

Are you dreaming?



Not There

By

Ion Light

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Due to adult themes such as sex, a lot of sex, some gratuitous, some not, and violence, not a lot, as the idea is to make love not war, this book is intended for a mature audience. This is a work of fiction. Just in case you weren't sure. As for the esoteric philosophies, yeah, it can really take you places, faraway places, sexy places, but don't be discouraged if that doesn't seem to work for you. This is not intended to be a self-help book or a training manual in the esoteric arts, but if it opens something in you, well, yay! That said, apparently people need disclaimers, as if a book on magic didn't say enough: if you're worried that exploring esoteric concepts that don't fit your paradigm endangers your mortal soul, I would like to refer you back to the religious artifact of your choice, even though it likely has more sex and violence than you will find within this story. (So, for example, if Ouija boards are taboo in your world, then this is probably not the book for you.) Names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental. Except where they're intentional, but hopefully respectfully and tastefully done, in a way to honor the sacred importance they played in the author's life. Again, we're adults. We are not 'untouched' by the influence of media. In fact, I would dare say, never in the history of man have there been so many 'touched!'

This is a work in progress. Any corrections, or constructive criticism for the purpose of story refinement is welcomed. If you choose to contact the author, you may do so at:

solarchariot@gmail.com. Please, put “not there” in the subject line. This helps me find you amongst the clutter.

214-907-4070 I am not always available to take a call. I will, however, eventually, answer a text. If I don't respond in a day, email me.

ENJOY!

PS: you may encounter “निर्मित” throughout this story. I think it is Sanskrit for “Tulpa” but presently, it is simply a page break between scenes.

(not there, version 1.0)

Chapter 1

It usually starts with sex. My morning. More specifically, a solo shag brought on by streaming porn through the cell phone, but for whatever reasons, I awoke to a strange sensation and didn't reach for my morning fix. I was in my bed. A King Size bed. Alone. Outside of the ragged, torn quilt that had seen better days, which was the last token of any semblance of family, the air was cold due to thermostat set too low. The quilt was made for me by my maternal great grandmother and had lost its fluffy, heavy feel longer ago than I can remember, but I was not ready to part with it. The patchwork pattern was sun, blue sky, night sky with moon and stars, clouds, and a random, and out of place, but odd looking squirrel. I was lying with my feet to the East, facing the window and morning sun, which was odd, because the head of the bed faced North. The sensation of sun on the soles of my feet was so sensational that it was akin to a massage. I expected that any second it might result in a happy ending. It was that sensational. Now, I say that, not just to get your attention. I wasn't aroused, at least, not in the general masculine, obvious in your face aroused. I can honestly say, though, I have never been so completely and surprisingly enthralled by a single sensation on the soles of my feet, that filtered up through every cell into my brain. Yeah, the feet and brain are connected, I understand that, but I had never noticed how intimately connected. I held my breath and didn't dare to move. I wanted it to go on forever.

But nothing goes on forever. The window size spot of sun slowly moved off my feet and across the bed. I rolled over trying to get back in that window, but it was gone. I stayed in bed a few more minutes, considering how nice it was to wake up in such a manner, no longer perturbed that I was off my usual head facing north feet facing south sleeping alignment. I wondered if the unspoken rule to never sleep with your feet facing east was a conspiracy to keep people from experiencing 'walking on the morning sun.' I sat up and tentatively placed my feet on the floor. The floor felt solid. The bedroom seemed brighter than usual. I rose, feeling lighter, physically and mentally. I made my way to the bathroom, humming a 'New Christi Minstrel' song about a cat, another remnant from another age. By the time I was in the shower, I was singing the words: 'but the cat came back, the very next day...'

