

The Last Supper

An old, sullen man walked into a supermarket. Behind him automatic doors creaked to a close, darkness on the other side of them. The man was tall and slender, with a large, wildly untamed beard covering most of his face. Large defined lines creased around his eyes as they peered around the market. It was mostly empty aside from an occasional passerby attached to a green cart. The man put one hand in the other and began to rub them vigorously. He looked over to see a cashier occasionally throw him a glance from the other side of the register to his left. The old man turned over to his right side, pulling his face out of view of the cashier. The man sunk within himself, breathing long and hard. His hand covered his face, eyes shut tight. He opened them to see a stack of small green handbaskets next to a stand with sanitary wipes. His eyes widened, a small shimmering covering each one.

“It’ll be ok,” said the old man. “It’ll all be ok.”

He straightened up and looked back at the cashier, who held a confused expression. The old man smirked and chuckled as he walked over to the baskets and swiftly pulled off the top one. The ones beneath came apart from each other in a disheveled heap. The man then grabbed one hand wipe, then another, then six more. He crumpled them into a ball and quickly rolled it around it his hands. He tossed it into a trashcan that was overflowing with garbage. The man walked with his head held high, the hand basket at his side. The cashier shook his head and looked back to a women walking up to check out.

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The man slowly walked alongside the aisles, examining each one as he passed its opening. The light was a dim pale blue-green, and there was a constant humming of the

freezers. The floor was a pale creamy white, with black marks from years of shoe rubs and cart scrapes covering it. The man walked until he saw milk down one aisle on the back wall. He slowly walked down the aisle, his footsteps echoing with every step. He approached the milk and looked about. Next to the two percent was cream. He gleamed. He reached for it and held it up to his face.

As he lowered the carton, he looked over to his father, whose face was in a newspaper. The paper read "Truman Elected", and the father shook his head as he flipped through it. He reached a hand out to his son, and motioned to place the carton in it. The old man reached out, his hand clear of blotches and and strains, and was instead plump and full of bright greens and pinks, creating a peach pigment. The old man's father grabbed the carton and set the newspaper down. He poured the cream into a coffee cup that was steaming. Behind the father, the mother stood at the stove. There was the distinct aroma of cooked pork with the sounds of sizzling grease to accompany it. The father stood up and placed an arm around the mother. She donned a white polka dot shirt with a blue dress. The father wore a white button up shirt with a plaid tie, along with brown pants and suspenders. The father reached into the pan of the mother, who slapped his hand away, laughing. The Father pulled away, and held out two pieces of bacon. He took one in his other hand and raised it to his mouth, holding it with his teeth. He held the other out to his son. The old man reached out and took it, beginning to bite down on it immediately. The juices filled his mouth with a hearty flavor. The meat pulled apart with ease, and the fat dissolved in the mouth. The old man raised a glass of milk up and began to drink it. It cooled his mouth against the sizzling bacon, and went down smoothly. The old man looked up at his dad, who was pulling on his jacket, the bacon still in his mouth. He placed a brown

porkpie hat on his head. He reached inside his jacket and pulled out a smoking pipe. He replaced the bacon with it and began to roll the bacon up into tube. He then shoved it into his pipe. The old man laughed, and the father winked at him. The father walked to the mother, kissed her on the cheek, and then walked off. The old man shouted for the father, who stopped for a moment. The old man stood from the table and ran to the father. He wrapped his arms around his dad's waist. He felt the warmth of hands patting him on the back, and smelled the crisp scent of cinnamon tobacco. The old man shut his eyes.

When the old man opened his eyes, his arms were wrapped around the cartons of milk before him. He cleared his throat and stepped back. Scratching the back of his head with one hand, he brushed himself off with the other. He looked down to see the cream already in his basket. He grunted as he bent down and lifted it up. He began to walk along the aisles once more. He looked up and saw signs with various instructions hanging from the ceiling. Meat, snacks, pastas, breads; and this continued across the entire store. He stopped at a random aisle and shuffled down it. There were boxes of fake cheese crackers and chips of assorted colors and flavors. Midway the crackers and chips shifted slowly to various brands of cookies. The old man looked over and saw black cookies with bright white chocolate chips in them. They were on the top shelf. The old man's expression became stern.

