

MICHAEL

As the elevator doors slowly slid open, Michael stepped out with a rush, navigating through cubicles with no time to answer the greetings from his office colleagues and as the secretary spotted him smiling with a concerned look she said, ‘Hey Michael, the senior has been buzzing for the past thirty minutes and everybody is worried! Is everything . . .’

‘Yes, Clara, everything’s fine! Thanks for asking. Traffic was hell!’ He interrupted as he panted; Michael hurriedly picked a piece of candy from a bowl on her desk and threw it into his mouth.

‘Bad boy!’ Clara said, smiling as he made his way into the conference room. ‘Well, don’t give Junior an edge to uproot one of your plants, darling!’ she added, then they both giggled.

A text came into his cell phone, he checked it and sender ID read ‘P. James’ he ignored it, putting the cell phone back into his pocket as he opened the door and shut it behind him. Clara bit her lower lip suggestively, staring at his bum but he didn’t notice.

Michael bent his head and quietly manoeuvred to locate his seat in the boardroom, the board stopped chatting, setting all their eyes on him until he sat down. The leather chair made an awkward squeaky sound but he sat down anyway, forcing the

candy down his throat. ‘Well, the golden boy is here so shall we begin now . . . Poppa?’ said Cannon Johnson Jr., also known in the office and popularly addressed as ‘Junior’ but no one dared say that to his face, of course.

Cannon Johnson Jr. was the only son but not a single child, after securing a degree in a course that did not relate to his current post, his father Cannon Johnson Sr. made him the head of human resources for the company and since it was a family business, Junior got to do whatever he pleased with the staff, especially the females in a dishonourable manner and got away with it. This never brought pride to his father but Cannon Johnson Sr. still lives with the hope that one day his son will turn out to become a man of integrity, but for how long? Time waits for no one.

Cannon Johnson Sr. was going through his new high-tech touchscreen phone, swiping his finger across the screen and scratching his nose at the same time. Seated opposite Cannon Johnson Jr., he took off his reading glasses and placed it on the table yawning, ‘Freaking tech stuff, they keep evolving! Clara should have gotten me a much cheaper easy-going and user-friendly gadget. I’m too old for this you know, one of those 2002 or the earlier versions would do just good!’ said Cannon

Johnson Sr. as he dropped his new gadget on the table staring at it.

‘Well, Dad, I think we can talk about that later and this is the future, you’re going to have to adjust to that. Gentlemen, shall we? I’ve got a plane to catch!’ said Cannon Johnson Jr.

‘Huh! The only thing you would have been able to catch, Junior, would be your broke behind on the streets, under the bridge if I hadn’t made the move to secure this future for you! Huh! Plane to catch?’ Cannon Johnson Sr. remarked as he shrugged, the entire board members burst out laughing but went hush suddenly when Cannon Johnson Jr. frowned, staring at them from his seat opposite his father. ‘Michael, out of the thirteen-member panel set up to decide the future of this company, six have voted in favour of selling our largest portion of shares to Cranum-Tech Group of Companies, and six voted against it last week, even though one vote from the...pro Cranum-Tech team side had a sudden change of heart, but like I said earlier, we are not accepting changeovers once a vote is cast, so all that is left now is your vote Michael. I’m trying to be fair here, so today, your vote seals this deal forever! Cranum-Tech Group of Companies or not. Period!’ said Cannon Johnson Sr.

Michael stood up, rearranged his necktie looking straight at Cannon Johnson Jr. then set his eyes on the entire board members saying, ‘I’m not in favour of Cranum-Tech Group of Companies, sir, with all due respect we can put this company back on its feet, and it’s just a tiny blip. It’s a usual thing, we have been through this before several times and got back even stronger, and my vote stands against CTGC. Besides, we all know what they intend to do with this company.’ He then sat down, fixing his necktie as majority of the men in the boardroom clapped, nodding in agreement but Cannon Johnson Jr. was not pleased.

‘Wise decision, Michael, men like you have given this company a firm footing to stand on even in the deepest of oceans, I am proud of you, thank you very much!’ Cannon Johnson Sr. remarked. Michael nodded honourably.

‘This is cowardice, you are all afraid because you are too old, too weak, and stone-aged to face the future.

Look at yourselves . . .’ said Cannon Johnson Jr. who didn’t hide his intentions and disappointment, ‘and you ...’ he added, staring at Michael, ‘the future of this company is in my hands or at least it will be . . . soon! I will decide at my own time what should be done! I brought a good idea to this table, to this

company! Sooner or later the man that always stands for you would not be here anymore and . . .’ before he could say what was next on his mind, his father interrupted saying, ‘And that’s why the future of this company has no room for your arrogance and incompetence, Cannon Johnson . . .Junior. I choose and have appointed Michael Henning to lead the company as the new GMD/CEO starting from Monday!’ This statement sounded unbelievable to Junior’s ears, Michael himself was surprised but remained mute. ‘I am speaking on behalf of the board, let it be known that it is my will and order that Michael stays as GMD/CEO for eight years before the board can decide on whom next to head the company unless Michael himself decides to resign on any reasons or terms best known to him in the future, and as for you Junior, you are the new Assistant Human Resource Manager. Your assistant, Mrs Shawn Kipola, will head that department, this should remain so until there is found a suitable position for you at the appropriate time by the board,’ added Cannon Johnson Sr., who stood up and walked toward the thick glass window viewing the city.