

PUT 'EM UP
by
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CHARACTERS: JOE SMITH, uninteresting, wimpy, 23
BRETT, cool, calm, collected, 30
PAULINE, grumpy, easily annoyed,
hairstylist, 54
POLICEMAN, hard-working, dedicated, just
there to do his job, 43

SETTING: A small bank, where BRETT is currently the
only employee on shift.

AT RISE: JOE is standing outside of the bank, while
PAULINE is inside reading a magazine and
BRETT is busying himself with papers at his
desk.

JOE SMITH

Alright Joe, just take a deep breath. You can do this.

(JOE closes his eyes and lets out a long breath.
He pulls a classic robber mask out of his back
pocket, and puts it on. He then pulls a gun out
of his other back pocket, turns towards the door,
and kicks it in. BRETT, whose back was turned to
the door, is startled and throws the papers he is
holding up into the air.)

PUT YOUR HANDS UP! THIS IS A ROBBERY!

BRETT

Woah there buddy, you scared the crap out of me. (Laughs.)
You can't just come barging in like that. Look what you
made me do!

(Gestures to paper on floor.)

Not cool, bro.

JOE SMITH

GIVE ME ALL YOUR MONEY! I'M NOT AFRAID TO SHOOT!

BRETT

(BRETT starts to pick up the papers.)

Listen man, you don't need to shout. I'm standing right
here ... Do you have a bank card?

JOE SMITH

(Starts to lower gun.)

Uh... well... no. I'm... I'm a robber. I'M A ROBBER AND I'M ROBBING THIS JOINT!

PAULINE

Well, you're not doing a very good job at it, now are ya?

BRETT

(To PAULINE.)

Yeah, tell me about it.

(To JOE.)

You don't even have a real gun!

JOE SMITH

Are... are you sure? I could've sworn this thing was real...

BRETT

I have seen quite a few bank robberies in my time, hot shot. Enough robberies to know what is a real gun...

(Points to JOE's gun.)

and what isn't.

JOE SMITH

Well... I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT THE MONEY I CAME FOR!

BRETT

(Mockingly.)

And how much money is that?

JOE SMITH

Uhh... all of it, I guess.

BRETT

I can give you the three bucks that's in my pocket, but that's all I'm gonna give ya. Look, I gotta do my job and be a good bank clerk, kiddo. I can't let you have any of the money that's in that safe.

(Muttering to himself.)

Even if it is only a hundred dollars.

JOE SMITH

What was that?

BRETT

Oh, nothing. Why don't you... have a seat?

(Gestures to chair in front of desk. JOE sits down and puts the fake gun on the ground next to him.)

PAULINE

Hey!! But I've been waiting to deposit this check for like --

BRETT

Well, you're gonna have to wait a little longer, ma'am.
(Sarcastically.)
We have more important things to deal with.

PAULINE

Fine! But the sooner the police come to arrest this jackass, the better.

BRETT

(Not listening.)
Yeah, whatever lady.
(To JOE.)
What's your name, kid?

JOE SMITH

It's Joe Smith.

BRETT

Not a very original name, now is it?
(Chuckles).
Now why on Earth would you want to do such a stupid thing as robbing a bank?!

JOE SMITH

Uh...well, I've always --

BRETT

Wait, hold that thought.
(Takes a moment to try to remember something.)
I can't believe it... I totally forgot to call the police! You came in here all like "Grrr -- Put 'em up." And I was all like "Woah, you scared me." And you were all like "Hey, guess what? I suck at being a bank robber." And I was all like "Yeah, you do. Have a seat.", and during all that commotion, I forgot to call the police! How unprofessional of me! Excuse me for a second.

(Turns away to talk on phone, conversation isn't heard by audience.)

JOE SMITH

(To PAULINE.)

Hey look, I'm sorry for --

PAULINE

(Not looking at JOE.)

I don't care.

JOE SMITH

But --

PAULINE

I said I don't care. All I want to do is just sit here and read my magazine until the police come and arrest you and lock you up for the rest of your life, because the real problem in this world is people like you who just do stupid things and serve no other purpose than to waste the time of honorable citizens like me.

(Pauses, looks at JOE.)

I hope you get shanked in prison.

BRETT

(Coming back from phone, claps hands.)

Alrighty, the police will be here in next five minutes or so. Now where was I? Oh yeah! Why on Earth would you want to do such a stupid thing as robbing a bank?!

JOE SMITH

Well, for the past several years, my life has been, uhh, boring. I didn't have many friends in high school or college, and I never went to any fun parties. I took boring classes in college, and that lead me to getting a boring desk job where I literally do nothing exciting. The girlfriend I had in college dumped me because she said she would rather watch paint dry... and then she said she's transferring schools because of me! I want to see my family, but even *they* think I'm too boring to be around. I just wanted to add a little bit of excitement to my life. So I figured the best way to do that would be to rob this small bank with a gun that I thought was real. I thought that it would sorta give me something to be remembered for, you know?

BRETT

Oh, sorry, what was that? I kinda just zoned out for a second after you started talking.

JOE SMITH

(Sighs.)

This was my final push. If I wasn't successful, I told myself I would... end it all. No one would miss me anyway.

PAULINE

You got that right.

BRETT

No no no. Don't listen to this old hag. I'm sure that there's something interesting about you.

(Thinking.)

What do you do for fun?

