

Shakers by John Godber and Jane Thornton

CAROL:

I can't help it, I hate it when people just assume that you do a job like this, you're thick. You know there is some nights I just can't stand it, I can't. I want to stand up on top of the bar and shout: I've got 'O' Levels, I've got A-levels and a bachelor of arts degree. So don't condescend to me, don't pretend you feel sorry for me and don't treat me like I can't read or talk or join in any of your conversations because I can. I see these teenage like men and women with their well-cut suits and metal briefcases, discussing the city and the arts and timeshares in Tuscany, and I'm jealous, because I can't work out how they've achieved that success.

It's so difficult. You see I want to be a photographer, take portraits. I won a competition in magazine. It was this photo of punk sat in a field on an old discarded toilet. It was brilliant. Anyway, after college I had this wonderful idea that I'd go to London with my portfolio. I was confident that I get loads of work. But it wasn't like that. The pictures were great they said, but sorry, no vacancies.

My mum said I was being too idealistic wanting it all straightaway. My dad said I should settle for a job with the local newspaper, snapping Miss Gazette opening a shoe shop. No thanks. Now he thinks I'm wasting my degree. I was the first in my family to get one so it's not gone down very well. My heads in the clouds he said, life's not that easy. But it is for some people, like I said, I see them in here. So why should I be different, have they tried harder or something?

Maybe they're lucky or it's because they speak nice. It's so frustrating because I know how good I am. My dad is right, you know, in some ways: I'm stuck here, wasting away. I do it for the money, that's all. But it won't be forever, no chance. I'm applying for assisting jobs, and as soon as I get one, don't worry I'm off. I'm now on plan two: start at the bottom and work up. It might take me years, I know that, but it's what keeps me going between the lager and the leftovers. The fact that I know I'll make it in the end.