

Assholes

By Ina Disguise

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Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

This book is all about assholes. There are many reasons why people are assholes, these are just a few of the ones that I have come across. You will have many assholes in your life too. This was very hard to write, because I did not want to remember a lot of it. As Harry, one of the assholes on my list, says, sometimes there is nothing you can do or say, people are just assholes. Even you.

Lucy is an asshole. She is your sister. She is an asshole because when you first managed to blow up a balloon at the age of three, she took great pleasure in bursting it with her cigarette, which you initially thought was pretty because of the smoke she blew out of her nose, but learned at two years old that it tasted horrible when she stuck it in your mouth and that she could burn you with it.

When you were eight, she swung you around her head and dislocated your shoulder. You were in a sling for eight weeks, but nobody remembers. Nobody remembers when she screams at you either, even while she is doing it. Nobody ever seems to remember her doing anything wrong at all, in fact, because they are frightened of what she will do if they mention it. She becomes jealous when her Italian boyfriend is nice to you because he likes children. You say to yourself that when you are twelve you don't have to talk to her anymore because you will be old enough not to.

Yucky Diane is an asshole. You are four years old. Yucky Diane's mother is a singer, so the nursery teachers keep asking her to sing. She is not very good because she is four. She has shiny red hair.

When you realise, in primary one, that there cannot logically be a Santa, you tell everyone. They cry. You are an asshole.

Rosalind is an asshole. She has just walked up to you in school and called you a fat pig, despite never having spoken to you before. She has hair in a shiny brushed helmet and is considered very pretty. She wears an a-line grey skirt and is always immaculate. She is an asshole because her mother has led her to believe that looking perfect makes you perfect. You always thought she was very pretty, but this incident made you realise that she was actually very ugly.

Later in life, her mother, who doesn't know who you are, accuses you of stealing tinsel from the church as you help take the decorations down for your mother. She is very embarrassed, but she is really an asshole too.

Babs is an asshole. She grabs your over-developed breasts at the age of 11 and shouts and laughs at you. She is actually jealous because she is very thin and flat chested, but she doesn't know this. You eventually stop her doing it by grabbing her by the throat, lifting her off her feet and telling her very slowly and menacingly that you will tell a teacher if she persists. When you meet her later at 16 she thinks that this was very funny. Although you are very kind to her, you still think she is an asshole.

Michelle is an asshole because she started a group of her hyena friends shouting at you in the school playground because you had a different accent from them. You reply in broad Glaswegian slang that perhaps you should talk more like them. They are so shocked that they never bother you again.

Denise is an asshole. She has insinuated herself into your friends and has turned them all against you. She also has shiny brushed hair and enormous lips and although her ability to keep up with clothing trends makes her very popular, she is not pretty at all. She has a boyfriend who she likes to swap named maltesers with, and this is considered by your friends to be very cool. She decides who everyone fancies. She has become an asshole by herself, as her mother is very nice and not at all perfect. Her brother is also very nice and you have talked to him a lot. She doesn't like that. That is why Denise is an asshole.

Jools is an asshole. She is very surprised that you are faster than her because she looks athletic and you are rather buxom, so she points it out to embarrass you. Jools has finally caved to peer pressure and has fallen out with you because the rest of the class are not speaking to you. They are not speaking to you because you have refused to conform to a single social group and instead have spoken to whoever is least boring at the time. You are now friends with the Jewish children from the Hebrew class, and the class you are in don't like that because they feel inferior. Jools remembers eventually that she is not an asshole, and tells the others not to be assholes either.

Mcmurray is an asshole because you kissed him at a party and you and he tried and failed to lose your virginity. Therefore he is telling everyone that you managed it and of course you didn't.

Kevin is an asshole. Kevin used to go out with your best friend Cherise, and has become your friend in an effort to win her back. You do your best to persuade her to take him back, and get him to try various things like giving her flowers and sending notes via you. Cherise is not interested. Kevin then tries to hit on you, which you initially don't mind and then become aware how intensely controlling he is. He tries to tell you how to dress when you are thinking about something else. You decide not to see him any more, even as a friend. He spreads stories about you to his friends, who every time you meet them even as an adult, sneer at you as a result.

You meet him years later at a party where he is refusing to let anyone else put any music on. You tell him, very slowly and for a very long time, that he really should consider being a DJ. Kevin is just an insecure asshole, and so are his equally stupid friends.

Angela is an asshole. You got your first job with Angela, washing dishes at a trendy bar. You were standing in the jobcentre, looking at the ads and your friend laughed at the job, so you said "Fine, I'll have it then." Three months later Angela tries to refuse to give you your week-in-hand money back because the bar is out of business. "Lying time is in case I walk out, not in case you shut down." This has been your first job, and already you have to fight for money you earned. You cooked for part of the time because the chef had broken his wrist, and so he got you your money from her. She was trying to keep it because she does not want to sell her Porsche. She is a total asshole.

In the meantime your friend is still unemployed because she hasn't found whatever she thinks people let intelligent but bone idle sixteen year olds do.

Timmy is an asshole. He was going out with your friend, and you stupidly kissed him. You allowed your friend to beat you up with an umbrella the next day because you felt so bad about it. You now think that Timmy is your boyfriend. He talks as if he is, but refuses to take you out and is unfaithful with every person that so much as looks at him throughout your eighteen month relationship. He says it is because his dad was unfaithful to his mother, but you think it is probably just because he is an asshole. He keeps telling you he loves you every time you try to go out with someone else. He is almost certainly a narcissist. You are now convinced that there is something wrong with you because Timmy is an asshole.

