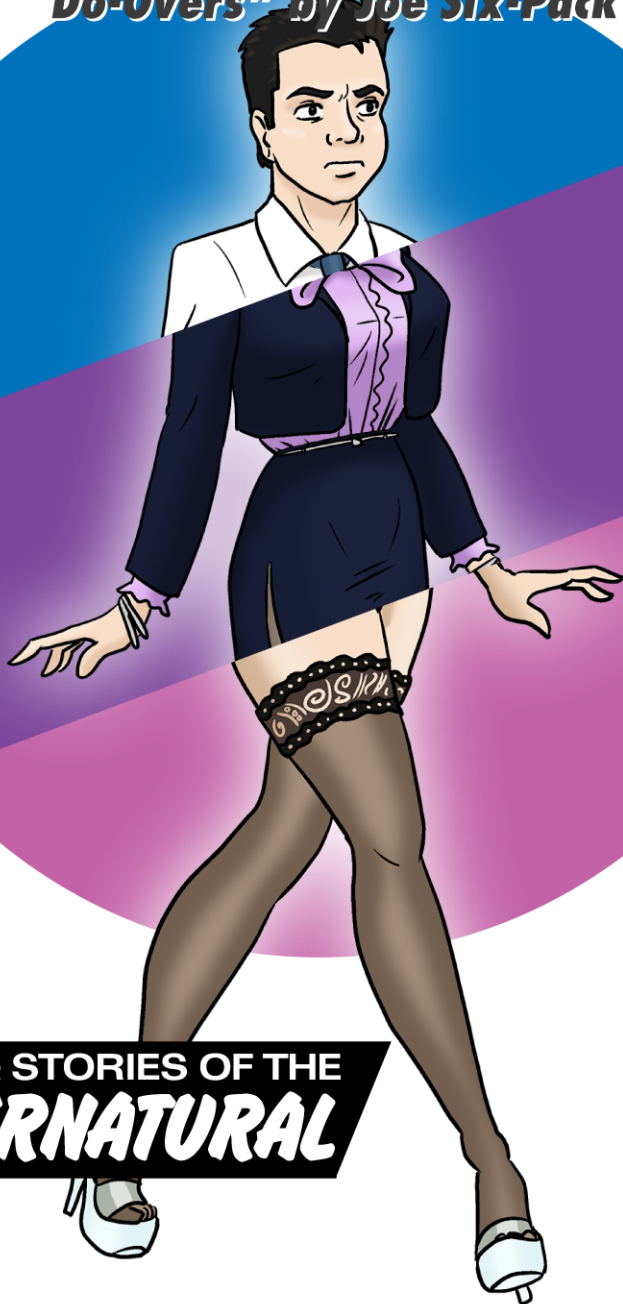


ADULTS ONLY

56 pages 18 illustrations

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?

"Do-Overs" by Joe Six-Pack



TRANSGENDER STORIES OF THE
SUPERNATURAL



J O E S I X P A C K

**A CHANGE
FOR THE
BETTER?**

“Do-Overs”

**Story & Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack
A Stories of the Supernatural Story**



2014 Digital Edition

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DO-OVERS

The dull, muffled murmur of a busy office on a Tuesday afternoon was like white noise. It could be both a comfort and a nuisance at the same time, depending on how you were feeling about work at any given moment. At this particular time, Evan Hardin regarded his job as a yoke around his neck, and the activity in the office was the sound of his continuing misery.

Still, that was nothing really new. He had been working at Crumpkin Financial for well over five years, right out college, and he had grown to loathe his job. He had expected to be on a rocket ride to the top of the company from the very first day he had started, but found the path to promotion a maddening exercise. Even simple recognition for a job well done seemed impossible. No matter how hard he tried, no matter how hard he worked, he couldn't get his superiors to acknowledge him. With every success he could claim, his triumphs were quickly shoved aside in favor of critiquing his deficiencies. With any win, he would find an unrelated failure pinned to him, even if he didn't deserve it. In his opinion, he never deserved it.

Evan had enough of this run-around, and his departure was going to come soon. At least as soon as he had the guts to go ahead and do it. Every time he told himself this was the last day, the security of a steady paycheck proved too much for him to give up.

