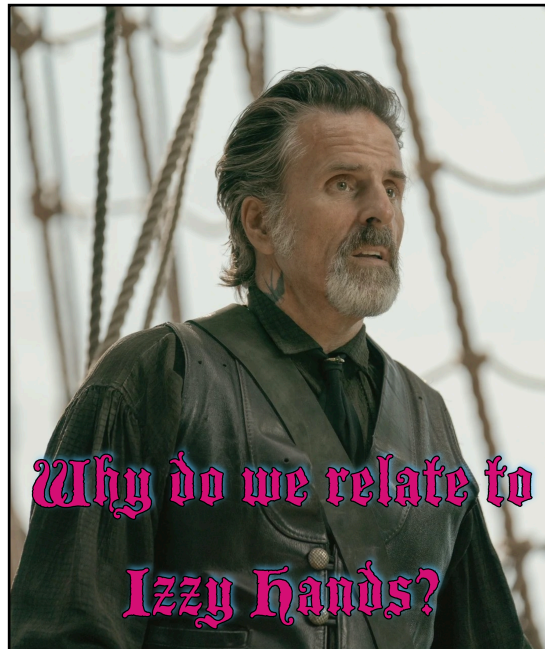


Why Do We Relate to Izzy Hands?

A Survey Report by Tikli

JUNE 28TH 2022



1 Background and Objective

Our Flag Means Death is a historical pirate romantic comedy series created by David Jenkins. It was released on HBO Max from March 3rd to 24th, 2022. *OFMD* has garnered a vast following of devoted fans and has been renewed for a second season.

The story is set in the early 18th century during the Golden Age of Piracy. It focuses on Stede Bonnet, who left his comfy life to become a pirate. He then met the legendary pirate captain Blackbeard, or Edward Teach. The rest of the story is basically historical fan fiction and has very little to do with the actual historical facts or people.

Izzy Hands is a supporting character in *OFMD*. He is portrayed by English actor Con O'Neill. In the first season he appears in 8/10 episodes.

In the story, before Stede met Edward, he had a run-in with Izzy, who is Blackbeard's first mate. Since Stede is the protagonist of the story, Izzy plays the part of an antagonist. From the start it is clear that Izzy dislikes Stede. When Edward takes interest in Stede, all three of them eventually end up being aboard the same ship. This rattles the dynamic Izzy has had with Edward. They have a professional Captain & First Mate -relationship, but it is heavily implied that Izzy has some deeper, personal feelings for Edward.

Izzy is a character who divides opinions. He has a loyal fan following (his fans usually refer to themselves as Izzy apologists or Izzy enjoyers) but there are also those who don't shy away from telling how much they hate him. The interpretations of his character and motives vary a lot depending on who you ask.

The fans of Izzy usually find him at least a little bit relatable. This survey focused on finding out which aspects of Izzy are those that people most relate to.

2 Methodology

The survey was conducted through a Twitter account <https://twitter.com/Ao3Tikli>. During the survey, the account had over 600 followers.

There was a preliminary survey to map out the different relatable aspects of Izzy Hands. The actual survey was designed based on the findings of the preliminary survey.

2.1 The Preliminary Survey

The preliminary survey was conducted through a Twitter thread (<https://twitter.com/Ao3Tikli/status/1535283208895479808>) on June 10th-17th 2022.

As shown in Figure 1, the participants were asked why Izzy Hands is relatable to them. The only instruction they were given was that it could be about anything, for example Izzy's personality, his place in the social hierarchy or his relationships, actions or motivations.

17 people answered to the preliminary survey. The answers were then analysed to identify different relatable aspects. Based on those findings, 36 aspects were chosen for the actual survey. These aspects were divided into six aspect groups based on some level of similarity.

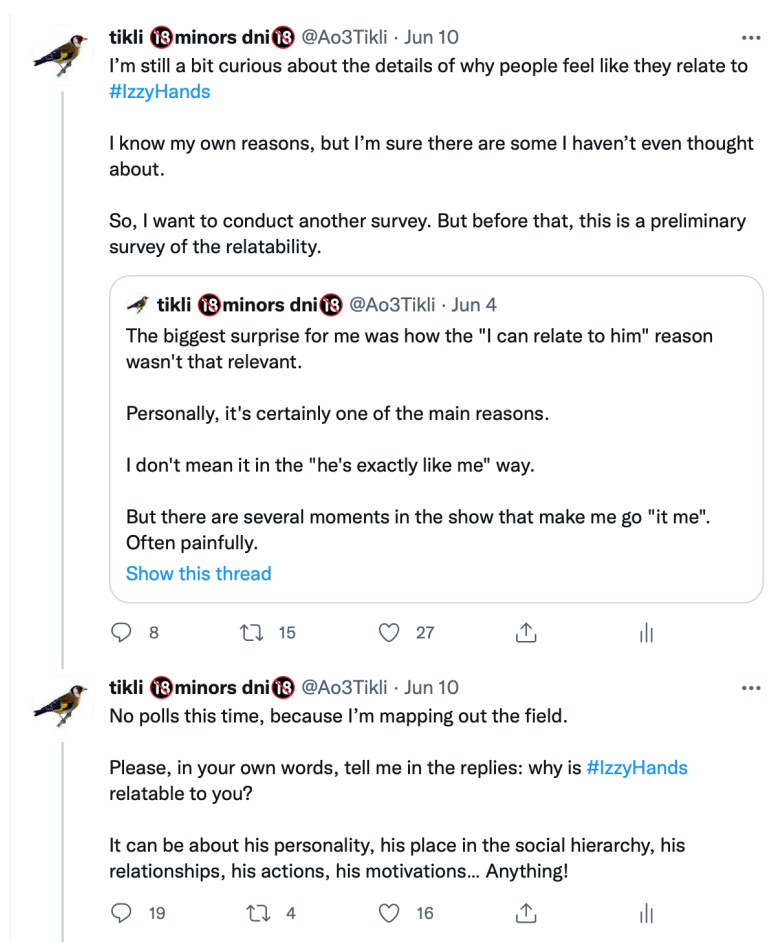


Figure 1. A screenshot of the preliminary survey tweet thread, posted on June 10th 2022.

2.1.1 The Aspect Groups

- 1 First Impression
- 2 Personality
- 3 Work
- 4 Relationships
- 5 Issues
- 6 Sex & Sexuality

Aspect Group 1: First Impression

- 1.1 Izzy is so angry all the time.
- 1.2 Izzy wears all black.
- 1.3 Izzy curses all the time.
- 1.4 Izzy is (comparatively) short.
- 1.5 Izzy is Exhausted. So Done. Just Too Old For This Shit.
- 1.6 Izzy is a dramatic bitch.

Aspect Group 2: Personality

- 2.1 Izzy is autistic.
- 2.2 Izzy is a misfit and an outsider, he doesn't belong.
- 2.3 Izzy needs things to go according to the plan and established rules and procedures.
- 2.4 Izzy is better at following orders than being a leader himself.
- 2.5 Izzy tries very hard to conceal his emotions but he's extremely bad at it.
- 2.6 Izzy is possessive.

Aspect Group 3: Work

- 3.1 Izzy is there to work, not to make friends.
- 3.2 Izzy is good at his job. He's focused, skilful and competent, he knows his trade.
- 3.3 Izzy has a strong sense of work ethic and responsibility. He believes his work to be important and expects the same level of seriousness from the people he works with.
- 3.4 Izzy can come off as a nagging killjoy or a nitpicker when he gets frustrated because the people he works with aren't pulling their weight.
- 3.5 Izzy is under-appreciated at work and this makes him feel resentment.
- 3.6 Izzy is a stressed-out workaholic.

Aspect Group 4: Relationships

- 4.1 Izzy is intensely loyal and devoted. He feels protective over those he cares for.
- 4.2 Izzy's love language is acts of service.
- 4.3 Izzy is wife coded.
- 4.4 Izzy has a relationship with a person he idolises to some extent, which leads to an off-balanced relationship dynamic.
- 4.5 Izzy is in love with his best friend but it's unrequited.
- 4.6 Izzy gets left behind because the person he loves chooses someone else over him.

Aspect Group 5: Issues

- 5.1 Izzy is afraid to show any weakness or complex emotions, so he's using his anger as a shield.
- 5.2 Izzy is repressed both emotionally and sexually.
- 5.3 Izzy has a strong need to feel needed.
- 5.4 Izzy is afraid of being abandoned, of losing the most important relationship he has.
- 5.5 Izzy feels insecurity, self-loathing and shame.
- 5.6 Other people's happiness makes Izzy disgusted because he's envious.

Aspect Group 6: Sex & Sexuality

- 6.1 Izzy is queer but in a cringe way.
- 6.2 Izzy feels shame over his own sexual desires.
- 6.3 Izzy is submissive.
- 6.4 Izzy is masochistic.
- 6.5 Izzy is a bottom.
- 6.6 Izzy is horny.

