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dream is a seed. What we do with that seed is a choice—a choice of germination or termination—a choice we make that is reflected in our every action, every second, every breath. Are we following our dream, are we giving it life and letting it bloom, or are we stifled by fear, hiding it in the shadows of convention and rational thought? The dream is our soul talking, or it might be the soul of the world. Possibly it's the guidance of divine Creation Herself.

I'm not sure whose voice it is, nor do I think it's important—let's leave that to mystery. What I do know is that it guides us on our journey called life. Follow it! Listen to it! Drink it! Let it consume you, delivering to you both ecstasy and deep wounds along the way, because the dream is the path of your divine expression, the journey of a life in grace.

Life is not rational, nor is it secure or conventional. It's always in motion. It never stops, always flows, and continuously transforms, even in silence and in death. It's an exhilarating journey of discovery and transformation, an adventurous cycle of death and rebirth guided by our dream, which serves as a torch lighting the path for us to follow. Let's allow our seeds to germinate!

—Hugo Bonjean

*“We do not err because truth is difficult to see. It is visible at a glance.
We err because this is more comfortable.”*

–Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn



*I dream of a delightfully diverse, safe, healthy and just world, with clean
air, clean water, clean soil and clean power—economically, equitably, ecologically
and elegantly enjoyed by all children of all species of all times.*

–William McDonough



We are what we dream, as individuals, institutions, societies and cultures. The world is a dream realized through the sum of our actions, actions that follow from the choices we make. We are what we dream. Which dream lights your path?

Dallas, capital of the American Confederacy

March 21, 2084



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he heart in her chest was pounding, her mouth was dry and her lungs were gasping for oxygen as the damp evening air rushed by her face. Nayla was running, running for her life! If she could just get to those trees in the distance she would be safe, or at least have a chance to escape, for on the other side of them was the main road.

Without slowing her pace she looked over her shoulder at the tall silver building. It was being wrapped in the night's shade; the last light of the sun had set behind the horizon. Its sirens were squealing uninterrupted, which meant there had been a major security breach. The building would now be in the process of a full lockdown, and soon the entire country would be brought to the highest state of alert. How many times had she participated in such security drills?

The brightly lit red letters on top of the imposing tower read: Carsanto. For years this building had been her second home, her lifeline to what was called the American Dream, that elusive dream which years ago had pulled her parents from their motherland, the United States of Bolivar, to the American Confederacy.

It was the dream to which Nayla had dedicated her life. She had been living it! She had fulfilled the dream of her parents and so many others, people who had risked everything to establish a life in the American Confederacy, the country of liberty and riches. But now she had destroyed that life forever. She had burned all bridges. There was

no way back; she would be lucky if she could even make it out of this country alive.

How could the man she loved, the man in charge of this governing corporation, be so cruel? And how could she love someone with no conscience? Could he have lied so blatantly to her, using her while expressing so much love to her? Had it all been an act? Why couldn't he see the consequences of his actions? She knew he would do what was expected of him if they caught her, and a shiver of fear ran through her body.

Her fingers tightened around the cotton bag in which she'd wrapped her precious parcel. As she focused her mind on the seeds inside—seeds of germination, seeds of life—her resolve strengthened. Her fear slipped away, and she focused her mind. Every fiber in her body charged and she was ready to do what had to be done.

She reached the tree line. Twigs snapped under her speeding feet. She felt something cutting into her leg, and some branches scratched her face, but she would not slow down. She *could not*. The life of her child depended on the successful delivery of this package. The life of all children of all species depended on it!

She sprinted, and made it through the trees. She waved down the first taxi, jumped in and gasped out in an exhausted but determined voice, "Just drive!"

For a number of years she had known deep down inside that something about the company and the work she had been doing wasn't all that ethical. When some of her relatives who still lived on the Latin continent questioned her about the company's activities, she would brush it off, saying things like, "It's just a job," or, "People here have hearts too. They don't intend for things to turn out badly for anyone; they just have a different dream for the world. They achieve things, and have large beautiful houses and anything they wish for."

However, when she offered these platitudes, her voice had never sounded really convincing, not even to herself. Deep inside she

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knew there was a truth to their questions, a truth she was just not ready to face. So she always quickly changed the subject.

This had left her for years in the comfortable position of doing nothing. As a scientist she focused instead on her enjoyment of achieving innovative breakthroughs, and did not occupy herself with how the new technology was being applied. She spent the money from her high-paying job on whatever she could think of. As long as it kept her distracted from delving inside herself to question the consequences of Carsanto's actions and her role in them, life was good, life was easy.

