

Mama Vera's Diner
by Bryce Beattie
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Cast of characters:

Jerry: 40's. Outgoing and friendly.

Dean: Early 20's. Very unsure of himself.

Vera: 60's. Southern accent. Prone to instant mood swings. Mysterious and a little creepy.

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And I would appreciate a recording of your performance.

Any questions? Contact me runamuck40 "at" gmail.com.

Thanks,

Bryce Beattie

Mama Vera's Diner

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MUSIC UP AND UNDER

JERRY Another three day training seminar ended and I was finally on my way home. I hated teaching those things, and I hated being away from my family. I really hated driving long distances, and this time I was twelve hours into a fourteen hour drive. Come to think of it, the exit sign didn't even have a number on it. However, the billboard right after it said "Mama Vera's Diner, exit now." I needed a rest, and I needed food, so I turned off the interstate. And with that simple choice, one of the most bizarre experiences of my life began.

MUSIC OUT

FX RESTAURANT DOOR JINGLES OPEN AND CLOSES.

VERA Welcome to Mama Vera's, stranger. I'm Mama Vera, and I'll take care of y'all today. You by your lonesome this evening?

JERRY As a matter of fact, I am.

VERA Well, just sit on down here at the counter. You can take a look at the menu if you want, but *your* special today is the vegetable pasta.

JERRY Sounds great, but I think I'll go with something my wife wouldn't normally let me have. Do you serve some kind of steak?

VERA Best sirloin in the state. It's been marinated in my secret garlic sauce for at least eight hours. Comes with a salad and your choice of potato. But that special's pretty good, too.

1 JERRY Sure, sure. [THINKS] I think I'll go ahead with that
2 sirloin, medium rare, please.
3

4 VERA [SUDDENLY SCOLDING, BUT NOT YELLING]
5 Mama Vera knows what's best for you. You sure you
6 don't want the vegetable pasta?
7

8 JERRY [A LITTLE ANNOYED] I'm sure I want the steak.
9 Medium rare. With french fries. Ranch on the salad.
10

11 VERA [BACK TO HER NORMAL] Steak it is.
12

13 FX RESTAURANT DOOR JINGLES OPEN, THEN
14 CLOSES.
15

16 DEAN Brrr. It's cold out there.
17

18 VERA Welcome to Mama Vera's. Why don't y'all sit next to this
19 fella so you can keep each other company?
20

21 DEAN [CONFUSED] Oh, uh, yea. OK.
22

23 VERA You want to see a menu?
24

25 DEAN Well, what do you have that's good?
26

27 VERA [CHUCKLES] Everything I've got is good, boy. But for
28 you I'd suggest the sirloin steak.
29

30 DEAN Um, well, actually I'm a vegetarian.
31

32 VERA A what?
33

34 DEAN [CONFUSED AGAIN] You really don't... It's like...
35 [STONGER] I don't eat meat.
36

37 VERA I know what a vegetarian is. I was just surprised someone
38 as skinny as you'd want to be one.
39

40 DEAN Actually there are many positive...

1 VERA [SERIOUSLY] Take a good look at me.
2
3 DEAN What?
4
5 VERA Take a good look at me... Do I look like I want to get
6 lectured?
7
8 DEAN Not really.
9
10 VERA Mama Vera knows what's best for you. You sure you
11 don't want the sirloin?
12
13 DEAN [IRRITATED] I'm sure.
14
15 VERA [NICE AGAIN] We'll I'll just bring you a big plate of my
16 vegetable pasta. That sound good?
17
18 DEAN Yes.
19
20 VERA Comes with a salad, too. What do you want on it?
21
22 DEAN Do you have some kind of Italian?
23
24 VERA I sure do. All right. Y'all's orders will be up in a bit.
25 [FADES AS MAMA LEAVES] I swear, everybody's got
26 to try it their own way first. Why can't they just believe
27 me...
28
29 JERRY That was weird.
30
31 DEAN If I wasn't so hungry I'd walk right out.
32
33 JERRY It happened to me, too.
34
35 DEAN Really? [PAUSES] You're a vegetarian, too?
36
37 JERRY Actually it was the opposite, just... in the same way.
38
39 DEAN I don't get it.
40

