

Socks & Co.

An absurdist retail comedy

By Alexander Attea

Characters: (2M, 2W, 2NB/Any)

CASEY	A new hire, full of sometimes-nervous energy. (W/NB, 20s)
HEATHER	The store manager, excitable and ineffectual. (W, 20s-40s)
DELIVERY DAN	The delivery man, super chill. (M, 20s-30s)
ROGER	The security guard. (M/NB, 30s-60s) Also plays ANGRY WOMAN #1, REGINALD B. RICHLEY III, CONFUSED PERSON, FENCING PERSON #1
THE OWNER	The owner, very mysterious. (M, 30s-50s) Also plays DANCING MAN, MR. HORNE
VICKI	A customer, entitled and obnoxious. (W/NB, 20s-50s) Also plays ANGRY WOMAN #2, CAVEMAN, FENCING PERSON #2

Time: Now-ish.

Place: A luxury sock store called Socks & Co.

Notes on production:

- This play must be cast with diversity in mind.

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ACT 1**One**

Lights up. The interior of a luxury sock store: displays, a counter, a front door, a door leading into a back room. Night.

A big noise comes from the back room!

ROGER, a security guard, enters to unlock the front door and step inside. He shines his flashlight around the sock displays.

ROGER

Hello? Somebody there? Hello?

ROGER opens the door to the back room. His flashlight flickers off. He tries to turn it back on, to no avail. He sets the flashlight down and steps inside. The door closes behind him. Transition.

Two

The sock store. Day.

HEATHER, the manager, stands behind the counter. CASEY, a new employee, enters and comes through the front door.

HEATHER

You're late.

CASEY

Oh my god, I'm so sorry —

HEATHER

I'm just messing with you, you're fine.

CASEY

Oh. Okay. Sorry.
Am I late, though?

HEATHER

— No.

CASEY

Cool. Okay. (Off to a great start, Case.)

HEATHER

You alright?

CASEY

Yes. Totally. I'm just nervous, I guess.
I don't want to mess this up.

HEATHER

That's fine. Your second day, you're allowed to be nervous.
Do you talk to yourself often?

CASEY

No, not at all. Not at all.

HEATHER

Great. Our clients can be very particular, so they might be thrown off if you're talking to yourself.

CASEY

Particular how?

HEATHER

People come from all over the world for these socks. They have expectations about the experience.

CASEY

Right, got it.

HEATHER

So don't let it happen again.

CASEY

Yeah. I won't.

HEATHER

Kidding again! Do you really think I'd be that harsh?

CASEY

Um —

HEATHER

Do you want to go over styles before we open? We've got a few minutes.

CASEY

Sure. Let's do it.

HEATHER

Yay, a little quiz! Exciting!

HEATHER gets four pairs of socks and lays them on the counter.

This year's collection has four styles. What are they?

CASEY *holds up a sock*

Crew.

Six to eight inches, typically ending below the calf muscle. Great versatile option for casual or dress. Your every day sock.

HEATHER *holding up a different sock*

Correct. This?

CASEY

Um — calf?

HEATHER

Nice. Tell me about it.

CASEY

Rests above the calf muscle. Great for coverage. Best for men with large calf muscles because it won't slide down the leg.

HEATHER *holding up a third sock*
Perfect. How about this one?

CASEY
No-show.

HEATHER
Or low cut.

CASEY
Or low cut. Sits below the ankle. Casual or athletic wear. Good for low cut sneakers.

HEATHER *a fourth sock*
Next up.

CASEY
Knee sock! Wear it with boots!

HEATHER *a fifth*
You got it! What's this?

CASEY
Another crew?

HEATHER
Nope! This is the quarter sock. Covers the whole ankle, can be casual or dress but tends to slide down the leg.

CASEY
Got it, got it.

HEATHER
One more. Know what it is?

CASEY
Sorry, I have to see it. Still learning.

HEATHER *holding up a sixth sock*
Here you go.

CASEY
Oh, of course! The liner sock. Ultra low cut, can't be seen outside of the shoe. Perfect for slippers, loafers, boat shoes, all of that.

HEATHER
And just like that, you got it. Nicely done.
This is going to sound crazy, but you're picking this up faster than most people.

CASEY
I'm a fast learner.

HEATHER
That's kinda surprising, actually.

CASEY

— Why?

HEATHER

Because on your resume, it looked like you haven't stayed long at any job you've had.

CASEY

Um, yeah, but that's because those jobs weren't quite the right fit. I still did okay at them.

HEATHER

Oh! Got it. Got it.

CASEY

Did you even call any of my references?

HEATHER

— I forgot a little bit.

And you interviewed so well, I figured you'd be perfect! And I was right!

CASEY

Well that's a relief. Hopefully I don't mess up too bad, I need this job.

HEATHER

Doing great so far!

CASEY *looking at the time*

Should I unlock the door?

HEATHER

Look at that, you're already nailing it! Go for it. Unlock that door.

CASEY unlocks the front door.

Yes! I love it!

CASEY

So there are a lot of people who didn't understand the styles at first?

HEATHER

Were. They don't work here anymore, obviously.

We've gone through fifteen sales associates in the last year.

CASEY

Woah. That's insane.

HEATHER

You're telling me, I had to train them.

CASEY

Why'd they all leave?

HEATHER

Some of them couldn't get the hang of selling luxury socks, some of them got other opportunities and left.

Lately it's been this weird security situation.

CASEY

Yeah, I've noticed there's no one at the desk —

HEATHER

No one. It used to be Roger, but he... disappeared.

CASEY

What??

HEATHER

He disappeared! He straight up vanished one night! They haven't been able to find a replacement.

CASEY

Oh my god. Why not?

HEATHER

Promise you won't quit on me.
He disappeared inside *this very store*.

CASEY

Okay, you're messing with me again.

HEATHER

I swear to god.
You never opened the door to the back room when you were in yesterday, did you?

CASEY *holding up their bandaged hand*

I tried, but the handle burned me, remember? I had to leave early.

HEATHER

Oh, right. Yes. Duh. That was really weird.

CASEY

Why was it so hot?

HEATHER

I wish I could tell you.
You're okay, right?

CASEY

Yeah, I'll be fine.

HEATHER

Do you want to try opening it again?

CASEY

Well, I'm curious now. Do you want me to?

HEATHER

Sure, go for it!
Be careful this time, too.

CASEY

I'm nervous.

CASEY opens the door to the back room. There is a DANCING MAN, dressed as if from the 1920s, doing a soft shoe number.

Who're you?

DANCING MAN

Hello!

CASEY *to HEATHER*

Who is this?

HEATHER

Oh, I have no idea.

CASEY

Is he always in there?

HEATHER

First time I've seen him. Shut the door.

CASEY shuts the door.

CASEY

But who was that?

HEATHER

Open it again.

CASEY

Is this part of my training, or —?

CASEY opens the door to the back room again. There are now two ANGRY WOMEN waiting at what appears to be a bus stop.

ANGRY WOMAN #1

— BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS ORDER THE BISCUIT WITHOUT ASKING ME WHAT I WANT, MEREDITH!

ANGRY WOMAN #2

YOU LIKE BISCUITS, SUSAN. I ORDER THE BISCUIT BECAUSE YOU LIKE BISCUITS!

CASEY shuts the door.

CASEY

Okay, what's going on here?

HEATHER

I wish I could tell you. It's been like that as long as I've been here.

CASEY

You've always had a *portal to alternate dimensions* in the store??

HEATHER

I wouldn't say alternate dimensions. We don't know if it's an alternate dimension. It could just be a time machine. Or a teleportation device. I'm not an expert.

CASEY

But that's where the security guy went. He's lost somewhere in there.

HEATHER

Apparently.

CASEY

Have you done anything to find him?

If it did this to my hand, geez, who knows what's happening to him.

HEATHER

What do you want me to do? It's scary. Plus I'm like, so busy selling socks.

CASEY

Should we tell anyone?

HEATHER

I've sent an email about it to our owner already, but he hasn't responded yet. He's really hard to get ahold of.

CASEY

Great. So what should we do?

HEATHER

I don't know. Like I said, so so busy selling lots of socks.

CASEY

Well, we need to do something. We can't just leave him lost in there.

HEATHER

He'll probably find his own way out!

CASEY

It's the right thing to do, Heather.

HEATHER

Hey, maybe this can be your first official project! That'd be fun, right? What do you think? Please say yes.

CASEY

— Um. Sure?

HEATHER

Awesome! I'm sure you'll do fine, you're a fast learner.

CASEY

I don't know how to start.

HEATHER

I don't know either, I'm not an expert. You'll pick it up!

CASEY

— Okay. Great. I'll pick it up.

HEATHER

And if you find him, that might lead to consideration for the Assistant Manager position...!
If you don't, then I don't know, he'll probably die or something.

CASEY

Geez. This is a lot for my second day —
You're not going to do anything to help?

HEATHER

Of course I'll help! I'll be here for any moral support you need.
You've got this, Casey! I believe in you.

CASEY

Thanks?

HEATHER *holding up a sock*

Oh, and one more thing. What's this?

CASEY

A crew sock?

HEATHER

Wrong! It's a quarter sock. You really need to get this inventory stuff down, Casey.

CASEY

— Alright. Um. Yeah. I will.

HEATHER

Wow. Your first project! I'm so excited for you!

Transition.

Three

The sock store. Later the same day.

CASEY is on a laptop doing research. HEATHER is helping a client, VICKI. There are eight sock pairs — black, grey, brown, khaki, blue, purple, green, red— laid out on the counter.

VICKI

Seriously? These are the only colors you have available?

HEATHER

Yes, we run a custom set of about eight colors each year, to add to the exclusivity of the socks. So these are the colors we have right now.

VICKI

Do you have — orange?

HEATHER

No, the ones on the counter here are the only colors we have available right now.

VICKI

I hate this blue, I would never wear that.

HEATHER

Okay, no problem.

HEATHER takes the blue pair off the counter.

VICKI

And grey is so — I don't know — boring?

HEATHER

Agreed.

HEATHER takes the grey sock off the counter. VICKI sees the back room.

VICKI

What's back here?

CASEY

Oh, um, you can't go back there.

VICKI

Excuse me? Why not?

HEATHER

It's closed to the public at the moment.

VICKI

Can I just take a peek?

CASEY

No, it's closed right now —

VICKI

It's okay, I'll make it quick.

VICKI tries to open the back room door and CASEY pulls her away.

Excuse me, did you just *grab* me with a weird diseased hand??

CASEY

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. You can't go back there, though. And the hand is burned.

VICKI

Wow. Gross. Who even are you? Do you even work here?

HEATHER

Casey's a new hire. Now would you —

VICKI

You should look for someone better.

CASEY

What was that?

HEATHER *to CASEY*

Casey.

To VICKI

Would you like to take another look at your options?

VICKI

Fine. Do you have anything else besides these?

HEATHER

— No. These are the eight colors that we are carrying at this time.

VICKI

What about patterns? Do you have any patterns?

HEATHER

We don't carry any patterns.

VICKI

I thought you guys custom made your socks.

HEATHER

We do. But we don't work with any patterns.

VICKI

Why not?

HEATHER

Working with a single color increases the quality of construction of the sock, and adds to the luxury of the product.

VICKI

What if I wanted to custom order a patterned sock?

HEATHER

We wouldn't be able to do that.

VICKI

And you don't have orange, like I want?

HEATHER

I think the Rustic Red we're carrying right now is light enough to be close to orange, and still gives you that pop of color you're looking for. And the Rustic Red looks great with your complexion. Plus, I think orange might give you a Halloween-y look, which is going to limit you on what you can wear the socks with.

VICKI

Oh my god, that's so right.
You know what? I'll take them.

HEATHER

Excellent!

VICKI

I'm so excited to wear these.

HEATHER scans the socks.

HEATHER

That'll be \$540, after tax.

VICKI

— Um. How much?

HEATHER

\$540.

