

*Nice Nails*  
by Aaron Ricciardi

CONTACT:  
Farrah Cukor / United Talent Agency  
(908) 307-3515  
[farrah.cukor@unitedtalent.com](mailto:farrah.cukor@unitedtalent.com)

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## THE PEOPLE

### The Workers

- ARIEL:** Late forties/early fifties, female, Korean-American.  
Co-owner of Nice Nail, with her husband Maurice.  
Thick Korean accent.  
Her real name is Hyeon-Jin (賢振).
- MAURICE:** Late forties/early fifties, male, Korean-American.  
Co-owner of Nice Nail, with his wife Ariel.  
Thick Korean accent.  
His real name is Min-Gyeong (敏敬).
- JASMINE:** Early twenties, female, Korean-American.  
Maurice's and Ariel's daughter and de facto Nice Nail employee.  
The slightest of Korean accents.  
Her real name is Jeong-Sook (正淑).
- NOMFUNDO:** Twenties-forties, female, black South African.  
New Nice Nail employee.  
Thick Zulu accent.

### The Visitors

- HELENE:** Late seventies/early eighties, female, Jewish-American, white.  
Longtime, loyal Nice Nail customer.  
Thick New York Jewish accent, originally from the Bronx.  
Either dyes her hair or wears a wig *not* gray or white.
- JACOB:** Late twenties, transmasculine, Jewish-American, white.  
Helene's grandson and new Nice Nail customer.  
Very slight New York accent.  
Has a mohawk or some funky hair color, like green.
- ALYSSA:** Twenties/thirties, female, American, any ethnicity.  
Nice Nail customer. Hair long, half-up.
- LYDIA:** Early forties, female, American, any ethnicity.  
Nice Nail customer. Hair long, a hot frizzy mess.
- RACHEL:** Thirties, female, American, any ethnicity.  
Nice Nail customer. Hair long, in a tight pony.
- EVE:** Thirties/forties, female, American, any ethnicity.  
Nice Nail customer. Hair long, down, flowy.
- KATY:** Late twenties, female, American, any ethnicity.  
NY State Department of Labor investigator.  
Hair long, in her face and her eyes and her mouth.
- CHARLOTTE:** Forties/fifties, female, English, any ethnicity.  
Nice Nail customer. Hair short, posh.
- } Played by the same actor.

## THE TIME

May-August, 2015

## THE PLACE

Nice Nail, a tiny nail salon in Nassau County, Long Island. There are many nail salons in Nassau County, some fancy, some not. Nice Nail is not. It's 2015, but, man, everything in this place looks like it was bought during the Bush administration. The first one.

There are manicure tables and pedicure chairs. The manicure tables might have lamps on them.

There is a display with shelves full of nail polish bottles.

There is a nail drying bar, with seats for customers. There's a counter for resting drying nails, as fans blow from above them, and fans underneath that blow air on drying toes.

A glass front door serves as the main entrance, with an Open/Closed sign dangling and a bell that tinkles when it opens. There's a window, which overlooks the street outside, with shoddy signs that say stuff like, "Manicure Pedicure \$25!" There are chairs here, along with a pile of outdated magazines waiting to be read.

In the back, there is a bathroom, a little employee closet, and a back door.

There is a counter with a cash register, behind which is an outdated stereo system. On the wall behind the cash register, a handwritten sign reads, "CASH ONLLY" yes, with two Ls. When the salon is open for business, Maurice rarely, if ever, moves from his seat behind this counter.

There is a large television screen that is always playing a slideshow of landmarks and natural beauty from around the world.

## THE SOUNDS

Whenever the store is open, there should be tacky spa muzak playing from the stereo—think classical music played with too much synth, or pop tunes played so acoustically on piano or guitar or mandolin that it's not clear what's even happening anymore. Oh! And lots of vague inauthentic "nature" sounds.

## THE SMELL

Whenever this play is performed, the theater should be alive with the acetone-rich scent of a nail salon.

## THE LANGUAGE

When Ariel speaks Korean, a translation should *not* be provided for the audience.

“When I first saw America,  
it was like a huge giant,  
and I was like a pygmy woman.  
I made a desperate struggle with this  
giant  
not to fall. He whistled merrily, waving  
his hands.  
He was a huge man, but a man like a  
snake.

Now, here I am in America, where  
people drink Coca-Cola, where  
people are crazy about Spielberg’s silly  
films, where  
people chase endless desires, where  
people choose an old anachronistic  
movie star as their president, where  
people enjoy powerful wealth, but keep  
homeless people in the street, where  
people shout, "ladies first,"  
and don’t allow a woman to be  
president.  
Now here I am from the country where  
the people are burning American flags,  
singing, "Yankee, go home!"  
Now here I am in America, where  
most of my yellow people are hungry  
for McDonald’s and greedy for "Made  
in USA"  
My brother who has a master’s degree  
in English literature  
thinks about Norman Mailer’s  
American Dream  
while selling fishes and vegetables  
to his white neighbors 24 hours a day.

