

DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR THE YELLOW BAG  
(Short)

Based on the short story by Evelyne Gauthier

Written by  
Evelyne Gauthier

Copyright (c) 2021

First Draft

Contact information  
Email: [evelynegauthier1@gmail.com](mailto:evelynegauthier1@gmail.com)  
Cell.: 514-779-5406

COLD OPEN

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

The office of a magazine. Everywhere are small cubicles with computers, office furniture: post-its, paper, staples, etc. Pictures from photo shoots, and plans for magazines, pinned on the walls. The camera stops at--

INT. AMELIA'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

AMELIA JOHNSON (late 20s) girl-next-door, likeable but jaded, sarcastic, a bit pitiful, is trying to work. Around her, all kinds of everyday products: a plunger, a spatula, an ice scraper, a corkscrew, a shovel, kitchenware. Her elbow resting on her desk, she stares blankly at the screen.

The following lines appear on the screen, around Amelia, as if handwritten in different colors and with an arrow pointing at her. Every time a line appears, a ding resounds.

Name: Amelia Johnson  
Age: 28 years old  
Gender: Female  
Occupation: Magazine Columnist  
Columns written: Useless  
Social status: Not applicable  
Life assessment: Pathetic

AMELIA (V.O.)  
Well, basically, that's the portrait  
of me and my life.

She yawns while typing on her keyboard.

AMELIA (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Exciting, isn't it?

She turns to the camera.

AMELIA  
My life didn't always suck that bad.  
When I graduated with my degree in  
journalism, I was planning on writing  
about exciting stories and covering  
wars in the Middle East.  
(she takes a magazine  
and waves it in  
front of the camera)  
Instead, I got hired by Women's world  
magazine.

(MORE)

AMELIA (cont'd)  
 (she puts the  
 magazine away)  
 And if you haven't already guessed  
 that it's a magazine for women, you  
 probably have a melon for a brain  
 because with such a lame name,  
 there's no way to go wrong.  
 (sarcastic)  
 So, thanks to our editor-in-chief--

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, a woman (late 50s), elegant but severe,  
 looks at Amelia and aggressively points at her wristwatch.  
 Amelia, embarrassed, responds with a forced smile.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 --some kind of Nazi dictator who  
 probably escaped from the Third Reich  
 and stole a woman's body to lead a  
 double life--

CUT TO:

INT. AMELIA'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

She keeps typing, sometimes looking at the camera.

AMELIA  
 --I inherited the testing column,  
 where I test all kinds of everyday  
 products, to the delight of our  
 readers.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMELIA'S BACKYARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Amelia holds a leaf rake, tines up, cringing while looking  
 at the brown, wet, dirty leaves stuck in it.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 From the best brand of rake--

CUT TO:

INT. AMELIA'S HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Amelia shakes a full garbage bag, leaking with a brown liquid, and looks at it with a hint of disgust.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
--to garbage bags--

INT. AMELIA'S KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

There is a pile of potatoes and a stack of different peelers on the counter. Amelia is peeling a potato, bored to death.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
-- to potato peelers, I have the  
distinct honor of testing the most  
insignificant items on the planet.

CUT TO:

INT. AMELIA'S CUBICLE - PRESENT DAY

This time, she stopped typing completely. In the background, a CLEANING LADY (in the 50s) is pushing a cart.

AMELIA  
So while others are covering fashion,  
food or arts, my last column of the  
month is about--  
(takes a shaving  
cream can and waves  
it at the camera)  
--shaving cream! I know, it's such an  
exciting topic you think you should  
rush to buy the next issue the second  
it comes out.

INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

The elevator is full and Amelia is surrounded by people who all look more fancy, elegant or important than her. She stares blankly at... nothing in particular.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
Truth is, right now, I couldn't go  
more unnoticed if I were a box of  
paper clips on a shelf.

The elevator's doors open to--

INT. OFFICE'S LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Everyone gets out and walks towards the exit. Amelia passes by the security desk. DEREK (early 30s), one of the security guards, a nice but weird man, smiles, winks and points a finger gun at her. Amelia smiles, embarrassed, and leaves promptly.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
Well... not by the right people,  
anyway.

INT. TRASHCAN - EVENING - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

A shaving cream can is suddenly thrown inside it.

INT. AMELIA'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Still at her desk, Amelia talks to the camera. The cleaning lady in the background is preparing her tools.

