

in defense of assholes

by Lance Manion

If you write enough you eventually reveal yourself to be a hypocrite. It was only a couple months back I went on a rant about midgets and mentioned Peter Dinklage by name as someone who should just be happy that he wasn't thrown off a cliff at birth or some such stupidity. Now, having finished watching *The Station Agent*, I sit here having an epiphany that I should have had years ago and probably did but it disappeared back into the recessed of my mind like every other epiphany I have or haven't had since I discovered how nice it was to repeatedly chemically alter that same mind.

There's a scene in the movie where it shows a couple of redneck dullards reacting to his presence (he's a dwarf if you're unfamiliar with his work) with laughter and cruel taunts. This pains his friend to no small degree who then tries with little affect to stick up for him. A very generic scene and one that has probably been done in movies a million times but at that moment I realized that that the assholes were happy and the sensitive guy was unhappy and it occurred to me that being a dick is easier and more fun than being a good person.

I know, real groundbreaking stuff.

But it's true. To feel empathy and compassion turns almost every interaction into a torturous exercise in hope and disappointment while on the other hand getting a quick rush of ego at the expense of another person seems like a pretty good deal.

Here's another thing to take into account. That same dwarf that you made a rude remark about has probably made the same remark about someone else's quirk or handicap just like you've probably rushed to the defense of someone that you have a personal relationship with. Same players but the dick is on the other foot. Wait, the shoe is on the other dick?

You get the gist.

You overhear a dwarf saying something nasty at the expense of a friend with a bad stutter and for a second you have the surreal

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experience of being all high and mighty with the same dwarf that you were only moments before being a dick to.

The Station Agent only got it half right (no, that is not a dwarf reference ... although I'm sure my subconscious is going crazy trying to squeeze a few in) and really didn't need to make the two hick antagonists such dimwitted stereotypes. They were us. They could have just as easily been two dwarves laughing at a hunchback. Or two hunchbacks seeking a brief respite from being two hunchbacks by making fun of a guy with Ambras syndrome.

We all run hot and cold. Cruel and empathetic. Petty and giving, and it's only the mix of these traits that makes us who we are.

Horrible people.

It's all about circumstance and who we are at any given point in time. There are moments where I am the dwarf and there are moments where I am the sleeveless, tattooed guy in a John Deere hat and to try and pretend otherwise is not only disingenuous but makes you momentarily blinded to the fact that the dwarf I just mentioned turns out to be an alcoholic racist and you are an asshole for assuming that wearing a sleeveless shirt, having a tattoo or sporting a John Deere hat in any way makes you less of a person.

But don't worry, you have plenty of company. I thought the same thing when I first typed that sentence.

What's worse is that depending on the hour of the day I can be either guy. Sometimes I'm even a sleeveless, alcoholic, tattooed, racist dwarf in a John Deere hat.

And so are you.

So I guess what I'm saying is that Peter Dinklage is entitled to no more or no less respect than anyone else just because he's a dwarf and therefore in a roundabout way I'm not so much apologizing for my past comments as recognizing and accepting that I can be an asshole when it suits my purposes.

Just like Peter Dinklage.

