1. All information the audience has must belong to a focal character's perspective.
2. Resisting the inclination to heighten the world for entertainment.
3. The film must be happening in the moment of its creation.
4. The visual language should replicate the perspective of who the moment concerns
5. We will use natural dialogue inspired by verbatim theatre techniques.

# **1** INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

1.1

Some people are situated quietly in a bar. One man REGINALD, stocky, late middle-aged businessman scrutinises the room. His wife LYDIA, stern, lady of leisure, their daughter AMELIA, early 20s, self conscious, though still enjoys the benefits of her class. They are accompanied by EDWARD, similar in age to his business associate, thinner, less jovial then REGINALD. He is accompanied by his wife, —, They are joined by their son ARCHIE, an attractive young man, just graduated and ready to join the corporate world. REGINALD and EDWARD lead the group, following the restaurant manager, MATTHEW, into their private room. MATHEW, REGINALD and EDWARD exchange brief pleasantries with Peter shaking Reginald’s hand slightly. They approach a table situated in a private room adjacent to the bar.

1.2

They walk through the wide hall. The room has an unmistakable opulence and wealth. In the centre of this room, framed by ornate sandstone detailing is a single table. It is adorned with fresh flowers, well set, folded napkins. They are led over to the table, being used to the status this place brings. They take a seat and we see them. They become engulfed in the texture of the room, their presence fills the space. Their voices fill the entire room; They belong here.

1.3

REGINALD

(Cordially)

What a pleasure this is.

EDWARD

I can see no better occasion, and what a brilliant space!

1.4

LYDIA

(half interjecting)

We’ve been coming here a long time now, in fact we had Amelia’s 18th here, didn’t we sweetheart.

AMELIA

Oh (beat) yes, it’s lovely.

LYDIA

So lovely.

1.5

A waitress is seen in the background, she walks across the space, her gait is steady and rehearsed. Deliberate. This is SARAH.

Can someone write them talking about the architecture and interiors and business

SARAH

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, how are we?

REGINALD

Quite fine.

SARAH

My name is Sarah and I shall be your server tonight, if there is absolutely anything I can do for you please let me know.

Sarah places drink menus on tables.

Here are our menus… (menu descriptions)

I understand in terms of starters and mains, you are tasting our Christmas menu?

REGINALD

Yes, that's right.

SARAH

Brilliant, could I get some water for the table whilst you look at our drink selection?

REGINALD

(without hesitance as if the previous question was something he was naturally prepared for)

A bottle of still and a bottle of sparkling.

(SARAH leaves to go get water)

WIFE 2

I’ve been telling Eddie for (beat), god knows how long, we should look for stuff more central.

EDWARD

She has

WIFE 2

I have. Of course we have the Golf club, and it is…

LYDIA

So lovely, excellent for lunch but not so much for this, you know?

WIFE 2

(now also half interjecting)

And this space..

LYDIA

So lovely, (noticing Amelia is slightly disengaged) isn’t it darling

AMELIA

Yes of course, (still unsatisfying her Mother’s need for approval) very lovely.

.

(SARAH enters and places down the bottles of water)

ARCHIE is eyeing up SARAH. He is cocky, laid back, undressing her with his eyes. EDWARD notices this and cocks back, registering the waitress. They do not look her in her eyes, instead focusing solely on her body. The women notice in turn that the men have looked away. There is an immediate vitriol held between the mothers.

SARAH

(calm, collected, placed in between both families)

Shall we order some drinks?

Reggie goes to speak but is cut off

LYDIA

(Stern)

Yes,well, I know Me, Cate, and Amelia are having the(white meat dish)... we’ll have a bottle of the (long beat) Chateau Haut-Blan and you still have the other wine ?

SARAH

(promptly)

Yes, is that the 15 year or the 25?

LYDIA

Archie, you are having the other wine?

ARCHIE

(barely taking his eyes off SARAH)

I’ll have a glass

LYDIA

Brilliant. The 25 then please

just bring a glass for each of us

AMELIA

Oh, Mother I said I don’t-

(interrupted, here gaze moves to sarah)

LYDIA

(pretending to be light)

It’s fine, just bring them anyway

AMELIA looks to SARAH and then away as she smiles to herself, and looks down. SARAH smiles around the table and tries to mask her discomfort at the gaze of the men.

SARAH

Certainly, I’ll be right back

LYDIA

(faintly to Amelia)

You’re being rude.

**2**

2.1

She walks away and we watch her leave, the eyes of the men linger, predatory and aggressive. Each examined in their own way, REGINALD looks at her with an old, deep seated power. He wishes to take her, he swivels his whiskey glass and raises it to his nose. EDWARD seems appreciative, as if she is a gift for him. ARCHIE’s eyes dart across her.

2.2

REGINALD eyes follow her out of the door but drift into a blank stare as he takes a drink before returning to the real world.

2.3

SARAH walks over to the small bar. It is well stocked, well maintained. PETER is bartending. He smiles as he sees her approaching. She takes four seconds, counting under her breath, before she drops her customer service facade. She appears exhausted, she holds enough composure not to slump over the bar, but does support herself.