My sister, who liked paintings of  
Picasso’s Blue Period  
is working on sewing machine, with  
dyed blond hair.  
When colored friends are making a  
rainbow coalition  
my yellow people wonder whether  
yellow is on the rainbow.  
They think the lighter the skin, the  
closer to heaven,  
the darker the skin, the closer to hell.  
They decide yellow is in between.  
So they smile at white and frown at  
black.  
They make money in the hope of  
becoming a majority  
and forget about the minority.

Now, here I am torn between  
my own self-flattery and my own revolt.  
When I think about the Native  
Americans  
who were deprived of their land, my  
stomach cramps.  
When I think about the African slaves  
who were stolen from their land, I  
throw up.

Now here I am in America, where  
I develop a serious ulcer, a sickness of  
wrath.”

“Poem by a Yellow Woman”  
by Sook Ryol Ryu

**ONE**

*Alyssa lounges in a pedicure chair,  
getting a manicure and a pedicure at the same time.  
Jasmine is sitting doing her toes,  
while Ariel is standing doing her fingers.  
Nomfundo stands next to the pedicure chairs and watches Jasmine and Ariel work.  
Maurice sits behind the counter, reading a car magazine.  
Tranquil spa muzak plays.  
Alyssa lies there like a member of a royal family,  
mindlessly Instagramming or Snapchatting or whatevering on her phone.  
It remains like this for what feels like a long time—maybe an entire minute.  
(Or maybe the actors have even been onstage like this since the audience came in.)  
All is serene.  
That is, until Alyssa's phone rings.  
The ring is a pop song that clashes with the spa muzak, and it's very loud.  
Alyssa answers the phone, careful not to mess up the wet polish on her nails.*

**ALYSSA**

**I'M TRYING TO RELAX AND YOU KEEP BOTHERING ME!**

What do you want.

Well I know you think you sent the paperwork but they didn't get it, so what you think happened literally doesn't matter. Just scan it it's not hard!

*(To Ariel, sweet.)* Top coat please, thank you so much.

*(Back to the phone.)* I wasn't talking to you mother. I was talking to the nail girl.

*(To Jasmine, sweet.)* Can you put top coat on my toes too? Thaaaaaanksss.

*(Phone.)* I'm not talking to you mother!

*(To Ariel and Jasmine, sweet sweet sweet.)* Do you guys have Quick Dry? Omigod that would be amazing. I have a meeting. Thanks so much.

You're my guarantors. Yes I'm talking to you, omigod. You're my guarantors. I can't move into the apartment until you send in the paperwork so FIG-URE-IT-OUT.

Do you want me to live on the street? 'Cause that's what's gonna happen: I'll live in a cardboard box on the street and I'll eat McDonald's for breakfast lunch and dinner and then I'll weigh six-hundred pounds and I'll have you to thank because you don't know how to use an EFFING SCANNER.

Okay, stop yelling at me? I'm getting a manipedi at a nail place on Long Island and I've never been here before in my life and you're embarrassing me in front of everyone.

Literally you can just go to Kinko's.

*Ariel and Jasmine indicate to Alyssa that she's done  
and direct her to sit at the nail drying bar.*

**ALYSSA**

*(To Ariel and Jasmine.)* Oh okay.

*(Phone.)* Mom HOLD ON!

*Ariel, Jasmine, and Nomfundo carry Alyssa's purse and shoes to the nail drying bar, and they turn on the nail and toe fans for her.  
Alyssa shuffles across the salon like a penguin and sits at the nail drying bar.  
It takes Alyssa a while to get there.  
She sits and sticks her hands and feet under the fans  
and situates her phone between her shoulder and her ear.*

**ALYSSA**

What mom.

I don't remember what I was saying.

Oh. GO TO KINKO'S! ASK THE GUY TO HELP YOU! TELL HIM YOU NEED HIM TO SCAN THE PAPERWORK AND E-MAIL IT TO THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY! THE END!

Wait you got it notarized right?

Mom.

Please don't tell me you forgot to get it notarized.

Mooooooooommmmmuuuuuuuhhhhhhh.

How could you be so stupid?

It is a big deal! You still have to *find* a notary! Notaries are really hard to find!

They do *not* have notaries that work at Kinko's you don't know what you're talking about.

Oh yeah we did get that notarized there.

SO GO TO KINKO'S!

Why can't you just support me? Why do you tell me all the things I have to fix about myself instead of just telling me I'm amazing?

No I know you think I'm amazing that's not what I'm saying.

I can't with you anymore. What time is it?

Oh my god I have to go!

*Alyssa makes sure her nails are dry.  
She waddles to Maurice at the counter.  
Helene waltzes in to Nice Nail, carrying a shopping bag.  
Upon seeing Helene, Ariel preps for her manicure at her station:  
she lays down a paper towel, gets a bowl with warm water, etc.*

**MAURICE**

*(Like a song.)* Hello how are you!

