to attain the authority of sacred text. Thus, the publishing service finally approved his book.

Cover

{AI-generated audio narration.}

A man's pen is mightier than his word.

A man wrote a book, and for narrative convenience and to avoid the issue of his legal name already being taken by another man, he used a pseudonym.

He had typed and edited the round about fifty thousand words of the book himself.

In a fit of optimism so profound it bordered on pathological, he decided to publish it through a direct publishing service.

Then, a message from the publishing service appeared in his inbox, originating from a server farm somewhere in a damp corner of America. The message had the terse, impersonal tone of a customs official. It stated that his book suspiciously resembled something else, published somewhere else, by someone else. The man was instructed to provide "documentation."

This was, of course, problematic, as one rarely keeps receipts for their own thoughts. The man dutifully responded, explaining the simple and undramatic truth: "I wrote this. It's mine. I use a pseudonym, a pen name. There's nobody else." This type of straightforward, honest answer is precisely the sort of response that computer systems, in their infinite wisdom, are programmed to distrust immediately.

Predictably, the AI screening system of the publishing service rejected his explanation, replying with smug finality: "You have not provided documentation. Statements are not proof."

The man sighed the sigh of someone who had just been asked to prove he existed. He signed his statement with a pen on paper,

with a flourish that felt entirely absurd, photographed it with his phone, and emailed it.

It was said that a rejection could do more than merely prevent the publication of a single book. It could lead to catastrophic consequences: freezing or even deleting the man's entire account. Every previously published book would instantly vanish, leaving no digital trace of the invested hours, months, and years of creative labor. Even worse, the man might be forever banned from publishing with this service again, neither under his real name nor any conceivable pen name, a complete literary exile at the whim of an algorithm.

A new message arrived from the publisher, stating they required "additional time" to review the matter. This is a common phenomenon in bureaucratic systems, where time itself can be stretched and bent into strange, taffy-like forms, typically to delay the moment someone must admit they have no idea what's actually happening.

Finally, the grand resolution arrived. After another day presumably filled with intense computational contemplation, the AI system announced its verdict. Now, the issue was that the document failed to explain the match and relationship with another previously published book.

The man stared at the message. He was now confronted with a mysterious match and relationship to a book he'd never heard of and a connection that didn't exist.

Once again, the man scribbled his signature on paper with his pen, invoking the principle ''A Man's Pen Is Mightier Than his Word''