

Wednesday, November 2, 2005

### **0.3: Unreal (updated)**

Jack glanced through the tiny glass panel in the door. I hate it when he sits with his back to the window. I have no clue if he's busy or just staring at his desk...

Glancing around the room for clues, Jack noticed the red light on the phone cradle that indicated a call was in progress. He glanced at his watch, and the clock on Andy's wall. 3:47...if I'm going to be at the airport in time, I need to leave NOW. At that moment, Andy turned, nodded vigorously at the phone, made a brief statement, and pressed a button, terminating the call. Glancing at his door, he motioned Jack in.

"What can I do for you, slugger?"

Jack grimaced. He wanted to say "I hate it when you call me that.", but that wasn't the way one began a conversation with Andy Millicant. Especially not when you were about to ask him for a favor.

"Look, Andy, I've got an important family thing, and I need to leave early."

Andy pursed his lips and blew out a long breath. "Look, Jack, I've been meaning to talk to you...hey, come in and shut the door." As Jack did so, Andy motioned to the armless chair that sat across from him. "Have a seat, big guy."

Jack glanced nervously at his watch and sat. As he looked up from his watch, he noticed a look of...anger?...on Andy's face. The sarcastic voice in Jack's head chuckled dryly and whispered "Sorry, Andy. Does the fact that I have somewhere else I'd like to be diminish you in some way?" Jack smiled wanly and tried to ignore the butterflies in his stomach.

"What's up?"

"Well, Jack, I wanted to talk with you about the company's performance. You know things are a little tight right now?"

"Of course. Ever since I got those shares for 'sweat equity', you know I've gone over every quarterly and monthly status report with a fine-toothed comb."

"Yeah, yeah...that's right. Well, Jack, I spoke with the Board this morning -- in fact, just got off the phone with the Chairman -- and I'm afraid we're going to have to cut back resources in your department."

"You mean I'm going to have to fire someone, right? How many people?"

"Well, champ, that's the good news. You don't have to fire anyone at all!" Andy delivered this with a toothy grin, but there was a dark, hungry look in his eyes. "You're fired, Jack. Clean out your desk. You're still a partner, there's nothing I can do about that, but you've been a millstone around this company's neck for too long. Tiny and Mack will be sharing your duties."

Jack slumped backwards, poleaxed. "What?" he whispered faintly.

Andy's face shifted back to its usual cheerfully anonymous look. "No need to take it personal, champ. We're just having a bit of a rough spot, and had to cut some of the -- dead weight, if you will."

Jack leaned his elbows on his knees and put his head in his hands, gazing at the floor. "What?"

"You're fired, Jack. Hey, come on, don't act so surprised. We both knew this day was coming. You've been cutting back your hours -- only 85 last week! You know how things go around here, Jack."

Fight it. Jack snapped up straight, staring Andy right in the eyes. "You -- you can't fire me, Andy. I \*built\* this company! It's MY COMPANY."

"Hey, Jack, calm down. Look, the Board appreciates everything you've done, but -- well, we're going to be taking the

company in a different direction now, and we don't really need any of the 'old guard' hanging around, resisting change. And, hey, it's not like you haven't been compensated for your work. The investors paid you almost two million dollars."

"EVERY SINGLE PENNY of that has gone right back into the company and you KNOW it, Andy! Why are you doing this to me?"

Andy sighed and leaned forward, putting on his "earnest" expression. "Jack, I'm sorry, I wish there was something --" He held his hands apart, as though to indicate his helplessness. "Say, didn't you have some sort of emergency -- somewhere to be?"

Jack stood, his thoughts spinning. "Andy -- I --"

The hungry look came back to Andy's face. "Get lost, Jack. And don't let the door hit you on the way out." Andy turned his back to Jack and leaned back in his chair, whistling.

As he left Andy's office, Jack glanced at the clock on the wall. It read 4:15pm.

Posted by Ancient of Days in The End is Near at 15:40

I hope this doesn't reflect any real life events. I know Novell has been going through layoffs. . .

tee heeComment (1)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 16:11

Funny man.

While this IS based on a real-life event, it has nothing whatsoever to do with Novell.Comments (4)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 16:12

Awesome characterization. Great dialog.

Do it again.

And again.

And again.Comment (1)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 16:12

Not sure I can finish the entire story in only three posts...Comments (4)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 16:15

Re: Update

Sorry, forgot that you guys wouldn't know how much time had transpired during that conversation.

While it may seem like that half-hour went extremely fast, I'll just reiterate what I said in response to the Mad Giggler's earlier comment: This is based on a real experience, and it really CAN take a half hour to have a conversation like that....there's a lot of silence and staring.Comments (4)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 16:20

"No need to take it personal champ", great line! I just wanted to reach through the screen and grab his head and pull it down to my up-thrusting knee. I hate him.Comments (2)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 17:55

LOVE IT. Especially the first time you hit me with the "dark, hungry look" line...I could SEE it. Awesome. :)Comment (1)

Anonymous on Nov 2 2005, 22:28

Hey, how about putting in a time stamp during the conversation, to indicate how it is progressing allong, and when the pauses happen.Comments (2)

## Blog Export: Annals of the Homestarmy, <http://www.thehomestarmy.com/s9y/>

Anonymous on Nov 12 2005, 11:38

I'll see what I can come up with. Part of the problem is that I can't exactly be sure myself how that conversation takes that long...

:)Comments (4)

Anonymous on Nov 14 2005, 00:48