

*“Before you reach the top of the ladder, make sure it’s against the right wall”*

# **The Head Chef**



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# “The Head Chef”

A Head Chef is hired by a French restaurant business mogul to get the restaurant a five-star ranking, but he finds out that he is the target of the mogul's sibling rivalry scheme.

## SHOW CROSS

*“Chef!” Meets “Trading Places” Meets “Bridesmaids”*



## PITCH

"The Head Chef" is a comedy feature that at its base is a romantic comedy set in an exclusive New York restaurant, where our hero is sweating to work his way to the top, but side-tracked by a female corporate raider scheming to use him in a ploy with her boss for a promotion. Elements exist within the same vernacular as other comedies.

"Chef!" becomes art when a Head Chef, full of rampaging rants and incisive insults, allows nothing to interfere with his culinary perfection in one of the finest French restaurants in the world. "Trading Places" rises above two business moguls plotting a selfish scheme using an underdog as a pawn. And, "Bridesmaids" cooks us up a relationship that boils, simmers, spoils, and then somehow turns into a delicate soufflé.

In the end, the cost to all sides suggests not so much a whimsical gourmet kitchen escapade but rather an Adler/Brooks mix where our hero is a brainy, nervous serious chef, unaware he is the target of a ploy amidst a swashbuckling, never self-serious and occasionally dramatic familial backdrop. The conclusion is something that Shakespeare might recognize as an America at every level scheming and feuding with itself, whether it is in the conference room, at the dinner table or in the bedroom.

## SYNOPSIS

When Head Chef Bobby Westfall sets off to run his own crab shack restaurant kitchen, to follow his dad's dream, he is intercepted by a female business raider, Lindsey Sanderson, who gives him the chance to win over a world-class French cuisine critic, to become one of the best French chefs in the world. Bobby accepts the offer.

There is only one problem. Unbeknownst to Bobby, Lindsey has her own agenda. She is setting Bobby up as a target by her boss in return for a promotion in a sibling rivalry plot. If she can top her boss's brother's French restaurant, he'll give her a big promotion. This is a ploy to try to win his mother over for always giving attention to his brother.

Not too far into this venture, Bobby and Lindsey develop an attraction for each other and soon thereafter sparks begin to fly. Bobby stays at Lindsey and her parents to save expenses on this venture. Getting along with two, stay-at-home slacker brothers, dealing with the death of her grandma Aubrey and her dog, and trying to please everyone in general, adds extra challenges for Bobby until it becomes time for the visit of the world renown French cuisine critic.

Lindsey finds out from her boss the critics felt his dish was not up to par. Now she has to fire him. Bobby finds out about the scheme. He takes the firing in stride and goes back to his smaller kitchen at the crab shack on the wharf. They split the sheets, but after a time of reflection, sulking, and missing each other, Lindsey returns to Bobby, happy with his life at the crab shack.

## TREATMENT

Chyron: San Francisco Wharf July 1982. Bobby Westfall, 8yrs old, works with his dad, Big Ed, in their family owned business, The Seafood Shack, that sits on Fisherman's Wharf. A line of 20 people deep waits to get lunch at their favorite place. Bobby hands a fish sandwich to a customer, Phil. Phil bites into it. His eyes roll back in ecstasy. He turns to Bobby. Big Ed smiles and winks at his son who smiles back beaming with pride as he shares with Phil that his dad is an artist. Covered in sweat, Big Ed turns his attention to the assortment of fish and shrimp spread across his grill.

That evening, Big Ed is tucking Bobby into bed as Bobby asks him why people like his food so much, in which Big Ed replies its probably his secret recipe. Bobby asks him what his secret recipe is. Big Ed writes it down, after contemplating whether or not to tell him. He hands the recipe to Bobby and tells him to keep it a secret. After his dad leaves the room, Bobby places recipe in a cigar box under his bed along with his other typical childhood treasures.

