORDAN: (*looks over CUSTOMER warily*) I don't *want* to call you honey.

CUSTOMER #2: My wife calls me honey. (*pretending to ask his wife*) "Can you get me another soda, dear?" (*imitating his wife, standing up*) "Sure honey, I'll be glad to." That's how it works in *my* family.

JORDAN: Then why do you eat *here*?

CUSTOMER #2: There's a lot more to it. Sure honey, I'll be glad to.

(*changes attitude and plays a nagging, frustrated wife, pushing JORDAN down on a chair and lecturing and belittling him*) "After you

get off the couch and change that light bulb. After you mow the lawn like I asked you to do five times already. After you take your daughter to ballet class, soccer practice, and her Future Farmers of America meeting. But since I have to do all that, *honey*, I don't really have time to get you your soda." That's *my* family. (*HE sits back down.*)

JORDAN: I think we need a new slogan.

HAILEY: I think you need to give your daughter some chill time.

VANESSA: Well, it *is* a family diner.

JORDAN: That must be our problem. You can't get anything done without a fight. Well, something has to appeal to the customers. And the staff. (*thinking of another slogan*) Here we go. "Home cookin' like mama used to make."

HAILEY: *Used* to make?

VANESSA: Yeah, till you put her in a home and made her eat Medicare, part D.

JORDAN: (*upbeat, like a TV announcer*) In this fast paced society, people don't have time to make a delicious home-cooked meal. They have to go out for it. We're going to provide that. (*proud of his slogan, arms around both WAITRESSES*) Home cookin' like mama used to make.

(*VANESSA and HAILEY look at each other, frightened.*)

VANESSA: You don't want home cookin' like *my* mama used to make. Frozen pizza and mac & cheese. We didn't have a vegetable in the house till I was 13.

COOK: (*like "mama," perhaps ringing a bell, big smile . . . enters or shows up through a door or a "pass through window" if there is one on the set*) Come and get it!

HAILEY: Of course! (*sarcastic*) Mama. (*SHE takes a plate of food from COOK to CUSTOMER.*) Here you are. Home cookin' just like mama used to make.

CUSTOMER #2: I didn't order this.

HAILEY: Just eat it. It's like mama used to make. (*looks at the plate, not impressed*) Apparently.

CUSTOMER #2: Whose mama?

HAILEY: Your mama?

CUSTOMER #2: My mama couldn't cook a bowl of oatmeal. Dad always ate here and left us home to suffer.

HAILEY: All our food is prepared with the freshest ingredients . . . but the tastiest ingredient is mama's loving care.

CUSTOMER #2: Well, maybe. (*takes a bite*) Needs salt. (*looks around the table*) Can you bring me some salt, please?

HAILEY: Well, okay. (*SHE goes to get salt*)

(*COOK enters and takes it away from her before SHE can give it to CUSTOMER.*)

COOK: (*aggressive, with an imposing presence*) I made it without salt on purpose.

CUSTOMER #2: It needs salt.

COOK: (*tweaks CUSTOMER*) You don't need salt. High blood pressure, stroke, you know what the doctor said about too much salt.

CUSTOMER #2: It doesn't taste right without salt.

COOK: (*dramatic*) I slave and suffer over a hot stove all day long to prepare you a delicious meal and this is the thanks I get. *It doesn't taste right.* I skim on one small ingredient, not because I want to, but because I care about your health and your future. And your children's future, they should have you for a long time.

CUSTOMER #2: Leave me alone! This is why I eat out to begin with! I want a tasty meal. Salt, sugar, sauce, cream, you name it. Even a trans-fat or two.

COOK: Fine. Enjoy your life. What's left of it. (*takes a salt shaker from her apron, plunks it down on the table and covers her eyes tearfully*)

CUSTOMER #2: (*not sure if HE should use it or not*) What are you doing?

COOK: I can't bear to watch. My creation. It's like splattering house paint on the Mona Lisa. Next time you can go to McDonald's. You can drink Lipton out of an aluminum can. Go spend five dollars on a soda at the ball park.

CUSTOMER #2: Speaking of which, no one's brought me my refill.

COOK: You don't need a refill.

CUSTOMER #2: It's diet!

COOK: Diet tricks you into eating more. Your tongue thinks it's getting sugar, but your body knows it's not. Next thing you know, you're craving more unhealthy sweets. You should have a nice cold glass of water.

JORDAN: We don't make a profit on the water.

COOK: (*up to JORDAN, still overdramatic*) Is money all you're interested in? Is that why you come to work in the morning?

JORDAN: Well . . . actually, yes.

COOK: (*takes the salt back just as CUSTOMER is reaching for it, now going back off stage*) So ungrateful.

JORDAN: Okay, Hailey, you get the salt. Vanessa, you get the soda.

VANESSA: What are you going to do?

JORDAN: Manage. And come up with a new mission statement!

