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Devil Town

By Jackson Cook

Characters

NAILDUCT: A six thousand year old demon who dreams of what life is like outside of their dead end job in Hell's call center.

SLUGBOX: A younger demon who is career oriented and competitive.

FROGTUBE: An older demon who used to possess shepherds. This job in the call center is their soft retirement.

Setting

A call center in the middle of Hell.

Time

A little after noon.

Devil Town

(A call center in the middle of Hell—three cubicles in a line decorated with novelty posters, tacky trinkets, an outdated desktop computer, and a standard office phone. SLUGBOX and FROGTUBE are both in rolling chairs, talking across their wireless headsets. Next to them, NAILDUCT—their coworker—dials another number and rhythmically taps their pen until the phone clicks.)

NAILDUCT

Good afternoon. Am I speaking to (consults their call list) Sam Ko-stop-ulos? Yes? Perfect. And just to confirm what we have here, were you recently damned to Hell? Yes? Perfect. Um, well, Mr. Kostopulos, my name is Nailduct the Spider Emperor, and I'm calling on behalf of the Satan Beelzebub Corporation. We are currently conducting research on customer satisfaction and would like to know if you would mind spending a few minutes answering a couple of quest—You're too busy at the moment? What do you mean you're too

You're being tortured for an eternity! You don't have a few minutes? Sir, it would really be very helpful if—

(A humming dial tone marks the end of the conversation. Nailduct hopelessly sets their headset on the table and kicks the wheels of Slugbox's chair. Slugbox raises the microphone on their headset.)

SLUGBOX

One moment. (lowers the microphone on their headset.) So, on a scale of one to ten—one being "torture, suffering, and eternal damnation" and ten being "Hellish"—how would you rate your experience in Hell thus far? One? Perfect—Well, that is the last question I have for you today. Thank you so much for completing the survey today Mr. Reeves; we really appreciate your time. You should be able to see your reward—um, the coupon to TJ Maxx, on our website in the next two or three days. Just be sure to finish making your account. (raises the microphone on their headset.) What's happening?

NAILDUCT

I'm quitting today, Slugbox.

SLUGBOX

I don't have any time for this again. Do you understand that the semi-quarter ends this week and (looks behind himself and then leans in) Frogtube the Duke of Torture is catching up to me. (lowers the microphone on their headset.)

NAILDUCT

I'm serious this time.

SLUGBOX

One second. (faces away from Nailduct) Good afternoon, am I speaking to Rishith Vaddavalli? Yes? Perfect. And were you recently—

(Nailduct reaches across Slugbox's cubicle and hangs up their phone.)

SLUGBOX

HEY!

NAILDUCT

I'm going to quit today. I've made up my mind...for real this time.

SLUGBOX

I don't believe you.

NAILDUCT

I'm going to send Mr. Haborym my resignation right now. It's already typed out.

(Slugbox taps on Frogtube's desk. Frogtube

SLUGBOX

Oh really? Do me a favor real quick and watch this.

(Slugbox taps on Frogtube's desk. Frogtube raises their headset.)

FROGTUBE

One second. (lowers their headset.) Yes, you will need to wait two or three days to see your TJ Maxx coupon pop up on our website. Yep, you're gonna be able to get free shipping on orders over \$89. Perfect! Have a good day now. (raises their headset) Is everything okay? I'm so far behind. The semi-quarter ends this week.

SLUGBOX

There is no way you are gonna catch up to me.

FROGTUBE

Are you trying to distract me right now?

SLUGBOX

Nailduct said that they're going to send Mr. Haborym their resignation today.

FROGTUBE

Was that really the best distraction you could come up with?

NAILDUCT

I'm serious!

FROGTUBE

Sure you are. (lowers their headset) Good afternoon, am I speaking to Keeling—

(Nailduct lunges and hangs up Frogtube's phone.)

FROGTUBE (Cont.)

HEY!

NAILDUCT

I am telling you guys that this is it. I have had it.

SLUGBOX

Dude, you have been threatening to quit for the past six thousand years.

NAILDUCT

And this time I'm serious. I'm tired of the way we get treated.
(Frogtube goes back to working.)

SLUGBOX

It could be worse.

(Slugbox presses a button on their office phone and hellish screams play over speaker-phone)

NAILDUCT

We used to have dreams Slugbox. Aspirations!

SLUGBOX

Oh, believe me, I still have dreams. I still have aspirations. Do you even know what the prize is for this semi-quarter, Nailduct? Whoever gives out the most TJ Maxx coupons is gonna get their own TJ Maxx coupon. I already have a shopping cart full of graphic tees, extra slim jeans, and knit insulated cuff beanies.

NAILDUCT

Those aren't aspirations! You can buy all of those things.

SLUGBOX

But the savings!

NAILDUCT

That's not the point. Look at Frogtube! They used to possess shepherds.
(Slugbox realizes that Frogtube is working and hangs up their phone.)

FROGTUBE

HEY!

SLUGBOX

You do not get to work while I'm explaining to Nailduct that they aren't going to quit.

FROGTUBE

They'll burn themselves out. Just let me get back to work.

NAILDUCT

Frogtube, don't you think there's more to eternity than this?

