

DECK THE HALLS 3

Ep 4. French Waiters

INT. BALLROOM, HOTEL -- DAY

WE HEAR: mild crowd noise/laughter.

WE HEAR: mild microphone squeal, Junior tap-tap-tap on the microphone.

Junior speaks from a podium across the ballroom

JUNIOR  
(distant, microphone)  
Welcome, everybody. Merry  
Christmas, happy holidays.

WE HEAR: a mild cheer, applause.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
It's been a checkered year, to be  
sure. Lot of work, lot of worry,  
not enough fun. How 'bout we fix  
that right now?

WE HEAR: applause.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
Within reason. Freshen your drinks  
and get your White Elephant  
numbers. We'll start the game in  
just a little bit.

WE HEAR: more applause.

TRANSITION: we zero in on the French Waiters clapping and murmuring.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Aw.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Very nice.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Is a nice man.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
A very nice speech.

WE HEAR: a few people walk up and put down a wrapped present on the table, interrupting FW2's applause.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
C'est bon, m'ssieur, put your  
presents right here on the pile.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
We'll take that.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
I see someone took the \$20 limit  
*very seriously.*

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Merci. Merci.

WE HEAR: the waiters piling up gifts on the pile. The French Waiters shake/squeeze each package before declaring its contents.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(low)  
Desk set.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(low)  
Homemade scarf.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Hm.  
(shakes again)  
I can't...  
(shakes)  
Beads? Teeth?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(shakes)  
Novelty mug full of M&Ms.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Oh! Wait, wait, give it here.

WE HEAR: FW1 was about to put the mug in the pile, but passes it back to FW2. FW2 opens the top of the package and steals some of the M&Ms.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
(eating M&Ms)  
Novelty mug **half full** of M&Ms.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Ha! C'est bon!

WE HEAR: FW1 take a handful too, eat. They retie the top of the parcel (maybe a rubber band wrapped around the paper, or just stuffing down tissue paper in a bag.)

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
 (chewing M&Ms)  
 Psst! Psst! Incoming.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Ooh! Looks big.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Properly wrapped!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Department store?  
 (aloud)  
 Madame! We'll take that right here  
 for you. Not too heavy, is it?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Beautiful paper.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Are those squirrels?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 On motorbikes!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 And the bow! It's charming!

They laugh.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 Don't forget to take your Elephant  
 ticket!

NOTE: if we can figure out a "ticket dispensing machine"  
 aural sting, that would be a great shorthand for "this person  
 is going away now."

The French Waiters chuckle amiably until WE HEAR: the person  
 walk away.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 What have we got?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Not as heavy as I hoped.

WE HEAR: French Waiter 1 shake the box. (shake a board game)

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
 Something thick inside. Not solid.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 A book?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Plastic too. In bags.

WE HEAR: another earnest shake.

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
Dice.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
No.

WE HEAR: small shakes to punctuate the conclusions.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Plastic bits. Cardboard. Decks of  
cards.  
(finish shaking)  
Trivial Pursuit.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Star Wars edition?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Books Lovers.

WE HEAR: French Waiter toss the present on the stack.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
If I wanted to "read books", I  
would buy reading glasses! And a  
book.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
All we have is The Joy of Cooking  
and four copies of Dianetics.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Four copies?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
The couch kept losing legs.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
There, see? As many as you'd ever  
need.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I would buy a lamp.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
You would?

FRENCH WAITER 1

One of those green glass desk lamps. Make the room feel like a mid-tier law firm. Or the one I saw at Ikea that was shaped like a cactus.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Seems a little ostentatious.

FRENCH WAITER 1

Ostentatious?

FRENCH WAITER 2

Oui.

FRENCH WAITER 1

MOI?

FRENCH WAITER 2

First it was a toaster oven. Then an ottoman. The light bulbs you had to have for your birthday. Not 60 Watts. Not 70 watts. A hundred watts! So you could have the best lights. The most light!

FRENCH WAITER 1

They're very good light bulbs. For cooking. And illuminating every cobweb on the baseboards. And performing surgery.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Exactly. You see everything you need to see.

FRENCH WAITER 1

Except sometimes I cannot see because of the blue spots burned into my retinas.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Tsst. That. That's just your eyes getting adjusted to the flood of high definition detail!