I became aware of several things. The water seemed hotter than I recall it ever being. Also, the shower streams coming at me from several angles were annoying against my skin, as if

I were being assaulted by tattoo needles. I stopped singing and quickly rinsed off and turned off the water. I stood there in the open shower, puzzled. Something was different. I couldn't quite place my finger on it. I dried and went to put my uniform on. It felt scratchier than usual. I ignored the tactile sensations and proceeded out to my truck. I was almost to work when I realized: 'OMG. I am happy.'

I reached for my cell phone to call out from work. Clearly, I was sick and I needed to go to a doctor. I discovered I had failed to bring my cell phone. How could I have forgotten my cell phone, you might ask? I was asking myself the same. The only thing I could come up with was that I was off my routine. My days started with a general porn surf, followed by resignation that my core 'go to' comfort girls was as good as it will ever be, followed by getting up and putting the phone next to the truck keys. I thought it more hassle to turn around and go get the phone just to call out sick when I could just go to work. So, I went to work in a mood. A good mood, which provoked a sense of doom. I felt certain that this was not likely to end well.

On entering, the old man Jenson met me at the time clock.

"Jon, I need to be the foreman on the receiving dock," Jensen said.

"Um, you understand I am not on the foreman list?" I pointed out politely.

"Don't give me any grief. I want you in charge of receiving today," Jenson said.

"I hear that, and I am trying to save you some grief by reminding you of the union protocol and the foreman list..." I began.

"You're in charge. Now, go send someone to collect the pallets out of the bone yard, cause we're short," Jenson said, and walked away.

So, I walked to the receiving dock and asked Darryl to take a fork lift and a cart down to the boneyard and bring back a cart full.

"Fuck you," Daryl said. "Juan is in charge today."

"That's interesting, because Jensen just..."

Darryl and I turned to a commotion. Juan was cursing Jenson out. I think everyone in the dock could hear the conversation, which is not an easy thing considering the volume of background noises. "I fucking traded shifts with Manning, which means I am the foreman today."

"This is our highest volume day and I want the most senior guy in charge," Jenson said. "I want you loading outbound trucks."

“Fuck you, you can’t tell me what to do,” Juan said.

“I am giving you a direct order,” Jenson said.

“Darryl,” I said, sideways, not turning my head from the train wreck. “I know I am not technically in charge in your eyes, yet, but would you be willing to go get those pallets, please?”

“And miss all this? Besides, who are you going to have unload that truck that’s backing in?” Darryl asked.

“Where’s Peter?”

“He’s on lunch,” Darryl said.

I sighed. A lady entered and rang the bell at the desk. She was a sight to look at, with a big black hat, and long flowing black dress that nipped at her ankles. It wasn’t quite a funeral dress, but could have been construed as a church going dress, maybe, and there were places where the sun light across the dock made the dress seem thinner in places. It made my eyes linger hoping it was thin enough in the right places. A black dog on a leash stood to her right. She sat down the empty kennel and the dog obediently entered. I greeted her and discovered the obvious was true: she wanted to ship the dog; addendum- to LA. I got out the forms and walked her through the process and examined the papers she brought, shot records etc, as well as examined the kennel’s condition. The dog seemed to be the appropriate size for the cage. A black lab. She barked at me, wagging her tail.

“Quiet, Pandora,” the lady told the dog.

“Jon!”

I turned because I thought I heard someone say my name. But, there was no one there. I noticed the customer had paused to watch me as I sought the voice. I turned back to my task, but heard it again, and still, there was no one there. Well, there was someone almost there. Two someones. Union officials. I ignored the auditory event of a female voice that had caused me to turn.

“What the hell, Jon,” Steve said. “You took your name off the foreman list.”

“I did,” I agreed.

“So, why are you causing this ruckus?”

“Why are you assuming I started this ruckus?” I asked.

Juan came over and interrupted. “I purposely traded shifts so that I could be foreman. If I wanted to work a normal shift, I would have just stayed on gate delivery,” he said.

Jenson arrived. "What is this? A slow down? I want you loading the truck on 7, and Jon, I told you what I wanted you to do," he said.

