

SVEIKI

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A One-Act Play by  
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

GLADYS, female, the receptionist, 20

MAYA, female, the citizen, 22

SUZY, female, the supervisor, 25

DJ, non-binary, from the IT department, 18

SETTING

The reception area.

SVEIKI

A reception area; clean, bright and modern. There is a single entry door and a pair of double doors leading deeper into the building. The doors have large, frosted glass panels.

The room and its appointments indicate that what happens here is efficient, streamlined, and just slightly institutional. There is a reception pedestal - like a lectern - and GLADYS sits on a stool. She holds a TABLET computer in her hands. GLADYS is dressed in a simple uniform with comfortable shoes. The uniform is friendly yet slightly clinical (think flight attendant meets nurse).

GLADYS is doing something on her TABLET and whatever it is, it appears to be important and frustrating. After several failed attempts, she makes a sudden discovery. The TABLET makes a CAMERA CLICK SOUND. This further frustrates her. Finally, she holds the TABLET away from her and smiles broadly at it - CAMERA CLICK SOUND. Then goes back to fiddling with the TABLET. Shaking her head, she holds it up again and smiles in a more coy way. CAMERA CLICK SOUND. She doesn't like this either. She continues this trying various poses.

A BUZZER GOES OFF and startles GLADYS.

She checks herself out in the TABLET one last time then puts on a big smile and practices.

GLADYS

Hello! Ola! Sveiki!

The BUZZER GOES OFF AGAIN. She looks down at the TABLET and taps a few times.

We HEAR THE ELECTRONIC LOCK ON THE ENTRY DOOR BUZZ and it is pushed open.

MAYA ENTERS. She is dressed in a contemporary, American style. She carries a bag over one shoulder (purse, pocketbook, messenger bag).

MAYA

Excuse me? Hello?

GLADYS

Hello! What can I do for you?

MAYA

(Digging in her bag)

I got a letter. It had this address.

GLADYS

Do you have it with you?

MAYA

I do... Hang on-

GLADYS

May I have it please?

MAYA

(Pulling an ENVELOPE from her bag)

Yes! Yes, here it is.

MAYA holds out the ENVELOPE, which we see is dirty, ripped and taped back together, with large, damp stains on it.

GLADYS

Oh my.

MAYA

It came like this.

GLADYS

Had a bit of a trip, huh? Well, let's take a look.

MAYA hands GLADYS the ENVELOPE.

GLADYS

Thank you.

GLADYS daintily opens the ENVELOPE, some of which she has to peel away in pieces, and removes the LETTER inside which is not in much better shape.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Hmmm...

MAYA

I know. It's very hard to read.

GLADYS

Yes...

MAYA

You see at the top-?

GLADYS

One moment.

MAYA waits. GLADYS looks at the LETTER from several different angles and holds it up to the light.

We can see that a few of the top lines are very clear, but then it is a series of very smudged lines abruptly ending in a big smear of ink.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

It came like this?

MAYA

Yes. Yesterday. I could see - see at the top? It has the address and the date.

GLADYS

Yesterday?

MAYA

I know. It clearly says I am supposed to report here today.

GLADYS

This is dated from the beginning of the month.

MAYA

I know. Yesterday it arrives in my mailbox looking like this.

GLADYS

Like this?

MAYA

All I can make out is that it is nearly a month old, and I'm expected to be here. Today.

GLADYS

I see.

MAYA

So here I am.

GLADYS

Well you did the right thing. Coming in. Good for you.

MAYA

Thank you.

GLADYS

I'll just try scanning the barcode.

MAYA

There's a barcode?

GLADYS

Yes. Well, this part here is supposed to-

GLADYS puts the LETTER on the pedestal and points her TABLET at it. CAMERA CLICK SOUND.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

There. Mmmm... Nope.

She tries again, a little further away. CAMERA CLICK SOUND.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Sometimes if you back up - Nope. Can you hold it for me?

She hands the LETTER to MAYA.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

If you can hold it up - sometimes it needs to be further away. There.

MAYA holds the LETTER up for  
GLADYS. CAMERA CLICK SOUND.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Hmmm... Can you stand further away?

MAYA

Further?

