

SMELLS!
(or)
The Last Hurrah Of Harold Hubris

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Characters
Yours Truly
Harold Hubris
Henna

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YOURS TRULY

SMELLS! (or) THE LAST HURRAH OF HAROLD HUBRIS. —As recited by
YOURS TRULY.

Harold Hubris is buying a falafel pita pocket sandwich from a Greek vendor on the corner of High Street and Murray—when Harold *smells* trouble! —*So!* Harold runs from that spot *JUST IN THE NICK!* —*JUST AS* —a portion of the Ozone Layer falls to the street and *ozones to soot* the falafel vendor and his steaming falafel wagon.

—*THEN*—Harold *runs* a few blocks, *puffing* all the way.

HAROLD

PUFF, PUFF!

YOURS TRULY

—*DUCKS* into the last organic health food store left in Bodoni County—*removes his filter mask*—and orders the *BIGGEST* organic tofu and vegetable malted he can buy.

HAROLD

I'll have *the biggest* organic tofu and vegetable malted I can buy. Please.

YOURS TRULY

Then he goes to the side counter, faces the wall and gulps down the organic tofu and vegetable malted.

HAROLD

Gulp!

YOURS TRULY

A woman enters. . .cautiously. Cautiously removes her filter mask. *Cautiously* taps Harold on the shoulder and says
—*cautiously*

WOMAN

. . .Listen. . .I saw you run from that fateful falafel spot—just before the ozone layer cut loose and plopped? You seemed to anticipate that that was going to happen. *Weird*. I mean— like most people, I just miss being ozoned—almost daily—but I've never been able to anticipate *when* an ozone piece was about to plummet. How can *you* do that?

HAROLD

I can smell trouble coming. So I ran.

WOMAN

You can *smell* trouble coming? —Even through your filter mask?

HAROLD

Through every pore of my being. —What would you like to drink?

WOMAN

What are *you* having?

HAROLD

An organic tofu and vegetable malted.

WOMAN

Why, that's *my* favorite! I'll have a double!

YOURS TRULY

So Harold gets her a double and, like the boy and girl in *Our Town*, Harold and the Woman sit side-by-side, face the wall and *gulp* their organic tofu and vegetable malteds together.

WOMAN/HAROLD

Gulp!

YOURS TRULY

Then—*cautiously* still, the woman . . . *timidly* . . . says:

WOMAN

Say. . . Harold. . . I think you should know. . . that. . . I really admire. . .
—your fingernails! *A lot!* —They're really healthy looking—the healthiest I've
ever seen on a man— almost. . . —why not out with it? —*EROTIC!*

HAROLD

Say, you *are* astute. —My fingernails *are* healthy! And they *are* erotic!

YOURS TRULY

Says flattered Harold who, for the first time since their
encounter at the counter, *slooooooowly* peruses the woman's
rather unusually interesting de-masked face, and covertly peeks at her pert c
cups.

WOMAN

—Tell me, he-of-the-erotic-fingernails,

YOURS TRULY

Asks the woman, feeling Harold's beginning-to-smolder body heat:

THE WOMAN

— What does a "freak accident" smell like?

HAROLD

—Rotting cucumber skins,

YOURS TRULY

—Quickly responds Harold. And the woman, with searching intensity, queries,

WOMAN

Isn't it a bit of a pain? Being able to *smell* trouble—*before* it comes, I mean.

HAROLD

Oh, yes. Keeps me in a state of constant anxiety. And sometimes
—As before? —I get all shaken apart and it takes me a while to re-shake myself
together, but I always do--*Because trouble can't get me!* I'm always ready to
outrun it. In fact, I've outrun trouble so often that now . . . —Hel-lo! A discovery
. . . I do believe I'll outrun . . . —*DEATH ITSELF!*

WOMAN

Oh, say,

YOURS TRULY

Exclaims the woman!

WOMAN

OH, SAY! —I hope I smell a smidgen of hubris in your emerging cute
character, Harold?

HAROLD

You really *are* astute: "Hubris" is my last name. And my middle name is Icky
—that's short for Icarus.

WOMAN

I can't believe this! *I, too, am into Japanese mythology!*
But, death aside, Harold —and *this* is important: What about other troubles? Do
you outrun *them*?

HAROLD

Of course. Because each trouble has its own smell. Name some.
Test me.

WOMAN

—Rape.

HAROLD

Smells like the stuff between the toes.

WOMAN

—Getting mugged!

HAROLD

Smells like cat urine.

WOMAN

—Drive-by shootings.

HAROLD

Rancid popcorn butter.

WOMAN

—Bloody syringes washed up on the beach.

HAROLD

—Stale cigarette breath!

