



LUCIANO AVELLINI

Building manager - 32 years old

You manage the apartments in Via dell'Olmo. Every evening, as soon as you clock off, you think of all the interesting things you could do with your free time, like reading ten different newspapers to form an unbiased political opinion, or opening that beautiful leatherbound notebook you got for your eighteenth birthday and promised to write your first novel on. And what do you do with your fucking free time instead? You look over old meeting minutes, because, you know, resting won't do your career any good...

Except you don't give a shit about your career. This job is hell, and you've been trapped in it for five years just because you can't find an alternative. Five years at Il Poggio Law Offices, working for a couple of morons the financial crisis somehow hasn't managed to sink yet. Sometimes you ask yourself why you still put up with them: You are in no desperate need of money, your parents are fine and you're an only child. You could very well begin looking for something else or go back to contract work. But in the end you tell yourself you'd just go from shit job to shit job and nothing would ever truly change.

How did you come to settle for this?

You were a top student in high school, and you dreamt of being a thousand different things: judge, writer, teacher, literary critic... Then you got 46/60 in your finals. A meagre forty-six out of sixty. After five years of keeping your marks perfectly straight? You asked to see the exam

reports: There had to be a mistake somewhere! But what you read in your personal profile just branded you like a cow: Your teachers thought you too "academic", which in a student's language meant "a dumb bookworm". Just like your classmates, all your educators saw was the kind of boy who shut himself in his room to mechanically memorise texts and formulas, without the slightest hint of critical spirit, or brilliance, or personality. A dull, plain, grey student who would never do anything worthwhile with his life.

You still applied for law school, though you never finished your studies. You chained perfect marks like daisies, but after every exam you felt the damning certainty that professors and classmates alike only ever saw you as that dull grey student, as eager to do well as devoid of passion.

And this is how you do your job: You hate it, but you still do your best, because whenever you mess up you feel the judging gaze of the world.

With this burden on your shoulders you've become best friends with stress, but that's not the point. The problem with your job is the people: They tear at each other's throats in every meeting, they come to you with issues as big as their home and no possible solution, they push you around to get you on their side, they keep yelling at you... And you can't stand it. You hate handling people, because you hate hurting or disappointing them. Altruism? Not at all, you're just afraid to argue. Each confrontation is a harrowing experience and conflict is destroying you. Keeping accounts and paperwork in check is tiring enough, let alone fighting with people. And so, every time you get home in the evening or turn on the TV to

finally shut off your brain, the white noise in your head comes back.

«Was that really the right answer?»

«Did I remember to sign that report?»

«Was I rude to the attorney?»

And it just won't go away. Not with meditation, not with yoga, not with sports, not with alcohol. It's all useless.

The truth is your life belongs to them: people, work, the firm, all the eyes that judge you day after day and the plethora of unhappy clients you have to answer to. But it never belongs to you.

You want a single thing for yourself: To tell everyone to fuck off. But you've never done it. And you don't know why.

Relationships

Luciano Avellini: (Your turn to speak)

Alice Gabbrielli: The thirty-year-old resident “crazy cat lady”, the subject of many a bitter argument. She cares for a colony of eight cats (or fifteen during one very stressful summer), and she grows furious whenever someone lays a finger on them. Sometimes she reminds you of Alice in Wonderland, with her colourful socks and childish dresses. You've always liked her, but she has never noticed you... Nor have you ever had the guts to tell her. She lives in her own little world. Whenever someone drags her into a dispute you try to stand up for her, and now she's in big trouble: Ristori gave her an eviction notice to sell her apartment off.

Vincenzo Salemi: A forty-year-old who grew up here, inheriting his parents' apartment. You know he was into local university politics. Apparently he was in an extreme left-wing movement, though now he doesn't look like that kind of guy.

Camilla Lanzi: Vincenzo's wife and a doctor in the local ICU. Obsessive and pedantic, she's always complaining: That tree's roots are dangerous, we have a mosquito problem, Giada keeps me up at night with her heels, Alice made a mess of the courtyard, Rosa uses her washing machine during quiet hours... What a pain!

Gioele Zacchei: An illustrator in his forties. He's renowned in his field, just not enough to feed his family. Not even his wife Rosa's part-time job in a travel agency is enough to solve their money issues.

Rosa Mistretta: The beautiful Sicilian girl on the first floor, much younger than her husband Gioele. When she first moved here she made heads turn, but you've seen her wilt over these eight years, though she's the mother of a beautiful little girl.

Giada Fadda: Young and rowdy. After she moved here Alice stopped being the main target of the “decent folk”'s barbs. All because Giada is openly lesbian, and she loves shoving it in people's faces. It's clear she does it to defy them, and it's fun to watch, but then you have to clean up after her. Her love for bickering has made meetings a tad too lively for your tastes.

Ria Santos: A young Dominican, she lives with her husband, Giovanni Sarno, who's almost twenty years older than her! He's in the Army and you rarely see him around, especially during council meetings. He must be the kind of man who expects his wife to be submissive just because he rescued her from poverty. Ria, as naive and kind of childish as she is, has been really difficult to deal with ever since she became a mother: She seems to think the world should revolve around her son. Now she's got it into her mind that the cat colony in the courtyard is harbouring every germ known to humanity. Not to mention her demand to hire a cleaning service for the stairwell, because her fellow residents are apparently "not diligent enough" in doing their part.

Dario Ristori: A rich, entitled arsehole. He's the majority shareholder of a soap company, people say he poached it from the owner's son. You're not sure what he's doing here: He would certainly have the money to buy a place downtown, and instead he insists on staying and bugging the other residents to "valorise the building" with useless renovations nobody else can afford. One day it's repainting the façade, the next it's fixing the cracks in the sidewalk, and when the council rules against him he orders his attorney to find some clause that will let him win this battle. The fact that he just evicted Alice because he's suddenly in a hurry to sell her apartment off only gave you another reason to despise him.

Attilio Daddioli: Ristori's lawyer. His face looks familiar: He's only a bit younger than you, maybe you crossed paths in university?

Today's meeting

You called for an extraordinary meeting after receiving a letter from Ria Santos: She informed you that someone had keyed her car, and that she suspected the culprit to be a vengeful neighbour. You got a similar message from Camilla Lanzi, who found her car door vandalised in the same manner, and although she made no accusations against the other residents, she's enquiring about the installation of a surveillance system.

Also, Ria Santos keeps complaining about Alice's cat problem, so much so that she put out a petition calling for the colony's displacement and demanded to discuss the matter with the council.

The next meeting

You will be the one to decide on the meeting agenda, in accordance to what happened in the previous session.