

Addict

by Larry Strattner

He read about side effects of his new prescription on line. The web page had an interactive status alert chart. The chart concluded his status was: addict. He checked the mirror for drooling or shaking. His pupils seemed dilated but he couldn't tell. He was not entirely sure what part of his eye they were anyway. He had not mistaken the word 'morphine' however; listed as a similar drug. He shuddered at the possible future requirement for intravenous dosing. Needles made him squeamish. Sticking himself with a needle scared the crap out of him

His wife said, "For god's sake Harold. It's only a pill. Your first one. If the pill lessens the pain it's good for you. Swallow for Christ's sake."

"I do not want to go to jail, Greta. I do not. Who knows what will happen to me buying drugs on the street, at night, in the projects?"

It's not at night. It's not in the projects. It's in Walgreen's. You have a frigging prescription."

"What if they won't renew the prescription? I run out. They won't renew; and I'm hooked. I'm down in the projects trying to score? What then?"

"Then you are a raving lunatic. I will feed you lithium. I will squeeze the lithium out of some flashlight batteries and feed it to you in your Grape Nuts. That's what will happen then."

"You are cold Greta. A cold hearted woman. You've always been cold. I'm in pain and you could care less. Cold."

"You are a pain in the ass Harold. Always have been. A royal pain. Dr.Obduel should have prescribed heroin; heroin would be easier. We wouldn't be having this ridiculous conversation. You could be an addict and get used to it. By the way, your pupils look funny."

"What?"

"Oops. Just kidding."

"Don't kid around! I'm addicted here. Got the shakes. Can't wait to get more."

"Are you talking about your prescription or your Smirnoff? At least the pills won't light your breath on fire while you're grilling hamburgers."

"Ha! An isolated incident!"

"Tell your story to the dog. Last time I checked his tail was still half gone."

"The website says these pills are almost identical to morphine."

"Maybe they are. Maybe you'll nod off and I can get some peace and quiet. Maybe you will overdose. I can collect your insurance. Go to Aruba and shack up with a younger addict."

"For god's sake Greta. Can't you be just a little sympathetic while I try and fight this thing? I'm having severe withdrawal."

"The only time you've had severe withdrawal was when we stopped having sex in nineteen eighty three."

"You were always criticizing how I did sex."

"How you did sex? I only criticized how you never did it. You've had issues with sex and now drugs. All that's left is rock and roll. Maybe we can buy you a Buddy Holly album.

"You are cold Greta. Cold. I have to get off this stuff before it kills me."

"Maybe we can get you a shitty generic. Something from Hong Kong. The quality won't be as good. You can come down easy."

"So cold."

"Shut up and take the goddamn pill, Harold; before I wring your neck and you have even more difficulty swallowing."

