

# Here to Judge

Cast:

Priya Hall

Leila Navabi

Robin Morgan

Elis James

[Here to Judge Theme Song]

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.

Leila: 'Am I the asshole for not wanting to spend my summer defecating in a communal bucket in the middle of nowhere? I don't even know where to start with this. God I wish it was a joke. I, F 21, have recently been invited along with my mum and brother to a secluded cottage getaway by my mum's brother, my uncle [laughs] my uncle. My Uncle Graham, has a wife' [laughs].

Robin: [Laughs]

Leila: My uncle a lot. 'My Uncle Graham has a wife who put [laughs] I can't keep...

Robin: [Laughs] It's like she's never described family before.

Priya: [Laughs] Is this the first time she's heard of uncles?

Robin: [Laughs] My uncle has a wife who apparently is called aunty, I don't know.

Leila: Right. I'll read that again [laughs]

Priya: [Laughs]

Leila: Right, 'I female 21, have recently been invited along with my mum and brother to a secluded cottage getaway by my mum's brother, my uncle.' That's her uncle's work.

Robin: Her what?!

Priya: [Laughs]

Leila: 'My Uncle Graham has a wife who to put it nicely is a nut job and two children who I adore.' [Laughs] Nice, all right. 'My Uncle Graham put this cottage possibly in the worst way possible. It's in the middle of the Welsh countryside, no main roads for over three miles'. [Laughs]

Robin: [Laughs]

Leila: 'And has one bedroom with one bed for seven people to share and no working toilet'.

Robin: That's so accessible.

Leila: 'There's a outhouse in the garden with a bucket, and that's it. He wants us to spend the entirety of August at the cottage with them. When my family and I read the email we were in hysterics as it is the last thing we would possibly ever want to do. My mum put me in charge of responding as I'm closer to them.

I replied basically saying that as tempting as it sounds, I would have to pass on this occasion as it sounds horrendous. I asked if I'm able to come down and visit at some point before university starts up again, as I'm going into my fourth year of medicine and don't have time during the year when my family are planning on going. I later got a reply from my uncle saying that he didn't appreciate my passive aggressive tone and that the children were getting irritated by the lack of effort to see him, which isn't the case. I see them every break I have.

I replied saying it was extremely unfair to put all the blame on me considering it's me who has to travel. They haven't ventured up to where we live for nine years, yet I make several trips to theirs every year. He ended up calling me and we got into an argument. When I told my mum about the situation I was expecting her to be on my

side but she said I was extremely rude and disrespectful. She called my uncle and apologised but he refused to accept it. Am I the asshole?'

Priya: Why would seven people share a bed? Is my first question.

Robin: It's Charlie Bucket and his grandparents [laughs].

Priya: [Laughs] That whole film was set in the Welsh countryside.

Robin: It's Welshly Wonka.

Priya: [Laughs] Very good.

Leila: [Laughs]

Robin: So I don't read these before they're said out loud and this has genuinely shocked me. So most Augusts my extended family meet up in Gregynog near Newtown in Mid Wales. And we usually share this one cottage. And my cousin does medicine.

Leila: [Draws breath shocked]

Robin: And everything was starting to really sort of like, I was like shit, we all know Wales is small but surely our Welsh episode can't call out my family in one of those to this podcast [laughs].

Leila: The question is, is your dad called Graham? Is that how it works? How does this work? I don't know how families work either [laughs].

Robin: No he is not luckily. And also I've never heard of my uncle, what is uncle?

Priya: [Laughs]

Robin: But luckily there seems to be enough gaps unless they're using fake names and they've changed certain facts to protect the innocent i.e. me. Genuinely it's like one of the

highlights of my year, and it's lovely, it's great, it's wicked. So I don't know what this person is complaining about. If she genuinely replied to the uncle saying 'Sorry, can't come' it sounds horrendous, then yes you're a piece of shit.

Priya: But do you have to shit in a bucket when you go to this cottage in Gregynog?