FRENCH WAITER 1

I have a lot of trouble driving at night.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Then tie a scarf around the bulb. Or put it under a colander.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
That what a lamp is!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(spluttering)  
If that's how you feel, you can go  
back to stealing saint's candles  
from the Catholic church.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(olive branch)  
I like the light bulbs.

WE HEAR: more guests come up to drop off gifts.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(to another guest)  
Yes, thank you, leave your gift  
here. Don't forget your ticket for  
White Buffalo.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Elephant.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Go sit in your artistically dark  
study and "read" your "books" for  
your book-based trivia games if you  
know so much.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Now that is just mean.  
(low)  
At least I have a library card.

WE HEAR: two more people come up, drop off gifts. The second  
one is a bottle of wine in a gift bag.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Thank you. Oh, reindeer! Very  
creative. Don't forget your ticket.  
(at bottle of wine)  
Ooh! A long slim silver gift bag,  
unsealed, no tissue paper. I wonder  
whatever could be inside!

WE HEAR: FW2 shake the gift a little, sloshing the wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Oooh, a fine wine perhaps? Naughty!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Take a number, take a number! I  
hope you didn't want this one back.  
(MORE)

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 You might have to fight for it!  
 (faux laughter)

WE HEAR: the person take a ticket, walk away.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 What is it.

WE HEAR: FW2 slip the wine bottle out of the bag.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Another Foot wine.

WE HEAR: FW2 drop the wine unceremoniously on a pile of gifts. (maybe a pile of gift bag wrapped wine.)

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 That brings us up to two Cabernets,  
 six Chardonnays, five Merlots--

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 I threw the Reisling down the  
 laundry chute and put my socks in  
 the gift bag instead.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 These sad grocery store wines  
 packed in glittering, vinyl gift  
 bags, like rain spattered  
 prostitutes on the last train home.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Foot wine in a screw top bottle.  
 The ultimate expression of  
 derision.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 "I could not be bothered to spend  
 an extra three dollars so your wine  
 could have a cork."

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 "Foot Wine, because for some reason  
 vinegar is more expensive."

WE HEAR: someone drop off another bottle of wine, take a ticket, depart.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Whatever happened to Far Side  
 calendars?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Or singing fish?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Gourmet coffee. Gift sets of jam  
jars.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Or scented candles?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
I *get it*. I will *get you a lamp*.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(forget it)  
(Lay-zz tom-bee)  
Laisse tomber...

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Tsst! Incoming!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Oooh!

WE HEAR: A person set a nice heavy package on the pile. The  
FWs pick it up, mildly pulling it back and forth between  
them.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Now this is a present!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
With a bow!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Nice heavy paper.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Only three pieces of tape. Very  
professional.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Merci. We'll place it ever so  
gently in a safe spot.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Right under the table.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
May Christmas.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Party hearty. Don't forget your  
ticket!

WE HEAR: we hear the person take a ticket and depart.



FRENCH WAITER 2  
Shhh..... .... ... he's gone!

WE HEAR: the French Waiters scramble to look at the package.

The French Waiters mildly FIGHT. (Cartoonish)

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Oooh! I'll do it!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I haven't done one yet!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
You rip the paper!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
That was one time! And it was  
double sided tape!

WE HEAR: French Waiter 1 successfully wrest the package away.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(warning noise)

FRENCH WAITER 1  
It was *double sided tape*. Let me do  
this one. I'm ready. Please! Look  
how long my fingernails are!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Be quick.

WE HEAR: FW1 drop down to his knees and peel back the tape.

WE HEAR: a few small packages put down, tickets taken.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
(covering, singing under  
his breath)  
Vie la vie la vie la vie  
(aloud)  
Bon nuit. Ooh. A gift card!  
(resume)  
La vie la vie la vie.  
(aloud)  
Holly jolly, oui, merci. Ah!  
Madame, what festive perfume! Tu  
sense comme le sapin!  
(Tew saans cum lu soo-  
pahn)  
(Literally: you smell like  
the fir tree. Slang: you  
smell like death.)

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 (under the table)  
 Aha! C'est bon!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 What is it? Whatever it is, we  
 split exactly half. An espresso  
 machine? A cake pop kit? One of  
 those strange Williams-Sonoma deep  
 friers that make stuffed pancakes?

