

THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING!

BY **ERIKA KUHN**
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THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING! was first presented as a developmental reading at West Virginia University (Josh Williamson, Director of the School of Theatre and Dance) in Morgantown, West Virginia, on March 24, 2024. The project's faculty advisor was Aubrey Sirtautas. The production was directed by Erika Kuhn, with music direction by Spencer Hansen and lighting design by Justin Borak. Stage directions were read by Ethan Maxwell. The stage manager was Rachel Rock. The cast was as follows:

MAEVE Faith King
HARPER Veda Wheeler
DREW/DYLAN Newton Sweeney
BLAKE/DIANA/RANDY/OLLIE Kenzie Wasson
JESSE/JOAN/KIRBY Ripley Hoffmaster
JORDAN/ALEX/SHANE Matthan Elijah
ANNA/LIV Reilly Wilcox
BROOKE/RILEY Natalya V. Wood
THE MAN BEHIND THE MILK Ethan Maxwell
BILL/TONI/CHAD George Wagner
CRAIG/BROCK Chase Kipps
JULES Justin Borak

*For Kurt: loving father and perpetual supporter.
We can still hear you in the hum.*

CHARACTERS

THE REGISTERS

MAEVE – A young woman whose family owns the local grocery store. Her father, the patriarch of the family, has just passed away. She's figuring out what to do with her life. Female.

HARPER – Maeve's ex-best friend from high school. After getting a big scholarship, she left town and moved across the country for a fancy business school. She comes back to town because she needs to talk to Maeve. Female.

DREW – The leader of a group of teenagers who cause havoc in the grocery store parking lot. Any gender.

BLAKE – One of the teenage troublemakers. Any gender.

JESSE – One of the teenage troublemakers. Any gender.

JORDAN – One of the teenage troublemakers. Any gender.

THE DAIRY AISLE

ANNA – A young woman who has fallen hopelessly in love with the man who stocks the milk in the dairy aisle. Female.

BROOKE – Anna's best friend, who pushes her to go after love. Female.

THE MAN BEHIND THE MILK – The man who stocks the milk at the store. Male.

THE CANNED GOODS AISLE

BILL – An old pro and longtime employee of the store. Male.

CRAIG – An excited but nervous new employee at the store. Male.

THE PASTA AISLE

DYLAN – Riley's partner, incredibly nervous about their families meeting for the first time tomorrow. Any gender.

RILEY – Dylan's partner, trying to get Dylan excited about their upcoming meeting of the families. Any gender.

THE GREETING CARD AISLE

ALEX – A young person trying to figure out how to express their love. Any gender.

JOAN – An older woman who helps Alex navigate their feelings. Female.

THE MEAT AISLE

SHANE – A bro and a recent vegan. Male.

BROCK – A bro and a lover of meat. Male.

CHAD – A bro and a lover of meat. Male.

THE BAKERY

LIV – One of Sadie’s bridesmaids and Diana’s best friend. Ruined the wedding cake earlier that day. Female.

DIANA – One of Sadie’s bridesmaids and Liv’s best friend. Is trying to save Sadie’s wedding and Liv’s sanity. Female.

NOTES ON THE PLAY

The play takes place in Maeve’s family’s grocery store. Each scene shifts to a different aisle and section of it. These shifts can be as magical or industrial as you want, but it should always feel like we are inside the store.

Cast the show with as many or as few actors as you would like. We used doubling for our world-premiere reading, but you can do this play with any configuration you want. The only actors who shouldn’t be doubled are the two playing Maeve and Harper.

This play is a vignette play. For transitions, please feel free to use characters, lights, music, and scenery to mask scene changes or make them feel organic. There are scenes in “The Stockroom” that can be used as transitional devices, but please, be creative with it!

A “/” indicates where the next line of dialogue begins.

A “-” indicates that a line should be cut off before it’s finished.

NOTES ON “THE STOCKROOM”

“The Stockroom” is an annex of additional scenes. While the play in its original format reads eighty to ninety minutes, the playwrights have developed these scenes to slot in OR take the place of any scene throughout the play except for “The Registers.” “The Registers” acts as a constant for the play and should never be moved. If you plan to do the play for competition purposes, we recommend placing one to two scenes in between each “Registers” scene.

The play is meant to be flexible and versatile to YOUR production. Feel free to place any of “The Stockroom” scenes throughout the play or cut scenes (other than “The Registers”) that you feel unable to perform with your cast. If you have any questions, please reach out to Concord Theatricals for further instruction or help.

THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING!

(MAEVE, a young woman wearing an all-black suit, opens the store.)

(She turns the lights on, walks past the cash registers, and takes a moment at a specific one with a worn-in stool.)

(Just as she takes a deep breath, four TEENS rush into the building.)