VANESSA: (*getting really chummy with JORDAN*) How about “Vanessa gets the day off with pay.”

JORDAN: (*pushing her off*) How about “Vanessa gets the rest of her life off, without pay.”

CUSTOMER #2: Is anyone going to bring me the salt? I'm resigned to no soda.

HAILEY: (*SHE gets some salt and starts to shake, shake, shake over his plate.*) Here. Just the way you want it.

(*COOK enters frantically, fighting with HAILEY to take the salt back but HAILEY prevails and keeps shaking it.*)

COOK: What are you doing? You're killing him!

HAILEY: That's okay. Less work for me. Eventually. Maybe he'll put a tip in his will.

(*After a struggle, COOK exits into the kitchen, HAILEY keeps shaking.*)

CUSTOMER #2: Enough already! I don't want that much salt.

JORDAN: Hailey! Stop it!

HAILEY: I'm giving him *more* than he wants. I'm providing extra customer service. I should get a raise.

JORDAN: (*more to himself*) I should get a medal. But I do like that slogan. “Just the way you want it.”

VANESSA: I think it's been done.

JORDAN: It's been *said*, but it's not been *done*. (*a FAMILY comes in, MOM, DAD, and two unkempt CHILDREN*) This will work like a charm.

HAILEY: This is going to backfire.

CUSTOMER #2: Can you send *this* back? It's too salty!

HAILEY: (*takes a bite, to the CUSTOMER's amazement and thinks it over*) This tastes fine. Hats off to the cook.

CUSTOMER #2: But . . . I thought it's just the way I want it!

HAILEY: You ordered before we implemented it. So you're grandfathered out of it. You ordered this under “just like mama used to make,” and my mama salted everything! Now her blood pressure is 242 over 189.

JORDAN: (*to the FAMILY*) Welcome to Cousin Amy's Diner, where everything is just the way you want it.

(*This family has no understanding of how to behave in public and is very loud and obnoxious. If desired, MOM can be on a cell phone as well as shouting around the restaurant. Throughout much of this scene the CHILDREN wander around out of control annoying people and touching*

things THEY shouldn't, knocking things over, while the parents seem helpless to stop it.)

MOM: Can you turn the lights down? I want atmosphere!

DAD: Leave them up. I want to see what I'm eating.

MOM: Down.

DAD: Up!

JORDAN: Let me seat you over here.

MOM: Look, are you going to do things just the way *I* want it, or just the way *he* wants it? We never agree.

JORDAN: Both of you. It's our policy.

MOM: I don't want policy. I want atmosphere!

DAD: You're creating your own atmosphere. Of dissention and disgust.

CHILD 1: *(CHILD is near CUSTOMER looking over his food)*
Mommmyyyy. Can I get a milkshake?

MOM: *(pulling him back)* No milkshake. We talked about that on the way over.

CHILD 1: But I want one. That man said I can have what I want. *(runs to JORDAN and clings to him)*

MOM: That man is not your mommy. *(pulls CHILD back)*

CHILD 1: Well I wish he was. Then I'd get a milkshake. *(throws himself on the ground to throw a tantrum)*

MOM: That's not going to work!

CHILD 1: *(stops)* Oh, okay.

CHILD 2: She's going to make us drink healthy. We never get what we want. We only get pomegranate juice. Apparently children are unable to take advantage of your very liberal service policy. *(sits on the floor to pout)*

(DAD struggles to lift CHILD up.)

CHILD 1: *(tragic!)* You offer us one chance, only to have it taken away.

(As JORDAN tries to seat them)

MOM: I don't want this table. It's too close to *(points to CUSTOMER #2)* *him.*

CUSTOMER #2: What's wrong with me?

MOM: I can smell the salt on your food. You're setting a bad example for my children.

CHILD #1: *(loud)* Mommmyyyy!

DAD: *(loud)* Be quiet! You need to learn how to behave in public. If I have to turn this car around!

CHILD 2: Dad? We're not in the car anymore. That's not really a valid threat.

DAD: If I have to take you back to the car and turn it around . . .

CHILD 2: *(to JORDAN)* If we don't want to go somewhere we act up and he turns the car around. I haven't been to the dentist in years!

MOM: *(still treating everyone like servants)* I'm looking for a roast.

VANESSA: We don't have "roast" here. Unless you mean "celebrity insult festival," then it's pretty much ongoing.

HAILEY: We do have roast on Thursday. That's our special.

MOM: Then . . . I want it to be Thursday. Can't you just get it out of your Thursday freezer?

JORDAN: Sorry, ma'am, we're stuck on Tuesday. Our special today is—

MOM: I don't care what *today* is. I want Thursday and I want a roast.

JORDAN: "Just the way you want it" does not include time travel.

