



From Second to First Division
Just one more chance was all he needed

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PART ★★★★★

MY NAME IS WINTER GRAY, I'M
22 YEARS OLD, AND I USED
TO BE A PROFESSIONAL
FOOTBALL PLAYER.



I PLAYED AS A LEFT WINGER FOR BRIDGE DISTRICT, A CLUB IN THE SECOND DIVISION. ALTHOUGH I WAS KNOWN AS A TIRELESS PLAYER, I WASN'T A REGULAR STARTER; MOST OF MY APPEARANCES CAME FROM THE BENCH.



THAT CHANGED WHEN KEVIN, THE REGULAR STARTER, GOT INJURED. I FINALLY HAD THE CHANCE TO BE A STARTER—UNTIL ONE DAY, WHEN A FOUL CHANGED EVERYTHING...

OUCH!

CRACK



THE FOUL BROKE MY LEG
IN TWO PLACES AND
ALSO INJURED MY KNEE.

BLIADAAA BLIADAAA



THEN CAME THE SURGERY...

HE'LL BE ALRIGHT, NO SEQUELAE TO BE NOTICED IN HIS DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES... IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY, BUT IN MY EXPERIENCE IT MAY BE VERY DIFFICULT TO RETURN TO HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT.



SOME MONTHS LATER..

PHYSIOTHERAPY WAS VERY
HARD...

I TRIED



AND TRIED



SOME MONTHS AFTER...

NO PROGRESS...I COULDN'T RUN FOR LONG OR QUICKLY CHANGE DIRECTION ANYMORE. AFTER JUST A FEW MINUTES, I STARTED EXPERIENCING PAIN. DEEP DOWN, I KNEW I WAS DONE.



THEN THE FATEFUL DAY CAME...

IT'S UNFORTUNATE TO SAY THIS, WINTER, BUT YOU SHOULD RETIRE. NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY, YOU HAVEN'T MADE ANY PROGRESS. BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU ON YOUR OWN....

WE KNOW YOU TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM UNIVERSITY WHEN YOU WERE PROMOTED TO THE FIRST TEAM. WE REALLY LIKE YOU, AND WE'LL COVER THE REST OF YOUR TUITION. MAYBE YOU COULD GET A JOB AT THE CLUB AFTER YOU GRADUATE

SNIFF

SNIFF



THEN I WAS BACK IN THE UNIVERSITY...

WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I SHOULD BE IN THE CLUB!



FOOTBALL WAS EVERYTHING
FOR ME... I WAS FRUSTRATED,
SO I ENDED UP TAKING MY
FRUSTRATION OUT ON FOOD



BUT IT ONLY MADE ME FEEL WORSE

WHAT THE FLUCK AM I DOING?



AFTER A FEW MORE MONTHS...
I WAS ALMOST DOUBLE MY WEIGHT



NOWADAYS

I WAS FEELING EMPTY, DIDN'T
FEEL ANY PRESSURE, I JUST
WANTED TO LIE DOWN AND
DISAPPEAR...



HEY BRO, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AT
UNI IN AGES! EVERYTHING OKAY?
ARE YOU STILL JUST EATING AND
SLEEPING?

LEAVE ME ALONE

SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE...
I'LL BOOK YOU AN APPOINTMENT
WITH A PSYCHIATRIST.
AND I'LL PERSONALLY DROP YOU
OFF THERE

HMM...

DEF



Hi, pleased to meet you, I'm Dr. Luna, and I here to help you

I understand, however, could you please follow me to my office first?

I'm fine, just do whatever you want but let me go, I have some important things to do

NODS



MR. GRAY, I'M HERE TO HELP YOU, BUT THAT'S ONLY POSSIBLE IF YOU'RE WILLING TO ACCEPT MY HELP

ARE YOU READY TO OPEN UP A LITTLE BIT?

I'M FINE


HOW HAVE YOUR DAYS BEEN, MR. GRAY?

