

Have A Nice Day

or

~~These Doors Are To Remain Open During Business Hours~~

by Joan Kessler

scene opens: a low-end eclectic gift store. HATS are displayed on a wall, T-SHIRTS are folded on a table, the counter is cluttered with impulse buy items, a PHONE, REGISTER. Kenneth, obviously lacking sleep, sits behind the counter reading a MUSICIAN RAG. a RADIO PLAYS music unsuitable for the environment. Audrey, in smart, casual attire and wearing a store APRON, enters from stock room carrying a COUNTER DISPLAY.

AUDREY: Move over, Kenneth.

KENNETH: (turning down music) What's this?

AUDREY: Lina ordered it for the counter. (she places tchocky unit on counter, leaving about five inches space next to register)

KENNETH: Perfect. You know, I'm thinking of building a little wooden door with a flip-up window. Customers will have to give a secret knock to get any service around here.

(Audrey is staring into space - Kenneth knocks on counter)

AUDREY: Sorry. I failed one of my classes.

KENNETH: Ow. Why don't you cut back your hours here?

AUDREY: You don't know how hard it was just to get time off to take the finals.

KENNETH: Did you hear anything about the internship?

(Rachel is seen at door - Audrey takes key from pocket and crosses to door)

AUDREY: I won't know until next week.

(Rachel enters - she wears chic, trendy clothes - carries a large shoulder bag - appears to be having a crisis)

AUDREY: Hey Rach. We've got donuts in the back.

RACHEL: Oh good. My rent went up! I almost called in today I'm so upset. Of course it happens right after my fencing accident.

KENNETH: Sorry to hear it, sister.

RACHEL: Well, he's out of ICU. I need another job.

KENNETH: You need another hobby.

RACHEL: I can't believe you have to work here a year before you can even get a raise. (pulls curling iron out of bag and steps behind counter)

AUDREY: Believe me, it's not worth it.

RACHEL: Where's an outlet? I have to do my hair. Oh, how'd it go last night? I'm sorry I couldn't make it.

KENNETH: The Finger Puppets were tight. And this Jr. exec hung for two hours dangling his record company in front of us.

RACHEL: You guys are really getting noticed.

KENNETH: He noticed the drinks we were buying him.

(there is a knock at the door - a disgruntled looking guy can be seen looking in)

KENNETH: It's not time yet, is it?

AUDREY: I've got two minutes till.

(the knocking persists - Kenneth steps over and speaks in exaggerated mime)

KENNETH: We open at ten. (customer points at wrist) Yeah, ten o'clock. Two minutes. (customer shakes head, points at wrist, mouthing word 'now') Son of shit. Jerk wants the doors open.

AUDREY: Oh, might as well. (she takes key and crosses to door)

RACHEL: What put you in such a good mood?

KENNETH: she failed a class.

RACHEL: Yikes. (she heads toward stock room) If an insurance company calls I'm off today.

(Kenneth puts on apron - adjusts tie - Audrey opens door)

AUDREY: Good morning.

CUSTOMER: It's after ten.

AUDREY: Sorry.

CUSTOMER: No you're not. (hands food wrapper to Kenneth) Do you have a trash. (he begins looking around)

KENNETH: Nice how do you do

AUDREY: Is it five yet?

(RACHEL enters from stock room wearing apron and carrying feather duster - Customer pulls out cell phone)

KENNETH: Oh. Last thing I need is sexual fantasies involving Rachel. Will you put that thing away?

RACHEL: I need to keep busy to keep my mind off my problems. (she goes into happy dusting frenzy)

CUSTOMER: Hey. Hold on. (looks at her apron) Do you work here?

RACHEL: (staring in disbelief) Me? No. I'm doing community service. See those two people over there with the aprons? They can help you.

CUSTOMER: You got books on tape?

KENNETH: We sure don't.

CUSTOMER: Great. (phone) Yeah. Well work it out. Sure. (hangs up)

(Rachel crosses to counter)

RACHEL: That felt so good.

AUDREY: oh shoot. I just remembered overhearing Lina talking about a Mystery Shopper.

RACHEL: What the hell kind of moronic title is that? What, are you supposed to guess why they're shopping?

KENNETH: Maybe it's more like "Sherlock Holmes in Neiman Marcus".

RACHEL: "The Case of the Needless Mark-Up".

AUDREY: No, it's a fake customer. They come in, buy something they don't need with someone else's money and the whole time they're checking out your eye contact and how much you smile at them, then they fill out a report on your 'customer service' and send it to the boss.

KENNETH: So, we're being judged on our sex appeal on the job by a well-kept pervert whose own job is so idiotic he has to do it inognito?

AUDREY: Yup.

RACHEL: What a revolting bunch of bullshit. You know, this is my job. It's me making money so I can have my life. It's not my life! My job is not my life!

KENNETH: okay, we got it.

RACHEL: This is ridiculous! Our own manager sends a spy to check up on us? In THIS place? What is wrong with her?

KENNETH: We agreed never to try to answer that.

AUDREY: Hey! He could be the guy!

RACHEL: He's rude.

