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Diary of a CyberChondriac

By

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(aka Carla Bradley)

The story so far...



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Week 1 – Monday

Have had a really sore throat for two days now. Its just on the left hand side and when I have looked down my throat in a mirror there is a white streak.

I googled it this morning. Turns out I could have throat cancer which sent shivers down my spine as I am a secret smoker. Actually it hurts a lot when I try and take a puff of my ciggie.

Another site said it could be tonsillitis and I would need to visit my GP for anti biotics. The thing is I am never away from the bloody doctors. I am really embarrassed as all the receptionists know me by first name and even a few of the cleaners.

I suspect that I am a topic of discussion in the staffroom. "The women who is always ill". I bet they think I've got that Munschausen Disease.

Hang on, maybe I have got munschausens. Lets look at the facts ;

I am at the doctors at least once a week.

I am at the nurse at least once a fortnight.

I have an NHS prescription season ticket because I am always needing prescriptions and it is cheaper to pay yearly.

I am able to diagnose most ailments amongst family and friends and recommend specific treatments (sometimes herbal remedies)!

Well that's just feckin great isn't it? As well as having lots genuinely wrong with me I have munschausens.

I am very short so munchkins disease would have been far more appropriate.

Week 1 – Tuesday

Bit the bullet and have made an appointment to see the nurse about my throat. In the meantime am gargling with oraldene and sucking strepsils like they're going out of fashion.

Starting to get quite concerned about my throat as my gland feels a bit swollen.



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Looked on Internet again and typed in all my symptoms into Google. The result showed that I might have something called quincey. I have never heard of this. I thought quincey was an American TV programme which was aired in the 1970s. Turns out quince throat is very nasty and I may need to be hospitalised with it.

I went into town and bought four bottles of anti bacterial hand gel (I am certain that I would catch MRSA as I am unlucky like that). I also bought a new dressing gown and two new nighties. Stuck it all on my store card. They can come looking for the payment when I am six feet under. The thing is I can't go into hospital looking a clip. There might even be an attractive male nurse I could flirt with. One has to make the most of every opportunity no matter what the circumstance.

Week 1 – Wednesday

Hayfever really bad. Looked it up on Google. I may even have mild asthma as I am wheezing a bit. Have took a non drowsy anti-histamine and some nasal spray. Am seeing nurse this afternoon. Ate my lunch and have terrible heartburn. Is probably my sliding hiatus hernia.

I actually self diagnosed myself but Dr Burns insisted I have an endoscope shoved down my throat to have a look inside my stomach. Turns out I was right and I do have a hiatus hernia. I have to avoid spicy stuff like chilli and curry and also raw food aggravates it.

Am feeling tad embarrassed following my appointment with nurse. Firstly the receptionist Morag asked me if I wanted to order anything out of the Avon book (she must be certain I will be available to collect order from, deliver goods to and collect payment.) Then I went in to see nurse and explained my symptoms (I may be being paranoid but I am sure she sighed when she saw me come into the room.)

The nurse took a swab from my throat using a long cotton bud and said she was sure it was viral but best to send a swab to be sure. She assured me I was not asthmatic and that I should try and cut down on my dairy products as that may be causing the wheezing. I decided not to tell her that I had a food allergy test done years ago at Holland and Barretts and it showed I was intolerant to



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anything that came from the cow. I thought it best not to mention that I smoke approx between five and fifteen ciggies a day. A lecture I do not need.

I get plenty of those from people in magazines and on the telly.

Week 1 – Thursday

Keep thinking about my throat and can't wait to phone for test results.

I rang for some results a couple of weeks ago. My periods had all but stopped and the doc sent me for blood tests to see if I was anaemic and she made me do a pregnancy test (even though I am not in a relationship).

Well that's putting it mildly as it's been so long I think it may have healed up!) come to think of it that's probably why period not coming. Its like there's a cork up there.

Anyway I had rang for results at two o'clock on the dot and results were normal. Felt gutted and robbed. I thought there may be some pills I could take to resume menstruation but narda!

As I have previously explained I am a bit of an oracle when it comes to medical matters. My mum (Peg) even gets her neighbours to ring me. There's nothing I don't know about the residents of Neil Kinnock Crescent.

I once got a phone call from mum's best friend as she had awful blisters on the palms of her hands. I advised her it was probably an allergic reaction to a detergent she had been using but she insisted that she always, always wore rubber gloves (separate ones for the loo). To cut a long story short she had the medical profession bamboozled as no creams or ointments seemed to cure it. After I had slept on it for a few days I had a brainwave. It was stigmata.

We all had our photos taken for the local paper. Mind all sorts came crawling out the woodwork. A man with a potato shaped like John The Baptist and a wooden toilet seat with mother Theresa's face. All in the same street. Very spooky I thought.

I have felt a bit dizzy this afternoon. Probably the stress of waiting for the swab results. Also I haven't had a movement for three days despite taking senokot religiously. Something not right.



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I looked up constipation on Google and it said I probably wasn't eating enough roughage or drinking enough water. The site advised I do some squats to massage the colon.

In bed in agony. Was doing my third squat and I put my back out. I am waiting for the physiotherapist to ring me at home. I rang NHS Direct and they advised to ring physio and apply heat and ice alternatively. Freezer empty save a tub of Ben and Jerry's Phish food so am waiting for some ice cubes to set. It's like watching paint dry.

Keep checking on them but not even slush yet.

Week 1 – Friday

As I suspected, the throat swab showed an infection. I have to go to the surgery to collect a prescription for penicillin. Of course I am layed up with my back so have texted my sister Anita to ask if she could collect it for me. She texted me back informing me that she is at her son Miles's school assembly. Luckily I still have my dad's walking stick so I will hobble down there later.

Had trouble getting dressed. Had to hook my knickers onto a coat hanger then wriggle into them. Bra out of the question so is a good job I am flat chested. Managed to slither into a velour jogging suit, apply some lipstick and shove a banana down before I left.

A ten minute walk took half an hour (not coz of my back, I bumped into Fred and Jean, my nosey neighbours). I got all their latest news. Fred's piles have been terrible. He's had to apply an ice pack hourly and the anusol is not working so he's ordered some suppositories from the doctors. Jean has been floored by labyrinthitis.

She told me she had been weeding for two hours and the doctor said all the bending down had brought it on. She was swaying as she spoke to me, said it was like being on a ferry crossing. Back home.

Managed to heat a tin of soup up and am now resting whilst watching an episode of 'Maury' titled "Only one of the Siamese twins is mine". These people make my family seem tame and that's saying something.

Week 1 – Saturday



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Nightmare, its raining outside. Well when I say raining it's like a fine mist. I have got the type of hair that hates misty rain. It just goes like a frizz. I rarely go across the doors at Christmas because my hair resembles Noddy Holder from Slade when it frizzes up. The local kids always shout "It's Christmas" really loud if I venture out. Its even the same strawberry blonde shade as Mr Holder's. I have also been compared to Rod Hull (at least it's not Emu) and John Pertwee from his Doctor Who days (could be worse, could be Sylvester Macoy.)

I have been on google countless times to research curly follicles and have been recommended various products to tame the beast but none have worked. I have tried having it cut into a gamine pixie crop but instead of looking elfin I just looked like a butch lesbian. No offence to lesbians. One of my female friends is gay and even she agreed the crop did me no favours. My fringe also curls up and looks like a panty liner.

So as well as having a bad back I have got to go into work today with frizzy hair. Not even a hood or umbrella can save me. It's like my hair senses the damp. Still I have to go in as I dare not take any more sick leave. I am close to going in the Guinness book of records for my low attendance.

I work in the offices for Macdonalds. Not the famous burger chain but a company who manufactures toilet fittings. As it happens we are busy at the moment as we are supplying to George Wimpy for a new housing development. I have been having a telephone flirtation with one of the builders.

He sounds really sexy. I can guarantee that he will be a total Quasimodo in real life.

I looked at google in my lunch break to look for cures for my slow bowel movements. I stumbled upon a site dedicated to piles. It said I may have them if I have painful and itchy bum hole. It advised to look for something which resembles a bunch of grapes hanging from rectum. Now I am a bit confused . Did it mean small seedless grapes or the larger ones with pips?

The lighting very poor in staff bogs so will have to look later at home. I will never get a boyfriend at this rate! I mean piles is a huge turn off. We wouldn't be spoiling the moment by putting on a condom, we would be getting me comfortably positioned on my



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rubber ring to stop any chafing. I am sure Dr Ruth didn't talk about having "org-ashims" in this fashion.

Back at home and still reeling. The sexy builder called by this afternoon to check on a delayed order of cistern parts. He is actually quite dishy. I would give him an eight out of ten and he is very muscly. I was mortified that he saw me in my alter ego of Noddy Holder but it didn't deter him from asking me out for a drink on Monday night. Of course I accepted as at thirty four the clock is ticking. I am the only sibling left to remain unmarried. My sister Anita is married with three kids and my brother Julian has been married twice but is currently 'playing the field'.

Must go back on line and check for a frizz cure again. I have 48 hours to find a cure. I need a miracle.

Week 1 – Sunday

Another Nightmare.

Am very very nervous and anxious about impending date with sexy builder called Mark.

My Irritable Bowel has flared up with all the stress. I feel like canceling. It is far simpler being single. I have the worst flatulence ever and violent pains in my stomach. I imagine they are like labour pains (this is why I do not plan to procreate.)

Went on Google and advised me to take deep breaths, ensuring I am breathing correctly from the diaphragm as shallow breathing is not the correct way to breathe. I have also took a cocktail of tablets including Mebeverine, Buscopan and Immodium. Ironical that I have been constipated for eight days and now I could shit through the eye of a needle.

My arse is red raw (like one of those baboon documentaries).

I have thickened bum hole with Sudocreme and pray that redness subsides by tomorrow night. Don't get me wrong, it's not like the sexy builder will be viewing my bottom. Even if I was the type to "do it" on the first date I would insist on complete darkness and possibly even chloroform for the male participant. No man should have to suffer my body insecurities.



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I have always had a huge hang up about my flat chest, and compensate by wearing push up bras but there is nowhere to hide when the bra comes off. I look like a pubescent boy when I am topless. Then there's the dimples in my right butt cheek. I have always felt it necessary to explain that the dimples are just that and not cellulite.

Mind only a female doctor has seen my bottom so far, as my longest relationship was eight months which was in the winter so managed to hide my flaws behind the dark evenings.

I have also decided not to start the antibiotics until Tuesday as I will have to have an alcoholic drink or ten on the date to loosen up. I feel my personality not sparkling without six halves of Woodpecker. Let's be frank, not many men like talking about medical matters. It would be no good hooking up with a doctor either as it would be like a Busman's Holiday going out with me.

An early night for me tonight as I need my beauty sleep. I have to be up extra early to exfoliate and shave entire body.

Week 2 - Monday

Well I have done the deed with sexy builder. It was quite good for a first time (well once the cobwebs had been blown away I got well into it). He didn't rush home afterwards either. He stayed the night and we had a repeat performance this morning-twice! Anyway I made us breakfast and he went and got us the Sunday papers and we spent all day in bed reading, kissing and cuddling. Then he said we should take a shower and I could not think of an excuse to get out of it so I was brave and went in with him.

We were soaping one another under the warm water when I noticed something strange. No, not that! The toes on his right foot are webbed! Can you believe it? In the twenty first century people still have webbed feet. It made me feel much more comfortable about my small boobs etc. It's strange but it makes me like him even more now that I know he's not totally perfect.

In fact I think I could be falling for him although I will tread carefully as I got badly hurt in my last relationship. James made me fall for him then when I was in deep(I had the back of his watch engraved with our initials as a surprise) he ran for the hills, well sprinted more like, and he didn't pass go or collect two hundred pounds. I dumped all his stuff on his doorstep but I made sure I



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sprinkled lawn seed on his clothes first which I had moistened first. I also replaced the saline in his contact lens case with dettol.

He contacted the police but nothing happened as the officer who came out to my house was my bother's bezzie mate.

Week 2 – Tuesday

In the cold light of day I am cringing about the webbed feet thing. I emailed my best friends and they both said it was a non-starter as I was quite shallow normally. I didn't dare tell them I have agreed to his brother's barbecue at weekend. Am already dreading it.

Hate eating bbq food as always looks half raw. Apparently his brother is well off and lives in Cheshire so we are staying over in their spare room. I will have to share a bed with those webbed toes. Euch!

Told girls at work about sex but not toes as sexy builder might come into office and that would be embarrassing. I told them he is good in bed with a buff body.

They are sooo jealous!

Have been going to the loo a lot today and it stings when I pee. Have made an appointment for after work with the nurse. Think sexy builder has given me something nasty or maybe I am allergic to the condoms.

And another thing. I had to do a pee sample in doctor's toilet. It is very tricky so I ended up peeing all over the floor and my trouser legs. Nurse put a stick in it and confirmed I have bladder infection. She advised me to wear cotton underwear (no polyester thongs), don't use perfumed soap to wash down below and she gave me a seven day course of trimethoprim.

So felt quite smug that I have something genuinely wrong with me. Of course I won't be able to drink alcohol whilst I am on the anti-biotics so I may have a good excuse not to go to dreaded barbecue.

Week 2 – Wednesday

Rang sexy builder and explained my predicament. He said he would abstain from alcohol at the barbecue as well so that I would not feel awkward. I protested that he should just go without me and enjoy



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himself. He wasn't having any of it and said he would contact his relatives to see if they could rearrange. He told me to rest and he would ring me tomorrow.

Week 2 – Thursday

Work really busy today and I had to keep nipping to the loo as kept feeling like I needed to pee but when I got there nothing. Just a drop if I was lucky. My hands are red raw from using industrial strength anti-bacterial handwash.

The management are taking no risks since this Swine Flu came out. Maybe I will catch it and won't be able to go to barbecue at all. Manda says I have got bladder infection because of all of the sudden sex. She said cystitis is known as the 'honeymooner's disease'.

Trust me to get it after a two year drought.

Week 2 – Friday

Felt really unwell so rang in sick. I was wake all through the night with terrible pains in my back and a really high temperature. At one point I was hallucinating. I still remember the image.

I married sexy builder underwater in style of Little Mermaid and we had two children both with webbed feet. I have made a telephone appointment with doctor as am too weak to walk the ten minutes to the surgery. I could have taken a taxi but I have dated three of the drivers from my local taxi rank and couldn't risk it as am not looking my best.

I settled down to watch GMTV with Dr Hilary giving advice about Swine Flu. Even though people are dying he said not to panic as most cases are mild. I am ill with worry about swine flu. I obviously had my normal flu jab in November at my local Asda Superstore (not that local as it is seventeen miles away) but this vaccine gives no immunity from dreaded Swine Flu.

