

<DOORBELL CHIMES>

*PAN OF UPSTAIRS APARTMENT*

NARRATOR - I could hear the echoes of her heels from the floor below, five quick steps from the bathroom to the front door, i guess its about time

<HI - O ITS YOU, IM SORRY JUST HAVE TO WASH THIS STUFF OF MY FACE - YOURE EARLY!>

*DOWNSTAIRS APARTMENT OVERVIEW, early guest shouts across room*

- I BROUGHT SOME PETIT FOURS, ILL JUST PUT THEM IN THE KITCHEN FOR YOU

<sounds of cabinet doors and water running>

*hostess walks calmly to kitchen, now fully dressed in simple cocktail dress and flawless makeup*

- a ok thanks

*early guest tells anecdote from real life while leaning on kitchen island*

...

<SLIGHT KNOCKING>

*early guest, who is closer to the door, grabs door handle while looking at hostess, as if to check whether this move is acceptable*

- my father is not feeling well, he asked me to tell you he cant come tonight, the child took two steps forward to hand over a small note 'there is no one to make me dinner'

- HaHa, arent you cute! sit down please, you will take your fathers plate, as a matter of fact you look just like him, no one will notice. but we *will* have to find you some other clothes to wear!

...

*main guests arrive uneventful*

<NO PLEASE>

...

*DINING ROOM VIEW, early guest pours drinks*

*narrator steps downstairs and joins the dinner, still in capacity of narrator*

ALL THE GROUND IS STREWN WITH CHESTNUTS, SOME OF WHICH ARE RUBBED FREE OF THE BURR, OTHERS LIE QUITE SHUT UP, AND OTHERS SHOW THE BURR BREAKING AT THE LINE OF DIVISION

*late guest arrives right in time for main course, knocks over sauce while sitting down, slight twitches but no one moves to deal with spill*

NARRATOR - Midway through the maincourse I recited a poem:

PURPLE FIGS DRIPPING WITH JUICE ARE HEAPED ON VINE-LEAVES; AND THEY ARE DEPICTED WITH BREAKS IN THE SKIN, SOME JUST CRACKING OPEN TO DISGORGE THEIR HONEY, SOME SPLIT APART, THEY ARE SO RIPE

*at these words, the child's eyebrows trembled slightly*

HERE ARE THE GIFTS OF THE CHERRY TREE, HERE IS THE FRUIT IN CLUSTERS HEAPED IN A BASKET, AND THE BASKET IS WOVEN, NOT FROM ALIEN TWIGS, BUT FROM BRANCHES OF THE PLANT ITSELF

*late guest reads out draft of short story written by main guest on demand of other guests on account of having a beautiful reading voice:*