VICKI

Why is it so expensive? They're, like, socks.

HEATHER

We're the only place in the world to make custom socks at this level of quality.

VICKI

Yeah, but that's *way* more than I was expecting. I thought they'd be, like, \$100 at most?

HEATHER

Our price point is due to the quality of the materials, the manufacturing process, and the durability of the socks. Like I was saying earlier, these will last you forever. You won't wear a hole in them.

VICKI

Right, I *totally* get that, but there's *no way* I'm paying \$500 for *socks*. That's a *ripoff!*
You know what? I'm leaving, and I'm going to tell *all my friends* that this place is a *SCAM!*

VICKI storms out.

HEATHER

— Have a good day!

CASEY

Yikes.

HEATHER

She was just charming.

CASEY

Does that happen a lot?

HEATHER

We're selling \$500 socks.

CASEY

Got it.

HEATHER

And I know why you did it, but please don't grab customers anymore.

CASEY

She was going to get herself lost back there. And burned. Burned and lost.
Which, now that I think about it, might have been okay.

HEATHER

How's your research coming?

CASEY

Well, I'm not sure yet. I wish I could —

DELIVERY DAN, the delivery man, comes into the store.

DELIVERY DAN

Howdy howdy. Anything going out today?

HEATHER *handing over a stack of sock-sized boxes*

Got a couple things for you.

DELIVERY DAN

Nice. How's everything been in here?

HEATHER

Not too bad. Oh! We've got Casey working on where Roger went.

DELIVERY DAN

Who?

HEATHER

Roger.

CASEY

Hi!

DELIVERY DAN

Oh hey! Didn't see you there. New hire?

CASEY

I started yesterday.

DELIVERY DAN

Nice to meet you, Casey. I'm Delivery Dan. I like your bandage, that's cool. You could call it a *hand-age*. Right? Haha.

Anyway. Enjoying the sock business so far?

CASEY

It's — interesting.

DELIVERY DAN

Don't quit on us.

CASEY

Um. Okay.

HEATHER

Casey's the fastest learner I've trained so far.

CASEY

Delivery Dan? Is that really your name?

DELIVERY DAN *to HEATHER*

The fastest learner? You sure?

To CASEY

I'm the delivery guy. Delivery Dan the Delivery Man. I deliver socks to our in-town clients.

CASEY

We do that?

HEATHER

It's a special service we offer. Socks On Foot.

DELIVERY DAN

Socks On Foot, baby!

CASEY

Socks On Foot?

DELIVERY DAN

Hell yeah! Came up with the name myself. It hasn't technically been approved by the owner, but he's, like, really hard to get ahold of.

CASEY

So I've heard.

DELIVERY DAN

Oh, you've heard? Did Heather show you the —

HEATHER

No, we haven't talked about any of that yet.

CASEY

What? What haven't we talked about?

MR. HORNE enters the store.

MR. HORNE

Hello Miss Heather —

HEATHER

No! No! You get out!

MR. HORNE

I was just hoping to look at some socks —

HEATHER

Not today, Mr. Horne! Get out! *Now!*

MR. HORNE

Alright, I'm leaving, I'm leaving.

MR. HORNE exits.

CASEY

Geez, what was that about?

HEATHER

That's Mr. Horne. He's not allowed in the store.

CASEY

Why not?

HEATHER

Don't worry about it.

DELIVERY DAN

So you're working on where Roger disappeared to, huh?

CASEY

Um, yeah. It's my first project.

DELIVERY DAN

You've seen the back room, right?

CASEY

Yeah, I'm trying to figure out what's going on there.

DELIVERY DAN

I think it has to be some sort of teleportation portal, or something.

CASEY

Why's that? Why not a time machine?

DELIVERY DAN

Well, every time I've seen it open, it's been something that looks like it's from our time period. Our world. So I don't think it's manipulating time.

CASEY

I think it might be a doorway into different dimensions.

DELIVERY DAN

I don't know about that. I've never seen anything *really* weird in there. It's all stuff that seems like it could be happening here and now.

If it were going into different dimensions, we'd see some crazy interplanetary shit, right?

CASEY

I guess so. But I've only looked in twice.

What have you seen?

DELIVERY DAN

Oh. I've only looked in twice too.

But I have to make these deliveries now. I'll tell you more about it another time. Wish I could help more!

CASEY

No, it's okay, I think you did.

DELIVERY DAN

Is Heather helping you out?

HEATHER

You're doing great, Casey! Keep doing what you're doing!

CASEY

Moral support.

DELIVERY DAN

Excellent. Moral support is huge.

Alright, I gotta get going. See y'all later!

HEATHER

Bye Dan!

DELIVERY DAN exits. MR. HORNE has been waiting by the door and tries to come in again.

No no no! I see you trying to get in, Mr. Horne!

MR. HORNE

I'm not doing anything wrong!

HEATHER

You know you're not allowed!

MR. HORNE

But I —

HEATHER

NO! GET OUT!

MR. HORNE exits, grumbling.

CASEY

What is his problem?

HEATHER

You just have to yell at him, he scares away pretty easily.

Actually, you should probably practice.

CASEY

Practice what?

HEATHER

The yelling. As part of your training. It's an important skill! Okay, imagine I'm Mr. Horne and I've just come in. What do you do?

CASEY

Um, you can't be in here?

HEATHER

Not authoritative enough!

CASEY

You can't be in here.

HEATHER

I'm not leaving —

CASEY

You can't be in here!

HEATHER

What did you say?

CASEY

You can't be in here!!

HEATHER

Try something different —

CASEY

You can't be in here! You're banned!!!

HEATHER

Ooh, very nice! I think that would've done the trick. Maybe you could use your gross hand to scare him, too! He's squeamish. Anyway, good job, Casey! You're such a fast learner. But hopefully you won't have to yell at anyone while you're here.

CASEY

I hope not.

HEATHER

If you do have to yell at someone, though, I'll be here for moral support!

CASEY

Thanks, Heather.

Transition.

Four

The sock store. The next day.

CASEY is still researching on the laptop, and taking notes. HEATHER is putting up new sock displays.

HEATHER

You know what I hate?

People who wear socks with sandals. So annoying, right?

CASEY

I guess so, yeah.

HEATHER

It's gross. Just decide on one or the other!

My aunt Gertie married a guy who likes to wear socks with sandals and I haven't spoken to her in, like, six years.

CASEY

Geez, because of her husband's footwear?

HEATHER

Well yeah.

Plus she's been dead.
We weren't very close anyway.

CASEY

Oh. I'm sorry.

HEATHER

Don't be. She made bad decisions.
Alright, I'm going to go to lunch! Will you be okay here alone for a bit?

CASEY

Yeah, it seems to be pretty slow today. I think I'll be alright.

HEATHER

Sounds good. See you soon!

HEATHER exits. CASEY continues taking notes. Then, CASEY looks up at the door to the back room.

CASEY

I wonder...

CASEY goes to the back room door and knocks. There are knocks heard coming from the other side.

Oh geez. Oh geez. Okay.

As CASEY is about to open the door, MR. HORNE bursts into the store.

MR. HORNE

I see Miss Heather isn't here —

CASEY

Um, no — wait! You can't be in here!

MR. HORNE

I'm just having a looksie...

CASEY

No, you have to get out.

MR. HORNE

Don't mind me.

VICKI enters the store.

VICKI

Hi. I'm back. I decided to go with those socks.

CASEY

Oh! Great. Okay. I think I can ring you up. Sorry, I'm still in training.
The Rustic Red knee socks, right?

VICKI

Yeah, weren't you paying attention yesterday?

MR. HORNE

Well hello, miss.

VICKI

Hi.

CASEY *putting VICKI's socks on the counter.*

Okay, that's going to be, um —

VICKI

Can you not touch them with your weird hand?

CASEY

I'm sorry, I —

MR. HORNE

So what size are you?

VICKI

Excuse me?

MR. HORNE

What size are you?

VICKI

Oh. Like, an 8?

MR. HORNE

Mmm. That's a good size.

VICKI

Thanks.

CASEY

Sir, you have to go —

MR. HORNE

I'm just having a nice conversation with the young lady —

CASEY

No, sir —

MR. HORNE

Are these the socks you're buying?

VICKI

Yes, I was going to go with orange but I decided on these.

MR. HORNE

Excellent color.

Let's see them on!

CASEY

Excuse me —

VICKI

Oh! Well, I guess it can't hurt.

VICKI takes her shoes off and puts the socks on.

CASEY

Mr. Horne, I'm going to have to ask you to —

MR. HORNE

Yes, that's a lovely color.

CASEY

Mr. Horne, you can't be in here!

VICKI

Why are you being so mean to this man?

CASEY

I'm just trying to —

VICKI

You have terrible customer service here, you know that?

MR. HORNE

Can I touch them?

CASEY

Oh my god — you need to get out!

VICKI

What, my feet?

MR. HORNE

If you don't mind —

CASEY

GET OUT NOW!!!

MR. HORNE scuttles out the front door.

VICKI

I can't believe you would yell at that man!

CASEY

He was being a creep! He was trying to touch your feet!

VICKI

This is the rudest place I've ever been. I've decided not to buy these socks.

CASEY

Fine! I don't care!

VICKI, with a string of huffs, takes the socks off and storms out again.

VICKI

This is the last you'll see of me!

CASEY

I was trying to help!
— And she's gone.

DELIVERY DAN enters through the front door.

DELIVERY DAN

What's that lady's problem?

CASEY

She's mad I wouldn't let a creepy foot fetish guy touch her feet.

DELIVERY DAN

— What?

CASEY

Mr. Horne came into the store and I couldn't get him out fast enough.

DELIVERY DAN

You gotta yell at that dude, Case.

CASEY

I know, I know, I was trying. I was thrown off because I heard knocks through the door to the back room.

DELIVERY DAN

Wait, knocks —?

CASEY

Yeah. I don't know what it was. Before I could open the door, there he was, like a, um — like a guy with a foot fetish in a sock store.

DELIVERY DAN

Good metaphor.

CASEY

It's a simile.

DELIVERY DAN

That's still a metaphor.

CASEY

Oh, right. Thanks.

DELIVERY DAN

So. Somebody was knocking on the back door.

CASEY

Gross.

DELIVERY DAN

You know what I mean.
Anyway, I've personally never seen anybody go back there.

CASEY

Gross.

DELIVERY DAN

Stop it.

CASEY

So — whoever was knocking must be trapped, right?

DELIVERY DAN

I guess so. If they could open it, they wouldn't be trapped.
You didn't see the Owner go back there, did you?

CASEY

I haven't seen anybody. Do you think it's Roger the security guard?

DELIVERY DAN

It might be.

CASEY

But either way, if somebody can knock from the other side, that means this doorway can be accessed from the other side. Which means Roger can come back out!

DELIVERY DAN

It's a long shot, but yeah. That would have to be the case. He could re-enter.

CASEY

Gross.

DELIVERY DAN

I swear to god, bro —

CASEY *handing DELIVERY DAN a few delivery boxes*

Alright, here are your deliveries, thanks, bye!

DELIVERY DAN

Hold on, did I tell you about what a client found in their delivery yesterday?

CASEY

Socks?

DELIVERY DAN

Besides that.

DELIVERY DAN pulls a remote control-like device out of his pocket.

Check it out. It's like, some sort of remote.

CASEY

What's it for? What does it control?

DELIVERY DAN

I don't know.

He presses a few buttons.

Nothing happens, though. I think it's broken.

CASEY

Can I keep it?

DELIVERY DAN

Aw, I kinda like it.

CASEY

I think it might be useful.

DELIVERY DAN

Oh, for sure, I was just kidding. Have at it!

*DELIVERY DAN gives CASEY the remote and exits with his deliveries.
Transition.*

Five

*The sock store. Later that day.
CASEY is reading a book about portals, HEATHER is folding socks.*

HEATHER

Do you ever think about how cool our product is?

