

Checked Out

Written By

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COLD OPEN

EXT. ROOSEVELT PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

A small, humble public library branch. ANNA REID (28), an earnest nerd with a twinkle in her eye, stands in front of the glass double doors, giving her reflection a pep talk.

ANNA

You can do this, Anna. Your first librarian position. You're going to serve the community, change lives, and make a difference, because that's what librarians do. Confidence. Confidence.

Before she can repeat the word one last time, the door next to her flies open and a NAKED MAN runs out of the library.

NAKED MAN

Don't go in there, everyone's a lizard in a skin suit!

A wide-eyed Anna takes off her cardigan and holds it out for Naked Man.

ANNA

You look like you need this.

NAKED MAN

Begone, you foul reptilian queen!

He runs off, SCREAMING. Anna watches him go with pity in her eyes.

ANNA

At least I'm a queen.

With a deep breath, she enters the library.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

A handful of patrons sit at tables. A homeless man's head bobs up and down as he slips in and out of sleep.

In the small computer lab, a woman SNEEZES all over her monitor and continues working.

At the circulation desk, CY VU (45), a long-haired rocker, doodles a weed leaf smoking a blunt. Anna approaches the desk with a smile.

ANNA

Hi, I'm--

Cy looks up with a huge smile.

CY

Welcome to Roosevelt!

ANNA

Thanks! I'm the new librarian, is the branch manager here?

CY

Let me know if you have any questions!

Cy goes back to his doodle. Anna stares at him, confused. Next to Cy sits GAYLE HEINZ (55), a sweet Midwestern mom, who looks up from a book she's inspecting.

GAYLE

Don't mind Cy, he's got his headphones in.

She leans in toward Anna.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

He's also high as a kite. I'm Gayle. You're the new librarian?

ANNA

That's right, I'm Anna.

GAYLE

Are you single, Anna?

ANNA

...Yes, but--

GAYLE

You would love my nephew, Duncan! He's an ornithologist, he has one of those Padawan braids, and--

DAN RAMOS (37), wry and a bit disheveled, appears next to Anna.

DAN

Gayle, stop trying to pawn your disgusting nephew off on every woman you meet.

GAYLE

Duncan's not disgusting, he's unique.

DAN

He's a 35-year old man with a rattail and a bird fetish.

(to Anna)

You're welcome. I'm Dan, the other librarian on staff. I'll take you to Ruth's office.

Anna follows Dan further into the library.

ANNA

On my way in, there was a naked man screaming about lizard people. Is that... normal?

DAN

No, it's Steve. And yeah, that's pretty much par for the course around here.

ANNA

I tried to give him my sweater, but he wouldn't take it.

DAN

Must not have been his color. Or yours, for that matter.

Anna's a bit hurt as they reach a door at the back of the library that reads "Branch Manager."

DAN (CONT'D)

Welcome to paradise.

Anna straightens her cardigan and knocks on Ruth's door. No answer. She knocks again: still nothing. She tries the handle and finds it unlocked. She opens the door and peeks into--

INT. RUTH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Where RUTH COLEMAN (61), a woman who hasn't smiled in years, sits at her desk, fast asleep and SNORING. Anna tiptoes into the room, leaving the door open behind her.

ANNA

Ruth?

Ruth SNORES louder as NADIF ABDULLAHI (20), a wannabe baller, appears behind Anna with a cart full of books.

NADIF

Oh snap, Ruth's asleep?

Anna watches Nadif snap a selfie of himself with Ruth in the background. When he's done, he turns to Anna.

NADIF (CONT'D)

I'm Nadif. You need anything, just let me know. Right now, I got a fat hookup on beef jerky, you feel me? And follow me on TikTok, I'm a straight up meme lord.

Anna gives him a confused smile. Nadif SLAMS the door on his way out and Ruth SNORTS herself awake from a dream.

RUTH

More coconut oil, José!
(sees Anna)
Who are you?

ANNA

I'm Anna, the new librarian.

Ruth surveys her for a second.

RUTH

You have a very hopeful energy.

Anna smiles.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I don't care for it.

Anna's smile falters.

ANNA

Thanks for the feedback. Is there anything I can do to get started?

RUTH

Yeah, you can get the hell out of my office.

Anna's dumbstruck as Ruth tilts her head back and closes her eyes. There's a quiet beat.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Now!