KENNETH: He made us open on time.

AUDREY: He's testing us. We have to out perform him.

RACHEL: How?

KENNETH: Ah, pucker up.

RACHEL: Are you kidding? I have to kiss up to that guy?

KENNETH: We realize it's a step above your usual clientele, but we're confident you can pull it off.

RACHEL: Audrey I'm gonna kill him.

AUDREY: Well do it in the stock room. I don't want this guy to see any employee tension. (smiling at Customer) Can I help you find something?

CUSTOMER: I want to see that hat up there.

AUDREY: Sure. I'll just get the ladder. I'll be right back. (she exits to stock room).

(Rachel saunters over to customer)

RACHEL: (wide eyed and smiling) Are you finding everything o.k.?

CUSTOMER: I got a girl helping me.

RACHEL: O.K.

(Customer browses table with identical knickknacks - he picks up items one by one and looks at the prices)

RACHEL: Kenneth. Look what he's doing. Why is he doing that?

KENNETH: I don't know. Maybe he's a compulsive.

(Audrey enters with ladder and climbs up to get hat)

RACHEL: Compulsive? You mean like a shopper? A compulsive Mystery Shopper?

AUDREY: (on ladder twisting body around to make eye contact) Which hat did you want to see?

CUSTOMER: Hm? I changed my mind.

AUDREY: Oh. No problem. (she climbs down and drags ladder toward stock room) You finished pricing those Kenneth? Great. Let's get them on the floor.

KENNETH: (smiling) Yes ma'am. (takes large box to sales floor)

CUSTOMER: Hey kid, is there a place to get a cup of coffee around here?

KENNETH: (smiling) Absolutely. I'll go get you some. (he crosses to Rachel and Audrey) He wants a cup of coffee.

AUDREY: I think there's still some instant in the back.

KENNETH: I'll go make it.

RACHEL: You don't drink coffee.

KENNETH: So. Is there some reason I can't make it?

RACHEL: Yeah. You don't drink coffee.

KENNETH: (beat) I'll be right back. (he exits to stock room)

RACHEL: Hey Audrey. What if he's not the Mystery Shopper.

AUDREY: What if he is?

RACHEL: Yeah, but what if he isn't? Why should I be nice to a jerk who's got nothing to do with my career?

AUDREY: It improves your karma. Besides, this is not a career. It's a job.

KENNETH: (enters smiling with styrofoam cup) Here you go sir. Sugar? Cream? Stirrer? (he pulls items from pocket individually)

CUSTOMER: Uh, no thanks. (he takes a sip of coffee and spits it out) That's disgusting!

KENNETH: I'm so sorry you're unhappy with the beverage. Here, let me help you. (Kenneth takes his tie and dabs at Customer's face) There you go.

CUSTOMER: Get away from me, punk.

KENNETH: I understand your anger at me. Allow me to dispose of this for you. (he takes cup and crosses to counter)

RACHEL: I'm just saying, people who don't drink

CUSTOMER: (holding up t-shirt) Do you have this in a 2xl?

KENNETH: I believe we do.

CUSTOMER: Yeah check for me.

KENNETH: Of course. (exiting to stock room) My face hurts.

(Customer walks around store idly messing up displays)

AUDREY: If you're done cleaning, Lina left us another shipment to unload.

RACHEL: Why are you all "chop-chop get to work"? Since when is this place so important to you?

AUDREY: I didn't think to mention it before, but I happened to notice a job application on Lina's desk the other day.

RACHEL: So?

(Audrey notices customer - begins following and straightening Rachel follows - they end up at register)

AUDREY: So, we are fully staffed. And now this Mystery Shopper? I think Lina wants to replace one of us.

RACHEL: I don't believe her. Oh, poor Kenneth.

AUDREY: Rachel how do you know it's Kenneth?

RACHEL: You think she's replacing me? Why would she replace me? What did I do?

AUDREY: It could be me.

RACHEL: Audrey you're her right arm. You're the right side of her brain for Christ's sake. She couldn't run this place without you.

AUDREY: Eventually she's going to have to. one of these days

I'll be moving on. meanwhile I'm stuck here, and so are you, so "chop-chop".

KENNETH: I knew we had it. Perseverance pays off.

CUSTOMER: Do I pay you?

RACHEL: I can help you here. At the register.

(Customer starts cross to register - Kenneth and Audrey fall in behind counter - Rachel rings - Kenneth folds shirt - Audrey bags)

RACHEL: Twelve ninety-nine. Please.

(Customer tosses crumbled bill on counter)

RACHEL: So it'll be cash. A little wrinkled. No problem. (she pulls curling iron from below counter and runs bill through it a few times) There we are. All crispy new again. Seven oh one is your change. Thank you so much. Here's your receipt.

CUSTOMER: You can throw that away. Hey, I want to look at that hat again.

AUDREY: Sure. I'll get the ladder.

(Audrey fetches ladder - Customer walks around taking notes)

RACHEL: Did you know Lina's replacing one of us?

KENNETH: What are you talking about?