It was about three, and around this time of day, everyone was waking up from the mid-day lull and wrapping things up in a whirlwind of typing, copying, printing and talking. The sound of the office would pick up for a while, before dissipating just before five, followed by blissful silence. As such, Evan was obligated to look busy as everyone else, so he didn't appear to be slacking off.

When he had first started his job, there had been little question of how hard a worker he was. He never missed deadlines, was in every weekend, returned email at lightning speed and never declined a phone call. Evan's ambition was grand, with the ultimate goal of a vice presidency within five years. But three years in, and Evan knew he had no shot at a real promotion. They juggled his title a few times, added a few "adjustments" to his paycheck, but he knew he wasn't even allowed near the corporate ladder.

Evan glanced up to see the reason he had been denied his chance, in the smirky, smug and self-satisfied countenance of Anderson Barnes, the VP in charge of the Mid-Town office. He had been singularly responsible for marking Evan down in his annual reviews, and was a one-man force for malice throughout the office.



“Pick it up, Hardin,” Mr. Barnes said, as he passed by Evan’s half-height cubicle. “Stop surfing the internet.”

Of course, Evan’s job was to use the internet to monitor news and information as it regarded the investment funds he was assigned to, but Mr. Barnes was blissfully unaware of that fact. Mr. Barnes somehow seemed to manage the office without any working knowledge of what his employees did or were supposed to do. That fueled Evan’s contempt for the man. What set fire to the fuel was that “Mr. Barnes” was clearly incompetent, maybe the least qualified man in the entire building.

“Let’s look alive!” Mr. Barnes continued, stopping to talk. “Let’s close the day out strong! Chop chop!”

All Evan could see was a boy walking around in an expensive suit meant for adults. He regarded Anderson Barnes as a child, or man-child, playing dress-up. He was pretending to be an executive like he was wearing a costume for Halloween. It was a sour punchline to the joke Evan’s career had become.

“Right,” Evan replied, with a well-deserved growling, contemptuous tone to his reply.

As minor – as nearly imperceptible – as Evan’s bad attitude was, it was still enough to cause Mr. Barnes to pick up on it. “Is there a problem here?” He asked.

That was another thing Evan hated about him. He loved to pick fights. He apparently lived for the opportunity to publicly challenge his employees and rub their noses in the fact that they dare not fight back.

“Just focused on doing my job,” Evan said.

“For God’s sake, Hardin, stop wasting company time! You have work to do, so *do* it!” Barnes reached over the wall and slammed the top down on his laptop. With that action, he terminated the six open messaging apps, and had just reset Evan’s browser, closing the dozen windows he had to keep open to monitor news feeds and stock activity. “Spending all day on that computer! You should be paying *us* to let you use the internet and goof around all day!”

Evan took a deep breath, just like his therapist had told him to do. Then he slowly counted to ten. He made it to three before he spoke up. “What can I do to help you, Anderson?” He said calmly, keeping his tongue from lashing out.

“Mr. Barnes!” The younger man sharply corrected. “I am your superior, and I run this office! And I believe I just told you the problem I have with you! Your job performance has been slacking off, and I’ve got a stack of bad reports about you on my desk a foot tall!”

Bullshit, Evan thought to himself. “My job performance has never slacked off, and if you have one bad report about me, I’d like to see it!” He had had enough.

The shock in Anderson Barnes eyes was priceless. He had never expected any kind of backtalk from one of his underlings, and this was simply not something he was prepared for. "I..." He began to say, his mouth opening and closing, expecting to speak, but without words. "You've got yourself a write-up coming!" He eventually said.

"So scared," Evan replied. That was a huge mistake, and he knew it, but his red-hot temper was in control right now. "You mean I might not get a promotion or a raise? Like I already never have?"

"You're asking for a reprimand!" Barnes shot back. "You goof off all day on your computer and then you have the gaul to..."

"What do you think my job *is*, exactly?" Evan shouted. "My job is to work on the internet! It's what I do! It's in my job description! That's my all my job is, you jackass!"

Barnes turned to the nearest person. "You're seeing this! A direct provocation! He's challenging my authority!" He turned to another member of the office. "This is insubordination!"

"Sir, please!" said Anderson Barnes' personal assistant. She came mincing out of her office in a tizzy, worried about her boss. She was a faithful Girl Friday, and was never more than a few feet from her superior. "There's a call for you!" She said, clearly lying to get Barnes into his office where he could calm down.