Lately Carsanto's executives had become impatient with the stubborn position of the United States of Bolivar; the country had kept refusing to buy their seeds and agro-chemicals. And Nayla knew the company's goal was to control the world through its seed trade.

The power Carsanto could unleash was formidable. It was a power she had created: the famous mutating terminator seed! Not only did the genetically modified seed render the seeds that grew from its plant sterile, it was also prone to cause the terminator gene mutation in other plants. As a result, once the seed was unleashed in a certain region, all the farmers in the region became dependent on buying new seeds each year from Carsanto, since the seeds they normally saved for replanting were now rendered sterile. Control of the seed industry, and in essence the world's food supply, had given Carsanto control of the entire world, with the exception of the United States of Bolivar. Nayla knew how deadly and devastating the introduction of mutating terminator seeds would be to the country where she had her roots—the country that now spread out over the entire Central and South American continent.

The events had forced her to consciously examine what she had been doing with her life. How was she impacting this world? What was the real value of all her money and possessions? Was she creating the world she dreamed of? The American Dream was certainly making her rich, but how happy did it make her? What would happen to her five-year-old daughter, Gaya, who lived with her Mayan father, Julian, in the jungle of Central America, if she didn't act?

For months she'd been tormented by such questions. But today's board decision to spray unwanted mutating terminator seeds across the continent from high altitude planes had put her in a situation where she could no longer postpone action. She'd stayed at the office until late in the evening—which wasn't unusual for her to do. When it looked like everyone was gone, she'd walked to the lab just like she had done so many times late at night before she left. This time, though, while her walk and composure had appeared as calm and collected as ever, her heart had almost pounded out of her chest.

She had greeted the security guard on his round through the building with a friendly smile, just like she always did. The door had slid open after the security camera at the entrance had scanned her eye. Inside the room she'd wasted no time, and had collected all recently developed mutating germinator seeds from each crop species into small, aluminum-coated envelopes. She'd carefully labeled each pouch, and then sealed the seeds into waterproof bags, which she had wrapped in the cotton cloth.

Chances were good that nobody would even notice their disappearance. After all, she'd been the company's only scientist who worked on the germinator seeds; all other researchers concentrated on terminator technology. The mutating germinator seeds were unique not only because they were immune to terminator cells but also because they could pass this defense on to other plant organisms. But to the company there was no commercial value in seeds that could mature and develop their own fertile seeds again. In fact, she'd only received permission to develop a mutating germinator seed after her persistent pressure to create a backup plan in the event the terminator technology got out of hand.

She'd planned to call in sick the following morning, and that would have given her at least a few days before they would come looking for her. This should have been a walk in the park—no problem at all—if it hadn't been for a new security guard who had insisted on doing everything according to the book. He had totally ignored her executive position, and had insisted upon searching her

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bag. Security could have done this any other day for the last fifteen years without finding anything, but not tonight.

Sure, she'd tried to charm her way out of it. When that had failed, she'd explained to him that she was the head of the genetically modified seeds division; a well-respected member of the company's board of directors; and that she'd always worked late for the last fifteen years and had never had a security guard search her personal belongings. She had even threatened to take his actions up with his supervisor the following morning.

But the guard had been undisturbed by her threats, politely responding, "Ma'am, I understand what you're saying, but I'm merely following the instructions I received during training. They hired me because of my track record. It wouldn't have been that good if I hadn't always followed the procedures to the letter. I'm afraid that tonight I'm going to have to search your bag. Maybe tomorrow you can take it up with my boss and ask for a search exemption, which I'll then gladly adhere to."

She'd handed over her bag in the hope that he wouldn't look inside the cotton wrap, and had walked through the metal detector. But when the guard had put the precious package on the table between them and was about to unwrap it, she'd had no other choice. In an impulsive move she'd grabbed the parcel and sprinted for the front doors.

"Hey, wait!" she'd heard behind her. "Lady, what're you doing?" the bewildered voice of the guard had shouted.

It had taken the poor man a few moments to recover from the shock. After all, Nayla was a board member! Board members don't hide things in bags and most certainly don't run. So by the time he'd pressed the alarm, Nayla was already out of the door. She'd heard the building lock down behind her. She had headed for the trees and the road beyond, realizing there wouldn't be enough time to get her beloved sports car out of the parking lot.

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While the taxi cruised down the multilane boulevard Nayla tried to calm down and digest what had just happened. A mere five minutes ago she was a board member and Senior Vice President at the mighty Carsanto. Now she was a fugitive on the run! She had destroyed a lifetime of work in one impulsive move. The penalty for stealing the state secrets of the nation would be death!