RACHEL: Audrey just told me. (she begins straightening Kenneth's disheveled appearance)

(Audrey climbs ladder -retrieves hat - customer decides no - she replaces it)

KENNETH: (fighting off feather duster) What the fuck are you doing?

RACHEL: Here, let's fix your hair. (she licks her fingers and attempts to comb back some loose strands)

KENNETH: Will you get the hell away from me!

RACHEL: Just stand still a minute.

(they struggle - Kenneth gets poked in the eye by feather duster)

KENNETH: Fu- (Rachel hides Kenneth's face in her chest - she

(smiles at Audrey and Customer)

RACHEL: Oh honey I'm sorry!

AUDREY: Excuse me. (rushing over) What happened?

KENNETH: She poked my eye out!

AUDREY: Well there go the fun and games. Could we please look just slightly professional today?

(notice Customer watching)

RACHEL: (smiling) That's what I'm trying to do!

KENNETH: Oh! We're smiling our asses off for this guy while you strut around like some pre-menstrual peacock!

RACHEL: I rang him up!

AUDREY: Lina lost a lot of points with this one.

(customer is at table where sign reads 'all items ten dollars' he holds up an item)

CUST014ER: Hello! Can someone get me a price on this?

KENNETH: Uh, is it off that table?

CUSTOMER: Yeah.

AUDREY: Kenneth...

RACHEL: (crossing to Customer) I can help you. That is ten dollars.

KENNETH: Oh God - Look. There's a sign. On the table.

CUSTOMER: You need to do something about your attitude, kid. If you want a career in this business you're going to have to learn some people pleasing skills.

KENNETH: (starts to argue but can't) I hate to say this to a customer, but you're right.

RACHEL: Kenneth?

AUDREY: (grabbing feather duster) Give me that.

KENNETH: You're an ass, but you're right. My attitude needed that adjustment. (points at self) Right here's the only people I'm concerned about pleasing.

(Kenneth turns and walks out - Audrey and Rachel stare at each other in disbelief then turn back to Customer)

CUSTOMER: I don't believe this place.

AUDREY: I apologize. That was very unprofessional. Is there something we can do...

CUSTOMER: I really just want to finish up my business here. Give me the hat.

AUDREY: Okay. I'll get it for you.

RACHEL: (following Audrey) I'll help you. (whispering) This is crazy! Why won't he leave? Doesn't he have enough on us ?

AUDREY: (retrieving hat) We're almost there. Don't fall apart on me. (climbing down) Here you are.

CUSTOMER: (takes hat) No, this is dumb. Forget it

AUDREY: O.K. (replaces hat - descends ladder)

RACHEL: Well it was a pleasure doing business with you. Come back Have a nice day!

CUSTOMER: No, give it to me. (Audrey climbs back up and down) Truth is I just enjoy watching a lovely lady climbing her way to the top.

AUDREY: Oh hey, that's funny. I'm putting the ladder away. Do you want the hat?

CUSTOMER: Are you being smart with me?

AUDREY: I don't see how that's possible.

CUSTOMER: I'd like to see your manager.

RACHEL: She's not in today.

.AUDREY: You'll have to e-mail the Secret Files.

CUSTOMER: Maybe you've, confused me with someone else.

AUDREY: I'm sure you manage that by yourself. What, with all your disguises.

CUSTOMER: I don't know what this bullshit is you're talking about. Your manager's getting a call.

AUDREY: Somehow you're qualified to determine whether or not I'm good enough to work here? (grabbing his shirt) Don't threaten me. I'm tired. Tired of playing by the rules and being miserable. I'm tired of climbing ladders and never getting to the top. And I am sick and tired of wasting my time catering to the over blown egos of losers like you! (exits to stock room)

RACHEL: I - What a crazy day, huh?

AUDREY: (entering from stock room with her bag) Sorry, Rach, you'll have to wrap this one up on your own. (she exits)

RACHEL: You know, I'd like to offer you a generous discount on that hat.

CUSTOMER: Finally. Customer Service. of course I won't mention this unauthorized discount to your manager. Could you hurry though. I've got an appointment at the law office.

RACHEL: You're a lawyer?

CUSTOMER: No. My brother was involved in an accident. Some idiot nearly skewered his eye in his fencing class. I can't wait to go to court.

RACHEL: Oh God!

CUSTOMER: What?

RACHEL: I forgot to pay the meter! (she gets bag from behind counter and runs out - she runs back in and grabs feather duster) Finger prints! (she exits)

(Customer waits a beat then steps behind counter - takes out an appointment book and goes to a number - picks up phone and dials)

CUSTOMER: Hello, May I speak with Lina please? Hi, this is Mr. Curran. I just wanted to let you know that they've left. (pause) You did the best thing for them. They can get on with their lives now. (pause) It's easy to get stuck on the wrong side of comfort. Takes a good bird to push her babies out of the nest. Oh, I may have to add alteration costs to my fee. (pause) occupational hazzard. I've got another appointment at a diner, so I'll lock the doors on the way out and messenger the key to you with my bill. (pause) You're very welcome. (hangs upgoes to door - takes out key - exits locking door behind him)

the end