

Here To Judge – Gravy in a Bottle

[Singing, 'here to judge, here to judge, here to, here to, here to judge']

LEILA NAVABI: 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, Leila Navabi.

ROBIN MORGAN: Me, Robin Morgan.

PRIYA HALL: And me, Priya Hall.

[Singing, 'ooh']

PRIYA: Right, shall I start? 'Am I the asshole for not refunding a pair of shoes I sold to my friend? I had a clear out and found a pair of shoes I barely wore but didn't want anymore. I stuck them on faceby – I guess that's Facebook marketplace – and Ebay for like £15. And my friend messaged me and asked if she could buy them. I said she'd have to pay a little extra as she lives about two hours away, so I'd need to pay postage. She said, "that's fine," Paypalled me the money, and I sent them off a few days later.

A few weeks pass and I got a message from her saying that the shoes had been attempted delivery twice, but she wasn't in so they got sent back to the depot, who only hold onto them for ten days. Then they get returned to sender. She asked if I could re-send them when they came back to me. Awkward pause as I hadn't put a return address on.

When I said that, she asked if she could then have a refund as she never received them. I said I'd refund the postage but it was on her for not going to pick the shoes up because she had ten days to do it. She flipped her lid, saying she works nights and couldn't get to the

depot because she doesn't drive. I said she could've asked for a re-delivery for when she was in, but said it was my fault for not putting a return address on the package. She's now threatening to open a dispute with Paypal, though she hasn't yet, and I've sent her back the £3 for delivery. So am I the asshole for not refunding her?'

LEILA: God.

PRIYA: Too many details in this.

ROBIN: So many details.

PRIYA: Way too many details.

ROBIN: They are not friends.

LEILA: No, they're Facebook friends. Maybe they went to school together.

PRIYA: Yeah.

PRIYA: Sure.

LEILA: At one point many years ago.

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: I wouldn't want shoes from someone I went to school with at one point many years ago.

LEILA: Me neither, thanks.

PRIYA: I would not trust them.

ROBIN: You'd never use the word 'refund' when talking about friends.

LEILA: No. No you wouldn't, would you?

PRIYA: Yeah.

ROBIN: You know what I mean? Like give some money back. Give like

–

PRIYA: A Paypal dispute.

ROBIN: Yeah, exactly.

PRIYA: Like I feel like she's written this out so that she's got it ready when the dispute comes through.

ROBIN: Oh yeah yeah yeah. It's like a copy and paste job intellect there, sure.

PRIYA: Yeah. This is her first draft.

ROBIN: It's really shit, isn't it? Like –

LEILA: Absolutely terrible. Horrible. I think the trouble comes with – if you're selling something on Facebook marketplace, I feel like – I mean I know this because I've seen many family members, uh, like trying to flog stuff on – I'm going to get the notification.

PRIYA: Sure.

LEILA: So once you put something – I like Gumtree, I like Ebay. The problem with Facebook marketplace is it has – it's like saying to all your friends, 'anyone want this?' And then there's like this –

PRIYA: Yeah. 'Do you want this shit?'

LEILA: Yeah, exactly. You know, you'd expect it to be some sort of casual thing, do you know what I mean? And also –

PRIYA: Yeah.

LEILA: What shoes are these? It's a crucial – is it just like a pair of like shoes, um, daps? Or are we talking like Vivienne Westwood? Like – no, what – daps, yeah.

ROBIN: Daps.

LEILA: Of course. Further detail once more and I feel that we've not received it.

ROBIN: Yeah, that's a good point.

PRIYA: Yeah. This person needs to download Depop because I feel like Facebook marketplace is not the appropriate place to sell your shoes. Also what if you like knew someone who was sort of a weirdo and wanted your shoes for like –

LEILA: Weird reasons.

PRIYA: Weird reasons.

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: I guess if you're happy enough to sell them, that's fine. But –

LEILA: But using it as a gravy boat.

PRIYA: Exactly. That's exactly what I meant. One for gravy and then one for like mustard.

ROBIN: The – the two condiments. [laughs] Is gravy a condiment?

PRIYA: Yeah.

LEILA: No, it's a sauce. Isn't it a sauce?

PRIYA: Wait.

LEILA: What?

PRIYA: Sauce is condiment. Like ketchup is a sauce and – and it's a condiment.

LEILA: Yes, but you would never – you wouldn't get gravy in a bottle. You wouldn't get it, would you? Thank you. Thanks, everyone.

ROBIN: Gravy in a bottle! We haven't had a song in a while.

[All laugh]

LEILA: Yeah, I mean –

PRIYA: And that was the perfect one.

