

Shumi's Pantry

- Rumi :** Shumi found a job today.
- Shumi :** I didn't get the job yet. I only filled out an application.
- Umme :** What, what kind of job?
- Shumi :** It's at the supermarket.
- Rumi :** It's very close, Ma.
- Umme :** What about school?
- Shumi :** It's only a part-time job. I can work after school.
- Umme :** This is your last year before college, Shumi. You need good grades.
- Shumi :** Don't worry, Ma, I'll get good grades. But we need more money. We have bills to pay – rent, electricity, phone, food. If I work at a supermarket, I can help buy groceries, too.
- Umme :** You don't need to do that.
- Shumi :** I just want to help. Besides, I may not get the job anyway. I have to do an interview first.
- Rumi :** I'll help you practice.
- Shumi :** Okay, ask me a question.
- Rumi :** Hmm... Do you have any experience working in a supermarket?
- Shumi :** Don't worry, I'll wear my pink hijab for good luck.
- ***
- Ms. Wu :** So, you have never worked in a supermarket before?

Shumi : No, but I am a hard worker and a quick learner. And I'm good with numbers. You can ask my math teacher.

Ms. Wu : Why do you think you can do a good job here? Give me one more reason.

Shumi : Hmm... let me think. I'll tell you. I'm very interested in food. I want to study nutrition in college. I think eating well is the key to good health – mental health and physical health.

Ms. Wu : That's interesting and nice, but this is a food market, and the job is to work at a cash register and help the customers. Tell me why you can do a good job here.

Shumi : Well, I'm friendly and I like to help people. I think customer service is very important in this business.

Ms. Wu : Do you have references? Can you give me the names and contact information of two people? Your math teacher and one other person.

Shumi : Sure.

Shumi (talking to a customer): Your total is \$9.25.

Shumi (talking to another customer): Your total is \$17.50.

Shumi : A few minutes ago a customer paid with a card. It said in big letters "BENEFIT". Do you know what that is?

Ms. Wu : Sure, it's a SNAP EBT card. People used to call it food stamps. It helps people pay for their groceries. You can use it in a

supermarket, a bodega, a farmers market too.

Shumi : Can I get one?

Ms. Wu : I'm not sure. I know there are some requirements. Lots of people have one.

Umme : Excuse me. It's very dusty. I think it's safer if you wear a mask.

Gabriela : You are right. Thank you.

Umme : You're welcome.

Shumi : We can apply online for a program to help us pay for food.

Umme : Hmm... I'm not sure.

Shumi : I think it's a good idea.

Umme : Let me think about it.

Shumi : That is a lot of soda.

**Hipster
Customer 1 :** Yes, it is.

Shumi : Are you sure you want all of this?

**Hipster
Customer 1 :** Yes, I'm sure. Why do you ask?

Shumi : Hmm... I was just thinking, you know, about all that sugar.

Shumi : You can keep canned vegetables for a long time.

Customer : Yes, and they're cheaper too.

Shumi : Yeah, that's true. Did you know we have a sale on broccoli in the fresh vegetables section?

Shumi : That is a lot of ice cream.

Hipster Customer 2 : Yeah, we're having a party.

Shumi : What about fresh fruit too?

Ms. Wu : Is it true? Were you telling the customers what to buy and not to buy?

Shumi : I was just trying to help. I thought it was good customer service.

Ms. Wu : You are not their doctor, Shumi, are you?

Shumi : No, I'm not.

Ms. Wu : And it's not your business to tell customers what to buy, is it?

Shumi : No.

Ms. Wu : This is your first week. I know you are trying to help people but please, do not do that again.

Shumi : I looked up the food program we were talking about. I found a website: **Foodhelp.nyc**. You can apply online in different languages too. ... There are so many people who don't have enough food to eat. It's not fair. Sometimes, even my family..

Ms. Wu : When I was your age, I started thinking about these things too. Now that I have a market, I donate food to a food pantry. I

volunteer there too.

Shumi : Wow, I read about food pantries. They're free for everyone, with immigration papers or without.

Ms. Wu : Actually, I'm going later this afternoon. You can go with me after work if you want. I think it would be a good experience for you.

Shumi : I'd like that.