1 JERRY Is she cooking? [PAUSES] OK, well, it went like this. I
2 came in, she told me my special was the vegetable pasta.
3 I told her I wanted steak, and she gave me a hard time.
4 Then you came in.
5

6 DEAN That's just not right.
7

8 JERRY Eating meat? You've got to be kidding...
9

10 DEAN No, no no. Not that. [NERVOUS LAUGH] I'm not one
11 of *those* vegetarians. I'm talking about her treating her
12 customers that way.
13

14 JERRY Oh, I know. But what are you going to do?
15

16 DEAN I wish there was somewhere else to eat close by. I'd
17 totally be out of here. It's just not fair for her to abuse the
18 situation like that.
19

20 JERRY And did you see that dress Mama Vera was wearing? It
21 was like something straight out of the...
22

23 VERA [MUFFLED] You boys better not be talking about me. I
24 ain't never spit in a customer's food yet, but don't make
25 me start today.
26

27 DEAN&JERRY Weird.
28

29 DEAN [SUDDENLY NERVOUS] Uh... um... so...
30

31 JERRY So where you headed?
32

33 DEAN Back to Cali. For the summer.
34

35 JERRY You in school, then?
36

37 DEAN Yeah. Next year I'll finish my business degree.
38

39 JERRY Worthless.
40

1 DEAN My business degree?
2

3 JERRY No, my business degree. Only thing it was useful for was
4 getting me a couple of interviews. Didn't use any of it in
5 the workplace, then I ended up doing training for my
6 company's customer support division.
7

8 DEAN Well, things have probably changed since you were in
9 college, certainly the...
10

11 JERRY Take it easy, friend. I didn't mean to say you're getting a
12 bad education. I'm just saying what I learned in college
13 wasn't as applicable to the real world as I'd hoped.
14

15 DEAN Well, uh, pardon my asking, but like what? What did you
16 learn that wasn't applicable?
17

18 JERRY Well, calculus for one, statistics for another, all four of
19 the upper level accounting classes, psychology 101,
20 microeconomics, macroeconomics, I'm sure you get the
21 picture.
22

23 DEAN But you didn't end up using your degree, I thought you
24 said you do training.
25

26 JERRY Bingo. And now you know why the degree is worthless.
27

28 DEAN But I plan on actually using my degree.
29

30 JERRY I did, too. But that's OK. Everybody needs goals to work
31 for. What'd you say your name was?
32

33 DEAN I don't think I did... Um... It's Dean.
34

35 JERRY Pleasure to meet you Dean. I'm Jerry.
36

37 DEAN Yeah.
38

39 JERRY This is the one part of traveling I like.
40

1 DEAN Yeah... Old-school diners?
2
3 JERRY Meeting new and interesting people.
4
5 DEAN Oh. [PAUSES] What do you mean by "Interesting?"
6
7 JERRY I'm not trying to pick a fight, if that's what you mean.
8 "Interesting" isn't a bad word. [UNDER HIS BREATH]
9 To me, at least.
10
11 DEAN Guess not.
12
13 JERRY Say, I wonder how long Mama Vera's going to take? We
14 are the only customers and all.
15
16 **FX KITCHEN DOOR OPENS**
17
18 VERA Wonder no longer, children. Mama Vera's brought your
19 salads.
20
21 **FX SALADS PLACED ON THE COUNTER. EATING**
22 **SOUNDS**
23
24 JERRY This is great dressing.
25
26 VERA [CHUCKLES] Thank you. [SUDDENLY SERIOUS] I
27 told you Mama Vera knows what's best for you. Your
28 food'll be up in a minute.
29
30 **FX KITCHEN DOOR CLOSES.**
31
32 JERRY She just radiates bizarre, doesn't she? [IMITATING
33 VERA] "Mama Vera knows what's best for you."
34
35 DEAN I... I'd be careful with that if I were you. [QUIETER] I
36 get the feeling she knows what we're talking about.
37
38 JERRY Oh, come on. It's not like she has mystical powers or
39 something.
40

1 DEAN I guess you're right. It's just weird how she knew we were
2 talking about her, and how she answered your question
3 without even hearing you ask it.
4

5 JERRY OK, I'll give you that. Mama Vera is pretty weird... I still
6 don't think we can jump straight to the conclusion that...
7