The cookies dangled in a bag in midair as fingers wrapped around them. A tall, bulky boy held them high. A small girl jumped up to grab them, but her hand only made it to the tall boy's elbow. Sunlight blinded the girl as she squinted and continued jumping. The playground was emptied as children rallied behind the tall boy. He laughed. Next to a tree a yard away from the small girl was the old man, hanging from one of the branches. Leaning against the tree with a

Superman comic book was a scrawny boy with glasses. The old man looked over to the girl and the tall boy. The girl was now hitting the tall boy, whose face went from one of bliss, to a dark grimace. The tall boy lowered his arm and slapped the girl across the face. The blow silenced the crowd's laughter, and send the girl to the ground head first. The old man dropped from the tree and began to make his way to the crowd. The boy with glasses looked up from his comic book, then, wide eyed, quickly pursued the old man. The boy in the glasses pleaded with the old man, tugging on his arm, pointing out the massive girth of the other tall boy. The old man didn't hear him. He couldn't. The two boys stopped next to the girl. The tall boy grinned at them. The old man looked to the boy with the glasses and smiled, motioning to the girl. The boy with the glasses helped her up and she backed away from the old man, standing a few feet behind him. The boy with the glasses walked next to the old man, rolled up his comic, and slipped it into the old man's pocket. The boy in the glasses then backed up next to the small girl. The old man approached the tall boy, who met him halfway. They pumped out their chests. The tall boy had a foot and a half on the old man. But the old man stood his ground. He could feel the adrenaline. The sun blazed. Sweat slid slowly down the old man's face. His right hand shivered for a moment. Then tensed. Within as second it was high above the old man in a fist, and the tall boy was on the ground, out cold. The old man was shocked, and looked at his fist, which shook, red marks on the knuckles. He looked down and saw the bag of cookies next to the unconscious boy. He bent down, picked up the bag, and walked over to the small girl. The boy in the glasses greeted him and slapped him on the back. The old man handed the bag to the girl, and bowed. As he lifted his lowered head up, his face was met with a cookie. The girl was smiling at him, her orange hair burning in the sun. The old man took it and bit into it. The

sweetness overtook him. The earthiness of the dough blended with the white chips. His chewing slowed as he memorized the textures. He swallowed.

The old man sat there with the opened package of cookies in one hand, and a cookie with a bite mark and the gleam of saliva in the other. The old man looked over to his right down the aisle, then to his left. He threw the cookie into the package and dropped it into the hand basket. It leaned against the cream. The old man picked up the basket and continued on. He made it to the end of the aisle and curved around, walking the opposite direction down the adjacent aisle. He stopped at the cans of pasta sauce. He picked one up, tossing it slightly, spinning it in his hand.

The red sauce spread over pasta in front of the old man. He looked up and saw a young orange haired teenager standing at the other side of the wooden table, pouring the sauce over his pasta. The steam rose from it. The aroma of sweet intermingled with one of strong spices. The sauce was a pool of bright reds with sprinkles of black and green particles about it. Before the girl could sit down, the old man shoved a fork into the rivers of sauce and mountains of pasta, grabbing a spoon with his free hand and spinning the pasta on his fork with it. He began engulfing the pasta. The girl laughed as she slowly sunk in her chair, in awe of the ferocity of the old man. The sauce was powerful, spice stabbing through the sweetness of tomatoes. The girl fought through laughter, struggling to ask him if he liked it. The old man pointed his fork at her in a flicking motion, expressing his bliss with grunts. His fork tossed sauce over the table and onto the girl's chest. The old man choked down his mouthful of pasta, apologizing profusely as he wiped his mouth with a napkin. She stressed that it was fine, and began to stand back up, leaning against her hand, which was placed on the table. The old man stood up quickly and

reached out for her. His hand went over hers. They both stopped and looked at one another. The dim light in the room surrounded them. The old man saw nothing but the shine in her eyes, and the dark maroon lipstick on her lips. They both slowly leaned across the table, their clothes getting smeared with sauce. They smiled and kissed for the first time.

