

**Stuck!**

by Wolf Stahl

9847 Shepard Road, Macedonia, OH 44056

[Jstahl6@kent.edu](mailto:Jstahl6@kent.edu)

330-356-9643

**Summary:** Pat Bartlett is late for work due to a family emergency, and the evening takes a turn for the surreal as she becomes immobilized.

**Characters:**

MR. TUCKER, older, soft hands and a hard heart. A sneering, domineering man. The worst boss you've ever had on his worst day.

PAT BARTLETT, younger, eager to work and loaded with debt from a degree that wasn't hiring. She received terrible news before leaving for work this evening. Much too polite.

SALOMAN, a delivery driver. A man who saw ZORRO and decided to become Antonio Banderas. He is decidedly *not* Antonio Banderas.

**Length:** 6 pages

INT. OFFICE LOBBY

9:05 PM

*Boxes crowd the corners of an office lobby. MR. TUCKER, dressed in a smart but old-fashioned three-button suit, paces the floor.*

*The front door squeaks open. PAT BARTLETT enters, suited for a winter evening.*

MR. TUCKER

Kind of you to show up, Pat.

PAT BARTLETT

Sorry, sorry, my dad had a -

MR. TUCKER

Let me stop you there. I am not your therapist, I am not your caretaker, and I am not your friend. I am your employer. I am Mr. John Quincy Tucker of Tucker Typesetting. My interaction with your life is limited to nickels-per-minute. When I say to be here at seven, you should be here at five-till. Got it?

PAT BARTLETT

..Yes, Mr. Tucker.

MR. TUCKER

Good, then, if we're all in agreement - I've got to prep the fourth quarter receivables. Don't bother me unless there's another bomb threat.

*MR. TUCKER disappears into the bowels of the office.*

*PAT BARTLETT rips her coat off and tosses it onto a folding desk. Her job is written tall on her overshirt: SECURITY. She sits at a folding chair, part receptionist and part guard. She sighs deeply and stares at the emptiness of her desk, feet flat on the floor.*

*She looks to the interior doorway, hesitates, then sneaks her cellphone from her pocket.*

*She dials a number quickly.*

PAT BARTLETT

Mom? How's he - No, Mr. Tucker said it wasn't any bother considering the circumstances - that's, that's not important. How's dad?

*A tense moment flares, flickers, is smothered.*

PAT BARTLETT

Stable? Is that...

*The confused resolution of waking from a plummeting nightmare.*

PAT BARTLETT

Oh thank god. Thank god. I'll be there after my shift. Tell him I love him. Tell him I love him.

*Another garbled phrase carves across her face.*

PAT BARTLETT

No, mom, please, don't - don't worry about that. It was just an ambulance ride, we can... I can cover it.

*A knock on the exterior door grabs PAT's attention. She clicks a button attached to the desk and wraps her call up, assuming the Customer Service Professional mask.*

PAT BARTLETT

Shit, sorry, I've got to work. I'll call you back as soon as... As soon as I'm free. Mhm. Love you so much. Mm-bye. Evening Sal.

*SALOMON enters, the smell and feel of frost lingering on his coat. He carries a bag of takeout containers from The Peking Panda, cold from the trip.*

SALOMON

Evenin', pretty lady. How is the night so far?

PAT BARTLETT

Lousy, cold, tragic ... and weird.

SALOMON

Same as forever, eh?

PAT BARTLETT

Not quite. My dad's in the hospital. Heart problems.

SALOMON

Oh, yeesh, this is not good. The one in Springville? Ah, no, I took my brother there once, for a pain in the kidney or liver or somesuch. The solution? Aspirin. Four hundred dollars, it cost him. A whole month of living, gone for aspirin!

*They both wear grimaces. This talk is too big for acquaintances.*

PAT BARTLETT

I just...I don't want to think about it right now.

SALOMON

Very hard to chase away a thought, no? Anyways. I have the usual order here for the usual culprits.

PAT BARTLETT

Alright, I'll take it up in a minute, just need to...yeah, chase away the thought.

*SALOMON deposits the order on her desk. He flashes a lazy two-finger salute as he turns heel.*

SALOMON

Everything works out though, try not to worry, yeah? Be seeing you tomorrow, likely.

PAT BARTLETT

Yeah. Try to stay warm out there.

*SALOMON exits. PAT takes in a deep breath; something inside her is either breaking or broken.*

*She stands up, plucks the cold food, turns her body towards the interior door...and corkscrews at her ankles, catching herself on the desk and spilling the bag of containers onto the lobby floor.*

PAT BARTLETT

What the heck?

