

THE LAST DINNER

Written by

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Based on Characters from Playdate Theatre's Clique Bait

FADE IN:

BLURRED SCREEN - UNKNOWN

SUPER: It's the last Sunday dinner before the gang has to make a decision about New York.

Hunter and Vanessa are a mess

Cam is waiting for an LA talent agent to email them a contract

Lelah hasn't told the gang that she wants to stay in Seattle

As a joke, Ruby offered Caroline a spot in the apartment, and Caroline seriously wants to be considered if a spot opens up...

The screen slowly unblurs to reveal:

DISCORD APP - VIDEO CALL - NIGHT

Lelah and Hunter are doing their pre-Sunday dinner gaming ritual. Lelah wears a Turtle Beach gaming headset, Hunter wears a sign of consternation.

LELAH

Flanking top. Have your ult and ignite ready.

HUNTER

I mean, how would you feel if she only answered your facetimes like one out of three times?

LELAH

(ignoring)

I'm diving! Hunter ignite! Hunt-

Lelah throws her hands in the air.

HUNTER

My bad, kinda distracted.

LELAH

Head in the game, soldier...

Lelah catches herself being too invested in the game.

LELAH (CONT'D)

Sorry. Well, maybe she's just busy?
How did the trip pan out?

HUNTER
It didn't. I took Zach.

LELAH
Ah.
(beat)
Well I'm sure at least the cuddles
were on point.

HUNTER
(snickering)
Shut-up...
I'm lagging B-T-dubs, are you?

LELAH
Naw, I'm on that Seattle fiber,
babyyyy.

HUNTER
Oh man, bet you're not looking
forward to that New York-apartment-
carrier-pigeon internet.

Lelah's eyes widen.

LELAH
(clearly lying)
Mmm-hmm. New York. Totally.

CUT TO:

SKYPE - VIDEO MEETING - NIGHT

The group meeting titled, "VCR Remote" is still waiting on
the "C". Vanessa and Ruby sit there, bored.

RUBY
What's taking Cam so long? This is
our Sunday dinner thing...

VANESSA
Come on, you know Cam. They're
busy, that's all.

RUBY
(distracted)
Yeah, apparently commenting on the
socially distant gala is more
important?(beat)
They're like literally live
tweeting.

Ruby holds her phone up to the camera showing Cam's twitter with tweets scrolling by.

VANESSA

Oh man, you sound like Hunter. I'm sure fan engagement is part of their thing.

RUBY

(rolls eyes)
Speaking of Hunter and engagement...

VANESSA

WOW.

RUBY

How's it been with you and your man?

VANESSA

It's been rough. For the first time in my life I've found my calling, and I feel like my partner doesn't support me.

RUBY

That's not good *Vane**.

*Note: Spanish way of shortening Vanessa. Pronounced: VAH-NEH

VANESSA

When I got the news about being hired I picked up my phone to text him, and I froze. It felt like needles in my heart.

RUBY

Why didn't you want to tell him?

VANESSA

Remember when he won that award for best nonfiction essay or whatever?

RUBY

Yes...

VANESSA

You know, we wrote it together. Total collab. When he talked about the award he just won, he never mentioned me. He never told anyone that I helped. He thanked me privately.

RUBY

Vane, are you serious with me right now?

VANESSA

Yeah. That's what he wants. He wants some quiet first-lady to his "presidential successes".

There's a long pause as Vanessa works through some of her thoughts.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I've always just been Hunter's girlfriend. I'm finally discovering what it means to be *Vanessa*.

RUBY

That's amazing, girl.

VANESSA

Thanks. I still love him, of course, but I need to be doing my own thing too.

RUBY

You need to tell him that. He'll get it. We helped him see the light on Bernie, he's a smart guy.

CUT TO:

DISCORD APP - VIDEO CALL (CONT.)

Hunter and Lelah are still gaming. Hunter is sitting back while Lelah is furiously clicking.

HUNTER

(chewing snack)

-so in this British show they said that their heart-rate went up by sixty points, and I literally asked myself if that was in Celsius or Fahrenheit.

LELAH

(laughs)

When I said "how stupid can you be", I wasn't asking for examples...

HUNTER

Oh.