Annie is an asshole. She ran out of female friends for a while and managed to persuade you to do lots of stuff that you wouldn't normally do, like go nightclubbing with no money and taking acid. She moved the first junkie you ever met into your flat, and after a holiday your parents insisted you took, you found a burnt spoon in the bath, your room broken into, and a belt you particularly suited stolen, you decided to move out. She is considered very glamorous by the other females and males in your social group so you have now socially climbed. Yawn. You finally decide whilst on an acid trip that you find her a bit tiresome as all she seems to talk about is going to the toilet, being sick and whether people, including you, are 'real' or 'full of shit', sometimes while you are actually sitting there.

Joe is in love with Annie. He is very jealous of your friendship with her. So he tells you that you are enormously fat and that Timmy considers you to be a piece of meat – probably because you are now very popular as a result of your whacky doodle friendship with Annie and have a choice of potential boyfriends should you want them. He is not one of life's alpha males. You should have realised this by now but you are still a bit hurt. Your underage friend takes his virginity, and tells you that he is constantly telling her that he doesn't like her and is in love with Annie. She seems to think this is OK but you are furious.

Lara is an asshole. She was your friend for a while, and was preferable to Annie because she seemed to prefer drinking to sponging from random people and talking about toilets.

Now however the guy she likes to kiss when her long term boyfriend isn't looking has tried to sleep with you on the grounds that it was his birthday. You are a bit offended by this as you quite liked his friend and cannot understand why he would even ask. It was all a bit scary because they took you somewhere you didn't know before this scene played out.

Lara is telling everyone that you are a liar, even though she wasn't there, because she thinks she knows this guy.

June is an asshole. She has made some bitchy comments for no apparent reason about your painting, which was done in half an hour because you were bored. You don't really care if she likes it, you didn't put it on the wardrobe because you thought it was good, but the fact she is telling you it is crap means she has no manners, which is a bit annoying.

She has a long term relationship with Kieran, but she has slept with your on-off, Mick in her boyfriend's bed whilst he was sleeping. She got pregnant to him and had an abortion. How she knows it was him and not her boyfriend is a mystery, but she tells you this after you confide to her that your period is late. Although this was not discussed and was a false alarm, she goes and tells Mick that you are having an abortion, and he throws a bottle at you and runs away before you can explain the situation. You do not dare to speak to him for some months as a result. He later refers to this as 'just drama'. Apparently you deserved the bottle thrown at you, but she is ok for some reason.

Simon is an asshole because he kicked you in the face just because you happened to be there. He had already done this to a smaller, younger girl which is why you were there, so that he could not do it again. He is probably in jail.

Amira was an asshole at drama school because she was extremely beautiful. At home, she cares for her younger sister who is disabled. She has been abusing older boys since she was thirteen, using various painful implements. You see her much later when doing a quick shift at a heavy metal bar. You feel quite sorry for her because it looks as if nothing has changed for her at all.

Moochie is an asshole because he is dead. He is dead because he became a junkie whilst travelling with New Age Hippies, where apparently he was considered the camp bike and slept with everyone. He dies alone in a doorway in London. You first saw Moochie when he used the lyrics from the back

of an album cover to win the school poetry prize. He used to chase you in the street and shout 'quadrophenia' at you because he thought he was a punk. He was famous amongst his friends for sucking the poison out of boils and giving people bits of carpet instead of cannabis in their pipes.

Ed is an asshole. Ed is an asshole because he has taken to smoking crack cocaine. He was bearable before, despite being a heroin addict, because he was intelligent and capable of conversation without trying to sleep with you, but now that he is on crack, he cannot either converse, or travel because he has to find ten pounds every hour or two to buy more crack. When you arrived to visit him, he greeted you with a bottle of cleaning fluid and a bottle of bleach, because his flat is covered with his blood from shooting up. You then had to walk a mile to find a big container of spring water because the water in London is undrinkable. Now you have been cleaning and listening to his crack induced drivel for two days, and you cannot take him out because he keeps asking for money and then has to go out to buy more crack. You decide not to bother seeing Ed again, and later hear from a third party that he has stopped talking to you because you were 'stuck up'. You phone him and remind him what actually happened, and suggest that he perhaps stop taking crack cocaine. You never speak to him again.

Ed became an asshole quite early in life. He was adopted as the youngest son of a railway family and had a different name before. When he writes, which he does reasonably well, he writes under his original name and is clearly very disturbed by the adoption. The two sisters of the family spent their childhood throwing him into rivers surrounding their home, and so Ed is afraid of water. He is so dirty that he no longer smells bad. Musty. He drinks a lot and has been adopted by prostitutes, who bring him lunch as he sings the blues, which he does exceptionally well. He has a peculiar morality, which he gained from the strange family, very unusual for a junkie, and disapproves of everything from poorly thought out stealing 'where someone actually loses something,' to the infidelity of the woman who pays him and his friend to sleep with her. He expresses this by shoving tigerbalm inside her unexpectedly during the event. He is very angry.

You met him when your friend fell in love with him in the course of herself becoming a heroin addict. Even he was disgusted with her, which is why he wasn't an asshole for a long time. Now that he takes crack however, he is an asshole.

