

URINAL CAKES

By Eirik Gumeny

Cast of Characters

LEON WASHINGTON, owner, boss-man

ARTHUR SIMMONS, employee, coffee drinker

SETTING

Leon Washington's small office – fitting for the owner of a small company. Sparsely decorated, not a lot going on. There's a large desk in the center of the room, adorned with a few office supplies and a photo of Leon's wife. Leon is sitting at his desk, reading over paperwork.

[ARTHUR SIMMONS walks into the office and steps onto the desk.]

LEON

Simmons?

[ARTHUR SIMMONS unzips his fly, pulls out his wiener, and begins urinating on Leon's desk.]

LEON

Art, what the fuck are you doing?

ARTHUR

I'm urinating on your desk, Leon.

LEON

Yes, I can see that.

ARTHUR

It's the pay cuts, sir. I was elected by the staff to discuss them with you.

LEON

You're against them?

ARTHUR

We're against them. This [ARTHUR waves toward his wiener and the steady stream of fluid stemming from it] is symbolic of the gross injustice, pun very much intended, you have perpetrated against us.

LEON [leaning back in his chair]

Yeah, I got that.

[ARTHUR continues to pee, unabated.]

LEON

Look, I had to do it, Art. We're a small company. We're not making any money. And it's not like I singled out any one department or particular person, it was across the board. I took a pay cut, too. It was either that or fire someone. And I wasn't about to do that, Art.

ARTHUR

Yeah, we figured that was the case.

LEON

So you understand?

ARTHUR

Sure we understand. But we're still pissed.

[LEON hangs his head.]

ARTHUR

Ha! That one wasn't intended, I promise.

LEON

I would hope not.

ARTHUR

Look, Leon, the long and short of it is this: Unless you give us more money, the staff is going to walk.

LEON

All of you?

ARTHUR

All of us.

[ARTHUR continues to pee on Leon's desk. LEON looks down at the now soaked desk then back up at Arthur.]

LEON [gesturing toward Arthur's naughty bits]

Can you... stop that?

ARTHUR

I had a lot of coffee.

LEON

It's making it difficult to have this conversation.

ARTHUR

You're doing OK.

LEON

I'd still like you to stop.

ARTHUR

Almost done, sir.

[Art's stream continues without interruption.]

LEON

If I increase the staff's pay, I'm going to have to fire someone. There's no other way around it.

ARTHUR

We are aware of that.

LEON

And you're all OK with it?

ARTHUR

We've agreed that it would be for the greater good.

LEON

Really? That seems... well, unlikely, at best.

ARTHUR

We were a little surprised, too. But we voted. It was unanimous.

LEON

Huh. Nobody... volunteered, did they?

ARTHUR

No, we're not that self-sacrificing.

[Art's stream begins devolving into a series of spurts. ARTHUR steps back to avoid getting any on his shoe – more of an instinctual action than a useful one, given the mechanics of desktop urine distribution – and knocks over the framed picture of Leon's wife.]

LEON [shaking his head]

Jesus Christ, Art. You're not leaving me much of a choice here.

ARTHUR [shaking himself dry and tucking his wiener away]

I know that, sir.

LEON [quietly, to himself]

Fuck. [LEON pauses, then to ARTHUR] This company is already as streamlined as I can get it. I need everyone.

ARTHUR

And we'd all really like to stay. But we'd really like the money more.

LEON

And what about the person who gets fired, Art? What about them?

ARTHUR

The staff has decided that we'll buy the terminated employee several dozen lottery tickets and several cases of beer.

LEON

Three of the staff are underage.

ARTHUR

They were the most vocal about the beer.

LEON

They don't actually get paid, though. They're interns.

ARTHUR [shrugging]

Then they've got nothing to worry about.

[LEON stands and puts his hands behind his head. He exhales forcefully.]

LEON

Well, there's really only one thing to do then.

ARTHUR [wincing]

Yes, sir.

LEON

I'm going to un-cut your pay.

ARTHUR [confused]

Wait, what?

LEON

I never wanted to cut anyone's pay, Art, but I had to, for the sake of the company. I brought it up a few times, in meetings, in e-mails, but no one had a better idea. More importantly, nobody complained. So I did it. But this... [shaking his head and gesturing toward the sopping mess of his desk] I can see now that the pay cuts were wrong. Clearly I should have tried harder to get the staff's attention on the matter. And the fact that you've got the balls, pun more or less intended, to stand up for yourself... I'm old school, Art. Frankly, I think that kind of action, that kind of audacity, should be rewarded.

ARTHUR [stepping down from the desk]

Th-thank you, sir. Thank you!

LEON

You're welcome. Would you like to inform the staff or should I?

[Lights dim, ARTHUR walks to center stage, in front of the desk. Spotlight on Arthur.]

ARTHUR

I let Leon tell the staff. I was so humbled, so impressed, by his generosity, his respect for us... He deserved the credit.

But the rest of the staff, well, they knew I talked to him, they had questions. "What did you do?" they asked, "What did you say?" I told them the truth. That I had told Leon our position, that we were unhappy. "That's it?" they asked, "Nothing else?" Nothing else, I said. Just honesty. And an enormous amount of urine.

In hindsight, I probably should have left that last part out.

From that point on, whenever Leon did anything morally questionable – or even something completely valid that the staff just didn't want to do – someone would, without fail, walk into

Leon's office, drop his trousers or hike up her skirt, and piss all over Leon's desk.

It... It got bad. Leon, the poor guy, he just... he smelled like urine. Constantly. Couldn't get the smell off of him. He tried, he really did. But there's only so much a dry cleaner can do. The smell was unstoppable.

Leon tried to have the office cleaned, but it never took. And inevitably someone would have some new grievance the very next morning. Leon asked politely, he opened windows, laid down newspaper. He even enacted a strict "No Urinating on Company Property" policy. That one was a pretty good idea, but... it just didn't work. After Cynthia took a nasty shit on his desk in protest of her new parking space, getting his shoes peed on occasionally didn't seem quite so bad anymore.

By the following summer, the company had gone under. The staff blamed Leon for the collapse. The day he told us about it we all followed him home and pissed on his lawn, en masse. It was quite a sight. Leon's wife had to chase us away with a shovel.

Nobody bothered to ride out the last few weeks. Most of us went in the morning after the announcement, cleaned out our things, e-mailed our clients the news, and called it a day. A few others stuck it out for another day or two beyond that, but that was it.

Leon didn't wait it out either. He'd come and gone before the first employee got there. Not that anyone blamed him. We were just hoping he had enough left in the bank to cover our severance.

[Arthur smiles.]

He did.

Our severance? Paid entirely in urinal cakes.

END