CASEY

— They're socks, but sure?

HEATHER

Right, but they're part of people's lives! People have traveled the world in these socks.

CASEY

I'm sure people have traveled the world in a lot of socks.

HEATHER

I think it's cool that it becomes, like, a part of the person. Part of their personality. People wear these like a badge of honor.

CASEY

The price tag probably has something to do with that.

HEATHER

What are you thinking your first pair will be? I was thinking you'd look good in blue.

CASEY

Oh! Um. I hadn't thought about it.
I don't think I can afford a pair yet.

HEATHER

But we get a discount!

CASEY

It's still a lot to pay for — socks.

HEATHER

Good socks. They'll last forever.

CASEY

I know that.

HEATHER

If you're not passionate about the product, Casey, then there might be a problem here.

CASEY

No, I am passionate —

HEATHER *chipper*

Don't worry, I believe you! Just making sure!

CASEY

— Was that a test?

HEATHER

And you passed!
She holds up a sock.
 Part two: what's this?

CASEY

Oh! Quarter sock!

HEATHER

Wrong! Crew sock this time! Come on, Casey, get your head in the game!

CASEY

They look the same!
 Anyway, I wanted to ask you —

The front door opens and THE OWNER enters. They are wearing sunglasses, a scarf, gloves, and a long trench coat. What little can be seen of their face is obscured by a white face bandage. The flashlight is in their coat pocket.

THE OWNER

Hello.

HEATHER

Hi there! How are you?

THE OWNER

Fine, fine.

CASEY *referring to the OWNER's bandages*

Hey, um, I guess we match!

Pause. THE OWNER regards CASEY.

THE OWNER

Who is this?

HEATHER

The new hire. Casey.

THE OWNER

Casey. How do you do.

CASEY

Oh, I'm fine, thanks. Nice to meet you!

THE OWNER

If you say so. Back to work.

CASEY

Right, of course, of course. (Don't mess this up, Casey.)

THE OWNER

Hm?

CASEY

Nothing! (That was close.)

HEATHER

What brings you in today?

THE OWNER

Errands.

Heather, have you found my —

HEATHER

Still looking.

THE OWNER

Very well.

THE OWNER goes to open the back room.

CASEY

Wait!

THE OWNER

Yes, Casey. I am waiting.

HEATHER

It's fine, Casey.

CASEY

But —

HEATHER

Don't let us keep you from your errands.

THE OWNER

You wouldn't be able to if you tried.

THE OWNER opens the door to the back room and disappears into it.

CASEY

Um — that was the owner?

HEATHER

Yep.

CASEY

What happened to his face??

HEATHER

An accident, I guess. He hasn't told me.

CASEY

What does he usually look like?

HEATHER

Oh, I don't know. He's always had that bandage.

CASEY

Does he usually go into the back room like that?

HEATHER

Every time he's in.

CASEY

And he comes out?

HEATHER

I don't ask questions.

CASEY goes to the back room door and knocks on it. No response.

CASEY

He doesn't get lost?

HEATHER

I guess not. Like I said, I don't ask questions.

CASEY

Don't you want to know??

HEATHER

My job's to sell socks. I come in, I sell socks, I go home. That's all I'm getting paid for.

REGINALD B. RICHLEY III enters through the front door. Very rich.

REGINALD

Miss Heather!

HEATHER

Well look who it is! Good to see you, Reggie!

REGINALD

Good to see you too, darling. I hope you've been well.

HEATHER

I'm doing just fine. How are you? How's the wife?

REGINALD

She hated our trip to Milan.

HEATHER

Oh no!

REGINALD

She said it got boring after the first two months.

I told her that as long as she keeps spending my money on purses, I get to keep choosing the vacation spots. Ha ha!

HEATHER

Sounds like you two are doing great.

REGINALD

We really are.

So, I came in today to whet my sock appetite once again. Got anything for me?

HEATHER

Do !!

Putting a pair of socks on the counter.

Tell me this Gunmetal Grey isn't just delicious.

REGINALD

Beautiful! You know me too well, Heather.

HEATHER

Hey, I'm just doing my job.

REGINALD

Your job apparently is to take money directly out of my pocket! They're my size?

HEATHER

11 right on, no more, no less.

REGINALD

I'll take them.

HEATHER

\$540 after tax.

REGINALD B. RICHLEY III gives HEATHER cash.

REGINALD

Wonderful. Just wonderful.

HEATHER

Here, I'll box them up for you.

HEATHER puts the socks in a box.

And you're all set.

REGINALD

Great seeing you as always.

HEATHER

Same to you! Give my best to the Mrs.

REGINALD

Will do.

REGINALD B. RICHLEY III notices CASEY.

Ah! I see we've got a new face in here.

HEATHER

This is Casey, our newest hire.

REGINALD *extending a hand*

Reginald B. Richley III. A pleasure.

CASEY *shaking his hand awkwardly*

Nice to meet you.

HEATHER

Mr. Richley's a world-renowned physics professor.

REGINALD

Please, you flatter me.

CASEY

Physics? Really?

REGINALD

Physics, really.

CASEY

Can I ask you a quick question?

REGINALD

Ask away.

CASEY

Do you think parallel universes, or alternate dimensions, are probable?

REGINALD

They're possible, but I don't know if I would say probable.

CASEY

Would it be possible for a portal into one to exist on Earth?

REGINALD

I wouldn't know. A portal? Based on the current evidence, it's very very unlikely.

CASEY

Okay. I see. In that case, how would you explain — this!

CASEY opens the door to the back room. THE OWNER is standing there.

REGINALD

Well, Casey, I'd have to say that's a door.
Love an inquisitive mind, though. Keep it up!
Nice to see you as always, Heather. Ta ta!

REGINALD B. RICHLEY III exits. THE OWNER steps out of the back room.

THE OWNER

Did somebody knock?

CASEY

I did, a few minutes ago.

THE OWNER

Don't.

THE OWNER leaves the store.

CASEY

Do you think he has Roger trapped back there?
CASEY opens the back room door.
Roger!

CASEY's voice echoes back, as if through a canyon.

HEATHER

Oh that seems fun! HELLO!

HEATHER's voice echoes back.

CASEY

Heather —

HEATHER

BUY SOME SOCKS!
HEATHER's voice echoes back. CASEY closes the door.
What? I thought we might be able to get a sale out of it.

CASEY

I actually have something to ask you.
CASEY takes the remote out of their pocket.
Do you know anything about this?

HEATHER

Give me that.
CASEY hands the remote over.
All I know is that you shouldn't have this.

CASEY

Why? Delivery Dan said he found it in someone's delivery. What is it? Does it have anything to do with Roger?

HEATHER

I don't know. But if the Owner sees you with this, we'll both be in trouble.

CASEY

But why?

HEATHER

That's enough, Casey.

Sorry, I don't like being like this, but I think you're looking for answers in the wrong places.

CASEY

Um. Okay.

HEATHER

You're doing great, though!

Transition.

Six

The sock store. Evening.

CASEY and HEATHER are closing up.

CASEY

Listen, can we talk about earlier —?

HEATHER

You can finish closing up, right? I have a family thing I need to get to, so I kinda need to run.

CASEY

Yeah, I can take care of it. But do you have a minute to talk about —

HEATHER

See you later, bye!!

HEATHER exits. CASEY locks the door behind her.

CASEY

Something's up, something's up.

CASEY turns off the lights in the store. CASEY pauses at the back room door.

Are you in there, Roger?

DELIVERY DAN enters and knocks loudly at the locked front door, scaring CASEY.

DELIVERY DAN

Let me in!

CASEY

Christ, you scared me!

DELIVERY DAN

Just unlock the door!

CASEY *unlocking the door*

What's wrong? What's going on?

DELIVERY DAN

The door was locked.

CASEY

Yeah, but is everything okay? Why were you yelling?

DELIVERY DAN

So you could hear me.

I was just looping back around to see if there were any more deliveries from the end of the day.

CASEY

No, nothing.

DELIVERY DAN

Are you okay?

CASEY

I'm fine, why?

DELIVERY DAN

You're, like, really jittery. Are you on something?

CASEY

I wish.

It's just this Roger thing is freaking me out. And I met the owner today, and that was... weird. I don't know.

DELIVERY DAN

Damn, you met the owner already? I didn't meet him until I'd been working here for six months or something. He's really hard to get ahold of.

CASEY

He gave me a super weird vibe. I feel like he's hiding something.

DELIVERY DAN

Besides his face?

CASEY

Yeah, other than that. He was really defensive about the back room.

And then, when I showed Heather that remote, she took it from me and said I shouldn't have it.

DELIVERY DAN

Woah. That's so crazy.

Maybe he's, like, a space traveler and the back room is his ship! Or he might be a crazy alien creature, which is why he keeps his face covered. And Heather's covering for him!

CASEY

Wow, I — I really hope not.

DELIVERY DAN

But maybe! Can't you let a guy dream that his boss is an alien??

CASEY

I don't think that should be my problem.

DELIVERY DAN

It's all a conspiracy, man. An alien conspiracy.
You know what you need to do, right.

CASEY

No, I'm completely confused about all of this.

DELIVERY DAN

You need to confront the owner. Get up in his face. Or, his bandages. I don't know.

CASEY

Yeah, no, I'm not doing that.

DELIVERY DAN

You have to! You need to get some answers!

CASEY

What would I even say? "Are you an alien?"

DELIVERY DAN

I don't know! You just have to grill the guy. Throw him off. Maybe you can get some information.

CASEY

How do you expect me to do that? Like you said, he's really hard to get ahold of.

DELIVERY DAN

You're right about that. You'll have to trap him or something.

A CONFUSED PERSON appears outside the door and tries to get into the store. When they find the door locked, they start banging on it.

CONFUSED PERSON

Hello? Hello??

CASEY

Oh — we're closed!

CONFUSED PERSON

Why's it locked??

CASEY

We're closed — the lights are off!

CONFUSED PERSON

Let me in! I want to look at the socks!

CASEY

You'll have to come back tomorrow!

CONFUSED PERSON

What??

CASEY

We're closed!

CONFUSED PERSON

Why won't you let me in?? Don't you want my business???

CASEY

Oh my god.

DELIVERY DAN

Having fun?

CONFUSED PERSON

Hello???

DELIVERY DAN

Maybe if we stay really still, they'll go away.

CONFUSED PERSON

I see you in there!!!

DELIVERY DAN

Well, it was worth a shot.

CONFUSED PERSON

What kind of store doesn't let people in???

CASEY

We need to get out of here.

DELIVERY DAN

They're blocking the door at the moment. And if we try to leave, they'll definitely try to get in here.
We have to wait it out.

CONFUSED PERSON

HELLO???

CASEY

I don't think that'll work.

CONFUSED PERSON

If you won't let me in, I'll never shop here!

CASEY

Sounds good to me!

CONFUSED PERSON

I hope you go out of business and starve!!!

DELIVERY DAN

I hope you starve first!!

The CONFUSED PERSON exits, furious.

CASEY

Geez, that's a bit severe.

DELIVERY DAN

Whatever, it's fine.

Oh, hey! You know what? You've gotta trap him like that.

CASEY

What?

DELIVERY DAN

The owner. You've gotta trap him, like that person just trapped us in here. Just be freaking crazy about it.

CASEY *thinking*

They trapped us by blocking the door—

Okay, I think I have an idea.

Oh, this is not going to be good.

DELIVERY DAN

Proud of you, Case. You're doing great.

CASEY

Watch it — moral support is Heather's job. That, and hiding stuff from me.

DELIVERY DAN

Oh! Right. How could I forget?

Speaking of, did she ever show you the flashlight?

CASEY

What flashlight?

DELIVERY DAN

Roger's flashlight. The security guard.

CASEY

No.

DELIVERY DAN

Weird. I figured since you were working on this, she would've shown you.

DELIVERY DAN goes behind the counter and pulls a flashlight out.

