

# ***Food On The Table***

*by*

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Cast of Characters

DARLA:

30's

CHUCK:

50's

Place  
Office

Time  
1 PM

Setting: Inside Darla's office.

At Rise: Darla and Chuck sit opposite sides of Darla's desk.

**DARLA:** Chuck, this ain't gonna work.

**CHUCK:** Why not?

**DARLA:** I told you five hundred times that if you're gonna abandon the merchandise, while you take lunch, you're gonna get fired.

**CHUCK:** It wasn't lunch. I had an emrgency for the bathroom.

**DARLA:** You just leave everything near receivables?

**CHUCK:** I was in pain.

**DARLA:** Why didn't you let a supervisor or even a co-worker know?

**CHUCK:** It was really bad.

**DARLA:** Really bad? Yeah? I'll tell you what's really bad, Chuck. The fact that all the inventory that you are responsible for, *vanished*. That's right. Gone. We have it on camera. Three guys came in, snatched up all the packages and disappeared, without a trace.

Like it was planned. Was it planned, Chuck? It sure looks planned. As soon as you made your move and I mean the very second you turned away from the crate, three hooded men appear out of nowhere, pouncing on the items and clearing out whatever they could get their hands on.

Expensive items. Laptops, a television set, phones...choreographed, perfectly.

This is the third time this has happened on your watch and it's the last time. You know why it's the last time, Chuck? Cause you're fired. You're out.

Don't say a word. Please, please don't try and defend yourself. Yo've been warned. I'm letting you off easy, considering. Considering that we aren't getting the police involved in this because...well, you know I know your mother and she was there for me when I lost my mother and I'll never forget what she did...which is why I gave you this job in the first place, but...

You better figure something out. You've made my job very difficult. I have to answer for these stolen items, yet again and this paints me in a very uncomfortable corner.

**CHUCK:** Darla, if you just give me a second to explain.

**DARLA:** What is there to explain?

**CHUCK:** I swear to you, I have no idea what you are talking about.

**DARLA:** How can you not?

**CHUCK:** You're right. I know I've been warned because of the robbing that's been going on, but you can't really think I'm involved in any of this, can you? ...I wouldn't risk my job.

**DARLA:** It's too coincidental. Too well-timed.

**CHUCK:** How do you know that whoever did this wasn't waiting for me or someone else to leave the site?

**DARLA:** That's the point. You aren't suppose to leave the site under any conditions, and if it is an emergency as you claim, you are supposed to tell a manager before leaving the premises. This is policy and regulation 101, Chuck. We have a three strike policy and today was your final swing. I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do for you, you've been let go.

**CHUCK:** This is bullshit!

**DARLA:** Chuck, please, don't make me call security.

**CHUCK:** Why? I'm not going to do anything to you!

**DARLA:** Please, just go.

**CHUCK:** Show me the video.

**DARLA:** What?

**CHUCK:** I want to see it. Show me the video and then I'll leave.

**DARLA:** I'm not showing you the video.

**CHUCK:** Darla, I want to see what these goons look like. I'm going to take matters into my own hands.

**DARLA:** What good is that going to do?

**CHUCK:** Cause I'm innocent! I want to catch these guys. I'm fired because we live in a shitty world.

**DARLA:** Chuck, listen to me, had you followed company policy, none of this would have happened in the first place. You were given *three* chances. Why didn't you speak to a supervisor?

**CHUCK:** I'm stupid.

**DARLA:** Don't say that.

**CHUCK:** I am. I'm such a stupid, stupid man. This is why I can't do nothing else in my life. This is why I'm packing boxes for a living. Everything else I've tried and now my...okay, I have a confession to make.

**DARLA:** What?

**CHUCK:** I didn't have to go to the bathroom.

**DARLA:** Oh, no?

**CHUCK:** I had an emergency call from my girlfriend about our son. Our son has special needs and he was hurt today during his program and my girlfriend called me up in a panic. He's alright but she needed to hear my voice to calm down. He had stitches put in, over his eyebrow...but, he's gonna be alright.

**DARLA:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**CHUCK:** The other times I left the work area was on account of my boy. There's always something going on with him and my girlfriend, she, without me...I have to be there for my family when they need me...I'm sorry, but that's the truth. If it means me losing my job than so be it, but what is a man supposed to do, Darla? How am I supposed to take care of my family?

I'm focused on my job but when I get a frantic phone call the blood drains from me and all I see is my family...

It's my fault. I left the inventory unattended, but when your girlfriend calls you up crying in a panic on the phone because your child is injured, it's hard to think rationally while I'm in the thick of it, and I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed, I'm smart enough to recognize that fact and umm, I guess what I'm steering at is that I'm asking you to have some compassion for me, for my loved ones, some understanding cause I'm trying, I'm trying real hard and I feel lucky you've given me this chance...I feel blessed.

For the first time in a long time I feel like, I don't know, like I'm adding up to something, that I actually mean something to others. My, uh, my self-esteem, confidence...it goes a long way when you can put food on the table and uh, I plan on marrying Cassandra, I love her and I'm trying to save up for a ring...

This is all I got, please, give me one more chance...please...just one more shot and I swear I won't let you down, no matter what, Darla, no matter what...

**DARLA:** The best I can do is put you under review. This has to go above me now. I can't make this decision.

**CHUCK:** But you're my authority.

**DARLA:** My authority has to make the final decision. I'll speak on your behalf, that I can do but I can't keep you on, even if I wanted to.

**CHUCK:** Come on, Darla, please, I'm a grown man begging you.

**DARLA:** it's not about begging, Chuck. It's about the rules and the procedure that I have to follow. If you were anybody else, there would be no review, but I believe you and I'm willing to give you a final chance, but my superior is going to have to weigh in on this, whether you like it or not.

**CHUCK:** Do you think I'll keep my job?

**DARLA:** The odds are fifty-fifty.

**CHUCK:** Damn it.

**DARLA:** Because it's fallen on theft and they have to investigate the matter.

**CHUCK:** How long is that going to take?

**DARLA:** Could be a month.

**CHUCK:** A month! What am I---

**DARLA:** I'll place you on paid suspension, until this review gets resolved. During that time I would seriously consider looking for another job placement, just incase things don't go your way.

**CHUCK:** I don't believe this is happening to me.

**DARLA:** Chuck, I'm buying you time and I'm buying you a chance.

**CHUCK:** Right, right.

**DARLA:** Listen to what I said. Go find other work as a back up.

**CHUCK:** Okay.

**DARLA:** You understand?

**CHUCK:** I understand. I'm real sorry, Darla.

**DARLA:** I know you are.

**CHUCK:** If I can go back in time and change my actions, I would.

**DARLA:** I know. Go home and I'll keep you posted on the proceedings.

**CHUCK:** Will I be brought in for questioning?

**DARLA:** It's possible.

**CHUCK:** Can you tell them that I would like to, if it means me keeping my job.

**DARLA:** I will.

**CHUCK:** Thank you.

**DARLA:** I'll call you.

**CHUCK:** I'll be waiting. Thanks, Darla.

*Chuck leaves.*

**END OF PLAY**