

Joni Goes Postal Synopsis

Joni, a 34-year-old postal worker, eagerly anticipates the arrival of Richard, her longtime boyfriend, back from a trip to England, where he attended his aunt's funeral. The reunion, however, doesn't go as planned. Richard seems aloof and blames it on jet lag. But Joni senses something is wrong.

Still, Joni refuses to acknowledge there is a problem. Her sister, Karen, is happily married and pregnant; her best friend Sierra is a skeptic and thinks love is over-rated. Joni isn't about to admit to either of them that something is wrong.

While helping a colleague sort mail at work, Joni discovers a postcard addressed to Richard at his office. It is from Dawna, his former girlfriend in England. The message indicates they spent time together on his recent trip. Afraid of what this means, and choosing to remain in denial, Joni hides the postcard in a dresser drawer.

Joni plans a romantic dinner for Richard. She prepares gourmet food, decorates the apartment, and makes a HAPPY FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY sign. While she is in the kitchen, one of the candles on the dining room table goes out. Richard looks for matches - in Joni's drawer. He finds the postcard and becomes defensive: how dare Joni steal his mail? They fight, and Joni soon realizes the truth: Richard slept with Dawna while he was away, and although he cares for Joni, he still has feelings for Dawna. Joni angrily kicks him out. She throws dishes around the apartment, rips up the sign, and devours the special cake she made, along with the rest of the wine.

Joni becomes obsessed with Richard's betrayal. She searches through his mail, finding Dawna's phone number, and then calls her, leaving angry messages on her answering machine. She phones everyone she can think of, taking a poll - is Richard immature, selfish, an asshole, or all three? She gives herself a disastrous makeover resulting in brassy hair, over-plucked eyebrows, and a nasty rash from an allergic reaction to a store-bought facial cream. Joni's work suffers, and she gets complaints from irate customers, and her floundering dream of becoming a writer is put on hold.

Joni comes home and finds Richard packing up the remainder of his belongings. He leaves, taking the cat with him - a cat she adores. Joni is furious, but then the anger turns to resolve. Damn Richard! She is going to get over him! She begins to scrub and clean her apartment, picking up the broken dishes, metaphorically clearing away her anger and pain.

In an attempt to prove that she is *really* over the break up, Joni joins the other "posties" for a night out at a local pub. She signs up for overtime so that she can cover the rent on her own. She devours self-help books, and even begins to write again: a story about how she overcame heartbreak and got on with her life.

But Joni's resolve is tested when she runs into Richard. He invites her for coffee, and they begin to hang out as "friends". Joni realizes she still has feelings for Richard, and starts to hope they will reconcile. After all, Dawna is in England; there is no way he is going to see her again. It was a one-time thing, a mistake, she convinces herself. When a mutual friend is having a housewarming party, Joni suggests they go together, but Richard declines. He is going to be busy, he tells her, doing paperwork, in which he is woefully behind.

Joni decides to surprise Richard at his new place. She bakes him cookies, puts on a sexy dress, and goes over to his house in the hopes of keeping him company - and rekindling the romance. But when she arrives, she is thrown for a loop. Richard pulls up in his car - with Dawna, and her luggage. She has come to visit.

Infuriated, Joni makes a decision: to get revenge. She storms back to her apartment and scours it for items Richard left behind, burning them or cutting them into pieces, and sending them to him in the mail.

When Joni sees Richard and Dawna at a coffee shop, and overhears them laughing about her revenge, she ups the anti, and devises a plan. Richard owns a small company that sells trophies on line. Joni spends all her money on dildoes - then intercepts Richard's outgoing parcels, substituting vibrators for trophies and mailing them to his customers, thereby destroying his business.

When Joni's boss finds out about the way Joni misused the post office, he fires her on the spot. Having spent all her money on revenge, and unable to pay her rent, she is evicted from her apartment and moves back in with her mother. Joni slumps, alone and distraught, watching TV. Sierra comes over and confronts Joni, telling her that she has lost her soul for a man.

After Sierra leaves, Joni goes for a walk. She sees an elderly couple walking arm in arm. She has a revelation about the nature of true love: when the woman trips, the man helps her and they share a smile.

Armed with new determination and insight, Joni finally summons up the courage to confront Richard and tell him how much he hurt her. She also apologizes for her actions. Joni and Richard come to understand each other, and Joni finally begins to experience true peace and acceptance.

Joni's passion for writing is reignited when she decides to write from the heart. She posts an article online - HOW NOT TO BREAK UP WITH A GUY. A female editor in Toronto sees the post and likes her style. She offers Joni a job - in the mail room. It's not much, but there is the hint of a promise that it may lead to something more. Joni leaves town, ready to face the future - whatever it may bring - battered but wiser, and full of hope.