“No time to reflect on this now; I have to stay focused,” she thought. “My life is in the balance now!” It wouldn’t take too long for the powers-that-be to be informed. She estimated that by the following morning the entire country would be in a state of alert. She had no time to waste. She had to think quickly and couldn’t afford any mistakes. The cargo in her hands could save the planet!

“Right!” she directed, as the taxi approached the first junction.



George entered his living room, and threw his briefcase and jacket on the bench next to the entrance. As he passed the mirror, he straightened his shirt over his slightly extended belly, ran his fingers through his graying hair and headed straight for the bar. He poured himself a glass of Scotch, contemplated the sweet aroma of his favorite drink, and raised it in the direction of the cross on the wall.

“Thank you, Jesus!” he saluted, and emptied his glass in one gulp. The warm glow of Scotch flowed from his throat into every cell of his body. He filled up his glass again and dropped into the couch while swinging his feet up onto the living room table.

“Music!” he commanded as he loosened his tie.

The voice-activated computer system responded, and the room filled with the silky voice of his favorite singer, Kelly Clarkson—an old-timer, but without a doubt the greatest American Idol ever.

“Isn’t it great to live the American Dream?” he thought as he reflected over the events of the day. Damn, he was good!

World control was within his reach! His father and grandfather would have been proud of him. For three generations now, the Shapura family had been in control of the mighty Carsanto Corporation. Carefully they had executed a strategy that had led the company to its current position on top of the world.

It all started in 2016, when his grandfather, Roberto Shapura, orchestrated the biggest merger in history between some of the then

most powerful companies, creating a conglomerate that touched every aspect of life, from oil and gas, to cars, bio-chemicals, agriculture, banking, computers, software, entertainment, weapon manufacturing and food production. It didn't happen all in one step. Over a four-year period, major leading corporations in America were merged into the all-powerful Carsanto. Most were absorbed on friendly terms, but in some cases Carsanto simply used its economic muscle to take over the target company.

After four years there was no doubt that Carsanto was the most powerful entity on the planet, with an economic value that dwarfed even that of the richest countries on earth. Initially, Carsanto's mergers and acquisitions were all approved on the basis that none of them were within one industry. It was argued that within each industry, there was still ample competition. However, soon thereafter the powerful conglomerate started to use its power to squeeze its competitors out of business. As more and more of them closed their doors, Carsanto expanded its market reach, and effectively became the controlling power of all economic life on earth.

While Carsanto's reach was global, the company's power was concentrated in Europe, North America and Australia due to the sophisticated economic nature of those regions. The lack of a strong centralized corporate economy in Asia, Africa and South America, and the vast scale of small entrepreneurs in those areas, made it more difficult to control those regions by economic means alone.

As time passed, governments started to recognize the threat of Carsanto's effective governing power. China was the first to respond by nationalizing all the company's assets in a move to develop its own internal economy and escape the dominant power of the conglomerate.

George's grandfather recognized the possibility of a future government ruling to break up the company and its assets. So in 2021, he acquired Whitefog, the largest private military force in the world. It had handled all of Carsanto's security needs over the last decade. In return the Duke family, which owned Whitefog, received a large stake in Carsanto, and control of the company's security forces.

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When the governing authorities questioned Roberto about acquiring an army, he called it a “private security force.” He defended the company’s rights to provide for its own security by comparing it to the right of each man to be armed and able to defend his private property. Whitefog had already been providing such protection for Carsanto for a decade, he argued. This was simply an economic decision. It made more financial sense for Carsanto to acquire the company than to keep contracting for its services. Furthermore, in light of the increase in looting and systemic sabotage of the economic infrastructure by anti-civilization rebels, Roberto’s argument sounded reasonable. Soon, Carsanto’s army became more powerful than the United States military; after all, the company was simply much richer, and could easily accumulate weapons and pay handsome salaries to its security force.

Now with an army in place, the company could advance its quest for power more aggressively. Roberto’s credo was: “Carsanto brings liberty and riches through market efficiency and creativity. Carsanto *is* the American Dream!”

When in 2022 anti-civilization rebels not only killed the American President but blew up the White House, the Senate and one-third of the Pentagon, it was only natural that Carsanto offered its army in protection of liberty and the American Dream. Most Americans wanted to maintain their lifestyle and were more than prepared to offer their allegiance to Carsanto and its leader, Roberto Shapura, in return for their physical safety and access to the goods and services the company provided.

The rebel activity had commenced around the same time Roberto had acquired Whitefog. At first there had been sporadic, uncoordinated attacks at some small river dams. While no one had foreseen where this insurgency would lead, it had been necessary for the company to protect not only its assets, but also its executives during those years. This task had given Whitefog many headaches. The rebels were not organized, so it made it impossible for Whitefog’s

counter-intelligence to anticipate the next target. As a result, the insurgents' attacks were often successful.

