

*(Lights up. A painfully normal and completely realistic convenience store. There is a door frame at the lip of the stage with an exit sign above it and a large lever next to it. At one end is a counter with a cash register and a large supply shelf behind it. There are two security cameras, one mounted on either side of the set. There is a door leading to a back office, one leading to a supply closet, two leading to bathrooms, and another leading off stage. The lights are dim as though the store is dark. Rattling. Someone is trying to unlock the back door. Eventually, ANNA half-stumbles, half-falls through the back door.)*

ANNA  
Fucking *thank you!*

*(She lets the door shut behind her and turns on the lights. There is an incessant fluorescent humming. She begins to set her bag down and fiddle with things on the counter. Someone knocks on the back door. ANNA pries it open and REAGAN stumbles in.)*

REAGAN  
Hi! Sorry, I think the door is stuck?

ANNA  
I know. It's too big.

REAGAN  
...what?

ANNA  
When they made the store, they ordered the wrong size door, so when it's hot, it sort of swells and it gets stuck in the frame. I'll, uh, teach you how to handle it.

*(She picks up a clip board and flips through it.)*

ANNA  
You must beeee...Reagan?

REAGAN  
Yes! It's nice to meet you.

ANNA  
Of course. Welcome to Convenience, I'm Anna, the MOD. Allegedly, it stands for "Manager on Duty," but I prefer to think it's "Maiden of Despair," although it really depends on what mood I'm in.

REAGAN  
Right.

ANNA

I'm on shift Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and usually Sundays. Sometimes we have to close, though.

REAGAN

Are you full time?

ANNA

No, just most of the time.

REAGAN

Who're the other managers?

ANNA

I don't know. We don't work at the same time. Anyway, since it's so hot outside we're either gonna have a slow day or be full of idiot teenagers breaking the Slursh machine. I'll show you how to fix it when that happens.

REAGAN

Oh man, there was a Convenience right down the street from my house growing up. My brother and I would go there on the way back from summer camp. We definitely broke the Slursh machine a couple times. I didn't realize you could actually fix them.

*(As they talk, ANNA leads REAGAN around the store, turning on the Slursh machine and straightening products on the shelves.)*

ANNA

Huh.

REAGAN

What?

ANNA

Nothing, it's just...my brother and I did the same thing.

REAGAN

Really?

ANNA

Nevermind, sorry. I shouldn't have said anything.

REAGAN

Okay...

ANNA

Uh, we're gonna start with taking inventory. Take the clipboard and go down the aisles. There's one column with the number of units that should be on the shelf, so just count them and then write down how many units there are. If there aren't a ton of units, or if the stock is out, highlight it in yellow. If the number of units is equal to the expected stock, highlight in pink. If there are *more* units than there should be, come get me.

REAGAN

What? Wait, why does it matter if there's an equal amount?

ANNA

Corporate likes to know. It helps them decide what they want us to stock.

REAGAN

Okay.

ANNA

I'll be up front.

*(REAGAN begins to take inventory. ANNA goes back to the cash register and rifles through the drawers.)*

ANNA

Ah, shit.

REAGAN

*(From within the shelves)* What's up?

ANNA

It's the supply orders. They sent them in the wrong language.

REAGAN

*(From within the shelves)* Really? What language?

ANNA

I'm not even sure. I'm gonna go into the office and call some people. You alright on your own for a bit?

REAGAN

I'll be alright.

*(ANNA goes into the back office. For a moment, the stage seems empty. There's a bang at the back door. REAGAN emerges from the shelves, confused. Another bang. A third one, and the door flies open, with OLIVIA hurtling through it. She crashes.)*

OLIVIA

Aa.

REAGAN

Are you alright?

OLIVIA

*(Picking herself up)* I'm fine, I'm fine. That storm is starting earlier than expected.

*(OLIVIA plucks a large locust off her shirt and chucks it out the door.)*

OLIVIA

Eugh. Bug.

ANNA

*(Peeking out the office door)* I thought that storm wasn't supposed to start until later?

OLIVIA

You know how the forecast can be. *(She points at REAGAN)* Who the hell is that? I thought I was talking to you.

ANNA

That's Reagan. Reagan, that's Olivia. Olivia, Reagan; Reagan, Olivia.

OLIVIA

We get it.

ANNA

*(Quickly)* Reagan, Olivia.

*(She ducks back into the office, slamming the door shut. OLIVIA shrugs at REAGAN.)*

OLIVIA

Hey.

REAGAN

Hi.

OLIVIA

Has she explained the whole door situation to you?

