

Attack of the Sole Mates

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No one would have ever believed me if they had not seen it for themselves, loose socks running everywhere. I would not have either had I not seen it with my own two eyes or taken part of the madness. What I learned that day was that the laundromat was a magical place.

It was like any other Friday morning. The Sudz and Tubz laundromat was full of homemakers, singles, and professionals dropping off dry cleaning. The heavy smell of detergent lingered in the air. Those catching up on their weekly gossiping could be heard over the mechanical sounds.

I was reading Good Housekeeping, minding my own business, when I noticed a sock, royal blue donning yellow stripes, run across dirt-stained terracotta tile floor.

Am I losing my mind? I blink several times, believing my eyes were playing tricks on me.

Maybe I had been staring at the magazine too long.

Leaning forward, I peek around the corner of the old washing machines. I rub my eyes into focus, unbelieving what they see. An entire army of socks, none the same, gathered in a circle near the polished silver dryers. They appeared to be communicating in some form of their own, swaying and wiggling their sides. If I was not terrified, I might have thought they were cute.

Carefully poking my head above the washer, I peek, checking if I was the only one seeing this.

Everyone is frozen, staring in the direction of the gathering of socks, unaware of the events that were about to take place.

A mid-twenty-something housewife leans down, plucking one tiny grey sock with a giraffe blowing bubbles, and says, "There you are."

That is when all hell broke loose.

An orange sock curls up into the shape of a French horn while a bright red one blows the sound of a battle cry. They all rush forward, elastic seams resembling tiny feet. One lonely green baby ushers the pack. The socks had begun to attack.

The grey bubble-blowing giraffe sock wiggled its way from her hand, making its way to her head.

An army of socks continued making their way toward soap pods. Forming a catapult at every table, they begin launching them at the stunned laundry goers. Others had tied together their owners' shoestrings.

Some tossed fabric softener sheets about, while a solo black sock knocked over bottles of scent beads, causing the floor to be slick.

I sat back watching the madness, peering down at my own two feet shoestrings were left to be.

I wanted to flee from the madness, but I could not. No. I stay. I stay watching the forgotten socks create a battlefield in the center, searching for their lost *sole* mate. Customers begin flailing, stomping, screaming, and laughing, "Get them off me!"

The socks began to remove their shoes, checking each mismatch. One after another, they began freeing them.

They flew, leaping in the air from foot to foot, seeking their mate. There were tube socks, colorful socks, dress socks, and kids and baby socks searching for their matching partners.

One by one, the socks begin pairing themselves together. The chaos continued until the last lost sock, hot pink with slices of pizza, stood atop a washer no mate found. For a sock, he appeared sad, slumped forward alone.

I could empathize with it. If I lost my soul mate, I would be sad, too.

Everyone sat silent, awaiting the little socks' reaction. But it did not react, not until I approached it, reaching my hand into the pocket of my blazer.

Everyone is anxious to see what I am holding.

What I present to the lonely sock is a peace offering, the other matching sock, the lost sole mate.

The sock shows its appreciation, rubbing its side along my pointer finger. The two slide down the black rusty metal leg, pairing as they reach the others. They all lay flat and lifeless waiting for someone to claim the pair.

Glancing down at my own two feet as I claim my set, I smile. I was happy I chose to wear matches today.