The Registers 1: Teenage Troublemakers

(BLAKE, DREW, JESSE, and JORDAN enter the grocery store on a mission.)

DREW. Mentos and Diet Coke.

MAEVE. No –

DREW. MENTOS AND DIET COKE –

MAEVE. Guys, not today.

I know my dad let you mess around in the parking lot and have fun but I really don't want to clean up.

JESSE. Yeah, Maeve, where's your dad –

(JORDAN hits JESSE.)

(JORDAN gestures at MAEVE's clear funeral outfit.)

JESSE. Oh.

Yeah.

Sorry for your loss.

(**JESSE, JORDAN, and BLAKE** all chime in with “sorry for your losses” as well.)

DREW. We loved your dad.

BLAKE. Yeah!

MAEVE. Really?

He was kinda just an old grocery store owner.

JESSE. No.

He was OUR old grocery store owner.

JORDAN. Yeah!

And he was the only person who didn't care about us making a mess in his parking lot.

BLAKE. Honestly I thought he was magic –

DREW. Blake –

BLAKE. WHAT?

Drew, think about it.

(*Honestly thinking this is magic.*) Every time we would throw rotten fruit at the dumpster it would just...be clean tomorrow.

DREW. Yeah, it was Mr. –

BLAKE. (*Still thinks it's magic.*) Or remember when Jordan threw their lunch at the dumpster with Jesse to see which one exploded more, a ham and cheese or a PB and J?

(**JORDAN** makes an explosion noise.)

JESSE. That was awesome.

BLAKE. The parking lot is magic!

And so was your dad!

MAEVE. To some people he was.

JESSE. No!

To all people!

BLAKE. He was like Houdini –

JESSE. He wasn't literally magic –

BLAKE. Maybe though.

DREW. My mom said he was a “pillar of the community.”

BLAKE. What does that even mean?

DREW. He was old and stuff.

MAEVE. Ouch.

DREW. No, like, he's always been around!

JESSE. Like the Leaning Tower of Pizzazz –

BLAKE. Or like that big green lady in New York.

MAEVE. The Statue of –

BLAKE. LIBERTY.

The Statue of Liberty.

DREW. GUYS, HE WAS RESPECTED NOT MADE OF STONE!

MAEVE. No, it's fine!

He was old and has always been around!

BLAKE. Kinda like you!

MAEVE. Guys, chill –

DREW. Blake, you can't call people old.

BLAKE. No it's true!

I heard you were a legend back in the day.

JORDAN. Yeah, my cousin –

JESSE. She lives in an apartment –

JORDAN. She said you and your friends *ruled the school*.

JESSE. Yeah, you and what's her name –?

DREW. Oh yeah, Harp –

MAEVE. (*Interrupting.*) Yeah, well, enjoy school while it lasts.

People come and go, but sometimes you get stuck.

In the purgatory that is this town.

(*Awkward, long pause.*)

BLAKE. Wait that sounds really scary –

DREW. So like, respectfully...

What are you doing here?

MAEVE. What?

JORDAN. Yeah, like...

Shouldn't you be with your people today?

MAEVE. (*Kinda a joke.*) I couldn't get the day off work.

Boss is a real jerk!

BLAKE. Dude he's *dead*...

JESSE. Aren't you the boss now?

Couldn't you just give yourself the day off work?

DREW. I think she was trying to be funny.

MAEVE. And it clearly worked.

BLAKE. Your dad was better at being funny.

MAYBE 'CAUSE HE WAS MAGIC.

MAEVE. I hate to break it to you...

But this is just a grocery store.

My dad's not magic.

He was just a pushover who cleaned up after you guys when you'd destroy his parking lot.

(Beat.)

(The TEENS are kinda hurt by this.)

BLAKE. *(Under their breath.)* I still think he was magic –

DREW. *(To MAEVE.)* Well, that's what we do!

What we've always done!

Our friend group throws your trash at large objects.

JESSE. Yeah!

It's our thing!

DREW. *(To MAEVE.)* Didn't you used to have fun with your friends?

MAEVE. Well, I –

JORDAN. Maeve, you still *like* fun right?

BLAKE. You don't like live in the store or something?

(The TEENS kinda laugh.)

(MAEVE feels defensive.)

MAEVE. I like fun!

I have a life!

I –

I –

You know what, I don't need to explain myself to you.

You're children.

(The KIDS seem to be let down.)

(They were just trying to have fun.)

(MAEVE feels bad.)

(She tries to save it.)

MAEVE. BUT...

I do have some old apples in the back.

If you PROMISE to throw them IN the dumpster, not AT...

You can take 'em to the alley –

JESSE. SCORE.

(They start to run toward the stockroom.)

(MAEVE stops them.)

MAEVE. I'll grab them as soon as I get a chance.

I don't want you all destroying the stockroom.

