

LIFE'S LITTLE PLEASURES

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

It's a cool, but comfortable, morning at the park. Two men sit playing checkers on a weather-beaten wooden picnic table.

CLAYTON is mid-70's, medium build, silver-grey hair topped with a cap. MURRAY, also well into his 70's, is a little shorter, a tad frailer and bald except for around his ears.

CLAYTON

Hee-yah! That's three outta five.

He rubs his palms together as briskly as he's able to.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Sorry, Murray, old buddy, but that means you gotta go...

Clayton cracks an even wider smile as a dejected Murray slowly starts to stack the checkers in a worn cardboard box.

MURRAY

Damn it, Clay, it's not funny. I've gone the last two times!

He glances across the road at a supermarket, then his eyes go wide and he gulps.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

How 'bout four outta seven?

Clayton cackles and begins filling a Briar pipe.

CLAYTON

Sorry, Mur, but fair's fair.

He strikes a wooden match against the table and lights his pipe, then he leans forward and cautions his friend.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

At the Bingo last night, the old widow Wilson told me the market's got some newfangled video cameras in since last time.

Clayton puffs away on his pipe, enjoying himself immensely.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

You'll have to be extra careful.

Murray eases his weight off the bench, takes a deep breath and adjusts the suspenders holding up his baggy tweed pants as he stares across the street summoning up the courage.

Seeing his dear friend's predicament, Clayton softens a bit as he smokes thoughtfully.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Ah, hell, Mur, maybe you're right. This thing's gettin' bigger all the time. Look, if you want, I'll follow you in and run a diversion.

Somewhere off behind the park, a POLICE SIREN wails down a nearby street.

Murray squares his bony shoulders and shakes his head.

MURRAY

No, I'll do it. Besides, no sense in both of us gettin' nabbed.

CLAYTON

Atta, boy. Get in, and get out. And remember: just easy to carry stuff.

MURRAY

I know, I know...

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a breath spray and holds it up.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

... in case of a hasty exit.

He opens his mouth, and gives himself a spritz.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Okie-dokie, I'm going in.

INT. SUPERMARKET - LATER

Murray comes around an aisle pushing his cart into Produce and stops in front of a counter filled with tomatoes. He selects one and starts talking to himself.

MURRAY

Well, lookie here. Damn price is up a buck a pound from last week.

He picks another one up and studies them both.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
But I do love 'em.

He looks up, surveys the area and weighs both in his palms.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
Might as well take 'em both. If you
get caught, they don't judge you on
weight.

He places the tomatoes in the cart and starts off again.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Murray looking left and right in front of stand of grapes,
then selecting a single grape and pretending to cough as he
pops the small fruit in his mouth.

Murray going up another aisle inspecting packages, nodding
and saying hello to other shoppers in an attempt to blend in.

Murray's head poking around a stack of canned juices as he
reconnoiters the next aisle.

Murray revealing a sweet tooth by dropping a packet of cherry
Jello, a container of butterscotch pudding and a bar of dark
chocolate into the shopping cart.

Murray's eyes go wide. Without lifting his head, his eyes
peek up at the ceiling looking for surveillance cameras.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

Murray's checking out Household Cleaners when the ring tone
Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head fills the air. The old man
fumbles with his cell phone.

INTERCUT - I/E.

MURRAY
What're you doing? You know we're
supposed to be incommunicado.

CLAYTON
I know, but I was gettin' worried.

MURRAY
Well don't. I'm just about done.

He looks out from the end of the aisle to the long row of
checkouts.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Then I'll look for our target.

CLAYTON

Avoid Brenda the Barbarian. I think she might be onto us.

MURRAY

I know better. I'll look for a newbie.

CLAYTON

And no bag boys! They don't have nothin' else to think about.

Murray picks a kitchen cleaning sponge from a rack and places it in the shopping cart.

MURRAY

Don't worry. I'm heading out now.

CLAYTON

Good, you're gonna look suspicious if you stay much longer.

MURRAY

Gimme five. I'll meet you outside.

