A Magical Hidden Kitchen

by Brenda Athanus

We had reservations for a "secret dinner" at an undisclosed location for the last 2 weeks that I sadly can't disclose to anyone. To say that I was very excited would be an understatement as I have always fantasized about what it would be like to have my own private dinner club, but that is a whole other story.

This saturday night in Maine it was very cold and clear, the sky was full of stars and just a perfect half moon guided our way as we barreled down country roads riddled with frost heaves for over an hour-heading for a small coastal "unnamed" town. We are instructed by an email sent just 2 days before to arrive at 6 sharp, but we arrived a half hour early and parked in front of the still dark location. We look at the facade of the old brick building for any sign of activity but there is none, just a soft light coming from the shuttered second floor windows. Our vehicle is one of only 3 cars parked on the whole of Main Street, every car that passes slows down and notices our presence. Do they know that we are waiting outside a underground dinner club or is it just something one does automatically when they live in a small Maine town. We feel a bit anxious – will dinner be good? Will the company be interesting?

At 6 p.m. sharp a dark haired women comes down the 20 steps to the front door with a piece of paper in her hand that looks like a list of names. She beckons us in and cautions us that the stairs are quite steep and to use care. At the top we separate the heavy velvet drapes to reveal the all white dining room decorated with tall glass vases filled with bright red tulips, birch sticks and Spring green moss. There are 4 rectangular tables set with 6 chairs at each. The dishes and glassware are modern and stylish, the collection of flatware is old, eclectic and well polished. Everything sparkles in the candlelight against the bright white walls lined with large photographs.

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