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Perfectly Formed

by Debbie Holden

It's perfectly formed, the scan shows, though a little small he says with an air of apology. I was hoping it might be a little larger but I'm happy with the results and we will go ahead on Monday morning.

We look at each other, not quite believing what he said, and two hours later, we step out into the Brightness of the Mediterranean sun.

"Lunch he asks?"

"Perfect," I say, "can we go to that lovely Tapas bar we stumbled upon last year. Gonzalez I think it's called. It felt so romantic, and the food was amazing last time we were there."

"Great idea," he says, taking my hand.

We walk through the cobbled streets lined with their picture-perfect eateries and elegantly understated shops. Gonzalez sits comfortably in these surroundings, with its yesteryear facade, that suits it well. It's in a typical Spanish square, with a small park in the centre, with some sun faded swings, and an old fashioned roundabout.

All the tables outside Gonzalez are already taken with locals ordering lunch, under the sun umbrellas. This the main meal of the day. It starts early, often drifting through into a late lazy afternoon session, depending on the amount of wine consumed., and the workload for the rest of the day. The smartly tiled interior of he restaurant seems dark compared to outside, and My eyes take a moment to adjust.

We follow our camarero who tells us his name is Paco to a lovely spot by an open window, set for two, and discreetly far enough from other tables to allow privacy. Paco takes a moment to tell us the best way to eat tapas is to share the dishes, enjoy the surroundings and never rush. He says this with a soft smile, as if knowing we have so much to say to each other. Reading the menu causes my mouth to water in anticipation.

The expectation of savouring these wonderful small plates again was somehow comforting. As always we order too much food, keen to try everything on the menu.

Apple and manchego crostini, with fresh crisp slivers of pink skinned apple, sitting on crumbly aged manchego cheese.

Bite size salt cod fritters, delicate, yet full of flavour. Beautiful fat juicy olives, marinated in orange peel, bay leaf and warm red peppers. Soft tender Artichoke hearts in a smoky garlic sauce, and Melt in the mouth croquettes filled with Iberico ham and mushrooms. All delicate, tasty and fresh. After some advice from Paco we also decide on a bottle of the Crianza to wash it all down.

We talk, we people watch, and we smile at the toddler being pushed on the swing, in the little park, and we hear him giggle, as she pushes him as he calls “mas, mas!” She does push more but all the time mindful of the new baby brother or sister, swaddled in the Pram by her side.

Paco says he hopes we will return one day, when eventually and reluctantly we stand to leave. We hope so too, is our answer, the food was amazing.

I feel his hand gently on my arm, pulling me back as we cross towards the park to once again look at the child in the swing. “That could be us soon he says, if all goes well on Monday.”

It’s busy in the hospital on Monday morning, and Sister Sofia is ready for a long day on her feet. Both patients are ready now Doctor, she calls, and the teams are prepared.

Thirty minutes later, the small but perfectly formed heart is transplanted into Anna's chest, pink, warm and beating independently. While next door they remove the monitors, the lines and equipment from the perfectly formed child, and close his now empty chest.

Outside the sun is shining, and people are beginning to order lunch, while a small child calls more Mama as she pushes him ever higher on the swing.