

The Meeting

By Colin D. Smith

Tom stared around the conference room, breathing heavily. He was only five minutes late, but this was a critical meeting, and the head of department took tardiness as a personal insult. Thankfully Mr. Miller hadn't arrived yet, and people were still milling around the room.

"Are you okay, Tom?" said a man coming up beside him.

"Yes, fine thank, Bob," Tom replied. Bob extended his thin naked arm and shook Tom's hand.

"Good," said Bob. "It's just you look a little, well, odd." He smiled and went to take his place at the table. Tom noticed that Bob had nothing on except his underwear and an undershirt.

"Uh, Tom?" It was Sherrie. She was standing on the other side of the large rectangular conference table. "You okay?"

"Yes, yes, thanks," he said. "Is that a new dress?" he added, indicating the shapeless polyester orange and green monstrosity she was wearing.

"Yes," she smiled with pride. "Do you like it?"

"It's lovely," he smiled. Sherrie thanked him and sat next to Joanne, Mr. Miller's secretary, who was shamelessly sporting a thin negligee. Tom moved toward the table, feeling every eye upon him. He smiled nervously, and pulled at his collar.

His collar?

He looked down and saw his white shirt, his burgundy tie, and his navy pinstriped suit. His eyes bulged. He could hear hisses of laughter. Sweat began to trickle down his neck.

The door handle turned and Tom rushed forward to the nearest chair. He sat with his head down. Mr. Miller burst through the door.

“Sorry for my delay,” said Mr. Miller, “but I had an emergency call from head—Tom? Is that you?”

Tom’s face turned scarlet. The hisses turned into chuckles. Soon the room was filled with laughter. Tom looked up to see his co-workers in fits. Even Mr. Miller was laughing at him, standing in nothing but his white boxer shorts decorated with hearts, pointing.

Tom screamed.

He sat up in bed. His alarm clock sat silent on the bedside table. At first he sighed with relief; then he saw the time. Tom shot out of bed. In ten minutes he was in his car, speeding through his neighborhood. In another ten, he was parking at the office.

Tom burst in through the door of the conference room.

“My goodness, Tom,” said Bob, coming over to greet him. “That was quite an entry. It’s okay, the old man’s not here yet.” Tom smiled gratefully at Bob and they sat down at the table. He looked around the conference room as the others took their seats. There was Sherrie in her hideous dress, Joanne in her negligee, and even Bob was wearing the same underwear and undershirt. Tom’s heart started racing.

“Are you alright?” Bob said to him. Tom looked down and saw he was wearing his pajama shirt and boxer shorts. He sighed and smiled.

“Yes, thanks Bob,” he replied. “I had the strangest dream...”