When Roger disappeared, this flashlight was the only thing left. It was right here in the store. I guess we held onto it, but I don't know why. It doesn't work.

CASEY

Can I see that?

DELIVERY DAN hands the flashlight over.

DELIVERY DAN

Like, what good's a flashlight that doesn't work?

CASEY

Why didn't she show me this? What's she hiding?

DELIVERY DAN

I've put new batteries in it and everything. I think it's a piece of crap.

CASEY

Delivery Dan — can I hold onto this?

DELIVERY DAN

I was going to suggest we throw it out.
But sure, if you want. Don't let her take it from you.

CASEY

Thank you. I won't.

DELIVERY DAN

I guess you can use it to not see things in the dark.

CASEY

— Sure. I maybe had other plans for it.

DELIVERY DAN

This flashlight is the perfect choice if you're in a dark room and you want it to stay that way.

CASEY

You know, Dan? You're really really funny.

DELIVERY DAN

Hey. That's *Delivery* Dan to you.

Transition.

Seven

The sock store. Later that night, around 2am.

CASEY enters the store, holding the flashlight, making sure to lock the front door again once inside.

CASEY

Okay, Roger. We're figuring this out.

CASEY goes to the back room door and opens it. There is a CAVEMAN there, trying to light a fire.

Oh my god.

CAVEMAN

Hurgh.

CASEY

Um, I'm sorry to bother you.

Suddenly, the flashlight turns on, and light shines onto the CAVEMAN. The CAVEMAN stands up.

Oh no, oh no, oh no.

CAVEMAN

Hurgh!!

The CAVEMAN starts to walk towards CASEY. CASEY drops the flashlight and shuts the back room door. Then, the sound of keys unlocking the front door. CASEY ducks behind the counter as THE OWNER enters.

THE OWNER

Socks, socks, socks.

THE OWNER picks up the flashlight, looks around the store, and opens the back room door to the lights and music of what sounds like a rave. He closes the door behind him.

CASEY

Okay, Casey. Okay. Now's your chance. Trap the guy. Grill him.

Like a steak. Grill him like a steak.

Yum.

I guess I'm hungry.

CASEY waits, but THE OWNER does not come out.

Any minute now...

Silence. THE OWNER does not come out. CASEY yawns.

I guess I'm tired too.

Maybe if I just close my eyes for a second —

CASEY, eyes closed, soon falls asleep.

Transition.

Eight

The sock store. The next morning.

HEATHER enters the store to find CASEY, asleep.

HEATHER

Casey! What are you doing?

CASEY wakes up.

CASEY

Hm? What's going on?

HEATHER

Were you sleeping on the ground, in the store?

CASEY

Oh. Um — I guess I was.

HEATHER

Casey, you can't do that! I don't mop very often!

Also, this is a luxury store and we can't have clients seeing employees on the ground like we're homeless or something.

You have a home, right?

CASEY

I have a home, Heather.

HEATHER

Then why aren't you sleeping there?

CASEY

I — I was working on the Roger thing.

HEATHER

Honey, you need to leave work at work. Come on, get off the floor.

HEATHER helps CASEY up.

CASEY

Sorry, I —

HEATHER

No need to apologize. Just go home and get some rest. I'll cover the store today.

CASEY

No, I have to stay. I want to stay.

HEATHER

You need to relax. The bags under your eyes are so dark they're like — really dark bags.

CASEY

Good simile.

HEATHER

Um, it's a metaphor.

CASEY

Okay. Whatever. I just really need to figure this out.

HEATHER

I totally get it, and you're doing great!
Sleep is helpful too, though.

CASEY

Can I stay for a little bit, at least? There's something I'm waiting for —

HEATHER

I wish I could say yes, I really do, but no. Nope. I can't have you in the store looking like this, it'll scare clients away.

CASEY

Who's going to be scared away?

HEATHER

People spending \$500 on socks. Rich people are easily frightened.
Boo!

CASEY doesn't flinch.

Yep, that's what I thought.

Now go home and take a break! I'll see you tomorrow, okay?

CASEY

Sure. Yeah. I'll see you tomorrow.

CASEY exits.

HEATHER *to herself*

Oh, Casey. Will you ever be Assistant Manager material?

Not if you're sleeping on the floor like that. Assistant Managers definitely do *not* sleep on floors.

VICKI enters.

VICKI

Hi. Do you remember me?

HEATHER

Yes, you were in a few days ago. How are you doing?

VICKI

I'm fine. Your helper, or whatever, didn't remember me when I came in again. Then they yelled at this nice old man, so I left and didn't buy the socks like I was planning.

HEATHER

I'm sorry to hear that.

VICKI

You should fire them.

HEATHER

Who? Casey?

VICKI

Sure, whatever their name is. They were so rude.

HEATHER

Thanks for the feedback, I'll take that into consideration.

VICKI

Well, anyway, I'm here to buy those socks. I've decided to take them.

HEATHER

Oh, great! Let me get those for you.

HEATHER pulls out the red knee socks.

Yep, we've still got one pair left of the Rustic Red knee socks in your size!

VICKI

It's the last pair?

HEATHER

Until more are made, yes. Being a custom store, most of our inventory are samples.

VICKI

Oh. Well, since they're the last ones, can I get a discount?

HEATHER

No, we don't offer discounts.

VICKI

Even if they're the last ones?

HEATHER

They're not the last ones, we just have to make —

VICKI

So you'd rather not sell them at all, than accept a lower price?

HEATHER

That's not the case, we just don't offer any discounts.

VICKI

Hm. That's interesting.

HEATHER

It's just policy.

VICKI

Fine. Whatever. That doesn't make any sense. I'm so sick of arguing with you guys.

HEATHER

I'm sorry if you feel —

VICKI

Um, I'm still going to buy them though. How much was it again?

HEATHER

\$540 after tax.

VICKI

Ugh. That's ridiculous for socks.

HEATHER

They are made from premium materials and they'll last —

VICKI

Yeah, I know, I know. I've heard the spiel. Can you just take my payment?

HEATHER

Sure. Cash or card?

VICKI

Card.

HEATHER

You can swipe here.

VICKI swipes a card.

And let me box these up for you.

VICKI

It's fine. I'll just take them.

HEATHER

Oh! Alright. Here you go! Thanks so much.

VICKI

Okay, bye.

VICKI takes the socks and exits. HEATHER takes a deep breath.

HEATHER

"Um, can I get a discount?"
Geez.

THE OWNER enters from the back room, flashlight in hand.

THE OWNER

Hello.

HEATHER

Oh, hi! I didn't know you were back there.

THE OWNER

I was. Where is the new person?

THE OWNER sets the flashlight down on the counter.

HEATHER

Casey had to take a sick day.

THE OWNER

Casey. Yes.

HEATHER

But they're doing really well so far!
Except for the fact that I found them sleeping on the floor here this morning.

THE OWNER

They shouldn't do that.

HEATHER

I know.

THE OWNER

If they mess up again, we can't have them working for us. That isn't in line with the Socks & Co luxury image.

HEATHER

Don't worry, I told them. But like I said, they're doing really well so far other than that!

THE OWNER

Yes. Yes. Good.

HEATHER

You alright?

THE OWNER

Why?

HEATHER

You seem distracted.
Like, more distracted than usual.

THE OWNER

I'm fine. My work back there is getting to my head.
You are selling lots of socks?

HEATHER

Just made a sale, before you came in.

THE OWNER

Good. These are the best socks, you know.

HEATHER

I know! I tell all of our customers that.

THE OWNER

Ever made.

HEATHER

There's a reason they're \$500!
Haha.

THE OWNER doesn't laugh.

THE OWNER

I hope you take this product as seriously as I do.

HEATHER

Of course.
Could I ask you, what is it you're doing back there?

THE OWNER

Your only concern should be selling these socks.
I have to get going now.

HEATHER *taking out the remote*

By the way, Delivery Dan found this in a client's order.

THE OWNER

Does he know anything?

HEATHER

It's Delivery Dan. Of course not.

THE OWNER

Let's keep it that way.

HEATHER

Hey, um, what are you using it for?

THE OWNER

Don't be nosy, Heather.

HEATHER

Oh. Sorry. I was just curious.

THE OWNER
Don't be.

THE OWNER exits out the front door. HEATHER takes another deep breath.

HEATHER
What is going on today?

Transition.

Nine

*The sock store. The next day.
CASEY is inspecting the flashlight. DELIVERY DAN enters.*

DELIVERY DAN
Heyo. Heard you had a sick day yesterday. You feeling okay?

CASEY
What? Oh, yeah. Is that what Heather told you?
I actually fell asleep in the store.

DELIVERY DAN
— Do you need a place to sleep, Casey?

CASEY
I'm all set, thanks.
Well, for now. The rent on my apartment went up again and I can barely afford it, so I might have to take you up on that! Fun!

DELIVERY DAN
Geez, that sucks. You okay?

CASEY
I'm fine. Don't worry about me.
Anyway, after you gave me the flashlight the other night, the Owner came in so I stayed behind to try and confront him.

DELIVERY DAN
Oh man! Did you? What happened?

CASEY
— No. I fell asleep.

DELIVERY DAN
Oh. Right.

CASEY
But he took the flashlight with him into the back room. So I'm trying to figure that out.

DELIVERY DAN
Slow day in here, then?

CASEY
Heather's been on lunch for an hour and a half, and no one's come in.

DELIVERY DAN

Hey, at least you have time to, um —
What do you guys even do in here all day?

CASEY

Oh! I didn't even tell you the most interesting part from the other night!

DELIVERY DAN

Besides you falling asleep?

CASEY

Yes, besides that. Shut up.
I opened the door to the back room before the Owner showed up, and there was a caveman back there! Like, an actual caveman! So maybe it is a time machine and you're super wrong.

DELIVERY DAN

Damn, really? Okay, that's awesome.

CASEY

And the flashlight started working. So there's gotta be something about the back room that makes it work.

DELIVERY DAN

I think we should test it out. Mainly because I really want to meet a caveman.

DELIVERY DAN starts toward the back room. MR. HORNE enters the store.

MR. HORNE

Where's Miss Heather today?

CASEY

Oh, come on. Not today, Mr. Horne. You know you're not allowed in here.

MR. HORNE

I'm having a looksie. I'm considering a purchase.

DELIVERY DAN

Hey man, you gotta get out of here.

MR. HORNE

You can't tell me what to do. You don't work here.

DELIVERY DAN

I do, I'm the delivery — never mind.

CASEY

Are you actually here to purchase today?

MR. HORNE

I am.

CASEY

Why should I believe you?

MR. HORNE slaps a wad of cash onto the counter.

DELIVERY DAN

Casey, get him out of the store. He's just here for trouble.

MR. HORNE

I'm looking for something blue.

CASEY

Well, um, this is the shade of blue we're running this year.

CASEY shows MR. HORNE a pair of blue socks.

MR. HORNE

I'm a size 9. Do you have something in blue in a size 9?

CASEY

We have crew, calf, quarter, low cut, but we don't have knee socks in blue in that size right now.

MR. HORNE

I like calf.

CASEY

You're looking at them.

MR. HORNE picks up the socks.

MR. HORNE

Mmm. Nice.

DELIVERY DAN

Casey —

CASEY

It's okay, I got it.

MR. HORNE

These are very nice socks.

CASEY

They'll last forever. No holes either.

MR. HORNE

I like how soft they are.

CASEY

Yes, they're very soft. Do you want to buy them?

MR. HORNE

I would like to buy them.

CASEY

Great! I can ring you up. They come to \$540 after tax.

MR. HORNE *gesturing to the cash*
It's exact.

CASEY *to DELIVERY DAN*
See?

CASEY takes the cash into the register and takes out a box to package the socks.

MR. HORNE
Thank you.
Now, I'm buying them on only one condition.

CASEY
— What's that?

MR. HORNE
I'm buying them for you to wear. So you have to wear them. It's a gift.

CASEY
— Um. No thank you.

