

Nettle Soup

Bill needed a change. Redundant, divorced, the ex-wife had taken the kids back to the States. He'd hated his job working for the local council. Staring at his laptop screen, Bill poured another glass of red wine. He wanted to escape, at 45 he wanted some peace and tranquillity.

He stared at the Welsh Manor House online; rolling green hills, smiling hippies. Yes that was it, Bill would run away to join a commune. He could rent out the house to cover the mortgage. Bugger looking for another dull job and paying maintenance.

Another wine and he'd sent an e-mail to Megan. Two months later, packing the recent cheesecloth purchases from Camden Market into his rucksack, he was ready for the off. No cars allowed at the commune, so he was taking the train, Megan confirmed she would pick him up in the Land Rover. Yawning, Bill stretched his legs in the cramped train, looking forward to some meditation with background waterfalls. It had to beat working in an office.

He squeezed into the Land Rover. Megan, overhanging both sides of the driver's seat, passed him a perfectly typed spreadsheet.

"Your rota for the week, Bill. You'll love it."

Digging potatoes, traipsing through mud in the bloody rain, cheesecloth flapping on his back, every bone aching, Bill had blisters on his hands and as for the meditation? Not even a mention on the spreadsheet. He collapsed exhausted into the rock hard bed every night. There wasn't time to take a walk in the country, after a week he had no idea if there even was a waterfall. He could have been anywhere. Everyone else talked about what an amazing experience this was, living off the land, no interruptions from mobile phones, laptops or TVs all banned from the commune.

Megan constantly asked if she could tick his 'chores' off the sheet. Yes, she had a computer to make sure everything ran smoothly, but pointed out there was no internet connection. Bill could clearly see what was happening, they were just her serfs, keeping Megan's manor running. He noticed her oversized arse never left the office chair, apart from waddling to the table to eat the disgusting vegan food cooked for her and to drink the elderflower wine. Tonight it was his turn in the kitchen. He'd made the nettle soup, who knew you could even eat disgusting weeds?

With a nettle leaf attached to her front tooth, Megan smiled,

"Bill, have you made an addition to my suggested recipe? Tell me..." She started to cough "Excuse me." Megan left the table, heading for the bathroom.

Bill laughed as he drove the 'borrowed' Land Rover back to the station. What a good idea taking the extra hot chilli sauce to spice up the food, he hadn't meant to use the whole bottle. Megan wouldn't be sitting on that chair much tomorrow and he would never make nettle soup again.

488 Words

Disappointment