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and shook their hands, would make you think, "I'd vote for her." LOUISE's attire is perfectly appropriate for an office temp. Everything about her appearance would make any office manager think, "Oh, she'll be fine." ... for the first five minutes.)

LOUISE. Hey there! Hi! How are you!

DAVE. *(A little thrown to find someone standing immediately outside the door:)* Uh...

LOUISE. My name's Louise. Louise Peakes.

DAVE. Oh! Miss Peakes, yes—from the temp agency.

LOUISE. And you are?

DAVE. Dave Riley.

LOUISE. Dave Riley; it's nice to meet you, Dave.

DAVE. Human Resources called to say you were coming.

LOUISE. I'm happy to help out; I hear you guys are a little short-staffed. *(To PAIGE:)* Hi there! Louise Peakes.

PAIGE. Paige Caldwell.

LOUISE. Paige, pleasure to meet you. *(Committing their names to memory:)* Paige, and... Steve.

DAVE. Dave.

(Three things about LOUISE and mistakes: 1. She makes a lot of them; 2. She's always good-natured about it—often recognizing her error, sometimes even chuckling about it; and 3. She sees no significance in mistakes. To her, they indicate no flaw, no need for embarrassment or decrease in self-confidence. "I don't know what I'm doing," she will later say, "but that doesn't mean I'm not a valuable employee." This is her guiding philosophy.)

LOUISE. Dave, right—sorry. I'm not always great with names, right off the bat, but I've got it now— Dave. So, what can I do for you?; what's the job? I think they told me I'm*the... Assistant Executive Governor? *(To PAIGE, with a smile—knowing that sounds off:)* That can't be right.

DAVE. It's, uh... actually, you'd be the Governor's Executive Assistant.

LOUISE. *(A friendly aside to PAIGE, in a way that suggests they share these amusing observations all the time:)* See, these titles always have too many words. *(To DAVE:)* What is it? Executive Governor... ?

DAVE. Executive Assistant—

LOUISE. Executive Assistant Governor.

DAVE. No, it's not a... *(Actually finding this funny:)* You're not a Governor.

LOUISE. I'm an Assistant Governor.

DAVE. No, you're, uh—

LOUISE. Look, let's not worry about my job title, okay? I'm just a temp; you just tell me what you need me to do, and I'll get to work.

DAVE. Right, great; thanks. What I mostly need you to do is sit out in the Reception area— *(Indicates the Reception door.)*

LOUISE. Perfect.

DAVE. You have a desk out there—

LOUISE. Excellent—

DAVE. And answer the phones, greet people when they come in—

LOUISE. *(Looking at the phone on the desk:)* And the phone system here—this looks pretty straightforward.

DAVE. Yeah, they're pretty standard phones.

LOUISE. Has the usual buttons. You can probably put people on hold, and... transfer calls.

DAVE. *(Still trying to exist in a realm where this isn't an odd conversation:)* Yeah, it's pretty, it's pretty standard.

LOUISE. *(Again, with zero embarrassment about her shortcomings:)* Okay—just to let you know—phones are not my strongest area. But I will figure it out, no worries. That's what I've learned, being a temp: you're always finding yourself in a new situation, in a job you've never done before, that you don't know how to do. But then you realize that, hey, that's okay, you know?

DAVE. *(He's not sure that is okay:)* Uh, sure, but... just to be clear—you have done *this* kind of job before.

LOUISE. *(This is all 100% positive:)* Very likely not, but listen: this is what I do. Every day I'm in a new office. And they say, okay, here's the job, and I say, okay, first time doing this, and by the end of the day, they're like, okay, good news, we don't need you here tomorrow—and I'm off to the next place. I have more experience than *anyone* at working somewhere I have no experience. So don't you worry about me, I'm gonna be at my desk, figuring out that phone. *(Heading to the Reception door:)* And let me know if you need anything else, okay? Coffee?

PAIGE. Oh! Actually, yeah, that sounds great—

LOUISE. No, I'm sorry, I was asking where I could get some coffee.

PAIGE. Oh.

LOUISE. I'll worry about that later. Time to get to work. Nice to meet you both. Happy to be here. Okay.

(LOUISE exits out the Reception door.)

PAIGE. Well. She's a keeper, Dave. I mean, if you're only hiring one person... you gotta make it count.

DAVE. My god. I mean, they did tell me I was calling very last-minute and any temp they could get wouldn't be the best—

PAIGE. *(Admiring the accuracy of their statement:)* And she is not; she is definitely not the best.

DAVE. But if I send her back... do I get someone worse?

PAIGE. I think that's... literally impossible.

DAVE. I need to call Human Resources. *(Remembering:)* But first I need to find Ned.

(He heads for the Reception door.)

PAIGE. Hey, is there... ? She said the word coffee and now all I can think about is coffee.

DAVE. Yeah, there's a whole set-up, right, uh... *(As they look offstage to the Reception area, realizing.)* Right next to her desk.

PAIGE. Well, that explains why she couldn't find it.

(DAVE and PAIGE exit out the Reception door, closing the door behind them. The Hallway door opens. A head peers around the corner, timidly. After anxiously looking around the room, the head enters further, followed by the body connected to it. This is NED NEWLEY: a person of impressive ability, but a complete lack of confidence. A man awaiting permission to enter a room in which he is already standing. NED's suit is ten years old—in good shape, but out of style. He carries a well-worn briefcase, or hugs it to his chest. He gingerly makes his way toward the desk—as if not wanting to disturb the furniture. Throughout the following, NED mumbles to himself—words we can sometimes understand. When he arrives at the desk, he visibly relaxes—until, turning, he sees Larry staring down at him, and, startled, lets out a yelp, and jumps a little. Recovering from the fright, he makes his way upstage of the desk, taking in its vastness. When he puts a hand on the high back of the desk chair, he's impressed by its softness, and makes a

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