CUT TO:

SKYPE - VIDEO MEETING (CONT.)

Cam joins the call, fashionably late.

CAM

Heyyy. Sorry y'all, I'm getting so fat my thumbprint literally doesn't work anymore.

RUBY

(rudely)

I mean, we only waited for like thirty minutes for you and your fat thumb.

VANESSA

(ignoring rudeness)

Yeah, our group call was almost cancelled. The TV network said there wasn't enough diversity.

CAM

Well you better tell right-wing twitter to start their meltdown, cuz I'm here ladies.

RUBY

(sarcastically)

My hero.

Cam notices the animosity and files it away for later.

CAM

Okay dish, I wanna know what's up with y'all.

VANESSA

Work has been awesome but busy-

CAM

I hear you there, girl

VANESSA

Having boy problems, but what else is new

CAM
(snaps fingers)
Ooooooh.

VANESSA
(laughs)
Dammit Cam, you're always making me
laugh like a dummy.

Cam frames his face with his hands.

CAM
I'm the new face of Gen-Z education
for a reason, aren't I?

RUBY
So you admit you have a second
face.

CAM
(to Vanessa)
Umm. Can you please tell me what
her problem is?

RUBY
I just think it's funny how you
make us wait all the time now.

CAM
I got bags to make, okay? Maybe you
should try it sometime.

VANESSA
Whoa, not cool, both of you. We're
all friends. Good vibes only.
We're really happy for you Cam, all
of us are fans.
Ruby was just telling me about how
she made up with Catherine.

RUBY
Caroline.

VANESSA
Caroline!

RUBY
Yeah, she just put it all together
and made this really big apology.
It was weird because she tried to
deny it at first, but then she
broke down and said sorry.

CAM

And you just gonna accept how she bullied you when she was supposed to be your best-friend?

RUBY

You of all people should know that people change.

Vanessa is so uncomfortable. She desperately tries to relieve the tension.

VANESSA

Okayyy.

(beat)

The good news is that she wants to join us in New York, so maybe we can split the apartment six ways? Save a little more money?

CAM

She can just have my spot.

VANESSA

What?

CAM

I think I'm going to LA. This agent is gonna send me a talent agreement, and I've already been looking at places to stay.

RUBY

So you have an agent now?

CAM

Makin' bags, honey. So about those boy problems, how do I get some?

CUT TO:

DISCORD APP - VIDEO CALL (CONT.)

The game seems to be winding down, as Lelah seems is less involved.

LELAH

See? And that's why you never give-up, you never surren-

HUNTER
 (worried)
 So how are you feeling about the
 move?

LELAH
 Um... I don't actually think I'm
 going. Things are going super well
 with May and work... I was planning
 on telling everyone during dinner.

Hunter contemplates for a few seconds.

HUNTER
 (shyly)
 I need your opinion on something.
 It's about Vanessa.

LELAH
 I'm all ears.

CUT TO:

SKYPE - VIDEO MEETING (CONT.)

CAM
 Wow girl. So he got mad that you
 didn't tell him about this job?
 Shouldn't your partner be happy for
 you?

VANESSA
 I guess. I hate to say it, but it
 felt like jealousy. His thing at
 the New Yorker isn't really panning
 out-

CAM
 That is some bullshit. Man, I'm so
 mad at Hunter right now.
 (joking)
 Am I gonna have to cut a bitch?

VANESSA
 (laughs)
 No, no, we're fine. He went on his
 road-trip alone and seems to have
 gotten most of it out of his
 system.

RUBY
 Okay well it's eight o'clock here,
 nine for our east-coasters.

(MORE)

RUBY (CONT'D)
We should probably jump into the
zoom meeting.

Okay. VANESSA Right. CAM

CUT TO:

DISCORD APP - VIDEO CALL (CONT.)

LELAH
(shocked)
Wow. Was not expecting that.

HUNTER
Yeah.

LELAH
So when are you gonna say it?

HUNTER
I was thinking after dinner.

LELAH
Are you sure you wanna do this? No
turning back.

HUNTER
I'm super sure.

LELAH
Okay. Let's get into the zoom call,
I just got a message from them.