REAGAN

She said it gets swollen and stuck. Didn't really go much further than that.

OLIVIA

Well, it's only gonna get worse. Here, I'll show you how to fix it.

REAGAN

Oh, well Anna actually has me taking inventory—

OLIVIA

—It's fine, this'll take two seconds. C'mere.

*(OLIVIA pulls a bottle of spray sunscreen from behind the counter.)*

OLIVIA

This is the magic stuff. You wanna spray the hinges and then go out and spray the outside of the door.

REAGAN

I get greasing the hinges, but why do you spray the outside?

OLIVIA

I think it reflects the sun or something. Watch.

*(She sprays the hinges, then pries the door open (with a significant amount of effort) and walks outside, pulling the door shut (with another significant amount of effort). After a second, she walks back in and the door swings open and shut easily. She finds two more large locusts on her and throws them out the door.)*

OLIVIA

Eugh. Bug. Ew. Second bug. *(beat)* See, it opens better now, though.

REAGAN

Good to know. When do we open?

OLIVIA

In a bit. Anna will let us know.

*(The Slursh machine rattles.)*

OLIVIA

It does that.

*(They stand in awkward new-coworker silence for a beat.)*

REAGAN

So, how long have you been working here?

OLIVIA

I dunno.

REAGAN

You don't know?

OLIVIA

You know how it is. It's a minimum wage job. All the days kinda blend together. Have you worked somewhere like this before?

REAGAN

I worked at a gas station for like, four years before this. And then before that, I was at a smoke shop for a bit.

OLIVIA

Really?

REAGAN

Mm-hmm.

OLIVIA

Huh.

REAGAN

What?

OLIVIA

Nothing, you're just older than you look.

REAGAN

I am?

OLIVIA

It's just, usually the people who work here are doing it to pay their way through school. Or they're like Anna and they started out that way and then never left.

REAGAN

Oh, I am a student.

OLIVIA

Really? But you have to be 18 to work in a smoke shop, don't you?

REAGAN

You do?

OLIVIA

...yes.

REAGAN

Whoops.

*(ANNA pokes her head out of the office door. She has a landline phone pinned between her ear and shoulder.)*

ANNA

Hey, I'm still on hold with another store. Olivia, can you show Reagan how to use the cash register and then open? This might take a second. You can take stock after.

OLIVIA

Word.

*(ANNA ducks back into the office.)*

OLIVIA

I'm assuming you have register experience?

REAGAN

I have a lot.

OLIVIA

Awesome. We have a Winchester register—

REAGAN

—oh I fucking hate those—

OLIVIA

—Everyone does. They suck. Allegedly, they're going to be getting replaced because the newest version of the Secretum registers is coming out, but to be honest they've been saying that they'll replace the registers for like, a year, and nothing has happened, so I'm skeptical.

REAGAN

Who's been saying that?

OLIVIA

You know. Corporate.

REAGAN

Right. Corporate.

OLIVIA

Anyway, you know the drill. We just have to input your biological signature and that'll act as your like, password. I don't know why we have to keep track of everyone's sales because we literally don't make commission, but it's whatever.

REAGAN

At least it isn't like my last job. I had to do my thumbprint and social security number just to clock in and out.

OLIVIA

That's wack. Your finger gets kinda sore, though. I guess I don't have to explain the whole process to you. Scan the stuff, select cash, card, or other; take the money, bag the stuff. If there are any issues or you need to like, void a sale, get me or Anna. Any questions?

REAGAN

Not really. Does it usually get super busy?

OLIVIA

Almost never.

REAGAN

Then why are there three of us here?

OLIVIA

It's a corporate thing. There was an incident at another location. Now we can only staff in prime numbers. Can you ring me up for one of those protein bars on the endcap? I skipped breakfast.

REAGAN

For sure.

*(REAGAN goes to the cash register and presses her finger to it. She winces.)*

REAGAN

Ouch.

OLIVIA

You alright?

REAGAN

It's just sharp.

*(REAGAN scans the protein bar. OLIVIA walks to the entrance and pulls the lever. There's the sound of rattling chains, like a drawbridge has been let down. The lights flicker and both REAGAN and OLIVIA lose their balance as though the stage is shaking violently. ANNA throws open the office door. Everything calms down.)*

ANNA  
What did you do?!

OLIVIA  
What did we do? What did you do?!

ANNA  
Nothing! I was just sitting down to translate the reports!

OLIVIA  
And I was just letting down the drawbridge!

REAGAN  
Olivia, your total is four fifty.

OLIVIA  
How are you not concerned?!

