

THE BAKER'S GAZE

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INT. DAY- BEHIND THE COUNTER AT ITALIAN BAKERY

DEREK a 22 year old who works at his family's bakery. He is prepping for opening and is kneading dough.

Derek is moving sleepily doing each task. His mother, LYDIA enters the room with a smirk across her face.

LYDIA

So...?

DEREK

So? What mom?

LYDIA

So...how was last night? You haven't told me anything yet!

DEREK

Mom...

LYDIA

I am dying to know! I have little to look forward to! Just entertain your poor mother!

DEREK

Ma, If it will get you off my back...it was fine.

LYDIA

What??? Just "fine?" No spark? No magic?

DEREK

No mom. I don't think that Sophia the Barista and I are soulmates. Okay?

Derek turns to his mother and stops kneading.

DEREK (CONT'D)

And that reminds me, please stop writing my number on receipts! Please, it gives the wrong idea!

LYDIA

I- I was only trying to help. What was wrong anyway? She was absolutely beautiful! You can't go around being too picky, Derek! You'll die alone!

DEREK

Enough with the dramatics, okay?
I am not even sure what was wrong
if I am honest, ma.
Just was a boring night. We don't
have anything in common. It was two
people sharing a meal and staring
at their watches till the check
came.

LYDIA

Yikes! That poor girl! How did I
raise a man with no instinct for
romance!? If your father was here-
God bless his soul-

DEREK

Yea! My father would be so
disappointed.

LYDIA

He swept me off my feet any chance
he could! If any man looked at a
clock in my presence I'd walk to
the nearest exit!

Derek sighs heavily and goes back to kneading the dough.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Okay...but you can't say I didn't
try.

DEREK

I really wish I COULD say you did
not try, mom. Being 22 and getting
set up on dates by your mother is
not exactly a typical thing.

Exasperated at this response

LYDIA

Well I never-

DEREK

Mother please. It's just not
happening.

EXT. NIGHT - BEHIND THE BAKERY

Derek is lugging out stale bread in large bags to the
dumpster.

DEREK

I just have a few more bags, ma.
And then we can head out for the
night-

In the dark there is a figure that emerges behind the dumpster. The figure is short, petite and quick. Derek pauses in disbelief and walks towards the dark end of the lot to inspect the movement further.

LYDIA

Hurry up, sweetheart! I'm not
missing jeopardy tonight because of
you. Time and time again I make
sacrifices for you! I draw the line
at my programs!

DEREK

Okay! One sec....

Derek walks slowly toward the figure that is facing away from him and they are knee deep inside the dumpster of his family bakery now. Rummaging through bags they can't hear him approaching.

The knot in Derek's stomach is growing in fear that the figure is dangerous. He proceeds anyway.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Hello?

The figure jumps at the sound of Derek's voice and her face is revealed with the slight glow of the street light hitting her face. The black hoodie veils VICKY's blonde hair she's holding bright yellow shop-rite bags full of the bread Derek just threw out.

VICKY

Oh my goodness I am so sorry!

DEREK

What are you doing?

VICKY

Usually you're gone by the time I
get here- I really did it this time-
oh my goodness

DEREK

Ah I see what's going on here!

Derek releases a sigh of relief that this encounter was not a dangerous one. He smirks to himself about how beautiful Vicky is and fixes his posture.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Ha! I know our bread is good but I assure you it's better when it's not mixing with the dumpster water from Ling's Palace

VICKY

Here. I won't take it. I won't come back. I'm sorry. I should have known I would only be lucky for so long!

Vicky lifts herself up out of the dumpster her arms covered in purple bruises. She sweeps herself off shyly and starts to walk away leaving the bright yellow bags behind.

DEREK

No! What? You're fine! Take as much as you need seriously! I was joking!...It Just didn't land well! But please help yourself.

Vicky stops in her tracks and faces her body back in his direction.

DEREK (CONT'D)

We won't be using any of these! You're more than welcome to take there now but you can just come in before we lock up and I can help you out any other night.

LYDIA OFFSCREEN

Sweetheart let's go! What could you be doing out there?

At the sound of Lydia's voice in the distance Vicky sprints off into the street and disappears.

DEREK

Ugh. Damn it mom...I'm coming

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Jeopardy is playing loudly on the television as Lydia and Derek eat dinner in front of it. Derek stares off to the distance as his mom shouts answers to the show joyfully.

LYDIA

You have to get better at this game, Derek. You're getting your butt beat by your old lady! Pathetic!

DEREK

Wha-what?

LYDIA

What's up with you tonight? No effort in jeopardy in this house is truly a crime...

Derek shrugs and continues eating his dinner. His stare does not waver.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Oh...Oh no is this because I keep pushing you to date that-

DEREK

Oh goodness- no mom!

LYDIA

I really just want to see you happy! Is that so crazy?

DEREK

Everything is fine. I'm just tired, okay?

LYDIA

...and they say women are cranky...

