

Cast:

Priya Hall

Leila Navabi

Robin Morgan

[Here to Judge Theme Song- With a Christmas Twist]

Priya: Welcome to Here to Judge where we scour the internet to dissect dilemmas and decide who's to blame. Here to Judge today is me, Priya Hall.

Leila: Me, Leila Navabi.

Robin: And me, Robin Morgan.

'Am I the asshole for demanding the same Christmas present my stepbrother got? I sound like a real asshole but I've completely lost my mind over this. I'm 17 and my stepbrother is 17. We both have our driving licence. I just found out five days ago that my dad and stepmom bought a used car for my stepbrother, they got me a £600 gift card to Best Buy'. That's like a Home Bargains type thing I'm guessing?

Priya: Yeah it's an electronics store.

Robin: OK so cool, so cool he could buy just loads of scart leads. 'I know £600 is a lot of money but what the fuck? Am I crazy or is it super unfair? It's literally the straw that broke the goddamn camel's back'. He's so swearsy and that's from me, he's very swearsy.

Priya: [Laughs]

Robin: 'I'm actually so pissed off that I've moved to my mom's house full-time. My dad seems to be genuinely sorry and told me he's looking for a car now but it will take a while. I messaged him back saying that I'll decide if I want to see him after he decides to be fair for once. I've ignored all of the other calls and messages from him since. My

stepbrother messaged me saying that I need to chill out and that he'll let me use his car. He also said that I need to stop bitching and ruining everyone's Christmas. I told him to get in his Civic and fuck off'.

All: [Laughter]

Robin: 'Am I the asshole?' I assume it's a Honda Civic otherwise it's a really good phrase that I want to use, 'Get your Civic and fuck off!'

All: [Laughter]

Robin: I mean this seems like an open and shut case.

Leila: Yeah. I have two sisters, one of them is 20 and the other one is 18 and every Christmas I just ensure that everything I get them costs the same amount. And for a while I just bought them the same thing, now I'm like a bit smarter about it and I'll be like, OK this to her taste, this is to her taste. For both people X amount of money and that's fine. I think that this seems a bit nuts to me that they've done this. Especially with the dynamic of stepbrothers and stepsisters. I imagine that's politically a bit awks yeah. What do you reckon?

Priya: I think I disagree with you on this.

Leila: Really?

Priya: I think this guy is an asshole.

Leila: Oh I'm not saying he's not an asshole.

Priya: Oh right, OK.

Leila: I just think it's a bit weird but.

Priya: He's 17 though like what if he is like super irresponsible and they were like let's not buy him a car because he'll die in a wreck and the other one is fine so they bought him like a cheap car. And if you're complaining about \$600 for anything...

Leila: Yeah that's very true.

Priya: ...then you're a tiny little douche bag.

Robin: [Laughs]

Priya: Is what I think of this 17 year old who's just trying to have a nice time on the internet.

Robin: Yeah take that kiddo, get in your Civic and fuck off!

Priya: [Laughs]

Leila: Yeah that's very true.

Priya: That's such a specific amount of money to put on a gift card, \$600.

Leila: Yeah it's a lot of money as well I'm thinking about it, that's a lot.

Priya: Yeah to spend on electronics.

Robin: How much do you reckon a car costs?

Leila: Yeah much does a used Honda Civic? Because in my head that's a couple of grand.

Robin: Yeah but it could just be like a proper like piece of shit couldn't it?

Priya: I feel like in America cars are cheaper but I might have made that up.

Leila: In my head I'm like whatever money it is, if it's 10 quid, or if it's \$600, just the same amount on both of them and then this would be fine...

Robin: Yeah.

Leila: ...is how I feel about it. I feel like it's a just a bit uncomfortable.

Priya: Yeah.

- Leila: I always find this sort of thing scary. Especially being one of three girls who are each two years apart in age.
- Robin: Yeah that's a lot isn't it?
- Leila: But my mum in particular was always just very careful to not do anything different for each person. Which is why my sisters got their ears pierced when they got their ears pierced but I had to wait until I was whatever 15 or 16.
- Priya: Really?
- Robin: Oh are you the oldest?
- Leila: I'm the oldest so all they all just did it at the same time as me because that's how it was fair apparently which I don't think it was.
- Robin: You got the shit deal man.
- Priya: My mum had my ears pierced when I was a literal infant. I was under one when I had them pierced the first time. And then obviously they got infected because a baby can't take care of their ears.
- Robin: Aw bless you.
- Priya: And then I was three when I got them done the second time, same thing happened. And then 11 the last time and that held.
- Robin: Held! Held! [laughs]
- Priya: What? Why?
- Leila: Do you feel weird about that?
- Priya: Well yeah.
- Leila: Do you feel like violated?
- Priya: And also she didn't take me to like a reputable place to get my ears pierced, so I have multiple holes in one ear where they just kept missing the original hole.

