

1/4/06

Fletcher.

I am currency, Fletcher thinks. He stands between the two shiny vehicles, surveying the clean lines of his purpose built garage. He is impressed by the surgical order within. He's sure there's not a single person he knows that isn't secretly jealous of this carefully considered garage. The immaculately kept tool zones. The flawless, polished cement floor. The generous space around each vehicle allowing easy access for maintenance and polishing. The seamless design of his stark designer home is reflected here in his beautiful garage – home to his beautiful cars. He couldn't remember another garage like it.

He would have none of this without being ruthless. Strange how one can feel so calm here. So happy and at ease here. Yet within half an hour this contented demeanour will transform when his perfect, electric blue 911 slides beneath the electric security gates into the office car park.

'Good morning Mr Fletcher' says the plastic receptionist. Fisher nods austere in her direction, confident in the knowledge that he can have her any time he wishes. Confident that he will. As he saunters along the long, clean corridor to his large glass office overlooking the city, he imagines himself over her, how she will look beneath him on the desk. Prone. Skirt up around her waist, shirt open, head back, eyes closed, lips slightly parted, hair spilling down across her 'Morning Mr Fletcher' says a miscellaneous studio junior. Fletcher grunts in his direction, unhappily losing grip on the fantasy.

Fletcher places his slim, aircraft aluminium briefcase on the meeting table in his office and glimpses the array of award trophies that cluster in the corner of his desk. There are so many now that they have obscured the framed photos of his children. His secretary slips into the office apprehensively.

'Good morning Mr Fletcher, your coffee is on the way. Mr Simmons is running late for your 9 o'clock and sends his apologies. Jan Davis rang from Ford. She loves the creative and wants to know which designer came up with the ideas. Shall I tell her who ...'

'I'll call her in a minute' Fletcher snaps. No-one here will take the credit for work that he should deserve – that he *rightly deserves* - whether he was involved or not. Why should they? For Christ's sake - they're lucky to be working with him anyway. I complete their resumé, Fletcher thinks. I am currency.

'And your wife called to remind you that the kids ...' 'I'll call her later' Fletcher hisses, 'where's that coffee?'

There is fear at one end of the boardroom. Those standing are ashen faced. Those reclining in soft leather seats have skilfully adopted sombre faces. Curtains are drawn out of mock respect.

'Look,' says a big man in a blue suit, 'we've had a significant downturn and some client losses. It's unavoidable'.

The forty something Graphic Designer stands in disbelief searching the faces of those around the table. How could they after all the good work he'd done on the Ford account? The people in this room know nothing of his mortgage. His young family. His fear. They know nothing of his black moments. The darkness that cloaks him at night and haunts him until he finally gets up to take refuge in late night movies and infomercials. They don't know how close he's come to finishing it once and for all.

The talented young studio junior standing next to him is holding back tears. His father had been so proud. What will I tell him, he thinks. He looks across at Fletcher, who is glass eyed, leaning way back in the sumptuous conference chair. The studio junior wants a glimpse of recognition or sympathy or something. *Anything*. But Fletcher is looking past him. Smiling.

The skirt is up around her waist, shirt open, head back, eyes closed, lips slightly parted, hair spilling down across her breasts. Fletcher loosens his belt and his pants slide to the floor. He shifts himself into position.

I am currency.

I am a winner.