

## The Lunch Date

By Carrie Lammers

Characters:

WAITRESS *The waitress that takes everything literally*

FRED *A no nonsense guy who just wants to order lunch*

COOK *No explanation needed*

JUDY *Fred's kindhearted girlfriend that can't seem to show up on time*

*Setting: A lunch counter close to noon. FRED walks in and sits down at the counter.*

*WAITRESS appears behind the counter with a notepad in her hand.*

WAITRESS: Hi. Welcome to Mel's Diner. How can I help you?

FRED: I'm looking for a girl...

WAITRESS: *Flattered.* Well, thank you mister, but no can do.

FRED: No! I'm meeting a girl here. Has she come in yet?

WAITRESS: *Looks around.* I don't think so. *A pause.* Well, here's our menu. *Hands FRED a piece of folded paper.* Can I start you off with something to drink?

FRED: I'll have a cherry cola.

WAITRESS: Cherries and cola?

FRED: No. A cherry cola.

WAITRESS: A cherry cola?

FRED: Yes. Do you have diet?

WAITRESS: *Looks down at herself, then up at FRED.* *Angry.* Now, excuse me mister, are you asking if I'm on a diet? Are you suggesting that I go on a diet? Because I will have you know that there are more important things than outward appearance! First you say you're looking for a girl. Then you say I need to go on a diet. Am I not good enough for you!?! Are you that shallow? You sexist pig!

FRED: *Dumbfounded.* No. I just wanted a diet cherry cola.

WAITRESS: *Suddenly perky.* Oh, okay! Why didn't you say so?

FRED: *Mutters.* I did.

WAITRESS: What was that?

FRED: Nothing.

WAITRESS: Okay. One diet cherry cola coming up. *Sing-song.* I'll be back in a jiffy!

*FRED looks down at menu. To herself.* Why would anybody want cherries with their cola? Who does that? *Walks offstage.* *FRED inaudibly mutters to himself as he looks at the menu.* A pause. *WAITRESS reappears with a drink, which she places in front of FRED.* *FRED looks up.*

FRED: I think I'm ready to order.

WAITRESS: Order what?

FRED: My lunch...

WAITRESS: Oh, of course! Your lunch! Naturally!

FRED: I think... *Looks down at menu again.* A sandwich sounds good. I'd like a sandwich, please.

WAITRESS: *Angry, shrill.* Now wait just a minute, mister! First, you tell me to go on a diet, then you tell me to make you a sandwich!?! Do you think it's my job to be skinny and make you sandwiches? You can make your own sandwich! Are you incapable? I will have you know that it is not your place to tell me what mine is. My place is not making people like *Points notepad at FRED* you sandwiches! So you can just go home and make your own sandwich!

FRED: *Very confused.* I... I just wanted a sandwich...

WAITRESS: Of course you did! That's all you can think about! You don't care about my feelings, just that you're hungry and you want food. Did you think about the fact that I don't want to make you a sandwich!?! No, you didn't! Because you're too hungry and food is more important than the feelings of little old me, right!?! Well I have feelings, too, mister!?! Do I look like a sandwich-making robot to you!?!?

FRED: No... I just wanted to place an order for a sandwich. This is a lunch counter, isn't it?

WAITRESS: *Suddenly cheerful again.* Why, yes it is! You want a sandwich, huh? Well why didn't you just say so?

FRED: I thought I did.

WAITRESS: *Laughs.* Oh, silly me! What kind of sandwich?

FRED: Can I have grilled cheese with tomato soup?

WAITRESS: *Starts writing on notepad, looks up. Confused.* Canned grilled cheese and tomato soup? I'm sorry, mister, but we don't have canned grilled cheese here.

FRED: No. I said, can I have tomato soup and grilled cheese?

WAITRESS: I'll say it again, sir, we don't have canned food here. We make it fresh.

FRED: I'd like you to make me a grilled cheese sand– I mean, could you put an order in for grilled cheese and tomato soup?

WAITRESS: *Starts writing again.* Okay. Grilled tomatoes and cheese soup.

FRED: Grilled tomatoes? Who eats that? Who makes that?

WAITRESS: You do, sir. So we will make grilled tomatoes for you. Now, do you want the big tomatoes or the cherry tomatoes?

FRED: No! I said, I want grilled cheese and tomato soup!

WAITRESS: Now, are you talking about just plain cheese on a grill, or do you want the sandwich?

FRED: *Repressing his anger.* May I please have one grilled cheese sandwich with tomato soup?

WAITRESS: Sure thing. Now, do you want the tomato soup in a bowl, or on the sandwich?

FRED: *Sarcastically.* On the sandwich. Where do you think I want the soup?

WAITRESS: *Looks at FRED. Bewildered.* I don't know, mister, that's why I asked you.

FRED: *Takes a deep breath. Calm.* I would like one grilled cheese sandwich and a bowl of tomato soup.

WAITRESS: *Writes on notepad. Looks up. Cheery again.* I'll get that order in for you right away! *Walks offstage.* FRED looks at his wrist to see that he isn't wearing a watch. WAITRESS reappears. Anything else I can get for ya?

FRED: Say, I seem to have left my watch at home. Do you have the time?

