

'BON APPETITE'

ORIGINAL PRE-TEEN TV SHOW

FIRST EPISODE

Written and Created

by

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EXT. CLAPHAM NEIGHBORHOOD, SOUTH LONDON - DAY

A cheerful-looking catering shop named 'BON APPETITE' sits on a busy street in London.

INT. BON APPETITE KITCHEN - DAY

A large kitchen bustling with activity. A dark-skinned chef, EMMETT CLARK, mid 40s, stands by the stove, stirring several pots as sweat pours from his brow. He wears a white chef's coat and white chef's hat as the WHISK suddenly jumps out of his hand and TALKS!

KINGSTON THE WHISK

(Jamaican accent)

Hey! Slow down, mon. Why must you insist on doing everything yourself? Am I not quick enough?

EMMETT

You're too slow. I've got six orders not even finished yet, and the delivery boy will be here any second.

DAPHNE, the DOUBLE RANGE EIGHT GRILL OVEN opens and shuts her DOUBLE OVEN DOORS, revealing some baking treats inside.

DAPHNE

(American Southern accent)

That's just like y'all! Yelling while I'm baking my biscuits! Do you want them to fall, and us having to start them from scratch again!?

ALDWYN, the kitchen CLOCK chimes in as his hands twirl.

ALDWYN

What a disgrace. Twenty minutes behind and that floor is still a mess! Why, in my day, we'd have the upper deck swabbed, the lower deck swabbed, and a crew of five hundred already fed, plus the galley spotless by now! And that was with German submarines headed straight for us!

His hands move and reposition themselves on the correct time, followed by CHIMES and a SHIP'S HORN BLOW. Emmett lets go of the cooking utensils at the stove, as Kingston takes over.

Kingston has five hands and uses them all, spatula, whisk, spoon and ladle and juggles them all with equal care and balance.

Emmett wipes his brow with his hand towel as he sits on a stool by the counter. An ancient COOKBOOK, PRECIOUS, opens and SPEAKS.

PRECIOUS
(female/West African
accent)

It's happening again. You're working too hard, and your poor old heart has been ignored long enough. You need my Red Snapper Stew.

VERA (O.S.)
Spice, spice, and everything nice. It's the spice that makes the heart nice, and healthier too.

VERA the SPICE RACK opens her bottles and pours some spices into the pots as Kingston stirs.

KINGSTON
They're right, mon. Time for some Red Snapper Stew.

The others chime in, including WILLY the FREEZER/FRIDGE, and HENRI the CARVING KNIFE.

ALDWYN/WILLY/KINGSTON/HENRI
Hear, hear! We need our chef in good health, for us and Bon Appetite. Get out the red snapper and let the customers wait!

EMMETT
Settle down now. Meanwhile, who didn't reorder enough of the food delivery containers? How am I going to get all this food delivered without more delivery boxes?

Emmett checks the delivery containers in the closet and sets a few out on the countertop where Henri the Carving Knife is busy chopping onions in mountain sizes while crying.

HENRI
(French accent)
It's sad when our chef neglects his health. It makes me cry, when I think about it!

EMMETT

You cry every time you cut onions!
Now that's enough already. We need
KG, not an entire kitchen full!

Precious the Cookbook opens its pages and ruffles!

PRECIOUS

Willy, get out the ingredients. We
can start the Red Snapper Stew now,
and it'll be ready by dinner time.

Willy, the huge walk-in-freezer, OPENS and BARKS.

WILLY

I've got the ingredients except the
tomatoes. Every week I order the
tomatoes, and along with the yellow
yams, peeled shrimp and fresh
creole, and no Red Snapper Stew
gets made!

KINGSTON

Fine! Only leave the tomatoes out
of this.

(sneezes)

I hate tomatoes. They make me
sneeze 'cause I'm allergic!

Emmett checks on the stove items still cooking.

EMMETT

You can't make Red Snapper Stew
without the tomatoes. Now where is
that delivery boy? Mrs. Fergerson's
Spaghetti Bolognese is almost ready!

He looks at Aldwyn the clock who HOOTS and HOLLERS and blows
his SHIP'S HORN.

ALDWYN

He's late again, that boy. Why in
my day, if a crew member didn't
report to the duty on time, he'd be
stuck in the latrine, cleaning the
toilets with his toothbrush!
Speaking of clean, the floor being
a mess is a clear violation of
kitchen code! Am I talking to
myself here?

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

Dad? Is that you? Who are you
talking to in there?

The kitchen doorknob turns as doesn't open. It is locked. ALL the UTENSILS, APPLIANCES, CLOCK and COOKBOOK instantly GO SILENT as Emmett unlocks the kitchen door.

CECILY CLARK, 10, enters. She is a pretty, dark-skinned girl with thick, black hair held back by a thick hair-band which shows off her incredible blue eyes. She wears a soccer uniform and sneakers and holds a soccer ball.