**ARIEL, JASMINE, AND NOMFUNDO**

*(Like a song.)* Hello how are you!

**HELENE**

Fair.

**MAURICE, ARIEL, JASMINE, AND NOMFUNDO**

Pick a color!

**HELENE**

Uhrte, picking a color, here we go.

*Helene goes to the nail polish display.*

**ALYSSA**

Do I pay you?

*Maurice nods.*

**ALYSSA**

*(Phone.)* Mom hold ON!

*Alyssa very carefully takes a credit card out of her wallet.*

**MAURICE**

Cash only.

**ALYSSA**

I can't understand you.

**MAURICE**

Cash only.

**ALYSSA**

*(Sweet.)* No one told me that? So...

*Maurice points to the rather large sign behind him that says, "CASH ONLY."*

**ARIEL AND JASMINE**

Cash only!

**ALYSSA**

*(Phone.)* Mom I have to go, this place is like in the Stone Age, they don't take cards love you too.

*She hangs up.*

**ALYSSA**

Listen, I don't have any cash so I don't know what to tell you.

**MAURICE**

*(Pointing to the front door.)* A-t-m.

**ALYSSA**

*(Clapping her hands for emphasis.)* I. Can't. Under. Stand. What. You're. Saying.

**ARIEL**  
A-T-M!

**JASMINE**  
Miss, there's an a-t-m at that end of the shopping center. It's not a far walk.

**ALYSSA**  
FINE. I'll go to the goddamn a-t-m even though I have a really important open house to go to. If you even know what that is.

*Alyssa realizes she's wearing paper sandals.*

**ALYSSA**  
Where are my shoes?

*Everyone, including Helene, points to the nail drying bar.*

**ALYSSA**  
Oh. There they are.

*Alyssa puts on her sandals, furious, and careful not to mess up her polish.*

**ALYSSA**  
Who doesn't take cards? Wake up, people! It's the twenty-first century!

*Alyssa slams the door open and storms out of Nice Nail.  
A moment.*

**HELENE**  
She should die.

*Maurice, Ariel, and Jasmine laugh their asses off. Nomfundo laughs a little too.  
Helene sits at Ariel's station, placing a bottle of nail polish on the table.  
Nomfundo stands to the side and watches Ariel do Helene's nails.*

**ARIEL**  
Everyone who comes in here, they're all just like her. So rude. No manners. Not you though. Not Miss Helene.

**HELENE**  
The most important thing in life is respect. I don't care if you got an ass that shits hundred dolla bills. You gotta have respect for people.

*Helene hands Ariel the shopping bag.*



**HELENE**

Here ya go dear.

*Ariel takes a designer purse out of the bag.*

**ARIEL**

No, Miss Helene.

**HELENE**

Didn't you like the Coach I gave you a while back?

**ARIEL**

I do. I still use it.

**HELENE**

So take. I have too many. What are they gonna do, sit in my closet like rejects? I'd rather give them to you than to Goodwill.

**ARIEL**

Very nice Miss Helene. Thank you.

**HELENE**

Rodney Dangerfield used to have a line "Nobody gives me respect." "No one has any respect for me." You know him, Rodney Dangerfield?

*Ariel shakes her head.*

**HELENE**

Maurice, you remember him? Rodney Dangerfield?

**MAURICE**

No.

**HELENE**

You're probably too young. He was a veeerry funny man and he always used to say, "People don't respect me." "They don't treat me with respect." And everyone would laaaaauuugh. Because they saw the truth in it. That's what brings us together. Seeing what we have in common. And he was a Jewish boy, Rodney Dangerfield. Cohen, I think his name was. He changed it. That was back in the day people didn't like Jews very much. Still don't some places.

*(To Nomfundo.)* Wanna sit on my lap?

**NOMFUNDO**

Huh?

**ARIEL**

Everything okay?

*Helene pounces at Nomfundo from her seat.*

**HELENE**

Boo!

**NOMFUNDO**

AH!

*Helene chuckles. Nomfundo is horrified.*

**ARIEL**

*(To Nomfundo.)* Move!

**HELENE**

She's so close to me I feel like she should ask me to dinner first.

**JASMINE**

*(To Nomfundo.)* Tiana, don't get so close to the customers.

**HELENE**

I'm just teasing. Are you new dear?

**NOMFUNDO**

Yes.

**JASMINE**

She's in training.

**NOMFUNDO**

I'm in training.

**HELENE**

What's your name dear?

**NOMFUNDO**

Nomfundo.

**HELENE**

What is it?

**NOMFUNDO**

Nomfundo.

**HELENE**

Nadufo?

**NOMFUNDO**

NomFUNdo.

**HELENE**

What is she saying?

**JASMINE**

You can just call her Tiana.