2.2 The Actual Survey

The actual survey was conducted through a Twitter thread (<https://twitter.com/Ao3Tikli/status/1537768622571003904>) on June 17th-19th 2022. The data was collected via Twitter polls that were open for 48 hours.

There was a separate poll for each of the 36 aspects. Each poll had four different relatability levels as voting options:

- Extremely relatable
- Quite relatable
- Somewhat relatable
- Not relatable

The participants were asked how relatable the given aspect was to them. They could choose freely which polls they wanted to vote in. The total number of voters in individual polls varied between 506-720. The total amount of given votes was 22 266.

2.2.1 The Data Analysis

The survey data consisted of the percentages of the different reliability levels.

Reliability Scores were counted by weighting the percentages of each reliability level as follows:

- Extremely reliable = 100% reliability
- Quite reliable = 50% reliability
- Somewhat reliable = 25% reliability
- Not reliable = 0% reliability

For example, if an aspect would have gotten only "extremely reliable" votes, the Reliability Score of that aspect would have been 100.

With the individual aspects, a concept of High / Low Reliability Score was also used. The scores that were in the lower quartile were considered to be Low Reliability Scores (LRS) and those in the upper quartile were considered to be High Reliability Scores (HRS).

Reliability profiles were constructed based on the Reliability Scores.

Four methods of analysis were used to define what people related to the most and the least:

1. The share of "Extremely reliable" answers
2. The share of "Not reliable" answers
3. The Reliability Score
4. The reliability profile (HRS/LRS ratio)

All four methods were used to analyse aspect groups. Individual aspects were analysed using methods 1-3.

2.2.2 The Participants

In addition to the aspect polls there were also two questions about the background information of the participants: age and gender. Both questions were divided into three polls, because Twitter polls have an upper limit of four options.

Not everyone who voted on the aspect polls disclosed background information of themselves. 63% of the participants disclosed their age (Figure 2) and 75% of the participants disclosed their gender (Figure 3).

2.2.3 Potential Causes of Inaccuracy

The Twitter account that was used for running the survey is a so-called "fandom account": it's been used for personal free-time purposes, focusing on relaxation and having fun and connecting with like-minded people. For this reason, the owner of the account has curated their online experience by using Twitter's blocking feature to respect the boundaries of others and to set some boundaries of their own. Because of this, not everyone who's in the "OFMD fandom Twitter" was able to interact with the survey. Notable reasons for an account being blocked are:

- It is owned by someone who is under 18 years old.
- It is owned by someone who has expressed that "proshippers" should not interact with them.
- It has engaged in / condoned / supported harassment, racism, LGBTQIA+ phobia, sexism or any other form of bigotry / discrimination.
- It has posted prominent Izzy Hands hate and / or criticised Izzy fans in a derogatory way.

The polls were posted in two batches, within 15 minutes of each other. It's possible that some of the participants answered the first batch of the polls right after they had been posted, but didn't stick around to answer the second batch of the polls.

The background information polls were added as an afterthought, almost 2 hours after the aspect polls had been posted. It's possible that some of the participants who answered the aspect polls didn't return to answer the background polls.

Because the Twitter thread was very long, it didn't automatically show every tweet of the thread. After the aspect 5.2 the rest of the polls were hidden behind a "Show replies" link. If a participant didn't notice this, they missed the rest of the polls by accident. There is a clear drop in the amount of votes after aspect 5.2, as shown in Figure 4.

There was an autocorrect error in the description of aspect 4.6 *Izzy gets left behind because the person he loves chooses someone else over him*. The tweet read "the person he **does**" instead. The error was noticed only after the polls had closed.

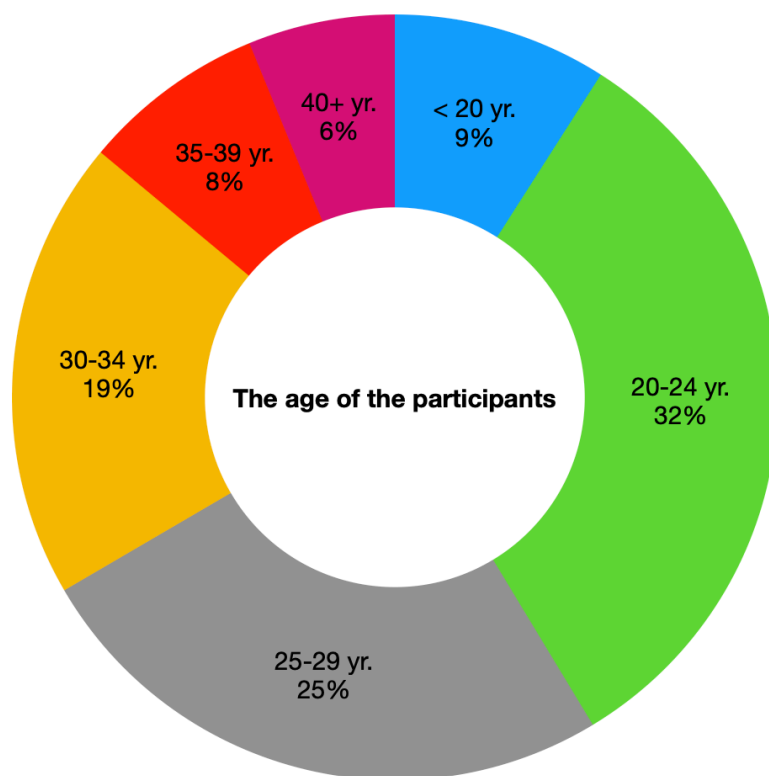


Figure 2. 452 participants (63%) disclosed their age. Over half of them were in their 20s and over a quarter of them in their 30s.

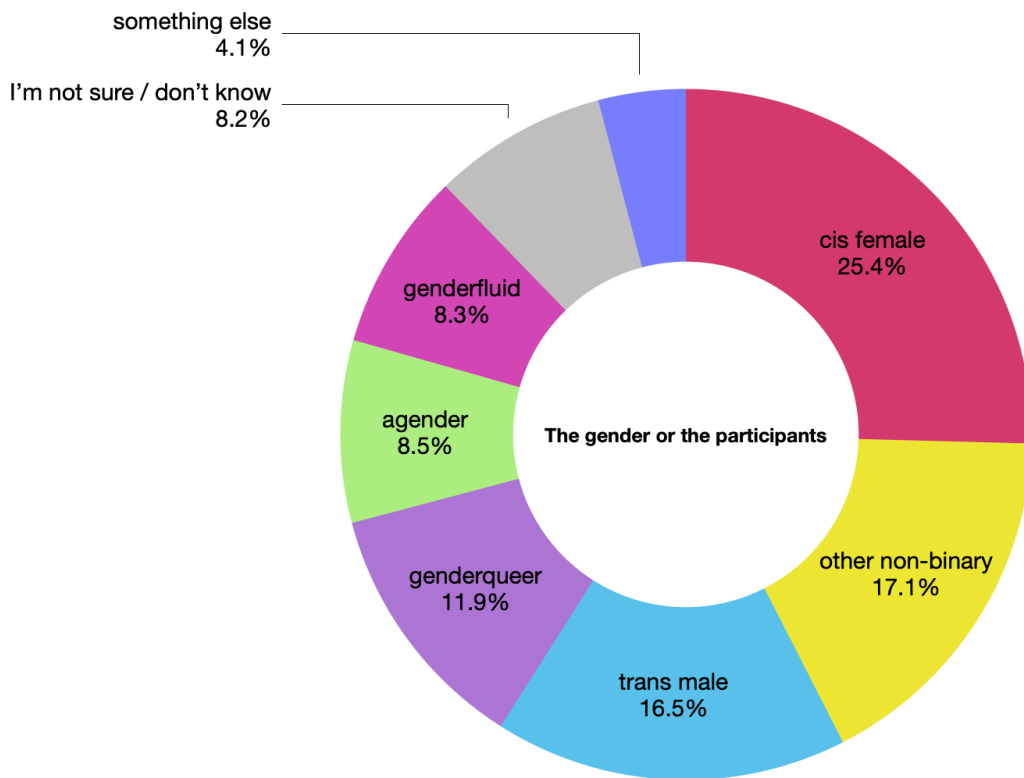


Figure 3. 539 participants (75%) disclosed their gender. Almost half of them fall under the non-binary umbrella and one quarter of them were cis female.

The "something else" group consist of the following options: something else (1.9%), bigender (0.9%), cis male (0.7%) and trans female (0.6%).