8 **FX KITCHEN DOOR OPENS**
9

10 JERRY [A LITTLE SHOCKED] That uh... This is the best salad
11 I've had in a long time.
12

13 VERA Oh, don't you worry. I've been called 'weird' lots of times.
14 I just prefer to think of myself as "interesting." Now
15 here's your orders.
16

17 **FX VERA SETS PLATE ON COUNTER**
18

19 VERA Veggie noodles for you.
20

21 JERRY Actually I...
22

23 VERA And the sirloin steak for the young man.
24

25 **FX VERA SETS PLATE ON COUNTER**
26

27 VERA You all enjoy, now.
28

29 JERRY Vera? Actually, I...
30

31 VERA That's "Mama Vera" to you.
32

33 JERRY Sorry, Mama Vera. I actually ordered the sirloin and...
34

35 DEAN I ordered the noodles.
36

37 VERA [SMALL PAUSE] I know. I just thought I'd give you a
38 chance to correct your orderin' mistakes.
39

40 DEAN I'm not sure I...

1 JERRY And I'm pretty sure I want that steak. It looks terrific.
2
3 VERA Oh, it is. It's just not what Mama Vera, [PROUDLY]
4 that's me, thinks you should have.
5
6 DEAN I'm, I'm sorry, uh, Mama Vera, but I just don't eat me...
7
8 VERA You got some kind of medical reason?
9
10 DEAN No.
11
12 VERA Some kind of religious reason?
13
14 DEAN No.
15
16 VERA Moral problem with meat?
17
18 DEAN [STRONGER] No, but I don't think it should even matter
19 why I don't...
20
21 VERA Fine. Just keep in mind Mama Vera gave you a chance
22 and tried to help you two thick skulls out. [SERIOUS]
23 Mama Vera knows what's best. I'll be in the kitchen if
24 you need me.
25
26 **FX** **KITCHEN DOOR OPENS.**
27
28 DEAN I think I offended her.
29
30 JERRY I think we made her mad.
31
32 DEAN That was really...
33
34 JERRY Creepy?
35
36 DEAN Yeah. You want to..
37
38 JERRY Switch? Oh, yeah.
39
40 **FX** **PLATES BEING SWITCHED**

1 DEAN&JERRY This looks great.

2

3 **FX** **EATING SOUNDS**

4

5 JERRY Mmm, this is excellent.

6

7 DEAN Mine too.

8

9 JERRY Really good.

10

11 **MUSIC** **UP/UNDER**

12

13 JERRY It was the best steak I had ever eaten. But as soon as I got
14 done, things really started to get weird.

15

16 **MUSIC** **OUT**

17

18 JERRY That was great. I wonder when she'll come back out here
19 and give us the check?

20

21 DEAN She already did.

22

23 JERRY When? I didn't see her...

24

25 DEAN I didn't see her, either, but look there under your plate.
26 See, I've got one too.

27

28 JERRY How did she do that?

29

30 DEAN I... I don't know. I'm telling you, it's like she's...

31

32 JERRY There's no such thing. I wonder when she'll come back
33 out and get our money.

34

35 VERA [MUFFLED] Just leave your cash on the table. I'll keep
36 the change and put it toward your next visit.

37

38 JERRY Weird.

39

40 DEAN [WHISPERING] Next visit? I don't know why I'd ever

1 come back to a place... a place that...

2

3 JERRY What?

4

5 DEAN Nothing... nothing. I'm getting out of here before this gets
6 any worse.

7

8 **FX PAPER MOVEMENT AND COINS ON COUNTER**

9

10 JERRY Well, it was nice meeting you. Best of luck with your
11 degree.

12

13 DEAN Sure. And best of luck with your... training or whatever.

14

15 **FX FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS**

16

17 JERRY Wow. Where did all this fog come from?

18

19 DEAN I hope we can get out of the lot all right.

20

21 **FX FOOTSTEPS. REMOTE CAR DO OPENS. CLOSE**
22 **CAR DOOR OPENS. DISTANT CAR DOOR**
23 **CLOSES. CLOSE CAR DOOR CLOSES. ENGINE**
24 **STARTS. CAR NOISES AS CAR STARTS TO**
25 **MOVE.**

26

27 JERRY I sure hope that kid can get out of this lot with all the
28 fog... There he is... And there's the exit... Man, that fog's
29 thick. I can't even see the freeway from here... I don't
30 remember seeing this road cross over the freeway... What
31 is this? ...Are we... it can't be... Oh, good. He's parking...
32 I'll just park next to him.