MOM: Then I'm going to camp out here until I get my roast. *(SHE sits somewhere inconvenient, perhaps pulling up a chair right in front of the counter.)*

JORDAN: No you're not. *(moves the chair, with MOM in it)*

DAD: Yes she is. You should have seen her waiting for Matchbox 20 tickets.

HAILEY: You listen to Matchbox 20?

MOM: *(trying to be cool)* Love 'em! They're the bomb.

HAILEY: *(that's so '90s!)* You're old.

MOM: You're impetuous.

HAILEY: You're archaic.

MOM: *(getting up)* You're sanctimonious!

HAILEY: I don't even know what that means. *(self-assured)* I can't be it if I can't define it.

MOM: I was Matchbox 20's biggest fan. I waited in line from January through June to get front row seats.

DAD: We didn't see her for six months. *(musing)* The happiest days of my life.

MOM: *(sits down again, in front of the counter)* I want a roast! Now!

CHILD 1: *(sits down as well, imitating MOM)* I want a milkshake! Now!

DAD: That's "I want a milkshake now, please!"

(CHILD 2 sits down and if there is room on stage, they are all at different tables or parts of the diner.)

CHILD 2: I want a hamburger! With noodles on it. And I want it now!

MOM: *(shouting to him)* Noodles on a burger! No wonder they make fun of you at school!

DAD: If you don't all pipe down, I'm going to turn you right around and make everyone go home! Now!

MOM: I'm ready to go anyway. Come on, let's go somewhere else. (to JORDAN, loudly) It's too loud in here!

CHILD 1: And we can't get anything we want.

CHILD 2: Liar!

JORDAN: (sweetly) Thank you for coming in!

MOM: (ever so sweet) See you Thursday! (the family exits, loudly)

(After THEY recover, JORDAN is putting some chairs back where they belong, looking to VANESSA and HAILEY for help, so THEY finally move a couple things back to the right places.)

VANESSA: You need to find a slogan you can make good on.

CUSTOMER #2: Am I ever going to get my refill?

VANESSA: What do you think?

CUSTOMER #2: With all this salt I need something sweet to wash it down. I want to send this back to the kitchen!

HAILEY: Have you seen the cook? I wouldn't do that.

JORDAN: (lost in thought, at the counter) I've got it!

VANESSA: Whatever. It's always more work for me.

JORDAN: More work is something you might try on occasion.

HAILEY: What this time?

JORDAN: "We treat every meal as if it's your last."

HAILEY: I don't think that'll work.

JORDAN: You need to have a more positive attitude.

HAILEY: As I've explained previously, attitude and salary go hand in hand. Restaurants pay us \$3 an hour if we're lucky, treat us like we're chimney sweeps in a Dickens novel and we're supposed to be thankful. What, in these United States of America, can I do with three dollars an hour? I burn through at least that much just sitting in one place doing nothing.

JORDAN: If I could afford to pay you more, I'd fire you and hire someone who deserves a better wage.

VANESSA: (musing) I never understood that. "Live each day as if it's your last." You know what I'd do on my last day? (SHE gets a burst of energy!) Spend all my money. Blow off my homework. Tell my mom (to JORDAN like he's her mom) "You take out the trash, you do the dishes, and (shouts) turn down that stupid Fleetwood Mac!" I'd tell the biology teacher to go stuff it up a test tube, and I'd tell the math teacher to . . . Oops. (laughs) I already did. You know what? I wouldn't tell them anything, because I'd skip school. Oh, and I'd make out with Corey Chambers, even though he's dating my best friend. Point being, I'd get whooped, and it *would* be my last day on earth. So unless you're convinced these people will never eat here again, I'd think twice.

JORDAN: Maybe, but we could get away with the trans-fats. Look, Vanessa, nobody else thinks the way you do.

VANESSA: I'm thinking outside the box.

JORDAN: Maybe you should get back in it and think like normal productive people.

VANESSA: Excuse me for having my own mind. Everyone wants me to think for myself until I actually start doing it. Then it's "where did you ever come up with that?" If you're going to give me educational tools, don't be upset when I start to implement and facilitate.

CUSTOMER: Can someone implement and facilitate my refill?

HAILEY: Oh, are you still here? Hee hee. Sorry.

CUSTOMER: So?

HAILEY: So, what?

CUSTOMER: (*pointing to his glass*) Refill.

HAILEY: Maybe. I'm not sure what our current philosophy is. If it's "just like family," then you're on your own. If it's "like mama used to make," well, mama never made carbonated beverages, though she drank several in the alcoholic realm. If it's "just the way you want it," I'll never meet your exacting standards, and if it's "like your last meal," then you deserve something much more expensive, and on the house.

CUSTOMER: So you have an excuse for every mission statement.

HAILEY: Basically. (*looking off stage*) Oh, this should be fun.

(*Enter DEREK with two OFFICERS, DEREK is in cuffs and also in leg irons, if desired*)

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