LEILA: It really was. I mean you –

ROBIN: If there was like a British Weird Al Yankovic, surely he's done that. 'Gravy in a Bottle.'

LEILA: Oh, you would think, wouldn't you? I mean, look, Bisto are probably looking for some sort of –

ROBIN: Yeah, 'Hit Me Gravy One More Time.' All of this stuff.

LEILA: Yeah, all of – I mean look, if – I wouldn't have gravy out of a bottle. Do you know what I mean?

ROBIN: Yeah.

LEILA: If it – if it came like that, you wouldn't. I don't know how we've got onto this from shoes. I'm –

ROBIN: It's so rare for us to go on a – on a digression. So what was it, shoe? The refund and she's already given the £3 refund and there's a Paypal dispute potentially coming.

PRIYA: I think she's not the asshole.

LEILA: Um, what do I think? Yeah, just throw them off guard. That's what I would do for this. Because then you don't have to go through that, 'oh my gosh, should I refund them?' or whatever.

ROBIN: Yeah, good.

LEILA: Just reply – that’s what she should do. Just honestly, if you’re in a dispute with your friend, you just throw something at them that they’re not expecting.

ROBIN: Yeah.

LEILA: Not physically.

ROBIN: Yeah. A boot – a boot of gravy.

[Keyboard music]

[Guitar and flute music]

RACHEL MASON: This is I Wish I Was An Only Child, with me, Rachel Mason.

CATHY MASON: And me, Cathy Mason.

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[Singing, ‘here to judge’]

PRIYA: Is that the thing to put a candle out?

LEILA: I'm going to use this to make a sound effect, right? When we decide what someone is, on the next one I'm going to go [rings bell] like that.

PRIYA: Okay, I'll do one now. 'Am I the asshole for accidentally melting my roommate's Tupperware in the oven? Last night my roommate said to me, "don't heat up the oven right now, I've got something in there." That was around 5 pm.

I assumed she meant she had food in there that she was going to cook later. I spent the rest of the evening in my room. This morning I woke up and, assuming she'd cooked her food last night, started to heat up the oven to make my breakfast. After a few minutes, my roommate came in and said, "what are you doing? I told you not to use the oven." Turns out she had a plastic bowl of her dog food – brackets chicken and rice – sitting in there.'

ROBIN: Oh!

PRIYA: 'The bowl had melted and now there's melted plastic all over the bottom of the oven. I apologised and she said, "it's okay." But I'm not going to clean the oven. I know I screwed up but part of me feels like I shouldn't have to clean it. Why did she have a plastic bowl sitting in the oven? Why didn't she tell me specifically what it was? Why is it sitting in there for so long? So I guess my question more specifically is, "should I have to clean the oven?"'

ROBIN: He also missed the next question, which is why is there fucking dog food in the human's oven?

PRIYA: Why did she leave it in it all night?

LEILA: I hate people that use their oven for storage purposes.

PRIYA: Why?

ROBIN: Uh...

LEILA: Yeah.

PRIYA: Yeah.

LEILA: Lard, like chip fat.

ROBIN: That's a proper old people thing though, isn't it? Like just leave it in the pan on the top. My nan – my nan used to do that for ages. You know, like a casserole. It'll be fine. It's in the pan, isn't it? But –

PRIYA: Yeah.

LEILA: Your oven isn't a cupboard for a reason. You've got cupboards.

PRIYA: We'll put that on a t-shirt for merch.

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: 'Your oven isn't a cupboard for a reason.'

LEILA: Yeah, absolutely.

ROBIN: Yeah, this guy is not the asshole.

PRIYA: No.

ROBIN: Should he have to clean the oven though? I feel like –

PRIYA: No. I feel like preheating your oven is a completely normal thing to do and assuming your roommate would've gotten something out after a whole evening of not cooking.

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: He went from 5 pm until the morning without eating a goddamn thing.

ROBIN: What's he making in the oven for breakfast? That feels like – he said that, like he – like it's a daily thing.

LEILA: Yeah, oven at breakfast time? What are you making?

PRIYA: Like hash browns?

LEILA: Every morning?

PRIYA: Sausages? Oh, I hope not every morning.

LEILA: Sausages and hash browns in the oven? I mean hash browns in the oven, fine. Sausages I'm putting on a pan. They're so like dry, especially Linda's or whatever.

PRIYA: Disagree. I put Linda sausages right onto the grill.

LEILA: Yeah, muffin and sausage and –

PRIYA: Sure, that's how I like my food. And then I put some gravy from a shoe all over it.

ROBIN: No.

