

Seven Shakes of Pepper Under the Moonlight

---

Act 1

by

Harrison Sagraves

Scene

Outside of Arby's. DOLMAN is sitting on the curb taking slow drags of a blunt. A woman that he had just served in the drive-thru a moment ago can be seen walking towards him from stage right.

DAHLIA

Something getting you down? You're making quite the sour face there.

DOLMAN

...It's nothing that I'm willing to open up to a whole-ass stranger about.

DAHLIA

Oh come now!

(DAHLIA holds up a paper Arby's bag)  
We only just met a moment ago.

DOLMAN

No memory of the sort.

DAHLIA

Not the slightest?

DOLMAN

(after an exaggerated drag of his cigarette)  
Zero recollection.

DAHLIA

But, you're the one who made me this scrumptious Meat Mountain© sandwich...

DOLMAN

(exhales a long breath)  
...I work the drive-thru lady...

DAHLIA

(hurriedly sits herself down next to DOLMAN)  
So what's that like then?

(DOLMAN snuffs out his cigarette)

DOLMAN

(mutters) Just wanted to at least enjoy my break today...

DAHLIA

What's it like being a, um, drive-thru'er?? Is it fun?

DOLMAN

(pulls out another cigarette)

Nope.

(as he reaches to grab a lighter out of his pocket)  
You smoke?

DAHLIA

Oh, no, I'm fine!

DOLMAN

(nudges the bag in her hand)

You eat this slop but when it comes to a little cig, that's where you piss a line in the sand??

DAHLIA

I'm not sure about whether it makes me have to pee or not, but it sure was a hefty meal!

(pats her stomach)

DOLMAN

(snickering)

That so? Might wanna hold off on the stuff then. Like seriously, that shit will give you the runs.

DAHLIA

Not if it's this good!

DOLMAN

You can't actually think that stuff tastes remotely good right?

(looks around humorously)

Where's the cameras at? Am I being recorded for some kind of YouTube skit?? (pauses)

(stands up and backs away from DAHLIA)

Are you some kind of secret shopper for the store?

DAHLIA

(quickly stands up to look at DOLMAN)

Honey, my love for your meat is no secret; no secret at all.

DOLMAN

Knock off the snide phrasing would ya? The only person that could say that they "like Arby's" is either a licensed and certified sociopath or some dude that's getting their pockets lined by Mr. R-Beeeeez!

(uses hand gestures to split the syllables of Arby's)

(DALHIA steps forward and opens her mouth to retort, but DOLMAN cuts her off)

DOLMAN

And don't call me 'honey.' It's gross. Almost as gross as that grease-stained bag you're holding.

DAHLIA

...But I really do mean it! Your Meat Mountains© are the best. It's not an exaggeration to say they may have even saved my life.

(DOLMAN scoffs)

DAHLIA

And it's all because of you! It's the way you make them that's just so good, the way you smile at me when you hand me back my receipt, the way your tender hands slide the drive-thru window shut after we part. Ohh, just thinking of it fills me with such a fleeting ecstasy - this yearning!

DOLMAN

I'll do you a favor for the sake of your self-image and pretend I didn't hear the last half of that, but you know I don't make the food myself, right?

DAHLIA

(cranes her head to the side in confusion)

Huh?

DOLMAN

Ohhhhhh NOOOOOOOO! Now *THIS* of all things has to be the joke - no, the punchline of it all. You can quit jerking my leg with the comedy bit now.

(stares over to DAHLIA, expecting an answer)

DAHLIA

...Not sure what you're getting at, but, if you say you don't like the sandwiches, and that you don't even make them yourself, then why are you here?

DOLMAN

(scratches the side of his head)

I don't really know the answer to that one too much myself. Moved out of my parents' place, left my hometown behind - all of it behind, came all the way out to the city and then, *this*. It's bullshit, you know? I've got nowhere to go besides this factory of glop. You know the inside of that place is so thick with the smell of grease that it sticks to you even after you go home and shower off? Even after you take off these degrading uniforms and put them in the washing machine. *Twice. Thrice!* No matter how many times, the smell just clings and never lets you go. The smell sticks to your bed, the feeling of grease crawling across your skin sticks and never lets go, and the taste sticks to your mouth, warping and violating your taste buds - everything, everything down to your nature as a human being is tainted by the this place. It's almost like the Arby's mission is to force some form of realization over you. That once you've become a grease monkey for this garbage dump, then that's all you'll ever be...

