

לאירא

by Stanley Lieber

*Dominus illuminatio mea*

A ram's horn trumpet split the curtain of silence, penumbra of so-called dignity discarded on the unmopped floor. The Archangel Uriel appeared before them, there in the SAM'S CLUB, fully visible in all his splendor to the human eyes who gazed upon him.

"It is quite simple actually," said Uriel. "I hold the key."

Uriel descended the stale air of the manager's office, seeming to pass *through* the drop ceiling without disturbing its corporeal aspect. He gripped the rusty key in his right hand, extending it for no apparent reason toward the ceiling he had presently traversed. Neither human understood the significance of the gesture. In point of fact, neither human had wondered after the gesture in the first place.

Sam Walton removed and then slowly replaced his meshback cap. His eyes narrowed as they tracked slowly, left to right. His panic was evident.

"You are not alone," Uriel assured him, easily.

"Why... You're the drawing I made. Right here, in my notebook." Sam tore the page from his notebook and shoved it firmly across his desk at Uriel, ripping it nearly in half in the process. It wasn't a handshake but it would have to do.

"One of the most important things in life is to know your limitations," said Uriel.

"I—I'm not much of an artist, I'll admit..." stammered Walton. His mouth opened again and then he realized he had nothing more to say.

"Just because something is easy to do doesn't mean it is a good idea," countered Uriel, gently.

"Simplicity is harder to reach than complexity," Uriel explained. "This is more an implementation detail than anything."

Walton and Piotr had not been sure how to respond to the sudden invasion of the manager's office by this... What was he, exactly? Piotr's incredulity was plain.

Uriel gripped Sam Walton by the shoulders and stared deeply into his gray eyes. "You do not know what you are doing."

And then:

"This is simply false."

Finally:

"And you are wrong again."

Sam Walton stared back at him, dumbfounded.

"Uhu?" said Uriel. "I honestly and deeply hope you fail completely."

Sam shuffled backwards, landing awkwardly in his chair. His meshback cap felt heavy on his head. It jostled, fell flat on the floor.

"People are fucking stupid," Uriel revealed. "Morals are subjective and individual, and in many cases in conflict with the law."

Piotr tilted his head, as if considering the point.

The Archangel Uriel, steadily frustrated at Sam's apparent lack of comprehension, reached into his shoulder bag for a visual aid.

Sam Walton, for his part, had run out of words.