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Gray Hairs

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Gray Hairs

The Hostess sighs when we say *Twelve*, then disappears. When she returns, we follow her to the back of the restaurant. Mother pushes me in first, next to the great view of the K-Mart parking lot. The waitress plops a stack of menus on the tables and disappears. The room is filled with old people, not the kind that you see driving half way in the lane going twenty-seven on a four-lane road but the kind that most of the time still know what is going on. A portly gray-haired guy sits within arm's reach. He looks around the room and outside like he's expecting someone. The waitress nods her head indicating Mother should start. "Ham omelette with green pepper and mushrooms." "Yup, yup." The man says softly. Then me. "I'll have the Granny Omelette Special." I expect to hear the old guy, but he's silent. "Oh, wait, and hash browns," I remember during Uncle Joe's order. Then, "Yup, they always forget," the old man mutters. I can feel him staring at me, mouth open to speak if I just look his way. "Ya know, this reminds me of the time that I was in France. Yup, was stationed there in '44. I remember gettin' up and going down to the mess hall, and they had eggs and hash browns for breakfast, and I ended up giving it all away to my buddies." He tips his cup. "I tried out for the Air Force once, but they said I couldn't see well. So I had to become a grunt. But D-Day. They needed us on D-Day." Mother gives me a look, and I just nod. "Yup, those were the good ole days when a man could be a man and there was none of this modern day nonsense." I stuff my mouth so I can't respond. "Yup." He tips his cup and leans toward me. I nod and smile.

Geoff Denstaedt