



People I Want to Punch in the Throat: True(ish) Tales of an Overachieving Underachiever

Jen Mann

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A debut collection of witty, biting essays laced with a surprising warmth, from Jen Mann, the writer behind the popular blog *People I Want to Punch in the Throat*

People I want to punch in the throat:

- anyone who feels the need to bling her washer and dryer
- humblebraggers
- people who treat their pets like children

Jen Mann doesn't have a filter, which sometimes gets her in trouble with her neighbors, her fellow PTA moms, and that one woman who tried to sell her sex toys at a home shopping party. Known for her hilariously acerbic observations on her blog, *People I Want to Punch in the Throat*, Mann now brings her sharp wit to bear on suburban life, marriage, and motherhood in this laugh-out-loud collection of essays. From the politics of joining a play group, to the thrill of mothers' night out at the gun range, to the rewards of your most meaningful relationship (the one you have with your cleaning lady), nothing is sacred or off-limits. So the next time you find yourself wearing fuzzy bunny pajamas in the school carpool line or accidentally stuck at a co-worker's swingers party, just think, What would Jen Mann do? Or better yet, buy her book.

People I Want to Punch in the Throat: True(ish) Tales of an Overachieving Underachiever Details

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From Reader Review People I Want to Punch in the Throat: True(ish) Tales of an Overachieving Underachiever for online ebook

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Ok..so I liked this book. A shit ton of my friends didn't like it. They will probably get trolled by me.
Hell...someone has to do it.

Anyways..Jen Mann..I think she is my sister from another mister, mom or some crap like that. She doesn't do too well as room mom. Yeah, so maybe I did get replaced by one of those plastic moms the one year I was brave enough to try it. She might wear her pajama's in the car pick up line-don't judge..it's a hard world out there. The neighbors might not like her..not saying anything about that because my husband says I have to place nice with them now.

I think we might be twins. Except she makes a whole hell of a lot more money than I do. I'm the cheapie hubs in my story.

Plus I DO NOT want a mini van.

Anyways, give this book a try even though half of Goodreads is wrong about it.

And Jen.....

I received an arc copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Ivonne Rovira says

I really enjoyed Jen Mann's hilarious tales of life as a young mom in Kansas City with her blunt-bordering-on-rude, cheapskate husband Ebenezer and her sensitive son Gomer and precocious daughter Adolpha (names have been changed to protect the guilty). Because we know the same competitive moms. You know whom I'm talking about. The perfectly coiffed and dressed mom whose child never has a meltdown and who doesn't understand why you don't have time for Pilates or enough money for Le Ploutocrate, her favorite three-Michelin star restaurant. Sometimes she's a stay-at-home; sometimes she has one of those jobs where you can actually go out to lunch. She will always be blonde. She is better than you; you know it, and she knows it. Her kitchen is clean, she made her kids' Halloween costumes, and instead of the simple frosted cupcakes you made (or, as likely, bought at Kroger), hers are shaped like Minions or My Little Ponies. Unless her children never touch gluten or refined sugar. Then she somehow made admittedly delicious cupcakes out of carrots, kale, dates, and agave syrup. Yes, I'm bitter.

I don't know if it's being a real-estate agent or a blogger or just a freer spirit than I, but Jen Mann says all of the things that we sweatpants-clad, scruffy moms are thinking. Only more articulately. And funnier — much, much funnier. You don't have to be a parent to enjoy *People I Want to Punch in the Throat: Competitive Crafters, Drop-Off Despots, and Other Suburban Scourges*, as it's hilarious, but parents will laugh especially loudly.

Note: Jen and I have to part company on parents who do their children's homework. Her son is only in second grade, and somehow has not yet been assigned Homework to See How Smart Your Parents Are. I'm

frankly amazed that hasn't happened yet to young Gomer.

My daughter was 7 and in the second grade when we got our first assignment to create a three-dimensional model of the State of Maine. (We live in Kentucky — but, hey, why not be cosmopolitan?) We were supposed to make up a batter for this play-dough-like substance — I'm not making this up — and then shape it and bake it in a slow oven. Really, second-graders and ovens: What could possibly go wrong? Then we were to paint the state, its surrounding states (and Canada, in our case), include the capital (I was still OK with it thus far), all the major cities, the mountains, all of the rivers and lakes, and the major tourist attractions. Did I mention my daughter was 7? Or that she is a high-functioning autistic? Or that, at the time, her language development was such that she sounded like Bob the Minion?

