

# LUV

**Milt**

Is it...No. Harry Berlin! I thought so! I just caught a glimpse of you and I said to myself, "I bet that's Harry Berlin. And sure enough, it's old Harry Berlin himself. How have you been doing, Harry? What's been happening? It must be...why, at least fifteen years since I saw you last. We had that party after graduation, I said, "Keep in touch", you said, "I'll call you in a few days," and that's the last I heard of you. Fifteen years.

**Harry**

Is it fifteen years?

**Milt**

Fifteen years.

**Harry**

Hard to believe.

**Milt**

Fifteen years next month as a matter of fact.

**Harry**

Time sure flies.

**Milt**

It sure does.

**Harry**

Who are you?

**Milt**

Milt! Milt Manville! Your old classmate at Polyarts U.

**Harry**

That's right! Milt! Milt Manville!

**Milt**

Say. Harry, I've been doing wonderful for myself; terrific. Got into the brokerage business. The money's just pouring in. And, say, I got myself married. Oh, yeah, I went and did it, finally did it. Ellen. A wonderful, wonderful girl. Do anything for her. Hey. Look at this watch. Solid gold. Twenty-two carats. Notice the labels? Silk underwear. Imported. Isn't that something? Hey, smell this, go ahead, smell it. Not bad, huh? Well, how's it been going, Harry? Let's hear.

**Harry**

Awful, Milt; awful. It couldn't be worse. I'm at the end of the line. Everything's falling apart.

**Milt**

I don't get it.

**Harry**

The world, Milt. People. Life. Death. The old questions. I'm choked with them.

**Milt**

Oh.

**Harry**

I must have been out of school for only a couple of weeks when...boom, It hit me all at once.

**Milt**

Oh. Ohhhh.

**Harry**

I remember...I was sitting in the park. It was Sunday. I was kind of day dreaming, thinking of the future, my plans, my prospects...Then...Suddenly...Suddenly I looked up and I saw, standing there in front of me...How can I put it in words? It was a dog, Milt. A fox-terrier. I'd swear it was a fox-terrier. But who knows, I...

**Milt**

Let's just say it was a dog, Harry.

**Harry**

It was a dog. Right.

**Milt**

A dog. Go ahead.

**Harry**

And...And he was there, right in front of me, standing on his hind legs and...He looked almost like a little old man with a little white beard and a little wrinkled face. The thing is...Milt, he was laughing. He was laughing as loudly and as clearly as I'm talking to you now. I sat there. I couldn't move. I couldn't believe what was happening. And then, he came up to me, now he was walking on all fours and...When he got up to me...When he got up to me, he raised his leg and...

**Milt**

No.

**Harry**

All over my gabardine pants. And they were wet, through and through. Then he turned right around and walked off...I thought...Why me? Out of everyone in that park, out of hundreds, thousands of people, why me? What did it mean? How do you explain it? That started it; From that minute on, everything changed for me. It was as if I was dragged to the edge of the cliff and forced to look down. Nothing mattered to me after that. Nothing.

**Milt**

Your plans to go to medical school?

**Harry**

I couldn't.

**Milt**

The book you were writing.

**Harry**

No use.

**Milt**

Your Greek studding?

**Harry**

I couldn't. I couldn't go on. No roots. No motive. I had to find some answers first. A reason. I travelled, went everywhere, looked everyplace. I studied with a Brahmin in Calcutta, with a Buddhist in Nagoya, with a Rabbi in Los Angeles. Nothing. I couldn't find nothing. I didn't know where to turn, what to do with myself. I began drinking, gambling, living in whorehouses, smoking marijuana, taking guitar lessons...Nothing. Still nothing. Tonight...Milt, tonight I was going to end it all, make one last stupid gesture of disgust and..that would be it!

**Milt**

You don't mean...

**Harry**

That's right. Ask me what I believe in, Milt.

**Milt**

What do you believe in, Harry?

**Harry**

I believe in nothing, Milt.

