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# The Lady at the Post Office



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My morning routine is a simple one: breakfast at McKusker's Deli (*low fat muffin... mmmmmmmm...good*); a brisk walk to the Post Office; pick up the mail in the briefest amount of time; and, a brisker walk back to the car; then the ride home to write...to write this.

“Dull stuff,” you say? Agreed, most any day. Today was different. The routine was well in progress. Time spent in the Post Office was briefer than usual (*no mail except for the good news that I'd been “pre-approved” for a credit card. What an honor! It's nice to get approval.*).

This particular Post Office, like many, is entered and exited through a set of double doors; the first closes behind you just before you open the second door, and for a brief moment, you are caught in a glass cage.

Look to the left or straight ahead and see into the Post Office; look to the right and see two very large potted plants with a sturdy wall behind them; look behind and see the glass door you just came through. It was in that brief moment, caught between the forward and rear glass doors, suspended between these impenetrable transparent governmentally approved glass walls, that I had my frightening encounter with... *(dum-da-dum-dum)*...

The Lady at the Post Office!



How frightening could a little old lady at the post office be? Well, to look at her most any day, you would not be frightened. You would probably smile. You might feel something for her; you see she was quite old (*I hope she is yet older now*). And I think she must have had a hard life (*I hope it is easier now*). She wore house-slippers, not shoes, and she used an old cane to help her walk. She was clad in an incongruous collection of artifacts from what must have been a life of eighty years or more. And she had a strap suspended round her neck, the kind of strap that in earlier years would have attached a book bag for the schoolgirl, a silken purse for the teen, or a shopping sack for the wife. But for the little old lady, this strap held a small oxygen tank holding life-giving air.

What then was it about her that justifies  
the use of a font called, “Chiller?”

It was speed! It was velocity! It was the astounding rate of motion that this missile from the retirement home hurled herself toward the glass door! It was the stark realization that the only thing between a sure collision and me was this, seemingly now, flimsy transparent surface. Governmentally approved or not, it was little barrier to this Attila in drag. She whipped the door opened in a flash, exposing me to the thrust of her attack.

I took it all in, as time slowed its pace. Her slippers had become running shoes securing her footing on her unswerving trajectory; her dress the flowing robes of a paradigmatically-challenged terrorist, the oxygen tank a potentially lethal weapon. And, most chillingly (hence “Chiller” font), there was no place for me to go; there was no place for me to hide.

I looked quickly behind me as I faced her onslaught. Safe havens loomed amid the unsuspecting people inside, a mother and child buying stamps, a neighbor whom I recognized from a town meeting, and a post person (actually a woman) chatting with yet another (seemingly) harmless senior citizen! But, no, the glass door was there, still not quite closed, still moving from my release.

Yes, there was safety inside, but my way was blocked by governmentally approved transparent barriers, no doubt constructed in the first place to protect me (and the little old lady hurtling at me like a fast ball in the world series) from the devastation of a chilly breeze. The consumer-protecting glass walls were now barricades off which to bounce; the potted plants obstructions on which to stumble; and the wall behind them no more than a surface on which to splatter!

Oh, she was going to hit me all right, I knew it when the field of space warped and that razor's edge that moves through the field of time, separating past from future, stopped! I could see she had been distracted by something in the street; she was looking behind her. But my peril became clear by *what I could not see*; I could not see the eyes of...*(dum-da-dum-dum)*...

The Lady at the Post Office!



If I could not see her eyes, then she could not see me! My last chance for survival was gone; my hope that she too would somehow see the impending disaster; that she would pull up at the last second, that she would save us from catastrophe even after it was certain (*like Wiley Coyote after he runs off the cliff, realizes it and tries to run back before the laws of gravity take effect and he hurtles to certain death only to be miraculously revived for the next episode of the Road Runner.*)

We would collide! She would whack me like a rock hitting a mirror. No matter that I had seen her and could stop my own forward motion (*...there's an old Yiddish saying, "Whether the rock hits the mirror or the mirror hits the rock, it's going to be bad for the mirror!"*).

It was certain. We were going to collide ...but who would survive? Yes, she was little (as required by definition of “little-old lady”), and yes she was old (again by definition). But she was moving fast... very, very fast. (*What are those stories about flying feathers penetrating brick when carried on the winds of a tornado?*) And, me? I was hustling...to freedom, to the day ahead, to the sunshine. So, the best I could do was to pull up, at least not contribute to the velocity of the impact!

In what I knew were to be my final moments on Earth, I glimpsed the true danger and understood its ghastly implications. The oxygen tank flailed at her side, bouncing off this wall and that, clinking and clanking as metal smacked glass. What if it exploded right here in this governmentally approved official United States of America Post Office consumer-protecting glass entryway? What if the blast took out the whole building, the neighborhood, the town and along with it McKusker’s low fat muffins!!!

Was this my destiny? If it was my Karma to be here at this time in this space, I accepted my fate. In those last moments before the crash, I came to peace and contentment. I saw a white light at the end of a long tunnel and I heard my Mother's voice from beyond the veil saying, "It's alright dear."

And then, from a place further away, I heard another voice. Whose? It was familiar, it was calm, and it was firm. It spoke clearly and I understood that I was hearing my own voice emanating from deep within the tunnel and echoing in my brain, "*Caution!*" And, twice again, "*Caution, caution!*"

And then a miracle; she heard me! Her head whirled to see where this mysterious warning was coming from. I could see her eyes now, not the devil eyes I expected, not the blood-shot eyes of a Willey Coyote, but the startled eyes of a Road Runner.

Coming to a screeching halt, just moments before our seemingly unavoidable collision, she saw me and her brain of eighty years kicked in. That which had kept her alive for eight decades served to keep her alive yet another day.

She looked at me in breathless astonishment. As time and space once more resumed its orderly progress, I smiled and asked, “Are you alright?” “Yes,” she wheezed, gasping, not yet recovered. “Thank you, you taught me a lesson. I should watch where I’m going!” “No,” I said kindly, relieved to be alive and once more on into the sunshine. “No,” I said, “*I* didn’t teach you anything. Perhaps *you* learned something?” She smiled, seeming relieved that she too had survived, and she said with a wink, “Perhaps.”

With that she entered and I exited to come home to my mountain and write about my encounter **with...*the Lady at the Post Office!***

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