

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

There's a knock at the door. Without waiting for an answer, Ledell, 22 and average, walks in. Jules is sitting at the kitchen table, drinking hot tea and reading. Ledell collapses in the chair in front of him. Then dryly:

JULES
It's open. Hi, Ledell.

Ledell takes his cup of tea from him and starts drinking it.

JULES
Hey, now!

She continues to drink his tea.

LEDELL
This has been the most terrible day
of my life.

JULES
(faking surprise)
Is that so?

LEDELL
I get to work, and the very first
thing--

JULES
Don't you want to hear about my day?

Ledell puts down his tea.

LEDELL
Jules - seriously - this has been
the most terrible day of my life.

Jules softens, and puts down his reading material.

JULES
Fine, fine. Let's hear about it.

LEDELL
Okay, so I go to work and...

FLASHBACK:

INT. LEDELL'S BEDROOM. MORNING.

Ledell places a nicotine patch on her arm as the opening credits roll. The patch is covered by her shirt as she puts

it on; she finishes getting dressed. She is dressed in a Marc's or a supermarket uniform. Looks in the mirror and adjusts her visor. She smiles brightly at her reflection.

EXT. SUPERMARKET, PARKING LOT. MORNING

Ledell violently swerves and cuts someone off, taking their parking spot.

INT. LEDELL'S CAR. MORNING.

She doesn't notice the honking as she gets out of the car and heads for the entrance.

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Ledell is waiting at her cash register. SEAN, her handsome 28 year-old manager, walks over. They make small talk as he unlocks the cash register and puts the drawer in.

SEAN

Good morning, Ledell. How are you?

LEDELL

I'm great, Sean, how are you?

SEAN

Not too bad.

He finishes with the drawer.

SEAN

Have a good one, Ledell. I'll be around if you need me.

Ledell sighs after him, watching him walk away. Meanwhile, another customer, a kind of skinny YOUNG GUY, has approached her register. She doesn't notice.

YOUNG GUY

Hello?!

Ledell turns around.

LEDELL

Oh, hi! (by way of explanation) That was my boss.

Young Guy is a little nervous, and doesn't respond. He plops a box of extra large condoms on the counter. Ledell looks at him suspiciously.

YOUNG GUY

What? You've never seen someone buy

these before?

Ledell looks at the condoms, and then looks down at the guy skeptically. Ledell shrugs and says:

LEDELL
Are you sure this is what you want?

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

JULES
Oh, jeez.

LEDELL
It *is* my job to make sure people get what they need.

JULES
I can understand how someone else's condoms would be of concern to you.

FLASHBACK

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

LEDELL
Are you sure this is what you want?

YOUNG GUY
(misunderstanding)
Yeah, that's everything.

LEDELL
No, I mean, is *this* what you want?

YOUNG GUY
What do you mean?

LEDELL
Are these for you?

YOUNG GUY
I don't think that's really any of your business.

LEDELL
(muttering)
All right then, Mr. Sensitive.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

JULES

You asked him if they were for him?
Ledell, that's embarrassing--

LEDELL
An ill-fitting condom could result
in pregnancy. I was trying to help
the guy. Apparently he has some
pride issues that he needs to work
out. Anyway. Then Sean came over.
(casually) And started flirting with
me.

FLASHBACK:

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Sean walks over after the young guy has left sulking.

SEAN
What happened?

LEDELL
(quickly)
He was just sensitive about some
personal items. . . So, what's up?

Ledell smiles at him brightly.

SEAN
I'm uh. . .okay. Concerned,
whatever. And - what about you?

LEDELL
Oh, you know me.

SEAN
Yuuuuup. (kind of kidding) I guess
I'll just have to my eye on you.

He nods over to the line in front of the cash register.

SEAN (CONT'D)
You've got a customer.

He walks away. The woman in line is in her 30's and slightly
overweight. The items that the woman is buying are Slim
Fast, Cheetos, and bacon.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JULE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

LEDELL
. . .and you know how it's sort of

an unspoken rule that you just *have*
to make conversation with the
customers. . .

Jules winces, feeling the embarrassment that Ledell cannot.

JULES
What'd you say?

FLASHBACK

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Ledell scans the items.

LEDELL
Hello. How are you today?

The woman talks as she plops a jug of milk onto the counter.

WOMAN
Phew. I am pooped. Today's workout
was a doozy. (she sighs) But it's
worth it!

Woman leans closer, shields her mouth, and whispers loudly:

WOMAN
I'm trying to lose weight.

Ledell picks up the Cheetos that she's about to scan.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

LEDELL
I asked her what kind of Cheetos she
was buying--

JULES
You couldn't just look at the bag?

LEDELL
(snappy)
No.

As Ledell speaks

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

The WOMAN waits as Ledell casually looks at the bag of

Cheetos and asks her question, which is inaudible.

LEDELL (V.O)
And she just went nuts!

The woman's face grows red, and she snatches the Cheetos from Ledell. She picks up the bacon and hurls it to the ground.

LEDELL (V.O)
She started saying that I was jumping to conclusions, and I was stereotyping her.

