

**Anger Management**  
By  
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## Characters

### **Mr. Custard**

40s, unhappily married, unable to relate to his children. His father was a clown too and it was expected that he join the family business. He feels he has no say in his life whatsoever.

### **Gary Windmill**

Late 30s, newly divorced and lonely. Deflated and demoralised humanities teacher, fears one day he might swing for Cory Twist, a year 9 student.

### **Lillian**

80s, was glam once. Is attending sessions after she attacked one of her knitting circle with a crochet needle.

### **Amanda**

Teenager. Has lost the use of her legs in an accident. Unable to communicate with parents before the accident, now she's in a wheel chair, they have no idea what to say to her. Passive aggressive.

### **Sandy Beech**

Overly cheerful but unsympathetic, feels that the group should pull themselves together a bit and stop being so silly. Secret drinker. Tends to ask quite pertinent questions and then opens a bag of crisps, chewing loudly.

Part 1

ARE YOU STRESSED?

*A room. Four chairs. A clock ticks. LILLIAN sits, knitting. A moment passes. GARY enters carrying a battered brief case and a plastic bag. He hovers. LILLIAN'S knitting needles click, click, click.*

**GARY**

Hello.

*LILLIAN ignores him.*

Hello. Excuse me. Erm, are you here for the session? Not sure if I'm in the right room. This is the first on the right isn't it? End of the corridor, first on the right. Yes I think so. Don't want to be stuck in a knitting class do I?

*LILLIAN stares at him, the knitting does not cease, she returns her gaze to her knitting.*

*GARY clears his throat and gingerly sits down.*

**LILLIAN  
GARY**

I might have a sandwich actually. Do you mind? *Pause [as if he thinks her deaf]* I said do you mind?  
I couldn't give a flying fuck what you do!  
O-kay.

*Pause.*

**LILLIAN  
GARY**

It's just I've been at a department meeting this evening, came straight over you see and I haven't had a chance...  
Fascinating.  
Right, right. Sorry.

*He eats his sandwich.*

*[Offering]* Would you like a...? No, no, right you are.

*Long Pause. LILLIAN'S needles click together loudly.*

*AMANDA enters in a wheel chair.*

*[To himself]* Oh thank god! *[To AMANDA over*

*enthusiastically*]Hello, hello, hello there, hi! I'm Mr. Windmill...erm Gary, Gary Windmill, erm...just Gary actually...would you like to sit down? *[Realising his mistake]*Oh, erm gosh, no, ha ha, how silly of me. Right, erm...sorry, right...sandwich?

**AMANDA**

All good on the sandwich front thanks.

**GARY**

Good, great.

**AMANDA**

I had peppered mackerel for my tea.

**GARY**

*[Far too keen]* Really?

**AMANDA**

*[Beat]*Yep.

*Pause.*

**GARY**

*[Uncomfortably fills the silence]* I very much enjoy a peppered mackerel myself. Yes, very oily fish. Good for your brain function, omega 3 and all that. Very important for your development, fish.

**AMANDA**

Right.

**GARY**

I believe omega 3 is good for joints and all round suppleness but it also has benefits for pregnant women too. Not that I'm suggesting that you fall into that category obviously, just because you're a teenager doesn't mean you're going to get yourself 'knocked up'.

**AMANDA**

Well, I can't move my legs anymore so I guess it's 'supple' benefits are wasted there, and I'm pretty sure that no one is ever gonna to try anything with me that might get me, even slightly, 'knocked up', since I'm now a 'cripple' and all that - so I guess I should've had chips with grated MSG and a side order of hydrogenated vegetable fat, for all the good it'll do me.

*Pause.*

**GARY**

I didn't...

**AMANDA**

I'm just going to...

*AMANDA points and wheels herself into a space next to LILLIAN.*

**LILLIAN**

Hiya.  
Hello love.

*AMANDA gets here phone out and starts texting.*

**GARY**

'Hello love'?

