

The Northern Protector

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EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

It's grey. We see Joan, a rosy cheeked woman in her sixties, struggling to open a folding chair in front of a gravestone. She tends to the grave, replacing dead flowers with a bunch of beautiful red roses and then with a great puff of exhaustion, collapses in the chair.

JOAN

There ya go love, that's more like it. Happy Valentines...Happy Anniversary and Happy Birthday. I know you don't like a fuss, but we made a promise.

Joan reaches for a thermos, pouring herself a steaming cup of tea.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Ooh, that's better. You know Tetley's half price at the moment, hey...bargain! Well, I did what you asked... Fancy spreading ashes on the M1 for goodness sake, ya daft apeth! I looked a right fool, pulled over on the hard shoulder by the Watford Gap, trying not to let the wind blow you all down my new dress. Guardian of the North indeed... The things I do for you... did for you...

Joan finishes her tea looking wistfully around, listens to the birdsong and seems very peaceful. She wets her ring finger with her lips and pulls off the gold band, kissing it she places it amongst the roses.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Goodbye love. See you later.

Joan packs up her things to leave.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Joan enters the Chemist's and shuffles to the counter, waiting in line. The Pharmacist is middle aged and has a kind face and manner. He finishes serving the lady before Joan and then signals that it's her next.

PHARMACIST

How can I help you Madam?

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

Four boxes of Paracetamol please.

PHARMACIST

No problem. Are you sure you need that much, dear?

JOAN

Aye, but I struggle to get into town and I prefer to buy in bulk. Is that OK?

PHARMACIST

Yes of course, one sec love.
(returning)
Do you have any allergies?

JOAN

No love, my husbands the one with the allergies... Are you married?

PHARMACIST

Engaged, only last month. Together 7 years! Took me a while to get the courage to ask her.

JOAN

Courage, what a strapping lad like you, I don't believe you!
(laughing)
Listen to me pet, spend every moment you can with her, mark my words, every moment is so precious.

PHARMACIST

I think if we spent every moment together she'd call it off!
(laughs & taps the till)
That'll be £3.20. So how long have you been married?

JOAN

43 years today.

PHARMACIST

Wow, a Valentine's wedding. 43 years, eh...What's your secret?

Joan picks up her bag of pills.

JOAN

Never being apart for too long.