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Dr. Enger

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Fired

Busy and going off a tight schedule, Paulette was rushing to work, hoping she wasn’t going to be too late. Paulette had worked at Robinson’s gas station for the past four years after losing her job at the hair and nail solon. Everyone who came into Robinson’s knew Paulette. In her mid-fifties, she still put her hair in a styled mess and always had a new set of nails each week. Paulette was a high-maintenance kind of woman and acted as such. She always ordered other employees around when the managers weren’t around. Most employees, the newer ones, actually listened to her, but some of the older ones knew they didn’t need to. Most, if not all, of the people who know her beyond her façade of being a charming woman, know that she a cold bitch.

Paulette pulled her white station wagon into the parking lot, turned the car off, and lightly jogged inside the store. The little bells chimed as she opened the door. She turned to the till and gave a dainty wave with her flashy fingernails to the employees on the clock. They returned her hello with a sarcastic half-smile. Paulette continued into the back office where her boss, Dave, was doing paperwork. Dave was one of the youngest bosses Paulette had ever worked for. At thirty-two, he treated Robinson’s and his employees with the utmost care and loyalty. He would do anything for the store, and when it came to Paulette, Dave knew she was a commanding person and sometimes hard to work with, but he, with his few short years of being a manager at the store, knew how to handle her attitude. It wasn’t his favorite part of the job though. Paulette entered the office and lightly tapped the open door; Dave turned and looked at Paulette and her heavily caked-on makeup, “How many hours do I work today, Dave?” Paulette asked her boss.

He stared at her weird, chalky complexion for an awkward second. “Thirteen,” he said, “and another twelve tomorrow.”

“Holy shit, Dave,” she said outraged, “Why so many? Plus you are having me work at the other location too?” She let out a hot huff, “Really Dave? I’m not a full-time employee.”

“Paulette, calm down. I need your help. You know I’ve had three people walk out of here in the past week.” As Dave explained, Paulette just turned darker shades of red as her wrinkles became tighter.

“No wonder why they all left! You just push us to no limit!” Paulette screamed so the rest of the employees and customers could hear.

Dave started to get heated, “Now listen here, Paulette! You wanted hours, you got them. Either you keep them and keep quiet, or I take them all away and you can leave.”

Steaming mad and completely irrational, Paulette tore her nametag off her kelly-green polo and spit on it. She then threw it at Dave with full force. Paulette quickly stormed out and drove off with tears streaming down her face.

Paulette was upset and outraged that Dave had the audacity to make her work all those hours; those damn lazy co-workers never help out around the store. She thought that she had never done anything wrong and now she was being treated like this. Paulette was done with Robinson’s. Done with Dave, the whole team of misfit nobodies, and done with the impossible scheduling bullshit.

Late that night, after a twelve pack of beer and four packs of cigarettes, Paulette couldn’t get the scene out of her head of what happened at Robinson’s earlier that day. The more she thought about it, the more upset she got. She slurred out loud, “Those goddamn, no good co-workers! I did so much for that store and they decide to pile on an ungodly amount of hours! They never listened to me! They wanted me out of there! This is just their way to get me to leave!” Ready to punch a hole in her living room wall, Paulette stumbled up enough to stand up straight. She aggressively grabbed her keys, staggered down the flight of stairs, and fell into the driver’s seat of her car.

Paulette started her car and took a deep breath to collect herself. She pulled out of the driveway and headed straight for Robinson’s. When she arrived it was around two in the morning and the station was completely locked up. She parked her car up next to the fueling station and fell out. Grabbing the gas hose, Paulette took the gas and flung the smelly liquid all over the place. She dropped the hose on the ground, allowing the fuel to spray recklessly on the ground, and unlocked the store. Disarming the alarm, Paulette proceeded to take a bucket and go outside to fill it with more gasoline. Paulette went back into shop with a full, sloshing bucket and threw the bucket clear across the building, spraying toxic fluids and fumes all over the place.

Still inebriated, Paulette was dizzy from both the alcohol and the gasoline fumes. She sat down and pulled out a cigarette. Paulette looked around and started to laugh, “Those damned fools. They’re going to regret messing with me.” Starting to sound like a mad-woman, she got up with the unlit cigarette hanging out of her mouth. She mustered up some intoxicated strength and knocked over a shelf full of candy. Paulette thought that since she did so much for this company, they are going to have to do so much to fix this. Since the day she started, she thought, she was nothing but kind and would work for hours on end for them. For every hour she put into working, Paulette was ready to put another crack in the wall.

Paulette was drunk with revenge and wasn’t going to let them forget what they did by making her leave Robinson’s. Staggering back to her car, she leaned up against the passenger side door. She lit up a sly smile on her face as she looked around at what she had done. Entirely pleased, happy for what she did to the completely destroyed property and building, Paulette was ready to leave. The pain and anger was splashed all over and she was satisfied. Looking down, the gas hose was still spilling a small stream of liquid. Paulette started to giggle again, “Those damned fools.” Paulette was completely content with herself and what she had done. No remorse. No guilt. She grabbed the lighter out of her pocket and lit up her cigarette. She felt there was no one in this world who mattered, but her. So prideful and so enthused with herself, she couldn’t help but smile her biggest, most wrinkled smile. The faded old make up from hours before filled in the cracks.

The laughter stopped once things started to feel hot. Paulette’s purple dress, covered in droplets of alcohol and gasoline was starting to burn. Paulette frantically tried to pat the fire out. She ran inside, looking for some water or something to extinguish the flames. But as she ran inside the store, she splashed into a large puddle of gas, creating a huge wave of fire engulfing her entire form.