

## Darnyelle

author credit: Finding Voice Project

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*(Talking to: Strangers on the street) Author's note: the character's name is pronounced "darn-yell".*

'scuse me sir?

[ignored by passer by]

Sir, 'scuse me, sir?

[ignored by passer by]

(sucks teeth).....

[woman is approaching]

Oh! 'scuse me, ma'am?! MA'AM?

[woman stops]

(breathes sigh of relief) SHEESH! You have no clue how long I been standing out here. People really just be walking by people that's talking to them and don't say nothing! I mean, I know I do it sometimes to homeless people which I know, is RUDE, but I be on the move, you feel me right? Anyway, I am NOT homeless so I appreciate you actually stopping when I called you. You even took out the ear buds and everything! What was you listening to? That new Kendrick? Some Cardi? Nah, nah, you look like you be listening to them podcasts when you out here am I right? Don't lie! You know I'm right! I bet you was just listening to some white girl talk about murdering somebody, or her friend getting murdered by somebody, or her friend's friend getting murdered by somebody so her friend murdered that somebody who killed her friend's friend and now SHE trying to figure out who murdered her friend, right? You know I'm right! I love podcasts too but I can't listen to them right now because my mom took my phone because I got detention again because Mrs. Handy said I "talk too much" in class. Crazy right? My mom was like, "Stop all that talking and you'll get your phone back!" But I'm like UGH if you just give me my phone I can text, send snaps, and be quiet. Now I GOTTA talk because I ain't got no phone. She been getting on my nerves lately. Like today, I'm just on the couch watching that weird Steve Harvey courtroom show? You know what I'm talking about? I thought he was on Family Feud, why he a judge now? Anyway, I'm sitting there watching this because she took my phone and lord knows if I change the channel to what I want to watch then it's World War 3, or is it 4? I think I saw a tweet that said we 'bout to be in World War 3 right now. Anyway, I'm sitting there and she goes, "Go to the store and get me three bags of Hot Cheetos." So you know I'm standing there with my hand out like..... oook you gonna give me money for it? She give me the stink eye and then gon' say "DIDN'T I GIVE YOU 20 DOLLARS YESTERDAY?!" and I'm like "I HAD TO BUY LUNCH AND DINNER YESTERDAY YOU WANT ME TO EAT RIGHT?!" So THEN, she gets a phone call from my Aunty saying she trying to come over tonight and watch **Real Housewives of Atlanta**. They always say they hate that show but for some reason they keep watching it. Anyway, then she's like, "Here's a 20. Get me three bags of Hot Cheetos, and a couple Four Locos for me and your Aunty." I tell her uhhhhh, I'm 14. How am I supposed to buy Four Locos? She tells me "Figure it out! I ain't going to the store I been working all day."



The Educational Theatre Association was awarded an ARI Community Arts Projects grant by the Ohio Arts Council to complete this work in the spring of 2022, under a project known as "Finding Voice".



And I was real close to snapping on her but I'm supposed to be getting my phone back tomorrow and I can't go without it another week. I been missing out on too much tea in school! Anyway..... this might sound crazy... but I accidentally lost the 20 dollars she gave me. So I'm standing out here trying to see if somebody will buy it for me. You're real nice for talking to me. Do you think you could buy the stuff for me? By the way, what's your name?



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