

I have never been fond of trolleys or baskets when entering a supermarket, but now in times of COVID-19, I am handed one every time I enter through the supermarket door, like an award that I truly did not want to win. I say my acceptance speech (a simple “dank u” in badly pronounced Dutch) and strive towards the bananas, my trolley has a wheel that doesn’t work but it only inspires me to get this shopping trip over and done with quickly; I aspire to be the Usain Bolt of banana buying.

The trollies are always heavier than I remember as I try and navigate through the supermarket to find the chickpeas, and also some donuts as the working day has been particularly taxing. There are many others like myself, trying to control their trollies which seem to have a mind of their own, they contort their bodies to fit inside their safe space located behind the metal machinery that they are trying to operate, as well as throwing various items into it.

The supermarket is now not just a supermarket, but a dance floor. As I reach for the last remaining can of chickpeas, I do an awkward waltz with a man who seems to be reaching for pasta, we shuffle in tandem for 30 seconds too long, awkwardly giggling while our trollies bash into each other, (doesn’t look like we are going to win Dancing with the Stars any time soon). He looks like he has walked off a red carpet and straight into Albert Heijn and I day dream frantically of COVID-19 love stories, and how we will tell our children the romantic tale of how we fell in love while reaching for chickpeas, and how our trollies ‘must have known’ that we were destined for each other. This daydream is already over before it began and we bow at one another as I squeeze past him apologetically, but also annoyed as he seems to have got the last remaining packet of pasta that isn’t whole-wheat.

I then do a rumba with a woman who is reaching for the biscuits, she is not as rhythmically gifted as my first partner but this does not dissuade me from trying to make the clumsiness of our situation an enjoyable experience. She becomes impatient and with a clash of metal that pierces the ‘happy clappy’ supermarket radio overhead, she dashes towards the toilet roll. I keep my fingers crossed that we do not meet again.

The last dance of the day is a rushed and horrendous salsa with a man who is bulk buying dog food, I must admit that I wasn’t concentrating on the dance itself but thinking of the dogs that he was buying the food for. Instead of bashing his trolley into my trolley, he throws it towards my hip in an attempt to make space for his final sprint towards the check out. He does not apologise but gives me a look of pity as he strolls past, head held high in the air, his tactics take no prisoners as I limp towards the checkout cursing his impeccable talent of claiming the dance floor of the dog food aisle as his own.

As I pay for my dance floor trophies (cursing myself this time for forgetting my bonus card), I hand my faithful steed, the trolley with the broken wheel, back to the man who gave me it and hope that the next person who has it, has a better dance routine than me.