



Denise Mullen is a journalist, writer and entrepreneur. [www.ladiesofacertainageassassinsclub.com](http://www.ladiesofacertainageassassinsclub.com): 'Life in the Crosshairs' is an online gentlemen's club for ladies - which also welcomes gentlemen. The online members' Club, which is free to join and launches later this year, is for discerning 40+s who love a spot of wit and repartee and find themselves just a little bit bored with Instagram fakery and Facebook fluff.

## Who's for an edgy new year then?

So, bizarre as it may seem, 2021 is going to be a year of self-improvement. Yes, even by mid-January, even by me.



I'm not sure how improved I'll be, but it will be entirely selfish.

Most of us are a work in progress. I'm still no stranger to a bottle of Marlborough Estate Sauvignon and a woman who treats the vacuum like a virus (no improvement there, and nor do I care), so instead of tackling the inconsequential and deeply dull, I'm giving rein to a frivolous little bit of something 'just because I fancy doing it'.

Yep, my New Year's resolutions diverged from

the mundane this year. My one resolution was to make only one resolution. And that was not to make any.

Apart from this one small thing.

I decided I really needed to do something genuinely new.

Ideally it would be something I could do indoors or out, wouldn't require me to travel, wear anything Lycra or wash my hair. There would be no heavy kit to cart around and I wouldn't break a

sweat doing it. It would require skill and focus and it would become a source of personal pride as I gained in confidence and proficiency. I ordered my kit.

Imagine my excitement when the package eventually arrived.

The set of pink 'ladies' throwing knives (in faux croc scabbard) arrived via flying reindeer - from Texas actually - to be unwrapped on Christmas morning.

Inside was all kinds of fresh delight. The very throwing knives, and in a delicate shade of Rose Petal Blush.

So my man set about project-managing a health & safety compliant knife-throwing booth.

I'd need a contained area. Sides. It needs sides, he said. A target (make that a LARGE target) and some form of permeable and soft flooring to prevent the pointy bit breaking when I inevitably 'wapped' the floor repeatedly with my wildly inaccurate throwing.

OK, fine. So I couldn't start throwing practise until: 1. I had the booth to prevent injury to various pets, husband, wildlife, passers-by and 2. knew how to do it.

And there was the thing. I spent ages trawling the internet for knife throwing video explainers, classes in my area - you know the drill.

However, there was nothing, nada, zip.

I checked the packaging again. No instructions. I flipped the box onto its side in a last-ditch attempt to find some kind of nugget of help. There were three illustrations.

1. a target
2. a hand holding a knife by the tip
3. a hand holding a knife by the handle

*Hmm (raised eyebrow).*

A friend asked me why I'd decided to take up knife throwing. I considered - and then it just came out. 'I've got a bad knee, I don't ride or ski anymore because of said joint dislocated during these rufty tufty activities and felt I need a hobby with some edge. Plus, it'll be a conversation piece at parties.'

Actually, I just really fancy having an out of the ordinary skill. Which is why it's so galling I can't find a teacher. Surely someone must teach this. Sort of darts but, like, way more Ninja, innit? And without the pint of bitter (I can just about stomach a half of Peroni) and horrible acrylic XXX4 teshirt.

Meanwhile, my man was down at the building suppliers

ordering Jablite insulation or polystyrene or other kind of fluffy stuff for lofts. The guy behind the counter asked him what the job was. Oh boy did my husband enjoy explaining it was for his wife's new knife-throwing booth.

**I am now, officially, a tart with a dart.**

A kind and lovely friend helpfully did a little research after my constant whining about there being nowhere (within a 20-minute drive) to get expert help. She found a video guide to knife throwing, hosted by a Russian army chap who looks like he ate Ant whatshisname from SAS Who Dares Wins on the telly.

In the video the butch Russian from the KGB with v. v. scary knife has trousers and a gilet with many pockets. I'm now frowning as I consider that I will need special knife-throwing trousers, steel toe-cap biker boots (actually, I may have those already) and possibly oven gloves (got-em). On closer inspection the captions on the video inform me to always keep my 'spare' concealed in my sock. Not a good (or achievable) look when you've set your heart on a shift dress, footless tights and sandals.



Knife-man is grunting as he leans into his throw. His knife is huge and glinty and his hairy hand moves so fast I struggle to follow his grip technique. I try the weight forward stance - although I can't bring myself to grunt - he's right though, it does make a difference.

So the knife-throwing is progressing - well, knifely. Grouping is getting better. When I'm engaged in conversation

about my new hobby I can feel a little frisson of pride flushing up my neck.

We Ladiesofacertainageassassinsclub.com members are not thugs dearie. We are accomplished, smart and stylish - and fabulously and joyously underestimated, and that suits me just fine. However I do rummage for the odd cutting remark or two when people snigger - REPEATEDLY - with disbelief at my, admittedly, ridiculous new hobby.

No one thought I was really taking up knife throwing huh? Imagine their faces when the 'thunking' from my new booth in the barn is accompanied by my dulcet tones ringing out: 'Get In You Beauty!'

In short, I may just have to self-teach and then start classes for other ladies searching for something to take them beyond Bakeoff and see them through the New Year's Strictly vacuum.

Well: if goat yoga is a thing.....