

This is a Robbery

Characters: Robin, Customer, sarcastic (female, early 20s)
Malcolm, The world's worst robber, indecisive (male, 20s-30s)
Arnold, An anxious cashier (male, 40s-50s)
Landon, The manager of Crestview Grocery Store, painfully
unaware to the crisis taking place (male, any age)

Setting: A grocery store, modern year. The stage is empty aside from three people and a counter.

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(The stage is set with a counter, ARNOLD standing behind it scanning ROBIN's groceries. There are various grocery items and grocery bags. Elevator music plays in the background of the entire scene. The intercom crackles as LANDON's voice comes from offstage.)

LANDON

(with annoying enthusiasm) Attention, Crestview Grocery shoppers! It is 8:45 PM and the store is closing in fifteen minutes. The store is closing in fifteen minutes!

ARNOLD

(to ROBIN) Alrighty, your total is gonna come out to \$27.52. Are we paying with cash or card today?

ROBIN

Card, thanks.

ARNOLD

Paper or plastic?

ROBIN

Plastic's fine.

ARNOLD

(while bagging her items) You're out oddly late today, Robin.

ROBIN

I had to cover someone's shift. Again.

ARNOLD

You're still working at that diner?

ROBIN

Unfortunately. But, I've just submitted a couple audition tapes, so who knows.

ARNOLD

Well, that's good. You work too hard.

ROBIN

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Yeah, yeah. I'm just ready to get home. *(hands over her credit card)* By the way, did you guys stop carrying those electrolyte drink-things?

ARNOLD

We're waiting on a shipment right now. I'll be sure to order some, though, in case they weren't put on the form last week.

ROBIN

Thanks, Arnold. You're the best.

(ARNOLD hands ROBIN her card and groceries.)

ARNOLD

Hold on, I'll get you that receipt. The printer's been slow lately.

(MALCOLM enters, dressed in a traditional all black burglar outfit and brandishing a gun from inside his pocket.)

MALCOLM

EVERYONE FREEZE! I HAVE A GUN!

(ROBIN drops her bags as her and ARNOLD shakily raise their hands.)

GET ON THE GROUND!

ARNOLD

(as he lowers to the floor, trying to remain calm) Please... We'll give you anything in the register. Just don't shoot.

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ROBIN

(from the floor) How do we know he has a gun? It's in his pocket.

MALCOLM

I have a gun!

ROBIN

You could be lying, though.

MALCOLM

(raising his gun) You really want to take that chance?

ARNOLD

Robin, *shut up*.

ROBIN

Why is he hiding it in his pocket if he has a gun?

MALCOLM

Are you serious right now? Open the register.

ROBIN

You mean get up off the floor?

MALCOLM

Just him.

(ARNOLD immediately starts to stand as ROBIN sits up.)

(to ROBIN) Don't move!

ROBIN

I'm just sitting up, God.

ARNOLD

(terrified) My manager is the only one with a key to the cash drawer.

MALCOLM

Oh, uh- That's fine. Just bring him out here.

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ROBIN

'Bring him out here'?

MALCOLM

(pointing the gun to ARNOLD) Or, I could shoot you both-

ARNOLD

No, no, no. I'll grab him. He's in his office.

ROBIN

Don't, Arnold. This guy's full of it. He doesn't have a gun.

ARNOLD

Robin, stop making things worse.

MALCOLM

(pointing the gun to ROBIN) I have a gun!

ROBIN

Why aren't you showing it to us, then?

MALCOLM

I don't have to explain myself to you. This is a robbery.

ROBIN

Barely.

MALCOLM

What?

ROBIN

This is barely a robbery. You're barely a criminal.

MALCOLM

I'm a criminal alright. I have a gun.

(ARNOLD begins to slowly reach for the phone and dial 911.)

ROBIN

Show it to us, then.

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MALCOLM

I don't want to. (*noticing ARNOLD*) HEY! DON'T MOVE!

ARNOLD

(*throwing his hands up*) Okay, okay. I'm sorry.

MALCOLM

It's fine, just grab your manager.

ROBIN

Is this the first time you've robbed someone?

MALCOLM

What? No. I've... Robbed plenty of people.

ROBIN

Like who?

MALCOLM

Stop talking. Open the register.

ARNOLD

I'm gonna go grab my manager.

ROBIN

Don't you want to follow him in there? To make sure he doesn't call the cops?

MALCOLM

(*lowering his gun a bit*) What if *you* call the cops?

ROBIN

(*shrugs*) I might. Who knows.

ARNOLD

I won't call the cops. I'll just get my manager.

ROBIN

He could be lying, like how you're lying about your gun.

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MALCOLM

I'm not lying about having a gun. *(to ARNOLD)* Please don't call the cops.

ROBIN

You think asking him nicely will stop him?

MALCOLM

(exasperated) Well, what else am I supposed to do?

ROBIN

You could shoot me, if you had a gun. Or try to bust open the register.

ARNOLD

Jesus Christ, Robin, don't give him any ideas!