DAHLIA

(short pause)

But you always seemed so happy when you took my order...

DOLMAN

I have to act that way, don't you get it?? I'll get fired otherwise.

DAHLIA

...And... the smile that you always have when you greet me at the drive-thru window??

DOLMAN

A façade. Nothing special. I'd do that for anyone and everybody. Even if the chewed up that shit pile of viscera and carbs that they call a sandwich and spit it back in my face, I'll still smile back to them and say, "Have a nice day! Please come visit us again!"

DAHLIA

(short pause)

That's cruel. Just... so cruel...

DOLMAN

Yeah, well that's showbiz sweetheart! Everyone's an actor in their own goddamned tragedy.

DAHLIA

But things shouldn't be like that. That gentle smile of yours. It's something precious. Not something that should be confined to just one place, no, the world! The world should see you. This bright open world under the moonlight - This is where that smile of yours belongs.

DOLMAN

Well,

(he taps his cigarette, although he hasn't taken a single drag from it)

ain't gonna happen today. And especially right now. Cuz my break just ended.

(begins to walk to exit stage left, but stops to face DAHLIA again)

DOLMAN

Don't get yourself mixed up with this place, even if it's just by being a customer. It'll rot you to your core - physically and mentally. (murmurs) This ain't the way a person's meant to live.

(DOLMAN flicks his unfinished cigarette down to the asphalt and snuffs it out with the tip of his work boot)

DAHLIA

(frantically rushes to catch up to him before he exits)  
Is there anything I can do?! Anything I can do to help you out at all?

DOLMAN

As long as my pisswater boss is still around, probably not. And like I said, I'm not all too giddy about receiving counseling or help from a complete goddamn stranger.

(DOLMAN leaves through stage left)

(DAHLIA stands in place, downcast)

DOLMAN

(off stage)

Beat it! And never come back!

(DAHLIA rushes to try and follow DOLMAN regardless, but bolts upright in shock, as someone else is starting to enter stage through stage left. DAHLIA frantically turns around and hides behind a nearby car peaking out of stage right)

BOSS

Damn that brat, smoking up the whole damn store. Smokes an entire pack out here and expects that shit to not linger on while he's sulking at his register. What a fuckin' waste of space.

(BOSS leans up against the car that DAHLIA is hiding behind, and strikes up a match to light a cigar)

BOSS

But a cigar, now! Now, that's a *real man's* flavor!

(licks his lips and takes a long a drag of the cigar, then rummages around in his pocket for a moment)

Damn! I'm out of cigs! I ain't gonna survive the night without another fix...

(Goes around to the driver's side door of the car and starts to open it up)

Hope those little shits in there don't cause any trouble while I'm gone. The station's just a few blocks down. Shouldn't take me too long to load up on the good stuff.

DAHLIA

(rummages around in the paper Arby's bag and reveals a large knife)

This ought'ta teach that bastard to say mean shit about my man.

(brandishes the knife above her head, and slashes it against the back wheel)

DAHLIA

"As long as my pisswater boss is around..." right? Well no worries, you're not gonna have to deal with him no longer sweetie pie.

(BOSS drives the car off stage right.

A moment after exiting, a loud pop can be heard)

BOSS

WHOA WHOA WHOA! HOLY FUCK! A TIRE JUST POPPED!

(The sound of a 16-wheeler blaring its car horn can be heard as BOSS screams)

BOSS

OHOOOOOOOO SHIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIITTTTTTTT!!

(carcrash.mp4)



DAHLIA

(a car wheel comically rolls onto and across the stage)  
That'll teach that little varmint to meddle with my cherry boy!  
(cop sirens are heard off stage)

DAHLIA (Continued)

Oops, I better hustle on away from here before things get serious. Good luck!  
(blows a kiss in the direction of the Arby's building)  
(exits off stage right)

DOLMAN

(runs out from stage left in a hurry)  
(looks off towards stage right)  
Holy shit! Is that the boss man's car?! No way... Does this mean... he's dead?

DOLMAN

(a pause, while he lets it sink in)  
Oh no... what does this mean for my job?? If I get fired because of this, I'll go broke! I'll starve! No. no, no, no. Let's think on the positive side! I don't gotta deal with that slave-driving bastard anymore, so maybe things won't be so bad... maybe I might even get a promotion! Just look on the bright side, look to the bright side.