You barely even looked at me? I thought maybe you were deaf

**LILLIAN** or mad or something, but that's just rude, you heard me perfectly well – I was only trying to be polite!  
Why don't you go and take your face for a shit?!

*AMANDA starts laughing.*

**GARY** Well! I really am quiet taken aback by all of this! These sessions are supposed to be helping me! If I'd know that they'd be riddled with cripples and coffin dodgers I wouldn't have bothered coming!!

*[Realising what he's said]* I'm sorry. God, sorry. I keep doing that...

**LILLIAN** Piss off then. Wank stain.

*There is a pause whilst GARY assesses the situation, recoiling in shock, before he rewraps his sandwiches, puts them back in the plastic bag, picks up the briefcase and heads for the door. He bumps directly into MR. CUSTARD.*

*Pause, whilst they take in the sight before them.*

*MR. CUSTARD is dressed in full clown costume, shoes, face paint red wig etc. He is out of breath. After a while...*

**MR.  
CUSTARD** Am I late?

*Pause.*

**AMANDA** *[Laughing]* Dad was right. I feel better already!

*SANDY enters briskly, flustered, carrying a flip cart and several bags and papers.*

**SANDY** *[Almost singing]* Sorry! Sorry everyone! Terribly sorry, I had to pick this old thing up from the library, how they expect us to deliver these sessions with such few resources I do not know. I've had to buy my own pens this year, if you can imagine that. They're not cheap I can assure you.

*[To Gary and MR. CUSTARD]* Well, sit down then you two. Take your wig off, look like you're stopping.

**GARY** Well actually...

**AMANDA** He was just taking his face for a...

**SANDY** Don't be silly. You haven't done the eight step programme yet. You're not going anywhere until we've done the eight steps.

You won't be sorry, it's very 'empowering'. Sit.

Now then. Where's my list, let's make sure that we've got everybody we should have and nobody we shouldn't, shall we? Now, where is it. Right you are, here we go. No, nope, no. That's not it. Whoops. Ah. Now then. Oh no, no that's Wednesday's class erm, and that's my to do list – I have to write everything down you see, brain like a colander. *[Still riffling through her bag]* No. No. Right. Never mind. Have an awful feeling that I've left in on the counter in the kitchen. Humm. Oh well. Sometimes you just have to think on your feet, don't you? Keep the old grey cells ticking over. Good. Great. Why don't we begin then, by going round the room, introducing ourselves and saying a little bit about why we're here?

**GARY**  
**SANDY**  
**AMANDA**  
**SANDY**  
**GARY**  
**AMANDA**  
**SANDY**

Do we really have to do that?

Who wants to start?

I will.

Ok then.

This is ridiculous.

Hello, my Name is Amanda...

Actually, sorry, sorry to stop you mid-flow, but I really should start by welcoming everyone – can't believe I forgot that. So, welcome everyone. Welcome to 'ANGER MANAGEMENT – What's there to be so cross about anyway?'. Hello. And welcome. This is the first of eight classes for this 'Eight Step Programme' and I'm pretty sure that it's going to be excellent! Well, if not excellent then at the very least, really very good. Good. At the very least. Great.

*Pause.*

Right that's the welcome done. *[Ticks it of her list]* I'm Sandy and am here because it's my job, obviously. So that's me. Erm, over to you Sandra!

**AMANDA**  
**SANDY**  
**AMANDA**  
**SANDY**  
**AMANDA**  
**SANDY**  
**GARY**  
**SANDY**

Amanda.

Sorry?

It's Amanda.

What is?

I am.

Sorry, don't follow.

Her name is Amanda!

Erm it's not actually your turn to speak yet, we'll go round in a circle shall we? Staring with Sandra.

**GARY**  
**SANDY**  
**GARY**

Amanda!

I beg your pardon?

Her name is...

