Soul Food on the Menu

My family owns a diner in Harlem, New York. It's called For Your Soul. It serves soul food.

Mom says soul food is good for the soul. That means it makes you feel good. If you feel sad, eating soul food will make you feel better. Dad says this is because soul food is made with love.

One day a sad looking man comes to the diner. He sits down quietly at the counter and looks around nervously, like he's not sure how he got there.

"What will you have," I ask him.

"What is good?" He asks in a voice so quiet I can barely hear him.

"Everything!" I say.

"I never had soul food before," he admits.

"Did you hear that, Mom?" I ask loudly so Mom can hear me in the kitchen.

"Oooooo, boy! You are in for a treat today!" Mom says sticking her head out of the kitchen. "I'll bring you an order of New Soul—it's for folks like you who've never tried soul food before."

The man nods. I watch him as he waits. When his eyes grow as big as platters, I know he's spotted the tray of food that Mama is carrying.
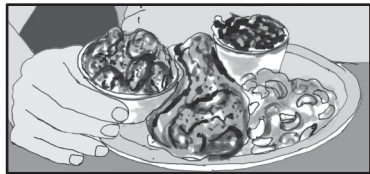
Mom brings him platters full of food. There is fried fish. There is fried chicken. There is mac and cheese. There are grits. There are collard greens. There are biscuits. There are black-eyed peas. There is sweet potato pie.

The man starts to eat. After a while, he starts to smile. Soon after, the man starts to talk to the people sitting next to him at the counter. The man begins to look happy. The more he eats the the happier he looks.

"I feel so much better than before," the man says. "Is this food magic?"

"No," says Mom.

"It is made with love," I say.

"Love is good for the soul," says Mom.

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