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Naked and Frantic

Karen Iseminger

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Tuesday March 5, 2024

Naked and Frantic

By Karen Iseminger

He was coming for me. It was just a matter of time. I listened for his footsteps, but the deafening beat of my heart and the oddly healthy 30-year-old shag carpet stymied my efforts. My time was running out, a fact that fed my anxiety. My movements became more frantic, my sweating more profound. I was drenched from scalp to soles, with no clothing to soak up the stress.

I was naked and alone. My massage therapist had left a while ago with strict instructions to disrobe and lie face down on the table. He was vague about his return time – not that I have any concept of time while naked, it's all very stressful. If I nakeded well, like say... Jennifer Aniston, maybe I'd be better. Unfortunately, I naked like Buddha so I am always in a rush to unnaked.

Anyway, my massage therapist was, undoubtedly, on his way back to the room and I was spinning around like a dog chasing its tail looking for whatever it was that fell out of the pocket of my hoodie when I pulled it over my head. The problem was, I didn't remember putting anything in that pocket — hence the fevered search for the item. I'm not a weirdo by nature but you just never know what sort of thing I might've popped into my pocket while tidying up the house.

I mean, a zip tie and some duct tape in a house full of high school athletes has a whole different meaning than when those things are unexpectedly dropped on the floor of a massage therapist. Not that I thought I had zip ties and duct tape in my pocket but frankly, with this house — you just never know....

So, I spun and knelt and sweated. I looked everywhere and found nothing. I had to make a decision — keep looking and risk being seen in the awkward state of perspiration-soaked nudity or let the chips fall where they may and hope I hadn't cleaned out an old purse full of decomposing condoms.

I decided condoms were better than back fat “boobs” and a vertical C-section scar that left an observer wondering if I was coming or going. I positioned my damp body on the (gulp... heated) table just as I heard the knock from the masseur. I forced myself to settle in and calm my breathing and was thankful he was starting at my legs instead of my damp back. He uncovered my right leg, tucked the blankets appropriately and said, “Well, well, well... what do we have here?”

I turned to see him holding up the elusive quarter he'd peeled from the arch of my moist, pasty foot.

—Karen Iseminger

Karen Iseminger is a mother of three, wife of one, and self-proclaimed master of overthinking. She is a pharmacist by profession and a writer by passion. Her sights are set on turning her hobby of hyperbole into a paying gig so she can leave behind the monotony of

slinging pills. In 2024 her essay "Naked and Afraid" became a finalist in the Erma Bombeck Writing Competition under the global humor category. Karen enjoys writing about her family and their shenanigans with the hope that their experiences will help other families know exactly what NOT to do.