

**Bourne**  
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## Everyone

by Janie Reynolds

Everyone, at some time or another, must sit down to a banquet of consequences, as each is served them, one by one, from under the dome of a silver serving plate. They must look each consequence directly in the eye, and hold the gaze until their hearts bleed, with love, for those sorrowed creatures they once left behind them, in their wakes.

“To start with, your hors d'oeuvre, Madame,” announced the waiter, as he lifted the heavy silver lid to reveal Tom, peering up at me with those huge brown eyes; my trusty Labrador, who I left at the side of the motorway.

“And for your soup,” he continued, “a son; the sharp-witted, sensitive, tall, lean boy you named Paul. Twelve weeks in your womb before he was poisoned and siphoned from you to be discarded as clinical waste.

“And as an appetiser, Madame, here is your Mum. “Pardon? Pardon?” she bleats, as she strains to hear us, so wanting to, so needing to, but unable to. Because, in my teenage rage, I lashed my cupped palm against the side of her head, bursting the air through her ear drum and leaving her deaf forever more.

“And next, for your salad,” continued Monsieur le serveur, “may I present a selection of your wedding dresses, worn only once, left to feed the moths and with no husband still to show for any of them.

“And for dessert, your father, his lower eyelids drooped so deep you can see inside to the balls. His back so bowed and crooked from carrying you that he bent so far forwards one day and tumbled into his own grave.

“And lastly, Madame, a selection of mignardises, on the house. Some enemies with grudges in the absence of your apologies; lovers forever scarred by your callousness; homes sold and neighbours left behind; and gardens, gardens of weeds.

So, finally, if Madame would like to kneel for her dessert wine? Knees in the weeds, her delicate hands ripping and tearing out the roots from the ground, she may chew on every leaf and every stalk until the sap drips down her throat into her cells, like green light.