a harris & COMPANY

by Leonard Durso



A HARRIS & COMPANY



A. Harris woke up with two seconals and a few two and alls in his bed. He was unsure of what to do with them so he swished them around in his mouth with some Cepacol and went off to do his daily day. Oh God, be with me tonight, he thought to no one in particular, because Linda certainly won't.

Linda stared at her phone and thought of A. Harris. She decided to call. The phone rang three times and then a voice not unlike his own said, "Hi. I'm A. Harris. I'm also not at home. This voicemail acts as my proxy. Please tell it who you are and what you're doing so I can call you back. Thank you." Then came a loud buzz. Linda hung up. She called Carl.



"Hello," Carl said.

"Want to go out and have some fun?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

"Then come over here."

A. Harris walked along Broadway giving out WTFM pens and filling out questionnaires.

Do you have a radio in your store?

Do you keep it on during the day?

If so, what station do you listen to most often?

If not, what station would you listen to most often if you could?

If you wouldn't, then suppose that you did, and which station would it be if you could?

Thank you.

A. Harris gave out a lot of pens. They had WTFM in red, black, and blue on a white background. They all had blue ink. His mother told all her friends that her son Arnold was in direct advertising. But he knew better.

Carl would howl when made love. He would go: AAAAAhhhhhhh—

OOOOOwwwwwww!!! AAAAAhhhhhhh-

Linda dialed A, Harris' number. When his proxy answered, she held the receiver up and recorded a few minutes for A. Harris to hear. She thought of him often.

A. Harris moved in groups of two and three. He played Parchessi and always got captured. He played checkers and always got jumped. He walked in the park and got jumped there, too. A. Harris wasn't lucky. He watered fake flowers in department stores and his dog had the runs when he left. He had a brown rug by default.

Linda dismissed Carl. He backed out of the door bowing and blowing sandalwood incense. He called her honey. She clipped her toe nails. He took the clippings and put them in a scrapbook. Life was good to Carl. Linda was restless.

"Hello."

Linda breathed into the phone and A. Harris bit the cord. He put on his shoes and his dog ran.

It was over before it began but A. Harris didn't know that yet. He kept on working, moving his hips and holding her ass and pumping the night away. Linda was a puddle wetting her bed. She said UM for hours on end.

When A. Harris finally stopped, it was quiet for a long time. Linda smiled to herself. Her hand lay on his thigh and she drew circles in his hair. He tried to count



the cracks in her ceiling but he couldn't see any, or the ceiling for that matter, so he imagined some and tried to count those. He soon grew bored of that and fell asleep. Linda stared at him until the morning. Then she fell asleep, too.

A. Harris had a bad day. No one would answer his questions and someone threw a pen down the sewer. A Great Dane pissed in the trunk of his car when he left it open and wet all his WTFM takeones. His morning coffee was bitter and mice were stealing his dog's cereal. And the only message on his voice mail was four minutes of AAAAAhhhhhhhh-OOOOOwwwwwwww!!! AAAAAhhhhhhhh-OOOOOwwwwwwww!!! AH-AH-AH-AH!!! He stared at his dog who was licking himself. He wondered if life would ever go away.

Carl was on his knees in Linda's bathroom taking all the hair out of Linda's tub. He carefully put it in an envelope and sealed it. He marked it HAIR FROM LINDA'S TUB with a Bic Banana. He put the envelope in his breast pocket and began to sweep her rug.

"Well hello, Arnold. It's so nice of you to be home."

A. Harris sighed and watched the second hand on his clock. He repeated to himself over and over the word adnil. "You think you could come over Sunday for dinner?" his mother said over the phone. "It's been a month since you were here."

"I don't know. Maybe."

"What do you mean-maybe? Aren't you hungry?"

"I eat, Mom."

"You eat, you eat. What do you eat? You eat garbage, that's what you eat."

"I don't eat garbage."

"You eat garbage. You come Sunday and I'll feed you food."

"But—"

"You come Sunday. Your Aunt Sarah will be here, too."

"But-"

"You come Sunday, Arnold. You want I should cry?"

A. Harris sighed again and leaned against the wall. He looked at the mouthpiece and said, "Yes."

Linda walked through Bloomingdale's but didn't buy anything. She wanted slippers but they didn't have her size in red. She didn't want blue or yellow. She didn't believe in compromising. Linda bought a George Benson album at H&R Music and went home.