Evan couldn't help but give her a look. Her name was Sandie, and was by far the top subject of rumors in the office. Although at first glance, she appeared as prim as they came, seemingly beyond any nasty insinuating stories. She dressed in classic secretarial fashion, in a dark women's suit that clung tight to her body. Her pale blue silk blouse had a high, frilled neck that was buttoned up tight to keep prying eyes away. A flouncy, thin bow-tied ribbon was around her neck. Over that, she wore a small deep navy blue jacket that was only just long enough to cover the blouse.

Unfortunately, as conservative as it was, it could not hide the fact that Sandie was hiding two produce-quality melons under her top that grabbed men's eyes like a superconductive magnet. Underneath all that primness was the body of a centerfold, a pin-up girl and a porn star all wrapped into one. The pencil skirt accented her broad, curvy hips, and the hem ended just below the nub of her knees. A long, provocative slit in the skirt went almost all the way up to her waist, surely with the intention to make her perfectly sculpted legs be the centerpiece of attention, rather than her two biggest assets. With the jiggling, gelatinous globes she was hiding under that blouse, there was little chance of that.

Her lensless glasses and slicked, pulled-back blonde hair were another weak attempt to make her look like she hadn't been hired exclusively for the private, behind-closed-doors use of Anderson Barnes as a living sex toy. She gave the

game away by wearing the five-inch heels that had no place in a prudish business ensemble.

“Sir! They’re waiting!” Sandie yelped. In her haste, she ran right up to her employer and rammed right into him with her massive, pillowy breasts.

The action caused her blouse to pop right open, with a long-tortured and over-strained button flying off and ricocheting off a copier. For just one awkward, lingering moment, Sandie’s red, lacy bra and the round, perfect teardrops of warm flesh they held, were plain to see. Quickly, Barnes grasped the blouse shut with his hands.

“Hands-on management,” Evan quipped. How could he not?

Barnes was so angry, he started to tremble and his face went red. “You’re fired!” He shouted. “Get out of my office!”

Sandie collected the loose end of her blouse for herself and skittered away back to Barnes’ private office. As Evan watched her retreat, shaking that crazy plump butt of hers, he nearly missed what his boss had just said.

Barnes was not going to be ignored. “You have five seconds! You get out now, before I have the police arrest you for trespassing! Your job is terminated!”



Evan realized he had no other real option left to him. Unless he was prepared to defend a charge of assault for the next year or two, it was time to leave. He turned around, picked up his personalized mug, his jacket, and his favorite bobblehead doll off his desk and headed out the door. Barnes stood his ground, pointing to the door until Evan was all the way outside.

At least one thing had changed for the better, Evan thought to himself. You couldn't hear that dull, muffled sound of the office when everyone was shocked into silence.



The red mist in Evan's mind finally lifted a few hours later. By the time he was able to step back and reflect on what he had done, he was in his car, parked in the lot behind a local Burger King, with the passenger's side seat was covered in discarded oil-stained burger wrappers.

He bonked his head onto the steering wheel of his car, as he realized he was now unemployed in a rotten job market. He had but one job in his job history, and he had a feeling Barnes wasn't exactly going to give him a glowing recommendation.

Doing the math in his head, he had only enough savings to last for another month, and was going to have to get a job as soon as possible, if not sooner. He had woken up that morning as a dutifully employed financial industry professional. Now he was a jobless, useless blight on society. A "drifter," as his dad used to say.

He had sunk everything into his job. He hadn't made any friends in this city, even eschewing a serious relationship. Evan didn't want the distractions. He figured that ten years down the road, when he was an executive and secure in his position, he could build the friendship he was missing. When he was making bank at his new job, enjoying after-dinner drinks at the club with his pals, living in a classy upscale apartment and driving a Lambo, he'd have his pick of women.

Now he had nothing.

He checked the time and decided to head home to his apartment and get out of his shirt & tie. There was a game on tonight, and he wanted to go out for a beer and at least spend a few minutes forgetting the mess he had just gotten himself into. He would start his job search tomorrow.

It was almost kickoff time, so he sped his way through the streets, testing the limits of yellow lights at every intersection. The last thing he needed was for the guys at the bar to give him grief for being late. He wouldn't handle that very well at the moment.

He parked at his apartment building and ran up the stairs, undoing his tie as he went. Once he was inside, he tossed it into the garbage. Not that he was superstitious, but it certainly hadn't brought him any luck today, and he didn't want to wear it again.

