

## Lit 'Я' Us

There comes a time in every person's life when they say, quite reasonably to themselves (though at volume and through teeth so gritted it almost makes the sentence indecipherable), 'NO! THIS WILL NOT DO!' The age you reach this sentence differs wildly, as does the reason you've uttered it. It may have been ejaculated through sheer annoyance at the state of the government or trains being cancelled, again. It might be shouted after the postman has, for the third time in a row, jammed through your letterbox, a cardboard envelope which along with the legend 'Photos, do not bend' he has added 'Yes they do', and shoved it in. It may even be to do with your expanding equator and your forlorn attempt to stick at the diet you promised yourself. The event, act or travesty which has caused me to explode, for which alone should gear Parliament in to reintroducing corporal punishment is, the dropping of litter.

Now, before we start, can anything dropped by anyone be classed as littering? Let us not forget that to drop litter (in a public street) is an offence, against the law, a crime. Under the Environmental Protection Act of 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, a fine of between £50 and £80 can be imposed. You get me!?! Yes, I'm talking to you, the miserable woman behind Piccadilly train station near the taxi rank who dropped what I thought was a full packet of fags and who said with a smile, after I pointed this out, 'No it's OK, it's empty'. Leaving me orally inert, she sashayed off, a spring in her Doc Marten clad feet. Git!

So, before what would become a passionate tirade were my column inches upgraded to feet, should we first define 'litter'? 'No, they should all be strung up!' (Ed). Well hang on Mr Harris, perhaps not all is so obvious and white, even though it is and I would enjoy sticking a variety of small, sharp-toothed mammals up transgressor's nightdresses. For one, if someone dropped a tenner in the street, ask yourself this: would you go up to the 'law-breaker', appalled, wave the note in front of their face telling them that they should be disgusted with themselves? Would you jog up to them, panting, saying, 'you dropped this'? Or would you pocket it and wander off in the other direction, whistling? I know where I stand. It's on top a huge ivory tower bellowing, as we all know what littering really is, don't we?!

Well, because we haven't time for a complete in depth polemical study, littering is the (casual) dropping of wrappings and assorted detritus which could have otherwise found themselves in a bin with absolutely no hardship bestowed upon their owners. Takeaway boxes, cigarette packets (I hope you're listening you be-air cushion soled slattern!), a drinks bottle, a betting slip, an unlucky scratch card and old pants, do not belong on the floor!

Let's suppose you're out walking in the country side, you're eating an apple, you finish the apple, you throw it in to some bushes. That, my callipygian lovelies, is OK. To do the same in a busy high street is not. And just because the object in question is organic, the reverse isn't true. Tossing a pizza box on to the floor of either of these venues is abhorrent. Would you agree then, that what we consider litter is either something of no value (see 'cash' paragraph) or something which is considered to be an eye sore? Even though to throw away your dog ends is technically an offence, there miniscule nature, to me at any rate, doesn't fill me with the same horror. And it isn't always just what's thrown away, it's how it's thrown away. The casual flinging of unwanted items by people who think they own their portion of the planet can send murderous convulsions through my already twitching frame. Certainly where you've been brought up and by whom plays a crucial part in these law breakers actions. To educate early is the only answer. But if no respect is shown to the place from where you come, then the norm you will think it is, to discard your crisp packet right through to an old mattress, wherever the hell you like.

Apart from forming an action group and visiting nurseries and primary schools to instill these values early, the only recourse we have is to tell people who are dropping litter that it is not permitted. This isn't easy. You can, very often become involved in a futile argument where there is no victor. Almost without exception, people who drop litter think there is nothing wrong with it. For you to point this out, no matter how genially you do it, abuse can very often come your way. This is especially true if the person is part of a group. Loosing face and all that is just another punishment that could be meted out, and eating their charred remains is just something we could consider. Too much? Yours, R. Lecter X