WE HEAR: FW1 put the gift on the table as he climbs back to  
 his feet.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 La Grande Guerre!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Gahh! Another board game!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 It is not! ...It's a computer game.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 I'd rather have the Foot wine. Axis  
 and Allies. Empire in Arms. Secret  
 Hitler. It's chess for white men  
 too shy to read Rommel biographies  
 in public.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 My grandfather died at the hands of  
 the Wehrmacht. A Panzer ran over  
 his horse. Then his milking cow.  
 Then his legs.

WE HEAR: FW2 drop the present.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 I don't know why we bother. It's  
 all board games, Etsy yarn, and  
 foot wine.  
 (sigh)  
 I hate Christmas.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Por quois?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 I hate Christmas parties.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Ahhhh.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 I hate *these* Christmas parties.  
 Standing guard over a table of  
 worthless nonsense. With a taco bar  
 and raffle tickets and Brenda.

WE HEAR: Brenda call.

BRENDA  
 (distant)  
 Yoo-hoo! Bonjour Noel!

The waiters shudder.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Brenda who is learning French on  
 her phone.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 If we had to work at a Christmas  
 party, why couldn't we have a rich  
 party? One where fat men give each  
 other caviar and expensive watches  
 and get so drunk they forget where  
 they put their fancy gift bags?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 I forgot you worked 2 years at  
 Haliburton.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Have you ever had Beluga caviar on  
 a Strawberry Pop Tart?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Well, just once, I'd like to put a  
 White Santa Elephant on the pile,  
 not just hand out the number  
 tickets. I'd wrap up a ten dollar  
 bill, then hide it in a candy bar,  
 then wrap it in bubble wrap, then  
 put it in a newspaper, then put it  
 in a box of Twister. Then I'd wrap  
 the box of Twister in the Charlie  
 Brown Sunday comics.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 I want to taste the Chex mix. I  
 want to ruin the cheese ball with a  
 butter knife covered in ranch.

WE HEAR: another present dropped off, a ticket taken.

WE HEAR: FW2 shakes the box.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Fitbit.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Fitbit.

WE HEAR: FW2 toss the box onto the pile with a sigh.

WE HEAR: an elevator ding to indicate someone new arriving.

DELIVERY MAN  
Delivery for Mr. Winthrop? His  
secretary said to drop this off at  
the gift table.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Oh.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Oh.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Of course.

WE HEAR: FW2 sign for the package.

WE HEAR: the Delivery Man take a WOODEN BOX out of a bag, set  
it down carefully.

DELIVERY MAN  
Thanks. Merry Christmas.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(distracted)  
Mass Noel.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(distracted)  
Marry Chipmunks.

WE HEAR: Delivery Man depart (another elevator ding on exit?)

FRENCH WAITER 2  
The coast is clear.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Bon! Let's have it!

WE HEAR: The waiters slide the present in front of them,  
bumping other packages out of the way.

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
Is it sealed?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Just a lid. Hup!

WE HEAR: FW2 slide open the wooden lid. It's a bottle of wine encased in dried grass or shredded paper... fancy packaging.

The French Waiters audibly exhale, taking in this wonder.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Domaine Leroy Clois de la Roche...

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Grand Cru.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
2005.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Monsieur Winthrop... he can't have meant this for the sad office pile. Can he?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
A hundred and twenty five tickets, 27 bottles of nine dollar Foot wine. One of them will probably take this home.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
To languish on a pressboard wine rack.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Right beneath an air conditioner.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Or in a tiny condo kitchen!  
Alternately freezing and broiling!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
One week on a kitchen counter, this bottle will be destroyed!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
The humidity alone--

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Stop. You'll make me ill.  
(beat)  
We could taste it.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
What?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Just a bit. Just the tiniest bit.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
They'll see the punch in the cork!  
The seal will be broken!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
We'll seal it up with wax. They'll  
think "oh my how fancy and old  
fashioned it's like how Dracula  
must seal up his wine!"

FRENCH WAITER 1  
This is French wine, not  
Transylvanian!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
They don't notice. They take the  
bottle home, they forget, then they  
open the wine again and say, "Hey  
honey did you already open this  
wine?" Honey says, "Maybe, I  
forget, it was so long ago and I  
consume so many bottles of wine!"

