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# INTRODUCTION

LIFE HAS AN AMAZING WAY of sending help to those who need it. For many years I have worked intimately and intensively with people who have faced and moved beyond difficult and sometimes overwhelming challenges. I have heard one common theme from nearly all of them: *When I most needed help, it showed up. Life did not leave me to drift and die. To the contrary, my ordeal led me to greater life.*

The story you are about to read is a chronicle of the answer to one such man's prayers. Although he would not call himself a spiritual man, and certainly not a religious one, his heart was in deep pain and his spirit called out for relief. His answer showed up in the form of Bert Everit.

Although the story is couched in an apparently fictional format, I assure you that the lessons recounted in *Mr. Everit's Secret* are quite real. They occurred during real life on planet

earth to people like you and me. Somewhere in our world walks the man depicted as Bert Everit in the pages that follow. Although you may not recognize him, you do know him. And he knows you. He has already found you, or he will. Of this you can be sure.

The man himself, he asked me to tell you, is less important than the lessons he delivers. Mr. Everit is not interested in fame, accolades, or personal attention. Please, he urges you, do not confuse the medium with the message. Teachers of truth come and go, and with them their human foibles. Yet the principles they impart are eternal and immutable, more solid than steel. They work because they are universal law. Mr. Everit sees himself simply as a voice for wisdom we all have, but need reminders to live. Thus he chooses to work quietly, out of the public eye.

Everything you need to know to achieve personal, financial, career, and relationship success is contained between these covers. Such a claim is not exaggerated; indeed to proclaim less would be to understate what is available here. If you latch onto even one of Mr. Everit's lessons, practice it, and make it real in your life, you are well on your way to mastering them all. "The truth is like a diamond," he once told me. "If you take any one facet and follow it all the way in, it will lead you to every other facet."

Enjoy your journey with Mr. Everit. He will make you think, laugh, and cry. Along the way he will hold up a mirror

to your true face and shine a torchlight for your steps. Then he will creep into your heart like a long-lost friend you had forgotten how much you missed until you reunited with him. Then you will discover that, like Mr. Everit, the answer to your quest is closer to home than you know.

—Alan H. Cohen



# THE GREAT WHEELBARROW CAPER

A LABORER IN A hardware factory went to the CEO and asked for a promotion. After a brief discussion, the CEO bluntly informed the man that he didn't have the education, experience, or business savvy to be a manager.

“Then I'll make you a wager,” the laborer offered. “I say I am smart enough to make it look as if I am bringing the company business, but meanwhile rob the company blind without you knowing how. If I can pull this off, I'll return the goods and you give me the promotion. If not, I'll quit.”

The CEO, being a sporting fellow, accepted the bet.

The next day at 5 P.M. the laborer showed up at the checkout of the factory store, pushing a wheelbarrow full of inexpensive items for his purchase. One by one, the clerk rang up each article. The laborer paid for all the products and took them home.

The next day the fellow showed up again at the company store with a wheelbarrow containing low-cost goods, and paid for them. And the next day, and the next.

The CEO, especially watchful for the laborer's deception, gave strict instructions to the store clerk to be sure that every item in the wheelbarrow was checked and paid for. He further ordered that the laborer be searched for concealed articles. None were found.

After a month, the company records showed a loss in profits. The next month revealed an even greater drop. By the end of the quarter, the company was in the red and no one could figure out why.

Finally the CEO called the laborer into his office and conceded the bet. "Now you must tell me what you have been stealing," he demanded.

A sneaky grin grew on the laborer's face as he answered, "Wheelbarrows."

## Lesson 1

# STARS BEYOND THE TELESCOPE

SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT before we are born we make a date to meet everyone in our life who will affect our destiny. If I knew how much one odd man would change my world, I would have found my way to him when I was younger. But, then again, he taught me that there's a timing to life. Still, there are so many things I wish I had said to him. Maybe if I tell you my story, he will somehow hear. . . .

I showed up for my interview at the wheelbarrow factory twenty minutes late. Bert Everit emerged from his little office wearing a new pair of Wranglers and a plaid flannel shirt just big enough to contain his modest Buddha belly. He greeted me warmly and shook my hand for a long time. I worried for a moment that he was going to hug me, but he didn't.

"I've been waiting for you," he told me right off.

Had I blown the job before I even got hired? I couldn't afford that; my credit report was getting uglier by the day. "Sorry I'm late . . . There was traffic on—"

"No, no, don't worry about that," he laughed. "I was just looking forward to meeting you."

Did this guy greet every job applicant like this? Before I could make sense of his welcome, he whisked me off and introduced me to all the department heads as if I was a long-lost family member. Along the way he rested a comforting hand on my shoulder, looked me squarely in the eye, and asked me more questions about my life than my skills. In the hour I spent with him, he gave me more undivided attention than my therapist.

