

Ben and Jerry's

Being an ice cream addict, when I was first hired at Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream I thought I had died and gone to heaven. It was the perfect job: nothing dangerous, friendly people, flexible hours, good money, and all the ice cream I could eat. I was set.

The two days of training before my first shift were a breeze. Everything came pretty easily. I memorized the location of all the ice creams and learned how to work the cash register. I even discovered that I liked making waffle cones. I thought I was ready for anything.

The night before my first shift I could barely sleep I was so excited; I wanted to prove that I could be the best scooper in the history of Ben and Jerry's. I woke up the next day ecstatic that finally the moment of truth had come: the first shift of my first job. I left for work fifteen minutes earlier than necessary to make sure I got there on time. When I got to the shop I parked my car and went in, said hello to everyone, washed my hands, put on my 'Scooper in Training' badge, and started helping the first customer. After about an hour of a pretty steady flow of customers there was a lull in the action so my boss decided to go get some lunch, leaving me and my co-worker, Andrew, by ourselves. Almost immediately after my boss had left, a large group of thirteen-year-old girls came in to get ice cream in celebration of the end of the school year. Being new, I was slightly overwhelmed at the sheer size of the group, but what came next was something I'll never forget.

I walked down to the end of the counter to greet them and to start scooping their order. "Hi! Do you guys know what you'd like?" I asked. The only response was a collective giggle, but then one girl said, "Why are you wearing that 'Scooper in Training' badge?" and I told them it was my first day and I was required to wear it. Again they just laughed. Finally, one of them asked for a scoop of Cookie Dough ice cream. As I was scooping her ice cream, I felt a hand on my head moving my hat around. One of the girls was literally leaning over the counter and touching my head. This was not in my job

description, so I tried to pretend it wasn't happening. But the girl, who did not intend to be ignored, asked, "S.I.N.T., how old are you?"

I stopped scooping and slowly looked up at the gaggle and said, "What's a S.I.N.T.?...and I'm seventeen." I realized that in my attempt to be polite I had replied without thinking of what might come next. There was nothing in the training manual preparing me for how to handle the embarrassment of being flirted with by a group of thirteen-year-old girls.

As I stood there trying to maintain my composure, one teen told me, "You know, 'S.I.N.T.', Scooper in Training."

I stared blankly for a second, and then looked down at my shirt to the badge; I could feel my face flush red. Attempting to deflect the flirtatious remarks, I finished scooping the Cookie Dough, handed it to the girl, and asked if any one else knew what they wanted. Unfortunately instead of an ice cream order, I received a bombardment of personal inquiries. They asked where I went to school, what grade I was in, if I had a girlfriend, if I had a cell phone, and if they could have the number to it. I looked at Andrew to see if he could help me out, but he was just laughing and shaking his head, telling me I was on my own for this one.

I have to admit I was taken aback, because they were only thirteen. But I decided I needed to do something. I took a deep breath and answered the questions one at a time: "I go to Bellevue High School; I'm in twelfth grade; no, I don't have a girlfriend; yes, I have a cell phone; and no, you can't have my number. Can I help whoever's next?" They were slightly disappointed at my reply, but in the end it all turned out alright. The rest of the girls didn't order anything, and as they made their way to the door, I heaved a sigh of relief. At least they hadn't ordered Hunka Burnin' Fudge.