At 1 a.m. the day it was due, we were still working on this project. I had already had to slice the Allegheny Mountains and relocated them where they actually belong. My daughter and I were both crying. I finally sent her to bed, and finished it myself. I even added a tiny moose with a flag of Maine clutched in its jaws. You won't be surprised when I tell you that mine wasn't the fanciest state there. Missouri was just awesome.

Lyn *GLITTER VIKING* says

"people who treat their pets like children"

I am so over this backlash of people all up in arms about people and their pets. My cats are my children. I plan my life around them.

Mann can go and fuck off. Congrats, you are the first name on my list of People I Want to Punch in the Throat.

Kelli says

People I want to punch in the throat:

-Anyone naive enough not to realize the screen name JenXxx might be misconstrued as anything other than a play on "generation X."

-Those apparently unfeeling assholes who tell their neighbors that "they would have been smarter to use \$13k to redo their kitchen rather than waste it on surgery for their dog."

-People so insecure that they can't just own up to wearing pajamas all day.

-^^x1000 when this is a bigger concern than your missing child.

-Immature couples who can't handle cleaning their own house for 6 fucking months before hiring a cleaning lady in order to avoid marital problems.

-Any parent who thinks, "Hey, it's ok if her kid beats the shit out of my kid because she gives me cool gifts and invites me to her book club."

-Writers who make points through means of overly-long, made-up conversations.

This book was terrible. I think I chuckled twice, once about how slow the internet used to be and once about something with carnivals and corn dogs that I can't remember. Is this really a memoir based off of a real-life blog? Because this can't be real. I repeatedly wanted to tell her to grow up and at one point yelled aloud, "BORED," and hit skip to jump to the next section.

Dan Schwent says

People I Want to Punch in the Throat is a collection of blog posts from the blog of the same name.

I got this from Netgalley.

Being a regular contributor to two book blogs and a neglecter of a personal blog, I'm no stranger to blogging so I had ulterior motives for requesting this. I often wonder if people would pay a paltry sum for a distillation of my bloggings.

People I Want to Punch in the Throat covers a wide range of topics, like parents doing their kids homework for them, meeting her husband on the internet, secretly coveting a mini van, hating to clean, her three year old being a racist, getting tricked into going to a swinger's party, and various points in between. They're all pretty funny.

Jen's writing style is pretty damn funny. I quoted numerous lines out loud to my girlfriend, who laughed before asking me what the hell I was reading. I kept picturing Tina Fey playing Jen in a movie or TV version of the blog.

It's a pretty funny read but, no surprising considering the source, you're reading a bunch of blog entries. It's like reading a collection of Chuck Klosterman essays without all the pretension. It was really entertaining but I'm not sure I'd want to pay for it when I could get it for free elsewhere. How many times have I said that... ?

3.5 out of 5 stars. Funny and definitely worth the time.

Correction: Jen informed me that the material within isn't gleaned from her blog and is in fact available nowhere else.

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

ARC received from NetGalley. Thank you, NetGalley!

Confession: My name is Kelly and I'm addicted to reading blogs. I started reading the *People I Want to Punch in the Throat* blog back when a certain "Overachieving Elf on the Shelf" post went viral. When I found out the author lived in the same area as me, it added even more enjoyment to some of her posts. Although I don't still follow the blog religiously, I was excited to see a book version available and figured it would provide some hardy-hars.

Well, things didn't work out quite as planned. A more fitting title for this book might have been *First World Problems of Entitled Suburbanites*. The stories in this collection attempt to point out how many assholes the author has to deal with on the daily. The trouble was, I didn't find the stories to be very funny and in many of the situations I found the author to be the asshole rather than all of the people she was complaining out. Which would be absolutely fine – if she owned her assholery instead of coming off as “holier than thou” in so many of the entries. Maybe me living in the same area and being familiar/having many of the same experiences backfired and lessened my enjoyment rather than enhanced it???

The one story that had me LOLing was either the truth or a continuation in the awesomeness of the urban legend which is called “The Suburban Swinger”.

I'm not so naïve as to believe swinging doesn't exist in fly-over country. In fact, I've even had an unfortunate incident where the “hubs” and I were asked to partake (trust me, if the two of us are the hot ticket on the menu, you probably want NOTHING to do with this particular club). According to *People I Want to Punch in the Throat*, there is a certain neighborhood known for its high number of residents who might not be opposed to “swapping keys” with the neighbors. This book points out that the houses are marked with giant white landscaping boulders to either warn or welcome new *ehem* friends(?). The power of Google/Realtor.com confirmed solo white boulders in a sea of mulch exist in several of the homes currently for sale. My morbid curiosity tells me I must buy a high-powered telescope and move to this neighborhood **immediately** in order to ewwwwww and ahhhh over the potential grotesquery of the over 50 swinging set.