"I'm not feeling well. I am going home sick," Juan said. And with that, he walked right to the clock, badged out, and headed towards his car.

"Jon, you will have to run both docks, now," Jenson said.

"You do understand he is not on the foreman list and you're bypassing people who are," Steve pointed out.

"Jon is the most senior person here and I want him in charge," Jenson insisted.

"You understand that all the people you bypassed are going to get foreman pay because of your decision," Steve pointed out.

"Do I need to sign anything else?" the woman called to me.

"No, I won't," Jenson said.

I went and checked the lady's paperwork. The guy driving the truck that had parked his rig had entered and he was leering at her behind his glasses, leaning against the wall, beer belly hanging below his belt. I don't know how I know he was ogling her, because I couldn't see his eyes, maybe he wasn't, but then again, isn't that why you wear those kinds of glasses, so you can ogle anonymously? Perhaps I imagined it. Or, I was projecting. Had there been no one around and I was in a safe place, I would have been ogling her. With permission, I would have done more than ogle. So, I'm not saying I wouldn't have ogled her myself, or that she wasn't ogling quality, but for whatever reason, I was rather distracted and not myself. The paperwork all seemed to be in order.

"You're good, mam," I said.

"Dominque," she corrected.

I looked up as if she had said something important, but I had missed the obvious nuance of light flirting. In the background Jenson and Steve were still arguing protocols.

"Is it always this crazy here?" she asked.

"Uh? Oh. I assure you, Pandora will arrive safely," I said.

Darryl was awkwardly dragging a piece of freight to the scale, a large metal pipe that swung because of his imprecise lift, that nearly hit the dog kennel and I had to execute a jump rope like maneuver to escape being injured.

"Darryl!" I snapped.

“Sorry,” he said.

“I think I changed my mind,” the woman said.

“Would you like me to help you put her back in the car?” I asked.

“What’s the problem here,” Jenson asked.

“Um, nothing,” she said, opening the kennel and having Pandora follow her back to the car. I carried the empty kennel for her and put it in the back of her suburban. She thanked me, trying to hand me money, and I waved it off. “Please, for your trouble.”

“It was no trouble. I appreciate your decision, and quite frankly, given the energy today, I think I would do the same,” I said.

There was something in her eyes that was interesting. She took out a card and handed it to me. “Call me when you’re off work. I want to talk.”

“Jon?! Stop flirting with the customer and get back in here!” Jenson yelled.

My hot embarrassment at being called out, for something I wasn’t doing this time, is what made me realize there had definitely been flirting. I accepted the card. I have never been hit on at work and I was flattered and I wanted to follow it. Later. My boss was yelling, and Darryl and the truck driver were watching, and I was way too distracted to stay in the game. I nodded to her, petted Pandora who pushed her head into my crotch.

“By Pandora,” I said.

The dog barked as I returned to the dock. The pipe was on the scale, barely, but the pallet it was on kept it from touching the ground and was throwing off the weight. It was a twelve foot, metal pipe, four inches in diameter, weighing in at four hundred pounds, and that was minus the pallets average weight.

“I am sorry, sir, but we can’t accept this,” I said, fully prepared to explain the reasons why.

“Your boss there just assured me you’d get it on the next flight to LA,” the truck driver said.

“Well,” I said, turning my wrist up to look at my watch. I wasn’t wearing my watch. I never went without my watch! I turned to the computer and verified the time constraints.

“Getting it to that flight on time isn’t the issue.”

The truck driver whistled at Jenson and he returned.

“What’s going on?” Jenson asked.

“Your man here won’t take my freight,” the truck driver said.

I did not like being called ‘your man.’ I suppressed a silent rage.

“Jon, this company sends us lots of freight, process it and move it on...”

“With all due respect, Sir,” I interrupted.

“Since when have you given anyone any respect? Just do as I say,” Jenson insisted.