Once he had rid himself of the dress shirt and changed into jeans and sneakers, he was headed out. There wasn't a second to lose if he was going to be on time. Grabbing his wallet and keys as he ran out, he was already telling himself to go easy on the spending tonight. He needed to stretch every last cent he had.



The game had actually just started by the time Evan was in his local sports bar, Slugger McGee's, but there was enough activity that he wasn't seen as he slipped inside.

"Evan!" Said Chris, the bearded burly man he only knew by his first name, "You almost missed the kickoff!"

"Wouldn't miss it!" Evan replied, pretending like he had been here the whole time.

Another man, in a threadbare flannel shirt over a ratty T slapped Evan on the back. "There's my man! The crew is all here!"

"Hey, Mike," Evan replied with a solid slap on the back. "Trevor made it too?"

Mike nodded. "He's in the can. He's been here for an hour already, the jerk."

Just as the words were spoken Trevor came strolling by, in his old gold shirt and khakis. "Already had a couple. You guys have some catching up to do," he said.

"Beers? Wings?" Evan asked. It was customary for them to rotate paying as they ordered for the group. It was his turn.

"I got the beers, Trevor got the wings – since we couldn't find you." Chris said, with a hint of disappointment.

"Oh," Evan replied, understanding that he had broken the code. "Let me get something, then. A little something extra."

"Go for it," Mike shrugged.

That sent Evan off to the bar, to peruse the food menu. It wasn't a very long list, with mostly wings, sauces and a couple of takes on grilled cheese sandwiches. But one thing did grab his attention.

"Just Desserts?" he said to the bartender, reading the one menu item he didn't quite understand.

“Huh?” The man behind the counter said, getting a look at the menu for himself. “Oh, yeah. That’s the name of the business.” He went back to filling some mugs. “New place. We just contracted with them to do our sweets.”

Evan “Well, uh... What do they have?” The menu said ‘selection changes daily.’

“Let’s see...” The man looked over to a spot behind the counter out of Evan’s sight. He picked up a small plate with a pastry on it and placed it on the countertop for display. “Cherry Do-Overs, says the label.”

It was a small triangular pastry with red gooey stuff coming out the sides. “I think that’s a Cherry Turnover.”

“The card says Do-Overs,” the bartender confirmed.

“Whatever,” Evan said. It was the only thing on the menu he was inclined to get, so that’s what he did. “Four of those,” he requested.

Back at the table he shared with his crew, the new choice didn’t get the warmest of receptions. “The fuck is that?” Trevor asked, looking at them with



his trademark disdain. His greasy brown hair and off-putting hipster mustache made him look all the more displeased.

“It’s what they had,” Evan said. “Fuck!” He said, realizing he had screwed up. That got Mike’s attention. Evan’s reaction was a little more intense than he would have expected. “Rough day at work?”

“Yeah, something like that,” he replied. That triggered all the things he was trying to forget.

In his mind, he was running over the events of that afternoon. *If only he could have controlled that dumb temper of his for one more minute*, he told himself, he’d still have a job.

Of course, if hadn’t been so stupid as to try and keep that job, he’d be in better shape. But he kept on working there, even when he knew that asswipe of an executive, Anderson Barnes, was eventually going to push him too far. The smart thing to do would have been to get a new job the moment Barnes had stepped into that office. He knew it was never going to work, so why did he stay?

Barnes was as incompetent a manager as he’d ever had to work with. From the very first day, it was clear he didn’t know what he was doing or what his employees did. It was also clear he didn’t care on both counts. Maybe Evan had some twisted sense of loyalty, that made him want to prove himself to his idiot boss. How man like that could even get to be a VP was a mystery he’d never solve.

How he could ever get that sexy secretary of his was a mystery too. Maybe it was the money. Maybe it was the power. All Evan knew was that he’d have killed to have a smoking hot woman like that by his side. With a girl like that, a guy might feel almost invincible.

