

Rush Hour

by Angel Gabriel Velez

Today was finally the day for me to make history, at least on a minor scale. Ever since my rich peers accepted my suggestion of sharing my ideas for improving the town we live in at the next “Rich People Convention” meeting, I did nothing but prepare myself for that certain day. Of course, today was finally the day for me to show these ideas off at the latest meeting. All I had to do was to make it to this meeting on time, and that’s when I’ll finally get my opportunity to show off my helpful ideas.

I checked myself out in front of the mirror with my current meeting outfit, which was a dull red suit with a white tie. I chose the main suit color because I wanted to subtly show that I am very passionate when it comes to helping this town improve for the better, no matter what. After I made sure that I was all set in the clothing department, I quickly ran down the stairs like a maniac, although I made sure not to trip and fall down the stairs.

Once I successfully made it downstairs and out of the mansion, I immediately took notice of the cold winter wind that was currently present in the environment. At that moment, the wind blew lightly and gently, but even so, there was no way I was going to let some cold winter weather stop me from achieving my incredibly important life goals, even if it were to increase in intensity. I silently hoped that it wouldn’t be the case though.

I sighed as I walked through the mansion gates, ready to face the chaotic outside world that lies beyond the gateway of peace that stands between said chaotic outside world and my peaceful mansion. I cautiously walked on the sidewalk path to the convention building. At that

point, there were about ten minutes left before this convention meeting started. I thought that I was all set and ready to go without any distractions getting in my way.

Well, it turned out that I thought too soon. Not long after I perished that thought, one distraction popped up in the form of a certain troublemaking duo.

“What’s up, trust fund kid?” Zack said.

“We dearly hope you’re not in a rush or anything like that,” Cody said.

I groaned as the pair walked up to me, forming some sort of human wall in front of me. *Not this pair of immature dolts again! What do they even want with me? It seems they weren’t even trying to be subtle when it comes to becoming a literal obstacle in front of my goals and dreams!*

As if on cue, the wind chill started to pick up on the speed and the intensity a bit. I shivered a bit due to this little shift in weather. *Now the weather wants to go against me too? That’s just great. What else could possibly go wrong?*

I suddenly heard exaggerated groans from the pair. I immediately looked at them with one raised eyebrow.

“Ugh, what’s wrong now?” I asked.

“What even is that suit of yours?” Cody asked. Zack imitated a police siren, which made me groan back in retaliation. That was cringe, that’s for sure.

“We are now the fashion police, and you are now under arrest, you ugly citizen! I’m afraid you’re going to have to come with us to ‘Fashion Victim Jail’ and stay in there forever! Well, that is unless you can answer three questions for us,” Zack said.

I stared blankly at Zack. *You absolutely cannot be serious. You must be joking. Do you and your bothersome sibling really intend to waste my time like this? Where are your dang hearts, because you two are seriously lacking these vital organs of empathy right now.*

I sighed. Against my better judgement, I decided to play along with this.

“Fine, I’ll play your stupid game,” I said.

“Hooray! Now here comes the first question! What made you become such a tragic fashion victim?” Cody asked.

I felt the chill run down my spine after hearing that question, and not just because of the wind speed increasing some more. *Seriously? Are you really going to start with this question? Gosh, I have never felt more insulted in my entire life!*

I sighed and said, “Because I am a huge stupid idiot who has no taste in cool clothes and any cool stuff in existence ever.”

That earned a huge laughing fit from the immature brats as they paraded around in laughter. I could tell that they love to make me look like a fool in such humiliating ways. As long as I played along with them though, I could probably succeed in their torturous quiz. Sure, it sucked, but it was the only surefire way of getting out of this hairy situation quickly.

“Alright, next question! Who are the coolest people in existence?” Zack asked.

I smiled rather forcefully and said, “Zack and Cody, a pair of kings who should have ruled this universe a long time ago.”

This answer earned a cheer from the pair as they paraded around in celebration this time. *Great, not only are these two pranksters mean and immature, but they also have obnoxiously huge egos as well. As if I needed any more reason to dislike these two to oblivion.*

“Man, you know us all too well! Maybe you’re not such a tasteless idiot after all, despite what your current fashion statement may suggest,” Cody said.

I crossed my arms and said, “Can you please stop with the fashion insults already? That joke is quickly becoming as old as dirt.”

Zack snickered and said, “Not as old as your mom!”

Then Zack and Cody gave each other a high-five for that retort.

I rolled my eyes and said, “That insult is even older than the last one!”