(DOLMAN takes out his lighter and digs his hand into his pocket to grab a cigarette)  
Oh... shit, I'm out. Well, I got nowhere else to be tonight, considering work is, well, y'know. Might as well go grab a pack.  
(DOLMAN exits back off stage left)

(DAHLIA sneakily follows a few seconds after DOLMAN, she looks to the crowd and holds her index finger to her lips while giving a cheeky wink and exits stage left)

Scene

DOLMAN's apartment. There is a sofa in the middle of the stage with modest furnishings around the walls. A door is closed behind the couch. The entrance to the apartment and the kitchen are not shown, but are portrayed off stage to the right. The bedroom, similarly, is not shown but is off stage left.

(DOLMAN is relaxing at home after the events at Arby's. He enters from stage right, holding a beer he got from the kitchen)

DOLMAN

What a day to be alive! Oops!

(DOLMAN looks up to the ceiling and scoffs)

Was that joke a little too soon for you, boss? (sigh) I almost can't believe they promoted me on the spot. All that hard work, all those grease stained hours spent in toil. Finally, it's all getting paid with interest, baby!

(Plops down on the couch center of stage)

But this meat locker can't hold me for long. Someday, I'm gonna make it on the big screen. Just like those actor boys and girls on TV. Someday! "DOLMAN" is gonna be a household name. And it's not gonna just be any old name that's popular in any old shitshack like this smelly apartment. "DOLMAN's" gonna be the name housewives are screaming into their pillows at night while watching late night television!

(Having enjoyed his delusional dreams for the future, DOLMAN pauses to reflect on the events of today)

DOLMAN

But really, you can't describe that shit in any other way besides "freak accident." Body mangled between the steering wheel and the front bumper of a 16-wheeler. And the cops were even going around the store interviewing the people working there. They said something about foul play - A slash mark in one of the boss man's left tires... There's no way! A "freak accident" is a "freak accident." End of story! No room for no "foul play" or any bull shit like that. Or at the very least, there's no room for any bull shit that's gonna bring down **my** day.

(At that moment, the sound of a door knock comes off stage right)

OFFICER

Police department! We need to ask DOLMAN Dlybrynski some questions about an incident that happened earlier this night.

DOLMAN

(muttering)

Shit! Right when you speak of the devil in blue, he shows the fuck up. I ain't got shit to tell you!

DOLMAN

(shouts towards stage right)  
I'll be right there! Just one minute!

(DOLMAN exits off stage right)

(After DOLMAN's exit, the door near stage left opens slowly to reveal DAHLIA, wearing an Arby's work uniform and with a ski mask on top of her head)

DAHLIA

(sarcastically)  
You gotta learn to keep your windows closed while you're out, DOLMAN. It's a dangerous side of town you live on! You never know who might just slip in.

(DAHLIA sneaks off stage left and drags a tied up, unconscious body with her onto center stage. DAHLIA lays the body down on the couch)

DAHLIA

(DAHLIA pulls out a mini notepad from a Kroger's shopping bag that's draped over her shoulder)  
Step 1: Yoink my man's signature uniform... Check! Still has his smell on it, so that's a nice lil' added bonus.  
Step 2: Knock his bitch of a landlady out while dressed as him... Check! But really though! This bitch was heavy to lug all the way through the bedroom window! I thought my arms were gonna give out...  
Step 3: Call the police about a suspicious individual lurking around the back of the apartment complex... Checkarooni!!!

(DAHLIA pats her hands together in satisfaction)

DAHLIA

And now that the fruits of that step of the plan are underway, now I just gotta plant the evidence of that happy little accident from earlier...

(DAHLIA digs around in her Kroger's bag again, this time brandishing a steak knife)

(DAHLIA stabs the knife between the cushions of the cheap leather couch, unbuttons DOLMAN's work uniform, and slings it over the landlady's body)

DAHLIA

There we go! Two birds, one stone! That should be enough to further my plans just a tad more.

(Just as DAHLIA is setting herself up to leave again through stage left, DOLMAN comes rushing in from stage right. DAHLIA hurriedly pulls down her ski mask)

DOLMAN

(voice pours in from offstage)

Hold on for just one moment officer, I can grab my phone to call my colleague and have this whole situation cleared up nice and-  
(The two lock eyes on opposite sides of the couch)

(DOLMAN darts his eyes down and up to confirm the two intruders in his house. One intruder, of course, being his oh-so-familiar landlady; the other, a not-so-familiar figure wearing a ski mask)

DOLMAN

WHO THE-

(DOLMAN's vision quickly darts back to the door, then back to the burglar(?))

