

# **OBERON 'S GIFT**

by  
Richard Dante

SMASHWORDS EDITION

PUBLISHED BY:  
Richard Dante on Smashwords

OBERON'S GIFT  
Copyright © 2010 by Richard Dante

\* \* \* \*

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, brands, media, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

## Smashwords Edition License Notes

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be resold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each person you share it with. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then you should return to [Smashwords.com](http://Smashwords.com) and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the author's work.

\*\*\*\*

**OBERON'S GIFT**-a Political Fantasy  
by Richard Hardaway

PREFACE

To counteract the gloom and doom of the daily news--here's an upbeat alternative: Blessed with a wee bit of magic and his own considerable abilities, George Bertram Potter (No relation to Harry) enters the picture and ultimately pours light and joy into the dark corners threatening mankind. Accompanied by his beautiful wife, Lydia, their son George Two, and his nanny, Liza Cooper, Good ol' George sets out to right the world's wrongs and bring sense to government turmoil. Though OBERON'S GIFT may at times seem bizarre and a bit over-the-top, that's part of the fun of this feel-good tale. After a brief bumpy beginning, poli-sci major George Potter meets the amazing Oberon, the leprechaun, and he's off and running! Once you are caught up by the good fairy's spell in the first chapter you'll be hooked. So Read On...and Enjoy!

ONE

The rusty, dusty VW Bug roared and clattered down the night-quiet streets of old Oakland. It was two A.M. After squeezing through three yellow lights and blatantly running a red one, the small car swerved into the circular drive of the Amos Plunkett Memorial Hospital; and came to a screeching halt in the white passenger zone at the front steps.

The driver side door flew open and a tall, black-bearded, long-haired young man in faded jeans and a sweatshirt with cut off sleeves, leaped out and rushed around to the passenger door. A pretty blond with a pained expression emerged. Her bulging camel coat did nothing to hide the fact that she was extremely pregnant. The girl groaned softly as the young man grabbed an old shopping bag from the back seat and gently, tenderly almost carried the young lady up the steps, through the glass and brass doors and into the hospital lobby.

The young man looked wildly around for a moment until he spied the admittance desk in the far corner. The girl bent forward and moaned: "Hurry, George! Please!" He seated her carefully on one of the couches and ran to the desk.

"Please!...my...Lydia...she's...she's about to have a ...baby!" he stammered desperately.

The thin-faced, gray haired woman seated at the desk looked up. In his haste, George had neglected to comb his hair and beard. With his scruffy appearance and

worried, wild-eyed look, she must have mistaken him for an escapee from the mental ward upstairs. Her startled expression was magnified by the thick-lensed glasses she wore. Then a flicker of distaste touched her face. Hippies! her look seemed to say.

She stood up, stepped to the counter and smiled as she glanced at Lydia across the lobby. Her lips smiled only. Her eyes still held the same coldness.

“Yesssss...of course,” she hissed at George. “You do have the one hundred dollar admittance fee, don’t you?”

George turned white. “Admittance fee?--Hundred dollars?” came his choked reply. “I don’t...”

“Well, we can’t admit her unless you can pay the fee. Hospital policy--this isn’t Community General, you know.” She spoke with a condescending tone, slowly and distinctly as though Lydia had all the time in the world, when actually the young lady was nearing the critical three-minutes-between-contractions stage.

George’s own sympathy pangs were coming even closer together and he wasn’t sure he could stand much more of the old gal’s total indifference. George looked over at Lydia. She was holding herself and looking at him with such pleading eyes, he wanted to throttle this bitter old woman who was keeping his girl from the attention she needed.

“I...I just don’t have it.” he said hopelessly.

“Then I’m afraid you’ll have to take her to Community.” she said, obviously enjoying their discomfort.

Lydia groaned loudly, and the woman, exhibiting no concern whatsoever, gave the girl a look of impatience.

“Wait a minute!” cried George, grasping at straws. “How about the pink-slip to my car?”