Anna snaps to it and heads for the door, a worried look on her face.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. STAFF WORK ROOM - DAY

The library staff sit around a table in the middle of the room. At the head of the table, Ruth eats meats and cheeses off a fancy charcuterie plate.

RUTH

Okay, everyone. This is our new librarian, Hannah.

Anna stands up.

ANNA

Actually, it's Anna, and I'm thrilled to be here. I grew up in Minneapolis and after a few years in Chicago, I'm excited to be back.

GAYLE

What happened in Chicago? You and a boyfriend break up?

ANNA

No, I--

Gayle's eyes widen.

GAYLE

Fiancée?

ANNA

As I said, it's great to be here at Roosevelt. Growing up, my neighborhood library was Washburn--

EVERYONE ELSE

Boo.

ANNA

Excuse me?

RUTH

Washburn's run by a bunch of know-it-alls who think they're better than everyone.

NADIF

Go off, Ruth!

ANNA

Well, those know-it-alls are the reason I became a librarian. That library was a second home to me.

RUTH

Well, la-di-da, not everyone gets two homes. Sit down, Hannah.

ANNA

It's Anna...

Anna sits down.

GAYLE

Well, I made fat-free, sugar-free, gluten-free bars for everyone.

Gayle pulls out a pan of sad, beige bars.

DAN

Gayle, you shouldn't have.

Gayle holds the bars out, but nobody takes one.

DAN (CONT'D)

I wasn't kidding, please stop bringing these.

CY

Yeah, they taste like if sand could fart.

ANNA

They can't be that bad.

Anna grabs a bar as Gayle smiles at her. Anna takes a bite and immediately spits it out. Gayle's face falls.

RUTH

Next up is a numbers report. Let's see... circulation is down, new card registration is down, and program attendance is down.

Anna's struck by the news, but no one else bats an eye.

ANNA

That's terrible! We should hold a public forum to ask the community how we can better serve them.

Anna looks around for support: Cy exhales a huge vape plume, Gayle offers up her bars again, and Nadif's on his phone.

NADIF
 (fake coughs)
 Kiss ass!

RUTH
 Absolutely not, Hannah. I shared
 your optimism once, but 35 years of
 thankless work and ungrateful
 patrons beat it out of me. They're
 monsters, every one of them.

Anna's shocked. She looks at Dan, but he just shrugs.

ANNA
 Well, what about--

RUTH
 No.

ANNA
 Okay, but--

RUTH
 Nope.

Anna opens her mouth to ask another question.

RUTH (CONT'D)
 Your job is to lead story time,
 answer questions at the reference
 desk, and otherwise shut up and put
 your head down. I'm four years from
 retirement, don't mess with me.

Anna bites her tongue but gives Ruth an intense look.

RUTH (CONT'D)
 Attagirl. Now, someone took a dump
 in the stacks. Nose goes!

Everyone except Anna puts their finger on their nose. Ruth
 hands Anna a bucket filled with cleaning supplies.

INT. ADULT STACKS - A LITTLE LATER

Anna scrubs the carpet with a brush and soapy water. Nearby,
 Nadif tapes himself "hitting the whoa" with his phone as an
 OLDER PATRON approaches him.

OLDER PATRON
 Do you know where I can find the
 new Tom Clancy book?

NADIF

No, but you look like someone who appreciates a good piece of jerky.

OLDER PATRON

Excuse me?

Nadif pulls out a bag of beef jerky to show the Older Patron.

NADIF

What you need, Teriyaki? Mesquite? Naw, you look like an Original ho.

OLDER PATRON

I just want to find--

NADIF

A way to get in the game, I respect that.

He holds a business card out to the Older Patron.

NADIF (CONT'D)

Go to this website, set up a profile, and put me down as a reference. Before you know it, you'll be swimming in jerky, baby.

OLDER PATRON

You're very unhelpful.

NADIF

And you smell bad, so we all got our burdens to bear.

Older Patron HARRUMPHS and walks off as Anna approaches Nadif, cleaning supplies in hand.

ANNA

Nadif, why do you work here?

NADIF

'Cause it's stupid easy and gives me a steady customer base for my entrepreneurial endeavors.

ANNA

Well, your jerky endeavor sounds like a pyramid scheme. And the ALA Code of Ethics clearly states, "We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users."

Nadif gives her a confused look, then has a light bulb moment.

NADIF

Oh!

