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## Cynicism, negativity, sarcasm and other fine qualities

by Candida Lloyd

It was Friday and Elliot and Polly were off for an early evening stroll across the field to the village pub. “Isn’t it great that they’re finally getting those windows seen to” Polly said nodding in the direction of their neighbour’s house as she zipped up her jacket. The building had been falling into disrepair and everyone knew how that could affect house prices on the street.

“Well, you can be sure they’ve got Mr Bodgit doing the job,” Elliot remarked. Polly sighed, “Here we go again....” she said.

Elliot know what this meant. Lately the qualities that had made him so attractive to his wife when they’d first met, suddenly seemed less appealing. The cynicism, sarcasm and negativity on which he prided himself were no longer well received.

Still, it was the weekend and they decided not to pursue the argument and press on with the walk. Outside the pub was a table offering home grown produce with an honesty box. “How delightful!” exclaimed Polly surveying the bunches of sweet peas, raspberries and runner beans and patted her pockets for some change.

“I tell you what, I’d pay two quid NOT to have that marrow!” said Elliot anticipating laughter. But instead Polly stalked off in the direction of the pub empty handed. How could she fail to enjoy the comic potential of an outsized courgette? But he didn’t like seeing her unhappy.

The next morning at yoga class Elliot lay on the mat feeling blissfully stretched and relaxed listening to the instructor’s soporific voice. His new exercise regime was doing wonders for his back, not to mention his libido and he started to think about having

sex with Polly when he got home while trying not to get visibly aroused. Then he recalled her current huffy demeanour and his hopes of some tantric action diminished.

The yoga teacher was talking some nonsense about neural pathways in the brain and negative thoughts being rechannelled. "Start each day with a positive thought and a grateful heart." she said, "namaste."

In his present elated state this didn't sound like *such* an objectional idea and he found himself placing his hands in a prayer position and returning the customary Hindu farewell.

Motivated by his horniness and the desire to please his wife he contemplated his new, optimistic approach on the way home. Unsure what he would say, Elliot googled 'positive quotes' in his phone and up came a number of suggestions. He picked one and practised it in his head.

At home Polly was in distress. Soapy water was pouring out of the washing machine all over the kitchen floor and she held up her favourite cashmere jumper which had to shrunk to fit a small child. "Look!" she wailed.

It was a gift - the perfect opportunity for Elliot to try out his new self "Don't worry my love, things are never as bad as they seem" he said calmly.

"You patronizing bastard!" she screamed, "Fuck off!" and hurled the sopping sweater at him.