EMMETT

Off to practice again, already? It seems like you just got home.

CECILY

Dad, why do you keep this door locking all the time? You know it's just Mom and me here.

EMMETT

I'm making Mrs. Fergerson's favorite and cannot be disturbed. You know how particular she is when it comes to her--

CECILY

Spaghetti Bolognese again? How many times is she going to order that? You'd think she'd be sick to death of it eating that by now!

Kingston LAUGHS. Cecily hears this and looks around.

EMMETT

It's her bunions. It helps her to walk better.

CECILY

That's silly, Dad. Spaghetti Bolognese can't make people walk better. It's just food.

EMMETT

And food is the heart of the people. And if the heart is right, then everything--

PRECIOUS

Heart, heart, Red Snapper Stew!

Cecily looks around, hearing this.

CECILY

What was that?

EMMETT

Probably some kids outside playing.
Now enjoy your practice and let me
get back to my business.

CECILY

Okay, but you still look tired. Why
can't you just hire some help, or
let me help you after I get back
from soccer practice?

EMMETT

You do enough around here with
helping your mother. And besides,
who knows? Maybe some day you'll
end up being a professional player,
just like you wanted to!

CECILY

Dad, I'm only ten. I have years to
worry about that later. You sure
you don't want me to stay home
today and maybe help with--

EMMETT

No! The kitchen doesn't like it
when there are too many cooks. It
makes me and them very nervous.

CECILY

Them? Who is them?

EMMETT

Now stop worrying about me and
enjoy your game, sweetie. We'll
have dinner together later, and you
can tell me all about it.

PRECIOUS

Red Snapper Stew!

Cecily looks around again as Emmett kisses her.

EMMETT

Okay, sweetheart.

CECILY

Okay, Dad. I love you.

EMMETT

I love you too, sweetie!

Emmett kisses Cecily on the forehead. She walks down the
hallway as Emmett closes the kitchen door and locks it.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cecily walks past her mother, ABIGAIL CLARK, mid-30s, as she sits in her crowded little office with stacks of paper falling off the edge of it and onto the floor.

CECILY

Bye, Mom. I'm off to practice.

Abigail is an attractive brunette, Caucasian woman with thick, black eyeglasses and wears a plain-colored, brown dress. She SPEAKS into the phone.

ABIGAIL

I know, Mrs. Fergerson, but the delivery boy still hasn't arrived yet. I'm sure he'll be here soon and your Spaghetti Bolognese will be right over.

Abigail hangs up the phone as it RINGS AGAIN.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Sweetie, did you talk to him?
(into phone)
Bon Appetite. Can you hold a minute?

Abigail covers the phone and looks at Cecily who stands in the doorway leading out to the alleyway.

CECILY

He said, no. The kitchen doesn't like it.

ABIGAIL

What? I swear, that man is going to be the death of me.

CECILY

Don't worry, Mom. We'll corner him at dinner. There is no way he can keep up with all this business without hiring some help soon.

ABIGAIL

Thanks, sweetie.

Cecily leaves through the door and closes it behind her.

ABIGAIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Yes, Mr. Gallager! So sorry to keep you waiting. What will you have today? Your usual Tuna Tartar?

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cecily bounces her soccer ball on her foot and heads towards the street. She HEARS A TOOT of a horn and looks up to see --

-- BEN BUCKLEY, 15, a handsome, long-blond-haired, English boy driving a rusted old red scooter. The scooter skids on the pavement and seems to be headed directly for her.

BEN

Look out! Look out, the brakes are jammed!

CRASH -- the scooter slams into the wall next to Cecily which sends her crashing to the ground, along with Ben, who lands beside her. Five grocery bags, which were tied onto the back of his scooter, go flying everywhere, including dozens of red tomatoes.

Ben sits up and removes his yellow helmet and sees all the mess. The tomatoes are squashed and lying everywhere, along with all the other food.

CECILY

Ben Buckley! You nearly ran me right over!

Cecily rises and looks at her now dirty uniform. She wipes off her knees as Ben scurries to collect all the tomatoes.

CECILY (CONT'D)

Are you sure you got a license to be driving that death trap?

BEN

The tomatoes! Did any of them get bruised!?

Cecily helps him pick up the rest of tomatoes. As Ben puts them back into the bags, he examines each one of them.

CECILY

Don't worry about me. I'm only human! See you around, Ben Buckley.

Cecily walks out of the alleyway with her soccer ball, as Ben watches her.

BEN

Ben Buckley. Why does she always have to call me that? Why can't she just say--

EMMETT (O.S.)

Ben!? Where have you been? Do you know how long Mrs. Fergerson has been waiting for her Spaghetti Bolognese? She's called three times already!