Anna's proud of herself.

NADIF (CONT'D)

You're the one who stinks, with
your bucket full of dookie water!

Anna's face falls as Nadif goes back to dancing.

INT. REFERENCE DESK - CONTINUOUS

Anna plops down at her desk and looks at the children's section of the library, which is empty. Behind her, Dan sits at his desk, facing the adult section and talking to Cy.

CY

Dan, you're gay, right?

Dan nods and Cy leans in.

CY (CONT'D)

If a girl wants to get in my butt,
is that gay?

DAN

A girl, as in someone of the
opposite sex?

Cy nods, eyes wide.

DAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, sounds pretty gay.

CY

I knew it... so, what does that
make me?

DAN

Well, sexuality is a spectrum.

CY

Nah, that's autism.

Dan gives Cy a blank stare.

DAN

Good talk, Cy.

CY
For sure, any time!

Cy walks off as Anna wheels her chair over to Dan.

ANNA
Dan, we have to do something to get
Roosevelt's numbers up.

DAN
No, we don't. Trust me, this job
will be much easier if you don't
try so hard. Or at all.

ANNA
Well, I didn't become a librarian
to just collect a paycheck.

DAN
Don't forget about all the poop
you'll be cleaning up.

Anna shoots him a look.

ANNA
So you won't help me hold a public
forum?

DAN
While I admire your enthusiasm, we
already have to deal with these
people all day, so--

The OLDER PATRON approaches the desk.

OLDER PATRON
Do you know where I can find the
new Tom Clancy book?

Dan pulls out a book and hands it to the Older Patron.

OLDER PATRON (CONT'D)
This is an erotic novel.

The Older Patron shows the cover to Dan.

INSERT - BOOK COVER

Jacked Ryan by Tom Handsy

BACK TO SCENE

Dan smiles at the Older Patron.

DAN

Not just any erotic novel, gay spy erotica written by yours truly.

The Older Patron shakes their head, drops the book on Dan's desk, and walks off. Dan turns back to Anna, who gives him a curious look.

ANNA

You're a published author?

DAN

Self-published, so... technically, yes. I have 1,000 more copies of that if you'd like one.

ANNA

Absolutely! So, about the forum?

DAN

Ruth explicitly told you not to do it, and you don't want to see that woman angry.

ANNA

Then I guess we just won't let her know it's happening.

DAN

You know, it's your first day, maybe just get your bearings before you go plunging into--

Anna holds up her phone.

ANNA

I just posted about the forum on Roosevelt's Facebook page. Community engagement, here we come!

She holds her hand up for a high-five. Dan shakes his head and turns back to his computer.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Huh, you'd think Tom Handsy would be all about high-fives. Zing!

Anna high-fives herself with a determined glint in her eye.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

A MAN Googles "tiny horse porn" and rubs his hands together.

INT. ADULT STACKS - CONTINUOUS

A WOMAN pulls a book off the shelf, rips a page out, shoves it in her pocket, and puts the book back on the shelf.

INT. CIRCULATION DESK - CONTINUOUS

Anna leans over the desk and talks to Cy.

ANNA

Ruth said not to hold a forum, but
I know it's the right thing to do.
Can you keep an eye on her today?

Cy leans in closer.

CY

I'll do it if you come to my band's
show this weekend. We're called
Psycho Virgin Death Squad.

ANNA

(sighs)
Okay, fine.

CY

Sick. So, you just want me to chill
in the staff room?

ANNA

Not chill, keep guard. And if Ruth
comes out of her office, distract
her. Got it?

Cy slowly nods.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Good, repeat the plan back to me.

CY

The plan.

ANNA

Yeah, repeat the plan.

CY
The plan. The plan. The--

ANNA
Just go to the staff room.

Cy salutes her and ambles off toward the staff room. Anna turns around to see Gayle right behind her.

GAYLE
A plan, huh? Whatcha working on?

Anna sizes up Gayle, who smiles like a golden retriever.

ANNA
Ruth changed her mind and decided we should hold the forum after all.

GAYLE
Really?

ANNA
Yep! Can you help me spread the word?

GAYLE
Absolutely! I'll email everyone. My sewing club, my wine club, my Krav Maga class--

ANNA
Krav Maga?

GAYLE
I just started, but it's exhilarating.

Anna gives her a wary look, but Gayle just beams at her.

GAYLE (CONT'D)
Keep your head on a swivel, dear!