REAGAN  
I'm sure it was just thunder or an earthquake or something. The storm seems to be picking up—look how dark it is outside.

*(She points to the door. OLIVIA and ANNA both seem confused. OLIVIA opens the door and stares out into the audience. Slowly, she closes it and turns to her coworkers.)*

OLIVIA  
We may have a problem.

ANNA  
You broke the drawbridge, didn't you.

OLIVIA  
Get off my *ass*, Anna. There is...no longer a drawbridge.

REAGAN  
Did it fall off?

OLIVIA  
There is no longer...anything.

ANNA/REAGAN  
What?!

*(ANNA rushes to the door and opens it. They all stare out into the audience. When the door is opened into the Void, the fluorescent humming of the lights is obscured by an oppressive silence. Some sort of inaudible tone that elicits discomfort can be used to enhance this effect.)*

REAGAN

I'm gonna take a wild guess and say that this is bad.

ANNA

Well it isn't good.

OLIVIA

Does anyone else feel tempted to walk into it?

ANNA

*(Closing the door)* And we're closing the door.

REAGAN

I'm gonna try the back door.

*(She goes to pull the back door. It's stuck again. She goes to brace her hand on the wall and then pulls back, confused.)*

REAGAN

Um, guys? The wall is bleeding.

ANNA

Huh.

OLIVIA

That's... fun.

REAGAN

Okay... I'm gonna go wash my hands.

ANNA

Use the family restroom.

REAGAN

Is the single stall out of order?

ANNA

No, it just—this happened before I started here so don't quote me on anything—but you know the whole like—

ANNA/OLIVIA

*(Monotone)* Employees must wash hands.

ANNA

—thing? Apparently this guy “Tom” used the single stall restroom and left without washing his hands. It created some sort of weird time vortex, so no one is allowed in there anymore. We try to keep it locked.

REAGAN

Oh, jeez.

ANNA

Honestly it didn’t work out too bad for him. Rumor has it he ended up sometime in the 60s. I remember hearing that he got into some crazy psychedelics for a bit, but eventually he became a teacher with some really weird theories about the human brain. We used to sell his manifesto. There’s probably a copy kicking around in the office if you’re interested.

REAGAN

Good for Tom. I’m gonna go wash my hands. Can you guys give the wall a band aid or something?

*(She starts walking towards the single stall restroom.)*

ANNA

Family.

REAGAN

Right.

*(REAGAN disappears into the family restroom. ANNA and OLIVIA stare at the wall, which is still oozing blood.)*

OLIVIA

Bleeding wall.

ANNA

Yah.

OLIVIA

Fresh blood?

ANNA

Smells like it.

OLIVIA

Is it hum—

ANNA  
—Best not to ask.

OLIVIA  
Does this seem...weirdly familiar to you?

ANNA  
Now that you mention it, I think it might be in the employee handbook.

OLIVIA  
We should check it.

*(ANNA roots around behind the counter. She pulls out a small red book.)*

ANNA  
Oh, here's Tom's manifesto.

*(OLIVIA takes the book and flips through it. ANNA pulls out another book, this one large and leather bound. It looks ancient. REAGAN emerges from the bathroom, drying her hands.)*

ANNA  
Page number?

OLIVIA  
I'm feeling a cool...734?

ANNA  
No, that's the section on mimicry and emulation, remember?

OLIVIA  
Right.

REAGAN  
There was a number scratched into the mirror. Try 647.

ANNA  
Ah! Here we go. "In the case of a severe security threat, your Convenience store will be transported to an endless void as to contain said threat." That explains that whole situation. "Should the walls of your Convenience store begin to bleed, search for a communication from Corporate regarding next steps towards resolving the security threat."

*(OLIVIA, who has finally opened up her protein bar, pulls a crumpled letter from the wrapper.)*

OLIVIA

I found it.

REAGAN

What does it say?

OLIVIA

“Pending. Please await further communication.”

REAGAN

That’s not helpful at all!

OLIVIA

No, it is not. And there isn’t even a protein bar in here! This sucks. We’re gonna die here.

ANNA

Relax, Olivia. It’s barely been five minutes.

OLIVIA

I can’t believe you’re all I have to comfort me as I waste away. This is bullshit.

ANNA

Truly so little time has passed.

OLIVIA

You don’t know that! We’re in a void, fifty years could’ve passed in real time!

ANNA

I highly doubt that.

REAGAN

Anna has a point. Usually voids are actually places of temporal stalling, meaning that it's more likely that once we return to the store’s original location, little to no time will have passed.

