

A vibrant yellow background features a wreath of purple flowers. A bright light beam with sparkling particles descends from the top left corner. The text is centered within the wreath.

SOME  
*Fine*  
WOMAN

ROMELLE  
WINTERS

*Some Fine Woman*

By  
Romelle Winters



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Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.  
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# Dedication

*This book is dedicated to my husband, if he lets me get a new dog. Otherwise, this book is dedicated to my late dog, Peaches. RIP, sweet girl.*



# Chapter One

“Hey, Charlie, you can see I can’t hold all of these packages by myself. Grab a few. Why do you think I asked you to come with me?”

“I don’t know. I thought it was for my witty repartee.”

“If I wanted wit, I would have invited a politician. I need some extra hands.”

Making their way out of KB Toy Store, the two men collapsed onto a bench in a small resting alcove, packages protruding at odd angles, defying laws of gravity. Attempting to put boxes and bags into order, Jim Bennett’s nose began to crinkle as a revolting odor drifted into his orbit. He slowly turned his head.

Lying on the seat next to him was a baby, mouth tightly gripping a pacifier and legs being held up by a frantic father. The young man’s hands feverishly swiped the baby’s bare bottom, the obvious source of the stench permeating the air in ever-widening waves. Passing shoppers looked away in disgust as they recognized the fragrance so strong it seemed to be sending blue waves into the atmosphere.

“Sorry. He always does this the minute my wife leaves him with me. And the men’s room doesn’t have a changing table.”

“*Yech!* A face like an angel and it smells like the inside of my septic system. Let’s move, Charlie. I don’t think I’m up to this anymore. There was a time when the smell of baby poop didn’t bother me, but lately it doesn’t take much to set my stomach to roiling. I wonder what the hell they feed that kid. Nothing on earth could smell that bad.”

“How about the inside of your tennis sneakers?”

“Ha. Ha. They don’t even come close.”



The two men gathered packages and moved to the opposite side of the rest area where they sat down and silently watched as an endless stream of Christmas shoppers passed into their field of vision. Jim silently began to sing the words, “Deck the halls . . .” joining the tinkling bells emitting from an unseen speaker. His fingers wiggled with the motion of a piano player as he silently played along with the music on an invisible keyboard resting on his leg. The two pairs of eyes moved back and forth as, first one, and then another person caught their attention. People-watching—something to do to keep your mind going while your feet are resting. Charlie and Jim were experts.

Charlie was nudged slightly as one particular lady passed their field of vision. Four eyes followed her progress, taking in every detail. Her two-hundred pounds were distributed evenly over a five-foot-two-inch frame. Waddling duck-like, she appeared oblivious to the stark stares that followed her progress. Hair, frizzed from a recent permanent that went awry, was the color of dried sludge. In order to hide as much as possible, a scarf, tied babushka-style, was put on hastily before leaving home. The orange color clashed horribly with her cranberry red coat, but she decided it was better to look like a psychedelic Christmas tree than subject herself to a public display of the frizz on top of her head. Out of her peripheral vision, Dolly Flynn saw the stares of Jim and Charlie.

*Oh God, why do I have to look like this?* Dolly thought. *Fat, old—well, not too old—with hair that looks like I just stuck a finger into a light socket. I could kill Ruby for telling me that permanent was the latest thing. Look at those two goats staring at me. I know what they’re thinking. They’re laughing at me. I’m sorry, critics. I’m sorry I don’t look like that young thing in front of me wiggling her backside in that tight skirt. I used to be skinny like her. Give her forty years and she will pack on the pounds. We women all do.*

Trying to gather some dignity in the face of adversity, Dolly raised herself a quarter of an inch higher, put her nose into the air, and plodded past Jim and Charlie, who were still

watching with rapt attention. As Dolly passed from their vision into the 16 Plus store, Charlie turned to Jim and said, “Did you see that?”

“Sure did, Charlie. That is some fine woman. Yep, some fi-i-i-ne woman. Sure beats these young ones walking around nowadays. Look over there!”

Charlie shifted his gaze in the direction of a gaggle of giggling females on their way from high school to their jobs at Dairy Mart. Leotards, short skirts, dangling earrings, moussed hair—all part of the modern adolescent uniform.

“It’s a wonder sex is so important these days. Who in the world could be turned on by something looking like that? See that redhead? She’s so skinny her striped pajamas have only one stripe. What male would want that?”

“What male? Just look behind them.”

Following at a perfect inspection distance—far enough away to see top to bottom, close enough not to miss a detail—were two males. At first glance, Jim had difficulty determining their gender. The faded jeans, earrings, and oversized sweaters were sexless, but upon closer examination, the leering smirks perched atop peach-fuzzed cheeks were a dead giveaway. Typical horny, adolescent males.

“God, Jim, it’s been so long, I hardly remember feeling like that.”

“I still remember.”

“I don’t know how the hell you do it. All you think about is sex, sex, sex. Never saw anyone over seventy-six so horny.”