Wullie from Dundee is an asshole who wants to throw you in the canal because you have a 'posh' voice. Ed stops him and tells the smack dealers that Wullie has been rude to his friend. Wullie is in big trouble.

Leon was introduced to you by Ed. He is an asshole because he threw tea at you and tried to smash your browbone using his head, and later blamed you for the eight aneurisms which are allegedly scheduled to kill him. There was no argument, you were sleeping on his living room floor because your mother was being difficult at the time.

He became an asshole when his sister accused him of paedophilia in order to claim criminal compensation. Her daughters made six thousand pounds. Leo lost two careers, one as a nurse and a few years later as a special needs teacher, because of the false allegations. When you first met him, you got him the best lawyer in Scotland and removed the irrelevant drivel his ex-wife had written to defend him, about catching his niece masturbating. He was very confused, not only by

this, but by his ex-wife, who told everyone she knew what had happened to him and then left him for a performance artist with better prospects long before he met you. Now he is a film director, and makes movies with famous actors who are between jobs. The movies are not very happy, but he is actually getting to do something more interesting because of what has happened to him. He cannot see this, he can only see that his life has been destroyed, and anyone who remains near him for long is at fault. That is why Leon is an asshole.

Jenny is an asshole. Jenny is an asshole because she saw trainspotting and decided that she wanted to be a junkie. When she met Ed, she decided to fall in love with him to see if her family would react. They tried to stop them seeing each other, but failed. She became an asshole because her very respectable high earning, intellectual snob parents drank a bottle of gin each every night and beat her dog. Jenny beat her dog too, because she didn't know how to stop them drinking. They stopped her pocket money and she became a thief, as did her brother, quite early in life, long before she became a junkie. She doesn't know how to look after herself, suffers from sex addiction and is quite depressed, although she has somehow managed to get a degree and a job as a lecturer. When she allows you to buy drinks for a full day because she is saving her money for heroin, and then fails to climb a small hill you are dimbing to get home, you know that you will never see her again.

She only ever made friends with you at school because you had lost weight after two operations on your throat and appendix and she was obsessed with losing weight. When her other friend hears that she is a junkie, she immediately laughs and says that she imagines Jenny only wanted to be a junkie to lose weight. She is probably right.

Jenny ended up selling rented televisions under a false name, which makes her sound like she had married Ed, to buy smack. Jenny is probably now a dead asshole, unlike Ed.

Her brother Danny is an asshole too. He is an asshole because he started annexing calculators at school to make money for cigarettes. He got caught. Later he started dating single girls with no family and inducing them to take out loans to pay for jazz instruments for him. As a result he ended up with a jazz band, all with instruments he had provided for them. The girls were left with massive debts.

He was abused by their father's best friend from childhood onwards, but his parents didn't seem to notice and were in any case drinking far too much to care. He was quite pleased with the money his father's friend gave him because of the guilt, so he decided not to care about anyone apart from his sister. That is how Danny became an asshole.

Nick is an asshole who inherited ten thousand pounds when he was fifteen. After he had spent this on drugs in an effort to make people like him, he stole Krugerrands from his mother to fund more escapades to make people like him. You advise him not to do this, and he becomes very upset.

Several years later, you hear he has finally stabbed someone who didn't like him no matter how many drugs he supplied.

Tony is an asshole because he raped your friend, and is now trying to rape you. He is a notoriously violent biker. You talk him out of it by indicating that being a rapist just isn't cool at all. Surprisingly,

this actually works and you spend the rest of the night listening to Annie having very noisy and surprisingly chatty sex with her future husband at the other side of the room.

Ron is an asshole because you left him with a very nice flat, and he thanks you by stealing and selling the carpets and furniture. He does this because he is a fruit machine addict who has a close relationship with the television. You later hear that someone he owed money to threw him out of the window, which sounds worse than it is because you only lived on the first floor. You decide to leave town.

Malcolm is an asshole. He looks like Jerry Lewis. After the browbone incident with Leo, Malcolm refused to acknowledge you at the door of his father's restaurant, because your face is in such a mess he thinks you will frighten the customers. He is quite right, but you worked and lived with the family for months and feel very hurt. You have gone to the highlands to spare your mother the sight of your half destroyed face, which is not only smashed but burnt and infected by the tea that was in the cups, so that you look like a lizard. Malcolm was born into the restaurant trade, and says himself that he knows nothing of life outside. Malcolm is very superficial and frightened of the world. He buys trousers to match his father, because he cannot think for himself. His sister, who has learning disabilities, also works for his father. When she tried to leave and got promoted in the job she went to, their father was so upset that he drove all the way from the highlands to the south of England to bring her back the same day. Malcolm will never get out of the restaurant business or away from his father, which means Malcolm will always be an asshole. He knows this, and so he tells you sadly to 'do something nice with yourself'.

Terry and Lisa are both assholes. They are married to one another.

When working for Malcolm's dad, you shared a room with a very stuck up, self -interested redhead called Lorna. She slept with Terry 'because he was good looking'. She apparently missed the 'married' part. She still believes herself to be superior to you in every way because she is on the summer break of her librarian course at university. You are a bit confused by this because she is just a rather plain redhead who has slept with a married person, which you think is a bit poor. Terry doesn't really have much of a personality, and later tells you emphatically that he believes that 'a social life is essential'. Despite the fact you actually have one at this point, you say no, you don't think it really is. Terry kills ten thousand fish by giving them the incorrect dose of medicine. It smells very bad.

