



Sample Pages from
The Hope and Heartache Diner - One Act
Version

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THE HOPE AND HEARTACHE DINER

—ONE ACT VERSION—

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



The Hope and Heartache Diner - One Act Version
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Cast of Characters

5W 4M + 7 Either

FELIX BROWN: (17) A teen with a big imagination, a big heart, but also a little self-centred. Can be male or female.

SAM BROWN: (53) Felix' dad. Loves to feed people. He solves problems with food. Married to...

NELL BROWN: (45) (Nelka Rolek) Nell is practical, stern but filled with love.

LOO BROWN: (19) Lucja (Lubomir if male). Loo is confident and knows what she wants. Can be male or female.

WIKI BROWN: (15) Wikoria. Timid. Loud places scare her. She bakes and is home schooled.

RAT: (19) Rat is rough around the edges, to the point that violence is always just under the surface. But she's working on it. She has plans for the future. Can be male or female.

MISSION: (17) Mission is a southern belle with an unstable past. In the present she is bright and bubbly. But don't cross her.

EARL, BETTY, FELIX SR: Felix's great-grandparents, and grandfather. They are ghosts and purposefully look as they did as teenagers. Earl is a jokester. Betty is a sweetheart with smarts. Felix Sr. was a ladies man as a teen, married once and never again after his wife died young. He and Felix were together every day of Felix' life. He is the source for all of Felix' stories.

The DINERS: Use these characters to populate the world of the diner. Have them enter and exit, place orders, put them in tableaux. They are the atmosphere. The DINERS also play: **HAMIL, MS. BRONSTEIN, ERIC, MAUDE** (if genders are switched use HAZEL, MR. BRONSTEIN, ERICA, MELVIN), **DONNIE (M), REBECCA (W).**

Costume Notes

FELIX: A typical teen. Jeans, sneakers, hoodie.

SAM, NELL, WIKI, MISSION, LOO, RAT all wear a variation of a diner uniform. For example, khakis, blue button down shirts, and aprons. A t-shirt with the diner name on it. The uniforms are personalized to suit the character.

BETTY, EARL and FELIX SR wear black and gray. They dress in a 50's style. Felix Sr. wears a letter jacket and Converse sneakers. Betty wears pedal pushers and flats. Earl wears a bowling shirt.

Set Notes

The set is an old style diner. It should be representational rather than realistic. Think *Our Town*. Use plates and cups but no liquid or real food. There are tables downstage right and left with a counter across the upstage with stools. Everything is lovingly worn. The chairs are covered with duct tape. The paint is peeling. If you have red vinyl booths all the better.

Lighting Notes

You're going to want two lighting looks: one for the present, and one for flashbacks. One option is a warm wash for the present, cool wash for the past. Another is to use a cyc backdrop to accommodate this change in looks.

Flow Notes

This play moves quickly between present and flashback. There are no costume or set changes, it just happens.

In the original production Felix clapped to signal moving into and out of the flashbacks. The important thing is that there is no pause or blackout between past and present. **The two are fluid like water.** If characters are in a past scene and are onstage during a transition to the present, they simply and quickly walk off.

The Hope and Heartache Diner (One Act Version) was first performed at the Kentucky Thespian Festival on October 24th, 2015 by the Rose Curtain Players of Owensboro High School (Owensboro, KY) with the following cast:

Stew: Austin Adams
Avery: Brie Alsip
Donnie: Conner Elliott
Ms. Bronstein: Kyla Isbell
Rebecca: Autumn Stolle
Hamil: Sam Ward
Rat: Hayden Elliott
Mission: Savanna Hinchcliffe
Sam: Forest Clark
Wiki: Lucy Decker
Felix, Sr.: J Tucker Greer
Nell: Cheyenne Harbison
Betty: Kennedy McCollam
Loo: Abby North
Earl: Cory Storm
Felix: Carter Stovall

Production Team

Director: Carolyn Cork Greer
Stage Manager: Alyssa Shelton
Assistant Director: Anna Leigh Thompson
Lighting Design: Joe Lewis
Sound Design: Easton Reynolds
Set Design/Construction: Dave Walker

Music plays. Lights come up and the DINERS are in tableaux. Talking, drinking coffee, forks in mid air. Big gestures, big smiles, energy captured in a moment.