BEN

Sorry, Mr. Clark. It's those brakes again. I had them checked on the way here, and wouldn't you know, they locked up again as soon as I took that same corner!

EMMETT

Never mind that. Did you get the tomatoes I asked for?

BEN

I picked them out all myself. Just the way you like them. Extra -- juicy.

Ben hopes Emmett doesn't notice the bruises as Emmett helps him with the bags. They both enter the kitchen. Emmett closes the kitchen door behind him as --

EXT. LONDON STREET - CONTINUOUS

Cecily passes by MRS. IRIS JUNIPER (43) who stands outside her JUNIPER CATERING SHOP. She is a tall, thin women with bleached blonde hair in a tight bun. She sweeps the sidewalk with a battered old broom as her black cat EBENEZER lies on the sidewalk beside her.

CECILY

Hi, Mrs. Juniper. Nice day for sweeping the sidewalk again, isn't it?

Mrs. Juniper snubs her as Cecily continues bouncing her ball and turns the corner. Mrs. Juniper swats her cat, Ebenezer, who jumps up and HISSES at her.

MRS. JUNIPER

Go inside and catch a mouse. You've taken enough cat naps today already.

Ebenezer heads inside the catering shop as Mrs. Juniper continues sweeping.

MRS. JUNIPER (CONT'D)

That Bon Appetite is putting me out of business. Ever since they moved in here, I can't seem to get a single new customer. Why, it's no wonder I have to spend all my time sweeping this sidewalk instead of--

She hears a SCOOTER as Ben whizzes by with FIVE large BON APPETITE catering boxes tied to the back of his scooter.

BEN

Hell, Mrs. Juniper? How's Ebenezer? Did he finally cough up that nasty fur ball yet that makes him so grouchy?

Ben whizzes by and turns the corner. He TOOTS his horn to some other NEIGHBORS and waves 'hello'.

MRS. JUNIPER

There he goes again. I bet he'll be back with five more deliveries before closing! And all I've had is one order of cabbage soup the whole day. And even they complained it was too watery!

HICKLEY JUNIPER, 17, stands in the doorway, stretching his head and yawning. He is a tall, scrawny, thin-lipped boy with red hair and curls that look more like dreadlocks.

HICKLEY

It probably was. I keep telling ya, Ma, you gotta use fresher ingredients. That's what Bon Appetite does! Instead of those cheap ingredients you keep trying to use.

She swats Hickley with the side of the broom.

MRS. JUNIPER

Don't you tell me how to cook! Why, I was making cabbage soup when you were in still in diapers. Maybe I should offer a free dinner to new customers again. That oughta-

HICKLEY

Not that again. The last time you did that, those day old ham sandwiches nearly made them sick!

Mrs. Juniper shoves Hickley inside the catering shop.

HICKLEY (CONT'D)

And how can you call old ham
sandwiches dinner anyway?

MRS. JUNIPER

Oh, hush up, you. You and your
father know nothing about food. You
still think it has to taste good!

Mrs. Juniper closes the front door as SEVERAL LOCALS stroll
by, wheeling baby strollers and walking their dogs. Long
pause.

INT. CECILY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sun streams into Cecily's bedroom decorated in
her favorite soccer team's stripes. Cecily wakes up in her
bed, still dressed in her soccer-print pajamas. She opens her
eyes and sees her big fluffy white cat, Mr. MUFFINS, lying
beside her. She gives him a big kiss and hug.

CECILY

Good morning, Mr. Muffins. Sleep
okay? Let's see what's for
breakfast. I'm starved.

She puts on her robe and slippers and heads into the hallway.
Mr. Muffins jumps off the bed, stretches all his paws out,
yawns and slowly follows after her.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cecily peers inside her parents' bedroom door. Abigail is
sleeping, but the other side of the queen bed is empty.

CECILY

Up already? I bet he's not even
making his own breakfast. Mom's
right. He is working way too hard,
and something is going to have to
be done about it.

She heads down the stairs as Mr. Muffin follows.

INT. BON APPETITE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Emmett lies on the kitchen floor. His white chef hat lies on
the tiles beside him as Kingston, the whisk, hovers above his
chest, dripping egg batter on Emmett's white chef jacket.

The eggs on the stove are now burning as Daphne turns OFF the heat.

DAPHNE

Too hot. Too hot! Look what y'all did to him!?

KINGSTON

What 'we' did? The man's exhausted, mon! Just trying to keep up with all your burners and ovens, it's no wonder he's lying on the floor. You've over-cooked him!

Kingston changes from a whisk, to a spoon, to a spatula and other cooking utensils used for mixing items.

WILLY

Someone call the medics!

VELMA

Does anyone know CPR? The man is suffocating, and so am I!

Velma fans herself in front of the OPEN WINDOW while holding onto her spices.

