

Awkward Invitations, Situations

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 22 November 2011 13:46



Dear L. A. Plume,

I have been invited to a friend's house for Thanksgiving dinner. This is a lovely invitation as my family lives far away and I would otherwise be alone. However, she is inviting several people I don't really know – one that I don't care for – and she isn't the best of cooks. She wants to prepare every dish herself, giving none of us the opportunity to contribute a favorite food of our own, and she expects me to be her kitchen helper. She is a recovering alcoholic so there won't even be any wine to dull the pain or encourage cheerfulness, depending upon your outlook. I don't want to hurt her feelings, or leave her without a helper, but there is just nothing about this invitation that appeals to me except for the fact that she was kind enough to include me. What should I do?

Bella

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Dear Bella,

What a cheerful holiday portrait you have presented! Mediocre food, inadvertent company, dishpan hands, and no giggle juice. Have you considered a turkey potpie and a movie at home? Unless you think there is some capacity in which you can enjoy yourself, or at least have a good story to tell after the fact, I vote in favor of the potpie.

A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

We have a friend who is a constant talker. It doesn't matter if we're listening to a band play,

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sitting at a lecture, at a movie, or just in a restaurant. He is constantly interrupting other conversations and keeping anyone within earshot from being able to enjoy what is going on. We love his energy and joie de vivre, but the endless chatter is making us crazy. Is there a way to politely ask him to tone it down?

Sandy

Dear Sandy,

No, not that I know of. But you could try introducing him to the person who always talks with food in her mouth, at least that might be entertaining in a bizarre sort of way.

L. A. Plume

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Dear L. A. Plume,

We have been invited to a potluck Thanksgiving dinner. I love the idea of everyone contributing a dish and the hostess not having to do all the work. The problem is that she has given us each a dish and the recipe with which to make it. The items are all a bit strange and somewhat expensive (pate made with expensive cognac, stuffed oysters in a champagne sauce, etc.), there is no comfort food in sight, and we are also supposed to bring wine. (That too has been dictated and is expensive.) This isn't exactly what we had in mind. I was looking forward to taking corn souffle and a couple of bottles of pinot noir; I've been asked/told to bring 3 bottles of sauterne (@ \$40 each) to be paired with an espresso infused cocoa cake layered five times with mascarpone, ricotta, and cream cheeses. Help!

Not Julia Child

Dear Not Julia,

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Help how? By telling you that pinot noir is not a perfect pairing for corn souffle? Actually I like pinot noir with anything. Do you want to switch dinners with Bella of the first letter and thus be off the hook for 3 bottles of sauterne? Do you need cooking lessons? Read Debbi Covington's column, Everyday Gourmet, for great recipes that you can actually make successfully. Buy a cake if you can't make that one, pretend you confused mascarpone with pinecone and it just didn't work. It sounds like your hostess is trying to make a dinner to remember at everyone else's expense, but it should be fun. Maybe eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich before you go, just in case.

L. A. Plume

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