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Arnold The "Aussie" Stalker

I'm not sure what it is about me that seems to draw so many men with a loose screw in their head. But I can tell you that if there is any mutual attraction whatsoever between us, you can pretty much bet he has a loose screw somewhere up there in his noggin. And here is the story of yet another lunatic.

Arnold, an Australian man of mega-wealth, was sent my way via a dear, well-meaning girlfriend in L.A. She introduced the two of us, when she was in town for some business dealings, about a year or so after my last breakup with Mr. Sociopath. I was not utterly impressed at first. He was short, balding, and looked a little like Bozo The Clown. But he had nice eyes, dressed well, and seemed intelligent. Plus, he was blown away with me. Okay, so sue me, but I gave him a chance. I was so lonely, that I could appreciate anyone who appreciated me! Rumor had it that Arnold was **separated** from his wife, although I had doubts as to whether it was a separation of more than a mere *ocean*.

I met him for lunch on a swelteringly hot, 95-degrees-in-the-shade July day. Lunch was nice enough, and he seemed genuinely interested in me, and I, in him. There was a flurry of conversation, in which he revealed that he owned a large chain of stores in Australia, and he had been doing some business in my city for a while.

That very afternoon, perhaps around five o'clock, the doorbell rang and there stood a wobbly man carrying what looked to be a flower arrangement the size of a forty-pound dog. It was magnificent. It took up the entire surface of my small round dining room table. I thought, "Well, that was very nice of him!" It made me feel very, very good. I was missing those damn weekly flower deliveries by Mr. S. that had become extinct in the past year, just like our romance. It is a fact, once a woman gets used to getting flowers, it is friggin' hard to get used to not getting them!

My girlfriend who set us up called to tell me Arnie had called her immediately after our lunch date, and went on and on about me. He asked her loads of questions, and in general she said he was completely and totally smitten. I guessed so, judging by the mammoth flower arrangement.

After several more lengthy phone calls we had dinner a few nights later. I liked Arnold, but I noticed that he did seem to be a little overbearing and verbally pushy. He took exception with, and argued about *every* damn opinion I had about *any* topic we discussed. It bugged me. *It bugged the shit out of me*, but I didn't become irascible or anything (most likely due to the fact that I had not been on a date in eons). If that were me today, some five years later, he would have been history before the stone crab appetizer even arrived! I was needier back then. Much needier. I also noticed that he seemed to polish off that bottle of Chateau Margaux, with very little help from me.

At the end of the evening I gave him a brief kiss at my front door and said goodnight. He appeared a wee bit disappointed that I didn't invite him in.

Very next day, I get a very weird call from Arnie. Seems he had been snooping around my neighborhood, and you see, behind my house, there is a hill that contains a small park,

with a tall skinny tower that I had always assumed was a radio tower. Anyhow, Arnie was very concerned about my welfare, since he stated he was convinced that this "tower" probably had an electric force field that could cause cancer! He was emphatic about my moving. And he **really** had me going, being ever so slightly disease phobic as I am, and knowing that a young woman down at the other end of the circle had died from cancer a year before. Well, let's just say I was freaked out! Meanwhile, at dinner one night (this was only our third date) he got pretty sloshed and told me that he had decided he'd like to spend more time in my city. Okay, no big deal. **That was until he added that I should find us a house.** He said it had to have a pool and a tennis court. He would buy it, and I would live in it. *Oh really.* He would stay with me when he was here, and go back and forth from Australia for his business. (I suspected his "*business*" also might have included some *very* unfinished *business* with his *wife*.) I wondered if he might not be rushing things just a *wee tad*. After all, he hadn't even had sex with me yet!

But Arnold seemed *intent* on getting me out of the disease-prone townhouse. I am listening incredulously to this gibberish and I honestly can't believe it. All the while he is working on me over and over and on and on about the dangers of this *tower* behind my house. I am more and more distraught, suggestible as I am about disease. And after a point, he began *not* to enjoy my obsessing about all kinds of horrible health scenarios. Why? Because now it was getting in the way of his romantic intentions big time! And he has made me paranoid about this damn tower, and I am practically frothing at the mouth with fear. And fear, my friends, does not make me feel sexy.

