

WRENCH IN THE WORKS

Pilot

Written by

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ACT ONE

EXT. BARBERSHOP - NIGHT

Chipped brick wall. Graffitied facade. A mechanical metallic curtain SHRIEKS as it slides down the storefront.

A blinding "BERBERSHOP" neon sign hums. Stops. Blinks twice before going off.

A withered worker blows out cold air as he struggles to climb up a ladder on the wall. Power drill on. A menacing buzz...

The worker takes the sign down. Death sentence.

Across the road, standing on the pavement --

Shaggy-haired KAMAL "KAM" (30s) watches. Powerless. Now more than usual. His face screams a desire to do something about it, but he's too skinny to cast a big enough shadow.

SALEEM (O.S.)

You know it's nothing against you,
yeah?

Kam ignores it. That, and everything else. Behind him --

SALEEM (40s) sits on the steps of a building. A rough and unshaven face that tells a hundred business stories. A stupid smirk that suggests the fortune he made from each of them.

SALEEM

I can sell the place. Invest in the
guys who take over. Make my money
back. Six months tops. Can even
give you some of it if you need.

Kam is not here for the moment, leave a message.

SALEEM

Dad would've wanted it shut by now.
Nothing you coulda done to make it
work. It's a barbershop, you know?
(then)
Kam?

KAM

Yeah, yeah. I get it. Good thing
you shut it down now, too. Rather
than next year or something... when
I could have made you cash.

An unpleasant silence. Feels like forever.

SALEEM

Oh, come on, man... we gave you
your chance.

Kamal can't help but scoff. If he kept it together so far,
that last remark hits him like a brick to the face.

INT. KAM'S STUDIO FLAT - DAY

Spartan, *pocket-sized* East London pad. Yellow walls that
definitely used to be white. If there was any room for it,
the place would be a mess.

Kam sits on the edge of an unfolded sofa-bed that takes up
most of the space. A bundle of TWENTY POUND NOTES in his
hands. He counts them... counts again. *Just to be sure.*

He takes a deep breath in. Picks up a brown envelope from the
floor. Loads the money in. And with a black marker pen:

"RENT KAMAL - MARCH".

INT. KAM'S BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Kam descends down the stairs. Heads to a shelf of mailboxes.
Reaches to one with the envelope, but --

Doesn't let go yet. Takes a moment. His eyes move all around
the claustrophobic hallway. Lost in thoughts.

A faint scheming grin. Quickly repressed.

He drops the money in -- steps away, climbs up the staircase,
until --

He stops midway. Loses himself in his thoughts again.

Kam returns to the mailbox. Inserts his fingers... makes his
hand thinner than the envelope... slides through the crack...
groans as he does...

And fishes the package out. Pockets it and exits.

INT. MOE'S MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANT - DAY

Pre-lunch rush prep. Chefs at their stations. Waiters place
cutlery on tables like clockwork.

A mixture of tacky, fake-gold ornaments and authentic Middle
Eastern memorabilia.

Kam walks in -- scans the place -- finds what he's here for:

Sitting in a booth, MAURICE "MOE" (40s) drowns under a pile of paperwork. Balding. Buttoned down shirt. Gold chain on hairy chest. Definitely not his real name.

He shakes his head as he notices Kam approaching.

Kam points at the seat in front of Moe in a way that asks if he can join him.

MOE

Haven't got time for whatever it is
you're here for, big man.

Kam doesn't take the hint. Doesn't care for it. Sits down.
Moe avoids eye contact. Too busy.

MOE

Heard about your place. Got nought
to offer you, though.

KAM

Oh yeah?

MOE

Yeah. Rough times, innit'. And you
gotta have what it takes to work
for me, so...

Kam is taken aback by this comment.

KAM

What... you mean the shit two-star-
rated business?

MOE

Yeah, okay --

KAM (CONT'D)

Opening a restaurant after stealing
couscous recipes from a white mum
on Quora -- that kind of business?

MOE

Make as many jokes as you want,
funny man. Point is you don't have
it in you. Alright? You don't have
the connects.

KAM

I don't have the connects, do I?

MOE

How about you go open another
"berbershop" instead? Give us a
call when you make ten quid.

