



Let's Talk.....

T'was A Dark And Stormy Night

Dear Reader

T'was a dark and stormy night well, actually, it was just dark but given that it's Halloween week and *Dark & Stormy* happens to be the name of a particularly excellent cocktail, I thought this would be a fitting start to my e-mail!

I don't like Halloween which is a tad inconvenient because it also happens to be my Birthday. This aversion dates back to one Halloween evening when I was about five years old. My sister, in full Halloween spirit - pardon the pun - took great pleasure in chasing me around the house along with, full on, arm waving actions, like a Banshee on Speed, whilst shrieking out blood curdling cries of "Dorothy" which, if written phonetically to describe how she sounded, would be written "Dorotheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeey".

This traumatic event ended with me crawling under my bed and hiding. No amount of coaxing could get me to emerge. It resulted in me, never, ever, EVER again being brave enough to watch The Wizard of Oz. I literally managed to avoid it throughout my own kids' childhoods until, alas, of my best friends announced that her daughter had landed the lead role of Dorothy in a local theatrical production. To my utter horror, I couldn't find an excuse not to go and see her perform that didn't make me sound like.....well, a 5 year old! I do feel, however, that credit should be given where it's due. Me, managing to avoid The Wizard Of Oz for nearly 40 years certainly matched her sterling performance!

Furthermore, to this day I refuse to see a production of 'Wicked'. I hear it's quite good but I'll just have to take your word for it, as I have absolutely no intention whatsoever of finding out.

So, as you can imagine, my birthdays were accompanied with trepidation and when the kids came along, Halloween evening was naturally all about *them*. The nearest I got to any sort of birthday celebration was a house full of sugar crazed kids along with their accompanying parents who happened to be some of my closest friends - so it wasn't all that bad!

I always offered to host because I had no intention of ever going out on Halloween evening. My friends knew better than to ask me to join them trawling the streets, chaperoning the Trick-or-Treaters. They understood that this fell strictly under my husband's remit who I designated for that joy - with no exceptions. Instead, I could always be found in the safety of my comfortable central heated home, busying away in the kitchen, happily preparing food for usually around 10 adults and anywhere between 10 to 15 sugared up short people.

If you do ever find yourself in the position of catering for a small hoard, then ready made pizzas, garlic bread, coleslaw and a green salad have always been my 'go to' options. These always go down well with kids and adults alike and if your birthday happens fall on Halloween as mine does, then it's likely that some lovely person will have made you a birthday cake which will do nicely for dessert. Cake can be accompanied, of course, by a bucketload of sweets that your little cherubs are bound to have brought back with them after annoying and terrifying the neighbours in equal measures!

Throw in a spooky mocktail and cocktail or two and your job is done. Check out the Halloween section on the website for inspiration.

However you are spending Halloween this year, whether surrounded by kids on a sugar high, quietly snuggled up under your duvet with the TV remote or even if you are just doing the weekly washing, enjoy and I'll see you on the other side.

Much Love.

Ever x