CLAYTON

Okie-dokie.

Murray spots a young teenage girl with an In Training happy face button on her uniform and a big smile on her own face.

MURRAY

Holy-Moly. I got a live one wearing a trainee button.

CLAYTON

Excellent! I'll be just outside the exit. And I'll have my cane ready to trip anybody chasing you.

Murray starts for the far checkout where the young girl has begun her shift.

MURRAY

10-4. Bald Eagle out.

He dodges in and out of other cart pushers and makes his way behind a rack of paperback novels where he collects himself and double checks the contents of his cart.

Still anxious, he goes through a series of restless motions like a baseball player at home plate, wiping his wet palms on his thin spindly legs, running his tongue over his grey lower lip and nervously hitching his pants. Finally, he is ready.

Murray makes a bee-line for the end cashier, confident he can get there without drawing attention.

Standing in line, he smiles at the bright and bubbly cashier.

She's wearing a bright yellow button that sports the message: Hi. My name's Cindy. Please be patient. I'm in training.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

And a howdy-doodly to you, too.

Murray's gaining confidence with every step the line moves forward. He glances back to see three full carts behind him, then to the two shoppers ahead of him.

Then he makes the mistake of looking up. Tucked in behind some potted plants and spotlights is the nose of a camera with a tiny red light winking.

Just then, an unfriendly-looking heavy-set woman in her 50's wearing the store uniform walks up to Cindy and relieves her.

Murray's eyes go wide. He swallows and wipes beads of nervous perspiration from his forehead.

He peeks at the shoppers behind him. A string of stern, knowing faces stare back.

A loud voice barks out as BRENDA announces:

BRENDA

Next!

Clayton looks up.

Brenda the Barbarian is drumming her thick fingers at the end of the agitated black conveyor belt awaiting his goods.

The nervous old man begins to mumble to himself as he places his items on the counter one at a time, lining up bar codes.

MURRAY

(to himself)

Well, what's the worse could happen to me? I'll just tell 'em I'm an old fart that got mixed up.

Brenda finishes flashing her fingers over the scanner, peers over her reading glasses and rumbles:

BRENDA
That's \$19.80

Murray gropes for the correct change and finally decides on a \$20, then he shuffles down the aisle to get his bag.

As the nervous old man struggles to slip the plastic handles over his trembling fingers, he hears the loud, dreaded:

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Excuse me!

Murray's shoulders sink, his face pales and his cheeks turn a rosy tint. The two of them stare each other down.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Don't you want your change?

The woman slides two dimes down the aluminium ramp.

Murray scoops them up and hurries to the exit.

EXT. PARK - LATER

The two men are back in the park. Murray has his grocery bag wide open and is counting out items in a loud, clear voice, carefully placing each package on the picnic table in a neat, long line.

MURRAY
... 14, 15, 16.

Murray rummages around in the bag and gives Clayton a wicked smile as he holds up a small pack of envelopes and announces brightly:

MURRAY (CONT'D)
17!

With the flourish of a magician pulling a rabbit from a hat, Murray pulls the second tomato from the bag and gloats:

MURRAY (CONT'D)
TA-DAH! That's 18!

Clayton, all flustered, sputters around his pipe.

CLAYTON
No fair! You can't count two tomatoes as two separate items.

MURRAY
Why the hell not?

CLAYTON
You just can't. Did Brenda weigh
them separately, or together?

Murray maintains his smile but reluctantly places the second
tomato with the first one he'd counted earlier.

MURRAY
Nevertheless, Clay, *Old Buddy*...

He reaches over and playfully pulls his friend's cap down
over his forehead.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
Getting 17 items through the 12
item checkout still ties the
record!

Clayton laughs, rubs Murray's head and looks at his watch.

CLAYTON
We best be going. I heard they're
servin' meatloaf tonight.

MURRAY
Yeah, and it's movie night, too. I
heard they're showing *The Sting*.

The two old friends get their goods together and head off
slowly through the park.

FADE OUT.

- THE END -