The woman narrowed her eyes at him for a moment before she spoke. “Well...that is highly irregular, but I think it has been done in the past. Yes--if that’s the best you can do.”

George turned on his heel and sprinted for the car. In the glove compartment he found the pink paper. It was fresh and new. He had received it only day-before-yesterday. He’d scraped up enough from his tutoring to pay for the car, the only thing he owned except for the clothes on his back.

He ran up the steps and back to the desk where the sour-faced old biddy waited with outstretched hand. She flinched slightly as their hands touched. Then she studied the document for a few moments and nodded. She pressed a button. A nurse came from another room. Without a word she saw what was needed and quickly brought in a wheelchair. The nurse, at least, showed some compassion for Lydia. Clucking like a mother hen, she and George helped Lydia into the chair. George hooked the old shopping bag over the handles of the wheelchair and said apologetically: “Uh...her things. She might need them.”

Lydia gave him an adoring, though pained look as he kissed her. The nurse flashed him a friendly smile, turned the chair around and pushing it ahead of her, trotted off down the long white hallway.

George blew a kiss after them

“Young man,” croaked the woman at the desk. “You still have to fill out these papers and sign them.”

George gave her a piercing look and glanced back down the corridor. Lydia was out of sight.

He filled out and signed the papers without bothering to wade through all the fine print and legal mumbo jumbo. He felt a bad case of writer's cramp coming on before he finished filling in the blanks and signing his name, George B. Potter, again and again. All the while the unkind woman looked disapprovingly down at him.

"There now, That's just fine," she said with her best cold smile as she gathered the forms together. "You will please wait in there!" she commanded as she pointed a bony, yet well-manicured finger toward a doorway clearly marked, Waiting Room.

"How long does it take?" asked the dazed young man.

"Oh really! Don't you know anything?!" asked the woman, her short supply of patience at an end. "It could take minutes. It could take hours--sometimes even a day," she grumbled.

George turned and slowly walked away from her toward the waiting room.

\*\*\*\*

He paused in the doorway and surveyed the small, well appointed room. Much of it was in shadow, yet here and there pools of light illuminated comfortable looking leather couches and chairs. There was no one in the room. He had his choice of parking places, so he selected his corner and waded across the plush carpet to an inviting leather armchair. As he plopped himself down into it, he felt his weariness take over.

Most of good ol' George's friends and professors thought him to be, clear of eye, steady of hand, resolute of purpose, tried and true, and serene of spirit

Actually, and few people knew this, deep within his rather impressive, sturdy frame also beat the heart of a lover and poet. But that was when he was possessed of all his faculties. At the moment, he was none of the above. His exhaustion and the events of the past hours had driven out his usual cool, leaving him just a bit dizzy and dopey. A list of confusing thoughts coursed through his momentarily befuddled, though usually intelligent, sensitive mind:

One: Whoever kept the timetables upstairs must have goofed it, he thought. Lydia's premature labor had sent poor George into a state of dazed panic. He'd glimpsed frightening visions of himself trying desperately to deliver the baby enroute, in the VW. Needless to say, he was relieved when his hopelessly ill-qualified help was no longer required.

Two: The impending blessed event had foiled his own secret scheme to become a husband before he became a father. He loved Lydia and wanted the baby, but now it looked like marriage would be after the fact. The truth was, he'd been caught off guard and hadn't even informed Lydia of his matrimonial plans. He could see his peers laughing at him for his pangs of conscience. Well, darn! He had old fashioned moral standards and was determined to set the date as soon as Lydia was able.

Three: Then there was the little matter of money. He'd been unwilling to risk a run to the University clinic and had rushed her to this, the closest hospital. It looked pretty elegant and expensive. He'd already hocked the VW, and wasn't sure he'd ever get it back. Maybe he could borrow a few bucks from the University Student Fund.

Four: And, what about their plans for his career? George had just completed his master's thesis in political science to the praise and plaudits of the faculty judges. They

enthusiastically advised him to go on for his doctorate. Sorry folks...his entry into the political arena would have to wait. He had a real family to take care of now. First a job, then he'd see about working out a study schedule.