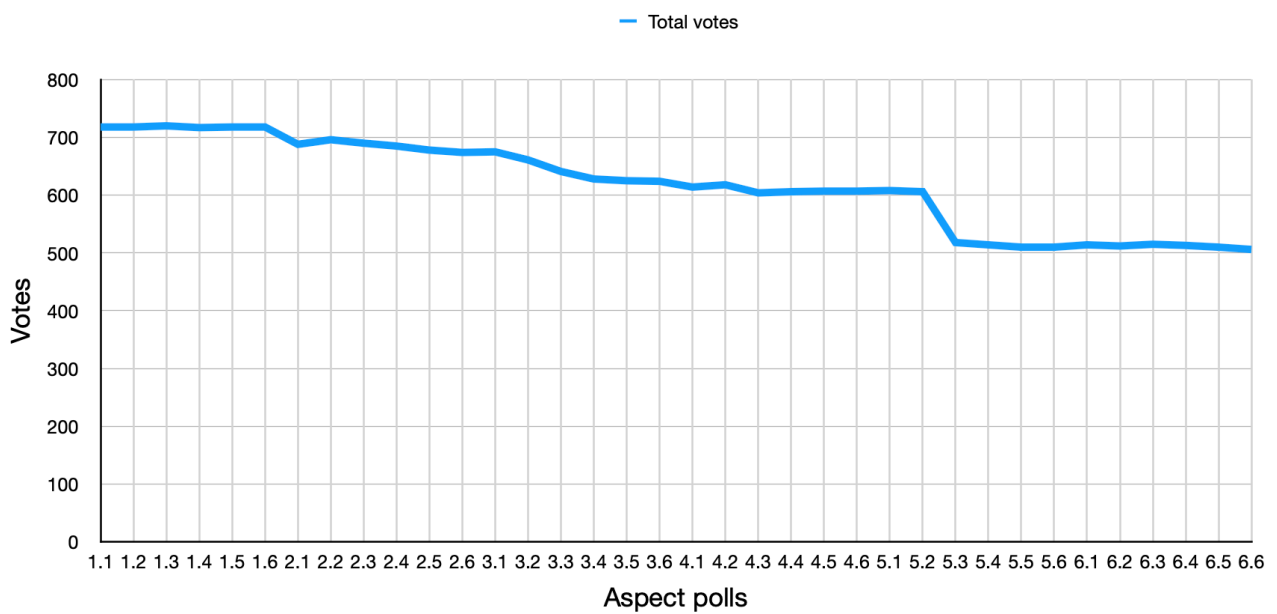


Figure 4. How the amount of given votes changed throughout the aspect polls. The amount of votes was gradually declining, but there was also a clear drop of roughly 90 votes after aspect 5.2, which is the point where the Twitter thread automatically hid the rest of the polls, because the thread was very long. If the survey participant didn't notice this and didn't click "Show replies", they probably missed the rest of the polls.

3 Results

In the combined data of the survey, the highest relatability level ("Extremely relatable") was the most common answer with a share of 38.5% of the votes. The lower the relatability level, the less common of an answer it was. 17.7% of the combined answers were "Not relatable". The distribution of the relatability levels in the combined data is shown in Figure 5.

The overall Relatability Score of Izzy Hands, based on the combined data of the survey, was 55.2.

3.1 The Aspect Groups

The aspect group with the biggest share (45.0%) of "Extremely relatable" answers was group 5 *Issues* (Figure 6). The aspect group with the smallest share (11.7%) of "Not relatable" answers was group 1 *First Impression* (Figure 7).

The aspect group 6 *Sex & Sexuality* had both the smallest share (32.2%) of "Extremely relatable" answers and the biggest share (26.6%) of "Not relatable" answers (Figure 8).

"Extremely relatable" was still the most common answer in each aspect group, but in two groups the "Not relatable" answer was more common than "Quite relatable" or "Somewhat relatable". These two groups are 4 *Relationships* (Figure 9) and 6 *Sex & Sexuality* (Figure 8).

In aspect groups 2 *Personality* and 3 *Work* almost half of the answers were either "Quite relatable" and "Somewhat relatable" (Figures 10-11).

The comparison of how the relatability levels were distributed within each aspect group is illustrated in Figure 12.

The Relatability Score between different aspect groups varied between 46.9-61.7 with a median of 54.7 (Figure 13), with 1 *First Impression* having the highest score and 6 *Sex & Sexuality* having the lowest score.

None of the aspect groups had a completely balanced relatability profile, because the aspects with High / Low Relatability Score were divided between all the groups. The relatability profiles of different aspect groups are shown in Figure 14.

Group 5 *Issues* contained three aspects with a HRS and one with a LRS. This group contained both the most relatable and least relatable aspect of Izzy Hands.

Groups 1 *First Impression* and 2 *Personality* both contained two aspects with a HRS and one with a LRS.

Groups 4 *Relationships* and 6 *Sex & Sexuality* both contained one aspect with a HRS and two with a LRS.

Group 3 *Work* contained two aspects with a LRS. This is the only group that did not contain any aspects with a HRS.

The most relatable and the least relatable aspect groups by the different methods of analysis are shown in Table 1.

3.3 The Individual Aspects

The percentage of “Extremely relatable” answers in individual aspect polls varied between 13.3-72.6%, with 5.6 *Other people’s happiness makes Izzy disgusted because he’s envious* getting the smallest share and 5.4 *Izzy is afraid of being abandoned, of losing the most important relationship he has* getting the biggest share of the votes.

The percentage of “Not relatable” answers varied between 0.7-42.2%, with 4.1 *Izzy is intensely loyal and devoted. He feels protective over those he cares for* getting the smallest share and 4.5 *Izzy is in love with his best friend but it's unrequited* getting the biggest share of the votes.

The individual relatable aspects had a Relatability Score between 29.2-82.1 with a median of 55.5 (Figure 15). The most relatable aspect of Izzy Hands was 5.4 *Izzy is afraid of being abandoned, of losing the most important relationship he has*. Other aspects with a High Relatability Score (belonging into the upper quartile, Q3=66.1) were 4.1, 5.3, 1.5, 1.3, 5.5, 2.2, 6.6 and 2.3.

The least relatable aspect was 5.6 *Other people’s happiness makes Izzy disgusted because he’s envious*. Other aspects with a Low Relatability Score (belonging into the lower quartile, Q1=43.7) were aspects 6.2, 4.5, 3.1, 1.1, 6.4, 4.4, 2.1 and 3.6.

The relatability profile consisting of all the aspects is shown in Figure 15. Since the aspects with High / Low Relatability Scores were divided between several aspect groups, relatability profile was uneven.

The most relatable and the least relatable aspects by the different methods of analysis are shown in Table 2.

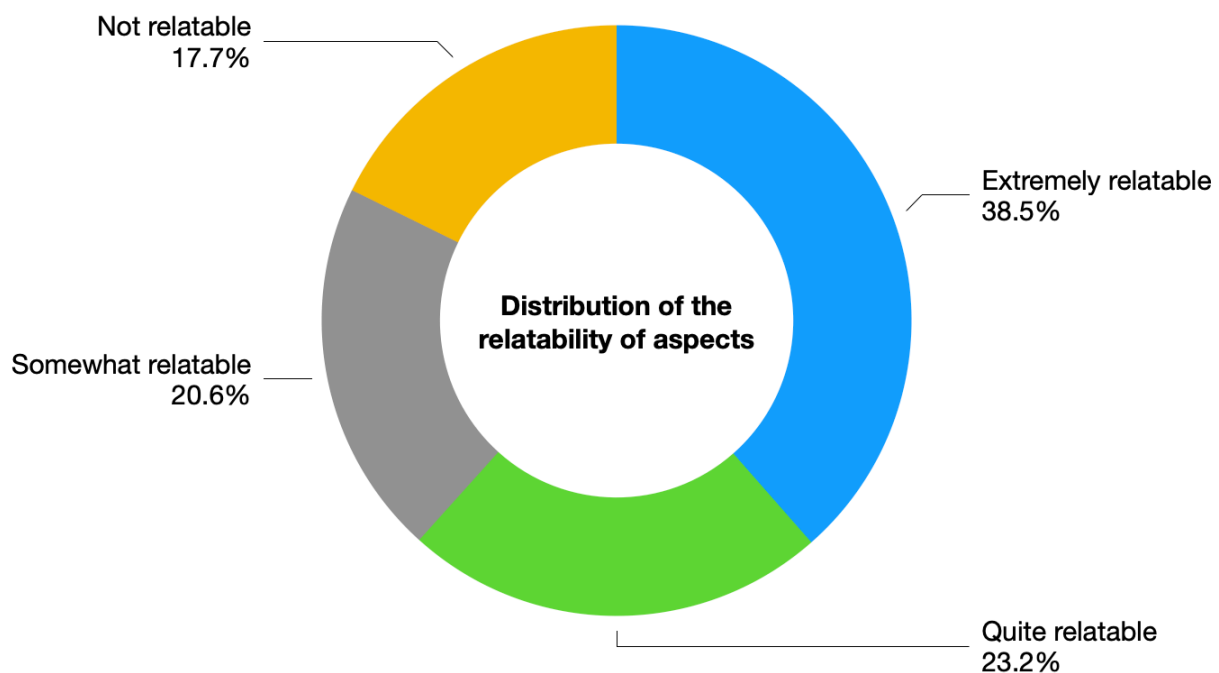


Figure 5. The combined distribution of different levels of relatability in 36 aspect polls (n = 22 266). The higher the level of relatability, the more common of an answer it was.