Leila: Like Claire's Accessories, did a 15-year-old do it?

Priya: No I think it was just someone's garage when I was really little.

Leila: Oh.

Priya: And eventually when I was 11, I was like 'Right we're going to Claire's because we can trust Claire'.

Robin: Yeah [laughs]

Leila: Just Claire.

Robin: Will Claire be doing it? Claire needs to do it.

Priya: We're going right up to the top.

All: [Laughs]

Robin: CEO Claire.

Leila: [Laughs] Oh I really hope that's true.

Robin: Girl boss.

Leila: Yeah [laughs]

Robin: Plus like a one-year-old turning up with this gammy ear stretching along the floor you know, bless you.

Leila: I bet no one messed with you though.

Priya: That is true. This baby can handle a good piercing.

Leila: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Priya: Don't mess with her, she will kill you.

Robin: This baby is on antibiotics.

Priya: [Laughs]

[Here to Judge Interim Music- With a Christmas Twist]

- Leila: 'Am I the asshole for mentioned that there aren't enough pigs in blankets at Christmas dinner?'
- Robin: [Laughs]
- Leila: 'Me and my brother love pigs in blankets. If you don't know what they are, they're cocktail sausages wrapped in bacon, apparently a British thing.'
- Robin: Oh my God, this is American.
- Leila: I'm assuming it is because it says 'apparently a British thing'.
- Robin: I was really hoping this would be like our first properly British one.
- Leila: I don't know why I've guessed that it's American. Like maybe it's French. Like I don't know, I'm going with American unless otherwise.
- Robin: Sure OK.
- Leila: 'And it's not a Christmas dinner without them. Last Christmas my sister hosted a dinner for about ten people and made enough pigs in blanket for one per person. Again, they are cocktail sausages so that's literally a single bite each. When I noticed how few she had prepared, I made a comment along the lines of, 'I don't think there's going to be enough pigs in blankets for me (and my brother).'
- Robin: [Laughs]
- Leila: I didn't say it in a rude way', I'm done with the American accent now.
- Robin: Sure.
- Leila: That was fun. 'I didn't say it in a rude way, it was just a simple observation. My sister's reaction to this comment was to run out of the room bawling her eyes out acting

like I'd just called her a cunt or something actually heinous'.

Robin: [Laughs] Love the OP. Love the OP.

Leila: Well it doesn't, she said 'acting like I just called her the C word or something heinous' but I said cunt, because I'm not a pussy!

Robin: Then love the Leila. Love the Leila.

Leila: 'And on the day I just assumed that she overreacted and didn't think much of it, however, it came up in conversation today with my stepdad. He claims that I was being rude by stating my opinion that there aren't enough pigs in blankets. That I was out of order for not keeping it to myself. And that I clearly lacked empathy and that's why I can't see that it's rude. Now I am socially inept and maybe I'm totally wrong and I was being rude. But if I was, I don't understand, I didn't say it in a rude way. How is it rude to simply say there's not enough of something?' This is very Oliver Twist.

Robin: [Laughs]

Leila: 'Is what I said a serious lack of empathy? I've never felt a lack of empathy in other areas of my life and I assume he's only saying this because I'm autistic and he's ignorant and thinks autism equals lack of empathy when it's a SPECTRUM. And you can go the other way when you have too much empathy. For context, my brother made a similar comment/observation and she didn't react proportionately and no one is calling him rude. So was I the asshole? Do I lack empathy? I genuinely believe I didn't do anything wrong but I'm seriously doubting that after today's conversation. This has thrown my whole understanding of social interaction up in the air.'

Priya: I don't think the OP is an asshole but I completely understand where his sister is coming from, in that I've cooked like Sunday dinners and Christmas dinners before

and someone has been like 'Rah' and I've gone apeshit, yeah.

Leila: I get that, it's like tiring.

Priya: Yeah.

Leila: You should all just move on is honestly how I feel about this.

Robin: The phrase is pigs in blankets and I really resent saying 'pig in blanket'.

All: [Laughs]

Priya: A lone pig in a blanket.

Robin: Yeah, a lonely old pig in a blanket is disgusting.

Leila: It's also not, it's like a pig in a pig.

Priya: Yeah.

Leila: It's like if blankets were skin then that would make sense.

Robin: [Laughs]

Leila: Like when are we going to get blankets without human skin.

Robin: Yeah.

Leila: Do you like pigs in blankets first of all? Question for the table.

