

TALL ORDER

(excerpt)

John Shanahan

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CHARACTERS

Larry and Neil, men of any age

Waitress, any age

Scene: A diner on New Year's Day. LARRY and NEIL are at a table. Larry is staring at Neil, who's got a menu in his hand and is just shaking his head. Larry's clearly impatient. As he'll note, it's been twenty minutes. The WAITRESS enters. It's her third trip to the table.

WAITRESS So what do you think, guy? Are we ready to order yet?

LARRY Yes, I think so. I'll—

NEIL No. Hold on. No. I'm not ready.

LARRY Oh come on!

WAITRESS You need *more* time?

LARRY No—

NEIL Yes! Yes, please. Please. Thank you.

(Waitress exits)

LARRY What are you doing?

NEIL Huh?

LARRY You've been looking at the menu for like 20 minutes.

NEIL I know. I know.

LARRY It's a one-page menu! One sided!

NEIL Okay, okay, I get it. I know.

LARRY So what's going on?

NEIL I'm just—this isn't easy, you know!

LARRY You're ordering breakfast. How hard can it be?

NEIL This is not *just* breakfast.

LARRY Brunch?

NEIL No! No, see, you know how they say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day?

LARRY I seem to recall that from grade school, yes.

NEIL Okay, then. So if breakfast is the most important meal of the day, then breakfast on New Year's Day—today—is the most important meal of the *year*!

(Pause)

LARRY Are you still drunk from last night?

NEIL No! I read something recently that said that what you choose for breakfast can affect the outcome of your whole day!

LARRY You read that on the internet, didn't you?

NEIL An e-mail.

LARRY And did it tell you to forward it to seven people?

NEIL Well if I didn't, how was I supposed to receive good luck?

LARRY I knew it.

NEIL What?

LARRY You're such a frigging sheep when it comes to internet stuff.

NEIL I am not!

LARRY Really? Tell me, how's that little girl who lost her parents in the flood doing?

NEIL Still hasn't found them.

LARRY And when was the flood?

NEIL Couple of years back.

LARRY Uh-huh. I'm thinking they should step up the search a little. And how about the kid who needed five thousand e-mails so the doctors would give him a kidney?

NEIL You know, I never heard.

LARRY I have to assume the worst, then.

NEIL That's not funny! Timmy needed help!

LARRY My God, you even know his name?

NEIL This is different!

LARRY How?

NEIL This is about me! And my breakfast! And how my year's going to go!

LARRY I am ashamed that I'm actually about to get into this with you. I want you to know that.

NEIL Okay.

LARRY How does your breakfast affect your life?

NEIL Glad you asked. See, it's all about the composition of the breakfast.

LARRY Composition.

NEIL Right. Its inner meaning.

LARRY Example?

NEIL Okay... Um... Scrambled eggs. I can't order the scrambled eggs.

LARRY Because?

NEIL Hello? They're *scrambled*? Chaos? Things all mixed up! My
life, all mixed up!

LARRY Because of scrambled eggs?

NEIL Exactly!

LARRY So get one sunny side up. That's cheery.

NEIL The uncertainty of the yolk bothers me. Things could get
sloppy. Messy.

LARRY Runny?

NEIL Exactly!

LARRY So you wipe it up with the toast.

If you'd like to read the complete script, please e-mail me at
playwrightj@yahoo.com for a PDF perusal copy.