

The Chafing Dish

Sylvia was browsing in the Not Yet An Antique Store,
When she spotted an old tarnished, chafing dish;
Being the kind of person she is, she talked to the thing;
“Why, you are such a lovely chafing dish;
I wonder what brought you to sit on a shelf,
And tarnish away like a discarded coffee can.”

Much to Sylvia’s amazement and surprise,
The chafing dish roused and opened its eyes;
“Why, nobody has talked like that to me in such a long time;”
Said the suddenly alert, tarnished chafing dish;
Sylvia jumped back with a startle and a gasp;
She wondered if she might be losing her mind!

“Don’t worry, madam,” said the dish;
“I really can talk, it’s just that no one has ever asked,
How I feel sitting on this shelf alone and lost;
I used to be lovely and shiny, once upon a time;
I graced my mistress’s table at special times;
But alas, alack, that was so, so long ago.”

“But, dear chafing dish,” said Sylvia with concern,
“What brought you to such a dreadful demise?”
“Well,” the chafing dish hauntingly, replied,
“My mistress used me once in a while,
She put me on display in the center of her table,
When she wanted to show great style.”

"This went on for many, many, years,
Until my mistress grew old and had few guests;
I finally got lost on that big, old shelf,
And when she died, the old mister's sight was gone;
He couldn't seem to make me shine,
As much as he rubbed and rubbed, but to no avail."

"When the old man died his children forgot about me,
I was shoved back into the corner, to tarnish away;
Then, one day the house was barren and empty;
An old junk man bought all the worthless stuff;
I just happened to be in that dreadful pile,
And was carted away like a bag of trash."

"From there we banged around, from town to town;
Nobody wanted an old tarnished chafing dish;
They're too much trouble, don't you know?
Somebody has to apply a paste and rub away;
Sometimes, it takes many hours to remove the grime,
But my old mistress never did mind."

"She talked to me while she rubbed on a shine;
I loved her warm hands and the kind smile;
She could see herself in me when I was shiny;
Boy, did she ever smile when I looked nice;
I miss her, you know, she was so good to me;
I haven't heard a kind word since, until you!"

Sylvia looked at the price tag marked on the shelf;
A mere fifty cents--for such a sturdy, resilient chafing dish;
She dug in her purse and came out with a dollar,
Which she handed to the man behind the counter;
“Good riddance,” said the man with a scowl and the change,
“I’ve been carting that thing around for ages it seems!”

Well, Sylvia, being the kind of person she is,
Took the chafing dish from the man’s grimy hands;
She gently carried it to her car, all the while furtively glancing,
To see if anyone she knew might be watching;
What would they think if they saw her talking to a dish?
She jumped into the car and quickly sped away.

The chafing dish had not seen the sun in so long;
The bright glare was painfully blinding;
So, it closed its eyes and took a long nap;
Suddenly, the car stopped and the engine died,
Then the front door flew open;
Gentle hands scooped up the sleepy chafing dish.

“My, oh my,” said Sylvia to the chafing dish,
“You took a little nap on the way home;
Now, I’m going to give you a bath to make you shine;
I don’t even know what you are made of--you are so dark with tarnish;”
And without another word, she slapped on some polish;
Then, she began to rub the dish’s round, domed lid.

Again, to her amazement and surprise,
Sylvia saw a sparkle under the mess of polish and tarnish;
Her heart began to quickly pound as more of the grime wiped away;
Underneath that mess was a beautiful, silver chafing dish,
A finely crafted, delicately etched, pretty centerpiece;
She was so happy and proud--and she paid only fifty cents!

The sparkling chafing dish sat proudly with a smile and said,
"A bath, finally, after all these long and dreary years!
It feels good to get out from under that mess;
Why, I thought I would never shine again;
Now look at me--a new mistress and a fine table;
No other chafing dish could ever feel such pride!"

Sylvia talked to the chafing dish every day,
And reminded it of how lovely and beautiful it was;
She even let it stay in the center of the table for days;
Sylvia smiled at the chafing dish daily, too,
And patted its domed lid when she walked by,
Which made the chafing dish really smile!

With every Thanksgiving and Religious feast,
Sylvia brought the chafing dish to center stage,
To dress the table with fine linen and silver;
The chafing dish was the best server--ever;
And never even popped off its lid,
When the sterno put out too much heat.

Marie Lowe

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