Taste Buddies

by

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Genre: Drama

Theme: A vegan and and a carnivore argue over

their dietary philosophies.

OPENING MUSIC - 'EAT THE MENU' BY THE SUGARCUBES

ESTABLISHING SHOT - CITY AT NIGHT

AERIAL SHOT over a city. It could be any moderate to large city. The camera spirals down to ZOOM IN on a busy inner city street.

CUT TO:

EXT. - CITY STREET AT NIGHT

TRACKING SHOTS at street level of people buying food over counters, eating and laughing in a variety of eateries (outdoor cafes, upmarket restaurants), butchers' shops advertising specials with rows of meat and dripping rotisserie chickens in their windows, stalls groaning with multicoloured fruit and vegetables. The effect is sumptuous, almost psychedelic movement focusing on food and people's interactions with food.

MUSIC FADES AWAY

CUT TO:

TRACKING SHOT of a man (JAMES) walking towards the camera along the street. He is in his mid/late twenties, dark haired, good-looking, dressed in smart casual gear. James has a far-away look in his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

JAMES' FANTASY - EXT. RURAL SCENE - AUTUMN/DAYTIME (CONTINUOUS)

A large busted, stunning looking woman with long blonde hair dressed in Playboy type garb - black lingerie, black fishnet stockings and garters, black super high stilettos sits cross-legged on the back of a Harley Davidson with a come-hither pout.

The background is rural autumn, red and golden leaves scattered around, edged in SOFT FOCUS.

JAMES' FANTASY WOMAN
Hi James, I'm Marilyn. I've been
expecting you.

A loud clattering sound is heard.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET AT NIGHT

James trips over a rubbish bin. He bends to set it upright, shakes himself back to reality and continues walking.

JAMES' V.O. Yeah, right. That'd be a miracle.

CUT TO:

TRACKING SHOT of a woman (MARILYN) walking towards the camera along the same side of the street as James, but coming from the opposite direction. She is also in her mid/late twenties, blonde and goodlooking, dressed up-market flowing type clothing. There is a dreamy look on her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

MARILYN'S FANTASY - EXT. LUXURY HOUSE/BEACH (CONTINUOUS)

A tall, dark, handsome man dressed in a tuxedo stands beside an outdoor table set with silver cutlery and candelabra on a snow white table cloth. Behind him is a beach, the sea glistens and waves gently lap beneath a golden full moon.

Soft violin music plays in the background. As the camera approaches him, he steps forward, bows slightly and holds out a single red rose.

CONTINUED:

MARILYN'S FANTASY MAN Good evening, Marilyn. I'm James. You look ravishing tonight. I...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. - CITY STREET AT NIGHT

Marilyn accidentally bumps into a pushchair being pushed by a young couple coming in the opposite direction. She turns and holds her hands up in an apologetic gesture, shakes herself and sighs before continuing to walk.

MARILYN'S V.O In your dreams, honey.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT

PAN SHOT of James and Marilyn walking towards each other from opposite directions, about 30 meters apart. They are the only people in view.

ZOOM IN as each nears the doors of the restaurant made of dark polished wood, one open to welcome customers. The restaurant's name in red lights above the doorway is 'Taste Buddies'.

They arrive almost in unison. They stop, framed by the restaurant entrance.

The two of them resemble less glamorous versions of their respective fantasies. Both pause. James surreptitiously checks his watch.

JAMES

Ah, you wouldn't be Marilyn by any chance?

Marilyn nods, moves forward and holds out her hand, smiling slightly.

MARILYN

Yes, hi. James, I presume?

They shake hands and stand there for a moment looking at each other.

CUT TO:

SPLIT SCREEN CLOSE UPS of James and Marilyn's faces

JAMES' V.O. Whaww!!