I wasn't surprised when Mr. Everit invited me to stay for dinner. He escorted me to his studio apartment at the back of the factory, an oddball Hobbit hut strewn with a turtle shell from the Galapagos, overdue Anthony Robbins videos, and a rare collection of Yoda action figures. I had met people like him before. They were either nuts or geniuses. Maybe both.

He donned a chef's hat personally autographed by Wolfgang Puck, cooked us up a tasty Cajun halibut, and then unlocked his private stash of cognac. I was astounded to watch this strange duck move with disarming simplicity, a homespun blend of mastery and humility.

After dinner he took me out on his little patio overlooking a lush valley, where I could hear critters rustling in the

night. “How good is this?” he uttered with eyes aglow as he inhaled a deep breath of country air. The moon had not yet risen, and in the dark of the night sky I was awestruck by a shimmering splash of stars across the heavens.

“Can you believe all those stars?” I asked him.

“I can believe them—that’s why I see them,” he answered. “Dominic didn’t skimp on anything.”

*Dominic?* I turned to him and squinted, “Who the heck is Dominic?”

“Dominic is my name for God.”

“Then why don’t you just say, ‘God?’”

“The word’s gotten too beat up over the years. I like ‘Dominic.’”

Okay, Dominic it is.

“Dominic created the universe in fantastic abundance. Extravagant, even. Niagara Falls was His idea—not those silly little contraptions you put on your shower to save water. Jeez, you have to stand there twice as long to get wet. So what’s the point? Ecologists should take a hint.”

I just sat there taking it all in, wondering if Bert Everit was an incognito sage or one fry short of a Happy Meal.

“Right where you’re looking now, there are millions of stars,” he went on, losing himself in a gaze. “And billions more beyond them.” He clasped his hands behind his head and leaned back so far I was afraid he would fall over. “You could build a telescope bigger than Mt. Everest, and there

would still be countless stars past its range. The universe is a bean counter's nightmare, but a mystic's delight."

I never really thought of the universe as endlessly rich. I spent more time trying to figure out how to time my coming and going from my apartment so my landlord wouldn't corner me.

"Have you ever been to Hawaii?" he asked abruptly.

Hawaii? Are you kidding? "Only seen it on TV and the movies."

"I went there on my honeymoon with Marlene. It's quite a place. Everything is gigantic! Palm leaves so big it takes two guys to load one in a truck. I asked a couple who live there, 'Do you have seasons in Hawaii?' The lady snickered, 'Yes—every fall we argue over who is going to rake the leaf!'"

Was that really true, or was he just making this up as he went along?

"Ever been to Australia?"

"Nope."

"I was there on business once. Saw a statue of a 12-foot prehistoric kangaroo. Momma! Can you imagine driving around a corner and running into one of those suckers?" He slapped his thigh and laughed; he obviously got a kick out of himself.

"Ever been to prehistoric times?"

Did he, like, take me for a complete geek? "Uh . . . not that I remember."

“Once, in a museum, I saw a replica of a prehistoric armadillo the size of a Volkswagen Beetle.”

Okay, already. “And your point?”

He had toyed with me long enough. “Life was intended to be *big* and *a lot*. Everything, everywhere, in infinite supply, capable of reproducing itself in immeasurable quantities forever. Enough of everything for everyone. Always.”

Well, that might be, I thought, but then why do I have to go to the gas station to fill up my saggy left rear tire with air before I can drive anywhere? If I could afford a new tire, I would just buy one. Meanwhile, people are starving, trees are disappearing faster than Burger King sells Whoppers, and tap water tastes like transmission fluid. “So what happened, Mr. Everit?” I asked him up front. “If the universe is so abundant, why have good things gotten so scarce and why doesn’t everybody have everything they want?”

He stood there silently for a while. Maybe I stumped him, I thought. Finally he turned to me and asked, “Do you need to get anywhere soon?”

“I guess not. No dates with Britney Spears tonight.”

“Then let’s take a ride.” Mr. Everit grabbed his keys and motioned for me to follow him.

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM MR. EVERIT:

1. What I see is what I believe.
2. The universe was created in utter abundance, even extravagance.
3. For every limit I can imagine, there is something beyond it.

## OTHER STUFF HE SAID:

1. Almost the whole world is asleep. Everybody you know, everyone you see, everyone you talk to. Only a few people are awake, and they live in constant total amazement.  
(From the film Joe Versus the Volcano)
2. If all you're receiving for your work is money, you're being grossly underpaid.
3. Choose a job you love, and you'll never work another day in your life.

## WHAT I DID:

1. Used Mr. Everit's computer to look him up on the internet to see if he had a criminal record or had been institutionalized.
2. Wondered if there is more available than I've been settling for.
3. Started to notice signs of enoughness in and around me.