San Francisco Present Day. Bobby, now 40, is the Head Chef at "The Little Meadow" restaurant, an intimate restaurant at the heart of San Francisco. Bobby is intense, volatile and slightly wound up preparing a French Cassoulet, a slow-simmering mix of beans, pork sausages, pork shoulder, pancetta, and duck. The entire kitchen staff is watching. Randy, his fellow chef and friend, dabs the sweat off Bobby as he vigorously prepares the food. As Bobby puts the final dish into the oven, the staff starts to applaud, but Bobby stops them and tells them not to clap until it is done. An argument ensues about how Citizen Kane ended. Bobby announces food critic Luc Dufour from Gourmand

Gazette will be critiquing the restaurant and him and that he needs them all to bring their best game to move the restaurant from a 4 star to a 5-star rank.

Later that evening, Bobby can't drop the issue of how Citizen Kane ended, and discusses it with his wife, Karen, still frustrated no one is agreeing with him. In the meantime, Hedge Fund billionaire, Vance Walton explains his plans to his assistant, Lindsey Sanderson from Wall Street who is bored out her gourd while he rambles. He wants her to oversee the restaurant because he is in competition with his brother, Mark, who also owns a French restaurant. Vance is jealous that Mark is getting all the attention from their mother who rants and raves about Mark's restaurant. So he is making a deal with Lindsey that if she gets his French restaurant up and running, he will promote her into his firm as assistant VP. Lindsey not only agrees, but is passionate about the undertaking. Vance explains their first step is to get Chef Bobby Westfall on board.

At the Hardy Soul Restaurant, Bobby and Karen are dining with Vance and Lindsey about the deal, but Bobby says he is reluctant to leave his restaurant, Little Meadow. Vance offers Bobby a share in the restaurant if he agrees. Bobby goes home and contemplates with Karen.

Interior Little Meadow kitchen the next night. Bobby is overseeing things behind the line. A little later, Luc Dufour tastes a specialty dish, surrounded by several other dishes in equally stunning presentation. Bobby and Randy are peeking around the corner checking out the critic's reactions after each bite. As Bernard, the waiter returns back towards the kitchen, the two try to get out of him what Luc said about the dish. Bernard said the critic said the dish did

not have enough flavor. This makes Bobby outraged and he storms to the critic's table, but is interrupted by Luc complimenting him...but Bobby isn't aware of the compliment. He pours salt all over Luc's dish to give it what he explains to Luc, as "flavor." Luc says he was just going to give him a rave review. Bobby adamantly states he knows he would not give him a good review. Luc resigns to tell Bobby he will never make it as a great chef, only remain a "Head Chef." Luc leaves. And Bobby storms out.

At home, Bobby remains distraught, but since he is home earlier than usual, he encounters Karen with Matt Damon, the actor. They have an action hero scuffle. A little later, Karen is telling Bobby she wants a divorce and that they have nothing in common anymore.

One week later, it is obvious Karen has left, and Bobby is at home alone sulking like a lonely bachelor. He's lost his wife and he walked out on The Little Meadow. Randy enters with a double offer by Vance in Boston.

Cut to Logan Airport a short time later and Lindsey is meeting Bobby. They arrive at Miles Standish Hotel; built in 1765 Old English smells of the past remain as Bobby scopes it out. Lindsey bribes the bellboy to oblige Bobby fully as he is the ticket to her fortune.

At Le Jardin's Restaurant, Bobby inspects the chefs and the kitchen like Patton inspecting his troops. He is introduced to Hilly Sturm, German Sous Chef, and Rene Robert, The French Saucier Chef, Charles, the walrus mustached Rotisseur, Wyatt, a 29 year-old Poiseenier, and others chefs, and Kevin a 19-

year-old kitchen boy, Mr. Walten's nephew, who looks extremely out of place, not the brightest bulb.

Bobby makes a speech to the chefs about his promise to his father---to become the best at his father's passion and he asks for their help to keep that promise.

Lindsey is at home with her family planning her Grandma Audrey's 105th birthday party, with 19 year-old Keith, the Mayor's aid. The planning is an adult version of "Rosanne" banter across family members firing rapid insults at each other. The main argument is about funding the party--whether or not there will be enough funds from the City's budget because of the town hall termite infestation project.