**AMANDA** Never mind, never mind! Hello. I'm *Sandra* and I'm here because...  
**GARY** You can't just call yourself Sandra!  
**AMANDA** Why not?  
**GARY** Because that's not your name. Because that's just a bit bloody juvenile, frankly.  
**AMANDA** I'm seventeen.  
**GARY** So?  
**AMANDA** So I am a juvenile.  
**GARY** Oh for goodness sake...  
**LILLIAN** *[Explosive]* Oi ginger, get back in the biscuit tin!

*They all look at LILLIAN, who sniffs and returns to her knitting.*

**GARY** What the hell...  
**SANDY** *[TO GARY]* Could you please try to settle down?  
**GARY** *[Pointing]* Not ginger!  
**SANDY** Well, that's...your opinion.  
**GARY** Seriously. *[To MR. CUSTARD]* This isn't, I mean this is not ginger is it?  
**MR. CUSTARD** Not really my place...  
**LILLIAN** Ginger nut!  
**GARY** Do you have mental problems?  
**SANDY** Could everyone just calm down please? Shh, shh, shhhh.  
**AMANDA** *[Shouting above them]* MY name's AMANDA and I'm here because I can't walk anymore. My Mum and Dad have made me come to these sessions because they think I'm angry, they think I'm pissed off but I'm not, that's just your normal, everyday teenage angst. That's just them projecting their feelings onto me.

*MR. CUSTARD starts clapping, they look at him. He stops.*

**MR. CUSTARD** *[Mumbles]* Sorry.  
**SANDY** Ok, thank you Sandra. *[To LILLIAN, raising her voice]* And what's your name dear?

*LILLIAN does not respond. She holds up the jumper she is knitting, which has the word "faggot" knitted across it.*

**SANDY** Ah, that's nice isn't it? You are clever. *[Louder]* said you are clever.

*LILLIAN gives SANDY the finger.*

Ah, bless her. *[Beat]* Right then Mr. 'I can't possibly wait until it's my turn to speak!' We're all ears!

**GARY** My name is Gary and I am...

**SANDY** Hello Gary.

**GARY** Er, hello. I'm here because I'm...because I feel...because...sorry. I really don't know what on earth I'm doing here. I think I should just go.

**MR. CUSTARD** *[Explosive, grabbing GARY's arm]* Don't go! Please?

**GARY** *[Slowly]* Alright, alright mate. I'm staying. I'm here.

*MR CUSTARD nods.*

**SANDY** Well, were making connections already aren't we? Great. Do go on Gary.

**GARY** Ok. Well, I'm finding it a bit difficult to contain my anger to be honest. I just come out with things, really offensive things and I don't really know where they come from. But they're there; biting at the back of my mouth. And I teach, you know, in a school and I'm worried that if I don't do something then...*[trying to make a joke]* then I might just punch Cory Twist full bore in the face!

**SANDY** Who's Cory Twist?

**GARY** A Year 9 student.

**SANDY** A minor?

**GARY** Well, yes.

**SANDY** I can't really allow that kind of thing Gary, I think that's a child protection issue.

*She rummages through her notes.*

**GARY** No! No it's not! I was joking! Well, mostly joking!

**SANDY** Still...

**GARY** I said I '*might*' do that Sandy, not that I '*had*' done that! If I HAD done that then YES that WOULD be a child protection issue.

**SANDY** Have you done it Gary?

**GARY** What?

**SANDY** Have you punched Cory Twist full..

**AMANDA** Full bore

**SANDY** Thank you, full bore in the face?

**GARY** No!

**SANDY** Are you sure?

**GARY** I am quite sure. Jesus Christ!!

**SANDY** Right, well, I'm going to take your word for it for the moment. But you really need to be more careful of what you say.

LILLIAN  
SANDY  
AMANDA  
GARY

He called me a coffin dodger earlier.  
Really?  
He did.  
I didn't...I didn't mean. Yes. Yes, alright, I might have called her that. This is what I'm talking about – these outbursts. I get wound up. She wouldn't speak to me and then she went and said hello freely enough to Amanda. I thought it was rude.  
And you're calling me juvenile?!  
For god's sake! This is being blown out of all proportion!  
Do you often find that you feel things are being blown out of proportion Gary? When you're not in control of a situation?

