

The Big Challenge

A new week was in full swing, and Tim had just clocked in for the day, exhausted from his tedious commute to work.

“Hey, tardy Tim!” Kelly called out to him. “The boss wants you in his office, right now!”

“Thanks, Kelly,” said Tim. “I’ll go over to Marc’s office in a moment.”

Tim knew that instant why he was being summoned.

“Your task this week, Tim, is to work with the editing department and submit a detailed report after,” said Marc.

Handwritten submissions for the upcoming special edition paper had just opened, and like every other employee, Tim wanted his article to be featured in it.

This had been his dream long before he walked in through the revolving doors of Summertown Newspaper as an intern, but only full-time employees could participate.

Also in Marc’s office was burly and condescending Jake. Undeterred by Jake’s intimidating presence, Tim put his big request forward.

“Sir, may I participate in the submissions for the special edition paper?”

“You?” scoffed Jake. “You are an intern; still wet behind the ears. What do you know about impeccable writing?”

“I want to show and not tell, sir. This is a chance to improve my writing skills and challenge myself,” said Tim.

He very well understood the magnitude of his request, but his bosses were not convinced that he did. No intern had ever expressed such high intentions.

Silence took over the room for a moment.

“Very well then, prove yourself,” said Jake with interlocked fingers and a smirk. “You have until the deadline. Not a minute more.”

Excited, Tim thanked Jake.

“Good luck, Tim,” said Marc, mildly surprised at Jake’s unconditional concession. “I’m sure you will do a great job.”

“I won’t let you down, sir,” said Tim, and at the tail end of his celebratory moment came Jake’s big condition.

“You get only one shot at this, intern, and if you strike out, you will get no more opportunities,” said Jake.

Tim’s smile waned at the blatantly extreme consequence while Marc sat wordlessly still, hoping that Tim would take the cue and step back.

Instead, Tim answered, “Very well, sir. I will make that my incentive to succeed. The editorial team will get the best article ever written by an intern!”

While Marc was worried that Tim was about to take on a commitment that he could not fulfill, Jake saw an opportunity to put the overreaching newbie in his place once and for all.

“You should not be so hard on Tim. He’s got a smart head on his shoulders at least,” Tim heard Marc say as he walked away from the office.

“Of course he does; he’s a fox,” Jake snapped with unbridled condescension.
“Even cellphones are smart these days. What I need is a journalist who’s worth his salt!”

I am that journalist, sir, Tim thought. And I’ll prove it to you.