

So, there I was the next day, back at my office.

Tito had called me in. It was a Saturday. Tito knows I hate working the Saturday morning shift, but the bastard is only following orders himself. He sounded hungover over the phone.

“Keep up the good work, Nene,” he’d told me once. “You’ll have your own office one day.” I didn’t speak English well back then, but I believed Tito would put in a good word for me, eventually, should I improve. He was a one-minute-manager type, his own tiny closet of an office in the corner of the restaurant. When the thought of how right he was comes to mind, I shutter.

“Nene,” he had said over the phone. “We need you, man! We are desperate here. Shit’s falling apart. You know how important you are for this operation. You know the customers. They are thirsty, Nene. Thirsty! They need you. Get your ass over here!” That’s Tito style, always starts off with a limp one between his legs, talking about how it’s in my interested, then goes into some sour, “It’s for the greater good” shit, and ends on a command. By now Tito knows I ain’t into the greater good. Which is why he shot me that last bit. Something I can wrap my head around.

So I pulled up to the building where the restaurant was. Walked up the flight of stairs, all eleven of them, just so I could get there later than I’d already planned to be. I never cease to amaze myself. Anyway. When the stairwell doors swung open I walked up to our glass front door with my belt tight over my tucked shirt. I looked fresh. I might have not wanted to be there, but damn, I smelled looked tasted delicious. I could have served ten families were we open. But we weren’t, I found out. The restaurant was closed. Tito,

the bastard, tricked me. And rubbing the crusties out of my eyes I remembered why I hadn't gone to work the day before.

I flipped the neon "Open" sign on, then off again. Got to stripping the walls of all the decorations, pinched the staples off the ground, underhanded them into a trash bin knocked onto its side. I saw Tito's own tiny office door closed, and then I took down wet toilet paper off of it. Wiped the bar counters, got rid of all this jizz-like substance that was hard to scrub off before the bleach had soak in real good. And then I hit the ceiling, took down more decorations, more staples. There was a grand old white board with the words "YOU WILL BE MISSED, FAREWELL ---" in the kitchen. I spit all over that douche's name, and wiped the dry-erase clean with my ass.

"Thank you, Nene. You fucking covered MY ass real good. You know I got you. Know it."

I'm not sure what's going on in Tito's head, if it's professional, or some tired buttoned up MBA bullshit at the tail end of his sentences. Either way, I won't stick around here much longer. Oh I'll show up tomorrow, I said to myself, but damn if I take a single order.

The next day at the office I put my feet up on my desk and lit a good cigar.