

"Felix, as unconventional as it may sound, but law is perhaps one of the most heart-breaking fields a person can get themselves into. Around my 20s, I had finally become a full-time lawyer; a divorce lawyer, no less." The magistrate judge let out a soft, yet bitter chuckle.

"And that field is why I consider law to be as heart-breaking as it is. You know, in criminal cases, everything tends to be simple: you have a suspect, you have some evidence of relative quality, and a jury that decides that suspect's fate most of the time. If they're found guilty, great, if not, also great, since everyone will think that the right thing was done. Hell, even civil cases are quite simple. Usually you'll just have two parties angry at each other for whatever damage they have caused, but as angry as they are, they still have to come to an agreement." The judge spoke as he leaned back in his seat, taking a small sip of coffee. He stared ahead at Felix with his brown, soft eyes that, despite the authority behind them, still seemed to radiate an air of compassion and empathy.

"But divorce cases? My boy, divorce cases are **very** different. You have two parties that hate each other's guts on an incredibly intimate level, since they are here to break an eternal bond they promised to their respective partner that should have technically lasted their lifetimes. 'Till death do them part', as the saying goes. They hate each other, and they hate each other so much neither of them wants to compromise on anything. Any judgement or decision that might benefit the other party just a little bit is immediately seen as unjust. I guess you understand why it hurts to see that, no? A bond that was supposed to last forever, being torn apart in the courtroom by the corpse-eating vultures that we legal officials sometimes are." The judge leaned forwards a bit, placing his hands on the desk.

"The worst part, however, isn't even that. At least to me. The worst part is the fact that in most of these cases, you have a little creature stuck in the middle of all of it; often barely older than 10. It doesn't understand what is going on, it sees the most important people in their lives argue and shout and scream like chimpanzees. Often, too, it thinks itself to be to blame, that they weren't 'good enough' for ma and pa, and made them split. This rat-faced lawyer steps up to the kid, asks them who they want to live with, and the kiddo shakes, doesn't know what to say. The lawyer makes that same child step up at the witness' podium, pats their head, asks them to tell what 'ma and pa were doing', and the poor thing just clutches their little plushie and cries the whole time, whimpering out jumbled accounts of things they don't even understand." He turned away for a second, wiping away a stray tear. He briefly glanced to the bunny plushie tightly held in Felix's own hands, before looking back up to him.

A silence emerged for a few moments. The judge avoided looking directly at Felix, as Felix himself avoided looking at the judge.

"Emancipation, too," the judge spoke up, "was also one of the hardest things I've had to handle when I just became a 'Your Honour'. You have this 16 year-old, father killed the mother in a drunk stabbing and then killed himself. He's standing up at the witness stand, and he's wearing those stripey arm warmers, and they're stained red in slits on his wrist, and when they roll down he panics

to put them back in place to hide the fresh cuts on his wrist that gush with blood when he moves his arm too quickly. His face is smeared in makeup, eyes red like he had been crying for weeks on end. And I feel myself about to cry too, for the single orphanage in the city has refused my request, stating that 'he was too old' and 'we have no spots'."

"That's why I am where I am now, Felix. The pay was good, sure it was, but I couldn't do it anymore. And so, off to criminal law I went, and here I am."