

False pretences

Charlotte Reather finds affected people simply ghastly, unless divine intervention takes them down a peg or two

PEOPLE who say “ghastly” and “divine” really get up my left nostril. The other day Arabella Steel-Toe-Cap, the girl with a chip of ice for a heart, was offered a cup of green tea. She tasted it. “Oh, it’s sooo divine. Perfect. Simply the best in the whole world.” Look, it’s just a cuppa char minus milk.

Affectation is so tedious. And what is it with these women who insist on keeping their nursery names well into their forties? At a dinner party recently I sat across from Fluffy, a bony-arsed pavement person with a marriage of convenience who insincerely flattered Tim-the-unfunniest-man-in-the-world-baronne all evening. She laughed, throwing her head back, twirled her earring and gazed at him with her dead eyes.

“Tim, that’s amazing! Really? You are so funny. Isn’t Tim funny? He’s so funny. You’re so funny, Tim. He like totally changed the words round and made them funny. That is so clever. Isn’t Tim clever? He’s so clever.” Of course, as soon as Tim had departed, Fluffy’s true hard face fell back into place. “What an absolute nightmare. I was in Siberia sitting next to that ghastly little man Tim or-whatever-his-name-is, who didn’t even know where Verbier was! Can you imagine? It was just too awful!”

For Fluffy and her fluffers brigade false flattery is a full-time job. They even feign affection to themselves. That’s why they’re all bulimic – they literally make themselves sick. And when they’re not being socially counterfeited, they’re setting up useless charities to give themselves the cloak of compassion and dignity they actually lack.

Fluffy says, “Many people say I look like the Princess of Wales, which is such a compliment because she was so beautiful. Anyway, I set up a charity to help children just like Di did. It’s called ‘Fluffy’s Foundation for Children Who Can’t Read Good Or In Fact See Anything Much Really.’”

Even though there are a million charities far better equipped to help disabled orphans in Libya, Fluffy needed to set up her own. And, even though she sent all her children away to

boarding-school at four and regularly farms them out to nannies during the holidays she’s “just always really loved kids”.

This isn’t to say there aren’t countless people out there who are genuine about their causes and work tirelessly to raise money and help the needy, but we’ve all met ones who are doing it for the wrong reasons and are part of the “look at me, aren’t I rather wonderful” brigade.

Of course, these irritating women rarely take part in country sports and if they do, it’s hunting but only through the gates at a gentle trot. They are amazed and appalled by women such as me who shoot “because guns are so dangerous and go bang and that why only men should use them”. What is sad is that some of these women, unlike Fluffy, have talent and brain-cells which they have opted to turn off in order to act the part of perfect wife and brood mare.

“Even though she sent all her children to boarding-school at four and regularly farms them out to nannies, she ‘really loves kids’”

The most self-important man I’ve ever have the misfortune to meet is known, for good reason, as That Bastard Bobby (TBB). He once referred to me in the third person neuter throughout a shoot lunch. “It looks good and it speaks well. It’s clever too. It’s a 10.” I was seething with anger and had to stick a fork in the back of my hand all lunch. However, divine intervention followed. On the last drive, TBB stood for a good 10 minutes facing the wrong way, much to the hilarity of beaters and guns. Finally, I shouted to him: “It’s facing the wrong way!” He stood there red-faced, spitting like a kicked cat. It’s never lived it down and, oddly enough, it’s given me little trouble since.

Fluffy’s husband Bungalow (there’s nothing upstairs) is also a pompous arse who pretends to be all holier than thou. The fact that

he cheats on his wife, drinks more than Gazza and snorts half of “Columbia’s finest” up his trunk doesn’t stop him from passing judgment. Once he said: “Now Charlotte, why were you not in church on Sunday?”

“Because I don’t need to ask for forgiveness as much as you,” I replied.

Bungalow is also one of these people who pretends to know about everything. “You don’t know what a crankshaft is? Unbelievable! You haven’t been bear-hunting in Canada? Extraordinary!” I went toe-to-toe with him. “Bungalow, you don’t know what existentialism is? You think Edgar Allan Poe is one of the Teletubbies?” Stupid people who think their clever are one of life’s major trials.

Now, I admit a little bitchiness and a dollop of pretentiousness is fun from time to time but we mustn’t take ourselves too seriously. Pour me a cup of green tea, it’s sooo divine. ■

Charlotte Reather is winner of the Gloucestershire Glamour Award 2008