There, that was better. He'd rationalized his problems into a neat package and heaved a long sigh of relief. Everything would work out. It always did.

He glanced over at the collection of publications stacked neatly on the table next to him. George had read the newspapers already. As a devoted student of the political scene, he liked to stay informed.

He rummaged around under the newspapers and smiled. Now here's something of real interest! he thought as he extracted the latest copy of Playboy. He hadn't seen one for a long time--couldn't afford the price. He thumbed through it and skimmed an interview with the House Majority Leader. It was informative, and as usual, just a bit provocative.

He closed his eyes for a moment and tried to clear the drowsy fog that was creeping into his consciousness. He forced his eyes open and continued to thumb through the magazine. Another overpowering urge took him and he yawned a big, self indulgent yawn. He shook himself. He must stay awake! No use. His efforts were in vain. The power of sleep overtook him and he fell into a fitful slumber. His unkempt, dark beard and full mustache fluttered slightly in the breeze produced by his deep even breathing. In fact, the elegant surroundings clashed sharply with the scruffy appearance of George Bertram Potter, BA, MA, U.C. Berkeley Class of '82.

The hospital quiet was broken only by the soft chiming of the call bell and the whisper of crepe soled shoes as nurses scurried along the corridor outside.

Suddenly, an unexpected sound jarred him awake. His magazine started to slide from his lap and he made a grab for it, then sleepily spread the centerfold across his knees. A voluptuous Miss April offered him a sultry smirk. He was about to give her a groggy grin in return, when he was startled by the sound of someone clearing his throat, and realized he was no longer alone. George peered over the edge of the centerfold and focused his eyes on a puddle of light on the plush carpet nearby. Standing in the puddle was a pair of very shiny, very green, patent leather shoes.

The remarkable shoes impelled him to look further. He allowed his eyes to travel upward, where he next took in sharply creased, bright green trousers, followed by a smartly tailored matching vest and suit coat. Then a pale green shirt came into view, adorned with a green-on-green polka-dot tie. The tie was held precisely in place by an enormous, glittering, green-jeweled tie tack.

Finally, his eyes came to rest on the most extraordinary face he'd ever seen! The pointed, bright red-orange beard went perfectly with a halo of flame-colored hair. the face was wreathed in a merry smile and the twinkling green eyes were the same hue as the mans dapper, three-piece vested suit. His eyes were separated by a pointed nose that turned up slightly at the end. The trim little man was rather short, thought George; less than five feet tall.

The two men studied each other silently. George couldn't take his eyes off the amazing little gentleman. The man in green continued to smile as he surveyed the graduate student in the chair. He raised an eyebrow and said to himself, So this is our candidate? He could see he had his work cut out for him. The young mans disheveled appearance wasn't very encouraging.

At last the little man broke the strained silence.

“Good morning, George Potter,” he said softly, with just the hint of an accent.

George was naturally surprised the bizarre little fellow knew his name and stammered. “Who...who are you?!”

Little Red Beard drew himself up to his full height and made a slight bow.

“I am Oberon, the Good Fairy,” he said proudly.

George bristled and growled at the man in green, “A fairy, eh? Buzz off man. I’m not interested!”

“No, no, George,” said the stranger with a high piping laugh. “You misunderstand my meaning. I am the real Good Fairy. We’re sometimes called leprechauns”

This was too much for George. “Oh, come on now!” he scoffed. “There’s no such thing!” Then all of a sudden a small chill went through him. He’d just noticed something else about his visitor. The red-bearded man cast no shadow. Stranger still, this Oberon character seemed to create his own light. A mysterious aura of green radiance shimmered about him. George blinked his eyes and rubbed them. He ran a hand through his hair and scratched the back of his neck where the hair had begun to rise.

Impossible! Maybe he had been studying too hard. Yes, that was it. And he decided he’d better have his eyes examined in the morning.

The little man’s smile faded and his face registered disappointment. “You mortals! We offer you the world and still you doubt us. I suppose you want proof?”