Dr Hilary says to use good hygiene and disinfect all surfaces at home and work. (not to self, take huge supply of anti-bacterial wipes to work next week). I have already started carrying anti-bacterial hand gel in my handbag for use outside as there are some horrible people who get my bus and it's not the chav kids.



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They are really clean and smell of designer perfume and after shave. The drivers stink mind. Really strong BO and their hands must be riddled with potential swine flu germs due to large handling of money.

Just spoken to Doctor Bloomfield. He thinks I may have a kidney infection and I have to drop another sample to surgery asap. I rang my sister but she is on way to have a Brazilian wax. She wants to practice to see if she can go hairless for our holiday to Benidorm. I explained to her that Benidorm is not St.Tropez and that you are very likely to see droopy `spaniel ear' boobs and lots of pubic hair (mainly grey) creeping out of upper leg of bathing costumes. She said I had spoiled her image of Benidorm and that she was still going to look her best in four weeks time when we go.

She said she intended to have a spray tan, her hi-lights retouched and her eyelashes tinted. I begged her to collect my urine sample but she said she was not prepared to carry a tube of warm yellow liquid . I told her she would be drinking glasses of warm yellow liquid in Benidorm.

Managed to get dressed, put oversized sunglasses on and took sample to surgery. The receptionist said I would get results on Wednesday.

I could be dead by then.

Week 2 – Saturday

Sexy builder texted me to see if I was ok to go shopping with him for a new bathroom suite but I declined as till feel rough. I went to work as I knew I was the only one in until dinner time when Manda was due in . I have anti-bacterialised entire work station and staff toilet as I know the cleaner uses the same cloth for loo seat as she does for desks.

I felt a bit light headed after cleaning frenzy and suddenly got my appetite back so I texted Manda with instructions. She brought me a tuna melt panini (Or poonani as Manda calls them) and a lemon macaroon from marks and spencers.

She was in a great mood as she met someone on Thursday night at the bowling alley. She is waiting for him to text or ring her as he promised to do so at weekend but as she said it is only Saturday so still one and a half days left.



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Apparently he is called Ed and is gorgeous. She said she couldn't resist sleeping with him (in back of taxi then back at her place.) I asked if taxi driver had complained but she said he just winked at her. What is the world coming to?

Went home after work and had long soak in bath then snuggled under duvet with mug of tea and tube of Pringles and watched Pretty Woman again. Sexy Builder didn't ring although I am not that bothered as have Richard Gere for company. God he was so sexy in 'Officer and a Gentleman' and don't get me started on 'American Gigilo'. Anyway I ended up falling asleep on sofa and was woken by doorbell .

I looked terrible so decided not to answer as thought it might be sexy builder. I went to bed at midnight and slept right through.



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Week 2 – Sunday

Well what a day I have had. I was woken up at six thirty this morning by my mobile ringing. It was Smithy, my brother Julian's policeman friend. He said he had rang my doorbell last night at midnight to tell me Julian was in hospital. He had been beaten up badly by local hardcase Mickey 'the hatchet' Hargreaves. 'The Hatchet' had learned that Julian was sleeping with his fiancée Bianca Balls.

I headed straight to the hospital. The whole family were there keeping a bedside vigil. My mum was distraught. She said he should have stayed married and out of trouble. My dad said no good ever came of playing the field. I told them to go home and get some rest and that I would stay with him .

He woke up and spluttered a load of blood. He managed to mouth 'sorry our kid'. He explained that he had joined the gym at the swimming baths and that Bianca worked on reception. She was beautiful and funny and he was dazzled by her.

He said he had no idea she was in a relationship with Micky Hargreaves as she told him her boyfriend was away in the army. He said he was gutted because he had fallen for her bigtime. I was a bit bewildered as I had only spoken to him last week and he didn't even mention he had met someone.

After a while the police came to interview him but he wisely said he didn't remember anything and therefore was unsure who had beaten him up.

Bianca then showed up wearing a dark wig and huge sunglasses and warned him to stay away. She said she had been flattered by his affections but she knew her future lay with Mickey as he could offer her a huge house with a Jacuzzi and walk in wardrobes. Julian could only offer her his heart and at a push a semi detached ex council house with blocked paving. She gave him back his love letters and the bottle of Britney Spears perfume he had bought for her and reminded him to stay away.

Week 3 – Wednesday

No I haven't been on blog since Sunday as have got Swine Flu.



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On Sunday night I developed really high temperature (didn't have thermometer so knocked at neighbours at eleven pm and asked Mrs Skelly if she could take my temperature. She felt my forehead and confirmed I was definitely running a fever.

She said there was no need for these new fangled digital contraptions.

I rang my doctor's surgery and was put through to swine flu help line. I had to describe my symptoms to person (unqualified I am guessing) as they were called Elvis and spoke with a Pakistani accent. I was then told a doctor would ring me asap. At three in the morning a doctor (Rahman) rang and confirmed my worst fears. I have swine flu and have to get a healthy person to collect Tamiflu asap.

This is where I became stuck. My sister refused on the grounds that we are going to Benidorm soon . My parents had been warned by my sister so didn't pick up the phone. My brother is still recovering from severe beating by Micky 'the hatchet' Hargreaves. I texted my two colleagues in desperation but they were scared to catch it. As a last resort I rang Sexy Builder. He sounded terrible. He has had swine flu and that is why he has not been in touch. He has arranged for his friend to collect my medication and drop it off.

Week 3 – Thursday

No improvement. Temperature still very high, no appetite, limbs aching , sore throat and dry cough. The Tamiflu has given me the runs and my bum very very sore.

I keep dragging myself out of bed to take paracetamol and also look at NHS website for latest swine flu update. It says it is possible to catch it again. This is because it can re mutate and become a different strain. The country is in panic.

People are dropping like flies. At this rate I will miss barbecue and Benidorm trip. Haven't been excited about it anyway. Hate Anita. What a bitch for refusing to collect my anti-virals. Maybe I can sell holiday on ebay. I could say swine flu forces sale. Mind people are worried that they can pick flu up from ticket even though swine flu germ can only survive for twenty minutes on paper (according to Dr Hilary on GMTV). I can't think how or where I caught it. Must have been sexy builder. I don't think his personal hygiene as fastidious as mine.



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My mother has rang and said the reason I have caught it is I am too clean. I have no resistance to germs and that is why I catch every bug going. She was very matter of fact and not at all sympathetic. She said she had left me some bread and milk and tissues with Mrs Skelly but I would have to get them myself. There is no way I can make it next door to collect grocery items. It's a shame as my nose is in awful state due to using Asda smartprice toilet paper to blow it. I could really use those tissues. I will just have a little sleep then will try to go to neighbours.

Week 3 – Friday

Oh my God. Have been asleep for eleven hours solid. Feel bit better so will have bath then attempt trip to neighbours. Had to go straight back to bed as went dizzy and faint when was getting out of bath. Think I may be dying. I have rang doctor and am waiting for call back.

Week 3 – Saturday

The doctor refused to do a home visit as I am not in the high risk group i.e. elderly, a baby, a diabetic, an asthmatic, a prisoner. The doctor advised me to continue with the paracetamol and drink plenty of fluids and rest.

Anyway when I woke up this morning I felt slightly better until I looked in the mirror. I am delighted that due to unexpected weight loss my face looks gaunt in style of Kate Moss but on the other hand I have giant spreading cold sore in style of Amy Winehouse.

I googled cold sores and it advised liquorice balm. As I don't have any to hand, I have eaten half a box of liquorice allsorts which I got last Christmas for my dad then I misplaced them. I found them at Easter when I was storing chocolate eggs for my niece and nephew. Cold sore doesn't look any better. Managed to have a shower and wash hair. In state of panic I texted sexy builder (he had left seventeen messages for me) and I implored him not to visit as I was too weak for visitors. I failed to mention unsightly mouth affliction.

I then replied to my sister Anita's email. She has asked me if our mum can take my place on Benidorm trip. The reasons being as follows



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1. I have Swine Flu
2. Mum is very distressed over brother Julian's recent beating.
3. She has received date to have her bunions done and will be incapacitated for eight weeks following surgery.
4. Anita senses that I am not keen on idea of trip .
5. She will reimburse me in full.

I have emailed immediately before mum changes her mind. I am now six hundred quid better off. Thank God. They probably would not have let me fly anyway with this huge coldsore. If it doesn't clear up in a couple of days I will make appointment with nurse.

Week 3 – Sunday

Oh my days!!

I think Mark (sexy builder) might be 'the one'. He ignored my pleas for non visitation. He has tended to me all day despite my hideous disfigurement. He even went to 24 hour pharmacy for honey and lemon linctus, lozenges, tissues, Vaseline for my nose, paracetamol and zovirax for coldsore.

He has made home made vegetable soup and French baguette and brought it to my bed on a tray. He has made sure I have taken all my medication and that I am having plenty sleep. I have pretended to be slightly delirious due to my acute embarrassment about scabby lip.

When I awoke I heard him hovering then he cleaned the entire flat (probably not to my standard but am very impressed.) He is sleeping on the settee to make sure I am ok. He said he will let himself out early as he has to return to work following a week on the sick.

Week 4 – Monday

Doctor's surgery sent me a letter advising me to ring doctor asap regarding urine sample. I had forgotten about sample with whole swine flu emergency. Anyway, they need not have wasted a stamp. The sample was completely normal and no further action required. Rang in sick with swine flu. Managed to have a shower and wash hair but wasn't up to exfoliation or shaving.

Still very weak so didn't bother to dry and straighten hair. When I looked in mirror to apply anti ageing cream and zovirax I got an



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awful fright. My hair looks like a cross between the hairbear bunch (cartoon from the eighties) and Robert Plant, has been rock god. I left a voicemail for Mark and told him I was resting so not to come over under any circumstances.

Hopefully I will be strong enough tomorrow to straighten hair and shave awful fuzz from my body. Even the wiry hair which sprouts from my chin looks longer and coarser than normal. Couldn't find tweezers so have trimmed it with nail scissors.

Julian called around at three. He has the rest of the week on the sick then he has to return. He told me I needed to go to a spa as I looked like a zombie. That made me feel great. Then at three thirty Mark arrived with huge bunch of flowers. I managed to race into bathroom and put wet towel over my hair in style of turban. He will definitely dump me if he sees hair.

He said he managed to finish early and thought he would cook for us. I told him I had little appetite and he insisted because he said I looked gaunt. My brother Julian made a hasty exit and told me to hang on to this one as he was a good egg.

Anyway, Mark made quite a feast of lasagne, salad, garlic bread and he had bought a lemon cheesecake as he said he remembered I said it was my favourite dessert.

God this guy is perfect. Too perfect I think. I just know there's a catch.

The barbecue is scheduled for this Saturday. He will give me a lift and we will stay overnight at his brother Clint's house. He said some people find his family strange so that I should prepare myself. I asked sarcastically if one of his siblings was a cross dresser and he gave a nervous laugh. I told him not to worry as my family crackpots.

Week 4 – Tuesday

My mother rang to ask if I was over my illness. I am sure she didn't say swine flu in case just uttering it would make her catch it.

She said she was preparing for her trip abroad and had called next door to remind Doreen (morbidly obese loner with halitosis and facial hair) to check on house while she was away in Benidorm. Doreen asked her to bring back four hundred ciggies and a bottle of cheap vodka. No wonder she is a loner!



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Anyway mum informed me that Doreen is on the waiting list for a gastric sleeve operation. The term gastric sleeve conjures up an image in my mind of the thing Christopher Timothy wore when he was delivering calves on 'All Creatures Great and Small'. It sounds well, frankly barbaric. Doreen must be desperate.

Mum said she had joined Match.com and described herself as single, GSOH and cuddly. She had gone on seventeen dates. She had been stood up sixteen times and the suitor who did show up wanted her to squash him. I told mum that this was sick and perverted but she said au contraire, Doreen went back to his old people's sheltered housing and did the deed but they didn't see one another again as she said he had awful BO.

Anyhow, Julian has gone and told the family about Sexy builder and mum asked when they could expect to meet him. I told her not to hold her breath as was early days and I didn't hold out much hope.

Week 4 – Wednesday

Forced myself back into work as mum rang four times altogether yesterday and I couldn't face any more of her interrogation. I went for an eyebrow and bikini wax in my lunch hour and have made an appointment to get my roots touched up on Friday. I want to make a good impression at the barbecue. Am not sure why. I reckon they might be posh as they live in an affluent area.

I also called in to Debenhams and bought a nice outfit (trousers and summery top). I decided to wear shoes instead of sandals and hopefully Mark will follow suit and conceal his webbed feet. I expect his family are aware of them. God, maybe they are hereditary. I will have to keep my eyes peeled.

Week 4 – Thursday

Mark came around this evening and we watched a repeat of 'Extras' then we ate a Chinese takeaway. Big mistake on several counts. Firstly, got spare rib meat stuck in tooth and I picked at it all night and ended up with swollen gum. I have also had violent pains in stomach so have taken some buscopan as I think pork must aggravate my irritable bowel syndrome.

Mark became amorous but I said I had my monthly visitor and he asked if my mother was staying at my flat. I explained I was on my



Google

back pain



Search

period and he laughed and said of course he knew that and was teasing me. I wonder!

Week 4 – Friday

Managed to swap my days with Bernice at work so that I could get hair done and pack. Of course I also needed to go through flat like a tornado. My mum always told us when we were growing up that if you were going away you should leave your home immaculate in case anything happens to you and you don't return. That way, whoever comes to sort out your affairs cannot call you behind your back for being a dirty bugger.

Although when I think about it rationally I realise that if you were dead you wouldn't really give a flying fuck whether your bench tops had been bleached and your chrome was sparkling.

I told my mum years ago that her headstone would read 'she may have had her faults, but her skirting boards were immaculate'. Since I am only away the one night I am simply taking a holdall (the truth is I only have one case and it's ancient), I could be like that trampy chav family from that television documentary and carry my belongings in netto bags!

Anyway, hair looks totally defrizzed for once and have applied masses of super strength serum so it would take an act of God to move it. Roots are a nice hue of strawberry blonde and is looking poker straight. I think with hours spent applying expensive clinique make-up I should look passable for barbecue tomorrow. My tummy still a bit gypsy so have googled at last minute for advice.

Got bit of shock. Turns out that the spasms, constipation and the runs may not be irritable bowel syndrome but may be crohns disease. Very concerned now.