The old man pulled away, the can of sauce inches from his face. He placed it slowly next to the cookies in the basket. He reached out and grabbed a package of dried pasta and placed it over the can of pasta. He lifted up the basket. It was heavier. He made his way to the bread aisle. Lines of generic packages layered the side wall of the building. He looked around, and in the corner was a small bakery. He slowly walked to it, seeing fresh loaves of french bread spread out. He picked one up and squeezed it. It was soft, and crunched slightly beneath his boney hands.

The old man tore a piece off and handed it to the orange haired girl laying on her side on the cloth that laid over the grass they sat on. She took it and reached into a basket that sat on the cloth with them. She pulled out garlic butter and spread it over the bread. She spilt the piece in half and handed one over to the old man. He bit into it, a smooth sensation covering his mouth along with the a subtle undertone of garlic. The old man smiled at the girl, and put his piece down. He looked past her, seeing a young man in his early twenties waving to him from behind a tree. The old man put his hand up and asked the girl to wait for a moment. She smiled faintly and looked down. The old man walked to the younger one by the tree. The man with the glasses smiled and reached inside his pants pocket, pulling out a small ring box. The old man pressed his hand against his head and sighed. He reached into his back pocket to pull out his wallet, but the young man in glasses shook his head. The old man pleaded with him,

trying to bargain for the ring box. The young man grabbed the old man's hand, and placed the ring box into it. He cupped his hands around the old man's and shook it. The old man smiled, breathed deeply, then turned and walked back to the girl. He got down on his knees right in front of her and told her he had something to say. She looked up at him with worried eyes and said she had something to say as well. The pit forming in the old man's stomach grew, and his hands shook around the ring box. She began to get to her knees, struggling a bit before he helped her straighten out. They laughed and pulled away from each other. She said that they should say their respective thoughts at the same time. He nodded in agreement. They both breathed in slowly. He asked her to marry him. She said she was pregnant. He said yes. She returned the response. They froze and looked at one another. They grinned.

The old man put a loaf in his basket, then looked away from the bread, and looked toward cakes that were covered inch to inch in frosting. He pressed his face against the glass.

He got a face full of cake. The frosting was lemon with white cake underneath. He licked his lips as he smashed a piece into the face of the orange haired girl standing with him in front of the rest of their cake. He shook his head and beamed. Glasses clinked together in a toast. Music blared over stomping feet. The old man twirled with around with the orange haired girl, who wore a long white dress with a noticeably plump stomach. The room was a sea of noises and laughter.

The old man stopped as he slammed into the cart of another shopper. He jumped back and looked from the cart to the person pushing it. It was a woman in her thirties, with dark bags under her eyes. She glared at the man. He brushed himself off and nodded at her, a smile crossing his face as he picked up a packaged slice of cake and dropped it into his basket. He

disappeared quickly into an aisle that held the stores supply of alcohol. He looked around, running his fingers through the miscellaneous bottles of bourbons, liquors, whiskeys, scotch. His hand stopped at a large bottle of Fireball.

The old man raised the bottle up and shouted in joy, to which he received an uproarious response from the group of young men standing around the bar that spread out in front of him. They cheered and sang. Each donned a soldiers cap, some wearing dark, pale green blazers with various badges and medals on them. Beer pours over their shirts and heads as they puts arms around one another, singing and chanting. They chug their beers which never empty. They yell about people they don't know to people they don't know. The old man drains the bottle of Fireball, shaking his head vigorously as his innards flare up in response. He makes his way to the young man in glasses, who sits at the bar counter with a glass of champagne. The old man slaps the young one on the back, and the young man smirks and gives a slight nod in return. The old man offers the recently emptied bottle of Fireball to the young man, who simply grabs it and rolls his eyes. He thanks the old man, who bellows a laugh. The old man turns around and stops in his tracks. Dirt flies up in front of him. Shrapnel expels from bombshells, the blast of bullets ring out, and in the distance men release guttural screams. Dust covers the earth as black clouds hide the sun. The thunderous roar of tanks launching death upon soldiers calls out as mounted guns mow down every living thing in their sights. Knives sink into flesh, bullets against bones, sour smelling gases shred through lungs, rats carve out corpses. The old man's jaw dropped, sweat beginning to form on his face. He saw blood on his hands. He saw wrapped limbs. He saw broken glasses.

