

Three-Stone

I'm pleased for my brother-in-law. *Obviously*. Frank worked hard to lose the excess weight he'd been carrying since hanging up his football boots all those years ago. A triumph, no question. But, *really?*

I liked Frank. As far as in-laws go, I couldn't ask for a more stand-up guy. He was always good for a laugh or a night at the pub. A mate, when I needed temporary respite from my oestrogen-charged household. But after his wife of ten years left him for her younger, *trimmer*, more successful boss, Frank wasn't what you'd call delightful company. If truth be told, he was a miserable git. I should know. For nearly two years, he spent more than his welcome share around our place, guzzling my beers and raiding my snack cupboard, while sulking about the love he'd lost and lamenting his poor life choices. My wife Millie assured me Frank's melancholy would pass. This wasn't the first time she'd seen her older brother through a nasty breakup.

Earlier this spring, Frank decided he'd wasted enough time feeling sorry for himself and committed to turning his life around. *Good for him*, I thought. *It'll be great to have my mate back*. The first thing he did was to hit the gym and forego his X-Trail for a Cannondale road bike. That, combined with a drastic change to his diet, helped him to reach his goal weight in no time. Frank was down three stone and the healthiest he'd been in decades. A changed man.

As I said. I'm pleased for him. It's just a shame I can no longer stand the guy.

It started with the Lycra. The moment he dropped a stone, he shed his loose-fitting tracksuit bottoms and opted instead for a pair of skintight cycling shorts that left no room for my, or my adolescent daughter's imaginations. Try having a meaningful conversation with a middle-aged man's bunched up bits staring you in the face. You can't. By the time summer rolled around, Frank was down another stone. Suddenly, shirts became optional attire. *There's a time and place, buddy*, I wanted to tell him. *Sunday lunch at your mother's is not one of them. Read the room*.

Lycra shorts and exposed torso aside, Frank has become an intolerable, self-righteous pillock. His sense of humour, social grace, and every ounce of common sense flushed down the loo along with stone number three. Nowadays, we can't get through a single occasion without his incessant preaching.

'At our age, weight training is the only way to go. Cardio alone isn't enough.'

'You should cut back on them beers. A moment down your gullet, a lifetime round your gut.'

'Plant-based meals. Good for the planet. Good for you.'

And God forbid if he let ten minutes pass without bringing up his weight loss.

'When I was fat'

'Before I lost three stone ...'

'Now that I'm thin'

Frankly, Frank, I liked you more when you were a fat, miserable git.