INT. BAKERY- MORNING

Derek and his mother are kneading the bread and getting things ready for the day. The door jingles as it opens with a young woman entering. Derek looks up he recognizes the woman as the dumpster diver from last night.

VICKY

I think this should clear some things up.

Vicky places a jar of loose change on the counter in front of Derek.

DEREK

You really don't need to-

LYDIA

Well hello! How can we help you today?

VICKY

I think this is what I owe
you...I'll be on my way. Thanks
again.

LYDIA

I don't understand...Did you want
to hear our specials?

DEREK

Mother, please...I'll explain
later.
Miss? Please take your money. I
just can't accept it.

Derek grabs a fresh baguette and the jar of change and pushes
them towards the front of the counter.

With tears in her eyes Vicky takes the jar and bread and
gives him a big hug. Lydia stands with furred eyebrows in
confusion behind the counter.

VICKY

My name is Vicky. Thank you for
this kindness. I hope I see you
around.

Vicky walks out of the bakery and Derek darts after her.
Leaving his mother bewildered behind him.

LYDIA

Am I missing something?? My own
bakery and I'm the last to know
everything!

EXT. IN FRONT OF BAKERY- MORNING

Derek catches up to Vicky and grabs her arm. She turns
swiftly with tears still running down her face.

VICKY

I- I thought you said it's okay!
What's wrong?

DEREK

Vicky, I know this is crazy! But
can I take you on a date sometime?

VICKY

Oh...I don't need pity if that's
what this is. You don't need to do
that-

DEREK

What? No! No! That's not at all what I meant.

VICKY

You gave me enough you do not need to take me out for food, okay? I can get my own dinner.

DEREK

Vicky no! I think you're beautiful and there is something about you...I Can't quite put my finger on it...

Vicky's smiles and nods her head in agreement.

VICKY

Is it the garbage water left on me from Ling's Palace?

They both laugh and Vicky nods happily.

VICKY (CONT'D)

I would like that very much actually.

DEREK

Okay how does Manino's at 8 tomorrow sound?

VICKY

That sounds great but I'm not sure I have anything to wear...

Vicky looks down at her clothes shyly.

DEREK

Don't worry about a thing. What you're wearing now is perfect. We'll grab a slice and talk all night. Oh gosh! Where are my manners! My name is Derek. It was a pleasure to meet you Vicky!

Derek extends his hand to shake.

VICKY

The pleasure is mine.

Vicky takes his hand and shakes it firmly with a grin across her face.

Montage depicting months going by in this relationship:

Happy dates at restaurants, picnics in the park, laughing while working together at the bakery

INT. BAKERY- MORNING

Vicky and Derek are opening the bakery for the day and are cleaning and cooking.

VICKY

You guys need to start donating the leftovers, babe. If there was a bakery this good on my side of town that did not donate, I would not be the only person dumpster diving I can tell you that.

DEREK

We really should! I know it would help many people out

An awkward silence fills the air.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Um...speaking of your side of town, when am I going to be able to visit you?

VICKY

No. I've said this before. It's not happening. Please drop it.

DEREK

Haha..I don't know Vicky I think it would be good to get to know your family. I want to know everything about you and get that father's approval haha-

Vicky shoots a look of anger at Derek and stops in her tracks at this.

VICKY

I said no.

INT. BAKERY- NIGHT

Lydia and Derek are dealing with their last few orders and are closing the shop. CARL a regular is at the register swiping his card.

LYDIA
Sweetie, I think we need to talk
about something...

DEREK
Yea? What's up mom?- Thank you
CARL! Have a good night. Say "hi"
to the Misses!

CARL
See you around, Derek.

LYDIA
I bit my tongue for too long about
this...Are you sure we can trust
Vicky?

DEREK
Mother! That's awful! She's my
girlfriend-

LYDIA
Derek be serious! You have been
dating for quite some time now and
how much do you truly know about
her? You haven't seen her home, her
family, and she avoids almost every
conversation about her past!

DEREK
Mom stop! I care about her. Vicky
has been through so much.
Just give her some time! She will
tell us more when SHE is more
comfortable.

LYDIA
Time has passed and she only looks
more and more suspicious. I mean
Derek you literally found this
woman in the trash! And I'm
supposed to think she is more than
that?

Derek gasps at this comment.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
I am not comfortable leaving ANYONE
alone with the register if I don't
feel like I know them well

DEREK
She's not just someone random
woman.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

And for you to judge her for needing help makes me worried about who YOU are. I trust her, mom. And her not talking about her family doesn't mean she will take from us. They have nothing to do with each other!

LYDIA

You'll see I'm right only when the safe is empty!

DEREK

That's enough! Please-

VICKY

If you want to see my home so badly we can go tonight, okay?

Vicky walks from the back of the bakery towards Derek and Lydia. She has her sleeves rolled up in attempt at covering bruises across her arms and her head hanging low.

LYDIA

Oh dear...I did not mean for you to hear any of that...

