

*“Well, darling, just try to be little bit less Western in your thinking, if you can, please. I mean, you realize, of course, that in Zen terms everything in the universe is just molecules, don't you? Ying and yong, ping and pong... Mmm? You know that, darling? These are my molecules and that's your little clump of molecules over there, sweetie. I mean, in real terms, there's no difference between me and the coffee, me and the table, me and a tree, me and Madonna, for God's sake!”*

– Edina Monsoon, *Absolutely Fabulous*, Season 1 Episode 2: Fat, 1992

# Absolutely Faaablus

by Owen G. Parry

*Absolutely Fabulous*, also known as *Ab Fab*, features Jennifer Saunders as Edina Monsoon, a heavy-drinking, drug-abusing PR agent who spends her time chasing bizarre fads in a desperate attempt to stay young and "hip". Edina is joined in her quest by magazine fashion director Patsy Stone (Joanna Lumley), her best friend and enabler, whose drug abuse, alcohol consumption, and promiscuity far eclipse Edina's comparatively mild self-destructive behaviour. Whether you're a Patsy or an Edina, or whether these characters are relevant to you, I hope you'll find this survey a way to get reacquainted and to dig a bit deeper into this cult classic.

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**Warmup! Now, it's multiple choice questions.**

Are you ready? How many years was Margaret Thatcher Prime Minister?

- a) 900 years.
- b) 3,000 years.
- c) 11 years.

A trick question.

## ***Series 1: Fashion / Fat / France (1993)***

1) **Fashion can make you feel fabulous, but it can also be a pressure to conform.**

Is Fashion: (Circle answer)

A Friend

A Foe

I've never felt judged for what I wear

2) **How many drinks is too many drinks?** (circle answer)

1

3

5

depends

3) **At a high-end Fashion Show are you:** (circle answer)

Front row

The model

Shagging the model

1000 miles away

4) **The French Philosopher Michele Foucault invented the concept of Biopolitics to describe the various ways bodies are governed to conform in society through, for instance, regimes of cosmetic beauty.**

In light of this, what does beauty mean to you? (one sentence)

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5) The countercultural movement of 60s, 70s and 80s from Hippies to Punks explored freedom through style and attitude. Describe what 'Freedom' means to you. (use three words)

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6) The late queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick said "Shame is transformative. Shame is performance". Have you experienced shame in relation to any of the following? (Circle answers)

Gender      Sexuality      Body      Class      Ethnicity

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7) On a Holiday in France, you need to pop to the shops to buy some bread and milk. How much money do you need? (Circle One)

€300      £3      "I've got cards"

8) What do you want written on your 'epitombe' (aka Gravestone)? (not for you? Move to question 9)

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9) The Mile High Club is: (circle one)

A Rooftop bar      Sex on a plane      A spa resort in Marrakesh      A disease

10) How comfortable are you on a scale of 1 to childbirth? (Mark your position)

1 ----- Childbirth

### ***Series 1: Iso Tank / Birthday / Magazine (1993)***

1. Come on. Cosmo sex quiz. We'll do it together, we'll do it together. Mum and daughter will do it together. Shall we, sweetie? There it is. It's multiple choice, darling, all right? A, B or C.

A) Is he shaggable?      B) Are you shagging?      C) Have you shagged?

2. ***What does an Iso Tank mean to you?*** (circle one)

An ice machine      A air conditioning cooler

A shallow pool of water      A bank account

3. Co-dependency is an excessive emotional or psychological reliance on a partner, friend or family member. Give one example (a sentence)

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4. Britain's Empire and colonial history still configure in the British consumerist desire for "knickknacks", "heirlooms" and "gorgeous little things". Give two possible examples

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5. "Have you seen this pot?": What does "pot" mean to you? (Circle Answer)

A useful vestibule      An ornamental feature      Marijuana

6. When was the last time you went to work? (circle one)

Work? Today This week  
Last week Last month Last year

11) What's in? And what's out? (give one answer for each)

In: \_\_\_\_\_

Out: \_\_\_\_\_

12) Who is sexy? Who is not sexy? (give one answer for each)

Sexy: \_\_\_\_\_

Not sexy: \_\_\_\_\_

13) What is your "word du jour"? i.e "moist", "zingy" (one answer)

\_\_\_\_\_

14) We all have a sob story. What's yours? Have you used it to get your own way, or get ahead? (two answers)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15) Have you tried saying "please"? (circle one)

Yes No

16) "You can never have enough hats, gloves and shoes": What's your catchphrase?