A. Harris walked with his back to the wall and his fingers in his ears. He bumped into parked cars often.

"Arnie," Linda said and A. Harris listened. "I want to go to Zabar's and buy some cheese."

He looked at his watch. It was four o'clock in the morning and it was raining outside. "Zabar's is closed," he said. "How about a pizza?"

"From Guido's?"

"Yeah," he said. "They deliver."

"With anchovies and extra cheese."

"Sure."

She licked her lips and laid back down with her head on his chest. "Only if you please me first."

Carl went to St. Patrick's and lit two candles. He sat in a pew and watched the tourists rub the statues and stare at the stained glass. He thought impure thoughts about Linda and felt warm inside. He was wearing a coat and it was July.

Linda rode the subway for hours. She wore a short skirt and crossed her legs. Men stared and she pretended she didn't notice. She uncrossed and crossed her legs again. Men drooled on themselves and panted in their seats. Someone rubbed himself against a pole. Linda changed trains.

A. Harris talked of marriage. He spoke of common bonds and social security. He went in great detail about life in general and his feelings in specific. He said he couldn't live without her and that he would pledge his life to defend her honor. He also spoke of the pain he suffered when subjected to hours of AAAAAhhhhhhh—OOOOOwwwwwwww!!!ings. He bit his nails and grew silent. The dog said nothing. It slept at his feet. He stared out the windows but the drapes were closed. He took all the pictures down from the walls and painted the walls black. He put one red dot in the center of one wall. He stared at it for days, waiting for the phone to ring.

Linda told Carl she loved A. Harris. Carl fainted. Linda dragged him out into the hall and went back inside her apartment. She considered the matter closed.

"So you've got a new job," A. Harris' mother said on the other end of the phone. "In real estate."

A. Harris sighed.

"Oh, that's wonderful. There's plenty of money in property. People have to live somewhere."

A. Harris attacked the clogged drain. He poured Draino and Liquid Plumber down the pipe. He pumped with his plunger and tried a snake. Nothing worked. The water sat there reflecting him back to himself. Soap and hair floated on his face. The woman



who lived in the apartment stood in her bathrobe and tapped her slipper. "You're the super?" she said. "Some super."

A. Harris sighed and wished her away.

Linda moved around A. Harris' apartment straightening things. The dog followed her everywhere. Every now and then she would bend over and pet the dog. "Nice dog," she would say. The dog would roll over and spread its legs. Linda would smile.

Carl wired himself up to explode and put the detonator in his raincoat pocket. He carried an umbrella in his other hand. He walked out of his building and down the street toward the subway. A, Harris would be coming home very soon. When Carl passed A. Harris on the street, he would beat him with his umbrella and jump on him. Then he would press the button in his pocket and blow them both up. If he couldn't have Linda's love, he would die for her attention.

A. Harris changed some light bulbs in one of the buildings he was superintending. Then he walked to the subway to catch the local home. He still had some light bulbs in his pockets. He looked for a trash can but the train came before he found one. He sat tilted to one side so he wouldn't break them. People looked at him funny and moved further down the car.

Carl patrolled the block waiting for A. Harris. He had a hat pulled down over his eyes, dark sunglasses

and a fake mustache. Little kids pointed at him and laughed, dogs barked, and an old man pinched his ass. Otherwise he remained inconspicuous.

Linda moved around restlessly in A. Harris' apartment. She was dressed in Victoria Secret thong panties and one of A. Harris' old shirts with the top four buttons undone. She moved like a panther. She had jazz on the stereo, raw oysters on the half shell, and red wine in their glasses. Her thighs quivered whenever she heard a noise in the hall.

A border collie barked at Carl and nipped at his cuffs. He shook his umbrella and cursed softly. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw A. Harris. He moved forward clumsily. The collie ran between his legs and he pitched forward. He raised his umbrella to the sky. He hit the ground and blew out half the sidewalk.

A. Harris was knocked back by the blast. Concrete dust clouded his eyes. He backed into a parked car and the light bulbs burst in his pockets. He jumped forward right into the hole.

Linda looked out the window at the hole in the ground that was half the block. She shook her head as the dog ran across the floor. She fell asleep waiting for A. Harris. When he came home, all dirty and half broken, she repaired what she could and screwed the rest.

A. Harris didn't know any better. And the night wasn't over yet.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Seven novels published: one by a Turkish publisher, one by a UK publisher, five as ebooks. To see titles check Leonard Durso's Author Page on amazon.com

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