

Leonard, born as Leroy, woke up rested and untroubled by his sins.

It was not a perfect morning however. His left shoulder ached slightly, and he detected a slight lump in the bed. He made a note to have it replaced.

Leonard made it a point to give away his mattresses at the first sign of trouble.

Rest for Hope was his fourth, and possibly final shelter. The first three had written such effusive thank you letters that he'd funded complete renovations.

Great for them, but then they no longer needed his used mattress.

Leonard was conscious that if his willpower gave out again there wouldn't be a shelter close enough to justify the cost of shipping his mattress to them. His mattresses would simply rot in landfills.

These thoughts fluttered on the edge of his mind, but they did not occupy it. They were a brief daydream as he got out of bed. Once he had wiped the sleep from his eyes he focused his brain on choosing between fuchsia ties.

As he stepped out onto his hovercraft, began his morning meditation. He needed the calm it brought because Kyle was going to be leading the morning meeting.

Leonard did not want his dislike of the man to taint their meeting. It would be unproductive and unfair.

Halfway to work, the craft chimed at him that his niece and nephew were three vehicles ahead on their way to school.

Leonard smiled to himself, and hit a few buttons.

Both his craft and theirs pulled out of the air lanes, and he charged at them.

They played bumper-cars all the way downtown, swooping around the vehicles stuck in their lanes. The kids loved it. For them it was a rare treat, usually associated with the circus, to be able to leave the travel lanes.

It was a privilege of the very rich, to own the sky.

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"You know everyone thinks you're an asshole for wearing that," said Harrison, the voice of reason.

The elevator door closed on them and Leonard examined his reflection in the pristine steel.

His eye went directly to his purple-green tie. It was garish, but his unbuttoned suit jacket was elegant enough to offset it.

It was his equally expensive silk shirt was that Harrison was referring to. In bold block letters, slightly obscured by the tie read the words:

**Take This Job and Stick It!**

It was the design he'd worn every day for the last eight years.

Two years ago Harrison, then a junior executive working for a different firm, had said those same words, "Everyone thinks you're an asshole for wearing that" to him in the same elevator.

Leonard had hired Harrison, his tired morals and all, and the quip had become something of a morning ritual.

Harrison was extremely talented, but unsettled in the world. He was good at his job, and felt guilty about it, so he sought redemption. His conscience was constantly trying to reconcile his success with the greedy and unjust world he saw around him.

Harrison's moral compass kept him from lashing out randomly, but it ensured that he lashed out.

Leonard preferred that it be done on his behalf.

Occasionally Leonard found himself hoping that Harrison was covertly working on an underhanded plan to bring down their whole enterprise. But try as he might, he couldn't find any evidence of it.

They made small talk for a while.

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They were early for the meeting, and so Leonard took a moment to survey the room around him.

In hallways and lunchrooms, junior executives often suggested to each other that Leonard didn't like meetings. They whispered that he had a tendency to nod off and miss details. This was an exaggeration; Leonard rarely fell asleep in meetings. If he stumbled into meeting that he did not think he brought value to, he simply left.

But the rumors contained a grain of truth. Leonard didn't focus on the minutiae.

He monitored the tempo of the meetings. He listened for the overall tone as much as what words were said. To him, meetings were symphonies, and the individual solos were only sporadically meaningful.

Leonard did not always watch the details, he told himself, because he did not need to. He had done his work when he crafted the bylaws and memos that the company was founded on. The details were the trees and he was interested in the biosystem.

The chairs everyone sat in were comfortable, because he had written a memo two years earlier after encountering a chair without sufficient lumbar support.

The agenda for the meeting was on a screen in front of him, because he had dictated that all meetings have agenda's. Improvisation was admirable, but chaotic unplanned jamming was best left to rehearsals, not the main stage.

This was a meeting of the board of governance. Its details were dictated the mission statement. Including two of Leonard's favorites:

- **Do no more evil than necessary**
- **Profitability first, \_\_\_\_\_, Growth third.**  
(Second place is reserved for giving profitability room to breathe.)

The first point kept people like Harrison in the room, but had a loophole big enough to leave him in constant doubt. It affected the tenor of every meeting, because it controlled the businesses they were in. It dictated the entities they dealt with and the kind of soybeans they fed to schoolchildren. In good years investors vilified them for their adherence to it. When the cycle turned and politicians began casting about for scapegoats, they were lauded for their vision and forethought.