KINGSTON

What is CPR, mon? A song?

DAPHNE

No you dimwit! It's to help with his breathing, y'all!

HENRI

(sobs)

And stop dripping those eggs on him, Kingston! They're making me allergic!

Henri continues sobbing as he chops more onions at the table, now piled almost up to the ceiling. Kingston SNEEZES.

KINGSTON

It's me whose allergic to eggs, you silly knife! And quit crying all over those onions! You're making them all soggy again!

PRECIOUS

Settle down, all of you! It was bad enough he didn't eat his Red Snapper Stew last night, but he wouldn't have it for breakfast!

(MORE)

PRECIOUS (CONT'D)

I cannot be held responsible for saving a chef who doesn't take his own heart condition seriously! Especially one who spends too much time focused on helping all his customers first!

Vera hovers over Precious the Cookbook and 'nods'.

VERA

But isn't that our job, to keep the customers?

ALDWYN

Not if it means a dead chef! What is wrong with you all!? Why, in my day, we'd have dragged him into the infirmary days ago, and force-fed him if we had to!

CECILY (O.S.)

Dad? Is that you? Who are you talking to in there?

The doorknob to the kitchen turns. Everyone in the kitchen instantly goes silent, but the door is locked.

HENRI

(sobs)

Poor child! What is she going to say when she sees her father lying there?

PRECIOUS

Unlock that door! It's time she finds out what is going on in here and gets some help!

Kingston unlocks the door.

KINGSTON

Fine! But I'm not taking the rap for this, mon! I told you before, I'm only in charge of the mixing!

The door unlocks as Cecily enters. She sees her father lying on the floor and covers her mouth, in horror.

CECILY

Dad? Dad!? What's happened? Daddy!

She kneels beside Emmett and sees he is not breathing.

CECILY (CONT'D)
(shouts into hall)
Mom! Mom, come quick! Something is
wrong with Daddy!

Cecily cries as she holds her father in her arms. The others in the kitchen, including Precious the cookbook, Aldwyn the clock, Kingston the whisk, Henri the knife, Daphne the oven, Willy the freezer and Vera the spice rack - all look on.

They all have tears in their eyes and are on the verge of crying, except for Henri who BLOWS his NOSE.

EXT. LONDON STREET, CLAPHAM NEIGHBORHOOD - DAYS LATER

The Bon Appetite shop is closed. A black wreath hangs on the front door and all the shades are drawn. Dozens of cars sit parked out front and line the whole street. A long line of PEOPLE stand by the back alleyway, waiting to enter the house. They hold boxes of food and other Bon Appetite catering boxes.

Mrs. Juniper looks on from down the street as her husband, ALBERT JUNIPER, 50s, exits the Juniper Catering shop behind her. Albert weighs about three hundred pounds and wears a dirty food-stained napkin around his chin.

ALBERT
Where is my breakfast? It's nearly
half past nine, and I'm starving!

MRS. JUNIPER
How can you think about food at a
time like this? Can't you see the
owner of Bon Appetite has just been
buried?

ALBERT
And what's it to you? I thought
you'd be happy by now, so you can
finally start getting some of your
own business.

MRS. JUNIPER
That's a horrible thing to say.
I've been waiting for the phone to
ring all day, and I still haven't
even gotten a single order! I
wonder who's catering that affair?

ALBERT

Well, certainly not you! Never mind, I'll make my own toast until you're ready to make my pancakes!

Albert waddles inside as Hickley comes out with his school bag on his back.

HICKLEY

Bye, Ma. See you after school.

MRS. JUNIPER

Where do you think you're going? I want you to go over to Bon Appetite and find out what their future plans are. And even more importantly, when they are going out of business!

HICKLEY

Not me, Ma. I got a history test.

Hickley walks down the street and turns the corner. More cars park in front of Bon Appetite as more MOURNERS head into the alleyway. Mrs. Juniper puts her hands on her hips, annoyed by all this.

INT. CECILY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cecily sits on a sofa next to her mother, Abigail. They both wear black dresses and shoes. A NUMBER of GUESTS mingle about the room and also the busy dining room which is seen through large french doors.

Flowers are everywhere along with food that is present inside the dining room on the large table. A stream of Guests pass by Cecily and her mother, paying their respects.

MALE & FEMALE GUESTS

So sorry. Tragic, very tragic. So sudden. So young. So talented. So sorry.

Cecily sighs as she holds her mother's hand, tightly. Abigail wipes her eyes with her Kleenex as her chin trembles.

CECILY

What are we going to do, Mom? Who's going to take care of us now? And what about Daddy's business? Who's going to take care of that now too?

ABIGAIL

I don't know, honey. I don't know.

INT. DINING ROOM AREA - CONTINUOUS

Guests continue to mingle about as Mrs. Juniper enters the living room, dressed in a black dress and holding a large basket of muffins. She sees Cecily and Abigail on the sofa and approaches.