DOLMAN (Continued)

(In a frantic whisper)

Who the hell are youuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu?????!!

DAHLIA

(faking a low pitch voice)

Umm... I AM THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST! I HAVE COME TO REBUKE YOU OF YOUR LONG SOUGHT AFTER LUST TOWARDS YOUR LANDLADYYYYYYY...

(moans like a spooky ghost)

WwwwOOoooowowooHhhhooOOoOooooooOO!!

DOLMAN

The HELL I have any pent-up feelings for this hag!

OFFICER

Hey, what's going on in there! You coming out with your phone or what?!

DOLMAN

(towards stage right)

Ah yes one minute!!!

DOLMAN

(quickly faces back towards DAHLIA)  
I'm gonna have you explain whatever kind of mess this is to the po-po. So come on over and turn yourself in nice and smoothly, and we won't have to have any problems!

(DAHLIA reaches for the knife planted in the couch and pulls it out and points it towards DOLMAN playfully)

DOLMAN

Ah...

(DAHLIA makes a stabbing gesture in DOLMAN's direction)

DOLMAN

AH! AH! AHHH!!!

(The two begin running around the couch in a way that would almost look like musical chairs, if it weren't for the fact that one of the players was brandishing a knife, and the chair was already occupied by an unconscious bystander)

OFFICER

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?!

(In shock, DOLMAN freezes up at the right arm of the couch. DAHLIA catches up and the two wrestle for control of the others body, until DAHLIA pushes DOLMAN over onto the couch, and onto the landlady's body)

DAHLIA

(in the same low pitch voice)  
Toodles~!  
(DAHLIA darts off stage left)

OFFICER

(Enters from stage right as soon as DAHLIA exits)  
...Oh what the HELL son! We got more to talk about down at the station than just a murder case at this rate...

DOLMAN

No, no! Officer, this isn't what it looks like at all!

OFFICER

Oh, can it twerp! That's what all the brats your age say. If you were horny enough to go kidnapping some poor woman, you woulda

been better off spending the time clapping one out to some porn or something.

(the officer pulls out a pair of handcuffs and slaps them on DOLMAN's wrists)

OFFICER

But now at least you don't gotta bother your colleague or whatever with asking them the details of what happened tonight. We'll have plenty of time to talk that over at the station.

DOLMAN

(pouts and looks out towards stage left)  
WAIT! WAIT! There was another person here a minute ago that actually did all this! They should be over there! In my bedroom!

OFFICER

You expect me to believe that?

DOLMAN

It's the only thing I have as an alibi. Just please!!

OFFICER

(pause)  
I'll take one glance. And if I don't catch so much as a shadow stirring in there, I'm coming on back here to drag you to an open cell.

(The officer marches off stage left,  
leaving DOLMAN momentarily)

DOLMAN

Everything's going to be okay... There's no way they could have gotten away in this short amount of time!

OFFICER

(off stage left)  
Oh wow! Now THIS is something!

DOLMAN

(looks off to stage left hopefully)  
Did you find them officer?!

OFFICER

(walks back onto stage with a DAHLIA's steak knife in hand)  
Nope! But I did find something ever so incriminating for what transpired with your boss tonight!

(DOLMAN is shocked)

OFFICER

I suppose we can head on down to the station now, son?

DOLMAN

Yeah... uh... that sounds fine with me...

(DOLMAN and the officer exit off stage right)

(A few seconds pass since the two exit)

LANDLADY

.....Hm? ...HMMMM?????? ...WHAT THE HELL IS GOING  
OOOONNNNNNNNN????!!!!!!!

(The LANDLADY bounces to her feet and  
jumps to leave off of stage right)



Scene

The scene is set on an arched, stone bridge. DOLMAN hangs his arms off the railing of the bridge at center stage, looking out off stage. DAHLIA walks to DOLMAN from stage left with a grocery store bag in hand.

DAHLIA

(jovially, waves her hand as she approaches DOLMAN, despite him not facing her)

Hi! Hey honey! Saw you hanging out around her since before I went to the market. Something on your mind?

DOLMAN

(frazzled, his train of thought breaks and DOLMAN turns around to face DAHLIA)

Oh, yeah, hey! (pause) ... Oh no wait I know you! You're that harpy that was skulking around my old job.