FROGTUBE

Are you kidding? This is the best job I've ever had. I don't have to smell like sheep all day, there is air conditioning, I have good job security, and if I get back to work I think I really have a shot at winning that TJ Maxx coupon. I have been shopping on their website all morning.

SLUGBOX

Did you see the holiday buffalo plaid notch pj set?

FROGTUBE

Yes I did! And I also saw a review that described them as comfy, coordinated, and stylish.

NAILDUCT

This is torture.

SLUGBOX

Torture is three floors down.

NAILDUCT

That's it. I'm sending Mr. Haborym my resignation.

(Nailduct turns back to their desk and theatrically hits the enter key on their keyboard. WHOOSH! Nailduct stares intensely at the computer.)

FROGTUBE

They actually went through with it!

SLUGBOX

There's no way. (leans over to inspect Nailduct's computer) Dude, no way.

NAILDUCT

Yup.

FROGTUBE

You actually did it...It's already past noon, but Mr. Haborym should still be on his lunch break. We might be able to sneak into his office and delete your resignation before he sees it.

NAILDUCT

No. I did it. I finally did it.

SLUGBOX

What are you gonna do now?

NAILDUCT

For the first time in my existence, I have no idea.

SLUGBOX

I don't think anyone has ever quit before.

FROGTUBE

I've certainly never heard of anyone quitting. I only stopped possessing shepherds when they expanded the customer survey department.

NAILDUCT

You guys should quit too.

SLUGBOX

Now you must be kidding. You are a lunatic. There is no way in Hell that I am quitting right now. The TJ Maxx coupon is in reach Nailduct!

NAILDUCT

Then what? What comes after you win the TJ Maxx coupon? For a long time I have felt like there was a big empty hole inside of me, and if I were to guess, I would say that you have a big empty hole inside of you Slugbox, and you too Frogtube. And sure, the made in italy wool fedora felt hat can fill that hole you have inside of you. But, that hole will just keep getting bigger. Then what? Are you gonna fill it with a three piece reversible belt set? Why not?! Then, after that, when the hole is still growing, you can fill it with a leather woven tote bag. But, eventually, after a long time, you will have to face the real problem and not just keep filling that hole up.

SLUGBOX

That was a great speech, Nailduct, but there's no way that I'm quitting.
(Frogtube presses enter on their keyboard.
WHOOSH!)

FROGTUBE

I sent in my resignation!

SLUGBOX

Wh—what?

FROGTUBE

Slugbox, don't you see? Nailduct is right and we have to be a united front on this.

SLUGBOX

That speech was terrible. There is no way that you went for their scheme that easily.



FROGTUBE

That's true, but also, you were right. There was no way I was going to be able to catch up to you this semi-quarter. I was never going to win that TJ Maxx coupon, so what's the point?

SLUGBOX

They'll never actually let you quit. There's no way.

FROGTUBE

We have nothing to lose but our pitchforks Slugbox.

SLUGBOX

You're crazy. You're both crazy. Where will you even go?

NAILDUCT

I'll tell you where we'll go. We'll go to Massachusetts.

FROGTUBE

Massachusetts?

SLUGBOX

What's in Massachusetts?

NAILDUCT

Plenty of things. They have cape cod, Fenway Park, clam chowder.

SLUGBOX

None of this is really convincing me.

NAILDUCT

And they have the TJ Maxx headquarters.

(Slugbox presses enter on their keyboard.
WHOOSH!)

SLUGBOX

I'm in.

FROGTUBE

Perfect!

NAILDUCT

You guys actually sent the email?

FROGTUBE

Yeah!

SLUGBOX

Wait, why did you send me an email Nailduct?

FROGTUBE

Yeah, I got it too. Why did you send us your resignation?

NAILDUCT

Because I never sent my resignation to Mr. Haborym.

SLUGBOX

Why did you not send in your resignation??

NAILDUCT

Because the TJ Maxx coupon was too big to leave to chance. I couldn't risk either of you outperforming me again. Do you realize how far behind you guys I've been this semi-quarter? The semi-quarter ends this week! And you guys thought I wasn't even trying? I have a whole shopping cart FULL OF CLOTHES Slugbox. But, not just clothes, I've got chairs, fall decor, spring decor, christmas decor, bedsheets, and lamps. I've got HUNDREDS OF ITEMS. I had to ensure victory. This plan was my way of doing that. I haven't even been calling anyone. This phone isn't plugged in! All I've been doing is shopping on TJMaxx.com. I need those savings, Slugbox. I need the coupon. And the only way I was going to win is if neither of you were in the race anymore.

FROGTUBE

You are the spawn of satan.

SLUGBOX

I can't believe you would do this to us.

NAILDUCT

Would you not do the same thing in my position?

SLUGBOX

Obviously not!

FROGTUBE

I might have if I thought of it.

SLUGBOX

Frogtube, Mr. Haborym might still be at lunch. If we hurry we can go delete those emails.

(Frogtube and Slugbox EXIT. Nailduct leans back in their chair. Frogtube's phone rings. Nailduct wheels over and answers it.)

NAILDUCT

Hello? Who is this? Well, good afternoon to you too Mr. Moore, but no. I do not have time to take a survey. I don't care if this is to conduct research on customer satisfaction. No, I specifically remember checking the box on your website that said I would not receive calls like this. (hangs the phone up) The nerve of some people.

End.