

Grace Dent: If I Ruled The World

BY READERS DIGEST
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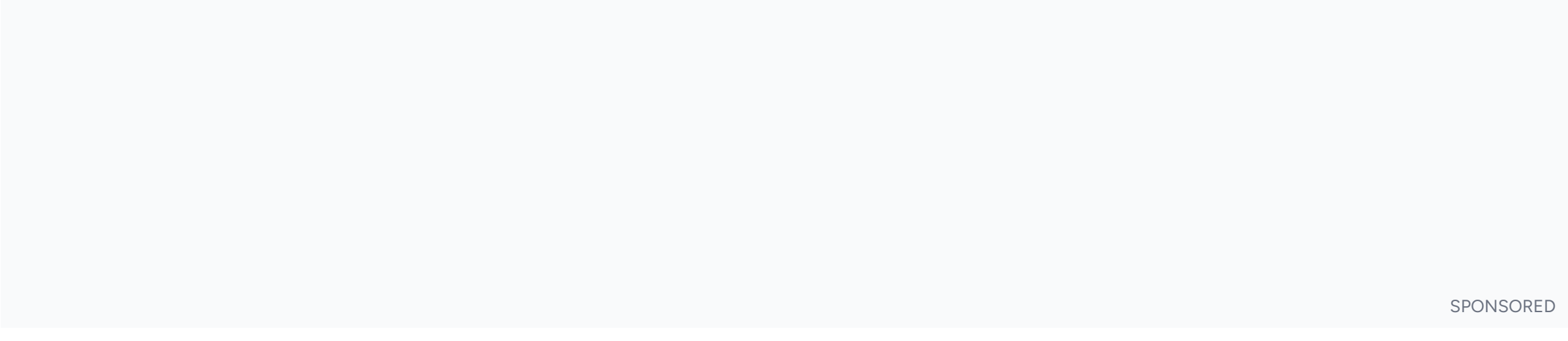
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Restaurant critic, broadcaster, author, and MasterChef UK regular Grace Dent shares her vision of a world she would like to lead

We would have a daily internet break

We would have a compulsory half hour of “keep [fit](#)” per day, away from the internet. My theory is that almost all internet arguments would be solved if we were all forced to walk away from our computers and do star jumps in [fresh air](#). I think that a lot of our anger comes from the fact that we’re just not getting enough of it. You can’t win an argument on the internet. Twitter, Facebook and even WhatsApp don’t lend themselves to making yourself properly understood. And sometimes I have to say to myself, “Have I had any fresh air today?”

When I come to power, everybody will be given a headband and a tracksuit, and for half an hour a day they will have to walk around the local environs, breathing in air, with loud [music](#) on. I think this would eventually stop all wars.



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Kindness to animals would be compulsory

I think that people should wear their [animal love](#) on their sleeves more. Once a year, we would have a national day completely devoted to animals; everybody would be allowed to have the day off and just spend their time with their dog, cat or hamster.

I think sometimes people are embarrassed to say that they love animals as much as they love humans. And I think that I am as well. I wish that I could talk about that more freely. I’m always happy when I meet other people who feel the same way, and devote their lives to taking in stray cats and dogs, and raising money for animal charities.

Michelin-starred dinners for everybody!

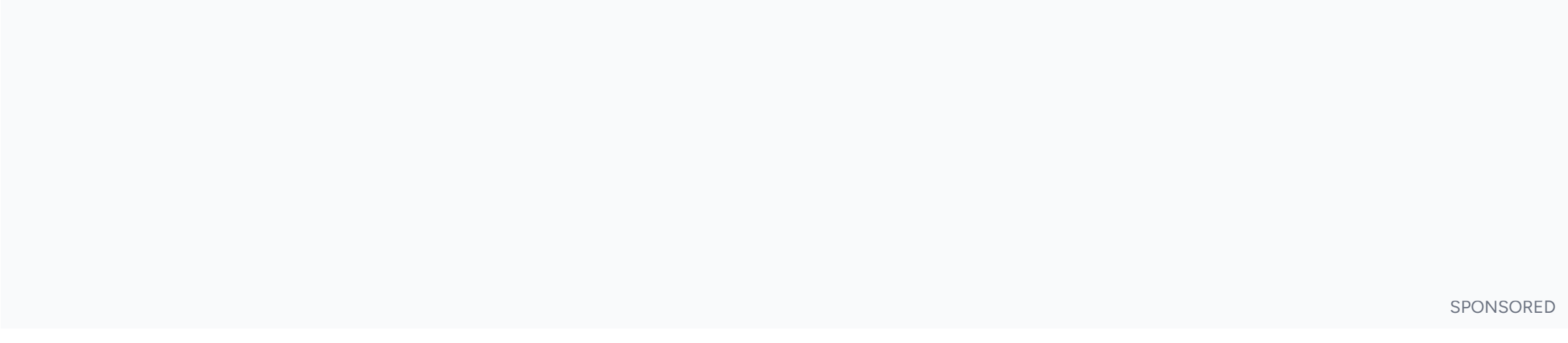


We live in a world where we hear about these places a lot. In Britain, it’s set up as the pinnacle of experience to go there and eat this food, but in reality, for almost 99 per cent of the country, it is a space that people will never go into. It’s incredibly expensive, it’s intimidating, it might be far away, so people don’t go. They might watch *MasterChef* but they may never witness the theatre, and almost the ridiculousness, of a two Michelin star restaurant for themselves.