WE HEAR: FW2 start to open the wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
What if they open it tonight?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
All the better. They're already  
drunk, they'll never notice.

WE HEAR: FW2 get the cork out.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Any minute, they're going to--  
(gets a whiff of the wine)  
Ohhh.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Coffee cup, coffee cup.

WE HEAR: FW1 root through the gift pile, unwrap a coffee cup,  
wipe it off.

WE HEAR: FW2 pour a little dribble of wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
A little more, little more.

WE HEAR: FW2 pour more wine.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
It's so dark.

WE HEAR: FW2 take a sniff, then a sip.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Taste, taste, taste.

WE HEAR: FW1 sniff, sip.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Mmm! My god!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Again.

WE HEAR: another little dribble of wine poured out, sip, sip.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Sinewy.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Acidic.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Spicy. There's mixed berries and...

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Fungus.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Truffle?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Salt. Earth.

WE HEAR: another pour of wine and sips.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
This is... this is so familiar.  
Beef and apples cooked in a pot  
with my grandmother's bones.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
*Amor!*

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Not *her* bones. The bones she would  
buy from the butcher, god heaven.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(Ah la vahsh)  
(Oh my god)  
Ah la vache.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 She'd roast the bone, mix the  
 marrow with the stewed apples, then  
 pour wine across the bone to clean  
 it. Wine and the gristle, the fat,  
 I taste it here. Try, hold it under  
 your tongue. Ah?

WE HEAR: more wine poured out, sip sip.

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
 (holding wine in mouth)  
 Taste it?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 (holding wine in mouth)  
 Sort of.

WE HEAR: more wine poured out, sip sip.

<p>FRENCH WAITER 1          (holding wine in mouth)          &lt;unintelligible&gt;          It's not the taste buds in          your mouth that change the          flavor, it's the blood          vessels under your tongue          that warm the wine and change          the flavor. You can taste it          change even as you swallow          it.</p>	<p>FRENCH WAITER 2          (responding as FW1          talks, still holding          wine in mouth)          Uh-huh. Uh-huh.</p>
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FW2 accidentally swallows some wine as he talks, coughs and splutters. FW1 whacks him on the back.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Are you all right? All right?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 (Nezpazzi tru-de la tart)  
 (That was hard.)  
 Whoof! Ne pas être de la tarte.  
 (easier)  
 Whew. Let's have another tiny  
 taste.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Drink slow this time. Keep your  
 mouth closed.

WE HEAR: FW1 and 2 occasionally sip from the increasingly empty bottle during their reminiscing.



FRENCH WAITER 2  
You know what this reminds me of?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Licorice. And chocolate.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
No. The overpass. Back when they didn't have an employee parking lot and we had to walk across the highway to the Walmart every night after work.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Dawn. We were on night shift then.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
I'd forgotten that!  
(chuckle)  
Strange days. I never could sleep during the daylight. We never had good wine. And you were stuck on Zinfandels.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
We all go through a "California" phase.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
It was my first Christmas here, so far away from home, and there was a crate of good Pinot Noir for the secret board member "steak and breasts" party. I hid half a bottle in the coffee pot and then that window-cleaner Armando turned the hot plate on and ruined it. But then you cleaned the room and scrounged up a full glass by pouring out all the dregs.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I should have used a cleaner cup.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Napoleon never bothered about clean glassware.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Maybe when he was in prison.

FRENCH WAITER 2

I am trying to pay a compliment.  
Paper cup or dirty glass, even if  
we had drunk from our hands. It was  
a kindness I had not expected. And  
the flavor... in the cup it smelled  
like fruit. In my mouth it tasted  
like salt. But in your mouth. In  
our mouths it tasted of anise  
and... and...

FRENCH WAITER 1

Chocolate. I told you, I was eating  
a Snickers bar stuffed with Good &  
Plenty.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Why?

FRENCH WAITER 1

We were drinking red wine. What  
else do people eat with red wine?

FRENCH WAITER 2

I don't know. Steak? Cheese?

