

Trick or Treat

by

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This is a story about Halloween, a packet of toffees, and a bloke.

The toffees are easiest to describe, so I'll start with them. Chewy treacle, a whole 1,35 kilos—I believe in being exact, it would've saved a lot of bother if the nutter who wrote *Genesis* had specified *exactly* what he meant by 'day', like solar day or sidereal day or millennial day, and I say 'he' with malice aforethought, because no woman would have been so dim as to—

I mean, come on, an *apple*?

OK, let's try again. This is a story about Halloween, a packet of toffees, and

Except that it isn't a packet, more like a small sack with a pumpkin painted on it and tied with a piece of shiny orange ribbon, just right for Halloween, and a pretty note written with a chartreuse gel pen, which at school I wouldn't be seen *dead* using, and of course the toffees, and I don't want to give you the wrong idea, they aren't any horrid supermarket muck but homemade ones, I'm really good at making stuff like shortbread and fudge and caramel popcorn and stuff, and don't laugh, I like to garden too, and though I oughtn't tell you, I even grow some *weed* in my mum's garden, in the corner behind the shed, she's never around to notice, anyway she'd think it was, like, weedy weeds if she saw it, she can't even recognise nettles and ragwort and those greenish toadstools which smell like honey, you could kill someone with one of them, not to mention all the old tins in the shed, but anyway, about the toffees, I use only real butter and a bit of salt, makes all the difference, and despite everything, Paul just swoons over my baking, he's got a socking great sweet tooth and

Right. Last try. This is a story about Halloween

Except that it's not a story. Or maybe it is, I reckon I'll let you work it out for yourself. Anyway, last night I made the batch of toffees, you would've too after that text, I mean, talk about cowardly. Three months, and the sod can't even ring. Telling me to my face that I ought to stop stuffing it—yeah, I don't know a single lad who could do that, but a text? A *misspelt* text, like he was in some sort of bloody hurry to dump old fatso Anne—a shag is a shag, but you wouldn't want to take her to a club or anything, would you?

Not like Lauren. Blond hair she could just about wipe her arse with, pipe-cleaner legs, tits like soup plates—the posh, flat sort. She's got nice handwriting, though, I'll give her that.

So, anyway. As I've said, last night after I'd eaten a few crisps and had a good cry, I set about making the toffees. Measured them extra carefully this time, and added 55 ml of strong dark rum for flavour. They turned out gorgeous, they did. I was dying to taste them—*dying*, that's a good one. Exactly thirty-five lovely chunks, and if I know Paul, he'll polish them off in one go. Now it's nearly dark, and all the little kids are already out, so I've dressed up witchy, black hat and hooked nose from that panto two years ago and heaps of slap, and I'm off to ring his bell before he goes out, nobody but him is ever at home at this time, and then he'll find the sack on the doorstep with that little note from Lauren—sort of.

Trick or treat.