MARILYN'S V.O.
Mmmm. Not bad at all

CUT TO:

PAN SHOT of the couple in front of the restaurant. Both look mildly embarrassed. James sweeps his arm towards the entrance, bowing slightly and smiling. Marilyn smiles and walk in ahead of him.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT

BY THE ENTRANCE DESK

The concierge is behind a desk near the entrance. At one end is a cash register next to a bowl of peppermints, at the other end there are flowers in a vase. Behind the desk is a cloak rack. The restaurant is mildly lit, the décor moderately up market. The kitchen is situated at the back. A number of other customers are seated, chatting and eating at tables. Waiters and waitresses are coming and going with food and drink.

CONCIERGE

Good evening. How can I help you?

JAMES

Yes, hi, we have a reservation for two under Robinson. James Robinson.

The concierge gestures a waiter over, who takes Marilyn's coat and hangs it up before returning to the couple.

WAITER

Very good. Please come this way.

TRACKING SHOT as the waiter leads the couple to a table for two near the window looking onto the street. People can be seen walking past and cars drive by in the background.

BY THE TABLE

James holds out Marilyn's chair for her and the couple are seated. The waiter lights a small candle in the centre of the table. Marilyn looks at James and her surroundings, clearly pleased. James looks at Marilyn admiringly. They both point to something on the street which seems funny. There are quiet sounds of normal restaurant activity in the background.

WAITER

Would you like to order drinks now?

James looks at Marilyn enquiringly.

MARILYN

Yes, thanks. I'll have a mineral water.

James casts her an awkward glance.

JAMES

Ah, um...I'll have a Stella.

The waiter departs.

James leans forward a little.

JAMES

So, I already know you are some kind of teacher from our emails, but you hinted that you would like to try your hand at something else?

MARILYN

Aha, yes. Well, my fascinating alter ego would really like to have a go at.....

DISSOLVE TO:

James finishing a funny story and Marilyn laughing heartily.

JAMES

... and then he just pulled on his little pink cap and left.

Still giggling, Marilyn wipes her eyes. Both of them start looking at the menu. Their glasses are nearly empty.

JAMES

Mmm, not a bad selection. I think I'll have the venison.

Marilyn's head jerks up from the menu.

MARILYN

You can't be serious?

JAMES

What do you mean? You don't like venison?

MARILYN

Consuming all animal products is immoral!

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of James' appalled face.

CUT TO:

JAMES' FANTASY - EXT. RURAL - INT. PRISON CELL

James' fantasy woman unceremoniously falls off the motorbike. The picture DISSOLVES TO Marilyn standing in a prison cell dressed in full Nazi regalia holding a lamp interrogation-style towards the camera, darkness behind her. She speaks in a guttural, comic-book German accent.

JAMES' FANTASY WOMAN
Meat ist bad, schweinhund!!

DISSOLVE TO:

BY THE TABLE

James barely stifles a groan.

JAMES

Oh for god's sake. You didn't put 'Vegan Nazi' in your ad. So lying by omission is moral is it?

MARILYN

Huh! Since when does being principled make one a Nazi? I'm not obliged to announce to the world at large every last detail about myself. Just like your ad never mentioned you have a tattoo.

James reflexively tugs at his shirt sleeve to cover the Celtic knot tattoo on his forearm.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Besides, I've found the Vegan
label puts people off.

JAMES

No kidding.

MARTLYN

All the same, I'm entitled to try and persuade other people that exploiting animals is wrong. It's hardly necessary for our survival.

JAMES

OK, but don't start on me. Maybe it's not necessary for our survival now, but I read somewhere that we're only "human" (draws inverted commas in the air) because our brains expanded over millenia due to a massive injection of meat protein when our distant ancestors got the bright idea there might be more culinary delights than eating bloody grass.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of Marilyn's disgusted face.

DISSOLVE TO:

MARILYN'S FANTASY - EXT. LUXURY HOUSE - INT. CAVE

Marilyn's fantasy man / setting DISSOLVES TO James dressed in ragged animal skins with filthy, long matted hair. He crouches grunting in a cave, his teeth tearing at a large, bloody bone before a small open fire.