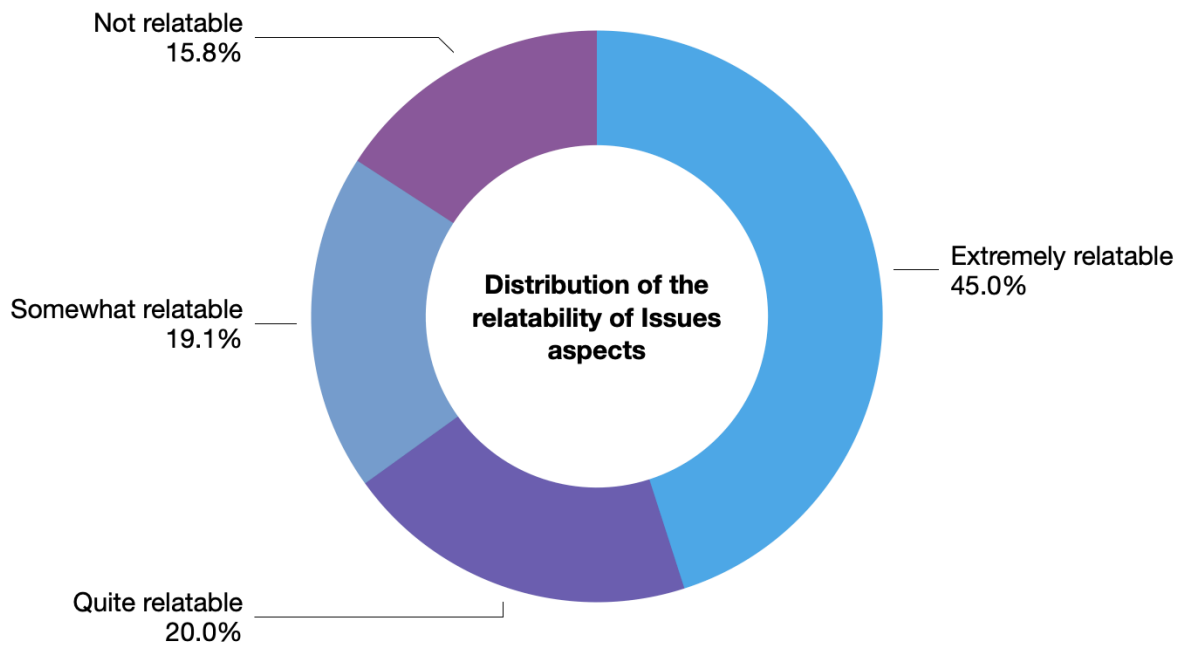


Figure 6. The combined distribution of different levels of reliability in the aspect group *5 Issues* (n = 3 266). This group had the biggest share of “Extremely reliable” answers.

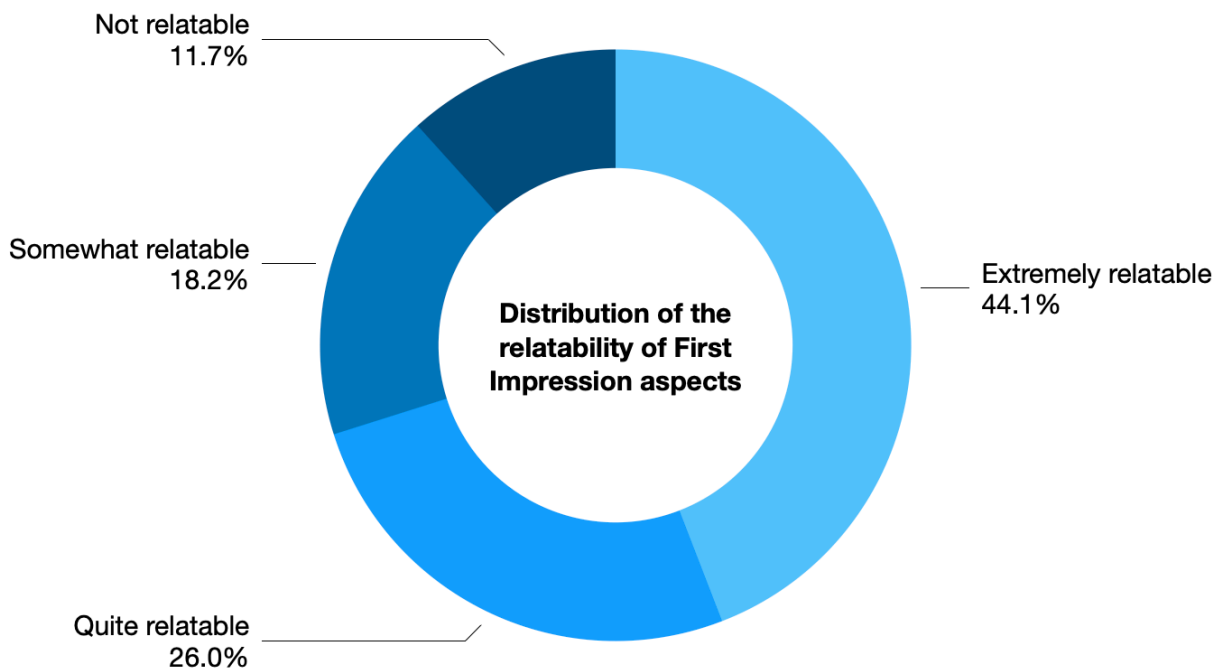


Figure 7. The combined distribution of different levels of reliability in the aspect group *1 First Impression* (n = 4 309). This group had the smallest share of “Not reliable” answers.

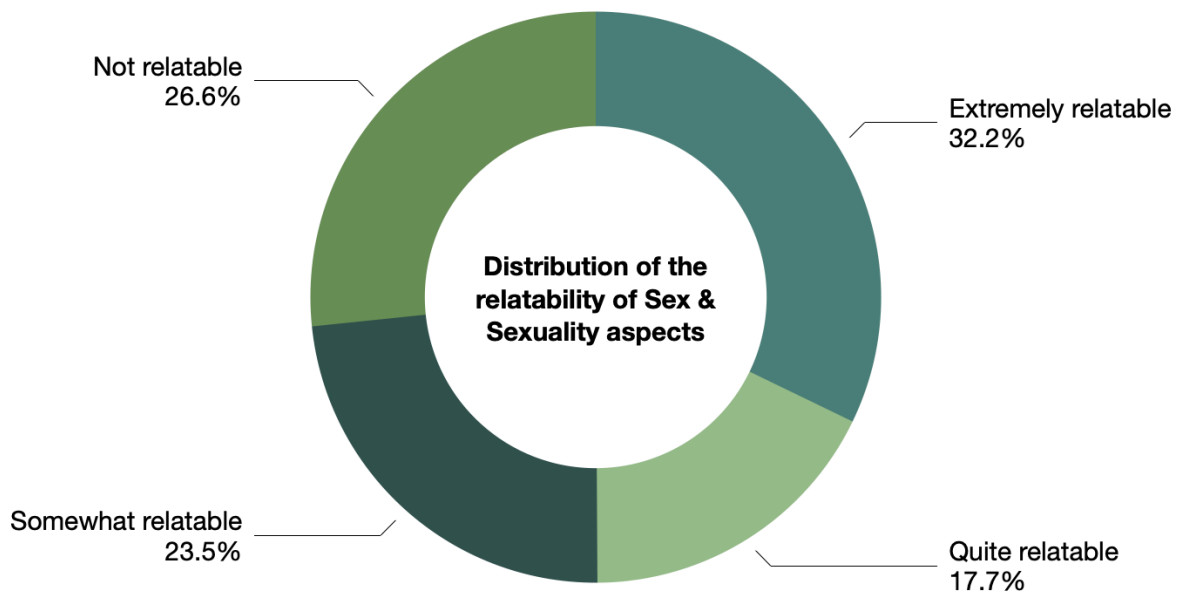


Figure 8. The combined distribution of different levels of reliability in the aspect group 6 *Sex & Sexuality* (n = 3 070). This group had the smallest share of “Extremely reliable” answers and the biggest share of “Not reliable” answers. It was also more common to not relate to this group at all than it was to find it “Quite reliable” or “Somewhat reliable”.