By the time of the Presidential assassination, the rebels—influenced by a vision of a culturally diverse and sustainable agricultural society—had such a following along the West Coast, most of the Northern States and Canada that the country had entered into a full-fledged civil war. The lines of this were almost identical to those in America's first civil war.

The rebels' strategy had proven to be very effective. By attacking the electrical and transportation infrastructure of the country, they paralyzed the economy and made life in the large cities impossible. It took only a few years for American icons like New York, San Francisco and Chicago to be turned into ghost cities controlled by urban gangs who grew their food in the city's parks and green spaces.

Rather than trying to subdue these people with their different ideologies, Carsanto used its media arm to rally people in the Southern States behind the great American Dream, and concentrated its armed forces on the protection of the borders of those states. In a surprise move it sent part of its army south, into what was then Mexico.

The problem, as Roberto saw it at the time, was border control. For the American Dream to stay in existence while the world around it was developing different ways of living—ways that were called “sustainable”—Carsanto had to be able to control its borders. But with the Northern states in turmoil and a huge border running coast to coast across the North American continent, they couldn't afford the threat of Mexico possibly joining up with the United States of Bolivar, which now had extended its borders as far north as southern Mexico.

Therefore, in order to stabilize the lines of power and bring peace to the world, Carsanto's air force launched one strategic attack that destroyed Mexico City with its entire population of more than thirty million people. At the same time, the company set up a major communications campaign that promised Carsanto would bring liberty and the American Dream to the remainder of the Mexican people.

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The media, which by now was controlled by the company, hailed Carsanto as the savior of Mexico. They claimed Carsanto had saved the country from its own leaders, who were about to betray their citizens by joining the socialist United States of Bolivar. It was said repeatedly that such a move would have brought the Mexican people even greater poverty, and prevented them from ever realizing the great American Dream. Mexicans could now keep on living in liberty.

The media strategy worked, and most of the rest of Mexico was taken without too much trouble. There were some areas of fierce resistance, but any insurgency was always met with unrivaled brutality. Such a response caused those who were considering fighting to rethink their plans and embrace the American Dream and the liberty that Carsanto promised. After all, for years Mexicans had tried to get across the border into the United States in search of this elusive dream. Now it was being delivered to them on their very doorstep!

Carsanto also negotiated a deal with the rebels in the Northern and Western states. It then dubbed the new country the “American Confederacy.” Its southern border was just south of the city of Oaxaca, Mexico where the company built a wall that extended from coast to coast at the very point where the distance between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean was the smallest. A vast army was stationed there, with the instructions of killing anyone who tried to enter the country illegally.

The northern border now ran almost in a straight line across the continent. It started in the East, south of Virginia, and ran north of Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona. It then cut what was formerly California in half, to end on the coast halfway between Los Angeles and the now-ghost city of San Francisco. Within this newly created country, Carsanto was the government, the law, the army and the economy. Carsanto provided liberty and the American Dream to its citizens. It ensured unlimited consumption for its residents, and protected them from foreign invasion, terrorism, and socialist or sustainable living ideas.

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By 2029 peace had returned to the world, and Carsanto could again shift its focus towards conquering the rest of the planet through its trading power and providing the American people with the almighty consumer goods that were central to the way of life they fought for. Although tightly controlled, both the northern and southern borders reopened to traders and travelers.

George's thoughts returned to the present when the enchanting voice of the singer was suddenly interrupted by a ringing tone.

"Aaah, not now," George hissed in irritation.

"Caller: Head office. Importance: Urgent," droned the monotone computer-generated voice.

"Answer!" George commanded the system.

"George, there has been a security breach at the head office!"

The cold voice of Dick Duke, alias "the General," echoed through the living room.

Dick was Carsanto's stocky, bald-headed chief of security and the armed forces—and a direct descendent of Whitefog's founder. Dick never panicked, and kept his cool when most other people would crumble under pressure.

He was always direct and to the point. Things were simply black or white for Dick: You obeyed the rules, or you didn't. And if you didn't obey, he would make sure you would reconsider or suffer the consequences.

Even to George, it sometimes seemed like Dick had no heart. But that was exactly why George liked him in his position: Dick simply was the law in the American Confederacy!

"A woman ran out of the head-office building after refusing to let the guard check her bag. The guard's description seems to indicate it was Nayla. She told him she was a member of the board and head of the genetically modified seeds division. Were you expecting her tonight?" Dick's voice said crisply.

"She's coming over later, yes. She said she had to finish some research first. Did you check her office and the lab?" George

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responded casually. “Now, why do you think it’s Nayla? She would never do such a thing. Did you check the surveillance cameras?” he added. George was positive it wasn’t Nayla who had bolted out of the building.