George said nothing, but was even more perplexed when the little man reached for his inside jacket pocket and withdrew what looked like a golden pointer, one of the collapsible kind. The strange little fellow extended it to its full length and made a few practice passes through the air above George’s head. The tip of it sparkled and gave off a strange greenish light. Finally, the leprechaun turned the tip downward and touched the paper image of the Play-Girl-of-the-Month, who lay well exposed in George’s lap.

George watched with fascination, and gave a start when the buxom young lady stretched her arms, yawned, and looked up at him with such a come-hither glance, he blushed. Since George hesitated to join her between the satin sheets on which she lay, the delightful creature reached up with her tiny hand and touched his cheek. Still he didn’t move, so she gave his cheek a tweak. He flinched slightly and she reached up and kissed him tenderly. Oberon the Good Fairy, watched all this impatiently. At length he waved his wand again, and with that, the nude girl returned to her page and two dimensional form.

George continued to stare in awe at the magazine. His mouth hung open.

Suddenly George scowled at the leprechaun. “Now hold on a darned minute! You’re messing with my mind. That was a very clever trick, but I think you’re nothing but a hypnotist!”

Oberon groaned inwardly, Why are some mortals so skeptical? At first glance, he’d hoped for an easy victory, But appearances can be deceiving. Initially he’d seen only a scruffy student sitting before him. One who seemed to have none of the requisites of world leadership. He smelled clean enough, but looked rather shoddy. Yes, Oberon had at first decided, a genuine hippy in patched jeans; and at first glance seriously lacking in the brains department. Still, he’d read the committee’s spy report. and Potter’s brilliant master’s thesis. Presumably, hidden in the deep recesses of the young man’s rough

exterior was a heart and mind filled with grand ideas and potent emotions. It was the ultimate goal of Oberon and his fellow beings to help bring those internal forces to the surface and project them to the world. That would come later. This initial visit with the candidate was merely to show him anything is possible with a little push and extra will power. Just now he'd caught a promising glimpse of the young candidate's true colors in his extraordinary blue eyes. He'd been warned this George Potter was more than usually rational, realistic and logical--potentially a tough nut to crack. Oberon realized two powerful wills now filled the room. The leprechaun only hoped he was up to the challenge. He had to win. The subject must accept the first wish or the game was over.

Close your mouth, George," snapped Oberon. "It's time to get down to business."

George looked up and clapped his mouth shut.

"Do you believe I am who I say I am, George?!" Oberon demanded.

"Sorry, I'd like to believe...I really am trying...but..." stuttered the student.

The leprechaun sighed a resigned sigh, "Well, at least you're making an effort, I guess this is as good a time as any to explain why I'm here."

George nodded uncertainly as the little man continued.

"George, have you ever wondered why it is, every few years, a unique human being makes an appearance on earth? Someone, who by sheer will and personality, is able to change the course of history?"

George furrowed his brow and shrugged his shoulders

"Surely you don't think it was mere chance that produced Alexander the Great, Elizabeth I, Napoleon, Winston Churchill, Abe Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mao Tse-tung, Gandhi, et cetera, ad nauseum. The list goes on and on, but I think you get the idea." He could see a vague glimmer of understanding come into the still dubious young man's eyes.

"You see, George, it's a little game we Good Fairies play. When it gets dull here on earth, we like to stir things up. Every once in a while, just for the fun of it, we select someone. Our candidates are carefully screened. They must meet certain qualifications." He waited for this to sink in, then pointing a finger at George, he said very positively,

"This time, George, we've selected...YOU!"

Again George's jaw began to dangle in disbelief.

"Here's how it works," continued the man in green. "We grant you three wishes. I'm sure you've heard that one before. Whatever you want, though we sometimes make a suggestion or two." Oberon, the leprechaun warmed to his subject as he saw excitement begin to show in George's face. "Then we just sit back and see how you turn out. That's the best part of the game. You can imagine the wagering that goes on back home. It's a gamble. Oh, we've come up with some real lu-lu's, That damned German paperhanger was a source of great embarrassment to us. All in all, though there have been some outstanding successes!"