If the first point controlled the mind of the cooperation, the second controlled its body. It controlled its size, growth and management philosophy. Everything else had to adapt to this dictum. Despite all Leonard's many clarifying memo's, it was rarely understood, but it had led to a giant sprawling multi-headed beast of a company.

Analysts and mid-level managers went mad to when they realized that they still provided support for USENET software simply because it eeked out a small but consistent profit margin, as long as no managerial resources were used on it.

So none were.

Their inability to fully resist a tendency for growth explained why the boardroom was the largest of any of their competitors even if most of the members were yes-men to the chair, Mick.

Kyle led the meeting and they zipped through the first few agenda items.

From the steady hum of the meeting, Leonard could tell that the agenda had been personally crafted by Mick. The first few items were designed to give the room confidence in itself. It was a masterpiece of management.

Why had Mick taken the time? Leonard thought to himself. No answer sprang to mind, so twenty minutes into the meeting, with Kyle's voice droning on in the background, Leonard opened his eyes and looked down at the agenda.

There Leonard saw something that annoyed him. Agenda item 5 contained the words "hostile takeover."

Harrison met his gaze with concern.

It was not the takeover that concerned him. That happened every year or two.

Leonard was annoyed his name was not next to that agenda item. Mick and Leonard had not spoken familiarly in years, but he still expected a heads up on items like this.

Mick knew that Leonard never read the agenda.

Interrupting Kyle's explanation of South Asian monetary fluctuations, Leonard said, "I move that we skip to agenda item number 5."

Mick looked up from the table, as if to challenge him. He disliked deviations from the agenda.

But Kyle had been waiting for this, and couldn't resist.

"If you insist," said Kyle. "Agenda item 5 is a minor incursion by Northern Passageways United. Johnston, a member of my team spotted it. We don't have many details yet, but we should know more soon.

"I'd like to put Johnston in charge of it, as a reward for noticing it. She would work under my direct supervision of course.

"If you look at table 6.A you'll see that the scenario's in the upper left quadrant will require all rapid action, so I'm asking the board for permission to move laterally if needed. Consolidation to free up capital..."

As Kyle spoke, Leonard had eyes only for Mick, who met his gaze with a sad smile.

Leonard scratched his left ear with his right hand.

He watched Mick carefully for the corresponding signal, the code that would tell Leonard things were not as they appeared. That he should trust him.

It did not come.

“Has my position been eliminated from the company?” Leonard asked aloud, again speaking over Kyle.

The room was suddenly very quiet. Nobody met anyone else’s gaze. Except Mick. Mick’s eyes never left Leonard.

Kyle blinked, took a breath, and stepped boldly into the fray “I hope I haven't offended you. I think you misunderstand my intentions. Your expertise in offensive strategies is valuable, but this particular attack involves finical quadruple backed denotative exchange hybrids that my department is uniquely suited to...”

“Shut up” said Leonard. And he let a small smile play on his lips. It was not a sad smile.

“Mick, do you back him in this?” asked Leonard.

“I think it up to the board to determine what is best for the company as a whole Leonard” said Mick calmly.

Leonard did not have to look at the board. If Mick was content to leave it to the board, then Leonard already knew how the song would end. He didn’t need to hear how they got there.

Leonard realized that he could no longer bring value to this meeting, so he left.

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Leonard’s niece Clarissa was a dark soul. Leonard had hired her from her hospital bed, the morning after her stomach was pumped. The job kept her out of trouble during the day.

She stared at a computer screen in front of his office, wearing an aggressive corset with steel accessories. The skulls were all smiling.

Leonard said, “I'm taking an official leave of absence. I'd like to leave you in charge while

I'm away."

At first, Clarissa thought he was teasing her. But she was quick and it didn't take her long to realize that he was serious, even as she protested that she was still working on her GED. Leonard assured her that she would be compensated appropriately.

He warned her that might be dangerous. He invited her to move into his office. He reminded her that any deal his enemies offered would be to her ultimate detriment. Everything would run itself and she should not agree to any changes. They were all liars and sharks.

She rolled her eyes as if to say, "aren't all men?"

He gave her a set of earplugs.

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Leonard was deeply saddened that it had come to this. The sense of betrayal was deep, and tore at wounds that had thought had long since scabbed over. He went through his deep breathing exercises and strove to adopt an attitude of acceptance.

If there was a silver lining, it was that his preparations had not all been in vain. As he walked out of the building he could hear the words:

**"Take this job and shove it!"** being sung from every speaker, on every floor of the high-rise. The music rang out from every computer monitor, every alarm system, every speaker in every hallway, every room, in the building.

