



PLUMP PATERNAL WOMAN (6)

When I grow up I want to be a cruciverbalist. Fintan thinks that this is no sort of a job at all, but seeing as his job consists of making more and more money for people who are already far too rich for their own good, his opinion is a bit redundant.

His title now is 'Director of Operations', which would be impressive except they aren't real operations, like transplants or nose-jobs, and he isn't the real director of anything useful, like a play or a film or even a silly little Christmas pageant like we had in primary school. I understand, of course, that he is not *that kind* of director, but when I pretend not to understand that, he gets all frustrated and sighs heavily and eventually his moustache begins to flutter like a big black scrubbing brush that is ruffled by a gentle summer breeze.

The reason I want to be a cruciverbalist is not because it sounds like some sort of dark wizard (although that is one of many amazing perks). No, I want to do it because I have started doing the crosswords in *The Irish Times* and they are hard. Like, crazy hard. Except for the Simplex, because it has simple in the title and so I refuse to let it defeat me. So one day,

CRUCIVERBALIST:

Someone who designs crosswords for a living. What I am thinking of being when I grow up. Although it may not last. A fortnight ago, I was going to be an organic farmer because of all the food and adorable wellingtons I would have.

when I had only gotten two of the cryptic clues, it occurred to me how amazing it would be to be the maker-upper of the puzzles, how pleased you would feel when people worked them out and how smug you would feel when they failed to do so.

So I started making up my own crossword clues, and it is kind of the most fun I have had by myself in ages. And it turns out it is an actual job. There's no college course for it, but I will learn my skills from the University of Life. (I also plan to go to real university, but all my talk about the University of Life is really getting on Fintan's wick, so that is why I keep going on about it when he's in the room.)

In real life, I think I might want to do journalism in college. Because then I could get a job at a newspaper and make sure their chief cruciverbalist has an accident so I can rise up to assume his or her place. The good thing about this plan is that you can repeat it as required, like with a shampoo, so if there are any other budding cruciverbalists at my place of work, I could take them down as well. I can do this by sneaky stairs-pushing or germ warfare, in which I catch a nasty cold and make out with all my enemies in order to pass it on to them.

But before I become evil, I have to have the skills to back it up. I have to study and hone and do lots of crosswords so I can understand their language and use it to my own nefarious ends. My ends are not always nefarious, only sometimes they can be. But not, like, crazy nefarious. More mildly nefarious. Divilish, as opposed to devilish. Because being a devil isn't the worst thing in the world you can be, but being *the* Devil is not a good thing at all.



NEFARIOUS: Evil. People who are nefarious include Stalin, Hitler, Pol-Pot (in spite of his funny name) and The Devil Himself. Also Karen. Especially Karen, as a matter of fact.

GETTING ON SOMEONE'S WICK: This is like getting on someone's goat, if they have a wick instead of a goat.

I am always getting onto people's goats and wicks.

It is kind of a problem.

DIVIL: Lovable rogue. Not to be confused with the actual Devil.

KAREN: Karen is a horrible person. She used to be friends with my friend Ciara, before Ciara was my friend Ciara, but then she started doing this whole excludey kind of business that a certain type of mean and nefarious individual is so good at. Also, there was this whole thing last year where I punched her in the face for calling my friend Ella a 'starey little retard'. Ella has Asperger's syndrome, which makes her a little bit different from most people I know, but in a way I appreciate and love. Karen is a lot different from most people I know as well because she was born without a soul. She is pretty much a sociopath, I reckon. The only reason I regret punching her in the face is because it dragged me down to her level.

SOCIOPATH: Someone who is born without a sense of empathy. They cannot relate to other human beings, and if they pretend to do so it is only because they are up to something. Serial killers and Karen are often sociopaths. Some cut-throat businessmen are as well, but my dad Fintan isn't one, even if I sometimes think he is because he has no idea what I'm feeling half the time.





Anyway, if I wanted to be the Devil I would have to push Karen down the stairs and take her job. That girl is nefarious personified. She broke Simone's iPod Touch yesterday by throwing it out a top-floor window, just to see what would happen.

Simone is one of Karen's good friends. Imagine how she would treat an enemy. I don't have to imagine, because she hates my guts. Luckily, I do not have an iPod Touch. I'd love an iPod Touch. Fintan is mean and does not shower me with enough gifts.

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