

BARGAIN STORE

by

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EXT. BARGAIN STORE - DAY

A beat-up car sputters into the parking lot. Jerks.

INT. CAR - SAME

GEORGIA SPRINGS, early 30s, small-town girl with a side ponytail to match, pulls the emergency brake up with all her might. The car stops.

She puts it into park. Shuts it off. Tries to roll the window up. It doesn't go.

EXT. BARGAIN STORE - DAY

Georgia gets out of the car, cola bottles and empty cigarette packs falling out after her. She slams the door. Stares up at the Bargain Store's plain sign. Frowns, resigned.

INT. BARGAIN STORE - DAY

A tiny bell rings at the top of the door as Georgia enters.

She scrambles past HAROLD, 50s, greasy, heavy-bellied as loud, sexual moans of raunchy porn come from his phone.

HAROLD

Well, look who decided to grace us with her presence: Miss Georgia Peach.

GEORGIA

Sorry, Harold, had car trouble.

HAROLD

Excuses are just nails used to build a house of failure.

GEORGIA

(puts her apron on)
I still don't know what that means.

HAROLD

It means, I'm docking your pay.

GEORGIA

It ain't even that late.

HAROLD

And my hemorrhoids ain't even swollen that much. Late is late.

GEORGIA
I'll stay after, then.

HAROLD
(looks up from phone)
I like where this is going.

GEORGIA
Forget it. Just dock my pay.

HAROLD
Playing hard to get at your age,
it's not the look, honey.

GEORGIA
I got myself a boyfriend, you know.

HAROLD
You don't have a boyfriend.

GEORGIA
I could have a boyfriend--

HAROLD
Have you looked in the mirror
lately, gal? You ain't a teenager
no more. Not in the best shape
either. Reminds me of my ex, damn
her to hell.

GEORGIA
I'm going to start with the
inventory.

HAROLD
Don't forget to clock in.

She stares at the computer in front of him. He isn't budging.
She leans over to clock in.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
(whispers in her ear)
Come on. Get that car fixed, maybe
even get your hair done. Ain't no
shame in it.

She pulls away. Takes off to the back.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
(hollers after her)
Go ahead and give it some thought.
I'll be here!

He goes back to his phone.

INT. BARGAIN STORE - LATER

Georgia stocks the shelves on a small ladder. She stares up at the toys, losing herself in them.

GEORGIA

Y'all don't know how lucky you are just being toys. Nobody bothering you, rubbing their glands on you, talking dirty like it's a second language. Oh god, I'm talking to toys.

The tiny bell above the door rings.

She watches as a SOLDIER, 30s, strong and self-assured, walks in. He goes past Harold, whose eyes stay glued to his phone.

She goes down the ladder. When she turns, he's right there.

SOLDIER

How much?

GEORGIA

Excuse me?

SOLDIER

(holds up doll)

The doll? She doesn't have a price.

GEORGIA

Oh.

(goes around him)

Everything is nine ninety-nine.

SOLDIER

She kind of resembles you, doesn't she?

GEORGIA

You think I look like a cheap, shitty, bargain-store doll? Wow, the compliments just keep coming for me today.

(goes back to stocking)

Look, buy the doll or not, okay. Just keep your--

She turns around. He's gone. She stares down the aisles. Picks up the doll that he left on another shelf.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll just put this back for you, then. Don't worry, I don't have a thing to do.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Georgia slams the door, causing the window to fall down more. She shivers. Tries to start the car. Tries again. Nothing.

She spots Harold coming out. She sighs.

INT. HAROLD'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Georgia closes her eyes as Harold's hand inches toward her.

EXT. BARGAIN STORE - DAY

Georgia is tinkering underneath the hood of her car when Harold comes outside. He stares at her behind as she works.

HAROLD

Georgia, I ain't paying you to work on your car, no matter how much I enjoy watching it.

GEORGIA

I almost got it, just got to try it out real quick. I think it's the transmission maybe or--

HAROLD

After work.

GEORGIA

Come on, Harold--

HAROLD

"Come on, Harold", nothing. Get back to work!

He goes back inside. She closes the hood. Goes to open the store door but the soldier's hand opens it for her.

SOLDIER

Hello again.

She stares. Where did he come from? He walks in after her.

She keeps an eye on him as she grabs her apron. She follows him down the aisle but loses him when she runs into Harold.

He sucks his teeth.

HAROLD

All that car business kind of got
me going, know what I mean?

(whispers in her ear)

Give you another ride tonight?

GEORGIA

I think I got the Camry fixed.

HAROLD

Pretend you ain't.

He pushes up on her. She makes eye contact with the soldier
in the aisle, humiliated.