"Are you really for real?" squeaked the graduate student.

You said you'd at least try to believe, George," admonished Oberon.

"I've tried...but it's all so unbelievable!"

Concerned that he might lose this young man, and thereby lose the wager, he resignedly continued his sales pitch.

“Listen, George, and this is important! The way we play our game is crucial. You do get three wishes, but to make the game more interesting, the rules committee instructs us to dole out the powers one at a time. Surely, you can see how this adds to the suspense.”

George nodded vaguely.

Oh brother! groaned the leprechaun to himself. Then he continued. “Tonight you get your first wish, Then, after this meeting, I will show up periodically to grant the other two. Get the picture?”

Still not totally convinced, George grunted in assent.

“The rules committee also retains the right to revoke the remaining wishes if our candidate becomes difficult or causes trouble, as in the case of the aforementioned dictator. Also, if necessary, they may suggest a wish, if the chosen fails to come up with something. You must see how all this could make the game more exciting for both the candidate and the folks back in Neverneverland”?

George replied, “I guess....”

Hoping he was finally getting through to his subject, the leprechaun made a final plea.

“George, this is the chance of a life time! Don’t pass it up!”

Fearing ostracism by the committee or lost points in the game if he failed, the good fairy gestured desperately toward the centerfold still draped over the young man’s lap.

In his exhausted state, George finally decided the only way he was going to get some peace was to give in to the bizarre little man’s unbelievable arguments. Then, maybe this Oberon character would leave him alone.

“Okay...Okay. What do I have to lose?” he murmured giving up and giving in.

“Nothing”, agreed the relieved Oberon, “and you have so much to gain! Now”, he urged, “ How about that first wish?”

Still pretty sure he’s dreaming, George thought for a moment before answering.

“Well...face it. I’m a poor starving student. I had to hock the VW to get Lydia into this snooty hospital.” He blushes. “And though I love the heck out of Lydia, we’re not even married. The rent is way overdue on our little dump, and now, with a growing family, we need a bigger place.” He paused and cleared the fog from his voice. “If any of this madness is possible, I guess my first wish has to be money. I’m not greedy, but a few thou right now would sure come in handy.”

Though Oberon cringed at the young man’s stubborn doubt that fairies exist, he came back with, “Wealth, yes, that’s usually the first wish.” He waved his wand over George and some sparkles slid down the young man’s cheek. Though he felt the tingle, he really didn’t feel any different. Perhaps riches had to grow on one.

“Well, George, that’s your first wish. We’ll meet again. How soon depends on you.”

Oberon eyed the young man in the chair and wondered just what sort of choice he and his brothers had made. He knew the human spirit often contains that elusive spark of greatness. It lies hidden within the deep recesses of the mind. Though it may yearn to break free, it’s usually stifled by life’s petty responsibilities or destroyed by everyday frustrations. All it really needs is a little encouragement. Oberon and his brethren had furnished the first measure of fuel, now with any luck, they could ignite their candidate with the prime ingredient--Opportunity! The Good Fairies planned to put George’s



political and language skills to good use later, but wanted to have a little fun with him first.

Oberon concentrated his extraordinary mental powers on his subject.

“George, I read in your thoughts that your only concern is for your Lydia and the boy-child who is going to enter this mad world in...” The leprechaun checked his green-glowing, digital watch. “...in exactly five minutes and twenty seconds.”

George caught the Good Fairy’s meaning and beamed from ear to ear.

“A boy? Oh boy!” He yelped.

“Yes, a boy,” Then a thought apparently struck the amazing Oberon. “Oh...before I forget. You are going to come into a wee bit of money almost immediately. When you do, your common sense will dictate you only spend it for the welfare of your new family. Use the money wisely, George, but don’t be afraid to take a little gamble.”

“So, that’s it. Good-by, George and good luck!” the little man in green concluded, as he waved the wand one last time over the young man’s head.

