

SCRIBE

He remembered the air – relieved, hopeful – before shattering syllables sliced through it.

“SCRIBE!”

His master was truly a savant of timing. For the fourth time in five minutes, Jess reopened the door to Great Lord Dunbar’s throne room. Standing beside Dunbar was the new Intern. *Poor girl*, Jess thought. *Doesn’t know what she’s in for*. Dripping with sour molasses, Jess answered his summons sweetly. “Yes, your Greatness?”

“REMIND ME AGAIN OF THE SIXTH STEP OF MY BRILLIANT PLAN!”

The bellowing winds of his master’s voice smashed against what remained of Jess’ once-immaculate quiff. It was more tornado than hair now. The Intern was desperately trying to erase her ears with her hands. Eyelids gritted, Jess said, “Would you be so kind as to put the megaphone down, my Incomparable Overlord?”

“FEW ARE GRANTED THIS REQUEST!!” boomed the blowhard king before he lowered his gold-embellished megaphone. “Yet I will accept your plea if for no other reason than to show the Intern my mercy.”

“You are truly the most Charitable and World-Renown Messiah. As to the plan–”

“My plan.”

No, MY plan, Jess corrected Dumb-Dumb Dunbar in his mind. “As to your plan, the sixth step was ‘Conquer the World.’ Would you like a reminder as to the steps that get you there?” he said through fake smiles.

“WHO DO YOU TAKE ME FOR FOOL? I REMEMBER THE FIRST STEP. IT IS MERELY THE REST OF THEM THAT I WISH TO HEAR AGAIN,” came the amplified might of Mr. I’m-So-Powerful. “For the Intern’s sake, of course.”

Dunbar had forgotten again. *Your memory is that of a fish*, concluded Jess in the silence of his mind. Outwardly, he said, “Of course, my All-Knowing Monarch, oh Conqueror of Brilliance and Strength.” *No matter. Your shortcomings are my keys to the kingdom.*

Dunbar glided like sandpaper across his throne to address the Intern. “Learn from my Scribe, dear Intern. He is most excellent in his service.”

The Intern smiled. *With all the devotion of naïve youth*, Jess believed. *Poor girl. Anyways, let’s get this over with*. He hurriedly recounted his plan to his audience, bowed to the blundering fish king, zipped to the entrance, and made his exit. His wilting hair was in need of emergency relief efforts. Ready to repair the damage, Jess started towards his personal chambers. Then the air split in half.

“SCRIBE!”

Fifth time. Six minutes. Jess blazed internally. *After I take the throne, megaphones everywhere will know my wrath.*