Robin: Uh? No we don't have to, that's just something I like to do [laughs].

Priya: A fun treat.

Leila: The quandary here is, it has one bedroom with one bed right? But does a room have to have a bed in order to be a bedroom? Because I can't imagine that they're seriously suggesting seven people sleep in one bed. Maybe he's annoyed that there's only one actual bed and then the other option would have to be like an airbed or a sleeping bag or whatever.

Priya: Yeah.

Leila: Has he ever been to a festival? Because this sounds extremely mild in comparison.

Robin: This is a month long though.

Leila: Oh right.

Priya: Yeah I'm sort of with the OP on this. I think especially if you're a med student, spending your whole summer, on base case scenario a sofa bed, worst case scenario in a bed with seven distant relatives.

Leila: [Laughs]

Robin: [Laughs] Worst case is, on a cousin.

Leila: [Laughs]

- Priya: Yeah and also it sounds like Uncle Graham was obsessed with OP so that's weird.
- Leila: Yeah Uncle Graham is a bit creepy isn't he?
- Robin: [Laughs]
- Priya: Like I'm with them on it. Ringing them up and being like 'You have an obligation to visit us for the whole summer' is weird.
- Leila: Come and sleep in my communal bed!
- Robin: [Laughs]
- Priya: What's your deal Uncle Graham?
- Leila: I think her Uncle Graham's a creep.
- Priya: Yeah.
- Robin: Yeah but Graham has a wife who is the nut job. He's not the nut job, the wife is the nut job.
- Priya: Oh I forgot about the nut job wife.
- Leila: Yeah how can we say that she's a nut job?
- Robin: We don't even hear anything about her like throughout the rest of the post, by the way she's a piece of shit but Graham! [Chuckles]
- Leila: I mean she's maybe a nut job because she's married to Graham is how I feel about it.
- Priya: I like that 'to put it nicely is a nut job'.
- Robin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Priya: That's so rude.
- Leila: I mean I would never share a bed-- imagine sharing a bed with like seven of your family members? I can't even, like Christmas day at a table is hard enough do you know what I mean?

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Robin: The thing is, this is August for a month. And when I see cottage countryside, one bedroom, shitter, it's totally the Edinburgh festival.

Leila: [Laughs hysterically]

Robin: And I'm like yeah that sounds fine! That sounds absolutely fine.

Priya: Seven people to a bed, spot on.

Robin: There's a nut job there, of course there is, it's Edinburgh [laughs].

Priya: [Laughs]

Leila: God! I don't know what else to say about this you know?

Robin: I think she is an asshole but I don't think she's THE asshole.

Leila: Yeah.

Robin: Does that make sense?

Priya: OK.

Robin: I think she seems to hate her family but a month away with Uncle Graham with the mad wife who is not mentioned, which makes me so suspicious.

Priya: Yeah that wife is completely fine.

Robin: Yeah [laughs].

Priya: She's probably a delight.

Robin: Yeah I think so. Cleaning the bucket every day.

Priya: Oh god. I don't think OP is the asshole. I think she should be able to spend her summer however she likes and if she doesn't want to shit in a bucket with Uncle Graham, that seems reasonable and fair.

[Here to Judge- Interim Music]

Robin: 'Am I the asshole to think people from up North/Wales are much friendlier than Southerners? I was born in South Wales, currently live in Southern England, husband from Manchester. When we go up North to visit his fam, I'm always shocked by how much friendlier in general everyone is. I haven't been back to Wales for 30 years but recall when I did, everyone was always looking out for each other and generally being genuinely friendly and interested in each other's wellbeing.

I like where I live now but I am considering a permanent relocation back to Wales in a few years as more people than not here in Southern England'. She doesn't know English. 'There's more people than not here in Southern England that are either just unfriendly and a large minority are moody, aggressive and selfish. Am I being unreasonable? What are your experiences?' She's been there 30 years ago but she...

Leila: 30 years! Do you know, before you think about moving somewhere, maybe just visit, once.

