

Finding Me

Nikki Harmon



ArtAge
Publications



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ArtAge Publications

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FINDING ME

by

Nikki Harmon

CAST

AIRPORT ANNOUNCER

EDNA: In her 70s.

Outside LAX Airport, 4:00 p.m. Horns are honking, and traffic is heavy.

AIRPORT ANNOUNCER: *(over the public address system)* The White Zone is for loading and unloading of passengers. There is no standing in the Red Zone. The Green Zone is for . . .

Edna is sitting on her luggage at the arrival area, swamped in layers of batik.

EDNA: I was supposed to call my husband when I got out of customs. That was three hours ago. I've just been sitting here watching the people come and go. Mostly go. Max doesn't like to waste time driving around the airport, so he told me to call him when I got out of customs. That was three hours ago...I told you that, didn't I? I'm sorry, I forgot. Max's always afraid I'm going to forget things. He didn't want me to take this trip. He thought I'd forget to come home. I didn't. I just don't know if I want to go home. I never traveled before this, except that time we went to Tennessee. Max called it a vacation, but it really wasn't. He had business and he said he could write it off, so that's why he took me. "Let the IRS pay for the trip and we'll get a free vacation." But he just did business, then we packed up and came home. Said the IRS would question if we spent too much time there. That was the only vacation I've had in fifty-one years. Max and I have been married for fifty-one years...Funny, it seems longer than that. I wonder why that is?

(Her mind clicks in another direction.)

Max likes to drive. He drove to Tennessee that time. Wouldn't let me drive. "Women drive to the store; men drive across country!" Said he'd feel funny letting his wife drive while he just sat there. That it'd be like having your wife go to work and the man stays

home. So, I didn't drive. Did I tell you Max likes to drive? Max drove me to the airport last month. "Why pay good money for cabs when you have a perfectly good car," Max always says. Max never stops talking, and he doesn't like it when people talk when he's talking. So I don't talk..."Keep your passport in the pouch around your neck with a hundred dollars and your medical history," he told me. "Put fifty dollars in each side of your bra, and keep a hundred in each shoe, but only keep twenty in your money belt. That's important, Edna. Only twenty dollars in single bills. That way if they cut off the belt in the middle of a crowd all they'll get is the twenty dollars. And make sure it's only one dollar bills. By the time they've counted it you'll be gone, and they won't get your other money." I asked him who they were, and he said, "Foreigners, Edna, Foreigners." I said, "Max, in their country we're the foreigners." But he just said, "Edna, I'm talking," and kept talking. "And the water, don't drink the water. Brush your teeth in bottled water. And the fruit, only eat fruit with thick skins, like bananas. Never apples. Or pears, stay away from pears. Oranges would be alright, and grapefruit, that would be okay. But don't eat anything you don't recognize, and make sure the meat is cooked. That's important, Edna. Cooked meat. Never raw, and never from a street vender. Even if you see other people eating their food, you don't. No street food. That's important, Edna."

Everything Max says is "Important." I've always wondered why Max doesn't just start off each day with, "Edna, everything I say today is important." It would save so much time, and time is very important to Max.

We got to the airport with four hours to spare, and Max dropped me off right at the curb, since he never pays for parking if he doesn't have to. Max is very frugal. So, there I was, standing on the curb with a sensible straw hat, a bottle of salt pills in one pocket, aspirin in the other, and my suitcase, not weighing more than the airline would allow, and not a fraction too wide or too tall. Max says the airlines supplement the low fares by charging people for their luggage. He says it's a conspiracy with luggage makers. That they know what size suitcases the airlines accept and then make the suitcases an inch bigger. Max thinks there're a lot of conspiracies. I don't know anything about that sort of thing, but Max says not to worry, that he'll always be there to protect me. I'm just not sure from what.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!