The website says it can only be confirmed with an endoscopy or a colonoscopy (other end, think Hoover nozzle inserted up rectum without lube.)

I have therefore decided to take my trusty laptop on my overnight stay. I need to keep a close eye on symptoms but earliest doctors appointment would be Tuesday as Dr Bloomfield doesn't work Mondays and he knows my stomach history, i.e. irritable bowel



Google

back pain



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syndrome, sliding hiatus hernia, painful period cramps and excessive flatulence.

Mum rang to say goodbye as she off to Benidorm with Anita, Ivan and kids. I decided not to mention the barbecue as didn't want the third degree when I return, i.e. what do Mark's parents do? where do they live? are they god botherers? Do they have their own teeth? Does his mum dye her hair and are there any signs of varicose veins or bunions?

I told her to have a great time. She asked me if I wanted any ciggies bringing back and I gasped as I am a secret smoker. Mum said she has always known that I smoke even though she chain smokes herself, she can smell it on my coat.(that febreze is rubbish!)

She is bringing me two hundred fags back and is smuggling tobacco in bulk for dad as he rolls his own and extra for her to sell at the local working men's social club.

Week 4 – Saturday

Well, it's all been a nightmare. I am writing this in the hotel room alone.

The whole thing started off okayish. Mark's parents Dolores and Alfredo (AKA Dolly and Alfie) were ok and fairly friendly. He introduced me to his sister Mercedes who is married to Hugo. What a complete bitch!!

Well I have missed a vital part of the story. Somehow, my hair went wrong on the journey. It was a drizzly morning when we set off but my stylist had assured me that this industrial strength serum would not fail. Well he was wrong. I only stood in rain for about thirty seconds whilst putting my bag in Mark's car and we stopped at a service station for a coffee and a fag break (nearly fainted as two cups coffee eleven pounds).

Anyway, Mercedes looked at me like I was something she had trodden in and said I was welcome to use the family gym in the house but all her stuff was size zero so I would have to get Mark to take me for gym clothes. I was so annoyed I told her I didn't go near the gym as it put too much strain on my joints and didn't want to end up with osteoporosis.



Google

back pain



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I calmly explained that I was more a fan of Ashtanga yoga and pilates, (I read about these two things in an article about Madonna in Company magazine in the doctor's waiting room.)

I then met Mark's 'brother' Mungo and his 'wife' Babs. Mark filled me in on the history. Mungo used to be Mary but always felt trapped in the wrong body and dressed in men's clothing from the age of fifteen. After years of psychology sessions along with horrendous bullying from school then work colleagues (he went to an all girls school and worked in stocks and shares) he underwent a full sex change and had his breasts, ovaries and womb removed. He was put on a course of male hormones to deepen his voice and give him facial hair.

I can accept all this but why choose Mungo as his new name? That I can't get my head around. His wife Babs was lovely to me and I was very surprised at how glamorous she is. Mind, Mungo is extremely wealthy. The house is enormous with a gym, swimming pool, four reception rooms, six en suite bathrooms and a landscaped kept garden. They have housekeeper, a cleaner and a nanny for the two dogs Bafta and Oscar.

I am in the wrong job. The dogs' nanny gets eighteen grand a year just for walking, grooming, dressing and accessorising , training and picking up poo poo.

My stomach was playing up so I stuck to cold salads and white wine spritzers. Mercedes asked me if I was watching my weight when she clocked my plate but I told her I don't do carbs ever. (Good job she didn't see the two crumpets I had for breakfast with utterly butterly and jam).

At about nine pm, Mark was mingling and I was left alone. I crept around the back of a tree for a sly cigarette and that's when I met her.

Week 4 – Sunday

I am back home licking my wounds. Mark has sent me sixty three texts and left various voicemails but I won't reply. The woman I met was his fiancée Jennifer. I was so gob smacked I didn't let on who I was and just said I was a friend of the family.

Jennifer said she was thrilled to see Mark as he was working in Manchester at the moment for a building company. She told me she



Google

back pain



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was going to press him to set a date for the wedding. I am just realising that Mark didn't introduce me as his girlfriend to his family, just Carla who he met through his job.

The two timing bastard. Anyway, I digress. I finished my cigarette and tried to sneak away from the barbecue without being seen. My plan was to return to the hotel, pack my stuff and catch a train. However I changed my mind for the following reasons:

1. There were no trains to Manchester until the next morning.
2. It should be him who leaves not me as he is in the wrong.
3. There were molton brown toiletries in the en suite and I wanted to enjoy using them.
4. Maybe I should confront him? (this goes against every fibre of my being as I am not usually a confrontational person.)

Anyhow, as I was proceeding toward the vast entrance in order to make a clean getaway I bumped into a man and he said "wo where's the fire?". It must have been a build up of things, I am not sure but I burst into tears. The man introduced himself as Rex, the family's private hairdresser.

To cut a long story short we ended up in a pub six miles away and the whole story came pouring out. He said he of Mark but had not met him and so didn't know anything about Jennifer. He said he was sure it could all be explained.

I could not help telling him how my hair had sapped my confidence and that I felt ugly compared to the rest of the female guests. Rex reassured me that I was very attractive and that if I followed him to his salon he could fix my hair and restore my self esteem.

Rex a bloody miracle worker. He gave me a gorgeous honey blonde colour with caramel slices and a temporary straightening treatment which should last six weeks.

He told me he was gay but I informed him I had already guessed. I also figured out that he has a thing for Mungo and he confirmed my suspicions.

Although he said no good could ever come of it as Mungo still has female genitals and he is with Babs who Rex adores. We parted as good friends and we have swapped numbers. Rex gave me a lift back to the hotel in his sports car and I came up to the room to google my stomach, write my diary and read tragic love poems on the internet.



Google

back pain



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I telephoned Mark at this time after consuming the mini bar. I told him it was over and not to come to the hotel. I advised him I would make my own way home. He seemed very puzzled as to why I had left barbecue and why I was ending things with him. I told him to ask Jennifer and then I hung up and switched my phone off. I put the 'do not disturb' on door and passed out.

A knock on the hotel room door awoke me at ten o'clock. It was the cleaner needing to get the room ready for the next occupants. I packed hurriedly and took all molton brown stuff and shower cap (good to use when applying hair mask.) I then rang Julian and he came and collected me (I knew he was in the area on business.)

Week 5 - MONDAY

I had already booked these two weeks off when I thought I was going to Benidorm with Anita so I have managed to cancel second week as there is no point in wasting holidays. I need a week to recover from drinking that mini bar anyway. Doesn't feel strange being single again as was only with Mark a short time.

My stomach is in a terrible state though. I am fairly sure it is the after effects of drinking mini bar (two miniature Jack Daniels and coke, two miniature vodka absolut neat, a mini malibu, a mini southern comfort and lemonade, three miniature bottles of Napoleon Brandy for shock.

I can't stop feeling sick and I have butterflies in my tummy. I went onto google to look up symptoms and it said I was suffering from acute anxiety and stress. Yes, it makes perfect sense. Although just to be sure I have made a telephone appointment for tomorrow with Doctor Bloomfield. He may be able to prescribe something to calm my nerves.

Managed a tin of soup but couldn't face venturing out. Mrs Skelley knocked and delivered a hand written letter. She explained that she came past my door as she was sweeping lobby and noticed letter.

It is from Mark. He said he broke up with Jennifer nearly a year ago and she could not accept it. He explained that she has been using stalker like tactics since the breakup.

Apparently she has stayed good friends with Mercedes and that is how she knew about the barbecue. He asked me to give him a ring and he would explain everything.



Google

back pain



Search

I just can't bring myself to read his texts, listen to his messages or ring him. I feel so foolish. Like I was the only one who didn't know about his other secret life.

Not only does he have webbed feet, he has spun me a web of lies. I shall not call him The sexy builder anymore, i shall refer to him as Spiderman (although he is taller and much better looking than Tobey Maguire.)

Week 5 – TUESDAY

Doctor Bloomfield has confirmed I am indeed anxious and stressed and has written me a prescription for Fluoxetine (prozac). Dunno whether to take it though as came off it years ago and feel I became addicted to it. Will keep in vast medicine cabinet just in case.

Mum rang me at seven thirty this morning to tell me she has a terrible upset stomach. I asked her if she thought it was food poisoning but she said she doubted it as had only eaten salads and paella(oh if only she knew!).

She remembered I had done Spanish at night school and wondered if I knew the word for Diarrhoea. I explained that the night classes were seven years ago and it was conversational Spanish and I had not come across the word Diarrhoea .

Anyway she waited on the line while I looked in my Spanish dictionary. I advised her the word she needed was 'descomponerse'.

I said surely one of them had taken trusty immodium away with them. She said she had packed anti histamine and laxatives but alas not a cure for Spanish tummy. She said she would go straight to chemist after breakfast. I advised her not to eat anything but she said she had paid good money for an "eat as much as you can buffet" style breakfast and that is what she intended to do.

Week 5 - WEDNESDAY

Listened to Mark's voicemails this morning. He is begging me to ring him and saying that he can explain everything. On the last message he is crying and saying he loves me and that I should not throw it all away just because his psycho ex girlfriend has told a pack of lies.



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back pain



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I texted him to remind him she was actually his fiancée not his girlfriend, and I wondered what I was classed as because he had not introduced me as his girlfriend to his family. He texted straight back and said yes he did introduce me as his girlfriend to his parents but he had already told Mungo and Mercedes about me so they already knew who I was.

I texted him back and told him that Mercedes had made bitchy comments and made me feel unattractive. He replied saying that is what she is like with everyone including her husband's family. He then said he was so pleased I had texted him and that he would keep bugging me until I agreed to talk face to face with him. He then said he had to go as he was on a roof.

I texted him immediately and told him not to jump on my account and he replied saying he not suicidal yet, just laying tiles on apartment block roof.

Silly me. I forgot he at work this week.

Week 5 - THURSDAY

Am going on the razz tonight. Rex rang me and asked me if I fancied a night out with him and his two friends Gus and Mitchell. I said I would go if I could bring some friends. I have arranged to go with Manda from work, and my long standing best friend Tracey. They are coming to mine at seven and we are meeting the lads in Chase Bar at eight. Rex said only Mitchell is gay so maybe I could hook up with Gus if I liked him. I told him I was still nursing a bruised ego.

My hair still looks fab so I decided to treat myself at the local salon to some beauty treatments. I had an anti ageing elemis facial, a manicure and a pedicure. Eyebrows were still ok from last weekend. On impulse I called into the hairdressers and had a blow dry as well. I applied false tan last night after my shower so am a nice golden hue. Put all my beauty treatments on my plastic card. I am working extra hours next week as Bernice is going on holiday so I have her shifts. The extra money will hopefully help pay some debt off.

Was arranging my outfit for tonight when my mobile rang. It was mum. She is distraught. Anita had to be rushed to hospital in



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back pain



Search

middle of night with violent pains. The hotel doctor suspected appendicitis so didn't want to take any chances. Anyway, when mum popped out for a cigarette she was mugged.

A young guy ran passed her and cut her bum bag with a stanley knife. She has lost all her euros (600) and her passport. I said, "that's terrible, but how is Anita?" and she replied "Fuck Anita, it was trapped wind. Too much junk food. I need to ask you how to explain about my lost money and passport".

I consulted my trusted Spanish dictionary and told her how to say in broken Spanish 'ser vapuleado, perdido dinero, perdido pasaporte'. She wrote it down and said it sounded like the cast from a Martin Scorsese Movie. I told her she hadn't lost her sense of humour. She said she was on the way to the police station.

She is very worried as those euros were her baccy money. She was going to make a hundred percent profit. I told her to ask Anita to lend her credit card but she said they were not speaking. I told her she will have to apply for a new temporary passport.

Am ready, waiting for the girls. Got wine cooling and have put pot some nibbles. Stomach still in knots. I am still stressed about Mark, and now am worried about my mum. Decided to take two prozac. The more you take, the quicker they get into your bloodstream according to Google.

Week 5 - FRIDAY

Didn't wake up until half eleven. Head banging. I don't even remember getting home last night. Come to think of it I don't remember very much. Rex came into my room with a cup of tea and scrambled eggs on toast. He told me I had started acting funny at about ten thirty and then I passed out so he brought me home. He was very concerned about me so he stayed on the sofa.

What a great friend. He said I was babbling on about my mother being kept in Spain forever and that my sister was a hypochondriac. He said I had not showed myself up as he got me away from everyone before I got any worse.



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back pain



Search

Apparently Manda copped off with Gus and Tracey got Mitchell set up in a gay club. I told Rex I remember him saying that he thought Mark had used me as an experiment. His theory is based on the fact that I am the polar opposite of Jennifer, I am one hundred percent working class, I have several flaws (Mainly my hair, shortness, flat chestedness.) I told Rex that I thought he said I was very attractive.

He said of course you are but you are real and not plastic like Mercedes and Jennifer. I assured him that Mark also very down to earth, and despite having buff body and good looks, he too has flaws. Rex demanded to know so I confided in him about webbed feet, occasional unbearable noise when he is eating and slightly smelly feet. Rex said he was aroused at the thought of webbed feet.

After we had caught up with the previous nights events, Rex went home in a taxi and I had a lovely bath with calming lavender oil to soothe my frazzled nerves. I also took three milk thistle tablets to cleanse liver. I have vague memories of downing cocktails in one bar last night.

Went on google to check whether I have done permanent damage by taking prozac with alcohol but there was nothing to suggest one couldn't drink whilst taking them. I took another two and had a sandwich(monster munch in a buttered bun always hits the spot when hung over).

Decided to check my emails. Big mistake. When I read them I had to rush o the loo with the runs. The stress of seeing Anita's emails(6) made my irritable bowel syndrome flare up.

I was gripping my stomach as I absorbed what she was saying. Mum had got into a heated debate with the police and they had arrested her for assaulting a policeman without due provocation. Anita says in her other emails that mum is refusing to speak to either her or Ivan so can me or dad sort this out by ringing the British embassy?

I emailed her straight back and advised her to have a word with their holiday rep to see if they could do anything first.

I have had to go for a lie down. My nerves are in shreds, my stomach killing, my hangover horrendous despite monster munch and I still can't stop thinking about Mark.



Google

back pain



Search

Week 5 - SATURDAY

Anita rang me last night. They have released mum without charge. They explained to police that she suffers with mental health problems (she doesn't) and they said she was free to leave but that she should consider anger management classes. However, there is still the matter of the missing passport and tobacco money. Anita has got dad to wire her enough money to cover the tobacco as if mum doesn't get it, it will be a lean Christmas this year. They have applied for a temporary passport and it should be available by the time they leave.