*She wiggles. She wobbles. She's almost amused.*

*Her boots are firmly stuck to the ground. Her hands go to her right leg and she tugs - nothing.*

*She is trapped. Her eyes go wide and she blurts in frustration:*

PAT BARTLETT

Oh, shoot!

*PAT looks around. She closes her eyes and takes a calming breath. She wiggles her left leg one more time. She calls out.*

PAT BARTLETT

Mr. Tucker! Mr. Tucker!

MR. TUCKER (O.S)

Oh, hell, what is it now?

*MR. TUCKER re-enters. He throws a hand towards the carryout bag.*

MR. TUCKER

Why is my General Tso's on the floor?

PAT BARTLETT

I can explain. Uh, I'm...I'm stuck.

*A pause.*

MR. TUCKER

*What? Christ almighty. What?*

PAT BARTLETT

Um. I'm stuck. To the floor. You ever use one of those gluetraps to catch mice? Like that.

*A flash of - not quite concern, more the promise of an opportunity to punish - twitches across MR. TUCKER's face. He steps forward, around the desk, and retrieves the parcel.*

MR. TUCKER

Damn. Dinner's cold.

PAT BARTLETT

Harold - Mister, Mr. Tucker, please, I'm serious. I can't move.

MR. TUCKER

Come on, that's enough of that. If the floor is a glue trap, why can I pass through freely? C'mon, use your head.

PAT BARTLETT

I'm serious. I'm stuck. I even tried pulling up on my boots. Nothing.

MR. TUCKER

..Christ, I'm too busy to tell you how *stupid* and *childish* you're being. If you're having problems... Agh, just figure it out! Christ! I've got quarterly profits to review!

*MR. TUCKER storms off with the ordered food. In a wicked flash of inspiration, he topples Pat's chair as he exits.*

*PAT BARTLETT looks to her feet and seethes.*

PAT BARTLETT

I hate, hate, hate that man.

*She reaches for the toppled chair, just past her grasp.*

*PAT crouches, shifts her weight, leans over - her off-hand reflexively braces against the floor - and she snags a chairleg, pulls it in.*

PAT BARTLETT

Ha. A triumph - Ah, fiddle!

*Her off-hand remains firmly stuck to the floor, along with her feet, in a bizarre Twister pose. She wiggles like a trapped mouse, but nothing comes loose.*

PAT BARTLETT

Can't hold can't hold can't-

*The human bridge teeters, totter, then collapses. Her entire side is fixed firmly to the floorboards.*

PAT BARTLETT

Ah! Crackerjacks. Fiddlesticks...Dang-it-all.

*PAT BARTLETT lays in a crumpled heap. She looks outward, sighs, and speaks to herself and G-d.*

PAT BARTLETT

I try, and I try, and I try. You work a month to build a little savings - then what? A heart attack? A crack in the engine block? God, I really do try. And I always end up here, no matter how hard I struggle, no matter what I do- I just - I just end up stuck like used gum under a desk, or...or on the floor, mashed down by some asshole's shiny, polished boot.

*Mr. Tucker reemerges from the building*

MR. TUCKER

Wha-a-at are you yabbering about out here? Christ, why are you on the floor? Lying down on the job again?

PAT BARTLETT

Mr. Tucker, really, I'm stuck here, if you could just give me a hand..

MR. TUCKER

*Miz Bartlett, let me posit a brief question: Do you agree that, per the employee contract you've signed, your time is worth a set value to this company and you are issued payroll accordingly? Further, do you agree that the company is paying you to watch the door, not lie on the floor, and ergo you have cheated my company and myself out of multiple minutes of my purchase?*

*PAT shimmies as much as she can, roughly facing her boss.*

PAT BARTLETT

Mr. Tucker... I can't take this! Can't you see that I'm - I'm - glued down here? You could help me, but instead you...you... I quit! You're a- You're a real, vicious... you're a son-of-a-bitch and I'm not gonna let you lash out on me anymore!

*Her moment of triumph. MR. TUCKER shrugs.*

MR. TUCKER

Suits me fine. Make sure when you're filing your unemployment claim that you mention you got stuck to the floor - Ha! Get out of my building.

*MR. TUCKER exits.*

*PAT takes a deep breath, laying on the floor, relieved and scared and contemplative. Abruptly without issue, she stands and takes a step. She digs out her cellphone and makes a call.*

PAT BARTLETT

Huh. Hey, Mom? Yeah, I... I'll be there soon. I've got some news, too. Love you.

*PAT BARTLETT exits the office for the last time.*