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## Italian Summer

by Brenna Dostal

Sophie and Jet were a very handsome couple. When they combined their savings and bought Lucy's bed and breakfast, she was thrilled. Lucy could think of no one else she'd rather pass her life's work on to. Sophie and Jet would keep the proud tradition of hospitality alive, and Lucy could take care of herself for once.

I'll be staying at this address in Italy, she said after handing over the keys. Don't be afraid to call.

Lucy was old and had never been to Italy. She would've died in her bed and breakfast if she wasn't her uncle's only surviving relative. He died of myiasis and left her all his money and then Sophie and Jet gave her some more. She was using that money to go to Italy. Lucy was nervous to live somewhere new, but she was comforted by the idea that Sophie and Jet would take care of her sweet baby. She considered their arrangement with the bed and breakfast as more of rental rather than purchase. She figured she would probably go back to living in her bed and breakfast when she returned from her trip abroad. Sophie and Jet were a very nice couple and certainly wouldn't mind.

Sophie and Jet kept Lucy's place exactly as it was. They knew Lucy would want that. All they did was repaint the rooms a white that was more eggshell than sandy shores, replace all the lampshades with matte blue rather than sheer periwinkle, install carpet over the original wood floors, renovate the patio into a home gym for Sophie and the library into a homeschooling room for the children they wanted to have and teach things to. They ripped down a couple walls and took down the bed and breakfast sign. They had those babies and decorated their rooms with otters and trees and other gender-neutral themed wall prints.

Lucy had a nice time in Italy. She met a woman named Lucile and they started seeing each other until the name thing got too confusing. She swam in the ocean for the first time. She got some sort of bacterial infection and lost hearing in her left ear. She smoked weed every night.

I've done it all, she said to herself one night. Lucy was sitting on the porch of her beach home and speaking with the moon.

Sophie and Jet absolutely demolished your place, the moon replied into her working ear. I fucking knew it, Lucy screamed.

The next day she packed up all her things and got a flight home. She immediately noticed the bed and breakfast sign had been taken down and was filled with such sorrow that she pulled a gun from her purse and shot herself.

There was no one around to witness this. The neighborhood had recently been evacuated because of the maggot problem.

Lucy didn't know about the maggot problem. She killed herself and then the larvae ate her body, everything except the bones and her boobs. For a couple weeks, she was just a skeleton with breasts in an empty street. Then Sophie and Jet collected her and deposited her in the backyard.



Sophie and Jet would've cleaned up the mess earlier, but they were busy raising and homeschooling their well-adjusted, politically correct babies. Wes and Windy. They were sweet children. Wes never actually spoke, preferring to cluck like a chicken. Windy was the translator, as she spoke English and poultry. Wes ate gummy vitamins like fruit snacks and Sophie and Jet didn't stop him because they didn't know he was doing it. Wes probably would have been fine, but the gummy vitamins turned out to be hibernating maggots and a couple months into his habit they woke up in his stomach and ate him from the inside out. His parents went in to wake him up one day for classes, but in his sheets, there was just a skeleton with ears. The maggots had left his ears.

Sophie and Jet weren't sure what to do with the body. It wasn't really even a whole body. They decided to bury him in the backyard and convince Windy she'd never had a brother. No one else would question them. They homeschooled their kids and didn't have any friends and lived in an old bed and breakfast in the middle of an abandoned neighborhood with a maggot problem.

Windy was pretty sure that Sophie and Jet were lying about Wes. She wasn't totally sure though, because Sophie and Jet had also told her that she hadn't seen that old woman shoot herself in the front lawn and then be eaten by maggots. Windy had a very strong imagination and supposed it was very plausible that she'd made all of this up.

Even so, she figured a better education would help her get her head straight. Windy told Sophie and Jet that she wanted to go to public school and they laughed. They gave her some addition/subtraction flashcards and she burned them in the backyard. The fire attracted a lot of maggots but when they touched the flames they started burning alive. This made them mad so they attacked Windy and she passed out. She fainted from fear of fire and then the maggots ate her burnt body. Her hair was so crispy it turned to dust in their little mouths. They left her bones and her pinky fingers, but it was all so charred that Sophie and Jet thought that they were sticks. They realized they had never had a daughter, just each other.



Children are little maggots, Sophie and Jet said. Why would we ever have those?

Many years later, Lucile realized she missed Lucy and traveled to the address of her bed and breakfast to tell her this. Lucy was always raving about her bed and breakfast, and Lucile had once joked that she had to choose: her or the B&B.

The B&B, then, Lucy said immediately. Lucile had rolled her eyes and gotten very drunk. When Lucile knocked on the door a handsome couple opened the door. They said their names were Sophie and Jet and she said hers was Lucile.

Lucy? They asked. We thought you were in Italy!

I'm back. Lucile said, a little uneasy. The street was too quiet for her liking.

Want some wine? Sophie and Jet asked. Lucile did, so she came in.

The place was not at all like Lucy had described, and Lucile realized she must be in the wrong place. She was about to say as much but then Sophie and Jet were giving her wine. Lucile loved wine so fucking much.

She drank a lot and Sophie and Jet insisted she spend the night.

This place used to be a bed and breakfast, you know, Sophie and Jet informed Lucile. It's only right you stay! She nodded sleepily.

Oh I know all about that, she said.

Of course, Sophie and Jet replied. We won't charge you though. Don't worry.

Lucile couldn't sleep. She was very drunk and wanted to enjoy it, not waste it on sleep. She wandered into the backyard and noticed a pile of black bones on the ground. It was such an odd sight that she didn't really know what to do with herself.

Where's the breakfast? Lucile teased the next morning. Sophie and Jet laughed for a long time.

Help yourself, they said, gesturing to the kitchen. It was the only thing in the house that fit Lucy's description. The walls were a creamy yellow, the curtains a frilly pink floral. The tile was the same, and the towels in the drawer. Everything was exactly as Lucile had pictured, except for the maggots in the sink.

Lucile got herself a cup of coffee, but when she went to wash it out the maggots dragged her down and chomped her into little pieces until the chunks fit down the drain. They didn't even eat her. They didn't leave the bones. They just washed her down the pipes.

Sophie and Jet said, What a nice woman!

They said, Our first guest!

They put the bed and breakfast sign back up and laughed merrily.