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

PLEASE, CONTINUE. TELL
ME MORE ABOUT HOW
YOU'RE FEELING.

FOOTBALL WAS MY LIFE;
IT FEELS LIKE SOMEONE
ROBBED IT FROM ME





FEEL LIKE AN EMPTY BOTTLE, SO EMPTY... THE ONLY THING I DO THESE DAYS IS EAT, BUT I DON'T FIND ANY PLEASURE IN IT. I JUST LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND THINK, "WHAT AM I DOING WITH MYSELF?"

I UNDERSTAND. THE FIRST STEP IS ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR FEELINGS AND BEING HONEST WITH YOURSELF

IT'S EMBARRASSING TO ADMIT
THAT I FEEL LIKE I'M GOOD FOR
NOTHING NOW

SNIFF

SNIFF



OUR
INNER BATTLE IS ONE
THAT ONLY WE CAN FIGHT, BUT
WE NEED TO BE READY FOR IT. IN THE
MEANTIME, YOU SHOULD FIND AN
ACTIVITY THAT YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON,
LIKE STUDYING OR A NEW JOB, TO
KEEP YOUR MIND OCCUPIED





IT'S HARD TO ADMIT BUT
SOMEHOW I NEED TO RISE
AGAIN



SO,
MR. GRAY, YOU'LL HAVE
SOME HOMEWORK. I WANT YOU TO
KEEP A SIMPLE DIARY. EACH DAY, WRITE
DOWN YOUR AVERAGE MOOD; FOR
EXAMPLE, IF YOU FEEL HAPPY MOST OF THE
DAY, WRITE "HAPPY." ADDITIONALLY, NOTE
SOMETHING GOOD THAT HAPPENED EACH
DAY. I'LL ALSO PRESCRIBE YOU SOME
MEDICATION, WHICH WILL HELP A LOT
WITH THE EMPTY FEELING

I GOT REJECTED MORE THAN 20 TIMES ALREADY IN PRE-INTERVIEWS... MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE UP...

KEEP SCROLLING

HMM, PERSONAL ASSISTANT FOR THE FIRST DIVISION OF PURPLE FRONTIER VENTURES, TO WORK WITH THE CEO, NO EXPERIENCE OR FORMAL EDUCATION REQUIRED, THIS ONE CAN BE INTERESTING.


APPLICATION SUBMITTED




INTERVIEW DAY

NICE TO MEET YOU WINTER,
I'M ANDREA GATTI THE CEO OF
PURPLE FRONTIER VENTURES,
PLEASE COME TO MY OFFICE





AS
YOU CAN SEE, MY
COMPANY LACKS
ORGANIZATION. FOR EXAMPLE,
THIS OPPORTUNITY WAS INITIALLY
INTENDED FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES
ONLY. HOWEVER, TO AVOID ANY
PERCEPTION OF SEXISM, WE DECIDED
TO KEEP IT OPEN TO EVERYONE AND
THEN FILTER THE FEMALE CANDIDATES.
UNFORTUNATELY, THERE WAS A MISTAKE
ALONG THE WAY DUE TO YOUR
NEUTRAL NAME, AND THAT'S HOW
YOU ENDED UP HERE



BEFORE YOU DISMISS ME, MR. GATTI, COULD I PLEASE HAVE A MOMENT TO TELL MY STORY?

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING BOOKED, SO GO AHEAD

A FEW MONTHS AGO I WAS A FOOTBALL PLAYER FOR BRIDGE DISTRICT...

FAST FORWARD ▶▶

SO, I AM HERE DEALING WITH MY DEMONS, TRYING TO OVERCOME DEPRESSION, AND SEEING MYSELF AS A HUMAN BEING RATHER THAN SOMETHING HOLLOW

I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT ANY CONDITIONS TO GET THIS JOB





HMM...

AFTER HEARING YOUR STORY, I CAN'T DENY YOU THE OPPORTUNITY. LET'S START THE INTERVIEW...

HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH YOUR EX-COACHES' LEADERSHIP?

I ALWAYS MADE AN EFFORT TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND ADAPT MY GAME ACCORDINGLY

CAN YOU DESCRIBE A CHALLENGING SITUATION YOU FACED AND HOW YOU HANDLED IT?


I AM CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING PERIODS OF MY LIFE. FOOTBALL WAS EVERYTHING I HAD FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, BUT NOW I'M FOCUSED ON REINVENTING MYSELF AND ADAPTING TO A NEW PATH. FOR INSTANCE, JUST A WEEK AGO, I WAS SO OVERWHELMED THAT I COULDN'T GET OUT OF BED. HOWEVER, I'VE BEEN TAKING IT ONE STEP AT A TIME, AND SIMPLY BEING HERE TODAY AND MOVING FORWARD FEELS LIKE A VICTORY IN ITSELF

AFTER THE INTERVIEW


hmm,,

IN FACT, I REALLY LIKED
YOU. YOU MIGHT BE THE
RIGHT PERSON FOR THE
JOB





I'LL
TELL YOU SOMETHING... I
NEED SOMEONE FOR THIS
POSITION WHOM I CAN MOLD TO FIT
MY VISION, WHO CAN FOLLOW MY
DIRECTIONS, BUT **SHE** MUST ALSO BE
CAPABLE OF MAKING INDEPENDENT
DECISIONS, AND I THINK YOU ARE THE
RIGHT PERSON TO BE MY PERSONAL
ASSISTANT. DO YOU ACCEPT MY
OFFER?



I'LL DO EVERYTHING IN MY
POWER TO BE THE BEST
PERSONAL ASSISTANT YOU
COULD HAVE!

WOW!

I DIDN'T THINK YOU
WOULD ACCEPT SO FAST,
DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT
THE POSITION IS STILL FOR
A *SHE*?





SO, HERE YOUR JOB CONTRACT, IT'S NOT FROM ANOTHER WORLD, READ IT AND SIGN PLEASE.

AS I SAID, I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN



YES, THE CONTRACT SEEMS PRETTY STANDARD, BUT IT IS EVIDENTLY WRITTEN FOR A WOMAN, AS SEEN IN THE CLAUSE ABOUT THE WORKING CLOTHES:

♥ THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT IS A DIRECT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPANY CEO AND MUST BE WELL-DRESSED IN A FEMININE MANNER. *THERE ARE OTHER CLAUSES AS WELL:*

♥ WEARING BRIGHT COLORS IS REQUIRED, SHE MUST BE EASILY RECOGNIZABLE AND TO AVOID BEING CONFUSED WITH OTHER EMPLOYEES.

♥ ADDITIONALLY, NAILS AND HAIR SHOULD BE WELL-KEPT.

♥ HIGH HEELS ARE MANDATORY.

AT LEAST THE CONTRACT INCLUDES A CLOTHING ALLOWANCE TO COVER THE COST OF PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE



HERE

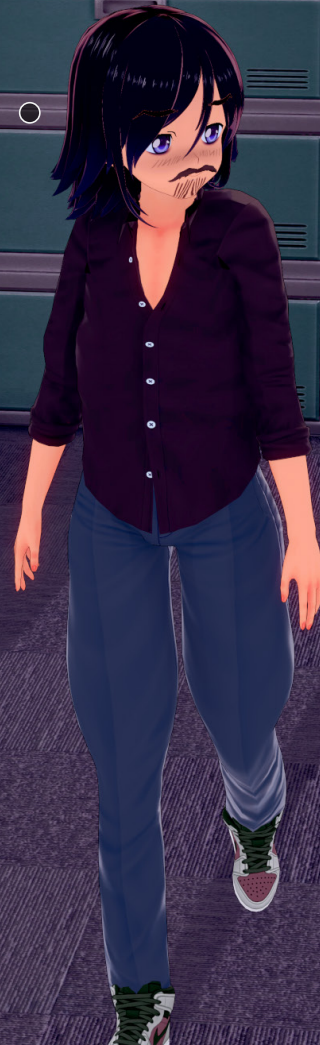
THANKS, AND HERE IS YOUR COPY. WHILE YOU WERE READING, I WAS THINKING ABOUT HOW YOU'LL BE PRESENTING YOURSELF AS A WOMAN. I'D LIKE MY PA TO HAVE A GOOD PET NAME. YOUR OFFICIAL NAME WILL BE KATRINA, BUT I'LL CALL YOU KAT