AMANDA  
GARY  
SANDY

SANDY *now has a large note book now and is enthusiastically scribbling notes.*

AMANDA  
GARY  
SANDY  
AMANDA  
GARY  
SANDY

Do you Gary?  
Oh hold on. I know what you're trying to do here.  
And what's that Gary?  
Yeah Gary?  
Can you ask her to stop doing that please?  
Do you feel that communicating with Sandra is now out of your control Gary? Are you losing your grip?

GARY  
AMANDA  
GARY

No. I'm fine.  
Are you fine though Gary?  
*[Taking a deep breath]*Is it possible that we could move on?  
This gentleman hasn't introduced himself yet.

SANDY

Well, what you're doing right now is displaying classic diversion tactics, but that isn't for this week's discussion, that's week three, so for now, Gary, we'll move on.

MR.  
CUSTARD  
AMANDA  
SANDY

*[TO Mr. CUSTARD]*And you are?  
Mr Custard.

This just gets better and better.  
And why are you here?

*Pause.*

MR.  
CUSTARD  
GARY

Oh now, hold on, I think I have that paper work here *[she searches in her bag]* Yes, that's right. Here it is*[reading]* ...is to attend Anger Management sessions as a compulsory addition to community service so as to avoid a custodial sentence, following the outburst at the party on...  
*[Mumbling]*Shame you couldn't have left that on the kitchen counter.  
I'm not sure that you should be reading that out loud Sandy;

isn't that private and confidential information?  
**SANDY** Nothing is private in here Gary.  
**GARY** But you just said that I had to watch what I was saying! Either everything's open and allowed or it isn't!  
**AMANDA** Feeling out of control Gary?  
**GARY** I wish you'd just... [*calming himself*] I'd just appreciate a bit of parity, that's all.  
**AMANDA** It's not all about you Gary.  
**GARY** But apparently it is all about you SANDRA!  
**SANDY** Shh, shh, shhhhh.  
**LILLIAN** [*Singing*] It's all about you, it's all about you baby. It's all about you...  
**GARY** For the love of GOD!  
**Mr.** [*Standing*] THIS IS JUST LIKE BEING AT HOME!!!  
**CUSTARD**

*Pause.*

MR. CUSTARD FLASH BACK 1

*The scene changes to the kitchen table in MR. CUSTARD'S home. The company become new characters;*

*LILLIAN – Mr CUSTARD'S wife - ANGELA.*

*SANDY – Mr CUSTARD'S 17 yr daughter - HANNAH.*

*AMANDA - Mr CUSTARD'S 15 yr daughter - AMELIA.*

**LILLIAN** Now darling, have you thought any more about this 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of yours? We definitely want to have a party don't we?  
**Mr.** I don't.  
**CUSTARD**  
**LILLIAN** Excellent.  
**AMANDA** Where shall we have it Mum?  
**SANDY** Can I get a new dress? I need a new dress – I've got nothing AT ALL to wear.  
**LILLIAN** I was thinking about The Hilton, you know they have private function rooms.  
**SANDY** I've seen one in Miss Selfridge, it's not expensive, can I get it?  
**Mr.** You've got plenty of clothes and besides I don't want to have a party. I'm at parties all day everyday...  
**CUSTARD** When you actually get any work you are.  
**LILLIAN** Children's parties aren't proper parties Dad, God!  
**AMANDA** Making balloon animals is hardly what you'd call work.  
**LILLIAN** It's not exactly academically challenging!  
**SANDY** Now, I've written out a guest list.  
**LILLIAN** Can Eddie, Jay and Dan come?  
**SANDY** Oh Mum you're not inviting Uncle Simon are you?  
**AMANDA** Oh no Mum!  
**SANDY**