(MAEVE exits.)

BLAKE. She seems sad.

DREW. She IS sad.

JESSE. But still, we get to throw stuff!

Win?

JORDAN. Huge win.

DREW. I wish there was something we could do to help.

(HARPER walks in wearing business casual.)

HARPER. Are you guys open?

JESSE. We don't work here.

JORDAN. We just kinda run this place.

DREW. Yeah, we just opened.

BLAKE. I'm the boss.

HARPER. Oh really?

That's so impressive from someone your age.

BLAKE. Excuse you.

I'm forty-seven.

HARPER. Well, you look great.

BLAKE. I use lotion.

DREW. Wait, do I know you?

Do you live here?

HARPER. Used to.

My family does, I was looking for an old friend.

Maeve?

JESSE. She's in the back –

JORDAN. – getting us rotten fruit to throw at dumpsters.

BLAKE. (*Condescendingly.*) It's a boss thing.

DREW. Are you Harper?

HARPER. Uh, yes.

How do you know that?

JESSE. Oh, you're Maeve's –

(**DREW** covers **JESSE's** mouth.)

(**DREW** thinks quickly.)

DREW. Do you...wanna see...Blake's office?

HARPER. Uh –

BLAKE. It's a dumpster.

HARPER. Not really –

DREW. Of course you do!

Come on!

*(**DREW** drags **HARPER** out to the parking lot;
the others follow.)*

The Dairy Aisle 1: The Man Behind the Milk

(ANNA and BROOKE, two best friends, in the dairy aisle.)

(They are mid-conversation.)

BROOKE. So he's...

ANNA. Yeah...

BROOKE. ...and you've –

ANNA. Yeah –

BROOKE. Never?

ANNA. Nope.

BROOKE. So, it's like an online thing?

Like an app?

ANNA. No, not exactly –

BROOKE. Wait, then –

ANNA. We haven't officially met. Like technically.

BROOKE. So how –

ANNA. We've interacted though!

BROOKE. Interacted?

ANNA. Yeah, like we know each other.

BROOKE. Can you just tell me already?

ANNA. You're going to think I'm stupid.

BROOKE. Okay, stupid, just tell me who the guy is!

ANNA. He's... He's the man.

BROOKE. Like...he's awesome?

ANNA. No, like, he's the man...

ANNA. The man who stocks the milk.

(Beat.)

BROOKE. The what?!

ANNA. You know, the guy!

BROOKE. Wait, which guy though?

ANNA. The guy in the back of the cooler?

BROOKE. I mean, I guess –

ANNA. And he puts the milk in and he kind of shoves it out and down to you.

BROOKE. Yeah.

ANNA. Well, I think I'm in love with him.

BROOKE. Uh-huh.

ANNA. So yeah, that's who it is.

BROOKE. That's who you've been seeing?

ANNA. In a way...

BROOKE. In a way?

ANNA. I mean I see him but...

I guess we don't technically see each other.

BROOKE. Because he's / the –

ANNA. / the man behind the milk.

BROOKE. Right.

Right, so –

ANNA. So, just hands mostly, forearms sometimes, if his sleeves are rolled up.

BROOKE. But obviously –

ANNA. Obviously it's cold back there so / his sleeves aren't usually rolled up.

BROOKE. / his sleeves aren't usually rolled up.

ANNA. You get it.

BROOKE. And you haven't told anyone?

ANNA. No, because obviously it's kinda crazy.

BROOKE. Yeah.

ANNA. Yeah, like usually with love at first sight you know
you sort of –

BROOKE. See the guy?

ANNA. Right?

So you see the problem.

BROOKE. Okay.

Okay.

Okay, so we just need to bring the milkman to you.

ANNA. Bring the milkman to me?

BROOKE. Yeah.

We need to see the man behind the milk, but more
importantly, he needs to see you.

ANNA. I just want to be seen.

BROOKE. We *all* just want to be seen!

ANNA. Exactly.

There's just one problem.

BROOKE. What's that?

ANNA. I'm lactose intolerant.

(They exit.)

The Canned Goods Aisle 1: Don't Look Down

(CRAIG, brand new to the job, and BILL, an old pro, are both employees of the grocery store.)

(BILL is training CRAIG in the canned goods aisle.)

CRAIG. Before we get started, I just really wanted to say how much I appreciate this opportunity, sir.

BILL. Yep.

CRAIG. Like, I really, really needed this job, and I want you to know, I'm ready for anything.

BILL. Yep.

CRAIG. You know, anything you need, anything I can do to help, I'm here, I'm your guy!

BILL. Yep.

CRAIG. Do you...

(He laughs nervously.)

Do you ever say anything besides "yep"?

BILL. Nope.

CRAIG. Got it.

BILL. Okay, let's get started on the basics of stocking.

