

FRAGILE

Written by

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TOM (30's), sits at the kitchen island enjoying a bowl of cereal and reading the morning newspaper.

The toaster pops pushing out two golden pieces of toast.

TOM

Sweetie, your toast is ready.

LUCY (30s), walks into the kitchen putting in her earrings. She stops briefly to kiss Tom then heads to the toaster. As she is talking she grabs the toast and lies them down on the chopping board grabbing a knife --

LUCY

Don't forget we have dinner plans Thursday night with Melissa and Robert.

TOM

Haven't forgotten put it in my diary like you told me to, have they asked us to bring anything?

LUCY

No, but I'm going to pop out at lunch today and pick up that bottle of red that we had a few weeks ago, y'know at the Italian place.

TOM

Good idea.

LUCY

Have you got a busy morning?

Lucy opens up a cupboard and removes a jar of PEANUT BUTTER.

TOM

I don't think so, should be quite a chill -

Lucy smoothly opens the peanut butter jar and starts scraping the contents onto the toast.

TOM (CONT'D)

(faltering)

Um...yeah...I um...y'know, I've actually got quite a busy morning.

LUCY

Really?

TOM (CONT'D)

Letting her take your lid off,
that's my job. Look I get it your a
new spreadable in this house,
trying to make an impression by
showing up the big dog but that
doesn't make you the big dick in
this prison yard. So here's the
game...you only get opened by my
hands...BY MY HANDS! She picks you
up and when she twists you don't
budge, ya hear me?!

Tom stares at the Peanut Butter for long moment until finally
we hear --

PEANUT BUTTER

(Ray Winstone-esque voice)

You don't scare me, you bipedal
meat bag.

TOM

Well, well, well...I was wonderin'
when you were gonna pipe up.

PEANUT BUTTER

I couldn't listen to your whining
anymore. Boo-hoo she opened my lid,
she enjoyed it as well.

Tom picks up his chair and throws it against the wall.

TOM

Shut up!

PEANUT BUTTER

Looks like the baby's throwin' a
tantrum. What does she see in you?

TOM

A man!

PEANUT BUTTER

Ha! Don't make laugh meat bag. All
I see is a scared wittle wittle
boy.

TOM

Right, I'm gonna lay out the ground
rules, we'll chalk today up as a
misunderstanding. Going forward
when she goes to take off your lid
you don't move, not even a fucking
atom, you don't move!

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

She struggles, trying to get her hands over the lid and twisting with all her might and then, when failure has consumed her she will come to my aid and I will assist because I am the man. I. AM. THE MAN. Understand me, and you will bend to the power for which I wield and you, by the love of all that is good and mighty, will yield to my power. I will not be undermined again in my own house because accidents can happen and it's a long way to fall from the cupboard to the floor...and If something unfortunate like that was to happen to you...

(getting emotional)

I could replace you in an instant with a jar who knows how to play ball, now do we understand each other...you peanut cunt.

Tom starts crying.

PEANUT BUTTER

This really means a lot to you.

TOM

What do you know!

PEANUT BUTTER

Hey, talk to me. Pick up your chair and sit down. C'mon, come 'ere.

Tom picks up his chair and sits down at the table.

PEANUT BUTTER (CONT'D)

What's this really all about?

TOM

Forget it.

PEANUT BUTTER

Hey, it's time to share.

TOM

If Lucy doesn't need me to open jar lids for her then what good am I? First it's this and then what next, the shelves put themselves up, the drain unclogs itself!

PEANUT BUTTER

You need to stop thinking like that.

TOM

Like what?

PEANUT BUTTER

These archaic gender responsibilities that society says we have to follow in order to determine our self worth as a partner. Where did this all start for you?

TOM

I was listening to a podcast about masculinity...

PEANUT BUTTER

Well there we go then. There's your problem, you're caught in the vicious echo chamber of toxic masculinity. You need cut that shit off.

TOM

But I'm the king of my realm and if there is a challenger I must-

PEANUT BUTTER

SHUT UP!

Tom cries.

PEANUT BUTTER (CONT'D)

What are you so afraid of?

TOM

That she'll see what I really am, just a fragile man.

PEANUT BUTTER

Look, I know what it's like to be fragile, look at me i'm a jar...I'm made of glass! I look tough but I have my breaking point, the thing is I don't hide it. The whole world can see how fragile I am, you can't fake being something you are not people can spot it from a mile away.

(MORE)

PEANUT BUTTER (CONT'D)

The thing is you have a lot to offer, being kind, supportive and knowing that your worth is not linked to your ability to open jars.

TOM

You're right.

PEANUT BUTTER

(emotional)

You got lots to offer unlike me, once I've served my purpose I'm done, there's no use for me anymore once all my peanut butter is gone. I just get thrown away.

TOM

No, it doesn't have to be that way. You can be upcycled.

PEANUT BUTTER

Upcycled?

TOM

Yeah, when you're empty Lucy can turn you into a candle holder, or fill you with homemade chutney and hey, our friend Cynthia has a wedding coming up we can give you to her. She needs empty jars to fill full of sweets to put out on the tables...y'know basic shit.

PEANUT BUTTER

(sniffs)

I'd like that. Y'know I never liked you meat bags but after all this I see that men and peanut butter jars have a lot in common. We can look tough but we can break very easily...and we're full of nut butter.

TOM

Um, uh...yeah, sure.

PEANUT BUTTER

I love you meat bag.

TOM

I love you Peanut Butter.

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INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

5

Toast pops out of the toaster.

TOM

Sweetie, your toast is ready.

Lucy walks into the kitchen. She plates up the toast and goes for the peanut butter again.

LUCY

Thanks, y'know I might have to make another appointment with the chiropractor again I'm starting to feel the pain again in my lower back.

TOM

(focusing on the jar)

You don't say.

Lucy starts twisting the jar. IT DOES NOT MOVE.

LUCY

Yeah, It started again last -

She struggles to move the lid.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Ugh it's stuck. Sweetie could you have a go.

Tom takes the jar from her.

TOM

(confused)

Uh...yeah I will.

Tom turns round in his chair and looks down at the jar.

TOM (CONT'D)

(hushed)

Peanut butter, what are you doing?

PEANUT BUTTER

This is a one time thing after yesterday, I owe you that much.

TOM

Thank you.

PEANUT BUTTER

Just remember what we talked about.

Tom nods then twists off the jar lid, he turns and hands it over to Lucy.

TOM
Here you go honey.

LUCY
(turning to face him)
My big strong man.

TOM
Hey, you loosened it for me.

Lucy starts putting the peanut butter on her toast.

LUCY
Oh, I didn't show you what I bought
yesterday.

Lucy reaches under the sink and pulls out a FOLDING STEP.

LUCY (CONT'D)
It's a folding step.

She unfolds it, puts it on the floor and steps on it.

LUCY (CONT'D)
See, now I can reach all the high
shelves so I don't have to keep
bothering you. Isn't it great?

Tom looks like his world is falling apart. A single bead of sweat runs down his forehead.

MAN
(lump in his throat)
Yeah...great.

DING DONG.

LUCY
Wonder who that is?

Lucy hops off the step and heads towards the front door. Tom watches her leave then quickly turns to stare at the Folding Step.

FOLDING STEP
(ratty voice)
Fuck you lookin' at, you mug?

SMASH CUT TO:

6

EXT. GARDEN - LATER

6

Tom, wearing safety glasses, fires up a chainsaw and brings it down on the Folding Step.

FOLDING STEP

AAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END