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THE LUNCH DATE

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION DAY

A middle-aged WOMAN wearing a fur coat walks across the station. She looks elegant and self-assured, and carries several shopping bags, including one from Bloomingdales.

The woman looks up at the schedule board. She fumbles in her pocket book and takes out her ticket. She hurries back a homeless man who is panhandling in the station.

She collides with a BLACK MAN. The pocketbook flies open. Her lipstick, pill bottle, and other stuff roll onto the station floor.

WOMAN

Oh my Lord! She kneels down to pick up her stuff.

The black man kneels down beside her. He is affable enough, but his bulk and dark sunglasses make her recoils slightly.

BLACK MAN

I'm sorry. Let me get you that. He begins picking up some items.

WOMAN

No. NO!

She picks up the remaining items in a hurry.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

No, don't! You're making me miss my train.

The woman grabs her stuff and runs off toward the platforms.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TRAIN PLATFORM DAY

A train rolls down the tracks as the woman rushes toward the tracks. She's missed it! She is breathless, agitated. She looks into her bag: her wallet is gone!

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION DAY

The woman returns to the main hall of the station. She looks up at the schedule board again as it updates the departures. She is clearly shaken and has tears in her eyes. She dries them off with her handkerchief. She looks ahead of her, a lost look in her eyes.

A homeless black man walks by her. He is playing a harmonica to an invisible audience. The HARMONICA MAN talks to no one in particular.

HARMONICA MAN

Lord have mercy! Ha! Ha! He know it, he know it! How you doing? You know who it is this morning! I know you are...

Hot Dog! You know who you are! Happy New Year's.

God bless ya!

The woman looks at him in disbelief and walks away.

INT. DINER DAY

The woman walks into the station diner. It is a bit old fashioned, with refrigerated glass cases containing prepared food, a small kitchen behind a tall counter, and neat rows of booths with gleaming brass frames. She takes a salad out of a glass case. A COOK stands behind the counter. He is wearing a white paper hat, an apron, and a smile.

WOMAN

How much is this salad?

COOK

Two dollars.

She puts the salad on the counter. She rustles through her pocket book.

WOMAN

Well, I am not sure I have that much.

She puts a dollar and some change on the counter.

WOMAN

One dollar. Here's some. The cook counts the money with his finger.

COOK

A dollar fifty... two dollars. Here ya go, lady. She grabs her salad and her bags.

WOMAN

Napkin.

The cook hands her a napkin. She walks toward the booths.

INT. DINER DAY

The woman walks down the aisle looking for a booth. She puts down her salad plate on a table and puts her bags on the seat. She sits down next to her shopping bags, but almost immediately stands up. She is still holding her napkin.

INT. DINER DAY

The woman walks back toward the front of the diner. She grabs a fork from the cutlery bin. She looks at her fork critically. She wipes it vigorously with her napkin. As she makes her way back to her booth, she stops and stares.

INT. DINER DAY

A black HOMELESS MAN is sitting there, eating her salad. He is dressed in a heavy wool coat. He is wearing a wool hat with the price tag is still attached and clearly visible. He looks up at her. The woman sits across him.

WOMAN

That's my salad!

HOMELESS MAN

Get out of here!

WOMAN

That's my salad. She reaches for the plate. He yanks it back.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey!

He returns his attention to his salad. The woman watches him as he enjoys every bite. Time passes. She picks up her fork and tentatively reaches into the plate. She quickly grabs a leaf of lettuce and starts eating it. He pays her no attention and keeps eating. She takes another bite, then another. He lets her share the salad. He stands up and walks off, letting her eat the rest of the food. He returns, carrying two cups of coffee. He delicately puts the cups on the table and sits. He offers her sugar.

WOMAN

No. Thank you.

He offers her a packet of Sweet and Low from his coat. She takes it.

WOMAN

Thank you.

They share a moment together. She seems to notice the man for the first time. She checks her watch. She stands up, takes her purse, and leaves. He watches her leave, a sad look on his face.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL DAY

The woman quickly crosses the great hall toward the platforms. Suddenly she stops: her shopping bags! She left them in the diner. She runs back.

INT. DINER DAY

She arrives at her booth. The empty salad plate and the two cups and their saucers are still there, but the man is gone, and so are her bags. She starts pacing. Suddenly, in the next booth, she sees her shopping bag, and the salad she bought, uneaten. She understands what happened: she ate the man's salad! She starts chuckling. She gets up, grabs her bags, and runs out of the diner, still laughing.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION DAY

The woman is running through the crowd. She passes a homeless MAN ON CRUTCHES.

MAN ON CRUTCHES

Spare some change, Please Ma'am. I'm starving.

She hurries to the platform.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL DAY

The woman runs down the platform to the waiting commuter train.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL DAY

The train starts off into the tunnel.

THE END