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Retail Hell #3

Beggars can't be choosers

By Kat Avila | Web Published 3.21.2005

What could possibly be worse than working one retail job? Working two. Beggars can't be choosers, especially when the credit card interest is killing you. So now I not only work for a bookstore (promoted from cashier zombie to frantic bookseller), but I work for a card & gift store, too. Thank goodness for the free bitter coffee I get at the bookstore!

As a cashier and retail salesperson, you meet many people from the local community. You recognize the regulars. There are the sane ones you meet with a genuine warm smile at the door, then there are the not-so-sane ones that you stifle a groan when you see them. For example, there was the lady I saw today whom I remembered from when she had asked for the bookstore's senior discount. She explained her mother wasn't with her but her mother was a senior so couldn't I still give her the senior discount. My adamant no-way was overridden by a half-my-age supervisor in the interest of customer service.

Shoplifters are another annoyance. I've twice interrupted shoplifting attempts by teenagers. But teenagers aren't any worse than the adults who steal from retail establishments by returning obviously used merchandise. The bookstore isn't a library, and our card & gift store is reluctant to take back merchandise that lost its charm after the holiday or was broken after abuse.

Other than being motivated by the prospect of fully paying off my credit card debt, I slog through each day fantasizing about where I'm going on my next "working vacation," what will I write about next. Some people think travel is glamorous, but for every good memory I have there is a matching bad memory; it's the universe's sense of balance, I think. And you



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have to pay the piper in the end. I sold my car and computer for my last adventure, and I'm still paying for the memories a year later. (Sigh, I used to be a car person and not a lowly sidewalk citizen.)

My working two low-paying and tiring jobs doesn't leave me with much energy to write or draw, yet I managed to finish an e-interview for the March issue of Sequential Tart (www.sequentialtart.com) on Javier Hernandez. My interview is titled "El Muerto Goes from Comic to Movie." The Peninsula Films movie stars Wilmer Valderrama of "That '70s Show" as the superhero El Muerto, a.k.a. Diego de la Muerte of Los Angeles, that is in his previous life. Filming was completed during Valentine's Day week. Readers might remember my July 29, 2004, LatinoLA.com write-up at <http://www.latinola.com/story.php?story=1951> after I saw him at last year's Comic-Con in San Diego. I'm looking forward to seeing how the movie turned out.

Kat is currently reading Ed Hooks's "Acting in Animation: A Look at 12 Films."

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