

The Office

There was something brutal about him. Not in the UFC, nail your balls to the wall and then screw your wife kinda brutal; but more of a Simon Cowell, “Hey look at me, I’m a british asshole on TV. Aren’t I soooo fucking endearing?” kinda brutal. He was cute brutal. Fake brutal.

Just don’t tell anyone.

“Take this shit and rewrite it,” he mumbled at me from across his desk. I watched the little ticker on his iTunes as a tired System of a Down song played its course, muted for my benefit, thankfully. Yeah, he was a System of a Down kinda asshole.

“The deadline’s in like forty-five minutes...” I mumbled apologetically.

“Do I look like the kinda fuck who cares? The article’s rubbish. You should’ve written something that reads better than my cat’s ass smells, then you wouldn’t have *Thirty-fuckin’-minutes* to rewrite it. Now fuck off out of my office.”

I pushed myself up out of the plastic chair and did my best not to tear his balding fucking head off his body. Of course, I was no better than any other pansy in the office, too afraid of his limp combover and the vein that stuck out on his forehead when the steam started pouring form his ears.

I’m surprised the door didn’t hit me in the ass on the way out.

Musical shrapnel violated my ears as he took his iTunes off of mute.

*“Wake up,
Grab a brush and put a little (makeup),
Grab a brush and put a little,
Hide the scars to fade away the (shakeup)
Hide the scars to fade away the,
Why’d you leave the keys upon the table?
Here you go create another fable”*

I died a little more inside.

“He seems to be havin’ a good day, eh Lucy?” Brian called from over on the other side of the floor we all shared. The one benefit of having to put up with *his* shit music all day was that we all knew we could say whatever the fuck we wanted while it blared and he was oblivious.

I responded as I walked over to my desk, sitting snugly next to Brian’s, “A right fuckin’ dandy, today. He only wants me to *rewrite* the entire fucking Coldplay article over again. Upstairs wants it in 30 minutes.”

“Just send it up anyway, I don’t think he even reads the magazine. I do it all the time?”

I paused, looking at Brian like he told me he had the cure for cancer or a sustainable fuel source to replace gas.

“That works?” I said slowly.

“Oh fuck yeah,” a smug smile crept onto his face. “You think the guy’s upstairs give a damn about him? He ran some web site that they shuttered and he had too much seniority to fired. Hell, there’s a reason he just sits in his office like an asshole and doesn’t write anything.”

“So just... send it up?”

“Yep.”

I slumped down into my chair, it bounced down softly under my weight. I leaned back, as one was wont to do in those chairs, and put my hands over my face.

Was it really that easy all along? Just ignore him.

“Why the fuck did I never think of that?” I wondered aloud.

“Because you hate this place, Lucy. And you’re always looking for more reasons to hate the fucking place. So you write your work and, even though you *know* it’s the best stuff that comes out of this floor, you submit it to the fat bastard in the back room, knowing full well that he’ll take all the anger in his miserable little life and throw it at your work. You want him to tear it to fucking pieces so that when you finally quit this place, you’ll feel vindicated. We all do it. Or maybe you just want to be fired. Severance, and all that.”

I goggled at him. “Fuck if you shouldn’t have been a shrink,” I said, “or at least start a web site where you solve people’s problems.”

He simpered, cocky pride beaming on his face.

“So what the hell are you still doing here, if you have all the answers?” I countered.

“I like the coffee.”

“The coffee. That I make.”

I did make a damn good cup of joe, I’ll admit to that.

“And the bagel guy’s pretty cute. I’d miss him if I quit.”

Another fair point.

Brian looked at his watch, “You’ve got 25 more minutes. What’re you going to do?”

A few flicks of my mouse.

“Done.”

Brian gave me a look like I had just deep throated a hotdog, impressed but unsure really how to react. “I didn’t think you’d actually do it.”

“What?” I felt my heart drop into my stomach.

“I was just fucking with you. I’ve never sent that shit up there without any regard for the boss.”

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” I felt a flush of panic creeping up from my chest and spreading over my face. I turn into a bloody tomato when the going gets tough.

“Well, it’ll, um... it’ll be an interesting experiment.”

My fingers ran nervously through the curly mop of hair on my head.

“What’ll be an interesting experiment,” I heard from the door that led to the hall outside.

“Hey Jess,” Brian called, “Lucy just sent her work upstairs without making the boss’s changes.”

Jess, a raven-haired bombshell walked over to our little arrangement of desks. None of us could figure out why someone who looked like her would work with a bunch of folk who look like us. Even I

had a crush on her and I was straight as an arrow... or so I thought. I think it was her Czech accent that sealed the deal.

She set down her bag and then shrugged in the nonchalant way typical to her, "It's too late now, right? Just hope for the best."

The music in his office shut off – Limp Bizkit put on temporary hold.

The phone on my desk rang, a double ring indicating someone in the building was phoning me.

The three of us all turned around and looked through the glass windows of the office, at the lumpy potato sitting in the chair. He had his phone pressed firmly to his ear and was furiously fixing his combover.

Of course the asshole would phone me into his office when I was fifteen feet away.

Jess patted me on the back and Brian had the decency to look a slight bit sheepish. Without picking up the phone, I pushed myself up out of my chair, comforted by the familiar creak of the hinges. The few strides to his office door felt like a funeral march.

I gripped the round door knob, looked back at my work mates, opened the door and stepped through to my silent grave.