“No, not yet. I first wanted to find out if she was with you.”

“I’ll let you know when she arrives. Now, Dick,” George said, slightly irritated, “don’t ruin my perfect day simply because the security guard gave a description that’s similar to Nayla’s. Nayla has everything she could ever want. She has absolutely no reason to steal anything from the building. Just check the surveillance system and identify the woman first!” he lectured the security general. “When you do so, find her and deal with it as you usually do.”

“I’ll do that,” Dick responded, sounding slightly embarrassed before he ended the conversation.

“Music!” George commanded again, and his favorite singer continued.

He got up from the sofa and checked the bedroom. He was pleased. His servant had done a good job in setting the atmosphere for a romantic night. Beautiful red flowers were casually spread across the bed. The candles were lit.

He thought of Nayla’s Latin passion, the grace with which she moved and her stubborn sense of independence. That last trait made her unpredictable, an aspect he appreciated in her as a lover. Now, where was she? It was getting late. Surely there must be a reason. “Nayla always has an explanation,” he smiled in thought. No doubt it would be one she would fiercely defend to him.

Besides being a sensual lover, Nayla also made a great executive for the company. How could Dick even think of Nayla as a thief? George knew Dick didn’t like her. But accusing her of theft based on a security guard’s description only? Ridiculous!

He thought about how he and Nayla would laugh later on when he shared the story with her. It would give her months of ammunition for pushing Dick’s buttons.

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He returned to the living room couch, and one of his favorite Kelly Clarkson songs took him to dreamland. Some forty-five minutes later the awful ring of the computer phone shocked George out of his sleep.

“Answer,” he snapped.

“George, it *was* Nayla!” Dick said triumphantly. “I saw it personally on the surveillance video. Nayla has run!”



"I

've got to get home first and grab stuff for my escape," Nayla's thoughts raced. She knew George was expecting her tonight, and that the security cameras had registered her escape. Once they confirmed that it was she who had run from the building, they would certainly pay a visit to her home to question her.

The General must be drooling at the vision of getting her into the interrogation room! It was a pleasure she was not planning on granting him. She had to act quickly.

But where would she go? How could she stay a step ahead of her pursuers? Once they realized that she had stolen all the new mutating germinator seeds, they would know she would try to deliver them to the United States of Bolivar. She now was glad her parents had returned to their home country just a few years ago, so she didn't have to worry about leaving any family behind here in the Confederacy.

"Darling," her father had said while he'd stroked her long, shiny black hair, "we are proud of you! You are living the American Dream."

His gaze had dropped to the floor while he searched for the right words to continue. Then he'd looked her in the eyes, and she had seen not only his love but also a deep sadness.

"I am now not so sure anymore if the American Dream really is the best way of life, at least for us," he had continued hesitantly. "We are comfortable and have things in this country, but each time

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when we visit our brothers and sisters in the United States of Bolivar, they share a happiness and a sense of community which we have never found here. Your mother and I are getting older. While you are our only child, you're working very hard and have little time to spend with your family. We understand this. But your child—our granddaughter—lives in our home country, close to the rest of our relatives.”

He had paused, lowering his eyes again in an effort to gain courage. He had then taken Nayla in his arms and said, “We’re going home. We long for our family and for being part of a community. I am tired of just fending for myself. There’s no joy that flows from this.”

Nayla could see how difficult this decision had been for her parents. Her mother’s blue eyes, inherited from her grandmother’s Northern family, had embraced Nayla’s soul with the pain of letting go, as well as a love that stays forever.

When she hugged her mother, Nayla felt a connection like she’d never felt before. It was like the merging light of two souls. Souls that understood each other, knew each other, and would always be there for each other. Souls that could never be separated, neither by space nor time.

“We’ll come and visit,” her mother had consoled her, knowing well that years would pass between those visits. The journey took so very long, both by boat or road, for commercial air travel had ceased to exist when she was still a child.

The General knew Nayla’s daughter and family all lived in the United States of Bolivar. It was the only logical place for her to go and be safe.

But if she headed to the United States of Bolivar, he would lock the southern border down before she would be able to get there and put a high price on her head to motivate citizens to turn her in. No, she had no real chance to make it there safely. She couldn’t join her family just yet.

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The shortest distance to safety, or at least relative safety, was to go north and cross the border into the United Canadian Communities. The border there wasn't as well guarded ever since the country had become dependent on Carsanto's terminator seeds, which assured peace and trading between the two nations. Yes, she would go north—and Carsanto would bring her there!