DAHLIA

Old job?? Did something bad happen at your work?!

DOLMAN

Bad? Hmph. That doesn't even begin to explain shit. (pause)  
Y'know, when I'm depressed, I like to come out and look at the river wash down beneath this bridge.

(turns to face the bridge railing again)

DAHLIA

Well, to tell you the truth, I saw you out here since a while ago when I went to grab some groceries.

(holds up the grocery bag)

Seeing as how you've been here for a while it must be something important. Want someone to talk to?

(DAHLIA sidles near the bridge railing)

DOLMAN

(inches away from DAHLIA)

Well... I got kicked out of my home today...

(DAHLIA raises her hand to her mouth in shock)

DOLMAN

(pause)

And...now I don't know where to go??

(DAHLIA nods speedily and repeatedly,  
urging DOLMAN to continue)

DOLMAN

And, uh...that's kind of all of it. I got no place to stay  
(pause) so now I'm here. (pause) I even got interrogated up and down by the police about all the shit that's been happening

around me. Said that they'll need me to come into the station tomorrow to turn myself in on account of a charge for my arrest.

DAHLIA

Hmm, I guess that makes sense! I'd be pretty bummed if I was stuck in that kind of position too.

DOLMAN

(sarcastically)

I'm glad this conversation at least worked to help *someone* lighten up with joy, cuz for me, things are looking a little *dim!*

(DOLMAN puts more distance between him and DAHLIA, now looking off towards stage right)

DAHLIA

Oh hon', I didn't mean to upset you.

(takes a step towards DOLMAN)

I know things must be hard for you, so why don't you have this!

(DAHLIA holds her grocery store bag out towards DOLMAN)

DOLMAN

(skeptical and hesitant)

Oh, uhh, no no! Me? Take some handout from a stranger?? Oh you must be joking, ahaHAaaa. And from you? Some weirdo that bothers to eat at Arby's??? AhaHAaaaaaaa you must really be out of your mind lady.

(There is a pause as DAHLIA looks dejected)

(DOLMAN rolls his hand over his stomach to show that he is hungry regardless)

DOLMAN

Uhhh, but, you know... just because I'm curious (pause) would you mind if I ask what you have there in the bag?

(elated, DAHLIA holds the bag up and takes out the contents, revealing a 12-pack carton of eggs, and a small bag of bird seed.)

DOLMAN

(taken aback)

Oh... looks...filling.....

DAHLIA

It's a family recipe! Boiled egg refried in bird seed!  
It's like that Japanese thing? What's it called? "Pan-co" bread  
crumbs?? Except it's way more crunchy!

DOLMAN

So, like, how do you cook the eggs???

DAHLIA

Oh well that's simple honey! Just heat up some water, and after  
it's come to a nice rolling boil-

DOLMAN

(cutting in front of DAHLIA's speech)  
No, no, that's not really what I meant. I'm homeless, right?

DAHLIA

Ah, well yes. And what could be a better pick-me-up than fried  
eggs?? Way to ask the obvious Dolman!

DOLMAN

Um, again, not really what I meant. I'm not only homeless, I'm  
also pot-less...And hot water-less...And running water-  
less...And for that matter, how the hell would I even fry bird  
seed with eggs even if I did have all that??

DAHLIA

Well that's the easy part! You just-

DOLMAN

(cutting in front of DAHLIA's speech again)  
No, no! Again, that's not what I mean dammit!

DAHLIA

(a little bit bewildered by DOLMAN raising his voice)  
If that was the problem you were dealing with all along then you  
should have just said soooo! Why don't you come back to my  
house? I'll cook you something right up, real quick!

DOLMAN

Umm, I'm sorry. I don't knooooow you, lady??  
(DOLMAN inches away more from DAHLIA)

DAHLIA

(inching towards DOLMAN, matching the distance that he tried to take)

No, no! I insist! We're always hungry- I mean, *happy* to see guests at our house! No need to be so humble, really!

DOLMAN

No, um really, like, I- (pauses, inches back more and more nervously, DOLMAN begins to break into a dash off stage right) I really should be going now my bus is about to leave bye!!

(stops at the end of the bridge and supports himself on the post at the end of the railing. Catches his breath.)

I don't really know why, but that lady was giving me some major creeper vibes. And was it just me, or did she know my name...? (pauses shortly) I must have just told her it last time we met. It's probably nothing...

