

## NOTES

There's nothing more relaxing than spending a lazy afternoon browsing around at a local bookstore. In his send-up on the state of booksellers, comedian and author, Varun Rajan, introduces us to a myriad of off-the-wall characters, who are, at times, the stereotypes of those found stocking the shelves and assisting customers at retail bookstores everywhere. This comedic one-act play may be performed by a male or female and should be entered in Humorous Interpretation. Be sure to make each character vocally and physically distinct. This selection is a tour-de-force for the talented comedian adept at playing physical comedy and creating memorable characters!

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**KEVIN:** The new guy. Normal and far more sensible than those who work at the store.

**STACY:** Single mother, and another employee. Friendly, caring and not as clueless as the others.

**BRETT:** Young employee, kind of a slacker, definitely not the brightest bulb in the box.

**MR. GRAYSON:** Middle aged, manager of the bookstore. Has driven the store to the brink of failure through a series of completely misinformed advertising tactics.

**BRAMLEY:** Senior citizen who neither works nor purchases anything from the store. In fact, nobody understands why he is there daily, but since he is a consistent source of company and entertainment, no one questions his presence or motives.

**MR. GIOVANNI:** A local author who wrote a book about his dog performing on a televised reality talent show.

**CUSTOMER 1:** A rare customer

**KATIEY KUTIEY:** A local news reporter known for trying to make her stories more newsworthy than they are.

**OFFICER MAE:** Tall, wide-set butch-like police officer who frequents the bookstore.

**SETTING:** *An unnamed bookstore at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Edgeworth, in an unknown geographic location.*

**KEVIN:** *(To the audience)* Hi, my name is Kevin, and I am...*transitioning*. Yes, I, like many in my generation, am transitioning. *(Pause)* I am transitioning from one job to another—in, I might add, a completely different field. I'm leaving "Marketing" and moving into "Retail." Wait! I know what you're thinking—"Retail?" Yes, retail. But I'm going to work at a place where I've spent thousands of hours all during my youth—a bookstore! There's this great little independent bookstore over on the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Edgeworth. In fact, I start today.

*(KEVIN walks through the entrance of the book store. STACY is standing behind the counter.)*

**KEVIN:** Uh, hey. I'm Kevin, I'm the new hire. Mr. Grayson told me to come in at 11.

**STACY:** Oh, hey Kevin! Come on in! I'm Stacy. Let me give you a tour.  
*(STACY and KEVIN turn a corner and walk through a set of bookshelves.)*

**STACY:** Aaaaand this is where we keep our Adult Non-Fiction and Self-Help novels.

**KEVIN:** Wait, really? You guys have only one shelf for all of these?

**STACY:** Yeah, Mr. Grayson isn't really a fan of non-fiction. Or self-help. Actually the majority of books in both of these sections are Southeast Asian cook books.  
*(BRETT enters.)*

**BRETT:** Hey, how's everybody living?

**STACY:** Brett, you're late.

**BRETT:** What, you mean today?

**STACY:** Kevin, I'd like you to meet our other employee, Brett. Brett, this is Kevin. Kevin here is the new guy.

**BRETT:** Whaaaaaaaaaat? We got a new guy?!

**KEVIN:** Yup.

**BRETT:** That is awesome! So, uh... where is he?

**KEVIN:** *(Laughs, before realizing he's serious)* Oh. Hi, I'm... that's me. I'm the new guy. It's my first day today.

**BRETT:** Oh hey, very cool! Nice to meet you man, I'm Brett!

**KEVIN:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah, I know!

**BRETT:** *(Perplexed and concerned.)* What, you know who I am already?

**KEVIN:** *(Still smiling)* Well yeah. *(Furrows brow and points towards Stacy)* Stacy literally just introduced us.

**BRETT:** Oh, cool, so you met Stacy already.

**KEVIN:** *(Beat.)* Yep.

**BRETT:** Cool, you want a tour?

**KEVIN:** I actually just had a tour.

**BRETT:** What do you mean, bro? You just got here.

**KEVIN:** No, dude, *you* just got here. I've been here for well over a half-hour.

**BRETT:** Oh killer, man. So when do you start?

**KEVIN:** Wow, this is going to be a long day.

**STACY:** So Kevin, walk around, take it all in, figure out where everything is. We've got a nice seating area in the back of the store where we take breaks, read, whatever.