Correction: Must **WIN LOTTERY** and then move to this neighborhood immediately, etc., etc., etc. because the house I like has an asking price of \$1,000,000. Plus I'll have to pay someone to haul that big fucking rock out of the yard.

When it comes to blogs-to-books, this was no *Hyperbole and a Half* or *Let's Pretend This Never Happened*, but you could definitely do worse. I'm sure many will find this to be hilarious. It just wasn't my particular cup of tea.

Diane says

I want to punch this author in the throat.

Sarah Jamison says

Disclaimer: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley.

Do you need a fresh take on the kinds of topics a humor/mommyblogger would write about that could lead to a cover mock-up featuring a ruined cupcake? Then this book is for you. It's a tumped up little cupcake of a

blog aggregate, probably much better suited to a twenty-minute musing over a cup of coffee than a whole bound book of same. Because same.

Same same same. Same old blogger style. Same old mommy quibbles (y'all, really. They're not even wars. It's just ladies bickering.) Same strategic use of the word "fuck" to establish both "authenticity" (whatever that means this week) and street cred in the woolly world of women who have blogs that feature artfully composed pictures of food that will be cold before anybody gets to eat it, cherubic younguns, and/or Lichtenstein inspired logos.

Sorry. I'm just so tired of it. I'm glad for Jen Mann that she parlayed her blog into a book that a lot of people will probably enjoy. But I don't want to kid anybody about what the book is about: one mom's experience in not fitting in with people she is contemptuous of anyway. Her fish out of water tale would carry a lot more water if she didn't seem like the world's most awkward, well-meaning hypocrite about the crafts, the drop-offs, the rest of it. In fact, I think it's pretty ironic that the apparent target audience of the book is the women getting bitched at and punched.

Blogs and bloggers are great. I read a wide variety (both topic and voice) every day. Yet every time I've read a book by a blogger I otherwise enjoy, I find the book tedious and cease enjoying the blog. There's something worth contemplating here, something about medium and message and how they do and do not work together. I'll get around to it just as soon as I start caring about what other women think of what other women think of them.

Dana says

I'm pretty picky when it comes to humour novels. Comedy is so subjective that I don't even check reviews when picking out such books because it's just too difficult to rate. There are many popular humour books that I absolutely hate, luckily this was not one of them.

I often have a hard time with female comics(I know I know I'm betraying my gender) but seriously I just don't find most female comics funny. There seems to only be one available subject for these women and that is sex(usually going on and on about what a "big whore" they are...Amy Schumer I'm looking at you).

What I enjoy(and what this book delivers on),is the other less popular but still entertaining subject of "bad mom humour", and I must admit that I am a sucker for this.

This book was really funny and better than I thought it would be. It's not quite at the level of How Not to Calm a Child on a Plane: And Other Lessons in Parenting from a Highly Questionable Source but it's still a barrel of laughs. I would definitely recommend this, and you don't need to be a mother to enjoy this book.

I look forward to checking out this authors other works. Overall I would rate this as a buy.

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

Pst: This book contains lots of swears.

La-Lionne says

An everyday life stories, yet so funny. Made my weekend.

It reminded me a lot of Petra's review with stories from her bookshop (you should totally write a book about it, it would be a hit).

I always thought that one day I would like to leave the big city and move some place quiet.. After reading this book, I'm not sure. Suburban people could be such assholes. Or maybe all of us are assholes, but living in a city, we don't let people close enough to get to know us so they can see the assholness inside of us :).

karen says

the title of this book is fantastic, and appeals to my own simmering inner rage towards all the various types of people i myself would like to punch in the throat. i didn't know anything about this woman before i read the book, although she has a very successful blog, but you know me - i don't have my finger on the pulse of the interwebz so good. so i didn't know that her blog was about motherhood and married suburban life, which is way out of my range of experience, and might be why i didn't love this book as much as i had hoped to.

but it's still very enjoyable. i love her voice - her lack of vanity as she recounts her struggles with her tightwad "hubs" and the various ways she doesn't fit in to her cookie-cutter suburban town - saying the "wrong" thing, letting her kids do their own homework, not getting into the spirit of a sex-toy party. she's funny and awkward and she's gonna embarrass the hell out of her kids when they get old enough to notice. but in a good way; one that when they outgrow the teen-embarrassment years, they will look back on and think "my mom is pretty cool."

