

Felix Takes the Cake

Working Draft 3 by Tyler Hutchison

Verisoft Software Offices, Chicago Illinois

The offices are located between the seventh and ninth floor of the Sear's (I would like some sort of office building in Chicago but one that is less recognizable) tower. The ninth floor is home to Verisoft's software engineers. They get private offices. They are the designers, the architects of software. The bathrooms on the ninth floor are small, private, and clean. The break room on the ninth floor is spacious and filled with complimentary muffins and other goodies. The eighth floor of the Verisoft offices is where the team managers and sales associates also work. The team managers make budgets, have meetings and take training seminars on how to be effective leaders. The sales associates make phone calls to clients, write down specifications, and make promises about when projects can be completed. The seventh floor of the Verisoft offices is essentially just one large room with the exception of a large community bathroom and a seven-by-seven break-room that is cluttered with coffee makers. The main room is filled with cubicles, individual compartments used to fool employees into thinking of themselves as important individuals. The employees of Verisoft attempt to personalize their cubicles like it will somehow make working there more tolerable. They post pictures of cute kittens or breathtaking landscapes with inspirational words printed on them. "Hang in there," or "Where were you when there was just one set of footprints? That's when I was carrying you." But these amenities make no difference. At the core of every cubicle is the standard issue desk, chair,

computer and coffee mug. Well, okay the coffee mugs are not standard issue, but they are standard.

Sitting in cube number 13 row 7 is Felix Eleazar. He is currently working on a project for a pharmaceuticals business, PharmaTech. The program catalogues the current price and the quantity of sales for every prescription drug currently on the market. The program then compiles this information into a report of the most popular drugs and their prices. The company, PharmaTech, takes these reports and then brings them to the pharmaceutical manufacturers to recommend price adjustments (increases only) for popular drugs.

Felix is not writing this application by himself. He has teammates. At least 20 or so Verisoft programmers are working together on this project. They are all randomly scattered throughout the shanty town of personalized cubes. Sometimes they have meetings to discuss the project and focus on what needs to be done. These meetings mostly entail the project manager, Chad Youngquist, yelling or congratulating and attempting to motivate everyone to work faster and meet deadlines.

Lunch time, Felix goes to McDonald's. He eats lunch by himself in his car in the parking lot.

Felix sits in his cube for the next fourteen hours. He doesn't really have a lot of work to do. He is a programmer, so his job is to program the application. All he has to do is follow the blueprints that the software engineers have made and translate them into code and type them into a computer. The best way to describe his job would be the word code monkey. His brain may not exactly be able to tell what the code is doing, but if you give him long enough he can continue to hit the code until it starts to

work... sort of. He doesn't have much work today because he just has to follow the blueprint and make sure that the computer does not spit out any errors. But the computer always gives errors and they are usually related to other parts of the project that his teammates are working on. Since there are errors in the project, he cannot make any more progress until there are no longer anymore errors or until his manager assigns him to another task and lets him see the blueprints for another piece of the project. He eats some Cheetos. He sits and spins in his chair. He does not leave work early just in case the computer stops outputting errors. It is also frowned upon by the managers if you leave work before they do. The managers like to work late. They get paid for overtime. Felix eats some more Cheetos. He gets up and goes to the break room to get some coffee.

Chad Youngquist popped into the seventh floor to gather his team into the meeting room and let them know that he is leaving for the day; he has left a folder of tasks that will need to be completed before the end of the day tomorrow.

O.k. time to go home I guess.

Felix drives his Volkswagen Rabbit home. He is surrounded by SUV's. Felix lives by himself in a 2 bedroom 1 bathroom apartment, the Melrose. The Melrose is a fairly upscale apartment where the tenants are wealthy enough to think that they are better off than all the other residents of the building, and should therefore not associate with their neighbors.

Felix started the night off with a little T.V. It helps him unwind. He sat in his chair, a black leather massaging chair from the Sharper Image, The Ultimate Human Touch Robotic Massage Chair. It is one of the only pieces of furniture he has in his

living room. He also has a futon that he sometimes sits on. But usually Felix does not sit on the futon because the futon is for company. The futon rarely gets sat on. He also has a black steel entertainment center with a tempered glass shelf for his 42" plasma screen TV. Felix sat in his chair watching television, Reality TV, a show following real ordinary people! Felix watched a dating-based competition game. One incredibly tan girl with large breasts and blonde hair goes on several dates with different gentlemen suitors, sexy dates. At the end of the show she picks one of the gentlemen and they win and go have sex or something. "Look at this guy what a meathead!" said Felix out-loud to the television. "Why is this girl falling for him!?!". He sat up from his chair a little to glare at the television set. "She is so shallow, I hate her. I hate him."

