

People

by Félix Saparelli

There's really only two kinds of people in the world: bad people and assholes. It's not static, either. It can change. You can change. And it's not all black and white — although with that kind of a world, white is pretty rare, I tell ya — there's plenty of grey around; shades and shades of the stuff.

Bad people aren't all the same, mind you: just look around. Bad people bad people bad people. Bad chick, bad guy, bad mum, bad dad, bad boy, bad girl. Bad soldier, bad courier, bad owner, bad buyer. All of 'em: bad bad bad. There's different classes of bad, just like there's classes of fish. Or was that schools of fish? Can't remember.

Here, for example, see that woman in the corner? The one with the yellow-tee brat grabbing her legs. Yeah, that one. Well, she'd be a real angel, up there in paradise — were you to believe in such things — if it wasn't for her husband. What? She cheats? Yeah, I know she cheats. That's not so bad. No, you see, in her past time she watches a puppy suffer. She attaches it to the wall and places its food just out of reach. Makes her feel good. There's a past behind it all, mind you, it's not out of pure cruelty. She's not an asshole. The dog's her husband's.

The young man chatting up the receptionist? He's got cancer. He's gonna croak in 4 months and he knows it. Twelve year old daughter. Dead wife: car accident in 2004. No, it wasn't his fault. The guy loves his daughter. — What? Yes, really. No, you sick fuck, not like that. Now shut up. — So, he loves his daughter. Loves her so much he's spending the rest of his short short life to put enough money in a trust fund for her to go to college. He works so hard at his job you can almost see the life seeping out of him. So, you ask, what's bad about him? Nothing. He's just an honest man. Enjoys life. Chatting up receptionists. When he was a teenager a stole a large bowl of chocolate mousse and used it to redecorate the village's catholic church. Good bit o' fun, that.

And the twins playing together outside? Boy and girl. Adorable little things. They're borderline assholes. So young. They're their own gang: he loves fire, she loves knifes. Sounds like a bad '80s BDSM flick, or smut. They go around, destroying Playmobiles and melting Legos, sneaking in their neighbours' houses and setting up mousetraps out the grown ups' rooms. They play hide and seek with the city kid and let him stay hidden for hours on end, not searching, just waiting for him to run out to go relieve himself; then they shout "Gotcha!" and have him count out to 100 — slowly. Yea, they're bad; not yet devils, but bad indeed.

There's all kinds and shapes of assholes, too. There's temporary assholes and permanent assholes. There's near-retirement assholes, assholes-in-training, and assholes with a PhD. There's young assholes, old assholes, middle-aged assholes; bright assholes, dim assholes, darkish assholes. There's all kinds and shapes of assholes.

The geek "of colour": comes over to see her mum every fortnight. Good kid. Awesome job in big cities. Travels a lot. Enjoys Martinis and G&T. She's a romantic. Spends her time online trolling people into submission. Likes softcore porn. Sets cats on fire. Collects stamps.

The fat guy in a suit: typical biz-y asshole. Cheats people out of their money, goes to church on Sunday, and prays to his God for more dumb people to give him green paper. He's divorced three times, no kids — 'cept if you count the illegitimate ones. He cut everyone out of his will, and wants to be cremated with his dough.

The wiry metis kid: everyone knows him as the school's dealer. But he's got a little sideline selling his services to the stupid: he spent enough time in the principal's that he knows her password to the school's system — good marks for the rich fools. He uses that same password to repeatedly set bad grades on the report of girls who're beat up for it because he gets hard spotting the bruises.

The old madam reading the Chinese horoscope: runs a multi-billion euro trafficking empire specialising in inter-continental transport. Furs; trade secrets; endangered species; firearms; sex;

drugs; people; cold weapons... She spoils her grand-kids with candy and lollipops.

People come in two kinds: bad people and assholes.

Which are you?