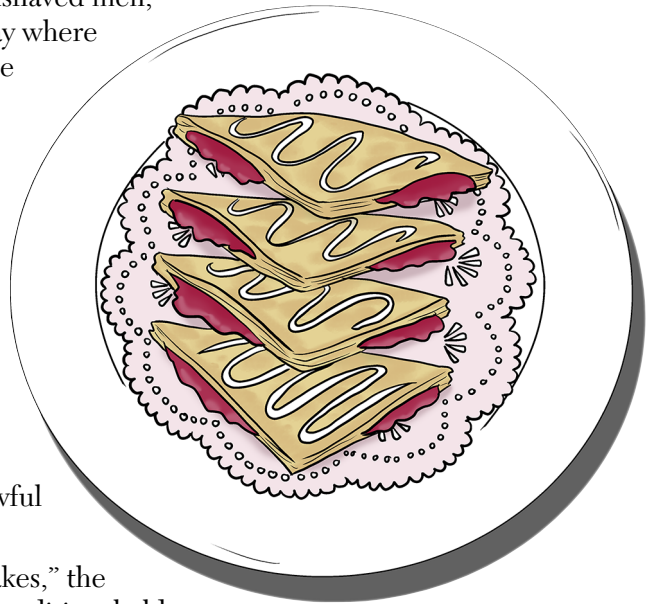
If only Barnes could have been just one degree nicer. Just one degree more human. Just a little bit better at his job. It wouldn’t have taken much to keep that job, to keep his employees happy. All Barnes needed to do was just show his employees a little bit of compassion, and a little bit of understanding. *Was there anything he could have done to make it better?* Evan asked himself. *Was it his fault?* Maybe he could have tried to work with Barnes instead of fighting him all the time. Evan sighed and took a sip of his beer. He had never been given the chance to show what he was capable of. That was what all he wanted. Just one chance.

However, it was pointless to think about it. That was now in the past and there was no going back.

Well into the fourth quarter, the turnovers – or “Do-Overs” – laid there on the table, ignored. By that time, Evan decided he should eat one just to show that they were good enough. Picking one up, he saw there was a doily under the pastry, with something printed on it in light script. Being in a sports bar watch-

ing football with three other unshaved men, he quickly tucked the doily away where it couldn't be seen. Seriously, he thought to himself, a doily in a sports bar? It was best not to tempt the teasing of his pals.

Evan tried the surprisingly stale and jaw-achingly sweet dessert for a single bite and then he put it back. Maybe he'd just put these aside before any of his friends tried them, he decided. Curious to see if the printed text on the doily was an apology for how awful these tasted, he read it.



“Sometimes we all make mistakes,” the script read. “Our hand-crafted traditional old-world recipe Cherry Do-Overs give you that chance to go back and see your regrets in a different light. Our tender, flaky crust and oh-so-sweet cherry filling will certainly put a new spin on the world as you knew it. Enjoy your trip!”

“These people are nuts,” Evan said, quietly. “No wonder these are crap.” He picked up the pastry and took another bite of it. Then he had another. Before he knew it, he had almost eaten the whole thing. Then, when he placed the last little piece into his mouth, the room started to fade to white.



The dull, muffled murmur of a busy office on a Tuesday afternoon was like white noise. It could be both a comfort and a nuisance, depending on how you were feeling about work. For Evan, he wasn't feeling very good about it.

Then, suddenly Evan jumped in his seat. He was at his desk. He was at his job. Looking around, slowly, and then quickly from side to side, he couldn't quite believe what he was seeing. This was definitely not a dream. He knew what dreams felt like, and this wasn't like that at all. He was in full control, and could feel and hear everything with total clarity.

Checking the clock on the computer in front of him, he could see it was about three. The office was in the usual hustle and bustle of the late afternoon, and no one looked twice at him, as if he shouldn't be there.

Then he thought back, recounting the last few hours. He was fired, he drove around for a while, he was in the bar, he was watching the game, he was eating a turnover...

The words on that dumb little doily came back to him: “Cherry Do-Overs give you that chance to go back and see your regrets in a different light.” That couldn’t have meant what he thought it meant, could it? He then recalled the last words: “Enjoy your trip!”

What in the wide, wide world of sports was going on?

He felt strangely calm, given what was apparently happening to him. If it was some kind of catastrophic malfunction of the inner workings of his brain, and this was the onset of death or insanity, he should have been panicking. If it was falling through some sort of wormhole in the space-time continuum, he should have felt the anxiety of being the worlds first known time traveller.

Instead, he was thinking about how he needed to check his news feeds.

The problem was, this wasn’t his computer. It was his cubicle, but it certainly wasn’t his setup. It was a different computer, a different chair, and the stuff on the desk wasn’t his.

