

The Bossman

Connor Chase

“Get up.”

The manchild looked up with the expression of a spooked deer. His expression made me mad because it was so pathetic I almost laughed, which would've thrown off the effect I was going for.

“Get. Up,” I repeated. My directions seemed pretty clear; there was nothing to misinterpret here. The manchild looked about the room, futilely searching for backup he and I both knew would never come. Then he looked up at me and I looked down at him with a face of stone. Slowly, hesitantly, he raised from the seat and walked to the other end of the room, head down, face blushing, obviously cursing with humiliation and shame. It was hilarious; this time I did chuckle.

I sat down and instantly felt better. I looked at the manchild who was now standing in the corner, his face still down. What a loser. I then looked about the room and everybody else quickly averted their gaze. Sure, they were all staring at me, bewildered by what they had just witnessed, but no one would actually do anything. Of course they couldn't. They never do. In my years I've learned that people hate to watch people be mean to other people but they'll never actually do anything, they'll never get involved. They're too scared it might happen to them.

The truth is that I didn't feel bad about what I did. In the waiting room there were, including me, six people but only four chairs. I wanted to sit; I wasn't going to stand around like a dope right before the interview. No, I was going to sit, relax, think about the upcoming interview. Plus (to be honest this is the real reason I stole the manchild's chair) my back was hurting. The pain, which erratically flared up, picked today for whatever reason to show up again. All those years of football, of deadlifting with improper form; it had really done a number on me in my later years of life. In high school I had no concern with back problems, and if I got knocked down I could get back up again with no problem. I wish I could say the same for now.

Also, it's not like the manchild has any back problems. That dude never played football, never worked out. He played video games in his basement, played Dungeons and Dragons or whatever its called with all his other nerd friends. He didn't *need* to be sitting; I did. So the way I see it, I should be sitting instead of him.

I chuckled again at how easy it was. I told him to get up, and he did. It was like highschool all over again. People did what I told them to in high school.

I looked at the manchild again. He reminded me of someone. Swirly Joe. Swirly Joe, ah, me and Swirly Joe had some good times together. Whenever I was feeling down, whenever I had played a bad game, whenever my Dad had been mean to me, I could shove his face down a toilet and feel better again real quick. Swirly was this little grade nine; sure, I was a senior by the time Swirly came around, so I did have a distinct age advantage, but I simply couldn't help myself. This kid had the smallest arms, the tiniest little arms you could imagine. I could have snapped his forearms in half if I just put my hand around them and squeezed. He was asking for it, the way I saw it, walking around being as weak and pathetic as he was.

The person next to me got was called into the office. I moved into their chair; it had just occurred to me that I had not only taken the manchild's seat, but his spot in line. Hilarious.

I realized I would be called in next for the interview. I thought about what I was going to say. “My biggest weakness? Oh, I'm a perfectionist. I can never stop until the jobs done

perfectly. It's a real problem." Ya, that line worked back in the day and it was bound to work now. It *had* to work now. I remembered being fired from my last job, but quickly suppressed that memory. That didn't matter, only getting this job now mattered. I had to get it.

I was never not good at interviews. Being confident, bold, handsome; initially those qualities impress employers sufficiently. I really had no problems getting jobs; keeping them was the problem. I was just myself in an interview, I didn't adopt any new persona, I didn't get nervous, I just acted as I would at any bar or sporting event. It took getting fired from my last job to realize that that same behaviour which got me the job so easily was the same behaviour that got me fired from the job so easily. But I didn't need to think about that now.

Now it was my turn. Time to be interviewed. I got up from my seat, looked around the room one more time. All I saw was heads turn quickly and the sides of faces. I chuckled and went in.

"Take a seat please," the boss man said. I did just that, but was a little concerned because it was my tradition to shake the employer's hand, show them my killer smile and my killer handshake right off the bat.

The boss man was looking down at some paper's on his desk, writing furiously. I was immediately impressed by this dude. I couldn't believe how cool he was. I didn't fully understand what this guy does, something with technology and computers, but whatever it is, it makes money. Lots of money. We were in a corner office, light streaming in through the windows, overlooking the busy streets of the cities and accompanying skyscrapers as far as the eye could see, which in the heart of a city wasn't that far to tell the truth. But even the office itself was gorgeous; his name plate, *Joe Staton*, was outlined in gold, he was sitting behind this large, powerful desk, there was a cabinet of vinyl records beside them, signed pictures of him with various celebrities. And then there was him.

The boss man didn't look at all like I expected him to. For someone that worked with computers he was oddly awesome. He was wearing a dress shirt but his muscle definition was evident beneath it. The dress shirt itself was designer, some offshore expensive brand; I couldn't even guess at the price. He had a full head of hair slicked back and gorgeous watch on his large forearm. I stacked the boss man up; he was in the shape I was in in high school, maybe better. I myself had fallen out of physical condition in the years since high school; I had a gut and my arms weren't rock hard like they used to be. But, if it came down to it, I probably knew how to fight better than this guy. I had been in lots of fights in my day.

"Okay. All I'm looking for is a delivery guy. You drive things where I need them to be. When I need them to be there. You aren't late, you aren't early, you arrive precisely when I need you to and get whatever product I'm delivering into the hands of the customer only when I tell you to."

The bossman hadn't yet looked up and he didn't look up during his monologue. He stared at his page and worked furiously. I surprised myself, because for whatever reason I suddenly felt a little anxious. I never felt anxious in interviews.

"You got that?" He demanded.

"Yes, sir, I got that." I immediately hated myself for saying sir.

"Great. What's your previous work experience." He didn't look up. I gulped.

"UPS, Pizza Pizza, Ebay."

“Okay, that’s good. In a couple years this company’ll be bigger than any of them, but that’s okay for now. Alright, I’ll get back to you in a couple days. Thanks for coming, goodbye.”

I couldn’t believe it. That was it? That was the interview? My heart went for a sprint. I needed this job. He didn’t even have my name! He hadn’t even looked at me!

I stood up, as professionally as I could muster, and outstretched my hand.

“Thank you sir.” I said with my hand outstretched. He nodded and continued writing. I panicked. “Kyle Mansome.” I had to, I needed to, at least tell him my name.

This, however, yielded perhaps the oddest response I’d ever received at an interview before. Suddenly, instantaneously, bossman stopped writing, took off his glasses and gazed up at me. It was a look of bewilderment. It was a look of satisfaction. It was a look of supreme smugness; and it terrified me. He chuckled to himself, and slowly, taking his damn time, outstretched his hand to meet mine. His handshake was firm, to firm; he squeezed much harder than was necessary.

I felt my face blushing, and turned to leave. I immediately started consoling myself. Sure, it was an odd interview, but all the other ones had been just as short. Sure they had! I still had a shot! As I was leaving through the door, I heard him say one last thing.

“Kyle,” he called out.

I turned.

He smiled.

It was a smile that I would remember for the rest of my life. It was a smile that I remembered smiling in high school days, a smile that only came out at the expense of others. A smile that was the result of inflicting pain on the weak. A smile that no one but my had father had ever smiled at me.

He said one last thing. It was sure to bring about guilt, sympathy and empathy for those I had never considered before. He said one thing that in a moment knocked me off my throne and sent me tumbling down the side of a mountain.

“It’s me. It’s Swirly.”