**Milt**

Nothing? That's terrible. How can someone go on living without believing in anything?

**Harry**

That's the problem I'm faced with. And there's no answer to it, none, except down there!

**Milt**

Now let's not lose our heads. Let's control ourselves. Keep calm. Keep calm. Now listen to me. I can understand. I can understand everything you said, but, Harry...Don't you think it's more than unusual, that I happened to be passing at the very minute, the precise exact minute, that you were contemplating this...this horrible thing?

**Harry**

You don't mean...?

**Milt**

I'm not saying it! I didn't say it! But just remember, science doesn't have all the answers!

**Harry**

Talking about it only makes it worse, Milt. You don't know what agony I've been through. It's gotten so bad that sometimes, sometimes, in the middle of

the day or night, without a warning of any kind, my whole body becomes paralyzed, I can't move a muscle and...

**Milt**

Harry! What is it? Harry, for God's sake...Help! Help! Help, here! Help! Help! Look at me! Speak to me, Harry!

**Harry**

That's the way it happens.

**Milt**

You scared the life out of me. That's terrible. Why don't you see a doctor, a specialist, someone...

**Harry**

I don't have to see anyone. I know what it is, Milt. The will to live drops out of me, plops right out of me. Why move? I say to myself. Why do anything? But that's not all of it. Sometimes, sometimes, I can't see, I lose the power of sight completely and I grope about...Milt...Milt...Where are you? Are you still here, Milt?

**Milt**

Right here, Harry. I'm right here.

**Harry**

Help me, Milt. Help me get to the bench.

**Milt**

Of course. This way, Harry. That's it. Watch your step. Here, here it is.

**Harry**

Thank you, Milt.

**Milt**

Is there...anything else I can do?

**Harry**

No. I'm all right now. That's the way it happens. Why see? I say to myself. Why be a witness to it? So I go blind and I don't see. The whole thing becomes completely automatic. I have no control over it.

**Milt**

But there must be something you can do.

**Harry**

What did you say, Milt?

**Milt**

I said, "There must be something you can do to correct..."

**Harry**

I can't hear you, Milt. Speak slowly and I'll try to read your lips.

**Milt**

I said, "There must be something you can do to..."

**Harry**

I hear you now, Milt. That's another one of my...my fits. Sound becomes so damn painful to me...Why listen? I say to myself. Why listen?

**Milt**

Incredible. I wouldn't have believed it was possible.

**Harry**

Well, it is. Look at me. I'm a living example of it. Now you can...

**Milt**

Harry? Are you speaking to me, Harry? Harry, I can't hear you. Can you speak...Oh, God, not that, too. I understand, Harry. I...Give me that. "Dear Harry. What we have to keep in mind, no matter what..." The least you can do is let me finish!

**Harry**

I can hear you, Milt.

**Milt**

You can?

**Harry**

I can't speak when that happens, but I hear all right. Why speak? I say to myself. Words have no meaning; not anymore. They're like pebbles bouncing in an empty tin can.

**Milt**

I don't know what to say, Harry.

**Harry**

What can you say? It's no good, Milt; no good. For cryin'-out-loud, let me get it over with!

**Milt**

Harry! Harry! Listen to me a minute. This is terrible, terrible. That you should treat life so cheaply...It's a sin! There. I said it and I'm glad! Look at you. At your age, worn-out, defeated, wrecked in body and soul. It takes guts to go on living, Harry. It takes guts to make something of your life. Harry, listen to me. Love...

**Harry**

Love?

**Milt**

Yes, Harry. Love, human love, the love of an old classmate, the love of a man for a woman. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

**Harry**

I don't know if I can love, Milt.

**Milt**

That's what everyone says until they meet the right woman. And then...

**Harry**

What?

**Milt**

You don't know?

**Harry**

How could I?

**Milt**

You don't mean...?

**Harry**

Not once.

**Milt**

Oh, Harry. Harry, to have lived and not have loved...Do you call that living?  
You don't know what life is, how can you destroy it?