GLADYS

Just a few steps.

CAMERA CLICK SOUND.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

A few more?

MAYA

Here?

GLADYS

A few more.

MAYA is across the room at this  
point.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Thank you.

CAMERA CLICK SOUND.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Nope. Not going to work. Were you expecting something? A notice, a summons, something like that?

MAYA

Not really-

GLADYS

This just came out of the blue?

MAYA

Yes. Kind of. I mean, I was expecting-

GLADYS

Well, let's try the control code which should be... be... here?

(She fiddles with her  
TABLET.)

Let's see... MS3... B... 4723... 7? 2? Maybe that's a 5. Does that look like a 5 to you?

MAYA

Maybe a Z?

GLADYS

Maybe. 9? R? 17?

MAYA

Or I-7?

GLADYS

Or I-7, yes. And an M? N?

MAYA

Looks like N.

GLADYS

N. That's not enough digits.

MAYA

How many does it need to have?

GLADYS

It doesn't tell me how many, it just tells me when there are not enough or too many. Did we miss one?

MAYA

That could be an E-6 not a B.

GLADYS

Yes, that could. No, now we have too many digits.

MAYA

Could you just look me up?

GLADYS

Just look you up?

MAYA

By my name or something.

GLADYS

Of course! I know what we can do.

MAYA

Great

GLADYS

(Pointing the TABLET at her)

OK... don't smile, please.

MAYA

Sorry. It's just when you say don't smile, it's hard not to-

GLADYS

Think of something very sad. Good.

The TABLET makes a CLICK sound,  
like a camera taking a photo.

GLADYS

OK, so we'll use your face to look... hmmm... Usually only takes a second. Hmmm...

MAYA

Having trouble?

GLADYS

It seems a little confused. Can I take another picture?

MAYA

Sure.

GLADYS

Try looking sadder. Excellent.

The TABLET makes a CLICK sound,  
like a camera taking a photo.

MAYA

How was that?

GLADYS

It's coming up with a few options...

(Showing her the TABLET)

Is this you?

MAYA

No.

GLADYS

How about this?

MAYA

That's a tea pot.

GLADYS

I know.

MAYA

No that's not me.

GLADYS

How about this?

MAYA

That's a school bus.

GLADYS

So that's a no?

MAYA

Maybe I should come back another day.

GLADYS

Well, it clearly says you're supposed to be here, today.

MAYA

That's why I'm here.

GLADYS

Let's try this - hang on.

GLADYS taps a bunch of times on the  
TABLET and holds it out to MAYA.

GLADYS

Can you put your hand on here please?

MAYA does.

GLADYS

OK...

GLADYS makes a few more taps.

GLADYS

And the other one please?

MAYA does.

GLADYS

There we go.

MAYA

Fingerprints?

GLADYS

Whole hand actually. They say it's better because you get the shape of the hand or something like that. I can also tell your fortune if you'd like. Just kidding.

MAYA

Great.

GLADYS

Hmmm... Your name isn't Vladimir is it?

MAYA

No.

GLADYS

Are you sure? No one calls you that? Vlad? As a nickname? An alias?

MAYA

My name is Maya.

GLADYS

Well, that's inconvenient.

MAYA

Maybe you could use my name?

GLADYS

To do what?

MAYA

To look me up in your system?

GLADYS

Oh. Huh. I suppose so. I haven't done that in a long time. We usually use the bar codes. Brings us straight to the information we need.

MAYA

But if they don't work-

GLADYS

They always work. Mostly. They mostly work. What is your name?

MAYA

Maya.

GLADYS

Hang on. I just need to find the place... where... no... no... Ah! No... OK. So your name?

MAYA

Maya.

GLADYS

Can you spell that please?

MAYA

M-a-y-a.

GLADYS

The traditional way.

MAYA

I suppose so.

GLADYS

Last name?

MAYA

Smith.

GLADYS  
Maya Smith?

MAYA  
Yes.

GLADYS  
S-m-i-t-h?

MAYA  
The traditional way, yes.

GLADYS  
OK. So Maya Smith.

MAYA  
Yes.

GLADYS  
Not Vladimir.

MAYA  
Right.