The old man saw a bottle of champagne and picked it up with his free hand, raising it above the Fireball.

He looked through his glass. Bubbles slowly rose to the top of the glass. He put it to his lips and drank. His eyes welled as he swallowed. He placed a hand on the edge of the open casket in front of him. He looked down at the young man inside. The orange haired girl walked up next to him and put her arm around his. She pressed her head against his shoulder, her figure slim once more. He smiled at her and lifted his glass to the air. The crowd behind him did the same as they toasted the man in the basket. The old man lowered his glass and handed it to the orange haired girl. He reached inside his jacket pocket and pulled out a pair of glasses, bent and cracked over one of the lids. He unfolded them and slowly placed them onto the young man in the casket.

The old man lowered the champagne and Fireball into his basket. He lifted it up slowly. It swayed tersely with the added weight. The old man huffed as he walked on to the back of the market. He walked slowly, stopping occasionally to switch carrying arms. He walked until he saw a small isolated stand with bags lined across it. His eyes drooped as he slid his feet forward to approach it. Bags of hard candy sat upon the stand. The old man set the basket down with a defined thud, and picked a bag up. He shut his eyes.

The old man pressed his head against the hand of an orange haired girl. She had lines on her face, spots forming on her bonier limbs. The old man's hands were only slightly more colored, with only slightly more form. The old man looked up into the eyes of the ginger haired woman, who smiled faintly at him. She asked him for forgiveness, with one hand over her stomach. He shook his head smiled back at her, waving hair off of her face. He lowered his head

into her hand, asking for her forgiveness, motioning at the charts and the exit to the hospital room. She leaned towards him, holding him. She put a piece of hard candy from a bag on the nightstand next to her into his mouth. He rolled it around. It was tart, with a slight strawberry sweetness behind it. She looked into his eyes.

“It’ll be ok,” said the old woman. “It’ll all be ok.”

The old man dropped the bag of hard candy into the basket, then bent down to grab it. He struggled for a moment, then slowly walked to the front of the store, hunched over. There was silence in the entire store aside from the shuffling of his feet. He approached the checkout stand where the same cashier still stood. The old man tried to lift the basket to the conveyor belt, but lowered it, panting. The cashier reached over to help him, but the old man grunted and held up a hand. He placed both hands on the basket's handle, breathed in, and held it as he lifted the basket. It shook as he placed it onto the counter. He grabbed the cream first. Then the cookies. After that came the sauce and pasta. Followed by bread. Next was a slice of cake. He lifted the Fireball and Champagne. Then the hard candy.

He walked slowly as the food slowly made its way to the end of the road. He walked to the end and examined his meal. The spice of pasta with the pureness of fresh bread. Accompanied by the light and hard alcohols for contrast. He looked at the cookie, cake and hard candy, his sweet tooth aching. And the cream to be saved for a rainy day.

“Sir”

The old man reached out and wrapped his arms around his feast. He breathed a sigh of relief. He could smell the aroma of breakfast, the bubbles of champagne. He could feel the heat

of the oven, of the sun on his back, of the fires of war. He could feel the adrenaline of violence, love, friendship. He could feel his heart sit heavy upon the sweetness of a desert.

“That’ll be fifty-four dollars and seventy-nine cents”

As the cashier spoke, the old man’s eyes opened. He looked up at the cashier, who looked down upon him and repeated the price of the food. The old man slowly stood up straight. He rubbed his hands together, which had old tattered gloves that missed fingers. He ran his fingers through his beard, which was tangled and greasy. He patted his stained pants to find empty pockets, and put his hands into the torn overcoat he wore, which was matted with grime. The old man looked at the food, his face expressionless, and turned away from the checkout counter. The store was pale. The sound of freezers humming was all that was audible. The old man began to walk away from his food. The cashier looked at him confused and called out to him. The old man kept walking.

He walked out of the door. He walked through the dimly lit streets. Down the grim alleyways. To a pile of flattened boxes. The old man moved the boxes to reveal an old yellow mattress lying on a puddle in the alleyway behind a dumpster. The old man bent down onto the mattress, lied across it, and looked out, wide eyed. He slowly pulled the cardboard boxes over his body, then his head.

He closed his eyes.