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## The New Employee

by Martin Bourne

“You’re new aren’t you. What’s your name?”

“Yes, started yesterday. Roberta, Roberta Armin.”

“Thought I hadn’t seen you before. My name is Beryl.”

“Yes, I was... I mean I am an actor.”

“Fancy that. You’ve come to the right place then, lots of actors here.”

“Really?”

“Yeah plenty act like total dickheads. Heads up, here they come.”

“Dickheads?”

“Nearly right, customers.”

“So if you’re an actor, what the hell are you doing working in a supermarket?”

“All the theatres have closed, so the show I am in has been cancelled.”

“What was the show?”

“It was Shakespeare. I was the jester.”

“Well you’ll need a sense of humour in here. How come you don’t you have a proper name badge?”

“They said it was on its way. Supplier problems apparently. It’s like everything now.”

“I know but I think it’s got a lot to do with those two jokers in the back who are responsible for uniforms and the like. All I’ve heard them say lately is stuck in the warehouse innit. Everybody is pretty fed up I can tell you.”

“I tell you what, I’ve got my jesters costume from the play. I could wear it round the store. Try and cheer people up.”

“You mean to say you carry it round with you. Bit weird isn’t it.”

“No not at all. Never know when the chance to wear it might come up. I mean I rehearsed for months.... I’ll go and get it, it’s in the car. It’ll be fun.”

“I’m not sure the manager will agree..., Oh she’s gone.”

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“Well that didn’t take long. It’s quite a get up you’ve got on. Hang on what are doing. You can’t ride a disabled buggy, they’re strictly for customers. Roberta, Roberta come back. Bugger, here comes the manager.”

“Beryl, what the hell is someone dressed as a court jester doing riding one of our buggies?”

“It’s that new woman sir, Roberta.”

“But I haven’t taken anyone new on.”

“Who is she then?”

“I don’t bloody know. Put out an announcement”

“This is a staff and customer announcement. Please be aware there is a court jester driving a disabled buggy erratically in the store.”

“Oh sir, dairy have just come through on my ear piece. She’s steering the buggy with her knees and holding two aerosol squirty creams and firing them at everyone.”

“Aerosol cream?”

“Yes sir. Now she’s heading for the bakery, and she’s singing, Born to be wild.”

“Born to be wild?”

“Yes sir. It’s a song by Bruce Springsteen.”

“I don’t bloody care. Tell the bakery staff to line up across the aisle and stop her.”

“Yes sir.”

“Well, what’s happening?”

“Ooooh...”

“What?”

“One of the bakery guys has knocked her out with a stale baguette.”

“Ah, here’s the police. Security called them.”

“She’s round by the bakery officers,” said Beryl.

Thanks love. We’ve been trying to find her since she was seen on cctv breaking into the theatre and stealing a jesters costume.