but the subject matter - her dependence on her cleaning woman, her desire to own a mini-van, her hubs' monitoring of her spending, while amusing, didn't really speak to my own experiences, so it was a sort of *removed* amusement, and not one of recognition. also, while she definitely isn't a suburban stepford wife, she is *far* too domesticated to ever actually punch someone in the throat. she has more pique than actual rage.

but if you can relate to her stories of carpools and school bullies and juggling a career and children and a hubs, this is probably a book you want to read, because she's really charming, and there are definitely giggles to be had, even if you are a childless urban lady like myself.

Debbie says

Did you ever head for a drive-through or a school pick-up line in your pajamas because there just wasn't time to get dressed? (And I mean flannels with bunnies on them, not black sweats that pass as regular clothes.) If so, you probably told yourself that there was absolutely no way you'd be required to get out of the car. But then...WTF? Well, it happened to Jen Mann, with hysterical consequences. This pajama chapter was one of my favorites. But there are tons of other stories I loved, from how she met her husband through AOL, to dealing with her racist preschooler, to handling her 5-year-old who sounds like Dr. Phil and gives

wise marital advice—Mann tells it all and makes us laugh.

It's fun to read about a sane, nice person who speaks up against all the jerks in the world. Her style is blog-like in that it's easy-schmeazy conversational, though each essay feels complete. Her insight, always humorous, makes her an instant hero. I kept wishing I'd have the nerve to say half the things she said. We see ourselves in her, we relate to her. She has a good eye for the absurdities of everyday life in the 'burbs. And she's not embarrassed to confess that she'd really love to have a minivan. I love how she's self-effacing.

But now my complaints. The title was misleading. No biggie, but I expected rage with a humorous bent, and maybe a chapter for each bozo she wanted to punch in the throat. Instead, this book was really tame. She starts off with a touching and funny story about how she met her husband. Though he bugged her, I'd hardly say she wanted to punch him in the throat—and she ended up marrying him, so her predominant emotion certainly wasn't rage. The book was mostly about annoying and absurd suburbia. Yes, there were lots of people who bothered her with their inanities and selfishness, but she didn't really seem to get outraged enough.

There was one chapter where her kid was getting badly bullied by a vicious kid (think *The Bad Seed*). Mann was pissed, but not pissed enough. I was the one who was pissed at her for turning it into a funny story instead of taking it more seriously. I thought she should have done more to prevent future bullying, and I wished she'd had more sympathy for her poor kid. Maybe she did but just didn't tell us. I wanted to be told. I didn't want to think the bully was allowed to continue hurting her kid and others.

And the title mentions competitive crafters. I expected stories about the crazy craft world of knitters, beaders, card-makers. But no, she meant parents who do required school craft projects for their kids, and there's just one puny and sort of boring chapter about it. Surely it wasn't title worthy.

Occasionally, as with all funny books, the humor seemed forced, like the author was trying just a little too hard to crack me up. Those times, the joke sort of fell flat, went on a little too long, and seemed awkward. Luckily it didn't happen very much.

Another problem for me—the suburban moms were just too bitchy, dumb, and heartless. Mean malignant monster moms. They said horrible things to each other; I had trouble believing such evil people exist. But I just don't want to think Mann lied. I must think of it as harmless embellishment. No way could she remember all the conversations verbatim. She could have introduced the dialogues with something like, “the conversation went something like this....”, a subtle confession that she made some of it up, and I would have felt better.

There were way too many chapters on moms. Most were funny, but I'm past the days of carpools and PTA meetings, and it got old. Besides, I've had my fill of reading about bitchy moms (*Big Little Lies* was bad enough). The first half of the book was less mom-ful and I liked it a lot better.

Okay, enough complaining. Even though, as usual, my complaint board runneth over, I liked this book. I always looked forward to picking it up. I liked every single essay, which is unusual.

I've decided I like books by bloggers—two fun ones are *Let's Pretend This Never Happened: A Mostly True Memoir* by Jenny Lawson and *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?* by Mindy Kaling. And one of my all-time favorite books is the brilliant graphic gem *Hyperbole and a Half: Unfortunate Situations, Flawed Coping Mechanisms, Mayhem, and Other Things That Happened*. I'd appreciate it if the funny blogger people ditched their insanely long titles, but still, I'm a sucker for their lively books. Blogs are especially

great for those of us who want fast, easy, funny, and short—food for my adult ADD. They often are a nice break after reading a long and serious fiction gemstone.