INT. CHILDREN'S STACKS - MOMENTS LATER

Nadif holds a bag of beef jerky as a TEEN walks away from him, shaking their head.

NADIF
Your loss, dog. Don't come crying to me when I'm in an Escalade and you're still on a Razor scooter!

Anna walks up to Nadif.

ANNA
Pyramid scheme isn't working, huh?

NADIF
It's not a pyramid scheme, it's
multi-level marketing!

ANNA
Well, I could take some product off
your hands if you get some people
to show up to the forum today.

NADIF
If I do, how much jerky are you
gonna buy?

ANNA
I'll buy one bag for each person.

NADIF
Two bags.

Anna walks away.

NADIF (CONT'D)
(calling after)
Three bags!
(then)
Fine, one. Damn.

A KID reading nearby looks up and SHUSHES Nadif.

NADIF (CONT'D)
You "shhh," I work here!

INT. CIRCULATION DESK - CONTINUOUS

An uptight woman, LINDA NORSTAD (45), confronts Gayle.

GAYLE
Ma'am, you can't check out new
materials, because--

Gayle looks at her computer.

GAYLE (CONT'D)
You lost three copies of "Eat Pray
Love." I love that book! The movie
was good, too. Julia Roberts is a
national treasure.

LINDA
This is ridiculous, I'm a taxpayer!

GAYLE

No way, me too!

Gayle smiles at Linda.

LINDA

So I can't check out this book on vaginal eggs by the editors of Goop?

GAYLE

Not unless you pay your fines, I'm sorry.

LINDA

Not as sorry as you will be.

GAYLE

Okay, then! Have a great day.

Linda narrows her eyes at Gayle.

LINDA

I always do.

Linda turns on her heel and marches toward the front door. Before she leaves, Nadif rolls his book cart in front of her.

NADIF

Whoa, I can't let you leave 'til I invite you to today's public forum on how to improve the library.

A malevolent grin creeps across Linda's face.

NADIF (CONT'D)

So... is that a yes?

LINDA

Oh, I'll be there.

INT. REFERENCE DESK - CONTINUOUS

Anna sits down with a contented sigh. A CUTE DAD, FELIX (30), approaches the desk with his YOUNG SON, MALCOLM (3).

FELIX

Malcolm, can you ask the nice librarian your question?

Malcolm hides behind Felix's legs.

ANNA

It's okay to be shy, Malcolm. I get that way too, sometimes. I'm Anna.

FELIX

I'm Felix. Are you new?

ANNA

It's my first day. At my first librarian job. And I've already scrubbed feces out of the carpet.

Anna's mortally embarrassed at having revealed this fact.

FELIX

Oh, I'm sorry.

ANNA

Don't be, it wasn't your poop... was it? Don't answer that.

FELIX

Wasn't me. At least not today.

He and Anna laugh.

ANNA

So, how can I help you guys?

FELIX

We're looking for books on trucks, would you happen to have any?

ANNA

You know, we just might...

She does a search on her computer, writes down some titles on a slip of paper, and hands it to Felix.

FELIX

Thanks, Anna. Good luck with the rest of your day, hope it isn't too crappy. Sorry, bad pun.

ANNA

Thanks. Also, we're holding a forum on how to improve the library today at five if you can make it.

FELIX

Cool, we'll try to come.

Anna smiles as she watches them leave. Behind her, Dan turns around from his computer.

DAN

Anna, what the hell is this?

Anna wheels over to Dan's desk. Dan points at his computer.

INSERT - E-MAIL FROM GAYLE

"You're cordially invited to Roosevelt's public forum on how to improve the library today at 5 pm. Hope to see you there!"

BACK TO SCENE

ANNA

I asked Gayle to help, and she did.
What's the problem?

DAN

She sent this to every staff member
in the library system. Which means
she sent it to Ruth.

Anna's face falls.

ANNA

I told her Ruth okayed the forum...
Alright, I'll just sneak into her
office and delete the email.

DAN

You don't know her passwords.

Anna raises her eyebrows.

ANNA

But you do! Will you--

DAN

No.

ANNA

Ugh, you're just like Ruth.

DAN

No, I'm not!

ANNA

You're right. At least she's old,
you're just sad.

DAN

Ouch. But still, no.

ANNA
 What if I edited your next book?
 For free. I'm a great editor!