OLIVIA

Oh my GOD, that’s so much worse. Do you think they’ll make us finish our shift?

ANNA

Probably.

*(OLIVIA groans loudly, slowly and dramatically collapsing onto the floor as it turns into a guttural scream. ANNA hoists herself up to sit on the counter and watches, unimpressed.)*

ANNA

Are you done?

OLIVIA

I should've quit when I had the chance.

ANNA

You probably shouldn't let your skin come in contact with the floor. It gets clingy.

*(OLIVIA pries herself off the floor, her hands sticking to it slightly. She claims the only stool behind the counter, leaving REAGAN without anywhere to sit. She goes to open the supply closet.)*

OLIVIA/ANNA

Wait!/No!

*(REAGAN opens the door. There is nothing beyond it but blinding light. ANNA jumps up and closes the door.)*

REAGAN

I'm blind now.

ANNA

Don't worry, it's temporary. Someone, uh, mixed some cleaning supplies wrong and it exploded and—you know what? Just don't worry about it.

OLIVIA

So for a building with six doors, we're down to two that won't kill us or cause serious bodily harm?

ANNA

Seems like it.

REAGAN

Anna?

ANNA

Yes?

REAGAN

Was it you that—

ANNA

—I'm the one that exploded the cleaning supplies, yeah. Here, lemme get you a seat and I'll tell you the story.

*(ANNA grabs a crate and dumps out its contents so she can flip it over. She guides REAGAN to the crate, but when REAGAN tries to sit, she misjudges the distance*

*and falls. ANNA scrambles to help her up. OLIVIA tries not to laugh. ANNA returns to her perch on the counter.)*

ANNA

Whoops, sorry. Sorry. Forgot you couldn't see.

REAGAN

You're good.

ANNA

Okay, so this happened when I first started here like, a million billion years ago. I was on my first shift with one of the managers at the time—his name was Theo. He told me to mop and wax the floor, so I went into the supply closet. I was, uh, kinda lazy, so I thought if I mixed the cleaning and waxing solution, I could kill two birds with one stone. Which I technically did! The resulting blast released a noxious fume that like, *decimated* the local bird population. Theo had to haul my unconscious body out of the store. The whole place got flooded with this crazy acid. That's actually why the floor is so clingy! It breaks down organic compounds. They never bothered to replace it, but to be honest it's kinda nice because we don't have to clean as much.

OLIVIA

Fucking christ, Anna.

ANNA

Yeah, it was incredibly bad.

REAGAN

Better or worse than getting transported to an endless void and then blinding yourself?

ANNA

*(Sighing)* Sorry your first day is going...like this, Reagan. I swear, usually things are pretty normal here.

OLIVIA

No they aren't.

ANNA

Which is normal for us. The void isn't normal, though. Very much not normal.

REAGAN

Oo! I can see again. *(beat)* I want a Slursh.

*(REAGAN walks to the Slursh machine. OLIVIA scoots her stool to the counter and leans into ANNA conspiratorially.)*

OLIVIA

So this is definitely her fault, right?

ANNA

What? Olivia, don't be a dick.

OLIVIA

I'm just saying! We've never had any issues before, and then she shows up and suddenly we get flung into a void!

ANNA

Olivia, since you started working here I've had nothing but issues.

OLIVIA

Rude. I'm a model employee.

ANNA

You are truly the exact opposite.

*(They're too caught up insulting each other to notice that REAGAN is standing right behind them with her Slursh cup.)*

OLIVIA

At least my very presence didn't relocate the entire store!

REAGAN

Are you talking about me?

*(OLIVIA and ANNA shriek.)*

ANNA

Sorry, Reagan. Olivia is being mean.

OLIVIA

I'm trying to figure out how to get us out of here! I think it's Reagan's fault! She's probably a Slip or something.

REAGAN

Excuse me?

OLIVIA

You're from the future and they sent you back with a wiped memory for nefarious reasons. They're probably using you for some sort of experiment or some shit.

REAGAN

I know what a Slip is, you jerk. I'm not a fucking Slip. How do you know you aren't a Double Slip?

ANNA

A what?

REAGAN

That's when they take you from your original timeline, implant false memories in your head, and then stick you back in your original timeline.

*(OLIVIA yells and lunges at REAGAN. ANNA, still sitting on the counter, sticks her leg out to clothesline OLIVIA, stopping her. REAGAN stumbles back, tripping and falling. The top of her Slursh cup flies off, but instead of a drink spilling out, there's just a letter. A beat. Everyone flies to grab the letter. REAGAN gets it first.)*

OLIVIA

It's from Corporate!