33

34 **FX ENGINE SHUTS OFF. CAR DOOR OPENS.**

35

36 JERRY Hey, Dean! Where are you going?

37

38 DEAN [A LITTLE DISTANT] What?

39

40 JERRY How come you led us back into the parking lot?

1 **FX** **CAR DOOR SHUTS. FOOTSTEPS.**

2

3 DEAN [CLOSER] I... I didn't! I got on the freeway entrance, and
4 suddenly, bam, we're both back at Mama Vera's. I was
5 going back in to talk to...

6

7 JERRY It's just this dang fog.

8

9 DEAN I don't think it... I think it's something else.

10

11 JERRY Are you crazy? Come on, get back in your car. If I can't
12 lead us back on to the freeway, we'll go in and talk to
13 Mama Vera.

14

15 DEAN I think I'd rather... Oh never mind. Let's go.

16

17 **FX** **FOOTSTEPS. CAR DOOR OPENS. ANOTHER**
18 **CAR DOOR OPENS.**

19

20 JERRY [UNDER HIS BREATH] What a nut case.

21

22 **MUSIC** **UP/UNDER**

23

24 JERRY I got in my car, and Dean got in his. The fog was
25 dangerously thick, but I was really missing my wife and
26 kids. Plus, to tell the truth Mama Vera's place was
27 starting to give me the creeps. I drove the full loop
28 around the parking lot twice. There was a one way street
29 coming in, and one going out. I took the one going out.
30 The road crossed back over the freeway this time, and it
31 looked like our road was going to be the on-ramp we
32 were looking for. But it never did merge. The road just
33 dumped us again into the parking lot of Mama Vera's
34 diner. We tried to drive out three more times. But each
35 time, we just ended up back in the restaurant parking lot.
36 I've never believed in magic or the mystical, but there
37 was no more denying this. Some bizarre force was
38 leading us back. Besides that, despite the huge meal I had
39 just eaten, I was starting to feel hungry again. There was
40 only one rational thing to do.

1 **MUSIC** **OUT**
2
3 **FX** **RESTAURANT DOOR JINGLES OPEN.**
4 **FOOTSTEPS**
5
6 VERA [DISTANT] You boys finally done driving around? Or
7 do you want to do a couple more laps?
8
9 JERRY Actually we...
10
11 VERA [DISTANT] Why don't you two come sit down at the
12 counter?
13
14 **FX** **FOOTSTEPS**
15
16 VERA [CLOSE NOW] All right, then. You want a menu this
17 time?
18
19 DEAN We, uh, actually just wanted to...
20
21 JERRY Why do we keep coming back?
22
23 VERA Because my food is so delicious.
24
25 DEAN Well, uh, that's definitely *not* why we're...
26
27 **FX** **JERRY PUNCHES DEAN IN THE SHOULDER**
28
29 DEAN Ow! Why'd you hit me?
30
31 JERRY [QUIETLY] Shut up, Dean. [LOUDER] What he means
32 to say is that the food is excellent, and we'd like to get
33 home and tell our families about it so they can enjoy it,
34 too.
35
36 VERA Well, aren't you suddenly the little charmer?
37
38 JERRY So how about it? How do we get home?
39
40 VERA I told you. Mama Vera knows what's good for you. All

1 you got to do is order what I tell you. [PAUSE] And eat
2 it.
3
4 JERRY That's it?
5
6 VERA That's it, child.
7
8 DEAN So, what should we order?
9
10 VERA And I told you that, too. Last time you were in.
11
12 DEAN But you told me to order steak and I'm...
13
14 JERRY He'll take it. And I'll take the vegetable noodles. Is that
15 right?
16
17 VERA Sure is. And salads?
18
19 JERRY Whatever Mama Vera thinks is best.
20
21 VERA That's what I like to hear.
22
23 DEAN But I don't...
24
25 JERRY Sure you do. Trust me.
26
27 VERA [SERIOUS] Mama Vera knows what's best for you.
28
29 JERRY See? Now can you please...
30
31 DEAN But I'm a ve...
32
33 VERA You're a'goin to be stuck here forever unless you change
34 that attitude, child.
35
36 DEAN O... OK.
37
38 VERA [HAPPY] Good. Your orders will be up in a minute.
39
40 **FX** **FOOTSTEPS AND KITCHEN DOOR**

