

LUNCH WITH LUCY

By James Still

Dft 2(C)
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CAST (three actors)

Lucy: appears to be 18 years old
Genevieve: late 20s/early 30s
Cute Waiter: 20s

NOTE ON CASTING: Everything tells a story. In the same spirit in which I wrote the play, the characters may/can/should be played by actors of any gender, race, ethnicity, origin and other-abledness. In whatever ways the play is cast, it will tell a story.

LUNCH WITH LUCY is about a newly arrived young actor in Hollywood having lunch with her manager to discuss an intriguing new project. "Lunch" turns out to have multiple meanings...

LUNCH WITH LUCY
by James Still (2C)

We're in a trendy restaurant in a trendy part of Los Angeles. It's lunchtime in Hollywood.

GENEVIEVE sits across from LUCY. They sip on bottled water.

GENEVIEVE is the older of the two -- she's in her 30s, dressed in California chic, great haircut, wears the kind of makeup that makes you think she isn't wearing any makeup.

LUCY is the younger of the two -- she looks like she might be 18. She's got her own distinct style -- think Edith Wharton heroine meets Billie Eilish (circa 2020). And another thing: she's very pale. Especially for California.

LUCY

(to US)

So I'm at lunch with my new manager, Genevieve. She says her name the pretentious French way -- "Genevieve" -- even though she's English, very posh. I dug around on the internet and she's actually working class from Liverpool or somewhere -- but she sounds like she grew up in Buckingham Palace. Don't get me wrong -- I actually like Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

(to LUCY)

Know what you're having?

LUCY

(to GENEVIEVE)

Not yet.

(to US)

What I'd really like for lunch is Genevieve. I'd love to sink my teeth into that neck of hers -- look at that neck and tell me it doesn't look -- delicious...

GENEVIEVE

(to LUCY)

You look a little pale. Do you take vitamins? I'll call my acupuncturist and maybe she can fit you in this week. You've been in LA for how long now?

LUCY

Almost six months.

GENEVIEVE

Right. I would have thought you'd get a little color by now. I thought you lived at the beach. Do you take Vitamin D?

LUCY

(lying)

I think so.

GENEVIEVE

I have to keep my eyes on the time -- I have a big meeting at Paramount at 2:30. I'm pitching one of my clients for an HBO show.

LUCY

OK.

GENEVIEVE

But let's talk about you, Lucy.

LUCY

OK.

GENEVIEVE

Let's talk about your career, your goals, what kind of roles you want to do. I want to know everything.

LUCY

I just want to make a lot of money doing the least amount of work possible.

GENEVIEVE

I know, we all do -- but you can't say that unless you do it with a touch of charming sarcasm or irony. You want to say it in a way that makes you seem young but hip, you have to be IN on the joke before you ARE the joke. Say it in a way that makes you seem wise, like you're doing it for the good of the planet. Understand?

LUCY

But I really do want to make a lot of money doing the least amount of work possible.

GENEVIEVE

Lucy, listen to me: let's say your publicist sets you up with an interview with someone who MIGHT be a voter for the Golden Globes -- and neither of you are drunk yet and you say something like "I want to make a lot of money doing the

(MORE)

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

least amount of work possible" -- then you'll be laughed out of town even though everyone feels exactly the same way.

LUCY

A: I don't have a publicist. And B: if everyone feels exactly the same way then maybe they'll respect me for saying what they were too scared to say themselves.

GENEVIEVE

Lucy. Love. It doesn't work that way.

LUCY

I could start a revolution. Have you ever been part of a revolution, Genevieve?

GENEVIEVE

I saw "Les Miserable." That's the French Revolution.

LUCY

What a shit-show.

GENEVIEVE

I rather liked it.

LUCY

No, yeah, I meant -- I was talking about the French Revolution. What a shit-show that was. Nobody sang pretty songs. I mean, I was there, you know.

LUCY stares at GENEVIEVE -- it's a game of chicken. Finally LUCY laughs. GENEVIEVE doesn't quite know what to make of her humor.

Before GENEVIEVE can ask another question A CUTE WAITER approaches the table.

LUCY immediately focuses on him -- very intently.

CUTE WAITER

Have you ladies made a decision?

GENEVIEVE

I'll have the cold crispy kale and kiwi salad. Dressing on the side. Please. And can you add a bit of mint? Organic, of course.

CUTE WAITER

Of course. Any allergies?

GENEVIEVE

I'm allergic to everything so they seem to cancel each other out.

