

Dan's New Life
by
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INT. SHOP - DAY

DAN (now SEBASTIEN MACQUOID-BIRDWHISTLE) is carrying a metal basket filled with groceries. He is standing behind a CASHIER (18) in smart clothes, and a cash register on a table. On both DAN'S sides and by the walls, are shelves stacked with all kinds of foods and drinks. Behind him is another MALE SHOPPER (30) in casual clothes and carrying a loaf of bread and some milk. DAN puts the basket on the table.

CASHIER

Hey, I know you, you're Dan right?

SEBASTIEN

Nope. Not any more. Now I'm Sebastien MacQuoid-Birdwhistle.

CASHIER

Why??

SEBASTIEN

That blasted James tried to get me arrested for being called 'Dan', so I changed my name. That way, he can't arrest me anymore.

CASHIER

Oh, I know the law you're complaining about... The one where literally anyone can make rules?

SEBASTIEN looks dumbfounded.

SEBASTIEN

I think we all do!!!

CASHIER

But he'll just make a law against people with your new name now...

SEBASTIEN

No...

CASHIER

Sounds likely, to me.

SEBASTIEN

But I've ordered a new passport, I've had my driving license changed, my bank details, you name it!

CASHIER

You really weren't expecting James to get the new you arrested?

SEBASTIEN

He wouldn't...

CASHIER

He would though, wouldn't he? Have you been thinking clearly lately?

SEBASTIEN

I have to admit... No...

CASHIER

You have to stop him, you can't go on living like this...

SEBASTIEN

How??

The SHOPPER from behind taps SEBASTIEN on the shoulder. The latter turns to face him.

SHOPPER

You have to make a law against people called James Ziegler.

SEBASTIEN

He doesn't care! He's on the run from the law and a mental home as we speak! But no one bothers to arrest him, as priority goes to people like me!

SHOPPER

You're really leaving your old life behind?

SEBASTIEN

It's the only way. I'm thinking of leaving the podcast for good and becoming a farmer in Australia.

SHOPPER

Why Australia?

SEBASTIEN

Because it's as far away as possible. I was considering leaving Earth for Pluto, then I saw reason and pulled myself together... And you think Pluto was bad? Before that, I made plans to live in Kepler 22B!

The SHOPPER shakes his head with sympathy.

SHOPPER

You want my advice?

SEBASTIEN
 (frustrated)
 What??

SHOPPER
 Don't go anywhere. Make up a lie that James gets sponsored by his favourite band, Deftones. Then say 'actually you're not, the band called you a twat'. He'd really hate that.

SEBASTIEN turns to the CASHIER as the latter speaks.

CASHIER
 Yeah. Then say Deftones wrote a song about him, saying how great he is, then say that was a lie as well. He'd believe the lie too, as actually bands have written songs about him.

SEBASTIEN
 Yeah! Then when he's depressed and helpless, I change my name back to Dan!

SEBASTIEN gives a cheesy smile. The CASHIER coughs awkwardly.

CASHIER
 Let's be real here, Mr. MacQuoid...

SEBASTIEN
 MacQuoid-Birdwhistle...

CASHIER
 ... Yes, the driving license company, your bank and all... well... when they hear about you changing your name back, they'll think you've been trolling them... They're going to be really annoyed...

SEBASTIEN
 Oh yeah. I guess it's the right thing to do if I keep my new name, then. I'll need to do some explaining, sure, but I think it will catch on.

CASHIER
 Why did you give yourself such a weird name?

SEBASTIEN
 I really don't know...

CASHIER

Do you have James's mobile number?

SEBASTIEN

Sure do...

CASHIER

Prank call him, now! Put it on
loudspeaker, so we can all hear!

The other SHOPPER chuckles as SEBASTIEN retrieves a mobile
from him pocket, dials a number, then puts it to his head.

SEBASTIEN

Hello! It's Chino Moreno from
Deftones! I've just written a song
about how great you are!

JAMES

Then why does it say it's a call from
Dan?

SEBASTIEN

Errrr. Not sure.

The CASHIER face palms.

JAMES

Did YOU write a song about how great
I am, Dan?

SEBASTIEN

It's Sebastien and dear God, no!

JAMES

Eh?

SEBASTIEN

Whoops.

JAMES

Oh you changed your name, so I can't
get you arrested?

SEBASTIEN

Yeah.

JAMES

In that case, people called
Sebastien... what's the rest of your
name?

SEBASTIEN

Ha! I'm not telling you and there's
nothing you can do about it!

JAMES

Fine. I'll just get ALL people called Sebastien arrested! Bye!

SEBASTIEN hangs up looking fed up.

SHOPPER

He's really going annoy the Sebastiens out there...

SEBASTIEN

Yeah, you'd think I'd have a whole army of Sebastiens supporting my fight against James, but the whole army probably consists of about two..

.

CASHIER

It is a rare name.

SHOPPER

Whatever the case, you better have a good lawyer...

Police sirens are heard from outside.

SEBASTIEN

No. That can't be for me, it can't be. It would be way too soon...

CASHIER

Sounds like the police are after you, Sebastien...

SEBASTIEN

What, do they think they're responding to some kind of an emergency??

CASHIER

It does seem likely...

Two POLICEMEN in their thirties enter the shop from behind. The other three in the shop turn to face them.

POLICEMAN 1

Hello... There have been reports that someone called Sebastien is here... Is that true?

SEBASTIEN

How did you know where I am??

POLICEMAN 2

Secret intelligence, I'm afraid.

SEBASTIEN

Come on! Are you suggesting I'm
some kind of security risk??

POLICEMAN 2

Yep. Of the most importance.

SEBASTIEN

How about you arrest James for
wasting police time??

POLICEMAN 1 pulls a funny face.

POLICEMAN 1

No... That's not possible.

CASHIER

How about you get him arrested for
being called James Ziegler?

POLICEMAN 1

That could work...