

Cross
By
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MONOLOGUE

She is sitting at a kitchen table, stirring a cup of tea in a bone china cup on saucer with a silver spoon, a tea-strainer to one side, full of leaves, as she says:

WOMAN

If I had a pound for every time I've heard her say "You weren't planned, you know!", then I'd...

She stops stirring, and holds the spoon.
I'd be a billionaire...."slight hyperbole!"

She throws the spoon across the room in rage.
"There's no mileage in you getting cross", she'd say. Cross! "Such a hot-cross bunny, getting in a tizzy!" She doesn't deal with anger, my mother. Just crossness. Children get cross; adults get angry. I'm her child, and... We're taught to know our place. "Don't back-chat me, little lady!".

She takes a sip.
You weren't planned... - it left a very bitter taste when I told her I'd had an abortion. But in whose mouth? Whether I'd kept it or not, she'd have had me in the wrong. I'm the text-book high-achiever. And where does it get you?

She takes a sip, then spits out the drink, laughing.
When I turned 34, she said "And what exactly have you achieved to date....compared to Jesus? He didn't waste his life on having gap-years, boyfriends, silly fashion shoes." "Martyrs together, you and Jesus, Mother", I said. "I'll have that talc back then" she said, as she grabbed my present and her car keys and stormed out. She doesn't like being called a martyr even though she'd freely admit that's her job spec. Our Lady of the... Cross!

She adds sugar to the tea, then sips.
Didn't like, I mean. When she was dying, I got to the hospital
(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)
just in time. I'd practised what
I was going to say as I was
bombing down the motorway at 200
miles per hour...."slight
hyperbole!". Three little
words. So easy in the car. But
sitting by her bed, they got
stuck in my mouth.

She sips.

I love you. Bit late now. But I
do. I love you, even though you
were never wrong. About
anything. And had terrible taste
in...talc. The fragrant white
elephant in the room.... Bye
mum.

*She drains the cup, and notices the pattern left in the
tea-leaves: a broken heart.*