The lights flicker and now everything explodes into action. Everyone is moving, talking all at once, talking to each other. It rises to a peak and then everyone freezes.

FELIX steps forward.

FELIX: This is Duke's Diner. *(gesturing)* Booths are here. Counter there. It's small but not cramped. Stack of coffee cups here. Apple pie there. The place needs a coat of paint. A coat of everything - the booths are more duct tape than vinyl. I've been here every day of my life. Whether I like it or not. *(shrugs)* Family business. But this is my last day. *(realizing)* This is my last day.

Upbeat music plays and everyone transitions into another pose. BETTY & EARL move forward.

FELIX: Duke's has been around forever. My great grandparents met here.

BETTY: Pal, you couldn't cook my Christmas dinner.

EARL: Oh yeah? Says who?

BETTY: Once a fry cook, always a fry cook.

EARL: Oh yeah? Well doll, you're just a waitress.

BETTY: *You're all wet.*

EARL: *You couldn't work the fryer for five minutes.*

BETTY: *You couldn't handle the customers for five seconds.*

EARL: I hate talking to customers.

BETTY: Yeah. *(beat, with a smile - finally something in common)* So do I.

RAT runs on, brandishing a frying pan ripping a hole right through the atmosphere.

RAT: WHOAREYOUWHATAREYOU DOING HERE!

EVERYONE: AGH!

Everyone hits the ground. Music shuts off. Lights change. RAT and FELIX are left standing.

FELIX: What are you doing?

RAT: What are *you* doing?

FELIX: Having a heart attack. You scared the crap out of me.

RAT: You? I saw the light on and thought we had been robbed. What are you doing here?

FELIX: *(like an announcement)* I'm doing the full run for my last day.

RAT: *(and she doesn't care)* If you're gonna be here, you better do something.

FELIX: *(to audience)* She's a little cranky before coffee.

RAT: Did you start the coffee?

FELIX: I've been busy.

RAT: *(yelling as she exits)* Those tables better be spotless today.

FELIX: I'm on it! She messed with my flow.

All the DINERS slowly get up and exit. Throughout the play, feel free to have these characters enter, exit, sit in tableaux, place orders. They are part of the atmosphere of the diner.

FELIX: Ok, this is Duke's Diner, no one knows who Duke is. I'm Felix - Hey, hi! I never said. Today I'm doing the full run. Doors open at 6 am and shut at 2 am. It's a tradition. It *was* a tradition. My grandpa did the full run every year at the end of summer.

BETTY: We're not going to get into *that* are we?

EARL: His head is big enough.

FELIX SR: Hey! Let the girl alone. If she wants to admire me, who's to argue?

FELIX: *(introducing)* Grandpa, Great Grandpa, Great Grandma. They're dead.

EARL: What? Nobody told me. How come nobody told me?

BETTY: *(swatting him)* Earl.

FELIX: They hang out with me. I know, It's weird. Just go with it.

BETTY: Felix dear, aren't you picturing us a little young? *(primping)* I'm not complaining mind you -

EARL: Sounds like you're complaining.

FELIX: (*gesturing to the audience*) I want them to see you at your best.

FELIX SR: I'm not complaining. I look good.

EARL: Head...swelling...

FELIX SR: (*wry*) Thanks pop.

BETTY: Is this really how you want to spend your time? Aren't you supposed to be packing?

FELIX: Later. (*to audience*) I want you to see Duke's how I see it.

FELIX SR: You mean how I see it.

BETTY: You mean how you exaggerate it.

EARL & FELIX SR & FELIX: (*all with the same gesture*) Details.

SAM enters.

SAM: Felix! What are you doing here?

