

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT
THIS PLAY IS FULLY PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT**

All plays, books, music and other materials published by Heartland Plays, Inc. are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries which the United States has reciprocal relations including, but not limited to all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, The Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention. All rights to the plays and materials on our website are strictly reserved including, and without limitation, professional and amateur performance rights; motion pictures; public reading; radio and television broadcasting; audio and video recording and reproduction of any type known or yet to be invented; information storage and retrieval systems of any type known or yet to be invented; and the rights of translation into any and all languages. No individual or organization whether amateur or stock may perform this or any play published by Heartland Plays, Inc. without first obtaining advance permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. and paying the appropriate fees including Royalties and Single-Use Copyright fees. Heartland Plays, Inc. collects royalties on behalf of the Playwrights whose plays it publishes. Unauthorized copying, transcribing or reproduction of this or any play or excerpt, or storage or transmittal in any form and by any means whether known or yet to be invented, is strictly forbidden except as provided by Agreement with Heartland Plays, Inc. Any unauthorized use is a violation of copyright laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES TO REMEMBER

1. DO take advantage of the free online perusal of our plays to help you make the best choice for your particular needs or production.
2. DO enjoy the convenience of our online purchase application for performance rights and single-use copyright.
3. DO understand that this play and all plays and materials on our website are controlled by Heartland Plays, Inc. and fully protected by copyright.
4. DO NOT attempt in any way to copy, transcribe or reproduce this play by any means or perform this play or use any play or material from our website without first receiving permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. Any attempt to use this or any other work without first obtaining permission is a violation of copyright and punishable by law.
5. DO NOT rob this Author or any of the Authors we represent of their right to be paid for the use of their property. It is a crime and it is wrong!

Product Code A0844-SP

Club Gastro

A 10-Minute Comedy
by
Ross Peter Nelson

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
REPRODUCTION WITHOUT SPECIFIC WRITTEN PERMISSION
PROHIBITED**

**Performance Rights Available Exclusively through
Heartland Plays, Inc. at heartlandplays.com
playsnow@heartlandplays.com
customer service: 406-431-7680**

Copyright © 2016 by Ross Peter Nelson

Club Gastro

by Ross Peter Nelson

CHARACTERS

2W / 2M

JULIA: Female, 30's. The birthday girl. Inhibited.

SUZETTE: Female. 30's. Julia's best friend. Can be wild.

DEVON: Male. Late 20's. "Chef" at Club Gastronomique. Buff.

MAITRE D: Male. Late 40's. Maître d'hôtel of the Club Gastronomique

SETTING

The Club Gastronomique is a place where people come and are presented with food that is described to them and they can see and smell but may not touch or taste: a strip club of cuisine.

TIME

Now.

Club Gastro

by Ross Peter Nelson

(SUZETTE and JULIA are standing outside CLUB GASTRONIMIQUE. JULIA is blindfolded. The club has a look that is simultaneously elegant and seedy. Both the staff and the patrons are dressed to the nines. MAITRE D speaks with an exaggerated French accent.)

JULIA

Are we there yet?

SUZETTE

Almost.

(SUZETTE draws two tickets from her purse, while singing the music to "The Stripper.")

SUZETTE

Da-da-dah, da-duh-da-dah.

JULIA

What's going on?

(SUZETTE puts the tickets in JULIA's hand and pulls off the blindfold.)

SUZETTE

Happy Birthday!

JULIA

(Looking around, grabbing the tickets, getting her bearings.)

Omigod. Club Gastro?

SUZETTE

Yes!

(Hugs JULIA.)

Are you ready?

JULIA

Omigod. What if someone sees us?

SUZETTE

Don't be silly, no one comes here to look at the customers.

JULIA

Oh, I don't know if I can do this.

SUZETTE

Julia! It's your birthday. Loosen your corset, girl.

JULIA

But still...I mean...isn't it kind of sleazy?

