

INSERT:

A very graphic illustration of a decomposing male zombie - bones and guts protrude from the creature's rotting husk. The remnants of its face bear a cruel, hungry grin. In a bony outstretched hand throbs a bright red, bloody heart.

In the other arm of the zombie lies a young maiden with a torn, gaping hole in her chest. A stream of blood pours from the wound, down her billowy smock and into a crimson pool beneath her corpse, forming "Happy Valentine's Day".

INT. MR. VALLORY'S OFFICE - LATE DAY

MR.'s VALLORY and PLOOG, both in their late fifties, are two standard issue character types: bossman and lackey. In a spacious and impressive office, gazing at an enlarged mock-up of the greeting card on an easel display before them. MR. PLOOG looks to MR. VALLORY to gauge his reaction.

Behind the easel is ROSS MOSLEY, younger than he should be for a man in his early 30's and dressed in a blandly colored shirt and slacks ensemble. His eyebrows are raised in anticipation.

VALLORY

What is that, a werewolf?

ROSS

It's a zombie.

PLOOG

(to VALLORY)

Could be funnier as a werewolf.

ROSS

I have a werewolf card. It's a "get well soon".

ROSS begins shuffling through the display materials. There are glimpses of other fiends and monsters.

VALLORY

Skip it.

MR. VALLORY walks off behind an imposing oak desk. He begins shuffling through one of the desk drawers. MR. PLOOG trails behind him.

VALLORY (CONT'D)

ROSS, you know what our top seller was last year?

ROSS
(surrendering)
Baby butts.

From the desk drawer, MR. VALLORY pulls a pair of greeting cards featuring photographs and illustrations of babies with bare bottoms. He displays them to ROSS.

VALLORY
Baby butts. That's right. And do you know what the top seller was the year before that?

ROSS
Baby butts. Look, I know that these might seem --

VALLORY
Baby butts.

PLOOG
Baby butts!

VALLORY
And I'd bet a tall stack of lettuce that if I gave you three guesses what the top seller was the year before that and the year before that and the year before that, you'd get it in the first two.

PLOOG
Baby butts.

ROSS begins packing up his presentation.

VALLORY
You're a sharp egg, Mosley. Those sympathy cards you came up with last year?

PLOOG
Oh, those were good!

VALLORY
Better than good, Bernie. They were terrific. Sold like ketchup at a french fry convention. Know why?

ROSS
...yes.

VALLORY

Nobody'd ever been able to crack that nut. How do you get a baby butt on a sympathy card? No one could do it, not here, not nowhere. Then along comes this kid, straight out of the commissary --

PLOOG

Mail room.

ROSS

Warehouse.

VALLORY

Exactly! With this beauty.

MR. VALLORY holds up a card with a naked baby crying a single tear. ROSS winces a little bit.

VALLORY (CONT'D)

And the sentiment inside! Every time I read it, it's like someone's cutting onions in here.

PLOOG

The Mrs. gets 'em by the boxlot.

VALLORY

This card, this maraschino cherry, I'm not ashamed to tell you Mr. Mosley, played no small part in Glad Home Greetings posting its biggest profits ever this year.

ROSS

Look, Mr. Vallory, I appreciate that. I understand that you've got to make money. If you want me to write more baby butts, I'll write more baby butts. Really. I just wanted to make something that I would buy. A card that appealed to people like me.

VALLORY

(his voice gradually
rising in tone)

People like you do not buy greeting cards, Mosley. Your generation shows up to a birthday party with a box of donuts and a handshake. You send e-mails. You make telephone calls.

(MORE)

VALLORY (CONT'D)

You probably call your mother on
Mother's Day! Your own mother!
Squawking at her through the
speaker like a chicken cutlet!
"HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY MOM. SORRY I
DIDN'T SEND A CARD. SQUAWK!"

PLOOG quickly pours a glass of ice water from a nearby
pitcher and hands it to the overheated MR. VALLORY. He drinks
deeply and calms down a bit. PLOOG refills the glass and
holds it at the ready, in case of emergency.

VALLORY (CONT'D)

Look, Mosley, I get it. I do. I
used to be like you. I wanted to
make my mark on the world. To right
the inestimable wrongs. Grab that
pie in the sky and devour it whole.
And I did, too, when I founded the
company that bought the carpet that
you track mud on every morning. So,
I guess what I'm saying to you is
this, boyo: yeah, do your thing.
Express yourself. Follow your
dreams. All that baloney. But do it
on your own time. Glad Home
Greetings is no place for
werewolves --

PLOOG

Vampires.

ROSS

Zombies.

VALLORY

The whole lot of 'em. You don't
spread frosting on a crouton, you
don't put a what's-a-hoozit on a
Valentine. Okay?

ROSS

Okay.

VALLORY

Great. Now show me your baby butts.

ROSS unpacks another portfolio as MR. VALLORY leans back in
his chair. PLOOG extends the glass of water to MR. VALLORY
who drinks it down in one swallow.