

Thank You and Enjoy the Show  
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I am 21 years old today. Since I took Math 21a last year, I can tell you that three and a half years ago I was 17 and a half. That was when I first became an employee of an AMC movie theater. It's now a high school graduation, a gap year and three semesters at Harvard later, and I'm still a proud employee at the same AMC Theater. During this time, I've become accustomed to the lack of manners and common sense guests often display. They ask for tickets to "Dejuango" and "Les Miserables." They yell at you thinking that will win them free tickets. They spill three bags of popcorn in front of their seats, or put snot-filled napkins in the cup holder, or even forgot pajamas and pant legs (not the pants themselves) in the aisles. In the real world we are expected to respect other people and clean up after ourselves, but you're currently caught up in fantasyland, so there's no need for any such courtesy as to make my job easier. I am, after all, getting paid to clean up your mess, right? And if your fantasyland involves fornication, by all means satisfy your boyfriend during the 10:30 am showing of How to Train Your Dragon in the presence of a father and his 6-year-old son. Do as you please, really!

Sarcasm aside, I hate a lot of things about my job. But what I hate most of all is this: "Why are you here if you go to Harvard?" That first came up when this guy thought some movie was too loud (it wasn't), and thought to insult me by asking "What, do you need a Harvard degree to work here?" I was feeling sassy so I responded, "Sir, I will be a Harvard student next fall, but I assure you that is completely irrelevant to the preset volume of this film." He laughed and began to turn away, but not before quipping "Right. Because a Harvard student would really work here." Unfortunately, he isn't the only one to think that. My co-workers often ask why I'm not at a hospital saving lives (though I'm sure my studies in Folklore & Mythology would be of great use at Mass General, magicking people to health). Even my favorite manager asked why I didn't work somewhere better, more suited to an "intellectual" person.

I know that when people say these things they mean that I'm above this job, that I have more potential than selling and voiding out tickets, but in my eyes the question really asks "If this is all you are good for, what right do you have to be at Harvard?" I guess I don't have any right. I don't save lives or cleverly invest millions of dollars. I fill out register-balance

spreadsheets and handle guest service complaints. It's not glamorous, and based on the sneers of others it doesn't seem meaningful at all. I am comfortable and happy enough in my job, but that comfort scares me. Sometimes I worry that if all I am cut out for is minimum-wage labor or low-stress management, I failed so many people. My mom says that I'm capable of doing whatever my dreams dictate. AMC is definitely not my dream, but that is where I've found myself. So has AMC trapped me in a lesser, failed existence?

I don't think so. To say AMC is beneath me is to say my co-workers are beneath me, and that is quite a whopper of a lie. I work with a father supporting his kid who dreams of showbiz, a retiree who has worked at AMC for 13 years just for fun, and dropouts trying to earn simple livings. (I also work with some of the worst people ever, but they can't all but winners.) Most of these people, though, are pretty fantastic. Sometimes I'd say these people are more fantastic than me, and I tend toward thinking that I'm pretty awesome. Why, then, should I feel "less-than" for working at AMC? Why should people tell me that I should be somewhere "better"? Working at AMC doesn't mean I am a failure because the others who work there aren't failures. Nor am I, as some would imply, above AMC because I am in no way above the film crew past, present and future. Nobody is. Neither you nor I nor Bill Gates nor Drew Faust is above those jobs because we're awesome people regardless of how we make our living, whether that be on Wall Street or watching *Wall Street*. And we, the film crew of AMC Framingham 15, have one rather valuable gift that no Fortune 500-er has: free admission to any movie whenever we want.