

SPIN

by Adam Sifre

Rose lifted her 55-year-old legs until they were perpendicular to the bed and admired how girlish they looked. It gave her the sexy legs of a 20-year old, if the morning light was right and she squinted a bit.

They look like they used to when Elvis was King and Daddy drove a black Cadillac with fins.

Fantasy time over, she trudged into the bathroom and began the familiar regime of applying the various powders, creams and snake oils needed to turn her reflection into something that definitely did **not** resemble her mother.

She knocked back a capful of mouthwash, and two tiny green rivulets made their way down her chin. Maybe she'd dye her hair black. It was getting harder and harder to ignore the gray. Rose sighed.

As above, so below. Carpet must match the drapes, and all.

She stared daggers at her reflection.

"Shut up, you. I refuse to look better in the casket than I did while I was alive, so I'm hitting the gym today, there!"

Her phone rang before her reflection could come up with a snarky reply. She trotted into the bedroom and picked up her phone.

"Hello, pumpkin. Am I calling too early?"

Rose winced. "Hi Mom. Yes, you are."

Before she could say anything else, her mom was talking about a story she read on the internet.

"By answering six questions, you can find out your probability of developing turkey necks, jowls, and crow's feet. I mean, really."

Jesus. Do we all become poultry in the end?

Rose managed to get her mom off the phone and barely squeeze into her brand new spandex monstrosity. It made her feel like a human suspension bridge. In the kitchen, she picked up the note left for her by the love of her life — the man who once wrote her

poetry, and then sweet talked her into sharing a bed for three decades.

“Pk up pctr hks + calking at hrdwr str. Enjoy Spin! ”

Tom loved her, she knew, but lately, their comfortable complacency made her crazy. She could shave her head and grow a third eye, and he'd probably say something like, “Wow, you look different. New dress?” Sometimes it felt as if they loved each other because to do otherwise would require some sort of action. She loved Tom despite all that, but she missed the spark.

An hour later, Rose found herself at Hennessey's Hardware Store.

15 minutes to spin class. No problem.

She suspected they imported the smell — a cross between burnt rubber and turpentine, with a 50 pound bag of fresh manure dumped on top. Maybe it was a special pheromone, designed to make men forget their natural fear of shopping. Tom loved it. Whenever he entered the place, he'd inhale deeply and hold it in for several seconds like a crack addict.

Rose always felt like a short dog in tall grass here. She wandered aimlessly in the paint aisle, thinking more about spin class than caulking.

And then, there he was, flanked by a bin of screw brackets and deck sealants. He caught her staring and their eyes met for just a moment too long. She'd never seen eyes as blue as a gas flame but there they were, and they were fixed on her. He smiled a slow, beautiful smile and dipped his head a little as if to say hello. His name tag read RICK.

Of course it does. How could he be anyone else?

She hooked a hasty left to the next aisle, part of her hoping he'd follow. The hardware gods answered her prayers.

Thank God for deodorant and mouthwash.

“Can I help you, Miss?”

She turned. Even at this close range, the man was a stud. Sixty, maybe? Ten years ago she'd have offered to assist the geezer across the street. Right then, however, she had another

offer in mind. Rose blushed at the thought.

"Hi, um, sure, uh." She sounded like a sow in heat. She heard him chuckle behind his pronounced Adam's apple. The last of her estrogen-laced blood rushed to her cheeks; and her blush turned into a hot flash. She took an involuntary step back and bumped into a bin of rakes.

The rogue's hand grasped her upper arm to steady her.

"I'm looking for picture hooks, the kind with sticky tabs. And some caulking for around the toilet." *How romantic.*

He grinned. "You're in the wrong aisle. You just follow me and I'll show you where those hooks are hiding."

She followed behind him taking in his broad shoulders and his nice tight backside.

His ass defies gravity!

Rick stopped in front of a large peg board, slipped a blister pack from a hook and slowly, seductively, set them in her sweaty, open palm.

"If these hooks are not right, you bring them back. Satisfaction is always guaranteed."

He winked. Rose felt faint. "Now I'll show you my caulking. How big a tube do you need?"

Her knees turned to putty. She pulled the first tube she saw off the shelf. It felt warm and heavy in her fist. Rose's blush went from deep to WARNING! DANGER! She had to get the hell out of there before things got out of hand. He took the tube from her, and wrung her up at the register. When he handed her the bag, and she noticed his strong, warm hands. Then he laid those beautiful steely blues on her again.

"Thank you very much, Young Lady," he whispered. "Have yourself a fine day now and do come again."

Rose floated out of the store, across the sidewalk and giggled on her way to her beat-up

Chevy.

I'll start spin class tomorrow. Today I'm telling Tom to come home early.

When she turned the key in the ignition, it sputtered and then stalled.

“Shit,” she said out loud. “C'mon old girl, just turn over one last time, pleeease.” And it did. There was still spunk in old things yet.

