It was a little antique store housed inside an old gas station.
Coming down the main strip through town, you might miss it if the owner forgot to put a few pieces of furniture outside to catch your attention.
But on this hot, sunny summer day, the old Ford station wagon was parked in front of it. It was parked in a fashion to block a few pieces of furniture from drivers passing through. Maw Maw had an agenda for parking right in front of the velvet red coach with the oak lion-clawed feet. She wanted it...bad.
Paw Paw sat in the front seat with the door wide open. He was smoking a pipe and wiping his forehead with the bandana he carried in the top pocket of his overalls.
“Good Lord,” he said. “It’s 100 degrees, and we’re the only idiots in Monticello sitting in the car with no air conditioner.
I was told to stay in the back and to not leave the vehicle under any circumstances. I debated risking the spanking I would receive just so I could go get a milkshake at the Ward’s next door.
“What is she doing,” I asked, crawling up front with Paw Paw.
“She calls it shopping, but I call it torture,” Paw Paw replied.
Maw Maw was shifting through the merchandise. She would go inside the store, come back out, go back in. We could see her in the windows, picking up lamps. She came out and opened the drawers on a chest about 50 times.
She even stared at us one time. I pretended to pass out from the heat, and she ignored me for the snuff tin bowl and Elvis quilt.
“The man’s got an antique store now, an antique store,” Paw Paw said. “But he has an Elvis quilt front and center. Go figure.”
For a moment, the owner of the store even came outside and looked over at us in the station wagon. He and Paw Paw had an intense stare-off for a few minutes. Some sort of unspoken “man code” must have been broken because Paw Paw gave an “umph” before the owner looked away.
Paw Paw jokingly made me promise to never drag my future husband on any sort of shopping adventure.
“Men hate shopping, and if one tells you they don’t, they are lying or they ain’t got no sense in the first place,” he said.
After what seemed like hours, Maw Maw finally made it to the car.
“You see that chest,” she said, pointing to the piece next to the couch, “He wanted too much for that couch, but I can get that chest for only $100. Can you believe that?”

“That piece of junk,” Paw Paw asked, grabbing his pipe out of his mouth. “I wouldn’t give you a penny for it. Shoot, I’ll pay him to get it off the street.”
Maw Maw just sped off from in front of the store. She complained the whole way home about never having anything new.
“But what you want ain’t even new,” Paw Paw said. “It’s old. It’s antique.”
That made Maw Maw step on the gas even more.
When we got back home, she deposited Paw Paw. She said we would return in a little while, but Paw Paw knew what that meant.
Speeding back toward town, Maw Maw said we were going by Aunt Eva’s house to pick her up. She had her two grandboys this weekend, and they could help put the chest in the back of the station wagon for her.
“But Paw Paw said we didn’t need the chest,” I said.
“Let me tell you something,” Maw Maw said, pushing up her glasses. “When you have your old man with you, you simply look. When he’s gone, you go back and buy.”
And that’s just what she did. She bought that chest and had our cousins bring it into the house. Paw Paw just stared as she pointed to where she wanted it put. Oddly enough, he never said anything about it.
So I learned two important lessons that day:
Don’t take your husband shopping. And if you must, always keep note of what to pick up later when he’s not around.
Hopefully, my husband won’t notice my stash. But then again, he probably has one of his own. I do have to wonder where he’s getting all this new fishing equipment.