

Over the Moon

Anthony Saunders

Dear Plate,

It's been a while, hasn't it? I don't suppose you expected to hear from me after all that's happened. But I thought I owed you some sort explanation, at least.

They used to say we were made for each other, you and me, didn't they? You at one end of the table, me at the other, us gazing at each other all across China and, dare I say it, the cutlery. Not that I was much for travelling. At least, not until recently.

Once, when we were younger and pristine, we actually got it together in the middle of that big polished dining table, didn't we? In front of everyone. What an uproar! We were brazen in those days. We didn't care what anyone thought. We were carefree. Now, we're both a bit chipped, a little scratched. Oh, I didn't care about those little nicks or your tiny hairline crack – it's hardly noticeable anyway. Really, it isn't. They just added to your charm. And I have a few cracks myself.

It was never about that.

Then came that memorable dinner party when dear old Glass had one too many. What a tragedy that was. But I always said wine would be his downfall, didn't I? And down he went. One minute he was full of life; the next, he was lying shattered all over the floor, spilling his fine claret everywhere. They were still picking bits of him out of the rug a week later. And the stain is still there, a reminder of dear old Glass. He was hand blown, one of the last of his kind. Dear old Glass.

I think that was the last time we were ever properly together, Plate, you and me. After that, we were kept apart although I longed to be with you but it was not to be. We were reduced to chance touches as we were passed about, lingering looks and fleeting glimpses in the cupboard and from the shelves. No longer were we brought out for every occasion like we had been once upon a time. I think it was during those cupboard days you developed that little crack and I began to lose a few flecks of glaze. And Dog's inquisitiveness didn't help.

I'm not as shiny as I was. Well, you know that. I came to realise we should grasp what we have, rather than hope for something beyond our reach. And a lot of soup has passed this way, hasn't it? Not to mention one or two trifles.

Not that you were ever a trifle, Plate. Please don't think that.

It all changed with the kitchen party. Who would have thought? No one but us crockeries, the glasses – and the cutlery – not forgetting the kitchen utensils, of course, whom we rarely saw even though we all lived in the same scullery. Some of those choppers are big lads, aren't they? And Big Copper Kettle. We all knew Big Copper Kettle! Could she whistle! I miss her whistle.

Plate, oh, how things might have been had not Cat come in out of the cold that day. He's a very demon, that Cat, isn't he? Someone left the door open and in he came from the yard as though he had every right. Oh, Cat what did you do? I don't think he realised the consequences of the uproar he caused. And while I don't blame him for what happened, he was certainly the catalyst. That spontaneous party erupted in the scullery with all the china and all the cutleries. It was a shindig like no other. What were we celebrating? Who knows! I don't.

Not now. Doesn't really matter, though, does it?

It changed everything, Plate.

What can I say? Was it my fault? I don't know. I suppose I was as much taken by surprise as anyone. I didn't plan it. It just happened. I know that is no excuse but I suppose I was receptive to change otherwise none of it could have happened. Could it? And as I sit here on the pine table in the little cottage by the sea, so far away from the Big House where we had so many happy times, I wonder how it could have been any other way in the end.

Was it meant to be?

That cat and his crazy fiddling. He held us all in his thrall, up there on the dresser throwing out his tunes with such abandon, prancing and dancing as he played his bow across the strings. I didn't even know he had a fiddle. What fun we had! And with no thought for tomorrow. It was like the old days. You and me should have been thrown together in those wild dances around the kitchen table.

But that's not what happened. Is it? In fact, we were thrown apart.

How is the Big House, these days? And has Dog recovered her composure? She might be little but she's a right terrier. I've never seen her laugh so much. Mind you, I think it was Cow who set her off. And then she kept on doing it. Cow, I mean. Cow thought it was funny and the more she did it, the more Dog lost control of herself. She ended up sprawled on her back on the tiles – Dog, I mean – her paws thrashing about in the air as she giggled uncontrollably. What a sight, that was.

And that's when it happened. Fate or just chance? I don't know, Plate. Really, I don't.

Perhaps it was Cow's fault.

But then, had we not been making such a commotion in the first place she wouldn't have come over to see what all the noise was about. She's very inquisitive, is Cow. Dear Cow. Mind you, if Moon hadn't been at a loose end, he wouldn't come down at the end of the day when it got dark. I don't blame him, though. I don't blame anyone.

So there you have it, Plate.

I know what you're thinking, though, and you're probably shaking your head as you think it. You're thinking, he should know better, a dish of his maturity. Well, you know what they say about us. And I am a bowl-sort of dish after all, always eager to scoop life to the full. I know she is so much younger than me but our age difference doesn't bother her at all. She never mentions it. Neither do I. It's not an issue, Plate.

I love spoon and she loves me. That is all that matters in the end, isn't it. I hope you can understand and find it in your heart to forgive me. It was never my intention to hurt you by running off with her. But spoon and me, we're very happy together. And you and me had long been apart, hadn't we. I had lost hope. What can I say? You and me were over long before that kitchen party, Plate. We both know it.

Spoon and me came together in a moment of wild abandon and as we met we discovered we were a perfect match, her curves and my bowliness, her length and my circumference. She was made to sup my soup and me to cradle her. Now, at the end of the day, we stroll hand in hand along the beach as the sun goes down. No more dark cupboards for Spoon and me. No more skulking in the scullery.

Affectionately, Dish

Dear Dish,

Don't feel bad about running away with Spoon. You make a lovely couple. Honestly. It was just a shame you and she eloped the way you did. That sort of thing isn't necessary these days, you know. We're all broad minded, even about vast age differences like yours. And mixed marriage is no longer frowned upon as it once was.

You've no need to worry about me as I'm now living with Kitchen Cleaver. We'd got together some time before you ran off with Spoon. You're right about him, though; he is a big boy, if you know what I mean. We have a daughter called Klatey. She has my curves and Cleaver's straight hair but with a slight wave in it. As for Cat, he's been banished to the yard and had his fiddle confiscated. I think someone hid in the well. Dog isn't allowed in the kitchen anymore and Ladle is having an affair with Gravy Boat, the hussy. Cow was making eyes at Moon for a while but Twinkle put a stop to that.

Next week, Jack and Jill are coming to take away that old cupboard. It's now completely bare.

Sincerely

Mrs KC (née Plate)