

BOYARDEE

Written by

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OVER BLACK

We fade in the sounds of scattered applause in a middle school classroom. Papers rustle, footsteps head back to a seat.

TEACHER

(OS)

Boyardee.

The grating sound of a chair sliding on a floor.

Then, another grating sound - this one being pulled across the floor.

Papers rustle as Boyardee takes his notes. He makes his way up -

But he suddenly trips and falls.

Giggles, murmurs.

BOYARDEE

(softly, OS)

Sorry.

Boyardee gets up, makes his way to the front of the classroom.

Papers rustle. The class quiets down. Boyardee clears his throat.

INT. A CLASSROOM - DAY - 1815

A full classroom of children stares at us.

BOYARDEE, an unassuming Italian boy of 15 wearing a full white chef's outfit several times too large for him, stands in front of a large blackboard that dwarfs him. In his hands he holds a stack of notes that he's nervously shuffling around. Next to him, a large roll of paper sits on a stand, presenting a map of Europe.

BOYARDEE

Sorry, I seem to have misplaced -

Boyardee holds up a piece of paper. Laughs nervously.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Ha, there, found it.

Boyardee looks to the TEACHER (50s), who looks at Boyardee for a second before jotting down some notes.

Boyardee looks away and takes a breath.

He begins his presentation.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Hello, class. Do you remember what
you ate for dinner yesterday?
Chances are -

A cacophony of bored answers. Rising above them, a voice of a
BULLY.

BULLY 1

I ate your mom!

BULLY 2

Brilliant one, Mario!

The bully high fives everyone around him.

Boyardee continues.

BOYARDEE

Chances are, you don't remember, or
if you do, it wasn't anything
special - probably just some pasta
or polenta. But, a farmer harvested
that wheat. Another pressed the
olive oil.

Boyardee pauses, looks up at the class. This presentation has
just started, but it's already dragging on.

He turns the page.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

For most of us, food is just a
means of living. Something to check
off on the daily checklist. But,
for others, it's more than that. It
can be a way of life, or a very
interesting hobby.

Boyardee spins and pins a finger on Paris on the map.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Here! This is Paris, the center of
European culture for a lot of
years! But that also includes food!
The world's most renowned chefs
reside there, cooking for the
world's most renowned people!

Boyardee's getting in the flow of it, becoming more comfortable. With flourish, he flips the roll of paper, revealing several poorly drawn images of cooking equipment. Boyardee looks at the pictures in sadness, shaking his head.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Alas, even with all the artistry that goes into this practice, these people aren't called artists, or poets; instead, we label them "cooks", and shut them off into the back room.

Boyardee turns to the class, in the moment.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Food is not just something you eat. There is more to it! It is a way of life! There is culture, history to it! It is *important!*

Boyardee flips his hat, like he's flipping his hair.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

I am Ettore Boyardee, and I want to grow up to be a chef!

Boyardee closes his eyes, prepares to bask in the applause, the glory -

TEACHER

Ricci.

But none comes. Instead, as the following student gets up to present, the class murmurs among themselves, looking at Boyardee and giggling.

Boyardee sadly takes off his hat and returns to his seat.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Outside the school, parents wait on horse-driven carriages in a line to pick up their children.

The bell rings, and a screaming mass of children burst from the school's doors.

Amid them, Boyardee walks out, depressed, holding his costume and notes under an arm. He looks at the happy schoolchildren rushing to their parents on carriages. His eyes move down the line to the back of it, where he sees ALBERTO BOYARDEE (40s), Boyardee's father, a bumbling and jolly fisherman, scanning the crowd atop a mule, ADELE.

Boyardee makes his way to Alberto. A huge smile grows on Alberto's face when he spots Boyardee, and he dismounts Adele.

Alberto embraces Boyardee in a suffocating hug. Boyardee doesn't reciprocate.

ALBERTO
My son! How good it is to see you!

BOYARDEE
Can we just go back home?

Alberto's demeanor shifts and he releases Boyardee.

ALBERTO
(saddened)
They didn't like it?

Boyardee sighs.

Alberto tries to find words to comfort Boyardee.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
Mother said there was some expired
meat in the factory. We're having
ragu tonight.

Boyardee instantly lights up.

BOYARDEE
Ragu?!

ALBERTO
But she said you can have it only
if you come home happy. Let's go!

The two get on Adele, and as Alberto navigates the crowd of vehicles leaving, we rise up to get a full view of the bustling SARDINIA CITY.

Sardinia, 1815.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY - STREETS - DAY

We follow the two through the narrow streets of downtown Sardinia City.

