

Over a black screen, we hear the sounds of a COMMERCIAL KITCHEN in full swing -- clattering, sizzling, voices uttering sharp, short sounds of an indistinguishable dialect.

PICTURE:

1 INT. VALENTINA KITCHEN - NIGHT 1

A SERIES of close-ups on fast-paced mid-range kitchen: A HAND plating a dish and hitting a CALL BELL; a YOUNG KITCHEN HAND stepping back from an open fridge door carrying one-too-many plastic containers of ingredients; a MALE CHEF laughing at a comment from someone else, both his hands on skillets over the grill.

LYDIA, 32, a slim white woman with short platinum hair and a crisp white jacket, is in the zone, keeping the kitchen clattering and humming. Pans sizzle, plates chime, voices call brusquely and in several different languages.

LYDIA paces, keenly choosing moments to dart in, communicate, garnish. The KITCHEN STAFF, three men, move smoothly and efficiently because of her presence.

She shares a laugh with MALE CHEF, hand on his shoulder.

LYDIA  
(loudly)  
Where's Mario? Where's my dishy?

ALBERT  
(from across the room)  
He didn't show up, chef.

LYDIA  
Anybody have his number?

ALBERT  
He's getting fifteen in the Heights.

LYDIA storms out, and into ...

2 INT. VALENTINA MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 2

LYDIA busts in. DAVE -- 35, on the short side, necktie too tight -- sits at the desk.

LYDIA  
What are you paying my staff?

(CONTINUED)

DAVE  
Fifteen an hour plus tips.

LYDIA  
Dishy? Hello?

DAVE  
The going rate is---

LYDIA  
This is fucking ridiculous, I have  
talked to you about this! Call  
yourself a Democrat--

DAVE  
(talking over her)  
We can't afford more, Lydia.

LYDIA  
It's twenty-five bucks a night,  
Dave, you CAN afford it, what I  
can't afford is losing another  
dishy every fucking two weeks!

DAVE  
If you wanna tip the dishy out---

LYDIA  
FIX IT. FIFTEEN AN HOUR. MINIMUM.  
And get me a dishy FOR TOMORROW.

She strides out, slamming the door.

LYDIA (O.S.)  
It's the fuckin' weekend!

3 INT. VALENTINA KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

3

LYDIA pokes her head in.

LYDIA  
Albert?

ALBERT  
Scotch, chef!

LYDIA  
Boys? Whiskey?

STAFF  
Yes, chef!

4

INT. VALENTINA FRONT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

4

LYDIA approaches the bar from the back of house, loosening her collar. The front restaurant area is mostly full. It's a nice Italian-influenced wine bar style atmosphere. The staff are all wearing white shirts and black ties.

FELIX, 27, the fit, natty, sharp-tongued bar manager, sees her approaching and smoothly grabs Jameson, pouring her a shot.

FELIX

Dishy?

LYDIA

Didn't show up.

(She shoots.)

I am gonna fucking murder Dave.

FELIX

Make HIM stay and clean.

LYDIA

Not worth it. We'd have to redo it all in the morning. Shots for the boys, please, Laphroaig for Albert.

Felix has already begun pouring shots into Dixie cups.

FELIX

I'm going out tomorrow.

LYDIA

As opposed to any other night of the week?

FELIX

Brooklyn. Queerlesque. Audrey's on, come on, bitch.

Lydia reacts with humorous disgust.

LYDIA

I'll see what Rome wants to do.

FELIX

Rome is already coming. Or Rome will be writing with a quill by fucking candlelight, so who fucking cares.

(CONTINUED)

LYDIA  
(downing another shot)  
He text you?

FELIX  
Fuck you, you see him every fucking  
night, you are eighty years old,  
and you HAVE SUNDAY OFF.

LYDIA  
Because I'm TRASHED.

FELIX  
You WILL be.

LYDIA gives him A Look and takes the shots back to the  
kitchen.

ANNA, 24, a corn-fed Midwestern waitress with an expansive  
smile and a musical theatre degree, approaches the bar.

ANNA  
G and T and a Blue Moon.

FELIX  
First date, he works for a startup,  
and she's a Long Island princess.

ANNA  
I want as little as possible to do  
with these people so please hurry  
up.

FELIX  
Ooo, somebody seems a little tense.  
Last night's Tinder date doesn't  
know where the clitoris is?

ANNA  
I'm waiting to hear about a  
callback.

FELIX  
Congratulations.

ANNA  
No, I haven't heard yet. I  
auditioned this morning.

FELIX  
Let it go, babe. Really. That is  
gonna be your life here. Leave it  
on the wall and NEXT.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Yeah, I know.

She takes the drinks to the table she's waiting; a Very White Couple sits there.

ANNA

Here are your drinks. Have you decided what you wanna eat?

WOMAN ON DATE

Do you have anything that's gluten-free?

ANNA

(with endless patience)

Yeah, so the ones you can make gluten-free are actually marked---