

A-HOLES
ANONYMOUS
– a one-act play

CHARACTERS: (4)

LEADER, male or female, any age
A-HOLE #1, male or female, any age
A-HOLE #2, male or female, any age
A-HOLE #3, male or female, any age

(The A-HOLES are costumed in street clothes – but their heads should have large padded lumps on either side, fashioned to resemble buttocks, with the actors' faces forming the butt-holes proper. Exaggerate for comic effect.)

SETTING: Just a few chairs for a group meeting.
Styrofoam coffee cups, a coffee-maker,
a few supplies.

AT RISE: The LEADER is arranging chairs,
altering them several times to get the “best”
configuration.

LEADER How about here? No, here! (finishing)

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Well, I'm afraid that'll have to do!
(Changes the chairs one more time)
There! (Looks at wristwatch) Almost
eight. God, I'd better make the coffee!
(Gets some Styrofoam cups and busily
makes some coffee.) (Finally finishes,
eager) All *right!* (Looks around)
Everything's ready. (Practicing)
"Welcome, one and all! I'm so glad
you could make it! Welcome!"

(Lights out.)

(Lights back on. Time has passed.)

LEADER (sitting in a chair, impatient, sipping at a
coffee cup, looking at watch again) It's
past eight thirty, folks! Where *are* you?

(Enter A-HOLE #1.)

A-HOLE #1 Hey, is this the right room?

LEADER A-Holes Anonymous?

A-HOLE #1 (suspiciously) Yeah. Is this it?

LEADER Come in. You're a bit late.

A-HOLE #1 No, I'm not! It starts at nine.

A-Holes Anonymous

LEADER No, eight. But never mind. You're here.
 And welcome!

A-HOLE #1 No other A-Holes here yet?

LEADER Not yet. Would you like some coffee?

A-HOLE #1 Got some tea?

LEADER I might have a bag or two.

A-HOLE #1 Not loose tea?

(The GROUP LEADER tries to find a tea bag among the
supplies.)

LEADER (with difficulty finding a single tea bag)
 Ah, success! There is one single tea bag
 left.

A-HOLE #1 Is it herbal?

LEADER (checking) Sorry. Earl Grey.

A-HOLE #1 I only drink herbal.

LEADER I can probably run out for some.

A-HOLE #1 You probably could, couldn't you.

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LEADER There's a store open late on the next
 block. (Starting to exit) Would you do
 me a favor? If any more A-Holes come
 in, could you make them comfortable
 and tell them I'll be right back?

A-HOLE #1 Chamomile. Got that?

LEADER I'll try my best. Be right back! (Exits.)

(#1 checks out the room, then sits in a chair.)

(Enter A-HOLE #2.)

A-HOLE #2 Is this A-Holes Anonymous?

A-HOLE #1 How the hell would I know.

A-HOLE #2 Are you the Group Leader?

A-HOLE #1 Nope. (Shakes head, crosses arms, rocks
 back and forth in the chair.)

A-HOLE #2 I wonder if I have the wrong room.

(#1 deliberately doesn't answer.)

(#2 goes back to the entrance, double-checks.)

A-HOLE #2 (returning) No, it says Room 209 outside.

A-Holes Anonymous

- A-HOLE #1 Does it?
- A-HOLE #2 I'm surprised there's no one in charge.
Not very responsible.
- A-HOLE #1 (non-committal) Yep.
- A-HOLE #2 Do you mind if I sit here?
- A-HOLE #1 (as if annoyed) Suit yourself, I suppose.
- A-HOLE #2 (mously) Thanks. (Sits) Is that free
coffee over there?
- A-HOLE #1 Beats me. (Shrugs.)
- A-HOLE #2 (getting up) I could use some coffee.
Worked very late today. (Starts to get
coffee, then stops.) Maybe I'd better not.
It could be old coffee.
- A-HOLE #1 (Yawns.)
- A-HOLE #2 Tell me about it! (sitting again) I often
have to work overtime. But no matter
how exhausted, I won't touch old
coffee!
- A-HOLE #1 (Yawns bigger.)

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A-HOLE #2 Last year I worked one thousand and ninety-five hours.

A-HOLE #1 (Huge yawn, almost falls off chair.)

A-HOLE #2 (undeterred) That's equivalent to three years in one. . . . Most of it overtime.

A-HOLE #1 (Gets up and moves deliberately to a farther chair. Sits again.)

A-HOLE #2 (after a pause) Including each and every holiday.

(Enter A-HOLE #3. Comes right in, sits in a chair, doesn't acknowledge the other two. After a beat, takes out nail clippers and begins methodically and noisily clipping fingernails – can be faked.)

A-HOLE #1 (after a few clippings fly about, under breath) What an A-hole!

A-HOLE #3 Is that meant for me?

A-HOLE #1 Are you the one clipping your fingernails?

A-HOLE #3 Yeah. You got a problem with that?

A-HOLE #2 (placatingly) Now you two –

A-Holes Anonymous

A-HOLE #1 /

A-HOLE #3 (together) Shut up!