Boyardee looks at the passing scenery from the backseat: office workers looking tired and haggard from a long shift, holding cups of soup dispensed from machines outside offices, eating without passion.

One of the workers tries to cross the street, but his boss stops him and hands him a cup of soup instead. The worker shakes his head and looks sadly across the street.

Boyardee turns his head, following the worker's gaze, sees empty pasta restaurants, their owners looking sadly onward at the people eating their artificial food.

Boyardee turns his head, sees stressed people outside newsstands, reading large newspapers with the headline "RUSSIA ANNEXES CRIMEA: COULD HUNGARY BE NEXT?"

Boyardee turns his head, sees empty soup kitchens, their owners crying as people with newspapers walk on right by their entrances.

Boyardee shakes his head in sadness as the two make their way out of the city proper, into -

EXT. RURAL SARDINIA - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Instantly, the atmosphere becomes brighter. Boyardee looks around him at happy people petting happier cows.

Boyardee smiles contentedly. This is his home.

Adele suddenly starts coughing. Alberto slaps her, but she continues.

EXT. HORSE PIT STOP - DAY

Outside a little shack with a red cross on it Alberto and an aging farmer stand talking to each other. In the background, Adele and a few other equines stand in pens being fed grass by the farmer's wife. Boyardee sits in some grass nearby.

CUT TO:

Alberto hands the farmer some cash.

EXT. RURAL SARDINIA - AFTERNOON

Alberto and Boyardee ride once more. Boyardee waves to various happy folk petting various happier animals.

Adele starts coughing.

EXT. HORSE PIT STOP #2 - AFTERNOON

The same setup as the first pit stop scene, except in a different location with different farmers.

Alberto, shaking his head, hands the farmer some cash.

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN RURAL SARDINIA - AFTERNOON-EVENING

We fade in and out of Alberto and Boyardee riding on Adele, Adele starting to cough, and Alberto promptly handing a farmer (who's taking care of Adele) some cash.

The two progress through the varied Sardinian countryside, crossing through rivers, forests, mountains. As time passes, Adele grows fatter and her mouth becomes more stuffed with grass; Alberto and Boyardee grow more worried; Alberto's pockets become dry and he ends up having to pay with fish.

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - EVENING

Alberto leads a swaying, burping and coughing Adele along a dirt path, Boyardee by his side.

They are coming up on the Boyardee farmstead: a quaint little two-story house surrounded by open fields, a few cows grazing on them. The lights are on inside, and the chimney is smoking.

In the windows, the outline of MARIA BOYARDEE (40s), Boyardee's kindly mother, can be seen tending to a steaming pot. She hums to herself as she works.

Alberto, upon approaching the house, pauses. Boyardee notices, looks worried towards him. Alberto takes a breath, plasters a smile on his face, pushes onward.

INT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - EVENING

The interior looks very quaint. I don't know how rural Italian farmers lived back in the 1800s, but the Boyardees are rural Italian farmers.

In a corner lies a bowl of money with a label on it.

Maria is in the kitchen stirring a steaming pot, humming to herself. She wears dirtied factory overalls with a sausage logo on them.

The door swings open. Alberto waltzes in, followed by Boyardee.

ALBERTO

I'm-a home!

Maria spins towards Alberto.

MARIA

Oh, Alberto, how I've missed you so!

ALBERTO

Maria, how I have also missed you so!

The two embrace. Boyardee drops his chef outfit and school supplies by the door, and takes a seat at the dining table.

MARIA

You smell of sardines.

ALBERTO

And you smell of salami.

MARIA

(sultry)

Perhaps I will get some tonight?

ALBERTO

(looking at food)

Aren't we all getting some tonight?

Maria laughs. She returns to the food. Alberto starts taking off his overalls and hanging them by the door.

MARIA

Ettore! How was school today?

BOYARDEE

Fine, mother.

Alberto takes a seat, Maria places a cover on the pot and carries it to the table. As she passes Boyardee, she plants a kiss on his cheek. He blankly reciprocates.

MARIA

Chin up! We have ragu tonight, your favorite! I'm sure your father has told you!

Maria gives Alberto a glance, but Alberto just shakes his head. Alberto turns to Boyardee.

ALBERTO

Remember our deal?

BOYARDEE

What deal?

Alberto nervously laughs. Maria takes a seat and takes the cover off the pot, starts dishing it.

ALBERTO

You can only have some ragu if you put a smile on your face.

Boyardee turns to Alberto, glaring. It catches Alberto off guard.