WOMAN

—The end of the world.

HAROLD

The smell of the inside of a MacDonald's Restaurant!

—Come to think of it, *there's* a smell I've smelled all week.

WOMAN

And is it getting stronger, that smell?

HAROLD

As a matter of fact, yes,

WOMAN

Then I'm not going back to work.

HAROLD

What is your work? And what's your name?

WOMAN

I'm Henna. And I model designer rosary beads. See?

YOURS TRULY

And Henna shows him the designer rosary beads in the form of a belt, choker, and ankle and wrist bracelets, which, adorably, she models so well.

HAROLD

Well, Henna, I really like your beads, I do. But I think you're wise not to return to work. Rosary beads are irrelevant now. All work is irrelevant now. I should think.

HENNA

What *is* relevant now, Harold?

HAROLD

Finding a place to be safe in when the end of the world comes. And finding the right mate to spend time with *in* that safe place. While the world is ending. I should think.

HENNA

Do *you* know of such a safe place, Harold? And . . . —***why not out with my basic inner want!*** —Could *I* be that right mate to spend time with in that same . . . *Safe Place*, Harold?

HAROLD

. . . Hel-lo! You might be. I don't smell liver and onions.

HENNA

Liver and Onions?

HAROLD

Liver and onions means trouble from women.

HENNA

I never knew that, Harold. —So does that mean I *could* be —*might* be—that right mate *to epoxy with* in that same. . . "Safe Place?"

YOURS TRULY

A simple, direct question, *but* one that sets off an inner struggle in Harold's soul and heart—so internal, that he must deliver it in an aside.

Harold

Oh, God--the inner struggle! To wit: Should I—generally a Loner—take this liver and onion-less tofu tootsie with me to, together, create and forge a race that will continue forever the Hubris legacy? —Should I chance it? —*Can* I chance it? —*But wait!* —Hel-lo! I just had an epiphany! —One that I feel awkward to "ephiphanize" to her.

YOURS TRULY

Harold! —Why not out with it! *AND DO IT IN ONE BREATH!*

HAROLD

Henna do you want me for me or for my extraordinary gift that will make us survive while everyone else croaks?

HENNA

I'll tell you, Harold: *There's no question!* You're now Numero Uno in my life —*Because* my mother always said—and I quote, "Henna, if you must have a man—and I'd advise you to rethink *that* bit of propaganda—*but* if you really must—then it's a smart daughter's job to get one who knows what *he's* running from and to, **and** has the where-with-all *to get there!* —*with you along for the*

HENNA

(Continued)

ride! Just look at what your not-swift Mum wound up with," she'd sob and say. "Your stupid bum-of-a-dad; shanghaied on the Garbage Barge Fleet; sailing around—like some friggin' flying Kraut—without landing, for a year, because no place would allow the barge *to dock and dump*. And then one day, dumb dad does decide to act—decides to get to shore himself—sees what he *thinks* is a magical *silver escape raft* floating by, and *leaps* onto what turns out to be a *million used condoms*, which, like some senile seal, he chokes on, and drowns in. —Don't settle, Henna! *Search! Search!*"

End, Mum's quote.

So I, Henna, have, indeed, been searching for a running from/slash/to man *who*—even if blind—could smell used condoms a mile away—*and* could take me with him to the promised land. . . .And you, Mr. Harold Icarus Hubris, *are* that man. . . .*BOTTOM LINE:* I said before that I admire your erotic fingernails. *And I mean it!* I mean, you could probably strum and plink-plunk a lady's south central uvula like nobody's business. And even as I speak, *my* south central uvula is now plink-plunking away—and *without* the actual strumming of your erotic fingernails. *Though!* I fully expect to deal with *their* diddle, as soon as we reach . . . "Safe Place."

HAROLD

Let's go!

YOURS TRULY

Says horny Harold.

HAROLD

I *will* take you with me, Henna and, in my "Safe Place" *we'll strum ourselves silly through the final toilet flush!*

HENNA

AND SO, MUM, HERE HAPPILY ENDS YOUR DAUGHTER'S SEARCH!

But, Harold, where is this. . . "Safe Place?"

HAROLD

In an abandoned Wal-Mart's at the edge of a chemical dump. I've dug a shaft into the old cellar. And I've made a place *so safe* that— **Gardenias!** *I smell gardenias!* That means *a whole gauntlet* of trouble before we get to . . . "Safe Place."— *Henna!* Stay glued to my side.

YOURS TRULY

So Harold grabs Henna by the hand and pulls her along through the gardenia, sweetness-of-death, gauntlet streets!

HAROLD

Roasted chestnuts! *Duck!*

YOURS TRULY

They hit the ground as five Bocce balls whiz over their heads and smash into a window of a store that's about to be looted!

