

# Microaggressions

(SciFi)

Power-chair user Lily faces many very tiny problems on her road to recovery.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTRE ENTRANCE - DAY

LILY, a moderately-sized woman in her thirties, drives her power chair up to the reception counter which is high, set at her eye level. Behind it the CASHIER is doing paperwork.

LILY

Hi. I'm booked to see Sarah at 2.30.

CASHIER

And is your carer here with you?

LILY

I don't have a carer. Where do I need to go?

CASHIER

Therapy Room 2. I'll call Sarah to the desk for you. She can take you there.

LILY

I don't need to be taken. If you point me in the right direction I can take myself. Can I pay for the session now?

The cashier grunts, types some numbers into an EFTPOS handset on a short cord, passes it over to Lily with some impatient juggling to get it within her reach. A heart-shaped locket swings around the cashier's neck as she leans over. Transaction complete, she points at a SIGN with an arrow and the words "Therapy Rooms". Lily toggles her joystick and moves off to --

THE SIGN. Which is hanging above a step up to a raised level. Lily looks for a ramp. The ramp is the other side of the reception desk. An OLDER GUY in gym clothes comes past as Lily three-point-turns.

OLDER GUY

(reversing noises, thinks he's funny)

Beep beep beep beep!

Lily rolls her eyes when she's not in his direct view, and goes back around the desk to the ramp, glaring at the cashier. The cashier ignores her.

INT. THERAPY ROOM - DAY.

The room has a filing cabinet and chair to one side and workout space in the middle but is dominated by mysterious equipment made of cables and pulleys plus shelves of minor tools - weights, rubber bands, yoga mats and the like. SARAH, a fit woman in her late twenties in neat casual clothes, is standing around, looking at notes on a clipboard, checking equipment is in the right place. Lily enters.

SARAH

(without looking up)

Oh, hello! You must be Lily. Come on in, take a seat.

LILY

Got one.

SARAH

Oh dear. Well, the first thing we need to do is get you out of that chair and walking around.

LILY

I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name - was it Jesus?

SARAH

I'm Sarah. And in my experience, people in power chairs get worse, not better. There's no motivation to improve.

(to herself)

I can't believe they still give them out.

LILY

You'll be pleased to know that this one comes with extra motivation circuits. Specially charged.

SARAH

Really?

LILY

They're called batteries. Because motivation means to move... Never mind. Anyway, I'm not here about walking. I'm here because of my shoulder.

SARAH

Oh. What's happened?

LILY

I've been reaching up too high trying to get things from shelves.

SARAH

Can you stand up to get them?

LILY

Only if nobody's looking at me. There's only so much energy I have to spend on people hissing "Faker!" at me as they walk past.

SARAH

You should just not listen to them.

LILY

Right.

SARAH

Well, we'll start with some stretches so I can see how your shoulder's moving and what exercises I need to show you. And then maybe we can talk about nanite therapy.

LILY

Nanite therapy?

SARAH

(standing behind Lily and manipulating her shoulder as she speaks)

OK, I want you to hold your arm out straight in front for me. Nanites are tiny little micro things that you can be injected with. They attack your muscle fibres, but in a good way. Now, arm to the side, just at shoulder height. That's right. And bend it up. The fibres fight them and get stronger. It builds up muscle tone in a matter of days to get you exercising fully again. You could be walking this time next week.

LILY

Isn't that still experimental? And only tested so far on men?

SARAH

Worth a shot. Wouldn't you like to walk again?

LILY

I think I have enough microaggressions in my life without adding a few million inside my body, thanks.

SARAH

Don't be silly. You could be cured!

LILY

I want to get better, not be cured.

SARAH

You won't get better with that attitude.

Sarah gets out an icepack and bag of rice from the shelves, applies them on shoulder and arm and lifts the arm around.

SARAH

OK, now this is going to hurt a little, but it should only hurt at about a 5 out of 10. More than that and you'll aggravate the shoulder more. I need you to bring your arm up to your shoulder and hold it for a count of eight, then rest, then repeat.

LILY

Resting I can do.

SARAH

And that right there is your problem. You seem to like just being lazy. I suggest something that will fix you and you turn it down. Do you really think it's everyone's job to work around you and your limitations, give you special treatment, when you could just become normal again?

Lily tosses the bag of rice towards the office chair, hits her joystick and begins working her way out of the room.

LILY

I am normal. You're the one who's temporary.

SARAH

What on earth are you talking about?

LILY

You're about eight years younger than me. I didn't develop this condition until about five years ago. Have you ever considered your own odds?

Camera follows Lily out of the room and back into--

PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTRE ENTRANCE AREA

She speaks over her shoulder to Sarah, who's followed her to the door.

LILY

Look to your own future. And ask yourself - if you could be cured of being normal, would you?

Lily heads at speed straight for the shortest way out of the centre, that one step down. As she reaches it she presses a button and pulls her joystick up. The chair CLANKS, GROANS, WHIRRS and lifts off the ground about twenty centimetres - just enough to float down the step.

SARAH

Your chair can fly?! I didn't know they could do that.

LILY

I save it for getting over all the little things.

The chair settles back down to the ground again.

SARAH

Why don't you just fly everywhere?

LILY

Because I lied about it having extra batteries.

Lily powers away to the door without looking back. As she goes she presses a button on her chair arm. A small light display pops up out of the back of the chair. The glowing letters read "Sucks To Be You".