

# SERVICE WITH A SMILE

by Scott Haan

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# SERVICE WITH A SMILE

*A Comedic Trio*

by **Scott Haan**

**SYNOPSIS:** Customer service in the fast-food industry may not always be top-notch, but it's rarely been this bad. All an unsuspecting customer wants to do is buy a sandwich at a sub shop, but he finds himself increasingly frustrated while dealing with the most ambivalent, clueless, maddening fast-food employee in the history of the world. Find out what happens when a sub shop...is out of subs!

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 female, 1 male, 1 either; gender flexible)*

CUSTOMER (m) .....	A young man who is just trying to order a sub. (54 lines)
CLERK (m/f) .....	A sarcastic, monotone Sub-Mania clerk. Preferably female, but flexible. (58 lines)
TRAINEE (f) .....	A new young female employee at Sub-Mania. (5 lines)

**TIME:** Present day.

**SETTING:** Sub-Mania sandwich shop.

## SET

Sub-Mania, a fast-food restaurant that specializes in subs. There is a table or counter. The dialog will communicate the setting well, but any props you could put on stage to further suggest the location (a sign that says "Sub-Mania," a rack or row of potato chips, some empty cups in a stack, a napkin dispenser, etc.) would be helpful.

## PROPS

- A few props to make the set look like a fast-food restaurant (optional)
- A long loaf of Italian bread

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The ages of the performers could vary greatly, although for best results, the Customer and the Trainee should be roughly the same age. The Clerk is written here as female, but could be played by a male if needed. What's more important than their gender is that the Clerk must remain monotone and unexcited throughout; as the Customer gets more and more agitated, the Clerk stays exactly the same, never getting upset or emotional.

## PREMIERE PRODUCTION

*Service With A Smile* had its world premiere at Clinton County Civic Theatre in Frankfort, IN as part of "Tall Guy, Short Stories: 10-Minute Plays by Scott Haan" in October 2017 with the following cast:

CUSTOMER ..... Nolan Vent  
 CLERK ..... Jean Warren  
 TRAINEE ..... Shayla Brock  
  
 Director ..... Jean Warren  
 Assistant Director ..... Scott Haan

## DEDICATION

*To Jean Warren, for being the perfect sarcastic grump while onstage, but the most wonderful friend and supporter the rest of the time.*

**AT START:** *At lights up, CUSTOMER is standing SR, on one side of the counter. He looks all around for an employee, then looks at his watch. Finally he leans over the counter and looks stage left to see if someone is in the back. At that moment, the CLERK enters from SL, in absolutely no hurry.*

**CLERK:** *(Monotone.)* Welcome to Sub-Mania. What can I make for you today?

**CUSTOMER:** Yeah, hey. Um, I think I'll take... a 6-inch chicken bacon ranch.

**CLERK:** I'm sorry, we're out of chicken at the moment.

**CUSTOMER:** *(Disappointed.)* Oh. Bummer. Well then, I will take... um... a cold cut combo.

**CLERK:** All right, what type of bread?

**CUSTOMER:** Just regular Italian.

**CLERK:** I'm sorry, we're out of Italian.

**CUSTOMER:** Oh. Wow. Then I guess I'll take Italian herbs and cheese.

**CLERK:** We're out of that, too.

**CUSTOMER:** You are? Man. Whoever checks your inventory needs to be fired. What other kinds of bread do you have?

**CLERK:** *(Pointing at a sign on the counter.)* Right there. We have five types of bread. Italian, Italian herbs and cheese, wheat, honey oat, and flatbread.

**CUSTOMER:** Hmm. I've only ever had Italian here. Which other kind of bread do you recommend? What's your favorite?

**CLERK:** *(Spoken as if she has never liked anything in her life, ever.)* I like honey oat.

**CUSTOMER:** Yeah? Okay then, I will go with the honey oat.

**CLERK:** We're out of that, too.

**CUSTOMER:** *(Beat and a blank stare.)* Seriously? Why did you bother telling me about it if you don't have it?

**CLERK:** We do have it. Usually. We're just out of it right now.

**CUSTOMER:** Oh...kay...?

**CLERK:** Besides, you asked which one was my favorite, so I told you. Don't ask if you don't care about the answer.

**CUSTOMER:** *(To himself.)* I'm starting to get a headache. *(To CLERK, with a shrug.)* I'm not a big fan of wheat, but it looks like my choices are getting limited, so I'll go with wheat bread. Unless...

**CLERK and CUSTOMER:** *(In unison.)* "We're out of that, too."

**CUSTOMER:** Right. Of course you are. This is ridiculous. Hey, let's try a different approach. Just out of curiosity, do you have any bread here?