FRENCH WAITER 1

(chortle)  
H'okay, American cowpoke.  
(French imitating  
American)  
I'll get the doggies up on into the  
barn and kiss the little missus  
good morning and have a little red  
wine with my cheese steak.

WE HEAR: FW2 pour them some more wine.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Comedian. I try to tell you  
something for real serious for once  
and you turn into Mssr. Seinfeld.

WE HEAR: Abashed sipping.

FRENCH WAITER 1

Tell it again. I'm ready.

FRENCH WAITER 2

It's not like I'm peeling off a  
band-aid and saying "oh hello, poke  
this white spot on my knee cap"

FRENCH WAITER 1

I know.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Five years now, you've heard me spell out the minute curves and hair follicles of every one of my doomed, desperate affairs. You can't hear one word about the shape of your mouth. And I know so many good ones!

FRENCH WAITER 1

It's different.

FRENCH WAITER 2

How?

FRENCH WAITER 1

Your talk is like television. The naked elevator repair, the mysterious catering supervisor, the dirty phone calls with the Comcast customer service rep... I want to make popcorn and squirrel up with my foot pillow. Good entertainment!

FRENCH WAITER 2

My heartbreak... is entertaining to you?

FRENCH WAITER 1

Pfft. Your heartbreak is entertaining to *you*.

FRENCH WAITER 2

(fair)  
Eh, oui.

FRENCH WAITER 1

I am not a distant memory yet. If I want to remember what it tasted like to take a sip of wine from your lips... I can lean over and sip.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Amor.

WE HEAR: FW1 pours out the last few drops into the cup.

FW1 sees the bottle is empty. FW2 doesn't realize it right away. (still feeling romantic)

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 (Wanker!)  
 (Bron-leur)  
 Branleur!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 (You want to see it?)  
 (tew voo le vwar)  
 Oui. Tu veux le voir ?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 No, no, no. Look!

WE HEAR: FW1 blow across the top of the bottle.

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
 Empty!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 No.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Oui!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Non!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Oui!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 We only took a sip! We took two  
 sips! Two sips and a little extra  
 mouthful!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Merde, merde, merde, merde, merde.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 We were only going to taste! To  
 appreciate what would have been  
 wasted, totally squandered on this  
 crowd full of polo shirts and cheap  
 rum!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Oh! C'est bon! We hide the bottle  
 and box in the laundry chute.  
 Pretend we never saw it.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Mssr Winthrop will see his present  
 was not opened!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 He is the head honcho, you think he  
 stays to see the filthy underlings  
 open their novelty gifts?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Of course!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 I am right.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Quick, gather up the straw.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Where's that lid?

WE HEAR: the FWs gathering up the packaging of the wine  
 bottle.

<Editing note: should we bury a door opening sound in the  
 packaging or just let Junior appear?>

JUNIOR  
 Excuse me.

WE HEAR: the FW freeze (perhaps shove the packaging in a  
 pile, as if shoving it behind their backs or under the  
 table.)

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
 Has the courier come through yet?  
 I'm expecting a delivery from my  
 steward.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Ah...

JUNIOR  
 A very special bottle that just  
 came off the plane tonight. I asked  
 my secretary to send it directly  
 here.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 Uh...

JUNIOR  
 It's a very special bottle. I don't  
 want to risk it getting stolen or  
 lost in this pile of bath store  
 garbage.

(reviewing gift pile)  
 Very good showing this year.  
 (MORE)

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

Carol really got the team's participation up. She's got them all in there playing "Tag Charades". Housekeeping is killing us all, they were smart enough to wear sneakers to this damn shindig.

WE HEAR: a distant SMACK and a cheer. Tag Charades sounds fun.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

(back to French Waiters)  
So, you'll keep an eye out?

FRENCH WAITER 2

For?

JUNIOR

For the courier. A package. A single small crate. A single small wine bottle crate from the evening courier, his name is Doug, can you handle that?

FRENCH WAITER 2

Doug.

FRENCH WAITER 1

Absolutely!

FRENCH WAITER 2

Doug and a tiny crate!

FRENCH WAITER 1

We will be on our tip-toes.

JUNIOR

Uh-huh. Fine. I've gotta get back in there.

WE HEAR: Junior depart. (when he goes back into the ballroom, maybe we hear another cheer from Tag Charades.)

