

RECURSO GRATIS • NIVEL PRINCIPIANTE

El último turno

A B1 story about workplace pressure, loyalty, and choosing what kind of employee—and person—to become.

PRESSURE

LOYALTY

INTEGRITY

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ANTES DE LEER

Prepare to read

On his final night at a warehouse, Marcos discovers a safety problem. Reporting it could protect his coworkers, but it could also create serious consequences.

Think before you read

What should an employee do when a supervisor asks workers to ignore a safety rule?

Reading goal

Notice vocabulary for workplace safety, pressure, and ethical decisions. Infer why characters do not always say exactly what they mean.

THE STORY · PART 1

One night remaining

Marcos had worked the night **shift** at West River Warehouse for four years. The job paid his bills, but it had also taught him how exhaustion could become normal.

Friday was supposed to be his final night. On Monday, he would begin an electrician's **apprenticeship**, a position he had pursued for nearly a year.

His coworkers brought sweet bread to celebrate. Rosa, who had trained him on his first day, wrote GOOD LUCK on a cardboard box and made everyone sign it.

Shortly before midnight, the supervisor, Mr. Blake, announced that an important order was behind **schedule**. If the team finished before morning, the company would keep a valuable client.

‘We need every loading station operating,’ he said. ‘No unnecessary interruptions.’

At station six, Marcos heard a metal **rattle** inside the conveyor. The emergency guard shook whenever a heavy package passed.

He pressed the stop button and attached a maintenance tag. Company **procedure** required a technician to inspect the machine before anyone restarted it.

Mr. Blake arrived immediately. He examined the growing line of boxes, then removed the tag.

‘It has sounded like that all week,’ he said. ‘We will repair it tomorrow.’

Marcos knew that ‘tomorrow’ meant after his final shift had ended.

The cost of silence

Mr. Blake restarted the conveyor. 'You are leaving anyway,' he told Marcos. 'Let the people who are staying decide what risk they can accept.'

Rosa avoided Marcos's eyes. Her husband had recently lost his job, and she depended on every hour of **overtime**.

'We can finish carefully,' she said. 'If the client leaves, management may reduce our hours.'

Marcos understood her fear. Reporting the machine could stop production for the rest of the night. It might also lead to an **investigation** of Mr. Blake.

For twenty minutes, the conveyor continued. Each rattle sounded louder to Marcos, although he could not tell whether the machine was changing or his attention was.

Then a box became **jammed** beneath the guard. A new employee named Luis reached toward it.

'Stop!' Marcos shouted, pressing the emergency button before Luis's hand entered the machine.

The warehouse became silent. Marcos photographed the damaged guard and called the company's safety number.

Mr. Blake's expression hardened. 'You could have spoken to me first.'

'I did,' Marcos replied. His voice shook, but he did not step away.

The order would not leave on time. Everyone understood the financial **consequences**.

THE STORY · PART 3

What remains after leaving

A safety manager arrived an hour later and placed station six out of service. She discovered that two internal bolts were almost completely loose.

‘The guard might have collapsed,’ she said. ‘Stopping the machine was the correct decision.’

Mr. Blake was sent home while the company reviewed his actions. No one knew whether he would lose his job.

During the break, several coworkers were angry with Marcos. Others quietly thanked him. Rosa said nothing until the end of the shift.

As dawn appeared through the warehouse windows, she approached him near the exit.

‘I wanted you to stay silent because I was afraid,’ she admitted. ‘That wasn't fair. Luis could have been injured, and I would have had to live with knowing why.’

Marcos worried that the team would blame him long after he left. Rosa reminded him that loyalty did not mean protecting every decision a person made.

‘Sometimes loyalty means refusing to let someone create a mistake they cannot take back,’ she said.

On Monday, Marcos began his apprenticeship. During his safety orientation, the instructor asked why procedures mattered even when production was delayed.

Marcos thought about his last shift. Rules alone had not stopped the conveyor; a person had to accept the discomfort of enforcing them.

He raised his hand—not because he believed every difficult choice had a simple answer, but because he now understood the price of pretending there was no choice.

**Integrity often feels inconvenient in the moment
because its value is measured by what never happens.**

Words for work and difficult choices

shift	turno
apprenticeship	aprendizaje profesional
schedule	horario / plazo
rattle	traqueteo / ruido metálico
procedure	procedimiento
overtime	horas extra
investigation	investigación
jammed	atascado/a
consequences	consecuencias
integrity	integridad

COMPREHENSION

Read between the lines

A. Choose the best answer

1. Why is the order urgent? a) The client may leave b) The boxes are damaged c) Marcos is leaving
2. Why does Rosa initially accept the risk? a) She trusts the machine b) She needs stable hours c) She dislikes Marcos
3. What finally causes Marcos to call safety? a) Mr. Blake leaves b) Luis reaches toward a jam c) The client calls
4. What does the safety manager discover? a) Missing packages b) Loose internal bolts c) A false order

B. Interpret

1. What does Mr. Blake mean when he says, 'You are leaving anyway'?
2. Explain Rosa's idea that loyalty can mean stopping someone from making a permanent mistake.

C. Write

Write a short workplace message reporting the unsafe machine. Include the problem, the action taken, and the help needed.

ANSWER KEY

Review and reflect

A. 1. a 2. b 3. b 4. b

B. Suggested answers

1. Mr. Blake suggests Marcos should not interfere because he will not experience the future consequences at the warehouse. 2. Protecting a person does not require supporting an unsafe choice; honest resistance may prevent lasting harm.

Sample workplace message

Station six has a damaged safety guard and a loud internal rattle. I stopped the conveyor and attached a maintenance tag after a package became jammed. Please keep the station closed until a qualified technician completes an inspection.

KEEP GOING

Discuss: When can loyalty and responsibility point in different directions?