DELIVERY DAN
Hell no, man. That's not happening.

MR. HORNE
But I paid good money for these! You have to.

CASEY
I don't want to.

DELIVERY DAN
Nope, no way. You get out now.

MR. HORNE *trying to grab CASEY over the counter, waving the socks*
Put these socks on! Put them on!

CASEY
Woah!

DELIVERY DAN
Hands off, bro!

DELIVERY DAN lunges and pushes MR. HORNE away.

MR. HORNE
It's my right!!

DELIVERY DAN
Nope, you're out. Time to go.

DELIVERY DAN pushes MR. HORNE toward the exit.

MR. HORNE

You can't do this! This is an outrage!

DELIVERY DAN

You bet I can.
Casey, keys.

CASEY

What?

DELIVERY DAN *struggling with MR. HORNE*

Toss me your keys!

CASEY

Oh! Okay!

CASEY fumbles in a couple pockets before finding the keys and throwing them to DELIVERY DAN. The keys don't make it very far.

Shoot, sorry.

DELIVERY DAN

Okay, never mind, hold on a second.

MR. HORNE

I am a paying customer!!!

DELIVERY DAN

You shut up!

DELIVERY DAN manages to push MR. HORNE out the door and hold it closed. MR. HORNE tries to push his way back into the store.

Alright, keys now.

CASEY

Got it, got it.

CASEY gives DELIVERY DAN the keys. DELIVERY DAN locks the door. MR. HORNE pounds on the door, trying to get in.

DELIVERY DAN

What a creep.

MR. HORNE

Open the door!

CASEY

Go away, Mr. Horne!

MR. HORNE

You can't do this to me!!!

CASEY

You can't force people to put socks on for you!

MR. HORNE

It's a free country!

MR. HORNE storms away. CASEY slumps to the floor.

DELIVERY DAN
You okay?

CASEY
I'm fine.
Thank you.

DELIVERY DAN
I know that was a pretty messed up thing to experience, so now probably isn't the best time to say this, but — I told you so.

DELIVERY DAN sits.

CASEY
Wow. Thank you, Delivery Dan.

DELIVERY DAN
Call me Dan.

HEATHER appears at the door and finds it locked.

HEATHER
Casey! Why is the door locked??
And I thought we talked about not being on the floor! I still haven't mopped!

DELIVERY DAN
I'll let her in.

DELIVERY DAN unlocks the door and HEATHER enters.

HEATHER
Casey, what's going on with you? This type of behavior is not approved by the Socks & Co. Employee Handbook. Did you read the handbook?
To DELIVERY DAN.
Do we have a handbook?

DELIVERY DAN
If we do, I didn't read it.

CASEY *standing*
I'm sorry, Heather. I —

HEATHER
Everybody's been acting weird lately. You, the clients, the Owner — well, I guess clients are always weird —

CASEY
I've been acting weird? What about you?
I think the you and Owner have something to do with Roger going missing, and you're covering it up.

HEATHER

Do we have something to do with you always being on the ground, too?
Casey, I promise I have as little of an idea of what's going on as you do. Why would you accuse me of something like that?

CASEY

You took the remote when I showed it to you! You said the Owner would be mad! And the Owner is the only person I've seen go into the back room and come out of it without getting lost in whatever goes on back there. He's got some sort of control over it, so he must have the answer about Roger. And you're hiding it for him.

HEATHER

That's a very serious accusation. But I only took the remote because I knew it was his, and he'd want it back.

CASEY

Sure. Sure.

HEATHER

It's true!

DELIVERY DAN

Why should we trust what you say?

HEATHER

Because I'm the one who put it in that client's order.

CASEY

Wait, what? Why?

HEATHER

Okay. So. He uses it to go into the back room. I don't know why, but the entire time I've worked here, he's always had it when goes back there. I've been thinking it might program where he wants the back room to take him. The other day, it was just sitting on the counter, so I decided to do a bit of investigating myself.

DELIVERY DAN

But why would you put it in a delivery?

HEATHER

That delivery was going to —?

DELIVERY DAN

Reginald Richley.

HEATHER

Reggie. Exactly. He and I are close, so I was going to have him give it to me. It was a way to get it out of here without the Owner realizing.

CASEY

Why wouldn't you tell me?

HEATHER

When you ended up with it, I panicked. I didn't want you to let anything slip. I couldn't let him find out that I was asking questions.

DELIVERY DAN

Well, we're going to confront him. Casey and I. It's time for him to give us answers.

CASEY

We?

DELIVERY DAN

Yeah! I'm really curious now, and I don't want to be left out of the interrogation.

HEATHER

Wait wait wait. You're planning on staging an interrogation?

DELIVERY DAN

An intervention of sorts.

CASEY

Well, not really an intervention.

To HEATHER

We need to find Roger. He's been missing for too long.

HEATHER

How do you expect to get the Owner to answer your questions? He's really hard to get ahold of. And he won't react well to being accused of a cover-up.

CASEY

I know. And that's what we still need to figure out.
Do you have any ideas on what to do?

THE OWNER enters.

HEATHER

My idea is to not do it!

THE OWNER

Hello.

CASEY

Wait, why not?

DELIVERY DAN

Oh my god, it's happening. Go for it, Case.

THE OWNER starts toward the back room. CASEY blocks his way.

CASEY

Excuse me, sorry, sir.

THE OWNER

Yes? Who are you?

CASEY

I'm Casey?

HEATHER

That's the new hire. You've met Casey.

THE OWNER

Right. Casey. Of course.

CASEY

Before you go back there, I have a few questions to ask you.

DELIVERY DAN

We have a few questions to ask you.

THE OWNER

I'm happy to answer your questions, Casey.

CASEY

Okay. Great. Number one: what are you doing in the back room?

THE OWNER

Skip. Next?

CASEY

Um. Okay. What is the back room? Why are there always strange things happening back there?

THE OWNER

Two questions in one. Skip.

CASEY

Hold on, you can't skip the questions. That's against the rules.

DELIVERY DAN

Not cool, man. You gotta answer the questions.

THE OWNER

Then ask me a question I want to answer.

CASEY

Where's Roger? What did you do with him?

THE OWNER

Who?

HEATHER

Roger. The security guard for the building? He went into the back room and got lost. I told you about this.

THE OWNER

I didn't do anything to Roger. I don't know Roger.

CASEY

Why should we believe you when there's something different in the back room every time I open the door?

THE OWNER

Heather, are you encouraging this?

DELIVERY DAN

How about you answer Casey's question?

THE OWNER

How about Casey doesn't open the back room? That's an owners-only room.

CASEY

I'm trying to find someone who's *missing!*

THE OWNER

I'm not trying to be mean here.
I have to get to work. You all should consider it too.

DELIVERY DAN

Casey's trying to be a good person and you can help, there's no need to be such a jerk!

THE OWNER

You don't know what you're talking about.

DELIVERY DAN

And do you? Huh?

DELIVERY DAN is getting dangerously close to THE OWNER.

CASEY

Here's a question you should answer: can you explain this?

CASEY opens the door to the back room. There are sounds of heavy wind and snow is blowing around. The top of a mountain.

THE OWNER

Don't open that!

CASEY

What is going on here? What are you hiding from us??

DELIVERY DAN

Answer the question!

HEATHER

Guys —

THE OWNER

I'm taking care of it!

DELIVERY DAN

Yeah? Well take care of this!

DELIVERY DAN pushes THE OWNER into the back room and slams the door shut.

CASEY

Dan!

HEATHER

What did you do??

DELIVERY DAN

He wasn't answering the questions.

CASEY

Okay. It's fine, it's fine. He goes in there and always comes out. So we've got him cornered. He'll have to answer us.

CASEY opens the door to the back room. There are two PEOPLE FENCING, dressed in 18th-century attire. They look up. CASEY closes the door.

Um.

CASEY immediately opens the door again to the lights and faint music of a rave.

HEATHER

What's going on?

CASEY shuts the door and immediately opens it again. All that is behind the door are THE OWNER's sunglasses. CASEY picks them up.

CASEY

He's not there anymore. He's gone.

DELIVERY DAN

That's not what I thought would happen.

CASEY

Me neither.

DELIVERY DAN

So. Um. What now?

Beat.

Blackout.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2**Ten**

*The sock store. The same as at the end of Act 1.
CASEY, HEATHER, and DELIVERY DAN are there. CASEY holds THE OWNER's sunglasses.*

DELIVERY DAN

So. Um. What now?

CASEY

Well, it looks like you just pushed the Owner into that portal through time and space. And now he's gone.

HEATHER

There's a good chance you'll be fired, I'd say.

DELIVERY DAN

He wasn't answering any of the questions! I was trying to help!

CASEY

We've just lost our best shot at getting Roger back!

DELIVERY DAN

You're not mad at me, are you?

CASEY

— Yeah, I am!

DELIVERY DAN

Oh. Okay. I'm sorry.

HEATHER

That sounded really sincere. You should forgive him, Casey.

CASEY

Let's just focus on saving these people from being lost forever, wherever they are.

DELIVERY DAN

Yes. Let's do that. How can I help?

CASEY

I think you've already helped enough.

HEATHER

Ooh, drama.

CASEY

Not helping, Heather.

HEATHER

Sorry.

DELIVERY DAN

Seriously?

CASEY doesn't answer.

— I think I'm just gonna get going, then. Good luck, guys.

DELIVERY DAN exits.

HEATHER

That was harsh.

CASEY

Well, what are we supposed to do now? We're totally screwed because of him!

HEATHER

We can probably figure something out.

CASEY

Like what??

HEATHER

— You're right. I don't know.

CASEY

Great. Just great.

HEATHER

Well, don't lose hope! It'll be okay!

CASEY

— Okay. Why do you sound so excited?

HEATHER

Moral support! It's still my job!

CASEY

Moral support. Of course.

HEATHER

You got this, Casey!

CASEY

There's no cover-up?

HEATHER

If there is, I'm not doing any of the covering. Up.
Cover-upping?

CASEY

I believe you. I'm sorry.

HEATHER

Don't worry about it! So, tell me what you're thinking so far.

CASEY

Well what do we know? We know that the back room is some sort of portal to different times and places. We know that Roger and the Owner are lost back there. We know that something about the back room makes the flashlight turn on and off. And the Owner has a remote that he — and you by extension — are very protective about.

HEATHER

Wait, what flashlight?

CASEY

You're not fooling me again. Roger's. The one he left in the store when he went missing. And, about that — why didn't you show it to me when I started working on this whole thing?

HEATHER

Oh, no reason.

CASEY

Because it would've been helpful to have. See, this is why I thought there was a cover-up. You were hiding it from me.

HEATHER

No! No. No.
Okay, yes.

CASEY

Why?

HEATHER

Ever since Roger disappeared, the Owner has been taking in and out of the back room, so I didn't want you to take it and have him get mad at me. I don't like when people get mad at me.

CASEY

Hold on, he's been what?

HEATHER

You're not mad at me, are you?

CASEY

I'm not *happy*, but whatever, that doesn't matter right now. Why is everyone suddenly so concerned whether or not I'm mad at them?

HEATHER

You just seem really mad.

CASEY

I'm fine.
The Owner's been using the flashlight when he goes back there?

HEATHER

Yes. You're not happy?

CASEY

Oh my god.

HEATHER

You're not going to quit, are you?

CASEY

Where is the flashlight?

HEATHER

It's here, behind the counter. This is usually where he wants it kept.

CASEY

Give it to me.

HEATHER almost hands CASEY the flashlight, but withholds it.

HEATHER

You didn't answer my question.

CASEY

What question?

HEATHER

You're not going to quit, are you?

CASEY

God, why are you so concerned about that? No!

HEATHER

Because you left all of your previous jobs! You're probably going to leave this one too!

CASEY

Heather, I need this job.
But if you don't give me that flashlight, I probably will!

HEATHER

It's just, you're a good employee. I like working with you.
Plus, I don't want to have to keep training people.