JOE SMITH

I... uh... hmmm... Sometimes I read a newspaper!

BRETT

Wow, okay, you really are boring. But just being boring isn't a reason for someone to commit suicide.

JOE SMITH

I know, I know, it sounds like a stupid reason, but I just don't see my life getting any better or more interesting from here. I just feel like I don't...

PAULINE

Have a purpose?

JOE SMITH

Yeah, what she said.

BRETT

Well, if you didn't have a purpose in this world, then God wouldn't have put you on this Earth, would He?

JOE SMITH

I don't believe in God though.

BRETT

Neither do I, but that mindset at least helps me get through the days when I feel like I'm not doing anything

purposeful with my life. And it sounds like that's every day for you, right John?

JOE SMITH

Joe.

BRETT

What?

JOE SMITH

Never mind.

BRETT

Look guy, I really do feel bad for you. I would give you some money to help out your cause, but I'm already on thin ice with my boss after a whole incident involving another co-worker and some actual thin ice, so unfortunately...

JOE SMITH

(Runs and grabs onto BRETT'S leg, on the verge of tears.)

Please, just don't let me go to prison! Please! There are big scary guys there with tattoos and scars and--

PAULINE

Don't forget about the homemade shanks! That'll be your favorite part, I'm sure.

BRETT

(To JOE.)

Listen, buddy. You may be mind-numbingly boring, but you're not eight, so let go of my leg.

JOE SMITH

(Let's go of BRETT'S leg and sulks back to his seat. He wipes away tears and blows his nose on his shirt.)

I'm sorry. That was uncalled for.

BRETT

Hey, at least you showed some emotion! It's a step in the right direction.

PAULINE

(Mutters something under her breath.)

BRETT

What was that, ma'am?

PAULINE

I said, "I hope he takes a step in the right direction... which is off a cliff." What're you, deaf?

BRETT

(Sighs.) First of all, that wasn't even that clever. And second of all, you have no right to treat him like that. The whole time that he has been here, you've only said mean and hateful things towards him. What did Jeff ever do to you that made you so mad?

JOE SMITH

My name's Joe, actua--

PAULINE

I'll tell you why I'm so angry!

(Stands up.)

All throughout school I had to deal with goobers like him. I was constantly picking spitballs out of my hair and cleaning mud that was thrown at me off of my dress. These kids never did anything except annoy people and cause trouble. And like you and your fake guns, I know one when I see one. This jackass is one of those kids.

JOE SMITH

I was actually pretty quiet in school--

PAULINE

I made it my life goal to never have to interact with another one of your... kind. I was doing quite well, until I got stuck in this stupid bank with a stupid bank clerk and a stupid kid who is doing a god-awful job at robbing it!

BRETT

Come on lady, you're being childish.

PAULINE

No, I'm not the one who's being childish. You're being childish by giving this waste of space encouragement that is obviously going to be lost on him because he is, undoubtedly, going to die alone!

(She walks over, picks up the fake gun and points it at JOE'S head.)

I wish this thing was real so that I could put you out of your misery myself...

(At this moment, POLICEMAN bursts through the door, holding a gun and handcuffs.)

PAULINE

Finally, it took you long enou--

POLICEMAN

(Points his gun at PAULINE.)

DROP THE GUN AND PUT YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR HEAD LADY!

PAULINE

Wait, no, I'm not...

(She looks to BRETT to back her up. POLICEMAN looks at him too. There is a long pause as they wait for BRETT to say something.)

BRETT

(Dramatically pretending to be scared.)

Ohh Mr. Policeman, please take her away. She came in here all like "Grrr -- Put 'em up." And I was all like "Please don't hurt me!" And she was all like "I'm not afraid to shoot." And at that point I just about peed myself. I've never been so scared before in my whole life. But thank goodness this man happened to be in the bank. He was able to distract her for long enough until you arrived. Without his heroics, my brain would be splattered across the wall behind me.

(Gives JOE a nudge.)

JOE SMITH

Oh, yeah... uhh, just doin' my job I guess.

POLICEMAN

(To JOE.)

It's men like you who make me proud to go to work everyday.

(He then handcuffs PAULINE.)

As for you lady, you're comin' with me.

(Starts to drag PAULINE out of bank. PAULINE is flailing around, trying to get away.)

PAULINE

(As she is being dragged off stage.)

NO, YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG PERSON! BOTH OF THOSE IDIOTS ARE LIARS! YOU ARE ALL GOING TO ROT IN HELL! THIS GUN ISN'T EVEN REAL!

POLICEMAN

You're not fooling anyone, lady. I know a real gun when I see one.

(PAULINE and POLICEMAN exit. There is a moment of silence, and then JOE runs over to BRETT, gives him a big hug, and doesn't let go.)

JOE SMITH

Thank you! Thank you so much!

BRETT

No problem buddy.

(Pats JOE on the head.)

Hey, did you like that little lie I came up with? Pretty quick thinking, if you ask me. And plus, now you will get to be remembered for something, like you were wanting earlier. I can see the headlines now. "Local Bank Saved from Crazy, Armed Woman by James Schmidt."

JOE SMITH

(Let's go of embrace to look at BRETT.)

It's Joe Smith.

BRETT

Huh?

JOE SMITH

Never mind.

(JOE goes back to hugging BRETT, smiling, as the stage lights fade to black.)