FELIX: Hey Pop.

SAM: Why aren't you at home? Your mother'll have a fit if she finds out you're not at home.

FELIX: I'm doing the full run today.

SAM: I better call her. You're supposed to be packing. Did you eat?

FELIX: No.

SAM: Did you leave a note for your mother?

FELIX: I...forgot.

SAM: Uh huh. I better call her. Mornin' Rat.

RAT: Morning Sam. (*to FELIX*) Stop standing around. (*she throws a dishcloth at FELIX*)

BETTY, EARL and FELIX SR shake their heads and make disapproving noises.

FELIX: What?

BETTY: You didn't leave a note for your mother?

FELIX SR: She's going to kill you.

FELIX: I forgot.

FELIX SR: Get ready for impending doom.

EARL: Stop scaring the girl.

FELIX SR: She should be scared. Nell scares me.

FELIX: Moving on...Pop does 6 am to one. Ma, noon to 7. My sister Loo does nights. My other sister Wiki, does all the baking. Yes, those are their names. (*like Count Dracula*) Lucja and Wiktoria, good polish names from my mother's family.

BETTY: Your mother doesn't like it when you say your sisters' names like that.

FELIX: (*like Count Dracula*) I can't help it. Weird names. Weird voice.

FELIX SR: What are you talking about? You got a great name.

RAT: Doors opening.

SAM: Doors opening.

FELIX: Doors opening! The morning shift. The morning rush. Everyone starts the day on the same page at the same time. (*bell rings*) We're open!

HAMIL: (*entering*) I know, Felix. Why are you here?

FELIX: I'm doing the full run.

HAMIL: Why?

FELIX: It's my last day, gotta do it up right.

HAMIL: Oh yes, off to the fancy writing school. Ooooh.

FELIX: (*embarrassed*) Yeah, yeah.

RAT: (*setting down a coffee*) Is she bugging you?

HAMIL: Nah.

RAT: Tables, Felix. (*the doorbell rings*) Morning Ms. Bronstein.

MS. BRONSTEIN: Garbage on the street. Garbage on the sidewalk, we're going to hell.

RAT: (*setting down a coffee*) Decaf Ms. Bronstein. (*to FELIX*) You're dead, by the way.

FELIX: Huh?

RAT: Your mom is beyond mad.

FELIX: Pop called her?

RAT: She's coming down.

FELIX: Before her shift?

RAT: You got any last requests, let me know.

BETTY: Should've left a note.

FELIX: It'll be fine. All families fight. Our family's just like every other family. Except our fights happen in the middle of the diner. That's where my parents are. If you want to fight with them, or they want to fight with you, it happens right here.

SAM enters with LOO following. NELL casually enters behind. This is the past.

SAM: You're going to college (*note: or university*) and that's final.

LOO: I don't want to go to college.

SAM: You're going to college. I'm your father and I'm telling you, you're going to college.

LOO: But I don't know what I want to be. Why would I waste your money on a useless degree?

SAM: Don't you worry about wasting our money. It's our money. If we want to fling it off the Empire State Building, we'll do it.

NELL: We're not flinging money off the Empire State Building.

SAM: We're not flinging money off the Empire State Building, but we could.

LOO: I want to bring back the night shift.

SAM: What?

LOO: That's what I want to do.

SAM: Let me make you a sandwich. (*he walks over to the kitchen*)

LOO: Pop. (*following him*) I know how to do every job. I know how to keep the dishwasher from flooding. I know the right spot to hit on the furnace, I know how to order inventory - Pop!

SAM: (*to NELL*) Did she talk this over with you?

NELL: She did.

SAM: And?

NELL: (*smiles at LOO*) She knows a lot.

SAM: Knowing is different than being the boss.

*There is the sound of door slam. We're back to reality.
LOO and SAM exit.*

FELIX SR: I can't watch.

NELL moves slowly forward.