**HELENE**

Tiana. That's easier.

**NOMFUNDO**

That's not my name.

*Hurricane Alyssa pummels into the salon once again  
and beelines for Maurice, waving cash in the air.*

**ALYSSA**

Here you go! Here's your stupid money!

That a-t-m doesn't work, in case you're interested. It took me like a half hour to figure it out.

And I messed up a nail. The polish is all crinkled now.

**SOMEONE FIX IT!**

*Jasmine grabs a bottle of nail polish, hustles to Alyssa, and fixes it.*

**ALYSSA**

There! No! There!

*(To Maurice.)* Um where's my change?

*(To Jasmine.)* Can you move any slower? Some of us have a job to get to.

**ARIEL**

빌어먹을 년.

Fucking bitch.

*Jasmine finishes fixing Alyssa's nail.  
Maurice hands Alyssa her change.*

**ALYSSA**

You should one-hundred-percent take credit cards. This was like incredibly inconvenient for me.

**ARIEL**

(*Wielding her cuticle clippers, laughing.*) 죽고  
싶어 환장했나. 갈기갈기 찢어버릴까 보다.

Let's kill her. We can chop her up into little  
tiny pieces.

**ALYSSA**

I KNOW you're talking about me and that's REALLY rude.  
Who treats people like that?

(*To Maurice.*) Teach. Your employees. To speak. *English*. This is AMERICA.

*Alyssa struts to the front door.*

**HELENE**

Honey. I think you're forgetting something. You need to give these girls a tip.

**ALYSSA**

Ummmmm, leave me alone.

**HELENE**

Look at yourself. You're behaving like an animal. They work their tushies off. Do the right thing. Give them a tip.

**ALYSSA**

Last I checked there's no law requiring me to give a tip when I don't think I've had good service.

**HELENE**

Didn't your mother teach you to act like a lady?

**ALYSSA**

Didn't your mother teach you to mind your business?

**HELENE**

My mother came to this country from Poland. At twelve years old. Alone. And then Hitler put every other member of her family in an oven. Before she met my father, she cleaned the floor of a whore house to make money, and she went to the movies every night so could learn English. These nice people had to put up with your big mouth. Give them a tip.

*Alyssa sneers at Helene,  
then flashes the world's most obnoxious pageant-girl, shit-eating grin,  
and marches out of the salon.*

**ALYSSA**

English! Learn about it!

**MAURICE**

We know English! We know English good!

*(To Ariel.)* Speak English!

Sorry Miss Helene.

**HELENE**

What are you sorry for?

*A photo of the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand,  
scrolls on to the slideshow on the television.*

**HELENE**

Isn't that the palace in Bangkok?

**ARIEL**

What?

**HELENE**

On the television there. That's the palace in Bangkok right?

**ARIEL**

I don't know.

**HELENE**

Maurice, isn't that the palace in Bangkok?

**MAURICE**

What?

**HELENE**

On the television!

Goddammit it went away! There was a photograph on the television there that looked like it was the palace in Bangkok. In Thailand. That's close to where you're all from, isn't it?

**ARIEL**

No!

**HELENE**

Where are you from again? Vietnam?

**ARIEL**

We're from Korea.

**HELENE**

Riiiiight, Korea. North Korea or South Korea?

**ARIEL**

*(Laughing.)* South Korea.

**JASMINE**

Nobody's really from North Korea.

**HELENE**

Oh.

**ARIEL**

South Korea and North Korea are very different! South Korea is one of the biggest economies in the world. They make Samsung. They make LG. Hyundai. Kia. You know those cars, Kia? That's Korean.

**MAURICE**

Thank God for the United States. They saved our country. My father fought in the war, in the Korean War, to protect us from the communists. Now they have Kim Jung Un, and he kills his people. It's very bad.

**HELENE**

Oh.

You all gotta go to Thailand. It's the most beautiful place. And the food! Puhtie. Ever had puhtie? I love puhtie. With shrimp? Delicious.

Ya know, my Harvey fought in the Korean War, did I ever tell you that, Maurice?

**MAURICE**

No.

**HELENE**

Hey, what if your father met my husband sixty years ago in some field someplace? Wouldn't that be something! We never went to Korea. He didn't want to go back. Which is funny 'cause we went all over the world. We went to Africa. Went to Australia. All over Europe. Turkey. Israel four or five times. Thailand, of course. You all gotta go. You must go to Thailand.

**ARIEL**

We're going to Disney World soon, / and in Epcot

**HELENE**

Disney! The worst!

**ARIEL**

You don't like?

**HELENE**

I've been to Disney World. Too many times. If I ever have to look at one more Mickey waffle or Mickey chicken finger or Mickey bar of soap, I swear to god, I'll end it all.

**ARIEL**

Oh. Well in Epcot, they have all the different countries from around the world. You can see the whole world in just one theme park.