CUTE WAITER

(smiling)

Brilliant. And you?

LUCY is just staring at the CUTE WAITER.

GENEVIEVE

Lucy?

GENEVIEVE looks back at the CUTE WAITER and smiles...

CUTE WAITER

Hello?

LUCY snaps out of it.

LUCY

Yes. I'll have a glass of wine.

CUTE WAITER

Red or white?

LUCY

Red.

CUTE WAITER

And what would you like for lunch.

LUCY

Just you. Kidding. Just the wine.

GENEVIEVE

You're not eating? Lucy...

LUCY

I'm a very picky eater.

(to CUTE WAITER)

I'm sorry -- but may I?

MAYBE THIS IS IN SLOWER MOTION,
MUSIC PLAYS:

LUCY stands up and reaches out and touches the CUTE WAITER's neck. He just looks at her, mesmerized.

BACK TO FULL SPEED:

LUCY

I thought you had something on your neck.

The CUTE WAITER touches his neck self-consciously, still staring at LUCY, not sure what just happened. Neither are we.

THE CUTE WAITER walks away, a little dazed, a little turned on, and very confused.

GENEVIEVE

Well I guess your weight's not going to be an issue. But you really have to eat, Lucy. Please tell me you don't have an eating disorder. I cannot deal with another client who's in and out of rehab. It makes you seem common.

LUCY

No way. I can really put it away when I'm hungry. I'm just -- picky. I like food that's -- beautiful.

LUCY looks back over at the CUTE WAITER who has stopped and looked back at her.

GENEVIEVE

Well if the camera loves you as much as our waiter does, you'll book every job you audition for. Which is what I wanted to talk about today. What kind of roles do you see yourself playing? I'm still getting to know you, Lucy -- and without a reel I don't know where to put you, how to submit you for projects.

LUCY

I thought the Baron told you about me.

GENEVIEVE

Yes, you come highly recommended -- why do you think I took you on as a client? I know you have more ambition than what you're letting on -- so just level with me, OK? Do you think you have what it takes to make a career here?

LUCY

I do. Yes.

GENEVIEVE

Good. That was excellent -- very direct, I believed you. That's what this game is about: making others believe you. And you're charismatic, that's something you either have or you don't have -- it can't be taught. Or bought. Or faked.

LUCY

Are there any projects you think I'd be right for?

GENEVIEVE

Things are pitifully slow right now -- it seems like every time there's any kind of holiday or virus the entire town comes to a screeching stop. And then it takes several days to start up again and then there's another holiday. I don't know how anything gets done -- but it does. Something about California, I suppose. Speaking of which -- how are you liking it here?

LUCY

I like it. I like the weather.

LUCY's attention drifts over to the CUTE WAITER and he sees her looking at him.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I've had some amazing meals since I've been here. Californians have the best taste.

GENEVIEVE

In what?

LUCY

What?

GENEVIEVE

The best taste in what?

LUCY

In everything. I just love how they taste.

GENEVIEVE

(laughing)

What are you talking about? Are you a cannibal?

LUCY

Yes. Do you have a problem with that?

GENEVIEVE looks at LUCY -- not sure where this is going.

LUCY suddenly laughs.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Was I believable?

GENEVIEVE

(laughing)

Yes. A little TOO believable. But point made. Though I don't remember now what that point might have been.

LUCY

The point is that I'm very convincing so surely there's a project out there that's looking for someone like me.

GENEVIEVE

No no no! Here's another tip: there is never anyone else out there "like you". YOU are one of a kind -- that's why they want you, that's why they have to have you, that's why they'll do anything to GET you.

LUCY

You should write a book. You'd make a fortune.

GENEVIEVE

I should. But I don't have time. And people don't read books anymore. Plus I'm too busy taking my clients to lunch. And this is a first -- usually when I take a client to lunch they actually have lunch.

LUCY

Stop worrying -- I'll eat when I'm hungry, promise.

GENEVIEVE

Fine. There are a couple of big studio films that might have a small part in it for you -- I'm friendly with a line producer who owes me a little favor and I'll see if I can use that to get you the role.

LUCY

How small is the role?

GENEVIEVE

Here's another tip: confidence is good, arrogance is a deal-breaker.

LUCY

I'm not being arrogant, I just want to know about the role. If it's really small then why not hold out for something bigger?

GENEVIEVE

Because no one knows who you are, Lucy. We have to introduce you to the world, and we want to do that carefully. This is how careers are made.

LUCY

What about TV?

GENEVIEVE

I've got some feelers out.

