

Left

By A. C. Zito

The dream was over. It was over... but I still felt haunted by it. I lay in bed looking up at the ceiling feeling the pressure of a million bricks pounding down on me; pounding down, making me feel feverish... hungover... something. I felt unwell; I knew that much was true. But why; what did I do last night?

"Theresa... Theresa, darling, my flu medicine," Where *was* that woman? She's a doll, that woman. I need to give her more credit than I already do. She does everything for me. And when I say everything I mean *everything*. She treats me like a queen. Like I'm Ms. America; but I'm just a lowly company executive. Do I own my own Fortune 500 Company? No, but I still have money in the bank from working at that company to get by. I mean, it's the 2050's. These years are the best times to be alive! And we've been moving product like we're the people off that *Mad Men* show. And it's crazy to think the throwback show was supposedly made to take place a hundred years ago, this decade. But did they have the product that *we have* back then? No, times have changed. Maybe they *did* have vending machines... but what did they put in them? Sodas, drinks that have *way* too many calories; of course, that product became obsolete. Now, what you'll usually find in vending machines is *our* product: contacts. We've been putting out vending machines filled with different types of contacts for the everyday Joe so one's eye will never feel lonesome ever again. But did the person who came up with the idea get credit for it? No! My boss swindled the poor sucker from any possible cent. Stupid people will forever be stupid and smart people will forever *stomp* on their weak, pathetic heart! For it's their fault for having a heart to begin with! I'm glad *I* don't have a heart. Oh, how terrible; the thought of dealing with emotions? The thought alone is *repulsive!*

"Theresa, you *whore!* I want my mocha latte, NOW!" I thought about taking off my diamond studded slip silk sleep mask, but Theresa *always* took it off *for me!* I don't want to break a nail! Especially on the day of Estevan's puppy and kitten party he's throwing at the *Galentino Country Club* over in the south end of the Hampton's. I heard the party was going to be a *ball*.

*God, I hope one of those stinky rat-things don't touch me* I thought to myself.

"THERESA!" I felt ready to kill that woman! She was *never* like this. She was *always* ready to kneel at my feet in my honor and do everything I bid her to be done.

Suddenly, a hand came at my face and *ripped* the sleep mask *right* off of me. Standing in the room, huddled around in a group, were three young gentlemen and four young ladies. They all stared at me while I looked at them in shock.

"Good heavens, who are you *dreadfully* ugly people?" They kept their fixed stare locked in place while the boy who ripped my studded slip sleep mask off spit at the ground and yelled out:

“WELCOME TO HELL, AUNT LUCY!” I looked at him, confused. I was *no* aunt. I had a sister who had just gotten married and a brother who just graduated college. But an aunt; no... good heavens, I’m only in my late thirties.

“Is this some sort of prank? Theresa, are you putting an interactive play on for me, this morning? If so, call it off. I don’t like silly games. Just get me my Eggs Benedict and my Kopi Luwak. And throw some bacon on the side too. And don’t forget to add a little brown sugar to the bacon while it’s on the frying pan; you forgot last time, and if you forget again, I’ll fire you, you Russian mail-order bride!”

“THERESA’S STILL ALIVE, UNLIKE YOU, AUNT LUCY!” One of the young women stepped forward and spit this out!

“Oh, for Pete’s sake, that woman’s fired.” I grunted out. I began getting up, but, instantly, the room began to feel rather dizzy, clammy, and cold.

Speaking in a rather more subdued tone than the rest of the mid-twenty year olds:

“I know this is uncouth for us to do, Aunt Lucy, but you brought this on yourself.” The young gentlemen spoke up. “We’re all children of your sister and brother. Our parents all passed away so it left your will up to us due to how you didn’t have any children.”

“So *we* got to pick out your simulation you’d live in for eternity! WELCOME HOME, AUNT LUCY!” The boy next to my bedside spit out. Then, chanting simultaneously together, they put their hands to their foreheads in the shape of an ‘L’, chanting all at once:

“LOONEY LUCY, LOONEY LUCY, LOONEY LUCY!”

“WHERE’S OUR MONEY, AUNT LUCY! YOU DIDN’T LEAVE US *ANY!*” One of the young women screamed out as the chanting progressed, getting louder.

I looked around, hysterically. It sounded like it was being chanted outside too. The room began to take form. My body felt much more agile and limber. Where did these hooligans stick me? I looked outside to see my old college campus.

“YOU RATS!” I screamed out. “WHY HERE? WHY THIS CAMPUS? WHY, OUT OF EVERYTHING, HERE?” It got a little bit louder every second as another one yelled out over the chanting:

“YOU KNOW WHY; YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED HERE!” I cussed some profanity under my breath as they began to fade away, and I was left in silence. The apartment room was just as I left it. Everything was how it was: to the last picture on the wall, to the last piece of clutter thrown on the ground.

*I want OUT of this prison cell, I want OUT, I want OUT* I kept whispering this over and over again like I was Dorothy and this was the movie: *The Wizard of Oz*.

A text appeared:

*The transaction went through. We'll be working with your guy on marketing the contact lenses vending machines in no time. Just stay in touch with us at Amazon, and we'll get you, and the man who you put you in touch with us, rich in no time.*

I remember that text like it was yesterday. I put the phone down and sighed at what was about to come next. Suddenly, the door flew open and my roommate barged in with her Halloween costume still on from the night before. I had mine on still too, and the guy I met last night was still dead asleep in my bed.

"So you really like my idea?" she asked, giddy with excitement, "The one I told you last night, Lucy; I lost my contact last night, and it just came to me!" she paused for a second and looked at me, concerned. "You think it's stupid, don't you?" I looked at her in silence as she screamed out the last little bit like she did all those years ago: "WELL, FINE, LUCY! JUST FINE! I'LL JUST COME UP WITH SOMETHING ELSE! I'LL HAVE MY BREAKTHROUGH, LUCY CORNWALLIS! I'LL HAVE IT!" She never did though, I seemed to have recalled, as she began to fade away. I stayed living in that room for the next five months before the transaction went fully through and while everyone at Northwestern knew what I did.

*Lucy Cornwallis, what in the world did you do to yourself?* I stepped outside with the bumblebee costume still on. It looked cute for a college girl with bad acne. I only walked ten feet and someone was already spitting at my feet, giving me the middle finger. I kept walking.

"FREAK," someone yelled out. The guy coughed, loudly, in my direction. I kept walking. I knew this had to be some sort of bad dream. That's all it was, a very bad dream.

"They're just a bunch of Edith Envies," I whispered to myself, "You're not a Looney Lucy, Lucy!" But the 'L' signs went up, and I screamed at the top of my lungs as I began running passed all the strangers. So many strangers I didn't know, and they knew what I did! I was a freak!

"GET ME OUT OF HERE!" I screamed. I found a tree of good size. I couldn't do anything else but climb it. Finding a perch to linger at until they went away, that's what I decided to do. Oh, why won't they just go away?

*CHIRP, CHIRP, CHIRP* they began yelling up to me. I began chirping like a bird like they told me to do. But I couldn't. Oh, why isn't that I couldn't? Why couldn't I JUST FLY AWAY?