

Mom's tea had to be served in China cup

By Ted Brown
tedbit@hotmail.com



A Ted Bit

Some people are tea drinkers, others would rather have the high-octane punch of coffee.

Whatever the beverage of choice may be, two very different cups are used to consume it.

I'm pretty much a coffee drinker, but from time to time, I make a cuppa tea.

But when I do, I consume it from the same cup, a mug.

My mom was a tea drinker. She'd occasionally have a coffee at breakfast, but most times it was tea.

And one thing was certain: that tea had to be served in a china tea cup. No using a mug with her. She loved tea cups.

Consequently she had a huge collection of fine China tea cups.

Some were Royal Albert, others were Royal Doulton, and countless other brands of high quality bone China cups.

I blamed Aunt Jean for Mom having so many tea cups. Aunt Jean worked at the Salvation Army Thrift Store in Georgetown, and every time a fine China cup was donated to the store, she'd be on the phone to Mom telling her, "It's a Royal Doulton, and has the most beautiful flower on it."

And the next time Mom was in town, she'd swing by to see her sister and pick up another tea cup.

Now when I was younger, I didn't really care if Mom had a billion tea cups. It made no difference to me.

Mom died in 1996, and Dad left all her china tea cups in the buffet and china cabinet. When we lost Dad in 2003—well, the tea cups (among many other items) became the responsibility of my sisters and I.

And my sisters, both being similar to Mom, had their own collection of tea cups.

I'm sure you can see where this is leading. I've had a cupboard full of fine bone China tea cups ever since then.

In time, we realize that some items are not as sentimentally special as we first thought. And with a cupboard full of cups, and other items cry-

ing out to be stored—well, I decided the cups had to go.

And what better time to disperse the cups than Thanksgiving weekend, when all four of my daughters would be here.

The cups were set out on the dining room table, where my unsuspecting daughters would pass by, and be hooked by a stunning collection of china. (I suppressed the urge to put up a sign reading "Free Tea Cups" on the table.)

After a wonderful turkey dinner, when everyone gets punchy and sleepy, I figured it was the perfect time to bring up the subject.

Hey girls, do you remember that collection of tea cups Nana had? You know, the ones she used for special occasions?

There were some cursory glances at the tea cups.

Eldest daughter spotted something.

I'm taking this one, she said. It has July on it. I'm sure Nana bought it for my birthday month.

Then Daughter Number Three piped up, There's a March tea cup, she said. That's my birthday.

As hard as I searched, I couldn't find a September or February tea cup for Daughters Two and Four, and I searched pretty hard.

But I'd moved two cups.

As the conversation continued, someone picked up another cup, then another, and the number of cups was receding.

So in the end, my daughters took some cups in memory of Nana, and I was pretty pleased. I know they're as strapped for storage space as I am—maybe more.

So I was thankful they relieved me of a dozen or so tea cups.

I figured I was on a roll, so I moved to the next items on the block—my old cookbooks.

The looks on the faces of the four young ladies said it all—no cookbooks.

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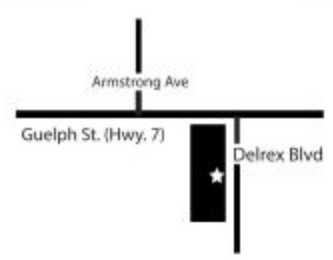
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