

"I am definitely going to kill myself tonight," mumbled Vera as she swished the mop around in the bucket. She said this every day, though some days she meant it more than others. Tonight was about the average. Suicide was a distinct possibility, but no more likely than her sitting down with a bowl of ramen, a 20th century detective show, and a few silent tears.

She propped the door open to get another look at the offending yellowish-brown stains, then jerked it shut, choking back vomit as the smell caught up with her again. This wasn't in her job description. She was a stock clerk. At a department store. But someone had to do it. She pursed her lips and whimpered, forcing her way back through the mephitic. The mop met the tile with a hard slap.

Even after eight years on Earth, she was still shocked by how little shame humans seemed to feel. This was the fourth "incident" she'd had to remedy this month, and it was only nine days in. Oh, well. At least this one was in the bathroom.

Her visor blinked. 10PM. Almost as if on cue, her communicator clicked.

"Yo, Viscera," said Brett from Furniture, "you all good down there? Getting ready to clock out." Vera had considered getting Brett to stop calling her "Viscera," but it wasn't like he meant any harm. Brett could never mean anyone any harm. He was just consummately clueless.

Vera struggled for a second to find the button on the side of her visor with her shoulder.

"Sure, Brett. Just wrapping up here." She finished rinsing the floor and drained the bucket.

"10-4, Viscera. You're the people's hero."

Ugh. She removed her green rubber gloves, revealing the scaly purple skin beneath. Making her way upstairs, she ran an idle finger across her gills.

"Maybe not tonight," she said. "I'd rather watch Columbo."