2.4

SARAH

Need a bottle of the Chateau Haut-Brion and bottle of wine. Six glasses.

PETER

Yeah, of course. (pause, leans forward) I got a latte under the bar for you when you’ve got a minute.

2.5

He reaches to one of the bottles, she mouths a thanks and exhales slightly.

PETER

(...as he is doing so)

There's only one more, I'll get some from the fridge if you think they’re gonna want more?

SARAH

Yeah, could you please.

PETER

(...as he is doing so)

There’s only one more, I’ll get some from the fridge if you think theyre gonna want more?

SARAH

Yeah, could you please.

Peter presents it and begins grabbing the glasses; checking for blemishes as he sets them down. A figure emerges beside SARAH. KELLY, younger, anxious.

2.6

KELLY

Um, Sarah. A table downstairs just asked me if the Gnocchi is gluten free…?

SARAH

Gnocchi has flour in it. Anything made with flour has gluten in it.

KELLY

(relieved)

Ok… Got it… Thanks!

SARAH

No worries

She brushes her hand on SARAH’s arm and hurries away. PETER chuckles to himself.

PETER

We’ve all been there

Sarah acknowledges enough to be polite.

PETER

(glancing at the table and speaking under his breath)
How are they?

SARAH

Same as always.

PETER chuckles again. ARCHIE walks towards the bar. He leans back into his body, staring at SARAH, arrogant grin on his lips. She turns to him and smiles, friendly though clearly on edge. He chuckles to himself. She looks away, and Archie, somewhat crestfallen scoffs under his breath, clearly annoyed.

SARAH registers the moment, but maintains her composure. ARCHIE wraps his knuckle against the bar, before whistling (could be too cliche for fine dining) to get PETER’s attention.

ARCHIE

(Louder)
(tersely) Whiskey coke.

PETER

Any preference in Whiskey.

ARCHIE

(scoffs)
I thought that was your job.

(beat)

What my father is having.

PETER

Ah, the bourbon.. Great choice sir.

ARCHIE

(Directed to impress Sarah)

Did he not hear me say Whiskey?

SARAH politely chuckles. PETER chuckles to himself, before sighing and smiling to ARCHIE. All the while, SARAH is balancing the glasses, ready to take them over to the table. PETER uncorks the whiskey and pours the drink. SARAH begins to walk off, ARCHIE grabs her arm.

ARCHIE

Let me help. Don’t want you dropping any.

SARAH

(Frustration masked, anger rising)
Oh, thank you but don’t worry, I’m quite experienced.

ARCHIE

I’m sure.

PETER

(Interrupting)
Your bourbon and coke.

He places the glass down firmly, enough to take ARCHIE’s attention. SARAH uses the opportunity to walk swiftly over to the table. The family is muttering about something (Anecdote here). SARAH lays out the glasses and pours into each. ARCHIE returns to the table at this time. He leans back, gesturing for SARAH to pour. She does, and he moves forward to stop, when it's nearing full.

SARAH

(to LYDIA)

Madam, your favourite?

LYDIA

How did you know that..?

SARAH

If I remember correctly you told me at your last visit here

LYDIA

Well, (beat )yes it is my favourite…

LYDIA

(to Amelia whilst laughing)

I completely forgot…

She leaves the empty RED bottle on the table to continue pouring the WHITE wine

REGINALD

(to SARAH)

Don’t forget this RED WINE

SARAH smiles, as if she was going to anyway. She heads swiftly to the kitchen.She practises her breathing, attempting to calm herself, though she is unable to fully level off, clearly agitated. She strides into the Kitchen, making eye contact with CHEF 1 (actor name). He laughs to himself, noticing SARAH’s anger.

CHEF 1

Hey, you’re here again? (beat) How’s that table treating you?

SARAH
Please, not today y/n

CHEF 1
You ain’t even gotta remember orders today, just smile, look pretty and pour drinks.You got it easy!

SARAH (coy)
Just tell me when the *fucking* course is ready Chef.

CHEF 1(Cautiously
Alright.

CHEF 1
Chef, how we lookin on the (name of first course)

CHEF 2
Plating now, Chef.

SARAH waits for the dish to be finished, leaving her a brief moment of peace. Everything is fading to silence.

The service bell rings, SARAH reacts like it nails on a chalkboard.

CHEF 1
There you go, no need to panic.

SARAH smiles a fake smile, to which the Chef laughs whilst pinning his ticket down onto the check spindle, she grabs the tray and walks swiftly back into the dining room. The tables are laughing, all except AMELIA. They are in the middle of a story. (this is an anecdote).

SARAH walks forward and waits for a moment, but seeing no one notices her, begins to grow irate again. She strides around the table quickly, and begins to hand over dishes. They are immaculate, and go completely unnoticed by the table. She arrives at ARCHIE but sees he is leaning over to his dad and whispering something.

ARCHIE is still whispering to his dad. SARAH Already irritated, she leans over the two to place down the dish. She places EDWARD’s dish but as she goes to place ARCHIE’s he suddenly moves backward, and SARAH spills some of the dish over his lap. There is a very brief moment of silence. Quickly, The table are outraged, and begin to speak in shocked dismay.

