

Watching

by Daniel Harris

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I stood at the olive bar of the Sarasota Whole Foods spooning up a pint of Caselvetrano olives. An anorexic middle-aged woman walked up and watched me.

—Those olives are so green they must be fake, she said.

—Are you addressing me?

—Yes.

—These are Caselvetrano olives. They are from Sicily. I actually wrote a story about them. They're very good.

—Is that the story about you picking up a woman and doing a nude portrait of her?

—Well, yes, but it was published by a small on-line site. How do you know it?

—One of my friends detests you because of another story you wrote and published on that site. I've been watching you. She's been watching you. You are an opportunist, which is a sort of predator. You meet women and use their tragedies for material. The whole city knows you are a predatory writer, worse than Truman Capote.

—Oh, I see, like the song by The Police?

—Well, yes, I guess, she said.

—You know everyone thinks that song is about love, but it's about stalking.

—No! she said stamping her foot.

—Sting realized that after he made the recording and someone called him on it. I painted a picture about that and sold it to Sting.

—No way. Get a life.

—No, it's true. So, are you stalking me?

—I'm not a stalker, you are. You're the predator. I should report you to the police.

- The rock group, or local law enforcement?
- You are such an asshole.
- Here, have an olive; maybe I'll paint your picture.

