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There'd been an unprecedented # of days where no needles were found in the bathroom—so when Finch stepped on one lying at the edge of the toilet, he understandably lost his shit.

“Goddamn it! Which one of you motherfuckers boosting in here?!” They could hear him yell through the house, but no one owned up; after that, there was a stern watch on bathroom activity among the tenants. Finch scrutinized every unflushed bowl. Everyone's foot had a distinct shadow and he studied the breaks from the light that peeked out from the door. But after a few days he gave up trying to find the culprit and resigned himself to wait until another instance.

Isagani had been particularly quiet as of late, becoming more and more of a shut-in—spending countless hours in his room masturbating and watching reruns of *Poker After Dark*. In the dead of night, Cleto and Kindil would often hear what Isagani had previously chalked up to being nightmares, emanating from the close/empty space that separated them—a violent clamoring full of misanthropy and momentary satisfaction<sup>109</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup> “OHHHHHHHHH!!!! SHIIIIIIIIIIITTTT TAKE IT DIRTY BITCH! YESSSSS!”

When Cleto shared the observation with everyone, it provided the gang with enough material to laugh Isagani right out of Sunday nights and into solemn appearances during the early morning hours.

Ms. Just had a loose policy about household chores required of everyone—things just to keep general order of the house, such as sweeping the kitchen, cleaning out the stove, mopping the bathroom floor etc. The weekly tasks were assigned and noted on a bulletin board hanging from the freezer door.

When he stepped on the needle, Finch had little time to pay attention to the tiny spots of blood near the bathtub. During her inspection on collection day, Ms. Just nearly evicted the whole lot for the condition of the floor. When she approached Finch about it, his response was swift.

“Tell whoever is leaving dirties in there to clean that shit up. That’s where the blood come from.”

“Vat is dis *dirties* eh? I know da fwoah is dirty. It is, ewer name on da vist foah bavoom?”

“I don’t give a fuck whose name is on the list. I stepped on a fucking needle in this house. You prepared for a lawsuit?”

“Oh veally?!”

“Yea, veally.”

“Dat is no my pwobwem. You-“

“It will be a problem for you if you try any of that, *I’ll evict* ewe bullshit with me... You’ll be lucky if I don’t sue.”

After the initial back and forth and not too pleased with the fact, but not wanting to make waves either, Cleto complied with Ms. Just's request to clean up in Finch's stead. When Wednesday came, he went at the bathroom, which was a relative cinch. No hard scrubbing or elbow grease needed and even if that were the case, Cleto would've given it closer to a spit shine after drinking goat milk rather than get between all the crevices with the cheap cleaning solution Ms. Just bought from the Dollar Store; 5 to 10 minutes' tops, a little Windex, a couple of extra flushes and he was done.

Walking down the hallway toward the 2nd bathroom, Isagani's door was cracked, which had not been the case since he'd taken Spice from Cleto some time ago. Cleto stood at the entrance for a minute, listening for heavy breathing, violent masturbating, or general rustling in the room. He knew for a fact Isagani kept a steady supply of candy bars, Ramen noodles, and other miscellaneous snacks (horded from care packages sent by Isagani's ex-wife) next to the bed/television. It wasn't Spice, but Cleto knew that Isagani, being the emaciated fuck he was, would certainly miss these things. But when Cleto opened the door, he was distracted by another sound coming from the bathroom.

Isagani was hacking uncontrollably and cursing like the dead of night. Cleto could make out what sounded like a puppy, and without hesitation, opened the door to further investigate.

Inside he found Isagani huddled over a runty gray Yorkshire from the neighbor's litter. He held a needle in one hand and a tied shoestring around the dog's neck.

The sink was overflowing and the lip fitter shade of the light hung dangerously close to the wet floor. Finch didn't catch wind of the scuffle until he saw the puppy race out of the bathroom and hide beneath one of the couches in the living room.

As everything began to spill into the hallway, Finch spotted the needle, finally giving him the reason he'd been waiting for; Isagani didn't even feel the Red Wing tip hit the back of his skull. He fell forward landing against the base of the sink. Cleto pulled himself out of the way just in time, before all of Finch's 235 lb. rage came crashing down over Isagani's limp body<sup>110</sup>.

It was definitely time to move.

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<sup>110</sup> Finch rolled off from Isagani's unconscious/bloody frame and said he was having a heart attack. Cleto didn't believe it at first. It wasn't until he helped Finch down the hall and onto the kitchen table, a freshly lit Ezra Zion teetering between the former Texan's shaky fingers, that Cleto really bought it.

"Do you want me to call an ambulance man?"

"Not really. I'd rather just sit here and die to be honest."

"You serious right now?" Finch is emphatic with 2 *yeah yeah's*, before the lights go out on him.