CASEY

— This feels like a weird type of moral support.

HEATHER

That's what I'm good at!

CASEY

You're okay at it.

HEATHER

That's hurtful, Casey. This is why people think you're mad.

CASEY

I'm sorry. Just please give me the flashlight.

HEATHER

— Alright. Here.

HEATHER hands CASEY the flashlight.

CASEY

Thank you.
Why do you think he uses this to go back there?

HEATHER

I don't know, it gets dark?

CASEY

But it only turns on and off when it's near the back room. See? It doesn't work normally.

CASEY demonstrates.

HEATHER

Weird. So it's connected.

CASEY

Right, I've been figuring that out since Delivery Dan showed me the flashlight a few nights ago.

HEATHER

Is this what you've been working on this whole time?

CASEY

Yeah — you didn't know that?

HEATHER

I've been so busy selling socks.

CASEY

Right, of course.
So now we have to figure out what this means in terms of saving Roger.

HEATHER

Do you have any ideas?

CASEY

— No.

HEATHER

Shoot, me neither.

CASEY

Great. We're doing great.

HEATHER

You need to work on your moral support, I think.

CASEY

Moral support is not what I was going for.

HEATHER

Wait! I think I know what we can do!

CASEY

What?

HEATHER

Give me a minute, I need to make a quick phone call.

CASEY

To who?

HEATHER

It's a surprise! This is so exciting, I'm being helpful!

CASEY

You know I'll be able to hear who you call, so it won't be a surprise, right?

HEATHER

Just plug your ears or something. It's a surprise! Yay!

Transition.

Eleven

The sock store. Evening.

CASEY and HEATHER are locking up the store.

CASEY

I thought you said it would be before we close up.

HEATHER

Maybe he's running behind. I'm sure it'll be any minute.

CASEY looks at the OWNER's sunglasses, then puts them on.

CASEY

Do I look cool?

HEATHER

Cool in what way?

CASEY

Like, do I look like a cool person? How else would I be cool?

HEATHER

Maybe temperature-wise. Cool in terms of temperature.

With the sunglasses on I'd say you look hot.

CASEY

Thank you.

HEATHER

Temperature-wise. You look like you're outside on a hot day.

CASEY

— Okay, but is that a cool look for me?

HEATHER
Sure!

CASEY takes the sunglasses off.

CASEY
I don't feel cool.
Why does the Owner always wear these? Why doesn't he let people see his face?

HEATHER
I don't ask questions.

CASEY
Right. I forgot.

A knock on the locked front door. It's REGINALD B. RICHLEY III.

HEATHER
There he is!

HEATHER unlocks the door and REGINALD B. RICHLEY III comes in.

REGINALD
Hello hello. Good evening.

HEATHER
Good evening, Reggie! Thank you for coming out here on short notice like this.

REGINALD
Happy to help, but I can't stay for long. I have a plane to catch.
Good evening, Casey.

CASEY
Oh, hi. Where are you going?

REGINALD
Just a quick jaunt to Helsinki for my half-birthday celebration.

HEATHER *to CASEY*
Are you surprised?

CASEY
— About Helsinki?

HEATHER
No, that Reginald's here in the first place.

CASEY
— I heard you call him.

HEATHER
Alright, but if you hadn't heard me call him, would you be surprised to see him here?

REGINALD

Ooh, a surprise! Surprise, Casey!

CASEY

I mean, I guess so. Hi, Mr. Richley.

REGINALD

We already did introductions, Casey, please keep up. So, is it your birthday?

CASEY

No.

REGINALD

Oh. Disappointing.

What is it you called me here for, Heather?

HEATHER

Something about portals, I think? Casey can explain it better.

CASEY

Well, show him the remote.

HEATHER

— I, um, gave it to the Owner.

CASEY

You what??

HEATHER

Sorry. I'm sorry.

CASEY

Alright. Never mind about that, Mr. Richley.

Here's the thing: two people are lost in a portal of some sort, which links to different times and places.

To be honest, Mr. Richley, my background is in retail — my longest job was at the Gap — so I'm way out of my depth here. We need some help.

REGINALD

A portal to different times and places? Are you sure they didn't just get lost?

CASEY

Yeah, I'm pretty sure.

REGINALD

And where is this portal?

HEATHER *pointing*

Here in the store! It's behind that door right there.

REGINALD

Show me.

CASEY

It's something different every time.

CASEY opens the back room door. The DANCING MAN is there again.

DANCING MAN

Hello!

CASEY

Oh, not this guy again.

CASEY shuts the door and immediately reopens it to the sounds of a rainforest.

REGINALD

How fascinating. It seems to be randomizing the destination point —

VICKI enters the store through the unlocked front door.

VICKI

Hi, I'd like to make a complaint.

HEATHER

Oh, I'm sorry, we're closed right now —

VICKI

Then why are you all here?

HEATHER

Because we, um — never mind. How can I help you?

VICKI

I'd like to make a complaint. Weren't you listening?

VICKI takes out the pair of socks she bought.

These don't fit. I paid 500 dollars for them and they don't fit.

HEATHER

I'm sorry to hear that. They were your exact foot size, an 8 if I remember correctly?

VICKI

Um, no. They're not my exact foot size. They're way too big. Like, my foot slides right out of them. I thought you guys were supposed to be the best.

HEATHER

Would you mind putting them on, so I can see?

VICKI

Fine, I guess.

VICKI puts the socks on.

REGINALD *to CASEY*

Who is this?

CASEY

Another client of ours. She bought those a few days ago.

REGINALD

First pair?

CASEY

Yep.

VICKI

See? They're way too loose. I feel like an idiot in them.

HEATHER

They actually look okay to me, it looks like they fit just about perfectly. And after their first wash, they will start to shrink in and adjust to your foot.

VICKI

Well, I don't care. I want my money back.

HEATHER

Alright. We don't accept returns, but we do offer exchanges. So we can get you a smaller size custom made for you, if you'd feel more comfortable in that.

VICKI

No. No. I don't want any of that. I want my money back.

HEATHER

Like I said, we don't accept —

VICKI

I don't care. *I don't care!* Give me my money back.

HEATHER

I'm sorry —

REGINALD

Excuse me, if I could cut in — I'm another client of this store, nice to meet you. I've been buying socks here forever. And Heather's right, they do start to form in to fit your foot.

VICKI

I could care less who you are or how your socks fit. I only came here to get my money back.

HEATHER

Unfortunately, that's something we can't accommodate. I can put in a request to have a replacement order made, if you'd like.

VICKI

No! I don't want that! I want you to give me my money back!!

REGINALD

I think Heather's explained it as concisely as she can that a return won't be a possibility. Your socks clearly fit you, so I don't see why you're causing a stir.

VICKI

No they don't! They're too big!
And I don't appreciate being spoken to like a child!

REGINALD

In that case, stop acting like one.

VICKI

Excuse me?

REGINALD

You heard me. Now, this store is closed, so you're going to have to leave.

VICKI

I'm not going anywhere.

HEATHER

Reggie, I can handle —

REGINALD

No. These socks are truly the best in the world, and there's no way Heather mis-sized you. You can either accept the gracious offer of an exchange, or you can leave.

VICKI

Are you going to let him speak to me like this?

CASEY

Honestly, yeah.

VICKI

I can't believe this place! The *audacity* of you people!
I *will* be calling the Better Business Bureau and I *will* have you *shut down!*

REGINALD

It's time to go, ma'am.

VICKI

I'll call the *police!* I've been *robbed!* This store *lied* and *stole my money!!*
You're going to get *arrested!*

REGINALD *opening the door for VICKI*

Bye now.

VICKI exits in a rage.

CASEY

Geez, can we go one day without someone yelling at us?

HEATHER

This is retail, honey, no we can't.

REGINALD

I can't believe she tried to return her socks. I would never.

REGINALD pulls up his pant leg. He's wearing the grey socks he bought from HEATHER.

HEATHER

Look at you! You look great!

REGINALD

I love them.

Now, back to the issue at hand. You need me to help you get these people back.

CASEY

Yes, please. You're a lifesaver.

REGINALD

One moment — what happened to your hand?

CASEY

I burned it the first time I opened that door.

Wait, you've already seen me with this bandage on —

REGINALD

Sorry if I don't remember, I get distracted by excitement when I buy new socks.

What was the source of the heat?

CASEY

I don't know, I didn't open it all the way.

REGINALD

Maybe the portal is emanating heat in order to expel energy.

HEATHER

Why would it do that?

REGINALD

If people have used that to travel through time and space, they're bringing their own energy to wherever they're going. So there has to be some energy expelled to make up for it. You know, conservation of energy? It doesn't sound very scientific, I'm hypothesizing.

HEATHER

That sounds very scientific.

REGINALD

Is the handle still hot?

REGINALD puts his hand close.

No.

CASEY

So, what does that mean? It's not expelling energy anymore?

REGINALD

I'm not entirely sure. This is all new territory for me.

REGINALD checks his watch.

And I'm incredibly sorry, but I can't stay any longer. I have a plane to catch in 30 minutes.

HEATHER

Oh my gosh, you need to get going!

REGINALD

Don't worry, they'll hold it for me.
Ta ta! Best of luck!

HEATHER

Have a good half-birthday!

REGINALD exits. CASEY remains inspecting the door.

CASEY

No returns, only exchanges.

HEATHER

Casey? What are you muttering?

CASEY

Heather, that's it! No returns, only exchanges!

HEATHER

Our policy?

CASEY

Yes, but it could also be the answer we're looking for. Maybe Roger and the Owner are trapped because the portal has already exchanged the energy they put in! That's why it burned me!

HEATHER

That's kind of mean, don't you think?

CASEY

Well, yeah, I didn't appreciate being burned. But —

HEATHER

That's definitely mean.

CASEY

Heather. Please. We need to focus.
What can we put in there to exchange for someone? To make up for the energy difference?

HEATHER

Don't look at me.

CASEY

I'm not suggesting we use an actual *person*, we can't risk —
The flashlight.

HEATHER

The flashlight?

CASEY

We throw the flashlight in. That's something. It gives off light energy, right? Then maybe the portal will spit Roger or the Owner back out.

HEATHER

Spit? That doesn't sound very scientific —

CASEY

I know, I know. Expel?
Give me the flashlight.

HEATHER

I don't know if we should.
The Owner uses it to —

CASEY

I know he uses it, I get it. Please.

HEATHER

— He'd be mad if we lost it.

CASEY

Oh, come on, Heather.

CASEY tries to get behind the counter. HEATHER blocks them.

HEATHER

No! There has to be something else!

CASEY

It's only a flashlight!

HEATHER

This isn't a good idea!

CASEY pushes past HEATHER and gets the flashlight.

CASEY

Here we go!

HEATHER

Casey, stop!

HEATHER grabs CASEY, trying to stop them. CASEY muscles toward the back room door.

CASEY

Let go! You need to let go!

HEATHER

I can't!

CASEY

It's only a flashlight, Heather!

HEATHER

This isn't Assistant Manager behavior!

CASEY breaks free and reaches the back door.

CASEY

I'm doing my job!

CASEY opens the back door to throw the flashlight. THE OWNER is standing there, without sunglasses. He steps out.

THE OWNER

Casey.

CASEY

You're back! We saved you!

THE OWNER

You're fired.

CASEY drops the flashlight. It breaks.

CASEY

What?

Transition.

Twelve

The sock store. A couple days later.

HEATHER is behind the counter. DELIVERY DAN enters. A moment.

DELIVERY DAN

— Anything going out.

HEATHER

Not today.

DELIVERY DAN

Great.

DELIVERY DAN turns to go.

HEATHER

Where are you going?

DELIVERY DAN

You don't have any deliveries.

HEATHER

No, but —

DELIVERY DAN

I don't have to stay if there aren't any deliveries.
So I'm going.

DELIVERY DAN tries to leave again.

HEATHER

You know he's probably going to fire you, too, right?

