

Look After The Pennies

Another postcard arrived this morning. I heard it plop onto the mat as I headed into the kitchen. April, and technically it's spring, but the kitchen tiles feel cold under my feet. That's because the soles of my slippers are wearing thin or maybe because I always set the heating to come on five minutes before I get up. "Such an unnecessary expense to pay for heating when you're tucked up under a duvet!" I got that piece of saver's wisdom from my mum. The picture on the postcard is clichéd - palm trees, golden sand, a bikini-clad nymph sipping a cocktail in a hammock. Yeah right! You'd have to be insane to try and drink in a hammock. We all know how that would end. I don't turn the postcard over as I know there'll be no message on the back. Not even an ironic "WISH YOU WERE HERE!" scrawled in capitals. No need. The picture says it all and I prop it on the mantelpiece next to the one of the yacht and the one of Las Vegas and all the others which have been arriving over the last three weeks.

I think I've mentioned that my mum's frugality, her "saver's wisdom," has rubbed off on me? I always buy own-brand food at the supermarket, put on a cardigan rather than turning up the thermostat and I never gamble. I can't imagine then why I joined the lottery syndicate at work. That really went against the grain that did. It was Sally who kept pushing me to sign up. She worked in Accounts so that gave her advice a bit of professional weight. "Yes," she told me, "the odds are long but with you, there'll be six of us in the syndicate, so you get six chances for your £1 instead of just one. And of course, the winnings would be split six ways, but imagine if we won £6 million?!" They hadn't won £6 million of course. It was £16 million. The week after I could no longer silence my dead mother's voice. I'd kept my £1 in my coat pocket when Sally came round to collect it before popping down to the newsagent to buy the ticket. It's still there, I think, unless it's fallen through the hole into the lining.

Word count = 384