Terry's wife is gorgeous. She is called Lisa. When you are with Douglas, a local farmer who also works on the fish farm, she encourages a boring blonde diver called Sarah who works there to sleep with him. Since you have met Lisa and quite liked her, you are very hurt by this, and you mention it years later working in Lewis to another asshole you work with who mentions that she knows her. Lisa comes around, with a friend, to beat you up. You explain to her why you think that was pretty bad behaviour and she seems very confused but still tries to tough it out. You continue to talk about the island you both lived on until it is clear to her that her memory is very poor. She leaves. She is now with an alpha hippy leader of a group of no-hopers called Sol, and Terry owns a nightdub which has been shut down because of a fatal incident with ecstasy.

Douglas says that the worst thing you could ever do to him is 'give him a dose'. He means of VD.

You have no intention of doing any such thing so you are not sure why this has come up in conversation. You are engaged briefly before he sleeps with Sarah the boring diver and gives you a dose of VD. You are very upset, but try to forgive him, which is a mistake as the relationship becomes very sick and you hit each other a lot. Although you get the worst of it, Douglas is not very bright so you don't really blame him for this. You should have left, but you were still only nineteen.

He later sleeps with his married cousin right in front of you at New Year. You meet her later in the local library and she announces loudly that her husband is a policeman. You ask whether he knows what she likes doing at New Year. She becomes hysterical. You laugh.

Mr and Mrs Crennan are assholes. They bought a rather run down pub at the side of a road, mainly for the moorings outside for their three-masted yacht. In the course of working for them you are told that Mr Crennan beats Mrs Crennan. You are told this because Mrs Crennan knows that you are in the same situation, but does not realise that this is really your fault because Douglas is a bit thick. You paint the entire pub. The locals complain that you are working too hard and they need work too. You go on a cookery course in order to provide better meals for the pub goers and find that Mrs Crennan has advertised for a new chef whilst you were away. You are furious, and thump your fist on the bar.

Mr and Mrs Willowton are assholes. They own a very tiny hotel on an island, and for some reason require several staff to run it. She claims to be a catering lecturer, but you are not sure about this because they freeze the seafood. They are on an island and they freeze the seafood? They forbid you to drink anywhere on the island and seem to think you are supposed to stay in all the time, which is a bit strange for a young person in the hotel business. You go to the nearest town to go out, which is fourteen miles away. They get very angry about that. Mr Willowton shouts at you even as you cook breakfasts for him the next morning. You ask if your going out is a problem? He continues to rant uncontrollably. You announce your notice, and he says he believes that you were 'saving it up' and that you can go today. You were not at all 'saving it up' but you believe that this man is probably still a bit insane following the nervous breakdown that caused him to buy the hotel. You ask to work your notice and they refuse, so you go to town to look for work.

James is a juggler. He is an asshole because he expects the keys to your flat even though he is sleeping with another six people and refuses to stop. Why would you not be entitled to privacy from someone who is basically just a tart?

Gilbert is an asshole because he tries to rape you after you get drunk with him in his bar. You slept on his couch because you were too drunk to get up the road. When you wake up he is molesting you. You cannot move so you tell him about the VD to get him to stop what he is doing. It is horrible. He is an asshole.

Gary the gardener is an asshole because he wants to be with you so badly that he breaks into your house and leaves a maidenhair fern. He tells you this, salivating slightly, as if it is pornographic. He has a fall in your house and his face bleeds. You have no idea how this happened but you decide not

to see him again, which is difficult given that you pour his pints every day. You tell him that you don't want to belong to anyone again after Douglas, because you are still in a great deal of pain.

Cherry is an asshole because she is an attention whore. She even hijacks your twenty first birthday as her flatwarming, and fills your house full of people you don't know. Her ex-boyfriend beat her up for two years, and comes around to try it again. She laughs when you tell him that you will batter him if he touches her, as you are half the size of him. He, however, does not laugh, and leaves immediately as he can see in your eyes that you could not care less what happens to you.

Jamie is an asshole because he is thirty seven and you are twenty one and he cannot believe that you care about him. He was a well-known advertising executive until he had a nervous breakdown and was sent to Scotland to recover. Now that he is a local artist, you like to tease him that he is a cartoonist. You remain in love with Jamie for years, but he never answers your letters because he knows that if you don't come back by yourself, he cannot travel with you.

Sally is an asshole because she wants to beat you up. You are dating her ex-boyfriend, not because you really want to, but because he is so depressed about losing her that he wants to kill himself. She does not understand this, nor does she understand why she wants to beat you up, she just does.

Mary is an asshole because she married Ron. Ron is an alcoholic, so much so that he regularly shits on the barstool he is impaled to in his bar. She is a very quiet woman, and has two horses. The only reason you stay working for them is because you like their dog and their duck. The dog needs to be walked several miles every day because it is very big. The duck is friendly and follows you everywhere. You end up babysitting their small daughter so much that she ends up with your accent, which annoys them both greatly.

After you finally leave them, because Ron called you a stupid cow, you hear that the daughter is screaming the place down every day, and that the dog is raping the duck in the beer garden in full view of the customers. You are not surprised, but there is nothing you can do.

