

sharks and solar systems — his son, she thought she remembered, or maybe his daughter. She wasn't sure and she had never paid much attention when he bragged about his kids. She liked him but not enough to do her job well.

"You keep to yourself," he said.

"I take a while to come out of my shell," she said.

"That's fine," he said. "I get that. You've been here...six months?"

"Almost a year," she said.

"In business school, I had a professor I really admired," he said.

"Yeah," she said. "I had professors like that."

"He told me that if your employees are bored, it's not their fault. It's yours."

"Oh," she said.

"So if you're wasting your time talking about video games at work, I can't blame you."

"Oh," she said.

"But what I can do is ask what I can do to make this work more interesting to you."

"It is interesting," she said.

"Stacey, I'm not the big mean boss. Insurance analysis is not *naturally* interesting. It's *naturally* extremely boring. But I've come to find it fascinating. Do you know how?"

"I don't," Stacey said.

"I think of the stakes," he said.

"The stakes?" she said.

"Yes. Like in a story. The stakes — who stands to gain or lose, and what? That's all insurance is. A valuation of stakes."

"I've never thought of it that way."

"So, again. You're not in trouble. I won't even ask you to uninstall... Discord. If you want to keep talking about games, well, that's not what we pay you for, so, you know, I can't promise that won't have some effect on your performance review. But I hope I can convince you that this work is important, and that it's interesting. That there are interesting things about it.