

Fake Story: Rob Simes

Her phone was held neatly to her ear. Her small, bird-like eyes swept the room, many tables, Saturday night, the water, lights, boats, and summer, she nodded, 'I am pleased.'

She surveyed the table, 'Please,' and gestured. To the room, perhaps, 'The glasses, filthy, the plates, fix it. All of it.' The embarrassed waiter hurried off.

She spied him walking up the stairs, stood, cradled her phone, looked out over the water, giggled, and spoke, and swayed, 'Yes, pleased.'

A few glanced her way, as he entered, but carefully.

A raised eyebrow sent him scurrying to help her with her chair, though he almost collided with several waiters setting the table again. 'How are you?', she asked, 'I am good, thanks for asking.'

Plates, and food, glasses, and drinks, came and went. People watched.

Mouths moved, cutlery too, but the world, all of a sudden, got still.

She reached out, 'Please.' He extended his arm, and she lay her hand lightly on his. 'I know you will never be happy. Not without me. I will have no trouble. You know this.'

She understood, his clamped silence was awe, attraction, adoration even, as it once was, and she resolved to make it so again.

There was a very long silence, uncomfortable for her.

He unwisely ventured a few words, into the pause, and again a raised eyebrow.

He stood, 'Please, don't leave.'

Through clenched teeth, 'Leave the money there, please.'

The audience struggled to decide, defeat or victory. It would be much discussed.

Her plans complete, she rose, brushing past people, like a shiny ball in a pin-ball machine, driven by great levers. A man looked her way, curiosity and fear, mixed. But she had seen, and he was caught. As she passed, she lay her thin-fingered hand on his bare arm, 'Please, you remember me!' And, as she turned, she smiled, her thin lips thinner still in her wide face.

To the maître d', 'With all these problems, I will not pay. I expect a call on Monday, please. First thing.'

She opened the door, surprised that no-one was there to do it, unsteady, on new, too high heels, and she called on her phone, she nodded, certain, 'It went well. I am pleased.'

And as she descended the stairs, she caught a final satisfying glimpse of herself, all colours and sparkle, in the reflection of the obedient glass.