GLADYS  
OK. Hang on. OK. Hmm... I have a big list of Maya Smiths.

MAYA  
How big could it be?

GLADYS  
22,323 Maya Smiths. Maybe we can narrow that down.

MAYA  
What about my address?

GLADYS  
What about it?

MAYA  
Can we use my address?

GLADYS  
No, No, No. I don't have address information. To protect your privacy. You understand.

MAYA

Sure.

GLADYS

I can use some demographic information. You are a woman?

GLADYS waits for an answer.

MAYA

Yes.

GLADYS

Ok, that knocks out a few. Age: Would you say you are in the 15-to-21, 23-to-34 year-old range or... the 35-to-44 year old range? 23-to-34?

MAYA

I'm 22.

GLADYS

That's not an option. I only have two options. 15-to-21 or 23-to-34?

MAYA

15-to-21.

GLADYS

Sort of at the top end of that one.

MAYA

23-to-34.

GLADYS

Oh look! It will let me check both. Are you single? Engaged? Married? Divorced? Separated? Widowed? Divorced? Civil Union? Domestic Partnership? Divorced? It's Complicated?

MAYA

Married.

GLADYS

Congratulations.

MAYA

Thank you.

GLADYS  
Children?

MAYA  
One.

GLADYS  
Yours? Step-child? Adoption? Foster? Ward of the state?

MAYA  
What does this have to do with-

GLADYS  
We're trying to narrow this down.

MAYA  
Mine, she is my kid.

GLADYS  
Thank you. And pets?

MAYA  
We have a dog.

GLADYS  
One dog?

MAYA  
Yes.

GLADYS  
No fish? Birds? Snakes? Ferrets? Octopi? Spiders? Hedgehogs?

MAYA  
No.

GLADYS  
You sure? It might really help if you had an exotic pet.

MAYA  
Well I don't.

GLADYS types in her response and then, seeing something on the screen, swallows hard.

GLADYS

On a scale of 1 to 7, with one being not at all satisfied and seven being extremely satisfied, how would you rate your experience here today? They put these surveys in to rate how helpful we are- I am.

MAYA

Seriously?

GLADYS

It is very important to... them. To know how I am doing. Any less than 6 and- But it's important for you to answer truthfully.

MAYA

Seven.

GLADYS

Thank you.

MAYA

Usually you get asked questions like that at the end of an... experience.

GLADYS

They used to do that but people wouldn't stay to answer so they changed it. Are you in prison?

MAYA

No.

GLADYS

Have you ever been arrested?

MAYA

That seems kind of personal.

GLADYS

It's just a demographic.

MAYA

That's a demographic?

GLADYS

I'm doing the big categories. To try to narrow-

MAYA

But you can't see my address?

GLADYS

Yes.

MAYA

How does that protect my privacy?

GLADYS

I don't know where you live.

MAYA

But I would tell you that.

GLADYS

Please don't.

MAYA

Look, I- I just got this letter.

GLADYS

That's very unusual, to get a letter. Oh! Did you get an email?

MAYA

From who?

GLADYS

Whoever sent the letter?

MAYA

I don't know who sent the letter.

GLADYS

Well, did you get any emails asking you to come here today?

MAYA

I get a lot of email. But no, I don't think so.

GLADYS

Because it is highly unusual to get an actual, physical letter. I mean, I have been here for seven years - it's the first one I've seen. Can you check your email?

MAYA

I guess so.

GLADYS

Great.

MAYA

You mean now?

GLADYS

If that's convenient, yes.

MAYA

(Pulling her PHONE out of her bag.)

I guess so. What would I even be looking for?

GLADYS

Well, something mentioning today's date would be good.

MAYA

OK... So that's not bringing up anything.

GLADYS

Did you spell out the month?

MAYA

I will try that.

GLADYS

What about using the abbreviation? Two digit year? Four digit year?

MAYA

Why don't I just use what is on the letter.

GLADYS

Good idea.

MAYA

Nothing.

GLADYS

How about the address?

MAYA

Nothing.

GLADYS

Poop. Poop poop poop.

MAYA

Look, I can't stay here all day.

