

2022-07-13 All Happy Mornings

(With appreciation to Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*.)

Stephan Arkady awoke happily swaddled in his sheets at the dawn of a new day. 'Dawn' was defined as that time when he'd have to wake up to arrive on-time at work. It bore no relation to the daily orbits of the sun circling the earth, or vice versa.

The letters slipped under his door were beginning to pile up. 'TO CURRENT RESIDENT' ... bills... miscellaneous summons ... more junk... nothing grabbed his attention. Still, the full stack of sheathed rubbish made a handy rest to prop up his newspaper that he diligently read over breakfast. It was the type of newspaper that mattered to his coworkers. So, naturally, it mattered to him.

His cell phone rang. This wasn't planned, or especially welcome. And alas, he'd saved his boss's phone number, and so couldn't dismiss the blaring alarm as spam when the too-helpful gadget blazoned out that superior's name.

"Hello, this is Stephan. Speaking?"

"Get over here right away! Head office just sent down requests for two full reports, in triplicate, on why you're over budget this quarter. Due tomorrow!"

"So sorry, I'll be sure to be there immediately. Only, I'm sure I couldn't finish tonight. I..."

Here, Stephan scabbled at the stack of mail, pulling an official looking oversized envelope out.

"I have jury duty today!"

"What, can't you postpone it?"

There was a pause just long enough for Stephan to scan the first paragraph.

"Oh no, I couldn't. I've delayed it ... seven times already. They're really quite insistent."

"So not only can't you stay late tonight, you can't even come in this morning?"

"I'll let you know as soon as I can if I'm placed on a jury."

"Yes, you do that. Who can explain your budget to HQ?"

"Oh, Alex should be able to. He's a clever sort."

"I don't need clever accountants, just honest ones."

"Yes, of course," Stephan said, turning the page in his newspaper. "I'll be in touch!"

Jury duty wasn't Stephan's idea of a happy morning either, even less so than going to work frankly.

Actually being at work might be worse than being on a jury, but traveling to jury duty across town was an unconscionable break in routine from his usual ten-minute commute.

Breakfast, newspaper, and coffee all half-finished, Stephan headed for the door. A small white envelope, unstamped, greeted him taped to his apartment's entryway.

This could only mean it came from his landlord, probably about the rent. And that meant a trip to the bank was in order! Fortunately, the bank was just down the street. For now, that solved the problem of a long trip to jury duty, an angry boss, and a small oversight at the office.

The rest of the day would surely work itself out. For now, all Stephan had to do was walk down the street on this brisk fall day.