

UNDER THE TABLE

a screenplay by

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INT. RESTAURANT - DUSK

An upscale urban restaurant -- cozy, but not too small, with a few dozen tables. The tables are covered in long white tablecloths. Perfect perfect place settings. Quadrants bathed in dim, romantic light.

At a far corner, a quiet PATRON reads the daily newspaper.

At the bar, a lone BARTENDER cleans a glass.

At the front foyer, a statuesque HOST.

In the center of the restaurant, at a larger, rectangle-shaped table, sits EMMA, late twenties, well-dressed and stiff. She is next to GREG, who has a resemblance to Emma, but is a bit older; he is also more slouched and casual. Across the table, Greg holds the hand of MARTY, an attractive and lithe woman his same age.

EMMA

The talk is that this place is killer.

Emma opens the heavy menu and peruses.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Alaskan Code over rice with orange spears.

GREG

Place looks expensive.

EMMA

I've got it. You don't come to the city very often.

MARTY

You don't have to-

EMMA

No, I have it.

(to Greg)

Starts me off on a good foot with your new girlfriend.

GREG

(Hesitant)

Well, Emma, I guess this as good a time as-

MARTY

(to Greg)

Hush.

GREG

We're-

MARTY

No, it's-

GREG

It's just that we wanted to tell  
you that we're-

EMMA

(Over the moon)  
Getting married!

GREG

(After pause)  
Pregnant.

Emma holds a bit, then looks down at the menu.

EMMA

Shit.

GREG

Emma, I, we-

EMMA

There's shrimp on the menu. You  
can't eat, uh, uh, fish or  
something, when... when...

MARTY

No, it's fine-

EMMA

I'll get the waiter. He'll have to  
know, uh that, and advise us on  
what you can, can...

(Signaling)

Waiter!

From the kitchen, the WAITER appears and hears the call,  
starts to cross.

MARTY

I can eat fish. All kinds of fish.  
Don't worry about it.

EMMA

Waiter, yes...

WAITER

Yes?

EMMA

My brother's girl... she's... what do you recommend, shoot, umm, if a girl is...?

GREG

Emma - Marty can eat anything.

EMMA

Pregnant. Pregnant. That's what I meant to say.

WAITER

Oh, well, congratulations.

GREG

There are no restrictions on fish, are there?

MARTY

There's plenty on the menu. I can choose something-

EMMA

(Realizing)

Oh, oh! I'm such an idiot.

She rises and leans over towards Greg.

EMMA (CONT'D)

This is terrific news! Fuck the fish! Fuck the fucking fish! You're going to have a BABY! Ha! So amazingly cool! I'm a bad sister.

Hugs all around. The Waiter is also swept into the moment.

WAITER

Let me have the bar send out some champagne. On the house.

The Host makes a no-no gesture to the waiter, out of sight of the guests, but it's too late.

WAITER (CONT'D)

(Shy now)

I'll be back in a moment to take your orders. And I'll ask the cooks about the fish.

He departs.

Emma sits back down.

The Patron raises his glass in salute, is acknowledged by the adjoining table, and then keeps eating.

EMMA  
So. Boy or girl?

MARTY  
We don't know yet, we-

GREG  
Marty sees the doctor next week.

Greg is momentarily distracted by something under the table.

GREG (CONT'D)  
And it's probably too early for all that.

EMMA  
Yes, you're not even showing.

MARTY  
I'm not looking forward to-

EMMA  
Of course.

Greg is still distracted, looks to his feet.

GREG  
Ah, yes. So next week. The old Ultra. I will finally get to see the woman-I-love's innards.

Greg again stops speaking and leans down, looking towards the floor, his bottom half completely hidden by the tablecloth.

GREG (CONT'D)  
Emma... Is there a reason this restaurant only has four customers on a Friday night?

EMMA  
What do you mean?

GREG  
Rats or something?

Emma laughs, then stalls.

EMMA  
Greg. Are you serious?

MARTY

Greg, don't joke like-

Greg tries to lift the tablecloth on his side, but there's too much fabric.

GREG

I don't want to disturb the polite settings. But I think there's a- Marty, that's not your leg?

MARTY

Under the table? No.

GREG

I think there's a, a dog under the table. It brushed my leg.

EMMA

Don't be ridiculous!

MARTY

Take out your legs, then, if you-

GREG

It's my feet, actually, but something brushed me through the tablecloth.

Greg begins to bustle the tablecloth from where he sits.

EMMA

Please, don't, please.

Suddenly, Greg starts to loudly scream!

Something has got him by the legs and is pulling him under the table. He's in severe pain and within seconds is swallowed up by the tablecloth and disappears.

As this happens:

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's not funny! It's not funny!  
Stop it!

Emma leaps up. So does Marty.

MARTY

Greg! What's wrong! What's wrong!

The Patron rushes and tries to grab Greg's hand, to grab the last flailing part of him before he's gone.

The host looks frozen in horror.

At the front of the table, the white tablecloth is splattered from the inside with copious amounts of blood.

The fringe ruffles with animalistic fury, then quiets.

Pause. Quiet.

Everyone stares down at the table.

CU:

The Waiter, a COOK, and a DISHWASHER at the kitchen door, mouths open.

WAITER

We heard screams.

From underneath the table - a bloodied hand darts out.

MARTY

Oh my God, Greg!

MARTY, thinking it's a rescue, grabs the hand and pulls it free - it is severed and dripping blood. She screams and is splattered as she tosses it away.

Everyone screams then settles, breathing heavy.

EMMA

He said there was an animal under the table.

BARTENDER

(to Cook and Dishwasher)

Call the police. And no one else come out of the kitchen!

The two race back into the belly of the restaurant, as told.

The waiter comes forward and stands beside the host.

SOUND, slowly rising:

From under the table, they hear chomping and slurping.

PATRON

It's eating him.

EMMA

(Hysterical)

It's a joke, it's a joke.

WAITER  
 Someone's got to go under there.  
 He may be alive!

They all look to each other. No one moves.

MARTY  
 Greg! Greg! Answer me!

Just the sounds.

The Patron returns to his table and picks up his steak knife. The other see this and follow suit, gathering forks, up-turned bottles of beer, and other found weapons.

WAITER  
 I'll get a butcher knife from the  
 kitchen.

The WAITER returns with an imposing knife. The eyes of the others clearly nominate him due to this weapon. He swallows and moves in.

Gently, slowly, he reaches for the tablecloth.

HOST  
 No, don't take it off.

WAITER  
 I'm just going to look.

The Host collects Emma and Marty.

HOST  
 Go. Get outside. Run. You  
 shouldn't be here.

EMMA  
 I'm staying.

MARTY  
 I have to see if he's alive.

The WAITER lifts the corner of the tablecloth. He creates a small hole so he can see.

Twitching, he makes an awful face, repulsed.

WAITER  
 Oh, God.

BARTENDER  
 Is he-?



WAITER  
He's dead. He's all in pieces.

Marty and Emma gasp and cry.

PATRON  
Did you see it? Do you see the  
thing that-

WAITER  
Wait. I can't...

He moves in closer to the chairs and raises the tablecloth a few inches more.

WAITER (CONT'D)  
Wait. Yes. There. That's no  
dog...

Suddenly, a leathery, deformed hand reaches out and grabs the WAITER's hand. The hand pulls him quickly under the table, which shakes. Dishes crash!

Screams and blood!

Body parts, meat chunks fly out from under the table!

Blood soaks everyone.

As it settles down to just the alien sound of chomping and eating, there is a long, long pause as everyone looks at everyone else and the carnage around them.

Long silence.

CREDITS.