

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Still Waiting

by Alexandra Collier

## EXTRACT

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# STILL WAITING

## Characters

Mad – (Madeleine) a waiter, mid twenties

Paris – a waiter, mid twenties

Dave – a chef, mid-thirties

## Set

The set is comprised of a table and two chairs centre-stage (this is the ‘restaurant area’). The table should be large enough to support Madeleine, who stands on it from time to time. Stage right is the kitchen, which Dave inhabits – a black screen with a pass in the middle where the plates are put up. It also has a bell which is rung throughout the play and a metal bench against the back wall of the stage where Dave preps food. Stage left is the waiter’s station; a rack with wine glasses hangs above it. Paris’s bedroom is upstairs. During the play he sits on the stairs, drinking and writing poetry. He litters the stage below him with his poems. At the back of the stage, there are three milk crates lying on the ground, this is the ‘out the back’ area.

## Sound

The music that is played during the opening section and in various points throughout the play is pre-recorded accordion music (original score written and played by Cat Kohn). The Dean Martin song that is played in the dance sequence is ‘Someday You’ll Want Me to Want You’. The kitchen bell often rings – this can be both a sound effect and Dave ringing the bell in the kitchen. Other sound effects are indicated in the script.

*Madeleine ushers the audience into the theatre. Text is largely improvised. Paris seats people at their table, bored, but turning on the charm when he feels like it. Improvised dialogue of seating people. Madeleine talks to people as she seats them 'Good evening. Table for two? Just over here. One? Just the one. Paris, this gentleman needs a table for one.' This goes on until the entire audience is seated. Paris stands side on, scribbling notes in his order book. Finally, when all the audience is seated, Madeleine, Dave and Paris face the audience, waiting. Silence.*

Mad: I suppose you're waiting for something to happen?

*Uncomfortable pause. The kitchen bell rings and Dave puts up three plates of food. The accordion music begins. Mad rushes into the kitchen and grabs the plates. Paris faces stage right and writes orders in his order book, ripping off pages as he goes. Dave is putting plates up on the pass. Mad deposits these plates in sequence on the table, switches the plates around and picks them up again. Each character's action is repetitive and syncopated and gets gradually quicker throughout. The movement and dialogue builds until the action has reached frenzy. At moments the action breaks and the characters stop what they are doing and observe the audience/restaurant casually. The whole scene should be like a piece of music, building to mini-crescendos with sudden pauses and slow moments and then resuming the frantic crescendo until everything explodes.*

Paris: Order in.

Mad: Order in.

Dave: Order up.

Mad: Order in.

Paris: It's away.

Dave: Take away.

Mad: I'm away.

Dave: Take away.

Paris: Order in.

Mad: Porterhouse.

Paris: Porterhouse.

Dave: Order up.

Mad: Table 2 away.

Paris: Nine's away

Mad: I'm away.

Paris: Seven's away.

Mad: Five's away.

Paris: Ten's away.

Dave: Order up.

Mad: Customers!

Paris: Two on one.

Mad: One on three.

Dave: Three for five.

Mad: Menus.

Paris: Six on seven.

*Beat. Action slows slightly.*

Mad: Tippers?

Paris: Table nine.

Mad: All mine.

Paris: Too late.

Mad: Table 8?

Paris: Bingo!

*Action resumes.*

Dave: Order up.

Paris: Bill for twelve.

Mad: Bill for ten.

Paris: Bill for seven.

Mad: Tips?

Paris: No way.

Mad: Bingo!

Paris: Who?

Mad: Legs eleven!

*Beat. Real time aside.*

Paris: Food was raw! They complained.

Mad: *Al dente.*

Paris: Smart.

*Pace resumes.*

Dave: Order up.

Paris: Order in.

Mad: I'm away.

Dave: Take away.

Paris: Porterhouse.

Dave: Order up.

Mad: I'm away.

Paris: Take away?