

Brittle

By

Tim Rolph

Tim Rolph©

TRolph@Gmail.com

INT.OFFICE BOARDROOM

JEFF and GEORGE sit in a small meeting room. They are both in their late twenties and casually dressed. The office is sparsely decorated with only three chairs at the table. HOWARD enters, a man in his lately fifties, well-groomed and dressed in an old suit.

Jeff showily extends his arm, pulls back his sleeve, and sternly looks at his watch.

JEFF
(sarcastically)
Oh, we don't mind, Howard, happy to wait.

HOWARD
(flustered)
The bus was late.

JEFF
You weren't late when you worked for my father, and I'd appreciate the same respect.

HOWARD
He drove me. Every day for-

JEFF
Yes, well, we're getting started today, we're already a bit behind.

Howard sits directly across from Jeff.

JEFF (cont'd)
There are going to be some changes around here in the next few weeks-Listen, Howard, I didn't mean to badger you like that. I'm sorry.

Jeff extends his hand across the table. Slightly reluctant, Howard extends his and shakes. A audible buzz and spark can be heard. Howard recoils in pain.

HOWARD
Gah!

Jeff falls into his chair laughing. George suppresses a smirk and looks at the table. Howard is still nursing his hand.

HOWARD (cont'd)
The hell was that?

JEFF
The joy buzzers are now shock
buzzers.

HOWARD
You could kill a man with one of
those!

JEFF
George?

GEORGE
(Quietly)
They're safe.

HOWARD
A man my age? With a bad
heart? They'll have all of us
arrested.

JEFF
All the pranks shock now. Kids
aren't interested in a 'buzz,'
anymore.

HOWARD
Your father and I built this
company on those buzz's.

JEFF
And that was fine then, but now
they shock.

Howard stands.

HOWARD
A gag doesn't shock! That's a
weapon.

GEORGE
It's really, an insignificant
amount of electricity.

HOWARD
You take that into bathtub with you
and you'll never see your family
again!

GEORGE
I assure you, it's 100% safe.

HOWARD
A gag doesn't shock!

JEFF
(irritated)
It does now!

Howard slumps back into his chair.

JEFF (cont'd)
George, show him the new can.

George unwraps an item by his feet and places it on the table. It is a small soup-can sized container, festively decorated and labeled "Nacho Chips."

HOWARD
What the hell is this?

GEORGE
It's the new-

JEFF
Open it.

HOWARD
I know exactly what is it. Who made it.

JEFF
We did.

HOWARD
No we didn't, no one asked me. Where's the peanut brittle.

George removes another can from a bag. It is identical to the first, except the label which now reads "Peanut Brittle."

JEFF
There you go. The last one. You can keep it.

HOWARD
Last one?

JEFF
Brittle's out. Kid's don't eat brittle.

HOWARD
Sure they do.

GEORGE
Research shows, they don't.

HOWARD
If kids didn't eat brittle, we
wouldn't have a company.

JEFF
If you were in charge, we wouldn't!

HOWARD
Well if no one's eating peanut
brittle, then maybe the problem's
with them.

JEFF
Open the can, Howard.

Howard angrily puts on his reading glasses and grabs the
'Nacho Chips' can. He examines it for several seconds and
opens it. Colorful snakes shoot out several feet into the
air.

HOWARD
Gah!

JEFF
They go twice as far, twice as
fast.

GEORGE
Denser springs.

HOWARD
You're both lucky I had my glasses
on or you'd have a court date!

GEORGE
They're not dangerous.

HOWARD
If a man opened these in a car,
you'd never see him again!

JEFF
And that wasn't true before?

HOWARD
Your father and I used ball point
click-pen springs! A good six inch
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
leap, enough for a man to goof his
wife- and these look like real
snakes!

JEFF
We know.

HOWARD
That's terrifying.

JEFF
It doesn't matter what it is, it's
what the kids want.

HOWARD
Kids want brittle!

JEFF
No, they don't! No one eats
brittle! No one! George, do you
eat brittle?

GEORGE
No.

JEFF
Do you know anyone that eats
brittle?

GEORGE
No.

JEFF
Howard, did you ever consider that
you and my dad may have driven the
brittle industry out of business?

HOWARD
We most certainly did-

JEFF
You redesigned the brittle cans
twice a year for forty years, each
time altering it just enough so no
one could tell it from the real
thing.

HOWARD
We had to respond to trends in the
market.

JEFF

(accusingly)

No eats brittle because no one trusts brittle. Brittle trust has been declining steadily since you and Dad opened your doors!

GEORGE

It's true. Hard caramel confectionery faith is at an all time low.

HOWARD

I...I...don't-

JEFF

You and Dad were bullies. And I refuse to go down in the books as the president of a terrible gag tycoon empire that put thousands of nut-growers out of business.

A pause.

HOWARD

M-maybe I should leave.

JEFF

Maybe you should.

Howard takes his bag and jacket, stands up and starts for the door. George sets something on Howard's seat.

JEFF (cont'd)

Howard, sit back down.

Howard looks confused, but Jeff smiles warmly. Howard sits down. A whoopie cushion is activated.

JEFF (cont'd)

No you can go.