Disgusted with his date for the evening Felix got up and went to the kitchen to make himself some dinner. A chicken pot pie, compliments of Stouffer's.

Felix will usually get bored with just watching television after about thirty minutes and he will sit in his chair on his laptop and look at the internet. Sometimes he types things into his computer. Sometimes he reads articles on Wikipedia.

He has several bulletin boards that he posts on. He frequently lurks on image boards posting as one of the legions of anonymous users.

Felix sat in his chair, looking at internets, sometimes observing the reality dating show on the television. He sat in this chair and did not move from it until 2 a.m.

Felix wanted a snack. He was hungry and his joints were stiff from internetting all night. He decided it might be a good idea to walk to the gas station and get some Funyuns. The nearest twenty-four hour gas station was only 3 blocks away from his apartment.

[Connecting part needed]

Felix was standing on the corner. He coughed. He coughed a few more times. One last time. And he was dead. Here lay Felix A. Eleazar, his corpse in a crumpled mass caressed by the yellow glow of the street lamp. So Felix stood up, out of his body. He looked down in disbelief as new souls are prone to do. His body lay on the damp asphalt, one leg pointing northwest, his head pointing east. The rest of his body was curled in to a fetal position as best as it could. He sat down on the curb next to his body, waiting. Waiting for someone to come by, call an ambulance. Call the police. Call the mortician. But no one came.

Felix sat on the curb wondering if this was the afterlife. No heaven, no hell, just a ghost world. A gray overcast world. Well, not really a ghost world, Felix didn't see any other ghosts around. So he sat quietly, crying over his body. Crying over the loss of the life that he despised the most, his own. His eyes were red and puffy, his nose was snotty. "I guess even as a ghost I still get a snotty nose." He tried to clear his throat but only managed to make a faint whistling noise. He sat staring past his body, at nothing of particular interest on the pavement. He sat and he waited.

Three hours had passed and Felix was still waiting. Three hours of gentle rocking and hair tugging. Still no one had found his corpse. No other ghosts. No Grim Reaper, no Saint Peter, no valkyries...

and then:

A man wearing a white robe appeared. His thick white hair brushed to his right side. Long wisps of eyebrow hair reached out and over his eyes like fishing pole gone taut. His nose was large and red. No, it wasn't red, it should be red, but it was gray.

The man is absent of color. He is black and white as well as every gray tone in between.

"Listen, Mr. Elezar, is it?" said the man looking down in his black leather-bound notebook. "We are really, really sorry about this mistake but it seems like Death forgot about you."

"Cla...Clarence?"

The robed man looked behind himself for anyone else. "What? Oh, no, my name is Gabriel."

"But, but you, you look just like Henry Travers... from *It's A Wonderful Life*"

"Oh yes! how silly of me," said the smiling figure. "I am perceived in many forms. They are different for everyone, You know, usually whatever they are most comfortable with an angel looking like. Now back to the matter at hand. It seems like our good friend Death has made a bookkeeping mistake and forgotten to come collect you."

"What? Forgot? How?"

"Well, you must understand he is a very busy man, he has a lot of appointments to keep, he can't be perfect all the time. Really it is nothing to worry about. He probably just didn't notice you."

"Didn't notice me..." said Felix looking at his hands. His head swooped up with a bright idea. "Well are you going to take me to heaven?"

The angel's eyes became large. His eyebrows stretched towards the heavens, his mouth went taut and sat as far away from the bottom of his nose as it could. "Me?!" Gabriel smiles, wide. He raises his hand out palm down, fingers spread. "Oh, no, certainly not sir, I am just a messenger! I can't take you away."

"Oh, so is Death coming soon?"

Smiles. "Well he is very busy," a row of teeth like the upper tier of bathroom tiles. "... very busy indeed," palms up. "...things like this usually don't happen, " hands at waist level. "... you understand right?"

"Well, no, not really I actually don't understand any of this..."

"Ho ho quite the funny man eh! That's a sport. Now let's see when we can pencil you into the schedule, shall we?"

The angel removed a gigantic tome from his robes and began flipping through hundreds of thousands pages, skimming them. Both of his hands looked like a hummingbird that had just received a strong dose of meth-amphetamines. "Ahh here we go, looks like we can squeeze you in around March 3rd, 2135."

"WHAT?! That's more than 100 years from now! Can't I die sooner!"

"Sorry, pal, you just aren't that important. I know we made the mistake, and these things rarely happen, but this is the best we can do for you."

"There isn't anything you can do at all?! I mean your an angel."

"Sorry, we really only make exceptions like that for the celebrities, they are always dying before their time."

"2135... what the hell am I supposed to do until then?!"

"I dunno. Read a book, join a cult. C'mon, it will be time for you to die before you even know it. Either way, I would get back in your body. It looks like it is getting pretty cold without a soul. Just remember, if you commit suicide or anything like that ain't nobody coming to get ya!"