BOYARDEE

And what's there to smile about?

Maria places a bowl of ragu sauce in front of Boyardee. She looks between the two men, trying to decipher what's happening.

MARIA

Ettore, don't talk that way to your father.

Silence. Maria dishes Alberto a bowl.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(to Alberto, exasperated)
What's going on?

ALBERTO

(to Maria)
He didn't do too well on his career presentation at school.

BOYARDEE

No. It's not that.

Coughing from outside. A donkey's cough. Maria perks her head up. Looks at Alberto, who avoids her glance.

MARIA

Alberto-

Alberto sighs. He reaches into a pocket, takes a coin out, throws it on the table. Its wobbling as it balances out is deafening.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I, I still don't get it - that's a coin -

ALBERTO

Adele has cancer.

Silence.

MARIA
How do you know?

ALBERTO
I went to all the doctors. This is
all I have left of today's pay.
They say if we want to treat it,
it'll... be costly.

MARIA
(finding words)
Did you feed her grass?

ALBERTO
Any more and she'll burst.

MARIA
How long does she have?

ALBERTO
A while. But she shouldn't carry
things. She can't carry things. The
milk from the cows, we'll have to
carry it.

Maria sighs.

MARIA
And she'll be eating all of the hay-

ALBERTO
I'll find a way. There has to be a
way out of this.

MARIA
Outside of selling the poor thing?
Who'll buy her?

ALBERTO
Can't feed her, can't sell her -
what are we to do?

Silence. Maria and Alberto look to each other, each coming to
the same conclusion.

MARIA
Ettore-

Maria turns to speak to Boyardee, but all that's left in his
place is an empty chair and an untouched bowl of food.

ALBERTO
(sighing)
I'll talk to him.

Alberto gets up. Maria stirs her ragu.

As Alberto crosses the table, he looks at the bowl of money. Remember that one? The one I spent one line introducing at the beginning of the scene?

Its label: ETTORE'S PARIS FUND.

Maria notices Alberto looking at the bowl. She follows his gaze. Then returns to him.

Alberto looks to Maria.

MARIA
(pointedly)
We are not doing that.

ALBERTO
I know.

Alberto takes Boyardee's bowl of food.

INT. BOYARDEE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Boyardee sits on his bed, tears on his face.

A knock at the door.

ALBERTO
(OS)
Hey, I have your dinner. If you still want it.

BOYARDEE
I'm not hungry.

The door creaks open. Alberto pokes his head in.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)
So am I still going?

ALBERTO
Son...

Alberto comes into the room, puts the food down on a surface, takes a seat next to Boyardee. Alberto takes a second to find how he wants to put things.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
 Sometimes, in life, you find
 yourself cornered between a
 mountain and a coast. No way out. A
 crossroads, where every path leads
 to either a difficult or impossible
 decision. It is in these situations
 where you must ask yourself an
 important question: what do you
 value in your life?

Boyardee scoffs.

BOYARDEE
 You can just tell me, you know.

A pause.

ALBERTO
 The culinary school is still on.

Boyardee nods.

BOYARDEE
 (pushing)
 But...

Pause.

ALBERTO
 If you want to go, we can't afford
 to keep Adele.

BOYARDEE
 Are you going to send me to
 downtown Sardinia City, then? Sit
 in one of those high-rise buildings
 and eat their high-rise gloop and
 earn big, fat high-rise paychecks
 to live a nice comfortable high-
 rise life so I can go to Paris to
 cook and *not* live a high-rise life?
 That seems kind of silly to me.

ALBERTO
 You're not going to be high-rising
 anything, Ettore! I just thought,
 since we are talking about your
 future, I'd include you in the
 conversation.

A pause.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
Include you... in the decision.

Boyardee looks to Alberto. Alberto is looking at his hands. He clenches, unclenches them, examines them.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
I wish I could be a boy again.
Living life without goals, stress,
concern... consequences.

Alberto eats some ragu out of Boyardee's bowl.

BOYARDEE
I want to be a chef.

ALBERTO
I know you do, son.

Alberto gets up. Prepares to leave, remembers something.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
Tomorrow, let's go fishing. We
haven't been for a while. I'd like
to do that.

BOYARDEE
I'd like to do that too.

Alberto nods, looks to his son.

ALBERTO
So that's that, then.

Alberto sadly smiles and exits.

Boyardee, left alone, sits in silence for a moment. He looks to the bowl of ragu.

Then, in a fit of energy, he reaches towards it and begins DEVOURING it. He eats it with a feverish fervor, savoring every bite, making noises to himself as he eats.