\_\_\_\_\_

17) It's your Birthday and you've been gifted a lovely set of earrings. Do you like them because: (circle one)

They go well with an outfit

You don't have ear piercing

It's a thoughtful gift

They're Lacroix

18) Morning television is for: (circle one)

Unemployed people Information on latest trends Reliable News

### ***Series 2: Hospital / Death / Morocco (1994)***

1) When travelling abroad what are the best ways to get to know the local culture? (circle one)

Guide book Guide Person Attempt to speak the language Irish Bar

2) When was the last time you 'pulled a tantrum'? (Describe your action)

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Everything was better in the 70s? (circle one)

Yes No

4) **Is there room at the Inn?** (circle one)

Yes                      No

5) **Have you ever been sold a dud?** (one answer)

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6) **Death is a taboo topic** (circle one)

Yes                      No

7) **You want to buy some art. But you want to make sure it's 'good art'. How can you tell?**

It's done by a reputable artist      It's a one off              It's at the Tate  
It's going to change your life      It makes no sense

8) **Humour is a good way to deal with uncomfortable situations** (circle one)

Always                      Sometimes              Rarely              Never

9) **The NHS provides free healthcare to everyone in the UK, but the waiting lists are long. In which situation would you consider 'going private'?** (circle one)

Never              In an Emergency      Depends on the cost      I always go private

10) **Have you ever 'made it into the newspaper'?** (if yes, give one answer)

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11) **Best Tabloid Headline you remember?** (one answer, or go to question 12)

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12) **What does your home tell you about you?** (circle answers)

Clean              Busy              Lazy              Obsessive              Exuberant

13) **Is it important to have lovely things around you?** (circle one)

Yes              No

14) **Did your life change much after 'Basic Instinct'?**

Yes              No              Don't know

15) **When is it ok to lie about your age** (circle one or more)

Tinder Date with a younger partner      Job Interview              Car Insurance  
Buying cigarettes or alcohol              Never

16) **Have you ever abstained or given something up?** (Circle One)

Yes                      No

***Series 2: New Best Friend / Poor / Birth (1994)***

1) **Scottish singer Lulu encouraged everyone to:** (circle one)

Sing              Shout              Think              Pray              Study              Love

- 2) **Your friends have moved into a new house and re-decorated it in a minimalist style. What do you take them as a gift? (circle one)**  
 A bottle of wine      A white empty box      A hanging mobile      Nothing
- 3) **Minimalism is: (circle one)**  
 Bright and airy      Too serious      Homely  
 A proto-fascist aesthetic      Expensive
- 4) **You see a friend struggling with a baby. Do you: (circle one)**  
 Resent them      Offer a help in hand      Make an excuse  
 Do nothing      Pretend you didn't see them
- 5) **Your friend is out to lunch with another friend and so you have no one to have lunch with: do you (circle)**  
 Ask to Join them      Go it alone      Get takeout  
 Pretend to bump into them      Starve
- 6) **Money issues: what are the best ways to save your pennies? (circle two)**  
 Stay in      Cancel gym membership      Cook food for work  
 Sugar Daddy      Take out a loan      Low-cost supermarket
- 7) **Are the rich growing richer and the poor growing poorer? (if yes, explain why).** \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) **Breaking the law is a criminal offence. What is offensive to you?**  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) **Why can't it be more like 'the continent'?** (one answer)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) **Is there more to life than being safe?** (circle one).    Yes    No
- 11) **Is there a point to all this?** (circle one)  
 Yes      No
- 12) **Why, oh why, do we pay taxes?** (one answer)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) **Why do they put barricades near traffic lights?** (circle one)  
 System of control      Suicide prevention scheme  
 Aesthetic austerity      To make it more difficult to cross the road
- 14) **What 'community service' do you perform?** (once answer)  
 Tea maker      Pick up rubbish      None      Hold the door open  
 Listen to others problems      Volunteer for a charity
- 15) **In the event of a fire at home. What one object would you take?** (One answer). \_\_\_\_\_

16) **Futon beds are:** (circle one)

Convenient                  Stylish                  Uncomfortable                  No feelings

17) **You're installing a new kitchen at home. What are the most important elements?** (order 1-6)

Cooker                  Oven                  Fridge                  Kitchen Island  
Dishwasher                  Drying rack

18) **Music and Fashion goes around in circles. What's the best 'come back' thing in the last 10 years?** (circle one)

Kappa poppers                  Skinny Jeans                  Steps                  Bum bags  
Curtains                  None

19) **Talking about your sex life with family members is healthy** (Circle one)

Yes                  No                  Depends (say why)

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20) **Do you know the story about your birth?** (circle one)

Yes                  No

### ***Series 3: Doorhandle / Happy New Year / Sex (1995)***

1) **What's the most ridiculous journey you've made for the most insignificant reason?** (one answer)

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2) **Do you prefer to take notes using:** (chosed one)

your phone                  voice message                  pen & paper                  memory

3) **Work work work, darling. Neoliberal capitalism has usurped leisure time into worktime. What do you do 'to relax'?** (circle one)

