

# BEFORE THE FALL

The warnings had been there for decades, like tremors before a tectonic shift.

Many believed the New York office had become bloated—haunted by a “pension hangover” and tethered to a failing revenue model built on selling physical Big Books in a digital age.

To some members, the office and General Service Conference felt like a distant cathedral, more interested in protecting copyright than carrying the message.

Wallets in basement rooms snapped shut.

## JULY 31, 2026

The wall arrived. AA New York could not roll over its debt, pay the Riverside Drive rent, or meet payroll. The doors were locked.

*The “Shadow World” of bankruptcy had claimed the organization that taught the world how to survive it.*

# THE BOTTOM WAS THE BEGINNING

Five years after the collapse, Harold looked out at a Fellowship growing faster than it had in fifty years. The 2030 International in St. Louis had become the largest gathering of alcoholics in human history.

*“We celebrate our sobriety dates - the day our personal lives went bankrupt. Why were we so surprised that the Fellowship had to do the same thing?”*

Darryl nodded. “We had to lose the organization to find the movement.”

**THE END WASN'T THE END AT ALL.**  
It was just the first step.

### A NOTE TO THE READER

This brochure is speculative fiction — an imagined future history created for discussion and reflection. The bankruptcy, surveys, gatherings, and organizational changes described here are not presented as actual events.



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# THE DAY AA FELL

A story of collapse,  
rock bottom, and renewal



*“We had to lose the organization to find the movement.”*

JULY 31, 2031  
Five years after “Corporate AA” went bankrupt

# WHEN THE WORLD SAID “AA IS DEAD”

The reaction to the announcement of New York going under was immediate, the media became a shark tank. Social media filled with “I told you so” posts, and major networks ran obituaries for Alcoholics Anonymous. Critics called the Twelve-Step model a relic.

Darryl remembered calling Harold on the morning of the bankruptcy.

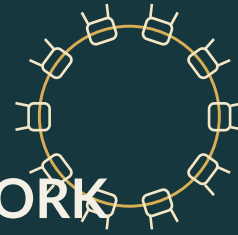
*“Both of us were shocked, dismayed, and afraid. We needed each other that morning.”*

“But do you remember how that phone call ended?” Harold asked.

Darryl laughed. “We spent ten minutes mourning the death of a multi-million-dollar organization, and then said, See you at the meeting tonight.”

THE MEETING WAS STILL THERE.  
The lights were on. The chairs were in a circle. The coffee was brewing.

# THE ROOMS DID NOT NEED NEW YORK



The bankruptcy of New had been announced that morning, at the regular Thursday night meeting the regulars arrived pale and anxious, clutching phones filled with alerts about the collapse. The bankruptcy dominated every conversation.

Then the group stood for a moment of silence to remember the suffering alcoholic.

*“You could feel the room relax.”*

Harold read How It Works. Around the words “rigorous honesty,” Darryl understood:

**The New York office did not keep me sober. This room did. The book in my hand did not need a corporate seal to tell the truth.**

While lawyers fought over desks and filing cabinets, the Fellowship moved. Within days, the word spread:

**THE MEETINGS HAD NOT STOPPED.  
NOT ONE.**

# A CONTROLLED BURN CLEARED THE DEADWOOD

The collapse became a controlled burn in a forest—destructive, frightening, and strangely fertile. New growth appeared almost at once.

**1 ARCHIVES LIBERATED**  
Dr. Bob's House and Stepping Stones rescued the records and launched a global museum.

**2 COPYRIGHT TO THE PEOPLE**  
Members bought the copyrights and released them. New community editions and translations flourished.

**3 REGIONAL REVIVAL**  
InterGroups became energetic local hubs. Recovery bookstores grew into vibrant community centers.

*“New York is officially irrelevant. Let's talk about the drunk down the street.”*

The whole room clapped. The movement had remembered its purpose: the suffering alcoholic in front of them.

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