Ms. Wu : You know, Shumi, nobody needs to go hungry in New York City.

Shumi : Who do you think comes here?

Ms. Wu : It could be anyone going through a difficult time. People out of work, people with low income. Anybody can have an emergency situation in their lives, Shumi.

Shumi : Where should we put this?

Ms. Wu : Oh, let's put it over there. I used to only bring canned food, but now I also bring fresh food.

Shumi : That's awesome!

Ms. Wu : What? Do you know one of the volunteers?

Shumi : No, it was a mistake. I thought I saw someone I know.

Umme : Shumi? Why are you so late?

Shumi : Oh, hi Ma. Sorry, I helped my manager to deliver some food to a food pantry. I volunteered there.

Umme : A food pantry, what is that?

- Shumi :** It's a place where they give food to people who need it. It's for free.
- Umme :** You volunteered? What do you mean you volunteered? I thought you were working.
- Shumi :** Yes, I am working, but I also volunteered with the manager to distribute food at a food pantry.
- Umme :** Shumi, you are doing too much. You are working... You are volunteering. You need to focus on school.
- Shumi :** Don't worry, Ma. I can handle it. The manager said that volunteering is good to put on my resume, too. It's good for my future.
- Umme :** I'm worried about your present... right now. How was work?
- Shumi :** It was great! There was only one thing my manager didn't like.
- Umme :** What happened?
- Shumi :** I gave advice to customers. I told them what to buy and not to buy.
- Umme :** What? You can't do that. That's not your business.
- Shumi :** That's exactly what the manager said.
- Umme :** She's right. What advice did you give?
- Shumi :** I encouraged people to buy healthy food—less sugar, less fat, more fresh fruits and vegetables. You tell us the same thing all the time.
- Umme :** It's okay for me to tell you, but not customers at a supermarket. You're going to hurt her business.
- Shumi :** I won't do it again.

Umme: I hope not. ... Shumi, sweetheart, I know you meant well.

Umme: Gabriela.

Gabriela: Hello, Umme.

Umme: I brought you these.

Gabriela: You didn't have to do that. I still have this one you gave me last week.

Umme: Please, take these. I was a nurse in my country.

Gabriela: Are you a nurse here in New York?

Umme: No, I'm a home health aide. I don't have the license for nursing.

Gabriela: Why don't you go back to school to get your nursing license?

Umme: It takes a long time.

Gabriela: I'm sure you can do it. You know, I am a student.

Umme: Really? What are you studying?

Gabriela: I study English at the library. They have classes, free for everyone, and I want to get my High School Equivalency diploma.

Umme: Oh, that's wonderful!

Gabriela: You can study too. Maybe there's a program for people who were nurses in other countries.

Umme: I am so busy working and taking care of my kids.

Gabriela: Me too.

Umme : Let's go and talk to my teacher. He may have some ideas.

Shumi : This says ground meat, right?

Coworker : That's right.

Shumi : But it doesn't say what kind of ground meat they ordered. Is it ground beef or ground turkey or something else? It's not checked.

Coworker : Sometimes those forms are missing some information.

Ms. Wu : Shumi.

Shumi : Hello, Ms. Wu.

Ms. Wu : Why did you change the customer's order?

Shumi : What do you mean?

Ms. Wu : He ordered ground beef, but you sent ground turkey.

Shumi : Oh that, yeah, uh... the order said ground meat, but it didn't say what kind. I chose turkey because turkey's healthier.

Ms. Wu : I told you not to do this, but you didn't listen. If you don't understand the order, you need to speak to me.

Shumi : I just wanted to help.

Ms. Wu : I like your spirit, but I can't let you ruin my business. Shumi, I'm sorry, but I don't think you can work here anymore.

Umme : You're home early.

Shumi : I think I lost my job.

Umme : Why?

Shumi : I did it again. I couldn't help it.

Umme : What were you thinking?

Shumi : I don't know... I was just trying to be helpful.

Umme : You have to go back right now and apologize to your manager. You have to ask for your job back!

Shumi : I don't want to, Ma. And if we need help with food, we can go to a food pantry or apply for food programs.

Umme : We can't depend on that kind of thing.

Shumi : Why not? We pay taxes, don't we?