FRENCH WAITER 1

(panic attack)  
Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Get it together.

FRENCH WAITER 1

Ah. Ah. Ah.

FRENCH WAITER 2

*Think! We're going to think!*

FRENCH WAITER 1

We're going to go to jail. We're going to be expensive wine drunk in jail!

FRENCH WAITER 2

We were going to refill the bottle with Foot Wine. So let's refill the bottle with Foot Wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1

*That was for when we think "OH it's a gift for Foot Wine drinkers!" Mssr Winthrop does not drink vinegar! He will know! He won't even have to sip! He'll take one whiff and boom!*

FRENCH WAITER 2

We just have to... dress it up a little.

JUNIOR

(distant, over mic)

All right! Let's hear it for Wanda in housekeeping! Wanda, come get your prize.

WE HEAR: applause.

WE HEAR: FW2 take off his jacket and roll up his sleeves.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Get me two Merlots and one of the Cabernets.

WE HEAR: FW1 rummage through the gift bags and get two wine bottles.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)

Screw tops. Wasn't there one with a cork? We need a cork that's intact.

FRENCH WAITER 1

The Resiling! It's still down the laundry chute!

FRENCH WAITER 2

Merde!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I'll get it.

WE HEAR: FW1 run off, open laundry chute, shimmy down inside.

WE HEAR: FW2 unscrewing the three wine bottles.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Lay a base of Cabernet. 50-50 with  
Merlot.  
(sip, sniff, gag)  
Oh god.  
(to FW1)  
Psst! Where are the Garfield M&Ms?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(echo-y, deep in laundry  
chute)  
Red bag! Puppies in chef hats!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Ah!

WE HEAR: FW2 pull out a handful of M&Ms from the puppy bag,  
unscrew a wine top, and drop them in one of the Foot Wine  
bottles.

WE HEAR: FW2 shake up the bottle.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
(humming to himself)  
Mmmm la vie la vie everything is  
fine la vie.  
(muttering)  
Dissolve this chocolate in these  
sizzling toxic red grapes.  
(takes a sip)  
Mm, blah! More chocolate.

WE HEAR: FW2 put in more chocolate.

WE HEAR: FW2 rummage through trash.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
What else have we got here, party  
buffet? Cherry tomatoes? No good.  
Baby carrots. Baby corns. Aha!  
Ranch dressing.  
(tasting with fingertip)  
Bon, bon.

WE HEAR: FW2 pull out a paper plate, dump veggies off plate  
into trash, dab his finger on the ranch dressing and taste  
it.



WE HEAR: FW2 go back to rummage through garbage. He piles up the little handfuls of snacks he finds on the plate as he goes.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 What else, what else. Coconut.  
 Amaretto ball, ooh almonds in that!  
 C'est bon! Pretzels. Popcorn. Ahhh  
 hahaha! Yes. Chex mix!

WE HEAR: FW2 pour a big handful of Chex Mix on the pile.

Brief pause.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 (I'm smashing this.)  
 (juh BREEsont)  
 Je brisant.

WE HEAR: FW2 smash the plate full of crunchies to bits. (Not banging his fists, so much as pushing his hands into the pile so we can really hear the crunching/smashing.)

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 (echo-y, still in laundry)  
 I found the Reisling!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Good! I've got the salt!

WE HEAR: FW2 pour the crumbs and push the ranch down into the open bottle of Foot Wine. He licks his fingers, then shakes up the bottle.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
 Mm! And some ranch. Mixed with the  
 pretzels, it almost tastes like  
 wood smoke. If you ignore the  
 chives. But you could put chives on  
 a wood fire.

WE HEAR: FW1 fumbling in the laundry chute.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
 (echo)  
 How do I get the cork out without a  
 corkscrew?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
 Break the bottle! But don't smash  
 it until you get back--

WE HEAR: FW1 smash the bottle in the chute. Very echo-y.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Up... here. Well.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(echo-y)  
I don't think I should have smashed  
the bottle in the chute.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Are you all right?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(echo)  
There is a lot of broken glass  
everywhere.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Careful not to--

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(echo)  
Ow! Ow! OW.

WE HEAR: FW2 put down his Frankenstein bottles and go to help  
FW1 get out of the chute.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Take my hand.

