

Liquor and Older Women

by Mike Handley

I was still in elementary school when I learned something else about the pussy and its various accoutrements.

All the neighborhood boys were in love with the mother of a girl who lived on our street. She was a raven-haired beauty -- the first divorcee any of us had ever known. The word as we pronounced it, "divorSAY," rolled off our tongues like syrup off a stack of pancakes. It wasn't naughty, like pussy and "fuck," the latter so bad as to call down a lightning bolt from Heaven. But it was exotic, sexy and therefore special.

My then-best friend, Poncho, and I were the proprietors of a traveling liquor store, a way of making enough money to ride our bicycles to the nearest cafe, eat cheeseburgers and play the jukebox every weekend. We knew the words to the "We're so sorry, Uncle Albert" song.

Our financial gains came through raiding our neighbors' trash cans. We'd pull out bottles of wine, bourbon, beer cans and other alcoholic beverages and pour the dregs into one of the prettiest freshly-washed bottles until it was nearly full of amber-colored liquid.

We eventually learned not only which of the neighborhood residents drank, but also their favorite poisons. One guy, in particular, was our chief supplier. He preferred Country Club malt liquor and Rebel Yell whiskey.

At one end of the block lived a taxidermist, whose family had somehow acquired a teenager -- we called him Wilson -- from Ecuador. He and his mother lived in a small trailer beside the taxidermy shop, which always smelled like salty rotten meat. Wilson,

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who spoke only broken English, would buy whatever we brought him.

It was during one of our garbage-foraging trips, at the lovely divorcee's empty home, that my friend and I came across a bunch of tiny white cardboard tubes.

"What are these?" I asked, twisting one in my fingers.

"Those are tampons," my wiser buddy informed me. "Women stick them in their vageenas."

"What is a vageena?" I wanted to know.

He looked around to see if anyone was eavesdropping. "It's another word for pussy," he whispered.

I almost fainted. To think that Mrs. W stuck so MANY in her pussy had to mean that she was even more exotic than I'd dreamed she was. From that moment on, I'd have done anything she asked. I even pretended to be friends with her son, so I would have a reason to go to their house.

I'd scripted our conversations in my mind.

"Young man?" she'd ask. "Would you please hand me a tampon?"

"Yes ma'am," I'd dutifully respond.

I had a way with women. That much I knew from my run-ins with Miz Phillips, the assistant principal at my elementary school. And my mother's card-playing lady friends all adored me.

But while my charms worked wonders on Miz Phillips, they had no effect whatsoever on the divorcee. For all she knew, I was her

little boy's playmate, or perhaps a potential boyfriend for her daughter. Looking back, her daughter was actually very pretty. But she had a crush on Marty, whose mother also was a looker.

I eventually lost interest. I mean, why bother with the divorcee when one of my mother's pals would pull me aside to question the peculiar stains on her son's sheets? "What should I do?" she asked.

I couldn't stain sheets, but I knew what she meant.

"It's normal," I proclaimed, secretly envious and aware that I wasn't yet normal.