Robin: Yeah.

Leila: Just go to Tenby, do you know, it will be fine.

Robin: Do you know I loved Chernobyl 30 years ago, I wonder how it is now?

Priya: [Laughs]

Leila: God.

Priya: This is bizarre. They have said 'A large minority are moody, aggressive and selfish'. A large minority, that doesn't make any sense just linguistically.

Robin: [Laughs]

Priya: [Laughs] A large minority. It's what they call me after I've had too many pies!

Robin: Ha, ha, very good!

Leila: [Laughs]

Priya: This person just has a problem with the friends and family they have made in South England.

Robin: Yeah she hates the last three decades of her life [laughs]. It feels quite patronising. I don't know whether that's the sort of chip on my shoulder but like 'I just think Wales and South Wales, I haven't been there in three decades, I just think it's really sweet and quant'.

Leila: I'll tell you what's odd is she's saying 'Whenever we go up North to visit his family in Manchester, they're really lovely. I'm going to move back to Wales'. How did you get to that conclusion?

Priya: Yeah.

Robin: I think we could rebrand ourselves as the Northern Powerhouse is now Wales, this is us now.

Leila: I mean maybe she wants to move to North Wales.

Robin: Maybe.

Priya: Yeah. Maybe?

Leila: But she's talking about how she remembers South Wales being this, that and the other. And it's just like...

Priya: Do you know what really annoys me about people who say stuff like this though? Is when they describe Wales as having a slower pace of life...

Robin: Oh sure.

Priya: ...than England. Because that's very much like, you guys haven't sort of developed any industry or culture so you're just hanging around doing nothing. And you're like, that's not true. We're busy too.

Robin: Yeah.

Priya: We're just not as mean about it.

Leila: Yeah.

Robin: There is that element.

Leila: Yeah.

Robin: I'm doing a job on Thursday coming, the production company sent me a letter in case I get stopped by the police to excuse me so I can travel. And the letter says 'This excuses Robin Morgan to travel from Wales'. Like they didn't specify where it is, it's just Wales. Because you know it could be deepest, darkest anywhere, it's crazy.

Leila: Yeah, I had the same thing! You feel like you're in M15.

Robin: Yeah like resident evil.

Priya: Do you remember the ring of steel they put around Cardiff for NATO? It feels like they were going to start doing that again...

Robin: I loved that.

Priya: And I was like ah, this is so scary.

Leila: Oh my god that was so funny.

Robin: I loved the ring of steel, it was so much fun. It was like Obama came to Newport, I love that. I love it.

Priya: Yeah. I mean people with machine guns on the A48.

Robin: It was great. I think it should happen more often. But Biden in Llanelli, just chuck in a new president. That should be the thing, inauguration and then off to somewhere in Wales and we spin the wheel and we should have put Trump in the Gurnos, that would have been wicked [laughs].

Leila: [Laughs]

Robin: What do you think then? Do you think this woman is being? I don't think she said 'Am I an asshole?' I think she said 'Am I being unreasonable for thinking that people?' I mean it's very tame isn't it? 'Am I being unreasonable for thinking that people from up North/Wales are more friendly than Southerners?'

Priya: I don't think she's being unreasonable, she's just being weird. If you want to move, just move. Don't be weird about it, get off Reddit.

Robin: Yeah [laughs] Go on Rightmove!

Leila: Do you know what the problem is? Is that like I think Welsh people just have a really great reputation for being friendly, lovely people because most of them are. The problem is when people meet me they think I'm going to be a really friendly, lovely person and I'm not. I'm a twat. So...

Robin: [Laughs]

Leila: It's ruining it. And then I'm like they're expectations, everybody should just lower them, I'm worried if I say she isn't being unreasonable that I am then making everybody's expectations of just the Welsh population in general, and therefore me, too high.

Robin: Basically as brand ambassador for Wales...

Leila: Yeah.

Robin: ...you need to...