There was a seed train ready to leave some time after midnight, she knew. She would hide on the train and travel north! A faint smile appeared on Nayla's lips as she thought about the irony in this, and how the General would rave if he found out that Carsanto's train had been her means of escape from the country.

When fifteen minutes later the taxi stopped in front of the luxurious downtown apartment complex where she owned the penthouse suite, she asked the driver to wait. She didn't want to lose any time in trying to find another ride. As an avid hiker, she had just the things for this crazy cross-country journey.

She quickly changed her office dress for her favorite hiking clothes: army-green heavy cotton pants, a tight tank top, a light sweater and a black hoody. Her small hiking pack she stuffed with two warm fleece sweaters, a pair of fleece pants, some extra warm socks, a loaf of bread, four large water bottles, some beef jerky, raisins, nuts and chocolate bars. In the pack's side pockets she put a lighter, compass, headlight and pepper-spray.

She then took the precious cotton package, and held it tightly to her heart while taking a deep breath with her eyes closed. Life! The world's life depended on her!

She put it in the top of her pack before closing it, tightened the laces of her light hiking shoes, and was ready to go back out of the door when she suddenly had a marvelous idea that could buy her some more escape time.

She would leave George a note. Yes, that's what she would do. She would leave a note apologizing for the security breach!

While she grabbed a pen from her desk, she noticed the old leather-bound diary from her grandmother. Her parents had given it to

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her when they had returned to the United States of Bolivar in the hope that she would read it. She never had.

Her grandmother had been an anti-civilization rebel during the first uprising shortly after the Carsanto conglomerate had been formed. As a board member, and thus one of Carsanto's leaders, Nayla wasn't exactly proud of her grandmother's history as a rebel. But in her current situation as a fugitive with a cause, the diary held a surprisingly mysterious attraction. Who was her grandmother, and why had she put her life on the line to destroy the American way of life?

Nayla grabbed the diary and put it in her backpack. Then she scribbled the note:

My dearest George,

I know you must be worried by my reckless and crazy behavior. But then again, you would not love me if I weren't reckless and crazy. I apologize for the security breach. The guard had simply no business in my personal belongings and he did not want to listen to any reason. I just need to take care of something personal. I'll be back in a few days and will explain everything. Don't be worried. I love you.

Your love,

Nayla.

P.S. Please forgive me for using Carsanto's security service as mail deliverers.

She put the note in a little envelope on which she wrote, in large letters, *For George Shapura*. She placed it on her living room table and smiled when she walked out of the door. The General was going to be furious when he found a note that wasn't his to open, and George was going to be amused by how she used Dick as mail boy. If her plan worked, it might take days before they would find out that the

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seeds were gone. By then she would be somewhere north in the United Canadian Communities.

She asked the cab driver to bring her to a fast food restaurant some two miles from Carsanto's train depot. She told him a phony story about how she was meeting up with a friend there, and that the two of them were taking off to the mountains near El Paso that were marked on this old treasure map she had found.

The driver had been very interested in the map. She told him she'd accidentally discovered it, and had already gotten into trouble with the country's security forces because of it. That would be enough to really confuse the General and put him onto a wrong lead once they found and interrogated this driver.

When she got to the restaurant, she made sure the taxi had left before she reached the diner's entrance. After all she wasn't planning to enter it.

Once the vehicle was out of sight she started, unnoticed, the two-mile hike to Carsanto's train depot. Her black hood blended into the darkness of the night and concealed her face. The streets in the warehouse district around the depot were empty. She kept a brisk pace, looking over her shoulder every few steps. This was not a neighborhood for a woman to be alone at this time of the night. She felt her heart pounding heavily, and her breath became short.

A car suddenly appeared from around a corner. It was still a few blocks away from her. Frantically she looked around for cover, and quickly hid among some broken down old cars next to one of the warehouses.

The car slowly made its way down the streets—way too slow for someone driving home from work. Whoever was in there was up to no good. It stopped a little distance past her and kept idling. By now Nayla's heart was racing. After a few minutes though, the vehicle continued at its suspicious pace. Nayla stayed in her hiding spot until the car turned right some six blocks further.

She waited for a while until she was convinced that the street was totally empty again. Her yoga deep-breathing techniques were

proving to be really helpful in collecting her composure. The depot was just a little further away.

A few minutes later she was sitting between some shrubs along the open area that gave out to the fenced-off train depot. For over an hour she sat there carefully observing the single Carsanto security guard she'd spotted. He kept patrolling up and down the side of the train. As soon as he had reached the end, he would turn around and start walking the other way.