He suddenly pauses.

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - MIDNIGHT

The house is asleep. Lights off. Still. Snoring loudly emits from the second story.

We hear creaking. Like someone's walking, but trying to conceal their footsteps.

The door opens.

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - ADELE'S PEN - MIDNIGHT

Adele busily licks clean a bowl of ragu on the ground.

Facing her is Boyardee, aiming a rifle with a bayonet at her. He's barely holding on to the gigantic thing.

He snuffles. He's crying again, *shit*. He tries to dab away his tears with his elbow, but instead he drops the whole damn gun.

It crashes to the ground, emitting a loud *thump*. Boyardee looks to his parents' window - no activity.

Adele neighs. As Boyardee picks the rifle back up -

BOYARDEE

Ssh, ssh girl, it's okay.

Seeing Adele eating the ragu, Boyardee can't help but giggle.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Knowing the practices that goes on in mother's factory, I wouldn't be surprised if you were committing an act of cannibalism right now.

Adele snorts.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Not like you'd care, anyway.

Boyardee takes a seat next to her. He pets her.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Did you enjoy today? Being fed all that tasty grass? You usually only have hay.

Boyardee sighs.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

We work and toil in education we don't respect to get a job we don't enjoy. Then we're shipped off to nursing homes to enjoy the rest of our numbered days in valued peace. There, we finally enjoy life.

Boyardee looks to Adele.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)
Perhaps more bonds us than just the
saddle.

He looks up, at the moon. It's a clear night tonight. Closes his eyes as the wind blows through his hair.

Giggles from the class presentation run through Boyardee's mind.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)
(to himself, quietly)
I'm Ettore Boyardee, and I want to
be a chef.

The rustling of papers. Scribbling on a notepad.

TEACHER
(echoing, VO)
Turn to page 32 of "A History of
Sardinia".

Boyardee gets up.

BOYARDEE
(to himself, rising)
I'm Ettore Boyardee, and I want to
be a chef.

Boyardee picks up the rifle. Checks to see if it's loaded.

BULLY 1
(echoing, VO)
What kind of name is Boyardee
anyway? Was your family, oh,
mentally challenged?

BULLY 2
(echoing, VO)
Fantastic jab, Mario!

BOYARDEE
(to himself)
I'm Ettore Boyardee, and I want to
be a chef.

Boyardee stretches his shoulders, aims the rifle best he can at Adele.

MARIA
(echoing, VO)
He wants to be a chef?

ALBERTO
 (echoing, VO)
 Yeah, I know...

MARIA
 (echoing, VO)
 Why? And also, why is he imagining
 this conversation? It has never
 happened. We have always been fully
 supportive of our son's endeavors.

ALBERTO
 (echoing, VO)
 Ssh, he's going through a little
 something right now.

Tears stream from Boyardee's face. His finger squeezes on the trigger. Adele neighs.

BOYARDEE
 (almost a shout)
 I'm Ettore Boyardee, and I--

Boyardee pauses.

A myriad of discouraging words from mocking children run through his mind: "What kind of world needs a chef anyway?" "Maybe you can come to my house and replace my annoying mother." "Chefs are dumb! I'm going to be a banker in downtown Sardinia City!"

Boyardee lowers the rifle.

INT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - A DARK SHED - DAWN THE NEXT MORNING

Alberto cleans a rifle. When he's done, he grimly exits the shed.

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - DAWN

While walking, Alberto tears open a cartridge with his mouth and loads the rifle with it. As he places his hand in his pockets to produce a speck of flint, he turns the corner to see -

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - ADELE'S PEN - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

What used to be the pen that held Adele is now empty, its fence open, the rope holding Adele cut. A bayonet lies on the ground.

Alberto looks in confusion at the scene, then feels the bottom of the rifle - bayonet missing. Looks to the bayonet. Looks to the rifle.

INT. BOYARDEE'S ROOM - DAWN

Alberto quietly opens the door to Boyardee's room.

Boyardee lies sprawled on his bed, snoring loudly.

Alberto spots bits of grass and hay around Boyardee's clothes and the room.

Suddenly, the sounds of galloping hooves and neighing from outside.

Alberto rushes to the room's window and opens it. Looks outside.

In front of the house, a large group of donkeys have gathered.

In the center is Adele, a cut leash around her neck. She and Alberto make eye contact.

Adele bows.

Alberto turns back inside to look at Boyardee, still sound asleep.

ALBERTO
(breathless)
Mama mia. The boy's done it.