**MR. CUSTARD** He's my brother.

**SANDY** He's a dirty old man!

**AMANDA** What a pervert. Do you remember how he kept staring at my tits last Christmas?

**SANDY** Gross! It's like he was in a trance or something.

**AMANDA** Makes me wanna vom.

**MR. CUSTARD** You weren't wearing very many clothes for December, if I remember rightly.

**LILLIAN** Don't be ridiculous darling, what do you know about fashion? We'll have to see girls. [*To the girls*] Now, this is going to take a lot of organizing so I'll be relying on your help!

**SANDY** But Mum, I've got A Level revision to do! You know I won't get my place at Sheffield if I don't get an A!

**AMANDA** Yeah Mum, and she's doesn't want to end up with a dead end job like Dad now does she?!

**LILLIAN** That's not an option. Okay well, we'll figure something out. In fact, [*To MR. CUSTARD*] can you do the dinner whilst we make some arrangements?

**MR. CUSTARD** Don't you want me to...

**LILLIAN** Can you just do this one thing for me?! For once? I'm exhausted for God's sake!

*They leave, returning to their original characters. MR. CUSTARD addresses the group.*

**MR. CUSTARD** It's like this all the time. I'm emasculated in my own home. I'm not talking about cooking dinners or clearing up, I'm not bothered about that. It's the only time I get some peace. I'm a strident feminist too you know – power to the pussy and all that. I don't mind doing my share. I'm really proud of Angela, actually, she re-trained after the girls went to school and now she's the main bread winner and that's great and all that but all of her achievements just highlight what a failure I am. And it pisses me off! I mean I don't even want a fucking party! I said that right – you heard me say that?

*Murmurs of agreement from the company.*

No one ever listens to me. It's like I'm invisible. I have no control over my life, what. so. ever. I'm a children's entertainer with anger management issues. It's not conducive to a good working environment and it's bad for business.

*He sits down.*

**SANDY** O-kay then. So, the Eight Step Programme begins with *[writing on the flip chart]* Week 1 – Understanding *Why You're Angry*.

**LILLIAN** His wife's a bitch, she can't walk and he's a ginger prick!

**GARY** Thank you for that succinct analogy Lillian, we can all go home now!

**LILLIAN** Ginger prick!

**GARY** Wrinkly old fart! *[Beat]* Sorry.

**SANDY** Ok. So one in five people in the UK have issues controlling their anger. So, there's one, two three, four, five of us in here, so that means that at least one of us will have anger issues in our lifetime.

**AMANDA** Is she for real?

**GARY** We all have anger issues Sandy, otherwise we wouldn't be here!

**SANDY** Well spotted Gary! Finally making a positive contribution to proceedings, good, great.

**AMANDA** Step 1, of the eight step programme is...

**SANDY** How many steps are there Sandy?

**AMANDA** This is an Eight Step Programme Sandra.

**SANDY** Eight, *[imitating SANDY]* good, great. Sorry, I hadn't quite got that.

**AMANDA** Step 1,

**SANDY** Of eight.

**SANDY** Yes, Step 1 is - Understanding *why* we're angry. Now then, I'm not sure if you've heard of a man called Freud, I think he's quite well known, anyway he says *[reading from her notes]* "A man who has been the indisputable favorite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a conqueror, that confidence of success is that which often induces real success". So, obviously success hasn't found any of you so – Amanda, does your Mother like you?

*Pause*

**AMANDA** She...

**SANDY** It's important to be honest here Sandra. More often than not this is a 'break through' moment.

*She leans forward expectantly.*

**GARY** Look Sandy, I'm not exactly her biggest fan but that's a bit bloody much isn't it? I mean you want her to share personal information in front of us, a room full of strangers. She's only known us for five minutes!

**MR.** A room full of strangers is easier. Strangers listen to you without

**CUSTARD** any hidden agenda or judgment and even if they do judge you, there's no need to see them again. I can't talk to anyone I know.