ANNA

What does it say?

REAGAN

"Anomalies detected."

OLIVIA

Anomalies? Plural?

REAGAN

"Source: Point of Sale system. Please reset your cash register."

OLIVIA

I knew it! Reagan was the last person to use the register! It's her fault!

REAGAN

What is your *deal*?!

ANNA

Olivia! Stand down!

OLIVIA

We're stuck in nowhere land because of her!

ANNA

We don't *know* that yet. Apparently the issue is the POS system.

REAGAN

How do we reset it?

ANNA  
Burning feels pretty standard.

OLIVIA  
Will it even burn? There's so much blood in it.

ANNA  
I don't think it keeps the blood.

REAGAN  
Where does it go?

ANNA  
Not sure. I think we have matches and lighter fluid in the office. Could one of you open it up and take the money out?

OLIVIA  
On it, boss.

*(ANNA goes into the office. OLIVIA pricks her finger and opens the register. The lights flicker. There's a low rumble. ANNA shrieks from offstage.)*

REAGAN  
There is NO possible way for you to blame this on me.

ANNA  
*(Pounding on the door)* STOP DOING WHATEVER IT IS YOU IDIOTS ARE DOING.

REAGAN  
*(Frantic)* Close it! Close it! Close it!

*(OLIVIA closes the register. ANNA stumbles out from the office holding matches and lighter fluid. She is wet from the calves down.)*

OLIVIA  
What the hell happened to you?

ANNA  
What do you think happened?! The office started flooding! What did you do?! Ugh my shoes are soaked. Move.

*(She shoves the matches and lighter fluid at REAGAN and climbs up on the counter to pull off her shoes and socks.)*

ANNA  
Burn the shit. I'm tired of fixing your mistakes.

OLIVIA  
...Alright.

*(OLIVIA grabs the cash register. It isn't plugged in. It doesn't need to be. She puts it on the floor and douses it in lighter fluid.)*

OLIVIA  
Should we say anything? I don't want it to haunt us.

ANNA  
*(Hopping off the counter)* Ah, shit, yeah. Um...exite, exite, noli intrare, non revertemur, vale.

REAGAN  
Sounds legit.

*(OLIVIA tosses a match. They watch it burn. It burns well. This goes on for a bit.)*

ANNA  
We should—

REAGAN  
I'll get a fire extinguisher.

ANNA  
Okay. That should've fixed it. I'll check the door.

*(She goes to move, but her feet are stuck and she falls, slamming her face on the ground.)*

REAGAN  
Oh, my god.

ANNA  
Aa. Aa. Help. Ouch.

*(REAGAN and OLIVIA help her up. It takes a lot of effort. They put her on the counter. Her nose is bleeding, almost too much.)*

ANNA  
The floor...I forgot about the floor...clingy...

*(She passes out.)*

REAGAN  
Oh my god. Is she dead?

OLIVIA  
Probably not.

REAGAN  
Does she have a concussion?

OLIVIA  
Do I look like a doctor?

REAGAN  
You certainly don't have the bedside manner of one. Go grab some paper towels and ice.

OLIVIA  
Don't tell me what to do.

REAGAN  
Please? *(Under her breath)* Dick.

OLIVIA  
*(Under her breath)* Asshole.

*(OLIVIA goes into the shelves. REAGAN pats ANNA's unconscious head awkwardly.)*

REAGAN  
There, there. Please don't die. It would be bad.

*(OLIVIA emerges from the shelves. As she does, the single-stall restroom door swings open and a cash register slides out, almost tripping her.)*

OLIVIA  
New register is here.

REAGAN  
Check the door.

OLIVIA  
It's void.

REAGAN  
Shit. *(beat)* Anna? Anna! Wake up!

ANNA  
Hrm? Wha—my face is wet. Is it raining?

REAGAN

No, no. You slammed your whole face and body on the floor very hard because you weren't wearing shoes and the floor tried to eat you.

ANNA

Right.

*(She goes to sit up and immediately lies back down.)*

ANNA

Ouch.

REAGAN

Okayyyy, let's take our time.

ANNA

*(Sitting up again and snapping her nose back into place)* I'm alright. I'm alright.

OLIVIA

We are going to *die* here, guys. We are going to *die here*.

REAGAN

Actually, the endless void will probably preserve our bodies in this state, so we'll just be alive this whole time. Hopefully the store has some sort of decompression equipment installed, otherwise we might explode or turn to mush or something.

OLIVIA

*(Wailing)* I don't wanna die here!