

"Where will you even *put it?*" Nero hissed, clawed fingers curled and smoking. "You're such a *disaster.*"

Trill considered the question as if it had been asked in good faith, when it had been years since Nero had had *good faith*. Eventually they settled the zhuzhed-up little paperweight atop a mountain of late library book notices, arranged in twice-reversed backwards chronological order. "I'll put it...right here!"

"You're going to bury it?" The little demon could barely contain himself, all the envy in his body leaking out of him as smoke from his tail.

"Yeah, I guess it's not that big a deal, when you've won it as many times as I have!"

"I need--to go--" The words rolled out as shaky growls as Nero turned. He could only stand having the Employee of the Month trophy rubbed in his face for so long, when it wasn't his. If it had been his, he would've been fine having it rubbed in his face for as long as possible.

"Wait!"

"*What?*"

"Can you show me how to use the copier?"

The orange rug singed away as Envy erupted in green fire. "The--the *nerve--!* The *gall--*"

"I'm not a nerd, I don't know how to use the 3D-copy function!"

"And *yet!*" Nero hissed, his tail whipping through the dark smoke it had created. "You, someone who doesn't even know how to use the *copier*, are the so-called Employee of the Month."

Trill held their hands behind their back and rocked forward on their feet. "Oh...did Monty make...a *mistake?*"

"Wh--what? No, I'm not saying that--"

"But...if Monty made *me* the Employee of the Month, which you think is wrong...."

The fire began to die down, frustrated flames smoldering away to envious embers. "I'm--not--saying that."

"Oh, okay! I must have misunderstood. So, how about that 3D function, huh? Good employees are helpful, right? Maybe you can get a jumpstart on *next-month's* Employee of the Month."

The wheels turned in the replacement demon's dark little mind. Those words seemed true enough, but it was an idea from *Trill*. Not to be trusted. Not to be listened-to. There was subterfuge and conniving hiding in the glare of that sunny smile.

"Ffff...*fine.*"

"Great! Hey, you know...." Trill grabbed the coveted paper weight off their pile of chronologically pointless late notices. "We could just make another one of these, if you wanted one."

Shadows pooled and swirled beneath Envy as his polished shoes left the floor. "It's not about the trophy!"

"Oh? No?"

"Don't--play stupid! You know it's n-not about the trophy!"

"Okay!"

Without the fight he'd been expecting, Nero was left hovering inches off the burnt carpet, Trill flitting off toward the copier room. It was worse to be left in the smoke inhalation of his own impotent objections.

"Heyyy, knock knock!"

Trill didn't even knock, which was, somehow, worse. It left Envy's shoulders coiled up in anticipation, waiting for a knock that would never come.

"What?"

"I think you saved over my spreadsheet!"

"I don't make mistakes like that, are you sure you saved it?"

"Yeah! Here, let me show you." Like that, Trill was in Nero's space, pushed up against his shoulder because he'd refused to cede space. That only lasted so long. It was secession, or tolerate the bouncy little angel's invasion of his space. Nero scootched.

"That's the wrong folder, *don't go in that one*."

"Whoops, sorry! I didn't know you had novel ideas!"

He didn't. He didn't know, as someone clicked in and out of the folder for the first time, if it was worse that someone think he have novel ideas, or if they knew there were a few not-safe-for-work items on the work computer.

The ambiguity of whether Monty knew or not kept Nero up at night, sometimes with anxiety, sometimes with his hand.

"This one! The chair inventory tracking guide."

"Huh?" Nero had needed a moment to tune back in from his pocket dimension of dissociation.

"Yep. Look. I definitely added rows before the Crocodile Demigoddex Semi-Throne. I found sound really cute hand-carved pieces in a jail."

"Why were you in a jail?"

"Don't worry, I just made a bunch of chairs, and they had to let me out."

"That's not what I was asking-- I wasn't *worried*, idiot."

"Anyway, did you delete the rows?"

"No! I told you!"

"Maybe you were editing it at the same time I was?"

"I wasn't. I would have seen that you were in the document."

"I mean, it's tomorrow, so maybe not?"

"Tomorrow--?"

"Yeah, they're in the timeline queue for tomorrow, did you check the timeline edit queue?"

Nero squinted up at his colleague. "That's not...a real thing."

"Sure it is!"

"It's not."

Trill cocked their head. "You don't know how to view the queue...?"

"There's no such thing!" The demon nearly sent their chair clattering. Instead it rolled away, bounced off a filing cabinet, and spun sadly off of the anti-scuff plastic. Nero pulled it back on before continuing. He'd received a Post-It(™) about unintentional carpet damages, and property damage was no quick route to superior employee status. "Where--what--where's the time queue setting?"

"Oh. You seriously don't know, do you?"

Nero reached out, hauled Trill in, and bared each of his perfectly clean and sharp teeth.

"Sorry! Let me check my chronometer!" Trill pulled the watch out of their pocket, examined the datestamp on the temporadial, and grimaced. "Oops."

"Oops, what? *What* is the timeline queue?"

"I'm uhhh, a couple days early for this update, I guess they haven't pushed it yet! Haha! Whoops!"

"I hate you."

"Aww, don't be like that! Now you know about a really cool update before anyone else! Little sneak-peek for you there."

The humiliating truth was that that was enough for Nero to let go.

"Anyway, don't overwrite my rows tomorrow!"

Trill bounced away. Nero sat, pulled a pad of paper over, and started graphing the overlap of temporal zones necessary to avoid just that. Trill, meanwhile, headed toward Monty's office to submit a feature suggestion.