VICKY

I know. I'll get your keys, Derek, and we can go to mine all together.

INT. CAR- NIGHT

Music plays softly on the radio of Derek's car while everyone sits silently during the drive. Dilapidated buildings and litter decorate the streets as they ride.

VICKY

Right here. Behind that red pickup truck...yea perfect.

DEREK

Ah. Looks...cozy!

EXT. OUTSIDE OF VICKY'S HOUSE- NIGHT

Vicky directs everyone inside this ranch style home in a sketchy part of town. The windows have thick metal bars in front of them to prevent burglary. People are staring in their direction on their porches. Derek locks his car again at the sight of this.

VICKY
Home sweet home.

INT. VICKY'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Behind the beat up wooden door revealed an older man in his 60s passed out on a couch. Beer bottles surrounded his body and were placed messily about the room. Take out containers are spread around upside down and crumpled up. The television blared loudly with sitcoms. The only light in the room comes from the television and a flickering lamp in the corner of the room.

Lydia looks around the room in awe and tears welt in her eyes. She looks at Vicky at a loss for words.

LYDIA
I-I'm so sorry if I hurt you dear-

VICKY
You wanted to see my family, right? That's it right there. That's my dad. This is what we are reduced to since my mom died a few years back. When he wakes up it'll be another few drinks down the gullet or a screaming match about whatever he conjures up. But by the looks of it, we have some time before that gamble.

DEREK
Please just stay with us. You should not have to deal with this.

Derek lifts his feet and pieces of receipts are stuck to his shoes.

VICKY
I'm used to it. And It's not so bad anyway. When he isn't taking camp on that couch he's working. So it's fine...mostly.

Vicky grips at her sleeves to cover up her revealing marks and smiles back at them.

DEREK
You should not be used to this. If I knew your situation was this bad I would have had you move in with us a long time ago.

LYDIA

Sweetie. I want you both safe and this environment is not good for you.

VICKY

It's best you go. Thanks for the ride.

DEREK

No. I'll help you pack your things and then we can all head back home.

The man on the couch let out a sleepy groan. Vicky starts to show Derek and Lydia swiftly towards the door to leave.

VICKY

Please go! We can talk about this another time. But it sounds like someone is waking up.

DEREK

I want to be there for you Vicky.

The man on the couch grumbles himself awake at the sound of them talking. His shirt is rolled up exposing his hairy midriff with a nametag on his chest that says MARTY. He growls before sitting up and his eyes are struggling to stay open.

MARTY

...ughh...my head...uhh...Who the fuck are these people, Vick?

VICKY

Daddy...I'm sorry these are my friends from work Lydia and Derek.

LYDIA

Pleasure to meet you sir.

Lydia extends her hand and Marty spits into the shag carpet. She lowers her hand and smiles awkwardly.

MARTY

Vick! Get these people out of my God damn house! And be useful! Grab me another beer!

DEREK

I'm so sorry to have woke you sir. We only wanted to bring Vicky home safely.

Marty stands up and gets very close to Derek's face. His eyes still struggling to stay open and his balance is off.

MARTY

Pretty boy I don't care what you wanted. I said get the fuck out of my house!

VICKY

Daddy! Stop!

Derek and Lydia run out and the Marty follows them. The door slams behind them. Arguing behind the door ensues. Objects start to slam to the floor.

MARTY (IN THE DISTANCE)

I work all day and have to deal with this shit? Why I oughta-

Derek runs up to the door knocking as hard as he could. Lydia's eyes fill with tears and her hands rush to her face. Derek scrambles through his pockets to get his phone and call the police.

DEREK

We have to do something!

LYDIA

That poor girl.

INT. BAKERY- MORNING

The bakery is quiet and tense. Derek is pacing back and forth trying to get Vicky to answer the phone.

DEREK

Why isn't she answering? This is insane! I need to know that she is okay

LYDIA

And the police did not follow up with you?

DEREK

In a town like that? They took an hour to get to her in the first place, mom. They're no help.

LYDIA

An hour...just for Vicky to refuse help from them.

DEREK
They should have known-

LYDIA
There's little they can do when she
says she's fine.

DEREK
...I just hope she's okay...

Derek continues pacing back and forth and dialing Vicky to
only hear dial tones in response.

INT. BAKERY- NIGHT

Derek is packing boxes of leftover bread for nearby shelters
when the door jingles open. Vicky enter the shop wearing the
same oversized black hoodie with a black eye and a suitcase
following behind her.

DEREK
Oh my God! Vicky! I've been calling
you all day.

Vicky lifts her wrist to expose a hospital bracelet.

VICKY
Yea...I was busy...sorry

DEREK
I'm so sorry I should have stayed

VICKY
I said I was fine. It's not you
fault.

DEREK
Vicky, you deserve better. Please
don't go back there.

Vicky gestures with a nod to the suitcase behind her. She
smiles softly.

VICKY
Do you need a roommate?

THE END