

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.*