AMELIA  
If I'm going to prove I'm not some pathetic loser, destined to test fly swatters for the rest of my life, I'll need to show some secret talent pretty soon. So I convinced Ruby, one of our stylists, to let me help with the photo shoot tomorrow morning.

She pulls up a pair of elegant shoes and a Burberry purse.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
She put me in charge of bringing these lovely designer's props to the shoot. Alligator Manolo Blahnik shoes, at \$2000 and a Burberry leather purse, at \$3000.

She puts the shoes and the purse away. The cleaning lady in the background is now vacuuming. Amelia turns around and looks at her.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
OK, time to go. Better protect these if I don't want to damage them.

She packs the shoes and the purse in a yellow plastic bag, and adds several balls of crumpled paper to conceal her precious cargo.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
One last stop, and I'm off to my  
pathetic life in my tiny apartment.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amelia gets out of the bathroom, looks at herself in the mirror of the restroom, and sighs loudly.

INT. AMELIA'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Amelia returns to her desk. She is startled to see that the bag is gone!

AMELIA  
What the?... where the fuck...?

She frantically looks under the desk, in her drawers, in the trash can, behind the desk, but it is nowhere to be found. Now, she is downright panicked.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
Oh my God, I'm so dead!

Amelia gets up, looks all around over the partitions surrounding her office. She spots LAYLA PRICE, (late 20s) cute woman with red hair, a colleague, in her own office nearby. She runs to her.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
Layla, did you see a big yellow  
plastic bag go by?

LAYLA  
Uh... No, why?

AMELIA  
(to the camera,  
sarcastic)  
Cause the alligator shoes and the  
leather bag suddenly came back to  
life and returned to their wild  
existence in a fit of nostalgia.  
(to Layla)  
I was supposed to bring props for the  
shoot tomorrow - the Manolo Blahnik  
shoes and the Burberry purse. They're  
gone!

LAYLA  
(stunned)  
You lost them! You're gonna get gutted!

AMELIA  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah, I know that, thanks for reminding me! You didn't see anyone who could have taken them?

Layla thinks for a moment.

LAYLA  
Well... The cleaning lady was in your office earlier. Maybe she took it.

AMELIA  
You think she might have stolen it?

Layla shrugs.

LAYLA  
I don't know. Maybe she's going to sell the stuff on eBay to make some money?

AMELIA  
(on edge)  
Well, we have to catch her! Where do you think she went?

LAYLA  
Uh... I don't know, she goes all over the building. Maybe she's on another floor.

Amelia jumps up and down, frantic.

AMELIA  
There's fifteen floors in this building! How are we gonna find her!?  
(to the camera)  
Maybe I should just run away to Africa to breed goats and meditate on the deeper meaning of life.  
(beat)  
But goats are stinky. And I'm so unlucky, I'll probably end up trampled by a zebra or an antelope.

LAYLA  
She's probably cleaning floor by floor, that would make sense.

AMELIA

We're on the seventh floor!

LAYLA

So eight more to go. Come on, hurry up! We'll search them one by one, we'll find her eventually.

INT. EIGHT FLOOR - A COMPETING MAGAZINE - CONTINUOUS

The elevator's door open on Amelia and Layla who get out and rush to the reception. The RECEPTIONIST is about to leave.

LAYLA

Eh, did you see the cleaning lady come by?

RECEPTIONIST

Huh... I don't know, I didn't notice anything. Ask Mimi, our stylist. At the end of the corridor.

(pointing to the back  
of the office)

Mimi always sees everything, so if your cleaning lady was here, you'll know.

Amelia and Layla rush to the back to--

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They see a tall MAN (early 40s) with green hair, wearing black pants, a washed-out camisole, a black beaded necklace and army boots covered with weird scribbles.

LAYLA

(to the man)

Sorry, we're looking for someone... Mimi, your stylist. We were told she could help us.

MAN

(turning to the girls)

I'm Mimi. How can I help you?

Layla and Amelia are stunned for a brief moment. They were expecting Mimi to be a woman.

AMELIA

Uh... Actually, we're looking for the cleaning lady. Have you seen her?



Mimi looks at the women suspiciously.

MIMI

Why do you want to know that? I've seen you two before, you work at Women's world. You're competitors. Why are you really here?