Watch TV                  Exercise                  Art                  Drink  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4) **What is the difference between a painting that someone chooses to paint like a child, and a child's painting?** (one answer)

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5) **Beauty or Utility?** (circle one)

6) **Tit test: Do you ever check your breasts yourself?** (circle one)

Yes                  No

7) **Grapes?** (circle one)

Seedless                  Pips

8) **What is a "Frankie Knuckles underground CD Rom dance happening", exactly?** (one answer)

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9) This “new year” thing. Am I right in thinking it’s when the year goes “up” one? (Philosophical questions, sweetie)

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10) Describe yourself: (5 adjectives)

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11) A family member you have not seen in a long time is visiting, but you don’t have a lot of space in your home. Do you offer them (answer one)  
Your bed      Sofa      Blow up mattress      A link to lastminute.com

12) Do you have any “new life” resolutions? (one answer)

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13) Heterosexual porn is degrading to women? (circle one)

Yes      No

14) Do you have sex on the first date? (circle one)

Yes      No      before the date

15) You’re organizing your dream Orgy. You can invite 4 other people. Who will they be? (4 answers)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Series 3: Jealous / Fear / The End***

1) How do you deal with a Nemesis? (Circle one)

Ignore them      Copy them      Compete      Collaborate

2) What kind of a reality has a 13 amp plug at the end of it? (one answer)

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3) What do you do when you’re home alone? (circle one)

Cook      Dance around      Wank      Talk on the phone      Feel lonely

4) Do you fear change? (circle one)

Yes      No

5) The West has often turned to the East for inspiration on healing. Have you ever undertaken an alternative therapy? (circle one)

Yes      No

6) Have you ever experienced an existential crisis? (circle one)

No      Yes (explain)

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7) Is your hair on purpose? (circle one)

Yes      No

- 8) Do you have a special place you go to contemplate life? (Circle one)  
Yes                      No

***Season 4: Parralox / Fish Farm / Paris / Donkey / Small Opening / Menopause / Gay (2001)***

- 1) Surveillance Camera's are useful for (give on example)

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- 2) Have you voted Labour again, dear? (circle one)  
Obvs                      Never

- 3) What's a good email address for someone you hate? (give one example)

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- 4) Emotional labour is the work of giving care and can be hard work. What measures should a carer take to take care of themselves? (one idea)

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- 5) Have you ever made friends/dated someone because of their social status? (circle one)  
Yes                      No

- 6) Duck a La'orange with tangerine accessories is: (circle one)  
A look                      a dinner                      a toilet cleaner

- 7) What does Paris mean to you? (circle one)  
Fashion                      Good food                      Innovation                      Friendly                      Neither

- 8) Is detoxing a 'fad'? (circle one)  
Yes                      No

- 9) If "God" could be played by anyone you like, who would it be?: (one answer) \_\_\_\_\_

- 10) How do you deal with a stalker? (circle one)  
Cut off their stalk                      Report them to the Police                      Enjoy the attention

- 11) Who will play you in the film of your life? (one answer)

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- 12) Age gracefully or Age grossfully? (circle one)

- 13) How can you tell if someone is gay these days? (one answer)

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- 14) Television healers can cancel out your disease or illness with a swipe of your credit card. (circle one)  
True                      False

- 15) Which is Whoppi Goldberg's best on screen appearance? (circle one)  
Sister Act                      Ghost                      Ab Fab  
The Colour Purple                      Made in America

***Season 5: Cleanin / Book Clubbin / Panickin / Huntin, Shooting and Fishing/ Birthin / Schmoozin / Exploitin / Cold Turkey***

- 1) How often do you clean your house? (circle one)  
Once a week                      Once a day                      Once a month  
I have a cleaner
- 2) Have you ever organized, or been a member of a club or society? (circle one)  
one)                      Yes                      No
- 3) Anxiety is a mood of our time. What do you do to cope? (circle one)  
Performance Art                      Safe Space                      Exercise  
Meditation                      Nothing
- 4) Hunting is an historical sport. But it's also murder. Should huntin' be banned? (circle one)  
Yes                      No
- 5) The Spice Girls in order of importance (mark 1-5)  
Posh                      Sport                      Baby                      Ginger                      Scary
- 6) What does Schmoozin mean to you? (one answer)

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- 7) Child acting. Should be: (circle one)  
Encouraged from birth                      Banned                      Paid                      Don't care
- 8) Have you ever gone cold Turkey? (circle one)  
Yes                      No
- 9) Christmas is a time for: (circle one)  
Family/friends                      Gifts                      Shopping                      Holiday                      Work
- 10) Who is 'top dog'? (circle one)  
Me                      My partner                      My boss                      My mother                      God
- 11) Is there life after "work"? (circle one)  
Yes                      No

**You're Done! Well done, darling. Grab yourself a drink....**