INT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - DAWN

Alberto passes by Boyardee's culinary fund and drops the coin (the last of his pay) in it.

BEGIN MONTAGE

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - NIGHT - 1820

1820.

Maria plops a fat load of cash in the pot.

MARIA

I'd say two more weeks of overtime
and we'll have it!

She turns to the dining table, where the family is enjoying dinner. Alberto is reading a newspaper with the headlines "RIOTS IN VIENNA OVER RUSSIAN OCCUPATION".

A 20 year-old Boyardee smiles.

BOYARDEE

Then they'll just raise the fee
again!

ALBERTO

(folding newspaper)
No matter - we'll keep the money
flowing in! Son, tell us about
college.

BOYARDEE

Economics is boring but great...

We focus on the newspaper, on a picture with a RUSSIAN SPOKESPERSON on a podium.

The picture materializes into real life.

INT. FANCY ROOM, MOSCOW - DAY

The spokesperson speaks on a podium, several hands writing on notebooks in front of him akin to microphones in front of press conferences.

Flashing light bulbs blind the spokesperson.

RUSSIAN SPOKESPERSON

Like I said, Austria was the
exception, not the norm. We won't
be annexing any more places any
time soon.

INT. AMERICAN THEATER - DAY

1825.

An American TALK SHOW HOST laughs with a GUEST.

TALK SHOW HOST

And you say he was *lying*?

GUEST

Yes, host John Smith, he was clearly lying, because if we look at the Russian Empire right now -

The guest unfurls a map of Europe - Eastern Europe is completely covered in red. The crowd LAUGHS.

GUEST (CONT'D)

The Tsar can talk all he wants, but I think he's not stopping at anything short of complete European domination at this point.

The guest turns to the camera.

GUEST (CONT'D)

You'll hear it first from me, but I think the military is a very good avenue to be progressing through right now.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

German soldiers SCREAM as a cannon shell explodes near them. Russian flags wave proudly in the distance.

1830.

A NEWSCASTER enters the frame, talking into a telegram, looking at us.

NEWSCASTER

As I stand outside Berlin, which used to be-

A SOLDIER runs into frame.

GERMAN SOLDIER

Call me a sauerkraut, but I'm taking one of those newfangled trains out of here!

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A train WOOSHES by us.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY TRAIN STATION - DAY

A 30 year old Boyardee wearing formal officewear exits the train and spots his parents. He runs to them and hugs them.

Boyardee sports a blossoming beard.

INT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - DAY

1840.

Boyardee, beard incredibly disheveled, plops some money into the money bowl.

BOYARDEE
Half of my rent going towards an unfounded dream.

ALBERTO
But not an impossible one.

Alberto comes to Boyardee's side.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
How has your life gone so far, son?

BOYARDEE
Not good. I still haven't achieved my dreams.

ALBERTO
Okay.

Alberto rolls away in an electric wheelchair.

INT. ITALIAN BANKING ESTABLISHMENT - DAY

1845.

Boyardee sits at a desk, working at a telegram.

A BANKING AIDE comes up to him.

BANKING AIDE
Congratulations, Ettore. You have been promoted. How does it feel to be making more money than you previously were?

BOYARDEE
Wonderful.

The aide drops a shiny certificate down on Boyardee's desk. Boyardee reaches over to the telegram and lifts it - under it is a photo of a bowl of spaghetti. Boyardee sheds a tear.

INT. KREMLIN - DAY

In front of various cameras, TSAR NICHOLAS THE FIRST (50s), loudspoken and obnoxious, flanked by GREGORY RASPUTIN (40s), mysterious and scheming, speaks to a crowd of journalists.

1850.

TSAR NICHOLAS THE FIRST
 Yes, I have declared war on France!
 Yes, I have declared war on
 Britain! No, I do not regret it!

JOURNALIST
 Why are you doing this?

Nicholas eyes the journalist.

TSAR NICHOLAS THE FIRST
 You'll see in time. You'll see.

Rasputin hands Nicholas a plate of pasta. Nicholas starts eating it.

We FREEZE FRAME on Nicholas' face.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY STREETS - DAY

Nicholas' face is printed on the headlines of a newspaper:
 "TENSIONS MOUNT BETWEEN FRANCE AND RUSSIA ".

A NEWSTAND OWNER waves around a newspaper.

NEWSTAND OWNER
 Extra! Extra! Read all about it!
 Tsar threatens war on Sardinia, as
 well as France and Britain,
 breaking the terms of a ceasefire
 set a year ago! Will the great
 powers take action? Read it!