AMELIA

(sarcastic)

What do you think? That we're here to steal state secrets? No offense, but we're not really interested in what you do. You're not exactly House of Gucci.

LAYLA

Look, the cleaning lady probably took a bag containing alligator shoes and a leather purse.

MIMI

Oh... I see. Alligator mississippiensis or alligator sinensis?

Layla and Amelia look at each other, more astonished.

AMELIA

What does it matter?

MIMI

Because if it's alligator sinensis skin, it's a species that comes from China and is endangered, you know.

AMELIA

(nearly hysterical)

I don't know! I didn't exactly ask them!

MIMI

How can you not know? They're your shoes, right?

LAYLA

(growing impatient)

Look, are you helping us or not? We need these for a shoot tomorrow morning. The shoes are Manolo Blahnik and the bag is from Burberry.

(pointing at Amelia)

Anyway, look at her, her shoes are probably from World War I.

(MORE)

LAYLA (cont'd)  
 If she had them stolen, we wouldn't  
 be making such a big deal.

Amelia, insulted, turns to Layla.

AMELIA  
 Hey! I'm not rich, but I don't get my  
 clothes from the garbage!

MIMI  
 Oh... Manolo Blahnik! You should have  
 said that earlier!

AMELIA  
 (filled with hope)  
 So, have you seen anything?

MIMI  
 No. The cleaning lady only comes on  
 this floor once a week, and it's not  
 today.

AMELIA  
 (downright hysterical)  
 Couldn't you have said that earlier?

Layla and Amelia start walking rapidly towards the elevator.

MIMI  
 But I know someone who would know  
 where your cleaning lady is...

The girls stop in their tracks and turn around.

MIMI (cont'd)  
 The security guard downstairs. He has  
 access to the surveillance cameras  
 and can see everything: he will find  
 your cleaning lady in no time.

The women's face light up. They rush to the elevator to--

INT. OFFICE'S LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator's doors open and the women nearly run out to go  
 to the reception desk. Amelia suddenly stops when she sees  
 the security guard and backs up to the elevator. It's Derek.

AMELIA  
 Oh, God...  
 (to the camera)  
 Anyone but him!

Layla stops and looks at her.

LAYLA  
What is it?

AMELIA  
(cringing)  
It's Derek. The guy's a pain in the  
ass.

LAYLA  
(surprised)  
Really?

AMELIA  
Okay, only to me.

LAYLA  
(worried)  
What did he do to you? He's that  
awful?

AMELIA  
(sighs)  
Okay, he's not really a bad guy, it's  
just that he kind of makes eyes at  
me.

LAYLA  
(skeptical)  
Kind of?

AMELIA  
(to the camera)  
I feel like she's not taking me  
seriously. I better find a better  
argument.  
(to Layla)  
And he keeps talking about... stuff  
like the color of the sidewalk!

LAYLA  
(sarcastic)  
Really?

Amelia realizes she's not convincing her colleague.

AMELIA  
(to the camera)  
Okay, I may have one last shot.  
(to Layla)  
And... he builds replicas of the  
Millennium Falcon or the Taj Mahal  
out of Popsicle sticks.

Beat. Layla looks at Amelia, absolutely not convinced.

LAYLA  
You're really shallow, you know that?

AMELIA  
(sighs, resigned)  
Fine, if not liking a guy who  
collects Star Wars action figures is  
shallow, then call me shallow. I  
don't care.

LAYLA  
(firmly)  
Let's go and find those props before  
you get fired.

Layla walks towards the front desk. Amelia doesn't move.

AMELIA  
(to the camera)  
I better comply if I don't want my  
boss to give me a punishment worthy  
of the Spanish Inquisition.

Depressed, she looks at Derek sitting at his desk.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
(to the camera)  
I'm not sure what's worse between  
dealing with Derek or my boss.

Amelia sighs and joins Layla at the front desk.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
(unenthusiastic)  
Hey, Derek.

DEREK  
(with a big warm  
smile)  
Eh! If it isn't my beautiful Amelia!  
How are you today?

AMELIA  
(to the camera)  
Like I'm about to get tortured.  
(to Derek)  
Well, not so good, actually.

DEREK  
(worried)  
What's going on?

LAYLA

Amelia was supposed to bring expensive props to a photo shoot tomorrow, and we suspect the cleaning lady took them. We need to find her fast. You have access to the surveillance cameras, you should be able to track her down easily. Can you help?

