

INT. LIVING ROOM - THANKSGIVING NIGHT

The TV shows Iron Chef, with MASAHARU MORIMOTO (early-50s) plating an elaborate dish. Steam and flames dance on the screen. DAVID (mid-40s) sits on the couch, absorbed, mimicking Morimoto's precise hand movements.

GRACE (10, energetic) spins a saucepan on her finger like a basketball. LISA (mid-40s) carefully arranges candles on the coffee table next to an alphabet board.

MORIMOTO (ON TV)
Passion is the secret ingredient.

David nods, mouthing the words.

GRACE
Dad, your talking to the TV again.

DAVID
It's not just a TV its a classroom.

Lisa grabs the remote, lowers the volume, breaking his focus.

DAVID
Hey! I was learning.

Lisa gestures toward the alphabet board, where Grace has neatly lined up a whisk, a rolling pin, and a saucepan.

LISA
And I'm preparing tradition.

David looks at the setup and groans.

DAVID
The ghost thing again?

LISA
It's our thing, David. Ghosts for Thanksgiving since... forever.

DAVID
We could just watch Iron Chef and eat pie, but nooo, ghosts it is.

LISA
Because you need to learn, and who better than Julia Child?

GRACE
Moms making sure you don't mess up.

The Oven chimes. David gets up, defeated.

DAVID
Mess it up? This turkey is already
perfection.

He heads to the kitchen, muttering with mock defeat.

DAVID
You get Julia, I'll do the turkey.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

David steps into the kitchen and immediately checks the oven.
The turkey gleams golden and perfect.

DAVID
Now that is a bird.

He opens the oven door, leaning in to inspect. Suddenly, he
hears a voice behind him.

MORIMOTO (O.S.)
Your turkey is dry.

David jumps and spins around. Standing there, impossibly
real, is MASAHARU MORIMOTO.

DAVID
What the--?

Morimoto surveys the kitchen like he's judging a competition.

MORIMOTO
Cluttered. No balance. Where is
your soy sauce?

DAVID
What are you doing in my kitchen?

MORIMOTO
Your family summoned me.

David freezes, confused.

DAVID
No, they're summoning Julia Child!

MORIMOTO
I arrived first.

Lisa's voice calls from the living room.

LISA (O.S.)
David? Everything okay in there?

David glances toward the living room, then back at Morimoto.

DAVID

Uh, yeah! Just... oven stuff!

David glares at Morimoto, whispers angrily.

DAVID

You're not real.

Morimoto picks up a knife and gestures to the turkey.

MORIMOTO

Then you won't mind if I help.

Before David can stop him, Morimoto starts slicing the turkey with the precision of a samurai.

David lunges for the turkey, but Morimoto steps aside with ninja-like agility, still smirking.

DAVID

No. No, no! What are you doing?!

MORIMOTO

Improving it.

DAVID

Keep your hands off my turkey!

Morimoto grabs a jar of caviar from the counter.

DAVID

Where did you even find that?!

MORIMOTO

True chef always knows his kitchen.

David dives to block the turkey, but Morimoto flicks a spoonful of caviar onto the bird with precision.

DAVID

No! Not the--

Too late. David snatches the turkey away, glaring.

DAVID

You've ruined it!

David frantically grabs a towel, trying to wipe off the caviar, but it smears into the turkey, leaving red streaks.

He turns to see Morimoto blends chestnuts in the food processor he found. David's eyes widen as Morimoto informs:

MORIMOTO
Chestnuts. A perfect complement.

David holds the turkey tight. Lisa's voice interrupts from the living room.

LISA (O.S.)
David, hurry up! Julia almost here!

David freezes, staring at Morimoto.

MORIMOTO
The competition has arrived.

DAVID
I married into madness.

Morimoto steps forward, gesturing toward the turkey.

MORIMOTO
I'll present. Your family love it.

David hugs the turkey to his chest like it's a football.

DAVID
This is my Thanksgiving turkey. I'm taking it to my family.

He grabs a knife and slices off the caviar-coated skin.

DAVID
There. Fixed.

Morimoto chuckles, unbothered.

MORIMOTO
Thanksgiving is the wrong holiday for this bird anyway.

DAVID
What's that supposed to mean?

Morimoto shrugs, walks to the kitchen doorway, looking toward the living room.

MORIMOTO
A spring feast. More balance, less chaos.

David rolls his eyes and takes a deep breath, trying to regain composure.

DAVID
Just get through this.

He straightens up, hoists the turkey, heads toward the living room. Morimoto follows at a leisurely pace.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David carries the turkey into the living room, clutching it like a trophy. His eyes catch the TV, where Morimoto's frozen image is still on the screen.

DAVID

Oh, come on.

He scans the room, looking for the remote, can't find it.

Lisa and Grace sit cross-legged by the coffee table, eyes closed, hands touching the alphabet board, chanting softly.

LISA AND GRACE

Julia Child, we call upon thee...

DAVID

Seriously?

David sets the turkey on the dining table, glances back to make sure no one's looking, and starts searching under cushions and behind the couch for the remote.

Meanwhile, Morimoto slips in behind him, silent as a shadow. From his pocket, he produces a small tin of caviar. He sprinkles the caviar onto the turkey with a flourish, pulls out the chestnut blend, scoops it deeper into the bird.

MORIMOTO

Balance restored.

Meanwhile David sees the remote.

DAVID

Found it.

He turns to see Morimoto's work.

DAVID

Noooooo!

David's scream jolts Lisa and Grace. Their eyes snap open, and they stare at the turkey, now adorned with streaks of red caviar and suspiciously creamy chestnuts. David looks at Lisa and Grace, points at Morimoto, who stands beside the turkey.

DAVID

It's him! Morimoto! He's been messing with the turkey!

Grace squints at the empty space where David's pointing.

DAVID
He's right there! He's--

LISA
David. Take a deep breath.

Morimoto watches, utterly unbothered.

MORIMOTO
Serve it. Your family will love it.

David hesitates, then picks up the carving knife and sighs.

DAVID
Fine. If they hate it, it's on you.

GRACE
On who?

David ignores her, carves the turkey, and serves each plate. The family hesitantly takes bites. Then, their eyes widen.

LISA
David... this is amazing.

David blinks, looking at their faces, then at the turkey, then back at the space where Morimoto was standing--now empty.

DAVID
Wait. Where'd he go?

Grace points to the TV.

GRACE
Dad, he's on the TV.

David turns and grabs the remote, finally finding it under a cushion. He rewinds to Morimoto's earlier moment, where the chef speaks passionately.

MORIMOTO (ON TV)
Precision. Innovation. Passion.
Always move forward.

David stares at the screen, frozen. The corner of Morimoto's mouth twitches into a smirk. David puts down the remote, looks back at the turkey, and smiles.

FADE OUT.