The WOMAN picks up the grocery divider and begins hitting Ledell with it. Sean comes running from his office, and grabs the woman from behind.

LEDELL (V.O)
Sean had to come over and talk her down.

Sean, with the help of another customer, drags the woman out of the store. The entire way out, she fights against them, screaming. Ledell covers behind the register as another customer or two comfort her.

INT. JULE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Ledell sighs.

LEDELL
It was insane.

JULES
Wait, so what exactly did you say?

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Ledell contemplates the Cheetos in her hand, and squints at the label pointedly.

LEDELL
Oh, are these diet Cheetos?

WOMAN
(confused)
No...

LEDELL
(snidely)
I didn't think so.

She runs the item through the cash register.

WOMAN

What are you trying to say?

LEDELL

Nothing, I just thought you said you were trying to lose weight.

Sean walks by. The woman shoves her money at Ledell, glares at Sean, and marches out of the store.

WOMAN

(to Sean)

You might want to do something about your little employee, there.

She pushed past Sean in a huff, leaving him bewildered. Ledell looks up and smiles at him.

SEAN

What was that?

LEDELL

I think she was hungry.

SEAN

What did you say to her?

LEDELL

I didn't say anything. I just asked about her day and what she was doing for lunch.

SEAN

Ledell, you have to be careful what you say to customers. We've had some complaints, and I wouldn't want to lose you.

Ledell looks away, bashful at his perceived compliment.

INT. JULE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Ledell smiles, running her finger along the top of her mug.

LEDELL

Sean is so protective. It's sweet.

JULES (OS)

Do you want some more tea?

He enters with the teapot. Ledell quickly downs the remnants of his tea, and holds her mug out for more. Jules pours her

some, and sits down.

JULES
How are things going with Sean,
anyway?

Ledell smiles.

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Sean props his elbows up on the counter.

SEAN
(flirting)
How's it going?

Ledell plays it cool, refilling her bags, not making eye contact.

LEDELL
It's going.

SEAN
Have any plans for lunch?

LEDELL
I was thinking of swinging by
Subway.

SEAN
Do you want some company?

Ledell glances over at him, a half smile playing across her lips.

LEDELL
Are you offering me some?

Sean leans forward, his lips almost touching hers. The electricity is almost visible between them.

SEAN
Do you want me to?

INT. JULE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Jules is leaning forward as well, although not so that he can kiss Ledell. He can hardly believe what he's hearing.

JULES
He was going to KISS you?

LEDELL
If there wouldn't have been a spill

in aisle 5, he would have.

Strike that; Jules does not at all believe what he's hearing.

JULES
He was going to kiss you?

LEDELL
I mean, he WANTED to.

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Sean looks at his watch.

SEAN
Well, hey, it's about time for lunch, so--

LEDELL
Sure! I'd love to!

SEAN
Oh, um, yeah... That's...what I meant.

LEDELL
I'll go clock out. I can drive.

Ledell pats him on the chest as she slips past him. Sean looks like he's about to say something but she is gone.

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

JULES
And? How did it go?

Jules is honestly happy for Ledell. He leans forward.

LEDELL
It was GREAT! Sean didn't want to eat in the restaurant, so we just ate in the car.

INT. CAR. DAY.

LEDELL (V.O)
We just sat and talked and talked.
It was super romantic.

Ledell hardly touches her food as she talks in a neverending stream. Sean tries to nod and seem interested, but begins to hold his sandwich in front of his face like a shield.

LEDELL (V.O)
 After lunch, Sean put me on stocking
 shelves.

JULES
 Why the change?

LEDELL
 Well - he just - sometimes - I

FLASHBACK:

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

An woman comes into the line. We see that she as asked for
 cigarettes; Ledell gets four packs from the shelf. The lady
 hands her a credit card. Sound of card being declined.

LEDELL
 Oh. This one's declined. Do you
 have another one?

LADY
 I should. (digging through her
 purse) It's right . .

The woman pulls out another card.

LADY
 Here.

Ledell zips it through the scanner. Sound of card being
 declined. Sean hears this and comes over, standing a few
 feet behind Ledell.

LEDELL
 This one's also declined.
 (conversationally) Maybe it's a
 sign that you should quit, huh?

LADY
 Well, you know the economy these
 days. And it's hard to keep up with
 things once you've lost your job. I
 just want a drag.

LEDELL
 All it takes is a little bit of will
 power.

LADY
 Honey, I've been smoking for 30
 years. If it "just took a little
 will power," do you think I'd be

shelling out this kind of money?

LEDELL
People quit every day, ma'am, you
don't have to be so--

LADY
I spend all my time looking after my
sister's kids while she runs around
town looking for a job. I think I
deserve a little cigarette break.

LEDELL
--full of yourself. What good are
you going to do your nieces and
nephews if all you have in your
pocket is a box of cancer? You
should think about--

Sean, hearing all of this, jogs over to them.

SEAN
Hey. . .

LEDELL
(smiling)
Oh, hey.

SEAN
You look like you need a little
break. There're a couple boxes that
need stocking.

LEDELL
Oh. Okay. But what about -

SEAN
I'll take care of her.

Sean indicates the woman.

