

KARAN  
(hesitant)  
A few weeks.

MR. GRAY  
(mockingly surprised)  
Huh? A few weeks, you say? That vase over there is probably one of the best antiques in stock considering it's on the window display. You've walked past it every week and you can't even try to sell it to me?

Karan looks down at the floor in shame.

KARAN  
(embarrassed)  
Apologies, sir.

MR. GRAY  
(stern)  
Well, you better be glad I don't want it, kid. I was just testing ya. I knew you wouldn't be able to sell that antique. In fact, I'm sure you can't sell me any of the store's best items.

Mr. Gray looks at the table and spots the accounting book.

MR. GRAY  
You do clerical work for Booker, correct?

KARAN  
Yeah. Inventory, accounting, sweeping.

MR. GRAY  
(miffed)  
Alright then. Why can't you do more, hah? Have you tried memorising this store's catalogue? Getting to know Booker's regulars? Have you thought about ways of getting more customers? No, right? I'll tell you why. You people never bother with doing more than the bare minimum. You just do what you're asked, nothing more. Instead of making the most of your time, you use a fraction of it well and waste the rest.

KARAN  
(puzzled)  
What do you mean, *you people*?

Mr. Gray pauses for a moment to process what he said and then snaps back to his cantankerous persona.

MR. GRAY  
(displeased)  
I mean, your generation, *kid*. Your elders, people like me, brought success onto themselves through self-motivation. They worked like their lives depended on it because they *did*. Nowadays, people are too comfortable to try harder. That's why I don't need your help. Even if I went to you, I *guarantee* that you wouldn't even *try* to find the best item for my needs!

Karan is taken aback. He feels seen through and slightly ashamed. He can see the truth in the man's words but doesn't want to accept it. His shame turns into anger as he clenches his fist. He's not backing down.

KARAN  
(maddened)  
First of all, I work hard where it's needed. I get great grades, I win competitions and -- I engage with my community. Second, I don't need to be a workaholic to be successful. I bet you guys never thought of a work-life balance or how burnout can affect your health. Third, I don't think that attitude makes your generation the better people.

Mr. Gray scowls and squints his searing eyes at Karan. He doesn't appreciate being retorted to.

MR. GRAY  
(offended)  
What do you mean by that?

KARAN  
Your *people* had a flawed way of life and beliefs. As time passed, we saw those flaws, fixed them and changed for the better! Just look at --