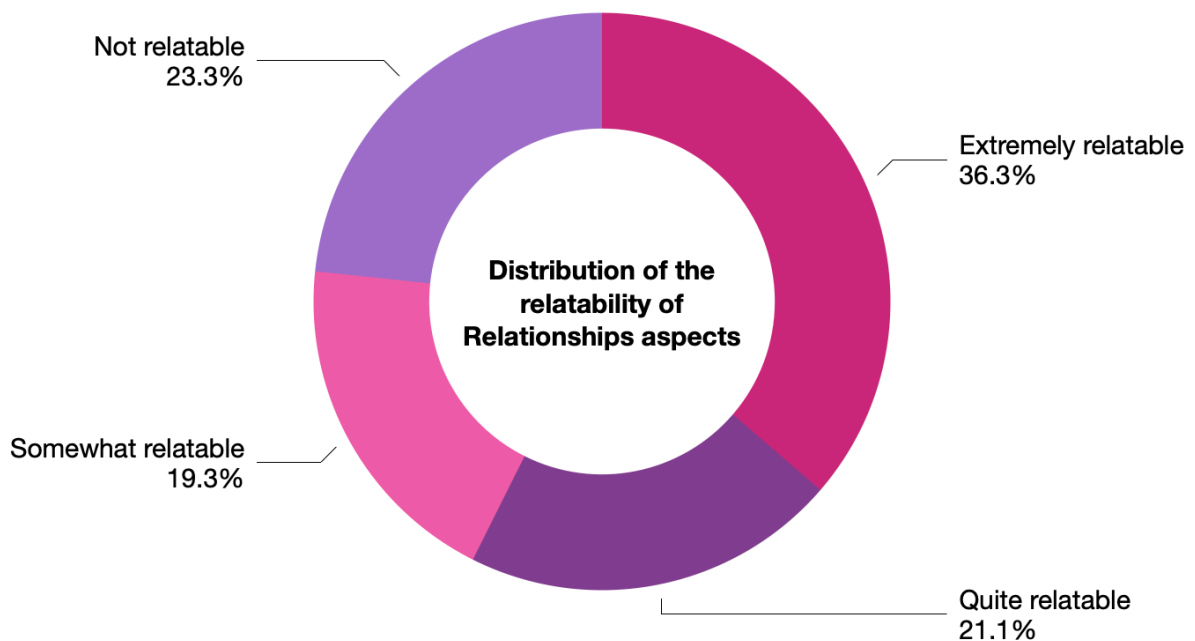


Figure 9. The combined distribution of different levels of reliability in the aspect group 4 *Relationships* (n = 3 657). It was more common to not relate to this group at all than it was to find it “Quite reliable” or “Somewhat reliable”.

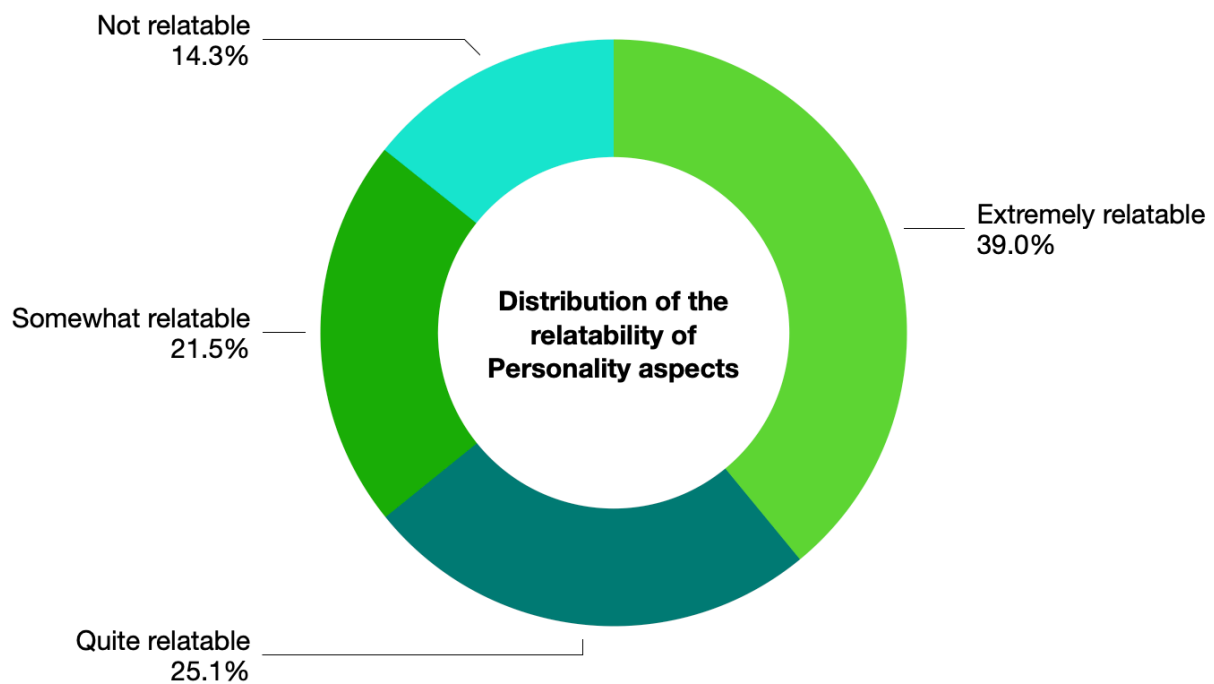


Figure 10. The combined distribution of different levels of reliability in the aspect group *2 Personality* (n = 4 111). Almost half of the answers (46.6%) were either “Quite reliable” or “Somewhat reliable”.

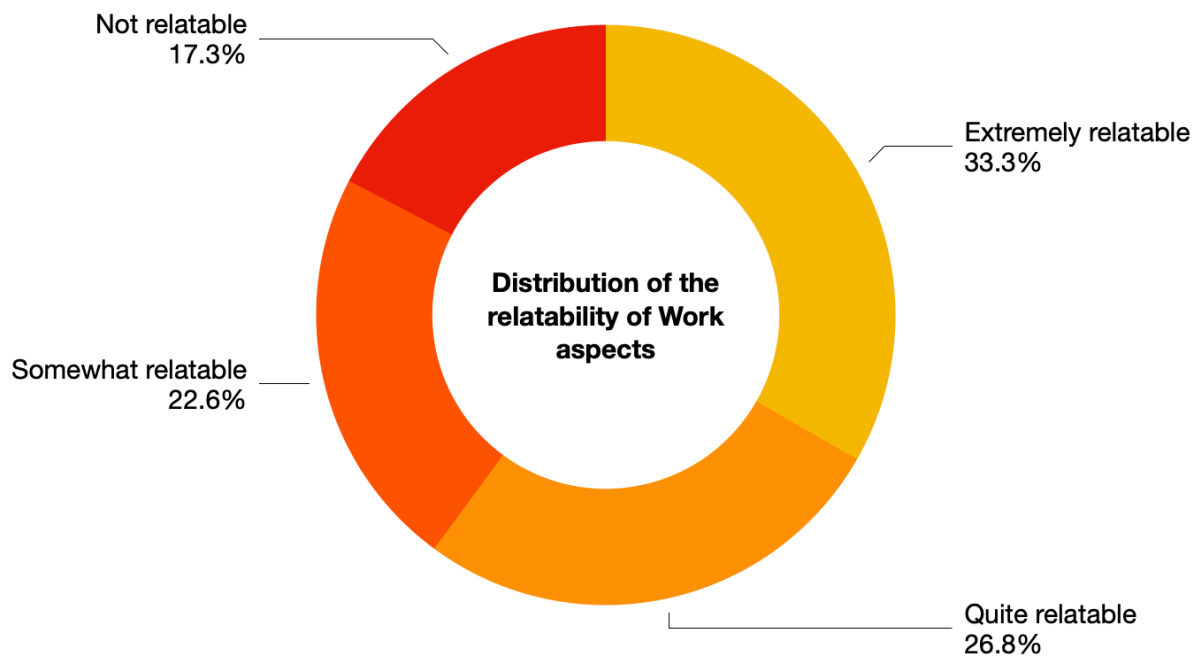


Figure 11. The combined distribution of different levels of reliability in the aspect group *3 Work* (n = 3 853). Almost half of the answers (49.4%) were either “Quite reliable” or “Somewhat reliable”.