**HELENE**

You'll have a nice time. No matter where you go, traveling is a great joy. Harvey and I, there was nothing we loved more than exploring new places, seeing all different kinds of people. Now that Harvey's gone, and with my hip, I don't go anywhere. I am going on a cruise tomorrow though.

**ARIEL**

Oooohhhhh. Very nice.

**JASMINE**

Where's it going to?

**HELENE**

Just the stupid islands. The Caribbean or the Bahamas or wherever they send you.

**ARIEL**

The beach!

**JASMINE**

I'm jealous.

**HELENE**

We're just doing a four-day. They send you to the crappy ports. They let you off the boat, there's nothing to do, you get back on the boat.

**ARIEL**

Who you going with?

**HELENE**

My grandson.

**ARIEL**

Grandson? I thought you only have granddaughters.

**HELENE**

Well. You remember Jackie?

**ARIEL**

Yes! Your daughter's daughter. You were telling me all the time about how she got into very bad trouble. She used to fight with her parents, dropped out of college.

**HELENE**

Yeah, that's my little guy.

**ARIEL**

Jackie. I remember Jackie.

**HELENE**

He's Jacob now.

**ARIEL**

What?

**HELENE**

He just moved in with me because he had this surgery. He's a transgender.

**ARIEL**

He's a what?

**HELENE**

He a trans, uh...he changed from a girl to a boy. He was born a girl and now he's a boy.

**ARIEL**

Changed from a girl to a boy? Changed from a girl to a boy? That's crazy!

**JASMINE**

Mom, don't you know Bruce Jenner from the Kardashians? The dad?

**ARIEL**

I love that show.

**JASMINE**

Well he just said he's a girl.

**ARIEL**

No!

**JASMINE**

Yeah, he's gonna start dressing like a girl, and nobody cares. I don't care. That's just what it is.

**ARIEL**

That doesn't happen in Korea. If a boy tries to be a girl in Korea, people say they're crazy and call the police.



**HELENE**

Well, god bless America.

*(Singing.)*

LAND THAT I LOVE.

STAND BESIDE HER,

AND GUIDE HER,

THROUGH THE NIGHT WITH A LIGHT FROM ABOVE!

Written by a Jew, that song.

*The image of the Grand Palace appears on the slideshow again.*

*Ariel gives Helene elaborate hand and arm massages,*

*which makes Helene's bracelets jingle.*

*Maybe Jasmine comes over and massages Helene's shoulders.*

**HELENE**

There! That's the photograph!

Isn't that gorgeous? What a beauty. People used to live like that. Like kings and queens. Well, not *like* kings and queens. They *were* kings and queens. To think: a life like that.

People waiting on you hand and foot like you're Cleopatra, carrying you around on a stretcher, giving you baths. More food than you could ever imagine.

And to think: people still do live like that in some places! There still are kings and queens!

Monarchs. I don't see the point of them personally. I see that fuhkakte nonsense on the news when one of them has a birthday, and it's like, enough already with the mishegoss with the birthday, go blow out some candles on a piece of sticky toffee pudding and leave me the hell alone. And get a job! Get a job! They don't even work, William and whateverhisnameis.

*A moment.*

**HELENE**

*(Singing.)*

THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN,

THROUGH THE PRAIRIE,

THROUGH THE OCEAN,

WHITE WITH FOAM,

GOD BLESS AMERICA,

MY HOME SWEET HOME!

**TWO**

*The end of the same workday.  
The spa muzak is not playing. The television screen is off. There are no customers.  
Jasmine and Nomfundo are cleaning/tidying up.  
At some point, Jasmine locks the front door and flips the sign on the door to "Closed."  
Maurice is sitting behind the counter reading a car magazine.  
Ariel is on her smartphone.*

**MAURICE**

This magazine says the Cadillac C-T-S is one of the ten best cars you can buy. They also say Tesla, BMW, Chevrolet, Ford, Honda, Mazda two times (*with disdain:*) three Japanese cars and Porsche and Volkswagen. Three Japanese cars, three German cars, *four American cars*. America wins. That's good.

**ARIEL**

(*About the device.*) 정숙아 이거 안된다.

Jeong-Sook, this thing won't work.

**JASMINE**

Mom, please speak English. It's rude to Tiana.

**ARIEL**

알 게 뭐야?

Who cares about her?

**JASMINE**

She's a member of our family now.

**ARIEL**

(*To Maurice.*) 우리 가족이라고?

*She's a member of our family?*

**JASMINE**

Mom!

**MAURICE**

Hyeon-Jin!

**ARIEL**

(*To Jasmine.*) Come here.

*Jasmine goes over to Ariel.*

**JASMINE**

What's wrong?

**ARIEL**

I can't get this thing to

**JASMINE**

What are you trying to do?

**ARIEL**

I want to see how much

**JASMINE**

Mom you're not even on the right screen.