GLADYS

I am trying to be helpful and ensure you are extremely satisfied with your experience.

MAYA

Of course-

GLADYS

By which I mean, on a scale from one to seven, with one being not at all satisfied and seven being extremely satisfied, how would you-

MAYA

Seven.

GLADYS

Thank you. You know, maybe we're coming at this all wrong. Instead of trying to figure out who you are-

MAYA

I know who I am-

GLADYS

Yes, but what if we tried to figure out why you're here?

MAYA

I thought- Ok. Where am I?

GLADYS

Is that a trick question?

MAYA

No.

GLADYS

Because you're there.

MAYA

Yes- What is this place? Where I am.

GLADYS

Here?

MAYA

Yes, here.

GLADYS

This is Central Processing.

MAYA

OK. Central Processing. What does that mean?

GLADYS

It means this is the central location where we... process.

MAYA

Process what?

GLADYS

People.

MAYA

Process them how?

GLADYS

And I should mention, we are not THE central location, we are A central location. There used to be a central location, but then they set up the regional system, and then they broke those down into divisions and then sectors- which turned out to be too small so they rolled them up into chapters and that's where you are. Chapter 12.

MAYA

Twelve.

GLADYS

Substation 4. Technically.

MAYA

OK. So this is the not-so-central central processing substation four of-

GLADYS

Chapter 12, North Division, Eastern Region. Yes.

MAYA

And how do you process people? When they show up.

GLADYS

Well, they come in and I scan their control codes. It's usually on their phones or tablets. I just scan the code.

MAYA

OK, then what?

GLADYS

And then they are processed. Meaning whatever they are here for, I send them on to the next step in their process.

MAYA

What kinds of processes do you do here?

GLADYS

Oh all kinds. Any kind. We used to have people at all the agencies and divisions to do this first step, but then it was all centralized. It's so much more efficient. I used to work at the Department of Corrections. All kinds of things really.

MAYA

So, like...

GLADYS

Like... Fishing licenses, driving tests, is your license current?

MAYA

Yes.

GLADYS

OK, community college registrations, deportations, lottery winnings - did you play the lotto?

MAYA

Not recently.

GLADYS

Those are always fun. Divorce, family planning, family and child services, adoption, community service, jury duty, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, restraining orders.

MAYA

Full service shop, huh?

GLADYS

Birthday parties, heavy equipment rentals, college transcripts, health insurance claims, parade permits, outstanding warrants.

MAYA

The good and the bad, huh?

GLADYS

It's all the same to me, I'm really just here to get people pointed in the right direction. Does any of that ring a bell?

MAYA

You know, a while back I did...

GLADYS

What?

MAYA

No, never mind. It's not-

GLADYS

Please, I'd love to help you. I am very conscientious and diligent in my job, not to mention a pleasure to interact with.

MAYA

OK.

GLADYS

That's what you should say. About me.

MAYA

Got it.

GLADYS

And.... There it is! In a few words would you please describe how your experience was working with our staff today?

MAYA

Oh! Ok.

GLADYS

(Holding up the TABLET)

Speak right into here please.

The TABLET BEEPS.

MAYA

Ok. She was very... conscious- and conscientious and good at her job. She was diligent and happy and... a real pleasure to work with. Thank you.

The TABLET BEEPS.

MAYA

Was that OK?

GLADYS

(disappointed)

It was fine.

MAYA

Sorry, look, maybe I better go.

GLADYS

We will figure this out.

MAYA

But I have other things to do today.

GLADYS

Me too!

They both look around the empty room.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Eventually. They send them to me one at a time.

MAYA

I really appreciate your help. Thank you.

MAYA goes to the ENTRY DOOR and pulls on it. It is locked

MAYA

I wish I could stay, but I will come back - can you? I can come back tomorrow maybe? Can you? Please?

GLADYS

Can I what?

MAYA

Unlock the door?

GLADYS

Oh, no. No.

MAYA

Why not?

GLADYS

I am not able to do that.

MAYA

Is it a rule?

GLADYS

No, there is no way I can do that. Look - no buttons, nothing on the tablet. I don't control the doors.

MAYA

Who does?

GLADYS

I think his name is Steve. Or Roger? Something like that.

