

The Meeting



The department head has been talking for hours. His employees sit around a red desk, doing their best to stay focused.

“This new plan will help us work faster,” he says. “Each part will line up with the others.” He points to his charts with real commitment. His eyes stay on the pages in front of him. He reads without ever looking up at the people in the room.

The employees sit quietly. Each moment feels longer than the last. The meeting slowly turns into torment. One hour passes. Then two. Then three more. He keeps talking. Each moment feels heavier, like sinking into wet cement. Every section of the talk feels like punishment.

The employees grow stiff. Their backs ache. Still, the department head goes on. “Now I’ll explain the new rules,” he says. “This part will fix things. But I need your agreement to move forward.”

The employees are slumped in their chairs. No one responds. The department head doesn’t notice. He never looks up. Slowly, the skin of some employees begins to peel away. Small pieces fall onto the desk. The department head keeps reading with calm contentment, his eyes fixed on the page.

“My judgment,” he says, “is that this plan will work well.” More skin of employees falls off. Soon, only the bones of employees remain at the table. Thick webs stretch across them.

Still, the department head continues, moving from one point to the next. At last, he asks, “Do I have full agreement? Any comments?” He does not lift his head. He never sees the skeletons sitting silently around the desk—the final proof of his endless management.