**ARIEL**

Yes I am! I'm trying to find a price

**JASMINE**

Just hold on, let me do it.

**ARIEL**

You don't have to pull.

**JASMINE**

I'm not pulling. There.

**ARIEL**

Oh. It's loading.

*They wait for the screen to load.*

**ARIEL**

Okay it says we could get a package for four days for about two-thousand dollars.

**MAURICE**

TWO-THOUSAND DOLLARS?

**ARIEL**

All-Star Sports hotel.

**JASMINE**

Does that include park tickets?

**MAURICE**

Oh my gosh.

**ARIEL**

Shut up! We can pay for that!

**MAURICE**

That's expensive.

**ARIEL**

Yeah yeah, we know, go back to your magazine.

**JASMINE**

Omigod look at Animal Kingdom Lodge, it's almost seven-thousand dollars.

**MAURICE**

We're not staying there!

**JASMINE**

I didn't know Disney was so expensive. Jesus.

**ARIEL**

Don't say Jesus' name like that!

*Jasmine rolls her eyes and goes back to cleaning.  
Silence as they clean/read/look online.*

**MAURICE**

Belle Park has this car. Cadillac C-T-S.

**ARIEL**

How do you know what kind of car Belle Park has?

**MAURICE**

I saw her driving before. I wanted to take my Corolla and drive her into a tree. She didn't see me, thank Jesus.

**ARIEL**

Why do you care if Belle Park sees you?

**MAURICE**

It's embarrassing! We came to this country in nineteen-ninety-four! She's here, what, five, ten years, and she drives a Cadillac. She looks like a success. You don't look like a success if you drive a Toyota Corolla with the mirror hanging off the side.

**ARIEL**

It's just 'cause she married that rich American Jewish. If I married some rich American Jewish I could have a Cadillac too, but I married Mister Lazy.

**MAURICE**

Don't say that word! I'm not lazy! I work hard!

**ARIEL**

Maybe if you worked harder you'd have a car like Belle Park.

**JASMINE**

Speaking of lazy, why don't you get off your asses and help us close? I mean, come on.

*Ariel puts her phone down.*

*Maurice tosses the magazine on the pile of magazines by the front door.*

*They help.*

**ARIEL**

Don't forget: I taught Belle Park everything she knows. She may think she's a big success story with her fancy salon right next to the Whole Food. Now she's doing gel manicures, ooh lah lah, good for Belle Park. But she used to be working here. I was teaching her how to do acrylics. I was teaching her how to scrub callouses off a dirty feet, okay?

**JASMINE**

I don't think you can really compare our salon to hers, Mom.

**ARIEL**

What are you trying to say?

**JASMINE**

Like, we only do nails. They do everything at Belle Park's salon: nails, waxing, facials. It's like a spa. They even do hair.

**ARIEL**

You should go to Belle Park's salon and have them fix *your* hair. So messy.

**JASMINE**

Stop touching me.

**ARIEL**

You look like one of the lesbians.

**JASMINE**

How do the lesbians look?

**ARIEL**

Like that. You spend too much time with that girl.

**JASMINE**

Which girl?

**ARIEL**

Your friend. That lesbian.

**JASMINE**

So?

**ARIEL**

Does she try to get you to go to bed with her?

**JASMINE**

Yeah she eats my puss.

**ARIEL AND MAURICE**

**JASMINE!**

**JASMINE**

Best orgasms of my life.

*Jasmine moans like she's having an orgasm.*

**ARIEL**

**JEONG-SOOK!**

**MAURICE**

Uuuucccccchhhhh!

**ARIEL**

Is that true?

**JASMINE**

Maybe!

**ARIEL**

You give me a heart attack. You're never going to find a man to marry if you don't go to church.

**JASMINE**

Are you saying the only place where men will ask me out is at the Korean Methodist Church?

**ARIEL AND MAURICE**

Yes.

**JASMINE**

That makes sense.

**ARIEL**

You come with me one week. Remember Thomas Lee?

**JASMINE**

Omigod Mom he had like a piranha as a pet.

**ARIEL**

He's cute now. He plays the guitar at church. He writes all the songs. They sound like they're from the radio. He's coooool. They're doing things different now at the church, you'd like it.

**JASMINE**

Mom. I'm never going back to your church. The people there are racists, they're male chauvinists, they're homophobic

**ARIEL**

Come on. Just go out with Thomas one time. I showed him your picture. He says you're pretty.

What's on your fingers?

**JASMINE**

It's just polish.

**ARIEL**

Let me see.

**JASMINE**

It's just polish.

**ARIEL**

Who did this?

**JASMINE**

I did it myself.

**ARIEL**

When?

**JASMINE**

Last night.

**ARIEL**

You used polish remover all day today, how's it still stay so perfect?

*Ariel pulls Jasmine to a lamp and examines Jasmine's fingers under light.*

**JASMINE**

Leave me alone.

**ARIEL**

This isn't normal polish. Is this is this gel?