This time George’s eyes became heavy and his head bent forward as he fell into a deep sleep. He seemed to float in the darkness for a long time. Then a blinding light cut through the black--a bright spotlight. The light was followed by a whole panorama of sights and sounds that came sweeping through his mind: A voice singing a clear high note; roaring, screaming applause; banners waving; crowds cheering. The visions went on and on, though they may have been only moments in actual time.

## TWO

The dream-pictures and voices danced and leaped through his brain, until another sound violated his sleep. It came from far outside the fantasy world in which he swam. Somewhere, in the distance, someone was calling his name.

“Mr. Potter! Mr. Potter, please wake up!”

It was a long way back, but George finally roused himself and looked into a vaguely familiar, friendly face. The mass confusion of the preceding hours came back to him: The panic stricken moment when Lydia announced she was in labor; the fear they’d never make the University clinic in time,; and their last minute dash to this high class private hospital. There was the instant regret when the night clerk turned out to be the reincarnation of the Wicked Witch of the West, who refused them asylum without a deposit, while Lydia moaned in pain. A moment of inspiration had prompted George to offer the pink slip to his old VW. The crone had practically cackled with malevolent glee as she accepted it, then grudgingly called the nurse who now smiled so warmly down at him.

“Yes...y--es. Lydia?” George croaked. “How is she?...Th...the baby?”

“Your...um...ah...wife is fine, and you are the father of beautiful eight pound boy,” smiled the nurse.

“A boy? Whoa!” breathed George.

George’s heart was so full of new-father pride he didn’t bother to correct his and Lydia’s marital status.

“Are they okay? May I see them now?!”

“They’re both fine--just fine.” the nurse thought for a moment before she continued. “Well, ordinarily I’d say you should let your...ah...wife rest. But she came through labor well. She’s a healthy girl and recovered quickly. I guess it’ll be all right if you don’t stay to long. Just take this hall to the end and turn left...room one forty-five.”

George missed her amused, slightly disapproving look as he thanked her. Resisting the impulse to run, he hurried down the hallway, quickly found the number and pushed open the door.

George entered the small room and saw Lydia sitting up, bolstered by pillows on the adjustable bed. She held a small creature in her arms who was sucking and smacking at her breast.

The soft light from the lamp fell across the bed and Lydia appeared to him like a vision; like a madonna in an old painting, all white and pure.

“Oh wow!” he exclaimed in a whisper.

Lydia looked up and smiled at him. “George, come and meet your son.”

George walked hesitantly, almost reverently to the bed and knelt beside it, without taking his eyes off the miraculous pair.

He gazed at the tiny creature she held--so shriveled and wrinkled and beautiful. The tiny fingers were clenched and the eyes were closed in secure ecstasy as he sucked. George’s own eyes misted over and Lydia could read his feelings. She took one of George’s hands and pressed it to her lips.

“Big George and little George, she whispered.

“Lydia,” he replied softly. “I love you so much!”

They stayed like that for a long time until the tiny boy-child finished his breakfast and fell asleep. The nurse came in and took the baby away.

George sat on the bed and Lydia took him in her arms as she had the baby. She kissed him and laid his head on her soft bosom.

Suddenly, he started to chuckle and Lydia squirmed uncomfortably. “George, stop that”

Your beard...it tickles. What’s so funny, anyway?”

“Oh, just a dream I had. One of those fabulous, incredible dreams that never come true.”

Distracted from what he was saying by her own thoughts, she whispered hesitantly.

“George?”

“Uh huh.”

“I hope you won’t be angry, but I didn’t know what else to do.”

“What’s that, Love?”

“Well, ah...I think we agreed that if the baby turned out to be a boy, we’d call him George, after you. That was okay, but I had to give a last name too...and, I...I gave him mine!”

George sat bolt upright and choked out. “Why Lydia?! Why did you do that?!”

He could see tears welling up in her eyes.

“We...we’re not married, and it’s legal to give the mother’s maiden name,” she sobbed.

“Now, wait a minute--married or not, our son's going to have my name, and besides...”

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