I didn’t understand his statement. I always respectful. Aloof, maybe, but respectful, always! “Sir, I will do as you instruct, however, you will hear me out, first,” I said. “This piece exceeds our single piece weight restriction of 350 pounds. That’s in the cargo manual, page 55. Additionally, this piece will not fit...”

“It will fit in the airplane...”

“Technically, it might, but you can’t secure it to a single cookie sheet, and you can’t put it on top of freight on two existing cookie sheets, and since that flight is full, you can’t put it on the floor by itself and secure...”

“Jon, accept the damn freight!” Jenson said.

“Sir, we guarantee delivery. It will not go on that plane, and it will sit on the ramp for three days, as people scratch their heads, then they will bring it back here and you will end up trucking it to LA, which means this preferred company is waiting for their piece and charging us for the delay,” I said.

“Accept the freight,” Jenson said, and walked off.

I looked to Darryl. “Would you put it a cart, please,” I asked.

“It won’t fit in a cart,” Darryl said.

“Place it in the cart long ways, at an angle with the tail end hanging out towards the back of the cart,” I instructed.

“That’s not safe,” Darryl pointed out.

“Yeah, but for now, just do it to get it out of the way,” I said.

“Nope, and you can’t make me,” Darryl said.

My silent rage was pushing past suppression gates. But, Darryl was right, I couldn’t make him. It’s the primary reason I stopped being a foreman. I had no authority and no power. I wasn’t management. I wasn’t crew. I was still technically ‘union’ but only in name, and only when it was convenient for the union. I straddled a fence with everyone making demands on me, but all I could do was make recommendations, and cheerlead, and I am so not a cheerleader. Most the

time I would say fuck it and do it myself, which guaranteed the job got done, but that's just an inefficient way to lead.

“Push it over there and finish unloading the truck, please,” I asked.

Darryl complied with that request. We finished weighing in the freight and the driver signed the appropriate paperwork and I took it to Jenson and handed it to him.

“What's this?” Jenson asked.

“You put me in charge because of my experience. You have chosen to disregard my experience in favor of your own, and in the process, insulted me in front of a customer. If you want this freight, you sign for it,” I said.

“Stop this passive aggressive bullshit and go do your job!” Jenson said.

“Oh, Sir,” I said. “You have not yet witnessed passive aggressive. I am being very polite and very direct. I will not sign this. Now, this next move is passive aggressive. I am going to my assigned duty station with my forklift and you can get someone else to be your fucking foreman.”

I left the paper work with him, went and collected my forklift, and proceeded to build cookie sheets. After they were built, I got off, netted the freight, and moved the entire cookie sheet, freight and all, to the oversized belt where it would go to be weighed. I operated the belt, printed the weight slip, stuck it on the cookie sheet, entered the data into the computer, and then used the forklift to carry the cookie sheet to an appropriate size dolly. I saw the cart carrying the pipe heading out towards the ramp. It was sticking up out of the back of the cart, and a wide swing might topple the cart or hit something, and given the time it was ‘rolling’ I suspected that conversation had already been had and Jenson had over ridden safety protocols. Hopefully the driver had the common sense not to take the corners fast. I reminded myself, not my problem.

A high priced item arrived with a police escort. Diamonds. Jenson asked me to take care of it. I reminded him he would need a foreman to take care of it because it was a high security item and a regular crew person was not trusted to handle such a transaction. I drove off to the other side of the hangar to build more cookie sheets. I took my lunch in a quiet shady corner outside where I could see trucks coming and going from one angle, and planes taking off from the other. The Union approached.

“Jon,” Steve asked. “Why did you accept that pipe?”

“I didn't. Jenson did,” I said.

Steve showed me the paperwork.

“That’s not my signature,” I said.

“It says your name,” Steve said.

“That’s not my signature,” I said.

“Come with us,” Steve said.

