

The Letter

by Ivor John

So, I thought I would write a note to you while you were not here. I know already you would criticise me. You will criticise me, for starting with 'so'. But I like it, I like the immediacy of it. I am sitting here, alone, with the remnants of the takeaway. Chicken Jalfrezi. We both like that don't we? I haven't washed, up. There are dirty plates in the sink and remnants of curry in foil cartons.

I should say, I never have known exactly what you want from me. We have known each other all of our lives. The relationship which we share, has changed over the years. Of course it has. But we have always been together, nearly always. In each other's pockets perhaps. We always know each other's thoughts. Don't we? I always feel that, but then, if that were really the case, then why would I be writing my thoughts to you know. So at some level, I must be confused, mustn't I?

Perhaps, I think differently when you are not here. Watching me, always watching me. Knowing everything that may enter my mind. You seem to know, even before I do. Perhaps, that is not a coincidence. I have always known that you can influence what I do. Maybe, you can even manage what I know, what I imagine. Not that I have a good imagination. You always make me think that, don't you. That I don't have any original ideas.

I am not really sure where you've gone. When I sat down, in the bedroom after our supper, it dawned on me that you weren't there. I tried to imagine where you may have gone, but really I don't know. I imagine that you'll be back. Probably later this evening. I hope you won't be too angry, and we can read this, together and give some thought to what we should do.

Do you remember, when we were younger, much younger, probably still teenagers, we were definitely still at college. I was still doing hairdressing. I had always wanted to be a hairdresser. To do something creative, to use my imagination and to see the good in people, to help them. You told me that I couldn't do it, that I wasn't good enough, you always told me that. When I asked you, how you could say that, how could you possibly know it. You just said that you knew. It was a prophesy you said. Things you had heard from people in college. Well, I believed you. I always believed you. I thought I was being naive to think I could possibly complete the course. Anyway, it was difficult then, living at home, even with you there. The money from the job at Asda was helpful. Thinking back, I think now, that is what you wanted all the time. That I should earn some money for us. Not trying to be something that I'm not. That I could never be.

But now, while we are talking, I feel as if I had a lid, or a cork, which has popped out. I can't put it back. The contents, my very viscera, my thoughts are all spewing out. I can't help thinking about what you told me. Imagine, please, just for a moment, that you had never heard that prophecy. Can you try to do that for me? Could you imagine that? Probably you won't be able to. But I want you to know that I could have done that course. I could have achieved that. But instead, I work in a supermarket, in Asda. It's horrible and I hate it. If you had allowed me to believe in myself, I could have been happy. You may have been happy to, but I never felt that you wanted happiness. I am not sure what you ever wanted, but I don't think it was that.

I didn't tell you yet, but I have lost my job anyway. The supervisor said I had been late too often, and also they'd had customers complaining about me. So she said not to come in anymore. But anyway, you are not here, so I can't talk to you about it. Instead, I have to write this down. I hope you can read my writing. I am going to sleep now, I will probably be asleep when you get back. I know that you will be back. Please don't wake me up. Please just let me sleep.

Imagine, please, just for a moment, that you had never heard that prophecy.