SUZETTE

You're only there to look. Nothing happens.

JULIA

(Pausing, then enthusiastic.)

OK. Let's go!

SUZETTE

(Hands JULIA a small wad of five-dollar bills from her purse.)

Oh, and you'll want a few of these. For tips.

(JULIA and SUZETTE enter CLUB GASTRO.)

MAITRE D

Bon soir, mademoiselles. Bienvenue à Club Gastronomique. May I see your tickets, s'il vous plaît?

(Taking tickets from SUZETTE.)

Ah, a private table. A special occasion?

SUZETTE

It's her birthday.

MAITRE D

But of course.

(He hands the women what appears to be a large menu.)

If you would select your chef for the evening, I will take you to your table.

JULIA

I can't do this, let's go home.

SUZETTE

Will you settle down? Look at the pictures.

JULIA

I can't.

SUZETTE

He's nice, and so is that one. Look at his jacket. So crisp. Pearl buttons.

JULIA

Really? Let me see. Is that his toque?

SUZETTE

Ooo, doesn't he look sassy holding that whisk.

JULIA

(Turning the page.)

They have women, too!

(JULIA and SUZETTE look at one another. A pause.)

SUZETTE / JULIA *(together, giggling)*

Uh-uh.

JULIA

You pick.

SUZETTE

I will not. It's your birthday.

JULIA

I can't.

SUZETTE

Come on.

JULIA

OK. That one.

SUZETTE

Him? Are you sure? How come?

JULIA

He doesn't look so perfect and posed. He looks like he's really been working in the kitchen. A spot of red wine on his cuff. A spray of veal stock on the collar. I can just see him stirring and tasting. Adding a little something. Plus he has really nice eyes.

SUZETTE

We want him.

MAITRE D

Excellent choice. I'll see that Chef Devon is with you shortly.

(The MAITRE D leads the women to a table.)

JULIA

I can't believe we're doing this.

(The MAITRE D seats them and pours a glass of wine for each of the women.)

MAITRE D

You know the rules of course, you may look but you may not touch. Enjoy your evening, *mademoiselles*.

SUZETTE

(Raising her glass.)

Happy birthday, Julia.

JULIA

(They toast.)

You're such a crazy person. What would I do without you?

SUZETTE

Live a more sedate life, I'm sure. I wanted you to have a private table for your birthday. The first time I was here I just watched a show on the main stage. It's not the same.

JULIA

You've been here before?

SUZETTE

Look, there's the mayor.

JULIA

Oh, no.

(Takes a big gulp of wine before she'll look.)

What's she having?

SUZETTE

Looks like steak tartare. Oh my god, look what he's doing with the egg. Oh yum, look over there. A flambé. Bananas Foster.

JULIA

Should we be looking at someone else's table?

SUZETTE

Don't be such a priss.

(Points.)

Skewered prawns.

JULIA

And they're just dripping butter.

SUZETTE

(Calls out.)

Woohoo! Spear one for me!

JULIA

Shhh! He's coming!

(DEVON enters and sets down a small covered tray.)

DEVON

Good evening. I'm Chef Devon, and I will be creating your menu this evening.

(DEVON shakes hands with each of them.)

SUZETTE

Hi, Devon. I'm Suzette.

DEVON

Suzette. A pleasure.

JULIA

Julia.

SUZETTE

It's her birthday.

DEVON

Julia. *Enchantée*. Is this your first time at Club Gastro?

(JULIA nods, drinks more wine. DEVON refills the glass.)

DEVON

I think you'll really enjoy what I've got cooked up for you.

(DEVON uncovers the tray, and picks up the dish inside. As he describes it, he moves sensuously between the two women, holding the dish for them to see and smell.)

DEVON

We'll begin this evening with an appetizer of quail salad. I start with a bed of rocket, arugula, and baby spinach. A succulent young quail from Hoffman Ranch is grilled, deboned, and gently nestled into the greens.