Gill is very rich. She is so rich that she can afford to get a parking ticket every day, so she does not care where she parks. She is very thin because she takes a lot of cocaine, and is friends with the anorexic that used to do your job. The anorexic is very jealous that the bar is now doing better since you took 'her' role, and complains daily that you give her too much lunch. Gill is very domineering about telling you this. You suggest that the anorexic gets her own lunch as a solution. This appears to have not occurred to either of them as a solution to this pressing problem. Although she is very pretty and you realise you are supposed to admire her expensive clothing and hair, you are aware that you don't.

The owner of the church bar who poached you from the job you were happy in is a complete asshole. So much so, that years later you hear that he prevented the builders renovating the building from fixing the electrics properly, and so it is a potential deathtrap.

He steals chefs from all over the city, and expects them to work effectively together without any rehearsal or role assignment at all, which of course does not work. Rather than fight for space in the

crowded and badly designed main kitchen, you elect to do the back kitchen work, which is far too much for one person, however the boys are fighting to rule and so are doing very little in the front area apart from arguing and tripping over each other.

The owner asks how you are spending your time, since he never sees you in the front kitchen. You have had to work ten eighteen hour days without a break and are very tired so you invite him to come and watch what is actually happening.

Even he can see you are the only sensible person there, since you are the only person making sure the kitchen can still function at all rather than competing in some demented pack animal theatre show. You leave.

Max has taken over as Head chef in the next restaurant you work in, a popular French chain. He is an asshole because he bullies the kitchen porter so much that one day he vanishes. When he finally berates this boy's mother so much that she comes in to see him, it turns out that the kitchen porter is dead. He has killed himself.

Max takes this out on you by giving you the wrong instructions day after day and then criticising you for it. Everyone in the kitchen knows why he is doing this, so when the new chef starts, and he starts the same thing with him, you verbally rip Max's head off. He never forgives you, and instead of being put in charge of the company's bakery, you are told you are getting a pay cut. You leave.

Cassie is an asshole because she doesn't say hello to you as you are cooking her meal in this restaurant. You were at school with her. The reason she sees you and yet doesn't say hello is not, as you assume, because she is a lawyer now and you are only a chef, but because she is embarrassed at what her father did when you were at school with her.

He was head of department, and so she and her sister came top in everything as some sort of punishment for being children of a teacher. He congratulated them for their hard work by getting a sixth year student pregnant, and had to be moved to another school. Cassie is still embarrassed.

Donny is an asshole because he dumped you after you moved 350 miles to be near him because you thought you had a relationship after three dates. You weren't that interested in him until your sister came to visit and announced that he was very good looking. He is an asshole because he didn't have the guts to tell you he had a girlfriend. Donny is Australian, a fruit picker who spends six months a year in the UK and six months in Australia. He lives in a caravan with a much nicer man who has only one arm. A fruit picker with one arm. You ask if he needs a hand. He looks at you as if you are stupid. You've been an asshole.

Tim, Donny's friend is an asshole, because he manages the bar you scrubbed clean because you wanted a job there, and he does not want to employ you because you refused to screw him. He chose instead to employ a girl from Newcastle, who you liked but who was not at all shy about screwing him. That is Ok, because it was a small boring village anyway and they did not appear to see the value in someone who would clean and cook in addition to serving at the bar.

Rebecca is an asshole because she is very hormonal. She invites you to stay with her, gets lifts everywhere from you, and cries when she is drinking, to the point that you frequently have to go and get her boyfriend to calm her down. She has had six miscarriages, and has periods so bad that she cannot stand upright. You feel sorry for her right up until she tells everyone that you did not pay her for staying at her house and that you are a bitch as a result.

She had actually refused any money when you offered, and you did two roomfuls of washing (why two people needed this many clothes is a mystery) in her bath because she had had no functional washing machine for months. Heaps and heaps of filthy clothing. She seems to be very depressed, probably because of the hormones and the miscarriages. Her boyfriend is very racist, and makes you watch Karachi cops every night as he commentates on how much he hates 'darkies'. They live in a hunt kennels, however, which is interesting as you would never otherwise have discovered why such places exist at all. The dogs are very large and frightening, although you quite enjoy the puppies.

Pete is an asshole because he wants to buy the bar you work in and does not want it to make a profit. It is next to a mental hospital, which is interesting because both the patients and the psychiatrists drink there. The psychiatrists are mostly young and single, and are very nice company.

When he takes a week off to go drinking, you find it is making money, and the week you make a profit on the food, you tell him. He takes a barstool and tries to hit you with it, ending up with a struggle on the floor. Your knee is damaged and you leave. You call the cleaner that you work with. She tells you to get lost because she has children, and she does not think your getting beaten up by Pete is very serious.

The next morning, you call in at the local lawyers' office and ask for help. His orthodox Jewish brother actually works there. You explain what has happened, pretending not to know who he is, and he very kindly comes with you so that you can pick up your knives from the kitchen so that you don't have to work there again. When he announces to Pete that he is there as your lawyer, he smiles. Pete is very shocked.

Robert is an asshole. He is an asshole because his mother loved him too much. When he married for the first time his mother told his new wife that she would never be good enough for him. Her family ended up funding his failed restaurant to the tune of half a million pounds. She ended up five and a half stone through the stress of trying to make it work before she left him. He hooks up with the rich wife of a disabled millionaire in France, who is regularly provided with a selection of young studs during her skiing holidays. Robert is really one of those, but he doesn't admit it, to himself or you. He likes to tell people he was on the French volleyball team and this is why he has terrible teeth, but really it is because of making himself sick.