**JASMINE**

No.

**ARIEL**

Yes it is. This is gel polish. Look at it. It's nice. Where'd you get this?

**JASMINE**

Nowhere.

**ARIEL**

Did you go to Belle Park?

**JASMINE**

No.

*Ariel smacks Jasmine, over and over.*

**ARIEL**

Did you go to Belle Park? Tell me!

**JASMINE**

Ow! Stop hitting me!

**ARIEL**

Tell the truth!

**JASMINE**

Okay! Fine! I went to Belle Park's salon. Ow.

**ARIEL**

When did you go?

**JASMINE**

Yesterday, after we closed. They're open 'til nine.

**ARIEL**

'Til *nine*?!?

**MAURICE**

Nine o'clock?!?

**JASMINE**

Yeah and the place was packed. I had to wait like half an hour.

**ARIEL**

Who did your manicure?

**JASMINE**

Esmerelda.



**ARIEL**

Great. She leaves working for us to go work for Belle Park and you go there and she gives you a manicure.

**MAURICE**

Belle Park's gonna tell everyone at church.

**JASMINE**

Will you stop? I wanted to see what it was like.

**ARIEL**

So? What's it like?

**MAURICE**

Tell us everything.

**JASMINE**

Okay so first of all, it's very well decorated. It's like a hotel. But the most amazing part are the pedicure chairs

**ARIEL**

Do they have massage machines?

**JASMINE**

Yeah, for your back *and* for your legs.

**MAURICE**

Holy moley.

**JASMINE**

Not only that. They have iPads.

**MAURICE**

Oh my Jesus.

**JASMINE**

Every pedicure chair has an iPad with all these games and magazines already downloaded.

**ARIEL**

Why do customers need iPads?

**JASMINE**

Because they want them.

**ARIEL**

Why can't they get a pedicure and not have to look at their iPad iPhone iWhatever?

**JASMINE**

Because that's how business works. People like something extra.

**ARIEL**

People are so stupid.

**JASMINE**

Well Belle Park is charging ten dollars more than us for every service and people are flocking there, so *she's* not stupid. Remember Miss Audrey? She was there. She goes there now.

**ARIEL**

That bitch!

**MAURICE**

Why are people going to her if they have to pay more money?

**JASMINE**

Well, they get all these extra perks. Especially gel.

**MAURICE**

What's gel?

*Jasmine's flashes her fingers in front of Maurice's face.*

**MAURICE**

Ohhhh that's nice.

**ARIEL**

It lasts a long time, like acrylic.

**JASMINE**

But it's cheaper than acrylic. There are way less supplies.  
I dunno, maybe we should do it.

**MAURICE**

That would cost money.

**JASMINE**

It wouldn't cost that much. Gel, iPads, maybe some new pedicure chairs? That's like a few thousand bucks.

**MAURICE**

Business isn't doing good anymore, Jasmine! They're raising our rent!

**JASMINE**

I thought we had money saved up.

**MAURICE**

We do.

**JASMINE**

How much?

**ARIEL**

That money's for Disney.

**JASMINE**

Mom. Stop talking about Disney.

**ARIEL**

But you want to go to Disney.

**JASMINE**

This is more important.

**ARIEL**

But I want to go to Disney!

**JASMINE**

Mom, I'm not trying to be mean, but look at this place. The wallpaper's peeling off the walls. The fabric on the pedicure chairs is coming apart. That handwritten piece of paper that says Cash Only? It's turning yellow, and it's misspelled. The word Only has one L, not two. O-N-L-Y.

**ARIEL AND MAURICE**

Ohhh.

**JASMINE**

Maybe that customer today was right. Maybe we should start taking credit cards.

*By this point, Nomfundo has been standing by the door, ready to leave, for a long time.*

**NOMFUNDO**

Excuse me. I have to go to my church.

**JASMINE**

Oh right. Sorry. I gotta pee.

*Jasmine runs to the bathroom. Maurice and Ariel get ready to leave.*

**ARIEL**

Church. That's good. I try to get Jasmine to go to church but she won't go. Why you going to church? It's Thursday.

**NOMFUNDO**

I go to my church every day.

**ARIEL**

Every day?

**NOMFUNDO**

I work in the kitchen. I make food for the people who come to the church to eat.

**ARIEL**

Oh.

**NOMFUNDO**

That's how I came to New York. They got me my papers, and they give me a room to sleep.

**MAURICE**

How do you like living in New York?

**NOMFUNDO**

It's nice. The room I'm staying in is small, but it's nice. Yesterday I called my daughter on the computer and she said, "Mama, does America have streets that are made of gold?" And I said, "No, the streets look worse than they do at home, and they smell like peepee!"