Umme : Someone told me immigrants shouldn't apply.

Shumi : That's not fair and that's not true!

Shumi : Gabriela! Let me help you with those.

Gabriela : Oh, thank you.

Shumi : Are you going home?

Gabriela : Yes, I live a few blocks away.

Shumi : How cool, so we're neighbors?

Gabriela : Yes, we are.

Shumi : Do you only work in our building?

Gabriela : No, I clean a few buildings in this area. You were probably going home too.

Shumi: Actually, my mother and I had a little argument. I left the apartment to get some fresh air.

Gabriela: It happens, but your mother is a great woman, a very kind woman.

Shumi: I know, she works so hard too.

Gabriela: You know, your mother and I are going to go to school together.

Shumi: Really?

Gabriela: Yes, at the library.

Shumi: I always wanted my mother to go back to school.

Gabriela: Thank you, Shumi.

Shumi: You're welcome.

Gabriela: Shumi, I saw you at the food pantry the other day.

Shumi: I thought I saw you, but I wasn't sure.

Gabriela: Do you work there?

Shumi: No, I was helping my manager. I volunteered.

Gabriela: That's great, a food pantry is a big help to a lot of people, and thanks to people who give food and volunteer, like you.

Shumi: Me? I just brought some food there with my boss. I never expected to see someone I know there. Is it safe for immigrants to go to a food pantry?

Gabriela: Yes, a food pantry is for anybody.

Shumi: I thought so.

Gabriela: Anyone can go through difficult times. Right

now, my husband is waiting for a job. A food pantry is a lifesaver in an emergency.

Shumi: Ma, you were right. I'm going to apologize to the manager tomorrow.

Umme: And I'm sorry I got angry. I know you want to do the right thing.

Shumi: How come you never told me you were going back to school?

Umme: Who told you I'm going back to school?

Shumi: The lady who cleans our building.

Umme: You mean Gabriela. We're just going to the library to ask what kinds of programs they have.

Shumi: That's fantastic!

Shumi: Ms. Wu, I'm really sorry for what I did. I shouldn't advise customers about what to buy.

Mr. Quintero: Next, Gabriela is going to say a poem.

Gabriela: Thank you, Mr. Quintero. ... I am going to say a poem by Langston Hughes. He was an African-American poet in the 1900's.

(Umme appears at the door of the classroom and listens to Gabriela recite parts of the poem.)

"Let America be America again."

"Let it be the dream it used to be."

"Let it be the pioneer on the plain"

"Seeking a home where he himself is free."

"...To build a 'homeland of the free'."

(Shumi is in Ms. Wu's office.)

Ms. Wu: Maybe... I will let you know.

(Back in the classroom, Gabriela finishes the poem.)

Gabriela: And "...I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—"

Mr. Quintero: That was beautiful, Gabriela. All right, everybody... let's take a five-minute break.

(Umme goes to speak with Gabriela.)

Umme: That was incredible, Gabriela!

Gabriela: Thank you, but let's go speak to Mr. Quintero. Come on. ...

(Gabriela takes Umme to speak with the teacher.)

Gabriela: Mr. Quintero, Umme was a nurse in Bangladesh. Do you know if there is a program to help her to get a license here?

Mr. Quintero: That's a really good question.

Umme: I'm working as a home health aide now. It would be wonderful to work as a nurse again.

Mr. Quintero: I think The City University of New York may have a program for you. We'll find something.

Umme: Thank you so much

Gabriela
(to Umme): You see, you can do this.

Umme: Excuse me, it's my daughter.



Shumi : Hey, Ma. I spoke to my manager. I don't know if she's going to give my job back, but I think so. I hope so.

Umme : Oh, that's very good. Listen, I'm at the library and I just met Gabriela's teacher.

Shumi : Ms. Wu, this is the last box.

Ms. Wu: Thank you, Shumi.

Shumi : Is it okay if I go? I have to help my mother. She's filling out an application for school.

Ms. Wu: That's great, Shumi. Please, take some of this good food for home.

Shumi : You're very kind, Ms. Wu.

Ms. Wu: So are you, Shumi. I will see you at the supermarket this weekend.

We Speak NYC is a production of the City of New York.