Cut to Miles Standish Hotel Function Room. Bobby sits with a bunch of older tourist couples while a Colonial Woman gives a demonstration of how candles were made in Colonial times.

Later, Lindsey opens a can of soda when her mom, Carol enters, giving her a standard mother-interest inquiry---where is she at on boyfriends, how long will she be in town. Lindsey reiterates her stance on not wanting to be tied down nor have any kids. Bobby calls Lindsey from the Colonial presentation inviting her to come over because there is a problem with the restaurant. In the course of the conversation, Bobby ends up volunteering to do the clam bake at the birthday party in order to save costs.



Cut to Nana's birthday party, 200 plus townsfolk are present. Bobby is having a good time scooping up clams for each plate. Short time later, Bobby and Lindsey eat at the picnic table.

Bobby talks about why his food is so good without disclosing his secret to Lindsey, despite how stressful it is for him to make the perfect dish.

Short time later, Mayor Damsak, wheelchair bound, addresses the crowd through a microphone, celebrating Nana's 105th year of life...but he veers off topic to talk about his crippling wheelchair situation bringing negativity to the gathering. But he eventually gets back on track with Keith's prodding.

Nana is next up---which is one full of negativity as well, rattling on about wishing she was dead, stunning the crowd, but eventually they applaud. Lindsey is up next. Instead of celebrating Grandma, she makes it all about Bobby and what a great chef he is and he's the one that made the event happen because he ran the clambake. Bobby shoves a handful of peanuts in his mouth before he takes the stand as he kisses Nana on the cheek. As he is speaking, Nana in the background is gasping for air. Bobby is oblivious to it until he turns around and runs to save her by giving her CPR. The doctor says it was Anaphylaxis due to peanut allergy. Bobby tries to hide the wrapper in his hand. As he tries to leave he is forced to give a handshake to Cliff who sees the wrapper in his hand and immediately calls out blaming Bobby. The family hears this; it takes a moment to sink in. Now they think it was all Bobby's fault why Nana died. Bobby tries to argue his way out of it, but soon it's a rumor across the community.

Later, Lindsey is at home with her parents in the kitchen. She is trying to convince the family to respect Bobby and let him stay with them, because she needs him at the restaurant in order for her to get the promotion. The family objects because they believe he is a murderer...except for mom and dad, Carol and James, Sr.

In the driveway, later, Lindsey approaches Bobby in his car to say the celebration will continue. Bobby feels real bad about the peanut incident, is upset, and contemplates leaving. She convinces him to stay and tells him he is going to bunk with Cliff at her parent's house.

Later in Cliff's basement bedroom at the Sanderson house, Bobby sees his new digs for the next several weeks; we see the slumbering digs of a stay at home son. The next morning, Bobby is again plopped in the middle of a back country dining experience as they argue about Nana's empty chair and her coffee mug.

Main Street, Hanson, day, a parade makes it way down Main Street, when a special float in memory of Nana features a celebration of her life. Mr. Fibbs, her dog seems to replace Nana as 4th graders sing, "Amazing Grace". At the carnival face painting booth, Bobby and Lindsey are getting their faces painted. She gets a kitty face. Bobby--a red devil with 'murderer' painted across his forehead unbeknown to him, he thinks it's a puppy face.

Later at the fairgrounds, they walk by Fisherman's Wharf and Bobby reminisces to Lindsey pleasantly and positively. Lindsey tells him her promotion plans after the restaurant gets set up. Their conversation begins to get more personal about their own relationships.

Cliff challenges Bobby to a bungee jump. Bobby tells the crewman his reason for jumping is to prove to everyone that he is not a killer even though he mistakenly killed someone. The crewman surmises the victim was Nana and looks at him suspiciously. Bobby jumps. Large droppings of excrement drop from the sky and hit him on his way down---come to find it came from Bobby's pants. Everyone runs for cover. Mr. Fibbs dodges a dropping and gets hit by a car. Later that day, a funeral is held for Mr. Fibbs in Sandersons' backyard. Cliff blames Bobby for his death too.

