

## Genie

Eric drove around town in his Dodge Viper. He had the top down on this beautiful summer day. He wished more days were as beautiful. Driving the strip always brought back memories of the good old days. They were simpler days, days before the nation wide curfew.

With the curfew came the blackouts. No light was to be shining past a certain time. That way any plane flying overhead couldn't be able to target their village. The war wasn't going good for his people.

The war had been on for over six years now. Eric hated war, he felt there was no use for it. It was more than an annoyance. War had taken its toll on the people that much was for sure.

Pulling up to a thrift store, Eric hopped out of his car and went inside. He was looking for something in particular.

Halloween snow globes. He had been a fan of Halloween ever since he was a kid. There was something bout dressing up that made him excited for the month of October.

Looking around the store, Eric couldn't find anything Halloween related. Maybe he was a season too early. Either way he was bummed by the thought that there were no Halloween decorations to be found.

Eric continued to look around the thrift store, maybe there was something else he could find. Sure enough there was an old bottle that piqued his interest.

Taking the bottle up to the cashier Eric paid for it and was on his way.

Getting home Eric pulled the bottle out of the paper bag. He dusted it off with a rag.

Poof.

A genie appeared before him. She wore a light blue dress.

“Master” she said “What is it thou wish of me?”

Eric froze. Master? What was going on here? He looked at the genie puzzled.

The genie sighed. “You rubbed the bottle releasing me. I am indebted to you.” She explained. “Whatever you want is yours within reason of course.”

Eric nodded. “Right.” He couldn’t believe his ears. Was this woman really a genie? Did he hit his head on something? Was he hallucinating? So many questions and yet he had answers to none of them.

“Anything?” Eric asked. The thoughts and possibilities raced through his mind.

“Within reason.” The genie reminded him. There were certain limits to her powers. She couldn’t do anything, only those things within reason.

Eric scratched his head. “Can you make the war end?”

The genie nodded. “Consider it done.” She snapped her fingers.

The world spun around them. Eric held onto the genie for support. As the spinning subsided, Eric grabbed hold of his head.

“Ow! What happened?”

The genie smiled. “I stopped the war.”

Eric ran outside. Sure enough it appeared the war was over. Soldiers were no longer walking around protecting the streets. It was a beautiful thing to behold. Walking back inside, Eric exclaimed his excitement.

“You did it!”

The genie nodded. “Yes but at what cost?” She said smoothly. “Every change comes at a cost.”

Eric looked outside again. Everything looked great to him. He couldn’t imagine what kind of consequence could happen by having a war end.

Picking up a phone, Eric called his best friend James.

“Hello?” James answered.

Eric was excited “James! Man we have got to go out tonight!”

James was confused. “What about curfew? You know what will happen if you’re caught outside past curfew man.”

Curfew? Eric was shocked. There was still a curfew? “Why is there a curfew?”

James got upset. “Dude that’s not funny. You know there’s been a curfew ever since *they* won the war!”

Eric froze, we didn’t win the war. He looked to the genie who simply shrugged.

“Of course what was I thinking.” Eric said. “Sorry man, I’ll talk to you later okay?”

Hanging up the phone, Eric looked to the genie. “We didn’t win the war?! You could have told me this!”

The genie simply shook her head. “Consequences.” She frowned “Every action has a consequence.”

Sitting down, Eric sighed. He didn't ask for this to happen. It was out of his control and he didn't know how many wishes the genie would allow him. Life was slowly becoming a disaster. The last thing he wanted was for his life to spiral out of control. So a curfew was still in affect. He wondered what else was messed up.

Maybe Jenny would know what to do. Jenny had known Eric for years. They grew up together. Jenny was Eric's closest friend. Picking up the phone he dialed her number.

Jenny's mom answered. When he asked for Jenny he was told it was a cruel joke for him to ask for someone who was dead.

Dead. Eric glared at the genie. His best friend was dead.

Hanging up the phone, Eric walked up to the genie.

"How? And don't you dare say consequences!" Eric yelled at her.

The genie frowned. "Eric, we can't have everything we want. Jenny died after a curfew violation." She sighed. "They take curfews serious these days."

