

The Complaint Department

Larry Ferguson



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ArtAge Publications

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THE COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT

by

Larry Ferguson

CAST

WOMAN: Middle-age, casually dressed.

MAN: Middle-age, average looking.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Pleasant, authoritative.

Place

Complaint Department of a large retail store.

Time

The present. A few days after Black Friday.

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Setting: The complaint department of a large retail store. A chain/rope guides customers to the service counter. A sign on the wall says, "We are here to serve you better." A bell rings to alert customers to advance to the counter.

At Rise: A WOMAN stands in line with a lamp. A MAN behind her carries a bag. He wears a hat and dark sunglasses. A CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY sits behind the counter. She is rummaging through her handbag.

WOMAN: Boy, it always seems that you have to line up for everything these days. And these girls have to answer the phone as well as this line up.

MAN: You're right. At some places you have to line up just to get into a line-up.

WOMAN: Did you see the article in the paper about the fight in a line-up on Black Friday? Imagine getting a black eye because the guy behind you wanted to get a ninety-nine cent rectal thermometer more than you did.

(SOUND CUE: Bell rings.)

MAN: Oops! Your turn. You have a nice day.

WOMAN: Thanks. Same to you.

(The Woman exits as if she is going to another customer service representative. The Man removes his sunglasses. Facing the audience, he dabs at a black eye. Then he steps to the counter.)

MAN: Good morning. I have a complaint about a ninety-nine cent rectal thermometer I bought on Black Friday.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Sorry sir, you will have to go back in line until the bell rings for service.

MAN: (*looking about*) But I'm the only one in line.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: I know but it is company policy. We treat every customer equally.

MAN: (*again looking about*) But I'm the only one here!

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Please, sir, it's not my rule. It's company policy.

MAN: Okay, Okay.

(*He returns to the line. SOUND CUE: Bell rings.*)

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Next!

(*Going again to the counter, he looks in his bag for the receipt. SOUND CUE: Phone buzzes. She puts on her telephone headset.*)

MAN: (*showing receipt*) I'd like to make a complaint about this ninety-nine cent rectal thermometer that I bought on Black Friday.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: (*She seems to be looking at him, but in fact, she is answering the phone call.*) Hello. How can I help you today?

MAN: (*bewildered*) Like I just said. I have a complaint about this rectal thermometer.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: (*continuing her phone call*) Yes. I understand sir. Was it stored in a cool, dry place?

MAN: (*indignant*) Excuse me?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Is it possible you inserted it in the wrong place?

MAN: Are you kidding?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Did the flashing red light come on after you inserted it?

MAN: No! The instructions never said anything about a flashing red light.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: There. That may be the problem. While I wait, could you insert it and let me know if that flashing red light comes on?

MAN: Right here!! You want me to insert this rectal thermometer so you can see if a flashing red light comes on?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Yes. That's right. I'm sure it would solve your problem.

MAN: I've never heard of anything so ridiculous in my life.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: No problem. I have plenty of time to wait for you.

MAN: At least could I do it somewhere in private?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Not to worry. I've had eight people with the same problem this week.

MAN: Eight people!! Then you already know it's defective. Why don't you just replace it with a new one?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: I will sir. And for being a really understanding customer today, I'm getting you a replacement that is double the size of the one you have now at no extra charge.

MAN: (*outraged*) Double the size? Double the size!

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Yes, and thanks for calling customer service. I'm sure your new copier cartridge will solve the problem.

MAN: (*confused*) Calling? Copier cartridge?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: (*pushes a button to disconnect the phone call; removes her headset*) Now, how can I help you sir?

MAN: (*relieved*) Are you talking to me?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Well, yes, sir. How can I help you?
(*He looks in the bag to get the rectal thermometer. SOUND CUE: Phone buzzes. The CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY puts her headset back on.*)

MAN: (*holding up rectal thermometer*) As I was saying. I would like to make a complaint about the ninety-nine cent rectal thermometer I bought on Black Friday.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Hello.

MAN: (*confused*) Hello? As I was saying—

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Could you speak up please?

MAN: (*louder*) I have a complaint about the ninety-nine cent rectal thermometer I purchased on Black Friday.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: I'm sorry, sir, but could you repeat that?

MAN: (*even louder*) What are you going to do about this rectal thermometer I purchased on Black Friday?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Can you tell me when you installed the unit?

MAN: (*embarrassed*) About 3 o'clock yesterday.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: And what kind of reception did you get when you installed the unit?

MAN: Reception? I was alone in the bathroom.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: Did any sparks fly out from the unit when you installed it?

MAN: How could I see sparks?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: I think it's best to return the indoor antennae to us.

MAN: (*exasperated*) Finally! That's what I've been trying to do since I got here. Wait! What indoor antennae?

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: (*disconnects the call; removes her headset*) Now, sir, how may I help you?

MAN: Never mind. (*puts thermometer on the counter*) You can just keep this.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LADY: (*holding up the thermometer*) But, sir, what am I supposed to do with it?

MAN: (*to the audience*) I'll let you tell her what she can do with it! (*Throwing up his hands, he exits.*)

CURTAIN