A-HOLE #1 You don't clip your fingernails in public!

A-HOLE #3 Oh, yeah? Who says?

(Both stand up, confrontational.)

(Re-enter GROUP LEADER, out of breath, with a box of tea bags.)

LEADER There you all are! I knew you'd show up. So how are you all doing? (Nobody replies.) Did you introduce yourselves?

A-HOLE #3 (rolling eyes) Yeah, right.

LEADER (sensing tension) Well, that's okay. We can all introduce ourselves in a minute. I found the tea! In bags. (Holds up the box.) Chamomile!

A-HOLE #1 I don't want it now.

LEADER You don't want it now?

A-HOLE #1 It might get fingernail clippings in it!

A-HOLE #3 (snapping the clippers at #1) And worse

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things!

- LEADER Hey! Hey! Easy now. Anybody else want tea?
- A-HOLE #2 I'll have some! I've worked up quite a thirst. I had to work overtime.
- LEADER Great! Anybody else?
- A-HOLE #3 Got any profiteroles?
- LEADER Any what?
- A-HOLE #3 Never mind. (self-pitying) Don't worry about me and what I might like. (muttering) No profiteroles!
- LEADER I'm afraid I just have tea or coffee.
- A-HOLE #3 (sighs) Well, what can you expect.
- LEADER (ingratiating) Why don't we just have our meeting. All right?
- A-HOLE #3 (reluctantly) I guess so.
- A-HOLE #1 Christ! I don't want to be first.
- A-HOLE #3 Me neither.

A-Holes Anonymous

- LEADER (to #2) Why don't you start?
- A-HOLE #2 But I hate to be first too!
- LEADER Okay – first off, I'm Lindsey. The Group Leader. I used to be like you, but I went through the program here at A-Holes Anonymous, and now I'm recovered. Now why don't you each tell us something about yourself and why you've come? Sound good? (to #2) Ready?
- A-HOLE #2 It's not going to get too personal, I hope!
- (The other two also grumble.)
- A-HOLE #2 Yeah, I don't want people knowing a lot of personal facts about me!
- LEADER Just tell as much as you want to. No pressure. (Gestures) Please?
- A-HOLE #2 My initials are S.A. and apparently I'm an A-Hole. My company sent me here. I don't think I'm one. Not as hard as I work!
- A-HOLE #3 I think you're one!

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LEADER Now, now. Tell us about yourself. Please.

A-HOLE #3 My name's my own business, and I wouldn't tell any of you punks anything if my life depended on it. But to some overly sensitive people I've got a problem. Personally I think *they* got a problem! *They're* the A-Holes. . . . (long pause) Okay. The police said I had to come.

LEADER Excellent! We're making progress. (to #1) And you?

A-HOLE #1 I'm . . . Joe/Jo. I drive a taxi, and I'm an A-Hole. I admit it. In fact, I'm proud of it. I just came to tell everybody. (Laughs.)

LEADER (applauding) Thank each of you! Nice job! The first step in recovery is admitting you're an A-Hole.

A-HOLE #3 I didn't admit it!

A-HOLE #2 I didn't either!

LEADER Don't be ashamed. There are lots of A-Holes in the world, and most of them never have the courage to come for help.

A-Holes Anonymous

A-HOLE #1 I'm not really one either. I just said that to be cute.

LEADER I see. So where does that leave us then?

A-HOLE #3 That *you're* an A-Hole. We're all agreed on that!

(The others concur.)

LEADER Now this meeting isn't really about me. I'm just here to facilitate.

A-HOLE #3 (crudely) Facilitate *this!*

(#2 and #1 laugh)

LEADER People, please! I don't think this is quite working. Maybe we should try a little group activity.

A-HOLE #3 What? A group grope?

LEADER Not exactly. More like a group –

A-HOLE #1 Not that huggy crap? I hate that shit.

LEADER No, you don't have to hug anybody – yet.

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A-HOLE #2 I don't like that stuff either. Unless it's sniffing each other's chairs. That would be acceptable.

LEADER (giving #2 a strange look) I see. No, what I had in mind was more along the lines of reverse role-playing. To get a feel for how others may view you.

A-HOLE #3 (crudely) View this!

A-HOLE #1 You got that right!

LEADER Why doesn't one of you pretend to be me, and I'll pretend to be you. Anybody volunteer?

A-HOLE #3 (after a pause) All right, I'll do it.

LEADER Terrific!

A-HOLE #3 So I'm being *you*, right?

LEADER That's the way it works.

A-HOLE #3 Okay, here I go. I work in this dump, and I'm a recovering A-Hole! Only I had a relapse!

A-Holes Anonymous

LEADER Very good. And now I get to be *you*.
Ready?

A-HOLE #3 As I'll ever be! Watch yourself now!

LEADER Here it comes. (imitates #3's body
language) Facilitate this! I would ~~an~~'t
give you punks the foreskin off my
schlong if you was starving to death!

