

Various Misunderstandings

by

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INT. SHOP - DAY

JAMES is wearing a white shirt. He is standing behind a cashier in a busy supermarket. A smartly-dressed 40 year old MAN by his side stands, passively. A 70 year old WOMAN, carrying a basket with cans of beer in puts her container on the desk.

WOMAN
Ah, beer, lovely.

JAMES
Do you have any I.D. on you?

The WOMAN shakes her fists with joy.

WOMAN
Hahahahaha!

JAMES
Lolz. No seriously, I can't sell you alcohol without proof of age...

WOMAN
You're killing me!

MAN
This is great work, James. People really like you here. Judging by your past behaviour, it's hard to believe your mental home is giving you days off to work here, for whatever reason you've suddenly gone normal...

JAMES
Thanks. But I do need proof of age.

MAN
Just give her the beer!

WOMAN
Teehee!

JAMES
Oh! My contact lenses have fallen out!

JAMES picks them up then looks at the WOMAN. He looks horrified.

JAMES
MY GOD! How old are YOU? You looked about 10 a second ago!

The MAN looks down.

MAN

Don't spoil things, James.

JAMES

Seriously, how old are you? 90?

The WOMAN looks so annoyed.

WOMAN

What?? I'm never shopping here again!

MAN

Please!

JAMES

Look on the bright side. Now you can get completely wasted!

WOMAN

It's for my son who will be turning 50! HE'S getting wasted!

JAMES

FIFTY? I'd expect him to be at least 70! A 70 year old getting wasted! Picture that! Not as funny as 90, though. 100 would be ridicu...

MAN

(interrupting)

James, even if you kept talking about people getting wasted without the ageism and abuse, that would still be inappropriate.

JAMES

I'm so sorry!

MAN

Just go, James.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

JAMES wears a cardigan. He stands behind a desk with books on it and a till. By his sides are a huge number of books on shelves. An OLD MAN carrying a book approaches JAMES.

OLD MAN

Hello, sir. I would like to take out a book called Hardcore Sects...

JAMES

Excuse me?

OLD MAN
Hardcore Sects...

JAMES
I'm sorry, this library doesn't
really have books like that...

OLD MAN
No, it's right in my hand, right now.

JAMES
Are you sure?

OLD MAN
Sure as I can be.

JAMES
Is it good?

OLD MAN
Apparently.

JAMES
Is the story captivating?

OLD MAN
Sure is. It's about the most extreme
religious groups in the world.

JAMES
I don't understand.

A 50 year old SHOPKEEPER enters the room and approaches
JAMES.

SHOPKEEPER
Is everything ok?

JAMES
I don't know what to do, this
person's a freak who doesn't seem to
care at all...

OLD MAN
I want a book called Hardcore Sects!

SHOPKEEPER
Do you know what a sect is, James?
Spelt 'S E C T'?

JAMES
A spelling mistake in THIS library?
It's S. E...

SHOPKEEPER
 (interrupting)
 Just go, James.

JAMES
 I'm not going anyway. I'm calling the
 police on this holy pervert...

SHOPKEEPER
 JAMES!

INT. CHARITY SHOP - DAY

JAMES wears a T-shirt and stands behind a cashier, looking depressed. By his sides are all sorts of random stuff, from old clothes on racks, CDs on shelves, stacked computer consoles, etc. An OLD MAN wearing glasses approaches JAMES.

OLD MAN
 Hello! Do you know why I'm here?

JAMES
 No...

OLD MAN
 Guess!

JAMES
 Why?

OLD MAN
 Guess!

JAMES
 Ok... Do you want to donate your
 shoes?

OLD MAN
 No... Maybe I'd want to donate my
 glasses?

JAMES frowns.

JAMES
 No, I know how important they are...

OLD MAN
 Correct. Maybe I have something in my
 pockets?

JAMES
 Yes?

OLD MAN
 Yes! But what?

JAMES
Coins?

OLD MAN
No! Pot noodle sachets!

JAMES
Oh. What flavour?

OLD MAN
Bombay Bad Boy!

JAMES
Oh, nice.

OLD MAN
I want £50 for them.

JAMES shakes the OLD MAN'S hand.

JAMES
I like you. You've had an interesting business idea, and whilst it's illegal, you can claim you have dementia and that you don't know what you're doing. Do you have dementia?

OLD MAN
Yes!

JAMES
I will gladly pay you £50. I don't have dementia, BUT I once hit my head hard and I zoned out for a while. I know what you're going through. Dan said I deserved it and I said I could get him arrested for assault, but HE explained how I've commit acts of burglary, arson, perjury, assa...

OLD MAN
(interrupting)
Only joking, I'm an undercover boss! It's me, your podcast producer, I'm wearing a mask and was testing you!

JAMES freezes.

JAMES
Oh dear God no. This can't be real. I can't even think how I could have said something worse to a worse person.

OLD MAN

I know.

JAMES

Please don't tell anyone. Can I still have your sachets?

OLD MAN

Why?

JAMES

They would just be something. A little gift to brighten this dark day.

OLD MAN

Here you go.

The OLD MAN hands JAMES his sachets.

JAMES

If I've blown three work experience days in just three days in more or less equally crazy ways, do you think maybe I could go back to hosting my podcast instead?

OLD MAN

Sure.

JAMES looks puzzled.

JAMES

Oh, cool. Sounds a bit unbelievable. I wasn't really expecting that.

OLD MAN

I know right...

JAMES

Er... thank you?

OLD MAN

Cheers!

JAMES stares in a daze.

JAMES

Why are so nice?

OLD MAN

Because ratings are down, I want you back on the show!

(MORE)

OLD MAN (cont'd)

Deep down I actually thought it was funny how you were willing to pay such an extreme price for my potnoodle sachets!

JAMES

Wow. That makes sense!

OLD MAN

Yes. Which is why there shouldn't be any misunderstandings. Which is ironic really.

JAMES

Why?

OLD MAN

Because if this situation was a sketch and similar things have happened to you as you've claimed, they could be called 'various misunderstandings!'

JAMES

Oh yeah!