

Cavity Searches and the Mile High Club

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Alicia picked me up at home just after five in the morning and we were on our way to the Logic User's Conference in Rhode Island. We drove to Baltimore, parking in the corporate lot and huffed our way to the shuttle in the cool spring air.

"Been a while since I've been on a plane," she said nervously as we rode the unkempt and unclean bus to check in. It smelled faintly of disinfectant, which wasn't encouraging.

I didn't know if her nervousness was due to the fact that she didn't like flying or because she was with me. Alone. I mean, her husband was Muslim and she was Catholic. Neither religion believes women should be unescorted with another man for an entire weekend. Even if he is married with two kids. Let me be blunt. I wasn't attracted to her in the least. Willowy, wispy women were not the top of my agenda. And she had a sense of humor that was about ten seconds too late. Every time. She was a certified public accountant and it clearly showed in her work, clothes and employee relations.

In this case, she was dressed to the nines.

"I haven't been on a plane since last year when I went to the PCUA in St. Louis," I told her. I'd gone alone on that trip, no one to talk to, knowing no one at the convention. And everyone in the company hated me because of what I knew about their underhanded dealings with their employees.

We were switching to a new computer system and were invited by the vendor to their User Conference in wintry Rhode Island to mix and mingle with their customers to get a feel on how everything worked.

We walked into the airport, stood in line, and checked our bags. Showing our IDs, we got our tickets from the counter.

I had my backpack, the Black Bag o' Doom that I kept with me at all times, the rest would be sent directly to the plane. Alicia had her purse and a small carry on.

Walking towards the concourse, I got in line at the security checkpoint, as this was a Friday morning around 6 am, security was always a bottleneck at whatever airport you went to. Five minutes later, it was finally our turn. I walked up to the security booth, dropped my bag on the conveyer, scooped out the coins and keys from my pocket and placed my wallet into the basket. I walked calmly through the metal detector, uneasy because you just never know...

No beeps.

I mentally sighed with relief. No cavity searches today. No smell of latex and KY as I clenched my ass cheeks in preparation to be violated. The big black female security guard waved me on my way. I collected my stuff and slung my backpack over my shoulder when I heard a loud beep behind me.

Looking back, I saw Alicia talking with the security guard.

"I don't understand," she said with indignation. "I've never had a problem before."

"You'll have to go back through again, ma'am," the security guard told her. Alicia turned around and went back through, taking off her long black coat and putting it through the x-ray machine.

Alicia walked through again metal upright rectangle.

Beep!

"Please take off your jewelry, ma'am."

Alicia backed up, took off her watch and walked back through.

Beep!

"All of your jewelry, ma'am." The look of frustration plastered itself all over Alicia's face. The line behind us began to grumble.

Beep!

"I've never had this sort of hassle before," Alicia said indigently. My eyes widened. Someone might be cavity searched this morning if she kept up the attitude.

"Ma'am, please take off all of your jewelry." The practiced tone dropped, the guard becoming more annoyed at her display of disrespect. Off went her earrings.

Beep!

“Maybe it’s your belt, ma’am.” Off went the belt and through the x-ray machine.

Beep!

“I don’t believe this!” Alicia huffed, her cheeks turning bright red. That’s the funny thing about people from Vermont. They are so pale that when they get embarrassed it looks like they have a bad sunburn. Or a rash.

“Shoes.”

Beep! The three inch heels joined the belt and coat at the end of the conveyer.

“Over here ma’am,” the irritated guard picked up her wand and walked around the station, her other hand on her gun. Alicia looked as if she was going to shit herself, it was best that the guard was wearing rubber gloves.

Everyone stared her way. Especially the security supervisor, who scrutinized this poor thin white woman. One of the other guards at the station picked up a phone and began speaking into it. This could be bad.

I could see the panic forming in Alicia’s body language, and I couldn’t do anything but just watch as her face became redder and redder, turning the color of a stop sign.

The guard ran her wand over Alicia, discovering it was the cufflinks and buttons on her suit jacket that was setting off the detector. Off went the suit jacket and onto the belt.

And there my boss stood in panty hose, white ruffled button down shirt and dark blue skirt. From the color of her face, she might have been naked.

Alicia walked through unimpeded.

No beep.

Several people behind her in line clapped. Mortified, she grabbed her jewelry, threw on her suit jacket and slipped back into her shoes, her face redder than a baboon’s ass. Her long coat draped over her arm, she apologized profusely and left the security station. I watched the security guard stare after her, shaking her head in disbelief.

As she trotted towards me on her three inch heels, I caught snippets of her muttering to herself about the ridiculousness of the situation.

“Last time I ever dress up for a trip,” she said emphatically, her voice two octaves higher than it had been earlier.

“Lucky you were taken away and cavity searched,” I told her as I fell in step beside her.

She shot me a look of disgust.

“I mean, come on, didn’t anyone tell you about security procedures?”

“I never had a problem before,” she mumbled, her long legs walking away from me.

I struggled to keep up as she nearly ran the length of the concourse. “The way you were stripping there, all you needed was a pole and everyone would have started tipping.”

She gawked at me, the standard gaping mouth she gave anyone who said anything that didn’t conform to her rigid aesthetics.

I shrugged. “I know I was enjoying the free show.” In honestly, I hadn’t, but it’s always nice to flatter the boss whenever possible. Add some levity to the situation. She was rattled by the scene she had caused more than she wanted to let on. I could tell. If there was one thing she hated, it was being embarrassed.

As we got onto the plane, I hoped that was the last of the problems we would encounter.

I was wrong, because twenty minutes later, I joined the mile high club.

You know - that rare club of people who have had hot coffee spilled on them by their panicky boss at ten thousand feet? One who couldn’t negotiate the distance between the tray and her mouth with the coffee cup?

In the end, I was left hot, wet and bothered by my boss, Mrs. Alicia Rainville.

I should have stayed home.