Rex texted me and said he had a spare ticket to see a comedian on Sunday night so I let him persuade me to go. He said Manda is going and that Gus is quite taken with her. Apparently she has a very dry sense of humour and is good in the sack. What else could a man need or want?

Mark has texted me hundreds of times asking if I would consider meeting him for a drink so that he can explain his side of the story. I texted him back and said I would think about it.

I have been on google about my stomach as it still has not settled following email shocker and night of prozac with cocktails. It appears that it is definitely my irritable bowel syndrome as well as my anxious state of mind. I will continue to keep taking Buscopan (for painful spasms) and mebeverine (to dry stools).

Strangely, google said that taking prozac can give you an upset stomach and can cause nausea. I cannot win!



Google

back pain



Search

Week 5 - SUNDAY

I woke up to the sound of 'Heaven knows I'm miserable now' by the Smiths. My favourite song ever. It seemed to be coming from outside so I gingerly pulled back the blinds and there was Mark standing with his ipod speakers and a huge bouquet of stargazer Lillies(my fave flowers ever).

After a quick wash, added bronzer, squirted perfume, a slick of lip gloss, I went down to let him in.

He said I looked really cute in my Betty Boop pyjamas and that he had missed me. He went in for a cuddle but I shyed away. He said my new hair colour and style was amazing and that I looked stunning.

He explained that he didn't mention Jennifer as he knew I would get arsey about it all. As far as he was concerned she didn't exist and that he had ended the relationship over seven months ago. I argued that he had said that he had not met the right girl yet. He said as far as he was concerned he hadn't until he met me! He said granted,I wasn't his usual 'type' of false tan, huge breasts and hair extensions but he had been taken by my sparkling personality.

I argued that I had huge hang ups about my body and self esteem issues as well as a penchant for looking up my symptoms on Google. I advised him he was better off without me as I had many health problems, both physical and mental. He insisted that he loved these little quirks and that is what made me so unique and special.

Admittedly he seemed convincing but I persisted that I felt he was not that desperate that he needed to go out with me. He was attractive and had a fit body so he could take his pick. He said he was through with air heads and at thirty five he was looking for something more meaningful.

Anyway, I told him I was still feeling very hurt and that I felt betrayed that he had kept Jennifer a secret from me. He said he can't be any more ashamed and sorry for his actions and he didn't know how else to prove himself to me. His eyes had tears in them and he reminded me of my family dog Arthur so we embraced and then had the most amazing make up sex ever. A marathon four hours of unadulterated filth under the sheets, on the stairs, in the



Google

back pain



Search

bath and the kitchen bench top. We then fell into an exhausted sleep.

I woke up at three and told him I was going out with Rex that night. He said he was glad that me and Rex were friends as it connected me to his family. I told him that was a bad thing because I wasn't at all keen on Mercedes. Mark assured me that Rex only does Mungo and Babs's hair and that Mercedes goes to Toni and Guy.

We parted on good terms and I went for a shower to get ready for comedy night.

Week 6 - MONDAY

Comedy night brilliant. Female comedian from the North East hysterically funny . I only had soft drinks so no hangover. However, I have got a very strange sensation in my ears. Like a muffled buzzing. Is so annoying.

Made myself a quick breakfast then headed off to work. Am full time this week.

Very busy at work but Manda still found time to tell me her sexploits with Gus and she showed me the love bite on her left buttock. She said Gus is such good company but she didn't take any relationship serious. She was in it for the fun (and the amazing sex.)

Had a short lunch break so Manda got us a Macdonalds and I ate it at my desk whilst googling my ear problem.

It may be a build up of ear wax, an inner ear infection or tinnutis. It suggested putting warm olive oil into ear twice daily then if no improvement seek advice from GP. I know I haven't got any olive oil in flat so will get some tonight at Tesco when I do my shopping.

Week 6 - TUESDAY

Mark rang last night and invited me to his flat for a meal. I got a great surprise as he has been renovating it for weeks and it looks amazing. It's really contemporary. He said that he had bought two of everything for the bedroom as who knows what the future holds?



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back pain



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I presumed he was referring to having a woman move in with him so I became tetchy and quiet which spoiled the night really.

He kept asking me what was wrong and I kept saying I was tired.

He

offered me to stay the night but I told him I needed to check my emails back home because of Benidorm situation. Plus my ears still bugging me and has made me irritable.

Mark ran me back to my flat (think now is a hovel compared to his swanky loft-style apartment). I gave him a peck on the cheek and he looked wounded. I reassured him again that I was fine and made my way into the flat.

Got laptop out and checked emails. One from Julian saying he is still in love with Bianca and can't get her out of his mind. He has texted her to say he is prepared to wait until she tires of being a gangster's moll. She texted him back and said "au contraire, I love this lifestyle. Ring me if you come into serious money".

Anita also emailed to ask me what the cure is for prickly heat as both she and Ivan are suffering. Manda emailed me a jokey thing with a picture of Brad Pitt naked. I must say, Brad doesn't do it for me. He is too pretty. Same with David Beckham. I think they would take longer getting ready for a night out than a woman would. Manda then sent me another email describing what she and Gus had been up to. It sounded illegal and has given her carpet burns.

Looked up Prickly heat for Anita and it seems the only cures are lavender oil, taking anti histamine and avoiding sunbathing.

Mark texted me just as I was dropping off to sleep saying that he hoped he had not said anything to upset me and that he loved me. I didn't reply. Treat them mean and keep them keen is my motto. (Totally isn't but am very tired so maybe will text him tomorrow.)

Week 6 - WEDNESDAY

Had awful nights sleep because of buzzy ears. I think maybe I had this when I was little (Still am little, mean when I was a child.) I think it may be to do with my sinuses. I have made an appointment to see Dr. Bloomfield after work as olive oil appears not to be working.



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back pain



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Great day at work today. Manda on good form. She is really happy with Gus and says maybe she does hope it leads to something more serious. She is slightly younger than me at thirty two and was married briefly in her twenties but it didn't work out. She had married her childhood sweetheart and they became like brother and sister. They are still good friends and regularly see one another. They both love the great outdoors so Des always invites her for hiking weekends and they go canoeing and abseiling. She says she is no longer sexually attracted to him.

Anyway, she has invited me and Mark to a charity night at the weekend. It's at the local leisure centre and is to raise money for meningitis as Des's nephew has recently just recovered from it and the child (Josh 17) want to give something back to charity. We have to go in fancy dress to do with the 1970s. Luckily I still have my abba costume from a previous night out.

Manda says her and Gus want to look fabulous so they are hiring their's.

Mark over the moon about charity night out. He seemed ecstatic to hear from me. He asked if I would stay at his after the party as it's the bank holiday weekend so I said that would be nice. He said he would pick me up on Friday night and we would drop my bag off at his then we will share a taxi with Gus and Manda.

Doc has given me a nasal spray for the buzzing in my ears and thinks it is related to my allergies (there are many, pollen, cats, horses, dust mites to name but a few.) He looked me in the eye and asked how my anxiety was and how I was dealing with my obsessive compulsive disorder now that I was no longer visiting the psychologist.

I told him that the prozac has made me feel lighter and less stressed but that my OCD was as bad as ever. I told him I was still doing a spring clean weekly instead of twice a year and that I had to check everything twice before leaving the house or going to bed. He pointed out that I had definitely improved as I used to do the cleaning thing daily (sometimes in the middle of the night) and checking things had reduced by half. He sad I looked well and that my blood pressure was fine.

Dr Bloomfield is an absolute saint. I don't know what I will do when he retires next year.



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back pain



Search

Anita has emailed me. She thinks she might be pregnant as she has morning sickness. I reassured her that it was probably the alcohol combined with the dodgy water and the heat. She seems calmer. She said she already has three kids under the age of eight and at thirty one she feels too old to be getting up through the night again.

Of course two of her kids are twins and they run in Ivan's side of the family. She has Miles who is eight, then the twins Channel (named after the place she was conceived, the eurostar which travels under the Channel Tunnel but is pronounced Cha-nel) and Paris. They are an identical five year old twins with completely different personalities.

Channel is very spoiled and opinionated and Paris is a free spirit who is incredibly laid back. Miles is the protective big brother and is highly intelligent. He has read all the Harry Potter Books already.

Mark is taking me out tomorrow night so have decided on an early night. Very tired after previous night buzzy ear scenario.

Raise money for meningitis, nasal spray, my OCD was as bad as ever

Week 6 - THURSDAY

Anita rang me at seven this morning absolutely hysterical. She has done a pregnancy test and it is positive. I told her to calm down and repeat the test on Saturday when she is back home. The police contacted mum at the hotel to say that her passport had been found a mile away from the hospital.

The Spanish policeman was bemused that my mother's Christian name is Pegasus. She explained that she always got called Peg. Her father had been intoxicated when he went to register her birth and instead of writing Peggy Sue(after the Buddy Holly song) he wrote Pegasus. It's a popular family anecdote which is actually true.

Anyway the upshot is she can travel home using her original passport. Anita said not to tell mum, dad or Julian about pregnancy as she wanted to confirm it first. She said she would have to move to a bigger house. I told her that since Ivan is a taxi driver her options are slim as less people were using taxis during the recession.



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Search

She said he could rejoin the TA and maybe get some shelf stacking work at Asda. I suggested she could get a part time job but she became very defensive and said that her place was at home bringing up the kids.

Very quiet day at work as Manda phoned in sick (she has to sort out her fancy dress costume and prepare the raffle prizes).

Mark and I went to the cinema to see a Nicholas Cage film. Extremely far fetched with an awful ending. I felt a bit sick as I scoffed a family bag of maltesers and half a bucket of popcorn. We went back to mine and he stayed over. We had a brilliant session between the sheets. He said he fancies me rotten with my new hair. I asked him if he would therefore go off me when it returns to it's natural frizz. He said of course not as that is what my hair was like when I met him. I am not so sure.

Texted Rex at midnight to book another straightening treatment. I am booked in for next week. I ended up inviting Rex to fancy dress night and he said he would bring some of his pals. Told him Gus already going with Manda.

Week 6 - FRIDAY

Mum texted to give me a shopping list as apparently dad incapable of buying bread and milk. She said she is excited about coming home but bit nervous about bunion operation. I texted her back and told her that bunion operation date was yet to be confirmed and she could be on the waiting list for months.

Anita texted and said she would ring me on Sunday or Monday after new pregnancy test results. She said Channel and Paris both got awful sunburn and she had to take them to casualty department. I said she has spent quite a lot of time in Spanish hospital.

She said I am lucky, it could have been prison as she had come close to murdering both mum and Ivan. I told her she probably has pre menstrual syndrome. She said please God.

Work very busy as Manda had brought a quiz sheet in and took ages to complete. She said her and Gus are both going as pimps to the charity do. I said how very classy. She said she has superb flowery shirt, flared trousers and trilby hat. Apparently Rex has been to a vintage shop and his costume cost a hundred pounds.



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Search

He said he didn't mind spending that amount as it was for charity. I explained to him that the vintage shop was privately owned and therefore the meningitis charity would in no way benefit from his spending spree. He said he would donate his tips from the salon for today and Saturday. He said he hoped I was going to make an effort. I told him my costume was Agnetha from Abba and he said 'quelle surprisez!'. I justified my lack of enthusiasm on a huge credit card bill looming and he said he would let me off.

I rang Mark. He has managed to borrow a wig and some platforms from Mungo (oh the pros of having a transsexual brother). Anyway he said he looks like Alvin Stardust. I said that was marginally better than Ziggy Stardust. He is working late tonight so early night for me. I need to prepare myself mentally for the Benidorm ones' return as well as going to work and the party.

Week 6 - SATURDAY

Got mum's shopping in during lunch break and had to lug it back to work. Mark working overtime so he rang me at work on pretence of ordering toilet fittings and said he would pick me up at seven and drop my overnight bag off at his flat. He confirmed he had ordered a taxi to pick us up at quarter to eight. Taxi then picking Gus and Manda up at 8 o'clock. Gus is staying at Manda's house for the whole bank holiday weekend. I told Mark taxi was going to be expensive but he said not to worry as his overtime would cover it. I don't think he is that well off judging by the amount of money it must have cost him to renovate his apartment. Maybe he is trying to look good in front of my friends?

Just a few lines before Mark picks me up (I am waiting for him to toot his horn-I may be tooting it later on if he's lucky! ooh sorry, had a couple of Jack Daniels and diet coke to get me in party mood.)

Anita rang me and said she is definitely pregnant as she had done three tests in a row. She said she had to drink a pint of orange squash to produce enough urine. I asked her if she was going to tell anyone else about it and she said 'Carla, of course, I have told Ivan and he is over the moon, in fact he danced around the bedroom when I told him.'



Google

back pain



Search

Somehow I do not believe her as Ivan begged her to get her tubes tied after the twins were born but she refused saying that getting your tubes tied was a very serious operation and it made women gain weight. Ivan refuses to have a vasectomy because one of his work colleagues (Ray, another Taxi driver) was butchered during his operation and had to wear a truss for months. Ray claimed that the truss made his bits look like a piece of brisket beef.

Also his partner Geraldine got pregnant the following year so Ray said it had not worked. I pointed out to Ivan at the time that it is a well known fact that Geraldine is known as 'Slagitha' down the local working men's social club. Also the baby was born with black hair and sallow skin and the rest of the kids are borderline Albino with ginger hair like Ray.

Only time will tell if Ivan is really chuffed about the impending birth of their offspring. I do think one of them should get contraceptives though as more than three kids is a lot for these days unless you can afford them. Oh will have to go as I can hear Mark(he has the Killers on in car, think should be something seventies like Earth, Wind and Fire to get us in right frame of mind.)

Week 6 - SUNDAY

Had a fabulous night and won three raffle prizes. Two of them were bottles of snowball and the other was a free cut and blow dry at Norma's Hair emporium (will give all three prizes to my mum.)

Rex and Mitchell looked super cool in their vintage gear, and Manda and Gus just looked hysterical in their pimp getup. Mark clumped around for an hour in his platforms but he slipped on the dance floor so changed into his trainers. The whole evening raised eight hundred pounds so was quite proud that I had contributed. I think Rex donated a hundred quid (his tips at work are excellent. It is his salon and his clientele are very elite).

The downside were the toilets. They must have been invented for waifs as I had to turn sideways to get in and it took ages to undo my lycra cat suit in such an enclosed space. I always hover over the toilet seat(my mam told me when I was growing up that I could catch sexually transmitted diseases from lavatory seats) but when I tried to hover my legs became wedged against the sides of the toilet cubicle.



