

Wrinkles and Wishes

written by

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**INT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY**

A group, each with a piece of birthday cake, sit at a table playing scrabble.

A care assistant sits with a pad taking score.

The sound of Louie Armstrong plays in the background.

One of the group rolls up his sleeves and adds a risqué word to the otherwise dull mix.

This is Alfred, a portly figure in a Hawaiian shirt. Fluffy white moustache, expressive eyebrows.

ALFRED

Hmm, so that takes me to...?

CARE ASSISTANT

(Monotone)

One hundred and eighty six.

Collective moan from the other residence watching T.V.

ALFRED

Well, looks like I'm in the lead again.

Maggie leans forward, taps urgently on the board.

Maggie rattles like an untrustworthy boiler, thick lenses magnify her demonic eyes.

MAGGIE

You can't put words like that!

ALFRED

You've been on this planet a hundred and fifty years and you still can't handle a bit of fruity language?

MAGGIE

How dare you!

She turns to the care assistant.

MAGGIE

He should be disqualified surely?

The care assistant sighs.

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CARE ASSISTANT  
(Monotone)  
Alright, let me see.

Her expression doesn't change as she inspects the board.

MAGGIE  
See? Filth! Utter filth!

CARE ASSISTANT  
C'mon now Alfred, behave  
yourself.

ALFRED  
What? It's just a word.

Leo pats Maggie's shoulder.

Leo is an African American. A gentle soul never without a smile.

LEO  
Don't upset yaself now Maggie,  
it's just a game, ain't got to  
pop a vessel.

MAGGIE  
You know I've never cursed in all  
my life? Not once!

LEO  
Good for you Maggie.

Pearl, another resident, is wheeled over, balloon tied to her chair.

Pearl shines. Innocence in a dusty pink cardigan.

She waves her hands left to right to Louie Armstrong's Hello Dolly.

LEO  
Careful everybody, Pearl's comin  
over.

She laughs, playfully pushes Leo's shoulder.

PEARL  
Ohhhhh, such a kidder Leo.

LEO  
Hehehehe. Still glowin baby.

He takes her hand and plants a gentle kiss.

She blushes like a nervous school girl.

Alfred rolls his eyes as he fishes for more letters.

PEARL

Oh stop, I-I'm far too old for  
all this romance.

LEO

Nonseeennse, why I believe ya got  
so much more love to give. Age  
ain't nothin but a number, ain't  
that right Maggie?

MAGGIE

Pfft. If it's just a number what  
am I doing here?

LEO

Why this place ain't so bad.

ALFRED

Are you kidding me? There's no  
action, everyday the same faces,  
same food, same view from the  
window...

PEARL

Oh now the view is gorgeous. Just  
look at that meadow, takes me  
back to when I was a child,  
running around playing with  
friends.

LEO

That's wonderful.

ALFRED

Yeah well, you can't repeat the  
past.

LEO

Don't mean ya can't be positive.

PEARL

You should listen to him.

ALFRED

Pfft. Yeah. Right. I mean take a  
look at Maggie over here, she  
leaks, she shakes and soon she'll  
break.

MAGGIE

What?!

ALFRED

Well. You've got way more liver  
spots than me, it's only right  
you go first.

Maggie turns to Leo.

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MAGGIE

Can you believe this? Can you believe the way he's talking to me?!

Leo chuckles.

Pearl stops smiling, stares into space.

ALFRED

Hey Leo? Pearl's gone again.

LEO

Ohhhhhh, now where's my favourite girl got to?

Leo starts singing, Pearl eventually joins in.

LEO/PEARL

So...take her wrap, fellas find her an empty lap, fellas Dolly never go away again.

Pearl claps, eyes sparkling again.

She leans towards Leo, hand on his knee.

PEARL

It's my birthday you know.

Maggie rolls her eyes.

LEO

Ohhhh well happy birthday.

PEARL

I-I had a cake.

LEO

No kidding? Well I hope ya made a wish now?

PEARL

I did I did.

She whispers her wish.

LEO

Woowww. Ain't that somethin.

ALFRED

Ehhh I don't believe in wishes.

Pearl's face drops like a child's realisation of 'Santa Clause'.

MAGGIE

I hate to admit it but I'm with Alfred on this one.

Made in Highland

LEO  
Why everybody has a wish.  
If only they were dreamers like  
us huh Pearl?

CUT TO:

**EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - NIGHT**

Still night. Owl hooting.

CUT TO:

**EXT. JUNGLE - DAY**

A cutlas swipes through leaves.

A figure emerges, fluffy white moustache, expressive eyebrows, Hawaiian shirt and a glistening body of a God.

He drops his cutlas, raises a brow, eyes fixed on a mermaid tail rising from the lagoon ahead.

CUT TO:

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Alfred is immersed in a dream. He pouts his lips.

ALFRED  
Well hello there.

CUT TO:

**INT. JUNGLE - DAY**

Alfred rips off his shirt, dives into the water and swims towards the creature.

The mermaid comes to the surface wearing thick lens glasses.

Alfred grabs her and kisses her passionately.

CUT TO:

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

'Maggie the Mermaid' runs her bony fingers across her nighty.

MAGGIE  
(Quivering)  
Ohhhhhh Alfred.

FADE OUT.