

11th July, 2004

SHE'S TOO YOUNG & PRETTY

DEAR DIARY, I feel so ashamed of myself. I'm jealous because the new girl at work is 10 years younger than me and beautiful. I've been at Engineering Design for almost two years and I've been the only girl amongst five men the whole time. The guys at work are all older than me and I am completely put on a pedestal all day, every day.

Lately, our workload has grown to the point of us not being able to manage it so my manager has decided to employ two new trainee engineers and an office assistant.

It was nice to know that I would be working with people nearer my own age. I imagined going out after work and having a bit more fun with people I have something in common with. I got my wish when they employed Ian and Mike but I found myself feeling threatened by Michelle. Michelle is everything I'm not. She's effortlessly attractive, she has really thick, shiny, bouncy hair, she's tall and slender, she's got the most sparkling Hazel eyes and her mother is Moroccan and her father is Spanish so she's multi-lingual too. I could just kill her!

I was hoping that she'd be a stuck up nightmare but she's lovely. I wanted her to make mistakes but she's bright and a fast learner. I wanted to find some kind of awful flaw about her but there was none; she doesn't have webbed hands or six toes on her left foot unfortunately.

I was supposed to hate her because she made me feel ugly and fat and short. She made my hair look crap and my clothes seem unflattering. She made my voice sound deep when hers was high and light and feminine. She made my large hands and feet look out of proportion with my body and she made my teeth seem yellow where hers was like she was a spokeswoman for Colgate. One day, she'll be sorry about all that smiling, it'll give her crows claws and laughter lines. That'll teach her.

I was jealous of the fact that she lived at home with her parents and siblings and all her wages were spent on herself when I was a struggling parent. I was jealous that she had an Audi TT and my car was a practical, sensible family car. I was jealous that she had a boyfriend who sounded like he adored her and my relationship with George was on it's last legs – in fact George seemed like he was trying to get the words "I don't love you anymore"

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out of his mouth on a daily basis and when I looked at George it seemed as if Aliens had taken the real George away and left me with a mechanical replacement.

I was jealous of her youth, I mean you name it, I was jealous and I feel awful because I wanted her to go away simply because she made me feel insecure and that's another lie I'm telling myself because Michelle doesn't make me feel insecure. I AM INSECURE. She's not done anything wrong. In fact, she's making me realise that I have to get a grip.

I'm feeling bad about myself simply because I'm not happy with me and my life. Sometimes, I don't even want to go home; I dread seeing my stop when I'm travelling on the tube after work. My small flat is suffocating me. My relationship is dead. I'm bored. I'm broke. I need a holiday.

But I really, really need to pull myself together and regain my self confidence pretty damn quick. What I need to do is find something refreshing for me and my children to sink our teeth into because I'm sure they're bored of my long face. I need to redecorate my home because I can't afford to move so I ought to revamp. I need to get rid of George because he's making me incredibly unhappy. I should do an evening class and learn something new so that I have a new hobby and I should look into taking some time off and going abroad before I make an idiot of myself and do something childish like stick chewing gum in Michelle's hair!

August Mayfield