“Hardin!” Mr. Barnes said, as he approached. “Get moving!”

Evan looked up to see the reason he had been fuming for the past several hours, in the form of Anderson Barnes, looking as smug and smarmy as ever.

Mr. Barnes then made the “get out” gesture with his thumb. Evan assumed that mean he somehow had reappeared at work. Maybe he was drunk and showed up at work after a night of drinking, and now he was being shown the door again? That might make sense.

“What are you doing? Out of Sandie’s cube, Evan,” Mr. Barnes said, making the gesture again. “Let’s get back to work.”

Even though he didn’t quite know what was going on, he stood up and slowly walked the few steps to exit the small workspace. As he did, he thought to look at the name plaque on the cube wall.

“Sandie Gillman, Data Analyst,” it read.

Sandie had gotten his job? They must not have thought that much of him after all, Evan realized.

“Come on, Hardin! Get a move on!” Mr. Barnes said, sounding irritated. He waved at Evan to follow him. As he did, he realized they were heading towards his office, not to the exit.

Just out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight of Sandie. Oh, he could recognize those knockers even with a passing millisecond-long glance. Turning to get a better view, he was disappointed. Sandie had dressed down a bit. She wore a standard white dress shirt, a pair of black slacks and brown leather

loafers. She looked like any other female office drone. She had tied her hair back in a pony tail and her thicker-framed, now-lensed glasses obscured a lot of her beautiful face. In fact, she looked amazingly average. She sat down at what was supposed to be his workspace and ignored his gaze.

“Evan!” Mr. Barnes said, loudly and impatiently.

Evan picked up the pace and headed into the office. He wasn’t sure exactly what was going to happen next. Was he going to be held for trespassing? Was he going to be arrested? Was he...

“Need I remind you that *that’s* your desk, Evan?” Mr. Barnes said, pointing though a door to the large, deep mahogany desk that sat in a nice wood-paneled room. “Don’t mess around with Sandie. You know how she gets. She’s always threatening us with grievances.”

Evan was about to ask what his former boss was talking about, when he saw the name on the door. “Evan Hardin, Assistant Vice President,” a plaque read, in gold-etched letters.

”Now this is what I’m talkin’ about!” Evan said loudly.

“I asked you to stop drinking at lunch, Evan,” Mr. Barnes replied. “Now, we have a conference call with LA in fifteen minutes, I need to make sure you’ve read the brief.”

“Oh, yeah, sure.” Evan almost leapt inside his new office in childlike delight. This was what he had been dreaming about. Finally, there was recognition of his abilities.

He sat behind the desk in a super-soft black leather chair and spun around a few times. This was all his! He didn’t care if this was a dream or hallucination or whatever it was, he was loving it.

“One more thing. Great job on the WestCom preso.” Anderson Barnes said, popping his head in the door. “You nailed it, buddy.” He shot him a wink and left again. “Let me know when you’re ready for the call,” he added as he entered his own, nearby office.

Respect. He finally had Barnes’ respect.

The remaining hour passed by quickly. The conference call was a breeze, with a bunch of clueless executives wondering about simple things he knew off the top of his head. He sounded like a super genius compared to them. He was having the time of his life. It was like he had divine validation that he was meant to be an big deal exec all along.

Because he was an executive, he didn’t have to wait around until five to leave, either. He decided 4:15 was close enough, and headed out. Checking the office, he saw that Barnes had already left, too. It was so great to be the Assistant Vice President!



Even more awesome was finding that white Lamborghini he had always lusted after in his assigned parking spot. “Thank you God!” He said to the cement rafters of the parking structure.

For no particular reason, other than to be seen in his dream car, Evan drove up and down the city streets. With the pair of aviator sunglasses he found on the drivers seat, wearing a crazy expensive fine tailored Italian suit and motor-ing past in the most expensive car one could imagine, Evan was looking like he was the big shot he always deserved to be.

Curious, he checked the date. It was still the same day. Somehow, he had been sent to re-live the day from when he got fired. But this wasn’t the same world he had lived in. In this one, he had been a success. Barnes was still Barnes, Sandie was working his old job, and he was on top of the world.

Well, almost. After all – he was just the Assistant Vice President. There was still room to go up.