Sassy, witty, hilarious, and honest, this collection of essays about life in the suburbs is a fast, fun read. Grab it if you want some laughs.

Natalie Monroe says

A non-comprehensive list of people Natalie Monroe wants to punch in the throat:*

*Subject to increasing daily.

1. Those empty taxis that drive away when they see I'm in a wheelchair.

I sincerely hope someone pukes on your floor mats.

2. The college kid who bumped into an elderly waitress, nearly causing her to fall, and *smirked*. Humanity is full-on doomed if these people are our future.

3. The mom I saw in the subway who conceded to letting her kids go to the library for a mere half hour after they begged. I understand that the life of a working mom is very stressful, what with lost permission slips and misplaced budget reports, but you can't take a few hours out of your life to bring them to the *library*? Unless you're pitching for Team TV, then I have nothing to say to you.

4. People in business suits who flee from charity-collectors like they're the plague.

Lemme help you with your car there...

5. Those people who text and order food at the same time and hold up the line. Multitasking is the new thang, but if your brain can't handle it, stick to ordering your roast duck linguine.

6. Guys who use the word 'gay' as an insult.

7. Stairs. Okay, they're not a sentient being, but I still hate stairs. Slopes rule.

8. That one guy in class who fakes a British accent to sound posh ~~and get girls~~. No, dude. It only make people want to punch you in the Adam's apple.

9. Everyone during rush hour.

No one is safe.

10. Myself for not reading this book sooner.

It's funny and perfect to read after a long day at work or school. There's some light slut-shaming and occasions when you can clearly see the other person's side, but on whole, it was great.

ARC provided by Netgalley

Elizabeth Salinas says

I don't know if my vocabulary is equal to the task of expressing my disdain for this book, but I will try, because I truly believe that if I save one person from wasting time or money on this, mine will have been a life well lived.

I thought I would like this book. I had never heard of the blog, but the title made me laugh. I live in the suburbs and have two children. I am about the same age as the author, and have been a room mom and involved in the PTA, so one would think I am exactly the demographic to appreciate and enjoy this book. Perhaps that's the problem--while I know many people with overscheduled children who wouldn't ever admit to feeding their families non-organic fruit, nobody I know pontificates about their choices like seemingly everybody the author meets does. The encounters and conversations she relates don't ring true at all. I've lived and worked in six different states, and unless the people of Kansas are just insufferable jerks a breed apart from those in the rest of the country, I can not buy what she's trying to sell. They mostly seem like contrived situations set up so the author can reply with a snappy putdown or a self-righteous speech to demonstrate her superiority. Do I believe that every story David Sedaris writes happened exactly as he describes? Of course not--humorists exaggerate for effect, but skillful humorists do it believably, and don't insult our intelligence.

The author purports to hold "humblebraggers" in contempt, which is ironic because the whole book amounts to an extended humblebrag--"I may be disorganized, underachieving, fluffy, unkempt, and foul mouthed, but really that's what makes me so much cooler and more together than those Dolce and Gabbana-wearing empty-headed suburbanites."

And, oh yeah, it's not really funny (unless you think punctuating every other sentence with the word "f*ck" makes things funny, in which case shouldn't you be finishing your algebra homework?).

Linda (Miss Greedybooks) says

I was awarded this book by NetGalley - Thank you!

The title is one of the best, ever!

This book by Jen Mann was funny, I laughed, chuckled, snickered & snorted through it.

I am surprised a little, she writes about suburban housewife, mother of small children issues that I have no basis of comparison for. So, I credit her even more for making me laugh at her daily problems & solutions.

I was caught right from the short list at the beginning. Then, how she met her husband was so good, I was

involved. The marriage and housekeeping problems kept me turning pages, once the baby and school issues began I already liked her way of dealing with things so although I did not identify really, I could understand.

The part I did not like was the strange names EVERYONE has... Ebenezer, Gomer, Adolpha, are just the names of her husband & children - the other housewives & their children ALL have such goofy names - yes, I know the names have been changed to protect the innocent, but really they were too outrageous and ridiculous for me. That being a very little part, the book was fun to read and follow the relationships between Jen and family or other mothers that the children go to school with.

Jen has a good way to phrase things so they are amusing while you can still feel her pain.

I recommend this book for all who could use a good laugh, and can't we ALL use a good laugh these days?