The owner looks up.

NEWSTAND OWNER (CONT'D)
 Oh look, a bird.

We follow the owner's eyes up to the sky, and rise to see the sprawling metropolis that Sardinia City has become over the years. Trucks full of soldiers rush by on the streets, which are choked with cars. In the sky above, you can barely see blue past the smoke rising from the factories in the city.

Several steampunk-styled aircraft bearing the Sardinian flag fly over us as a ship's horn blows.

Sardinia, 1855.

END MONTAGE

INT. ITALIAN BANKING ESTABLISHMENT - OFFICE - DAY

Boyardee faces his BANKING BOSS in a fancy office. The Boss reads a sheet of paper.

Boyardee is now 50. He looks like a really sad dad, but with a huge beard, so maybe if that sad dad was also Poseidon. He holds a cup of soup (similar to the ones we saw in the beginning).

The Boss chortles.

BANKING BOSS

Profits are up this quarter! And no thanks to your devilish charm, Mr. Boyardee!

Boyardee slurps his soup.

BOYARDEE

No problem. Always happy to help.

The Boss turns around and looks at the Sardinia City skyline.

BANKING BOSS

Ah, the wonders of money. Did I ever tell you how my life was before I got money? It was bad! But then I got money and now life is good!

The Boss turns to look at Boyardee, who's nodding lethargically.

BANKING BOSS (CONT'D)

You worry about so much less the moment you get money. Which is why my mantra is, "Money is good. Money is great. All you should work towards in life is getting more money." If everyone in the world followed that, this excellent ceasefire we have between the great powers would have been here three years earlier!

BOYARDEE

I agree, boss. Money is really the only important thing in the world.

BANKING BOSS

Attaboy! Atta-Boy-ardee! Has anyone ever called you that? I have reviewed your progress in the office and would like to offer you another promotion - this one to the position of Banking Boss.

BOYARDEE

Will I be making more money?

BANKING BOSS

More than you can ever dream of, boy! Your life, fully satisfied until the end of your days! How does that sound?

Boyardee nods.

BOYARDEE

I would like that, sir. I would like that very much.

The Boss breaks into a wide smile.

BANKING BOSS

Good. I will just clear my things and be out of your hair. Welcome to the top of the world, Boyardee! Glad to have you here.

The Boss picks up some monocles from the table and exits.

Through the closing door, we can see the employees of the office throwing a large surprise party for the departing old boss.

Boyardee settles into his chair and looks around the room, listening to the sounds of joy happening outside.

INT. ITALIAN BANKING ESTABLISHMENT - NIGHT

Boyardee is alone in the large workspace. He takes one more look at the vacant seats, then turns off the light to exit.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY STREETS - NIGHT

We follow Boyardee as he walks back home. He passes a BEGGAR.

BEGGAR

Spare a coin! Haven't had a real
meal in days!

Boyardee passes the beggar without a word. The beggar sheds a tear as he opens up a large stash of canned soup. He opens a can.

INT. BOYARDEE HOME - NIGHT

Boyardee enters his well-kept apartment unit. He hangs up his clothes.

We follow him as he opens up some canned soup and cooks it. He looks really, really sad.

His dinner finally prepared, he sits down on the couch in the living room and presses a telegram to his ear.

He laughs to himself as he eats his sordid-looking food.

INT. BOYARDEE HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Boyardee, in his pajamas, gets ready to go to bed.

As he approaches his bed, however, he trips on something laying on the floor.

BOYARDEE

Merda! Whatever was that!

Boyardee looks down to see that he has tripped on a box laying on the floor.

He picks it up and finds it surprisingly light.

Boyardee places it on a surface and opens it. He takes out a NOTE and begins reading it.

MARIA

(VO)

Ettore. These probably won't fit by the time you need them, but if you were in the need for a chef's outfit for your job in Paris... enjoy! Mama and Papa.

Boyardee places the note aside and reaches into the box.

He pulls out the chef outfit he was wearing at the beginning of the film. It's crumpled up and bears signs of disuse.

Probably because it's been in that box for whoever knows how long. It's 1855.

For a moment, we see a glimmer in Boyardee's eyes. A sign of life.

It vanishes.

Boyardee shakes his head and throws the chef's outfit on the floor.

BOYARDEE

Psh. The dreams of a child. I'm happy now. I am happy now. Being a chef is dumb! Food is not important. Only money is.

Boyardee kicks the outfit.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

So stupid! Chefs are unimportant. Food is not important at all. I don't like food.