Dan sighs.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Is that a yes?

Dan nods his head.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Dan, thank you!

She goes to hug him, but he puts his hands up.

DAN
 No hug.

Anna pulls back but holds her hand up for a high-five.

ANNA
 Don't leave me--

Dan gets up and leaves.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Twice in one day, totally cool!

INT. STAFF WORK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dan walks in to find Cy at the white board, drawing a mural best titled, "An Ode to Psychedelics."

DAN
 Are you on acid again?

CY
 Man, I wish. Anna asked me to keep
 an eye on Ruth.

Dan points to the door to Ruth's office.

DAN
 She in there?

CY
 Beats me.

Cy goes back to his masterpiece. Dan shakes his head and walks to Ruth's door. He gently opens it and steps into--

INT. RUTH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Where Ruth is asleep at her desk. Dan gingerly walks over to her desk to access her computer, but she's in the way.

He slowly rolls Ruth's chair to the side, but as he does, she pops up from her slumber, eyes wide. Dan freezes. Ruth blinks a few times, and then falls back asleep. Dan exhales.

INT. COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM - SAME

Anna steps into the meeting room: it's dusty, dingy, and downright depressing. She takes a deep breath and SNEEZES. She shakes it off, and SNEEZES again. And again. And--

INT. RUTH'S OFFICE - SAME

Dan accesses Ruth's e-mail account and finds the message from Gayle. He looks over at Ruth, and accidentally knocks her charcuterie board to the floor with a CLATTER. Dan freezes.

RUTH
(mumbling)
Oh yeah, that's the spot, Pierre...

Dan deletes Gayle's email, closes the browser, and tiptoes toward the door. But before he reaches it, Ruth's phone BUZZES. Dan's eyes widen with fear.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Dan? What are you doing in here?

He turns to Ruth, who's half asleep and confused.

DAN
I'm... not here, this is a dream.
Pierre will continue whatever he's
doing if you just close your eyes.

He quickly leaves, heading back into the--

INT. STAFF WORK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where he makes a beeline for the door to the library, leaving just as Ruth pokes her head out of her door. Cy looks up.

CY
Ruth, if a girl wants to get in my
butt, is that--

Ruth retreats into her office and SLAMS the door.

INT. COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Anna looks at the room, which is still sad but cleaner and sporting a few streamers. Dan walks in.

ANNA
How'd it go with Ruth?

DAN
Touch and go, but we got there. And she just left for the day.

ANNA
We did it! Now we need some snacks.

Gayle pops her head in.

GAYLE
I still have those bars from the morning meeting!

ANNA
Oh... let's definitely put those out.

Gayle beams and disappears as Nadif saunters into the room.

NADIF
I hope you're hungry, Anna! I hyped this stupid thing up to everyone.

Gayle walks in with the bars and sets them on the table. Cy strolls in behind her. Anna looks at her co-workers.

ANNA
Thank you for your help today. Even if no one comes, you've made my first day really special.

She smiles at them and looks at the clock: it's 5:10. Anna sighs gently. A WOMAN pokes her head in the room.

WOMAN
Is this the public forum?

ANNA
Yes, it is! Come on in.

GAYLE
We have bars if you're hungry.

The Woman sees everyone besides Gayle shaking their head, so she finds a seat as Felix and Malcolm walk in the door.

ANNA

Thanks for coming, guys!

Malcolm gives her a wave as more people walk in. Anna beams.

EXT. ROOSEVELT PARKING LOT - SAME

Ruth reaches her Buick LeSabre. As she opens her car door, she sees ROBERT QUALE (50), sweet and neurotic, walking toward her.

RUTH

Robert! What's the library director doing at Roosevelt?

ROBERT

I'm here for the forum!

Ruth's jaw clenches.

RUTH

Excuse me?

ROBERT

I love seeing this type of engagement, Ruth, it's very out of character for you. You're not leaving, are you?

Ruth forces a smile.

RUTH

No, I'm just getting more...
prosciutto and brie.

She pulls a small cooler out of the car and SLAMS the door.

INT. COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM - SAME

Anna stands at the front of the room. Fifteen or so patrons sit in chairs and her co-workers are scattered about.

ANNA

Welcome, everyone! Today's forum is about what you want to see from the library, so does anyone have an idea to get us started?

FELIX

Malcolm and I think it would be cool if there were an area for doing projects.