WAITRESS: *To herself.* Thyme. Thyme. Thyme. Do we have thyme? *Walks offstage while talking to herself.* *Calls to kitchen staff.* Say, do we have any thyme?

COOK: What's that?

WAITRESS: Thyme. Do we have any thyme?

COOK: No, but we have rosemary and basil. Will that work? *Onstage, FRED places his head in his hands.*

WAITRESS: *Reappears onstage.* *Holds two small jars.* We don't have thyme, mister, but we do have rosemary and basil.

FRED: No! I want the time! *Points to his empty wrist.* Time!

WAITRESS: No, sir we don't have thyme.

FRED: Never mind!

WAITRESS: *Confused.* Well, okay sir. You sure you don't want any rosemary on your wrist?

FRED: Who puts rosemary on their wrist!?

WAITRESS: You do, sir. That's why you pointed to your wrist, isn't it? You wanted the rosemary since we don't have the thyme.

FRED: No! Never mind! I don't want the rosemary.

WAITRESS: We have basil...

FRED: No! I don't want the basil either!

WAITRESS: *Carries jars offstage.* *To herself.* So picky. *FRED looks around counter desperately.* *Groans.*

FRED: *To himself.* Oh, where is she? *WAITRESS reappears.*

WAITRESS: Where is who? Rosemary is in the kitchen.

FRED: No! Just... *Takes a deep breath.* *Looks at WAITRESS.* I'm meeting my

girlfriend here for lunch. I'd like to order for her, too.

WAITRESS: Okay. What to drink?

FRED: One diet cherry cola. *Catches himself. Reconsiders.* One regular cola.

WAITRESS: One regular cola. And to eat?

FRED: *Looks at menu.* A hamburger. *To himself.* She likes hamburgers.

WAITRESS: A hamburger...

FRED: With hamburger meat and tomatoes and...

WAITRESS: Oh! A hamburger! Does she want ham on the hamburger?

FRED: No... She wants beef...

WAITRESS: She wants to have a beef? What kind of person wants to have a beef at a lunch counter?

FRED: No! She wants beef on her burger.

WAITRESS: Wouldn't that be a beefburger?

FRED: *Sighs.* Yes. She wants a beefburger.

WAITRESS: What does she want on the beefburger?

FRED: *Collected.* Pickles, and lettuce...

WAITRESS: *Confused.* Let us what?

FRED: *Curt.* Lettuce the food.

WAITRESS: Let us the food?

FRED: You know, with green leaves?

WAITRESS: *Suddenly understands.* Right! What else?

FRED: Mustard, tomatoes *pronounced to-mah-toes* ...

WAITRESS: *Incredulous.* Mustard to your toes?

FRED: *Snaps.* What?

WAITRESS: You said mustard to 'ma toes.

FRED: No! I said mustard and tomatoes.

WAITRESS: *Chuckles.* Oh!

FRED: And onions, ketchup...

WAITRESS: *Unsure.* Catch up, sir? What are you catching up on?

FRED: *Annoyed.* No! Not catch up.

WAITRESS: Are you caught up?

FRED: No!

WAITRESS: Why aren't you caught up? You need to catch up.

FRED: *Exasperated.* Yes! I need ketchup.

WAITRESS: Don't you mean you need to catch up?

FRED: No! I need ketchup! You know, tomato ketchup? Heinz ketchup?

WAITRESS: Right! Ketchup. Anything else?

FRED: Can I get an order of fries?

WAITRESS: Fries, sir?

FRED: You know, French fries?

WAITRESS: French fries. We don't have any French people frying food here.

FRED: No! The fried potatoes? French fries?

WAITRESS: Oh! French fries! *Writes down on her notepad. Looks up.* Anything else I can get for you?

FRED: *Grumbles.* An aspirin for the headache you're giving me.

WAITRESS: What?

FRED: *To WAITRESS.* Nothing. That should be it.

WAITRESS: Okay. One beefburger with fries coming up! *WAITRESS walks offstage cheerfully. FRED remains at counter, rolls his eyes and shakes his head. Offstage, a bell is heard, and FRED looks over his shoulder. JUDY walks onstage. FRED smiles.*

JUDY: Hi Fred, sorry I'm late. Have you ordered?

FRED: *Exhausted.* Yes. I ordered you a cola and a beefburger.

JUDY: A beefburger?

FRED: The waitress thought that hamburgers should have ham on them.

JUDY: *Laughs.* Sounds like you've had an interesting wait.

FRED: Judy, let's get out of here. The waitress is impossible! I tried to order myself a

diet cherry cola and she went into a fit that I was telling her to go on a diet! I asked her for the time and she went on a mad rush into the kitchen coming out with rosemary.

Who does that? What kind of idiots do they hire here?

JUDY: Fred—

FRED: *Interrupts her.* And she thought I wanted grilled tomatoes and canned cheese soup. Honestly! How stupid can you get!?! *WAITRESS reappears with JUDY's drink.*

FRED: *Motions to WAITRESS. Snide.* Oh look, Judy! Here's our lovely waitress now!

WAITRESS: *Waves to JUDY. Cheerfully.* Oh, hey Judy!

JUDY: *Waves to WAITRESS. Turns to FRED.* Oh, Fred, I'd like you to meet my sister! She'll be living with us for the next few weeks. *Blackout.*