1 DEAN [WHISPERING] What are you doing? I am not going to
2 eat...
3

4 JERRY [WHISPERING] Oh, chill out.
5

6 DEAN [WHISPERING] I'm not going to chill out. And I'm not
7 going to eat a steak. And I'm definitely not...
8

9 JERRY [WHISPERING] Come on. You were out there. We can't
10 leave unless we order what she wants us to.
11

12 DEAN That's not... I mean I don't think that's actually going to
13 work.
14

15 JERRY Why not?
16

17 DEAN Well, because I can't eat meat for one thing.
18

19 JERRY So you'd rather just be trapped here forever. [PAUSE]
20 You were in that parking lot. You saw what happened.
21

22 DEAN Of course I don't want...
23

24 JERRY Then you've only got one choice, don't you? It's eat what
25 she wants and get back on I-94, or...
26

27 DEAN I-94?
28

29 JERRY Yes, you know, the road you turned off of to get to this
30 place?
31

32 DEAN No, I didn't. I turned off of I-5.
33

34 JERRY Even better! We're trapped circling the parking lot of
35 some bizarre, you know... mystical... place that shouldn't
36 even exist and all you can think about is how you might
37 have to eat a couple of bites of steak? What is it with you
38 and meat anyway? You told her it's not a religious thing,
39 or a morals thing, or even a medical thing. So what is it?
40

1 DEAN I'd rather not... Look, it's not a problem. And it's none of
2 your business.
3

4 JERRY Fine. Just give me you're parents' number so I can call
5 them after I leave here and let them know how you won't
6 be coming home because you won't touch Mama Vera's
7 steak.
8

9 DEAN Please don't be... I guess... She's just... you know... Mama
10 Vera, she's...
11

12 **FX** **KITCHEN DOOR OPENS**
13

14 VERA Marvelous.
15

16 DEAN [WHISPERING] Did she hear...
17

18 JERRY Shh.
19

20 **FX** **CLANKING OF PLATES**
21

22 VERA You good lookin' boys are getting some marvelous
23 salads.
24

25 JERRY I'll say. These look even better that the last ones.
26

27 VERA Last ones?
28

29 JERRY The last salads. The ones we got the first time we came
30 in.
31

32 VERA You two have been in before? I don't remember y'all.
33 How long has it been?
34

35 JERRY About ten, maybe fifteen minutes ago.
36

37 VERA Couldn't be. I haven't had anybody in this afternoon, let
38 alone the same folks twice.
39

40 DEAN You... You mean you don't... never mind.

1 VERA [LAUGHS] You boys need to lighten up a hair, too. I'm
2 just jerkin' your chain. [FURTHER AWAY] Your food
3 will be just another couple of minutes. [FADING] ...don't
4 remember... [CHUCKLES]
5

6 **FX KITCHEN DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**
7

8 JERRY I don't know about you, but I didn't find that particularly
9 funny.
10

11 DEAN [WHISPERING] Switch with me.
12

13 JERRY Why are you whispering?
14

15 DEAN [WHISPERING] Please. Switch with me. We can switch
16 back plates again before she comes back.
17

18 JERRY What's wrong with your salad?
19

20 DEAN [WHISPERING] Nothing. Not the salad. The steak and,
21 you know, the noodles.
22

23 JERRY [CHUCKLE] Now I'm pulling your chain. She's right, it
24 is kind of funny.
25

26 FX FORKS ON PLATES.
27

28 DEAN [WHISPERING] Please.
29

30 JERRY [MOUTH HALF FULL] Dean, stop whispering. If she
31 does have... powers... do you think it'll matter that you're
32 whispering? Besides, she's only seems to hear and come
33 in when we actually say her name.
34