We got in a car and went over to the ramp office. As we went, the union explained what had happened. I gathered from the story that the ramp workers had indeed tried to load it. They had attempted to send the piece up to the aft cargo hatch, but the piece was too heavy for the conveyor belt and so the piece had slid in place as the belt turned under it, with the front end just making it inside the door. It seemed like an odd choice to me because in order for the pipe to fit, they would have had to have swung it hard right at an angle greater than the door would allow to accommodate the pipe and someone would have likely fallen off the belt. If there was someone actually in the aircraft waiting to catch, there was no way he was going bring it safely in. When a 400 pound 12 foot pipe has momentum, one human isn’t going to influence it that much. Not that they got that far. When it fell it rotated around a make shift pivot point not quite the middle of the pipe and the top end took a chunk of the airframe so that the aft door would no longer close and seal properly. The pipe rolled down the belt, fell to one side, and collapsed, just barely missing the people running for cover. The airplane was taken out of service and the LA trip canceled for the day. (Yes, this shit really happens and this the ‘mechanical problem’ that got your flight canceled.) I was so glad Pandora wasn’t on the flight; she would have spent the next 24 plus hours in her crate. No one was hurt during the incident.

We all sat down at a beaten up conference table, where everyone was introduced. There were several shift managers, Jenson, and maintenance supervisors. Jenson didn’t seem worried at all. I glared at him. Other than the introductions, there were no pleasantries exchanged, no how is your day going, but just direct to business. The shift manager asked why I had accepted the freight.

“I did not accept the freight,” I said.

The shift manager passed the shipper’s bill.

“So, you’re saying you did not sign this?” he asked.

“That’s exactly what I am saying,” I iterated.

“So, you’re saying Jenson forged your signature?” the union representative asked.

“I did not say that,” I said. The Union rep was angry that I didn’t say what he wanted me to say.

“So, if he didn’t do it, who do you suppose did?” the shift manager asked.

“It would be inappropriate for me to indulge in speculation. All I will say is that I didn’t sign this. I actually refused to sign it. I even went to Jenson and handed him the forms and said very clearly that I had no intentions of signing it,” I said, calmly and clearly.

“Did anyone see you take the forms to him?” the shift manager asked.

I looked to the Union representative. “Now would be a good time for you to intercede,” I said. I allowed some anger to leak through.

“Just answer his questions,” Steve said. “You’re doing fine.”

I fumed, staring at the table. My eyes came up to meet the shift manager. “I suspect there were several people that were positioned in such a way as to see me take these forms to Jenson, however, I cannot state with any reliability what anyone saw, and definitely can’t say what person will report seeing. I can tell you that I told the company representative that I could not accept the said freight, specifically stating the page and article number in which the freight in question exceeded the maximum single piece weight restriction. Not only did Jenson ignore my disclosure, he overrode my decision in front of the said representative. I imagine if you ask Jenson for the page or article number, he will not be able to provide it, where I would be happy to write it down and push it to you, so that you might use common sense to determine which one of us is being more accurate. Notice, I did not call Jenson a big, fat, liar, because if you really want me to speculate, I think Jenson got a kickback from the company because he knew that we would be shipping it for free, not only saving them money for shipping, but fining us for the delay in their project, which is probably already delayed and they’re just wanting to offset some of their cost by shifting it to us.”

Jenson came out of out of his seat. Steve actually stood up, too, stepping between us. Steven was a big guy and this is what he liked, the drama and fights that often ensued in these types of meetings. Seriously, there is no rationality in these pretend courts. There are kangaroos. For all their attempt at social protocol and ‘legalese,’ nothing was ever really fair or socially appropriate, or even consistent with state or federal law. Jenson was asked to leave the room. Steve came back and sat down, giving me a secret smile, as if communicating “I told you you had this.” Given the number of meetings I had been in, I believe the Union enjoyed my ability to

piss people off. I wasn't even trying. I did not smile back. I fucking hate these sort of meetings. They don't really want truth, they just want scapegoats. I never wanted to throw anyone under the bus, even someone like Jenson. I expected people to hear my truth and respond rationally.

