



Two rare birds—both fantasies of the unabashed art nerd; one a twee, raven-haired (Brechtian cut) frail and pale minx with immaculate china doll skin, large, bright blue eyes, tiny button nose, a soft spray of freckles across her small face; the other a coy little blonde (Daisy Mae braids on either side of her narrow collarbone) a diamond nose stud, gray eyes under blue eyeshadowed lids; both smell faintly of baby powder and freshness; she wears a turquoise baby-‘T’ that reads Catherine Breillat Gets Me Wet, the other a gray spaghetti-strapped petticoat emblazed across the front with a grainy black-and-white picture of Hubert Selby Jr.—sit at their table and wait.

The time is upon them and Katherine utters: ‘Rappaport.’

‘You sure?’ asks Becca, bending her thin arm backwards to hold her left braid.

‘Yeah. Rappaport.’

‘When. Now?’

‘Now.’

Becca leaves her braid alone, takes a deep breath, and lowers her voice. Mannish, but not quite, more epicene than anything else: ‘Hey, Rappaport.’

Katherine says nothing, she feigns a sense of disinterest, though seemingly involved in the game.

‘Rappaport,’ Becca repeats.

Nothing from Katherine, looking everywhere but here.

Becca taps Katherine on the shoulder. ‘Rappaport.’

‘Oh, I’m not Rappaport,’ Katherine says.

'No, Rappaport, it's me,' says Becca.

Katherine plays nervous, a bit baffled. 'Oh, but I'm not Rappaport.'

'Sure you are. Rappaport, you've changed your hair.'

'I'm not Rappaport.'

'Rappaport,' Becca says 'you've changed your suit! You never used to wear these kinds of clothes, Rappaport.'

'I'm not Rappaport.'

'And, Rappaport, my goodness: your voice, it sounds so different now.'

'I'm not Rappaport.'

Becca leans in, across the table and gazes into Katherine's eyes. 'Rappaport, *mea culpa*, but weren't your eyes originally brown?'

'I'm not Rappaport.'

'Rappaport, you've changed you name, too.'

Both girls lean back against their chairs, smile and exhale with relief and satisfaction. Ease and sobering repose now, sawdust memories.

Katherine fiddles with her filigree spaghetti strap on her right side. She twitches her nose and stares without thought or consideration to the floor below next to their table.

Without a moment's notice—and still staring at the floor with lackadaisical fatuity—she spouts out of the corner of her soft, pink lips: 'Some missionaries wandered into a cannibal village.'

Becca looks up from her own daydream. 'Oh yeah? A missionary village?'

'Yeah. The next thing they knew, they were in a flying stew.'

A quick, terse 'Hmm' from Katherine, who—just as quickly—takes a deep breath as though preparing to jump off a diving board before racing across a pool. 'Escorted by a doctor, a man was visiting an institution. The man saw a male patient sitting in the corner, playing with a doll.'

'What did the doctor say?' asks Becca, not looking up from her fixed gaze on the ground to the left and just ahead of their table.

'The doctor said "The man went crazy because he lost the girl he loved to another guy.' The doctor and the visitor walked on, until suddenly another patient ran up the hall. His violent nature was obvious and he looked as though he was ready to explode. The doctor explained 'He's the man who got the girl!'"

'Do you want a muffin?' asks Becca, looking up from the floor to Katherine.

Katherine thinks about it for a moment. 'Nah. I'm not really hungry.'

'You sure? I think I'm gonna get one. Or maybe a piece of carrot cake.'

'What's the point of *that*?' asks Katherine, pointing to the large, green backpack covered in buttons on the floor next to Becca's dark blue shoes. 'There's really no reason to get any cake right now.'

'*Cake?*'

'What *about* cake?'

'Did I tell you about my mom's cake the other day?'

'Why, no. Tell me: what happened with your mom's cake?'

'It was decent.'

'Just *decent?*'

'Her cooking is improving. All her lumps are bite-size.'

'Look,' says Katherine, reaching down into her own large, purple backpack 'if we don't buy anything soon, I'm gonna start feeling like a leech.' She unzips her backpack, pulls out a large pink box taped at the sides. She sets the box atop their table.

'I'm not really hungry,' replies Becca, who reaches into her own backpack—already unzipped—and pulls out her own pink box taped at the corners. She too sets the box on the table.

Katherine and Becca rest for a moment, they think and say nothing. They allow the seconds to pass by without care.

'Are you bored?'