“How many times do I have to tell you not to mention my age? And speaking of horny, don’t tell me you still don’t do it, Charlie. I’ve seen that smirk on your face every month or so. And you’re two years older than me.”

“Sure, I still do it, once in a while, but I’m married. Since Helen died, you’ve been acting like the neighborhood mutt chasing every female in heat.”

“Hey, Charlie, my wife died, not me. I was a faithful husband for over forty years, but I won’t be faithful to a ghost,

and I can't help it if the old testosterone is still coursing through my veins. You're probably just jealous that you still can't get it up every week."

"Maybe so, but lately you can't seem to get your mind above your belt."

"I don't wear a belt anymore—only suspenders, the latest thing."

"I wear suspenders, too. Have for a long time."

"Yeah, Charlie, but the difference is that you wear them to keep your pants from falling down around your ankles. Your belly is so big you can't pull anything up around it. I wear suspenders to make a fashion statement."

Jim's eyes wandered down to the top of Charlie's pants sagging around a protruding paunch. A small, involuntary sneer appeared on his mouth.

Feeling uncomfortable, Charlie ran a hand across the top of his head. *Damn*, he thought, *why do I keep trying to run my hands through my hair when I haven't had anything up there for the past twenty years? Jim's got more on his upper lip than I have on my whole head. Why do I have a beer belly when I don't even drink beer? Jim's stomach is as flat as it was at eighteen. Some people inherit all the good genes. No man should have a full head of hair and the body of an eighteen year old at seventy-six. It's all in the genes, and he must have inherited the best.*

"Deck the halls with boughs of holly." Harmonizing with the music coming from some unseen speakers, Jim attempted to change the subject.

Sensing his friend's discomfort, Jim felt badly. He and Charlie had been best friends for years, ever since they moved next door to each other. That was over—could it be possible?—yep, it was over forty-one years ago.

Hell, he couldn't help it if he stayed young while Charlie definitely showed his age. It's all in the attitude. Charlie let himself get old and go to pot, while he stayed active and mentally alert. *You have to work at looking young*, Jim told himself. *You make your own luck.*

The two men sitting on the bench were hardly reminiscent of the old men in Paul Simon's song, "Old friends, sat on the park bench like book ends . . ."

Physically, they bore little resemblance to one another. One was short, the other tall. One was almost bald; the other had a full head of light brown hair, secretly aided by a concoction purchased from an out-of-town drug store. Charlie was the stereotype of a retired accountant: bland, quiet, and bending his body into old age. His appearance belied his Harvard background, and he seldom mentioned his alma mater.

Jim, ten years after retirement, retained the personality he had developed as a top salesman of fasteners, nuts, bolts, and screws. He often jokingly told customers, "I make my money off of screws, but that doesn't make me a pimp."

He mused that in today's era of politically correct thinking and sexual-harassment suits, he probably wouldn't be able to use that line. He was glad he retired and didn't have to worry about offending some uptight woman buyer. Energetic, enthusiastic, and full of life were terms frequently used to describe him. He loved everyone and was generally open and good-natured. One of the few things that could get him truly angry was a discussion of his age. Jim didn't appreciate the joke that nature played on him with the passing of time and would seethe if someone mentioned the subject. "If you tell your age, you'll tell anything," was his standard reply.

Only a few knew exactly how old he was; even his children weren't quite positive. Charlie knew, but never told anyone. Occasionally, he mentioned it to Jim "just to keep him humble," but never to anyone else. They were best friends, after all. Charlie continued his assessment of the parade of shoppers.

Jim, on the other hand, fixed his eyes on the door of the 16 Plus shop. *Yep, some fine woman*, he thought to himself. *I wonder how someone goes about meeting such a fine woman.*

\* \* \*

In the 16 Plus shop, Dolly Flynn plodded her way up one aisle and down another. Singing softly to herself, she flitted through the racks of clothes designed especially for the LARGER WOMAN. Dolly had a pleasant voice and was a frequent soloist at weddings and funerals. It also allowed her to be the center of attention at parties, where her normally shy personality would take a backseat while leading a sing-along. Not that she went to many parties.

With three garments slung over her arm, Dolly eased her way into the dressing room. Laboriously bending over to remove her slacks, she pulled her right foot out while also managing to pull off a shoe and sock. It always amazed her that there were no chairs in the changing rooms of stores catering to the full-sized woman.

The design for dressing rooms was obviously the product of a young, supple male. *I can see him now*, Dolly thought. *Seventy-five pounds, six-foot-three, a tight butt, pink hair down to his shoulders, an earring with a long dangling spoon, a drippy nose, and a waving limp-wrist.*

*He obviously never had to bend over a mound of stomach fat to reach the bottom of his pants using a too-short arm.*

Leaning against the door to brace herself, Dolly lifted her left leg and tugged at the bottom of her slacks. With a mighty pull, the pants came off and Dolly flew through the swinging door onto the floor of the showroom. She landed on her back with both feet in the air. Customers were given a view of her purple long-johns with a hole in the backside. She had decided to wear them *Just one more time . . . who will see them?* before throwing them out. Being thrifty was always one of her virtues.

