

CLEARANCE RACK

By Kelly Meadows

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CAST: 1 female named Christine.

(*SHE opens the monologue as her mother, calling for her angrily in a store at a shopping mall.*) Christine! Christine Britanya LaJoya! You get over here right now!

(*as herself*) The call was so urgent you'd think I just won a sweepstakes with a claim deadline.

(*as mother*) Christine! Your father is looking for you!

(*as herself*) Where is he?

(*as mother*) In the car, waiting.

(*a bit sassy*) Did he check the trunk? If he's looking for me, perhaps he should leave the cozy confines of the automobile and come into the mall since he knows that's where I am.

(*as mother, one final bellow*) Christine!

(*as herself*) I was beginning to wish my name wasn't Christine. And... so was everybody else.

I was at that age of back-to-school shopping where you're old enough to have your own taste in clothing but too young to have the money to pay for it. The minute we walked into the mall, my mother's communications skills centered around three key phrases:

(*as mother*) "You're not wearing that."

"That will never fit you."

"Your father won't like that."

Well, then, I said, *he* doesn't have to wear it.

Dad came along because he wanted to make sure mom didn't use *my* shopping day as an excuse to doll up her own wardrobe. He had his own three phrases.

"We can't afford it." (*as herself, commenting*) It's on sale.

"You're not wearing that around boys." Oh, yes I am.

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"I'm your father." Well can you take a day off?

I spent all day basically hearing the same six things over and over, yet they say teenagers have a limited means of self expression.

Or course, what could be more painful for a 45-year-old man than spending a day with his wife and daughter looking at girls wear? Dad stayed in the car to watch golf on our vehicular video screen and texted us every five minutes.

(as father, texting, so CHRISTINE pretends to be reading a cell phone, not happy with her father's "text-speak") "I'm still your father, LOL."

(still narrating a text) "BTW, *(draws the letters with her fingers)* R U Finished yet?"

"Daddy, be quiet! *(embarrassed)* ROFL."

My big question is... why take me to shop where you're positive that everything is too expensive and nothing fits? Why waste my time, and yours?

I was also shopping for my little sister. She'll be wearing the same clothes – three years from now. So I get *(as a friend, critical)* "Ewww, that is so yesterday where did you get that?" and she gets *(as her sister's friend, impressed)* "Ooooh! That is so retro where did you get that?"

So we're outside the American Eagle and I'm like "Mom you are too old to walk past the inventory control device," and she says "I'm not buying anything for you I can't borrow myself. Times are hard." Are they ever!

Well who is working there but Myeesha *(pronounce it my-ee-sha)* Holcombe, who beat me out for the final cheerleader spot by one point because apparently she said "block that kick" a half inch higher than I did... and Aaron Iker *(pronounce it Eye-ker)*, who wouldn't take me to the dance because, apparently, I didn't dress suitably enough to fit into his clique.

(pretending to text) Dance?

(getting a response) Never LOL. Ever ROFL.

Well... colon – dash – open parenthesis, otherwise known as sad face, to you!

And what does Myeesha say? Not "Welcome to American Eagle!" not "Can I help you?" No, it's *(as a cheerleader, rubbing it in)* "Go team go! Block that punt! Hold that line!"

I respond in kind. *(in the same tone of voice)* "Wait on me! Find my size!"

Then Aaron has his say. "I'll have you know that any largess shown you

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during this transaction is purely professional and should not be construed as encouragement or agreement to attend the dance."

Mom says, "Are these friends of yours?"

(responding) "What do you think? Let's go!"

(as mom) I like this place!

(as herself, trying to get out of shopping here with her mother) Mom, nothing will fit!

(as mom, a bit condescending) There's a two for one sale! I think it will fit just fine!

"I'll be happy to help," Aaron says to my mother! "If you can dress her up a bit, I might just take her to the dance."

Mom never misses an opportunity to make a bad thing worse. "Is anything on clearance?"

(responding, annoyed) Sure mom, stuff no one wants. Can I browse, please? Alone?

So I'm pushing hangers around in a department that should be labeled "Clothes my father will hate," while behind me Myeesha conspires with my mother to put me into the ugliest outfit she can possibly find. I try it on, hoping to prove to my mom that it won't look good on me, her, or my sister three years down the line.

We were not on the same page. We weren't even in the same book. (as mother) "It's affordable and it fits fine!"

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