

Rescue Cat - Written By Will Snow

Chapter Seventeen

Bill came to with a start, his soul flooding back into his body, vacuumed back from some distant time-space. His mind flipped on to full awareness, like a solid-state hard drive snapping to life. He sat up and looked at the alarm clock—4:00 AM. He laid his head back down on the pillow and started laughing—softly at first, then louder and louder until he could scarcely catch his breath.

Deprived of further sleep, he hopped out of bed, surprisingly none the worse for last night's sedation. He flipped on his stereo system, selected a guitar anthem tape, cranked up the volume, and opened his window. He smiled when he saw their bedroom lights snap on. New world order, you bastards, he thought as he headed downstairs for his morning routine.

His personal trainer was very complimentary about his exceptional performance during that morning's workout. Bill was surprised to feel no ill effects or sluggishness. Quite the opposite. He was maxing out on every set and could have gone for more.

Bill walked over to the smoothie shop and chose something completely different this time. New day, new flavor, he thought

as he tipped the delighted young woman at the counter more than she would make that day in wages.

He walked down the road to the beach, took off his shoes and socks, and strode into the surf. Looking out at the predawn sky, he dropped to his knees and said a quick and earnest prayer of thanks for the day. Though no celestial seabird appeared, he was confident that his message was heard and appreciated.

After returning home, Bill turned on his workstation and saw the usual 100+ emails. Rather than dive into the labor-intensive process of responding to everyone, he drafted a very concise auto-respond message that read as follows:

"Thank you very much for your email. I will be taking a leave of absence starting today and ending sometime in the unknowable future. When I return, I will be doing something much more interesting and fulfilling. I appreciate all your business and confidence in my services and wish you the best in your lives. Make your time in this amazing world glorious." That task completed, he spent the next three hours making travel arrangements to the world's most vibrant and colorful cities.

Feeling lighter than ever as he removed the anchors that tethered him to his small world, Bill walked through his house with a jumbo-sized trash bag, throwing away everything that did not suit him at this moment without remembrance or remorse. He

called a mobile shredding service, scheduled an appointment for the next day, and started moving boxes of medical records and files to the garage.

Bill then called Snow Globe Travel Adventures and booked three months' worth of trips to all the far-flung places in the world that he had been dreaming of. Finally, he called Jodi to set up a time to come over to put up posters, even though he knew it would be pointless. When his call went to voicemail, Bill drove over and fulfilled his promise to her. He initially debated whether to share his vision from last night but ultimately determined that it was meant for his eyes only and that peace would eventually come to her in its own way.

After completing his final service, Bill hugged Jodi, returned to his car, and vanished into the sparkling salt air of Laguna.