

Dinner Date

‘Come in, my lovely! Gorgeous flowers for *me*! Thank-you. Can I get you some wine?’

‘Yes please, I’m straight from work, and I need to forget it.’

‘Come and relax. I’ve made mushroom soup for starters,’ Lesley serves the soup and pours the wine.

‘How are you?’ Julie takes a seat and hastily tastes the soup. Then freezes ‘It’s h..h...hot’

‘Spit it out, don’t burn yourself.’

Julie splutters and the soup runs down her cream blouse.

‘Oh no! I’ve burnt myself and.... made a mess!’

‘Drink some water.... here’s a napkin. Are you ok?’

Tears trickle down Julie’s face. ‘I’m sorry. I can’t do anything right...’

‘Things happen, sounds like you’ve had a bad day.’

Julie gasps and sobs. ‘You’re so kind.’

‘What’s going on? You’re very emotional.’

‘And terrible company, I’m sorry. Our chat last week got me thinking. You’re right. I’m back exactly where I was. Back doing a credit job, invoicing people who can’t pay.’ She’s wiping her face. ‘Being shouted at.’

There’s a pause. ‘Try the soup.’

‘It’s delicious, healthy. I’m trying to think of passive income streams. But getting through each day is my limit. This job drains me. I was so happy when I moved areas to be mortgage free. But I kept putting off finding a new job. Got distracted spending money on the new house. And here I am again *and* earning less! I just took the first job I could find because I was so broke. And I’m too old to be considered for anything else.’

‘Just keep applying. Don’t give up.’

‘I’m trapped. I’m getting no response. Or freeze when I’m interviewed. Something in me feels I don’t deserve better.’

‘You deserve the best. Look, wait here whilst I get something I want to give you, maybe it will help.’ Lesley goes out the back door and then returns.

‘You shouldn’t of.’

‘It didn’t cost anything. But it’s special. Hold out your hand, close your eyes.’

‘What is it? Feels like a stone.... a crystal?’

‘No, It’s precious. Open!’

‘It’s just a pebble!’

‘It’s completely unique, from the earth. Look at it every day. Imagine it dropping into water, creating ever-increasing circles, creating ripples. Changes radiating from the centre. Every time you hold it, remember your life is precious, and whatever you do creates ripples. You make a difference. Just like this stone. And every time you think this is just a silly stone, feel how hard it is, just like life is hard and then believe. Let yourself believe that it’s special. Just like you are.’

‘Awh, that’s lovely! You’re so right. I just need to believe in myself more.’ Julie holds the pebble tightly in both hands, quietly thinking. ‘Life is so precious. I’m imagining being by a large lake and seeing the ripples reach the other side. I’m going to keep looking and take my life somewhere new. Somewhere I don’t even recognise.’ They both look at the pebble.

‘Let’s see where the ripples take you.’