FELIX: Hey Ma. I'm sorry -

*NELL holds up a finger to stop FELIX from talking.
There is a moment of silence.*

FELIX: I just wanted to say I'm sorry I forgot -

*NELL holds up a finger to stop FELIX from talking.
There is a moment of silence.*

FELIX: If you want to yell at me, go ahead. I deserve it.

NELL: Want to yell at you? Do you think I enjoy yelling? You think that is something I enjoy?

FELIX: Well if you don't want to yell at -

NELL: Oh I want to yell at you. I want to yell at you. (*turning, changing tone completely*) Ms. Bronstein, how are you?

MS. BRONSTEIN: We're all going to hell.

NELL: That's nice. (*she turns back and stares at FELIX*)

EARL: She's toast.

BETTY: Shh!

NELL: Why did you leave the house without telling me? Hmm? Did you want me to walk into your room and freak out? Is that what you wanted?

FELIX: I was excited. I'm doing the full run. (*NELL stares*) I thought... since it's my last day...you know like grandpa used to do?

NELL: I have to drag you here kicking and screaming and today you're excited? Today is the day you decide to care? Is today the day you're going to do something right around here? Have you even wiped the tables yet?

BETTY: Should have wrote a note.

FELIX: Geez ma. That's harsh. (*moment of silence*) Which you're totally entitled to. Go ahead.

NELL: We're going to have a conversation. A family meeting.

FELIX: Now? Here?

NELL: Of course not now, your father's in the middle of morning rush. We have things to say to you. (*exits*)

FELIX: Ok. That went well. Did that go well? And I do too care about the diner. Would I be doing the full run if I didn't care about the diner?

FELIX SR: Is that why you're doing it?

FELIX: Sure. Of course. Where was I? (*she gives brief look to where NELL went*) Ok. You know how some people pick up stray pets? Cats and dogs just follow them home? Duke's picks up stray people. (*WIKI enters with a pie plate. She waves at FELIX.*) My sister does. Wiki. She started sending them into the night shift, I guess, three years ago.

RAT has moved to the entry. This is now the past, her first time entering the diner.

LOO: Can I help you?

RAT: (*defensive*) She said I could come.

LOO: Who?

RAT: Uh, kid with the weird name. She said, uh, I can't - Wili, Wiblee...

LOO: Wiki.

RAT: Yeah. That's it. She said I could come.

LOO: She did?

RAT: Forget it, I knew this wouldn't work. (*turns to go*)

LOO: Hang on. We're not done yet. She talked to you? Where?

RAT: The library.

LOO: Ok...

RAT: What, I don't look smart enough to go to a library?

LOO: You want coffee? On the house.

RAT: *(beat)* Ok.

LOO: *(she puts the cup down)* My sister doesn't talk. Much.

WIKI sits beside RAT.

RAT: Why?

LOO: The world is a loud place. Loud places worry her.

RAT: She talked to me.

RAT turns to talk to WIKI. They are instantly in the library.

WIKI: Wha - wha - What's the best word?

RAT: *(turning to talk to her)* Huh?

She takes a deep breath before she speaks. Speaking is hard for WIKI.

WIKI: I've seen you. You read...the dictionary.

RAT: You spying on me? You're with the library police or something?
(WIKI shrinks and covers her ears) Whoa. Sorry. Habit.

WIKI: You like to read.

RAT: This is a good hiding spot.

WIKI: The best.

RAT: Don't you go to school? *(WIKI shakes her head)* Me either. *(beat)*
There is no such thing as the best word. I love them all. But today
I found the word mendacity. Mendacity is a lie, something untrue.

WIKI: Menda City. City of lies.

RAT: *(seeing that WIKI gets it)* Yeah.

WIKI: Yeah.

RAT turns to back to LOO. WIKI exits.

RAT: She said...she said you might be, you sometimes look...for people.

LOO: My counter waitress just flaked off, you ever done that before?

RAT: I knew this wouldn't work. I knew this was totally -

LOO: Get out of my throat would ya! I asked a question.

RAT: And I'm gonna say, "No I don't have any experience" and you're gonna show me the door.