LEDELL.
Alright.

SEAN
(faintly, as Ledell walks
away)
I'm sorry, ma'am. It looks like your
card has been declined.

INT. SUPERMARKET BREAD ISLE. DAY.

Ledell is stocking the shelves with bread. There is another
customer, WENDY, in the aisle who is apparently looking for

something. When she sees Ledell, she approaches her.

WENDY

Excuse me, do you have any hot dog buns?

Ledell looks at the shelf, which is empty.

LEDELL

It doesn't look like we do. I can call back to the back, if you want.

WENDY

No, I'd just like to stand here and wait until you get around to restocking. Of course I'd like you to call back.

Ledell grabs her walkie talkie.

LEDELL

(into the walkie talkie)
Do we have any hot dog buns back there?

A voice comes through the walkie talkie.

VOICE

Ummmm, no, I'm looking at the breads right now. The shipment hasn't come in yet.

Ledell turns to Wendy.

LEDELL

I'm sorry, ma'am, we don't have any left.

WENDY

How can you be out of hot dog buns? Don't you ever check your stock?

LEDELL

It seems the shipment is late, ma'am. I'm sorry, is there anything else I can help you with?

WENDY

(loudly)
Unless you have some hot dog buns somewhere, no. How do you expect me to have a cookout without any buns?

LEDELL

Again, I'm sorry ma'am, but we don't-

WENDY
Don't ma'am me, (she looks at Ladell's nametag) Ladle. I have a name.

LEDELL
It's Ledell, actually.

WENDY
(loudly)
Are you going to get me those hot dog buns, or not?

LEDELL
No, I'm not! Because we don't have any.

WENDY
If you don't get your little tushie back there and get me those buns, I'll go back myself.

LEDELL
(shouting)
Ma'am, I'm sorry, I--

Wendy takes a step forward menacingly. Ledell puts out her hands.

LEDELL
I can't let you do that!

Wendy pushes past Ledell, who pushes her, trying to stop her.

WENDY
Get out of my way!

LEDELL
We don't have any buns, ma'am! I can't let you back there!

Wendy pushes Ledell to the ground. Ledell bounces right back up, and raises her hand for a nice big slap. Out of nowhere, Sean appears and forces himself between them.

SEAN
(angrily)
Ledell, go to my office. I'll handle this.

INT. SEAN'S OFFICE. DAY.

Ledell is sitting in a chair in front of Sean's desk, looking interestedly at the pictures on his walls and desk. Sean enters. Ledell stands.

LEDELL
I'm sorry you had to deal with that crazy lady.

Sean sits, and gestures for Ledell to do the same.

SEAN
(sighing)
It seems like you always get the crazy ones, Ledell.

LEDELL
It's been one right after another. One of those days, you know?

SEAN
I know exactly what you mean.

LEDELL
Basically the only good thing that happened today was lunch. We should do that again.

SEAN
What? No, Ledell...you're ugly.

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

JULES
He didn't say that.

INT. SEAN'S OFFICE. DAY.

SEAN
(confused)
What? No, Ledell, you aren't really my type. And...I'm firing you.

LEDELL
You're firing me?

SEAN
I tried to give you a warning, Ledell. You offended two customers before lunch break, people have been filing complaints about you ever since I hired you, and now that woman told me that you refused to

sell her hot dog buns, and I saw you physically assault her.

LEDELL
She pushed--

SEAN
I saw what happened, Ledell.

Ledell puts her hand on Sean's hand, trying to force a connection with him.

LEDELL
Sean! I'm telling you, that woman--

SEAN
(more loudly)
I said I saw what happened.

Ledell pulls her hand away, hurt. They sit silently. Sean sighs, and takes out his handbook. He reads from it.

SEAN
Mizz Washington, I'm going to have to ask you to leave the premises. You can return on Friday when your paycheck will be made available to you.

He looks up from the book.

SEAN
I'm sorry, but I can't cover for you anymore.

INT. JULES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Ledell sniffs. She isn't crying, but the steam from the tea is wafting up into her face and she's trying with all of her might to be not crying. Jules puts a hand on her arm.

JULES
I'm really sorry, Ledell.

Ledell wipes her face with her palm.

LEDELL
Yeah, well, you know. That stupid woman just...just ruined my day.

She cradles her head in her hands, and looks at...well, not really at Jules, but through him, thinking.

FADE TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Sean closes out the cash register, smiling wearily at the other cashiers and workers as they leave.

FADE TO:

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

The LADY puffs on the butt of a cigarette, looking out the window of her parked car.

FADE TO:

INT. DORM. NIGHT.

The YOUNG GUY sits on his couch, staring at the condoms on his coffee table.

FADE TO:

INT. WORKOUT ROOM. NIGHT.

The WOMAN runs on her treadmill furiously, the open bag of cheetos lying on the floor, bits of cheeto strewn around it.

FADE TO:

INT. JULE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Jules reaches in his pocket and pulls out a pack of cigs. He offers her one. She looks at it for a second, wavering between her desire to smoke and her resolve not to. She gives in, and takes it from him.

LEDELL

She ruined my entire freaking day.

END.