

Don't Tell Grandpa

Ashley R. Carlson

Word count: 1,000

"Are you ready to get your drink on?"

"My what?"

"Oh geez. What twenty-one-year-old doesn't know what that means?"

"I've been twenty-one for less than a day Grandma! And you should be glad you don't have some 'seasoned' drinker on your hands," Bernadette says. Her friend Macie laughs.

"It's true though, Bernie. You're a bit of a nerd," she says, lumbering over to put the dishes in the sink. "But tonight, that's *all* gonna change. I'm gonna check my makeup, then to the Watering Hole we go!" Macie flicks her trunk in Bernadette's direction.

"Ooh goody. Let me get my purse," Grandma Hess says.

"Whoa, hold up there. You're not coming," Bernadette says. "It's embarrassing enough that I have to wear some ridiculous 'birthday tutu.' I'm not also gonna spend the night with my sixty-year-old grandma."

"What, you don't think I can hang with the kids?"

"Correct. I do not."

"Well, you are one hundred percent *wrong* missy! Here, have a lollipop."

Grandma Hess fishes one out of her purse and tosses it at her granddaughter.

"One of your 'relaxing' candies? I thought these were only for after a long day. Plus, you never share," Bernadette says, unwrapping the paper with her trunk and tentatively licking the edge.

"There's a reason I've never shared before honey; because they're quite expensive and—"

"BLECH!! What *is* that?" Bernadette shouts, flinging the

lollipop away.

“—an acquired taste,” Grandma Hess continues, picking up the candy and handing it back to Bernadette.

“Ready!” Macie shouts in the doorway, holding the dreaded turquoise tutu.

“Ugh. I was hoping you’d forgotten about that thing.”

“Nope!” Macie says victoriously as Bernadette steps into the tutu, wiggling it up around her rotund midsection.

“What’s in your mouth?” Macie asks as the three elephants stomp out of the house and down to the bus stop.

“Itz-ah-wowwi-pop,” Bernadette replies, her voice muffled by the candy.

“What?”

“It’s one of my candies, dear,” Grandma Hess says, offering another to Macie. “I have them sent here from Madagascar. They’re made with a rare brand of beer; virtually no hangover.”

“*What?* Your grandma buys alcoholic candies?! Ha!” Macie shouts as she takes one.

“Ahpah-went-ly,” Bernadette replies.

“Don’t tell Grandpa,” Grandma Hess says as they board the bus. “Next stop, the Watering Hole!”

“The music’s so loud in here!” Bernadette shouts.

“If you’re competing in a contest for the lamest twenty-one-year-old ever, congratulations. You’ve won,” Macie says, returning from the bar with three shots.

“Oh, no thanks. I think I’m pretty drunk already off that lollipop.”

“Ooh, jackalberry juice. My favorite!” Grandma Hess shouts as they toast.

Bernadette takes a sip. “ACK! This is disgusting!”

A hyena suddenly appears next to her. “Hey there sweetie. Nice tutu. Is it somebody’s birthday?”

“Oh, um. Yes, it’s mine. I’m twenty-one today,” she says as he looks her over from trunk to toe.

“So you’re legal,” he murmurs, grinning to display a row of yellowed incisors. A moment later a beige blur whizzes past his head.

“Keep it movin’ bucko, or the next time my purse won’t miss that giant noggin. And there’s a brick in it,” Grandma Hess says with venom.

“Geez, what the hell? What crawled up your butt old lady?”

“From the smell of it, I’d reckon it was you,” Grandma Hess snorts. “Go on, get. Be sure to tell your friends how you just got told off by this ‘old lady.’”

The hyena’s nearby friends roll on the floor in hysterics as he retreats, their shrieks echoing throughout the bar.

“Grandma! You have a brick in your purse? *So you can swing it at people?!* ” Bernadette hisses.

“Of course I do. Can’t tolerate my youngest being preyed on by some mangy animal,” Grandma Hess replies.

“This is literally the best night of my life,” Macie laughs as Grandma Hess turns to leave.

“Let’s blow this joint. Grandpa and I’ve got a favorite place down the way, where they *know* their jackalberry juice.”

The three elephants leave the bar, stopping as a herd of young males stumbled by, arguing over whose trunk was longer.

“They’re all too small!” Macie cries after them.

“Grandma, I don’t think I can drink anymore,” Bernadette says. “That beer-lollipop was pretty strong.”

“Nonsense! You’ve barely had a thing,” Grandma Hess says, spotting a young, lithe lion in uniform nearby. “Officer! Officer!” she crows.

“Is there a problem?” he says.

“Yes, there is. My granddaughter here is twenty-one today, and claims she’s already drunk off one beer-lollipop.”

“Beer-lollipop? What’s a beer-lolli—”

“Nevermind that. Would you be so kind as to breathalyze her for me? To prove how paranoid she’s being,” Grandma Hess says.

The lion hesitates, then nods. “All right ladies, fine. I’m

assuming it's you who I'm testing? The one in that weird...skirt thing?"

"It's a tutu," Bernadette frowns, watching the officer pull the breathalyzer from his belt.

"I'm telling you right now, it's gonna be off the charts," she says before taking a giant breath and blowing into the device.

Beep beep beep beep...beep...beep...

"You have a blood alcohol level of...0.02," the officer says as he discards the mouthpiece in a nearby trash. "In some areas, that's not even high enough to be considered by law enforcement."

"What?!" Bernadette says as Grandma Hess and Macie dissolve into laughter.

"Are we finished?" the lion asks.

"Yes, thank you officer," Grandma Hess says. "You feel better now? Come on. That bar's callin' my name."

She trundles away as Macie and Bernadette trail behind.

"Your grandma is like...way cooler than you. You're lucky to have her," Macie says.

Grandma Hess waits for them at the entrance. "Live Rhino Revue tonight girls! Those muscled bodies and giant tusks...can't get enough. Don't tell Grandpa," she says to Bernadette with a wink.

"I won't. Love you."

"Love you too honey. But not as much as those performing rhinos!"

The three elephants squeeze into the doorway to continue enjoying their night, with Bernadette feeling like she may be pretty lucky after all.