MRS. JUNIPER

Poor dears. I came as soon as I heard. So horrible. So tragic. So, have thought about what you'll be doing about your catering business?

Cecily looks at her, shocked and concerned. Abigail just wipes her eyes as other Guests push her forward and out of the way of them greeting Cecily and Abigail.

INT. JOINING DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Muffin the cat follows Mrs. Juniper as she enters the joining dining room, still holding her basket of muffins. Mrs. Juniper sees all the food on the table, including MR. GALLAGER, 50s, and MRS. FERGERSON, 40s, who both eat large plates of delicious-looking food.

MRS. JUNIPER

Where did all this food come from?
Did someone cater it?

MRS. FERGERSON, 60s, speaks with her mouth full.

MRS. FERGERSON

We brought it. It was the least we could do after all Emmett has done for us. Why, my bunions have never felt better. And what with him gone now, I don't know where I will ever get this Spaghetti Bolognese made just exactly the way I like it.

Mr. Gallager tries one of Mrs. Juniper's muffins.

MR. GALLAGER

Me too. I could look the world over and never find another chef like Emmett. Why, what he did for my gallbladder, I'll never know. Two surgeries, and I never--
(gags/spits out muffin)
(MORE)

MR. GALLAGER (CONT'D)

-- felt better. It's a shame
really. Such a waste of pure
talent.

Mr. Gallager takes the basket of muffins and dumps them into the trash and walks off. Mrs. Juniper is shocked by this as Mr. Muffins purrs and wags his tail.

EXT. CLAPHAM NEIGHBORHOOD - LONDON STREET - DAYS LATER

It is raining outside the catering shop of Bon Appetite. The black wreath is now taken off the front door and the sign reads 'OPEN'. The lights are on INSIDE the kitchen, even though we hear lots of POTS clanging and ovens open and shutting, as well as other NOISE.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Abigail is busy talking on the phone in her small office.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry you didn't like it, Mr. Gallager. But we are still going through a transition phase. The new chef is still getting accustomed to the kitchen. All the recipes seem to be -- a bit challenging to him.

She hears a SCREAM. A dark-skinned INDIAN MAN, 50s, wearing traditional Indian turban and chef's coat, comes storming out of the kitchen, holding Henri the knife in his hands.

INDIAN MAN

(Indian accent)

Try to chop me, will you?!

Throws the knife back into the kitchen.

INDIAN MAN (CONT'D)

I will not work in a kitchen where the stove and other utensils are trying to kill me! You can take this crazy kitchen, and keep it! 'Cause I quit!

He takes off white his apron and throws it on the floor. He exits through the back alleyway. Cecily comes dressed in her soccer uniform and overhears this.

CECILY

He quit too?! Wasn't he only here since this --

ABIGAIL

(hangs up phone)

-- morning!? Yes. He didn't even last an hour! Oh, I don't know what to do. That's the third chef this week, and I'm up to my neck in calls with unhappy customers, more orders coming in every minute, and a chef I can't even get to work in that kitchen! What am I going to do?

The PHONE RINGS again as Abigail SIGHS.

CECILY

Don't worry, Mom. We'll figure something out. Just give me a minute to change my clothes, and I'll be right down.

ABIGAIL

Thank you, sweetheart. Thank you.

Cecily heads up the stairs as Abigail answers the PHONE.

INT. BON APPETITE KITCHEN - SHORT WHILE LATER

Cecily, in jeans and T-shirt, enters the 'unlocked' kitchen. The kitchen is a complete mess with food on the floor, walls, stove, fridge, everywhere.

CECILY

What a disaster. How can anybody even work in a place like this?

ALDWYN

That's what I'd like to know.

She looks up at the clock, hearing this as Aldwyn shuts his mouth. Cecily sees the cookbook on the countertop beside her and hears the PHONE RING in the hallway.

ABIGAIL

No, Mrs. Fergerson, we haven't made your Spaghetti Bolognese. I'm afraid our new chef just quit. It might be days before-- no I am not joking. I am very serious. We have no one to cook.

Cecily tries to open the book, which struggles with her at first. But she forces it open, turns the page and finds the Spaghetti Bolognese recipe.

CECILY
Must be all that oil stuck on these
pages. I'll have to try and wash
this old book later.

PRECIOUS
Wash me? Never!

Cecily hears the voice and again looks around the kitchen.

CECILY
Huh? Who is that? Is someone in
here?

No response. Cecily again eyes the Spaghetti Bolognese recipe
and reads all the ingredients. Mr. Muffin enters the kitchen
through the open door.

KINGSTON
(whispers to Daphne)
Look, mon! She let a cat in here!

DAPHNE
Isn't that against health rules,
y'all?