ROBIN

He's faking it! Look at him, he's barely holding himself together.

MALCOLM

Shut up, I'm holding myself together just fine. I'm... Going to trust him. To not call the police.

ROBIN

He'd be just as stupid as you to not call the police.

MALCOLM

(pointing his gun back at ROBIN) Call me stupid one more time-

(The intercom crackles and, from offstage, LANDON speaks.)

LANDON

(with annoying enthusiasm) Hello, Crestview Grocery shoppers! The time is 8:50 and the store will be closing in ten minutes. The store will be closing in ten minutes!

ARNOLD

(after a pause) So, am I supposed to grab my manager or...?

ROBIN

Why don't we come to an agreement?

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MALCOLM

(lowering his gun) I'm listening.

ROBIN

You're not much of a robber, and I'm not much of a victim, so you should let us go.

MALCOLM

Why would I do that?

ROBIN

Because, there's pretty much no way for you to get what you want without being arrested. We can't open the register unless you give us the opportunity to call the cops. You're screwed here.

MALCOLM

Unless I let you go?

ROBIN

Right.

MALCOLM

(thinking over it) Okay... Fine. But, I need your wallet.

ROBIN

You're kidding, right?

MALCOLM

I can't just let you guys go. That isn't how robberies work.

ROBIN

What are you basing your idea of a robbery on?

MALCOLM

I don't- A robbery is when someone takes something.

ROBIN

Well, you've definitely taken a lot of our time.

ARNOLD

Robin. Don't make him angry.

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ROBIN

What's he gonna do? Shoot me?

MALCOLM

I could if I wanted to!

ROBIN

Nice to know you don't want to, then. Why don't we consider this a robbery? You came in, you scared the cashier, and now you can leave. We won't say anything.

MALCOLM

Because, that isn't a robbery. I have to take something. Just give me your wallet.

ROBIN

What's your name?

MALCOLM

It's Malcolm.

ROBIN

(almost laughing at him) Why the hell did you just tell me that?

MALCOLM

I... I didn't tell you my last name.

ROBIN

Okay, sure. *Malcolm*. I'm not going to give you my wallet, but I'll give you something better.

MALCOLM

(lowering his weapon) What is it?

ROBIN

My respect.

MALCOLM

I'll take the wallet instead.

ROBIN

(as she stands up) Listen, Malcolm. I'm Robin.

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MALCOLM

No, *I'm* robbin'.

ROBIN

You're Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Yeah. Malcolm... Whose robbin'.

ROBIN

I am.

ARNOLD

I'm Arnold.

ROBIN

(beat) If you let us go, I will give you my respect. Isn't that what you want? That's why you're doing all this.

MALCOLM

I'm doing this for money.

ROBIN

On the surface, sure. But, really, all criminals want to be *respected*. I'll give you that.

MALCOLM

Why would it matter that some random person respects me?

ROBIN

I'm not random at all. You chose to rob me, and I respect your courage. That is, if you're willing to let us go.

MALCOLM

But... I'd be leaving empty handed.

ROBIN

Maybe it doesn't matter what you carry physically, but emotionally.

ARNOLD

(tearing up) That's beautiful.

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MALCOLM

No, it isn't! It's nonsense.

ROBIN

So is this robbery. Look, Malcolm, in my wallet, there's \$43, but if you just leave empty handed, you'll get the respect of the people you robbed. Everytime we enter this grocery store, we'll think about how you stood in front of us with a gun and robbed us. We'll talk about you to our family members. You'll be the most respected criminal in this neighborhood. How does that sound?

MALCOLM

You'd really do that?... You'd pretend I robbed you?

ROBIN

(the two share a moment as ROBIN nods) I would.

MALCOLM

Why?

ROBIN

Because, you tried. Maybe you didn't rob us, but you gave it your all.

(There's a pause as MALCOLM thinks it over and the intercom crackles again. From offstage, LANDON speaks.)

LANDON

(with annoying enthusiasm) Attention, Crestview Grocery shoppers! The time is 8:55 and the store will be closing in five minutes. The store is closing in five minutes!

MALCOLM

(beat) Okay. I'll leave.

ROBIN

Thank you.

(MALCOLM lowers his gun and begins toward the door before looking back.)

MALCOLM

I... Don't have a gun. I wouldn't have shot you.

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ROBIN

I know. *(beat)* Goodbye, Malcolm.

*(MALCOLM EXITS.
ARNOLD is freaking out.)*

ARNOLD

Oh my God! I can't believe we're still alive right now! Robin, we were just *robbed*.

(ROBIN's eyes stay where MALCOLM has exited for a moment.)

ROBIN

(wistfully) Yeah. We were.

ARNOLD

What do we do? Should I call the police? He didn't exactly take anything.

ROBIN

(finally looking back at ARNOLD) No, Arnold. I don't think he'll try that again.

ARNOLD

How can you be sure?

ROBIN

I'm not. I just... Trust him, I guess. I respect him.

ARNOLD

Why?

ROBIN

I told him I would.

THE END