

BEYOND CHEESECAKE

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First Draft

EXT. BACK DOOR OF CHEESECAKE SHOP - DAY

PAULETTE KUBIAK (50), a depressed, world-famous cheesecake connoisseur, waits for the shop's back door to open.

PAULETTE
(to herself)
One final morsel of happiness, then
I depart this mortal coil.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Paulette slips a stack of papers titled "Last Will and Testament (not that it even matters)" into a manila **envelope**, seals it.

SERIES OF SHOTS - PAULETTE'S FANTASY SUICIDES

- Apartment: toaster in the bathtub
- Apartment: handful of pills
- Park: hanging by a rope from a tree branch, kicked over chair.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

EXT. BACK DOOR OF CHEESECAKE SHOP - DAY

DAVID (47), baker of fine cheesecakes, opens the door, hands Paulette a paper bag. She hands him a wad of cash. But he doesn't release the bag.

DAVID
There's a fork in there.

PAULETTE
Yeah, I know how to eat cheesecake.

DAVID
You used to. What happened to you?

Paulette grabs the bag from him. David keeps eye contact as he closes the door.

Paulette turns to leave, stops when she sees TONY (50), her former Producer of thirty years, and HARRY (20), hipster, famous YouTube foodie, approaching the back door. Tony looks embarrassed and awkward. Harry texts on his phone and smiles to himself, aloof.

PAULETTE
(swears in foreign
language)
You've got to be kidding.

Tony frowns.

HARRY
Hey, I know you! Too bad about your
show. "Paulette Kubiak, the
Cheesecake Connoisseur" inspired me
to start my wildly-successful
YouTube channel.

PAULETTE
You replaced me with this guy? You
could have at least gotten a *female*
starlet!

TONY
Do you think I want to work with a
millennial? The network had no
choice, he's got twelve million
subscribers.

The camera turns to Harry who is taking selfies with his
phone with Paulette in the background!

HARRY
Paulette Kubiak. So retro!

Paulette FLASHES to killing herself with a bathtub toaster.

PAULETTE
I spent thirty years of my life
caring about our stupid cheesecake
show.

TONY
(cocks head)
What's that supposed to mean?

PAULETTE
You get to keep your job. I have
nothing.

TONY
Paulette, I wish we could keep
traveling the world, eating, making
our show. But you lost the spark.

Paulette is teary eyed. She gets angry. She turns to Harry
who is still on the phone and she takes it out of his hands.

PAULETTE

You are going to just LOVE being a Food Channel star. Sharing cheap hotel rooms with Tony. In small towns with no cell service.

Harry looks petrified.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

Go ahead, waste your life with this "producer." You'll end up where I am: replaced by someone younger and more famous. I reached my peak when I turned 45, but you? You already peaked.

HARRY

Oh my God, she's right. What have I done? Food Channel is a slow death! My life is over. I quit.

Harry runs out. Paulette turns to go.

PAULETTE

Stop calling me, Tony.

TONY

Why are you doing this to me? You know I don't have a choice.

Paulette strides away with her cheesecake.

PAULETTE

Fuck you, Tony.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Paulette sucks the last piece of cheesecake off her fork. She stands; it's time. She tosses the paper bag in the trash.

Rope in one hand and chair in the other, she looks for a good hanging tree, and sees Harry, practice-swinging a rope at a sturdy tree branch.

PAULETTE

Oh, come on!

Harry turns, startled to see Paulette.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

First you steal my job, now you steal my hanging tree? Fuck off, Harry.

Paulette muscles Harry out of the way, starts practice-swinging her rope at a tree branch. She is interrupted by fans GABBY and ALEJANDRA running up to Harry, screaming.

GABBY

It's Harry!

ALEJANDRA

I want a selfie before it's too late.

Gabby and Alejandra crowd Harry, they all pose. Paulette frowns, yanks the cell phone from Alejandra's hand.

PAULETTE

Can't you see he's in pain?

ON HARRY: What?

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

He just lost everything, and all you want to do is crowd around the corpse and tweet your trophy.

HARRY

I wasn't actually going to hang myself! I'm not stupid. I just want some attention before I go back on YouTube.

PAULETTE

This isn't how you communicate with people.

(to Gabby)

You. Say, "Hello."

GABBY

Hello.

Paulette points to Harry.

HARRY

Hello.

PAULETTE (TO ALEJANDRA)

Say something nice.

ALEJANDRA

I love your YouTube Channel.

PAULETTE

This is what matters, you social-media obsessed morons. Connection. With people.

ON PAULETTE: Realization: this is what she will live for.

HARRY
You're a pretty good motivator.

GABBY
You've inspired me.

ALEJANDRA
Are you on YouTube?

PAULETTE
(handing back the phone)
Not yet.

Paulette walks away from the group; they practice human interaction. Paulette pulls out her phone, texts.

ON PHONE, TEXT TO TONY: I have a new show idea, asshole

(after a few seconds, Tony texts back) Let's meet.

Paulette smiles and texts back: I know a great cheesecake place.

Paulette smiles and walks on.