

ALL-NATURAL ADDICTION

By John C. Havens

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ISBN 1-931000-46-8

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CAST: one male or female

An out of work actor/actress discovers his/her talent for delivering flowers and a smile.

Okay, plus the orchids and the rest, how about...tulips. Preferably pink. Or sort of that pinkish, crimson color so it's not too feminine. Guys like tulips a lot in my experience, so the color should be somewhat 'manly.'

Two dozen long-stemmed roses, red. I traffic in the 'products of love', so give me your best. And maybe a couple of simple yet elegant plant arrangements for the discerning mother. And a cactus. Just for fun.

Right, what does that come to? \$450.37. Wow, I guess a lot of flowers. Is that in American dollars? Right, great. Could I take just a moment of your time?

The long and short of it is, I don't have \$450.37. I don't even have twenty dollars. What I do have, however, is a mission. Please don't throw me out, I'm not insane. Let me explain.

Okay, I'm an actor (actress). Or I used to be, full time. Or at least I was always auditioning, worked a lot, but I came to the realization that even when I was working it was often in a show I didn't believe in, or I had to deal with a director who was frankly a putz. People who'd say stuff like, "Do that scene again, but angrier." How am I supposed to work with that? That's like telling your mother, "Nice hug, but this time make it more maternal." I can't deal with people that mess with the artistic process. It got on my nerves, man. It was weighing me down.

So one afternoon my aunt calls and says can I please do her a huge favor and bring over some flowers she's ordered for my grandmother, right? So, of course, I'm totally busy, I have headshots and auditions, I'm calling agents, I'm fielding offers, yudda yudda. I have no time to go over and listen to grandma prattle on about the old days. Don't get me wrong, she's a quality gal, but she's a talker, you know? She's

lonely, so she grips onto any warm body and talks til' her gums get too sore from her dentures. Not a pretty picture.

So I go to the shop on Ninth Avenue, Auntie's bought a very aesthetic bunch of violets and baby's breath surrounded by an embossed emerald green pot. I bring it to my grandma, and the long and short of it is she breaks down. She starts sobbing and explains to me that Grandpa brought her violets on her first date and how sweet it was of me to think of her when she was so lonely and missed Grandpa so much. Well, news flash! I had no idea about any of this, and I knew my aunt didn't either. I happen to know she bought violets because they were on sale and came with a free balloon. It was free because the woman at the flower shop over ordered 2000 of them for a bar mitzvah. The balloon said, "You're a man now, Herschel." Grandma didn't even notice.

So anyway, now I'm faced with a moral dilemma. Do I tell her, "Whoa, Gran, sorry to pop your bubble, but violets were on special. I didn't buy them anyway, they're from Auntie, and she bought them because she felt guilty about forgetting you at church last week."

No way, baby. I had a revelation. I saw her face shining with the memory of the man she loved, and I remembered the look from when I was a little kid and she was taking care of me. She felt loved and remembered, and precious. And she remembered how vital she was to the man that was the reason my mom, and therefore I, was born.

So I lied. "Yeah, Grandma, we all got together to buy you the violets and remind you of that first date at the gazebo." Turns out their first date was at a skating rink and they lived nowhere near a gazebo, but Grandma just nodded in that way that older people nod when they know you mean well but have no idea what the heck you're talking about.

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