Google

back pain



Search

As a result I have a really bad back. I looked back pain up on google and it advised keeping mobile as much as possible and applying ice and heat alternatively. Poor Mark can't help me either. Just before we left at about midnight Rex insisted we get a group photo taken and persuaded Mark to put his platform boots back on. We then left and went for some supper as the buffet was awful (stale sausage rolls, triangular sandwiches which were curled up and Iceland mini pizzas. I think was more a spread than a buffet.)

Anyway Rex coerced us to go for a curry at this restaurant that he frequents. The food was gorgeous. We had pickles and poppadums to start then Bhuna Prawn on puree, onion bhajis, chicken Massala all washed down with a pint of lager.

We left curry house at one thirty and stepped outside for a taxi. That's when Mark slipped on a discarded carton of curry sauce and chips. He was moaning in agony so we phoned an ambulance. I told Manda, Gus, Mitchell and Rex to go home but they all insisted on coming to hospital. They followed ambulance in a mini bus taxi cab.

The consultant on duty was not impressed by the fact that Mark had been drinking alcohol and advised that he could not have any pain relief. He had dislocated his shoulder and sprained his ankle badly as well as bad cuts and bruises.

It was hysterical watching Mark being told off because he was still wearing afro wig and brown nylon flared trousers although the platform boots had been removed. Rex and me kept giggling so the nurse told us to wait outside.

Mark did not get kept in but they have given him some strong painkillers and he is still sleeping. I have took a couple myself for my back.

I will shuffle in to the kitchen soon and cook us some lunch/tea as it's gone two. Rex has rang to make sure we are both ok but he had to try and stop himself laughing. I told him Mark was pissed off with us for being childish last night as he was in severe pain.

Mark and me have eaten an omlette, a family size bar of Galaxy and a pot of tea. We are now lying together in bed watching a dvd. We obviously can't go too near one another as both in severe pain.

Week 7 - BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY



Google

back pain



Search

Everyone has rang to see if Mark ok. I didn't mention about my bad back to Rex but I did tell Manda. She said she went in the toilets with Gus for a Booty call at the charity event. I asked her how she had managed this as I could barely get in. She just sniggered and said I had to use my imagination. She said it involved standing on the toilet seat. I don't even want to go there.

Mark is still in agony and his family are coming over this afternoon to see him. Mercedes his sister left a message on the answer phone saying Rex had told Mungo all about his accident. She said she was surprised he was still going out with Worzel Gummidge(presume that's me.)

I was meant to staying all day but I would rather make my escape now before they arrive.

Mark has begged me to stay and said to ignore Worzel Gummidge remark. He said Mungo and Babs both liked me and his parents were ok with me. Well flattery indeed. I think Mungo only likes me because I didn't freak about his sex change operation. I may suffer with many physical and mental illnesses but I am definitely not narrow minded. That is thanks to my parents and their eccentric ways.

My back really bad and feel I would be better in my own flat sitting with a hot water bottle watching Pride and Prejudice. However, I have soldiered on and managed to give Mark his lunch and his pills. He has been given Tramadol but they are making him really drowsy. I will have to ring in sick for him tomorrow.

The outlaws will be here soon so I have managed to tidy myself up and potter around cleaning up the flat. They have just buzzed up using the intercom so I will switch off now and report back later.

Well I am now back home. Me and Mark are finished for good.

Bloody Mercedes turned up with Jennifer. My confidence just evaporated as they are a formidable twosome. Mercedes looked at me with disdain and Jennifer went straight to the sofa where Mark was lying and started fawning over him. She kissed him on the lips. I don't honestly think Mark could pull away quick enough as he was in too much pain. I felt so sick to my stomach I said I had just received a text saying my mother was ill and had to go. I quickly gathered my stuff and left.



Google

back pain



Search

I was in such a state I walked all the way back to my flat even though it is six miles away.

I was sweating like a kipper when I got home so I had a shower and switched my mobile off. Am seriously thinking about getting a new SIM card so that Mark cannot bother me anymore. I just can't take any more of this shit. He may say that he doesn't have feelings for her but she is always going to be there isn't she? floating about in the shadows like a bad smell. Mark had shouted after me but I put my hand up in a 'talk to the hand coz the face ain't listening ' type of gesture.

I have phoned Rex in tears . He was in bed with some youngster(22 year old student) when I rang but he insisted on driving straight over. Manda and Tracey are on their way also.

My fabulous friends have been so kind. They made me have a hot bath, take my pain killers and eat some fish and chips which they had brought around.

They have all gone home now as it's late and they all have work tomorrow. I have decided not to answer phone or mobile for a few days. Rex has given me one of his phones to contact people on and transferred all my numbers for me.

Rex told me that Mercedes had slagged me off to Babs last weekend. She said I looked like a scarecrow and have no prospects(Mark had told Babs and Mungo that he had met me at bathroom fitting supply firm) and Mercedes said this is hardly a high flying career.

I tried to act like I wasn't bothered but I think Rex can read me quite well.

I will not wait until new year to make resolutions as I have decided today that I will go back to college on an evening and train to do something. Maybe I could do an open university degree? I could become a doctor even. I have a head start being so well read on all medical matters.

I will sleep on it. I cannot phone in sick tomorrow as I already have had a sick warning this year. I need this job to pay my rent and bills. We haven't all got rich millionaire brothers like Mark.



Google

back pain



Search

Week 7 - TUESDAY

I woke up in early hours of morning with horrendous pains in my chest. I also felt nauseous. I got up to go to the loo and my legs just gave way. MY heart was pounding and I was sweating. I managed to crawl on my belly and grabbed the throw on my bed and my mobile fell off. I rang Tracey and told her I thought I was dying. She asked if I had googled my symptoms but I said I was too weak.

Tracey googled palpitations, dizziness, nausea and sweating as well as pain in chest and told me she would ring an ambulance as google said I was having a heart attack. She said she would drive to the hospital and wait for me there.

I ended up in a holding type of ward and was assessed right through the night. The consultant came to see me at nine o'clock this morning and said she was sure I had had a panic attack and was suffering from anxiety. She asked if I was stressed about anything. I told her I was often stressed. She advised me to read the leaflets on anxiety management and gave me a letter to give to my doctor.

Tracey had phoned Manda and asked her to cover for me at work and explained what had happened. Manda told the manager that I had an emergency dental appointment and would try and get to work this afternoon.

Tracey brought me home and I had a shower while she made a sandwich for us.

I told her I feel totally stupid for dragging her to the hospital in middle of night but she said that was what best friends were for. I said a friend in need is a pain in the arse.

I don't know how but I managed to go to work at one and the manager was at an area meeting so luckily I was not missed.

Manda said that she and Tracey were going to try and book a long weekend away for the three of us. She said Bernice said she would cover the Monday and Friday for us. I decided that sounded like a fabulous idea.

I really need to get away and clear my mind about all things Mark related.



Google

back pain



Search

I went to see Doctor Bloomfield and he could not have been nicer. He advised me to continue taking the prozac and he gave me a weeks worth of diazepam to calm me and help me sleep.

Have decided not to turn phones back on until I am feeling better.

Week 7 – Wednesday

Have put my name down for anxiety management course at local community centre. Should hear in few weeks. I am hoping the group will consist of high flying professional type people but knowing my luck the class will be a bunch of no hopers like me.

Work was very busy as a new housing development has asked our firm to do all supplying. I spoke to one of the architects and thought he might have been flirting with me but ignored it and remained strictly professional.

Manda spent the entire morning on google looking for cheap weekend breaks. My mum phoned me at work for a chat and said she had dropped my cigarettes off with my next door neighbour. She said she was disgusted that Anita was pregnant again. She has been to her first ante natal appointment and her due date is April the 1st. That did not come as a surprise. She is having a scan in two weeks to confirm dates and apparently she is hoping it is not twins again.

Again, no surprises there. I advised mum that I had finished with Mark again and that I had ended up in hospital with a panic attack. She just said 'what are you like Carla! you can't seem to hold on to a man'.

She said Ivan had put his name down for extra shifts at work, and had asked dad if he could share his allotment as he needed to grow his own vegetables to save money. I told mum I thought he would be better off finding a better job but she said that Ivan was at the back of the queue when God was handing out ambition and brain power. I said at least he is fertile. Mum said that was a curse and she hoped the future offspring would inherit the Bradley brains.

Rex picked me up from work and we went for a cheap Italian tea time special. He has been an absolute rock lately. After the meal we



Google

back pain



Search

went to Rex's salon and he trimmed my hair, touched up my roots and applied another magic straightening treatment.

He said Mungo had told him that Mark has left nine messages on my answer phone but there was no more space to leave any more. He had also left endless text messages and voicemails. Mungo said that after I had stormed out he threw Mercedes and Jennifer out and told Mercedes to stay out of his life.

That does make me feel a bit better but I am ok on my own at the moment. If I am meant to be with Mark then it will happen. I am a great believer in fate.

Rex dropped me off at ten and I more or less flopped straight into bed. Because of diazepam I hope to get a decent sleep tonight.

Week 7 – Thursday

Well I am going away tomorrow for two nights. We are going to Rome. I have been to Rome when I was a teenager and I do think it's a beautiful city.

I have my Benidorm money which has paid for mini break and will fund my spending.

As well as me, Manda is bringing her sister Claire (very highly strung, tactless, mutton dressed as ferret), and Tracey.

I couldn't really disagree with Claire as it's her who got is cheap flights. She works for EasyJet as a call centre operative. Our flights are only fifty quid return and we have great flight times. Tomorrow morning at ten so have to be at Manchester airport at 8. I was going to ask Julian to take us but we have decided on a taxi.

Listened to all of Mark's messages then deleted them. He seems genuinely sorry about Jennifer and Mercedes turning up and is begging for another chance. He claims that I am his other one, and that I complete him. Please!!

He should know I have watched Jerry Maguire several times and is not Tom Cruise.

Maybe I will think about things when I am away. I could stare at the Trevi Fountain and gather my thoughts.



Google

back pain



Search

I decided not to tell mum that I was going as she will make me bring loads of tobacco back and the weight of my suitcase will go over the limit.

I was too excited to do much at work. Mark rang three times but Manda just told him I was too busy.

I hate taking off on the plane so will take a diazepam to calm my nerves. I have informed Rex where I am staying just in case of emergencies.

Early night tonight. All packed, Tickets, passport, money, credit card, Mebeverine, Buscopan, Immodium, Senokot, Fluoxetine, Diazepam, anti histamine, throat lozenges and paracetamol. If I need anything else I will have to visit Italian pharmacy. Have downloaded some useful phrases for emergencies such as 'I am lost' and 'do you have any treatments for Haemorrhoids'.

Week 7 – Friday

Obviously have brought my laptop. Arrived safely at hotel and booked in at 4 pm. The flight awful as I got sat next to Claire. She told me all about her polycystic ovaries, her facial hair nightmare and the adult acne she had to endure. The doctor had referred her to a specialist in women's problems and she had undergone a full hysterectomy (vaginally).

She then suffered a prolapse and has had stress incontinence ever since.

I never managed to get a word in edgeways. I did manage a gin and tonic though to numb the pain.

I insisted that I share a room with Tracey. I would not have had any room in the chest of drawers to store my things as Claire's panty liners and tenna ladies would have took up all of the room. Manda apologised and said she intended to wear her ipod in the room so that she didn't have to listen.

We got changed into something cool as Rome quite warm even in September. Looking suitably stylish we made our way into the city (our Hotel about half an hour from city centre so we took the bus.)



Google

back pain



Search

We went to see The Spanish Steps and gazed longingly into the windows of designer shops. Manda went into Prada and asked to buy a carrier bag but she was escorted out of the shop.

We took loads of photos, me and Manda in front of statue of Roman with willy hanging out, Tracey in front of man with willy hanging out, Claire giving a ten Euro note to beggar with a festered leg.

Next stop was gorgeous Italian restaurant omitting a dreamy garlic aroma. We sat down and ordered and then I nipped to the loo as I was bursting. The toilet was crawling with cockroaches. Returned to table and promptly left without ordering.

Found a clean place to eat but was very expensive so settled for a pizza between the four of us and a jug of water (probably tap).

We then found some lovely wine bars (so 80's) but the booze was very expensive so we bought a bottle of vodka from the shops and just added it to lemonade in bars under the table.

Rolled in to the Hotel Roma at three in the morning and were told off my reception for making too much noise. We plugged ipod speakers in in our room and had a dance and more alcohol. Manda had brought cheese savoury sandwiches and corned beef pasties from the Greggs at the airport so we stuffed our faces then collapsed into bed at about four in the morning.

Week 7 – Saturday

The breakfast is abysmal. One type of cereal supposed to be corn flakes. It was certainly flakes of something but not corn. Stale bread rolls and apricot jam. I ask you 'apricot jam!'. The most unpopular flavour in the UK and that's what they offer us. I ended up having a luke warm cup of black coffee and took my pills. Too hung over to even attempt the paltry offerings of the breakfast buffet (not a spread or a buffet to tell you the truth).

We had pre booked tickets to go on a planned tour today.

Got on bus with the girls at ten am.

Had to get off bus at ten fifteen as Manda vomited and some of offending liquid ran down centre of bus. One of the other tourists complained (Chinese elderly lady, floppy hat, huge camera) and we were asked to get off bus. We were told we could not get a refund,



Google

back pain



Search

but our ticket for the tour ensured a queue jump at the Colosseum and the Vatican.

We decided to walk a little to get our bearings and maybe find somewhere to eat.

We found a quaint outside cafe and ordered coffees and pastries. Delicious. Smoked several cigarettes as everyone smokes in Rome and we didn't feel like leppers for a change.

Four men outside Colosseum in Roman soldier attire. They swooped on us straight away and put their arms around us, offering to have a photograph taken for fifty euros. We politely declined and they persisted. Then Manda whispered into one of their ears and he winked at her.

Colosseum fascinating. A beautiful place to visit steeped in history. After ten minutes Manda disappears. I texted her but no reply.

She returns half an hour later looking disheveled. She had been in the sandwich van/portakabin and had a quickie with one of the Roman soldiers. She said it was true what they said about Roman Soldiers ... they have big helmets.

Had our photographs taken for free with Roman soldiers. I asked Manda if she felt guilty about cheating on Gus. She said "when in Rome make like the Romans, and anyway, Gus and I are not exclusive you know? Besides he was hung like a baboon."

I wasn't that fussed on the Vatican as I had been forced to spend an entire day there back in the 1980s when I went on a school trip with Saint Oswalds comprehensive. Still I felt obliged to take photos and I bought some fancy rosary beads for my mum.