DEREK

Sure, I'd love to. Nothing could be easier.

(winking at Amelia)

And I'm happy to help Amelia.

Amelia fakes a smile.

AMELIA

(to the camera)

Ugh... please, make it quick.

DEREK

But in exchange, I want a favor.

Layla and Amelia are appalled by his demand.

AMELIA

What?! Are you trying to take advantage of me?

LAYLA

That's disgusting!

AMELIA

Yeah! What the hell is wrong with you!?

LAYLA

Ever heard of metoo? We're in the 21st century, you perv!

DEREK

(shocked and insulted)

Whoah, whoah, whoah! You think I want sexual favors?! What kind of person do you think I am?

Amelia and Layla freeze, caught off guard. They're not sure what to think anymore.

DEREK (cont'd)

(calmly)

I want her to pose for me.

Amelia and Layla look at each other, more confused than ever.

AMELIA

(to Derek)

I'm sorry, what?

DEREK

(enthusiastic and  
passionate)

I've been looking for a model for my reinterpretation of Princess Leia. It's going to be my masterpiece. I want a real woman with character, charisma and style to be my model.

(to Amelia)

I want you for my painting. You want me to tell you where the cleaning lady is? Be my model and I'll help you.

Amelia is furious, while Layla appears perplex and pensive.

AMELIA

(to Derek)

That's extortion, you have no right!

(to the camera)

Does the late hour make people crazy or what?

LAYLA

(to Amelia)

Wait, if we don't find the bag, you could lose your job! He's not asking you to sleep with him. Just be his model, that's not so bad. As long as it's not nude--

(stops abruptly and  
turns to Derek)

--it's not nude, right?

DEREK

(offended)

Of course not! I told you, I'm not a perv!

LAYLA

(to Amelia)

See, it's not a big sacrifice to keep your job.

AMELIA

(sarcastic)

Yeah, you're not the one who's going to end up in a space bikini with buns on each side of her head!

(to Derek)

Why don't you ask Layla instead? Look, she's more beautiful than me. She's got super hot red hair and... uh...

(beat)

... a killer cleavage! She'd make a better Princess Leia.

DEREK

(firmly)

I want you, not her.

Amelia, downcast, leans her forehead between her arms on the desk and moans of despair.

LAYLA

(to Derek)

If you swear the painting will be decent, that I can come with her to make sure you won't touch her, we accept.

AMELIA

(now looking at Layla, incredulous)

What?

LAYLA

(to Derek, completely ignoring Amelia)

In addition, promise that the painting will not be displayed in a public place or sold for ten years. For private use only.

AMELIA

(to Layla and Derek)

Excuse me? No! We don't accept anything! I don't accept!

(to the camera)

There's no way I'm posing for mister would-be Da Vinci.

Derek and Layla are completely ignoring Amelia and keep their negotiation right in front of her. Amelia looks at them, more stunned every time one of them talks.

DEREK

(to Layla)

Eh, you lay it on thick! I'm doing you a favor. I'm under no obligations to do this. It's only normal that I want a favor in return.

LAYLA

(with a threatening look)

Oh, really? What if we said you had the chance to help us recover some very expensive equipment, and you refused? The magazine might press charges.

DEREK

Amelia was in charge of the props, not me. She's more at risk than I am.

AMELIA

(to the camera)

I think I should reconsider the option of breeding goats in Africa.

LAYLA

(with a soft tone, trying to calm Derek)

Derek, you wouldn't want Amelia to get fired? If that happens, you won't be seeing her anymore.

Derek sighs, resigned.

DEREK

(to Layla)

Okay, you can come with her to make sure that nothing inappropriate happens. And Amelia won't pose nude. But I can't promise not to display the painting or sell it. And I need eight sessions of two hours each to do my painting.

LAYLA

We'll give you three.

DEREK

Six, minimum.

LAYLA

Okay. We'll work it out.



AMELIA  
 (cutting Layla and  
 Derek off)  
 Hey! Am I bothering you? You want me  
 to get you some coffee with biscotti  
 while you discuss my future?

Layla turns to Amelia and looks her straight in the eye with  
 a serious expression.

LAYLA  
 Amelia, I like you and I don't want  
 anything bad happening to you. And  
 let me remind you that what he's  
 asking for isn't much. Also, I'll be  
 there to protect you.

