

Ashley Platten
English 104
Ratcliffe
Fall 2008
“Shouts and Murmurs”

Revenge of the Cashier

I have worked part-time at the local grocery store in Valders, Wisconsin for almost eight years. Although that may seem to be a rather short period, those eight years have been an eternity for me. I have spent eight years of my life dealing with the rude, inconsiderate, and ill-mannered customers of Christel's Piggly Wiggly. Don't get me wrong, not every customer that walks through the door is rude, but a great majority of people seem to lack politeness and basic forms of communication. As a cashier, it is my duty to appear bubbly and jolly at all times and be polite to every customer regardless of the situation. However, after about two hours of dealing with the unrelenting rude customers that walk through our doors, my smile becomes no more than a masquerade.

Almost all of our regular customers can be categorized into varying groups. First, there are the lunch crew customers. These perverted, middle aged, construction workers think you are attracted to their receding hair lines, greasy hands, and protruding stomachs (no doubt resulting from an indulgence of the liquid they place upon a pedestal--beer). Next, you have the mothers who are incapable of controlling their ape-like children who inevitably scream in such a high pitch that neighborhood dogs begin to howl. These children continue their rant throughout the entire store while reaching out their sticky little hands to grasp upon anything within their reach. Ultimately, they end up grabbing a jar of pickles which falls through their hands, caked with Spaghetti O's from lunch, and crashes upon the floor. The raunchy smell of vinegar wafts throughout the store. Once again it's "clean up on aisle two."

Then you have the older ladies who still insist upon writing out a check by hand, despite the fact that we have told them several times that “our machines can print those for you.” No, they would rather spend half an hour to write out their name. In the time it takes them to write Christel’s out, I could have written a five page paper. Moving down the line, you have the old men whose language skills consist of nothing more than muttered words and grunts. These irritable men seem to be replicas from the movie *Grumpy Old Men*. They complain about everything and never smile. With their cave men like behavior, they toss their groceries upon the belt. I feel like I am in a football game and someone should be screaming “Go long, go long!” at me while I desperately try to dodge the cabbage being thrown at me in an attempt to save myself from a brutal death by cabbage scenario.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most disturbing customers are those generalized as “the creepers”. These customers looked as though they popped out of a horror movie and if you turn your back you may end up in the back of their trunk. I, along with some of my other female co-workers, have actually given these customers names. One particular example is “the toothless wonder”. This is the customer with barely any teeth, hair that reaches out in every direction as though he has been recently electrocuted, and a smell that lingers long after he is gone. He wanders about the store aimlessly, while staring at you in a manner which makes you cringe. Then if you’re lucky, he’ll assume that he actually has a chance with you and will persistently ask you for your phone number and then grin at you like some type of ex-convict. Another annoying group is the “No, I will not give you my Piggly Wiggly card” group. This group consists of the customers who feel as though I have been secretly trained by the United States government to record what they are buying in our store on a daily basis. I politely ask, “Do you have your Piggly Wiggly card with you today?” and they respond with some ridiculous comment

alluding to the idea that Piggly Wiggly is using their card to “track” what they are buying. No, I am not tracking what you are buying. I could care less! Seriously, I am just trying to do my job, put in my hours and get the heck out of that store and away from you crazy people. Yet none of these groups combined exceed the intolerance I feel towards the group of just plain inconsiderate customers. I say, “Hello, how are you today?” and they simply do not respond. I say “Thank you, have a nice day!” and they just walk away. These customers missed the day in kindergarten when they taught politeness and how to say “please” and “thank you.”

It is not a difficult task to treat a cashier with respect and as a human being. Despite what some customers may think, no, I do not like being treated like an illiterate fool just because I am a cashier. I am a pre-law student at Marquette University. I am a cashier because I am entirely responsible for putting myself through college. I work as many hours as I can so that I can afford the five-hundred dollars worth of books I need to buy every semester. I don’t deserve to be treated like yesterday’s garbage, nor does any other cashier. So next time you go to the store, any store, be polite to your cashier and for a change tell them to “have a nice day.”