

PRESSING BUTTONS

Written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN AVERAGE OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

INT. OFFICE CUBICAL - MORNING

ELIZABETH, 23, is asleep, slumped over at her desk. Her blonde hair is in a messy bun and her desk is covered with Chinese food take-out containers and empty coffee cups. The papers around her desk consist of PowerPoint presentations and loose-leaf with charts and illegible notes scribbled on them. Her glasses rest half off of her face at a slant.

CANDACE, 25, wearing a stylish black suit, with her fiery red hair neatly pulled back. Her stylish black suit is complimented by her flashy black high heels. She tiptoes past Elizabeth's desk with a smug smile on her face.

Candace reaches over a sleeping Elizabeth, and glances around her desk curiously, pursing her lips. She plugs a flash drive into Elizabeths computer. A screen with the words "Enter Password" pops up.

CANDACE
(Whispered)
Damn it.

Candace glances around the cubical, looking for a hint to a password. She notices a Harry Potter calendar on the wall, and a notebook with the character Hermione Granger on it on Elizabeth's desk.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Ugh, some people are too easy.

Candace types "Hermione" into the password bar.

ON THE SCREEN

A pop up with the words "Access Granted" appears on the screen.

The screen changes to display an assortment of files, all of which Candace drags to her flash drive. Candace quietly waits for the files to download, almost waking Elizabeth more than once.

The computer freezes.

ON CANDACE

CANDACE (CONT'D)
No, no, no. Come on!

The computer starts loading again. Once the computer reads "Transfer Complete", Candace grabs the flash drive and throws herself into her chair on the opposite side of the cubical complex, just in time for Elizabeth to stir.

Elizabeth sits up, rubs her eyes, and flattens out her hair.

ELIZABETH

(groggily)

Ugh- damn, I must have fallen asleep last night. What time did you get here?

Candace flashes Elizabeth a cheery smile.

CANDACE

Morning, sunshine! I've been here since seven thirty. You know, always trying to make a good impression. But I'm sure no one would understand the importance of a good first impression like the newbie, huh?

ELIZABETH

What, uh, yeah! I really think that I'm getting the hang of this job. I want to prove I can do this.

Candace, who has begun to glare at Elizabeth, snaps back into a cheery smile. She cocks her head.

CANDACE

So, I'm sure you've been here all night prepping for the meeting?

A look of panic and confusion crosses Elizabeth's face.

ELIZABETH

(stammering)

Meeting? What meeting?

CANDACE

Oh, darling! You have to catch up. They're expanding the branch, so corporate is looking for a new supervisor. Anyone could be up for the position! Even you, as hard as that is to believe.

Elizabeths eyes light up with eagerness.

ELIZABETH

Oh, that's awesome! I have been meaning to get in touch with someone down there. I have a few ideas that I think they would like.

CANDACE

Oh, well I'm sure corporate would be thrilled to hear from an unknown newbie! Just as thrilled as I am talking to you right now.

Elizabeth notices Candace's sarcasm, but brushes it aside.

ELIZABETH

You really think so?

Candace cuts her off.

CANDACE

I can't wait to get the position. But- of course you should apply too! We don't want people to think I got the position unfairly! It's good to at least look like I tried.

Elizabeth rolls her eyes.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, I'm sure your dad owning the company will have nothing to do with the decision.

CANDACE

What does that have to do with anything? I got to this point through hard work and commitment.

ELIZABETH

(Under her breath)
And trust funds.

CANDACE

What was that?

ELIZABETH

Oh, um, nothing! I just said, um, best of luck!

CANDACE

Oh my god, you are too funny! I am so glad that we're friends. Aren't you glad we're friends?

Elizabeth turns back towards her computer and sighs.

ELIZABETH
(Under her breath)
Sure. Friends.

Candace walks away quickly through the entrance to the cubical with papers in her hand, her sarcastic laughing fading out. Elizabeth listens to the clacking of her high heels as she exits.

Elizabeth leans back in her chair and throws her head back, sighing. She rubs her eyes in frustration.