Evan wasn’t sure what had gotten him here, maybe this was some sort of alternate future, or a different dimension or some other sci-fi shit like that. He really didn’t much care. If this was his new life, he could definitely get used to it. Hell, he was already used to it.

A modest little chime came from his phone, and the display on the dashboard showed his calendar. He had an appointment in fifteen minutes to meet up with his friends after work at the club. The City Athletic Club was the most upscale and exclusive clubs in the country, and apparently, he had a membership. He and the boys were getting together for drinks.

There was no need to change. He wanted to be seen in this outrageously expensive suit, so he drove on over. He handed his keys to the valet and took the elevator up to the top floor. Evan kept his cool, outwardly, but inside he was giggling like a nine year old. He was so excited!

“Evan!” Chris said, as big and as burly as ever, but looking dapper in his tailored suit and plaid bow tie. “You almost missed the first round!”

“Wouldn’t miss it!” Evan replied.

“There’s my boy! The lads are all here!” Said Mike, in his sport jacket and ivy league tie.

“Hello, Michael,” Evan replied with a solid slap on the back. “Trevor made it too?”

Michael nodded. “He’s indisposed. He’s been here for an hour already, I’m told, the rapscallion!”

Just as the words were spoken, Trevor came strolling by, in his tweed jacket, holding a champagne flute. “Already had a couple. You gents have some catching up to do,” he said.



The City Athletic Club was mostly for the dining and lounging of the wealthy, but they had several handball courts, and the four walked to one of the tables overseeing the players down below. After ridiculing the handballers like Roman emperors watching Catholics and lions sparring, they ordered a light dinner. Aged Porterhouse steak and Lobster Bisque soup. For dessert, it was cigars and brandy.

“It’s not the taxes, mind you, it’s the principle of the whole thing,” Trevor said, in between puffs. He twiddled with his handlebar mustache. “I just don’t want my money in an American bank where it can be seized.”

“I’ve moved all my assets into digital currencies,” Michael added. “It never stays in a bank. It just lives inside the networks and can never be traced.”

“What about you, Evan?” Chris asked. “You’ve got more money than all of us put together. What’s your strategy?”

“I have my people take care of it,” he explained.

That was when he spotted the most curious thing. On the table was a cherry turnover. He was trying to figure out why it was giving him such a sudden sense of *déjà vu*. He was transfixed by it, and compelled to pick it up. The moment he touched it, the room turned white.

The sound of the room suddenly jumped by fifty decibels as a loud cheer came from the assembled crowd of football fans. Evan looked around. He was in some sort of lowly, uncouth sports bar. What had happened to his club?

His presence of mind slowly drifted back to him. He was back where he started, at Slugger McGee's with his friends. "What happened?" He said, aloud.

"Touchdown!" Chris said.

That wasn't quite what he meant, but Evan knew he didn't want to have to explain himself. Whatever had just happened to him, he was not going to sound like a sane man, describing it.

He pushed his drink away, thinking that maybe it had roofies in or something. Looking around for anyone smoking pot, he couldn't spot anyone or smell it. That turned his attention to the last thing he remembered ingesting. The turnover.

The doily was thill there, and the writing on the same. "Enjoy the ride" indeed. It was a crazy idea, but what if these did have some sort of power he couldn't explain? What if eating one of these was some sort of gateway to a different reality?

No, he told himself, don't be stupid. Magical pastry? What an insipidly stupid concept. Still, it really didn't matter about the particulars of how it happened, it mattered to him that he had slipped into some sort of new reality.

Maybe, just maybe, if he tried one of the three remaining ones, he could go back. Back to being a success. Back to a private office and an executive title. Back to being the millionaire he had just been. The memories were fading quickly though, just like a dream. He had felt the same way back in the 'alternate' world he had left – slowly, he begin to forget the particulars of his life back in this world. The new world became his new reality.

Before he was going to forget what it was like, he started eating a turnover. He so wanted to go back, and maybe there was some way he could stay this time. However, this time he didn't want to have to share that job with Barnes. He deserved his own title and his own job. No, he wanted something a little bit better than before.

And as he licked his fingers clean, he started to see the world go white again.



On a Tuesday afternoon, the white noise of the busy office was at a dull roar. The sound of copiers, staplers, ringing phones and hushed chatting was a sound familiar and yet disquieting to Evan. Offices were like petting a stray dog. Docile and consoling – until they snapped.

