*Indian Summer*
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On a warm but overcast Indian summer day, I walked down a remote trail in the state forest. I was miles from the park entrance when I saw a fresh bare human footprint on the path. I knew it was fresh because the mud that had squeezed up between the toes was still wet. Curious, I studied the footprint. It was much smaller and narrower than my size nine hiking boot. I concluded that it must be from a woman or a child.

Someone coming toward me on the path made the footprint but nobody had passed me coming from the opposite direction. I remembered a seldom used side trail about twenty yards back that makes about a three-mile loop and intersects back with the main trail about twenty yards ahead of where I was. I concluded that the barefoot hiker had taken this route.

Satisfied, I continued on my way. When I arrived at the junction where the side trail rejoined the main trail, I observed another bare footprint coming from the direction of the side trail. I stopped and glanced up the trail and was about to continue on my way when a flash of pink caught my eye. At the base of a large oak tree about ten feet up and five feet off the side trail appeared to be a bundle of some sort. I pushed through the brush to have a closer look.

When I got to the tree my heart started pounding. I couldn't believe what I had found. There on the ground before me was a neatly folded pink pair of woman's jogging shorts with a pair of white knickers neatly folded on top, next to the shorts was pink sports top with a sports bra on top both neatly folded and next to the top was a pair of Nike running shoes with a white running sock stuffed neatly into each one.

Suddenly I came to a mind-boggling realization. Somewhere down the side trail was a naked woman making a run to get back to her clothes. I imagined her thrill, pulse racing, fearing discovery. I pictured her boobs bouncing with every step. Her senses were surely heightened. She was hearing every sound and feeling the mud squish between her toes. Maybe she was a little panicked wondering why she ever gave in to an impulse to start such a foolish adventure.

All kinds of things started running through my head. Should I take her clothes and hide. I could watch her panic as she searched. She may think she left them some place else. I could humiliate her by taking everything but her shoes, socks and knickers. I could shred her clothes with my pocketknife. Even worse I could urinate on her clothes. Or, as I decided, I could be a gentleman. I could go on my way and leave the lady to her adventure. She would never know how close she came to disaster.

Suddenly, as I started to leave, an uncontrollable urge came over me. I could not believe what I was doing. I finished up and slowly pushed my way back through the brush and onto the path. I felt the mud squish up through my toes as I looked back and saw my clothes piled neatly opposite the woman's clothes. Trembling, my heart pounding in my ears I set off running down the path.

I ran hard for about five minutes up the side trail in the direction opposite that taken by the lady jogger. I had never in my life even thought of doing anything this foolhardy. Every step took me farther from my clothing. I was flying high. The thick woods formed a tunnel that up ahead curved gently to the right.

As I moved steadily ahead, my every sense sharpened, I heard movement in the woods ahead of me and to my right. I stopped short, frozen in place. Holding my breath. I heard the crackling of twigs, the movement of brush and sharp rapid footfalls. Suddenly there on the path about ten yards in front of me was a female white tail deer. She stood motionless looking right at me. Then as quickly as she appeared, she leaped off the path and disappeared into the brush.

I stood for a moment listening to the fading sounds of the running deer. As I exhaled and took in another breath, I felt suddenly vulnerable and exposed. Maybe the adrenalin rush from the deer surprise caused it, but a twinge of panic started to come over me. Urgently I wanted to get back to my clothes and get things back to normal.

Just as I made my decision to turn around, I heard leaves rustling under gentle footfalls on the path around the curve in front of me. I was sure that this was the lady jogger. In fact it was probably her approach that had scared up the deer. Whatever fantasies I had earlier, I did not want to be discovered now. Another wave of panic came over me. Quietly as I could, I started to run, but I knew that no matter how fast I ran, she would see me on the path when she came around the curve. Out of the corner of my eye I spied a large log in the woods five yards off the path to my left. I went for it. Wincing as I stepped on some burrs, I made it to the log, rolled over the top and laid flat and still on the damp ground behind it.

As I lay on the ground breathing in the aroma of moist earth, I heard approaching footsteps swooshing across the damp leaves on the path. Closer and louder, soon the footsteps were even with my hiding place. The footsteps did not slow but continued past me at a moderate jogging pace. I was safe. She hadn't detected my presence.

I got up on my knees and peered over the log. There on the path slowly jogging away was a petite blond about five feet tall. Her lack of attire left no doubt that she owned the pink jogging outfit that I found earlier. Her long ponytail swayed rhythmically back and forth with every step. Mud caked her feet. She must have slipped and fallen backward somewhere on her run because the back of her legs and ass were smeared with mud.

Watching her trot away down the path, it hit me. There was no way that I was going to be able to get back to my clothes before she found them. How could I have been so stupid as to leave my clothes right beside hers? I crept back over the log and tiptoed back onto the path. She was just disappearing around a curve about one hundred yards ahead. Keeping my distance I started jogging after her.

She must have been anxious to turn her adventure into a memory. The closer she got to where her clothes were hidden the faster she ran. I wished that instead of hiding behind the log, I had just run ahead of her and got back to the clothes first. She may have seen my naked backside running away but at least I would have been in control. Instead I wondered how she would react when she finds a pile of men's clothing right next to hers. Getting close to the main path she slowed and started to push back into the brush. Crouching behind a large old oak tree, I knew that I wouldn't be wondering much longer.

I didn’t even look up. There was no way I wanted to be seen now. I could hear her rustling through the brush. Suddenly there was dead silence. I guessed that she just had the surprise of her life. After about thirty seconds the rustling started again. I heard a zipper zip, more rustling. She was leaving the hiding place. Footsteps back on the path running away. I listened to them fade until all I heard was the sounds of nature. Birds chirping, wind in the branches I crept from behind the tree. Nobody was around.

I trotted back up the path and pushed back into the brush and walked to the hiding place. Now I had the surprise of my life. There were my boots and socks right where I had left them but instead of my clothes I was anguished to see a neatly folded pink pair of woman's jogging shorts with a pair of white knickers neatly folded on top, next to the shorts was pink sports top with a sports bra on top.