Bobby is seen still missing Karen even though she left him. Lindsey overhears him talking on the phone trying to get Karen back. While James bike is broken down, Bobby gives him a lift to the liquor store. They don't quite make it because a spider drops down the visor and causes them to crash into a pole. Now they are on foot and the Rusty Swords biker group comes upon them. They only pick up James and leave Bobby to walk.

Cut to the Jardin kitchen. Their Patissier assistant is replaced by Cliff. Bobby attempts to train Cliff. Cliff is not listening and following instruction carelessly and defiantly. Bobby and Cliff argue about how Cliff is being a dead beat son. Bobby is trying to convince Cliff that his parents wish that he would make

something of himself instead of living off their hard work. Cliff storms off the job angrily.

Cut to Lindsey's phone conversation with Vance on a conference call with his mother, Claire Walton, to get a status on how the French restaurant is coming along and how Chef Westfall is working out. Lindsey says all is fine, except for a few bumps. Vance edges her on and reminds her of her future promotion.

Later at Le Jardin restaurant Lindsey sees Bobby angrily throwing a Quail Escabeche dish across the kitchen that he just took out of the oven. Short time later at the Clam Shack, Bobby is in awe as it looks just like his dad's Seafood Shack. Later, Lindsey and Bobby are enjoying clams outside the hut critiquing the dish. "Salt, pepper, and love" is his dad's secret revealed in the note he shows Lindsey.

Back at the Sanderson house, Bobby is going to make the family a meal. Lindsey asks everyone to clear out and give him space. While Bobby is prepping the dish, Lindsey comes in to taste test and soon their own flame is lit for the first time. Suddenly, Bobby accidentally cuts himself real bad. Blood is squirting everywhere. With all the blood blown about, Lindsey faints, hits her head and her forehead opens up with blood streaming down her face. Bobby tries to awaken her. She is unconscious just as the Sandersons arrive home.

A short time later, the two are wheeled into the hospital side by side and making fun of their experience. She asks him about his wife and she balances that with her life of infidelity...they ramble on about their individual romantic

experiences, high on morphine pop cycles, and both end up singing Carly Simon song.

Cut to James's above garage apartment. Bobby asks to crash there because Cliff kicked him out of his basement pad. James had been crying again and explains to Bobby he can't help crying...that he cries about everything. Bobby consoles him and gives him advice.

Back at the restaurant Bobby is complimenting Rene on a dish as Cliff walks in asking for his job back saying Bobby was right in that his mom does baby him. Bobby is reluctant. Later in Bobby's office, Karen calls Bobby apologizing and saying she has made a big mistake and that Matt left her. Bobby gives in and tells her that he's coming home. As the phone is being hung up, Matt shows up at Karen's and she is crying to take Matt back. She does. Lindsey comes in and Bobby and her have a passionate kiss.

James and Bobby attend an HSP support group at the VFW Club where Sadie is also attending. James and Sadie eventually hook up. Cliff is hooking up with Hilly in the restaurant kitchen. And we know that Bobby and Lindsey have hooked up. A montage ensues of their romantic times.

Cut to the grand opening of Le Jardin restaurant. Bobby is frantically barking orders in the kitchen. He's angry, throwing food as he critiques the chefs' dishes. He mistakenly thinks Vance is giving a poor review and dumps salt in his dish. But Vance explains he is wrong instead toasts all to a success of the

grand opening. Bobby and Lindsey toast to all their dreams coming true and all the amenities.

Close up on Vance's hotel room next day. Vance discloses less than stellar reviews from the critics at the grand opening. He tells Lindsey to fire Bobbie and that his mother likes his brother Mark's restaurant better. He offers Lindsey a bigger promotion, VP position not assistant VP if she fires 'Chef 2nd Rate'. After brief advice from her dad, "you make choices you feel are best--even though they will have drawbacks."

In Bobby's office, she meets snooty-looking FOP, Chef Normand Levielle, #1 French Chef in Europe. Cliff and Hilly happen upon them planning the firing. She bumps into them on her way out. Cliff tries to stop her from firing Bobby.

