

## Short Story

**A New Job**

Part 1

“I assume you know how to operate the popcorn machine,” the manager, Ling, told Gina, “since you’ve worked in a theater before.”

“Sure,” said Gina. Her experience working in a theater was running the box office for her high school play, but she really needed a job. She didn’t think it would hurt if the manager thought she’d worked in a movie theater. Besides, how hard could it be to make popcorn?

“Before we open, we need a batch of popcorn. Get started. I’ll be back in a bit.”

Ling went to check the projectors, leaving Gina to make popcorn. She studied the machine. It was like a giant air popper inside a heavy plastic bin. It didn’t look complicated. Put in kernels, turn it on, and in a few minutes, it’s done. No problem.

Gina wasn’t quite sure how many kernels she should use. “I guess I’ll just fill it up to the top,” she thought. She poured the kernels to the top of the pan and flipped the switch. She started wiping down counters while she waited.

Part 2

When Gina glanced back at the popcorn machine, she was horrified. The popcorn had pushed open the door and was spilling out onto the floor! And it was still popping! Holding the door closed, she reached over to turn off the machine. It started making a high-pitched whine.

Suddenly Ling reappeared. “How’s it going?” she asked. Then she saw the mess. There was popcorn all over the floor. Gina was holding the doors shut so more popcorn wouldn’t come out. It was like a popcorn avalanche!

Gina looked at Ling in panic. “I’m so sorry,” she stammered, tears welling up.

Ling laughed. She couldn’t help herself. “It’s okay. But it looks like you used about five times more kernels than you should have! I guess you weren’t on popcorn duty at your last job, huh?”

*(Continued)*

## **A New Job** *(Continued)*

“Not exactly,” Gina said.

Part 3

Ling pushed a red button on the machine. It shut down instantly. “No problem. We’ll clean this up. But I need an employee who has experience. I’m sorry, I don’t think you’re the right person for this job.”

“I understand,” said Gina, drying her eyes. “And I’m sorry I wasn’t honest.”

As Gina and Ling swept the popcorn into a trash bag, Gina sighed with relief. At least she had not been buried in popcorn. She promised herself never again to lie about her work experience.