

From the Kitchen

16 December 2009

Enough of the opinions – mine anyway. Time for someone else to have a go ...



“Stupid, bloody man!”

“What do you mean?” I knew I was being stupid, but I was hanging out for an argument.

“It’d be obvious to you, if you weren’t so dense.”

“Well then, you’d better explain it to me, seeing I can’t work it out for myself.” I was starting to enjoy this. I can’t explain why. It may have been that we’d had a flat couple of weeks and the excitement of a fight was a relief.

“You wouldn’t get it, even if I did. You’re as thick as two bricks.”

“That’s as thick as two short planks.”

“Yeah, that’s right, change the subject.” Monique stood up to leave the room.

I called at her back, “You’ve lost. You can’t sit here and see this discussion through, can you?”

She turned, stabbing a finger at me through the air. “I’ve lost nothing, smart-arse. It’s just not worth arguing with you.”

“So why did you start?”

“I didn’t. I just said you were stupid.”

“That’s no way to make a point. I’m *going* to object, aren’t I? So would you, if I said you were ... uh, lazy.”

“I’m *not* lazy! How dare you? I just haven’t had time.”

At this point she lost me. I had no idea what she was on about. My face must have shown this.

“That’s right. You know when you’re beaten.”

“I’m not beaten. I just don’t have a clue what you’re flapping on about.”

Now it was her turn to stare blankly. “You’re confusing me deliberately so you can win.”

“It’s got nothing to do with winning – it’s about what’s right and what’s wrong.”

We looked at each other, neither of us knowing where to take this. I, for one, could only barely remember why it had turned into an argument. We’d been talking about the fact that it had been raining solidly for two days and we still had no water tank. We’d been talking about getting one for years.

Then I remembered. Monique had promised a few weeks back to get quotes because she knew people through work and I asked her about it and she asked why *I* hadn’t done anything and I reminded her that she’d taken it on and we just went around in circles.

She’d reminded me that I was going to do the figures on getting a solar hot water system installed. I’d been working overtime and, frankly, it’d slipped my mind.

I was just about to say something to get the ‘discussion’ going again, when Justine walked in. She’s fourteen, and precocious.

“You two are so pathetic. I’ve been trying to do my homework but all I could think about was how you just go round and round in circles and nothing gets done. Just like the government. They say that we need to stop putting carbon into the air or we’ll all drown and then they argue about it and say it’s too expensive and it’s going to ruin the economy. What about the ruin of the whole planet? At the rate everyone’s arguing and doing nothing, by the time I have kids, they’ll need gills. We’ll all be doing water births like Auntie June.”

Monique and I stared at her and then Monique took a deep breath. “You make it sound as if it’s all simple, darling, but it’s not. We have to find the cheapest way of doing this or we’ll go broke.”

Justine stamped her foot and shouted, “It *is* simple! You just do it. If you keep thinking and arguing about it, it’ll be too late. We won’t need any water tanks because we’ll be able to get the water through the window with buckets. If it’s money you’re worried about, I can get a job after school and I’ll stop asking for things and we can stop Christmas and birthday presents and holidays and Pete and I can go to the local high school and ...”

“That shouldn’t be necessary, dear. We shouldn’t have to give up all we’ve worked for. We can figure it out somehow.”

“No we can’t! Everybody’s trying to figure it out and no-one’s doing anything, except us kids. At school we got the teachers to turn down the heating and everyone’s wearing more jumpers. Only the teachers are complaining because it’s ‘inconvenient’ and ‘uncomfortable’ for them. Well, they’ll all be dead soon and it’ll be inconvenient and uncomfortable for us kids when we’re grown up. You guys don’t understand that you just have to get on with it.”

I looked at Monique and then at Justine. Our daughter had tears in her eyes; she really *was* afraid for her future.

“Justine’s right, Mon. Let’s just do it.”

“I hope you do, because otherwise there’s no point working hard at school. I might as well get a job and wait for the floods and the storms. At least I can swim.”

She walked out of the room, but was back within seconds. “And while you’re at it, you can get rid of the four-wheel drives and get small cars and you can sell the boat and fill in the pool and grow vegies.”

She left.

“We owe it to them,” Monique said.