Evan bolted up in his seat. He was at his job. He was back. The turnover had worked. He was back at the office.

Checking his watch, he could see it was about three, the office abustle with activity, as it had been. Quicker than he expected, though, Evan began to feel his memories of the world he had just come from begin to fade. That was fine with him, because he was going to find a way to stay in this world. The one where he was treated with respect and dignity. The one where he was... He was... What was he thinking about? His memory was disappearing again.

He didn't much care. Evan was where he wanted to be, and it was time to get to work.

This time, he had started out at his new desk in his own office. He thought it was a little different this time, though it was tough to remember much of anything. But he did like that it was nice and modern, with white walls and a nice, modern desk that wasn't too big or too small. On it, a plaque that read "Evan Hardin, Assistant to the Vice President."

He was dressed neatly, in a dark blue suit, buttoned up tight. His hair was combed back in place, making him look cool and sophisticated. At least that was what he could see in the small mirror he had stowed in his top drawer.

"Evan!" Mr. Barnes said, as he walked by Evan's office door. "Is that brief for the conference call on my desk?"

Evan wasn't entirely sure, but he had to assume he had been doing his job correctly. "Yes," he replied, hoping he was right.

"It's about fifteen minutes until the call, and I don't want to be disturbed," Anderson Barnes instructed. "Do you need anything from me before it starts? It'll be about a half an hour."

"Not that I know of," Evan replied. "I'll make sure you aren't bothered."

"Great. Thanks, Evan. You're too good for me."

The praise and respect made Evan tingle with satisfaction. He couldn't quite recall what he used to do, but being valued as an employee felt like the most important thing in the world.

Left alone, Evan wasn't sure what to do with himself. He looked around his desk, which was nice and spartan, and found he had Anderson's calendar open and a small pile of notes and flagged emails. He must have been putting together the appointments for the Vice President, and he was almost done by the looks of it.

After about fifteen more minutes, he was through with the task and updated the calendar server. Then the phone rang. "Vice Presidents' office," Evan answered. "No, he's busy right now. Can I take a message?" Evan grabbed a pen and his handy notepad like he had done it a million times before. "I'm sorry, he can't be disturbed."

There was no message, just a gruff request for a call back. Evan typed it into the messaging system, amused to see that his typing was much faster and far



more efficient than he could recall it being. Not only was he in a great job in this version of reality, but he had some cool new skills, too. Since he spent a lot of time on the computer, and this would make it easier.

Done with the jobs in front of him, he decided to go grab a cup of coffee from the break room. He walked right past Sandy Gillman's cube, where she was lackadaisically checking her web feeds. She was slouched back in her chair, her glasses at the end of her nose. She had worn a formless white dress shirt and a pair of loose black slacks, which was probably the best for her thick figure. Sandy was an attractive woman, but she was probably about forty pounds overweight, and her sour personality didn't do her any favors.

Something in the back of Evan's head told him that this was worth noting, for some reason.

On the way back, Mr. Barnes was out of his conference call, and Evan sipped his refilled coffee mag as he handed Anderson a fresh cup. "Thanks," he said, "You read my mind."

Mr. Barnes turned toward Sandy. "Sandy, could you at least look like you want to do your job?"

They only thing she did was sit up in her chair a little straighter and shoot a dirty look at the both of them. Sensing it was about to get a little confrontational, Evan tapped Mr. Barnes' elbow, and guided him back towards his office.

"Let's not make a scene, Andy," Evan said.

"Entitled parasite..." Mr. Barnes grumbled under his breath.

Evan wanted to get his boss off this train of thought. "So how was the conference call?"

As they entered the private office area, Evan walked past his door and into Mr. Barnes' space. He went behind the desk and pulled out the large, soft leather chair that only executives get, to get him to sit down. "It went fine. Parker's brief was concise and well annotated," Anderson said, as he eased himself into his seat. "Don't tell Parker I said that. Last thing I need is for that douche bag to get a swelled head."

"Well, I'm glad," Evan added as he arranged the things on Mr. Barnes' desk neatly for him.

"You can't let your employees think they've got the upper hand. You have to keep them feeling like they have to try harder. Keep them guessing. That's the secret to a productive operation."

"Yes, sir," Evan validated.

"Except you you, Ev. This job would be miserable without you."

"Thank you, sir," Evan replied with a swell of warmth in his heart. He loved being there for his boss.