

## **“Brittle” by Alexander Lee-Rekers - Gemma - F - 20s**

*Gemma, defiant, talks about the job she’s managed to hold down after some personal turmoil.*

**GEMMA:** When I was little, my mother used to say: “If somebody asks what you want to be when you grow up, you tell ‘em “businesswoman”, Gem. Let ‘em know you want to be your own boss.”

I’m happy at the shop. I didn’t think I would be, but I am now. Fuck, maybe I’m just used to it? Numb to it? No, it’s pretty good. I get a staff discount—and not just at our particular location, but, like, any of the shops in the chain. It’s nice. I think you’d like it.

They let me close for the first time recently, which means I have to oversee cleaning, lock up and handle all the money. Bit of a runaround, to be honest. But I think it means they trust me more, now.

The people are pretty good; they’re okay. I had a bit of trouble with this one lady named Angela. God, she is such an “Angela”, you know? Always neat and likes everything perfect and- I guess that’s not her fault, it’s just not me, not how I am....

Last week, though, Angela sees me at the register and she drops this ball of aluminum foil down in front of me. I thought it was her scraps from lunch—I was ready to pounce! But then she shot me a smile over her shoulder. Inside the foil was a lump of peanut brittle. Homemade. Hard as a rock. Tasted like burnt sugar. But she thought of me. And reckoned I could do with some.