

The Forbidden Shoes; a (mostly) true story: M. Giles

The only sin I committed that night was being hungry. I had an insatiable craving for a big juicy steak, with all the trimmings. It was this irresistible impulse that led me to the “Beer and Beefsteak” that one fateful evening.

I had dressed up for the occasion, which was rare for me as I seldom ate out. I was wearing my best clean blue jeans, and my second-best dress shirt, its un-ironed crinkled paisley pattern cleverly concealed under my tan leather coat. Then I slipped on my favourite white joggers, with the Velcro ties, and I was ready to hit the town.

But when I arrived at the venue I was greeted by the bouncer from Hell, who promptly banned me from entering the hotel bistro. And why was this? I hear you ask. It was all because of my shoes. He pointed to the notice that read *Appropriate attire required to enter this establishment*. Then he pointed at my shoes. Apparently, joggers were not considered ‘appropriate attire.’

My shoes were forbidden, the doorman informed me, because they were too ‘casual’. This behemoth of a barbarian was standing between me and my steak dinner; as immovable as Mount Everest and roughly the same size. I peeked behind his massive frame, and saw the bistro flocked with tattooed t-shirted bikers being served by scantily dressed and mostly topless waitresses. And yet I was the one wearing ‘inappropriate attire’!

I should tell you that I loved my shoes. These white joggers had served me faithfully for many years, at a time when my shoe size struggled between ‘geisha toes’ and Pagliacci clown floppers. But finding these joggers was like finding the ‘golden fleece’ for feet; they fitted perfectly, embracing my instep, caressing my toes, and lifting my soul from their soles. And now they were being rejected by this unfeeling and uncouth hotel doorman.

Now I admit that my prized white joggers, that were in fact no longer white, had seen better days. Their stitching was coming apart, so that my red socks showed through the stitches, like cool GT stripes, I thought. But we all age, don’t we? It’s a natural process. Now my shoes were being discriminated against, just because they were old. But they were still my shoes, even if they were ‘forbidden’. I did not get my steak that night, but I did keep my dignity, and my shoes.