He had 43 versions of the song prepared, including 7 unreleased originals that he had commissioned for the occasion.

Their first barrier to stopping them would be technical. They would find the computer system locked behind codes that were impossible to crack except through brute force. Leonard had his fingers crossed that they would be forced to need to divert resources from one of the super-computers.

When they crossed that threshold they would find legal notices in place. They would need a court order to stop it, and his lawyers should tie them up for at least another day.

All in all, he estimated it would be at least a day before they could do anything about it. Other, smaller surprises were in store for them as well. Screensavers, agenda items, all emblazoned with the same immortal words.

**“Take this job and shove it!”**

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Leonard entered an empty home. His mattress had been replaced. He sat on his couch and stared out over the cityscape.

His sigh was the thing tears are made of.

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The woman across the table wore a purple ringed necklace and a serious expression. She was openly skeptical of Leonard, but nice about it.

She said, “If we do as you suggest, Bates Corp would, in all probability, make a mere 13% return on our investment.”

“Perhaps more” said Leonard calmly.

“Meanwhile we would cause your former employer to lose their bid for the Antarctic frontier waveforms. This would devastate their stock price, and likely ruin our relationship with them for the foreseeable future.”

Leonard nodded. “Which could net you even more profit, if you wanted it to.”

She made a face to indicate that she was not convinced.

At the other end of the long imposing conference room, the steel door burst open. Harrison strode in as if he owned the place, an assistant chasing after him.

“Please excuse my tardiness,” said Harrison, “I am with Leonard.”

“No he’s not,” said Leonard.

There was a brief commotion, during which Leonard kept his gaze carefully focused on the impressive view of the sea, visible through the large glass window.

Ultimately, Ms. Yarlow allowed Harrison to stay.

“Any chance you’re here to take me up on my offer?” ask Ms. Yarlow. “We’d love to have you join us.”

“Afraid not. As I said, I am here as second chair to Leonard.”

“He’s not with me,” said Leonard, still staring out the window. This turn of events worried him, as it always did when others took risks on his behalf.

Leonard felt his power came from his wiliness to stare oblivion in the face and not blink. It was not a path he wanted to lead others down. Harrison had a reputation and future to protect.

Leonard thought he saw a dolphin splashing in the water.

“Well then Harrison, your timing couldn’t be better,” said Ms. Yarlow.

“Yes it could,” said Leonard. Everybody ignored him.

“I was just about to reject Leonard’s proposal,” said Ms. Yarlow.

“No she wasn’t,” said Leonard.

She continued “His proposal makes sense from a business perspective, and on that count I was inclined to do as he suggested. But there are dangerous holes in the picture he paints. He wants us to turn a profit at the expense of the company he claims to have be ‘on leave’ from. I’m suspicious of his motives, but I’m even more concerned that I can’t find any record of him having any official standing in your company at all.”

“My name won’t appear on the filings, but if you look...” said Leonard.

Even Harrison appeared slightly shocked at this revelation, but he shook off his confusion and did what he always did.

Harrison smiled his winning smile. He leapt up onto the overly long sleek table. His shoes thumped loudly as he landed. Ms. Yarlow looked suitably shocked.

Harrison had not shaved that morning, and his eyes dashed around wildly. He resembled nothing so much as the handsome troubled genius he was. His reflection shined up underneath him. His voice, just above a whisper, carried with dramatic urgency.

“You can trust Leonard. Leonard is the rainmaker, the advisor behind the king. Do you remember the YPB infrastructure crash almost a decade ago? How the windfalls everyone thought would last at least another decade came crashing down, creating a resurgence in open-source alternatives that flooded the market so rapidly that nobody except the Triad Alliance has made any money off them since?”

Ms. Yarlow nodded.



“Did you notice how the crisis forced us to re-hire Mick after he’d been booted off the board?” asked Harrison.

Ms. Yarlow nodded dutifully. This was all common knowledge.

“Well that was the last time Leonard quit. When he wants to go back, they will take him, but now as then, everyone who works with him during the lost weekend is bound to profit.”

Ms. Yarlow looked at Leonard with new eyes.

“Is nobody else going to comment on how absurd you look up there?” asked Leonard.

Harrison got off the table. He did not look chagrined.

Ms. Yarlow said, “So has Mick been let go again? I think I would have heard about that.”

“No, Mick is the one who betrayed me this time,” said Leonard. “But he’ll see the error in his ways. He always does. Eventually.”

