

has two basic weapons to use against life; they are a dazzling smile, and a boyish grin; both are pretty effective and CHARLIE knows it. He uses one now, and then without hesitation, speaks directly to the audience.

START



CHARLIE. If there's one thing I can't stand in the theatre, it's walking out alone on stage at the beginning of the evening to open a show cold. (Grins.) But it's better than waiting tables. I'm Charlie, (Ironic.) . . . your waiter for the evening. I'd rather be onstage tonight.

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Being a waiter is sort of a standard job for an actor; it's expected. I mean, if you're a dentist or an insurance salesman and someone says "where're ya' workin' nowadays?" and you say, "I'm a waiter at this little French place on fifty-sixth street." they think you're a failure. But if you're an actor, they understand. So. (Indicates the restaurant with a gesture.) *ici, personne ne parle francais.* (Beat.) That's the name of the place. (Beat.) Yeah, well I didn't get it the first time either. It means no one here speaks French. It's really a lunch place. At lunch they use four waiters. After lunch through dinner; one waiter. (Indicates himself.)

(By now, CHARLIE has started to juggle with things on the tables. Straightening them.) The food's good, French, reasonable.

Of course, the price soars if you start ordering little extras, like coffee. (The GIRL enters. She is playing Doris Potter. She wanders in a little hesitantly. She is very pretty,

END

CHARLIE #1

in a down to earth, ordinary way.) She's gotta be kidding. It's mid-afternoon. (He checks his watch.) (To the GIRL.) Bonjour, m'mselle.

GIRL. (Nervous.) Oh, you speak French?

CHARLIE. (He doesn't.) Oui.

GIRL. And . . . er, English?

CHARLIE. Yeah.

(He pulls out a chair for her, asking with his facial expression if the table is okay. She sits.) Did you want lunch or dinner?

GIRL. It doesn't matter.

CHARLIE. (Irrked.) How about dinner?

GIRL. Sure.

CHARLIE. Would you like a drink first? Dubonnet, a glass of wine?

GIRL. A coke, please.

CHARLIE. A coke.

GIRL. . . . not much ice. (She takes the menu which he hands her.)

GIRL. (Without opening the menu.) Do you have oysters? On the half shell? (CHARLIE nods.) Half a dozen. (CHARLIE writes on his pad.) Escargot? (CHARLIE nods.) How?

CHARLIE. A la Bourguignonne.

GIRL. (Unenthusiastic.) Just the way I like them. An order of those. (CHARLIE nods.) Steak tartare? (CHARLIE nods.) Some of that.

(CHARLIE makes to leave.) And then . . . (CHARLIE stays.) Do you have tripe? (CHARLIE, beginning to think he has a weird customer, shakes his head.) Sweetbreads? (CHARLIE nods.) How? Broiled? (CHARLIE nods.) Yes. Kidneys? (CHARLIE nods.)