AND ONE LAST THING, KAT: YOU SHOULD BE READY TO START NEXT MONTH, SO YOU HAVE 3 WEEKS TO PREPARE

WELCOME ABOARD KAT

SIGNED

IT
MAY BE A STRANGE
EXPERIENCE, BUT AT LEAST IT
IS BETTER THAN TO STAY ON MY
SOFA WITH BAD THOUGHTS
RUNNING THROUGH MY HEAD,
FULL OF GARBAGE OVER
ME



THAT SAME DAY

I'M
VERY HAPPY THAT YOU
FOUND A JOB, MR. GRAY. A CEO
PERSONAL ASSISTANT? THAT'S A
GREAT POSITION. IT SHOULD
DEFINITELY KEEP YOUR MIND ENGAGED.
I'VE NOTICED SOME PROGRESS IN
YOUR DIARY AS WELL. STAY
STRONG AND KEEP MOVING
FORWARD



DR., THE POSITION I WAS APPROVED FOR IS INTENDED FOR A FEMALE. PERHAPS I NEED SOME KIND OF MEDICATION TO HELP ME FEEL MORE ALIGNED WITH THIS ROLE, SOMETHING TEMPORARY

HMM...

THIS ISN'T MY SPECIALTY, BUT IF I DISCOURAGE YOU, YOU MIGHT END UP SEEKING IT OUT YOURSELF. SELF-MEDICATION CAN BE DANGEROUS. I'LL REFER YOU TO AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE WHO IS A SPECIALIST IN THE AREA

A FEW DAYS LATER

PLEASE, MR. GRAY, HAVE A SEAT. I SEE THAT YOU'VE BROUGHT THE EXAMS AND STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY I REQUESTED WHEN YOU BOOKED THIS APPOINTMENT. YOU MAY CALL ME DR. ESTELLE

BOTH SHE AND LLINA PREFER TO BE ADDRESSED BY THEIR FIRST NAMES—CURIOUS, ISN'T IT?





THIS TREATMENT IS
TEMPORARY, ISN'T IT?

HEH-HEH

EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS TEMPORARY—LIFE ITSELF IS TEMPORARY, BUT DEATH... DEATH IS ETERNAL. YET, DEATH CARRIES ITS OWN BEAUTY; ONCE SOMETHING PERISHES, THE EARTH WILL TENDERLY EMBRACE AND RECLAIM WHAT WAS ONCE HERS



SHE POSSESSES AN AIR OF
PROFOUND PECCILIARITY, A UNIQUE
BLEND OF TRAITS AND BEHAVIORS
THAT SET HER APART IN THE MOST
INTRIGUING MANNER



YOUR EXAM RESULTS ARE OK. ALTHOUGH YOUR HEALTH ISN'T IDEAL, YOUR CONDITION IS MANAGEABLE FOR NOW. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DIET; PROCESSED FOODS ARE NOT BENEFITING YOU





CERTAINLY, IT WILL BE LESS PAINFUL THAN A JUGULAR BITE. YOU SHOULD TRY TO RELAX...

YOU'LL NEED TO RECEIVE AN INJECTION EVERY TWO WEEKS. ADDITIONALLY, I'LL PRESCRIBE AN ANTI-ANDROGEN TO ENSURE THAT THE HORMONES ARE EFFECTIVE

DONE!

OULLUCH!