Robin: Yeah.

Priya: I'm a vegetarian so I've not had them in a really long time. But I don't remember rating them. I remember thinking a lot of the sausage is soggy because it's wrapped in bacon.

Leila: [Retching sound] No.

Priya: Yeah, no?

Leila: [Retching sound] Sorry it really genuinely makes me retch, I don't know if it's a cultural thing or what but I just never had ham growing up because my dad is Iranian and so it's culturally just not the thing to have pork in any way. And I remember I got to 15 and I really rebelled and I just like ate all the bacon, whatever I could get my hands on, I ate. But pigs in blankets to me was just like, and I'm a vegetarian now but I remember it being the turning point. Like pigs in blankets for me of being like...

Priya: You just held a pig in pig and was like 'No more'.

Robin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Priya: And just threw into the...

Robin: This is a double negative.

Priya: [Laughs] There's also the bird, in a bird, in a bird, isn't there?

Robin: Oh God that's so bleak.

Priya: Where they put like a chicken in a duck in a turkey. That's harrowing.

Robin: What I saw today was Aldi offering a two metre long pig in blanket as part of their Christmas range. And they've called it...

Priya: How do you cook that?

Robin: You just pop it in the oven apparently. But they've described it as 'the perfect centrepiece' [laughs].

Priya: Oh no [laughs]

Robin: When it sounds like a sort of culinary Human Centipede [laughs].

Priya: Do you have to eat it like Lady and the Tramp?

Robin: Oh yeah I think so. Or just put it on your door as like a wreath.

Leila: [Retching sound]

Robin: [Laughs]

Priya: Disgusting.

Robin: Absolutely revolting. I'm cooking Christmas dinner this year for the first time. And it's just for me and my wife and my kids but they're not going to criticise my lack of pig in blankets because we're not going to fucking have any.

Leila: Do you know I feel like that a lot of people who are experiencing that at the moment. Like are going to be experiencing cooking Christmas dinner for the first time because of Coronavirus.

Robin: Yeah.

Leila: I'd love to watch a show where it's just like people, first time people making their Christmas dinners. I'm telling you now someone is going to commission this and I'm not going to be involved in the process and I'm going to claim it back.

Priya: There you go, this is you laying claim to the idea.

Leila: It's a great idea.

Robin: I think if people haven't done like my Christmas dinner won't be too far away from a roast, I don't think. Should it be?

Priya: No. I made my first Christmas dinner when I was like 19 and it really changed me as a person for the few hours that I made it.

Robin: That's crazy, yeah I bet, that's really young.

Priya: And I remember my brother was really, really hungover and I was really angry at him. And then I was like who am I? I'm 19 years old. Why am I so angry about someone having fun?

Robin: Have some respect!

Leila: I feel like that would mature you more than becoming a teen mum. Like becoming a teen Christmas dinner maker is like something that would.

Priya: It 100% did.

Leila: Yeah how you feel now?

Priya: I feel like I'm never making another Christmas dinner for another human being ever. The last time my family tried to get me to make a Christmas dinner, I said 'No we're all having pizzas' and then absolutely failed to make a homemade pizza. And it was a very depressing day for everyone involved.

Robin: Oh Priya.

Leila: I have a friend, she, and I think her mum, have never, like they hate Christmas dinner, both of them. So for Christmas they have chips, chicken nuggets, like they have what we call 'British tapas' basically. Like smiley faces and chicken nuggets.

Robin: Brapas.

Leila: Yeah, yeah Brapas exactly. And it's like the best time ever and she has a great time every Christmas. And I just think...

Priya: I love that story.

Robin: That's perfect.

Leila: I love that. I think that so many people don't enjoy Christmas dinners. There are people out there who are like, I'm not really into it. So have something, like literally Christmas is the day where you could just eat what the fuck you like.

Robin: Yeah.

Leila: Anything.

Robin: That's it. Like all that party food that like everywhere sells, all of that would be the best in the world.

Leila: Anyway there we are. That's the end of that so. I think ultimately at the end of this one [laughs] I can't even remember the story now.

Robin: I think baby Jesus is the asshole.

Priya: Yeah.

Robin: I think that's what we're going for.

Priya: For putting too much pressure on people.

Robin: Exactly. I genuinely don't remember the story [laughs].

Priya: The pig in blanket [laughs]

Robin: Oh yeah. Yeah you're the asshole for bringing it up, but equally one pig singular pig in blanket is unacceptable so.

Leila: It's not worth having really is it?

Robin: Your entire family is awful.