(DOLMAN begins walking again to exit off stage right)

DAHLIA

(Waits until DOLMAN has completely exited off stage right) Oh well, that's a little disheartening. And here I was hoping I'd enjoy a meal for two tonight.

(DAHLIA begins to walk down stage left)

DAHLIA

Would've liked to have a nice dinner...A nice plate of crunchy eggs...A nice man on the side...

(DAHLIA makes it to the railing post at the far end of the bridge. She brandishes a knife that she had concealed inside the shopping bag. DAHLIA makes her way in front of the bridge, and walks to an alcove made to represent the underneath of the stone bridge.)

DAHLIA

Camping out here for a whole day like the good little Girl Scout I am, and the best I could get out of my prey was his name.

(sits on a prop felled log)

(mocking his voice)

"I can't believe those shitlords fired me," this, and, "That bitch landlady must've set me up," that...Three whole hours waiting for him to say anything about where he might go next, and that's the best I get... (pause) I got time until the nearest bus arrives to make its last run of the night. It's probably safe to assume that's the one he's heading for.

(DAHLIA sets the knife in her grocery store bag and stands up to walk off stage left)

DAHLIA

Let's just get a few things in order before...*"meeting"* him there. I'd hate for my dinner plans to go sour just because I didn't properly marinate the main course.

(DAHLIA leaves off stage left)

Scene

Middle of the forest. There is a riverbank that DOLMAN is sitting next to. DOLMAN has a single rucksack along with him.

DOLMAN

(sitting on the embankment of a river)

(\*sigh\*) (looks up to backstage where a full moon hangs)

"Is there nowhere in this world for a vagrant like me? Although I search this world tirelessly, my soulmate forever eludes my embrace. Am I damned to dance this solo waltz for all eternity..." Well not all of us can be winners DOLMAN... Some of us are meant to shine on the silver screen and rattle off lines of oh-so meaningless prose and poetry to a mass of roaring fans... It just wasn't meant to be me...

(DOLMAN begins rummaging in his rucksack)

DAHLIA

(offstage)

Not if I have anything to say about it!

(enters from left stage with a jovial, skipping gait. Her arms are behind her back)

DOLMAN

(he rises from his sitting position and recoils in shock)  
Oh, woah woah woah woah WOAHA! Okay, I was just quoting a line out of a movie there, I wasn't really expecting to- ... Wha-wha!!!...

(a pause as he stammers)

THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?!!

DAHLIA

Don't you fret hon. It's not like this is any kind of fairytale shit or whatnot. Nothing special like that at all! I just been stalking you since the last bus stop is all! None of that movie special effects out in this part of the woods. Well... not unless it's a horror movie you were looking to act in!

(brandishes a cartoonishly large cleaver from behind her back, along with a large brown bag that is wet at the bottom)

DOLMAN

(DOLMAN quickly kneels down to scoop up some river water, and splashes it on his face)

...Ahh yeah. Mhm. Ahahaha. "Oh dear, what a large knife you have"?

DAHLIA

"All the better for spilling your organs"!

(DOLMAN's legs lose the power to stand and he kneels in desperation near the riverbed)



DAHLIA

You went and wandered yourself this far into the wilderness for me. It's the least I can do for someone being so generous as to leave behind zero bystanders to witness your death!

(DOLMAN frantically starts rummaging through his rucksack)

DAHLIA (Cont.)

Oh, uhh. Hey! What are you fiddling around with over there...!

DOLMAN

(DOLMAN pulls out a small handgun and points it in DAHLIA'S direction)

Ok. OK! Stay back!

DAHLIA

Oh Christ. Oh fuck! Uhhh, well, I didn't expect you to have a gun...

(DAHLIA bites her lip and speaks in an irritated voice)  
(mutters)

Otherwise I would've killed your sorry ass sooner.

DOLMAN

Hey I can hear you just fine you know! You got a lot of nerve coming out here, threatening me after all I've been through!

DAHLIA

(sputters lips and rolls eyes)  
All you've *been through*?? Oh let me catch a break. You ever thought to breathe a sigh for all the hard work I've been through??? The person who helped you through all of your struggles. Me. ME! You're one and only, since the day we spoke together. I've been there to save you.

DOLMAN

(DOLMAN lengthens his arm out to better point the gun at DAHLIA)

I gave you a burger you bitch! I talked to you once. No, twice. TWICE! I don't KNOW you worth a damn lady!