LEILA: I just – I think maybe he was plotting like this all along. Okay, so you put your horrible dog food in this bowl. You've done it. And then maybe your dog hasn't eaten it. And then you're like, 'what do I do with this bowl? I have to wash it out, ugh, that's disgusting. I'll put it in the oven and then I'll trick this person into doing something – yeah, into burning it so they have to clean it out.' Well it has worked on – so –

ROBIN: Burning it. Yeah, for me putting the dog food in the oven is the worst part of this.

PRIYA: My ex used to – so his dog was really really picky. And he used to have to pretend he'd microwaved his dog's food to get her to eat it.

ROBIN: Sure.

PRIYA: Because she used to see humans microwaving their food, so she was like, 'I'm not eating anything that hasn't been in the box.' So every day he had to pretend to microwave food for her.

LEILA: I love that so much.

ROBIN: So funny.

PRIYA: So I do know of someone who used to put dog food in the microwave. But only for a second and only to trick his dog.

LEILA: Have you seen this thing about cats, you know, if you're on your computer doing some work, they'll come in there.

PRIYA: Yeah.

LEILA: And so you have to give your cat a little computer so that they can do their work next to you. It's a bit like that, that, isn't it? I just – I don't feel comfortable with dog food going in a human food place.

PRIYA: So if it's chicken and rice it might literally just be like baked chicken and rice. Because some dogs if they've got like bad stomachs that's all they can eat.

LEILA: But doesn't that make him worse? To give him them like non-dog food for a dog? Rice to a dog?

PRIYA: No, I think chicken and rice is like – yeah, so if they've got a bad tummy, rice is good for them.

LEILA: Really?

PRIYA: That's what I heard along the grapevine. I heard it from a dog, so –

LEILA: Yeah, I know.

PRIYA: So I know it's true.

ROBIN: A woof woof.

PRIYA: Heard it from that same dog that likes her food from the microwave, so –

ROBIN: Yeah. Ding ding, motherfucker. Where's my food?

LEILA: Who should clean it up, is the question.

PRIYA: The dog.

ROBIN: Yeah.

LEILA: Why – yeah, why – look, if this is me, I'm getting the dog. I'm going to get the dog to clean out the microwave with its mouth. And I'm putting the microwave in the bin and getting a new microwave from Facebook marketplace.

PRIYA: I feel like whoever put dog food in the oven is the one that should have to clean up the dog food from the oven. Also plastic.

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: If you're – if you're putting something non-oven proof in the oven, you have to clean it up when you get the consequences of your actions.

ROBIN: It's like well what was the goal there? To go, 'oh, well he's very – I'm just going to – I'll keep it warm, I'll keep it warm for him just in case he wants seconds,' you know? That is such a bullshit move.

LEILA: Yeah, it really is. It really is.

PRIYA: Also again, from 5 pm until the morning.

LEILA: Yeah.

PRIYA: What's the end game?

ROBIN: Yeah. Yeah. I think for sure the dog owner is the asshole here.

PRIYA: Oh yeah.

ROBIN: Where's that bell?

[Bell chimes]

LEILA: Asshole!

[Singing, 'ahh.']

[Spooky music]

KATH HUGHES: I proper loved learning about Spooktown lore and all that.

ED EASTON: Quick question: is it Spooktown town? So it would be called Spooktown town centre? Or is it Spook Town?

KATH: I think it's Spooktown town centre.

ED: Good.

[Both laugh]

ED: That is what I want. Spooktown town hall.

KATH: Welcome to Spooktown returns on Monday 15 of March.

ED: New episodes every Monday!

KATH: Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.

[Singing 'here to judge']

ROBIN: 'Am I the asshole for calling out my boyfriend's duck obsession? My boyfriend (27 male) and I (23 female), decided to move into together for quarantine. Everything has gone well, we both work from home, and have barely left the apartment. We split the chores, have a cooking schedule that we mostly follow, and even coordinated "alone time" with each other.

Well last week during his alone time, my boyfriend captured five of the ducklings that live around our apartment. He claims their mother was nowhere nearby. I have a hard time believing this, but I gave him the benefit of the doubt. When he showed me the ducks, I expressed my concern. I told him that ducklings grow fast and will overrun our apartment, plus carry germs. He said that he gave them baths when he brought them in. When I asked to contain them to one area, he refused, saying that they deserve just as much space as us. He said he's welcoming them into our family and will treat them as equals.

