

Table for one

by Augend Crusoe

The rain was coming down heavily now. Pools of water made the sidewalk resemble a slalom event. He didn't like that. Too much water.

He darted into the restaurant. Grotto. His favorite. Giovanni was waiting at the entrance, as usual. He didn't look Italian, Giovanni. Deep inside he suspected him of being called José. Who cares? He nodded to José, and found his way towards his usual table, next to the back wall.

Today's special was as interesting as it had been the first time he had had it, couple of years ago. Black tagliatelle with squid and funghi porcini. He didn't understand why they called it a special, it had been in the menu since day one they had opened. Who cares? He ordered it anyway.

As soon as he pushed away the order-pad, his first companion showed up across from him. She was a slim, dark haired woman, with a bored look solidly attached to her face. Nothing to do here. She glanced at him shortly, then focused on her risotto. Who cares? Didn't like her anyway.

Now she was gone. Replaced by a middle-aged nerdy looking chap. Who knew they were still making those kinds of glasses? Or maybe they didn't, he must have found them at a garage sale. The chap looked slightly amused, examining him with a curious look. Who cares? He wasn't interested in men. He concentrated on his tagliatelle.

The food was good. At least that. So far, the night had all the signs of one of those nights. He secretly hoped he'd at least be able to fall asleep easily, with all this rain.

He scanned his thumb and stood up. He turned off the companion screen on the other side of the table just as another bored face was coming onto it. Sometimes he wondered why he kept doing this. It wasn't any better than eating alone.

He nodded to José and stepped outside in the puddles that remained on the sidewalk. The rain was showing signs of fatigue. He reckoned it would stop just as he would reach home. Just his luck.

It was definitely one of those nights.

