

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
English 30B

## **Richard**

by Thomas Hunt

He signed the document and put the cap back on his expensive fountain pen. He looked over the document again and threw the pen into the trash. He leaned back in his chair and sighed. He picked the pen out of the trash can and put it in the cardboard moving box on his desk. He put the top on the box and left it behind, someone would be along shortly to pick it up and have it delivered to his house. They were very efficient around here, and they always would be. He left his office and nodded to his secretary. She looked down as he passed, out of respect.

He climbed the steps and boarded the helicopter. He waved to the small crowd that had gathered. They were good people, they didn't care about what had happened. All they had cared about was him and his comfort. But other people had wanted him gone, and now they had what they wanted. In a way it was what he wanted too. Maybe now the dreams would stop.

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The dreams had started a few weeks after the war. They had been the same every night since. Hundreds and thousands of human bodies, piled high in open mass graves. They look dead, but they are moving and screaming. The memory of the dream is so thick that he begins to sweat and his hands have started to shake slightly. His wife, seated next to him, reached over and took his hand. He relaxed a little but continued to think about the dream. The bodies were mostly male, but there were women and even children moving around in the pile. It was then that he remembered the baby. His cries could always be heard above the rest. He would always be crawling around and usually it seemed as though the baby was coming right at him. Every night he seemed to be getting closer and closer. Last night it seemed as if he was almost in reach. His small hands tearing through the tattered rags of the other corpses, reaching out, towards him.

The helicopter lurched and touched down. The man snapped awake and looked around frantically. He saw his wife sitting next to him, calmly. He relaxed with a smile. It was a good thing he wasn't driving, he thought.

As he straightened his tie and departed the chopper, he knew the dreams would stop and he could finally relax.

It was surprising that no matter how sure of something someone was, they could still be horribly, horribly wrong.

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The rest of the ride home was uneventful. From the chopper to the plane, to the limo, the man was surrounded by the uncomfortable silence of failure. On his trips in the past he had a healthy repartee with the pilots and drivers. They knew he was an avid football fan and that he always placed at least one bet every week of the season. This ride however there were no friendly mentioning of the Steelers or the Jets. The pilots and drivers just hung their heads, in shame, at the sight of their fallen master.

By the time he arrived home to California, the day had turned into night. He made himself a stiff drink from the sideboard and plopped down in his easy chair, exhausted. He drank his drink in a quick gulp. Perhaps a few more would dim his pain. He went to the sideboard and made another. This one was much stronger. He didn't bother sitting down this time. He swallowed it at the bar and made a third. After the third, came the fourth, and after the fifth, he sat back down in his chair.

Tomorrow was Sunday and now that he was home, he'd be expected to go to church. "Arrrrrrgh" he grumbled to himself for after what he had done he no longer felt

welcome in the house of the Lord. But he knew he would go anyway, he thought as he drifted off to sleep. Maybe it would help, maybe it would help, he thought as he began snoring. Snoring that would be interrupted by the shock of dreams, several times that night.

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He kneeled alone in the last row of pews. The last time he had been here, during his winter vacation, he had sat in the front row in a sharp suit, with his wife by his side and a million dollar grin on his face. This time he hid in the back like a leper, in a dark suit that made him seem as though he was there in mourning, for himself.

He kneeled throughout the mass, his hands clasped tightly and his head leaning against them as if he had no power to lift it.

"Make the dreams stop, Lord", he prayed, "It wasn't my fault. I tried to stop it, but I was just too weak." The Lord remained quiet, as usual. He stopped praying after that but kept kneeling and thinking. The people lost faith in him. They kicked him out before he could make good on his promises. He planned to stop the violence, he planned to stop the war. But the people cared not for his plans. All they cared about was some third rate burglary. Some worthless underling had botched a simple bugging job. He

had those cocksuckers running a round with flashlights, wearing surgical gloves, for chrissake. I wouldn't have hired those boobs to knock over a convenience store, let alone do the job they did. And it wasn't just them, there were the vicious rat bastard lawyer who refused to take the fall. Arrrgh. If only the Fairy was still around, I could arrest that shyster and crush his larynx with a steel boot. What a self-serving cocksucker. He wouldn't do a little time to save his boss, he thought. Some day I'm find that son of a bitch, he thought, someday that cocksucker will know who he messed with. Arrrrrrgh. He was too upset for church. He got up, blessed himself and went home, to get a drink and a pen and to start making a list.