

AT THE CLOTHING STORE (BILLY JEANS)

by Carlos Gontow

(from the upcoming book “Grammar on Stage”)

Characters:

A customer

A salesperson

(The Customer enters the clothing store.)

CUSTOMER: Good morning.

SALESPERSON: Good morning, can I help you?

CUSTOMER: Yes, please. I’m looking for some jeans.

SALESPERSON: Some jeans? Sure. What kind of jeans would you like?

CUSTOMER: I’d like some Billie jeans.

SALESPERSON: (*Not understanding.*) Billie jeans?

CUSTOMER: Yeah, Billie jeans.

SALESPERSON: I don’t know this kind of jeans.

CUSTOMER: They’re the Michael Jackson jeans.

SALESPERSON: The Michael Jackson jeans?

CUSTOMER: Yeah. Remember? (*Sings.*) “Billie Jeans is not my lover...”

SALESPERSON: (*Understanding, interrupting.*) Oh, I see, the Michael Jackson jeans.

CUSTOMER: Yeah. I’m a big Michael Jackson fan. And I’d like to buy his jeans.

SALESPERSON: I’m sorry, but that’s not Billie jeans. That’s Billie Jean.

CUSTOMER: No, no, no. I’m sure it’s Billie jeans. My English teacher told me that the word “jeans” in English is always in the plural.

SALESPERSON: (*Trying to control himself.*) Yes, sure, but Michael Jackson’s song was “Billie Jean,” not “Billie jeans.”

CUSTOMER: (*Explaining.*) Look, I study at Super English School¹. My English teacher is very good. (*Gets a notebook from his schoolbag, opens it and shows a page to the Salesperson.*) Look. (*Reading.*) “Clothes. These words are always in the plural. Shorts, pants, (*Emphasizing.*) jeans.”

SALESPERSON: (*To the audience.*) This is not my day. (*To the customer.*) Yes. I know that the word “jeans” is always in the plural, but...

CUSTOMER: (*Interrupting.*) There are other items that can be in the singular or in the plural. We can say “a shirt” or “shirts,” “a jacket” or “jackets,” “a coat” or “coats,” “a sock” or “socks.” But it’s not common to buy just one sock or one shoe or one glove. So you usually say “I’d like to buy some socks, some shoes or some gloves.”

SALESPERSON: I know that. I’m not saying that the word “jeans” is in the singular. I’m just saying that Michael Jackson’s song is not about “Billie jeans,” but about “Billie Jean.” (*Sings.*) “Billie Jean is not my lover...”

CUSTOMER: (*Annoyed, interrupting.*) Look, if you don’t have this kind of jeans, just say, “I’m sorry, I don’t have these jeans.” I’ll understand. But don’t say these things about Michael Jackson. I know Michael Jackson! I’m a big fan. When he died, I cried for two months.

SALESPERSON: I’m sorry...

CUSTOMER: (*Sad.*) I almost died, too.

SALESPERSON: I’m really sorry...

CUSTOMER: (*Crying.*) It was very difficult for me...

SALESPERSON: (*Embarrassed.*) Don’t be so sad...

CUSTOMER: (*Crying more.*) So I decided to buy Michael Jackson’s clothes to remember him.

SALESPERSON: (*Very embarrassed, looks around.*) Can I get you some water?

CUSTOMER: (*Crying even louder.*) I bought a hat, a shirt, a belt, gloves, socks, shoes, sunglasses...

SALESPERSON: (*Really embarrassed.*) I see...

¹ Use the name of your school.

CUSTOMER: (*Looks at the Salesperson.*) And notice that I said, “a hat, a shirt and a belt,” in the singular, and “gloves, socks, shoes, sunglasses” in the plural, so (*Shouts.*) **don’t tell me that his jeans are in the singular!**

SALESPERSON: No, I won’t tell you that. (*After a pause.*) But I’m sorry, I don’t have these jeans.

CUSTOMER: (*Stops crying.*) You don’t? (*Suddenly very cheerful.*) That’s OK. I’ll try to find them in another store. Thank you very much! Goodbye! (*Exits.*)

SALESPERSON: (*To the audience.*) Some customers are really hard to please!

THE END