WE HEAR: a lot of banging around, the French Waiters huffing  
and swearing. FW1 crawls out of the chute and lands on the  
floor.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I got it! I got the cork!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Mon Dieu! You're bleeding!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
No, no, no. It's only wine staining  
my clothes... soaking through my  
cuffs.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Reisling is a white wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Oh. Oh *my*.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Take off your jacket. Shake your  
shirt.

WE HEAR: FW1 take off jacket, FW2 shakes it. A shower of tiny glass shards falls out.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Did you roll in the glass before  
you climbed out? It's like you went  
to bed with a disco ball.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I am a little light headed.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Sit. Taste that.

WE HEAR: FW1 take a sip of the chunky snack-filled foot wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(sip)  
Augh! Uh gah. There are so many  
pretzels in this.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Don't drink it like that. Shake it  
first.

WE HEAR: FW1 shake, then sip again.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(surprised)  
Ah. Less bad.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Pants now.

WE HEAR: FW1 take off his pants, FW2 shake them. More glass flies out.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Bon sang!

WE HEAR: FW1 take another sip.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
It needs licorice.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Too strong!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Just a hint!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
We don't have licorice.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
I always have licorice.

WE HEAR: FW1 unfurl a bag of licorice.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
I always wondered why you wear a  
fanny pack.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Get me a coffee filter.

WE HEAR: FW2 open a cupboard, rummage, pull out a coffee  
filter.

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
(chewing up licorice)  
Bon, bon.

WE HEAR: FW1 fit coffee filter into wine bottle. He chews up  
the licorice and spits into the filter.

FRENCH WAITER 1 (CONT'D)  
We pour the chunky wine through the  
coffee filter, mixing with the  
licorice, and decanting into the...

WE HEAR: the wine slosh when FW1 looks at the bottle.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Cabernet-Merlot blend.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Obscene. Let's do it.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Hold on tight.

WE HEAR: FW2 begin to pour the chunky wine into the filter.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Careful.

WE HEAR: something plop out into the filter.

They gasp.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Careful.

WE HEAR: more plops.

They gasp twice.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
It won't hold!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Just a little more!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
The pretzel sticks are too sharp!  
They'll break the filter.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
We're almost there!

WE HEAR: another plop.

They gasp.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Pull back!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
We're so close!

WE HEAR: wet clumps of Chexmix and chocolate hit the table.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
The filter is overflowing!

JUNIOR  
(distant/on mic)  
All right! Get your tickets ready,  
it's time to wheel in the presents  
for the White Elephant gift  
exchange!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Merde!

Junior's talk continues in the background, vamping for time  
while the French Waiters finish up.

JUNIOR  
(distant/on mic)  
I saw some of those presents y'all  
brought. I thought we were going to  
be stricter about that twenty  
dollar limit this year. How about a  
hand for Carol? We couldn't have  
done this without you. I've got my  
eye on that hand-knitted scarf and  
hot chocolate kit you wrapped up.  
Oh don't be like that!  
(MORE)

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

You borrowed the scotch tape and  
wrapping paper from my desk, I  
should get to take a peek.

WE HEAR: mild applause/laughter

French Waiters continuing over Junior's distant chatter.

FRENCH WAITER 1

Last bit, last bit, last bit... got  
it!

WE HEAR: FWs throw the trash away, wipe down the bottle at  
top speed.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Cork! Cork!

WE HEAR: FW2 squeeze the cork into the bottle and twist it  
down.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)

(straining with cork)  
Refill the Foot Wine bottles with  
water!

WE HEAR: FW1 grab bottles, run to sink, refill, come back and  
shove bottles back in gift bags.

FRENCH WAITER 1

What about the bottle we filled  
with food garbage?

FRENCH WAITER 2

Substitute another present.

WE HEAR: FW1 rummaging, setting out a soda can, and going  
through his wallet.

FRENCH WAITER 1

I've got... a root beer. A frozen  
yogurt card that only needs one  
more stamp... annnd six dollars.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Good! Good. Wrap it up!

WE HEAR: hasty, cartoonish wrapping sound. Tape yanked,  
scissors snipping, paper wrapped, bow tied.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)

(still working in cork)  
Nnngh! Nnngh! Got it!