SARAH
Oh my god, I am so so sorry, please let me-

SARAH, panicked, tries to clean up the spill, though doesn’t know how to approach as it is on ARCHIE’s lap.

REGINALD(Interrupting)
You foolish girl, look what you’ve done.

LYDIA
I am so terribly sorry, usually they’re much better than this.

WIFE 2
Archie, are you alright dear.

ARCHIE
 Yes I just, it’s just a bit shocking, I’ve *never* had *anything* like this happen before.

EDWARD
(directly to Sarah)
Sorry, do you have any clue how much his jacket costs? How difficult is your job? Seriously, How hard must it truly be to put plates on tables?

SARAH (puts plates down,no longer trying to clean)
I…um…Well, you…

EDWARD
(mocking)
You, you what, speak up. (beat) No? Never mind. You’ve completely ruined our evening.

SARAH
I am truly sorry, I really didn’t mean to-

WIFE 2
(speaking over SARAH)
I can’t believe this.

SARAH, full of dread, stood frozen trying to process the situation.

REGINALD(aghast)

Get me (beat, clicks fingers) get me Matthew right now. I-

SARAH

No no, it’s fine I can -

LYDIA

Just do it! (beat, turns back to the table) My word!

She walks away from the table. She strides back past the bar toward the kitchen. She walks past MATTHEW, he notices her distress and hurries to the table. She catches the attention of CHEF 1. He goes to chastise but sees what is happening and doesn’t.

SARAH
Chef, I need another (spilt dish name),

SARAH walks to the back door, opens it and breathes in heavy unregistered breaths. the chefs don’t complain, They set out to make another starter. SARAH begins to tear up, anger overriding her. Her frustration is peaking, her manners failing. A figure appears at the doorway, KELLY.

KELLY
Sarah, are you…

She doesn’t respond.

KELLY (continued)

Do you want me to…

SARAH
I’ve got this, I'll be fine. You should probably go run tables or something.

3.She flashes KELLY a false smile, enough to send her away, and walks past her. She tries to resume her count, trying once more to gain control. She fails, her panic overriding, her face unable to stay rigid and polite. She makes her way to the kitchen doors and stops. She places her hands against it, pulling in long breaths. She looks up, calm, controlled. She smiles and pushes open the door.

At the table, the party is all looking at her. AMELIA is looking down, and REGINALD is over in the corner with the manager. He spots her arriving in the room and they both direct their focus towards her. The manager looks over and nods. He pats him on the back, and reassures him of something. SARAH, panicked walks over to the table. She takes the half empty bottle, and begins to top up the glasses. No one says anything, they watch and wait. Contempt fills the air. She smiles at each, some look away, some slightly scowl in return. ARCHIE scoffs a half laugh. SARAH, despite herself, takes deep breaths, as if she is going to tear up. Though she smiles through it, her breathing is heavy and tears run as they scowl at her. She finishes the bottle and walks over toward the kitchen doors, walking past KELLY with the replacement meal. There, waiting is the manager. He watches her walk in, follows behind her. She walks, not daring to turn to him.

MANAGER
Sarah.

She ignores him.

MANAGER
Sarah. (she stops here) Let’s stop by my office, please.

Turning to him, tears gone. Reluctantly she follows him. They walk into his office, he takes a small glass and has a quick drink from it. It’s clearly booze. He looks at her disapprovingly

SARAH
I can explain

MANAGER
There is no need to.

SARAH
It was an accident, an honest mist-

MANAGER
I thought we could trust you with that table.

SARAH
You can! You can trust me.

MANAGER
Sarah.

SARAH
Look I promise it won’t happen again but.

Let me go sort it out

(she says impatiently)

Its fine ill just go deal with them

MANAGER
Sarah, They've asked for someone else to tend to them for the rest of the evening

She stops.

MANAGER
(continued)
This is your last shift here.

I’m sorry. Listen, I had really hoped that you could’ve handled a table this important. Half of them are shareholders here. I’m sorry, mate. *(long beat)* I um… It’s out of my hands.

3.He waits for her to say something. She does not. He continues to talk about severance, packing bags, etc… but Sarah doesn’t hear. She stares forward, stunned. Eventually he leaves the room, leaving her in the staff room alone.

SARAH walks back through the kitchen

KELLY
What happened there?

SARAH doesn't answer. CHEF 1 asks if she’s alright. She says nothing. She walks to the changing room, takes off her apron. She goes to put it in her bag, but doesn’t. She drops it to the bench. picks up her coat, holds it over her arm but doesn’t put it on. She walks to the back door. The kitchen staff and a few others look on, talking amongst themselves. She swings open the back door and we watch her leave, walking away without stopping or turning back.

At the doorway, KELLY looks on. She seems uncomfortable. Chef 1 is beside her. He turns away. After a moment, she turns as well.

(CREDITS) A LONG TAKE OF THE BARMAN MAKING AND SHAKING COCKTAILS, TALKING TO KELLY WHO IS LEANING ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE BAR OUT OF FOCUS

FIN.