MAYA

Is he watching us?

GLADYS

Probably.

MAYA

(Waving her arms)

Steve! Steve!

GLADYS

Or Roger.

MAYA

Or Roger! Hey! I need to go!

GLADYS

Maybe we should get back to figuring out-

MAYA

You can't keep people here. Steve! Roger! Somebody!

GLADYS

You're not considering-

MAYA

What am I not considering?! I'm sorry. I'm upset.

GLADYS

It's OK. What you aren't considering is... Well, what if we need to keep you here? What if we need to.

MAYA

Why?

GLADYS

OK, well, what if that's why you got the letter? I mean, we don't know why you got the letter. What if you are a wanted person? Or are severely contagious? Or planning a terrorist act? We can't just let people walk in and out of here.

MAYA

For real?

GLADYS

It's a figure of speech. Obviously we can let you in, it's the out that's the problem. Are you sure you didn't play the lotto? They bring out the big check and everything. It's very exciting.

MAYA

Listen. I hate to do this, but... I think I need to speak with your manager.

GLADYS

What?!

MAYA

I just think this may be a little more than you can handle. So I think I should speak with someone... else... Are you crying?

GLADYS

No!

MAYA

Oh my dear lord.

GLADYS

But I am very conscientious and diligent in my job, not to mention a pleasure to interact with!

MAYA

Yes. Yes, you are.

GLADYS

Your words! Almost.

MAYA

Do you have a manager?

GLADYS

Yes.

MAYA

OK. So when something happens that goes beyond your... domain, right? Who are you supposed to call?

GLADYS

Suzy.

MAYA

Is Suzy your manager?

GLADYS

Uh huh.

MAYA

Wouldn't she want you to call her?

GLADYS

Not if you made me.

MAYA

OK, I don't want to talk to your manager.

GLADYS

You're just saying that.

MAYA

No, listen to me. I don't. I don't want to talk to your manager. But maybe...

GLADYS

Maybe you do?

MAYA

No, maybe you do.

GLADYS

I do?

MAYA

Yes. Maybe you want to talk to Suzy. So that she can help you.

GLADYS

Oh. Oh. OH! You know, I bet my manager Suzy might be able to help us.

MAYA

Right.

GLADYS

Hang on one sec.

GLADYS taps on the TABLET and holds it out facing MAYA.

GLADYS

Just look right here please. Thank you!

There is the sound of a PHONE RINGING.

GLADYS

It's ringing.

A LARGE PROJECTION OF A WOMAN'S FACE appears on the wall of the room. The woman looks a lot like MAYA, but not quite the same. She speaks in a calm, non-threatening tone.

SUZY

Hello, Gladys.

GLADYS

Hi Suzy. I'm Gladys. Yes. This is Maya Smith.

SUZY

Good morning, Ms. Smith.

MAYA

What the hell?

SUZY

What can I help you with?

GLADYS

I am SO sorry to bother you really. I know you must be SUPER busy. But it's a funny thing. I mean you will laugh when you hear it, really. I saw it and said Suzy will think this is such an strange thing-

MAYA clears her throat

GLADYS (CONT'D)

But since you ask, it seems we are having a little trouble with Ms. Smith's control code.

SUZY

I see.

There is an ODD PAUSE in the projection.

SUZY

What kind of trouble?

GLADYS

Well, Maya got a letter. Like a real paper letter? But the letter got pretty banged up. I mean, it's a mess right?

MAYA

Right.

GLADYS

So we can't really make our the control code. Isn't that funny? Like funny strange, not funny ha ha.

There is another ODD pause in the projection.

MAYA

What is this-

GLADYS

Shhh.

SUZY

What about the bar code?

GLADYS

You know, I tried that first.

SUZY

The bar code should always be scanned first.

GLADYS

Yes, I did that you see, but the bar code wouldn't scan.

SUZY

What's that?

GLADYS

It wouldn't scan.

SUZY

What's that?

GLADYS

I said, I tried scanning the bar code. It was the first thing I tried. But it wouldn't scan.

There is another ODD PAUSE in the projection.

MAYA

Maybe you could-

SUZY

Can you show me the letter please?