Priya: [Laughs]

[Here to Judge Interim Music- With a Christmas Twist]

Leila: 'Would I be the asshole if I gave my family self-help books for Christmas? Instead of getting his siblings materialistic shallow gifts this year for Christmas, my husband wants to get his siblings, 27, 29, 21, books to help them better themselves. He said he would pick each book for each sibling based on what he thinks they need and write a letter explaining his good intentions for the gift because he genuinely wants them to identify flaws within themselves and become better, happier people.' This is going to give them all trauma, that.

Robin: Amazing.

Leila: 'Would he be the asshole if he did this?' Yes.

Robin: Is that how short it is?

Leila: That's it.

Robin: That is concise.

Leila: Oh actually we've got an edit, there is an edit.

Priya: There is an edit.

Leila: OK I'll read the edit.

Robin: Oh go on.

Leila: 'Edit- none of his siblings that I know of have ever expressed or discussed any flaws they are working on/ want to work on. Also he hasn't said exactly what the books would be on but I'm going to assume they are deeper issues. One of his sisters is very stubborn and has pretty bad communication skills. When she's mad she just cuts the person off until both have forgotten about it and it just blows over.' That's the best way to cut someone off! That's the best way to deal with being mad.

Robin: And that's also what's going to happen [laughs].

Priya: It's the only way to deal with conflict.

Robin: Cut that shit off.

Leila: OK what are your thoughts please?

Priya: I think obviously he would be the asshole but [laughs] I think it's the level of pettiness that I aspire to. I respect that, being like 'You could all stand to improve yourselves a little bit. Here's how'.

Leila: God.

Priya: And tailoring the books to their issues, ah perfect, I love it.

Leila: And the letter.

Robin: The letter of good intentions is my favourite thing. Because that is like so planned. It's not just like a sort of Waterstones bargain basement bucket type thing where he's just gone 'Yeah fuck it, that'. 'This is something that I think is fundamentally wrong with you, and here are the reasons why. Santa has his list, I've got my list, you're a piece of shit for these reasons'.

Leila: I'm genuinely baffled by this. This guy needs a book on how to improve his own behaviour. That's the...

Robin: Imagine if his siblings were going to get him it though.

Leila: Yeah How to Stop Alienating Everyone Around You.

Priya: Oh that's true [laughs].

Robin: Yeah this is like a family tradition, it's all like hazing presents.

Leila: Oh God I can imagine. Yeah my mum once bought me when I was I think about 14, like a book about how to deal with teenagers. And she was like 'I was going to read it to see how to deal with you but then I thought it would just be better and make more sense for you to read it'.

Robin: [Laughs]

Priya: [Laughs] That is incredible.

Leila: And I read it. I did. But these people are in their 20s now [laughs].

Robin: Yes so how old is he? 24. He must have married quite young right?

Leila: Yeah he's 24 and his siblings are 27, 29 and 21.

Robin: Hey big bro, this is why you're a bad person.

Leila: It's really horrible. I just genuinely imagined it in my head if my sister did this to me. And I just think, I think it would

damage me. I think I'd end up in a facility if I received that because I would just be having the visceral need to improve myself possibly. Which I think probably most people have. A lot of people feel this way I think and want to be a better person. There's a constant pressure to be better and be the best version of you la-la-la.

Robin: I quite like the original poster's comment of like 'they haven't mentioned any flaws that they're working on currently' which is the kind of thing like, 'you know what flaw I'm working on?' You know like.

Leila: Yeah.

Priya: And I'm going to need your help to afford the books to fix it.

Robin: Yeah [laughs].

Leila: I just hate self-help books. I don't want any help unless I want to help myself with you know.

Robin: Yeah the arrogance to be able to write a self-help book. 'I'm perfect and you can be too'.

Leila: Yeah and...

Robin: It's a lot.

Leila: It's one thing writing one, then it's another thing giving them to everyone you know.

Priya: Yeah hand picking three of them for your siblings.

Leila: Bespoke.

Priya: So rude.

Leila: Uh, is this person an asshole?

Robin: Um?

Leila: Oh their husband, yeah.

[Here to Judge- Better, Happier People]

Robin: She's married to a proper pass agg.

Leila: Get a divorce! [clap] [clap]

Robin: Yeah get in your Civic and fuck off.

[Here to Judge Theme Song with a Festive Twist]

Melanie: This has been a Little Wander production. Music from Rhodri Viney. Local artwork from Sam Roberts. Voice by Melanie Walters. With special thanks to Beth Forrest, Steve Pickup, Sam Roberts, Henry Widdicombe, and Jo Williams. Other podcasts from Little Wander include: I Wish I Was An Only Child, and Welcome to Spooktown. Subscribe now on iTunes, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

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