He is bulimic and alcoholic. He nearly killed you in a car accident when you were working with him, and makes such a fuss about the insurance company compensating you that you ask whether it would have been better for him if he had succeeded in killing you. He lied about his infertility. You still don't know why, because he was constantly unfaithful to you as he worked you from seven in the morning until three o'clock the next morning because he 'didn't trust anyone else in the kitchen.'

He is a violent asshole, but you find that this, along with his alcohol consumption is related more to stress than to actual dependence or malice. He asks you to buy him designer clothes when you are stuck with supporting him after the owner of the hotel you met him in throws him out. You say no.

When he leaves you for a circus millionairess who has bought him a hotel, he asks you to move in because his nerves are so bad that he cannot work. The woman he left you for has become ninety percent disabled with ME through the stress he has caused, kicking in door panels and scratching the plaster in the hotel she bought him with his fingernails. You find this out when you go there to try and get the money he still owes you. Robert is now a pig farmer, still funded by the same woman. And he is an asshole who still owes you money.

Joan is sleeping with Robert whilst you are living with him. She is an asshole because she phones you up to complain that her husband is beating her. 'When are you moving in with us?' you ask, and she sounds rather shocked. 'I've been in a violent relationship and if you aren't ready to move out you should just shut up, because you're agreeing to be a punchbag.' As you are only twenty four, she is quite shocked by this rather harsh but realistic response.

Her husband is notorious in the local hunting fraternity for his particularly brutal treatment of a stag they had run to ground. Everyone is disapproving, but so scared of him after the 'murder' that they daren't say anything to him. He wants to kill Robert for sleeping with his wife. You are 100lb when he tries to assault him, but manage to hold him off. He almost blurts it out, but you interrupt him with 'He's not worth doing the time for, don't bother.' Muttered quietly as you push him back from his attempts to throttle Robert, but he hears you and relents.

Rose is an asshole. She is an asshole because she made you repeatedly clean the same hotel room in your one hour off in the afternoon, because she is jealous that the hotel owner let you stay in it for a fortnight because he had no accommodation for you, and she thinks it might 'give you airs.' You are so exhausted that you can barely stand up because you have been working 19 hours a day for weeks, so you go and do it as many times as it takes for her to shut up. She continues to complain, and you tell her to go and see her boss then, because you are due back in the kitchen to work. She is also jealous because she is the only person Robert has not tried to sleep with in the entire hotel.

Paul is an asshole because his dad is a paedophile, and he is so confused by this that he still takes his young daughters to visit him. He has been told by a psychiatrist that his father genuinely believes he is the head of a pack, and has the right to deflower any female member of his family. Paul cannot cope with this, and this is why, despite being an immensely talented chef, he cannot now make decisions and has to be told what to do throughout the day. You visit him at home, and find out his wife was his officer in the army catering corps, and does not allow him to make decisions at home, so his lack of initiative is not entirely due to his being upset about his dad. You feel very sorry for Paul.

Ann is an asshole because she came from a very rich German family, and does not understand money. When she tries to keep two horses on a hotel chef salary, she finds she cannot and starts to rob the entire village to feed them.

Gyllen is her boyfriend, and he is an asshole because he is a compulsive gambler. He steals to fund it. Robert gives him money, thinking he is being very kind. You think this is hilarious because Robert likes taking money from people too, and has no idea that he will never see this money again.

Gareth is an asshole because he is addicted to cocaine, a hangover from his days as a merchant banker. He sunk all his money in the run down bar you cook in for him. He used up all his spare cash after this, including the takings, in supplying the entire staff with cocaine, and so they are all very odd to work with. You are thankful that you missed this particularly lengthy 'party' as they are not particularly nice people and you have never been in the slightest bit attracted to cocaine. He tells everyone your personal business and speaks in abstract epithets – 'when the fireman is late, you don't turn off the water supply'. He takes a jackhammer and knocks down the ground floor wall in his bar when you request a window. He narrowly avoids killing the kitchen porter. The building is listed, and is five stories tall, and he has not asked for planning permission. He does not return the money he owes you when you leave, and instead has his ugly wife write you a disgusting letter.

Alden is an asshole. He speaks with a mid-Atlantic accent despite never having lived in America. He remembers his chauffeur being shot in the face as he drove him to school as a small child. His very rich parents then sent him from Africa to a Scottish boarding school at the age of six and he feels abandoned. He has been provided with funding until he is twenty seven to do whatever he likes, but he is still a sponger and expects you to pay for everything. You fired him and slept with him the same day, which might have something to do with this.

He likes to tell you he can score drugs in any city in the world, and that he once participated in gang banging a prostitute in India, whom he paid two pounds fifty to afterwards. He does ecstasy with a group of people led by a young Asian man who scores for the whole lot. He is in love with this man's girlfriend but can't admit it because she is the alpha female of the group and he is a delta male, and admitting it means he would have to address his own inadequacy.

He gets you to help him move into his new flat and then dumps you. You meet him later in life, on facebook, and he says he has a girlfriend. You ask what that has to do with it, and besides you are seeing someone too? He blocks you because 'you haven't changed'. What does that even mean? He is a chiropractor now, and clearly thinks he is of a superior social class, despite lacking the super-rich family upbringing he is so fond of reminding you of. Alden is a major asshole.

Alan came back from the New Age hippy camp a junkie asshole, although it is not at all obvious. He shows you how high he can kick, which confuses you sufficiently to ask Ed why he would do this? 'Because he can do it, it is something he can actually do,' says Ed. This is apparently supposed to earn him a cup of tea.

