

DRAMA IN THE CORAL ZONE

by Bob McDiarmid (September 2009)

Palo Alto, my new hometown, has a most humorous parking zone color system. Tell me a gay man wasn't involved in this? The blue zone (a beautiful sparkly deep blue), the coral zone (a soft orange pastel), the lime zone (a bright green pastel) and lastly - the fuchsia zone. (a zesty purple). I just love thinking about some butch guy rushing out to move his car - because he'd parked two hours in the lime zone. LOL!

(cue Airplane! The Movie voice)
the fuchsia zone is for loading and unloading only
(end Airplane! The Movie voice)

My morning walk to the train takes me through the coral zone and touching on the lime and blue zones.

but lets backtrack - and give this story some context. I was in line at the coffee shop and there was this young woman - hands full of bags and talking on her cellphone. There are few things that irk me the wrong way than people standing in line like that - talking on their cellphone like we're all part of her pre-latte meeting. She was running late - and apologizing repeatedly. (but somehow has time to stop for a tall extrahot no foam latte with splenda) When she catches me listening she gives me the death-stare and (i'm not so sure accidentally) bumps me out of the way with her extra hot bevvy. I blew it off - if someone wants to be THAT attitude filled in the morning - who am I to deny her that glamour? Anyhow - I get my grande in a venti cup - and add my sweetener and cream - and head out on my way. I cross the street - and enter the coral zone - and begin my walk to the train.

I get near the city park - and view Miss Extra-hot walking towards a shiny beige beemer. Beige? Seriously? What does a beige car say other than "i have no imagination in my color choices so I'll drive beige." The beigemobile from blah-motors. Anyhow... she hurriedly gets in her ride. (I'm guessing that it took her longer to get to her car because she was wearing impossibly high heels that clicked like a tap routine on the pavement)

As she revs things up and pulls out of the parking space - I heard the telltale sound of a instantly flat tire. sshhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhsssssssssssss. and the car visibly lists down on the left front tire. Miss Extrahot stops the car. and pauses for a moment before she gets out. She gets out and walks around the front of the car - and upon seeing the flat tire - lets out this outrageous expletive laced tantrum almost like she'd been holding the emotions in all morning - and it resulted in a critical mass. She's kicking the car and cursing - probably damaging her pedicure more than the car - and almost in tears she is so ramped up.

"Can I help you?" I say crossing the street.

She looks up - suddenly realizing that the entire neighborhood witnessed her tirade and gives me this look of total, complete desperation.

"Why don't you pop the trunk - we can get the spare and jack and stuff out of there. It'll only take a second."

She punches the button on her remote. the trunk is totally empty and still looks as if it came off the showroom yesterday. Almost like it was my job every morning - I pulled the cover off the bottom of the trunk and yanked up the spare. and there was the cranky-jack and bar.

I walked around the front of the car.

I asked her to get in and pull the parking break and we started pumping her car up. She was really shaken and upset. I told her to enjoy her latte - and I'd have her back on the road in a jiff. and honestly - it just took a minute - take the tire off - put the spare on and tighten things up.

"Are you an auto mechanic?" she asks.

I stifle a giggle - and instead of saying 'No honey, I'm the homosexual girlyman thats going to blog about you as soon as I catch my train.' - I tell her no, but that I've been in this same situation. (no not the crying tirade on the side of the road! bitches!)

I got her spare on - and told her she should go to the tire store right after her big meeting. Immediately her demeanor changed - she realized I was the philistine that had been listening to her in the coffee shop on the phone. She was very short - barely getting out a thank you - and she was on her way.

I realized rushing off to the train that I hadn't even asked her name. She obviously didn't care to know mine. It was just one of those odd situations where someone is just so involved and distracted. I only had to wait thirty-seconds on the platform before my train arrived. and I got princess seating. (a north facing seat with a table in the newer caltrain model!)

I booted up my computer and then realized I'd left my creamy coffee on the curb while helping Miss ExtraHot get on her way. Looks like I'll be hitting the coffee shop cityside for a suitable replacement.