CRAIG. Alright, okay!

Let's get into it!

BILL. Kid, there's no bonuses for enthusiasm.

CRAIG. You got it, boss!

BILL. Ah, jeez –

CRAIG. Sorry, I mean, okay.

Yeah.

Whatever!

Yes.

(Beat.)

BILL. Stock comes in before open on trucks, trucks unload onto the pallets, pallets get jacked and dropped along each corresponding aisle, and sometimes endcaps –

(CRAIG is furiously writing this all down in a tiny notebook.)

CRAIG. Jacked...and...dropped, got it!

BILL. As I was saying, stock hits the floor by five a.m. and doors open at seven.

You do the math.

CRAIG. Five plus seven equals twelve, sir!

BILL. Not like that.

(CRAIG starts scribbling something out in his notebook.)

CRAIG. I chewed the eraser off already.

BILL. You the nervous type, kid?

CRAIG. Not a lot.

I mean a bit!

Absolutely a bit.

But a lot?

Nervous a lot?

No way, not me.

BILL. Yep.

(BILL takes the notebook out of CRAIG's hands and slides it into the pocket of his vest.)

BILL. Now, you know FIFO?

CRAIG. Like the dog?

BILL. What?

No, like First In, First Out.

CRAIG. We get to leave first?

BILL. Jeez...in the biz it means how you rotate food.

Take this here can of beans.

We match the SKU on the shelf to the box, and we see we've got plenty of room to restock.

(Tapping a can.) Hot seller.

(CRAIG nods in awe and reaches to take the notepad out of his pocket to jot this down; BILL stops him.)

Now lookee what we have here.

(BILL reaches into the depths of the shelf and pulls out one last dusty can of beans.)

If this ole boy doesn't get taken out and moved to the front of the row, what's gonna happen?

CRAIG. No one can reach it –

BILL. No –

CRAIG. No.

BILL. Bad. Beans.

CRAIG. *(A realization.)* Bad beans!

BILL. Do we want bad beans?

CRAIG. Uh-uh.

BILL. So we FIFO.

(CRAIG whispers "FIFO" under his breath over and over in lieu of being able to write it down.)

Now look at this glorious aisle.

What do you see?

CRAIG. More beans?

BILL. No.

CRAIG. ...all of the beans?

BILL. No.

CRAIG. ...beautiful beans?

(BILL snaps his hand into a finger gun.)

BILL. Bingo.

(CRAIG pumps his fist in validation.)

You see, each of these rows in each of these aisles are faced.

Facing is when all of the pretty little labels face out to our pretty little faces.

(CRAIG mouths "pretty little labels, pretty little faces" with his eyes closed, deep in memorization mode.)

You got all that?

CRAIG. Yes!

BILL. Alright.

Then you're good to go.

Come find me when you're out of beans.

(CRAIG orients himself to the boxes and the shelves.)

CRAIG. But sir, what about these boxes that have beans in 'em that are already fully stocked?

BILL. Ah.

BILL. That's when you take on upstocking.

CRAIG. Upstocking?

BILL. It's when you take excess inventory...

(BILL exits around a corner and comes back dragging an old ladder.)

...and stock it up at the top of the shelves in storage.

(A look of horror spreads across CRAIG's face.)

CRAIG. Up?

BILL. Yep. Up.

CRAIG. Up.

Up there?

BILL. You got it.

CRAIG. Up, up, way up where it's high?

BILL. Yes. Is that a problem?

CRAIG. No!

Nope!

No no no no problem at all.

BILL. Alright then.

I'll check in soon.

(BILL exits.)

(CRAIG looks between the boxes, the ladder, and the height of the shelf in abject terror. He is afraid of lots of things. But most so, of heights.)

(CRAIG looks right and left, alone in the aisle. He looks for something, anything to do. FIFOs and polishes the one row of beans that BILL showed him, then runs out of things to do – besides upstocking.)

(CRAIG approaches the ladder. Touches it ever so slightly. It squeaks. He jumps. A CUSTOMER or EMPLOYEE passes by. He plays it cool and ad-libs a quick "Hello!" Or a very meek "Thank you for shopping!" He's once again left alone with the ladder.)

(CRAIG squares up with the ladder. Takes a deep breath, and before he can chicken out, jumps on the first step. Barely off the ground, he holds still, really still, and checks to make sure he's still alive.)

(He is! Emboldened, he takes another step up. Then another. He's feeling confident, proud. He takes another step, then we watch as he looks down. He is horrified.)

(Another PASSERBY crosses; CRAIG tries to call out for help but is too paralyzed with fear. All that comes out is little distressed mouth sounds and breath. The PERSON doesn't notice. They grab a can of beans, consider it, change their mind, and put it back on the shelf, label askew. CRAIG looks like he is about to have a heart attack.)

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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