

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

*Katie Burgess*

### **The Chronicles of Steve**

**L**ook, I understand why their story gets so much press. She came from his rib, which is a nice meet cute—or should I say m-e-a-t cute, ha-ha. They both show a lot of skin, and they stir up drama wherever they go. They're basically reality show gold. So, sure, people feel invested in them as a couple, but the fact is, he was never happy with her. Whenever she went off to gather fruit or hang out with her serpent friend, he'd come looking for me.

I begged him to come clean. "She probably knows already," I said.

"I'm too scared," he said. "I worry what others will say."

"What others? The rhinoceros? The bear?"

"Bear," he whispered, stroking my beard. "That's a good nickname for you."

"You and your compulsion to name everything. Can't you stop with the labels?"

Finally one night I'd had enough. "I won't be your dirty little secret," I said. "I want to go out to dinner—in public. Maybe to that nice patch of ground over there."

He said maybe next time, and I said no, no more next times. He looked sad.

Then we heard her calling his name. She staggered over, hair a mess, mascara running down her face. "I see you two," she said. "I *see* you."

I'll admit, whenever I considered our situation, I pushed her out of my mind. I told myself destiny was on my side, and if she got hurt that was unfortunate, but not my fault.

She clutched a piece of fruit. I recognized it immediately. "Shit, did you eat that?" I said. "Hurry, we've got to induce vomiting." I'd never imagined she'd try something so drastic.

She pushed me away. "It's all your fault. You put these confusing thoughts in his head." She turned and ran. He followed.

"Make her cough it up," I called after him, "or she'll die."

I watched them fighting in the distance. And then I gasped as he took a bite of that same fruit. They always did encourage each other's destructive behavior. That's when I realized I couldn't fix him, the beautiful dumbass.

They moved away soon after, and last I heard they're more miserable than ever—he's turned into a workaholic, and she writes this insufferable mommy blog. She pressured him to give up vegetarianism, and I bet she's got him eating all sorts of horrible tuna casseroles and meatloaf and I don't know what.

As for me, I don't feel any bitterness. Several new guys moved into the neighborhood, and while I'm a private person, let's just say my social

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calendar is full. The area's pretty gentrified these days—we're a gated community now. Once in a while he comes back and lurks, hoping I'll buzz him in, but I resist that temptation. God created me, I tell myself, and I deserve better.