

ForePlay

By Mike Malone

The cute waiter set the food on the table and was assisted by Esther, who removed some impeding cutlery, and was elegantly aware of her two handsome companions. She sent a surreptitious look at Jack seated across from her. His brown eyes caught hers, briefly before he spread his red dinner napkin over his khaki-clad lap.

“Mind yourself, Paul,” Jack cautioned his friend, as the food was being set down by the young blonde waiter.

Paul pulled back from the table slightly, worried about food dropping onto his lap. His red napkin quickly made its appearance also. He reset the cutlery to his liking, flicked some crumbs from his space and settled back in his chair to wait, while the remainder of the luncheon was served.

“Thanks, Jack. I didn’t see him coming,” he smiled.

Esther was ticked a bit. Jack hadn’t commented on her new Versace dress. Its bold colours enhanced her pale skin and dark hair and eyes. At the moment, Jack was completely unaware of the rapid beating in her breast. His attention directed elsewhere.

“Nice shirt, Paul. Polo?” queried Jack. “It matches your red hair.”

Paul ran his hand across his chest, smoothing wrinkles from his shirt and matching tie. He adjusted the collar and shot his cuffs, very much a primping affair, resting his wrists on the table.

“Thanks, Jack. Yeah it’s a Polo... the new Fall colours. I bought four for the season.” Again he ran his hand down his sleeve. Jack smiled his approval.

Esther sought a way to touch the long, slender fingers of Jack’s right hand. She reached for a fork and spread her own fingers slightly, making a brief contact. Jack moved his hand to his lap and smoothed his napkin, looking downward.

“Nice for the wardrobe, if you can afford it,” muttered Jack, wistfully.

Paul noticed the delicate interplay and heard the comment, but did not respond, nor did his face register any recognition of the envious words. They were welcome to their dalliance. He had other fish to fry. Where had that cute waiter with the blue eyes gone?