Amelia ponders for a moment, still hesitating.

AMELIA  
 (to Layla)  
 What if he doesn't keep his part of  
 the deal?

LAYLA  
 I'll stab him in the eyes with a  
 rusted fork.

AMELIA  
 (to the camera)  
 Seems fair.  
 (to Layla and Derek)  
 Okay, I accept.

DEREK  
 (thrilled)  
 Great! We'll make the arrangements  
 later.  
 (he looks at his  
 monitors)  
 So, your cleaning lady is on the  
 tenth floor.

Immediately, Lea and Amelia run breathlessly to the  
 elevators.

INT. TENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open. Amelia and Layla see the  
 housekeeper with her rolling tray and her cleaning supplies.  
 They literally throw themselves on her. Layla grabs her by  
 the uniform.

LAYLA  
 (nearly hysterical)  
 Where are the shoes and the purse?!?

CLEANING LADY  
 (frightened)  
 What!?

AMELIA  
 (worked up)  
 A bag! A big yellow plastic bag, full  
 of crumpled papers, you took it!

CLEANING LADY  
 (still afraid of the  
 girls)  
 Ahhh... The yellow plastic bag...  
 Yes, I took it like the other garbage  
 bags. It never caused any problems so  
 far.

LAYLA  
 Where is it? Do you still have it?

CLEANING LADY  
 (a bit staggered)  
 No, I threw it down the garbage  
 chute.

LAYLA  
 Shit!

AMELIA  
 (desperate)  
 Aaaarrgggghh!

Amelia, on the verge of crying, put her hands on her face. Layla massages her temples, trying to think. Amelia takes her hands off her face, and takes a deep breath.

AMELIA (cont'd)  
 (to the camera)  
 I won't have to pose dressed as  
 Princess Leia for nothing! There must  
 be a solution...  
 (to the cleaning lady)  
 Okay. Where does everything that gets  
 thrown down the garbage chute end up?

CLEANING LADY  
 Uh... Downstairs, in the second  
 basement. It falls into a container.

Amelia and Layla look at each other, filled with hope.

LAYLA  
 (to the cleaning lady)  
 Take us there now!

INT. SECOND BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The three women get out of the elevator. The cleaning lady, still a little in shock, shows them a container. Amelia throws herself into it and frantically searches inside. Soon, she pulls out the bag and quickly looks inside it.

AMELIA  
 (ecstatic)  
 Yes! I have it!

She jumps up and down with excitement, then falls on her knees with the bag pressed against her chest, and bursts into tears. Layla looks at her, and starts laughing, relieved. The cleaning lady, on the other hand, seems completely confused.

CLEANING LADY  
 All that for a bag full of crumpled  
 paper?

EXT. PARK - DAY - MORNING

Amelia is sitting on the edge of a fountain, relaxed, smiling. The material for the shoot is already installed: a white sheet mounted on a support, lights on stands, flash triggers, lighting modifiers, fans and cameras on tripods.

All around her, photographers, models, stylists, make-up artists and hairdressers are walking around, nervous. Amelia is in her bubble, and barely sees them. She finally turns to the camera.

AMELIA  
 I'm so relieved! Okay, I still have to pose in a Princess Leia costume for a few days, but it's a lesser evil compared to what could have happened to me.  
 (beat)  
 Oh, and I talked to Derek early this morning. All in all, it's a good guy, even if he is a bit weird. I should know that you don't judge a book by its cover. That's at least one thing I've learned from this whole crazy story.

(MORE)

AMELIA (cont'd)

(beat)

That... and keep a better eye on my  
stuff.

Amelia notices RUBY (mid-30s), elegant, nearby, searching  
the yellow bag for the shoes and the purse. Suddenly, Ruby  
frowns.

AMELIA (cont'd)

(getting nervous)

Uh oh... why do I get the feeling  
that something's wrong?

Ruby looks at Amelia and comes closer.

RUBY

Huh... Amelia?

AMELIA

(apprehensive)

Yeah?

Ruby takes the shoes, now dirty, and a slimy old banana peel  
out of the bag.

RUBY

Why is there an old banana peel in  
the bag?

Amelia stands, eyes and mouth wide open, unable to speak.

AMELIA

Huuuuhh...

FADE OUT