Leila: I'd like to take it down a notch. Do you know what? This is me being maybe slightly pessimistic and that's fine but I think we should just always expect the worst of everyone. So let's just expect the worst, and then we can't be disappointed.

Priya: [Laughs]

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Robin: I think that's the Visit Wales slogan.

[Here to Judge- Interim Music]

Priya: OK so this next one has come from the Here to Judge postbag, a postbag for the listeners. It is apparently a bag full of letters that used to exist in the '80s according to Steve our producer. Which I'm suspicious of, but here we go. There's a letter from Ellis James, aged 40, and it has a tape Sellotaped to it, like an old tape to listen to.

Leila: Why don't you play it Priya? Play it for us with your tape player.

Priya: OK here we go, playing it on my tape player.

[Plays the cassette]

Ellis: Am I the asshole for not letting my child speak her native language at home? Title isn't as bad as it sounds. My 35 M wife, 32 F, is Welsh and I'm English, if you get right down to it, we're both British anyway. She's always been kind of funny about identifying as Welsh and not British no matter how many times I tell her 'They're not mutually exclusive' lol.

Robin: [Laughs]

Ellis: I'm really tired with having to put up with her extreme nationalism.

Robin: Ugh.

Ellis: First of all she insisted that our daughter have a Welsh name, so now my family can't even pronounce it or spell it. I have to put up with jokes about my daughter's name all the time and her name getting spelled wrong all the time. The only primary school in the area is a Welsh school, so my daughter started learning all her school work through Welsh. This is fine I guess, it's pointless, but other than not being able to help her with her homework, which her mum does anyway, it's not an

issue. The issue is that my daughter started speaking Welsh with her mother's family, her mother, and her friends outside of school. I asked her to stop but my wife said I was being really rude to ask her to stop speaking in her native language but she can speak English too, it's not her native language when her father doesn't speak it.

My wife said I'm an asshole because I agreed to raise our child bilingually. But I was under the impression that our daughter would still choose to speak English because it's all around us. She speaks English and Welsh at home, sometimes mixing them both. It's confusing and can't be good for her education to be learning it in a pointless language. What happens when she goes to university in English? My wife says I should get lessons for Welsh and she'd be happy to pay and help, but I really don't see the point in learning a dead language when we can all just speak English. Am I the asshole for wanting my child to speak English?

Edit- OK but now my wife is making me sleep on the couch while she thinks about our relationship. Am I still the asshole when she's willing to disrupt our child's life because I want my child to speak a language everyone speaks?!

Edit- I'm OK with her learning Welsh just not speaking it at home all the time. It's stupid having a three-way conversation when people aren't the same language but my daughter insists on using Welsh.

Edit- I'm not going to answer questions that ask me why I married my wife, I married her because I love her, end of.

Edit- Going to bed. Some comments have given me insights and I can't ignore all the YTA posts. I thought maybe it was just the Welsh being at it again, but there's more of you calling me an asshole than there are Welsh speakers (crying-laughing emoji). I'll have a think and chat with my wife tomorrow.

Leila: Oh god.

Priya: Don't half go on doesn't he?

Robin: I love the edits, which is going to bed when you're not going to bed, you're going to the sofa [laughs].

Priya: [Laughs] To just stew. Should we reference the fact that Ellis has a lovely voice?

Leila: Yes.

Priya: And that was very soothing to listen to.

Robin: Beautiful voice. How can anyone not want anyone to sound like that?

Leila: I would love it if Ellis James had a SMR channel.

Priya: Imagine if you had a child and that child had Ellis James' voice, but not like Ellis James' accent.

Robin: [Laughs]

Priya: 40-year-old Ellis James' actual voice.

Robin: Totally, I want my one-year-old daughter to have that accent. To speak like Ellis James 'Good morning father' [laughs] it would be amazing.

Priya: [Laughs]

Robin: I just really enjoyed how angry Ellis was getting [laughs]. I adored that. Just literally sort of gritting his teeth! He went almost Partridge at one point. Just grrr, it was great.

