

No Strings Attached
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Honorable Mention - Humor

“Well, I guess we're stuck here”, she said.

“Indeed. I guess we are,” he replied.

The two of them wandered around the airport until they came across seats outside of a cafe. The seats were stained copper and quite uncomfortable. The lady likened them to sitting on pinecones, but at that point, anything was better than standing.

“You want anything to eat? I’m ravenous.”

“Nope. I’m not into the whole ‘eating food’ thing.”

“Suit yourself, Gandhi.”

The lady grabbed herself a sandwich from the cafe, and promptly enjoyed her meal. To her perplexion, every time she looked up from her lightly-toasted cuban on rye, other patrons at the cafe were staring right at her. Of course, the lady was too preoccupied to pay any attention to the onlookers; she was more focused on how to get to her important event on time. After all, it was her biggest show of the year.

“Hundreds of people bought tickets just to see our faces! It would be a disaster if we don’t show up,” she thought to herself.

After she finished her meal, the two of them left the cafe in search of a nearby help desk. Before she could even take two steps, they were stopped by airport security.

“Can we help you?” she asked.

“Yeah, can we?”

The esteemed TSA agent who halted them paused. He looked at the puppet that mounted her hand. Then he looked at her. Then back to her hand. After a moment, he spoke.

“Ma'am, you are aware that this airport has a strict ‘No Ventriloquist Dummies Allowed’ policy, don’t you?”

“Yes, I know,” she responded. “We were just kicked off of our flight. Paid good money for our tickets, too, you know.”

The lady and her puppet were scheduled to perform in Las Vegas that evening. In fact, they were supposed to be performing at the one and only MGM Grand resort hotel. Not many ventriloquists can say they scored a gig like that.

“I'm sorry ma'am, but you're going to have to come with me. And throw that stupid toy away before I have to take it from you.”

“I beg your pardon?! ” exclaimed the now furious wooden doll. “What did you call

me, you pot-bellied geriatric? You will NOT address me with such detestable words. Why I should--"

"Calm down, calm down," the lady told her charming puppet. "No need to make a scene in front of everyone."

At this point, the overweight security guard was baffled. Not once in the eighteen years he'd been keeping the airport hallways safe had he ever been spoken to this way, *especially* not by some random lady's stupid doll.

"That's it, lady! You're coming with me, and you're coming with me now! You too, Pinocchio!"

Before one could say "You have the right to remain silent," a young teenager sprinted towards the ensemble and stepped towards the lady.

"Oh. My. God! Are you Vicky: The Ventriloquizer? Oh my God! I love your work, I'm like totally your biggest fan! Like for real! Hey, did I tell you about..."

The girl continued to rave about *Vicky: The Ventriloquizer* for another four minutes and thirty-eight seconds whilst she was being arrested. Not a moment after she finished, the security guard stopped and gasped.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Did she say Vicky: The Ventriloquizer? My daughter loves you! I mean, she's like your biggest fan!"

As he went on about his daughter's vehement appreciation for the art of ventriloquism, the security guard took the handcuffs off of Vicky and her foul-mouthed partner-in-crime.

"I'm sorry for the trouble, ma'am. Please, enjoy the rest of your day. And thank you for visiting Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport," he proclaimed. Vicky and her puppet decided to do just that, and they prudently walked away.

"And ma'am? Just one more thing," the officer called out. "Do you think I could get your autograph?"

"Sure," she responded. "What's your daughter's name?"

"No-no, it's not for her," he insisted. "It's for me."