

# TEXT ADVENTURE

*'JERK  
VIZIER'*

by  
Stanley  
Lieber

## 1

The Vizier popped his collar and sat down on his throne. The green of his alligator polo merged with the fading sunlight until his head appeared to float above the stage.

“There is no safe word,” he said, into his microphone.

Instantly, the crowd cheered.

He was wearing his new wig.

The Vizier flushed.

## 2

“I jerked off to this footage, five, maybe six years ago. I don’t understand why they keep rerunning these same tired political spots.”

“For my part, I’m surprised at the variety. Most people have short memories. And jerking off is everywhere now.”

“Yeah. I know it’s not cool anymore, but still, I like doing it. I guess the rest of the world is finally ready to join me in the twentieth century. I just wish the programming was more varied.”

The two men piped down as a panoply of voices boomed from the stage.

## 3

The Vizier swiveled his microphone around and listened to the crowd. Discussion was trending towards nothing of importance. And yet, the people were still chatting idly, spiting the word of the law. Now they could hear themselves over the loudspeakers. Their retractions were boilerplate, inept; but still he was pleased with the uncomfortable noises emanating from the cheap seats.

He clicked off his microphone. Coughed, softly, then clicked it back on.

“You people have no idea what I’m going through,” he said.

The crowd cheered.

## 4

“I know the word,” said the Vizier. “I just can’t think of it right now.”

The men continued tying him to the grill.

The Vizier slipped out of his Nike Air Cortez and wiggled in his denim. Vestments discarded, he still could not manage to free his arms. Finally, his Rolex slid off, sinking into the ash and charcoal below.

“This is a disappointing way for a Caliphate to divest.”

Now stripped of the rest of his clothing, the group of men continued the process of smoothing the spicy rub into the Vizier’s bare haunches. The strong seasoning lodged in his sinuses, coaxing forth a powerful sneeze.

“Al’hamdo Lilah,” said one of the chefs.

“Yarhamaka Allah,” said the Vizier. “All things considered, I hope I at least taste good on a paper plate.”

“We’ll see,” said one of the men, straining to work yet more of the rub into the Vizier’s taut thighs.

“I’m one hundred percent serious,” said the Vizier.

## 5

“Wait! I remember! *Westsiiiiide!* The safe word is *Westsiiiiide!*”

The Vizier managed to free one of his hands. He threw up a W and waved it around, weakly. The stage chefs were not moved by this retreat into the classics.

“You said there wasn’t a safe word.”

“Look, that was dogma. This is dinner. And I’m the Vizier!”

“Doesn’t matter. We’re overbooked. Besides, you smell delicious.”

“That’s the seasoning, you imbecile. There has been a Fatwah against consuming the flesh of a Vizier!”

“As you said. Dogma.”

## 6

“I’m not really turned on by this cooking stuff.”

“Me neither. Preferred the political theater. Even the reruns.”

“Yeah. Let’s get out of here. Maybe we can still beat the post-event traffic.”

For once, the car started without any trouble.