She did, however, notice that during the entire time he'd never once looked behind him. She decided to run towards the train once the guard had passed the few warehouses that were built right up to the fence. They were located only a short distance from the rails, and the tree next to the buildings could be of help with crossing the fence. This meant she would be in full sight however, so she hoped the guard would not hear her or accidentally look over his shoulder. Otherwise she had plenty of time, since it would take the guard a full ten minutes to reach the point where he would turn around.

Minutes later she reached the sighted location, and to her relief noticed someone had cut an opening in the fence right by the tree. At least there would be no need for aerial acrobatics to cross the fence. She knelt alongside the building, and waited for the guard to pass. She was focused now, and the anxiety she had felt earlier when she crossed this warehouse area had faded away.

When the guard was far enough beyond the building, Nayla slid quickly through the opening. Then she sprinted, silently as a leopard, over the grassy field towards the railroad tracks. All the while she kept a worried eye on the security guard who continued walking away from her. At the tracks she slowed down her pace, and tiptoed quietly over the loose gravel.

She reached the train unseen and immediately took cover between two cars. The guard still had a distance to cover before turning her way again, giving her another few minutes to find better shelter. She peered out from between the train cars on the other side, and when she couldn't detect any security patrols there, started making

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her way along the train towards the grain silos. A few minutes later, after she had verified the train was destined for Canada, she climbed one of the cars that had already passed under the grain silo and been filled with oats. Before she climbed to its very top, she checked if any guards were in sight.

When she couldn't detect any, she opened the lid of the grain car and carefully lowered herself into it. Her feet sank a few inches into the seeds, and some kernels made it into her shoes. Carefully she sat down. The grain formed a natural seat around her body.

"This might make for a comfortable ride," she thought, although she recognized if she wanted to stand, she would have to open the lid.

For a while she just sat there in the dark. Her body pumped with adrenaline, her mind wired; now she had to calm down! There simply was no way she could sleep, even though she had found safety in this metal cocoon. She remembered her grandmother's diary.

"I might as well read a bit," she thought. "It will distract my mind from this eventful evening."

She turned on her headlight, made herself comfortable, and opened the diary.

February 8, 2021.

If the Universe had a message today on my 26th birthday, it came through loud and clear: Everything happens for a reason! This morning, the radio news sounded almost like any other day: an ultra-severe storm hit Florida; after a warm and brown Christmas, Chicago finally saw its first snow this winter—six feet of the white stuff was dumped on the city; in Europe winter temperatures were so high that they now had eliminated the possibility for any snowfall at all this winter—an act of nature that was bankrupting most of the region's winter tourism industry; another monsoon with some severe flooding hit somewhere in Asia; and millions of people were on the brink of starvation in Africa due to severe drought. All of this, courtesy of global warming and climate change. What really gets me is that instead of taking harsher action to combat greenhouse gases, politicians are still debating the cost to

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industry and the economy. Does anyone in the administration ever factor in the cost of all these natural disasters?

The reconstruction of course drives economic activity, but surely this isn't what we are after. I'm puzzled why we don't charge those large corporate polluters with the cost of all these catastrophes? It's kind of like what happened years ago with the tobacco industry. Eventually the tobacco corporations were held responsible for the cancers they'd caused. We have known for decades now that CO2 is severely damaging the atmosphere and causing our weather to change with all its devastating consequences to both the environment and our economic infrastructure. Governments should simply hold polluters responsible! That's when the true cost of products would be accounted for in the corporation, and then at least we, as taxpayers, wouldn't be paying for such corporate complacency. Or is it greed? I guess it must be since the executives know their companies are polluting—without having to pay for it. Doing so makes money for their shareholders, which in turn is good for their personal bank accounts.

Why do we allow some people to get filthy rich by destroying our environment and making all of our lives miserable while we, the taxpayers, clean the mess up behind them? Instead, we should present them with the true bill of their actions! But anyway I'm deviating.

What really got me this morning was that on top of all the typical daily news, Carsanto announced that it would start with the commercialization of its genetically modified terminator seeds. Twenty-one years ago the CEO of the biochemical corporation that got absorbed by this powerful conglomerate wrote in an open letter that the company wasn't planning to commercialize its terminator seeds. But then again, we all should have known that no corporation would ever spend money researching something it wasn't planning to make money from at some point in time. With the removal of the moratorium on field trials in 2016, I guess we knew this was coming. The Carsanto company argues that all public issues have been addressed; that the genetically engineered terminator seeds are both safe for consumption and no threat to the environment.