MATTHEW, 24, pops his head into Elizabeth's cubical. He is wearing an ironed button down, with his sleeves rolled up. His messy dark brown hair is tamed in a poor attempt to be jelled back. He is dressed like an high-end Staples employee, with far too many pens in his pocket, and is way too eager for the start of the workday.

He flashes a dorky smile at Elizabeth.

MATTHEW
Morning, Einstein. So did NASA
finally call and tell you to report
for some important mission asap?

Elizabeth smiles but turns back to her work. Matthew leans against her desk, picks up a rubber band ball, and starts tossing it in the air.

ELIZABETH
Matt, not now.

MATTHEW
But you haven't seen my new tricks!
I've been practicing.

He tosses the rubber band ball over Elizabeths head, knocking over a cup of pens.

ELIZABETH
Matt! I'm serious. I'm busy!

MATTHEW
You? Busy? There's a shock. So, I
have a question. If you can spare a
second.

Elizabeth continues staring at her work, but cracks a smile. Matthew grabs Candace's chair, gracefully spins it around, and sits down.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

So, want to tell me how the building security tapes went down for just the amount of time it would take a, say, 23 year old blonde girl to sneak back into the building to keep working when the building is locked up? Hypothetically speaking, of course.

Elizabeth smiles into a folder and turns away.

ELIZABETH

Hmm... magic? Maybe elves?

MATTHEW

You're clever, Elizabeth. I'll give you that. But mess with my tapes, and I'll mess with you.

ELIZABETH

Ha, oh really?

MATTHEW

Excuse you, I think we both know that I take the job of Building I.T. Guy very seriously!

ELIZABETH

(playfully)

Oh, is that your official title? I didn't get the announcement! Congratulations, Building I.T. Guy.

MATTHEW

It's quite the honor.

Elizabeth and Matthew make eye contact for a second, then they both break out into laughter.

Matthew looks around Elizabeth's cubical, noticing all the papers spread out. He picks the nearest one up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

What is all this? I think you just single handedly destroyed the entire environment! I can hear the endangered trees crying from here.

Matthew jokingly picks up a paper and holds it to his ear.

ELIZABETH

(laughing)

Shut up! No, it's- well- can you keep a secret?

MATTHEW

(While nodding no)

Yes, absolutely.

Elizabeth laughs and playfully hits his shoulder.

ELIZABETH

Matt, I'm serious. I'm trying to get a promotion. Boss has been talking about giving one out, and I figured if I can prove to him that I've got good ideas, maybe he'll trust me. Most of these ideas are awful, but some- some are good!

Matthew raises a skeptical eyebrow, and cracks a slight smile.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

No, I'm serious! Here, look. We could personalize the websites for each customer. It's really not that complicated, but I think it will improve sales!

Elizabeth grabs a huge pile of papers off of her desk and hands it to Matthew. She looks at him eagerly.

Matthew looks them over for a few seconds.

MATTHEW

Liz, these are actually pretty good! Like, really good. You should show these to-

Matthew is cut off as Candace enters the cubical.

CANDACE

Elizabeth! And Mike, right?

MATTHEW

No, it's Matthew. Remember? I fixed your computer when you spilled that coffee on it.

Candace ignores him, turning to Elizabeth.

CANDACE

What a great idea, Marv! Ugh, you two should go get coffee! I know Elizabeth deserves it, with how hard she's been working. It's on me!

Candace hands Elizabeth a twenty dollar bill, which Elizabeth reluctantly takes.

ELIZABETH

I mean, I could use a coffee. Let me grab my coat.

Matthew waits for Elizabeth to grab her coat, while Candace stands by. Elizabeth slips her hand into Matt's and they walk out of the office, while Candace glares at them.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Elizabeth and Matthew enter the conference room, laughing, and holding coffee cups. They are mid-conversation.

MATTHEW

Wait, but that's crazy. I thought I was the only person who went to tech camp! Always good to meet a fellow nerd.

ELIZABETH

Excuse you, I prefer the term "enthusiast".

Elizabeth and Matthew share a laugh. They quiet down as MICHAEL enters the room.