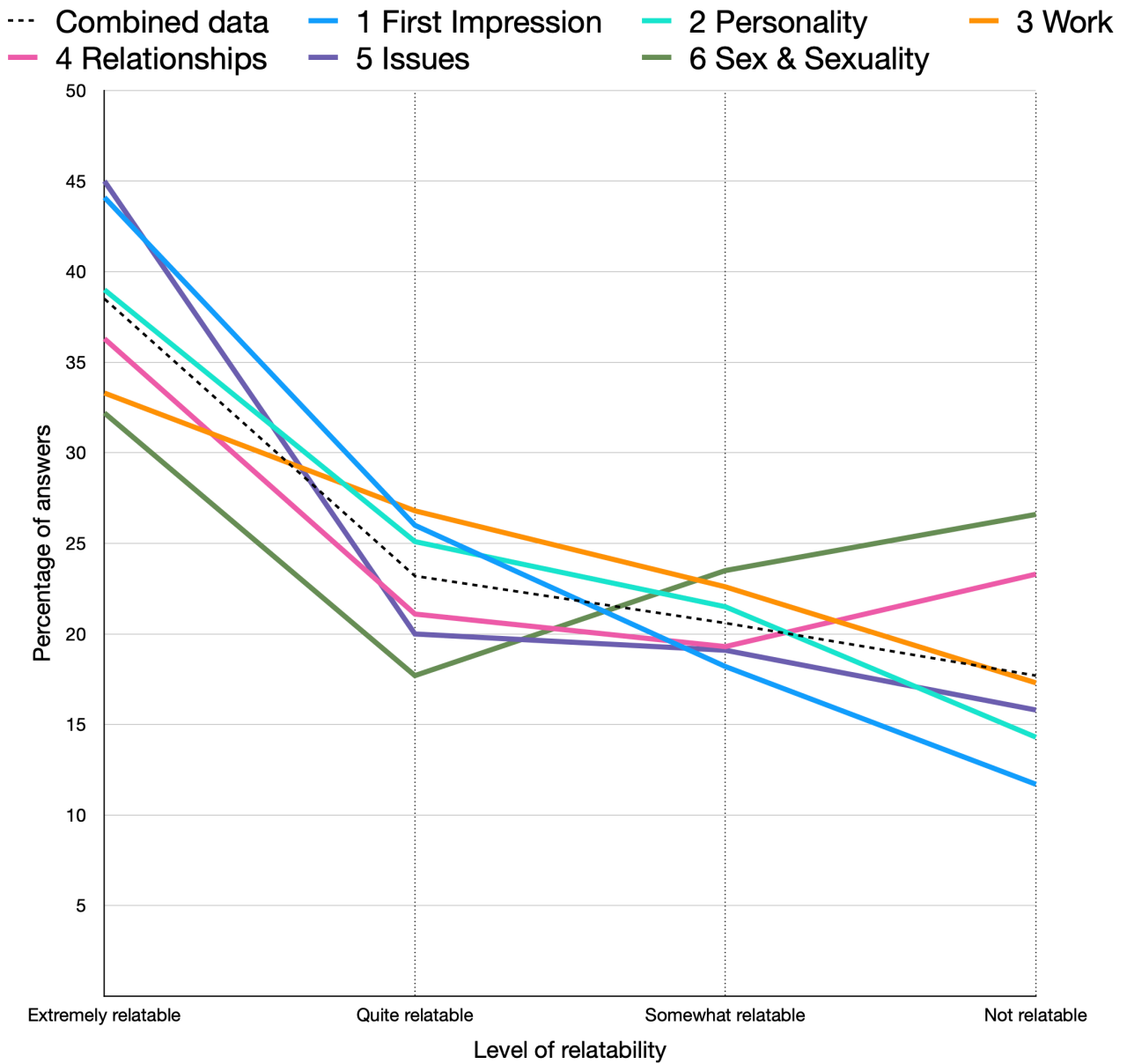


Figure 12. Comparison of the distribution of relatability levels between different aspect groups, with the combined data as a reference line. In every group, the biggest percentage of answers was on the "Extremely relatable" level. In most of the groups, the lower the level of relatability, the less answers it got. However, groups *4 Relationships* and *6 Sex & Sexuality* had a bigger share of "Not relatable" answers than they had "Quite relatable" or "Somewhat relatable" answers.

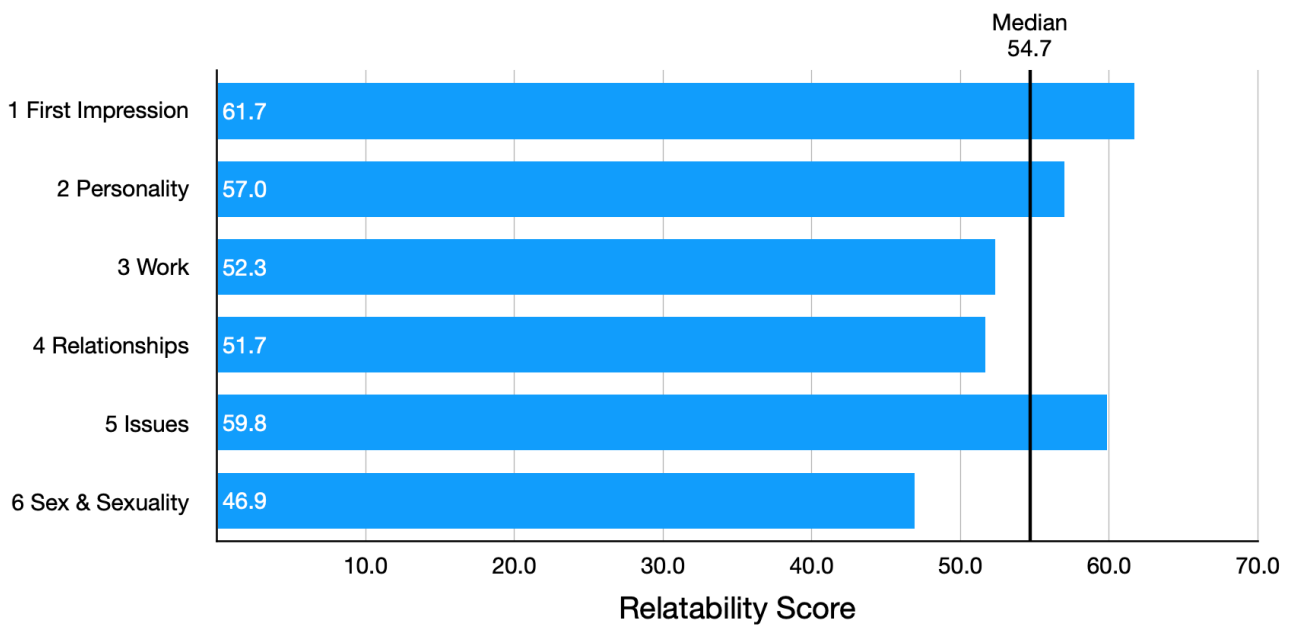


Figure 13. The Relatability Score of each aspect group. *1 First Impression* (61.7) was the most relatable and *6 Sex & Sexuality* (46.9) was the least relatable group.