Alan takes you out with his father and friends to the local pub. His father spends every conversation complaining about how demented Alan is until you break into the conversation to tell the crowd of old men exactly what you think of their behaviour. You were never that keen on Alan, but for him to worship his father, a formerly famous rock musician, and have to listen to this list of complaints is beyond the pale. A few years later, his father taps you on the shoulder as you are trimming the

hedge and then accuses you of bad work because you turn around. 'I'm working' you say, 'Do you know what that is?'

He suddenly realises through his drunken haze, that you know exactly who he is, and that he has managed to bring up four sons without working thanks to his years with the very famous psychedelic rock band. He backs off.

Kieren doesn't mean to be an asshole, but his parents have recently died. He has two friends, and has never previously spent time with you, but you realise that he has no one else to talk to about this as his friends are assholes. They are assholes because despite the fact they have all been friends for years, they have spent this time reminding each other that they are assholes, and so cannot discuss their feelings at all.

Kieren comes to your house almost daily for weeks after the deaths and then suddenly stops. A few years later he is homeless, and announces this on facebook. You offer to pick him up from wherever he is and let him sleep at yours for the night in the spare room. He is alarmed. 'Why would you do that?' he messages. You are more confused than ever about what your relationship with this guy is supposed to be, and you've known him since you were both kids.

The Duchess is a bit of an asshole because she tells you not to break some glassware in her house, and naturally one item gets broken. You advise her of this and reduce your bill, whereupon she complains to the agency you are using that you reduced the bill by too little. You are unaware of the fact you have effectively valued a priceless seventeenth century glass at a tanner, and are left somewhat confused by this, and by the fact you were not allowed to set the table because the retainer had to do it to justify her free house on the estate.

Dalia is an asshole because she is fifty three and wants to be friends with the girls that work for her even as she underpays them for imprisoning themselves on a shooting estate which is several miles from the nearest town. The lords and ladies complain about how much the girls eat when told that the estate needs to cut costs.

She is very bitchy about your relationship with the gamekeeper, an attractive but weak man who lives in a cottage at the estate gates. You tell her that she really needs a mother figure, someone who can mother a 53 year old in addition to the girls, as you leave because you have crashed your Audi. You had a choice between a cliff face and the sea, and you took the cliff.

David is the gamekeeper in question, and he is an asshole because he is an alcoholic. You spend lots of time watching TV with him and talking about his life, because you think he is very lonely. When you stay with him for a few days after finishing up work at the estate because you have no car, he uses it as an excuse to get so horrifically drunk that he ends up sleeping on a hillside with his night sight and shotgun. Dalia sends her husband to blame you for this. You are 25 but sufficiently savvy to tell this man to get stuffed and that you need a vehicle to move your stuff off the island.

After the experience on the shooting estate, you go to college and meet Aldous for the first time. You are both in a class with a mixed bunch of people, none of whom you would normally spend time with at all. Your assigned enemies are Big Jeannie and the nurses. The nurses are aging goths who

now listen to Radiohead and think themselves very grown up. They are particularly admiring of Big Jeannie, a rather bull-dyke looking hardnut from the other side of the city, who you later learn is fond of handing out used knickers and sleeping with weaker male members of the class when very drunk, a fact you are surprised about given her tough unappealing exterior. Because both you and Aldous are very clever, the rest of the class are not sure whether to like you or not so you are forced to be friends even though Aldous doesn't seem to like you very much. You used to go out with his brother Harry. You pretend not to notice the aggression from the nurses and Big Jeannie, although it escalates when Aldous quits college due to depression. He has become depressed because his mother is particularly bad at hanging pictures, and this costs him his college course.

One of the men who sleep with Big Jeannie is called Barry. He is an asshole because he is a latent homosexual who becomes violently hysterical when Aldous mentions the words 'brown hatter' during a lengthy drinking session. Aldous is particularly admiring of your ability to drink, which you gained during your years as a chef. Barry admits his leanings after knowing you for many months when you are out drinking together in your next job, at a Belgian restaurant.

The kitchen porter at the restaurant is called Fred. He is very thin, but you like his premature wrinkles and his voice, so you fall slightly in love with him even though he has a girlfriend. You do not admit to this until she leaves him, whereupon it turns out that he wasn't interested in you at all, he was just a dependant male winding you up.

You make several artworks for him, and write to him every day for over a year. It turns out he is a dependent personality because he is a junkie and a failed artist himself, but he only went back to college to try again because you cheered him up. He will not admit this, of course, and so your efforts, including the twelve days of Christmas in cigarette papers, miniatures of alcohol, and boxes of matches, are all in vain in terms of actually speaking to him. You probably didn't really want to anyway.

When you finally write to his brother in an effort to find out where he is, it turns out the family role playing depends upon his being a loser. That is why Fred is an asshole.

You finally leave the job after an awkward micromanaged night with an overzealous kitchen manager and concentrate on your studies at university.

There are many assholes at university, most of them are too young to be aware that they are assholes. One of the chefs at the restaurant has advised you not to worry about the assholes, because they have had no life. He has just quit his own course in order to be a musician, so you take his advice as all your efforts so far are to avoid becoming a professional artist. Your dad, who was a professional artist, has advised you of this because 'if you really want to do it, you will do it anyway, and being forced to make art for money is no way to great art'. Unusually, you have taken this paternal advice, which is why you have steadfastly avoided making art unless you are in love and cannot help it.