WE HEAR: one last piece of tape stuck on the box, then FW1 hold up newly wrapped.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Got it!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
That is beautiful.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
You think?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
You are an artist. How is this?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
It looks perfectly untouched. Fresh from the cask!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Ooh. We forgot to taste it.

JUNIOR  
(distant/on mic)  
Bring in the gifts!

WE HEAR: the doors open.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Quick quick quick! Put the straw over it.

WE HEAR: FWs put the bottle back in the fancy packing case, put the straw over it, and slide the wooden lid back into place.

WE HEAR: the present carts unlocked and wheeled off to the ballroom. Mild guest chatter in the distance.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Go on. Take them. Take your gifts.

JUNIOR  
(calling)  
Got 'em all fellas?

WE HEAR: Junior approaching. FW1 holds out the wine crate, artfully brushing it off.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Mssr Winthrop!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Your package sir!

JUNIOR  
Terrific, I just... what happened  
here?

WE HEAR: Junior step on glass when he takes the crate in his  
hands.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Your package just arrived.

JUNIOR  
What's all this broken glass?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
We were the last delivery of the  
night.

JUNIOR  
Is this Chex mix dissolving into  
the carpet?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Your wine steward says Merry Noel  
Christmastime!

JUNIOR  
Why is he only wearing a fanny  
pack?

FRENCH WAITER 1  
It is a party, monsieur.

Beat.

JUNIOR  
Right. Well.

WE HEAR: Junior take the wooden lid off and take the bottle  
of wine out of the straw.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
Good, good. This looks very good.

The French Waiters sigh with relief.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
Here. Merry Christmas.

WE HEAR: Junior hand the wine to FW 2.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
What?



JUNIOR

It's a gift. A little something special for you two. A thank you for your hard work and for being such good sports about manning the gift table when you could have been in there cutting a rug with the rest of us. Domaine Leroy Clois de la Roche, it's a 2005 Grand Cru. Supposed to be very earthy. Wines that year were highly acidic, made for a toothy run.

WE HEAR: the French Waiters pass the bottle back and forth between them.

FRENCH WAITER 2

Yes. I had heard that.

JUNIOR

Well. Enjoy. Drink it in good health. Now get your pants back on and come join us!

WE HEAR: Junior head back into the ballroom.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

Oh! And sweep up the glass before you come in.

(distant)

All right. Who's got number one?

WE HEAR: some Woos/cheers.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

(distant)

Carl Penchik! I see you! Step right up!

WE HEAR: the door shut on the party noise.

Beat.

WE HEAR: the wine slosh lightly in the bottle.

FRENCH WAITER 1

A gift.

FRENCH WAITER 2

(giggle)

A gift.

The giggle is contagious. The French Waiters laugh harder and harder, repeating "a gift", until they calm down.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
Give me the corkscrew.

WE HEAR: FW2 open the bottle of wine.

WE HEAR: FW1 sweep up the glass.

FRENCH WAITER 2 (CONT'D)  
You were magnificent.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
You were a lightning bolt of  
genius.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
A gutsier, braver, crazier strip of  
muscle-knotted tuxedo, I have never  
known.

WE HEAR: the cork come out, FW2 pour two glasses of wine.

WE HEAR: FW1 dump the broken glass in the trash, pick up a  
glass of wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
A faster-thinking, danger dreaming,  
dram of intoxicating brilliance--

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(stop)  
Ah ah ah.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Quoi?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
(listen to me)  
My love.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(absorb it)  
My love.

WE HEAR: the waiters tap their glasses (tink!) And drink.

WE HEAR: the waiters gag, splutter, set their glasses down  
hard.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Gluh!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Blaahh!!

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Ptoo! Ptoo!

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Augh. Ugh. Bluh!

They gasp for breath.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Still Foot Wine.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Still Foot Wine.

FRENCH WAITER 2  
Get your pants.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
(We'll have a drink?)  
(Uhn va bwar oon coo)  
On va boire un coup?

FRENCH WAITER 2  
We'll hide out in the Trip boy's  
office and order a pizza.

FRENCH WAITER 1  
Fantastique!

WE HEAR: FW1 grab his pants, the waiters share a little  
smooch, then depart, sprinkling glass for effect.

FADE OUT.