Kingston SNEEZES as he moves away from the cat.

CECILY
(reading book still)
That doesn't sound so difficult.
Does it, Mr. Muffin? Let's see. Are
all the ingredients here?

She tries to open Willy the freezer/fridge who keeps himself
locked. She struggles harder.

CECILY (CONT'D)
Oh, come on. What is wrong with
this thing? Has oil gotten you
stuck too?!

The door pops open.

WILLY THE FREEZER
I do not have any OIL in my door,
nor will I allow it! We have a very
perfect kitchen normally, only your
mother keeps letting all those
strangers in here! And that is not
allowed.

Cecily looks up at the fridge, now talking to her, as her eyes widen. Mr. Muffin HISSES at Willy and runs out of the kitchen and into the hallway.

ALDWYN THE CLOCK

Not to mention a cat in here! What kind of chef allows a pet inside a kitchen, may I ask? And just look at that FLOOR! Have you ever seen a mess like that before?

Cecily looks up and sees all the kitchen appliances, cookbook, and utensils barking at her! She leans up against the wall, horrified.

DAPHNE THE OVEN

It is any wonder we don't have the Health Inspector here pronto! Y'all are ruining a perfectly good kitchen.

KINGSTON THE WHISK

She's right, Missy! We need your father back or no cook at all! We can do it ourselves actually, mon! Just give us the orders, and we can fix them!

VELMA AND HENRI

Hear, hear! Give us the orders and we can--

Cecily runs out of the kitchen and slams the kitchen door closed behind her.

PRECIOUS

Nice going, guys. And who do you think is going to buy all the food, take all the orders and deliver the food as well? Or do you all intend to do all those jobs too!?

KINGSTON

She's right, mon! We do need a chef.

DAPHNE

Let's take a vote, y'all. Who's it going to be?

WILLY

I think the best prospect we had, we just scared off.

HENRI

He's right, you know. I like that girl. She reminds me of her father.

They all sigh as a picture of Emmett Clark hangs on the wall. He is ten years younger, wears his chef's hat and jacket, holds the cookbook Precious in his hands as he stands with Abigail (still pregnant) out front of Bon Appetite Catering Company. It seems this is the first day of business for them and the shop. They both smile.

INT. BACK ALLEYWAY - FOLLOWING DAY

Cecily stands in the alleyway kicking her soccer ball up and down on her sneaker. She wears her jeans and T-shirt and catches the ball in her hands. She peers inside the window and looks into the Bon Appetite kitchen, which is dark, as Ben enters the alleyway on his scooter and TOOTS his HORN.

Cecily sees Ben as he stops his scooter, takes off his helmet and looks at her.

BEN

What's up? Any luck finding another chef?

CECILY

No. I told you before, we're moving back to Jamaica. Mom says it's going to be too hard doing this business without Dad around, so why bother?

BEN

That's a lot of hogwash. Have you even tried?

CECILY

We've tried nearly every day. But there is something strange going on in that kitchen, and not just anybody can--

BEN

What? What are you talking about? What's wrong with the kitchen?

CECILY

Never mind. It's not important. We're just moving is all. I don't want to talk about it.

She walks off and sits down on some crates in the alleyway. She turns away from Ben, fights back tears. Ben approaches.

BEN

Look, I know you miss him. I do too. But giving up everything he worked for isn't going to help things, is it? Do you really think that's what he'd want you to do?

CECILY

I am not giving up. It's just that he didn't tell me. He didn't tell me or my mother. And that's what bothers me.

BEN

Tell you what? That he was sick? I could have told you that. He wasn't taking care of himself and working too hard.

CECILY

I know that! But that's not even half of it. There is a reason he kept that kitchen door locked. And it wasn't because he was busy. It's because-- they are things in there going on, which shouldn't be going on. That's why!

BEN

You're nuts! It's just a kitchen. If you can't cook, or don't want to cook, just say so. But for God's sake, don't blame the kitchen! That's just stupid.

She holds her ball and walks off.

CECILY

Oh yeah? You mean you never once saw anything in there that was strange, not ever? Or heard any sounds maybe from other... things in there?

He looks at her, dumbfounded.

BEN

You're getting a little crazy here, Cecily. But no matter. I guess it's to be expected after losing...

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

after all that's happened in the past week. But either way, I need this job. I've got Mom and two brothers at home, and no Dad at home anymore. And it's hard enough just trying to find a job I can do after school besides.

CECILY

Well, you're wasting your time. I told you already, we're moving.

BEN

Fine. Then go ahead and move. I still need my school books, which I left here last week. I'm going inside to get them.

He walks towards the kitchen door as Cecily watches him.

CECILY

I wouldn't do that if I were you. That kitchen isn't safe.

BEN

(opens door)
Oh yeah?

CECILY

In fact, it's filthy and sick!

