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No Thank You

I have never thought of myself as having good manners. Compared to my mother who writes back to thank you when you have sent her a thank-you letter, they are quite appalling. As I write, I have on my conscience a lunch party ten days ago, a birthday present sent to my daughter two weeks ago, and an overnight stay in London so long ago that it feels almost insulting to write and remind my host I ever came. But compared to some of my friends, I think I am something of a saint. One month ago I threw a dinner party and three weeks ago, another. Every morning ever since, I have nipped along to my mail box, anticipating a jaunty card celebrating my skills as a chef, my house, my husband, my dog but what do I get? A Boden catalogue (they seem to arrive almost daily). What about the phone? One might expect a text, or even a voice message. But zilch.

The problem with not being thanked is that you start to think that far from giving them the good time you thought you were, they were in fact putting up a very good front, and in fact despise you. I have started picking over the conversations we had and wondering if my oh-so-hilarious comments about swine flu were, in fact, really alarming and annoying them. I do remember one of the male guests telling me I was tactless. And another, I caught looking blankly into the middle-distance when he should have been tucking into his apricot crumble. I thought he must have been tired after a long week's work, but on reflection, he was clearly bored witless. As the weeks pass and the silence becomes ever more deafening, I have started to wonder, rather uneasily, if perhaps they are trying their own back? I do remember going to a fantastic dinner party given by one of the couples and taking an awfully long time to thank them for it. But at least I did.

I hardly ever give dinner parties; but they are a nice way of giving a little love, and receiving some in return. But when they leave you feeling as loved as an MP caught fiddling his expenses you start to wonder if it might not be better to give up, and go down the pub, instead.

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