

Student example

Story #2, Option #3

### Inked

“I want this here!”

“I want that in this spot, so I can see it.”

“I want this to cover my *entire* ribcage”

Nate spent the past decade putting unbelievable amounts of art on countless bodies. Some tattoo artists have a set of places they will not tattoo – for example Chris, who will never tattoo anyone’s hands or face and later be the reason that person cannot find a job anywhere. Not Nate though; he will tattoo anyone, anywhere with anything they asked for. Nate’s portfolio was stacked with tons of pictures of the tattoo he’s done—from tribal bands to eagles and butterflies to skulls and superheroes and whole poems by Shakespeare—and has been working at the same tattoo shop his whole career. Everyone that knew him loved him and everyone that went to him brought a dozen other people with them. For someone so renowned, Nate has an incredible fear of needles and does not have any tattoos himself. No one ever questioned it – they just thought putting art on other people’s bodies was more meaningful than on his own.

This particular Monday had an extremely uncomfortable vibe. Everyone came into the shop at 9:30AM ready to work (as usual). They usually never get a

customer until probably 11AM but there was already a middle-aged balding gentleman waiting at the locked doors at 9:30AM when they arrived. They went about their business and opened doors at 10AM (the usual time). In barges the gentleman.

“I know you all saw me waiting around the doors. Screw you guys.”

“What can we help you with boss?” asked Joe, clearly ignoring the rudeness.

“My mom died and I need a tattoo of her face on my arm before the wake today at four.”

“Well, sorry but I gotcha. I know everyone except Nate has an appointment so why don’t you give me the picture and I’ll have him draw something up for you.”

The gentleman hands Joe the picture and grabs a seat.

About twenty minutes pass when Joe lets the gentleman know Nate is ready for him. Everything was going well and the man agreed to Nate’s drawing. The man rolled up his sleeve, and showed a pale arm that wasn’t exactly muscular, but wasn’t skinny either, and Nate was getting all his equipment ready.

“Dude, are you new?” questioned the man.

“No? I have been working here almost thirteen years.”

“You got no visible tattoos as far as I can see. Lemme see whatcha got.”

“I actually don’t have any. I rather let my work out on other people.”

The man instantly started laughing a mean, high-pitched cackle.

“Bullshit dude! Why would I let you tattoo me when you can’t even do yourself?”

“I have this portfolio if you wanna see my work.”

“Does it look like I care about what you done to other people? Is their body mine? Screw this. If I’m about to get tattooed by you, you better tattoo something on yourself first.”

Not ready to face his fear and also not ready to admit to his fear around his colleagues, Nate does something no tattoo artist does – recommends another tattoo shop.

“Now you’re kicking me out? Fuck you. Tattoo your fucking ankle before I call your owner over and make up some bullshit to have you fired.”

It was clear that there was no shot for Nate to get out of this one – I mean, unless he was ready to lose his job. Out of all the artists in the building, why did Nate have to get stuck with this guy? He thought.

“Well? I got places to be you know.”

“Alright, alright! Give me a minute I gotta think of something.”

A few minutes passed and Nate needed to think of something quick to put on his ankle. He decided on the number ‘1’ mainly because it was extremely quick and since it was his very first tattoo, why not? He got all the new equipment he needed and told the man to have a seat. A feeling of anxiousness came over Nate’s body and he could feel the man’s eyes piercing through his soul as if he was trying to connect with him in a different type of way. It was almost a spiritual experience.

Nate took a deep breath and began. The second the needle touched his ankle Nate felt nothing but pain and only wanted to scream. He knew that his job was pretty much on the line considering this guy was ready to sell him out on something he didn’t even do. After a few strokes of the needle, Nate and his body became used

to the feeling and weren't feeling as much pain anymore. In a quick twenty minutes, he one was done.

"Are you happy?" asked Nate while he bandaged up his first tattoo.

"It's a pretty stupid tattoo but I don't got time to worry about you. Let's do me."

As terrible as Nate's morning started out, he was in the end appreciative for this man, who wound up not being such a bad guy and who opened up about his dead mother, who had been a nurse and had six children as a single mother.

Nate didn't tell anyone about his first tattoo, but he did ask one of his co-workers to tattoo something on him. From then on, the fear is history and now Nate is a completely inked tattoo artist.