Too late -- Ben is already inside the kitchen.

INT. BON APPETITE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ben turns ON the kitchen LIGHTS and looks around. The entire kitchen is completely spotless from floor to ceiling. All the appliances, stove, and utensils shine from polish. Even the pots and pans sparkle.

BEN

Looks fine to me.

He sees his books on the counter and picks them up. He places them into his bookbag as Cecily enters and looks around.

CECILY

Hey. How did that happen? There was ketchup and flour and food everywhere just a few... days ago.

BEN

Must be the mice or maybe Mr. Muffins. I'm sure they had a swell of a picnic.

CECILY

That's not funny.

BEN

No, you're right. It's actually sad. Especially the giving up part and moving away. I wish to hell I had your luck. I'd be in here doing my best just to make sure--

He looks up and sees Mrs. Juniper looking in the door. She sees him and ducks out of view.

BEN (CONT'D)

And that's another reason. Her. She's just waiting for you to move so she can take all of your business. And everyone knows she's the worst cook in town. There must be some things even I can make that would be better tasting than hers. And I'm no cook at all.

The cookbook Precious opens as its pages flutter and then stop.

CECILY

That's easy for you to say. Only I'm just ten, and my mom already works all day doing the books. Besides, I already told you, we tried other cooks and well... they just quit is all. Every one of them!

BEN

Whatever. Meanwhile, I'm starved. I missed lunch today at school 'cause I had to clean the hamster cage for some kid who got sick. How about I make something quick before I...?

Ben opens Willy the fridge, which opens easily and is completely stocked.

BEN (CONT'D)

Wow! Look at all this food in there. Who went shopping? You and your mom?

He takes out some ham, eggs, cheese and milk and puts it on the counter. Cecily looks inside the fridge, also shocked.

CECILY

What? That wasn't full the last time I--

BEN

Sounds to me like it's only you whose looking to close this kitchen.

Ben takes out a bowl and mixes the eggs, milk, cheese and ham together. He starts the stove and pours the mix into a pan. The stove lights itself.

BEN (CONT'D)

Wow, that's an interesting stove. When did it start to do that?

CECILY

I told you already, this isn't just any kitchen. There are a lot of strange things that... go on in here.

She looks around as Ben cooks the eggs and flips them over. He looks up and sees Mrs. Juniper staring into the window, this time watching the two of them. She ducks out of view.

BEN

Well, don't look now, but while you're busy packing, Mrs. Juniper's already putting flyers up all over town, offering free dinners for all new customers. You ever try one of her free dinners?

He finishes cooking the omelet and puts it onto a plate.

CECILY

No.

BEN

Trust me, eating the paper plate would make you less sick. Hum, I think I'll use some hot sauce on mine. You want some?

Ben heads over to get some hot sauce as Velma and Kingston come over to his plate and plop some spices and sour cream into his dish, along with Henri who scatters it with some scallions. Cecily sees this, eyes widening.

CECILY
Hey! Stop that!

Ben sits back down and sees the omelet changed.

BEN
What'd you do? Is that sour cream
and scallions?

CECILY
I didn't do it. I told you, it's
this kitchen. They just came over
here and--

BEN
(smells omelet)
Hum, smells great. Indian Paprika
and mustard powder.

Ben tastes it as his eyes widen. He eats, unable to stop himself as Cecily grabs the dish. She takes his fork and tries it. Her eyes widen.

CECILY
I know that recipe. My dad used to
make that for my breakfast. Only
how did...?

Unsure, she looks at the cookbook, which is open. She looks inside and sees the same recipe Omelet Nasi.

BEN
God, that was great. I feel like a
new kid. I could run a mile now,
and just a few minutes ago, I was
well... beat.
(puts dish in sink)
And you, you've been holding out on
me. You can cook. I bet you're just
as good as your father.

CECILY
I am not. It's this place, I keep
telling you. I don't understand it.

BEN
Oh, right. The kitchen.

Cecily sits down and starts crying.

BEN (CONT'D)
Hey, it's okay. Things'll get
better.
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

How about we stick around and see if I can't help you get a few of these orders put together.

Cecily looks up at him.

CECILY

My mom told them, we're not taking any more orders. There's nothing to fill.

BEN

Oh, really?

He enters the hallway and returns a minute later with a stack of orders in his hands.

BEN (CONT'D)

What do you call these?

CECILY

We can't do all that. I haven't even baked a cake before.

BEN

You got the cookbook right here. Besides, if they don't work out, who's to say you didn't at least give it a shot, right?

She sees the picture of her dad on the wall and then sees Mrs. Juniper again looking in the window. She gets up and pulls the shade down.

CECILY

You're right. What am I so afraid of? It's just a kitchen, and they're just... well, not human.

Ben looks at her strangely.

