



The Worst day of my life

This really is, to date anyway, the worst day of my life and I sincerely hope that it remains so...

It happened a long time ago now, in 1997. I got married in 1988 to a lovely-looking and successful woman called Jane – ‘plain’ she certainly wasn’t. We’d lived together for a year before we wed and everything was fine. Even after the marriage most things were OK. Yeah, there were the usual arguments about visiting parents, where to go on holiday, annoying habits like picking crusts off the loaf of bread – things like that – but nothing too bad. The same sort of differences that all couples have.

However, after five years of being as close to married bliss as most couples ever get, I just felt that we needed some added spice. Part of this was our age – early thirties and you think that time is running out for fun (HOW SO VERY WRONG WAS I?) – and the other was that I had taken to having lunch in the summer at a nudist spa in Hertfordshire with my best friend from the office and his wife, who, it transpired, were swingers.

A touch of spice

It got me thinking. You read all the time the so-called ‘expert’ advice about ‘how to spice up your sex life’, or ‘how to stop a marriage from going stale’. It’s the standard advice of ‘have a candlelit supper’, ‘talk honestly to your partner – tell them what you really want’, ‘try saucy photography’, ‘indulge your fantasies with your partner’s consent’. Basically, all loads of drivel from the days of

Masters and Johnson and published in worldly-wise, well-researched and literary masterpieces such as ‘Cosmo’ etc.

The exception to this repeated drivel is; ‘talk honestly’ and then see what happens. As with all men, a threesome with another woman (or more if you think that you can cope!) is a fantasy that I’d always had, and on one drunken – no, mellow – evening, I confided this to Jane. She looked a little taken aback, initially, but after another bottle of Merlot we talked earnestly and then had a couple of hours of great sex.

Fantasies realised

Next morning, a Saturday, we discussed it again in the cold light of day and, somewhat surprisingly to me, she hadn’t changed her mind at all from the night before. She agreed that it could be fun, with the proviso that I organise it all and that she could call a halt

at any time if it didn’t feel right. She also admitted that the idea really did turn her on and that, secretly, she’d had much the same fantasy for some years. Decadent though it may sound, we cracked a bottle of Bollinger and stayed in bed until late afternoon having fun and discussing our plans.

Even though we hadn’t actually done anything yet – just talked about it – our sex-life was re-ignited – to being even better than when we first met. We felt somehow closer together, and I guess that both the openness and the thrill of anticipation worked as aphrodisiacs.

It didn’t take too long – less than a month – for Jane and I to realise our, by now almost obsessive, fantasy. It happened in an hotel at the gala dinner of an exhibition in London to which WAGs were invited. Jane came along, dressed to the nines as she always did for these sort of boring functions, and we got on like a house on fire with a single blonde lady, Carrie, who was sitting at our table. As the evening drew on and the wine kept coming, the conversation between the three of us became more loaded with innuendo. Eventually, around midnight, I plucked up the courage to ask Carrie if she’d like to join us to hit the mini-bar in our room. ‘I thought you’d never ask!’ she replied with one of those knowing, ‘oh-so-come-on’ lip-licking smiles.

Yep! I can tell you, we didn’t even touch the mini-bar until about four in the morning. The moment we were in the room it all kicked off and I believe that none of us slept a wink that night.

I’m into something good...

That one-off encounter with Carrie was the start of a couple of wonderful years when we got together whenever we could. Then, for no apparent reason, it started going a bit strange. Jane and I were spending much more time apart due to business. She was away a lot at meetings in the UK and I was travelling in the Middle East for much more time than I would have liked. But when we were back together it was almost as if we were merely housemates. The passion had completely gone from Jane, and our rows were escalating to screaming matches, resulting in me going to the pub or Jane sleeping in the spare room and locking the door.

This couldn’t go on. We decided, or rather Jane decided, on a trial separation. I moved out and rented a flat in a nearby town. We talked, curtly, on the phone a couple of times week and met briefly for a quick drink once a week, during which encounters we hardly spoke to each other – hard to find anything to say.

It just gets worse

As I had been anticipating by now, one morning the divorce papers landed on my doormat. I rang Jane, asked her what was going on and pleaded with her to reconsider. Our weekly meetings ceased and the only phone calls were Jane begging me not to contest the divorce. She’d cited my infidelities – which, I still maintained, were part her doing – and because I still cared for her so much I agreed, signed the papers and the whole thing went through ‘on the nod’.

I moved back to London and one Saturday morning the Decree Absolute arrived. I’d been expecting it for a couple of weeks, but it was still a shock when you read, over and over again, something so impersonal, sent by faceless, mindless bureaucrats – that signifies the end of life as you’d known it.

Drowning sorrows

I was just downing my second Bloody Mary – mostly vodka – when the door opened and Lizzie walked in. I’d been seeing Lizzie for three months and she’d sort of moved in – but she’d come to pick up her belongings and return the keys, as she wanted to finish it. She was sick of my moping and repeatedly mentioning Jane. Apparently, my morbid demeanour in the restaurant the night before – and the fact that I almost ignored her – was the final straw.

Losing two in one day! I must be quite an expert at getting rid of women – especially when I don’t want to. In the words of Lady Bracknell, ‘To lose one is unfortunate; to lose two is carelessness.’

Anyway, I thought it was time move on and I’d booked to play squash. The regular Saturday fight with Barry. Normally it’s a tight tussle but this time, although I hit the ball harder than I had ever done before, those ‘Marys were taking their toll, and Barry wiped the floor with me, three-zip.

Over about five pints afterwards I became increasingly morose and explained everything to Bazza. A kind and sympathetic friend, he invited me over to their house for dinner that evening. They were having a special dinner for his sister, Donna, whom he hadn’t seen for a year or so. He said that she’d just moved in with her partner, and after messing around for years, was now in a stable loving relationship. All I needed, really. My relationships fall apart and Donna’s is now perfect. I promised to sober up by the evening and arrived on time feeling relaxed.

Icing on the cake

Shortly after I’d got settled down with a large scotch and lots of jolly consoling from both Barry and his wife, Donna arrived with

the love of her life – her new partner. I hardly have to tell you who this was and still is. It was, and is, Jane. I felt it was probably better to leave, so I did.

I know Jane and Donna are still together and are very happy indeed. And I am very happy for them. I hope that they remain so devoted – I’m sure that will. I wish them all the best, and a great life together. But as I write this, I own there are a few tears falling on the keyboard.

To badly paraphrase Confucius, ‘The longest and sometimes hardest journey starts with a single step.’

By the way – did I mention that Arsenal lost that day too?

