



Sammy got to work late that day. There was a memo on his chair announcing an all-employee meeting in the cafeteria at 9:00. It was now 9:10. By the time he got to the cafeteria, the doorway was jammed with late arrivals. He could barely hear what was going on. “What’s happening?” he said to Pete, who was a few feet in front of him and had a view of the speakers. “We’ve just been sold!” Pete said. The words left Sammy feeling chilled. They struck him hard, coming out of the blue. They repeated in his head like a TV jingle: “We’ve just been sold!”

For a second, he wondered if this was how it felt to be a slave in an auction: A big crowd gathers. “Sold!” an auctioneer cries out. But then Sammy thought, “That’s just silly. This is hardly on the scale of actual slavery.” He was ashamed of himself for drawing the comparison. But this news could mean big changes in his life. Did he still have a job? Would it mean a pay cut or a job change? Would he be asked to move?

“Who bought us?” he asked Pete. “Some company called CVPD,” Pete answered absent-mindedly as he strained to listen to the speaker. Sammy could barely hear the speaker, and so he had given up. Who are these people? thought Sammy. If Pete had said HP or IBM or Oracle, he would’ve had an idea of what to expect. Each of these names conjured up specific images for Sammy; he had

some idea of how each of them handles acquisitions. But this was a company he had never heard of. Oh my god, he thought, what if they were from another country. What if they were from Japan or China or India? His blood pressure seemed to rise with each succeeding thought, and he decided it was finally time to get in the game. Sammy fought his way past Pete and the others crowded in the doorway to the cafeteria. Sammy was anxious to find out what was going on.