ANNA

A maker space, that's a great idea!
Nadif, can you write that down?

Nadif's on his phone. Anna grabs a marker and writes "Maker space" on the white board as a MAN from the back calls out.

MAN

I want more books on Charles
Manson, I've read everything you
have on him. Twice.

ANNA

Okay, that's terrifying.

She writes "More books" as Linda Norstad stands dramatically.

LINDA

I'm Linda Norstad, and I have a lot
to say.

ANNA

Great! How do you think we can
improve Roosevelt?

LINDA

I don't think we can. I think the
neighborhood would be better served
with a shopping mall on this
property, and I'm here with a group
of concerned citizens who agree.

A few uptight women sitting around Linda nod seriously.
Anna's completely caught off guard.

ANNA

Well, that's not what this forum is
about, so let's...

Anna trails off as she sees Ruth and Robert walk in the room.

LINDA

Get rid of Roosevelt! It's time to
tear this library down and put
something actually useful here.

(chanting)

Tear it down! Tear it down!

Linda's friends join her in chanting. Ruth burns lasers
through Anna's skull with her stare. Anna swallows hard.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anna stands at the front of the room as Linda and her crew continue to chant "Tear it down!"

ANNA

Okay! Does anyone else have something they'd like to share?

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN stands up.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

I want to hear more of what Linda has to say!

A handful of people nod and "Yeah!" in agreement.

LINDA

Roosevelt hasn't been serving our needs for quite awhile, and the tax dollars we pay to support this dump are insane! Why not put some retail here? A wine bar, a yoga studio, a boho chic boutique, the possibilities are endless.

Robert steps to the front of the room.

ROBERT

Hi, everyone. I'm Robert Quale, Director of Minneapolis Public Libraries. And I must say... Linda makes an interesting point.

Anna's eyes widen. Ruth grabs her arm and pulls her aside as Robert engages Linda and the other patrons.

RUTH

I told you they were monsters.

ANNA

Most of these people really care about the library.

RUTH

Well, they're not the ones filling our director's head with ideas of cutting costs.

Anna sees Robert nodding his head as Linda rants on.

LINDA

Imagine how much money the city
would save by eliminating this
branch. No one needs Roosevelt!

Anna steps forward.

ANNA

That's not true. I need Roosevelt.
And so do a lot of people. Like...
that woman.

Anna gestures into the library, where a WOMAN works on a
computer.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Clearly, Roosevelt is serving her.

The Woman SNEEZES all over her monitor and continues working.
Anna turns back to the crowd.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Has Roosevelt lived up to its
potential? No. But should we tear
it down to build a mall?

Linda nods her head vigorously.

ANNA (CONT'D)

No, because malls aren't for
everyone. But no matter who you
are, or what your situation may be,
you're welcome at the library. As a
lonely, nerdy kid, I knew I was
safe at my local branch. The kids
of this neighborhood deserve that.
You all deserve that.

Anna looks at the crowd, but no one speaks. She turns to her
co-workers.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Anyone want to jump in here?

CY

For sure! Anna's right on about...
whatever we're talking about right
now.

Cy flashes Anna the sign of the horns and starts AIR DRUMMING
to the song playing in his headphones.

GAYLE

(to Anna)

I get nervous with crowds, but
you're doing great. Oh, wait!

(to crowd)

Everyone try the bars!

No one moves.

NADIF

And I just wanna say that... for
the next hour, jerky's two for one.
Get at me, y'all! Brrrrrap brrrrrap!

Anna sighs and hangs her head. Felix stands up.

FELIX

Anna's right.

Anna looks up, hopeful. Felix smiles at her.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Sure, Roosevelt's a dump, but it's
our dump. And if it shuts down,
where will we go? Washburn?

A handful of people in the crowd "Boo!" at the suggestion.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Exactly. We need Roosevelt.

The MAN who Googled "tiny horse porn" stands up.

MAN

Without Roosevelt, where would I
watch films like *Hittin' It Horsey-*
Style and *Little Horse, Big Dick*?

DAN

Sir, we've told you that's not
allowed on library computers.

MAN

Fascist!

DAN

(to crowd)

Sure, Roosevelt hasn't been great.
But with Anna on board, the future
is bright. We'll offer more
programs, plan fun events, and
maybe even buy a new book or two.
Right, Ruth?

Ruth gives him a steely glare and turns to address the crowd through gritted teeth.