Boyardee throws the chef's outfit into the bathroom.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

Goodbye, dumb dreams.

Boyardee turns off the light and goes to bed.

We linger for a moment on the window in the bedroom. From there, we can see the harbor of Sardinia City in the distance, lights blinking on and off from working cranes.

We focus on a lighthouse towering above the city, its light turning round and round.

A low, rumbling sound can be heard.

INT. SARDINIA CITY LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

Two LIGHTHOUSE OPERATORS sit around a table, playing cards.

Operator 1 notices a glass of water rippling. He looks up.

OPERATOR 1

You hear that?

Operator 2 slams down a card.

OPERATOR 2
Yes, it's me opening your ration
can because I won it! Give it!

OPERATOR 1
Shush. Listen.

They listen for a moment.

Suddenly, an explosion in the distance.

The operators look at each other.

OPERATOR 2
Are those-

Operator 1 starts to rush towards the lighthouse controls but
stumbles.

OPERATOR 1
Ach! My daily caloric intake cannot
sustain my active lifestyle!

OPERATOR 2
This damned food! Wish they fed us
better!

Operator 1 jiggles the controls.

The lighthouse shakes and shifts as its light starts pointing
upwards...

OPERATOR 1
Oh no!

The spotlight reveals a MASS OF RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT flying over
Sardinia City.

OPERATOR 1 (CONT'D)
It's Russians! They're here!

One aircraft drops a bomb.

It WHISTLES towards the lighthouse.

OPERATOR 2
They're bombing us! We have to get
out of here!

OPERATOR 1
I'm too weak! I've been on these
damned rations for too long!

OPERATOR 2

I've also been on these damned rations for too long!

BOTH OPERATORS

Nooooo!

The lighthouse EXPLODES.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY ARMY HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The army headquarters is an extravagant multi-story building. Searchlights on the roof peer into the sky as soldiers on balconies attempt to tear blankets off of large guns.

Soldiers fire muskets into the air as explosions explode all around.

Walking angrily past this scene is General LUIGI ROMANO (30s), a haughty army official. He eats a can of soup as Sardinia City Mayor RICARDO VERONA (50s) speedwalks next to him, barely keeping up.

ROMANO

(to soldiers)

What are you doing?! Get those anti-aircraft guns firing!

VERONA

General Romano! We can still evacuate the city, but we need time! We need a distraction using your men!

ROMANO

How do we distract airplanes?

(to soldiers)

Get those things up!

VERONA

I don't know, you're the army person in charge here!

ROMANO

Listen, Mayor Verona, it may be your city burning down, but it's my army you're dealing with here. I call the shots. I do the orders. And that's that.

(to soldiers)

Come on, boys! Guns out guns out! Let's go!

Romano leaves a confused Verona standing alone.

On the HQ balcony, a group of soldiers pull a blanket off a large machine with several muskets taped together on it. It fires. The soldiers grumble as they reload it.

INT. BOYARDEE HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

As alarms and gunshots go off in the background, Boyardee stirs in his sleep.

Suddenly, an explosion explodes on the street in front of Boyardee's apartment. The whole building shakes.

Boyardee finally awakes. It's really bright in the room.

He rubs his eyes in confusion as he checks his clock.

Another explosion, this one shaking the sleep out of Boyardee. He turns to look outside his window.

It's absolute chaos out there as airplanes dart to and fro in the sky. On the ground, debris and fire everywhere. More explosions.

BOYARDEE

What the-

Another explosion, this one sending flakes of plaster crumbling from the ceiling. Boyardee rushes out of bed.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY STREETS - OUTSIDE BOYARDEE'S PLACE - NIGHT

Boyardee exits his home to the streets, which are filled with people running in all directions. Sirens fill the night.

A BANK WORKER rushes by. He recognizes Boyardee.

BANK WORKER 1

Boss! Boss!

BOYARDEE

What's happening?

BANK WORKER 1

They're here! The Russians are here! Are you coming?

BOYARDEE

Coming where?!

BANK WORKER 1

The office! We have to save the money! It's too important!

BOYARDEE

The money! Oh no! We have to go!

Boyardee PUNCHES a passing farmer off their horse and hops onto it. He pays the farmer some money. Boyardee rushes off, leaving the bank worker to run after him on foot.

EXT. ITALIAN BANKING ESTABLISHMENT - NIGHT

Boyardee reaches the banking establishment, which is crumbling and on fire.

Workers hurry in and out of the building, carrying crates of money.

Wailing at the scene is the old BOSS.

BANKING BOSS

No! All the money! It's going to burn up!

