

The Bowling Ball  
[This is for Ed]

By Chris Vaughan,  
February 10, 2016  
715 words

The morning was cool as I was hefted out of the car to make my solo debut in the bowling alley without the *so called* support of my owner's *new* bowling ball. That ball was still at home, kicking and screaming, but my owner had been adamant and I was going to get a chance to prove that I was the better ball! Finally, I was out of semi retirement. What a blast! Hooray!

The last few weeks have been very frustrating for me. I had seen many chances for spares being thrown out the window by that cocky, arrogant new ball. A little humility would have been in order! Bowling is a humbling sport. I had learned that for myself in the past thirty years. But, no, he threw away his chance last week. So now, it was up to me.

Okay, so I am not so good any more at making strikes. A few aches and pains, a little arthritis, that make me stiff so that my hook isn't quite what it used to be. But, and this is a very big BUT, I am still good and I wasn't being used to my potential. My owner bought into the new ball's mystique and ignored me, a perfectly competent second stringer. So, this morning cocky new ball was sitting on the bench. Wait, not just sitting on the bench, he was actually suspended and left at home. Hooray again!

I love this place. I can smell coffee brewing and bacon frying in the restaurant! People are cheerfully arriving with their personal favourite balls. I love it! Just listen, as practice begins, to the sound of the pins crashing and banging as the balls limber up with their owners.

My owner takes me out of my home bowling bag and carefully wipes me all over, getting me ready to make my first run down the alley. Oh! I can smell the oil that has been applied to the alley in readiness for this morning. I am so excited! He places me in the ball return, ready, and takes his place in the line up for practice. I am practically jumping up and down. This will be a perfect day.

Now the familiar fingers are fitting into the holes and I am being lifted and cradled in my owner's arms. He speaks to me. "Now's your chance, old guy! Let's see what you can do. You've been begging me for weeks!"

He walks up to his mark and steadies me in his hands. Now he begins the slow walk toward the alley pushing me forward and then with one hand still holding me he swings his arm and frees me down the alley. I rush toward those pins grinning like crazy. Oh no! I am just off the pocket and a little light. I try to curve but it's too late! I crash into the midst of the pins, holy mackerel; I had forgotten how heavy they are! Most go down, but the ten pin is still up. Blast! I spin for a minute, thinking, maybe I don't want to go back. But, no, I can prove myself still. Strike would have been good but a spare is good too. So I ease myself into the channel and merrily return to my owner. He picks me up, muttering to himself, but I don't listen. I know I can do this.

Again, he walks that slow walk and releases me accurately toward the right hand side of the alley. I meander down the alley this time, confident and sure of myself. I even teeter slightly on the edge to give my owner a bit of a thrill but then I steady and curve to the left just slightly as I reach the ten pin. Thunk! And it goes down. We got a spare!

The rest of the morning is wonderful. I have redeemed my owner's reputation and he scores well. Much better than he had with that fancy new ball! His average for the day is the best it has been all season. He picks me up to return me to my home bag and wipes the oil off me giving me a pat while he chuckles. He's happy. We aren't going out to pasture just yet. My inner God does a happy dance and giggles as we head out to the car.