35 DEAN Fine. Will you please switch with me now?
36

37 JERRY What if it doesn't work? I want to get home to my wife
38 and kids tonight.
39

40 DEAN I'll pay for your meal, and I'll give you fifty bucks.

1 JERRY I don't need your money, kid. [PAUSES] I'll tell you
2 what, though. You tell me why you don't eat meat, and
3 I'll switch plates with you.
4

5 DEAN [MULLING IT OVER] No... I mean... You can't... It's
6 not... fine. But not until we've switched.
7

8 JERRY Deal.
9

10 DEAN Great.
11

12 JERRY Good.
13

14 DEAN So what do we do now?
15

16 JERRY Finish our salads.
17

18 DEAN That's not what I meant...
19

20 JERRY You want her to come back with our food. I swear, all we
21 have to do is say her name and then she pops right in.
22 Watch this. [CLEARs THROAT] One thing's for certain,
23 Mama Vera is an excellent cook.
24

25 **FX KITCHEN DOOR OPENS**
26

27 VERA Well, thank you, child. [LOWER] And just so you
28 know... cookin's not all I'm good at.
29

30 JERRY Oh, I don't doubt that one bit.
31

32 VERA Flattery is nice, but it won't get you a discount.
33

34 **FX PLATES CLANKING**
35

36 VERA Here's your food. And here's your checks. I've got a
37 phone call to make, so I'll be in the back. Just holler if
38 you need me.
39

40 JERRY Sounds great. Thanks.

1 **FX** **KITCHEN DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**

2

3 DEAN OK, switch.

4

5 JERRY I know.

6

7 **FX** **PLATES CLANKING**

8

9 JERRY All, right. Now let's hear it.

10

11 DEAN Do I have to?

12

13 JERRY That was the deal.

14

15 DEAN It's just that... it's kind of... embarrassing.

16

17 JERRY If it's any consolation, you'll probably never see me
18 again. Assuming we ever get out of here.

19

20 DEAN Fine.

21

22 JERRY So let's hear it already.

23

24 DEAN OK. Here it is. [FAST MUMBLING] I don't like the
25 texture.

26

27 JERRY What?

28

29 DEAN [MUMBLING FAST & LOUDER] I don't like the
30 texture of meat.

31

32 JERRY Say it so I can understand it.

33

34 DEAN [LOUD] I. Don't. Like. The. Texture. Of. Meat.

35

36 JERRY [SMALL LAUGH] You don't like the texture?

37

38 DEAN The texture. It grosses me out. It's all stringy when you
39 chew it. It gets stuck in your teeth, and... the texture is
40 just plain gross. It makes me ill just thinking about it.

1 Fine. There you go. Now you know.

2

3 JERRY [PAUSES] The texture? [LAUGHS]

4

5 DEAN This is why I don't tell people.

6

7 JERRY [CHUCKLES] No, I'm sorry. It's just that I've never...

8

9 DEAN Leave me alone.

10

11 **FX** **SOUNDS OF EATING**

12

13 DEAN Why are you looking at me? Go away.

14

15 JERRY Is pork the same as beef for you?

16

17 DEAN This trick better work, or I'm going to hate you forever.

18

19 JERRY What about chicken?

20

21 DEAN I swear, please, just let it...

22

23 JERRY Fish?

24

25 DEAN YES! Yes, yes it's all the same! Beef, pork, chicken, fish,
26 venison, buffalo, squid, monkey, dog, any meat you put
27 in front of me. I hate it all and it all makes me sick when
28 I chew it!