BEN

Right. So here's my plan. You get busy working on these, and I'll go take down all those flyers Mrs. Juniper has put up and replace them with new flyers that say the Bon Appetite is back in business.

CECILY

Now hold on, Ben Buckley. I only said I would try to--

BEN

(heads for back door)
And when I get back, I'll help you pack up all this stuff and start my deliveries again, and help you clean up the kitchen and all. Deal?

CECILY

But, Ben Buckley, I never said I was going to--

BEN

And that's another thing. Stop calling me "Ben Buckley"! I prefer just Ben!

She looks at him and blushes. Abigail enters the kitchen and sees them both talking.

ABIGAIL

What's going on?

BEN

We're back in business, Mrs. C! And nice job with the fridge. I like the way you order. I'll be back soon.

Ben leaves the kitchen.

ABIGAIL

What's he talking about?

Cecily steers her out of the kitchen.

CECILY

Never mind, Mom. I'm going to be doing some cooking.

ABIGAIL

What?

CECILY

You heard me. I'm going to be finishing up all those orders you took that nobody ever got completed.

ABIGAIL

But, honey, you don't know the first think about--

CECILY

That's why I've got help.

ABIGAIL

What help are you talking about?
You're only ten, honey and this
isn't just some after-school sort
of thing! It's serious--

CECILY

I know what it is, Mom. But I can't
just give up that easy yet. At
least let me try one recipe on my
own, and if I screw it up, then
I'll know this isn't what Dad wants
or what I need to do for him
either. Or for us. Okay?

Abigail smiles. She touches her daughter's face, pleased with
her. THE PHONE RINGS in the hallway.

ABIGAIL

Okay, sweetie. But start with the
Spaghetti Bolognese. I have a
feeling this is Mrs. Fergerson
again. She's been calling like
clockwork every day, and doesn't
seem to take no for an answer.

CECILY

Right, Mom. I'll get on to it right
away.

Abigail leaves the kitchen. Cecily stands alone in the
kitchen and sees her dad's chef hat on the table. She puts it
on and then puts her hands on her hips. She shouts!

CECILY (CONT'D)

Okay, listen up! You may be
listening and watching, but I've
got news for you! I'm the new chef
in town, and I am not afraid of you
or scared of this kitchen.

Willy comes alive as do the rest of the utensils, clock,
stove, cookbook, spices, whisk and carving knife.

WILLY/DAPHNE/HENRI/KINGSTON/VELMA

Well, well, well. Look who's
talking to us finally! It's
Emmett's daughter!

PRECIOUS

Back off, the girl's got something
to say, let her say it!

Cecily backs off, still frightened of them all.

CECILY

Well, I... I just want to make sure my dad is proud of me is all. That I can make him proud of all of us. Is that so much to ask?

PRECIOUS

Thatta girl! Sounds just like her father. I say we let Cecily use the kitchen and do her best. As long as she's willing to follow the rules of course.

CECILY

What rules?

ALDWYN

The rules of the cookbook, Precious of course!

PRECIOUS

Follow the rules and never look back. Now here we go. Spaghetti Bolognese. Willy, get the ingredients, Velma the spice, Kingston the whisk, and Henri--

CECILY

Wait a minute, wait a minute. Didn't I just say I was going to be the boss?

They all laugh at her.

KINGSTON

There is something this girl doesn't know about the kitchen, mon. In this kitchen, Precious and we are boss! Not the--

Kingston SNEEZES.

HENRI

(crying)

-- chef! Why do you think I keep crying my heart out for you? Poor girl.

KINGSTON

'Cause you're cutting onions again, that's why!

Cecily sees them all ganging up on her and going about making the food. She tries to join in as a mixing bowl in front of her is filled with ingredients.

ALDWYN

Twenty minutes, and then the boy will be back! Now, in my day, when we got a new chef in the ship's galley, we had to spend the whole day getting him up to speed on--

KINGSTON

We don't have time for all that, mon! We're behind two weeks in orders.

ALDWYN

Two weeks! Why didn't anyone tell me that? And you mean to say we're supposed to make up for that all in twenty minutes!

Cecily is fighting with Kingston the whisk, and tries to stir the bowl.

DAPHNE

Hush up, you're scaring the girl. And I like her eyes. She looks like she's going to make a good chef!

VERA, HENRI, KINGSTON AND WILLY

Hear, hear!

ALDWYN

If you let her get in there, she will. Now give her some elbow room! And whatever you do, do not make a mess of this kitchen!

Cecily smiles as she sees all the help she is getting. She feels more confident than ever before, that with their help, just maybe she can manage this kitchen.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Juniper chases Ben through the streets as he takes down all her signs about 'free dinners' for new customers. Ben puts up colorful news SIGNS for 'BON APPETITE' which is now back in business with a new chef, Miss Cecily Clark.

THE END