MICHAEL, 40, wears a crisply ironed, obviously Italian suit, complete with a tie and a perfectly horizontal tie clip. He means business. His hair is neatly jelled back, but despite this, there is a softness to his eyes. He still appears friendly, to a degree.

MATTHEW

Hey, boss.

Matthew nods his head in the direction of Michael, as if to say hello.

MICHAEL

Now, as you all know, this past quarter has been tough, but from what I've heard, Candace has quite the plan to pull us out of this.

CANDACE

Thank you. Now, as you all know, consumer relations has always been difficult for this company, but I propose customizing our website for each user, with their name, to establish a more personal connection.

Elizabeth has, up until this point, been whispering in the back with Matthew, hardly paying attention. At the mention of this plan, she jumps up.

ELIZABETH

Wait, what are you talking about? That's my plan. Word for word.

CANDACE

What are you babbling about? I've been hard at work on this, while you were out sipping coffee and galavanting. Very responsible of you to blow off work on the day of a meeting. How could this possibly be your plan?

ELIZABETH

You saw it! You must have. It was on my desk, it was just missing last time I checked.

CANDACE

Well, maybe if you were more focused on doing your work, as opposed to taking non-approved coffee breaks, this sort of thing wouldn't have happened. I take good care of my work, maybe you could learn from me?

Elizabeth marches toward Candace and grabs the folder out of her hands. She begins rifling through the pages, growing more red in the face with each turn of the page.

ELIZABETH

(shouting)

That is my idea! Word for word. You stole it. Are you serious? You thief!

Elizabeth is now shaking with rage. She frantically looks around the room as tears well in her eyes.

Michael stands up.

MICHAEL

Ladies, there is no need to argue.
It doesn't matter who gets credit.
What matters is how we help the
company. Let's take a break from
today, as we're all very on edge.

People begin to file out of the office, however Elizabeth pauses right outside the door to listen to Michael.

MICHAEL (OS) (CONT'D)

Candace, I am truly impressed with
your work today, and I apologize
for the accusations by Elizabeth. I
would like to discuss the
possibility of a 10 percent raise,
and, I imagine you will be joining
me for the company meeting in New
York City this weekend?

Michael and Candace exit his office, and pause in the doorway. Elizabeth stands up, to appear as if she has not been eavesdropping.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I see big things from you, Candace.

Candace walks out of the conference room, past Elizabeth.

Elizabeth follows her, pushing past people to catch up.

ELIZABETH

Candace! Wait, we need to talk!
Right now!

CANDACE

Sorry, Liz, I'm busy. Important
stuff. I wouldn't expect you to
understand. Ta Ta!

Candace darts away from Elizabeth through a door in the office, leaving her shaking from anger. Tears restart to well in Elizabeth's eyes.

INT. OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

A small group of co-workers, including Matthew, surround the water cooler. They are whispering and looking around anxiously. When Elizabeth approaches, there are hushes.

Elizabeth marches up to the water cooler, and aggressively grabs a cup. She takes a deep breath, still noticeably angry.

ELIZABETH

Has anyone seen Candace? I need to talk to her.

MATTHEW

Yeah, she's out to lunch with Michael. But did you hear about her company plan? How cool is that?

ELIZABETH

Matt, those were my ideas! I showed them to you this morning!

MATTHEW

Candace said she gave you the idea. Maybe she mentioned it and you thought you came up with it?

ELIZABETH

Are you serious? That idea was mine! I came up with it, and she gets all the credit? What the hell is happening here?

Matt and the others around the cooler share awkward glances.

MATTHEW

You know, Elizabeth, jealousy isn't a good look on you. Why can't you just be happy for your friend? She even bought you coffee! Maybe you heard Candace mention the plan, and you got it in your head?

Elizabeth cuts him off.

ELIZABETH

No, that's not it! Why does no one believe me. I thought you were my friend, Matt!

Candace passes by Elizabeth, heading to her desk.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Oh, Candace! Tell Matt that you stole that idea from me! Go on, tell him.

CANDACE

Aw, some people will do anything for attention! Isn't she adorable, Matthew? I have to go, it's been a busy day for me. See everyone when I get back from New York!

