

# 'Hubby, I've got something to tell you...'

Me in my 20s



**We are PRO-AGE**

When I hit 50 I rekindled an old love affair, only now I had to come clean to my hubby. **By Claire Jones, 51**

When my husband Rick mentioned the 'b-word', I had to fight to keep a grimace off my face. 'I really don't want a fuss,' I told him. 'But it's the big 5-0,' he pressed. 'We have to do something.'

Even though it was a milestone birthday, I just wasn't feeling it. In fact, lately, I'd been struggling to get excited about anything. I felt lucky to have a loving and thoughtful husband, and two gorgeous kids from a previous relationship, but I'd

been feeling like I was just going through the motions. I was comfortable in my job. My kids, aged 27 and 29, had left home, and I'd lost my purpose. But despite my birthday ambivalence, Rick wasn't deterred. 'I'll plan something,' he said. And when my big birthday arrived, he whisked me off to a gorgeous, converted railway carriage in Dungeness on the Kent coast. 'You've really spoiled me,' I told him, over dinner. 'Only the best for you,' he said. But back home in Dover,

Kent, I felt instantly flat again. I needed to get my mojo back, so I booked myself in with a life coach called Kerry Hales. At our first session, I tried to explain how I felt. 'I'm 50, my career's well-established and my kids have moved out, so it feels like I've done it all,' I said, with a shrug. 'What's something that's really made you happy in your life?' she asked. 'Something outside your marriage, family and career.'

But I couldn't think of anything. 'It'll come to you,' she said.

Heading home afterwards, I turned the question over in my head. It nagged away at me as Rick and I had dinner, before settling down to watch the new *Mission Impossible* film. But it was only as I went to bed that it suddenly hit me. *I know what it is!* I thought. Grabbing my phone, I messaged Kerry saying, *I want to learn how to ride a motorbike.* As a kid, I'd been a thrill-seeker, always heading straight for the tallest slide

or the fastest rollercoaster. And when my older stepbrother had got a motorbike, I'd loved riding on the back of it. In my 20s, I'd dated a guy called Adie, who also rode one. We'd don our leathers, then take off with me hanging tight to him as he weaved along the country roads. But I hadn't been on a bike since we'd broken up. Now, watching actress Rebecca Ferguson whizz about on a motorcycle in *Mission Impossible* had unlocked the memory of how freeing it had felt. For the first time in ages I felt excited, especially when Kerry and I began talking about how to make it happen at my next session. 'Find out what you need to do to help you pass, from start to finish,' she said. Adie and I had remained friends, so I called him for some advice. As I was soon heading to his neck of the woods for a work conference, I said, 'Maybe I can drop by and

**'It feels like I've done it all'**



Me and Rick

we can go for a ride.' 'Great!' he replied. A few weeks later, I found myself on the back of his bike, hanging on as he rode along country lanes – and I felt alive again! Back home, I began googling training courses. The only thing I hadn't done was tell Rick, but something was stopping me. One night, as I was reading motorcycling tips on my phone, Rick sat next to me on the sofa, so I quickly clicked the screen off and turned my phone over. 'What's up?' he asked. 'Nothing,' I replied, guiltily. I knew I'd have to tell him at some point, but I was worried he'd think it was too dangerous. It was something I wanted – no, needed – to do. But what if he was against it? And yet I knew that, the more I tiptoed around and hid it, the worse things would get. So one night, I decided to bite the bullet

and suggested we pop to our local for a drink. As I sipped my first pint, I could feel my heart racing. *I'll need another before I confess*, I thought. Finally, fuelled by Dutch courage, I said, 'I've got something to tell you.' His brow furrowed and the atmosphere between us grew tense. 'Look, Claire, I know you've been sneaking around,' he said. 'If you're having an affair, just tell me.' My eyes widened. 'I'm not having an affair,' I said. 'I just want to learn to ride a motorbike.' 'Is that it?' he asked. 'Yeah, I wasn't sure how you'd take it,' I replied, sheepishly. 'If it's what you want, go for it,' he said. 'Just be safe.' With the tension released, I explained where it had all come

from, and how free I'd felt when I'd ridden pillion with my stepbrother and Adie. The following day, with Rick's blessing, I booked myself on a course and started looking for my first bike. When I rang my local dealership, the man said, 'We have something perfect for a beginner.' And when I went to look at the 125cc cherry-red Honda bike, I fell instantly and hopelessly in love with it. 'I'll take it,' I said. Before it was delivered, I had my first lesson. Over a few hours on a training ground, a group of us attempted to master the art of motorcycle riding. *I can do this*, I told myself, every time I wobbled and fell off. It happened so much, that the instructor said, 'I don't think this is for you.'

**'I don't think this is for you'**

'I've already bought a bike, so I'm going to pass,' I replied defiantly. The only thing his remark made me realise was that he wasn't the instructor for me. And after finding a new one, I slowly began to get the hang of it. I found the more I got on the bike, the more it became second nature, so I joined a local riding group and going

with them helped my confidence build. 'How was it?' Rick would ask me whenever I came in. 'Amazing,' I said. 'I feel like I'm getting better with each ride.' And four months on, my instructor said I was ready to take my test. 'Are you sure?' I asked. 'Definitely,' he replied. 'You've been one of the most challenging students I've taught. But you're also the one who's improved the most in a short space of time.' On the day of my test, I was nervous, but determined. Calling Rick afterwards, I told him, 'I passed!' Taking my L-plates off the bike felt amazing. Since then I've taken myself all over – and I've never felt freer. If I hadn't bought my bike, I might've given up. But once I'd committed, I had to see it through – and I'm so happy I did.

It's given me my mojo back. That empty feeling I had as I turned 50 has gone. When I pull on my leathers and get on my bike, I feel free and content. I read a quote somewhere that said, *Travelling in a car is like watching a film, riding a motorbike is like starring in one*. That sums up perfectly how it feels for me. Although Rick hasn't been tempted to get into it, he's happy for me to do my thing



Me now

because he can see how much joy it brings me. And he's also relieved that my only extra-marital affair is with a motorbike! Now, at 51, I'm proof that if you put the work in, you can achieve your dreams, no matter how old you are. Life doesn't stop at 50. For me, it's only just beginning.

● To find out more about Claire, visit [youroneline.co.uk](http://youroneline.co.uk) or follow @clairebear\_bikerbean