

She Has Long Beautiful Red Hair

by H. W. Moss from a story by Todd A. Zimmerman “TAZ”

The old man approached the counter. He wore a concerned expression on his face, was obviously upset.

“I can’t find my wife,” he complained to the clerk at customer service as Madison, the assistant manager, exited the office. He had been observing from behind a one way mirror.

“Now, now, sir,” the clerk said as Madison approached her from behind. “What does she look like? Your wife. Can you describe your wife to me?”

“She has long beautiful red hair. She’s about my height, wearing a print dress. Flowers. I think it’s a dress with flowers on it. Can you help me? I can’t find her. I’ve looked everywhere.”

A grocery boy arrived on the side of the counter with the old man. “Where did you last see her?” he asked.

“I don’t know.” There was astonishment in his voice. “I really can’t say. It was about five minutes ago.”

“Produce? Did you last see her in the produce department?”

The astonishment was reinforced when the old man asked, “Do you have a produce section? Where is it? Maybe she’s there.”

Madison picked up the microphone. An echoing boom sounded above their heads which filled the store as he turned on the audio system. “Attention shoppers. We have a man looking for his wife. She has long red hair and is wearing a print dress. If that is you, please come to customer service in the front of the store. Thank you.”

A young woman pushing a cart scurried past not wanting to get involved. The cheese and deli section was nearby. Madison heard a clerk crack, “Early stages of Old Timer’s if you ask me.”

Madison began to doubt the old man’s memory. Perhaps the wife died years ago. No wonder he can’t find her.

A frail voice rose above the ambient noise created by shoppers and store personnel going about their business.

“There you are, Herbert. I’ve been looking all over for you.”

The woman was diminutive, no more than five feet which matched the old man’s description, and she wore a light summer dress with a floral print pattern. However, her hair had long ago lost its color, now matched his head of gray, and was rolled in pin curls wound tight against her scalp.

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