Needless to say, that evening he did not even get *close* to getting into my pants, once I got into the horrors of THE

TOWER. So, to appease me (or more likely himself) he decides he is going to talk to a close friend of his who is an expert in these sorts of things to find out the real scoop on THE TOWER.

Next day when he calls me and I immediately start hitting him with more of my paranoia about THE TOWER, he informs me that his friend investigated, *and found out that it was a harmless radio tower after all, just as I had suspected!*

He had needlessly put me through a week full of terror-filled days and sleepless nights. That dumb silly bastard! I am now getting the picture, and it is not very pretty. This guy is becoming increasingly the picture of manipulator and "Drama Hound." I decide this is just not working for me. And tomorrow I will have to tell him.

Next morning the doorbell rings. Same wobbly delivery guy as before is at the door. This time, he holds a humongous wicker basket containing two-dozen red roses, a bottle of Dom Perignon champagne, and an envelope. In that envelope, along with the words, "Love, Arnold," is some kind of *medical test report*. On closer examination, **I see that it is an HIV negative test report!** Well, I swear to God I thought I'd seen everything. I really had to blink hard to be sure that what I was seeing was real. *My God, what a presumptuous, pompous asshole!* A somewhat *considerate* presumptuous pompous asshole, but still a presumptuous pompous asshole nonetheless!

I call my girlfriend up to tell her all about his antics, and I come to find out that **in jest** when he was talking to her the other day, she had said, "Well honey, if you ever want to sleep with that girl, you'd better go out and get yourself an AIDS test first!" (Apparently, my friend understood a little about my disease phobic nature!) Well, don't you know, he runs out the very next day, and pays some doctor a couple hundred bucks

under the table, to get back the test results **overnight**, instead of the requisite three to four days time. This was an unfortunate scenario I had on my hands. He had just given me the *good* news that he didn't have AIDS, and now I had to give him the *bad* news that it was over!

Yeah, he freaked. He started yelling at me telling me how much trouble he had gone to on my account, where this AIDS test was concerned and that I just didn't appreciate it. Hell, I told him I might have appreciated it had I actually requested that the dumb fool get one!

For the next several weeks, every day he delivered letters pleading with me to reconsider. He even had that same wobbly valet from the hotel where he was staying deliver me some jewels. No kidding. My mother just happened to be in town staying with me a few nights. She knew the whole story. She advised that I should not open the box, which had the name of a well-known jewelry store on the wrapping. Instead, I should give it to my girlfriend who introduced us, to give back to him. That made sense, so I set it aside on a table in my living room. I noticed she kept staring at it sitting there. Succumbing to curiosity, she finally couldn't stand it anymore and agreed that I should just go on ahead and open it up to see what it was.

Inside the black velvet box was a vintage enamel and gold necklace made of flowers, with matching earrings. It was sort of weird, because it kind of looked like something my Aunt Nonnie, who was eighty-five years old, would've liked a whole lot better than me! It *did* make me feel a little better though, knowing that if it had to go back, at least it wasn't a Tiffany canary diamond ring or something!

My girlfriend returned the booty to Arnold, and last that I heard, strange Arnold flew back to his "estranged" wife in Australia. But not before showing up in his rented red Mercedes

over the next two weeks, in at least half a dozen places I just happened to be.

Lessons Learned:

– A man who buys you a lot of gifts very early on in your dating life, might be an incredibly generous, nice person who is crazy about you.... Or he could be a controlling, insincere person who is just **crazy!**

– No matter how flattering it is, a man who tries to buy your affections, is really just buying you a shit-load of problems. Remember...there is no free lunch!

– A man who takes exception with and argues every opinion you have, may be a control freak. Dump him early on, unless you want to spend the rest of your life arguing with an idiot who likes to argue just for the sake of having something to argue about.

– Beware a man who tries to scare you out of your place of domicile, *just so you will live with him*. Once again we're talking control freak.

– Don't assume that a man who tells you he is separated really IS. He could be talking about being separated by an ocean, or maybe just a mere WALL in his house!

– Lastly, BEWARE AUSTRALIANS BEARING GIFTS AND UNREQUESTED HIV REPORTS.