A-HOLE #3 (after taking in the image) So?

LEADER You don't see anything wrong here?

A-HOLE #3 Aside from your lousy impersonation,
no. You can tell where I stand on things.
I get to the point.

LEADER Civilization depends on a certain
amount of give and take.

A-HOLE #3 Yeah, you give and I take.

(He and #1 and #2 laugh, think this is funny.)

LEADER (persisting) Would anybody else like to
play me?

A-HOLE #1 No, you're too boring.

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- A-HOLE #2 I'll pass.
- A-HOLE #3 I'll pass too – gas! (Lifts leg from chair as if passing gas) You heard of Chief Sitting Bull? Well, call me Chief Passing Wind! (Laughs) Or this one. (Grabs face cheeks and squeezes, making a fart noise.) Pretty convincing, huh?
- A-HOLE #1 It was too easy. It comes natural to you!
- LEADER Okay, this group may be a little harder to crack than I thought it was going to be.
- A-HOLE #2 (abruptly) Why don't we sing? I'd like that very much.
- A-HOLE #1 Sing?
- LEADER Usually I'd wait for later in the group process, but why not a song? An excellent suggestion!
- A-HOLE #1 Hell, I'm not singing.
- A-HOLE #2 (suddenly) "Feelings, ohhhh, feelings!"

A-Holes Anonymous

A-HOLE #1 /

A-HOLE #3 Shut up, asshole!

LEADER Please, please. We use the term A-Hole around here! And we don't insult each other.

A-HOLE #2 (resentfully) "Feelings, ohhhh, *feelings!*"

A-HOLE #3 Hey, blow it out the other end!

LEADER I must insist!

A-HOLE #3 Insist this!

A-HOLE #1 (out of nowhere, singing) "Silent night, holy night."

A-HOLE #3 (joining in) "All is calm, all is bright."

LEADER What is this?

A-HOLE #1 You said to sing. So we're singing.

A-HOLE #2 "Round yon virgin, mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild." I've always loved that song.

#1 / #2 / #3 (Together) "Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace."

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A-HOLE #3 Hey, we're not too bad.

LEADER Perhaps you could form a vocal group.
The Singing A-Holes. Specializing in
Christmas songs.

A-HOLE #3 Hey! I thought you were recovered!

LEADER It's proving more difficult than I
thought.

A-HOLE #1 Are we done?

LEADER With the singing? I think so.

A-HOLE #1 I meant with the meeting.

A-HOLE #3 Yeah, I've had enough.

LEADER The meeting is supposed to last an hour.
(Points to wristwatch.)

A-HOLE #1 Well, we'd be out of here by now if you
didn't go running off God knows where
to get stupid tea bags nobody wants!

LEADER Nobody wants?!

A-HOLE #2 Yes, I have to get back to work.

A-Holes Anonymous

A-HOLE #1 You're working overtime. We know!
I've got the midnight shift with my cab
myself.

A-HOLE #3 I'm ready to leave. I think I'm cured!

(They start to get up.)

LEADER Nobody's leaving this room until I say
so! (Blocks the exit.)

A-HOLE #3 Hey! Out of the way!

A-HOLE #2 Exactly!

LEADER You -- cured? Not one of you three is
even half sane, let alone cured!

A-HOLE #2 Who are you to say?

LEADER The Group Leader, that's who!

A-HOLE #3 Are we gonna take this?

A-HOLE #1 This candy-ass creep thinks s/he's gonna
say a few magic words over us, and then
suddenly we're gonna be "cured." Well,
I for one don't care to be cured!

A-HOLE #2 Same goes here!

A-Holes Anonymous

ourselves and our – our – our what?

A-HOLE #2 Principles!

A-HOLE #1 /
A-HOLE #3 Precisely!

A-HOLE #2 From this moment on begins one of the
great socio-political movements of –

A-HOLE #3 And don't forget religious!

A-HOLE #1 Movements of all time!

A-HOLE #2 May I call you brothers/sisters in the
cause?

A-HOLE #1 /
A-HOLE #2 You may!

(All three embrace, with ad libs: Thank you, brother. My
brother! Etc.)

LEADER Gentlemen! Ladies! [as necessary] You
seem to be missing the point of the
group.

#1/ #2 /#3 Shut the fuck up! (They throw the
GROUP LEADER to the floor and each

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places a foot on the GL as if bagging a
hunting trophy.)

A-HOLE #1 We spit on your point! (All three spit as
one.)

A-HOLE #2 We spit on your group! (All spit.)

A-HOLE #3 We even spit on your name! (All spit.)
No more are we A-Holes Anonymous!
Henceforth we shall be known as —
(encouraging #1 and #1 to say it too)
known as —

A-HOLE #1 Ass —

A-HOLE #2 Holes —

ALL THREE United!

(They join hands and give a united Fuck You middle
finger to the GROUP LEADER on the floor. Then they
look at the audience and give them an even bigger finger
in a final power salute.)

ALL THREE And fuck you people too!

BLACKOUT