

It has been a strange week. The violent thunderstorm on Tuesday that resulted in widespread damage and power outages in the area would have been enough to limit our complacency, but then came yesterday, Saturday.

The day began innocently enough. We followed our usual morning routine, and then I baked *kaka*, our daily bread. That procedure begins with grinding the rye that makes up half of the flour in the bread. By noon, there were eight big rounds of brown bread that were cooling on the cupboard top. I had also made levain, the concoction of sourdough starter, water, and flour that would provide the leavening for two other kinds of bread. That would be a daylong process.

So, we ate our noon meal, and as we often do, especially on Saturday, we took a little time in the early afternoon to read. We were sitting here peacefully, two dogs stretched out nearby. All of a sudden, there came a loud crash, an explosion, really. Blue, who was sleeping in front of the kitchen sink, came to her feet in terror and headed for the door.

Several weeks ago, I had broken the large Pyrex batter bowl—the two quart glass mixing container that has a handle and a pouring spout. I used that bowl almost every day, and I had had it for many years. My mother had used it for many more years before I acquired it. I had bumped something else on the shelf in the cupboard, and it had fallen, taking a couple of drinking glasses with it.

I missed that bowl. I looked in a couple of stores, but we aren't "shoppers," and no shop we had visited in the time since I broke the Pyrex bowl carried them. So, finally, I ordered a similar bowl—also a Pyrex—on line. When it came, I was satisfied that once again, I had my "go-to" mixing bowl that would see use nearly every day.

But, during the hot weather, I didn't bake very much, and I had used the bowl only once—to hold the sugar for jam I was making. So, the rest of the time, the bowl stood on a shelf in the cupboard.

It was on the second shelf of that cabinet. The bowl sat on a small plate and had a two-cup Pyrex measuring cup standing in it. Nothing was hot or cold—just the usual room temperature.

Then came the explosion. That bowl shattered—glass everywhere. Nothing had touched it, no jarring, no banging, no change in any way. The bowl was not in use. It was sitting there, and it was destroyed with no help from the outside.

Is the cabin haunted? Has someone honored us with an unkind "spell?" We didn't think so.

Finally, I googled "pyrex disasters"—and I found that our experience with the batter bowl was not unique. Others wrote about Pyrex glassware shattering in the oven, or after being moved from the oven to a damp countertop, or, like yesterday's happening here—with no provocation at all.

If someone had been standing in front of the cupboard when that bowl disintegrated, he or she could have been injured with shards of glass. How is it that this kitchenware can be sold? And why had we never heard of this during all the years that Pyrex glass has been a part of most households?

Well, I found that Pyrex has changed. The glass composition that used to be borosilicate is now, instead, something called soda lime. This means nothing to me, and so far, I can find no admission by the company that now owns Pyrex that the change in glass is responsible for the problem. It seems that the owners of Pyrex bakeware are called negligent for not using care in baking and cooking with Pyrex. But, my batter bowl had never been exposed to heat beyond washing it when it was new in hand-comfortable dishwasher and again when I had used it for holding sugar for my jam a couple of weeks ago. This bowl sat on a dry, room temperature shelf and exploded. There has to be more to the story and a responsibility by the company that makes these standard baking and cooking products.