

that awkward moment

Four writers share one of their embarrassing stories, because there's something comforting about knowing other people sometimes look silly too!

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I jump on the bus for university and I tap my Go card. Only, there's no buzz. I tap again and again... nothing. A line of people builds up behind me as I'm trying to get my wretched card to work. Why won't it register? A young girl behind me taps me on my shoulder and points at my card. "Yes, it *isn't working*," I manage, feeling beads of sweat on my forehead.

I suddenly drop my card onto the ground and I swear I hear a chorus of sighs from the people growing impatient behind me.

"What's the hold up, kid?" The bus driver turns in his seat to address me. "Young lady, look at your card." My heart falls. It's not my Go card staring back at me. It's my bank card! Flip! I pick it up and fumble through my backpack to find the card I actually need, then tap it - beep - and race for the back of the bus to hide!

> Katherine Willis


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There are few moments in my life that compare to the horror of my first week

at my first job in a department store. I was less than an hour into my shift when I started feeling lightheaded and nauseous, but 15-year-old me was too shy to ask to go home. So, I laboured through my shift in silence and made it to closing time. As I was waiting to leave, I felt my stomach turn and without warning I threw up in front of everyone! Shortly afterwards I heard the call, "Clean up by the back door!"

A few days later I was back at work and so busy that I failed to notice it was time to leave. By the time I realised, everyone had already left. Moments later the lights went out and I was left in darkness. "I should call someone," I thought, but then realised there would be no one to answer. Before I could form a plan, the security alarms started blaring. The supervisor returned to investigate the disturbance, only to find me in my embarrassment.

For the following years I was known as the girl who threw up and the girl who got locked in. Needless to say, it was a relief to find a new job!

> Kayla Rasmussen



I was cooking dinner for my family, so I'd made a shopping list and got my mum to drive me to the shops and wait in the car. My little sister was about six at the time and was going through a phase where she was trying to be super helpful, and touching a lot of things. So of course she wanted to come with me "to help" but as we walked around the store, the more she touched everything, the grumpier I got. We got through the list and only needed two ripe avocados.

As my little sis started grabbing random avocados to put in our basket, I sternly told her to just stand there quietly without touching anything.

But as I turned back to the avocados, a small hand reached out beside me to pick one. I spun around angrily saying, "Oi!" but I was no longer looking at my sister, but at a lady who said quietly, "Oh, this is for me". I couldn't stop apologising as she turned to my sister and asked if she had gotten her into trouble! I rushed us out of there, I was so embarrassed. I don't think we were even able to use the avocados I brought home! > **Gabrielle Byrne**

One night at my waitressing job, a couple left their table to come to the front counter. The woman starts telling me about...champagne? I thought? It was busy, and I couldn't hear her, so I just smiled and nodded. I thought I heard her say, "Two glasses please." So I went to get them. When I came back with the glasses, she was looking at me weirdly. Her husband behind her was digging through a wine bag. For the next minute, we had a conversation that was mostly me saying, "Pardon?" because they were still whispering. Finally, a little frustrated, I asked her straight, "How can I help you?" I finally hear her when she says "You can't." It took me another twenty seconds to understand.

It turned out, this lady was just being friendly and striking up a conversation with the waitress while her husband brought out the champagne and their plastic glasses, separately from their friends who couldn't drink alcohol. I had spent several minutes trying to figure out what these people wanted from me when they just wanted to chat casually. The key to this situation is to smile and wait until they've left to facepalm yourself. > **Naomi Lamont**