**CLERK:** There's one last piece of flatbread in the back.

**CUSTOMER:** Halleluiah. Finally. Then I will take it. I'll have a cold cut combo on your last piece of flatbread.

**CLERK:** I'm sorry, we're out of flatbread.

**CUSTOMER:** *(Blinking hard.)* What? You just said there's one last piece in the back.

**CLERK:** There is. But I already used it to make a tuna sandwich for myself.

**CUSTOMER:** Seriously?

**CLERK:** Yep. I would volunteer to scrape off the tuna but I already took a big, slobbery bite out of it.

**CUSTOMER:** *(Pause.)* Are you joking?

**CLERK:** *(Monotone, no expression.)* Do I look like I'm joking?

**CUSTOMER:** So basically, you have nothing. You have no food. Why didn't you say that to begin with?

**CLERK:** We do have food. We have salad.

**CUSTOMER:** But you don't have any bread.

**CLERK:** Nope.

**CUSTOMER:** No bread, for subs.

**CLERK:** That's right.

**CUSTOMER:** So you have no subs... at SUB-Mania.

**CLERK:** *(With a shrug.)* Sad state of affairs, I know.

**CUSTOMER:** Then why are you even open? Why don't you close for the night?

**CLERK:** Because then I wouldn't get paid.

**CUSTOMER:** Well then why don't you at least have a sign on the door that says, "Sorry, we're out of bread?"

**CLERK:** Because that would discourage people from coming in. Not very good for business.

**CUSTOMER:** It's better than making them angry when they come inside and realize you're out of everything!

**CLERK:** We're not out of everything. We have salad.

**CUSTOMER:** Nobody cares about your salad!

**CLERK:** We also have chips and cookies.

**CUSTOMER:** But that's not what people come here for!

**CLERK:** How do you know? Do you have the place under surveillance? Do you take a poll when people leave?

**CUSTOMER:** This is the stupidest— *(Stops himself.)* Listen. When I first ordered, you asked me what type of bread I wanted!

**CLERK:** Of course. Bread is the first thing you need when you make a sandwich. It's the foundation. I can't very well start making your sandwich, and then ask what type of bread you want later. That seems a little backwards.

**CUSTOMER:** You...are a lot backwards. What I mean is, why would you even ask me to choose a bread in the first place, if you knew you were out of it?

**CLERK:** How could I tell you we were out of something before you told me what you wanted? I'm not a mind-reader, you know.

**CUSTOMER:** *(Slapping his palm for emphasis.)* But you have no bread at all! No matter what kind of bread I wanted, you didn't have it! So why would you even say... *(Mocking voice.)* "All right, what type of bread?"

**CLERK:** That's what we're supposed to ask whenever a customer orders a sandwich. I still have to do my job, you know. I pride myself on my work ethic. That, and my people skills.

**CUSTOMER:** All right, that's it. I'm sorry, but you are on my last nerve. Is there a manager on duty?

**CLERK:** Yes there is.

*Long pause while they stare at each other.*

**CUSTOMER:** Well can I talk to them?

**CLERK:** *(With a shrug.)* I guess. Hold on.

*CLERK exits SL. CUSTOMER, eyes wide, throws his hands up and shakes his head in disbelief that this is happening.*

**CUSTOMER:** Unbelievable!

*After a beat CLERK returns from SL, again in no hurry whatsoever.*

**CLERK:** Welcome to Sub-Mania. How can I help you?

**CUSTOMER:** Wait, what? I asked to speak to the manager.

**CLERK:** And here I am. *(Half-hearted jazz hands, like a bored, emotionless magician.)* Ta-da.

**CUSTOMER:** *(Incredulous.)* You're the manager?

**CLERK:** Yes, sir.

**CUSTOMER:** You.

**CLERK:** Me.

**CUSTOMER:** You are the manager here!?

**CLERK:** That's right. How can I help you?

**CUSTOMER:** This is insane. I feel like I'm on one of those prank TV shows. You are the worst fast-food employee I've ever dealt with in my life, which is really saying something...and you're in charge of this place?

**CLERK:** Yep. Some days I can hardly believe it myself.

**CUSTOMER:** But you...you obviously don't know the first thing about customer service!

**CLERK:** Look, are you gonna buy anything?

**CUSTOMER:** Of course not! Not from you!

**CLERK:** Then you're not really a customer. It's called "customer" service, not "deadbeat" service.

**CUSTOMER:** Deadbeat?!?

**CLERK:** It's not "loitering moron" service.

**CUSTOMER:** Whoa! Did you just call me a "moron"?

**CLERK:** Absolutely. You're the one who suggested we advertise that we're out of bread, with a big sign. Like that would be a selling point.

**CUSTOMER:** Not to advertise! To warn people!

**CLERK:** That's even worse. You want me to warn people against coming in here? To discourage them, on purpose, from patronizing my own establishment?

**CUSTOMER:** If you can't provide what you're supposed to provide, yes!

**CLERK:** We can still provide. We just have a limited menu at the moment.

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