

Rocky Mountain Oysters

by Kevin Myrick

He knew before she even opened her mouth that she was a Yankee. She had that too-polished look about her blond hair, her sunglasses more designer than Dollar Store; even with her eyes covered by giant frames she shielded her face from the hot Florida sun. Her slick looking frat boy toy in the Mercedes had that foul look of Wall Street about him as he yapped, yapped, yapped away on the little earpiece, too busy for other people including the woman he was with. He of course ignored the sign outside that said "no cell phone use inside, please." Jack couldn't hear what she was saying, but made up the conversation in his head.

Why do you want to eat at this dump? There was a perfectly nice looking restaurant in town.

The spiked-hair too-cool-for-school boy toy doesn't even miss a beat in his other conversation and nodded his head along to whatever the other person was saying.

We never go anywhere nice. It's always dives and grease pits with you. Jesus, you're going to make me fat if we keep eating at places like this.

Their New York license plate confirmed the whole story in his mind. She must have convinced him that he should take them to the Gulf because it would be the American thing to do. *Those people need us to spend money down there, not to help clean up the oil. They pay people for that.* He bet they never even thought once about the marshes that sparkled in the morning sun or the birds that lived there. Or even where their shrimp cocktails they eat at their fancy parties comes from.

Jack tapped Billy on the back and told him to play along with what

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he planned for the out-of-towners.

"Jack, come on man. Don't be crude."

"Just go with it," he said. "I promise we'll have some laughs about it later."

Jack motioned for them to take a table anywhere in the empty restaurant and asked them for their drink orders. "Pepsi," the man said.

"A water is fine with me," she said as she looked down in her purse and pulled out a bottle of medicine - Xanax from the looks of it - and she popped one in her mouth. Jack thought being with that kind of guy must have driven her to popping pills. He couldn't take it anymore.

"What the hell do you think this is, Shea Stadium?" Jack started to yell at the man. "We ain't got Pepsi down here. You have Coke and Diet Coke, and maybe Dr. Pepper if old Billy back there hadn't drunk it all Wednesday afternoon."

He told the other end to hold on. "Did you say you don't have Pepsi?"

Jack gave him a "you're the stupidest man in the world" look and tossed down two laminated menus in front of them. The man went back to his conversation, ignored Jack and the woman with him. She turned her eyes up at Jack and gave him a "he's a jerk, I know" look as he stood there, pencil and pad in hand like he was nothing more than an ornament. "You can read them, but their ain't much on there in season right now, you know."

"Why?" the blond asked.

“BP.”

“BP?” she parroted back, then after a moment finally realized what he meant. “Of course, the spill. Well, what do you have?”

“Well, we've got fried snapper sandwiches and Rocky Mountain Oysters, imported fresh from the streams outside of Denver.”

“Oh, well... those sound good. How do you cook them?”

“No, you eat them raw.”

The man was still on the phone, and she was annoyed. “Well in that case, I'll have the sandwich and he can have the oysters.”

“Coming right up.”

After 30 minutes of sitting in the restaurant and the man still on the phone, Jack came back to their table. In his hand was her fried Snapper sandwich, cooked to perfection and put on a beautiful piece of French bread. Then there was the man's dinner: a sloppy mess of chopped up raw fish that had been left out back all morning in the sun, and thrown on some empty oyster shells he found in the parking lot. They didn't actually have beef testicles, so it would have to do.

“Enjoy.”

“What is this?” the man asked, finally paying attention to what was going on.

“They're Rocky Mountain Oysters,” the blond said. “Fresh. You'll absolutely love them Jim.”

Billy stayed in back behind the grill and watched as the man ate the

fish with hot sauce. "He's going to be so sick tomorrow."

"At least it will teach him some manners," Jack said.