Ms. Yarlow made a few more attempts to hire Harrison away before finally agreeing to Leonard’s the provisional plan.

Leonard knew they would in the end. They had too much money to not take the risk.

Afterwards he took Harrison to lunch and threatened to fire him if he ever did anything like that again.

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Leonard was bone tired by the time he got home, but still cautious. He checked the piles of dust he’d left in the entryway, they remained undisturbed.

His phone rang.

“Sir, they are on the move. I fear the worst.”

“Thanks for the call. I will take care of it.”

Leonard hung up on Roberson and called Clarissa.

Clarissa’s voice was slightly panicked, “Hey! I’ve been trying to get in touch with you. I know you said not to do anything, but the southeast office is practically rioting in the streets.”

“It’s probably a trap,” said Leonard. His voice softened momentarily as he thought about his first management crisis. “But check with Roberson or Carlie. If you get independent confirmation feel free to do whatever you want to appease them. We have the budget for it.”

“That’s not all...”

“Now’s not the time I’m afraid. Do me a favor and put me on cam and turn your monitor to face the doorway. No time to explain.”

She did as he asked. She was smart and knew better than to ask questions when she heard the phrase ‘no time to explain’.

As a result, Leonard’s face was there to greet the man in the dark suit when he entered the room. Leonard did not recognize the face, but knew he was one of Kyle’s lackey’s. They all had the same haircut.

“Do I need to unplug you, or will you go away on your own?” asked Haircut, inviting himself to sit.

“If I could stand violence I would have you shot in the kneecap by now” said Leonard. “A show of escalating force to keep you off guard.”

“Scared she might sell you out?” asked Haircut.

“I would never!” said Clarissa.

“If I thought that was the extent of your plans I wouldn’t have bothered to even cam in,” said Leonard. “But I’ll tell you what, I don’t want her to even have to hear your offer. I don’t want the consequences on her conscience. So I’ll double my counter-offer if you keep your eyes on me and leave her out of it.”

“You have nothing I want.”

“I can keep you from losing your career over this.”

“You don’t even work here anymore you arrogant prick” said Haircut, his voice rising slightly. “But I’ll let you listen in as I explain what will happen if she doesn’t do what we want.”

Leonard sighed. He’d been so slow, he thought he’d have another day at least before it came to this. He’d lost this round. “I hate wasting this on you,” he said as he hit a green button on his console. A dart flew out from the front of his old desk. It hit Haircut in the

upper thigh. Haircut yelled and then started slurring his words, before collapsing.

Clarissa let out a scream as well. It took Leonard almost five minutes to calm her down. Once he had, Leonard explained his plan for dealing with the body.

“So Clarissa, tell me what you are going to do again now?”

“I’m going to open the locked cabinet behind the painting, and retrieve the envelope marked ‘Offer #6’. I will place it in his pocket and then call the police and tell them he triggered security protocol 16.7. They will take him away and he won’t come back”.

“Exactly right.”

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The team operated out of the least romantic place imaginable: a community college. Leonard met them in an unused classroom. As a show of solidarity they all sat in small blue plastic chairs that made it impossible to take anything seriously.

“So let me get this straight. You want to buy out our waveform research and give it to the public domain?” said a woman with long blonde hair and deep green eyes. The five other members of the team nodded supportively.

“Almost. I want to pay you to release it directly into the public domain. If I hold onto it for even a second I become subject to regulations that don’t affect you.”

“Your offer is more than five times what anyone else is offering, what do you see that they don’t?” asked a serious young man.

A shadow crossed the doorway. In walked a woman in her sixties. She wore a dark blue blazer and a familiar countenance. The team stopped meeting Leonard’s eyes.

“Yes. Please tell me. Why *are* you trying to buy them out?” asked the woman.

“F.Lisck?” asked Leonard.

“Close. I represent a breakaway conglomerate, Y.qel.” said the woman.

Leonard turned to the team. They all looked slightly ashamed. He pulled out a folder and handed them each a sheet of paper.

“If you want to bring Y.qel into the loop one of you will have to share your handout. I didn’t bring extras. But I don’t mind.

“Know what I like about chess? It is a game of perfect information. I always know have everything I need to in order to make the wisest move. I almost never do, but I have nobody to blame but myself. If you look at the charts here you will see my interpretation of events.

“I’m investing in waveforms because I want to see the technology move forward.

“As a bonus however, I know that Bates corp has already moved to cut off the Eastern seaboard. And none of the other players will sell to the Jorgon states. Those wounds are deep.”