Elizabeth turns to look at Matt and her coworkers with desperation. They all glance away sheepishly, avoiding eye contact.

Candace, with her coat, heads to the elevator. She steps in, presses the button and waits for the door to close.

Just before they do, Elizabeth steps inside, letting the doors close behind her.

INT. OFFICE ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

CANDACE

Elizabeth, this childish game is over, I really have to go.

ELIZABETH

No, you don't have to go. You are going to stay right here. You have been ignoring me all day. Everyone in this office always ignores me and just this once, you are going to listen.

Elizabeth slams her hand on the "Emergency Stop" button, and the elevator jolts.

CANDACE

Oh my god, you're actually crazy! What do you want from me?

ELIZABETH

You know exactly what I want! I want what you took from me. Confess! Confess that you stole my idea. You took the business plan from me. Confess!

CANDACE

I- I have no idea what you're talking about.

ELIZABETH

Don't play dumb with me, Elizabeth! You stole my idea.

Candace laughs and throws her hands in the air.

CANDACE

Fine, is this what you want? I stole the idea! I stole my business idea from Elizabeth! There, I admitted it!

(MORE)

CANDACE (CONT'D)

You know, it feels good to get that off my chest to everyone here. And by that I mean, just you. Look around, it's just us sweetheart. Did that make you happy? Is that what you wanted? I stole the idea of personalized websites from Elizabeth.

Elizabeth smiles and adjust her posture, making herself appear taller.

CANDACE (CONT'D)

What are you smiling for? Did you hear me? I won, and I'm going to get away with it. Did that make you feel better?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, you know actually it did. But maybe you wanna look around a little harder?

CANDACE

What are you talking about?

ELIZABETH

Look who's watching, sunshine.

She points to the camera in the corner of the elevator.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Smile for it, Candace. This time, the spotlight is all on you. And, I know how much you love that!

Elizabeth turns, presses the "Open Door" Button, and skips out of the elevator, revealing everyone in the office is standing there. It is evident they have been listening the whole time.

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Elizabeth sits down at her desk, trying to compose her excitement after her little victory.

Candace awkwardly steps into the office, frantically looking around, visibly afraid of making eye contact with any one person for too long.

Michael clears his throat.

MICHAEL

Candace, I suggest you pack your things.

CANDACE

Are you serious? For one stupid little idea? It wasn't even that great.

MICHAEL

Pack. You're out.

CANDACE

You said it yourself, it doesn't matter who came up with the idea! A win for one of us is a win for all, right?

MICHAEL

I defended you in front of corporate for this "stupid little idea". You made me look unprofessional. Pack your things.

Michael glares at Candace for a moment and then turns to Elizabeth, smiling.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Elizabeth, when you get a moment, if I could talk with you in my office? Oh and, you should start packing too, but for New York.

He smiles at Elizabeth with warmth in his eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I expect great things from you.

Michael begins to turn away, and Elizabeth turns towards her computer, smiling. She sits down and pushes her hair out of her face, almost squealing from excitement.

Elizabeth begins organizing the paperwork on her desk when a sound comes from her computer.

She glances at the username, and sees that it is from Matthew. The email reads "Hey, if you're free tonight, I'd love to grab dinner."

Elizabeth glances up from her computer, making eye contact with Matthew across the office. He is leaning coolly against the wall, where he has watched this interaction. She smiles softly. He smiles back at Elizabeth, who turns back toward her computer.

Elizabeth frantically types something into the computer and hits enter.

Matt walks past her desk, smiling at her.

He holds up his phone with a mysterious smile on his face.

MATTHEW

So, I got your email.

ELIZABETH

And?

MATTHEW

And, it's a date.

ELIZABETH

A date? I like the sound of that.

Beat

Wait, are you heading out? I'll walk with you.

MATTHEW

Sure, but, um, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Yeah?

MATTHEW

Why don't we take the stairs?

Elizabeth laughs and heads out of the office with Matthew following her. She grabs his hand and they walk out, smiling.

FADE TO BLACK.