DISSOLVE TO:

BY THE TABLE

Marilyn sneers.

MARILYN

Really? Well, I guess that said brain expansion was selectively passed down the genes. Tell, me, does it hurt when your knuckles drag along the ground?

Throughout the following increasingly heated exchange the camera CUTS TO CLOSE UPS of the speaker's face.

JAMES

Very funny. Why don't you go the whole hog (excuse my language) and give up eating altogether, like that Indian mystic who supposedly hasn't eaten in over 70 years or something too weird to be believed.

Marilyn leans back in her chair and crosses her arms.

MARILYN

Huh. Well, if we are what we eat, and you are a meat head, I guess that makes him an air head.

JAMES

And you a vegetable?

MARILYN

Touche.

Marilyn uncrosses her arms and leans forward.

CONTINUED:

MARILYN (CONT'D)

But trying to put your (stabs a finger at James) bigotry aside for one moment, are you saying all is meat okay to eat?

JAMES

Well, I haven't tried insects, but I don't have any moral objection to eating them.

MARILYN

Clearly, then, you lack imagination. What about dolphins? Dogs? Human flesh?

JAMES

Yeah, well. Okay, I agree there are limits. I find people a bit chewy, anyway.

MARILYN

Oh really? What's that cross around your neck?

JAMES

It was a graduation gift from my parents. I was raised as a Catholic, though I've been lapsed for many years. Why?

MARILYN

Huh, knew it! Catholics are cannibals, aren't they?

JAMES

Aha, yes...the whole 'body and blood' sacrament thing. I get it.

James leans back in his chair, puts his hands CONTINUED:

behind his head momentarily, then back on the table. He pulls his chair back slightly.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, as I say, I gave up eating and drinking JC some time back.

PULL BACK TO PAN SHOT of the two of them. Marilyn also leans back in her chair.

MARILYN

Mmmm... I guess it's a start.

They sit for a few moments in flushed, awkward silence, not looking at each other. Marilyn stares out the window and fans herself with her table napkin. James looks down and fidgets with his fork.

CLOSE UP of Marilyn who clears her throat.

MARILYN

Um, I'm not quite sure how to say this. But I guess there's more to taste than what goes in one's mouth. Besides, all this tension has got me.....

Marilyn looks directly at James.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Look, do you wanna get outta here? Maybe go to your place?

DRAW BACK TO PAN SHOT of Marilyn and James. James looks surprised. He pulls his chair forward.

CONTINUED:

JAMES

Ah, well okay, sure. But, um, I haven't got vegan food at my place. Or are you planning not to eat tonight?

They get up from the table.

TRACKING SHOT as James follows Marilyn towards the entrance desk.

BY THE ENTRANCE DESK

The concierge looks surprised to see them leaving so soon.

CONCIERGE

Is everything alright?

JAMES

Yes, look I'm sorry about this, but something's come up and we have to leave suddenly.

The concierge nods discreetly. James pays the account. The concierge identifies then hands over Marilyn's coat.

As James helps Marilyn into her coat, Marilyn turns to him.

MARILYN

By the way, I am planning to eat tonight.

CLOSE UP of Marilyn's face looking exaggeratedly demure.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Just don't expect me to swallow.

PAN SHOT as Marilyn turns and walks out the door.

CLOSE UP of James' stunned face. He looks upwards, briefly fingers the cross around his neck, then shakes his head.

JAMES' V.O. Don't be ridiculous.

TRACKING SHOT following James out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT

Marilyn and James stand momentarily under the 'Taste Buddies' sign.

EXT. CITY STREET AT NIGHT

They both suddenly laugh and almost skip arm in arm down the street.

TRACKING SHOT of the two gliding past butcher's shops, fruit stalls and eateries.

WIDE STILL SHOT of Marilyn and James merging into the general city mass until they disappear from view.

FADE OUT.

THE END