

First Day On The Job

The ant startled at the old buzzer's ring, jumping to their feet, and hurrying up to the floor from the chair they'd been pacing on for longer than they could tell.

Benny raced to the door, unsure how they'd open it. As soon as they got to it however, the slap of metal suddenly slid back before dropping down into the floor. Nervous, the bug swallowed and walked forth into the hallway.

What would be just a minute walk for anyone was quite the expedition for one so small. Benny had plenty time for their mind to rush through the possibilities of what was to come, it wasn't every day you were called in by someone who could change your life or end it on a whim.

Alas, arriving to the final door at the end of the hall, it opened just as the first. Coming into the room, everything was bathed in darkness, even the dim light of the hallway seemed to stop right at the door.

Benny called out, uncertain if it would be best to be in company of someone, or alone in this place. "Um... Hello? I'm here? You wanted to see me?"

The door suddenly closed back up in a shriek of metal rubbing against metal, the ant jumped back, stumbling, and falling down. They held their breath, now entirely lost in inky blackness.

That is until they noticed the dim glow of an old monitor waving around in the distance, then followed by the sight of a sharp Cheshire grin seemingly floating up, topped by two silver irises faintly shining through the room.

They tried to speak up but could only manage to squeak a panicked breath before everything turned bright as heaven in a flash. With their eyes struggling to adjust to the sudden brightness, the ant didn't even notice the rhythmic thumping until, just as they could finally open their eyes fully again, a mass of black and white crashed right before them.

Benny gulped, millimeters away from having ended up beneath the dark padding of a white furred toe, staring up, past the immense, sharp claw looming over them, barely making out the distant grinning face of their host.

"Marvelous, I feared you wouldn't make it alive, even on a slow day there can be quite the busy staff roaming around the public areas!" The grin seemed to grow even wider somehow on the feline's face, their sharp pupils locked onto the bug.

Benny remained speechless, getting back up to their feet, that deep voice still resonating in their skull.

"Now, now, no need to fret, I didn't call you here for a split second of amusement, you're my guest, you'll have a few hours before that can happen! Why don't you climb along Benny? I called you here because I need some help to relax while I work! Your resume was most... Adequate for this position."

The ant looked back to the digit, even standing up, the bug was barely standing as high as the soft looking fur reached down. They knew best than to wait though, and made their way to climb up the toe, getting in between two of them to get a better grip. Soon they made it up to the top, holding onto the snow bright fluff.

"Er... Thank you Noma... Sir... What did you want me to do, exactly?" trying to keep up a dignified stance, the bug queried, struggling to keep from squealing nervously with each word.

"Simple, really." Noma replied, crouching down to have a closer face to face with their little new employee. "You will be right around where you are, for the rest of my shift, just make sure to wriggle your way around to rub and massage! If you survive, you'll be out for the night, before your next shift. You'll get your own... Quarters, you'll know when work begins and ends!"

Benny tensed, it's not like they really had a choice, they'd already signed up the paper, uncertain whether they regretted it or if it was the best decision of their life. The bug acquiesced, getting right to rubbing.

"Glad to see your enthusiasm, I'll get you to your office right away!"

Before Benny could squeak a confused word, the titan began to walk back to their chair. The ant held on for their life, knowing how swift an end it would be to drop onto the floor now. Though even as the raccynx sat down, the rocky ride wasn't over yet.

Benny watched as Noma lifted their foot up and brought the dreaded office, an old leather boot, the kind worn by construction workers more than a company lead, though nobody would dare judge the choice of someone who loomed over even tall folks.

"Just don't hold your breath, you'll get used to the warmth and all, believe me, this way I'm sure I won't lose you, too, just avoid... The insole. Your... Former workforce didn't and it's a nightmare to clean up."

Unceremoniously, the footpaw slid into the boot with ease, basked in darkness once more, the ant did their best to keep on breathing as calmly as they could, whimpering as the toeclaws hit the steel toe of the boot, and a distant thump signaled the heel's landing.

It would be a long shift, Benny started to work on helping their boss relax, occasionally able to make out the shapes of those who failed their duty way down between the toes they worked on. Shivering at the curiosity nibbling at them, just how many had been hired before? How long did they usually last?

Benny feared about finding this out the hard way, reminded to not let their attention drift too far when the digits flexed to get them back to work, threatening to shove them off down to the insole for insubordination.

After the first hour, getting used to the damp conditions, the ant just shoved those questions to the back of their mind. Despite all, Benny did want to make a good impression on their first, and hopefully far from last day...