

Filthy Tuesday: José Nodar

Julie Armstrong, Editor-in-Chief of Beans & Books, surveyed her domain. Papers flew like confetti in a literary hurricane, interns cowered like mice under desks, and a half-eaten éclair adorned her monitor. This was Tuesday.

Julie's shrill voice shattered the controlled chaos. "Brenda! That manuscript I requested?" Brenda the Book Butcher, her acquisition clerk, slammed a bound folder on her desk. "Guaranteed bestseller. Vampire love triangle meets gluten-free baking. Title: 'Fangs 'n' Flours.'"

Julie, a woman weathered by years of bad prose and worse coffee, squinted at the title. "Brenda, darling, vampires and spelt don't mix. Unless the heroine bakes stakes, maybe."

Brenda scoffed. "Stakes? We need sugar highs, not wooden dowels. Think rom-com, not Bram Stoker."

A whimper came from beneath Julie's desk. It was Barnaby, her nephew intern, a timid soul whose chief function was fetching espresso and dodging tantrums. Julie patted his head. "Chin up, lad. Remember, publishing is like sausage-making: best not to see the process."

Just then, Julie's phone buzzed. It was Tania Agony, her star author, known for her tear-jerking sagas set in the Scottish Highlands.

"Julie, darling," Agatha's voice, thick with Highland peat and martinis, boomed through the receiver. "Just read the proofs. You've turned my kilted hero into a kilt less vegan! And given my heroine IBS!"

Julie sighed. "Agatha, the market has spoken. Tartan's out, tofu's in. And IBS adds realism, trust me."

"Realism?" Agatha sputtered. "My readers want hunky Highlanders wrestling sheep, not bloated bagpipes!"

Suddenly, the office door burst open, revealing Marty Stone, Julie's marketing director, a man whose tan was as fake as his enthusiasm.

"Julie!" he boomed, brandishing a sparkly pink poster. "I present the future of Beans & Books! 'Fifty Shades of Yarn': A knitting erotica masterpiece! Granny squares will never be the same!"

Julie groaned. Brenda beamed. Tania screeched.

Julie held up a hand. "Enough! Brenda, push 'Fangs 'n' Flours' through marketing. Tania, lose the IBS, keep the tofu. Marty, bury that yarn abomination."

She slumped back, massaging her temples. "And someone," he muttered, "get me a decent éclair."

The office exploded back into its usual disarray. Julie grinned. There was something delightful about the filthy business of book publishing. Julie loved to say: "A book may be made of paper, but publishing is built on grit, caffeine, and the occasional questionable éclair."

Barnaby whimpered from under the desk. Julie patted his head again. "Relax, kid. It's only another filthy Tuesday."

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