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How to Break up with Someone

by Victoria Cooper

You will meet him in a bookshop as you both reach for Remains of the Day. You will bite your lip at his geeky shyness and know that you will end up sleeping with him.

On your first date he will tell you about his dog called the Hindrance. You will stare at his nail-bitten fingers and imagine them stroking your hair when you have the flu.

You will search and follow him on Instagram. You try to stop, but scroll anyway through his posts and photos, getting stuck on the one where he is wearing a party hat, kissing a bleary-eyed blonde.

You will meet his boss buying flea spray at the pet shop and he will call you his girlfriend. You will move in and take up most of his wardrobe.

You will be invited to “supper parties” with couples called Bernard and Sophie, you will realise that Boef Bourguignon is just a stew and you will flirt with the host.

You will still buy a house together and his mother will give you the family rocking horse that he used to play on. Its glassy eyes will watch you as you throw her mushroom vol-au-vents down the toilet.

You will long for that moment after he has left for work when you can stretch like a cat under the sheets and your heart will drop when you hear his keys back in the lock again.

He will joke about babies and eating for two and you will not surrender to the urge to swat him with a fly swat.

He will propose on a city break in front of Klimt’s The Kiss, and you will smile at tourists taking photos while wishing you had not worn the tights that sag at the knees.

You will look into his watery blue eyes behind steamed up spectacles and you will quietly but politely say no and wonder if you should have said yes.

You will sob down the phone to your best friend who regrets telling you to call on her in a day of trouble.

You inhale two Toblerones, a share bag of Doritos and a bottle of Prosecco in front of Love Actually. You insist that John Lennon and Paul McCartney are the greatest song writers alive, while your best friend screams back at you.

You will never meet Bernard and Sophie again but you will feel a better person for it.

You will move in with your parents “just until you get back on your feet” and hear about being on the shelf on repeat as they argue over Boris Johnson’s hair and fish pie.

You will suddenly see him when you’re running, and he will be eating a samosa, sitting on a bench. You will wave but he won’t notice as he will be reading The Guardian on his phone, while picking out the peas.

You will go to your niece’s nativity and wonder if he would have been a good dad. You will cry through Away in Manger but nobody will notice.