"Serious? It sounds more than serious." Eric said. His best friend was dead.

The genie nodded. It was true from a mortal's perspective it would sound rather more than serious. It would seem down right cruel. But she wasn't mortal. The genie only did what her masters demanded of her. None of which outcomes were under her control. She always wondered what consequences would come of choices too. The genie found it amusing in her own

special way. It was a morbid curiosity really then anything else.

Eric eyed the genie, he was starting to wish he never found the damn bottle. Life was turning out to be something quite different. For now Eric decided to stay inside. It seemed safer that way. Safer felt better.

“How did we lose the war?” Eric asked.

The genie shook her head “I do not know master. It simply ended as soon as you made the wish. I do not have the specifics on how the war ended.”

Eric nodded. Putting his head in his hands he sighed. Of course the witch didn't have a clue how it all ended. Why would she? She was just a servant of his. Nothing more.

The night passed slowly for Eric. He didn't know what to do with the down time. Loud music had been outlawed. Mostly anything loud was outlawed after the curfew hour had begun.

Turning on a radio, Eric listened to see what was on.

Most of the channels carried what appeared to be news reports. Some of them were in a language Eric had never heard of before. The stations he did understand talked about how well the war effort was going on in other parts of the world.

So the war was still going on. Eric turned off the radio. It was too depressing to listen to. The last thing he wanted to be was depressed. Life wasn't meant to be that way.

His life was supposed to be uplifting and fun.

Walking into the other room Eric noticed the genie standing there. She looked at him expecting another command.

“What else do you want master?” She prompted.

Eric paused, he had almost forgotten the genie was there. But only for a moment. How could he forget the havoc she had applied to his life.

“Yeah, how about a pizza or will you screw that up too?” Eric said.

The genie nodded. “Done.”

Poof.

A pepperoni pizza appeared before Eric. It was piping hot.

“Nicely done.” Eric said.

“Oh yes now I’m your typical pizza girl.” The genie said. “On your next wish why down’t you put some actual thought into it. Give me a challenge.”

That’s when it occurred to him. “How many wishes do I have left?” Eric asked.

The genie sighed “As long as you have the bottle I am your servant and you are my master.”

Eric rubbed his chin. He could get use to something like this. He felt half bad about having essentially a slave. But that thought passed rather quickly. He was in control for the first time in his life. It felt odd.

“Let me guess” Eric said “You’d wish for freedom.”

The genie shook her head. “No, if I had the ability to wish I wouldn’t be a prisoner

to the bottle. And I certainly wouldn't have a master." The genie said.

Eric nodded. "Makes sense." He paused "For my next wish, I wish there wasn't a curfew."

"Done." The genie said. "But a warning, be careful what you wish for."

Poof.

The telephone rang. Eric picked up the receiver. "Hello?"

Music could be heard in the background. "Eric! It's James! Dude come on over, we're having a wicked party!"

Eric left his apartment and headed over to James' place. There they partied into the wee hours of the morning. Eric danced and talked and danced some more. He truly had an amazing night.

The next morning Eric drove home. Upon entering his apartment he saw it had been trashed. Someone had gone through all of this things.

*The bottle* Eric thought *where was the bottle?*

It took Eric over an hour to find the genie's bottle. Rubbing the side of it the genie appeared.

"Oh master, it is you."

Eric nodded "What happened?" He asked.

"You asked for there not to be a curfew. Without a proper curfew in place there was no law to prevent break ins."

"Consequences." Eric said.

"Yes master."

## Genie

Eric paced around his beat up living room. How could he undo all of the damage he had caused? There had to be a way to make it happen.

As if reading his mind the genie interrupted Eric's thought process. "I wouldn't recommend that course of action master. It would end badly."

"How?" Eric asked.

The genie simply said "Consequences."

Picking up the genie's bottle Eric threw it against the wall. It stuck in the wall not breaking. Eric growled.

"I wish I never met you!" Eric yelled.

"Done."

Poof.

Eric drove past the thrift store. He had intentions to go inside that day but for some reason he wanted to check on his friend Jenny.

The war was ever present in their lives.

THE END