

"All right, I'll go. But I'm getting out of there early. I'm not going nuts tonight."

"Don't worry. We're not talking about a bachelor party here."

The League's a huge old mansion on Broad Street, the sort of place you need to go to with a member, and there are no prices on the menu. The food's Episcopalian Thanksgiving/Golf Course Wedding Fusion, the decor from WWII and all the dust deliberate—real geriatric chic. I didn't feel the slightest bit self-conscious wandering the place sockless in a stained seersucker suit.

As in any WASP-themed restaurant, the food at the League's irrelevant. They pour the whiskey heavy and the only object seems to be numbness, surgical grade. It's near impossible not to get flattened in the place. There are three attractions to any restaurant: People-Watching, Eating Something You've Never Tried Before and Being Served. As People-Watching, there aren't any women or freaks to survey in the League. You get a generic parade of potbellied men in blazers and blue-haired wives with embroidered muumuu dresses hanging like curtains over what appear to be randomly assorted layers of breasts, interrupted by the occasional younger family outing—a thirty-sevenish bond lawyer with an SS haircut and Stepford wife. As to Eating Something You've Never Tried Before, if you haven't had minestrone,

you're in for something special. But on the Being Served end, I have to admit the place is Michelin four-star. Shoeshines are on the appetizer menu. Having him call you "Colonel" during the process is an extra five dollars.

Dinner passed in a flurry of liquid orders. "Another? Yes." "Sure, one more." "Yes, a double." I checked my watch every half hour or so, making a note of the time, aiming to leave by ten. That came and went, then eleven, then twelve. By one I was back in my neighborhood ordering Basil Hayden and Red Bulls with Harris at a restaurant up the street. By two I was in my living room loaded out of my mind, arguing about music.

"I don't like the Flaming Lips." Harris turned down the stereo. "They're Hollywood garbage."

"Do You Realize' is like a modern version of 'The Sound of Silence.'" I turned it back up. "You have to listen to it."

"I hate Simon and Garfunkel."

"They're not my favorite either, but they did write some classics."

"Hugely overrated. Simon couldn't sing. He talked, like Lou Reed does, but not as good, and Garfunkel whispered really close to the microphone. One guy whispering, one guy talking, and people call them geniuses? Bullshit."

"I didn't mean the Lips sounded like them."

"They also can't play live. I can't respect any band that can't play live."

"What are you taking about? The Lips play live all the time."

"No, Simon and Garfunkel. You're never going to hear Simon and Garfunkel tear into a jam in the middle of 'Scarborough Fair' or 'Teach Your Children.'"

"I should hope not. 'Teach Your Children' is a fucking Eagles song."

"Jesus, what are you doing?"

"My hands aren't working." Actually, I could never roll a joint.

"Give me that." Harris pushed me away from the stash. "You're an embarrassment."

"I need a cigarette."

"I only have five left."

"That hollandaise sauce from dinner is churning in my stomach. I need to kill the taste."

"It was béarnaise sauce."

"What's the fucking difference?"

"Béarnaise is French. Hollandaise is Dutch."