"DAMNIT! You go to hell, Clarence! If George Bailey had you for an angel, he

would have jumped!"

Felix dug the nail of his first finger into the pad of his thumb. His pinky finger was hooked out at a forty-five degree angle to his palm. He grimaced. Scrunched his face up as tight as he could, made his eyes real tiny. It looked like he was trying to swallow his face with his forehead and chin. His face went completely loose. He let out a mouth breath. He inhaled and held in the air. He inhaled again and slowly exhaled. He breathed in and out with rhythmically even lengths. One. Two. Three. An encore sigh. "Well, I guess it is no use just sitting around waiting here for death." Felix gingerly rolled his corpse over so that it was laying on its back, looking up. He put one toe into his body. A shiver ran through his soul. His body had been getting pretty cold, like a mitten left outside in the winter. Felix slowly lowered himself into the tepid corpse. He rose. Dusted himself off; his clothes were still dewy from the wet asphalt. Felix walks back to his apartment. Once inside his apartment he slouched into his chair turned on the T.V. and watched an episode of Blind Date that he had already seen.

"I'm going to have to become famous and important if I want to get out of this life." He yawned and picked some gravel out of his ear. "Yeeegh." Felix got up off his couch, walked to his bathroom, spit in the sink and proceeded to his bedroom and flopped.

7:30 a.m. Felix's apartment.

BREEEEP BREEEP BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP!!! Felix opened one of his eyelids. The other was still stuck shut with morning eye goo. He took a good long look at the attention-needy alarm. Mouth breathing. Abdominal muscles strained to sit up,

but they were cowardice. Through a net of early morning mucus Felix grumbled "...fuck it, I'm dead." He takes his boneless, feelingless arm and swatted the alarm off of the bedside stand onto the ground, unplugging it in the process. Felix rolled over and went back to sleep.

Three hours later Felix managed to make it out of bed. He started his day by going to the bathroom and taking a nice relaxing pee. He was hungry and thought about breakfast, but instead he just drank a glass of water and downed some advil. There was an open bag of potato chips on his counter; he had some of those for breakfast.

"Okay, let's see how do I become important enough to die?... hmmm." Felix sat on his couch, one leg crossed over the other with a spiral notebook cradled on the triangle they formed. "How to get famous..." Felix started to doodle something on the paper that kind of resembled a breast. "All I need is one good idea... I know, I'll watch some T.V. That will help me think of some ideas."

"NO! I can't watch T.V! Sitting on my ass is what got me into this predicament in the first place. I know, I'll write a movie script! That will help me get famous!" So Felix set off to writing his movie script.

Three hours had passed. This is how much Felix had managed to write:

Black cop meets white cop:

Black Cop: "Hey brother whats happening"

White cop (Duke Steel)looks angry because his old partner got killed.

Black cop is a rookie and sassy. (played by Will Smith? too old, might need makeup)

Duke Steel: "I'm not your brother rookie! You can call me Detective Steel"

The rest of the page was filled with doodles of boobs and dragons.

Felix tore the page out of his notebook. "Oh my god, this is terrible... Why on earth did I ever think I could do this?" He stood up, letting the spiral notebook fall off his lap. He paced back and forth through his apartment. "I need to get out of this apartment. Maybe I can find a book on how to be famous at Barnes and Nobles." Felix grabbed his coat and walked out of his apartment down to the parking garage and got into his VW Rabbit. He drove to Barnes and Nobles. The drive was SUVs all over the place.

The carpet was green. Extra-padded couches and chairs were splayed about the store. They were a cadre of colors: maroon, orange, blue yellow. While walking towards the Self-Help section, Felix walked by the in store coffee shop and spotted a familiar face. This was the face that Felix would have launched a thousand ships for in high school, if he'd had the courage. She was always nice to Felix, They'd had French class together.

"Oh my god, Irene! Irene Wallentine!"

"Yes..."

"It's me! Mon puce, c'est moi! Ton petit chou chou!"

"Felix? Oh my god! I had totally forgotten about that! It's been, what, nine years? high school seems like forever ago. What have you been doing with yourself?"

"Well uhh not much, I work at a software company." Felix stopped and scratched his head. "I uhh well I died..."

"Oh, Felix, you always were such a funny guy."

"Heh, I guess..." said Felix looking from side to side with his eyes. "So what have you been up to?" Felix looked Irene up and down. She was wearing a green barrista apron and had on a black Starbucks hat. [I should take this opportunity to give a more thorough description of Irene.]

"Well... I kind of work at Starbucks now."

"Oh heh, yeah I guess you do."

[I think it would be nice if she has a cranky manager or customer who is yelling at her in this spot.]

