

St. Charles Place

A One-Act Play

by

Brian Kokensparger

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SETTING:

The dingy interior of a gray, stuff, one-room apartment. The furniture in the room has not changed since the previous tenant. A faded curtain is pulled back from the single window, revealing a sunny day. A shelf has been installed since the last tenant; A Monopoly game is the sole occupant.

AT RISE:

Morning, 10:25 a.m. JOE, a quiet man of 32 in casual clothing, is leaning against the desk, smoking a cigarette. ANDY, 40, with a perpetual scowl on his face, is standing across the bed from JOE. He is dressed in polyester slacks and a dress shirt, and holds a bag of tulip bulbs in one hand, and a cassette tape in the other.

ANDY

(Shaking the bag)

There ain't a thing wrong with these --

JOE

(Crossing around him to the window)

Spouse ya thought we could eat 'em?

ANDY

(Shaking his head)

Never crossed my mind.

JOE

(Exploding)

Then why?

ANDY

(Turning quickly)

Hold on. What I do with my own money --

(Falters)

-- my own borrowed money --

JOE

That's right.

(JOE glares at him. ANDY settles back a little bit)

I told you it was for chips. An' dips. An' three different kinds a' pop. Make a big shindig of it! Oh yeah! High on the hog!

ANDY

I was gonna buy 'em. I really was.

(JOE snorts and turns away)

I was -- an' you don't know any different! You weren't there. There I was, all set to buy those pops, an' then I -- you're not gonna believe this --

JOE

(Crossing his arms)

Don't even say it.

ANDY

You're not gonna believe it -- but -- I was over in the pop aisle, just mindin' my own business. You know -- lookin' for Cherry Coke for you, an' Diet Cherry Seven Up for Naomi, an' Dad's for me an'--

JOE

Yeah?

ANDY

(Scratching his head a little)

I was reachin' for the Diet Cherry Seven Up, an' there was this -- voice . . . soon as I heard it, I knew who he was but . . . well . . . you know how hard it is to turn around when you hear a voice you ain't heard for a good year an' a half --

JOE

You met an old friend at Albertson's?

ANDY

(Turning to stare at JOE)

You might say that --

JOE

Cut the fat. I sent you to the store for food, an' you come back with tulip bulbs. Why?

ANDY

I'm gettin' to that, but ya ain't listenin'.

JOE

I'm listenin'. But we've gotta get ready -- Naomi'll be here in a moment --

ANDY

Gimme one more minute--

JOE

(Sitting down quickly on the bed, crossing his arms)

Okay, who was this -- voice?

ANDY

(Coming forward, he sets the bag carefully on the bed, leaning into

JOE)

Joe? It was Charlie. I heard 'im plain as day.

JOE

(Stunned, pauses a moment, then rises)

Naomi's gonna be here any moment, an' we don't even have the game set up.

ANDY

(Following him)

Swear to God, Joe! I wouldn't lie about somethin' like this --

JOE

(Crossing to the shelf where the Monopoly game sits)

Help me get this down.

ANDY

(Shouting)

Joe? I ain't lyin'. It was Charlie. I turned around. I saw him, Joe. I saw him! Standin' right behind me.

JOE

(Falters for a moment)

You saw Charlie in the pop aisle at Albertson's?

ANDY

I did. I really did.

JOE

(After a pause)

So what did he say? You gotta go out an' spend Joe's hard-earned money on tulip bulbs nobody could possibly use if they wanted to, right? Some kind of penance for lost souls, maybe?

ANDY

No. He said -- "Tulip bulbs on sale over at K-Mart. Time's runnin' out."

(JOE looks at ANDY like he's crazy)

No! I swear to God. You know I wouldn't lie to ya, Joe.

JOE

Charlie appeared to you, and told ya there's a sale at K-Mart?

(ANDY nods)

Tulip bulbs?

(ANDY nods again)

So when you got to the gardening section --

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