RUTH

That's right, we're here to serve you. And moving forward, we'll do a better job of that. Okay?

Most of the people nod. Linda and her group are mad, but resign themselves to silence. Dan and Anna share a smile.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Great. That concludes tonight's forum. Everyone leave now.

INT. COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM - LATER

The Roosevelt staff and Robert stack chairs and put the room back in order. Robert turns to Ruth.

ROBERT

That was quite a forum, Ruth. I'm impressed. Whose idea was it?

Anna looks over.

RUTH

Mine.

Anna's offended, but doesn't correct her.

ROBERT

Well, keep this up and you might avoid some major budget cuts.

RUTH

How's that now?

ROBERT

Oh, finding money for libraries, especially underperforming ones, is always difficult. But with this level of engagement, you just might save this place.

Robert leaves just as Anna comes over to introduce herself. She opens her mouth but is immediately cut off by Ruth.

RUTH

Don't start with me, you're lucky I'm not firing you right now.

Anna nods contritely.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Instead, I'm giving you a new role:
Director of Community Engagement.

Anna's excited but wary.

ANNA

Is that a promotion?

RUTH

In name only. This way, if we don't
get our numbers up, we know who to
blame. Oh, and it looks like you
have some community engagement to
attend to right now.

Ruth points into the library, where Linda stands at the
reference desk. Ruth gives Anna a malicious grin and leaves
as Dan walks up, holding a large manuscript in his hands.

DAN

Be careful what you wish for, huh?
On the plus side, that's the first
time I've ever seen Ruth smile.

ANNA

You were right about taking some
time to get my bearings.

DAN

Well, you were also right. We can
and will do better. Otherwise it
sounds like you'll be out of a job.

ANNA

Yeah... thanks for your help today.
I'm sorry for calling you sad.

DAN

Don't mention it. For once, I
actually had fun at work.

She holds her hand up for a high-five. Finally, Dan gives in.

ANNA

Tom Handsy in the building!

DAN

Speaking of, here's the current
draft of my next thriller.

He hands her the manuscript for *Rainbow Sex*. It's very heavy.

DAN (CONT'D)

You should probably talk to Linda
before she burns down the library.

Anna nods and heads toward the door, but is stopped by Nadif.

NADIF

Uh uh... it's jerky time.

INT. REFERENCE DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Linda watches impatiently as Anna plops down at her desk with
the manuscript and an armload of beef jerky.

ANNA

Jerky?

Linda shakes her head, disgusted.

LINDA

You may have won the battle, but
this isn't over.

ANNA

Linda, Roosevelt isn't going
anywhere. So, how can we better
serve you?

LINDA

First off, I refuse to pay my late
fees. They're unconstitutional.

ANNA

Okay... oh, look at the time! We're
closing in five, but let's pick
this up tomorrow. Or whenever.

Anna forces a smile.

LINDA

Oh, it'll be tomorrow. I'm a stay-
at-home wife, my schedule's very
open.

Anna's smile falters slightly. Suddenly, a bucket of cleaning
supplies is dropped on Anna's desk with a THUD. Anna looks up
to see Ruth looming over her.

RUTH

Computer lab. Back corner. You'll
smell it.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Anna and the Older Patron walk through the adult stacks.

OLDER PATRON
Thanks for your help, young lady.

ANNA
Of course, I hear that book's a
real nail biter.

OLDER PATRON
I hope not, I just clipped mine.

They share a laugh and turn the corner into a new aisle.

OLDER PATRON (CONT'D)
Oh, sweet lord!

Anna looks up to see Steve, naked and reading a book.

ANNA
I need you to put some clothes on,
Steve. Or I'll call the police.

Steve gives her a long look, then drops the book and runs
off. Anna picks up the book and turns to the Older Patron.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry about that.

OLDER PATRON
Don't be, that's the new Tom
Clancy! Thank you!

Older Patron takes the book out of Anna's hands and toddles
off toward the circulation desk. Anna smiles.

STEVE (O.C.)
Don't make me hurt you, lizard
woman!

Anna hears a BONE-CRUNCHING THWACK and runs toward the sound.
She finds Steve on the ground in front of the circulation
desk, clutching his groin and MOANING IN PAIN as Gayle dusts
her hands off. A patron walks in the front door and freezes.

ANNA
Welcome to Roosevelt!

END OF SHOW