"Mr. Harister, it has been brought to my attention that we are going to have to terminate you for violating company policy," the shift manager said.

"You can't prove that he accepted that freight and I certainly believe his version over Jenson's version," Steve said.

"Actually, we're terminating him for a different, ethical breach; specifically lying on an official company document," the shift manager said, pulling out a paper from one his folders. He provided copies of my original application for employment, where I had lied about my age and birth year. "You said here that you were sixteen, but in actuality, you were fourteen. You're being terminated with no rights to benefits, and no possible rehire."

"This was like thirty five years ago!" Steve said.

"There is no statute of limitations. Texas is a right to work state, which also means we have the right to terminate for any legitimate, or perceived, violation of company policy," the shift manager said.

"It was a mistake. The Union has documents that show that there was a correction made five years after his initial hire date," Steve said. And Steve would know. He was there for that meeting.

"We are aware that there was a correction made to his official birthday. We do not believe that he made mistake. We believe he purposely lied to gain employment," the shift manager said.

"You realize, we'll fight this, he will end up getting his job back, with penalty and back pay," Steve said.

"You won't fight this. And if it goes to court or mitigation, we will sue him for a return of all pay and benefits issued over his 35 years of employment, which is tantamount to theft since they were accrued under false pretenses," the shift manager said. "So, if you will please hand over your badge and keys, the security officers will escort you to the company parking lot. If you are found on premises afterwards, you will be arrested for trespassing."

I knew I got up on the wrong side of bed and that I was in a mood, but I had not seen this coming. My hands shook with fear and rage and a lump lodged in my throat. I had worked long and hard for my retirement and benefits. I was too old to start over from scratch. This was huge!

“Would you consider just letting him resign so that he can keep his retirement?” Steve asked.

“No,” the shift manager said.

“He has been a valuable, loyal employee. In thirty five years, he has used only 9 sick days, he has trained many of the workers, including your managers, one of whom, Jon is credited for saving his life when his tie got caught in a conveyor belt,” Steve said.

“I am sure he is a great guy. He probably wouldn’t lie to get out of trouble for accepting the wrong freight. But I could really care less. I have proof that he lied on this application, which means all of his statements are questionable. Hand over your badge and keys, Sir, or I will have security take it by force and then have you arrested.”

“Your animosity here is unwarranted,” Steve snapped. “And if you’re going to push this issue of zero tolerance for one mistake made 35 years ago, you are definitely going to have to fire Jenson for lying on a company document, forging someone’s signature,” Steve said.

“I have no evidence that he forged anyone’s name,” the shift manager said.

I stood up. My hands fumbled for my badge they were shaking so much. The work keys came off easier, as I had them clipped to a carabineer. I kept the carabineer and gently sat the keys on the table.

“I’m sorry, Jon,” Steve said. “We’ll figure something out.”

Two security officers stoically escorted me off premises, delivering me right to my vehicle. They were basically paid ten dollars an hour to preserve company property and space, whereas I was making twenty-six dollars an hour. Had been making? I got in my truck. I gripped the steering wheel to keep my hands from shaking. One of the security officers tapped on my window. I rolled it down.

“Sir, you need to leave,” he said.

I reached for my keys, put them in the ignition and turned on the truck. I was clearly in an emotional state and did not think I was capable of driving. I looked back to the officer.

“Sir, you need to leave, now,” the security officer said.

“May I have like ten minutes to calm down?” I asked.

“You can leave now or I will call for backup,” he said.

I nearly told him to call for fucking backup, because when I went ‘Incredible Hulk’ on him he was going to need an army! My desire to beat the crap out of the security officer was clearly misplaced, though, as he was certainly not the focus of my rage. And in my present rage, I doubt any law enforcement would be sympathetic to my needs, even though they recommended people not drive under the influence of strong emotions. In fact, I suspected my present rage would only antagonize any additional law enforcement, exasperating the situation and resulting in me getting beat up in their efforts to ‘make me’ calm down. I put the truck in drive and slowly drove forwards, exaggeratedly slow, turning away from the officer so as not to seem like a threat. By the time I got to the road, I was moving a little faster, but still not going the speed limit. Two people blew by standing on their horn. Was the whole world fucking mad? I get it, I am just one human being, completely irrelevant, but can no one slow down and see that I am in a state? Is there no place a person can go to be safe and recover?

