

# *Sketch*

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## Old Man Balls

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# Old Man Balls

Rachel Routier

The green tennis balls squeaked louder than the scarred wooden floor as the man forced his walker to the bathroom. With each step he pulled his hips forward in a thrust. A grunt escaped from his lips. He shuffled to shut the bathroom door. His yellowed teeth chattered from inside the glass on the vanity.

He looked into the mirror. Lines canyoned his face with deep blue pools in the center. His nose was a permanent bulbous red with spider veins.

“Mmmhmm old man, lookin’ good today.” He winked at his reflection and squeezed his butt cheeks together.

Martha, his wife, had already gotten up. Her body left a large, permanent dent on her half of the bed. He couldn’t hear her lumbering through the house, but what much could he hear these days anyway.

Forty minutes later he was dressed and in his Buick. The old boat had survived many a day and smelled like the swinging pine from the rearview mirror. His walker sat in the seat next to him, tennis balls resting on the floor.

The grocery store was a few blocks from his house. He eased into a spot and hung the blue and white handicap sign on his mirror. The store stretched itself amongst a cluster of cornfields. A yellow awning hung over the automatic doors as they slid aside for him to plunge into the building. Cold air blasted him from the heat of summer and he drew his jacket closer before moving his walker forward.

Rather than use a motorized cart, he barreled through the store on six feet. A solo cashier waited for customers while the other eight registers remained empty. She was wearing the white buttoned shirt, black pants, and bowtie the grocery store required of their employees. So far the beeps of scanned food remained quiet in the early morning. He could smell the competition between the cinnamon rolls wafting from the bakery and the chickens browning on the rotisserie back in the meat department.

“Good morning,” she said. Her dark eyes crinkled when she smiled. He nodded his Pioneer hat towards her and grinned and moved with renewed force to the section of the store he knew well.

The bottles of Black Velvet were stacked on top of one another before him. He smacked his lips together and paused for breath just short of the mountain of seduction. They gleamed a deep amber through the large 1.75 liter bottles. His hand drove towards a bottle, one aged for three years. He nabbed one and held it close before sticking it into the basket he attached to his walker.

He had one more stop, and then grunted and groaned his way to the lone checker. He paused and straightened his hat and shirt before handing her the Black Velvet.

He stared. Her tits jiggled like melons alive as she scanned the whiskey and sent it down the line.

The harsh florescent lights did little to deny her looks, instead it shined off her black hair and enhanced the ivory of her skin. The tag pinned to her uniform just above one melon breast said her name was Kate.

He tried to sneak the Depends on the register without drawing attention to the contents. They dropped and fell to the waxed floor. She bent down to get them and wrinkled her nose before it slid on down the conveyer belt. He watched her move. She had an athletic grace and flowed in a solid motion.

Kate began a monotone recitation for her greeting, “Hi, how are you? Did you find everything okay today?”

“Good. How about you?” He nodded as he answered and let his hand hover near a melon before he touched the back of her arm and scooted closer to the two-by-two indent she stood in. She scooted to the farthest edge of the counter.

“Okay, that will be \$17.99,” she said with a mutinous glare.

He fumbled for his wallet and knocked his hand against the walker. The green tennis balls rubbed against the floor in the silence. He inserted his hand and slipped her a twenty.

“My god, do you have a single grandmother who lives around here?” The words erupted from his mouth that he had been thinking the entire time.

Her back was turned from him while she was getting his change. She stiffened and flew around. “Two dollars and one cent for your change today.”

He took the crumpled bills. Her face was closed like a statue.

“Well,” he cleared his throat, “thanks Kiddo. Hope the weather stays nice for you.” He squeezed his butt-cheeks together while he made his exit, just in case she was watching.

He arrived home and listened for Martha, his lovely Martha, whom he hoisted over this threshold. Her plodding form could not be heard.

The kitchen table sat empty save for a whiskey glass. He grabbed a few cubes of ice and tossed them in with a generous helping of whiskey. He lowered himself into a chair and took a gulp.

“Martha, where are you?”