“That will send your old employer’s stock into a freefall.” Said the Y.qel representative.

“The effect will be doubled if waveform alternates start appearing the open market. It will reduce startup-costs and the increased news coverage alone is bound to kick start research. Someone is bound to crack the code.”

“And if we buy them first?” asked Y.qel.

“My employer can’t take Bates head on, but once they see what’s happening they will want to invest in waveform alternates. Stock prices aside, they are still cash rich, and heavily invested in the Western prospects. Anything that’s not already resolved when this starts ... well your strand, and your company, will go into their coffers and never be seen again.”

Everyone was looking at him again. Leonard hated that. Only the mysterious representative seemed to understand what would happen next. That was just as well, the world of corporate maneuvering was boring.

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Leonard was by nature a cautious man. The community college was only one of a number of groups he had approached. Losing the secret of the darts in his office was unfortunate, but he had more tricks up hidden in his desk.

He was protected by an interlocking series of the most advanced security systems available. They were backed by some of the least advanced security systems.

So when the authorities sent a signal designed to force Leonard’s craft to pull over, it did not immediately comply. Instead it woke Leonard up from his nap and asked him if he wanted to resist arrest. If he waited too long they would probably open fire on him.

He allowed himself to be pulled over at the docking station.

Leonard relaxed slightly when he saw the expression on the officer's face. Whatever he was after was routine to him. Nothing Leonard was worried about was routine.

The officer's expression changed suddenly as he looked past Leonard's craft.

They were both too late to do anything about the large red metal object that crashed viciously into the officer's docked craft. The hit craft flew forward like a billiard and crashed into the equipment that monitored the station. Alarms flashed.

Leonard tried to start his craft, but everything was on lockdown. He reached for the manual override as smoke started pouring in to put out the fire. Leonard tried to resist the effects of the gas released by the docking stations security protocols, but he soon fell into unconsciousness.

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Leonard awoke to sounds that resonated with the deepest parts of his soul. He opened his eyes to lights and colors that brought him unadulterated joy.

The emotional experience was so profound that it took his brain a few moments to recognize that he was also watching two young men in masks play a video game.

Leonard noticed that he was seated on a stool and chained to the steel bars of a window frame.

Before he could decide on a reaction, the man on the left, the one who had shaved his head, the one with the large eagle tattoo, the scary one, came over to him. He did not have far to walk. It was all one room, and the whole space was barely the size of an average suburban bedroom.

"I don't know who you pissed off man, and I don't want to know. Here's how this goes. You keep quiet and stay on good behavior, and all that happens is I keep your ass on lockdown for a week or so. You don't see my face, you can't ID me. This safe house is clean and even if you point the cops back here it'll be burnt to a crisp as soon as I let you free.

"All you gotta do is not piss me off and we both get what we want"

Then to make his point, the man shot Leonard in the foot. Leonard howled in pain. The two men laughed.

Leonard never had a high pain tolerance, and he soon passed out, the sound of the gun ringing in his ears.

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When he awoke, the men were asleep. The men slept on cots on the other side of the room. There was no kitchen. Leonard allowed himself to cry quietly.

Sometimes, to distract himself from the overwhelming pain in his foot, he would focus on how his arms felt, being chained above his head while he slept. It was no use though, the foot hurt much more. He felt that they had bandaged it while he slept, but he didn't dare look at it.

To distract himself from his tears he tried to work out the details of what was happening.

Why was he still alive? Was there a chance they had screwed up the grab? Surely the docking stations had surveillance. Maybe someone was coming for him.

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He awoke to them playing the same game. And what a game... what an experience. The kidnapping may be worth it just to have had that moment of seeing it again from a new angle.

It was one of the most successful creations to ever hit the market; it remained raw enough, crazy enough, to ride that line between sublime beauty and pure chaos.

Lightening in a bottle.

He was dismayed to see they were playing version 3.75, but was glad they weren't playing version 4.0.

Not that it would matter for what he knew he had to do.

Leonard closed his eyes, and spoke, "Protocol run Bandanna, 4987909999 oh- niner, insert master disc lightshow God RA" he said.

The game stopped, flickered for a moment, and tremendous burst of light came out. A phoenix rose in the room.

"What the fuck is this man? This is awesome," said the masked man who was not the scary one. The one who wore a shirt. "Some kinda easter egg?"

Leonard chuckled. "Yeah, kinda like that. Take a step back and I'll show you something even better."

The two men stepped back, speechless.