Priya: [Laughs]

Robin: There's a lot going on here isn't there?

Priya: I really hate that when he's talking about his wife, he's soo condescending 'she's been kind of funny about identifying as Welsh and not British, no matter how many times I tell her they're not mutually exclusive'. Surely you

knew that about her before you married her, for a start. And also, you're a prick.

Robin: [Laughs]

Priya: Like.

Robin: You should do relationship counselling.

Priya: [Laughs]

Leila: Oh god.

Priya: I felt like I had an articulate point then but I got overwhelmed.

Robin: I genuinely was about to butt in with, but you're a prick. But you did it anyway. I think we were both on exactly the same page with hit.

Leila: Do you know what? It sounds to me like he's gone, do you know what we'll send the child to a Welsh school and then I don't have to do any of the homework. And now he's regretting that decision.

Priya: Yeah.

Robin: That 'which the wife does anyway' like it sounds like you have a bad relationship with your child and you're blaming the Welsh language thing on that.

Leila: Yeah 100%.

Priya: He has a bad relationship with his wife and child and now he feels like they're ganging up on him when actually...

Robin: Uh Priya, he married her because he loves her so. And I think he deserves a lot of praise for that.

Priya: It went in an Edit so it must be true.

Robin: [Laughs] Edit, I love her. BTWs I love her [laughs].

- Priya: So I went to a Welsh-medium school and I'm a second language Welsh speaker. And it really irritates when people suggest that the level of schooling you get in a Welsh language school is worse than an English language school.
- Leila: Oh it's absolutely better, 100% in this country.
- Priya: It is. And historically it had to be because they tried to close Welsh language schools down so they had to over perform in order to stay open. And also being bilingual is good for your child's brain. So shut up your stupid face. The bit where he says 'What's she going to do when she goes to an English language university?' She'll be fine, she already speaks English, don't worry about it.
- Robin: For the first I'd say I guess two and a half years of my son's life, we lived in London and they could not pronounce his name loan, it was always, Ion, Owen, Rrrrrn. There was just loads of like mispronounced vowels when we went to the doctors and stuff. But it wasn't ever an issue for us.
- Priya: Also it's his family that's joking about his child's name.
- Robin: Yeah they can't even spell it! Learn to spell your grandchild's name.
- Priya: Yeah.
- Leila: We don't know what his child's name is because he hasn't written it, probably because he can't spell it.
- Priya: So it is in the Edit, the child's name is Megan.
- Leila: [Sighs]
- Robin: [Beep] off!
- Priya: And I assume they're saying it in the Welsh name which is Megan like with an emphasis on the 'a'.
- Robin: Yeah.

Priya: Um I don't know where to begin!

Robin: [Laughs]

Leila: I was expecting like Llinos, do you know what I mean, like Ceridwen.

Priya: Also not spelling it, like it's spelt the same way English people spell it, just M-E-G-A-N. So just Megan.

Leila: The worst thing that can happen is the vowel is slightly dulled. That's literally the worst thing that can happen.

Robin: I'm trying to play devil's advocate as a father of a Welsh speaking son whose child knows more than him and I suppose that could be emasculating. But I'm emotionally articulate enough to know that it's going to be fine, as opposed to this guy who is a piece of shit who needs to work on his family life. I mean none of us are playing devil's advocate with this really, are we? [laughs]

Priya: [Laughs] I obviously think this guy is the asshole and also someone should tell him that it's not a dead language, more and more people are speaking it every day.

Leila: Yeah that's terrible to call it a dead language.

Robin: Ellis I think hates this person, hates the OP, as we all do. And as his wife does, which is perfect.

Leila: Ellis's wife or?

Robin: Yeah let's announce that as breaking news. He says he hates Ellis James [laughs]. It's just going to make more people speak it. Like this should be the Welsh language campaign from the government 'Don't be like this asshole'. Asshole with a hat on it [laughs].

[Here to Judge Theme Song]

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,

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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.

[End of Podcast]