

Down For The Cause

by

Joseph Arnone

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Cast of Characters

WILLA:

40's

JOSELYN:

20's

Place

Willa's office

Time

Day

Setting: Willa's plush New York City office.

At Rise: Willa and Jossely sit opposite sides of Willa's desk.

WILLA: There's no slowing down Joselly, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. You wanted to be part of this thing and now you are. I asked you if you wanted to back out on day one. Remember that? Remember when I said, "Now's the time to change your mind?" Remember? Yeah, well, I meant it.

This is the game. You wanna play, you gotta go all in or go home.

JOSELLY: I want to go home.

WILLA: Done.

JOSELLY: For real?

WILLA: Go.

JOSELLY: I thought you wanted me to stay?

WILLA: It doesn't matter what I want.

JOSELLY: So, I guess you didn't need me as much as---

WILLA: You just finished telling me you want out of my content team and I'm giving you the exit.

JOSELLY: I didn't know it'd be that easy.

WILLA: Come on, Jos, you know me long enough. I'm not into twisting arms. Some people can't keep up, I get it.

JOSELLY: It's not that, I mean, it is, but, I didn't know it would be like this.

WILLA: Like what?

JOSELLY: I didn't know it would be non-stop.

WILLA: You must be joking.

JOSELLY: I didn't know it would be twenty-four seven. You are always on. I didn't know I'd get phone calls from you at like four in the morning, with some hot new idea you've just come up with.

I'm all for what you're doing, I totally have your back and you know that, but it's getting me sick...I'm literally, physically getting sick from how hard we're grinding.

JOSELLY: And you have me wearing so many hats, which I know I agreed to cause again, I'm down for the cause, but I had no idea things would get this overwhelming. Even with the team I've been managing to help alleviate the workflow, it's—I'm constantly bombarded with questions and it sometimes feels like babysitting, rather than any form of solid help.

Some days I wake up and I'm already wide awake and I have this burning sensation at the side of my head, I get shortness of breath and this, this, this *panic* comes over me and I can't think, I can't move, I can't function.

Does that make any sense for someone my age? I'm too young to feel as I do and I want this, I really want this, but you---I'm, I'm having second thoughts. Is everything I'm doing for you worth the sacrifice?

I know we're succeeding, we're winning, but when is enough ever going to be enough?

WILLA: I don't want your health getting in the way.

JOSELLY: It's reached that point.

WILLA: You know, I do want you on my team. I push you as hard as I do not because I'm trying to push you intentionally, but because you've basically been the only person to ever keep up. I'm not trying to make you do anything against your will.

I did warn you. I warned you of burnout potential. You are number five. Did you know that? Since I've started, you will be the fifth person to call it quits.

I pay you well, you travel the world, you are doing work you love...none of this should feel like work for you. You told me that yourself.

JOSELLY: I have no time for me.

WILLA: How so?

JOSELLY: My life has become your life, and I want some of my life back.

WILLA: What exactly are you saying?

JOSELLY: I'm saying that there are other things I'd like to do other than catering to everything you are.

WILLA: Such as?

JOSELLY: I'd like to start building out my own projects.

WILLA: That's not possible.

JOSELLY: That's the whole point of why I'm telling you all of this...

WILLA: You expect me to receive less than what you've been giving?

JOSELLY: There has to be some level of balance, don't you think?

WILLA: What sort of projects?

JOSELLY: I'd like to expand my own voice, share my own expertise, become my own name.

WILLA: I see, and working for me at this hard paced level is not permitting you the time you need to allocate to such tasks.

JOSELLY: Yes.

WILLA: Let's hire you an assistant.

JOSELLY: What?

WILLA: Your assistant, assisting my needs; this way the workload is lighter for you and you can cater to your...projects. BUT, I will only deal with you. You can leverage this new assistant to free up some time for yourself, however, if I see my pace starting to slow, I'm going to fire you instantly.

That's the best I can do.

JOSELLY: I don't know what to say.

WILLA: Say, yes.

JOSELLY: I didn't even imagine this being an option.

WILLA: There it is...agreed?

JOSELLY: ...Umm...no...

WILLA: No?

JOSELLY: Willa, I appreciate your offer, but I get the sense that eventually you will have me and this new assistant running circles for you the same way I'm running circles now, and it's exhausting. Nobody can keep up with you, not even me.

WILLA: You asked me when is enough ever enough...it's never going to be enough, Joselly. You know why? (beat) I come from nothing. Born and raised in the worst part of Brooklyn, my father was an immigrant who spoke two words of English, my mother, she was even worse...I watched my mother and father slave over their minimum wage jobs.

My father worked for the lumber yard, my mother was a seamstress and they did everything they could possibly do to raise me and my sister with the best clothes, good education, plenty of food, there was always food in the house, that's another thing, my mother was always cooking, non-stop...

They were both good human beings. They sacrificed so much, too much...they left their country behind to become Americans. Never got the chance to see their own mothers and fathers ever again, sisters, brothers...they took the leap to give me and my sister a better life, and my sister died. Freak accident while walking down the block, a loose tree branch came crashing down, hitting her just right, killed her instantly...

...What was once a bright and promising young woman...she was the clever one, the beautiful one, the one who would have the most impact, the crowning achievement of my mother and father's sacrifice...but it wasn't meant to be so.

I was left instead. I am here.

I do what I do because I'm living two lives, you see? I am grinding so hard because time on this planet is so short, and because I am going to hand my parents their crown.

Nothing will ever bring my sister back, but if I can give my life all that I have in me to give, without wasting one second, her death would not have been in vain. That is why enough will never be enough.

JOSELLY: Willa, I'm sorry for the loss of your sister.

WILLA: I'm not trying to guilt you into staying. I wanted to share my story with you because, I don't know, I'm justified in my lunacy.

JOSELLY: You aren't a lunatic.

WILLA: Ha! Good one.

JOSELLY: No, really, you aren't.

WILLA: Yes, well, I'm only human.

JOSELLY: What if we went one quarter? We'll take on a new assistant and we'll give it three months, if it doesn't work out, I'll leave the company and perhaps they can take my role.

WILLA: ...On second thought, I think it best you leave.

JOSELYY: You do?

WILLA: I do. Can't have someone work for me out of sympathy.

JOSELYY: I wasn't being sympathetic, I mean, I feel terrible about your loss, but I wasn't choosing to stay on because----

WILLA: You will get a reasonable severance check.

JOSELYY: Willa...Willa, I'll stay on, really.

WILLA: It's decided. You will get your severance. It's better this way.

JOSELYY: I'm confused.

WILLA: Is that regret, I hear?

JOSELYY: I think---

WILLA: Already? One should never speak out unless they are certain they know what they speak.

JOSELYY: I thought I could express to you how I feel, without judgement.

WILLA: You work for me. This is business.

JOSELYY: So, I'm fired?

WILLA: I wouldn't say fired, I'd say let go. It's what you originally wanted and I say always go with your impulse.

JOSELYY: Do I finish out the day?

WILLA: Not at all. Go straight home or wherever you need to find the time for you and begin your project building, as you put it to me.

JOSELYY: Fine. I'll leave now.

WILLA: Oh, and ask Greg to come in here before you go, would you please?

JOSELYY: Greg?

WILLA: Your replacement.

JOSELYY: Greg couldn't find the shoes on his feet.

WILLA: Greg will be useful for other things...

Jossely exits Willa's office.

END OF PLAY