Apparently this includes turning our heater to 85 degrees. He has also spread old newspapers across our apartment and put down water dishes that constantly get spilled. I've stepped on their food more than a few times and have resorted to wearing shoes 24/7 to avoid grain in between my toes. I know I should've put my foot down when he first brought them in, but he's been so bored with staying in that I thought it would be okay for him to amuse himself for a while. I figured it wouldn't be long before he released them. I was wrong. He is attached to the ducklings and has named the ducks to honour their connection to the earth. They're called Twig, Bumble, Seed, Sprout, and Pebble. If I call one "duck," he gets upset and says I'm disrespecting it. When I mix up their names, he gets frustrated,

saying I should know that Pebble is mostly brown with a few yellow spots, whereas Seed is much lighter than the rest. But to me they all look the same. He's kept his word about cleaning up after the ducks, but our utility bills have gone up from the constant heat and how often he washes blankets. Nowhere is safe from poop except the closet, and one of the ducks has been poking its head in between the accordion doors. It's only a matter of time before they get in by accident.

But when I pointed this out, he started talking about how proud he was of Bumble for being so smart. This morning I woke up to one of the ducks on my chest. Apparently my boyfriend set up a ramp to the bed after I was asleep so that my – so that his babies could experience true comfort. I completely exploded. I told him he is a grown man with no other hobbies except worshipping poultry that are incapable of caring about him. He told me I was being overdramatic and that he has been on top of caring for the ducks and I had no room to criticise him for saving innocent ducklings. He's been ignoring me all day and I overheard him venting to a couple of the ducks about my behaviour. I feel bad about exploding on him and the ducks are annoying, but he's right that he's taking good care of them. Am I the asshole for calling him out?'

LEILA: Is this legal?

PRIYA: I feel like it's not illegal. I don't think it would be sensible to have five fully grown ducks in a house when they're all grown, but I feel like this is completely fine. Um – I think this man is a dyed in the wool angel and she doesn't appreciate him.

LEILA: A ramp to your bed for the ducks? Can't ducks fly?

PRIYA: Not when they're babies. Like they'll just sort of flap.

LEILA: That's pathetic, really.

ROBIN: Not when they've got a ramp doing all the work for them.

LEILA: Yeah, exactly. How are you going to ever like – you can keep the training wheels on the bike forever, but it's not going to help you in the long run, is it?

PRIYA: You want to tough love some ducklings. Is that what I'm getting?

LEILA: This is – this is –

ROBIN: During a pandemic, Leila?

PRIYA: They're having a hard time.

LEILA: I cannot compute some of these people.

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: How many units is a duck, please?

LEILA: I – look, I love ducks. I love ducks.

PRIYA: Okay.

LEILA: But they're like – you can't – but not in like a pet way.

PRIYA: So my dad used to have a pet duck. But couldn't like – couldn't fly.

LEILA: Your dad kept a duck prisoner is what I'm hearing there.

PRIYA: Ducks don't really want to go anywhere, especially if they can't fly.

LEILA: The park.

PRIYA: Okay, fair enough.

LEILA: Like pop it in the lake. Have a lovely little time.

ROBIN: Yeah, get a ramp.

PRIYA: A ramp that goes all the way from the park to your bed.

LEILA: I love a duck. They're cool – like they're great little things. But you don't want one, do you?

PRIYA: But would you want to be with someone who saw five baby ducklings with no mum and just left them?

ROBIN: I would do that.

PRIYA: Or would you want to be with someone who'd bring them home and look –

ROBIN: I would leave them.

PRIYA: Are you serious?

ROBIN: 100%. 100%.

PRIYA: But – but would you not call the RSPCA or anything? Or you'd be like, 'you're on your own, ducks.'

ROBIN: Oh, yeah, no. I'd do – no, I'd do that, yeah. I'd call the RSPCA.

PRIYA: I'd be bringing them home with me.

ROBIN: Or the – or the RSPB.

PRIYA: Oh yeah, good shout. For the birds.

ROBIN: Thank you. Indeed. Yeah, for – for the birds.

PRIYA: For the birds. Um. No. These lot would be coming home with me if I – if I saw them out and about.

ROBIN: That's madness.

LEILA: It's a bit Mary Poppins, isn't it?

PRIYA: It's a bit Mary Poppins.

ROBIN: I think it's just arrogant to assume that you will give them a better life than a charity would.

PRIYA: True, but if – especially in a pandemic, if the charity's not up for coming out and getting them – so my partner's old house, in their garden they had a baby seagull who was separated from its mum. And obviously couldn't fly yet because it was a baby. And they called the RSPCA and the RSPCA was like, 'we're not going to come out for a seagull.' Um, so they like went online and found advice on how to look after a baby seagull. And they kept the baby seagull in the shed to keep it safe before it could fly. And fed it cat food, which is what they recommend. Mixed with water. Until it was strong enough to fly away.