Boyardee gets off the horse.

BOYARDEE

Is the fire department coming?

BANKING BOSS

They are preoccupied at other parts of the city! What don't they understand? People die every day! But money... money does not die every day! Money is much more important than people!

A ash-covered WORKER stumbles out of the building, empty-handed.

BANK WORKER 2

I'm sorry, boss! The vault - it's too late! All the money in there is going to burn!

BANKING BOSS

Damn you!

The boss gets out a cane and starts beating the worker. The worker cries and lays on the ground.

BANK WORKER 2

There is nothing more to be done!
The money is gone from our lives!

BANKING BOSS

There is nothing more important in
the world than money! You should
have went in there like a hero!

BANK WORKER 2

I would have, but I am just so
unmotivated! If I had a real meal
to look forward to-

BANKING BOSS

Blasphemy! Never utter the word
"food" again! Food is not important
at all! Only money is!

As Boyardee watches this scene, he grows more and more angry.
Finally, he reaches his breaking point.

BOYARDEE

No!

The boss turns around just in time to see Boyardee LEAPING
towards him.

The boss cowers...

But nothing hits him.

The boss looks to see Boyardee handing a dust-covered tomato
towards the worker.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

There. Take this home and cook a
good meal with it.

BANK WORKER 2

Thank you, new boss! You are too
kind!

The worker rushes off.

BANKING BOSS

Boyardee! What are you doing?! Tell
me this instant or I will take my
old position back and then fire
you!

BOYARDEE

I've had enough of this life! All this talk of money! It's making me sick!

BANKING BOSS

But I thought you loved money as much as everyone else in the world!

BOYARDEE

Perhaps there is more in the world than just money! You cry for bills as your city burns down! Have you no shame? Are you not a proud Sardinian? If you are, then act like it!

Boyardee punches the boss, then punches another farmer off their horse and gets on it. He pays the farmer some money.

BANKING BOSS

Where are you going?

BOYARDEE

To pay a visit to what really matters in the world. Goodbye, large moneybags man. Goodbye forever.

And with that Boyardee takes off.

EXT. SARDINIA CITY STREETS - NIGHT

In a parallel to the prologue, Boyardee rides through the streets of Sardinia City looking at the destruction occurring all around him.

He exits the city.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - SUNRISE

As the sun begins to rise, we follow Boyardee riding through the war-torn countryside.

BOYARDEE

Please, please...

He turns a corner to see the--

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - DAWN

The Boyardee Farmstead has been leveled by a bomb. Smoke rises from its exposed interior. Scared cows roam about.

BOYARDEE

Oh no!

Boyardee parks the horse and rushes to the house.

INT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - DAWN

Boyardee coughs through smoke.

BOYARDEE

Mother! Father! It's Ettore! I'm here!

The smoke is getting too intense. Boyardee rushes back outside.

EXT. BOYARDEE FARMSTEAD - DAWN

Boyardee crashes to the ground in exhaustion. He looks at his hands - they're shaking.

BOYARDEE

My daily caloric intake... this damned food!

Suddenly, the house EXPLODES. Debris falls around. But so do two other things.

By his side plop down Maria's salami apron and Alberto's fisherman overalls. They're covered in ash and on fire.

Boyardee cradles the clothes in his hands, crying.

BOYARDEE (CONT'D)

NOOOOOOO!!!

A rumbling sound.

Boyardee looks up to see the army of Russian aircraft flying towards the sea, away from Sardinia. We can hear clinks of glasses and bottlecaps thrown out of the aircraft - the pilots are drinking vodka.

Suddenly, in the sky, a giant projection of NICHOLAS pops up.

Nicholas laughs evilly.

TSAR NICHOLAS THE FIRST
Hahaha, Sardinia! You thought you
could escape the clutches of me,
Tsar Nicholas the First? This land
will be Russian soon! You'll see!
You'll all see! Hahaha!

The projection fizzes off.

Boyardee gets up, a grim resolve in his face, the clothes
from his dead parents in his hands.

BOYARDEE
If it's the last thing I do, I'll
see the end of you, Tsar Nicholas.
I swear on my parents' graves! This
will not go unanswered!

A sad SARDINIAN FOLK SONG plays in the background.

SARDINIAN FOLK SONG
(VO)
Ok, Sardinians, valiant ones, we
work and toil in the ocean and sea,
but also the streets, and in
addition, mountains, for we have
many varied geographies.

Boyardee makes his way back into the house.

END OF SAMPLE: to read rest of script, email admin@kylewong.com