

The Jar

Lisa had had many strange relationships in the past but she had never had one with a jar.

She was in the bath. She wished she had got into bed instead but the effort of drying herself and moving rooms now felt too much.

She looked at the jar in her hand. It seemed to discourage and encourage her. The label gave her clear instructions not to abuse its contents but the lid came off very easily.

She looked inside the jar. Would the contents be true to her, would they carry her happily away to a different reality or would they turn out to be like Michael?

She considered the comparison. The contents of the jar would never lie to her if she treated them properly. She could follow the instructions in reverse, as a call to action rather than a prohibition and everything would turn out well. She had, she thought, treated Michael properly but Michael had lied to her with energy and determination throughout their three-year relationship. It was only now she realised that he had a smooth glassy surface but a poisonous lump instead of a heart.

He had texted her the week before to say that he was, in fact, sleeping with Anya, as Lisa had suspected but not really acknowledged for some time. He explained briefly that this meant the only decent thing he could do was to dump Lisa so that's what he was doing.

By now, she knew the text off by heart. As usual, he was texting her carelessly, while doing something else, perhaps having sex with Anya and he hadn't checked his spelling. He said he had some good times but 'no longer loved her and had moved on.'

In her moment of crisis Lisa heard it for what it was and didn't translate his ill-spelt sentences as she normally would. She hoped hysterically that he would reach into the oven for a loaf so that his head caught fire or that he would lose control of his mower and it would run right over him.

The image of him lying under the mower with his head ablaze made her shake with laughter and the friendly jar leapt out of her hand and into the bath. The pills floated out and the jar, full of water, sank below the surface. Lisa rose.