*Ariel and Maurice chuckle to be polite. It's very awkward.*

**NOMFUNDO**

The other day, I was outside my church, and I saw a man going peepee on the wall on this busy street. Before I came to America, I thought like my daughter. Everyone told me it would be like The Wizard of Oz, like the Emerald City, everything clean and happy, but then I come here and there are men going peepee on the wall of a church when the sun is out.

*The three of them stand there silently, smiling at each other, nodding, super awkward.*

**NOMFUNDO**

Thank you very much for this job. God was looking down on me the day I met your daughter and she told me I could work here at Nice Nail. And thank you for driving me in your car. I am very appreciative.

*Silence: nodding, smiling, awkward.*

**NOMFUNDO**

Sir, I want to ask, if it's okay, I want to get paid more money. Right now, it's too little.

**MAURICE**

No.

**NOMFUNDO**

I was telling the people at my church. They said it is too little money. And they said you should give me back the hundred dollars. They said that's not right.

**MAURICE**

No, everywhere you have to pay the hundred dollars. That's your training fee. When you work with customers, then we pay you more.

**NOMFUNDO**

I'm ready to work with customers.

**ARIEL**

No no, not yet.

*Jasmine comes out of the bathroom and gets ready to leave.*

**JASMINE**

Tiana? Um, Tiana?

**NOMFUNDO**

That's not my name.

**JASMINE**

I know, but it would be really great if you could go by that name when you're in the salon?

**NOMFUNDO**

My name is Nomfundo.

**JASMINE**

I know it is, but it's very difficult for our customers to pronounce.

**ARIEL**

I can't say it.

**MAURICE**

Me neither.

**JASMINE**

Your nametag says Tiana. It's confusing. And it ruins our salon tradition. It's a fun thing we do here. In the past we've had Esmerelda, Belle, Nala.

**ARIEL**

Pocahontas.

**MAURICE**

Mulan.

**JASMINE**

It all started because when I was little I loved Disney. I still do! Do you like Disney?

**NOMFUNDO**

No.

**JASMINE**

It would just be really great if you could go by the name Tiana. She's a really special Disney princess. She's the first and only *black* Disney princess, isn't that cool!?!?

*A customer, Lydia, appears at the locked front door,  
pounding on the door, desperate, life-or-death.  
Lydia looks older than she is.  
She's wearing food-stain-riddled pajamas, covered by a fur coat.*

**LYDIA**

Hello!!!

**MAURICE, ARIEL, AND JASMINE**

We're closed!

**LYDIA**

Did you find my magazine?

**ARIEL**

Come back tomorrow!

**LYDIA**

I left something here before. *Please let me in!*

*Jasmine unlocks the front door. Lydia flies in and searches through the salon.*

**LYDIA**

Did you find my magazine?

**JASMINE**

What magazine?

**LYDIA**

It was a beauty magazine. You know, one-a those beauty magazines.

**MAURICE**

We didn't find.

**LYDIA**

It has to be here. I've looked everywhere!

**JASMINE**

Maybe it got mixed in with our magazines over here?

*Lydia tears through the large stack of magazines, throwing them everywhere.*

**LYDIA**

It's not here! It's not here!

**JASMINE**

Can you maybe buy a new copy of the magazine?

**LYDIA**

DON'T YOU THINK I WOULD'VE DONE THAT BY NOW?!? I need *this* magazine. It has a number written in it. A special number. For the cable company. I wrote it on the page with the perfume.

**JASMINE**

I can try to look up the number for you online.

**LYDIA**

You don't know anything! It's a special number! My brother gave it to me! Where is my magazine? Where Is My Ma Ga Zine?

**JASMINE**

It's okay.

**LYDIA**

It's not okay! This is the worst day of my life!

**NOMFUNDO**

I have to go to my church.

**JASMINE**

I'm sorry that you're having a bad day. But we have to close the shop now.

**LYDIA**

Oh. I'm sorry I made such a scene. My boyfriend broke up with me last week. I found out he was stealing from me. Thousands and thousands of dollars. I wanted to believe he was good, but then life goes and kicks you in the crotch.

**JASMINE**

Okay well we have to close the shop now.

**LYDIA**

Can I help clean up?

**JASMINE, ARIEL, AND MAURICE**

No.

**JASMINE**

We got it.

**LYDIA**

Okay. I hope you all have a splendid evening.

*Lydia leaves.*

**JASMINE**

I deserve a medal.

**NOMFUNDO**

I have to go to my church.

**ARIEL**

*(To Nomfundo.)* What do you think we're stupid?

Why does she have to say the same thing over and over? "I have to go to church, I have to go to church." We're not deaf.

**JASMINE**

What's wrong with you? Be nice.

**MAURICE**

Let's go.

**ARIEL**

She looked just like that girl from today.

**JASMINE**

Who?

**ARIEL**

That woman, just now, looking for the magazine, she looked like that girl this morning, the one who was yelling at her mom on the phone.

**JASMINE**

She looked nothing like her.

**ARIEL**

I don't know, they all look the same to me.

*And they're gone.*