When I come to power, everybody will get a voucher and be allowed to go to Le Gavroche, and see what the heck is going on inside it. And even if they hate it, at least they’ve seen it—it will be much more egalitarian that way. Also, I would really like some of the two-Michelin-star chefs to have to deal with people from Carlisle, where I’m from, asking where the rest of the [dinner](#) is when it arrives on the table.

Cumbria would be the greatest county in Great Britain

I would give Cumbria its rightful position as the greatest county in Great Britain, usurping Yorkshire. Although Yorkshire is incredibly beautiful, and I understand why people are so passionate about it, it does irk me to put my television on in the evening and find four or five shows telling me how wonderful Yorkshire is.



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Cumbria is a place of such exquisite, unspoiled, undiscovered natural beauty that I feel shortchanged. The mistake the British public make is that they go northwest, they go into the [Lake District](#) in Cumbria and they look at a mountain, and they visit Keswick or Windermere, and then they get back on the M6, and they go straight to Scotland. But what they don’t realise is that there’s hundreds and hundreds of square miles of Cumbria that they never look at.

I would raise awareness of Alzheimer's and dementia

Not only is it a [disease](#) that’s growing as our population ages, but it’s a thing that is almost so terrifying and horrific that people just blank it out. And, because they blank it out, we are overlooking the thousands of families in the UK who are dealing with it today.

My father has dementia and he is pretty well cared for, he wants for nothing. But there was a very long time in my family, where we knew my dad had [dementia](#), and we were in hell. We didn’t ask for help and when we did ask for help, we didn’t really know what we were asking for.

"I'm very passionate about getting the word out that you're not alone"

I support Alzheimer’s charities now and try to help as much as I can. But I do think we should be talking about it more because there’s people all over Great Britain right now who are in a kind of a prison, [caring](#) for people that have got dementia. It makes your world very small. You’re kind of babysitting the ghost of somebody who you’re grieving, and I’m very passionate about getting the word out that you’re not alone.

Language-learning would be compulsory

All British people would be made to learn another language. I studied [French](#)—really badly—for seven years, in a school in the north of England. And, during the whole time, I don’t think I even met another French-speaking person. I wasn’t very committed, I just did it because I kind of had to. And this has really bitten me on the bum years later, because now I’m surrounded by French people all the time.

So, when I come to power, all British people will embrace learning other languages and not just think they can speak louder in English, and things will work.

As told to Exa Mackevic.

Grace Dent is a restaurant critic, broadcaster, author, and MasterChef UK regular. She has appeared on [Very British Problems](#) and is the host of the critically acclaimed podcast, [Comfort Eating](#).

