

Perils of the Carousel

"it's not mine."

"It must be. Who else would have a bright green, yellow and pink backpack?"

"I put a sticker on the bottom of it but look, to keep you happy, let's check."

I yanked the backpack off the carousel and opened the zip.

"See, not my stuff."

"Quick, put it back on, the owner might have spotted you."

"You're the one who was so sure it was mine!" I closed the zip and shoved it back on the carousel.

An hour later we were in the lost luggage office reporting the missing backpack. The one from the carousel was sitting in front of us, unclaimed.

Two hours later we were being led through the dusty alleyways of Marrakech by Omar from our hotel who had met us at the taxi. Smiling he gave us the welcome to Morocco schtick while I sulked along behind him and Paul who chatted merrily away as if I hadn't just lost all my holiday luggage.

"Here we are, please go in." We were shown into the cool interior of the riad. The inner courtyard was open to the sky with whitewashed walls rising up three storeys and cool blue and white ceramic tiles on the floor. A small fountain babbled in the centre. Unfortunately I was in no mood to appreciate the surroundings.

"Please have a seat. I'll get you some tea." Omar indicated a couple of small tables and chairs in the courtyard.

When he had gone I groaned. "I just want to go to the room, I've had enough of today."

"He's just being nice, I think we have to go along with it."

The door bell rang and Omar reappeared. He brought in some more guests, a young couple who were soon seated at the table next to ours, also waiting for tea.

"Hi", they chirped. They were American.

"Hello," we said. I gave a wan smile.

Paul nudged me and hissed. "Look at her bag."

Resting against the back of the girl's chair was a bright green, yellow and pink backpack.

"Oh my God! It's exactly like mine, what if it is mine? What can we do?" I whispered.

"We can't ask her to open it or show us the bottom to check if the sticker's there, it's too weird and what if it isn't yours?"

"But if we keep quiet and she realises it isn't hers later it will sound suspicious if we suddenly announce that it's yours."

Coming up with a plan I smiled sweetly at the young couple. "Where have you guys flown in from?"

"From London, we've just toured Europe and are doing Morocco on or way home."

“Oh lovely. We’ve flown in from London too. Unfortunately I’ve lost my luggage.”

“Oh poor you, that must be terrible”, said the girl wrinkling her nose. “Excuse me a moment, I need a tissue.”

She reached behind, pulled her backpack forward and unzipped it. She turned to her partner with a shocked look on her face.