GLADYS

Of course!

GLADYS holds up the LETTER. She seems a little unsure as to where to point it.

GLADYS

Can you-

SUZY

Thank you.

GLADYS

-see it? Ok.

MAYA

Look, we don't know what I'm here for, and she can't let me out. So, I am wondering-

SUZY

Is that the...

MAYA

What?

SUZY

Is that...

GLADYS

I think she's trying to ask-

SUZY

(The voice suddenly changes and she is speaking with a thick accent. We also hear background noise like she's on the phone in a busy office - the projection stays frozen.)

Gladys? Gladys! Is that the front?

GLADYS

What?

SUZY

I said - Is that the front of the page?

GLADYS

Um... Yes?

SUZY

Hang on, hang on. I'll be- crap. I'll be there-

The PROJECTION breaks up and disappears.

MAYA

What is going on?

GLADYS

I... I don't know. Did she sound funny to you?

MAYA

Not ha ha funny.

GLADYS

She sounded funny. You don't think she's coming here, do you?

MAYA

Wasn't that the point?

GLADYS

Was it? This was your idea.

MAYA

Yes, that was the whole point!

GLADYS

(Looking into her TABLET)

Do I look OK?

MAYA

Dear lord.

The DOUBLE DOORS OPEN and SUZY ENTERS.

She is not at all the person on the screen. She is a woman about the same age as MAYA dressed in slacks and a blouse; she looks like she works in a government office and has for a long time.

SUZY

Show it to me.

GLADYS

What?

SUZY

The letter. Show it to me.

MAYA

Are you Suzy?

SUZY

I am.

GLADYS

(Handing the LETTER to SUZY)

Here.

SUZY looks over the LETTER.

MAYA

But you- On the screen there-

SUZY

What? Oh, right. She doesn't, technically, exist.

GLADYS

This is all very irregular.

SUZY

Yes. So in the very rare case that a processing clerk needs help, a supervisory avatar appears as someone our system feels the subject can relate to.

MAYA

The subject?

SUZY  
You.

MAYA  
You make up a... face?

SUZY  
The system generates one, yes.

MAYA  
Based on my...  
(to GLADYS)  
Did you know this?

GLADYS  
(shaking her head)  
Of course.

SUZY  
This is highly irregular. So many issues today.

MAYA  
So do you-

SUZY  
Hang on.

MAYA  
OK.

Suzy scratches at the LETTER, then looks at the back. Then at the front again. She holds it up to the light.

GLADYS  
What do you-

SUZY  
What?

GLADYS  
-think?

SUZY  
It's messed up.

GLADYS

Yes.

SUZY

Messed up real good. Everything today, but this- this really pooches things up.

MAYA

Yes, so you can see the problem.

SUZY

You did a facial rec on her?

GLADYS

Rec?

SUZY

Recognition.

MAYA

I'm either a school bus or a tea pot.

SUZY

Oh, right because you are... right.

MAYA

Because I'm what?

SUZY

What about a palm scan?

GLADYS

Tried it.

MAYA

Let's go back to why I'm a tea pot.

GLADYS

And we also tried working backwards from the demographic data.

SUZY

Good, good. You did everything right.

GLADYS

Thank you.

SUZY  
It's a good thing you called me.

GLADYS  
Thank you.

SUZY  
You could have called sooner.

GLADYS  
I'm sorry.

SUZY  
But I am sure you were- yes?

MAYA  
I have an issue.

SUZY  
OK.

MAYA  
I need to leave.

GLADYS  
Yes, she needs to-

SUZY  
I understand.

GLADYS  
I explained-

SUZY  
I understand. OK?

GLADYS  
Thank you.

SUZY  
I am sure...

GLADYS  
Gladys.

SUZY

Gladys explained this to you. You can't leave.

MAYA

Well, she said she couldn't let me out.

SUZY

That is accurate.

MAYA

But you're saying I can't leave?

SUZY

Yes.

MAYA

Can you let me out?

SUZY

Look, usually the system would give you a response that would be micro-targeted to lower your anxiety and diffuse your hostility, but today it's not going to do that. Instead, you've got me. I'm going to resolve this as quickly as I can, OK?