Kam laughs. It's insincere. Moe ignores him, types in numbers
on a calculator.

KAM

What d'you think my dad would say
if he saw me begging you for a job?

MOE

He'd slap both of us with his
sandal.

(in Arabic)

May Allah have mercy upon his soul.

A pause. Kam simmers down.

KAM

I need you to do something for me.

MOE

You want *me* to do something for
you?

Kam reaches in his jacket -- takes out the ENVELOPE FULL OF
CASH. Waves it at Moe.

Moe stares. Waits.

KAM

We off the record? Dickhead-to-
dickhead confidentiality?

MOE

Get on with it.

A pause. Kam considers his next words.

KAM

I need your guys to find my
brother. Do their thing.

Moe frowns. Not following.

MOE

Do their thing?

KAM

Don't play innocent, bruv'. You
know what I'm saying. I don't want
him to get hurt or anything. Or at
least... not really hurt. Don't get
them to break his nose, or his
teeth. Just enough to shake him.

Moe keeps quiet. Lets Kam dig himself into a hole.

KAM

Ruffle his feathers a bit, you
know?

Moe smirks. *Tickled.*

MOE

Ruffle his feathers?

KAM

Yeah.

MOE

Would you liketh me to rob his pouch, too?

KAM

Just remind him.

MOE

Of?

KAM

That he's not almighty -- that he's still like all of us. That at any point, things could go down for him.

A silence.

MOE

You realise he knows me, right?

KAM

Then get guys he doesn't know. I don't care. That's the kind of thing I'm paying you for.

Moe takes a moment to process this.

MOE

You're asking me to mess with Saleem, big man. That's... I don't know.

KAM

What? It's not Halal, is it? Just name your price, mate.

MOE

Give me one good reason to do it.

Kam waves the envelope.

MOE

No. No. Give me a real reason. Don't know how much you've got in there but I can tell you that's not enough to make me do this.

A silence. Kamal leans in.

KAM

Look, Moe... he's been doing this since we're kids.

MOE

Paying other people to beat the shit out of you?

KAM

Fucking with me. Sabotaging me. I'm just trying to make it. Trying to earn my life. I wanna build things. I'm not a fuck-up. But Saleem, he just -- he does this.

Moe listens to Kam plead. Not missing a word.

KAM (CONT'D)

Any time I have ideas to make money, he'll fuck with it. One way or another. And he's good at it. He'll give me jobs so he can take them away from me. And I just... I need to do something about it.

MOE

So... what? Vengeance?

KAM

It's not vengeance --

MOE (CONT'D)

Sorry, Batman, but I'll pass.

KAM

It's not vengeance. If I give him something to worry about -- something like this -- he won't have time to waste fucking with me. You get me, yeah?

MOE

I don't... even know what that means.

KAM

Trust me. I know him. I know what makes him shit the bed at night.

A pause.

KAM

I just need a break.

He's not openly begging but it sure as hell looks like it.

Moe stares at Kam. Looking like he's considering the offer.

He pushes his paperwork aside. And --

TAKES HIS PHONE OUT. Punches something in. Shaking his head. Full of judgment.

Kam sees him texting. Tries to hide a grin. Envelope on the table, as --

His eyes drift to the other end of the restaurant... BRISK DOUBLE TAKE...

Clocks THE GRUBBY CHEF (30s) behind the open kitchen. Both offer each other a polite nod.

Kam gives that look... *where do I know him from?*

MOE

Not my business, but I really think your brother should know you asked me to *ruffle his feathers*.

Kam takes his eyes off the chef. Back at Moe.

KAM

Yeah. Okay. Well, cheers for the bit of family therapy but... he can't know about this.

Moe WAVES HIS PHONE --

MOE

He does, now.

A moment passes before Kam computes. Too long...

...until it hits him. *God. No* --

Kam SPRINGS OUT of his chair. Fast breathing. Shaky legs.

Moe shrugs. *Sorry not sorry*. Kam freezes in place. Not sure what to do. Until...

HE STORMS OUT OF THE RESTAURANT --

Leaves HIS ENVELOPE behind. Arrives onto --

END ACT ONE