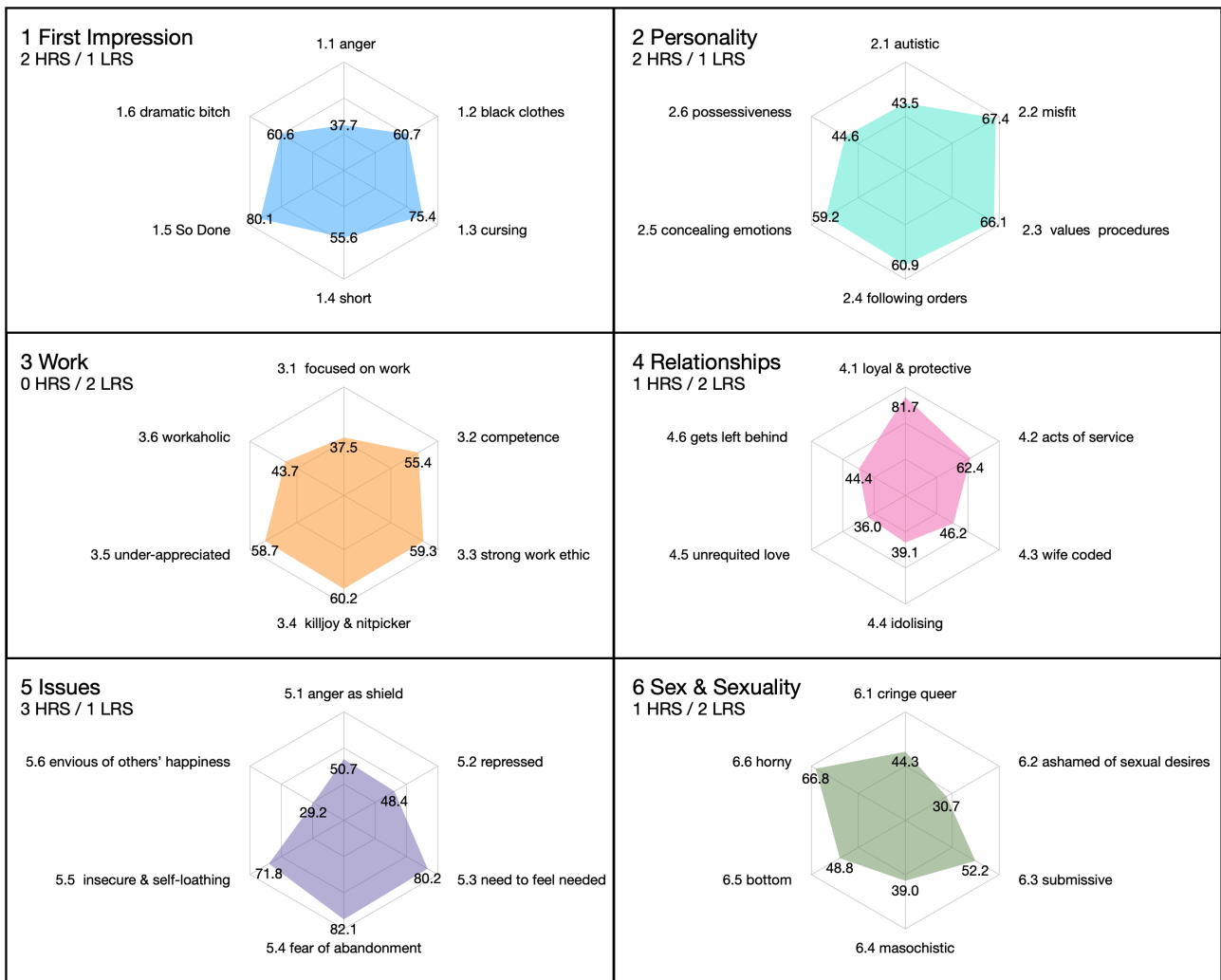


Figure 14. Relatability profiles of different aspect groups, based on the Relatability Scores of individual aspects within each group. The amount of aspects with High Relatability Scores (HRS, 66.1 and over) and Low Relatability Scores (LRS, 43.7 and under) in each group is marked under the group name.

Group 5 *Issues* had three High Relatability Score aspects and one Low Relatability Score aspect. Both the most relatable aspect and the least relatable aspect of Izzy Hands were in this group, so based on this, group 5 can be viewed as the most relatable aspect group.

Group 3 *Work* had two Low Relatability Score aspects and no aspects with High Relatability Score. Based on this, group 3 can be viewed as the least relatable aspect group.

Table 1. The different methods of analysis to determine the most reliable and the least reliable aspect group.

| Method of analysis | Most reliable aspect group | Least reliable aspect group |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Level of reliability: Extremely reliable | 5 | 6 |
| Level of reliability: Not reliable | 1 | 6 |
| Reliability Score | 1 | 6 |
| Reliability profile (HRS/LRS) | 5 | 3 |

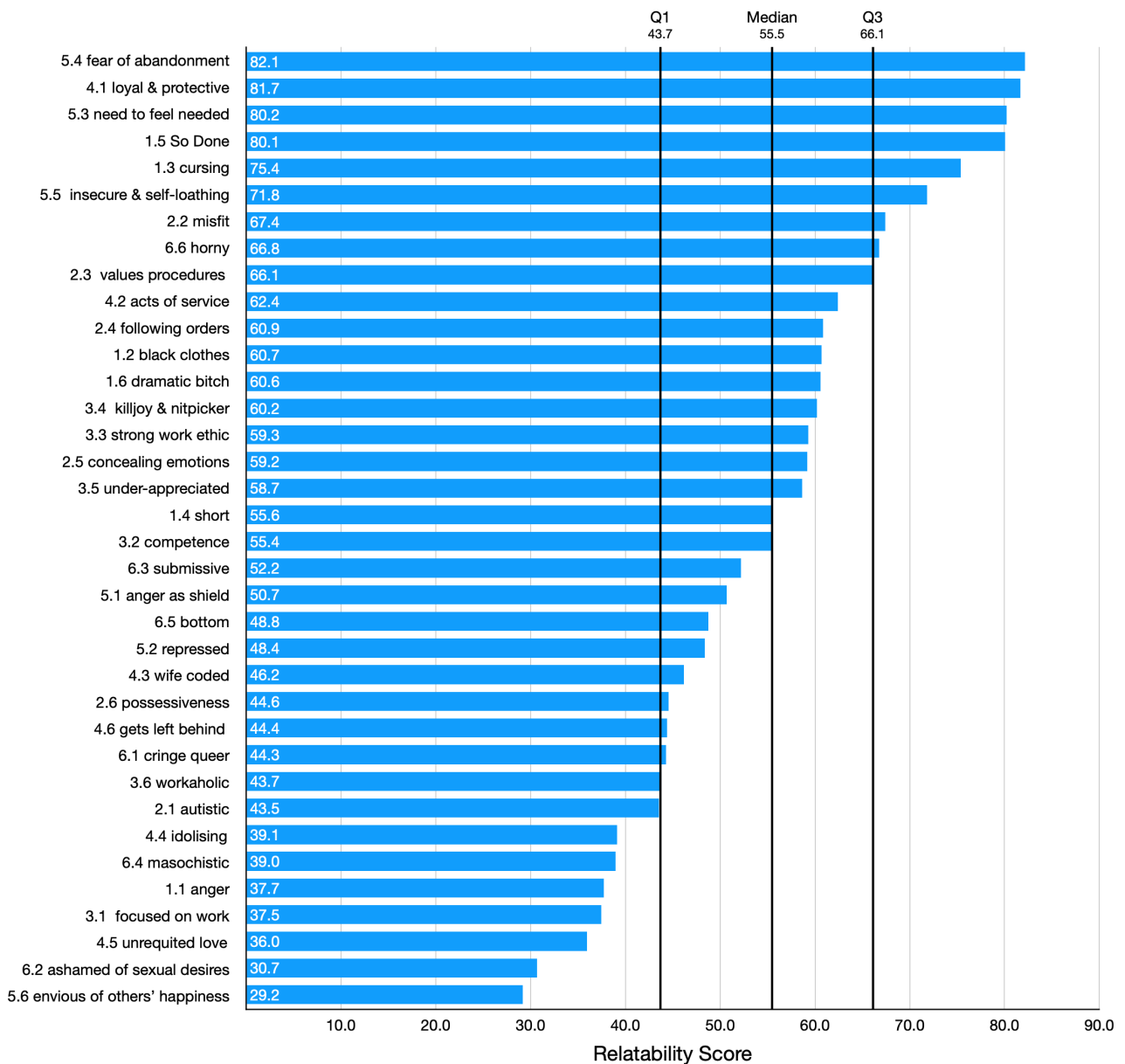


Figure 15. The Relatability Score of each aspect. The most relatable aspect (82.1) was Izzy's fear of being abandoned, of losing the most important relationship he has. The least relatable aspect (29.2) was Izzy being disgusted by other people's happiness because he's envious.

The aspects belonging to the Q3 have a High Relatability Score (66.1 and over) and the aspects belonging to the Q1 have a Low Relatability Score (43.7 and under).

