

Nailed It
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Original

INT. EARLY AFTERNOON-NAIL SALON

SERENITY, twenty-one years old, confident, a natural flirt, with an athletic build. She wears noise canceling beats, a brown body con dress with brown platform converse to match. She has a cross body bag that she holds with pride, walks into the local nail salon in her neighbor hood called Sunny Nails.

The nail salon is decorated with asian-inspired decor, with a grass half-wall that the front desk woman sat at on her phone.

Serenity takes off her headphones completely and waves at the front desk woman but, she did not acknowledge her presence.

SERENITY

Hello?

SERENITY (V.O.)

Okkaayyy?...You know what let me just sit my black ass down.

No one in the salon acknowledged her presence when she walked in. She noticed the nail technicians were busy running around the nail salon with nail polish in hand, stressed as if they were chickens with their heads cut off. She sits patiently in the waiting area, tapping her foot hoping to ease her anxiety and thoughts.

SERENITY (V.O.)

I know I have an appointment so hopefully they call me up.. sooner or later. I'm always invisible to someone.

Unfortunately that was something she was used to: being invisible. She sits in a chair behind a window that faces directly in front of the desk.

The sun glistens off her deep, brown melanin and highlights her soft afrocentric features.

The potent smell of the acrylic and noises of the nail machinery all blended together, her tapping is apart of the chaos around her. Serenity lightly coughs and speaks to herself as the smell vacates her nose.

SERENITY

(jokingly)

Damn.. I understand now why nail techs

2.

wear mask. These fumes could kill
someone!

Someone being me if I don't drink
something to clear this throat
IMMEDIATELY.

Serenity quickly bends down to her feet to grab a smart water
from her bag.

CAI, a mid-twenties Vietnamese woman dressed in an all black
V-neck three quarter sleeve split-side dress with purple
embroidery. She has a bothered demeanor and weary, tired eyes
which shows on her face as she walks out to the nail waiting
area to find her client.

Cai notices someone sitting down in the waiting area and
turns to the front desk woman with quickness and snaps at
her.

CAI
(annoyed)

Thật sự? Bạn không thể nói với tôi rằng tôi có người ở
đây?!.. /Really? You couldn't have told me someone was
waiting here?..

Cai rolls her eyes.

CAI
(annoyed)
chó cái đưa cho tôi danh sách/ bitch
give me the list!

Front desk woman slowly hands Cai the list.

FRONT DESK WOMAN
(sarcastically)
Tôi xin lỗi/I'm sorry.

Cai snatches the list from the woman at the desk's hand.
Pauses to breathe, rubs her neck with her hand and fixes her
posture before realizing the young woman sitting down was
watching the quarrel between them whole time.

Cai avoids eye contact by scanning the list quickly to find
the most recent appointment and attempts to pronounce the
name.

CAI
(confusingly)

3.

are ready for you honey.
(excitedly)
Thank you waiting!

She stands up abruptly the wrong pronunciation of her name alerts her and casts away the swirling thoughts in a instant snapping her back into reality.

SERENITY
(sarcastically)
It's pronounced Serenity, but thank you! You REALLY gave it your all.

Cai puts on a fake smile masking her real personality.

CAI
(apologetic)
I'm sooooo sorry honey, you can go ahead in sit in chair 2.

Serenity stood up with confidence after correcting Cai. She felt more confident knowing she didn't allow anyone to mispronounce her name, it helped her feel seen and powerful.

Serenity and walks over to the station to sit. She looks around from her chair and notices how the workers in the salon seemed over-worked as they all have heavy bags under their eyes.

Cai walks over to her chair 2 where her customer, Serenity sits. Her boss eyes her from far in her office, which causes her hair on her hands to stand up. As Cai sits carefully in front of Serenity with her supplies in hand and looks over her shoulder to see her boss once again eyeing her down.

Serenity noticed her off demeanor, but shakes it off by shaking her head to herself dismissing the thoughts.