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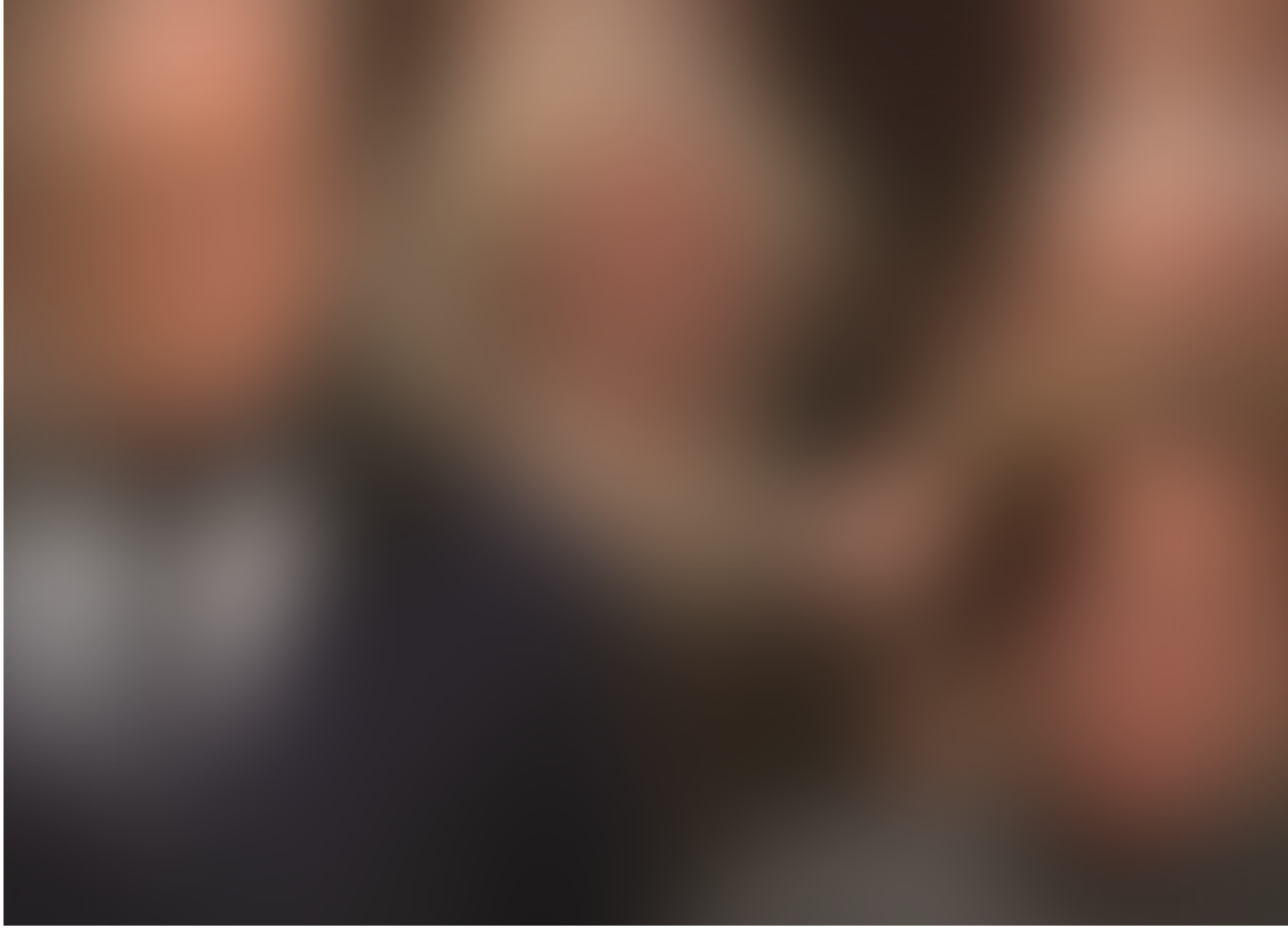
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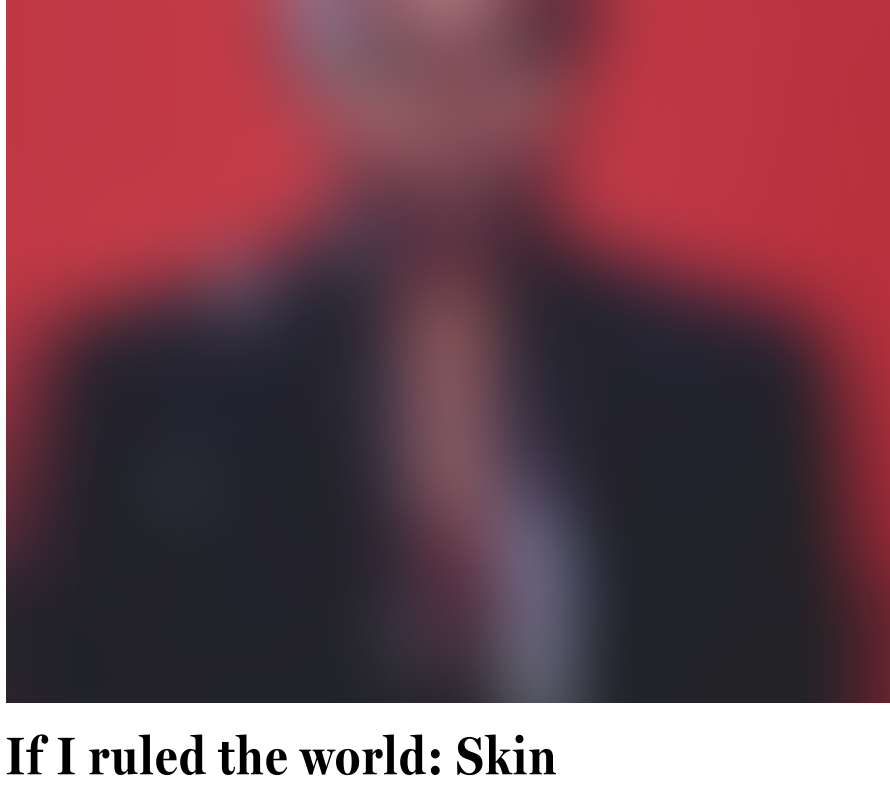
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