ROBIN: Well that's good.

LEILA: Yeah. I mean –

ROBIN: That – that –

PRIYA: But you're like, 'I wouldn't do it.'

ROBIN: No, I don't think I would.

PRIYA: That's fair.

LEILA: So what's the question here? Is she –

PRIYA: Is she being an asshole for not wanting him to have the ducks?

ROBIN: Or for calling him out on it and basically saying that he's a grown man. Not saying that like he's not doing something good, but basically saying it's gone a bit far.

LEILA: No, I don't think it's – no, I think that's fine.

PRIYA: I think she's – I disagree. I think he's doing a good thing.

[Bell rings]

LEILA: No.

ROBIN: If – if – Priya, if your partner brought back ten ducks and said, 'this is – this is Bumble.'

LEILA: No, you would worry. Be real. Come on.

PRIYA: Maybe. Maybe if the intention was to keep them 5ever. I'd be like, 'obviously when they're grown we can't have' – but if he today brought home five ducklings and said, 'they weren't with their mum, they were distressed, I brought them home.' 100% those ducklings would be staying with us until we could find somewhere.

ROBIN: How do you know the mum's not just going for a – going for a piss or something? Just like –

PRIYA: Ducklings imprint on their mum. So if there's no mum around they've lost their mum.

LEILA: This is going to make me cry, this story. Um –

ROBIN: Yeah.

PRIYA: So the ducklings are probably imprinted on this guy.

LEILA: He will have to say goodbye to them. When they are proper big old ducks.

PRIYA: Yeah.

ROBIN: Yeah, when he can't fly.

PRIYA: I think he's doing the right thing.

ROBIN: They're – but when he – but when they realise that he can't fly, they're not going to respect him.

PRIYA: Oh, no, he's going to be overrun by fully grown disrespectful ducks.

LEILA: Yeah, totally.

ROBIN: Yeah yeah yeah. Just –

PRIYA: Who are like kicking over ramps and pissing in whatever cupboards they feel like.

ROBIN: Sure. For sure. Just like leaving their cat food in the oven. Just awful. Awful behaviour. I love my wife dearly, but if she brought five ducks back, I'd be like, 'no. no. Absolutely not.'

LEILA: No, you wouldn't. Would you?

ROBIN: I just wouldn't have it. Is that – does that make me a bad person?

PRIYA: No, I don't think so. But I think getting aggravated with someone who clearly needs friends for making friends with some ducklings is a bit much.

ROBIN: So – but for getting the names wrong. Like Pebble's a bit – I mean like –

PRIYA: This man wants a baby. And that's fine. Just –

ROBIN: Sure. Yeah yeah yeah.

PRIYA: Just find something to entertain him in the meantime. She should be grateful that he's not poking holes in condoms.

ROBIN: I don't think she's the asshole.

LEILA: Yeah, I agree.

ROBIN: I think that it is an obsession. And I think that she's obviously tried to do it. She's tried to be quite, um, understanding about it.

LEILA: I'm with Robin on this one.

PRIYA: Uh, I so – I so disagree with this. I don't think he's being obsessive. I think if you had five ducks that you were looking after, you would get attached to them. And you would be –

LEILA: Priya is weird.

[Bell rings]

PRIYA: Confining them to one room.

ROBIN: Onto her chest. Onto her chest.

PRIYA: He respects them.

LEILA: No. Yeah.

ROBIN: No, it's a chest ramp. He doesn't respect his partner.

PRIYA: Alright. I mean I'm outnumbered but I feel like if I had five ducks here we'd outnumber you guys.

[All laugh]

ROBIN: That's the – that's a six to two. That's a – that's a –

PRIYA: This is one where I'm calling in for people to tweet that I'm in the right on this one.

ROBIN: Uh, this is one where I'm hoping that people on Twitter will send you ducks in the post. And then we'll see which side – which side your bread is buttered.

PRIYA: Put your money where your mouth is. Why is she so suspicious of him when he says he couldn't find the mum? It sounds like she definitely thinks he kidnapped these ducks. So many she knows something we don't.

ROBIN: I think he did. I –

[Bell rings]

ROBIN: Not the asshole.

PRIYA: Asshole. Ding ding ding ding ding.

[Bell rings]

LEILA: Ding ding ding.

[Singing, 'here to judge, here to judge, here to, here to, here to judge']

This has been a Little Wander production. Music from Rhodri Viney. Local artwork from Sam Roberts. Voice from 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.