LOO: Wow you can see the future too? You are talented.

RAT: Don't make fun of me.

LOO: Wiki talked to you. That makes you special. Do you need a place to stay?

RAT: I got places.

LOO: There's aprons in the back, a shower too. Then we'll get started.

RAT: What if I'm a terrible waitress?

LOO: What if you are? You'll learn. What's your name?

RAT: Rat. Got a problem with that?

LOO: I'll have a nametag made up.

They exit. As EARL and BETTY talk, DINERS enter and pose in pairs (couples) around the space. NOTE: If RAT is a boy, swap EARL and BETTY's lines.

EARL: That Rat. Whatta doll.

BETTY: Are you in love with her?

EARL: How could I be? I have you.

BETTY: Fry Cook.

EARL: Waitress.

FELIX: Diners are all about relationships. (*indicating a couple*) The couples who barely talk, they just stare at their coffee cups.

BETTY: (*indicating a couple*) The couples who can't stop talking.

FELIX: The couples who don't say a word, they just stare at each other.

FELIX SR: I'm gonna lose my lunch.

EARL: The lunch you ate in, what? 2010? That's some long lasting pot roast.

FELIX: (*to the audience*) I got a great diner story for you. This one has love written all over it.

REBECCA enters the diner. She has her hands jammed in her pocket and her head down low. She slumps into

a seat. MISSION crosses to her, taking out a pen and pad.

MISSION: Hey honey, what a nice surprise. Don't usually see you on the weekend.

REBECCA: *(with a big sigh)* Hey.

MISSION: That was a big sigh. Wiki made some cherry pie, you want some? *(catching on)* Ohhhhhh.

REBECCA: Yeah.

MISSION: Saturday.

REBECCA: Yeah...

MISSION: Home fries or coffee?

REBECCA: Coffee.

MISSION: Just coffee? *(REBECCA slumps)* That's too bad.

REBECCA: I thought he was the one.

MISSION: What happened?

REBECCA: Short socks. He wouldn't stop wearing short socks. With pants. You could see his ankle.

MISSION: That's...weird? I guess that's weird.

REBECCA: I couldn't get over it. *(beat)* You think I'm picky.

MISSION: I didn't say anything.

REBECCA: Why should I stare at a man's ankles when I don't want to? Huh? Male ankles are not attractive.

MISSION: You want anything before he comes?

REBECCA: The last three months of my life back.

MISSION: I'll work on it. *(she turns away)*

DONNIE enters with great trepidation. He takes one step in and stops.

MISSION: Hey...Donnie.

DONNIE: *(he doesn't move)* Hi. *(he gestures frantically for MISSION to come closer)* Has a short blonde girl with purple glasses and perhaps an air of anticipation been in here?

MISSION: Not to my knowledge.

DONNIE: Maybe you missed her?

MISSION: I don't miss much.

DONNIE: I should ask Nell.

NELL: (*approaching*) Ask Nell what?

DONNIE: Has a short blonde girl with purple glasses and perhaps an air of anticipation been in here?

NELL: I haven't seen anyone like that.

DONNIE: I didn't miss her. I'm ok. I'm ok. (*he takes a deep breath*) I need to make a reservation.

NELL: It's a diner.

DONNIE: I know.

MISSION: We're not big on reservations.

DONNIE: I wondered if you could make an exception. I brought some props.

NELL: For lunch?

DONNIE: (*showing a plastic bag*) I got a tablecloth, a vase, a flower.

MISSION: It's plastic.

DONNIE: Does it look bad?

MISSION: It doesn't look real.

DONNIE: Does it look real from a distance?

MISSION: Do you plan on putting your date at another table?

DONNIE: I don't want to jinx this. I asked Alexis Dudley out.

MISSION: You did? Congratulations!

NELL: Alexis Dudley?

MISSION: Short blonde girl, purple glasses, air of anticipation. (*to DONNIE*) How long did that take? Three months?

DONNIE: Six.

