

Tom nervously picked at his nail as he entered the tranquil forest. He loved to stroll around the area whenever he something was troubling him. It was his sanctuary where all his problems could fade away like mist in the early morning light. The bird's cheerful tunes were a melody of optimism, accompanying him as he strolled towards the stream. The symphony of nature was interrupted by the sudden buzzing of Tom's phone, pulling him back to reality. He wanted to ignore it and turn it off, but after a quick glance at the phone, Tom realised it was his boss who was calling. His boss had demanded that he finish his report by midnight. Tom didn't know what to do. Walking deeper into the woods, Tom's thoughts drifted. The rhythmic sound of his footsteps on the dirt path matched the steady beat of his heart. He wished he was brave enough to defy his boss, but he couldn't. Everyone saw him as a lazy, submissive, employee, and Tom could do nothing to change that.

Dimly lit streetlights lined the street outside Tom's office, casting long, distorted shadows that seemed to stretch endlessly along the cracked pavement. When he stepped through the rusted door, he sighed. It wasn't the first time he had entered this sterile, suffocating space, but with each passing day, the weight of the room seemed to grow heavier. The office felt more like a prison than a place of work, its walls closing in on him with a silent, relentless pressure. Something outside the window caught his attention and when Tom turned to check, he was greeted by a crimson parrot. Its feathers were like dancing flames in the midday sun. Parrots didn't live here, but Tom took it as a sign of good luck. The setting sun cut the sky open, revealing pastel hues of pink and orange that spilled across the sky. Time was running out.

Watching the parrot gracefully stretch its wings, anger began to simmer inside Tom, a slow burn that only grew with every elegant movement of the bird. Why did he have to do this report? This wasn't even his work. Tom's frustration tightened around his chest as he stood there, helpless, like a spectator in his own life. His hands trembled as he pulled out his phone, the cool metal of the device sending a shiver up his spine. He looked up, eyes narrowing, and saw the cracked clock's hands moving sluggishly, as though time itself was mocking him. He couldn't escape the thought of how the parrot's vibrant feathers blazed in the sun, a burst of fiery colour against the dullness of his own thoughts. With a deep breath, Tom dialled his boss's number, his fingers trembling but resolute. The decision had been made. He wasn't going to do his boss's work any longer, not this time.

Of course his boss was angry. The pale moon cast its pale silver glow across the forest, . The tree's silhouettes waved in the gentle breeze as if they were welcoming him back. The meandering stream seemed to glow under the moonlight. The whole forest seemed like a different genre of music with the owl's soprano hoots. The air was thick with the scent of damp earth and the sweet, musky smell of pine

and fallen leaves. Tom felt like someone had removed the weight that had been gradually building up over the years, which put him at ease. He was proud of his decisions.