DELIVERY DAN

Yeah. I know. That's why I'm trying to get out of here.

HEATHER

It wasn't fair what happened to Casey. I don't want it to happen to you too.

DELIVERY DAN

Great. Thanks.

HEATHER

I'm trying to help you.

DELIVERY DAN

I don't need your help, Heather.

HEATHER

Yes you do.

DELIVERY DAN

I'll be fine. Whatever.

Casey needed your help. You should've stood up for them. Instead of hiding things, and lying.

HEATHER

I thought you were mad at Casey.

DELIVERY DAN

I was. That doesn't mean we stop being friends.

You should've stood up for them. For once, someone was doing the right thing around here.

Something interesting.

Managers stick up for their employees.

HEATHER

I was trying to —

DELIVERY DAN

Don't get the wrong idea here. I don't dislike you, I really don't. I actually think you're pretty cool.

You have the capacity to be pretty cool.

But, I've kinda stopped caring. You can do you.

HEATHER

You *want* to be fired, don't you.

DELIVERY DAN

It'd make more sense. I'm the one who pushed him.

The fastest learner you'd ever trained, and you just let them go like nothing.

I'll see you later, Heather.

DELIVERY DAN tries to leave again.

HEATHER

— We still haven't gotten Roger back. Do you want to help? I know you just wanted to help.

DELIVERY DAN

Yeah. I did.

HEATHER

Want to try again?

DELIVERY DAN

No thanks.

DELIVERY DAN exits.

HEATHER

I think you've kind of messed things up this time, Heather.

Oh my gosh, Heather, do *you* talk to yourself??

Oh, that's not good...

THE OWNER enters the store and makes his way toward the back room.

THE OWNER

Flashlight.

HEATHER

What's behind the bandages?

THE OWNER

Please.

HEATHER

What?

THE OWNER

Flashlight? Please.

HEATHER

Oh, I wasn't reprimanding you for not saying please. Did you think I was — ?

THE OWNER

I thought you wanted me to say please.

You know what? I don't have time for this.

HEATHER

You shouldn't have fired Casey.

THE OWNER

I'm just as disappointed as you are, however Casey simply wasn't Socks & Co. material.

HEATHER

But they were doing good work.

THE OWNER

Not that I saw.

Flashlight, please.

HEATHER

What's behind the bandages? Why have I never seen your face?

THE OWNER

What's gotten into you?

HEATHER

Because that's weird. That's really odd.
What's the remote for? What does it do?

THE OWNER

I really don't have time to waste.

HEATHER

Why not? Why are you in such a hurry all the time?
And why won't you tell me, the manager of your store, anything?

THE OWNER

It doesn't concern you. I'm sorry, Heather.
Flashlight. Now.

HEATHER

No.

THE OWNER

Heather —

HEATHER

I talk to myself.
I say things, out loud, to myself. Customers could see it.

THE OWNER

You shouldn't do that.

HEATHER

I can't help it. I think it's self-conscious.
Subconscious?

THE OWNER

Subconscious. You shouldn't talk to yourself, it looks unprofessional.

HEATHER

Are you going to fire me?

THE OWNER

—

You've been with the company too long, you're too valuable.

HEATHER

Why did you hesitate?

THE OWNER

Give me the flashlight.

HEATHER

Bring Casey back or I walk.

THE OWNER

You're not going to do that. And Casey's not coming back.
Now, give me the flashlight. I'm not waiting any longer.

HEATHER

Bring Casey back or I walk.
A moment.
Transition.

Thirteen

CASEY, sitting alone. DELIVERY DAN enters.

DELIVERY DAN

Can I make a delivery?

CASEY

You can just sit down like a normal person.

DELIVERY DAN

I thought you might appreciate a delivery.

CASEY

What are you, Amazon?

DELIVERY DAN

Close. Hopefully less creepy.

CASEY

"Hopefully."

DELIVERY DAN

Anyway, your delivery.

DELIVERY DAN hands over a small tube of burn cream.

CASEY

What's this?

DELIVERY DAN

Can't you read? Burn cream.

CASEY

You know, that's what I always liked about you, Dan — you just have a way of playfully demeaning me that's *so* charming.

DELIVERY DAN

Oh, for sure, and your sarcasm is the most endearing thing in the world.

CASEY

Thanks, I *really* appreciate that.

DELIVERY DAN

There ya go.
And it's Delivery Dan to you.

CASEY

Thanks for the burn cream and the backhanded compliment, *Delivery Dan*.

DELIVERY DAN

Hey, any time.
Sorry you got fired.
I feel like it was my fault.

CASEY

Yeah, you probably shouldn't have full-on shoved the *owner of the store into an alternate dimension*.

DELIVERY DAN

We've all made mistakes.

CASEY

By the way, you never told me about the weird stuff you saw back there.

DELIVERY DAN

What?

CASEY

When we first met, you told me you saw some weird stuff behind the back door, but you never told me what it was.

DELIVERY DAN

Oh! Right. I saw a man wrestling an alligator the first time, then I saw a big crowd of people staring out and cheering. Looked like the stands at a football game or something. They stopped cheering when they saw me, so I closed the door.

CASEY

Wow. That's — pretty cool.

DELIVERY DAN

It was okay. Not as cool as a caveman.

CASEY

You win some, you lose some.

DELIVERY DAN

I yelled at Heather for you.

CASEY

About what?

DELIVERY DAN

Letting you get fired.

CASEY

It wasn't her fault. But thanks.
So who's looking for Roger now, Heather?

DELIVERY DAN

No, no one is.

CASEY

— What do you mean, no one is?

DELIVERY DAN

I mean, um —

CASEY

You mean I went through all that —

DELIVERY DAN

We went through all that —

CASEY

All that progress for it to just get *dropped*?
Someone's *life* is at stake here!

DELIVERY DAN

Maybe Heather will —

CASEY

What happened to your drive, Dan? You were so excited about figuring this out! I thought at least *you'd* keep going.

DELIVERY DAN

You got fired and I — I didn't want to.

CASEY

Great. That's just great.
You're a good guy, Dan, but you're also a coward.
Sorry.

DELIVERY DAN

No. Thanks. That means a lot.

CASEY

We have to go back and finish this.

DELIVERY DAN

We're getting Roger back.

CASEY

Duh. After all that work, I'm not letting this go.
Also, I don't want to have burned my hand for nothing.

DELIVERY DAN

We're getting Roger back!

CASEY

— Do you think if I can, I'll get my job back?

DELIVERY DAN

If you can convince the Owner, maybe. Why?

CASEY

I need the money. A lot.

DELIVERY DAN

Shoot, for your apartment situation?

CASEY

I mean, it's fine. Never mind.

DELIVERY DAN

I'm sure you'll get it back.
And if you need a place to stay —

CASEY

Don't worry about it. I'm fine.

DELIVERY DAN

— Okay.
Getting Roger back!

CASEY

Yes!

DELIVERY DAN

We're going to get him back so much! It'll be so good!

CASEY

Yes!

DELIVERY DAN

Heather's not here, so I'm taking over moral support duties.

CASEY

Not bad!

DELIVERY DAN

Better than nothing!

CASEY

Alright!

CASEY and DELIVERY DAN, excited, start to exit. CASEY leaves the burn cream behind.

DELIVERY DAN

You forgot your burn cream!

Transition.

Fourteen

The sock store.

HEATHER and THE OWNER, as before.

THE OWNER

Don't make me do this, Heather.

HEATHER

Bring Casey back, or I walk.

CASEY and DELIVERY DAN burst in.

DELIVERY DAN

We're here!

HEATHER

Casey! What are you doing here?

CASEY

We're here to finish what we started.

THE OWNER

There's nothing to finish. You've been fired.

HEATHER

We were in the middle of discussing —

THE OWNER

No, we finished discussing.
If you want to walk, feel free.

HEATHER

Wait, but —

THE OWNER

You're free to go. You don't work here anymore.

HEATHER

But you said I was too valuable.

THE OWNER

I changed my mind.
I was really hoping it wouldn't come to this.

CASEY

You can't fire Heather!

DELIVERY DAN

Yeah, she's been with the company for like, ten years!

CASEY

Nobody sells socks better than her.

HEATHER

Aw, thanks, Casey.

THE OWNER

You all need to get out now. None of you work for me anymore, you're not authorized to be here.

DELIVERY DAN

Hold on, I thought I still had a job —

THE OWNER

No. Especially not you. You pushed me.

DELIVERY DAN

Fair enough.

CASEY

We're not going anywhere until you answer our questions. Roger's life is still at risk here.

THE OWNER

You need to leave now.

CASEY

What are you using that back room for?

THE OWNER

You're trespassing on my property. I'm calling the police.

HEATHER

Maybe we should just go —

CASEY

Hell no.

THE OWNER has pulled out a cell phone, but CASEY lunges to grab it from his hands. CASEY throws the phone across the room.

THE OWNER

This has gone too far!

CASEY

What are you hiding behind those sunglasses?

THE OWNER

That's my business.

CASEY unwraps their own bandaged hand and shows the burn.

CASEY

This is what happened to me when I touched the back room for the first time. Did that happen to you, too?

THE OWNER

I don't have to answer that.

CASEY

Delivery Dan, a little help?

DELIVERY DAN

What do you want me to do?

THE OWNER goes for the phone. CASEY jumps on his back to stop him.

CASEY

Get the bandages off!

THE OWNER

No!

HEATHER gets the phone. DELIVERY DAN starts to struggle with THE OWNER to get the bandages off.

HEATHER

I'm turning the phone off!

CASEY

Thank you!

THE OWNER

You're all fired!

DELIVERY DAN

That's not making a difference right now, bud.

The CONFUSED PERSON walks up to the door of the store to come in, and sees what is happening inside. CASEY, DELIVERY DAN, HEATHER, and THE OWNER pause and they all lock eyes with the CONFUSED PERSON.

HEATHER

Um — want to buy some socks?

The CONFUSED PERSON decides to exit instead.

CASEY

Almost there, Delivery Dan!

THE OWNER *suddenly non-aggressive*

Please — you can't do this to me.

DELIVERY DAN gets the bandages off THE OWNER and drops them to the floor. THE OWNER turns away.

CASEY

You're — you're not burned.

THE OWNER

Don't look at me.

HEATHER

It's alright. You can turn around.

THE OWNER

I don't want to. I'm embarrassed.

HEATHER

You don't need to be embarrassed.

THE OWNER

I do. You've never seen it.

CASEY

Seen what?

THE OWNER

I've taken great precautions to — and now it's all been exposed —

CASEY

What haven't we seen?

THE OWNER turns around and drops their hands from their face. HEATHER gasps.

HEATHER

Oh wait, there's nothing there.

DELIVERY DAN

What's going on? What's the big deal?

THE OWNER

What's the big deal? My deformity?

DELIVERY DAN

I don't see any deformity.

THE OWNER points at a small spot on their own face.

THE OWNER

This hideous thing.

CASEY

What is it?

THE OWNER

My mark. From the first time I used the back room.

CASEY

Tell us what happened.

THE OWNER

Didn't I fire you all?

CASEY

We'll get to that in a minute. What happened when you used the back room?

THE OWNER

I had never teleported or traveled through time before, and there was a mistake. An unforeseen complication.

DELIVERY DAN

Of course there was. Man, this is getting good.

CASEY

Delivery Dan. Quiet.

DELIVERY DAN

Sorry.

THE OWNER

I had built the device to take me throughout history a few years before you started, Heather. The store hadn't been in business long. And I got a lot of people asking about the price of the socks, asking if these were really the best socks in the world. So I decided to find out. I would travel throughout history, all over the world, to make sure my socks were truly the best.

DELIVERY DAN

— That's what you used this for? Does the remote control it?

THE OWNER

Yes. I type in the time and place I want to go, and it takes me. The first time I used it, I brought a pair of our socks with me. To compare them. But something malfunctioned along the way, the socks disappeared from my hands, and I ended up with this hideous mark.