HENNA/HAROLD

Phew!

YOURS TRULY

On route again, Harold ejaculates—

HAROLD

Good god! I smell strawberry-flavored private parts rinse! *Up against the wall!*

YOURS TRULY

And they flatten themselves against the side of the building *just as* a runaway diesel dinky crashes past them and *scaloppini's to Swedish pancakes* two old ladies *and* their walkers.

HAROLD/HENNA

PheW!

YOURS TRULY

—Then, once more on the run, at an intersection, Harold yells:

HAROLD

Old sweaty sneakers! Here comes a nasty one!

YOURS TRULY

They move aside as *a flying set of brass knuckles*—slipping loose from the sweaty hands of a 10-year-old Elementary School Guard, disciplining a toddler whose tricycle had run a metal detector —*misses Henna's head by inches!*

— *Then they put on* their filter masks. And they *sprint* through a choking cloud of exhaust—*arabesque* over tops of gridlocked cars with asphyxiated drivers, whose cellular phones are still Siamesed to their ears—*and* when they finally reach the river to get to the abandoned Wal-Mart on the other side, *they luck out*. They are able to run across, *on top* of the water—because the two million tons of discarded, sunken junk reach the surface and *make a path*.

FINALLY! They reach the abandoned Wal-Mart's and Henna and Harold are safe in . . . "Safe Place."

HAROLD/HENNA

PHEW!

YOURS TRULY

When they get down to the bottom of the Shaft, they *push* aside a huge door, *fling away* their filter masks, *purify themselves* in the DeComSmeller Chamber, and then—*Lo!* —they are in splendidly lit rooms.

HAROLD

Magnificent, isn't it. "Safe Place?" Here, Henna, we can take all the Lysol baths we need. Here I have pantries full of tofu. Here, each medicine cabinet is filled with hygienic after-poopoo wipes. And here we will make pristine love in our pristine odorless world; and here, together, we will—yes—create a race of select, superior Smellers to forge the Hubris gift and, for ever and ever—yes, here, the Hubris progeny will outrun whatever tidal wave of dreck threatens to break over them!

YOURS TRULY

And Harold's internal, intense, quietly passionate arietta, acts as *an aphrodisiac*. They slowly, smolderingly, undress as Harold passionately exclaims:

HAROLD

Yes! OH, YES! —"Safe Place." Safe from all dust and noise. And best of all—*YES!*—safe from *SMELLS!* Not *one* smell. Why, there isn't a smell in the world that would dare—

YOURS TRULY

Suddenly Harold cringes, recoils and reneges!

HENNA

. . .What, suddenly limp Harold, is the matter?

HAROLD

There's something strange happening here, Henna. In meine Herz—that's German for, "in my heart."

HENNA

And what kind of "strange" could that be, Harold? Meine darling?

HAROLD

I don't know . . .—Well, of course, I do know that I fully intend to transport us *beyond* delirium, when you and I continue toward *Jig-Jig* entwinement. But, I'm feeling something—something about. . .*you*. . .that goes beyond mere . . .*Jig-Jig*.

HENNA

I've felt that about you all along, Harold; but, for the moment, *Jog-Jig* is okay by me.

HAROLD

I know what's "strange!" Whatever this feeling is—and it is a brand new one for me—there's been no smell! To alert me to its “strange” coming!

HENNA

Oh, Harold, Silly! Of course there's been a smell; a lovely smell, a sweet smell. And there's been that same sweet smell ever since I've been with you. I just took it for granted; thought you smelled it, too. And it *is* down here with us that smell. Don't *you* smell it?

HAROLD

No! I don't! Anyway, that's impossible! There isn't a smell in the world that would dare—Hel-lo! This. . ."sweet" smell, Henna. . .what does it smell like? It's not the smell of gardenias, is it?

HENNA

No. It's orange blossoms, the smell of love. At least it's orange blossoms *I* smell every time *I* fall in love.

YOURS TRULY

Harold's soul spasms, shudders and stalls. . . . Finally, de-stalling, and peering off into the abyss, he quietly says,

HAROLD

Curbside, perhaps, the smell of orange blossoms might mean *love* . . .but not down here. Down here, the smell of orange blossoms means something else.

HENNA

What *does* the smell of orange blossoms mean down here, Harold?

HAROLD

. . .cave in. . .

YOURS TRULY

Whispers Harold "Icky" Icarus Hubris; who pulls his Henna to his too-late awakened Herz . . .and, now totally de-Chutzpa'd, waits for the "orange blossoms" crash; the one smell he had never confronted; and the one smell in "Safe Place" that is too late to outrun.

And so ends our fable.