INT. BARGAIN STORE - BATHROOM - DAY

Georgia bursts in. Turns the water on. Rubs herself roughly
with soap. Mascara streams down her face.

INT. BARGAIN STORE - DAY

Georgia grabs toys, shoving them onto the shelves. The
soldier's voice comes from behind her.

SOLDIER

Can I ask you something?

GEORGIA

(jumps)

You again! What's with you and
sneaking up on people?

SOLDIER

How long are you going to let him
treat you like that?

GEORGIA

It's not what it looks like.

SOLDIER

So, you're okay with it?

GEORGIA

No, of course not, but what else am
I going to do? And mind your own
business.

SOLDIER

You could leave.

GEORGIA

Leave? What about bills? Eating?
I'm already a month behind on my
rent, you think my landlord ain't
going to throw me out on my ear? I
got daycare...

(continues to work)

And I guarantee the Camry is going
to clunk out again before the end
of the week, if I even fixed it
this time...

SOLDIER

At least you wouldn't cry yourself
to sleep every night.

GEORGIA

Hey, how did you--

SOLDIER

Remember what your mother said,
"don't ever let someone else..."

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

"Determine your worth."

GEORGIA

"Determine your worth."

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Who are you?

SOLDIER

A very observant off-duty soldier.

GEORGIA

That's real funny... Did someone
from my family put you up to this?

She turns. The soldier is gone.

She turns again and he's there, staring at Harold, who is
rubbing his crotch as he gazes into his phone.

SOLDIER

Look at him, what a disgusting hog.

GEORGIA

I've had nightmares about that man.

SOLDIER

Horrible nightmares where you're--

GEORGIA

Trapped in the store, his grimy
hands all over my body.

SOLDIER

It makes you angry, doesn't it?

GEORGIA

Furious.

SOLDIER

You don't deserve it.

GEORGIA

(anger building)

No, I don't.

SOLDIER

I say you walk over there and tell him to shove this awful job right up his awful ass. Start with, "Hey, Harold--

GEORGIA

(already headed to him)

Hey Harold, got a minute? I was thinking maybe we could have a talk.

The sex moans from Harold's phone get louder as they approach. He stays glued to the screen.

SOLDIER

Now he's just being disrespectful, he hears you. I say you tear some things up, let him know you're not one to be messed with.

Georgia spreads her arms, awkwardly clearing everything off the counter.

GEORGIA

I said, We. Need. To. Talk!

HAROLD

Have you lost your ever-loving, bottled blonde mind?

SOLDIER

The phone. Get the phone, that'll really get him.

She tries to grab his phone. It slips, causing it to crash to the ground, becoming silent.

HAROLD

Hey!

GEORGIA

I just want you to know that you
can do something with this job.

HAROLD

What?

GEORGIA

You can...
(eyes the soldier)
Shove it up your awful ass!

HAROLD

Who do you think you're talking to?

GEORGIA

I'm talking to you... you
disgusting--

SOLDIER

Porn-obsessed--

GEORGIA

Porn-obsessed pervert!

SOLDIER

There you go!

HAROLD

You better watch yourself, girlie.

GEORGIA

What are you going to do?

HAROLD

Well, I'm thinking about slapping
the hell out of you.

SOLDIER

Get in his face. He'll back down, I
know guys like him.

GEORGIA

(steps to him)

You're a disgusting hog, Harold. A
molester and an outright jerk, and
I...

(takes apron)

I quit, you son of a bitch!

Harold tries to stand but gets stuck and falls back into his
chair. Georgia and the soldier burst into laughter.

HAROLD
You crazy? You poppin' them pills?

SOLDIER
Tell him--

GEORGIA
I got this.
(to Harold)
I ain't scared of you no more and
even if I was, I'd rather die in a
rainy gutter than work another day
in your shitty shop.

HAROLD
Then, get out of my store, you
washed-up bitch.

GEORGIA
I'm gone.
(to soldier)
We're out of here, right?

HAROLD
Who the hell are you talking to?

She turns. The soldier has disappeared. She stares down at the boxed toy soldier that she's clutching in her hands. She smiles. Drops it on the counter.

GEORGIA
I'm going to let all the ladies in
town know what a creep you are. I
might even put your picture up with
a warning. I understand why your
wife left you and why your
hemorrhoids never clear up, 'cuz
you're a real asshole.

She kicks the phone out of reach.

The little bell rings one last time signaling her exit.

Harold's eyes go down to the toy soldier who now seems to have a smirk on his face.

EXT. BARGAIN STORE - DAY

Georgia drives away, watching as the Bargain Store sign gets further away in her rearview mirror.

THE END