'Not really. You want to play a game or something? I could get the chessboard or the cards.'

'Cards,' Katherine huffs. 'You know why they invented Bridge?'

'Bridge? Why?'

'Bridge was invented...so that women could have a thing or two to think about while talking.'

'That's moderately interesting.'

'Isn't it, though?'

'Not necessarily. Hey,' Becca says as she sets her elbows down on her pink box, rests her chin on her hands turned inward like a pedestal 'you know my next door neighbor?'

'Which one? The one on the left or the one on the right?'

'It doesn't matter. Anyway, he caught his son at a prank and asked 'Don't you know the difference between right and wrong?' 'Of course I do,' said the boy. So, the father goes, 'Yet, you always do wrong.' 'Well,' says the kid 'that shows you it's not guesswork.'"

Katherine holds a clenched fist up to her mouth as she sneezes quietly. She coughs. 'How much longer should we wait?' she asks.

'I can't really tell. There's something we need to wait for before we do it and until then, we'll just have to...wait.'

'And we're not going to buy anything?'

'What? Like cake?'

'Oh,' Katherine shakes her head 'for the good old days when tires weren't belted and kids were.'

'Try to be nice. If you behave, you can grow up and be just like Lincoln.'

Katherine furrows her brow in confoundment. 'Who the hell wants to be a *tunne!*'

'Then there's my wife.'

'You have a wife?'

'Yeah. My wife, she buys everything that's marked down.'

'She buys everything that's marked down?'

'Yesterday, she came home with an escalator.'

'Oy, wives. I could tell you about wives.'

'You could?'

'Indeed. A woman noticed a man was following her. Quickening her pace, she rushed home, bolted the door, and breathed a sigh of relief. She turned to put away her groceries. The man stood in the kitchen. The woman said 'You'd better get out of here. My husband'll be home any second and he'll kill you.' Just then, a car pulled into the driveway. Aghast, the woman went on 'He'll kill you. But I don't want him in jail. Hide in the closet. When he's not looking, you can run away.' The menace hid himself in the closet. The husband walked in, kissed his wife, looked at the mail, and when his wife had started for the den, he went to put away his coat.'

'*Then* what happened?'

'Well, listen and I'll tell you. So, the husband—opening the door—saw the menace and exclaimed 'Creep!' He looked closer and said 'Haven't I seen you someplace before?' The menace said 'Yeah, in *my* apartment *last week*. This'll make us even.'

Katherine kicks off her shoes under the table, twiddles her toes inside of her black socks. She stretches her legs out from under the table. Her knees pop and she lies her head down on the pink box before her. 'Hmm. That also reminds me of my girlfriend's mother. She came home to a vagrant in her house who began approaching her. She screamed out '*Rape!*' and the vagrant says '*No!*'

'It's amazing how long you can go on without stopping,' Becca intones with a sardonic air.

'It's amazing how long you can listen.'

'There was this one time when we were in the desert—'

'We were never in the desert, Katherine.'

'Oh, but we were. And we followed those three guys.'

'Oh, yes. The three guys in the desert. One carried a gold brick, the other a canteen of water, and the other—'

'A car door. That's right. 'Why do you have that canteen of water?' asked the other two. 'I have this canteen of water so that in case I get thirsty, I'll have something to drink.' 'Why do you have that gold brick?' the other two asked of the man with the gold brick. 'I have this gold brick so that in the event I want to buy the canteen of water, I'll be able to do so.' The three men continued through the desert until the other two inquired of the man with the car door 'Why are you carrying a car door?' 'Well,' reported the man with the car door 'in case it gets too hot, I can roll down the window.'

'I don't remember him saying that.'

'Your memory's fucked, then.'

'Why are you looking at me as though I ticketed your car?'

'I don't *have* a car. I think *you're* the one with the fucked memory.'

'Don't worry. I'm almost through...In fact, I think I was when I started.'

Becca cracks her knuckles, pulls her cell phone out of her pocket, presses a button on the side to check the time, and places the phone back in her pocket.

'Is it time?' asks Katherine.

'Yeah. Go for it.'

Katherine picks at the tape on the corners of her pink box, Becca does the same. Doing so, they're able to open their respective boxes to reveal a large cream pie inside each.

'Now?'

'Now.'

With both hands, Becca and Katherine pick up their pies, and...*splat splat*.

'I wish you were here yesterday,' Becca says, covered in dauby pie. 'I was out of town.'