“Not as old as your brain,” Cody said.

I shook my head and asked, “What does that even mean?”

“It means that you are a huge dummy,” Zack said.

“Alright, that’s it. I’m done.”

I began to walk away from the duo. Before I could walk away any further though, they both got in front of me and pushed me. I crashed into the mailbox and fell down as a result. Before I could even recover from the blow, Cody got behind me and twisted my arms around the mailbox pole. I struggled against his handcuff-like grab, but unfortunately, his grip strength was surprisingly strong. The wind became much worse at that point, as it blew against my face with fury. I shivered more and more frequently.

This can’t be happening! Why is this happening to me? Why are they going after me so much? My thoughts became much more frantic as Zack approached me.

“If you’re just going to run off during the middle of our fun little quiz show, then I think we should take you to ‘Fashion Victim Jail’ after all! What do you think, Cody?” Zack asked.

“Agreed,” Cody said.

I tried my very best not to pay attention to the situation or the strong wind. Instead, I tried to rack my brain for solutions. *Come on, there must be a way out of this jam! Hmm... Maybe this can work!*

After I took a deep breath, I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. After I felt Cody's grip on my arms loosening and I heard some screams of terror, I had a good feeling that it worked. I got up as soon as I could and witnessed the pair running away from the area. I silently thanked my lucky stars and ran off on the path to the convention building, despite the heavy wind trying to push me back.

A few minutes had passed during the jog, and that was when I finally saw the convention building in my sights. I stopped jogging and checked my watch. There were about three minutes left at that point. *Sweet, looks like I have some minutes to spare!*

Before I could walk any further though, I felt someone tap on my shoulder. I turned around and saw Pico behind me. I gasped in surprise, not expecting to see him here.

"Oh, hello there! What's up?" I asked.

"Why haven't you been coming to any of the treehouse meetings lately?" Pico asked.

My eyes widened. That was a rather sudden and direct question, if I did say so myself.

"Well, I was rather busy with my own life and all," I said.

"I see that, but you didn't seem to even try to come to our meetings. You have been absent all the time lately! Come on, dude, I know you care about making the world a better place as much as I do," Pico said.

I sighed slowly and then turned around as I said, "Look, that may be true, but I have my own things to do now."

It was at that very moment that I suddenly got tackled by him.

“You traitor! I can’t believe how selfish you are,” Pico said.

The venom in his voice immediately tipped me off on how serious this whole situation is. I fought back on instinct and kept trying to push him off. He kept on trying to land some punches on me, but I dodged many attempted harmful blows to my body. As the fight continued, the wind pretty much became a blizzard at this point, blowing the fastest and hardest around us, making for a brutally cold environment. Then again, it did supposedly fit this equally brutal fight.

“I didn’t even mean to leave all of you guys hanging,” I said.

“Then maybe you should have been more considerate then,” Pico said.

I rolled around in order to avoid some more punches.

“If only you cared more about our cause, then this wouldn’t have happened,” Pico said.

At that very moment, I just about had it.

I screamed and kicked Pico off me, as I said, “Pico, please listen to me!”

Unfortunately, I accidentally pushed him onto the brick wall. He briefly screamed in agony before he miserably slumped down in pain.

I gasped and immediately rushed to his side as I asked, “Pico, are you okay?”

“You win, okay? Now please leave me alone,” Pico said.

I winced. His tone matched his miserable state. *Oh my gosh, this is all my fault.*

I gently hugged him, only able to say, “I am very sorry for hurting you and for letting all of this happen in the first place. If only I attended more treehouse meetings, maybe I would be able to share my ideas of helping others too.”

Pico hugged back as he said, “No, it’s alright. I’m sorry too. I really shouldn’t have went off on you like that... Guess that was real jerkish of me. And by the way, did you just say that you have some ideas on helping others too?”

I nodded as I pointed at the convention building.

“Indeed. I was going to discuss them right there,” I said.

I noticed Pico smiling as soon as he saw that.

“Awesome! I’m glad that you aspire to help others so much, Ricky,” Pico said.

I nodded happily as I was about to enter the building, until I got an idea.

“Say, you don’t mind if you could join me on this meeting, do you? We’re discussing how we could improve this town for the better. I know that you’re not rich, but your ideas on helping others are the most valuable ideas ever,” I said.

Pico gave off a huge grin as he said, “Sure, I would love that.”

The blizzard-like weather finally calmed down for the first time in a while as we both walked inside the building. Thankfully, we made it to the meeting just in time.