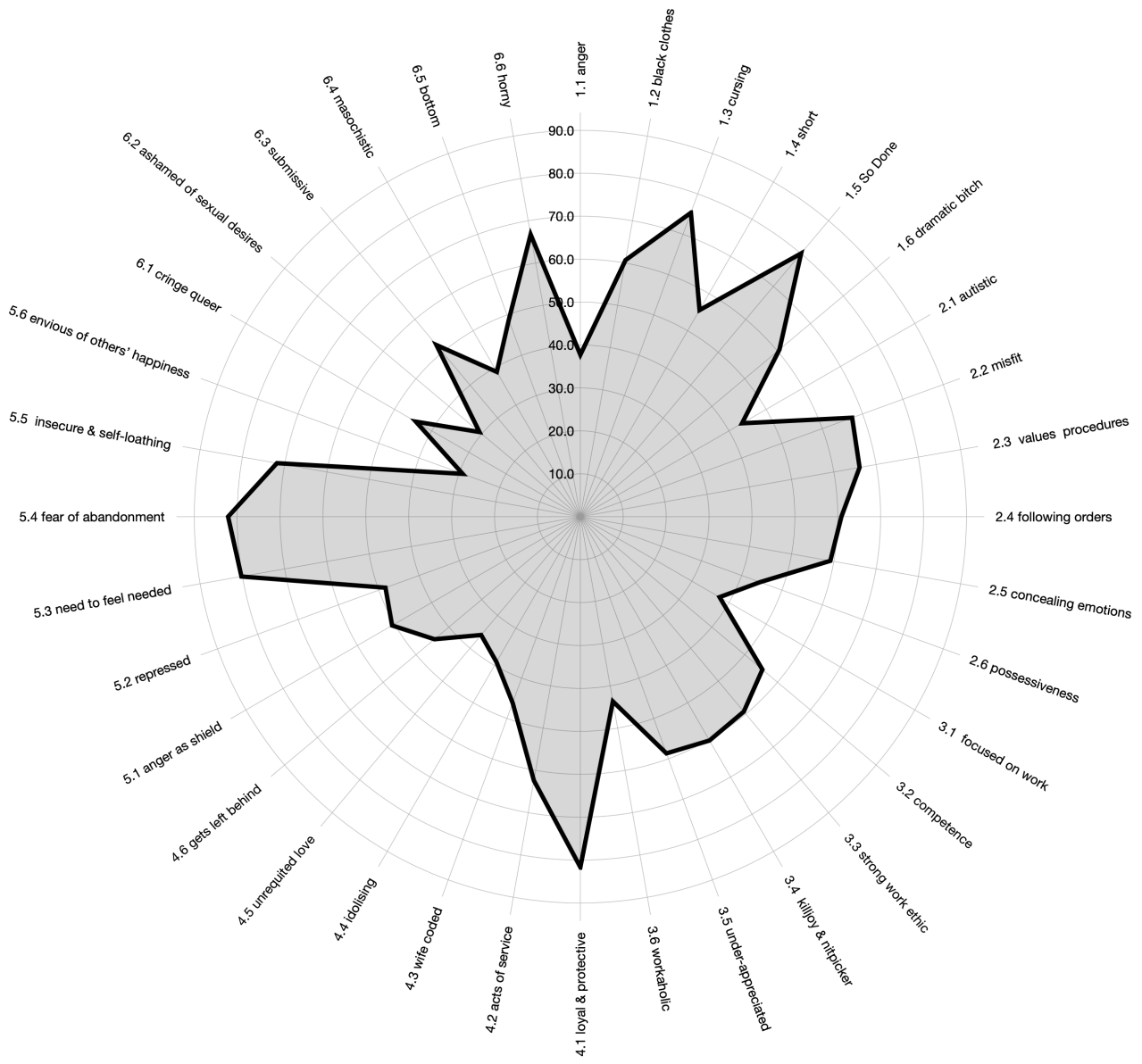


Figure 16. A reliability profile of all 36 aspects of Izzy Hands. The High Relatability Scores (66.1 and over) and the Low Relatability Scores (43.7 and under) were divided between several aspect groups, which leads to an uneven relatability profile.

Table 2. The different methods of analysis to determine the most reliable and the least reliable aspect.

| Method of analysis | Most reliable aspect | Least reliable aspect |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Level of reliability: Extremely reliable | 5.4 | 5.6 |
| Level of reliability: Not reliable | 4.1 | 4.5 |
| Reliability Score | 5.4 | 5.6 |

4 Conclusion

Relating to a character is like looking into a broken mirror: the reflections we see depend on the angle. Our own life experiences and personality give us each a unique point of view. Even when we are all observing the same character, the things that resonate with us are not identical.

With the help of this survey it is possible to draw a rough sketch of the version of Izzy Hands we find most relatable as a collective.

If we focus only on the aspect groups, Izzy is most relatable to us because of the first impression he makes and because of his issues.

The Izzy Hands we most relate to is afraid of being abandoned. He fears he's going to lose Edward, who is the most important relationship he has. He is intensely loyal and devoted to Edward. Izzy cares for him and feels protective over him. He needs Edward to need him. He's also exhausted all the time and feels that he can't catch a break, "So Done" being his permanent mood. Maybe that's why he keeps cursing all the time. Deep down he's insecure, filled with self-loathing and shame. On top of this, he has trouble fitting in with the others, he's an outsider who doesn't belong. Of course he's also horny. In addition, following established rules and procedures is important to him and he needs things to go according to the plan.

If we focus only on the aspect groups, the least relatable sides of Izzy are his sexual preferences and his work persona.

The Izzy Hands we least relate to is disgusted by other people's happiness, because he's envious of it. He feels shame over his own sexual desires and is in love with Edward, who doesn't return his feelings. When he's working, he focuses on doing his work and not on making friends. Being angry seems to be his normal emotional state. He is masochistic. His relationship dynamic with Edward is off-balance because he idolises Edward to some extent. He is autistic and a stressed-out workaholic.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 1 Background and Objective | 1 |
| 2 Methodology | 2 |
| 2.1 The Preliminary Survey | 2 |
| 2.1.1 The Aspect Groups | 3 |
| 2.2 The Actual Survey | 4 |
| 2.2.1 The Data Analysis | 5 |
| 2.2.2 The Participants | 5 |
| 2.2.3 Potential Causes of Inaccuracy | 5 |
| 3 Results | 9 |
| 3.1 The Aspect Groups | 9 |
| 3.3 The Individual Aspects | 10 |
| 4 Conclusion | 21 |
| References | 22 |
| Table of Contents | 23 |
| Executive Summary | 24 |

Executive Summary

Izzy Hands is a supporting character in the historical pirate romantic comedy series *Our Flag Means Death* (2022, HBO Max). He is the first mate to the pirate captain Blackbeard. Izzy has an antagonistic role in the story, playing an adversary to the protagonist, Stede Bonnet.

Izzy is a character who divides opinions. He has both loyal fans and haters. The interpretations of his character and motives vary a lot depending on who you ask. The fans of Izzy usually find him at least a little bit relatable. The objective of the survey was to find out which aspects of Izzy Hands are those that people most relate to.

Methods

The survey was conducted through Twitter in June 2022. A preliminary survey was used to define 36 relatable aspects, divided into six groups:

- 1 First Impression
- 2 Personality
- 3 Work
- 4 Relationships
- 5 Issues
- 6 Sex & Sexuality

The data was collected with the help of Twitter polls, asking the participants how relatable each aspect was to them. The total number of voters in individual polls varied between 506-720. The total amount of given votes was 22 266.

The survey data consisted of the percentages of the different relatability levels. Relatability Scores were assigned by weighting the percentages of relatability levels as follows:

- Extremely relatable = 100% relatability
- Quite relatable = 50% relatability
- Somewhat relatable = 25% relatability
- Not relatable = 0% relatability

With the individual aspects, a concept of High / Low Relatability Score was also used, based on the lower and upper quartile of Relatability Scores.

Relatability Scores were also used to construct relatability profiles.

Four methods of analysis were used to define what people related to the most and the least:

1. The share of "Extremely relatable" answers
2. The share of "Not relatable" answers
3. The Relatability Score
4. The relatability profile (HRS/LRS ratio)

All four methods were used to analyse aspect groups. Individual aspects were analysed using methods 1-3.

Results

In the combined data of the survey, "Extremely relatable" was the most common answer with a share of 38.5% of the votes. 17.7% of the combined answers were "Not relatable".

The overall Relatability Score of Izzy Hands, based on the combined data of the survey, was 55.2.

The most relatable aspect groups were *1 First Impression* and *5 Issues*, both being the most relatable by two methods of analysis: group 1 had the smallest share of "Not relatable" answers (11.7%) and the highest Relatability Score (61.7), group 5 had the biggest share of "Extremely relatable" answers (45.0%) and the best ratio of High / Low Relatability Score aspects (3 HRS / 1 LRS) on relatability profile.

The most relatable individual aspect was 5.4 *Izzy is afraid of being abandoned, of losing the most important relationship he has*. It had the biggest share of “Extremely relatable” answers (72.6%) and the highest relatability score (82.1). Aspect 4.1 *Izzy is intensely loyal and devoted. He feels protective over those he cares for* was the most relatable aspect by getting the smallest share of “Not relatable” answers (0.7%).

The least relatable aspect group was 6 *Sex & Sexuality*. It had both the smallest share of “Extremely relatable” answers (32.2%) and the biggest share of “Not relatable” answers (26.6%). It also had the lowest Relatability Score (46.9). Group 3 *Work* was the least relatable group by the relatability profile (0 HRS / 2 LRS), because even when it had the equal amount of Low Relatability Score aspects as two other groups, it didn’t have any High Relatability Score aspects to balance them out.

The least relatable individual aspect was 5.6 *Other people’s happiness makes Izzy disgusted because he’s envious*. It had the lowest share of “Extremely relatable” answers (13.3%) and the lowest Relatability Score (29.2). Aspect 4.5 *Izzy is in love with his best friend but it’s unrequited* was the least relatable aspect by getting the biggest share of “Not relatable” answers (42.2%).

Conclusion

If we focus only on the aspect groups, Izzy is most relatable to us because of the first impression he makes and because of his issues.

The Izzy Hands we most relate to is afraid of being abandoned. He fears he’s going to lose Edward, who is the most important relationship he has. He is intensely loyal and devoted to Edward. Izzy cares for him and feels protective over him. He needs Edward to need him. He’s also exhausted all the time and feels that he can’t catch a break, “So Done” being his permanent mood. Maybe that’s why he keeps cursing all the time. Deep down he’s insecure, filled with self-loathing and shame. On top of this, he has trouble fitting in with the others, he’s an outsider who doesn’t belong. Of course he’s also horny. In addition, following established rules and procedures is important to him and he needs things to go according to the plan.

If we focus only on the aspect groups, the least relatable sides of Izzy are his sexual preferences and his work persona.

The Izzy Hands we least relate to is disgusted by other people’s happiness, because he’s envious of it. He feels shame over his own sexual desires and is in love with Edward, who doesn’t return his feelings. When he’s working, he focuses on doing his work and not on making friends. Being angry seems to be his normal emotional state. He is masochistic. His relationship dynamic with Edward is off-balance because he idolises Edward to some extent. He is autistic and a stressed-out workaholic.