29

30 JERRY Wow.

31

32 DEAN [GASPS] Sorry, I... I didn't mean to blow up like that.

33

34 JERRY Wow.

35

36 DEAN It's so embarrassing.

37

38 JERRY It's all right, Dean. I'm not trying to offend you here. I
39 just want to know.

40

1 DEAN It's just that everyone says... Uh, are you going to eat that
2 steak before... she comes back?

3

4 JERRY Whoa. Guess I'd better hurry.

5

6 DEAN And please let it... you know... let the subject drop?

7

8 JERRY I suppose.

9

10 **FX** **EATING SOUNDS**

11

12 JERRY Mmm, that's good.

13

14 DEAN So's this.

15

16 JERRY What about when other people around you eat meat?
17 Does that make you sick?

18

19 DEAN [SIGHS] Not really, no.

20

21 JERRY Interesting.

22

23 DEAN I really hope this works.

24

25 **MUSIC** **UP/OUT**

26

27 JERRY Hurry up. She could come back in at anytime.

28

29 DEAN I know.

30

31 **FX** **SOUNDS OF EATING**

32

33 DEAN [MOUTH FULL] This is... really... good.

34

35 JERRY Come on, finish that last bite.

36

37 DEAN It's just that... It's so good. I don't want it be over.

38

39 JERRY Have you forgotten what happens to us if we get caught?

40

1 DEAN I know.
2
3 **FX** **FORK SCRAPING PLATE**
4
5 JERRY All right, let's switch back.
6
7 **FX** **PLATES CLANKING**
8
9 JERRY You think we should call mm, I mean her back in here
10 before we go? Or just leave the money like before?
11
12 DEAN I don't really want to see... Let's just get out of here.
13
14 JERRY That's fine. Let me just pull out some cash. There. Let's
15 get out of here.
16
17 **FX** **FOOTSTEPS. BELL & RESTAURANT DOOR**
18 **OPENING.**
19
20 JERRY Aw, crap.
21
22 DEAN It's, it's... It's thicker than before.
23
24 **MUSIC** **CREEPY MUSIC SLOWLY FADING IN**
25
26 JERRY I can't even see our cars.
27
28 DEAN I can't even... I can hardly see you through the fog, and
29 you're only...
30
31 JERRY Like five feet away.
32
33 DEAN [DISTANT] So stupid. I can't believe I thought that
34 would work. Of course she's going to know we switched.
35
36 JERRY Dean, where did you go? I can't see you.
37
38 **MUSIC** **GETTING LOUDER**
39
40 JERRY Dean, did you find the cars? [PAUSE] Can you hear me?

1 **FX** **JERRY RUNNING**

2

3 JERRY Dean? [TO HIMSELF] Where did that kid go?
4 [YELLING] Dean!

5

6 **MUSIC** **EVEN LOUDER**

7

8 **FX** **FOOTSTEPS SLOW WAY DOWN**

9

10 JERRY [LOUD] Did you find the cars? [TO HIMSELF] I can't
11 believe this. I've never seen fog this thick. [YELLING]
12 Dean! [TO HIMSELF] I definitely should have run into
13 the cars by now. [YELLING] Dean! Where did you go?
14 [TO HIMSELF] Ridiculous. I've got to get home tonight.
15 [YELLING] Dean! [TO HIMSELF] What if I can't get
16 home? I wonder how long that hag can keep me here.
17 [PAUSES] What if I'm stuck out here?

18

19 **MUSIC** **REACHES ITS PIQUE, THEN ABRUPTLY STOPS**

20

21 JERRY [YELLING] DEEEEEEEAN!

22

23 **MUSIC** **UP AND UNDER**

24

25 JERRY For a moment, I almost gave up hope. And who
26 wouldn't? The fog was so thick I could hardly see my
27 own hands if I held them out. My car had disappeared.
28 Dean had disappeared. The parking lot seemed endless. I
29 couldn't even find the restaurant again. Not that I really
30 wanted to go in there. I was afraid now to see Mama
31 Vera again. If she could do this, what else could she do?
32 [PAUSE] So I did the only thing that seemed reasonable.
33 I ran.

34

35 **FX** **RUNNING FOOTSTEPS**

36

37 JERRY I have no idea how long I ran. I was just going to keep
38 running in as straight a line as I could until I found
39 something. Eventually, I saw a light in the fog ahead.

40

1 **FX FOOTSTEPS SLOW DOWN**

2

3 JERRY As I got near, my heart sank. The light was a neon sign.
4 In the window of a restaurant. It read "Mama Vera's
5 Diner." The fog seemed to thin out immediately around
6 the building. I turned the corner and saw Dean just
7 standing and staring at the door.
8