Later, during a family celebration of Lindsey, Bobby gives a speech proclaiming his love for her. Cliff makes Lindsey tell the truth. Bobby angrily leaves, Lindsey in tow.

Six weeks later--Manhattan sky rise apartment-Lindsey's penthouse suit. Lindsey is sulking. Cut to Bobby at Miles Standard Hotel room. James visits and consoles Bobby. We find Bobby declined his severance package and goes to work at the Clam Hut. Lindsey returns asking him why he declined it. They get back together.

70 years later. Grave yard. Three different headstones. Narrator explains what happened to everyone.

## TONE

- Whimsical, lampoon
- In the same tone and pace as "The Odd Couple"
- Uses a variety of comedy styles: Observation; Physical; Character; Slapstick; Improvisation
- An upbeat romantic comedy
- Uses tone of an angry chef's kitchen, dysfunctional sibling squabbles, with occasional brief sentimental moments.

## CHARACTER LIST

**Young Bobby Westfall. 8 yrs.** with tight curly hair

**Older Bobby. 30s.**

**Big Ed Westfall. 40s.** Bobby's dad, burly build

**Phil. 50s.** Seafood Shack customer

**Randy. 30s.** Bobby's Sous Chef and friend. Overweight

**Sid. 50s.** Kitchen worker, obnoxious

**Karen Westfall. 30s.** Bobby's wife, attractive

**Vance Walton. Late 30s.** Hedge fund billionaire, a shark, with receding hairline

**Lindsey Sanderson. 30s.** Vance's assistant, attractive, impeccably dressed, all business

**Bernard. 50s.** Little Meadow waiter

**Matt Damon** as Matt Damon

**Ivan.** Limo Driver

**Bellhop for Miles Standish Hotel. 19.** Stoner, not into his job.

**Hilly Sturm. Female. 20s.** German. Sous Chef.

**Renee Roberts. 40s.** Male. Saucier Chef.

**Charles. Rotisseur (butcher).** Walrus mustached.

**Wyatt. 29.** Fish Chef.

**Kevin. 19.** Vance Walton's nephew, kitchen boy

**Audrey Sanderson. 104.** Aka Nana

**Mr. Fibbs.** Audrey's dog

**James Sanderson. 30s.** Lindsey's brother, large balding biker, wearing Rusty Swords Leather Jacket with spider tattoo on head.

**Cliff Sanderson. 30s.** Lindsey's other brother, unmotivated, slacker, wears pjs even though it is well past noon

**Carol Sanderson. 60s.** Lindsey's mom R rated version of Ozzie and Harriet.

**James Sanderson, Sr. 60s.** Lindsey's dad.

**Keith. 19.** Mayor's aid

**Colonial woman.**

**Mayor Dansak. 50s.** Wheelchair bound

**Dr. Kelly Angley. 30s.** The town's doctor

**Pussygrinder. 40s.** Rusty Swords Motorcycle Gang head

**Claire Walton. 70s.** Vance Walton's mother

**Sadie. 30s.** Attractive, meek looking

**Suzy. 20s.** Lindsey's assistant

**Narrator**

**VALID AND VETTED TARGET MARKET LIST**



Moviegoers will most likely be:

Friends, Families, and Partners

Male and Females

Frequent Bar and Club-Goers

Pre-occupied with family and child-rearing

Midlife ages

Interest in the American Lifestyle

Enjoy watching a person in dire straights rather than be in it themselves.

\*Generation X (M-F 38-52 age range)

\*Generation Y (M-F 22-38 age range)

Audiences who watch this also watch:

Trading Places

Animal House

Me, Myself, and Irene

Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy

The 40 Year-Old Virgin

Knocked-Up

Super Dad

Horrible Bosses

The Change Up

Burn After Reading

The Rosanne Show

Mel's Diner

Trailer Park Boys

Something About Mary

Shallow Hal

You've Got Mail

Chef!

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Bridesmaids

Wedding Crashers

The Hangover

Pineapple Express

Clerks

Get Him to the Greek

Super Trooper