**Harry**

Love. We read about it, all right; we hear a lot about it. But where is it,  
Milt? Where? I haven't seen it.

**Milt**

It's because your eyes are closed, Harry. Do you think I could go on, working  
day after day, giving my youth, my health, my life itself, for a handful of  
shekels, for a few clammy coins, if there wasn't some compensation for it,  
something that made it all worthwhile?

**Harry**

You do understand.

**Milt**

Of course I understand. Ask me what I believe in, Harry.

**Harry**

What do you believe in, Milt?

**Milt**

I believe in love, Harry.

**Harry**

Love?

**Milt**

Love!

**Harry**

If I thought there was a chance...

**Milt**

Of course there's a chance. Being alive gives you that chance. And now that  
we've met...I'll help you, Harry; introduce you to people, show you around.  
You'll meet some woman, and, boy let me tell you, one day you'll get down on  
your knees and thank me. What do you say?

**Harry**

I don't know how I'm going...You have to understand...It's not  
easy...Life...The stars...The sun...I...

**Milt**

Harry! Harry! Don't start that again! For God's sake. Harry...Love! Love.  
Give it a chance.

**Harry**

Give love a chance.

**Milt**

Why not?

**Harry**

All right, Milt.

**Milt**

That's my old schoolbuddy. Now you promise...

**Harry**

You have my word on it.

**Milt**

Wonderful. Wonderful. There's nothing in the world like it, Harry. It's like getting a new lease on life; it changes everything; one minute you're down in the gutter, the next you're up in the clouds. Do you know I'm more in love today than on the day I married?

**Harry**

You don't mean...?

**Milt**

That's right. But my wife won't give me a divorce. She's a wonderful woman, Harry; don't get me wrong. I'd do anything for her. But once love goes, what's left? There's no thrill to it, no excitement, no surprises...Look, here's her picture.

**Harry**

Your wife?

**Milt**

No, no, the girl I want to marry. Linda. Isn't she beautiful? Everything she does has grace and charm, a fascinating oriental quality. Look at her eyes, Harry, her mouth, her young virgin voluptuousness. Oh, God, you don't know how much I love this woman, Harry. I can't bear being away from her. Not even for a minute. It's sheer torture.

**Harry**

Why don't you get a divorce?

**Milt**

All I have to do is ask Ellen and...You don't know women, Harry. Look at me, Harry. I look happy, don't I? I look as if I have everything in the world to live for. Well, I don't. I'm miserable; positively miserable. Linda, my sweetheart, what's going to happen to us?

**Harry**

It couldn't be that hopeless, Milt. Why don't you...

**Milt**

I've tried everything, everything! She won't give me a divorce. I know she won't. I wouldn't even bother asking her. I've been over this a thousand times, Harry. Linda and I do nothing else but talk about it. There's only one answer and that's if she wants a divorce herself, if she meets someone and...meets someone and...Harry, Harry, buddy, buddy, old classmate of mine.

**Harry**

Oh, no. Definitely not. Don't ask.

**Milt**

Is this what I get for saving your life? Talk about gratitude! Harry, all I want you to do is meet her, just meet her.

**Harry**

Linda?

**Milt**

No, no, Ellen. Meet Ellen...Just meet her, Harry. I know you two will hit it off. She reads, Harry, book after book after book. And she paints, and she plays guitar...

**Harry**

Classical or flamenco?

**Milt**

What's that?

**Harry**

The guitar. Does she play classical or flamenco?

**Milt**

I don't really...

**Harry**

I play flamenco.

**Milt**

She's good at it; very good at it, whatever it is. And she reads, Harry. That woman reads continuously, books I never heard of...with hard covers, too!

**Harry**

All right. I'll meet her. But that's all I'll do.

**Milt**

That's all I want you to do. Did you hear...That's her. She's coming. Wait here, Harry. I'll bring her over. Wait right here. Don't move.