MISSION: I love asking out stories. (*leaning in*) How did it happen?

DONNIE: I ran her over.

MISSION: (*leaning back*) In a car?

DONNIE: No! (*as if this is obvious*) With my feet!

NELL: Why did you run over Alexis Dudley?

DONNIE: I wasn't trying to. I was running from Jeff Kroger, turned the corner and (*he slams his hands together*) Alexis and I made contact.

MISSION: Awwwwwww, I mean, ouch.

DONNIE: Books everywhere...papers flying...we're both sprawled out on the floor...Jeff takes one look at me and he's laughing so hard he forgets to turn me into a pretzel. And I'm so...happy, I forget who I am! I turned to Alexis and said "Will you go out with me?"

MISSION: And what did she say?

DONNIE: "Are there supposed to be two of you?"

MISSION: Oh dear.

DONNIE: But then she said "sure."

MISSION: Sure?

REBECCA: Oh, oh. (*MISSION shoots her a look*)

DONNIE: It was the best moment of my life! I can't believe I waited so long and now I'm thinking, what was I worried about? What was the big deal? It went great! It went...what?

MISSION: Hmm?

DONNIE: What's the matter? You look funny.

MISSION: Nothing. Why would there be anything wrong? I am merely rejoicing in how happy you are. I'm so happy for you. Let's get this date going!

DONNIE: What's wrong? Give it to me straight - come on, Mission.

REBECCA: Yeah Mission.

MISSION: (*to REBECCA*) You shush! (*to DONNIE*) Well, I just...a sure is not exactly the same thing as a yes.

DONNIE: It's not? Sure it is.

MISSION: It can be. Most definitely it can be. It is positive. But...it's a maybe. It's a yes for right now. It's a yes unless...

DONNIE: Unless what?

MISSION: It's a yes unless...*(she winces)* something better comes along.

DONNIE: She's going to stand me up. She's not coming. *(starts to breathe rapidly)* I need my inhaler.

MISSION: Donnie don't you dare pass out. What if she walks in and you're flat out on the floor?

DONNIE: Who am I kidding? She is not walking in. She's been "suring" me every step of the way. Do you want to go out? "Sure." Can I have your number? "Sure." Can I take you to my favourite place? "Sure."

NELL: Duke's is your favourite? That's so sweet.

DONNIE: It doesn't matter now, does it? Who cares that I've always wanted to take a first date here. Who cares that I've thought about sitting across from the girl of my dreams, sharing a plate of home fries. It has to be home fries. Home fries are so warm, so homey. Home fries are filled with love.

REBECCA: Exactly! Amen to home fries!

MISSION: Becky, don't excite him.

DONNIE: And maybe our hands touch reaching for the same fry. She giggles, pulling her hand away. I say, no - you take the fry. I hold it out for her to bite into and everything stops. All time stops. She smiles. She takes a bite. The world resumes. We are in love.

REBECCA: *(leaping up!)* I want home fries! I want them all day every day, to hell with coffee. *(she grabs DONNIE by the face)* Don't you lose sight of that fry. You hear me? Hold on to the home fry with everything you've got. Hold on to love. Promise me you'll never let go of the fry!

DONNIE: Can I have my face back?

REBECCA: *(letting go, and turning to the window)* Maybe she "sured" you. Maybe. But maybe she's shy. Maybe she's late because she's thinking about all the great things that might happen on this date and - *(seeing something out the window)* Hold the phone!

MISSION: What?

REBECCA: *(dragging DONNIE to the window)* Short blonde! Short blonde!

DONNIE: Where?

REBECCA: Look! Purple glasses...Air of anticipation...

DONNIE: She's here?

NELL: She's here!

MISSION: Oh Donnie, she's here.

REBECCA: She looks nervous. But excited.

DONNIE: Excited? I'm not ready. I'm not ready! Where's my inhaler? I don't have a reservation!

MISSION: All hands on deck! Rebecca help Donnie with that tablecloth.

REBECCA: Roger!

