

## Chapter 8: Dwayne

Well, what the hell else was he supposed to do? She left a note saying where she was going. It was in her handwriting, so she wasn't kidnapped. She's 14 for christsake. It's not like she's 7 and kidnapped. Just a kid running away for awhile. She wasn't in trouble.

So he went to work.

The warehouse wasn't going to stock itself.

Besides. Based on this latest news, who the hell was he to Rainbow anyway?

Apparently, the kid who he thought was his kid, wasn't. When he played it over in his head -- over and over and over -- it sounded like a crappy daytime soap, or an episode of Jerry Springer.

He wasn't the father. Apparently. Hell of a time to find out. 14 years after the fact. Somehow, he felt like he'd be less pissed off if the information had waited another 4 years. Then he could just toss up his hands and say 'the hell with you all' and not feel a bit of guilt.

Damn. Women can hide anything can't they? It was enough to make him believe that maybe nothing any female had ever said to him was true. Why would he? They all work on subtleties and exceptions to the rules. They give you just enough information to hang yourself with.

He had been sitting in his car in the parking lot of WeltCo. for thirty minutes. Late, but fuck it, he was the one who drew up the schedule. He could be late if he wanted.

He had gotten this far, and ran out of what the hell he was supposed to do. As his coworkers walked past his car, he pretended to busy himself with something in the front seat. Like he had dropped a pen, or an important note, or was just listening to the last little bit of a

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song, or waiting for the answer to a trivia question on WITI. But, pretty soon, his coworkers were going to start asking where the hell he was. Rick would be first, no fucking doubt about that. Rick’s the one to fuck up anyone’s fun. He was the one to put an end to the March Madness pool. He was the one to announce to everyone that benefits had been calculated wrong for the past two years and we all had one less day of vacation than we thought.

A douche.

And, he’d be the one to.--

Sure enough, here he comes.

Rick knocked on the window of Dwayne’s salt encrusted driver’s side window. It seemed to Dwayne that a good 45 minutes passed while he thought of exactly how to respond to the knocking. Ignore it? Flip him off? Open the window and tell him exactly what the problem was? Lie? Punch Rick in the fucking face? All viable options really. Finally, he decided to let Rick take the lead. He flipped the switch on his automatic window and it slowly rolled down.

“What?”

“You coming in to work today?”

“I’m here, aren’t I?”

“You coming in? Gus and Trey don’t know what the fuck to do, so they’re just sitting in the break room shooting the shit. And Steve is--”

“I’ll be in in a moment.”

“Okay.”

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“Okay.”

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“Was there something else?”

“Just waiting for you.”

Dwayne rolled up the window and sat for what seemed like 20 more minutes, but according to the clock on his dash was closer to 3. Rick waited outside. In an impulsive moment, Dwayne suddenly decided to tell Rick the truth, and instantly regretted it.

“My wife cheated on me 14 years ago.”

And that’s how Rick and Dwayne ended up spending the morning in Dwayne’s car talking about life, women, and the pursuit of happiness all morning long.

Gus and Trey took so many fucking smoke breaks, they broke a personal record.