We got the underground metro back to the hotel and had a nap. Once showered and looking glamorous we went out for a meal and then onto a nightclub which played distinctly dodgy music. I had not heard any of the songs before. Some slimy tourists from Germany tried to chat us up but there is something totally un sexy about the German accent. Still times are hard so we pretended to enjoy their company and let them ply us with drinks all night.

One of them took a particular shine to me and kept saying 'klein Carla, you ist zo vunny and chute'. Unfortunately for me he had a 'cling on' style fringe and he danced very stiff (like he had shit his



Google

back pain



Search

pants and his joints needing oiling). Manda said it is true what they say about German men, they have big helmets. She has no shame.

Tracey has had a man drought lately so she snogged the face off her German leech called Jon. She said he had a tongue like an electric eel, but his front two teeth were hanging out to dry so when they kissed his teeth rubbed against hers. Yacky poo poo!

Returned to hotel at one. Had to go straight to bed as we must vacate room by ten in the morning. We are not flying until tea time but we can leave our belongings at reception whilst we do more sightseeing tomorrow.

Week 7 – Sunday

Poor Manda. She thinks she might have a bladder infection. We looked up her symptoms on google. Burning when peeing and a pain in her groin area. Google did not mention a pain in that area. It said you may encounter pain the lower back or kidney area. I didn't like to say anything to Manda but I suspect she may have caught an STI (sexually transmitted infection). Google did mention that it would burn when you pee and you may get a sharp pain in the groin area. It said you may also get green sores on your genitals (euch!).

She has been such a laugh on this weekend away she doesn't deserve to catch anything as horrid as that Still, I suppose she did have unprotected sex with the Roman soldier. She said she didn't go all the way with the German guy although she did see his bratwurst sausage.

We enjoyed our last day in the Capital. Tracey and I went shopping. There was an outdoor market on so I bought a Prada handbag for twenty five euros and some costume jewellery. Tracey bought a Louis Vuitton suitcase for a hundred euros. Is a brilliant copy as I have seen the celebrities in the OK magazines at the airports with their large pile of LV luggage.

Manda felt unwell so she and Claire went ahead to the airport.

Tracey and I swapped all her stuff into the new case and we checked in for our flight home.

When we found Manda and Claire, Manda was crying and Claire was telling her off.



Google

back pain



Search

Manda told me she thought she might have caught something from that Roman soldier as she was really itchy down below. I calmed her down and said we would go straight to the 24 hour pharmacy when we got back to Manchester. She said she thinks she loves Gus and feels really guilty for cheating on him.

I told her to just put it out of her mind and start afresh with Gus. I believe in these situations, clearing your conscience does not help the other party. Even if it eases your guilt.

Flight not as bad as there were loads of empty seats so I sat with Tracey. I poured my heart out to her about Mark. Tracey thinks he really loves me and that I am being a fool for punishing him about Jennifer. She said he will find someone else and that I was not getting any younger (she reminded me that I will be 35 in a months time.)

Claire's boyfriend was picking us up from airport. I could not believe my eyes when I saw him. He looks exactly like one of the Chuckle brothers. I guess it has made me realise how gorgeous Mark is.

Am now back at my flat and I am gutted. I have a letter from my landlord. I have to vacate the property next Saturday as the place is being rewired and a new central heating system is being installed. As a result my rent is going up. What a bloody cheek. I have been getting electric shocks for the past three and a half years. He should be giving me compensation.

Mark had left three messages telling me he misses me and he hopes I have a great weekend in Rome (Rex had mentioned to Mungo .)

I rang Manda straight away and she said the sachets she got from the chemist are not working so she is going to go to the STI clinic first thing. I said I would cover for her at work. I asked her if I would move in with her for a fortnight whilst my flat gets renovated and she agreed immediately.

I rang Mark when I was curled up in bed. He was nearly in tears. He said he really missed me and he loves me. I told him I thought I loved him. He said he understood that I have issues with trust and self esteem so he was pleased that I thought I loved him.



Google

back pain



Search

He said he has actually broken one of the bones in his ankle but the hospital have agreed to take his cast off next week so that he can return to work.

I assured him I would call after work tomorrow and we could have a good talk then.

Week 8 - Monday

Poor Manda. She came in to work at eleven. She is very tearful. We sent Bernice on the sandwich run to get her out of the way.

Manda says she has definitely caught something from that Roman soldier. She said the lady at the clinic took swabs from her fanny and has given her a strong dose of antibiotics which she must take for ten days.

She cannot have sex for two weeks. She is going to tell Gus she has a bladder infection and that the anti-biotics are canceling out her - contraceptive injection.

She said she has learned her lesson and she is no longer going to be promiscuous (I will believe it when I see it!). She said Gus had left her a voicemail and said he was looking forward to a catch up bonk so she had texted him and said she was working late all this week and that I was moving in with her on Friday. She said that will buy her some time.

Called in to mum's after work to give her the Rosary beads. She was thrilled but annoyed that I had not told her about trip. I told her was all last minute but I had brought her two hundred ciggies so she forgave me.

Her neighbour has gone in for her gastric sleeve operation so mum is looking after her dog. It absolutely stinks. It's a cocker spaniel called Claude and it is fat and has saggy chops. Not a cute canine at all.

Mum is going to the scan tomorrow with Anita as Ivan too busy doing extra shifts. Mum said he started selling cans of cheap pop at the car boot sale but he was told he couldn't sell them as the organisers of the boot sale had all the rights on selling food and drinks. Out of spite he gave them away free so he is now a hundred quid down. Anita is livid!



Google

back pain

Search



Mum says they have put their names on the council list for a four bed roomed house.

Went to Mark's at seven and it went well. He is on crutches so I helped him clean the flat and I got us a take away from the Chinese.

I told him about moving to Manda's and he became dead sulky as he wanted me to move in with him. I said it was too soon but maybe I could stay one or two nights.

Because he can't drive I just walked home. I have my rape alarm so didn't feel nervous. Also I took a self defence class last year so know how to handle myself even if I am only little.

Still feeling bit agitated so I hope my anxiety management course gets in touch soon.

Week 8 - Tuesday

Manda still very itchy down below. She said it's like thrush but times a million. I have told her a billion times to stop exaggerating.

Massive order at work so manager says there will be weekend overtime available and he may take on an assistant manager as he has to go away on business. He made himself sound really important. Smug git. Still the extra money will come in handy. Maybe one of these days I will be able to buy my own flat instead of renting from that Jewish sod.

Mum rang. Anita is further along than she thought and they think she must have had a breakthrough bleed. She is expecting twins. Well it couldn't have happened to a nicer person! Apparently, Ivan is on Prozac but he can't go on the sick because he won't get paid. Poor Bastard. Still he should have kept it in his troosers.

I was having an okay sort of day as work goes and I started getting an awful dull pain in the top right of my jaw. I looked it up on google and said it could be a condition called TMJ caused by teeth grinding or whiplash, an abscess or tension in the muscles. Well I am not sure whether I grind my teeth (will set a tape up tonight to record my night noises), I do not have whiplash but I am always tense so may be that. Will wait to hear results of grinding experiment before I seek medical advice.



Google

back pain



Search

Tracey came over tonight to help me start packing. She is joining an internet dating site. I helped her with her profile. It asked what type of man she wanted to meet. She said "Carla, I just want to meet someone who will love me and care for me". I told her that made her sound needy and desperate so we agreed on average attractiveness, over five feet seven, medium build, no baldies, white collar worker preferable, must have own teeth, must not dye hair, no peanut allergy sufferers, no vasectomy receivers, no kids, must have own property and car.

I am sure she will get loads of responses - not! We have used her best photo, taken about ten years ago just after she came out of university. She looks so happy and hopeful. Little did she know she would end up in the Civil Service!

She has never used her degree really, except once she mentioned it on an application form for the TV show 'Eggheads'. Her team never got accepted. Shame as Tracey is very photogenic and would have looked fab on TV.

Rex rang while Tracey was there. He had heard about me having to move and offered me a bed but I declined his kind offer. He asked if anything was wrong with Manda as Gus got the feeling she was trying to avoid him. I told him she was really into him and that we have big thing on at work at the moment. Rex sniggered and said he didn't know there would ever be a rush on for bog seats. I informed him that we supply to all the big names as well as hotel chains and the local councils. He said 'keep your hair on missus, was only joking, thought you were going to retrain anyway?'. I told him I was still thinking about it. He asked me to come to his friends housewarming party on Saturday night but I had to refuse as am working overtime at the weekend.

Week 8 - Wednesday

I tell you I will be glad to see the back of 2009.

Up all night with horrendous pain in my jaw. This morning I realised that the bloody tape had not worked so I will never know if I grind my teeth. I rang the dentist and explained that I thought I had toothache. She told me to come to the surgery at eight thirty and someone would fit me in. I texted Manda and asked her to cover for me at work.



Google

back pain



Search

I ended up with the worst dentist in the practice. Mr Singh. He should have retired years ago and has shocking halitosis. I felt like offering him a polo mint but thought better of it.

He asked me if I was pregnant then proceeded to take an x-ray, which showed that the nerve in my tooth has died and I need a root filling. He gave me a prescription for penicillin and I have to see him in two weeks for a forty minute appointment. Oh joy. I bloody hate root fillings. I have had three altogether. Painful, uncomfortable and very expensive. I blame my mother for not breast feeding me as a baby. She said she didn't want to end up with spaniels ears. No, instead she deprived me, her precious offspring of essential calcium. She said if she had have been wealthy she would have paid a wet nurse to feed me. I am glad I was born into poverty as I could have sucked the nipple of a potential mass murderer.

It is just as well I have a months worth of overtime as I will be skint after dental bill, not to mention rent increase.

Work ok but I still feel really anxious despite being on high dose of Prozac. I think the whole dental debacle has aggravated my nerve endings. I rang Mark and he was really sweet. He told me to go to his tonight and he will cook (well he can't actually stand without crutches so he will order a ready cooked chicken and ready washed salad from Tesco).

Told Manda that Gus was getting paranoid but she said everything fine as he had arrived unannounced last night and she had told him the bladder infection excuse and he had bought it, and settled for a 'ham shank' instead (Manda's words, not mine).

Rex emailed me at work. He is going to have botox at the weekend as someone in a bar thought he was thirty nine. He is actually thirty four so he was devastated. I told him he didn't need poison injecting. He said it's botox not heroin. He said it was no biggy and that some of his clients had it done in their lunch hour. I told him he would end up addicted and he may look like the bride of Wildenstein, or worse, Jackie Stallone. He said he would rather look like the bride of Wildenstein than have wrinkles.

God he is so vain. He already spends a fortune on expensive face creams and anti ageing masks. He offered for me to have it in my forehead but I declined as I cannot afford to keep having it done.



Google

back pain



Search

Once it wears off I would look ancient. I think I will wait until my fifties then have a full body and face lift like Sharon Osbourne.

Rex informed me that Mercedes is having fertility treatment as she has not been able to get pregnant. I told Rex, her womb is like her personality.....hostile.

She will have a nanny anyway. I don't know why she is bothering. I bet she ends up with a surrogate.

Week 8 - Thursday

My period must be due because I am getting my 'third eye' (an enormous blind spot between my eyebrows). I don't know why they are called blind spots because you would have to be blind not to see the fecker. Maybe I should paint it with nail varnish in style of a bhindi.

Anyway sometimes I get weepy when I am due on and other times I have an awful temper. I think it depends whether it's the left or the right ovary.

Rex rang me at work to ask me if I could do some hair modelling for him as he is doing a hair show and he wanted to show the best example of his straightening treatment from Japan. I said I would do it as long as my make up could cover any future menstrual spottage. He said his best make up artist would take years off me by applying Smashbox mineral foundation. I told him I have been using Clinique foundation and loose powder since I was seventeen.

He said "Carla, it is so eighties pet, anyone who is anyone is using minerals." I agreed to keep him happy. It is this Saturday night and he said Manda and Gus are coming to support him (he narrowly missed the trophy last year).

Work relatively quiet although Manda assures me that the itch has subsided. She said she is definitely a new woman and that if Gus doesn't find out about her venereal disease episode, she is going to try and make things work with him. I told her he has probably had infections himself in the past but she covered her ears and said she and him were a fresh start.

Finished my packing and am moving to Manda's tomorrow night. We are going to have a girly night to celebrate my moving in. Am really looking forward to it but I shall miss my own bed that's for



Google

back pain

Search



sure. I paid a small fortune for my mattress as it's half sprung and half memory foam.

My mum said she is going to buy a memory foam pillow for dad as he keeps forgetting things.

Looked up Mark's injury on google and it said that he will be in pain for months. It's a shame as I was thinking about booking us for a weekend away to make up for disastrous barbecue weekend. It's my birthday in two weeks so it would have been a nice treat.

Oh well the last night in my own bed. Won't be able to wear some of the normal flannelette jim jams I normally wear as Manda would never let me live it down. Am only going to take three pairs for the fortnight. Manda has a utility room with a washer/drier so will be fine.

I am going to pay Manda for my keep as well. I know she struggles with the mortgage on her own.

Night night walls, night night my cosy bed.

Week 8 - Friday

Rex rang, he had the Botox injections yesterday and his wrinkles are still there. He is in a panic that he won't look his best for tomorrow at the Hair show. I googled it and told him it can take five to seven days for wrinkles to disperse. I advised he use Smashbox mineral foundation. He called me a smart arse and said he wants a refund. He is also considering having his teeth lightened by lasers because years of chain smoking have left them somewhat yellowy.

I told him that google advises to get an impression made at the dentist and wear the tooth whitening trays at home because laser whitening can cause bad sensitivity. He said he would have to go private because he had had a one night stand with his bi-sexual dentist and had promised to ring him but had not bothered.

I told him not to go to my dentist as they are old fashioned (not even computerised yet and it's 2009). Also Mr Singh has bad breath and failing eyesight.

Rex said he will be very busy tomorrow so Mitchell is picking me up at five thirty. I reminded him that was living at Manda's. I told him about eruption in between eyebrows. I advised him I was possibly growing a tusk. He said as long as it's not a beard or a tache he can



Google

back pain



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deal with it (note to self, must tweezer out my wiry menstrual bristle hair from chin.)

Had fab night at Manda's. Tracey, Bernice and Claire came. I managed to avoid her for most of the night but she had brought photos from Rome. I saw Manda look uncomfortable when the Roman soldier one came up.

I have asked for a couple to copy (I look fairly young, and hair is tidy.)

