

The Napkin and the Plate by JAMES STURZ

Amuse Bouche

I wanted to kiss her, rip her lips, bite her tongue, taste blood in my throat, make love to her, devour her. When I met her, she said, “Be gentle.”

But once I knew her, she consented to small bites.

Appetizer

Gabriella sat across from me on the train, spooning yogurt into her child’s mouth. A blueberry dollop fell to her knee, and she wiped it up with a finger. The baby and I looked at each other hungrily, wondering which one of us would win in a brawl.

Sauvignon Blanc

Lucy and I sat in the bathtub, surrounded by gallons of grapes. My knee was a pink hillock. Her toes were pearlescent seashells bouncing in the surf. The grapes rolled down our chests, into the smalls of our backs, under our chins, and behind our ears. Once we started to kiss, and we started to kick, they squished beneath us, undulating, breaking and splashing, sweetest where they were closest to our open thighs.

Capellini

Monica squealed, tangled around the tines of my fork. She wore tomatoes and olive oil in her hair. I overlooked the mozzarella. I think she could have easily worn a barrette.

Palette Cleanser

It was February, and freezing. Birgitte was shivering, sheathed in Shetland and shearling. She said, “Shhh, just hold me. Until I melt.”

Pan-seared Turbot

Ariel lay flat, and fluttered, shuddered and wiggled. Her dress was a puddle on the floor, her lingerie two small silk islands. Any ichthyologist can tell you that when your eyes are closed, it doesn’t matter where they are on your head.

Wild Game

The boar was charging at Zoe, leading with its tusks. She accommodated herself freely, and moved her pillow beneath her hips.

Buns?

Yes, plenty of buns. And a few rolls.

Fresh Garden Salad

I pictured Kiki preparing the salad: pulling the lettuce from the ground, the carrots, the beets, the perfect little radishes, and then washing them all with loofah and plenty of soap.

Ganache

The truffles looked so rich everyone started swallowing before taking a single bite. I reached with my hand, after reaching with my eyes. But our hostess harumphed. She said, “Don’t play with your food.”

“Besides, you’re all the same,” she sighed. “I wake up in the morning, and you’re gone.”