One of the lecturers on your course is a tall east coast American. You initially quite like him, because you like the idea of studying industrial and scientific history, but it turns out that he has no understanding of philosophy or political theory at all, to the point that he slaps you out of the

conversation rather than listening to what you have to say. As you come from a monarchist mother and socialist father, from a long line of communists, you learn that your own understanding of communism is reliable, and this guy has no idea what a communist actually is, to the point that he accuses you of dyslexia when you suggest that one of the writers he recommends is very right wing for an alleged commie. The probable answer is that the commie author concerned is an American commie, who himself does not understand what a communist is because he is using it for reasons of rebellion rather than actual ideology. You are left rather unimpressed with this class as a result, although the technology elements were very good.

Geraldine is an asshole because she cannot do the class you are doing. It is led by a very small grumpy Jewish American. You were initially quite crap at this class, but you improve because you adore him. He is very clever and intolerant, and you understand exactly how he feels dealing with a crowd of rather stuck up youngsters who have been led to believe they are very clever. When you finally submit and read every book he recommends you find him to be a somewhat punk thinker who likes to take a chainsaw to address problems in Medieval and Renaissance history, which makes him even cooler. Geraldine uses her position as student union rep to complain that his class is too advanced, and you verbally rip her to pieces because she is a complete tool. You are now thirty two. You make a beautiful chair for the lecturer, and give him a picture of it that he does not understand at all.

Carrie is an asshole because she makes out that you are a stalker because you like that class, and gets sexually assaulted the night before the exam to avoid having her marks taken into account. At least you suspect so, because she made no effort at all to actually address any of the questions. You know this because she was sitting in front of you. Having now been attacked a few times you know that this is really no reason not to be able to do the exam, in fact it would probably make you slightly more hyper alert.

Later she is a bigger asshole because she has moved to Japan, and on one of her visits back announces this to a homeless person as a reason why she is not giving him any money. 'Why on earth would that mean anything to him?' you ask. She has no answer, but never forgives you for this.

She is convinced that you are about to die of lung cancer because her father did, and so uses your inability to find graduate work as a reason to dismiss you as a loser even though she quite liked you. She is getting a bit wrinkly already at twenty five because of her obsession with her weight, and seems very narrow minded and stuck up suddenly.

You tend to talk in amusing and occasionally ridiculous blanket statements to provoke discussion and she now chooses to assume you are stupid rather than play the game and challenge them, which is what you expect people to do. You have always done this, you learned to do it when working in the kitchens to get people to start chatting, so you are not sure why she has decided on this course of action.

You give up on Carrie after she storms off down the street and refuses to talk to you because you are a 'loser'. This makes you very sad, because you know perfectly well that for once, this was not really your fault, she chose to do it, probably because of her fury at her late father's death. There is no

other reason why she would have understood you perfectly when she was twenty and not at all when she was twenty five.

You are sent to work in a very bad area you have never heard of. When you get to the properties you are due to monitor every second floor of the high rise flats has been burnt out, and the occupied floors have single, vulnerable elderly people who are too scared to answer the door. When one of them finally does, she tells you to abandon the job because the area is so terrifying. You do the job as best you can, and when you emerge from the block your car has four young men with knives slashing the tires, and smashing the windows. You know there is petrol in the boot of the car, and before you have even thought about it bellow at them to 'get to fuck.' Fortunately you have a deep voice, so they do not even stop to notice that you are actually a tiny woman before running away or you would have been in terrible trouble. You wait with your car for the AA to tow you away.

Willow is an asshole because she drinks too much and fails to get into honours. She is annoyed with you because you also drink too much and do get into honours, although she chose to work rather than take a couple of months off to study as you did. She is a musician and doesn't give herself the time to do well. She becomes very resentful and gets annoyed with you for studying. All conversations after this point become very awkward. She is ten years younger than you and this situation makes you feel as if you suffer from arrested development.

Norman the nudist is an asshole because his father beat him. He now has a thing about nudity because it attracts artists and photographers who like to take pictures of him naked. He confides that he used to be into science fiction, but the chicks are much hotter now that he is a compulsive nude. Your mother meets him when he is in the nude, and smiles. He is a very big boy.

Diana is an asshole because she doesn't know how to have a relationship. She warns you fairly early on that she is very nice, but will suddenly cut you off without a word. As you have done this yourself in the past, you kind of understand this. When you are having difficulties with Harry, she patiently listens to you worrying and does not communicate that she is having tremendous difficulties of a similar nature with her own boyfriend, who has been living off her and his parents for over a year. She blames you for this, as it is easier than confronting the fact that she cannot communicate at all, and tells you that she does not like Harry.

When you tell her you aren't too keen on her boyfriend either she tries to lie about applying for a job you recommended to her. Since you recommended it you aren't sure why she took this course of action, but since you weren't suitable for it anyway, you aren't worried about the actual job. Evidently she is just an asshole.

Dr Jim is an asshole because you are trying to write an essay and rather than encourage you, he tells you how awful you are because he is a linguistics lecturer and not a history lecturer.

Cynthia is an asshole because she is very large, and a bully. You are invited to a postgraduate residential reading week and she tries to tell you you will be assisting her in cooking for the group. You explain to the seminar leader that you do not feel this will go well, since you are a highly experienced chef and she is merely a very cheeky girl. This means that you miss the reading week,

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