**KEVIN:** Cool, sounds like a plan.

*(KEVIN walks to the back of the store, sits down in a chair and picks up a magazine off the coffee table in front of him. BRAMLEY is sitting on a couch placed directly across on the other side of the table, reading a newspaper.)*

**BRAMLEY:** So. You're new here.

**KEVIN:** Uh, yeah, hi. I'm Kevin. It's nice to meet you—

*(KEVIN extends his hand for a handshake. BRAMLEY does not reciprocate.)*

**BRAMLEY:** Bramley. You've made a huge mistake coming here. I don't think this place has sold a book in weeks.

**KEVIN:** Oh. Do you work here?

**BRAMLEY:** Nope.

**KEVIN:** Are you a customer?

**BRAMLEY:** Nope.

**KEVIN:** What's your deal then?

**BRAMLEY:** I consider myself an unpaid consultant and antique office décor.

**KEVIN:** Oh, interesting. So what do you think it's going to take to turn this place around?

**BRAMLEY:** Fire.

**KEVIN:** Excuse me?

**BRAMLEY:** Burn the whole damn place down.

**KEVIN:** *(Laughs and gets up from chair.)* Okay. Well, it was nice meeting you, Mr. Bramley.

*(Stacy walks over.)*

**STACY:** Hey! You met Bramley. *(Whispering.)* We have no idea where he came from. But he's been hanging out here every day for the past few years.

**KEVIN:** And you guys are okay with that?

**STACY:** *(Shrugs.)* What can I say, he keeps things interesting.

*(KEVIN, STACY, BRETT, and BRAMLEY are spending time in the front of the store. MR. GRAYSON walks in.)*

**MR. GRAYSON:** It's over, everybody! It's over! The store is done.

**BRETT:** Hi, Mr. Grayson! What's up?

**MR. GRAYSON:** We can't get another loan from the bank. It's over. The bank is giving us one week to come up with the five months back rent we owe! Let's start shutting down the shop! There's nothing else left! Oh, woe is me!

**STACY:** Oh my goodness, Mr. Grayson, are you serious?

**MR. GRAYSON:** *(Sobs.)* Yes! I am a failure as a manager!

**BRAMLEY:** Well, that much is true.

**STACY:** I can't lose this job, Mr. Grayson; I have a daughter to support. She's Goth! Do you know how expensive black hair dye is these days? She goes through seven bottles a month! There has to be something that we can do!

**MR. GRAYSON:** No there isn't, Stacy! I've tried everything!

**BRETT:** *(Whispering to Kevin)* You think we can get a half day today?

**BRAMLEY:** You could always burn the place down.

**MR. GRAYSON:** I've tried everything! I put up fliers all over the town. I've revamped our promotional campaigns by putting us on Facebook, Twitter and Yelp! What more can I do?

**KEVIN:** You guys are on Yelp?

**MR. GRAYSON:** Yes! *Look* for yourself! If staying current doesn't work, what will?

**KEVIN:** *(Searching on his phone)* Mr. Grayson, you've labeled us as a "Corner Store" on Yelp.

**MR. GRAYSON:** Well, yeah, we're on the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Edgeworth.

**KEVIN:** Yes, I understand we are *literally* on a corner, but that's not what people think of when they hear "corner store." You also labeled us as a "liquor store."

**MR. GRAYSON:** People kept coming in asking for liquor after I labeled us a corner store, so I figured I'd add it to our description.

**KEVIN:** But we don't sell liquor!