

Kitchen Turbulence

‘So, what did you do with Gary then?’

He was briefly distracted by the glare that streaked across the stainless steel opposite like a meteor. Reflection from something passing outside, he surmised. ‘And who might Gary be?’

‘Don’t play dumb with me, intruder. Obviously Gary was the perfectly fine water boiler that sits on the bench right where you are. Until this morning, that is.’

He felt like he should scratch his head, if he had one. And something to scratch it with. ‘Sorry, I don’t believe I’ve had the pleasure.’

‘The pleasure?’

‘Of meeting Gary.’

‘Yeah right, had the pleasure of doing away with him, I bet.’

He really didn’t understand ovens. All that constant gas and fire and heat made them so headstrong and irritable. And now he had to stare across the kitchen at this particularly nasty piece of work, day in and day out.

‘I really loved Gary too, but he wasn’t that perfectly fine. The Walkabouts seemed to have trouble getting him going the last few days.’

‘Hey Sudsy, whose side are you on? Us Silvers, we stick together. I might create the mess, you might clean it, but hell, that’s what they call sym-bi-ot-ic, bro. And Gary, he was a true Silver. One of us. Not like this impostor, bringing his fancy words into our kitchen. Silvers, they stick by their bros.’

He could feel the dry heat of the oven’s agitation, more powerful than his own occasional release of steam. He wanted to diffuse the situation, and quickly. ‘Maybe you should give me a chance, get to know me. I can be just as hardworking as Gary, and I’d really just like to get along with you all, make this my new home.’

‘But that’s the problem with you Rainbows, isn’t it? Coming in and taking our jobs, changing the décor. In all your fancy crimsons and greens and yellows. I mean what the fuck is going on? Can a crimson water boiler boil water better than a Silver? No sir-ee. And anyway, you let one Rainbow in, they just keep on coming.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Well looky alongside you. Yeah I’m talking ‘bout you, bread burner. Look at him, cowering in the corner. Who’s ever heard of an orange bloody bread burner? We had him under control, now he’s got frickin’ backup. The question is, who’s gonna be replaced with a Rainbow next?’

‘Oh really, maybe we should just give the little guy a go. I mean, there’s no reason why we can’t accommodate a couple of Rainbows. As long as we’re doing our job well, I’m sure the Walkabouts will keep us too.’

‘Oh my god, you’re so naïve! Trust a bloody female to show pity. You should just stick to making the coffee and let the proper Silvers take care of this, lovey.’

Now he was really starting to boil. It was one thing to hurl insults at him, but a female fellow Silver? ‘You have crossed the line a bit there, bud. I think you owe her an apology.’

The laugh that emanated from the oven sent waves across the room, and he trembled on his coil. But he was determined to face this feverish bully, to continue his counter-attack. ‘You know, you Silvers are not all that great. I mean, fingerprints? How annoying is it to clean those buggers?’

‘Let me tell you a few things about Silvers. Fingerprints? Bah. Symbols of life, of family, of home. Even, dare I say it, affection. Plus we have tradition on our side. We’ve always been indispensable to the Walkabouts – keeping their food cold, cooking their dinner, making their coffee, cleaning their dishes. We add polish and shine and sparkle to every kitchen, make the future look like it’s arrived right now. Don’t think you ‘bows can take that away from us so easily.’

‘Um, hello, sorry to interrupt...’

‘Oh for goodness sake, what is it Big Chill?’

‘Well, we Enamels, we’ve been here a lot longer than you guys. I might be white, but I can remember when the oven was a very cute little yellow Enamel–’

‘Oh shut up old guy, that’s ancient history. This is the postmodern world. Leave the debatin’ to me and the new guy.’

He was suddenly distracted by a sharp bleeping noise, repeating itself, over and over.

‘Walkabout alert! This is it everyone, show’s on.’

One of them stumbled in, and suddenly the view brightened. He heard the bread being burned, felt his own temperature rising. The Walkabout was in front now, scratching his behind, heading for the volatile oven. He watched him open it, put something inside, press a few buttons. Step back, kick the door.

‘Hey hon! I think we need a new oven. What do you think about blue?’