A terminator seed contains a cell with a dioxin—one of the most poisonous substances on the planet—and another cell that acts as an activator of the dioxin cell. The activator cell can be turned on or off through external stimuli like heat or a certain chemical. When activated, the dioxin is released in the late

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embryonic stage of the seed's development and renders the seed sterile. This practice allows seed farms to produce seeds with the dioxin gene. The activator is only added upon sale of the seed to the farmer. This typically happens by coating the seeds with tetracycline—putting more antibiotics into our food systems. Ultimately the produce that we will get to eat is from a sterile plant. Sterilized by releasing a dioxin—a really bad poison—during its germination. And of course, this would do no harm to us.

How many times do we need to be confronted with the same story before we learn from it? DDT wasn't supposed to harm us either, nor were any of the other chemicals we have sprayed on our land and food over the last seventy years. That is why the majority of all women feed breast milk with dioxin to their babies now! We didn't ask for this! Actually, we were told it was safe! How on earth did we ever buy into the story that chemicals, produced by corporations during World War I and II, would improve our food production if we sprayed them onto our soil and vegetables?

Anyway, I'll stop ranting... as you can see, this really gets to me, and I could go on for hours about our cultural stupidity. But again that's not what I was going to write down here. It was the synchronicity of events today that really made me think about my life and the world that I'm creating. Tonight my girlfriend took me out for my birthday to see a speaker. The topic was "Be the Change!" When we arrived, the auditorium was almost full, and in big bold letters the screen up front read: "What kind of world are you creating now?"

The question startled me. It was suggesting I was creating the world around me! I thought about Monsanto's terminator seeds, and feelings of anger boiled up inside of me. How could someone ask a question like this and therefore be suggesting I could do anything about this corporate criminality?! Of course I want to create a different world, but what power do I have?

On the way over, my girlfriend had told me the presenter was a corporate executive who had changed his life, and now focused his time and skills to create a more socially just and environmentally sustainable planet. Of course such a question could only be asked by a "corporate executive," someone with money, someone who didn't have to be concerned about making it to the next paycheck! I didn't want to disappoint my friend, so I politely stayed, but in reality, I just wanted to bolt. Some five minutes later when the auditorium was filled with more people than seats, the

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speaker walked in. There was no introduction, so I assumed most people knew this man.

“I’m going to start with asking all of you to close your eyes,” was the first thing he said with a slightly charming accent. I wasn’t planning to follow his request, but when I looked around and everyone had their eyes closed, I decided to follow suit.

“Now think about the time when you were sixteen, seventeen or eighteen years old,” he continued. “What dreams did you have? What kind of a world did you dream of?”

Silence engulfed the room, and eventually the question made me float back to my teenage years. I had so wanted to change the world. I had wanted to make a difference—to create a world that was more peaceful, where people cared for each other and respected each other’s differences. A world with clean air, clean water and clean soil. A world with lots of love and laughter! I sure was planning to change the world!

His voice brought me back with the question that cut straight into my soul: “And what kind of dream are you living today? What kind of world are you creating today?”

The stark contrast between the two pictures made me choke. While he had asked in essence the same question that had just minutes before made me really angry, I now felt rather puzzled. What had happened? I did have great plans and worthwhile dreams, so how did I end up working in a cubicle for a large corporate insurance company, and only seeing the sunlight when I went for lunch?

I ended up barely noticing the rest of the man’s presentation, for the question had shaken the entire foundation of my life. What dream was I following? What world was I creating? What had happened with my own dream? When did I lose it ...or more accurately, forget about it? For I still had it. It still was my dream! But I wasn’t living it, nor was I making any efforts to make it happen. Life had become something that happened to me. So I would complain, blame, get angry, feel frustrated, protest, and then make my contribution to a system that was nothing like the world I had dreamed of. How did I get here? When did I stop believing in my dream?

The presentation ended. The presenter took some questions from an audience that clearly struggled with accepting the fact that they had been accused of

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creating the world they lived in. I was glad that at least I wasn't the only one who had been shaken to the core.

Upon leaving the auditorium there was the opportunity to purchase the author's book, which he was signing. That's when the day's coincidences came to a peak. The book was titled, Seeds ...of Germination ...or Termination. Carsanto's terminator seed announcement came immediately back to mind, as did some new questions: "What did I allow to germinate in my life? What did I terminate? And why?"

Nayla scooped up a handful of the seeds in which she was sitting. Terminator seeds! Life that could only germinate once! Life poised to terminate! They were seeds that would germinate only to grow a sterile plant—one poisoned and reduced to a shadow of its true life-giving potential. It was all like a dream that takes root, but becomes corrupted and turns into an impotent mirror of its pure creative power.

Nayla wiggled herself into a comfortable position while the seeds embraced her like the kernels of a beanbag. She then drifted off to sleep with her mind occupied by questions: "What kind of world do I dream of? What kind of world am I creating?"

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