I pulled over at the first convenient store and parked. My breath came in exaggerated gulps. I am sure I had tears. A car pulled up beside me, blaring music with a bass so strong it vibrated my insides and I glared and his entire musical system fried and went off. That would teach him, I thought, and turned inwards back to my own misery without realizing I had actually destroyed his entire electrical system. My initial shock and fear were wearing off and a rage was filling the void. Bursts of rage seeped through the flood gates like water through a hose past a thumb. Laser precise, but seemingly ineffectual, as there were no specific targets. Though Jenson was an ass and instigated the whole affair, he probably had no idea they were sitting on a document waiting to fire me for the next perceived incident. I needed another target. What could I do to fight this? Thirty five years ago I was a desperate kid just trying to survive and so I lied to get a job so I could eat. So, yeah, I had lied. In fact, the foreman that hired me had known I lied, and he had helped me correct the error after working for him for five years with not a single accident or incident or use of sick time. I was too scared to call out sick. This was all before the company that presently owned the shipping company had bought us. So, technically, that lie had nothing to do with the present company, right? They acquired me after the fact, and even after the correction.

Fuming, I got out of the truck. I went in to buy a coke and some peanut butter M&M’s and found one dollar in my pocket. I didn’t want to use my credit card on comfort food, so I took

the one dollar and bought one mega million ticket instead. I went back to my truck and started homewards. While driving, I engaged in a full daydream rage, plotting my revenge. I would win the 800 million dollars, buy the fucking company that just fired me, fire Jenson, and the shift managers, and all the CEO's and then run the company the way I thought best. I'd bring back all the workers laid off at other stations in favor contract workers that were getting paid half of what company employees were. I think I would fire the fucking Union, too, since the top, fat Union Officials were likely in cahoots with management. I was going to rain down fucking hell on them. I imagined my first office meeting, calling in the bastard CEO's and managers one at a time. Then I thought it would be more fun just to bring them all into a surprise board meeting, where I show up with my lawyers and fire them in front of their friends. I imagined quite a few of them probably had skeletons in their closets, lying on paperwork somewhere, cheating on their spouses with their secretaries. I would hire detectives to find their faults and air it out in the meeting with threats of public disclosures.

I stopped at a restaurant. I went in and sat down and ordered a meal, while continuing to work out the details of how I would strike back and who would be the target of my wrath. This was not "Return of the Jedi," it was pure Revenge! It was all very elaborate and painstakingly deliberate in the fine detail. After dinner I sat there until I was asked to leave. I paid and stopped at Lake Lewisville and sat by the water. I wished for a magical lantern with a Jinn, as by now my wants were honed enough that I could accomplish my goals in three powerful wishes.

By the time I got home, I had decided I didn't want to own the company; I just wanted my benefits and retirement back. I rewound my flight of fancy back to the winning of the lottery and started my plotting over. I would spend the 800 million to fight being terminated in court, and since I was more than willing to spend all 800 million to win my stifle of 20k a year for life after the age of 65, plus insurance, that they would likely settle outside of court. I would also pay for full advertisements in their city hubs detailing my case so that public opinion was on my side, airing out all of their dirty laundry.

I had to force myself to go for a walk. Squirrels normally came to me for food, but today, they ran. Grasshoppers flew away from me with each step. The horses kept their distance. I walked my property. I thought about going to my shop and a working on my project, but decided I had no business operating power tools in my present state. I consoled myself that my property and everything on it was paid for and that I was not in jeopardy of losing my home. I would be

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