We drank Mojitos and white wine. We played our normal game of 'would you shag him?' about people from the telly. We all agreed (except Claire) that we would shag Simon Cowell as he has this air of power about him. We reckon he would like a girl to be a dirty ride and we all concurred that he would have some sort of magic power over us and that we would agree to whatever sexual demands he asked of us. Gerard Butler was a definite along with Dermot O'Leary.

Went to my new bed very drunk so should sleep ok. Texted Mark before lights out and he informed me that Rex had invited him tomorrow night so he is coming with Mungo and Babs. I told him I cannot drink as am on anti-biotics (I don't count those mojitos tonight as they were medicinal.) He said he is not drinking anyway as still on crutches. Anyhow, I agreed to sleep at his tomorrow night. He is hoping to get cast removed on Monday.

Week 8 - Saturday

Tracey texted me to say she has a date tonight with someone from the internet dating site. All she knows is his name is Colin and he is 45 years old.

I told her Colin is a bit of a nerdy name with the exception of Colin Firth and Colin Farrell. She said 45 is a bit older than she had hoped but beggars can't be choosers. We discussed what she should wear and agreed that a simple drink at the pub should be casual yet smart. A difficult look to pull off for Tracey as she spends her life in combat trousers and slogan t-shirts.

Work very busy. Phone never stopped ringing, orders being chased up. My mum called me in between the melee to inform me that Doreen had undergone her gastric sleeve operation and there had been complications and the hospital could not give her a date for getting out.



Google

back pain



Search

This means she is stuck with smelly Claude, the spaniel.

She is in panic mode as she is going into hospital on my birthday to have her bunions done. I told her she had nearly two weeks and I was sure Doreen would be out by then. I said if not, dad would have to look after Claude. She said dad had told her that he would not give up the allotment to mind someone else's dog.

Spot situation not good. There is a definite increase in the size of the swelling. It's also shiny, and no amount of powder will cover redness. No sign of period so spot may be a rogue outbreak.

Anita rang me to tell me the babies she is carrying are now the size of a scotch egg. I informed her that I had something growing on my forehead that was bigger than a scotch egg (slight exaggeration, but only slight mind), any way she said I was insensitive and she would not bother telling me anything else about my future nephews/nieces. She said I had better get a move on if I wanted kids as my fertility was dropping daily. I told her I was too important and busy to talk to her.

Also toothache back with a vengeance. Think alcohol must have cancelled out healing properties of anti-biotics. See what Mr Singh says next time.

Have to sign off now as dashing around Manda's trying to get ready for hair show. Mitchell picking me up in half an hour.

Week 8 - Sunday

Show was a huge success. Rex put temporary extensions in my hair and it went to my waist. Amazing! My real hair is only shoulder length at the moment but am deffo going to grow it now. Three other models were in Rex's team. Two of them were professionals. They were gorgeous but bitchy.

There was no sign of the 'tusk' as I was airbrushed to within an inch of my life. Two z list celebrities turned up (you will have seen them in Heat, Now, Star etc, the types who turn up to the opening of an envelope), one of them had been in Big Brother 5 and the other got through to the bootcamp stage of x factor in 2007.

I was given a fabulous catsuit to wear which I thought I would never carry off as I am so short but it was altered behind the scenes. I shimmied down the catwalk and I had to hold a hairdrier and point the nozzle as if I was holding a gun. Well cool!



Google

back pain



Search

There was champagne and canapés afterwards and I chatted to Gus, Mitchell, Mungo and Babs. Mark and I left just after midnight.

On the down side, I haven't been too well this morning. My poo is very runny and is a bit tarry. Looked up on google and it said any change in stool habits should be reported to GP immediately. Am very worried. This is it, the big one. I think might have crohns disease or cancer.

Very quiet at Mark's. Told him about my concerns and I burst out crying. He said he would ring Mungo and ask his private doctor to come and see me.

Doctor James rang me within the hour and asked me a series of questions. It was concluded that I was suffering the after affects of mixing strong anti biotics with huge amounts of alcohol. He said he would send me another short course of anti biotics over by motorbike courier and that I should take them and under no circumstances should I drink alcohol. Well I am so relieved. Mind he did say that if stools did not return back to my normal rabbits droppings I should visit my own GP for further investigation.

I rang Mungo and thanked him but he said it was 'no problemo, any time'.

Told Mark I was very embarrassed but he said he knew I was a worrier and not to worry about what he thinks as he still worships me. He then made me wear the catsuit and recreate the catwalk pose.

We made love. Was great. Lasted ages and was trembling afterwards. Still no sign of period. I then gave Mark a massage. He said he had to be honest and that I was terrible at massage. I won't take it personally although I secretly wondered if any of his previous girlfriends were good with their hands.

At four o clock I still had not heard from Tracey so I rang her. She said date not brilliant. She said Colin was a vegan. I told her I didn't like 'Star Trek' and she said "Not a Vulcan Carla, a vegan, he doesn't eat meat or wear anything made from animals." She said being a vegan suited him as he had cauliflower ears.

I asked her if he had an unusually shaped dick, perhaps a parsnip but she said she didn't see his bits. She won't be seeing him again.



Google

back pain



Search

Apart from the ears, his dress sense was non-existent. It must have been bad as Tracey not that bothered with fashion. Anyhow, she has another date on Thursday night with a guy from Cheshire called Jim.

Went home (Manda's) by taxi at ten as really tired with the day's worries bearing heavily upon me. I will say a prayer tonight for my stools to return to normal.

Week 9 - Monday

Fed up with work. I only had Sunday off last week because of overtime. New guy started in the office, although when boss away he will sit in his room. His name is Kirk, he is fresh from college. Very enthusiastic (you are when you are that age!) and he has loads of ideas about where changes can be made. Manda, Bernice and myself not happy as we think we may not get away with skiving from now on.

Anyway because I have been there the longest I have been told to take him under my wing. I will have to send him on errands when I want to go on google or make personal calls. Manda says she is attracted to him but thinks he is only in his early twenties. I told her she was being monogamous from now on anyway.

Because Kirk was so keen to please we sent him on sandwich run and gave him really complicated orders. Manda asked for a mozzarella, tomato and pesto poonani. We all sniggered behind his back. I remember my mum telling me that on her first day at the factory, the supervisor had sent her on an errand to get tartan thread. She knew it must have been a prank as it was a biscuit factory she was working in. The people must not have been very bright.

Whilst he was away I managed to google my stool problem again. I haven't been at all yet today so too early to say.

Rex texted me to say it's his day off and he has decided to go to a Dentist in town to see about teeth whitening. I knew he would become addicted. He also has an appointment next week at Transform to have his toes corrected. I just think this is a complete waste of money as nobody ever sees his toes. He argued that it would give him more confidence when having sexual intercourse.

The problem is, he explained in great detail, that the toe next to his big toe is longer than his big toe. I feigned horror and said that he



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back pain



Search

definitely must get that corrected as he was a freak of nature. (I didn't tell him about my double toenail on my pinky, as I think he may have vomited.)

Invited to mum's for tea tonight, apparently everyone going. Mum wants to see everyone before she gets her bunions done. You would think she was having a heart transplant. I will be on my guard because I have a feeling that she will want someone to do housework, feed dad and mind Doreen's mutt.

Tea at mum's started off all right. Julian and I making fun of Ivan to Anita. Of course Ivan wasn't there because he is working all the hours God sends.

He had an airport run and that's five packets of nappies according to Anita. My mum told her she should use terry nappies and steep them in a bucket like she did. Julian said as Anita is the youngest those nappies must have been well stained by the time she wore them. Mum's lips went thin and she assured Anita that she had bought a new packet with every pregnancy.

I painted Chanel's fingernails for her. She insisted I painted every nail a different colour so it took ages. I asked her if she was excited about the new babies but she just pulled a face and said "dad says the house is bloody crowded already."

Mum hassled me about introducing Mark to the family. I told her I would rather chew tinfoil than let Mark meet my family. Her lips went very thin this time and so I told her I would wait until after her operation.

Julian has a huge love bite on his neck which he tried to cover with concealer but we noticed straight away. It's pathetic really at his age. He should know that concealer won't work! His new love interest is a young dolly bird from his office. She is a temp so he says there will be no complications when he finishes with her as she is only on a short contract. Poor girl. He told me in private that she is a complete air head but she plays a mean fiddle. Oh purleeze! Too much information or TMI as Miles says.

Anita says she is going to ask friends to be godparents to the scotch eggs (new babies) as she thinks Julian and I are not good role models. I argued that we both work and are law abiding citizens. She said we spend far too much time drinking and fornicating. Can't say I am bothered about being relieved of god parenting duties.



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back pain



Search

She was wearing a brand new maternity outfit from Next as she said she gave the last lot to charity. Apparently she had offered them to Doreen, mum's neighbour but she couldn't even get her arm in let alone her body. Talking of Doreen, she is expected out of hospital in a week but she has to have a district nurse in for at least a fortnight. Turns out her gastric sleeve operation was a partial success. Julian said Doreen could give her old clothes to the scouts for them to camp out in. Mum tutted but she was definitely trying to stifle a smile.

Following huge roast chicken dinner at mum's I have had a motion and it is back to normal. Thank you Lord.

Dreading work tomorrow. Kirk is going to have a staff meeting to discuss changes. I don't take well to change. I still wear my blusher in an eighties stripe, I have eaten frosties for my supper since always and I had to have counselling when I had cable TV installed. God help me if we change to the Euro.

Anything is possible. Looks like dreary Gordon Brown is going to lose the next election. If the Tories get in we are doomed. I still remember the John Major years. My dad was unemployed, pensioners did not get heating allowance, Youth Training Schemes were the norm.

I am in a very pensive mood tonight. Miles was doing Michael Jackson impressions in style of Bo Selecta and it made me think of learning the dance to the 'Thriller' video when I was younger. Since his death I cannot look at my exfoliating glove!

Off to Beddy Byes.

Week 9 - Tuesday

Kirk called a meeting during a lull at work. He wants at least one of us at our desk during twelve and two to cover the phones so no more boozy lunches.

He has also divided out the contracts by alphabetical order and I am the latter half of the alphabet so I am still dealing with George Wimpy Homes. Good for me as it means Mark can still ring me on pretence of work matters.

He said if we take a cigarette break we have to take it during tea break or lunch break. This caused a few rumblings amongst us. He is obviously a bastard. Turns out he is Mr. MacDonald's nephew.



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back pain



Search

Quelle Surpreez! He is power crazy. He said no more jeans and trainers for work from now on. We have to come to work smartly dressed.

Manda argued that we do not see members of the public. He said if we are dressed smartly, we will work more efficiently whereas if we come to work dressed casually, we may adopt a lazy, relaxed attitude.

Manda asked if we perhaps should get an allowance to cover the new clothing we would have to buy. Kirk said absolutely not as he had ordered uniform for us. Before Manda could protest he said that he had guessed our sizes and we should have them by next week.

I told Kirk that I could not wear a skirt as I didn't feel comfortable showing my legs but he assure me the uniform comes with two pairs of trousers in the company's new purple . God, purple trousers! I hate purple.

He closed the meeting by saying that he would check on our work output twice a week to make sure targets were being met.

Manda says she is going to call him Captain Kirk. I told Manda I was going to the job centre next day off I have (my birthday). In the mean time I will scour the small ads in local paper to see if any jobs going. I know places are starting to recruit for Christmas. I can see myself in Debenhams actually. No stress.

Mr Macdonald breezed into the office after lunch to ask how we liked the new assistant manager. We all just smiled through gritted teeth. I will be needing a reference.

Mark texted me to tell me he has a surprise and could I call around tonight. Unfortunately I can't because I am going to Manda's mum's house. I promised her last week. We are scraping the spare bedroom as she is expecting her niece to come and stay for a few weeks as she is starting at Manchester university.

Manda's mum is a right God botherer. She is as my dad calls her 'a sanctimonious old cow'.

Week 9 - Wednesday

Well what a night at Manda's mum's house. She has even more religious icons than last time I was there. As we started scraping the spare room we heard her downstairs playing her Bontempi



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back pain



Search

organ. She was singing her usual hymn 'Walk in the light'. Manda reckons she is trying to make her see the error of her ways. We scraped for over three hours (we did take six fag breaks mind you). Cynthia (Manda's mum) did not offer us a cup of tea, not so much as a glass of holy water.

She is only in her late sixties but looks about eighty. She has always worn tweed, shin length skirts and polyester jumpers. Oh and always sensible shoes. She refers to Manda's shoes as 'death traps'.

As we put our coats on to leave she asked Manda when she was going to settle down. Manda told her mum that she will let her know when she is ready.

Cynthia said "Alas, I will never be a grandmother." She then proceeded to show us the hideous floral wallpaper that she had bought from the pound shop and asked us when we would be around to decorate. Manda informed her that we were working overtime but she would see what she could arrange and get back to her. She didn't see us out, instead she returned to the dining room, Emmerdale blaring from the television and began to play 'Walk in the light' again.

Manda said to me that the last time she had tried to walk in the light, she hurt her eyes and had to put her Ray bans on.

Went to Mark's tonight to find out what the surprise was and I was a bit disappointed. The surprise was that his cast had been removed. I told him I was pleased for him but I think he could tell I had bigger expectations. Anyway we played on the Wii for a bit and just chatted. God bless him, he has offered to decorate for Cynthia but only if I help. I told him he didn't know what he was letting himself in for. He is not a Catholic like myself and Manda so I know she will give him a hard time of it.

Mark still can't drive but he gave me the money for a taxi as it was dark outside. He said it was about time I learned to drive. I told him I have to concentrate on finding a new job first. He said that being able to drive would have widened my choices as travel would not be an issue. I just shrugged.

I haven't told Mark that I have failed my test eleven times. Only Manda and Tracey know. Too ashamed to tell anyone else. I just go to pieces behind the wheel. I have tried female instructors, old



Google

back pain



Search

instructors, young instructors, Manda as my instructor, Tracey as my instructor but all to no avail.

I will be agitated tonight because of this. I thought I had buried my driving lesson past.

Just before bed I went on google to look for ideas to speed up Mark's recovery. It said heat, ice and Arnica cream were good so I will buy him some tomorrow. It will show I care.

Week 9 - Thursday

Am really missing my own bed. Manda's spare room bed is memory foam. So bloody uncomfortable. I tossed and turned all night. Also I could hear her and Gus having sex in her room. I may have to rethink my plans. My mum has offered me my old room (still has Tears for Fears poster and pink cloud wallpaper) but am not too keen. Dad only allows us two squares of toilet roll for a number two and one square for a number one. I remember the first time I got my flat, I practically used a whole roll to wipe my bum. It was bliss.