MISSION: Wiki! A big plate of home fries and make it snappy!

Everyone cheers and then freezes in place. NELL moves forward.

NELL: It's time for the family meeting. Get ready. *(she turns and freezes)*

FELIX SR: Oh, oh...

FELIX: *(a little distracted)* So. I...uh...I wasn't finished showing you around the place. There's a couple of booths. I said that before. Stools at the counter. Red vinyl...

EARL: She's stalling. You're stalling.

BETTY: Hush Earl.

SAM, MISSION and RAT enter. NELL turns to FELIX.

BETTY: Maybe it won't be as bad as you think.

FELIX: Maybe it'll be worse.

NELL: Sit.

FELIX sits.

SAM: *(aside)* You want a soda?

NELL: *(she holds up a finger to SAM but talks to FELIX)* So. What was this today?

FELIX: I'm doing the full run.

NELL: What is she talking about? I don't know what she's talking about.

FELIX: Grampa did it.

SAM: My dad used to do it when he was young.

NELL: Oh. Yes.

FELIX SR: She hates me.

BETTY: Hush.

SAM: Every year at the end of summer, open to close.

FELIX: He talked about it all the time.

NELL: He talked about a lot of things.

FELIX SR: She's always hated me.

BETTY: She wasn't charmed by you. There's a difference.

FELIX SR: Whose side are you on?

NELL: And what have you done during this full run? Are you just hanging around? Are you helping?

FELIX: I...help...

RAT: You can't even say it with a straight face.

FELIX: I help.

NELL: You don't.

FELIX: All right, all right I get it. I'm a horrible human.

NELL: Don't be overdramatic. No one said anything about who you are as a human.

RAT: I'm going to. You're a horrible human.

FELIX: Why is Rat at the family meeting?

RAT: You have one job. Wipe the tables. That's it! You just waltz in whenever, maybe you lift a finger, maybe you don't.

FELIX: Well you won't have to worry about me being around to ruin your day much longer. I can't wait to get out of here. I'm out! I'm glad I'm going and I don't have to look at your stupid faces anymore. Your sorry sad faces.

NELL: Good.

FELIX: What? I just said I'm glad I'm leaving and that's good?

NELL: Your father and I are selling the diner.

This is big news.

FELIX: What?

FELIX SR: What?

EARL & BETTY: What?

SAM: I thought we were easing into this.

FELIX: The diner? Selling?

EARL: I can't believe it. Duke's is family.

BETTY: Duke's is tradition.

FELIX: Where is everybody going to go?

SAM: Other places.

FELIX: Ok, Ok, what about Wiki?

NELL: She wants to go to school and be a pastry chef.

FELIX: What? (*WIKI nods*) How?

MISSION: I'm going with her. I will proudly act as Wiki's personal spokesperson and loudness adjustor.

FELIX: Ok, What about Loo? And Rat?

SAM: Rat and Loo want to open their own place.

RAT: One day we do.

SAM: When is one day? You're ready. Do it now.

FELIX: Why didn't I know about this? Nobody tells me anything.

RAT: You never listen. There's a difference.

As FELIX starts to yell, WIKI cowers and puts her hands over her ears.

FELIX: You're ruining my life. Where am I supposed to go at Thanksgiving or Christmas? You never think about me! You never think about what I want and what my -

WIKI: STOP! NOW! I MEAN IT!

Everyone freezes.

EARL: What was that?

FELIX SR: A Christmas miracle.

BETTY: It's not Christmas.

FELIX SR: Wiki was never good with dates.

Everyone unfreezes and rushes to WIKI.

LOO: Are you ok?

NELL: Do you want some water?

SAM: Do you want a sandwich?