DAHLIA

You really don't get it yet after we've been through so much together. Fine! Let me spell it out for you. Your "shitbag" boss, your bitch of a landlady, all of the things you hated in this worthless town, I got rid of for you...And yet you still don't got the slightest bit of consideration for all the work I had to do. All of this work I had to do to make this happen in such a short period of time, all for you! Just to lessen the load you were carrying. To save you from all of those nasty things!

DOLMAN

What the hell are you trying to say you crazy asshole?

DAHLIA

(DAHLIA plays with her knife)

You still don't get it. I killed your *shitbag* boss... And your *bitch* landlady... right before coming here I had a friendly girl-to-girl chat with her.

DOLMAN

...You didn't...

DAHLIA

So yeahhh... here's a little appetizer for the main course.

(DAHLIA crams her hand into the bag and reveals the severed head of DOLMAN's landlady)

And this isn't all of course! I've got the yummiest parts already cooked right up at home.

DOLMAN

(DOLMAN holds the gun up with both hands)

You're coming with me back to town to explain all the shit you've put me through the past day, you little monster!

DAHLIA

Ummmm, what do you mean?? That'd just make everything that we've worked for up to this point meaningless.

DOLMAN

(relieved)

Oh thank god! I knew this couldn't have been the end for me... There's still a future for DOLMAN out there yet!

DAHLIA

I can't let you go doing any of that... Hey, are you even listening to me! I made all these preparations for our dinner together - all of these preparations for you to be the main course! And now you're going to wash it all down the drain!

DOLMAN

Beg your pardon? What was that about "main course" or whatever?? Oh, who cares! You're bullshit that you've been dragging me through is over here. Can't believe the gun I was planning to use to just off myself would be what saves me in the end, haha!

DAHLIA

Uh, uhh, weren't you just looking for a dance partner or something or whatever 2 minutes ago? You know, like right before I got here! *That's* what I'm here for honey, of course!

(DAHLIA shuffles to hide the cleaver behind her back with one hand, and stretches her other arm out to beckon DOLMAN towards her. DAHLIA positions her legs and feet to begin dancing)

DAHLIA

I've come to play the role of your dance partner DOLMAN, can't you see? Now, under the moonlit sky, let us parade our merriment under the audience of stars!

DOLMAN

Are you completely insane?? Well, I guess saying that about a psycho that carries around severed heads is an understatement...

DAHLIA

(rushes at DOLMAN in anger)  
Urrghhh, damn it!!

DOLMAN

(fires a bullet off to the side of DAHLIA, missing her intentionally)

DAHLIA

(flinches, shouts in panic and stumbles backwards)  
You nearly shot me!

DOLMAN

And you nearly went and tried to cut me open! I'd say we're on even ground here you and I!

DAHLIA

Hardly! You have a damn gun! You could blow my head off at any time and it's not like I could even fight back.

DOLMAN

And if I didn't have this gun? What were you gonna do to poor ol' defenseless me with that big ol' hunk of metal in your hands?

DAHLIA

Shove it into your back I suppose!

(DOLMAN points the gun towards the sky and fires another shot. DAHLIA flinches)

DOLMAN

Can't have you dying on me right away. I need someone to explain all the shit that's been happening to me, and unfortunately for me, the culprit themselves... that'd be you... is the only one that can hold me testimony.

DAHLIA

...DOLMAN, think about everything you're throwing away here. What's waiting for you back there - back in that town - back at that place you called a "greasy" whatchamacallit. Can you really break out of all of that the way you are?

DOLMAN

This doesn't have a shit's worth of meaning to you ruining my life in the course of a fucking day!

DAHLIA

How does it not?! You said it yourself you know. "This ain't the way a person's meant to live," right? If you're so upset whether it be that way (points away, off stage), or this way (holds up the bag), then why choose that old life that was just letting everyone use you? Why not choose me?? Why not let me use you, let me be the one who rules you - let me take you, let me have your life, let me eat you whole!!!

(DOLMAN fires the gun, this time hitting DAHLIA.  
DAHLIA falls to the ground)

DOLMAN

...You're right... you know...

(DOLMAN leisurely sits back down at the riverbank. He pulls his rucksack close to him and starts rummaging around in it)

DOLMAN

Maybe you are right... there's probably no reason for me to go back... even if everything did go well, I'd just end up right back where I started..... There's no place for me back there.

(DOLMAN pulls a bloodstained knife identical to DAHLIA's out of his rucksack, along with the head of the landlady)

END