

SPECIAL NEEDS

A monologue

BY JANE CAFARELLA

Drama/Comedy – 4 minutes

RUTH 40s +tells her friend how she learned to finally say 'NO!'

Speaking quickly but clearly, stream-of-consciousness style

The other week, I was at this party, and someone asked me what I did - as you do. And I said, oh I'm a Special Needs teacher, and they said, do you like it, and I said, it's not too bad, not too bad, and they said they had this friend who worked at this wonderful school, and they were looking for a teacher just like me and I should go for it.

So, I said, okay - and then the next thing, I'm filling out all these forms, and feeling really stressed!

Imitating a command

"Describe your communication skills, on a scale of one to 10!"

Of, course everyone says 10. But I couldn't put 10, so I said six but then they wanted to know why it wasn't 10.

Imitating a command

"Describe an incident where you solved a problem!"

Every day's a problem in Special Needs. Where do I start?

And I thought, well, I talked to my sister for an hour yesterday about her marriage problems, when I should have been writing reports, but that's another story.

Imitating a command

"List your referees!"

And I realised half of them were dead. So, I had to ring up the one that was still alive and tell her I was going for this job, and would you believe it, she knows my boss! So I got really, really, really stressed, as I hadn't resigned coz I was worried they'd be really angry as we so understaffed.

I'm shitting myself...no joke!

That night I couldn't sleep. When I finally did, I had this dream that I was in this job interview, and the question was something like, "If Olivia has six apples, how many pineapples does Charlotte have?"

"None," I said, and the interviewer shouted "Off with her head!"

And then I woke up. In a sweat.

Happy! So happy that it was morning... and I wasn't going for a job interview.

But then I thought about it, and I realized... this wasn't a dream. This is my life! And it's a nightmare. For real!

That's me. I'm always saying "Okay, yeah, I'll do it!"

"Hey, Ruth, can you make a seafood platter for 100 people for a fundraiser? Tonight!"

"Okay! I'll do it!"

"Hey, Ruth, can I come and stay for a week, or maybe two, and can I bring my boyfriend, whom you've never met by the way?"

"Okay! I'll do it.

Beat.

That's me.

Baffled

And I am ASTONISHED at myself.

Astonished that I *can't* say it.

Quietly

I can't say NO.

I never could.

It's just not in my vocabulary.

A confession

I'm too scared...

Scared that people won't ...like me.

But the truth is, that when I'm like this, I don't like me!

I don't like my life!

So, I've made a decision.

Quietly

I don't think you'll like it.

But I might.

Renewed energy

From now on, prepare to be truly astonished!

From now on, I am saying NO!

Coz I've got special needs too.

486 words – four minutes

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