**AMANDA** Me neither.

**GARY** Nor me.

**LILLIAN** Everyone I know is a cock sucking mother fucker!

*Pause.*

**SANDY** O-kay. Good, great. Does anyone want to begin?

*Pause.*

Anyone?

**AMANDA** I will.

**LILLIAN** Only if you want to.

**AMANDA** It's okay Lil. So, this is how it is...

AMANDA FLASHBACK 1

*The scene changes to a hospital cubical in ICU, AMANDA is in bed unconscious, with her Father sitting next to her.*

*The company become new characters;*

*LILLIAN – AMANDA'S Mother - Chrissie.*

*Mr. CUSTARD – AMANDA'S Father - Greg.*

*AMANDA plays herself.*

*LILLIAN [as CHRISSIE] enters.*

**LILLIAN** There's no reception anywhere in the building – I had to go all the way out onto the main road! Bloody ridiculous. Has she come round yet?

**MR.** No.

**CUSTARD**

**LILLIAN** Christ. What am I going to do? I'm down to review tonight and no one else is available to do it.

**MR.** You'll just have to tell them no.

**CUSTARD**

**LILLIAN** Oh Greg really – no one says no to Duncan!

**MR.** Don't you think this is slightly more important?

**CUSTARD**

**LILLIAN** Oh for god's sake, she's not dead!

**MR.** *[Biting back anger]* They have just told us that our only daughter has an 85% chance of losing the use of her both of her legs and all you want to do is 'make the review'? You are beyond...

**CUSTARD** Gregory, do not take the moral high ground with me.

**LILLIAN**

**MR.  
CUSTARD  
LILLIAN  
MR.  
CUSTARD  
LILLIAN**

What?

You know what I'm talking about.  
I haven't the faintest idea.

You feel exactly the same as I do.

*Pause.*

Stop being a prick. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

*Pause.*

Do I have to spell it out for you?  
Go right ahead.

**MR.  
CUSTARD  
LILLIAN**

Fine. But I completely resent being made to feel like the bitch  
all of the time.

What I'm talking about Gregory, is her! Our daughter. The  
person who allegedly has the same fucking DNA as us!! You  
wonder how she's ours, you wonder why you have nothing in  
common with her, you question what we did so wrong, why she  
doesn't have any friends, why she's unfashionable, un-liked at  
school. Bright, sure she's bright all right. She's so fucking  
clever! But why isn't she like us? You wonder that too right? I  
know you do. You must.

And now, now she's in this state and what the hell are we  
supposed to do now? We can't ever discuss that *now*, can we?  
I can't say at dinner "oh yes, my daughter and I have absolutely  
nothing to say to each other, what's that? Oh dear me no, of  
course it's not because she's in a wheel chair – she hated me  
before the accident"! I cannot challenge my daughter who is IN  
A WHEEL CHAIR for being unpopular, or for being socially inept  
or for hating me! How do we deal with it now?

I am going to have to spend time with her for fucks sake! What  
will we say?

*Pause.*

What will we say?

*Pause – the flash back scene is broken by Sandy's words.*

**SANDY**

O-kay then. Time's up I'm afraid. We're all out of time. He who gains time, gains everything and all that. Right. Good. Great. Excellent second attempt at week 1. Great first session. Well done everyone.

Better clear out sharpish, they have to set up for baby yoga in the morning and I wouldn't get on the wrong side of the site staff, one of them takes the jujitsu sessions here on a Thursday.

*SANDY bustles for the door, haphazardly picking up her belongings as she goes.*

*[Turning]*Oh, and before I forget – homework for next week – write a list of everything that makes you feel angry and bring it with you. Week two is all about empathy! Good night all!

*SANDY exits, humming to herself, entirely unaware of the rest of the company who sit motionless, staring at AMANDA who looks out front, a single tear falling down her cheek.*

*Blackout.*