9 **FX FOOTSTEPS STOP**

10

11 **MUSIC OUT**

12

13 JERRY Dean? How long have you been out here? [PAUSE]
14 Dean?
15

16 DEAN I don't want to go in.
17

18 JERRY I'm not certain we have a choice, Dean.
19

20 DEAN What is she going to do to us?
21

22 JERRY I don't have time for this. Come on.
23

24 DEAN Hey! Let go of me!
25

26 JERRY Come on!
27

28 **FX RESTAURANT DOOR JINGLES OPEN**

29

30 JERRY Now, get in there.
31

32 DEAN No way, you go first.
33

34 JERRY Fine.
35

36 **FX FOOTSTEPS AND DOOR CLOSES**

37

38 DEAN Where... Where is she?
39

40 JERRY I don't know. Mama Vera can't be...

1 VERA [TOO SWEET] I'm right here boys.

2

3 JERRY&DEAN [YELP]

4

5 DEAN How did you get behind...

6

7 VERA [SERIOUS] Sit down. Both of you.

8

9 JERRY&DEAN Yes, ma'am.

10

11 **FX FOOTSTEPS**

12

13 VERA You boys think I'm stupid?

14

15 JERRY Of course n...

16

17 VERA [GETTING ANGRY] Shut it. Y'all must think I'm a total
18 idiot. Do I look like an idiot? You think Mama Vera
19 doesn't know when two scheming... children are trying to
20 trick her?

21

22 JERRY We just...

23

24 VERA [ANGRY] I told you to shut it! You think I can't tell
25 when you're switching plates, eating the wrong food?
26 Just eat what I tell you! I told y'all when ya first got here!
27 Mama Vera knows what's best for you. Mama Vera
28 knows. Can you boys understand that? [PAUSES]
29 Answer me!

30

31 JERRY&DEAN Yes.

32

33 VERA [SUDDENLY CALM] That's better. [PAUSE] Now, I've
34 got your food all ready for you back here. You'll eat it
35 this time. No tricks. Just eating. [SERIOUS] Or maybe
36 next time you don't find your way out of the fog.

37

38 **FX KITCHEN DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**

39

40 DEAN Whoa.

1 JERRY I know.

2

3 DEAN Jerry, what am I gong to do?

4

5 JERRY Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. And that's eat
6 whatever she brings out.

7

8 DEAN That's great for you, but I can't eat meat and she's
9 bringing...

10

11 **FX** **KITCHEN DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING**

12

13 VERA Your dinners. Hopefully your last ones.

14

15 DEAN [SCARED] What?

16

17 VERA [LAUGHS] I meant your last dinner today, child. Not
18 your last dinner ever. [SERIOUS] Although it might be
19 that, too, if you try a fast one.

20

21 **FX** **PLATES CLANKING ON COUNTER**

22

23 DEAN Oh.

24

25 JERRY Looks great.

26

27 VERA [SWEET AGAIN] It is. You two finish your meals, all
28 right? No funny business. I've got to make another phone
29 call. [PAUSES] And don't worry about paying for this
30 one. It's on the house.

31

32 **FX** **KITCHEN DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**

33

34 JERRY Well, let's dig in.

35

36 FX EATING SOUNDS

37

38 JERRY [MOUTH FULL] These noodles are great. Even the
39 mushrooms.

40

1 DEAN Swell.

2

3 JERRY Aren't you going to eat?

4

5 DEAN [DETACHED] I guess.

6

7 JERRY Don't you want to get out of here?

8

9 DEAN Its just this steak... I don't know if I can... if can I eat it.

10

11 JERRY Suit yourself, but I'm going home.

12

13 **FX** **EATING SOUNDS**

14

15 **MUSIC** **UP/UNDER**

16

17 JERRY I ate a fast as I could. The food was great, but I wanted to
18 get out of there. Dean just stared at his food. In fact,
19 when I opened the door to leave I looked back, and Dean
20 never even looked up. I just shrugged and went into the
21 parking lot. [PAUSE] The fog was completely gone and
22 the sun was still up. I got in my car and drove away.
23 Never again did I see Dean or even Mama Vera's diner,
24 even though I drove that same stretch of road many times
25 in the years that followed. But, I tell you this story as... as
26 a warning. If you ever see the numberless exit with a sign
27 that says "Mama Vera's Diner," go ahead and eat there.
28 The food's excellent. Just make sure you order whatever
29 your waitress suggests. Because, well... because Mama
30 Vera knows what best for you. And if you see Dean
31 there, tell him "hi."

32

33 **MUSIC** **OUT**