LUCY

There are like 600 channels with 6000 shows on TVs everywhere -- surely there's something that needs me.

GENEVIEVE

Alright, I wasn't going to bring it up because I'm not sure if it's a good fit. But it's a series.

LUCY

Cable, streaming, or network?

GENEVIEVE

Wow. Are you sure you haven't done this before?

LUCY

I've had a lot of time on my hands. Feels like centuries.

GENEVIEVE

Right. It's actually a web series. They're making eight webisodes and they've got scripts for 20 so if they can get the funding they'll make 28. They're doing crowd-sourcing and the writer-director has family in the business so there's definitely money there. Hollywood royalty, you know.

LUCY

So it's not even a real series?

GENEVIEVE

It's a way for a show to get picked up AND for everyone involved to turn it into a bigger gig.

LUCY

Meaning it's my job to be so brilliant that it makes this rich kid look good which will get him his next bigger job.

GENEVIEVE

And you. Plus it's a fantastically low-pressure way for you to get some experience in front of the camera.

LUCY

Meaning you don't think people will see it.

GENEVIEVE

I didn't say that. I just mean you'll do the work but without all the pressure. Plus it might even be fun.

LUCY

You don't make it sound very fun but OK -- what's the project?

GENEVIEVE

It's a little cray-cray which makes it completely hip and fresh. Very high concept. It's about a young woman who moves to LA to be a movie star --

LUCY

Check.

GENEVIEVE

-- and ends up in a TV series about a young woman who moves to LA to be a movie star.

LUCY

That sounds fucking terrible.

GENEVIEVE

There's more.

LUCY

There better be.

GENEVIEVE

The character in the tv series within the tv series -- she's a vampire.

LUCY plays this very carefully.

LUCY

OK. You mean? Like?

GENEVIEVE

Yes and... And to make things even more interesting -- the character herself -- the one PLAYING a vampire in the series within the series -- she's actually a vampire as well.

LUCY

OK.

GENEVIEVE

I told you it was cray-cray. Very high concept. Sort of "vampire meta-meta".

LUCY

So let me make sure I have this straight. This webisode thing is about a woman who is a vampire who is on a tv show about a woman who is a vampire.

GENEVIEVE

Right -- but no one knows she's a vampire.

LUCY

In the show or in the show-within-the-show?

GENEVIEVE

Both. Everyone thinks she's acting.

LUCY

But she's actually --

GENEVIEVE

A vampire.

LUCY

(intrigued)

Huh.

GENEVIEVE

Telling you like this, it sounds radical, right? Cray-cray in the best ways.

LUCY

And somebody actually came up with that idea? It's not a remake or a documentary or something?

GENEVIEVE

What? No. These are kids right out of UCSB -- they're very original. I think they drink coffee and smoke dope all day to come up with their ideas.

LUCY

Sounds fun. When would I meet them?

GENEVIEVE

We would arrange for a time and place -- I'd be there, of course -- and we'll see what we think. Looking at you now, talking about it -- I think you'd be amazing in the role. You're -- strangely perfect.

LUCY

I agree...

(catching herself)

She said with charming sarcasm.

GENEVIEVE

(pleased)

Excellent. You're a fast learner.

LUCY's eye catches the CUTE WAITER as he subtly makes it clear he's going to head back for the restrooms.

LUCY

Will you excuse me? I'm going to use the loo.

LUCY goes.

GENEVIEVE checks her email.

She types a text.

She dials a number.

GENEVIEVE

(to mobile phone)

I always get your voicemail. Listen, I have a new client I think you're going to want to meet. I'm calling you first. She's got something -- special. She's truly one of a kind. Timeless but very contemporary. Call me and I'll set it up, OK, lovey? Ciao.

GENEVIEVE hangs up.

LUCY returns to the table. She looks very healthy -- there's more color in her face.

LUCY

What did I miss?

GENEVIEVE looks at her, puzzled.

LUCY (CONT'D)

What?

GENEVIEVE

You have something on your --

GENEVIEVE makes a gesture to the corner of her own mouth.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

It looks like -- blood.

LUCY nonchalantly wipes blood from the corner of her mouth.

LUCY

I must have bitten my tongue. I hate when that happens.

GENEVIEVE looks away and LUCY licks the blood from her finger like it's dessert.

GENEVIEVE looks up.

GENEVIEVE

Sure you won't have something to eat?

LUCY

No thanks. I'm full.

GENEVIEVE's phone buzzes/vibrates.

LIGHTS OUT.