Very busy at work today, I wore normal work clothes as new rules don't start until Monday. I rang mum in my lunch hour and told her not to ring me at work anymore as have new Nazi style boss. She told me that Anita has been offered a four bedroomed in William Hague Way (five minutes from Neil Kinnock Crescent where mum and dad live.)

The previous tenants (the Hubbard's) have been evicted due to disturbance of the peace, GBH and rent arrears. She is going to see it tonight during Ivan's tea break. Mum reckons it won't be very nice inside as the Hubbard's are soap dodgers, work dodgers and general scum of the estate.

Rex has persuaded Manda to come to the salon tonight for a restyle. She said it will fit in with her new ways of being a one man woman. I reminded her that she makes her normal stylist use a ruler to cut the exact half a centimetre every six weeks. She assured me that it is time for change.

Rex emailed me (I had warned him not to ring as I want to get a good reference). Transform consultant said the toe operation was a major operation and he would be off his feet for six to eight weeks. He also said he didn't feel an operation was necessary. He wasn't going to to dissuaded so he compromised and is booked in a fortnight before Christmas to have liposuction on his stomach. I told



Google

back pain



Search

him I had seen more fat on a butcher's apron but he gave a strong argument about middle age spread. He told me to come to the salon tonight so I agreed as he always provides pino grigiot and marks and spencers's nibbles. It's like a night out. Oh no, just remembered cannot drink. I hate the dentist and everything he stands for.

I emailed Rex and said that only Manda and Gus would be coming. (Those black stools gave me quite a turn, I will have to behave for another few days.)

Went around to Mark's instead and he gave me a card and went "Da - Dah!". He's only gone and bought me a block of twenty driving lessons. Of course I had to act pleased. I have already had that instructor six years ago and he banned me from ever getting in his car again. I will have to either come clean to Mark, phone ABC School of motoring and explain and maybe get a refund or lastly, sell lessons on Ebay.

Mark said quite proudly that he got the lessons for free as Mungo did some business for this guy, the instructor.

I gave Mark the arnica cream and he was really touched. I helped him massage it in but he said he could manage and shooed me away.

I told him I wasn't feeling too well and that I needed to go to my mum's. He gave me a lift to mum's house. I told him I wasn't sure when I could see him again as had loads of overtime at work. (I need to think of an excuse about driving lessons.)

I ended up going to number 66 William Hague Way with whole family.

Horrendous. A filthy tip. Oven had never seen a brillo pad, carpets stained with dog excrement and human excrement, woodchip wallpaper on every wall in the house. It stunk to high heaven. The garden was huge but had a burnt out shed, a heavily soiled mattress, numerous broken toys, cigarette ends, empty cans, a melted wheely bin and several panty liners.

Anita is ringing the council tomorrow to say she will take the house.



Google

back pain



Search

Week 9 - Friday

Manda has phoned in sick. I know there is nothing physically wrong with her as I live with her at the moment.

She swanned in last night and showed me her new bob. She was swishing her head this way and that and she kept saying that she loved it, wished she had done it years ago, it took years off her.

Well that only lasted an hour. She became hysterical and started hyperventilating (I had to open my laptop and look up symptoms, red face and neck, quick breathing, choking for air, uncontrollable sobbing.) Google said it could be a panic attack which I should know all about. When she had calmed down she said it was the first time ever that her hair had been shorter than mine. She implored me with her puppy dog red rimmed eyes that I too should get my hair cut in to a bob. I told her that last time I had a bob I ended up looking like Ken Dodd.

To cut a long story short, she is not speaking to Rex, she may sue him and she has gone to London today to have hair extensions put in by the same hairdresser that used to work for the Spice Girls. It is going to cost three thousand pounds but she is putting it on her credit card (which was maxed out the last time I asked.)

I told Kirk that she had gastric flu and he said he hoped it wasn't because she didn't like her new hair style. He is a complete freak.

It just means more work for Bernice and myself. Kirk said he would be issuing sick warnings from now on. Oooh I feel like setting the Hubbard's on him.

Mark texted me to ask me out but I told him can't drink until next week and have overtime all weekend. He was persistent so I agreed to let him come to Manda's for a DVD and a curry. I told him I definitely couldn't see him tomorrow as I already had plans. (Watching the X factor with a carpet picnic)

Actually Tracey is coming over and she will fill me in on her date.

Week 9 - Saturday

Kirk watched over us all day as we were doing our overtime. Hate is a strong word but it pretty much sums up my feelings for him. Mr



Google

back pain



Search

Macdonald was in and he was whispering to Kirk and they kept looking over at me. I feel more paranoid than ever.

After lunch the Nazi came over to check on how much work I had done. I got into trouble for not securing a new order even though I explained that the company had not got back in touch despite me leaving several messages. He told me that was a poor excuse and that I should have used my initiative and sent a fax detailing our figures.

During my lunch hour I looked at the job ads but not much for an unqualified thirty four year old. If I had a degree I could secure a management role at Asda superstore. If I was black or disabled I would have been welcome at the Inland Revenue. Alas I am doomed to stay in this hideous job.

I decided to finish at three as could not take any more.

I went to the precinct and bought some nibbles for tonight and a bottle of schloer. Then went home, had a relaxing bath and got in to my pyjamas.

Rex rang to ask if Manda had forgiven him. I told him she was still in London and not due back until tomorrow. He said he would have done her extensions at half the price but I reminded him that Manda detests him right now.

Tracey came over but she didn't drink to offer me moral support. Her date awful. Jim kept talking dirty. She said no matter what subject she was talking about, he would turn it around to sex. She said he was obviously a pervert . He talked to her chest all night and his chat up line was "Get your gums around my plums." She texted her other friend from work with the message 'code red'. Her friend then rang her and she pretended to Jim that there was an emergency at work and that she had to leave immediately.

She is going speed dating next week.

Week 9 - Sunday

I totally resented going to work today but I really need the money. Bloody captain Kirk makes work a right misery. Told Rex that I can't take much more and God bless him he offered to take me on as an apprentice and said I could make my wages up by getting a little cleaning job but I had to refuse his kind offer as the travel expenses to and from the salon would almost wipe out my wages.



Google

back pain



Search

I did receive an email today from a college offering part time courses and I think I am interested in the dog grooming one. I have always liked dogs and they can't answer you back. I have taken a leap of faith and have paid online for the course. It starts in November. Once I am qualified I will try and rent somewhere and maybe open up my own doggy salon. I am excited about the future.

Dreading tomorrow as have my first root filling appointment. More money that I don't have.

Manda was home when I got back. Her hair almost looks the same as it was pre bob. It is a nicer colour though. The extensions are very natural looking and her hair looks like Cheryl Cole's. She has had to keep the fringe but she assures me she will grow it out. She has to have her extensions maintained every six weeks and the London salon have given her the address of this woman in our neck of the woods who does them from home.

I told her about Kirk and about my dog grooming course. She reminded me that I was allergic to dogs that molt and that I would need to drive as I would need to go to the wholesalers.

I had mini panic attack and burst in to tears. Manda went online and found a telephone number. She telephoned and told the person that I have learning difficulties and that I had made a terrible mistake. They reluctantly refunded my money which should go into my account within three days.

I calmed down after that and Manda said if I had finished my anti biotics we could go out.

Got dolled up and went into Manchester with Tracey, Gus and Rex. There was a terrible atmosphere between Rex and Manda at first but once the alcohol had loosened her up, she and Rex embraced and she conceded that the Anna Wintour style bob had been her idea. Rex was so relieved he ordered champagne and said he would maintain her extensions at a discounted price.

Anyway I only had a few drinks as work tomorrow and anti biotics probably still in my bloodstream.

Early night. Dread the bloody memory foam bed. I reckon prisoners must sleep on these types of beds. It is a good punishment.



Google

back pain

Search



Week 10 - Monday

Had to go straight on google this morning. I have an awful stabbing pain in my arm, near my funny bone. Took two paracetamol (can't take ibuprofen because of hiatus hernia). Google says it could be Tennis Elbow. I haven't played tennis since 1982. I just don't understand.

Bit late this morning so had to eat toast in the car on the way to work.

Kirk said he was glad to see Manda was over her bout of Gastric flu. She told him it is highly contagious so not to come near her at all today. He pulled a strange gurning sort of face.

He handed out our uniform. It is vile. I do not suit any shade of purple as it clashes with the broken capillaries on my face. We were allowed to change into it in the toilets separately. Mine is a bit snug to be honest. It's a petite size eight but I am more of a ten in a petite. I informed Kirk of this but he said I would have to slim in to it.

Manda said that was out of order and she contacted our union rep (Bernice) who promptly made some phone calls and then went in to see Kirk.

He sent me an email apologising and said he would order me a size ten and that I could wear my normal clothes until then.

He kept his distance from Manda and Bernice , but kept giving me his memory stick with letters I had to print off and post. Some of them were personal and not to do with bathroom fittings. Manda said we should keep a diary and report him to the union. We don't trust him so we are keeping a written journal on him to be kept at Manda's.

Dentist hellish. Sat there for 45 minutes. My mouth had this clamp thing on and he kept asking me questions.

I have to go back next week to have the job finished. I now have a stump instead of a tooth and look like a pirate.

Went to Mark's after the dentist but couldn't even manage soup. He had cut out some jobs that he thought I might be interested in. He



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back pain



Search

said once I had passed my test I could drive anywhere to work. I couldn't take it any more and blurted out the whole story.

He said he will buy me some lessons with someone else but I told him my nerves were not up to it at this moment in time.

He was ok but a bit disappointed. He said he thought I had more get up and go about me. I told him that driving was my Achilles heel. He said swimming was his because of his deformity (webbed toes). I said I thought that would make him a stronger swimmer. He said he is a brilliant swimmer but is too embarrassed to show his bare feet in public. He said there was only so many times you could wear a verruca sock.

He does have a sensitive side that I just love. He rubbed arnica cream into my elbow and we snuggled up in front of 'Two and a half Men'.

I have agreed to spend weekend at his . It will give me a break from Memory foam.

Numbness didn't wear off until half ten so I had a tin of Heinz tomato soup. Manda and I sat up chatting until midnight about life. Men, work, hairstyles of the rich and famous and plastic surgery.

Week 10 - Tuesday

Mum invited me after work as she wanted me to sign Doreen's 'Get Well' card. Mum says it is the least we can do as Doreen doesn't have any family.

I got there just after six by the time I had popped to the library to return some overdue books. God bless her she had made me a lasagne (from Iceland, the freezer shop, not the country .)

After tea she thrust the card under my nose. I noticed straight away that Julian had written 'Keep your chins up' but I omitted to tell mum as she would have gone ballistic. Anita had written some sycophantic message. She hardly knows her. Anita is a real snob so she has always shyed away from people who suffer afflictions, you know, smokers, morbidly obese people, people with tattoos, people with black roots and her main one is people who eat in the street. She once crossed the road years ago when she saw Julian in town eating a saveloy. She pretended she had not seen him.



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back pain



Search

Mum and I then took Claude for a walk. I had to get out as my throat was starting to get itchy. We let him off his lead on the school field. The school has closed down now, Tony Blair art and history technical college. It used to be called Weatherley Comprehensive but changed it's name to fit in with mum's estate, but it closed down a couple of months ago. It got a really bad reputation. Anyway, Claude went missing. Mum was in a right panic as she knows that Doreen worships him.

After ten minutes of shouting like fish wives, we found him, rolling in ecstasy on a used sanitary towel.

We took him back and bathed him in the back garden as he is too fat to lift into bath. We need a hoist really. Am sure Doreen has one.

Went home to Manda's and rang my Landlord to find out when I can move back in. He said it will probably be another two weeks as there has been problems with the builders turning up. I said I thought it was just getting a new central heating system. He said some problems with the electric and plumbing had been uncovered and they had found damp .

My little flat is going to be a tip. Feel really weepy. Elbow throbbing and I have come on my period. The tusk had started to shrink so thought period not coming.

I just keep thinking about all the bad stuff in my life like my job, my flat, hiatus hernia, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, anxiety, tennis elbow, allergies, OCD.....

Nothing to look forward to. I need a holiday. Got my birthday next week booked off so think will book myself in for a massage and facial.

Dentist tomorrow at five so will go after work.

Week 10 - Wednesday

Anita left a voicemail on my mobile phone to say mum had gone into hospital to get her bunions done as there had been a cancellation. Doreen got out of hospital yesterday afternoon so Claude has been returned although Anita said she had said in a martyred tone that Claude may have to go to a shelter as she is too weak to care for him.



Google

back pain



Search

Managed to get through work. Manda took many notes on Kirk today. Bernice is thinking of resigning. Her dad says she can work in the family burger van which is positioned on the hard shoulder of a motorway. It is called 'Brenda's Big Baps'. Manda joked that I couldn't work there with my 34B's. Poor Bernice she must be desperate to even consider going to that job.

Went to dentist straight after work and then caught a bus to the general to see my mother.

She was holding court on the ward when I got there. The other patients were hanging on to her every word.

I was her first visitor. Anita had been this afternoon and said she was too tired to return. The sign on her bed said 'Nil by mouth'.

Mum said she was so hungry she could eat a scabby gorilla between two pissy mattresses. I winced at her turn of phrase as I felt sick with hunger following numbness from dentist.

She kept telling me to talk proper, but I explained the numbness wouldn't wear off for a few hours. Mum said she had asked Anita to feed dad and Doreen. I actually felt a bit sorry for Anita but I cannot help as I work full time and Manda doesn't live anywhere near Neil Kinnock Crescent.

Julian turned up after twenty minutes or so but he didn't have much to say as he hates hospitals .

I managed to wheedle out of him that he is still seeing trollop from his office but he is going for promotion so he is going to end things soon.

Mum says Anita gets the keys to new house on Monday so we are all expected (except her because of impending bunion operation) to help clean, scrape, decorate and help move her in. I reminded mum it was my birthday and that I had plans. She said "Shame on you Carla Bradley."

I don't recall any of the family helping me when I got my flat. It was filthy as well. My boyfriend at the time helped me. I refuse to feel guilty. I have booked a massage in town and am meeting Rex for lunch as he doesn't work Mondays. Don't know if Mark has anything planned.



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back pain



Search

Was glad to leave hospital. Julian offered me a lift. On the way to Manda's he told me to ignore mum. He pointed out that she is spoiled rotten and him and me have always had to make our own way in the world.

Mark rang me to tell me to get dressed up on Friday night as he has tickets to see 'Chicago' and then a meal afterwards. Am really looking forward to it. I will work on Saturday but will have Sunday off as can have a lie in at Mark's in his non memory foam bed.