CAI
(shakily)
So um..what kind of nails you want today? French? Manicure? or maybe acrylic whatever you want I can do for you honey.

Serenity smiles wide and starts talking with her hands with passion.

SERENITY
(excitedly)
Oh really? Now you got me excited

4.

okay, so I was thinking of coffin with brown colored French design outlined with some gems...

SERENITY CONT'

Waittt! lemme find a picture for you.

Cai fidgets with a nail file as Serenity speaks and begins to zone out. Serenity grabs her phone to start looking for her saved idea.

CLOSE UP- PHONE SWIPING THROUGH PINTREST

Serenity finds the photo and screenshots it.

SERENITY

Oh here it is!

Serenity shows Cai a style that she favorited by flipping her phone around.

SERENITY

(excitedly)

Can you do this? My birthday is coming up, so I really want to go all out and-

Cai interrupts she begins to show her true personality, cracking the mask.

CAI

Yeah, no if I'm being honest I can't do that.

Cai looks back to check if her boss is still watching her and is relieved she wasn't due to her out of her office, but she was in the background yelling in Vietnamese at one of the staff.

BOSS(O.S.)

(violently)

Bạn cần tẩy lông dưới môi cô ấy chứ không phải tẩy TOÀN BỘ môi cô ấy! Bạn là một kẻ xấu hổ, thu dọn đồ đạc của bạn và rời khỏi tầm mắt của tôi./You needed to wax the hair under her lip, not wax her ENTIRE lip off! You are an embarrassment, pack your things and leave my sight.

Cai puts her emotional mask back on as the sounds of her boss scare her into it.

CAI

5.

can do regular French. It will look good on you and get you a boyfriend. Let me see your hands.

Cai grabs Serenity's hands to begin the process of a French manicure while Serenity pauses and looks at Cai with disgust.

SERENITY

Boyfriend? What makes you think I want one?

Cai pauses to breathe then forcefully smiles.

CAI

Yeah honey, we are going to make sure you look all sexy for him. Is he flying you out for your birthday?

SERENITY

(jokingly)
No, that's because I don't have one.

CAI

Ohhh... is that a sore spot for you?

SERENITY

(passionately)
Absolutely not! First off all, everything I do is for the women and second of all ew..

(BEAT)

((jokingly))

Men don't even wash their OWN ASS. Men have so much internalized homophobia they can't even spread their own cheeks to clean themselves. Why would I want to date a dirty man?

CAI (V.O.)

I better put on a performance, I do not want ông chủ/ boss to come over here.

Cai puts on another facade faking empathy pushing herself past her limit.

CAI

(worried)
I am so deeply sorry honey, please forgive me! I didn't know maybe I can

6.

try-

Serenity tries to hold in her laughter but releases it in the mist of Cai's apology.

SERENITY

No, I'm sorry. Regular French is perfect, it will match my birthday dress. I just couldn't help but notice you were a little tense and kept looking back, so I wanted to pull your leg a bit. Are you okay?

Cai flushes in embarrassment her mask cracks.

CAI

I-I.. I'm sorry I'm just not used to this.

She thought her true demeanor wasn't noticeable and she could mask how she truly felt. She was actually happy someone didn't see her as invisible.

SERENITY

Used to what? Caring how you feel? I can tell you are exhausted.

Serenity looks in Cai's eyes with deep concern.

Cai looks at Serenity briefly but looks down to avoid her sincere brown eyes to continue to do Serenity's nails and sighs to herself. Cai feels comfortable to open up for the first time in years, her mask crumbling as she speaks.

CAI

Honestly, yeah. This job feels like a I'm in a forever loop can't escape from. Every time I try to express how I feel stressed and I want to quit to my boss or the coworkers I always end up back here where I started..

SERENITY

(concerned)

Sometimes jobs try to trap us into staying when you want to flourish elsewhere and because they are wayyy too lazy to rehire, but keep going I'm listening.

Cai's hazel eyes begin to water and stops filing Serenity