

TIME TO WAKE UP

Well, you won't recognise me, of course. Not now my hands are like emery boards and I've got blotchy skin. That's all the fudge, I expect. Compensatory gluttony, they call it.

One hundred years of blissful sleep and oh! such wonderful dreams! I had two favourites that I dreamed over and over again; and I can remember them so vividly. One of them – well, I can't tell you about that, because it's not the sort of thing nice girls talk about. But the other one – I went down to the beach, collected loads and loads of driftwood and Octopus and the snails helped me build the most exquisite, magical boat. They towed me out onto the water – it was lovely, bobbing up and down on the waves; but the best thing was that you could see through the bottom and the sea underneath was as clear as air on a bright spring morning. I used to sit there on the little bench and watch the wonderful creatures underneath, all living together and getting on with life in their quiet, watery world. Things got eaten, of course they did, and that's not fun. Honestly, I know that no-one wants to be eaten but they only ever ate what was needed to survive. They didn't eat each other just because they were there or so that some other creature couldn't. And they all understood that and accepted it. There was the odd squabble over mating rights but that's evolution, I suppose.

Anyway, there I was, happily dreaming my gorgeous dreams and then this Prince came along, slobbering all over me with a big grin on his face, like 'aren't I clever. I know how to kiss'. Doh. And of course, I had to be as grateful as anything because I'd been dragged out from my beautiful wonderland to take part in this jamboree called Life.

So here I am. Preparing another meal for Prince C to wolf down in five minutes before he takes his sword and goes off fencing or something. Have you noticed, females cook and keep everyone alive and then the chaps go off and try to kill them all? What's that all about? Is this how they entertain themselves? Because let me assure you, it's not with their wives they get their entertainment. Oh no, he made that clear as soon as we got out of the church. 'We have wives to get heirs,' he told me. 'For anything else, we go elsewhere,' he said. So, naturally, I said 'oh good. Then it's okay for me to go off and get my fun elsewhere, too.' I had visions of all the adventures waiting for me in the world outside the Palace. 'Oh no you don't!' he told me, 'if you do that, how will we know that the heirs are really ours and not the woodcutter's sons?' So that was that. It's been nothing but cooking and cleaning ever since.

The real tipping point came when he came back with some undergarments hardly worthy of the name. They were the sort you only put on so they can take them off. You know the sort of thing, they wouldn't even keep your fingernails warm in an English castle. So I thought, 'I've had enough of

this. I'm going to form a Union.' And I got in touch with Rapunzel, Cinderella and all the others and we're going to organise ourselves and tell the world what it's really like.

Because you know what, chaps, we can look after ourselves. That's not to say we don't want you. Of course we do. We don't want to be your enemies. We want to be your friends and lovers, mothers and companions. We just don't need you to save or rescue us. The question I'd like to put, though, is can you save yourselves?

I guess I'll have to come back in the twenty first century to get the answer to that one.