MAYA

And how are you going to do that?

SUZY pulls out a WALKIE TALKIE and speaks into it.

SUZY

DJ? DJ?

DJ

(on the WALKIE TALKIE)

Yeah?

SUZY

I need you in...

GLADYS

223.

SUZY

223.

There is a long pause.

DJ

2-2-what?

SUZY

2-2-3.

DJ

On my way.

SUZY

They're on their way.

MAYA

I heard that. So what do we do now?

SUZY

We wait for them.

MAYA

Can I have some water?

SUZY and GLADYS exchange a look.

GLADYS

Are you thirsty?

MAYA

Yes.

SUZY

So here's the issue with that-

MAYA

You are kidding me.

SUZY

Because we don't know why you are here-

MAYA

You are kidding me!

SUZY

-there is the remote possibility that giving you something to drink, even just one ounce of water-

MAYA

You. Are. Kidding. Me!

GLADYS

Allergies.

SUZY

What? No.

GLADYS

Not allergies.

SUZY

There may be something we are unaware of and giving you anything at this stage in the process could derail things upstream.

MAYA

I'm already derailed.

SUZY

I won't argue with you there.

MAYA

Look, I want to be helpful, but I don't know how much more of this I can take.

GLADYS

Are you often anxious and overwhelmed? Never mind.

DJ ENTERS through the double doors. They are dressed in grey coveralls and carrying an over-the-shoulder messenger bag. They have a spiky, modern hairstyle and look like someone who has many colorful tattoos.

DJ

Sorry, I was on the other side of the building. What a day, huh? What's up?

SUZY

(Handing DJ the LETTER)

Here.

Oh...

DJ

Right?

SUZY

DJ  
(Holding the LETTER up to the  
light.)

I'm not sure...

SUZY

Is it what I think it is?

MAYA

Wait- you know what's going on?

DJ

I haven't seen one myself yet, but I know how to test it.

SUZY

Do it.

DJ pulls a small device out of  
their bag and begins scanning the  
LETTER.

MAYA

What is going on here?

SUZY

So the issue is... this letter. It's unreadable.

DJ

Totally unreadable.

MAYA

You are getting on my last nerve.

SUZY

Listen, about a year ago there was an... incident.

GLADYS

Oh...

Yes. And-

SUZY

Oh...

GLADYS

And-

SUZY

OH MY GOD!

GLADYS

ENOUGH!

SUZY

Sorry.

GLADYS

SUZY

So, there was an incident. An anomaly in the system, and it generated a number of messages that got distributed through a subsystem which routed them to a chapter in a district in a region that was technically closed.

DJ

(still working)

It was supposed to be closed.

SUZY

That's what I said. It was closed.

DJ

Except it wasn't closed.

SUZY

Look, I don't want to bore you with the technical details, but let's just say...

DJ

It printed about a half a million of these at an automated facility about 60 miles North of Fairbanks, Alaska. This facility was supposed to be closed, but it had, in fact, been-

GLADYS

Been overrun by beavers!

MAYA

Beavers?!

DJ

Arctic beavers, yes m'am. The beavers ate most of them- the notices- but about 50-

SUZY

46-

DJ

I'm rounding - fell into a secure mail deposit box. Which would have been fine-

SUZY

Would have been fine except-

GLADYS

Mailman Billy!

SUZY

The rural post officer for Fairbanks happened to stop there once a month, just in case, and that one afternoon was the same afternoon-

GLADYS

He mailed them!

SUZY

Yes.

GLADYS

I thought it was just a story.

SUZY

It's not.

DJ

Here's the proof.

GLADYS

I didn't believe it.

MAYA

That is the most insane thing I have ever heard.

GLADYS

I didn't believe it.

DJ

Seeing is believing.

MAYA

So I am here for nothing? This is a complete waste of time? I could have just ignored the letter. But no, I do the right thing. I be a good person. And it's all some big mistake?

SUZY

I didn't say that.

MAYA

It's all some computer- what'd you call it? Anomaly? That some hillbilly mailman decided to mail?

SUZY

I didn't say that.

MAYA

Well then what are you saying? What?  
(Pointing at GLADYS)  
Why is she looking at me like that?