Startled salesladies rushed from the four corners of the store, picked her up, dusted her off, and made conciliatory sounds to ease her embarrassment, as if any words could help. Barefoot on the right, two-inch heel on the left, she limped back into the dressing room with four

pairs of hands hastening her departure from the sight of the now-gathering crowd. As she moved, or was pushed out of sight, her fleshy bottom protruded from the hole in the rear of her thermal long johns. From behind, her backside looked like a large uncooked Parker House roll on a purple tablecloth.

Not everyone who shops in this type of specialized store is overweight. Some are buying for relatives or friends. It was not in the best interests of business to allow them to be exposed to Dolly's rolls of fat and abundant adipose. The function of this store—its main goal—was to conceal, not to expose. That was the actual reason the sales staff came to Dolly's assistance with such zeal. Their purpose was not one of benevolent concern, but a desire to accomplish a deed executed so expertly by politicians: cover-up. The sales staff performed this task with such finesse that one would think it was an everyday occurrence.

Back in the dressing room, Dolly's face began to lose the deep shade of crimson precipitated by her brief foray into the world of the striptease artist. Facing herself in the three-way mirror, she began to assess her body carefully. Just what had they seen? Cruelly, the mirror reflected the truth. Years of snacking and indulgence displayed itself in convolutions, layers, and outlandish bulges of fat. *Fat! Fat! Fat!* The word, so small, conveyed such a disgusting significance. It told the world that she could not control her mouth. It screamed, "Look at Dolly Flynn, gross, revolting, repulsive, offensive. *Yuck!*"

Unable to tear her eyes from her image, she saw years of accumulated Twinkies, Ho Hos, and Ding Dongs. The texture of the skin on her stomach looked like the many pizzas she had devoured. Look! There's a piece of sausage sticking out, and over here are some slices of pepperoni. She could even discern the vague outline of several large anchovies right next to her belly button, which was almost covered by what appeared to be a lumpy slice of mozzarella. Basically, she looked like the ten-combo deluxe-special at the local

pizza parlor. The only things missing were slices of green pepper—she hated them on pizza.

Removing her blouse, she turned sideways bringing her rump into full view. It looked like two large portions of kneaded, raw bread-dough encased in a purple towel. Her thighs appeared to be filled with the lard from dozens of piecrusts, and the skin on her upper arms flapped like cooked lasagna noodles.

Facing forward, she saw breasts that hung from her shoulders like two-liter bottles of sugar-laden soft drinks—cola on one side and root beer on the other. “That does it! Diet tomorrow!” These words were spoken aloud to herself with firm conviction and resolve exactly in the same tone as they had been the last time Dolly stood before a full-length mirror. Changing the subject in her own mind—her ego can stand only so much—Dolly leaned closer to her reflection and surveyed the roots of her hair.

*Looks like a touch-up is in order. I'd better do that soon.* Eyes scanning her face, she admitted to herself something she heard from others. She really did have quite a pretty face. A little diet and some liposuction and she could rival anyone her age and a few who were younger. Her sixty-year old eyes were clear blue and still boasted of 20/20 vision. Her nose was tiny and set above a perfect-rosebud pair of lips. *Not hopeless, yet.* The basic foundation was there, if only she could rid herself of the superfluous building material.

*Yes! Definitely a diet tomorrow. In the meantime, I will stop and buy a banana cream pie and give myself a final fling. It will be the last in a long time.* These words were not unfamiliar to Dolly's lips and, in fact, had been spoken with regularity and much well-intentioned resolve every time she began a new diet.

She found two dresses that looked a little less like tents than most in her size and walked to the checkout counter. Halfway there, she paused and turned, placing one dress back on the rack. *No sense wasting money on too many*

*clothes in this size, she told herself. I'll wait until my diet is over and treat myself to a whole new wardrobe.*

This was also a common occurrence and resulted in a rather small supply of wearable clothing. Hanging in one corner of her closet was another trick to encourage dieting—several size twelve dresses, never worn and gathering dust—something to shrink into.

She walked back to the counter and paid the saleslady with her Visa card. Still a bit embarrassed, Dolly felt positive this woman was slyly smirking at her because she saw the hole in her underwear. Taking the package from the counter, she mustered what little remained of her dignity and walked out of the store after first bumping into the glass door.

Before she was out of sight, a rising crescendo of laughter began in the store. Tears streaming down contorted faces, personnel could be seen through the window doubled over with laughter. In their minds, they were already preparing to tell friends and families the “Tale of the Purple Long Johns.”

*The heck with them. Next time they see me, I'll be thinner than they are, and we'll see who laughs last.*

Dolly immediately put their laughter out of her mind as she lined up her final chore—on to the supermarket to pick up a few things, one of which would be a banana cream pie.

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