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Addiction

by Gill Hilton

Lisa was having coffee in her sister Fiona's small, ordinary flat.

"Are those new cups?" she said.

"Do you like them?" said Fiona.

"You've got dozens of cups"

"And?"

"You're always shopping. Wait! Have you got some kind of addiction? "

"Don't be ridiculous. I just enjoy having new things. You must admit, the cups are beautiful."
Fiona looked full on at her sister. "Anyway, I've never been addicted to anything."

"How do you know?"

"There's nothing I can't do without. "

"I think you're addicted to shopping."

"That's not an addiction "

"It is if you can't stop it."

"I could if I wanted to but I don't want to. If I decided to stop that would be like saying I'm addicted, which I'm not."

"What, you mean like alcoholics having dry January?"

Lisa didn't wait for the reply but left the kitchen and ran upstairs.

"Where are you going?" Fiona ran up the stairs after her sister who was already in her bedroom throwing open the wardrobe doors: all three sets of them.

"Jesus, look at this."

A crazy rainbow of neatly hung garments filled three wide wardrobes. Lisa ran next door into the spare bedroom and threw open more wardrobe doors.

"Bloody hell! You've got it bad, sis. "

"Why should I stop? Loads of people have new clothes. It's normal."

"This isn't normal: this is full on addiction. You've got enough shoes to bankrupt a small South American country, and it must take you hours to get all those scatter off your bed at night at night."

"So who is it harming?"

"Your bank account, the environment, your sanity?"

"Look, I can spend my money how I like. It's my choice."

"But that's the point, you don't have a choice."

"Of course I do."

Okay. Don't buy anything new for a month.

What?

Nothing.

Okay

You agree?

Yep.

You'll have to prove it.

What?

You'll have to show me your bank account.

It's none of your business. I'm not showing you that.

Look, I know you haven't got much money, you might as well show me how little, and what you're spending it on. What have you got to worry about, if you're not addicted to shopping?

I'm not playing this game.

It's not a game. I tell you what. So that you know I'm serious, I'll bet you a hundred quid you can't go without shopping.

What!

Just to show you I'm serious.

You are joking?

I care about your well-being

You mean you want to gamble?

It's not gambling, it's putting my money where my mouth is

Lisa it's gambling. There's no other word for it. What do you think you're doing?

"It really isn't gambling, it's not the same at all." There was panic in Lisa's voice.

"You don't fool me. You haven't kicked the habit have you? When were you last at the bookies? Of course it's all online now isn't it? You can distance yourself from the real thing now, make it seem like you're just playing a video game. You're accusing me of being addicted when all along it's actually you. How dare you suggest I'm the one whose sanity is at stake here? Don't you think everyone has suffered enough already because of you. Mum nearly had a breakdown when you were spending every penny and every minute of your pathetic little life betting on anything that moved."

"Bitch! You can't blame mum's mental health on me. And I'm better now. Forget about me trying to help you with your sick shopping habit. Why should I even care?"

Fiona began to cry. "I'm so unhappy, Lisa. You've no idea."

Lisa hugged her sister. "Listen sis, it's okay. We all go through bad stuff. Tell you what. James gave me some coke. Let's get ourselves some happy, and go out on the town to get completely smashed."

"You're on," said Fiona, "now, let's see if I've got anything to wear."