GLADYS

Oh, dear. It gets worse.

SUZY

(to DJ)

Are you almost done?

DJ

It's processing.

SUZY

The printing of the requests in an off-network, beaver-controlled facility was a mistake. The 46 requests, however, were real. And they break down into three kinds of requests: One, people who are wanted for committing heinous, violent crimes. Two, people who have been diagnosed with... certain diseases. And three, people who need to renew their library cards. So I hope you understand why we have to keep you here until we resolve this issue.

(MORE)

SUZY (CONT'D)

There are some things we can do with the letter itself that will get us pointed in the right direction.

MAYA

I see.

GLADYS

Do you happen to have your library card on you?

MAYA

No.

DJ

(Waving SUZY over to her)

Can I-

GLADYS

That's too bad.

SUZY

We'll be right back.

SUZY and DJ EXIT through the double doors.

GLADYS

You were right about calling Suzy. I'm sure she'll get this all sorted out.

MAYA sits on the floor, leaning against the wall.

GLADYS

Shouldn't be too long.

They wait. MAYA begins to weep.

GLADYS

Are you OK? What is it dear?

MAYA

I don't... I don't have a library card.

GLADYS

That's OK. I never use mine. You don't have to feel bad about- Oh. Huh. I'm guessing you're not a violent murderer?

MAYA

I wish I was.

GLADYS

So, you think you have...

MAYA

I went in for some tests. But they never called. They said they'd contact me if there was any- But they never called. Never emailed. And I figured, no news, right?

GLADYS

I'm sorry, dear. There, there. I am so sorry.

She hands MAYA a tissue.

MAYA

Thank you.

GLADYS

Maybe it's not- Or maybe. I'm sorry. I'm not very experienced at this part of the process. I'm a very good greeter. I can say hello in six languages. And 'thank you.' And 'through these doors.' English. Obviously. Spanish. Latvian. Samoan. Greek. And Urdu. I don't speak those languages. I just learned how to sound out those phrases. At first, I was worried that people who speak those languages would hear me and try to talk to me. But they don't. No one ever has. So that's usually all I have to say. Hello. Thank you. Through these doors. *Geiá Sou. Sas efcharistó. Méso aftón ton thyrón.* That's Greek. I talk a lot when I am anxious. *Ola. Gracias. A través de estas puertas. Sveiki.* That's my favorite. *Sveiki! Paldies. Caur šīm durvīm.* I don't get to use my Latvian that often. It's all stupid. You don't look anything like a tea pot, by the way. Once, I had a woman here and it came up as a cow. They removed all the animals. I miss prison. No really, I do. When I worked - I worked at a prison. Oh, my. I worked there. Anyway, when I worked there I was a property clerk. And so I would take in and catalog people's belongings and then give them out. I didn't take away people's things - that was part of the intake process? Talk about violent murderers. There were guards who did that. But each day I would get a list of the people who were getting out today. And I would find all their things and line up on a shelf. And the prisoners came to the window to take their things, and sign for them. Sometimes it's a suit. Or jewelry. A fancy watch.

(MORE)

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's just a pair of shorts and a tank top. But I am at the end of the process. And I get to see each of them, and help them move on to the next step. I was good at that too.

MAYA takes GLADY'S hand.

MAYA

Gladys.

GLADYS

Yes?

MAYA

Thank you.

GLADYS

Sure, sure.

MAYA

Shut up.

GLADYS

OK.

They sit, holding hands.

SUZY ENTERS through the double doors.

SUZY

Ms. Smith? The doctors are ready for you now.

GLADYS

Good luck.

MAYA

Thanks.

SUZY and MAYA EXIT through the double doors. GLADYS returns to the reception pedestal. She stands there a while, looking at the door MAYA went through.

The BUZZER GOES OFF.

GLADYS shakes it off and checks herself in her TABLET. Dabs her eyes. She puts on a big smile and practices.

GLADYS

Hello! *Ola! Sveiki!*

She looks at the door, presses her TABLET and we hear THE ELECTRONIC LOCK ON THE ENTRY DOOR BUZZ.

**END OF PLAY**