"Listen, we should really catch up." Irene took a small notebook out of her apron pocket and scribbled something down in it. She ripped out the page and handed it to Felix. "Here, why don't you give me a call sometime We should go have lunch."

Felix was astounded. The girl who had once made it painfully clear to Felix that they were just friends, wanted to go have lunch with him! Now really this is no big deal. People have lunch together all the time. Play it cool, Felix, play it cool.

"Yeah, yeah, thats a good idea. I mean, I was just here to uhh books pshhah you know anyways," said Felix. Irene had already walked away to attend to the cranky customer before Felix had said this. His face reddened a little. Then he noticed Irene was looking back at him from behind the cash register. She gave a little wave to him, one tiny enough that her manager would not notice. Felix smiled and waved back.

After looking through the Self-Help section for books on getting famous, and finding nothing, Felix went to the English section of the store and found a book that looked pretty a okay: *Writing Fiction* by Janet Burroway. He decided maybe he could

still get famous from writing a movie script if he had some help.

On his way home Felix found a small local grocer and decided it would be nice to make a meal for himself. Maybe he could learn to cook something for Irene. He bought some fresh sweet potatoes, some chicken and some cashews. The grocer was very friendly and told him "I remember when I was your age, you're a good looking guy I bet the girls like you." Felix went home. He made himself a nice lunch of cashew chicken and sweet potatoes. He read his new book while he waited for his lunch to finish cooking. After a nice lunch he washed his dishes. Then he went back to his futon and continued reading his book. It was kind of nice, he didn't even bother watching the T.V.

Three p.m.

The phone in Felix's apartment rang, RING RING RING. Felix got up from his futon and answered the phone.

"Hello?"

"mmv mhhhv v mhhvvv mhvhhh mhvvvvv?"

"What? Felix? Yes he lives here."

"vmm mmmv mmmvvvmm mvv mvv vmmm mvvmom?"

"No, he is not coming into work today."

"vmm vmm?"

"Why not? He died," and with that Felix promptly hung up the phone and went back to reading his book.

12:30 the next day.

Felix is walked down the street towards Irene's apartment. Standing at the

crosswalk was a woman talking on her cell phone.[She is dressed in a fancy business woman suit... I had no idea what that would be or would look like.] The light directing the traffic driving over the crosswalk turned yellow. The woman started to head into the crosswalk. The silver SUV was barreling down the road toward the crosswalk. It made no sign of stopping. Felix knew what he had to do, he ran as quickly as he could towards the lady and pushed her back onto the sidewalk. Everything was happening so quickly that he did not have time to plant his feet when he pushed the woman back, so the force of his push only furthered him towards the oncoming utility sporting vehicle. SCREEEEEE.....FWUMP fwoooooo thud thud. Felix's body was hurled into the intersection by the S.U.V. He went limp. His momentum was slowed by the friction of the asphalt. Skidding across asphalt at 30 miles an hour is like having a Brill-o pad run across your body at about 70 miles an hour. Thousands of tiny scrapes imprinted themselves onto Felix's body forming tiny constellations with the occasional cut that was deep enough to pour out a galaxy swirl of lipids.

Felix was a little groggy when he woke up in the hospital bed. He sat up, but his body did not follow him. His body stayed laying down in the hospital bed, it looked like Gulliver in a tiny town hospital, covered in sensory wires and IV tubes. Standing at the foot of his bed was Gabriel.

"Ho ho boy! I told you that you were immortal until 2135, not invincible."

"Heh... well I just, uhh, I guess I really wasn't thinking"

"Certainly not. Well I do have some good news, it seems as though a woman recently cancelled her appointment with Death and we have an opening for you."

"Really?"

"Yes, she was meant to be involved in a traffic accident. But apparently she was saved by someone who was meant to die about a week ago but had been forgotten..."

"Oh, sorry"

"Anyway we got a slot to fill and a schedule to keep. Death will be here any minute to see you."

"No, WAIT! I'm not ready to die yet."

"What do you mean?" said Gabriel. "Why just one week ago you could not wait to die, and now you are telling me that you are not ready?"

"Yes, I want to live"

"Well FINE then, BE THAT WAY! Throw the entire schedule out of whack! Now Death is going to think he has some free time! You know what he likes to do in his free time!?! HUH?! DO YOU?!"

"No, sorry..."

"HE LIKES TO PLAY CHESS! He does not have time to play chess! Do you have any idea how hard it is to convince a supernatural power to stop playing chess and get back to work?"

"No, I'm sorry, maybe he could get some sort of hobby that he finds less enjoyable... like raising cocker spaniels or something"

"GAH!" and with that, Gabriel was gone. poof.

Felix lay back into his body and shut his eyes for a good long rest. He slept to the stable lullaby sung by the electrocardiograph.