Leonard said, "Voice mod, unleash sonic blast, calibrate 5223. Over-ride code 442423, power level 5 9ner."

And the two masked men went down. Electroshock.

Leonard used the game's connection to call for help.

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Mick came in at dawn, he always did. He claimed that he was at his most creative in the morning.

Mick came into his office to see Leonard sitting in his chair, his bandaged foot propped up on the desk.

"Leo, what the hell do you think you're doing?" exploded Mick. "Our stock is in the tank. We are going to have to lay off half the company just to stay afloat. Is there something wrong with you?..."

"As I lay... wait," said Leonard "I couldn't lay could I? I was chained the window..."

"As I stared at my bloody foot in that cell you let me rot in."

"I didn't put you in any kind of cell." said Mick, his voice controlled. "What are you talking about?"

"Kyle then" said Leonard. "Whatever. If you didn't know it was happening, you should have. But the cell is beside the point. My bloody foot is beside the point.

"What I realized in that moment is how much was lost at 3.5. It all went downhill at 3.5.

"With version 1.0 we captured lightening in a bottle you and I. We realized our dreams. We made a game that has undeniable authenticity and personality. Something that stands on it's own both as a sophisticated multimedia interactive experience and as a ragged expression of our core humanity.

"Oh shut up Leo. I don't want to hear this all again," said Mick staring something clear seeped out from the bandage onto his desk.

"With version 2.0 we managed to transform it again. Against all odds we cracked the code of truly dynamically generated content and got that right. We combined it with our

previous work to make something glorious. It's soul expanded to encompass the user's input on a deep level.

"But nobody wanted to sell it. The data transference was too high. So we rewrote the infrastructure of the Internet. We built an empire based on compassion and a service ethic just to make our game accessible. Remember when we had that passion?"

"With 3.0 we gave the entire world access to high quality delivery mechanism for our creation. And in the process, created whole new worlds of semantics, education, enlightenment... at free universal platform for information that surprised us with the innovation others could bring to it," Leonard's voice cracked slightly "All for free. We actually made the world a better place and made an artistic statement at the same time."

"I know" said Mick. "And you think with 3.5 I ruined it all. One of your fucking memos keeps 3.4 up and unchanged. It's even got it equal placement. If some people disagree with you and think what we've done since then is worth paying for it's their choice. Don't blame me for wanting to live in modern times. For not fetishizing the past."

Leonard ignored Mick and spoke over him. He knew in his heart Mick would never hear him again, but he spoke anyways. That's what he owed him. "The press always like to file us into slots. They claimed I brought the vision and you brought the technical expertise. You of all people should know it was never that simple.

"But with 3.5, you bought into the myth too.

"You and Kyle assumed that because I won't manipulate our stock prices up, that I didn't know anything about the market."

Mick actually turned slightly red and said "So instead you used it as a weapon to bring us to our knees!? It's not that I didn't think you could, it's that I didn't think you would!"

"Oh come off it. 'Bring us to our knees!' Don't be so melodramatic. We've lost most of our paper growth value, but that's just because analysts are idiots. Who cares what they think. Besides you bought Y.qel."

"Leo... the company is in shards. You can see that can't you? You did it. If you'd just let me monetize the infrastructure around the current editions... You can keep 3.4 pure, but a few small tweaks to the pay structure now would get people used to the idea. We can even set up some safeguards to give free access to the poor or whatever if it eases your conscience."

"I should shoot you in the foot for that." said Leonard. Mick blanched. Until the last line he had almost felt bad for Mick.



“Anyways, I just wanted to let you know, I’m back from my leave, so you can call your jackals off Clarissa.

“Oh, and FYI, I took care of the takeover attempt, so let Kyle know he’s fired.”

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Back at his desk Leonard found a handwritten note:

Dear Uncle,

I am glad to hear that you have returned.

Please consider this my letter of resignation, effective immediately.

I thank you for the opportunities you gave me. I know I sounded scared on the phone, but I was never harmed, and I agreed to help you.

But working here, I had plenty of time see what is done here in your name, and briefly in my name. Looking over your files made me realize the true human cost of all your maneuverings.

The people who worked for the companies you destroyed didn’t have the same choice. They didn’t choose to volunteer to help you, to sacrifice for you. They gave no consent. Looking at your files I see numbers...

I see numbers, but I know they are people. I can no longer be complicit in the destruction of countries and the economies of greed.

May you find forgiveness,

With love,

Clarissa

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Leonard sighed deeply. He wondered if Harrison was behind this.

He pulled up his screen to start working on a memo.

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