CUT TO:

ZOOM MEETING - CONTINUOUS

Hunter and Lelah beep into the Zoom meeting, "VCR" are
waiting.

They do their standard chaotic greeting where everyone talks
over each other and nothing can be fully understood.

Hunter has the first clearly understood line:

HUNTER
Dammit. I'm guessing everyone
cooked already?

The gang responds in the affirmative.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
Welp. Looks like I'm making ramen
again, brb.

Hunter leaves his camera. Cam suddenly gets excited.

CAM
Oh, the agreement just came in!
Gimme a sec I'm gonna read this.

We see Cam mute themselves as their eyes light up with another window. They didn't turn off their video. Cam takes out their headphones as well.

Lelah, Vanessa, and Ruby are now voyeuristically watching Cam through a digital window.

LELAH
Oh Cam! CAM! Oh gosh he didn't turn
off his cam.

VANESSA
They always do that. Remember that
time they were dirty talkin' and
forgot to mute?

RUBY
(sarcastic)
Cam's life sure is full of drama!

VANESSA
Okay, what is going on with you
two? What was that earlier?

RUBY
I'm just kinda sick of feeling like
I'm living in Cam's world 24/7.

The excitement in Cam's face drains as they read on in the contract.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Oh look at this. Looks like it's
not all peaches and cream.

VANESSA
Okay, we should not be looking at
this, it feels wrong.

LELAH
I agree with Vanessa, but I can't
look away. What are they doing now?

Cam frantically gets up and looks for something. They find it, their phone, and dial a number.

VANESSA

I think I'm just gonna end the Zoom call-

RUBY

Vane, don't you dare.

Silence in the call as Cam stands up from their chair and paces around their room. They're suddenly very animated, arguing with the person on the other line.

Cam's animated features and pointing gestures don't seem to have any affect on the person on the other end.

Stillness as Cam ends the call and lets their arms hang. The only movement - their exasperated breathing. They look confused. Rattled.

LELAH

Poor Cam.

VANESSA

That didn't look good.

Ruby doesn't say anything, but they're no longer smirking. Seeing Cam fail was a bit too real. Cam collects themselves and walks back to the computer.

LELAH

Oh jeez, quick what were we talking about!

VANESSA

Um...um... the stock-market!

Cam reopens Zoom and unmutes themselves.

LELAH

(pretending)

So that DOW Jones eh? What will they think of next!

RUBY

(smugly to Cam)

Trouble in paradise?

CAM

(dejected)

Hey y'all. Could you hear me again?

VANESSA

No but we could see. That looked serious, everything good?

CAM

(more upbeat)

Everything good. We eating or what?

Hunter slides into frame with his cheap noodles.

HUNTER

(wannabe smooth)

Did someone say... "or what"

LELAH

Aww, are y'all gonna miss Hunter too?

VANESSA

What?

LELAH

Oh sorry, I'm not going to New York.

VANESSA

So why would *WE* also miss Hunter?

LELAH

Whoops.

HUNTER

(sheepish)

Um.

Vanessa is not happy.

VANESSA

You're not coming? When was I gonna know about this?

HUNTER

Well, we really need to talk.

VANESSA

Oh now you want to talk.

HUNTER

(To Zoom call)

Sorry folks one sec.

(To Vanessa)

Um. Let me Facetime you.

LELAH

Sorry me too, getting a call from
May, brb.

Hunter, Vanessa, and Lelah leave. Ruby and Cam now the only
two left.

RUBY

Well this is a crappy way to do
dinner.

CAM

Why are you so negative all the
time?

RUBY

Somebody has to be. All of you live
with your collective head in the
clouds.

CAM

You actually don't need to always
be running your mouth. Amazing how
that works.

RUBY

You've changed Cam.
(wraps pointer and middle
finger together)
We used to be *like this* before you
got your "big break".

CAM

You don't know a damn thing about
me.

RUBY

I know you've changed and that's
all I need to know.

They stew in silence as Cam pretends to be busy with
something else.

CUT TO:

FACETIME CALL - HUNTER AND VANESSA

VANESSA

How does Lelah know about this
before me? You're such a hypocrite,
you know that?