WIKI: I am going to France. That's where I have to go to be the best baker in the whole world. I am so scared, but I'm going. I know... *(she looks around)* It's not...I'm not...*(she takes a deep breath)* My ears work. I hear what people say. Weird Wiki. And I am. But because being weird is not a disease. And you know who taught me that? *(pointing at her parents)* You know who didn't force me to speak? Didn't force me to go to school? They listened to me. They listened to Loo. *(right at FELIX)* And they listened to you. They're ALWAYS listening to you! But you can't see it. You won't see it. You're so - so - agh! *(she storms into the kitchen)*

SAM: I think we're done. Are we done? Good. I need a milkshake. Anyone need a milkshake? No? Right.

They exit. Music plays and the DINERS slowly move about the diner. Everything is in slow motion as they order cups of coffee, and talk in low voices. BETTY, EARL and FELIX SR come to sit around FELIX, who since WIKI's speech hasn't stopped staring into space.

FELIX SR: *(snapping a finger in front of her face)* Felix? Felix.

EARL: She's in mental Siberia.

BETTY: Stop. Felix, you gotta snap out of this. You're in the middle of something.

FELIX SR: You're doing the full run. You can't give up now.

FELIX: Wiki yelled at me. They're selling the diner.

FELIX SR: We heard.

EARL: I can't believe it.

BETTY: We worked here our whole lives.

EARL: What did we work for if they're just going to sell it?

FELIX SR: Things change. (*BETTY and EARL look at him*) Don't we want things to change for Felix? Don't we want her to go out and experience the world? The world is bigger than this diner.

EARL: There's nothing wrong with the diner.

FELIX SR: I never said there was. But we never went anywhere. We never saw anything. We chained ourselves to this place and...I don't know. I'll give this to Nell, she doesn't want to end up like us and she doesn't want Felix to end up like us either.

FELIX: What if I'm no good in the world? (*beat*) What if I'm a horrible writer? There won't be anything to...come back to. How will I talk to you guys?

FELIX SR: This is not your life. You can't let us be your life.

LOO: (*entering*) Felix. Felix!

FELIX: Huh?

LOO: You want some pie?

FELIX: No thanks.

LOO: You gonna pout all night?

FELIX: Maybe.

LOO: So you're really going to do the full run. Like Grandpa did?

FELIX: I guess. Who cares?

LOO: I thought you did.

FELIX: Yeah well. It doesn't matter, does it. Everyone's leaving.

LOO: Yeah. 'Cause *you* are. We waited for you. What do you want Felix, a freaking parade?

FELIX: Maybe. (*sighing*) I don't know.

RAT: (*approaching*) Hey Loo, the dishwasher's broken again.

LOO: Of course it is.

FELIX: (*to RAT*) What are you doing here?

RAT: You never pay attention do you?

LOO: Oh leave her. It's been a rough day. Rat's doing nights in the kitchen for practice.

FELIX: But you do mornings. That's...a lot of work.

RAT: (*dripping with sarcasm*) Really? You mean magic fairies don't give you everything?

LOO: I got an idea. (*to FELIX*) You want things to stay the same? (*she pins her name tag on her*) You're in charge. There. You're Loo. You're the manager.

FELIX: What?

LOO: I'm going into the kitchen to work on the dishwasher. You're going to run the diner. See what it's really like.

FELIX: But - but...

LOO: Anyone asks for me, you deal with it. You do the cash, you take the orders. Ok? (*she moves upstage*)

FELIX: But I've never - I don't know how to do those things.

RAT: I'll try not to laugh too loud. (*moving upstage*)

FELIX: I can do this. How hard can it be? It can't be that hard. Can it?

EARL: Don't look at us.

BETTY: Go Felix!

ERIC (a customer) enters and sits.

FELIX: Oh crap. (*in a high voice*) What can I - (*clears throat*) What can I get for you? Coffee?

ERIC: Coffee.

FELIX: Coming right up. (*looks around*) Where is the coffee...Ah! There it is. (*she slowly gets a cup and slowly pours the coffee*)

ERIC: I don't have all night kid.

FELIX: Here you go. Cream and sugar on the counter.

ERIC: Where's Loo?

FELIX: She's not here tonight. I am Loo.

ERIC: You're Loo.



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