The others look closely at THE OWNER's face.

HEATHER

It's shaped like a sock.

DELIVERY DAN

That's kinda cool.

THE OWNER

It's disgusting. I don't want to be seen like this, it's humiliating.
A sock-shaped mark on my face. I'm a monster.

CASEY

So you keep your face covered.

THE OWNER

Yes.

CASEY

That's it? No ulterior motive?

THE OWNER

No.

DELIVERY DAN

But you can barely even see it.

CASEY

Why are you so secretive about the back room?

THE OWNER

I don't want anyone else to find out, and try to copy my product.

CASEY

So, you don't want other people to sell \$500 socks?

THE OWNER

Right.

CASEY

Who would *want* to do that?

THE OWNER

Somebody might.

DELIVERY DAN

Yeah, Case, somebody might.

THE OWNER

Lately, though, it's been malfunctioning. It's been setting to random destinations — I've been trying to fix it.

CASEY

It's malfunctioning because of Roger —

HEATHER

Hold on a second. You wouldn't even trust us, your employees, to keep your secret for you? I've worked for you for ten years and I'm just now finding out about what you're using the back room for.

THE OWNER

I was nervous. Talking to people makes me nervous. At a certain point, it was easier to keep it to myself.

HEATHER

But we're a *team*, alright? You can trust us.

THE OWNER

Right. A team.

HEATHER

Do we have your trust?

THE OWNER

Here's the thing —

HEATHER

No, there is no thing. We either do or we don't. Understand? If you want this business to be successful, you have to start talking to your employees. If there's no communication, there's no Socks & Co.

THE OWNER

The business is successful.

HEATHER

Not as successful as it could be. What do you say? Will you start talking to us? Are we a team?

THE OWNER
— Yes.

HEATHER
Wonderful. We're a team.

THE OWNER
If that's the case, then no more ambushing me.
And especially no more pushing.

DELIVERY DAN
I thought we'd moved past that.

THE OWNER
I can be aloof sometimes. But that doesn't mean I'm a bad person.

HEATHER
Except when you were going to call the police on us.

THE OWNER
I'm sorry about that.

CASEY
— So we have our jobs back, then?

THE OWNER
I will consider it.

CASEY
Oh, come on. You'll consider it? Who else is going to sell socks like Heather? Who else is going to make deliveries like *Delivery Dan*?
You have a great team here. If you fire them, you're going to have to do all of that yourself.

THE OWNER
And why should I keep you around?

CASEY
Um —

HEATHER
Because Casey's the best employee I've ever trained.

DELIVERY DAN
When Casey says they're going to do something, they do it.

HEATHER
I was going to promote Casey to Assistant Manager.

DELIVERY DAN
I was going to promote Casey to Assistant Delivery Person.

HEATHER
That's not a position.

DELIVERY DAN

You should keep Casey around because — um — because they don't smell.

Pause. THE OWNER considers.

THE OWNER

Why do you want to keep working here?

CASEY

Honestly, I need this job. I barely earn enough to afford to live, and I'm about to miss my next rent payment. If that happens, I don't have a place to live. So I'm kind of desperate. I know this isn't what you want to be hearing right now, and I don't know why I'm telling you of all people, but it's what I'm dealing with. So, having a job would be kind of nice.

Also — I want to keep working here because I like the people I work with.

THE OWNER

All of them?

CASEY

Delivery Dan can be a bit of a jerk sometimes, but yes, all of them.

THE OWNER touches the mark on their face.

THE OWNER

No more sleeping on the floor in here.

CASEY

You got it.

THE OWNER

Welcome back aboard, Assistant Manager.
Now everyone get back to work.

THE OWNER starts to exit.

HEATHER

Where are you going?

THE OWNER

I need to get new bandages to cover my face.

CASEY

But you look fine, you don't need to cover up anymore.

THE OWNER

I'm going to need some time to adjust. Let me have this.

CASEY

Fair enough.

HEATHER

Don't forget your phone!

THE OWNER

Of course. Thank you.

THE OWNER takes the phone from HEATHER.

See you all later.

THE OWNER exits.

DELIVERY DAN

That went — better than I expected.

HEATHER

We have our jobs back!

Thank you, Casey. You did great. But you're not Assistant Manager yet.

CASEY

— Why not?

HEATHER

Because you still haven't gotten Roger back. That was the condition, remember?

CASEY

Oh my gosh. Roger. How could I forget?

We need to exchange energy with the portal to get him back.

DELIVERY DAN

Are you sure that will work?

CASEY

Not at all.

Heather, flashlight.

HEATHER

Um, about that — It's broken.

CASEY

Broken? How?

HEATHER

You dropped it the other day, and it broke.

CASEY

Oh. Great.

What are we supposed to do now? None of us can go in there without being trapped.

DELIVERY DAN

Is there anything else that will work to exchange the energy?

CASEY

You know what? Don't worry about it. I'll go in.

HEATHER

Casey, you'll get lost.

CASEY

This whole thing has been leading me to this. I've just been putting it off. I don't want to be a coward about it anymore.

DELIVERY DAN

I'll go.

CASEY

Hold on —

DELIVERY DAN

It's alright, I have to take a risk at some point. I've never done anything like this! I'll be a hero! I told you I wanted to help, so let me help.

HEATHER

I'll do it.

DELIVERY DAN

What?

HEATHER

— Alright, I don't want to, I just didn't want to feel left out.

CASEY

Delivery Dan, let me handle this.

DELIVERY DAN

I don't want you to get lost in there.
The store needs you.

CASEY

Geez, Delivery Dan, I think you need more friends.

DELIVERY DAN

I have friends — !

CASEY

Okay, I'm going in.

CASEY goes to the back room and opens the door. The sounds of violent wind.

HEATHER *shouting over the wind*

Are you sure about this?

CASEY *also shouting*

I'm going to get Roger back.
I told you I wouldn't quit.

DELIVERY DAN *also shouting*

You got this, Case!

HEATHER *still shouting*

Moral support is my thing!

DELIVERY DAN *still shouting*
It's a team effort!

MR. HORNE bursts into the store. CASEY turns around and sees him.

MR. HORNE
Miss Heather —

HEATHER
No! Not now! You get out, Mr. Horne!

MR. HORNE
I have a problem I'd like addressed. It has to do with your underling there.

HEATHER
You're a creepy creep and you can't be here!

MR. HORNE
It's about a purchase!

HEATHER
— You bought something?

DELIVERY DAN
Casey sold him a pair of socks.

MR. HORNE
And then that boy pushed me out of the store!

HEATHER
Wait, what's going on? Dan, you pushed him?

CASEY
Don't worry about it —

DELIVERY DAN
Let's go, friend. I'll push you again. I'm a pusher.

HEATHER
Everybody hold on one second!

CASEY
No time, Heather! I had an idea!

MR. HORNE
I'd like to be compensated either monetarily or with my original request!

HEATHER
What's your idea?
Wait, what was his request??

CASEY
Mr. Horne, we don't offer returns!

MR. HORNE

Then there's only one other option.

CASEY

You're right, there is.
Delivery Dan, socks!

DELIVERY DAN

What about them?

CASEY

Throw some! To me!

DELIVERY DAN

Oh! Sure!

DELIVERY DAN gets a pair of socks and throws them to CASEY. CASEY catches the socks.

CASEY

Nice throw!

DELIVERY DAN

Nice catch!

CASEY

How about this, Mr. Horne?

CASEY takes off a shoe and starts to put one of the Socks & Co. socks on.

MR. HORNE

Yes, finally, finally. I love it.

HEATHER

Casey, I don't think this is a good idea!

CASEY

I'm handling it!

MR. HORNE

How's that sock feel? Nice and soft?

CASEY

Nice and soft, Mr. Horne!

CASEY has finished putting the sock on and sticks their leg in the air, in front of the entry to the back room.

Come and get it!

MR. HORNE charges at CASEY's foot. CASEY, at the last second, pulls their foot away and MR. HORNE tumbles into the back room. CASEY slams the door shut.

DELIVERY DAN

Woah!

HEATHER

Casey, what was that??

CASEY

Let's hope it works.

HEATHER

Let's hope what works?

CASEY

No returns, only exchanges, right?

CASEY knocks on the back room door. A knock comes from the other side.

DELIVERY DAN

Who is it?

CASEY

Let's find out.

CASEY opens the door and ROGER the security guard stumbles out. He looks around, confused.

ROGER

Where am I — oh, am I in that damn sock store again?

CASEY

Roger?

ROGER

Who are you? What do you want?

CASEY

My name's Casey. I work here. We got you back. We saved you!

ROGER

Saved me?

HEATHER

From being lost back there. You're back!

ROGER

Oh.

CASEY

— Aren't you happy?

ROGER

No, I'm not happy. Do I look happy?

DELIVERY DAN

Um. Maybe you're just disoriented. Do you need anything?

ROGER turns around and tries to go back into the back room.

CASEY

You can't go back there, you'll just get lost again!

ROGER opens the door. The CAVEMAN is there again, eating something off the ground. CASEY shuts the door before the CAVEMAN can get out.

ROGER

No, no, no, no —

ROGER collapses on the ground in front of the door.

CASEY

What? What's wrong?

ROGER

I was in heaven back there.

I was on some tropical island, beautiful blue water as far as you could see. And lovely trees. More fruit than you knew what to do with. Not a care in the world. It was perfect.

CASEY

But we saved you —

ROGER

Saved me from what? A neverending vacation? I want to go back!

CASEY

— I'm sorry.

ROGER

Now I have to be a damn security guard again.

Thanks. Is that what you wanted? Thanks a million. Yippee.

ROGER leaves. Pause.

CASEY

— Well. Good for us, we did it?

Transition.

Fifteen.

The sock store. A few days later.

CASEY, HEATHER, and DELIVERY DAN are there. CASEY is applying burn cream to their hand.

DELIVERY DAN

How's it feeling?

CASEY

Better, thanks.

DELIVERY DAN

Best delivery ever, right?

CASEY

— It's an okay delivery.

HEATHER *looking at the time*

Five o' clock.

DELIVERY DAN

Rock and roll.

HEATHER locks the front door.

HEATHER

I'm nervous. Are you all nervous?

CASEY *sarcastic*

What's there to be nervous about?

They laugh.

THE OWNER steps out of the back room, holding the remote. A small band-aid covers the mark on his face.

THE OWNER

It's all set.

HEATHER

Fixed?

THE OWNER

Test runs went as planned.

CASEY

Hey, were you ever able to find out where Mr. Horne ended up?

THE OWNER *pointing to the remote*

England. 1348. Terrible socks.

HEATHER

We're not going there, are we?

THE OWNER

No, of course not. We're going wherever you all want.

DELIVERY DAN

No more waiting! Let's do this! I'm gonna meet a caveman!

They start towards the back door.

CASEY

Hold on.

CASEY turns off the lights to the store.

HEATHER

You can leave them on, it's alright.

CASEY

I don't want anyone thinking we're still open.

DELIVERY DAN

Good call.

THE OWNER

All aboard.

THE OWNER types something into the remote, then steps into the back room.

HEATHER

Here we go! I'm so excited!

HEATHER steps into the back room.

CASEY

After you, Delivery Dan.

DELIVERY DAN

Okay, you know you can just call me Dan like a normal person, right?

CASEY

Yeah, but it's more fun this way.

DELIVERY DAN

Fair enough.

DELIVERY DAN steps into the back room.

CASEY

Let's do this.

CASEY steps into the back room and shuts the door behind them. A moment of silence.

Then, a big noise comes from the back room!

ROGER, having heard the noise, enters to unlock the front door and step inside. He shines his (new) flashlight around the sock displays.

ROGER

Did I hear what I think I heard?

ROGER makes his way to the back room door.

Please, please, please. Send me back.

ROGER opens the back door and steps inside. The door closes behind him.

Beat.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.