

NOTES

According to statistics, one out of every eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point during her lifetime. In her autobiographical essay, author Sandy Maranto takes us on a poignant, yet at times, humorous journey, as she reflects on surviving breast cancer. This selection contains mature subject matter; however, understand, this selection also contains a wealth of humor. Sandy Maranto chose to deal with her diagnosis by using her best defense: Her sense of humor, which varies from the sarcastic, to the witty, to the just down right hysterical! She teaches us a valuable life lesson: When faced with adversity, meet the challenge head on! This selection should be portrayed by a mature female and may be entered in either Prose Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. The real *drama* of this selection is reflected in its honesty. This is a *true* story—that *mostly*—really happened; therefore, play each *moment* for its inspirational *message*. If performed in Prose Interpretation, the drama mask icons serve as suggestions for when to turn the pages in the manuscript.

Did she just *say* what I *thought* I heard her say? Horrified, I asked Kelly, the woman in charge of the Women’s Conference, to repeat her last statement. “Come again?” I said loudly from the middle of the room; assuming that everyone knows “Come again?” is the polite translation for “What the heck did you just say?” Kelly appeared to be unfamiliar with the euphemism.

“What’s that, Sandy?” Kelly asked with a smile that seemed to say, “Did you really just interrupt me?”

“I don’t think I caught the last thing you said. Could you repeat that for me, please?” I asked with a smile that could easily be translated into, “Oh my gosh! I’m so sorry. I didn’t know this was the type of situation where we weren’t supposed to ask questions, and now I’m pretty sure everyone in here thinks I’m this big jerk. I didn’t mean to be rude. I promise that I’ll never interrupt anyone who’s speaking again for as long as I live.” My smiles tend to say a lot.

I could feel my face redden, as all 79 eyes belonging to the 40 women in the room, women I hadn’t met yet, turned to see who this Sandy, who so rudely interrupted Kelly, was. I say 79 eyes, because while we were all getting our nametags, I overheard a woman wearing a patch over her left eye tell another woman something about a jealous girlfriend, a crowded pool hall, and a cue stick. Anyway, as quickly as my face reddened, it

turned pale when Kelly repeated what I thought she had said, “As a sign of sisters serving sisters, we’re going to be washing each other’s feet.” “NO!” echoed loudly in my head. At least I think it was just in my head. Had I screamed that out loud? Glancing around the room and having no eyes meet mine, I felt confident that the emphatic “no” ringing in my head was just that—only in my head. But how was I going to get out of this? Could I fake being sick? Would it be too suspicious if, having just asked Kelly to repeat those horrible words, “We’re going to wash each other’s feet,” I came down with an unexpected raging case of diarrhea?



You know, I always use diarrhea to get out of things. It’s an extremely believable excuse. For example, no one in their right mind would call up their boss and say, “Look, I can’t make it into work today. My diarrhea is explosive!” unless they were being honest, right? And it’s not one of those things that would require a doctor’s note. I’ve worked at many places where, if you call in sick, you had better bring in a doctor’s note or your absence will be unexcused. If you were to call your boss and say you weren’t coming in because of a fever, chills and body aches, your boss might say to you, “Sounds like the flu. Better go get that checked out. Oh, and one more thing—be sure to bring me a note.” No boss needs a note about diarrhea. It’s not even doctor-visit worthy. It is what it is; and that, simply put, is messy and gross. Much like the state of my toenails at that moment, so I was very distraught over my situation.



The woman to my right, whose name tag read Cheryl, was the poor *soul* who would soon be washing my poor *soles*. I introduced myself to her, “Hi, I’m Sandy, and I just want to apologize in advance for what you’re about to see.” She laughed the obligatory *oh-I’m-sure-you’re-just-joking* type laugh. Soon, however, there would be no laughter—only confusion. “What happened to your toenails???” The words fell out of her mouth before she even had time to realize that *might* be a less-than-appropriate thing to ask a woman whose name she had just learned. “Oh, I’m sorry,” she continued, “It’s just that...well, they look so *painful*.” “No problem,” I said with a smile that seemed to say, “It’s okay. I’m fully aware that my toenails are janky!” Cheryl continued to stare at my toenails, as if they had her hypnotized. “So, what happened to them?” “Well, I had this little out-patient surgery a couple of weeks ago. Unfortunately, when I got home, I seemed lucid enough for my husband, Tim, to leave me in bed while he ran to the store. I was still under the influence of the anesthesia, and I probably shouldn’t have been left alone with anything sharp. There on Tim’s nightstand was a pair of toenail