HUNTER

I literally just told her! My parents won't support me going to New York cuz of the whole "being a Democrat" thing. And I don't have a job so...

VANESSA

So we're just not gonna talk about things anymore?

HUNTER

You did the exact same thing. I was gonna tell you before, but life kept getting in the way.

VANESSA

I didn't tell you about the new job for like a few days. How long did you know about this?

HUNTER

A while. Like a month.

VANESSA

This sucks Hunter. What's the point of this relationship if neither of us feels like we can communicate.

Hunter pauses. His face goes sullen.

HUNTER

Well. I agree. What is the point?

VANESSA

So you want to see other people.

HUNTER

I've been thinking about it. The trip to Florida was really somethin'.

VANESSA

You cheated on me.

HUNTER

No. But I did think about it. Maybe we should talk about ending this.

Vanessa massages the sides of her head.

VANESSA
What the fuck, Hunter.

CUT TO:

ZOOM MEETING - (CONT.)

Ruby and Cam are at it again.

RUBY
(angry)
You don't know what it's like to have to ask for money every month. To have *you* as a friend, flaunting the money they're making as well? It's torture.

CAM
(offended)
Ruby, have you ever had to support anyone other than yourself in your life? I don't have parents with deep pockets, I have parents who ask *ME* for money. If I don't help them, am I just supposed to let them go hungry? By the way, that whole agent thing ain't happening. He was trying to take like fifty percent of what I built.

RUBY
Even in this fight you manage to push my nose in your successes.

CAM
If that's what you took away from what I said, then fine. I don't need moral judgements from you.

CUT TO:

FACETIME CALL - HUNTER AND VANESSA - (CONT.)

VANESSA
Hunter this is insane. Two bombshells in one night?

HUNTER
Look the timing wasn't the best, and I still love you and all...

Vanessa is beyond distraught. She covers her face in preparation to cry. She suddenly gets an emotional second wind and fans her eyes with her hands.

VANESSA

Fine. I get to do what I want.

HUNTER

Well hang on, shouldn't we set some ground rules? No dating my friends?

VANESSA

Ground rules? Oh we're way past that.

HUNTER

(Suddenly angry)

Yo, what the hell Vanessa?

VANESSA

(distracted)

Hang on I'm getting some messages here.

HUNTER

Same.

CUT TO:

ZOOM MEETING - CONTINUOUS

CAM

You're selfish, there's no fixing that! Wait hold on, I'm getting some shit from Lelah.

RUBY

Wait, I am too.

Hunter and Vanessa join the call.

HUNTER

Hey what's going on?

RUBY

We have no clue.

Lelah enters. Her eyes puffy from crying.

LELAH

(inconsolable)

May... just dumped me...

The gang suddenly push their pettiness to the side and do their best to console Lelah.

CAM

Oh no! I'm sorry baby.

RUBY

That's horrible Lelah.

VANESSA

I'm so sorry.

HUNTER

Tell us what you need.

Lelah explains what happened through a snotty nose and pink cheeks. We see the concerned faces of friends nodding in agreement.

We see a time-lapse of the group continuing their call and going through a plethora of emotions and dinner dishes. Telling jokes, playing games, being silly, chatting, we see it all.

Everyone seems to be genuinely happy about being in each other's presence.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Oh man it's three a.m. here.

CAM

Wait! Before we leave. I have to talk to the owners about the apartment. What are we doing?

LELAH

I wanna go! I think I need a little space from Seattle for a bit.

VANESSA

Yeah, I'm going for sure. With or without you nerds.

RUBY

I'll still go.
(sarcastic)
As long as you're nice to me Cam.

CAM

Good-luck with that! I'm going too. LA can wait. Besides y'all couldn't live without me anyway.

HUNTER

I don't think I can go.

The group pauses. Vanessa sighs.

VANESSA

Hunter. If you really want to go, I can help cover your spot.

HUNTER

You would do that after what I-

VANESSA

Yes. We definitely need to talk about some things, but yes.

Hunter is shook.

CAM

Looks like Vanessa might be bringing her boyfriend too then.

RUBY

Vanessa's boyfriend! That's what we should call you now.

Hunter smiles.

VANESSA'S BOYFRIEND

I like the sound of that.

FADE OUT.