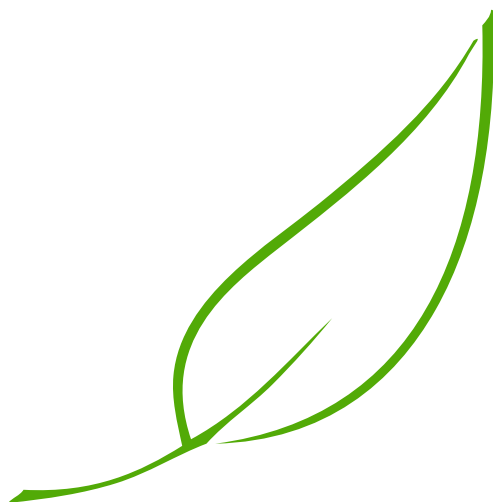


I DREAM OF GENE

by Ken Bradbury



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JIMMY: (*a young boy, entering and angrily shouting offstage*) Okay! Okay, Mom, I can hear you! I'm going to my room, okay? Yes, I want to play ball tonight! I just don't see why I've got to clean up this stupid room! (*listens*) Huh? Yeh, I know it's not a stupid room ... (*to himself*) ... I just think it's stupid that I've got to clean it up. (*listens*) Nothin'! Nothin' Mom! I said I'd be glad to clean it up. (*shuts door*) Boy, I hate to clean my room but she's not gonna let me out of the house until I do. (*looks around*) Darn. I've already stuffed stuff everywhere you can stuff stuff. (*as he moves*) Maybe in the closet. (*he opens the door and is immediately surrounded by an avalanche of falling "stuff"*) Oh no! What a mess. Now I've got stuff all over my stuff. Man, I haven't even some of this stuff for ... hey ... what's this? (*picks something up*) I don't even remember this old flashlight. (*blowing the dust of it*) Dusty. (*rubs it*) Just rub off some of this stuff ... maybe it'll still work.

GENE:(*suddenly appearing*) Cowabunga, Man! (*Jimmy screams*) Shhhh! You want your Mom to hear you?

JIMMY: (*now on the floor, holding his beating heart*) Who ... who are you?

GENE: The Easter Bunny.

JIMMY: That's crazy!

GENE: You're right. How about CNN? This is Gene Neeny with CNN news. We're here to interview the most recent victim of a bad attitude. (*putting an imaginary microphone in Jimmy's face*) Whatta ya say, Jimmy boy? Got a word for our television audience? What's is like to be a little jerk?

JIMMY: I ... are you ... am I dreaming?

GENE: (*singing*) "I dream of Genie with the light brown hair!"

JIMMY: Did Mom send you up here? Who are you?

GENE: Ah! Excellent question! I thought you'd never ask! Go ahead! Ask me again! Ask me again!

JIMMY: Who are you!?

GENE: I'm not telling.

JIMMY: But you just said ...

GENE: I said to ask. I didn't say I'd answer.

JIMMY: You're crazy.

GENE: Perhaps. It's a crazy world. Is this your mess?

JIMMY: Yeh ... It's my stuff.

GENE: (*mimicking him*) "It's my stuff, man. Don't touch my stuff."

JIMMY: (*moving for the door*) I'm gettin' outa here.

GENE: (*as a mysterious and very frightening chant*) Oh, thou who dost run in fear of the all-powerful power who has powered himself into this dungeon of everlasting stuff!

JIMMY: (*stopping*) Huh?

GENE: How darest thou doubt the mysterious ways and means of E pluribus Unum Ex Post Facto brick brack and walla-walla-bing-bang!

JIMMY: (*a long beat, then*) What'd you just say?

GENE: That means don't touch the door, kid. We've got some business to take care of.

JIMMY: You a lawyer?

GENE: (*painfully*) Oh! Oh! Ouch! I've been hurt! You've hurt me, boy! I may never recover! (*he falls into a heap on the floor*)

JIMMY: (*goes to him carefully...looks here and there on Gene's body for any sign of life ...then nudges him with his toe*)

GENE: (*as Jimmy jumps*) Is there some reason you're kicking me?

JIMMY: I ...uh ... I wasn't ... I didn't mean to kick you! Honest!

GENE: (*painfully rising*) And I landed right on some of your stuff. (*picking up a handful*) Geesh. What is this stuff? Do you ever throw anything away? I've never seen petrified French Fries.

JIMMY: I guess I kinda need to clean things.

GENE: Kinda? Jimmy, this could be a Museum of Natural History! (*holds something*) There's stuff in here from the Dark Ages!

JIMMY: That's a disco tape.

GENE: See what I mean?

JIMMY: How'd you get in here?

GENE: You rubbed.

JIMMY: What?

GENE: You rubbed and I came. That's what I do.

JIMMY: Rubbed?

GENE: The flashlight, Ding Dong! You rubbed that stupid flashlight!

JIMMY: Oh, my gosh! You mean you're ... you're one of those ...

GENE: Say it! Say it!

JIMMY: Firemen? You're a fireman!?

GENE: When was the last time you had an I.Q. test, kid? Do I look like a fireman? You see any ladders hanging from me? Think, Jimmy! Think! A flashlight ... sort of a modern LAMP! Big L, little A, little M, little P. Lamp! You rubbed a LAMP and I appeared!

JIMMY: (*thinking*) Uh ... you work for the power company?

GENE: (*moans in agony*) Ohhhh! My mother said, "Get a real job. Be a chiropractor. Learn horticulture! Do something that matters!" But no, I wanted to go into public service.

JIMMY: You're a librarian?

GENE: (*grabbing Jimmy by the neck*) I am a Genie, kid! Magic bottle! Lamp! Flashlight! You ever had your stuff stuffed up your nose? (*letting go and grabbing his head*) I'm getting a headache. You caused this, you know that? I was having a great day. The Cubs finally won a game, I came within two numbers on the Lotto and there was an empty seat on the bus. Now I come in here and ... oh, who cares? Who really cares anymore? (*he sits in a chair and begins to sob*)

JIMMY: (*a long beat as Jimmy stares at Gene, not knowing for sure what to do ... then finally*) Hey ... I'm sorry.

GENE: Sure you are. I mean, I'm just a Genie ... good old Gene the Genie. I've been at the bottom of that horrible closet ever since you joined the Cub Scouts. I hear you complaining so I roll myself out here on the floor to try to help and you think I'm your local librarian. Life is not fair, kid! It's just not fair!



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