SUZETTE

Yeah, we like 'em young!

JULIA

Suzy!

DEVON

It's OK. I want you to tell me what gives you pleasure.

SUZETTE

It's beautiful. The meat just glistens.

DEVON

Next, a handful of ripe figs is fire-roasted until the skin is charred and caramelized sugar under the skin encases the plump warm fruit inside. The figs are split and drizzled with Spanish olive oil, and a spray of red raspberry vinegar and scarlet pomegranate seeds are scattered over the dish.

JULIA

Oh. My. God.

DEVON

Sweet ripe figs. Savory flesh. Lively acids. A delightful contrast.

*(The women applaud and each stuff a bill into DEVON's pocket.
He exits with the tray.)*

JULIA

(Eyes closed.)

Split figs; makes me feel like Lady Chatterly.

SUZETTE

Normally after a dish like that, I'd be eating salad for a week.

JULIA

I though you were doing Atkins.

SUZETTE

That was last summer. Then I was on acai berry, but the supplements just got too expensive. I'm going back to the basics: nothing but fruit, salad, or cottage cheese.

JULIA

What about the wine?

SUZETTE

Made from grapes isn't it? Counts as fruit for me.

*(They both have more wine. DEVON enters with a larger tray
which he uncovers with a flourish, and again presents the dish.)*

DEVON

For the main course I have created a creamy risotto of Italian pancetta and morels from the Pacific Northwest. I've combined them in a rich gravy of the mushroom juices and red wine.

JULIA

(Moans.)

I am so hungry.

DEVON

While the risotto simmers with shallots, Parmesan cheese, butter, and a splash of champagne, I dice the pancetta and sauté it to bring out the flavors. The morels, sliced lengthwise, simmer gently in light cream until the sauce is infused with the earthy mushroom flavors and the morels are plump with cream.

SUZETTE

Oh, you're such a bad boy, cream and butter in the same dish.

DEVON

All these mingle in the risotto with the wine reduction conveying the very essence of its *terroir* directly to the palate. On the side, beets braised in vegetable stock and dusted with toasted hazelnuts, an orange oil infusion, and sea salt.

(SUZETTE stuffs one of her fives in DEVON's pocket.)

JULIA

If I give you a twenty can I have a taste?

(DEVON shakes his finger at her. JULIA stuffs the twenty in his belt anyway. He takes just a touch of the sauce on his finger wafts it under her nose.)

SUZETTE

That table is getting lamb chops. Look at those grill marks.

JULIA

Doesn't it make you want to eat everything in sight?

SUZETTE

Not really. I like to watch.

JULIA

Omigod, I could eat the tablecloth.

SUZETTE

Want to know a secret? I've lost fifteen pounds since I started coming here.

JULIA

What?

SUZETTE

I've been coming every week for about three months now.

JULIA

Suzy!

SUZETTE

I look at all this perfect food, and nothing else matters. I go home or even to a nice restaurant, and nothing looks this good. I don't eat because I know nothing else would measure up, it would taste like cardboard.

JULIA

Suzy, this can't be good for you.

(DEVON returns with a dessert plate.)

DEVON

May I tempt you with a little dessert?

SUZETTE

Please.

JULIA

Maybe we should leave. I'm a little concerned about my friend.

DEVON

It would be a shame to miss my specialty, a quadruple chocolate profiterole.

SUZETTE

Show it, Devon, show it.

JULIA

Quadruple? Quadruple chocolate?

SUZETTE

Oh, we've found your weak spot. Now you'll see why I keep coming back.

DEVON

(Playing this dish entirely to JULIA who moans in ecstasy once or twice during the description.)

I start with a *paté à choux* made from butter, flour, eggs, and dark cocoa powder, and bake it until it's airy and delicate. Then slice it open and pump it full of chocolate *crème patisserie* spiked with roasted cacao nibs.

JULIA

Oh my god.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes