

Dear friends

I am going to make a fortune. One day, I washed my trousers. When I got them out of the dryer, I found that they appeared to be worn out. There was a big hole at the right knee. So I put them aside among



textiles to recycle. After that I went to Alingsås to buy a replacement. There, in an exclusive fashion shop I saw that they were selling trousers with holes at the knees, just like mine. They also were obviously worn out, as one could see from the shape of the holes and other things too. The price tags were far above my budget. So I realized that I, out of ignorance, almost had thrown away something very expensive. When I got home, I examined my trousers more closely. And found that they are very thin at the butt. So next time I wash them, they are going to have a big hole there as well. Then I cannot afford using them any more. I am going to sell them at an extremely high price. I

have not decided yet how I will spend all the money gained. Perhaps a trip around the world?

No clothes

Here, I have to warn sensitive persons that perhaps, you should not view the rest of this page, and the top of the next. You had better close your eyes until you have passed the first third of next page. After that you may open your eyes again, and your day will continue without any strong and bad emotions.

The previous story was about clothes. This one will be the opposite. Living in a marriage and being separated by 12000 km has certain disadvantages. We do not meet as often as we would wish to. On the other hand, the times we are able to meet tend to be something very great.

Thanks to modern technique, and internet in particular, we are able to be in touch almost daily. This is good, and in this way we are able to know that we are loved. And as there is a possibility to be fully private on the internet – as long as everything functions correctly, we are able to share things that are intended to stay between the two of us. We cannot be in touch physically with the present level of technology. But there are several ways to give joy to each other even across such a distance. We can say and write things that nobody else should hear or read. And we are able to send more or less inappropriate pictures and clips to each other.

The difference in time zones (7 hours) means that when the time here in Sweden is around 15, it is time for Marisol to wake up, and get out of bed. She used to first drink some water, after that coffee, and with that perhaps some fruit, e.g. papaya. Then to get up for real. Have a shower and dress.

One such morning, after having her coffee, Marisol sent a very exciting message:

“I am going to have a shower now. Do you want me to send a picture without clothes?”

“YEESSS!”

I used to say that everything, and nothing fits a beauty. 15 minutes later the picture arrived.

In this case, the photo was outstanding. As you might know, Marisol is an expert on artistic photography, and this was so overwhelming, that I asked for her permission to show it, and with some reluctance she agreed. The picture at next page. You cannot imagine what a perfect composition.



A picture without clothes!

Upside down

As you know, people in Australia are walking upside down. Probably, gloves there are much thicker than here, as they have to withstand the regular contact with the ground. This year, things (e.g. pizzas) have tended to go upside down – even without any need to go to Australia. At regular intervals, each member of the Hemsjö choir is responsible for coffee and something to have with it during the pause of the weekly rehearsal. When it was my turn, I baked my special cookies with cherries that have been soaked in cognac for a few days. When it was time to bring them there, I put the plate in the front seat of the car, and started driving to the church. I was driving very slowly, and with great care, just in



case an moose or a deer would suddenly come out of the forest in front of the car. Eventually I arrived at the parking place and slowed down even more to make a turn. The car broke far more than I had intended and in a moment, all the cookies were on the floor. Upside down! Probably, the cookies thought that I had brought them to Australia.

I picked them up, and then I had to spend half an hour clearing away sand and dust from the cookies. It was particularly tricky with the sticky cherries. But I was able to get the cookies reasonably clean. Some dirt might still have

been there, but at the coffee break, I did not exactly announce the mishap, and people were eating the cookies with good appetite. If there was still some dust and sand, I comforted myself with the old saying:

A little dirt does not any harm. It merely cleanses your stomach.

A North European Odyssee - or - Murphy's law in action

In June, Marisol, Rosy (Marisol's niece), and I were going to Paris. Gunhild had got tickets to Brahms's violin concert with Janine Jansen, probably the best violinist in the world at present. During this journey most things went wrong. Our intention was to fly with our aircraft, but the day before our

intended departure, the weather forecast told about hurricane winds, thunderstorms and severe turbulence. We tried to get tickets with commercial flights, but no seats were available. So we decided to go by car. Three persons plus baggage in my tiny VW Lupo! It turned out that Marisol, as well as Rosy had forgotten their driving licences in Mexico, so I would have to do all the driving.

We left from home in the evening on Monday. In Malmö, we started looking for a hotel. Full everywhere! Some minutes after midnight, we gave it up, and continued to Denmark, hoping to find something there. We did not. So we had to spend the night in the car at a parking place.

At 6 AM, we gave up further attempts to sleep, and continued the journey. Do I have to say that the weather was perfect all the time. No hurricanes or thunderstorms! Meteorologists are professional liars. They cannot tell the weather next day, but want us to believe when they tell what it will be in 50 years!

An hour later, I found that the car was starting to have trouble with the driving knots, so I had to restrict speed to 100 km/h for the rest of the journey. We arrived in Hamburg. Three hours in traffic jam! Later to Bremen. Two hours of traffic jam!

After those disturbances, the traffic flow was nice, and everything was OK until we missed an exit. A long time later we came to the next one and left the Autobahn, only to find ourselves on another. Same procedure at next exit. At the fourth, we were able to turn back and start looking for the place where we had gone the wrong way.

During the rest of the trip, everything proceeded smoothly. We were supposed to live at a place close to the airport we had intended to reach flying. It was some kind of camping site some 60 km outside Paris. We arrived there at midnight. Then it turned out that the reception had closed at 21.00. We had to spend one more night in the car, trying to sleep!

In the morning, the reception opened at 10, and by then, we were smelling like pigs. The lady in charge did not want to let us in, and only understood French. After some negotiations with my poor French, and very reluctantly, she finally handed us keys for our cottage. After having showers, we spent a considerable part of the day in our beds. In the afternoon, we went to Versailles. The road description worked, and we spent a nice afternoon in the beautiful castle and its surroundings. After that, dinner at a good restaurant. When we went back home, the trouble started. The route description did not function this way. Sentences like 'continue 3 km and then turn towards Beauvais' do not function backwards. So we got lost. It was after midnight when we were back, but now we had keys, so it was no big deal.

On Thursday morning we went to the closest station of the metro, about one hour away with car. We parked the car, and went by metro to the centre of Paris. There we spent a nice day sightseeing and having dinner, after which we went to the concert hall. There, Gunhild and Oskar were waiting for us, a bit impatient, as we were somewhat late, and they had our tickets. At least, they thought that they had. But they had forgotten our tickets in their hotel!

We were let in by good will from the staff, and directed to seats high up and far back. Well, the concert, Brahms's violin concert, was beautiful. After the concert there were speeches. The chief director was giving his last concert before leaving for another city. So there were choirs and speeches. At 23.15, we got out of the concert hall and went to the metro.

The last train of the day, for the place where we parked the car, had left already!

We considered staying overnight in the Metro. Experience makes you wise, but not rich, so we decided to get a taxi to our car. I had been clever in the morning, by letting the spare GPS of the aircraft

draw a track along our route. So now going back was easy – we thought. Initially it was. We left the motorway at the correct exit, and proceeded towards the village. After a few km, the road was closed for construction works!

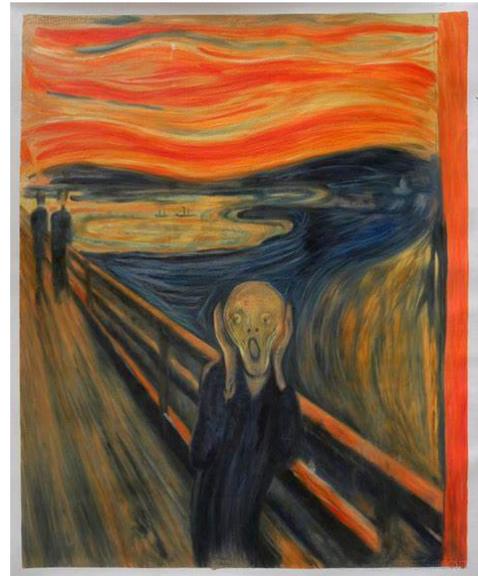
We went back to the motorway. Wrong direction. Eventually, we found a place to turn, and tried another exit. This did not go even close to our desired direction, so we had to return to the motorway again. After turning back once more, we tried a third exit. There, we found a sign toward our town, and proceeded a few km.
Road closed due to construction works!

Back to the motorway. We passed a particular hotel six times during that night. It was like a nightmare. You go on and on, but does not come anywhere. Eventually, we found a road to the place where we lived, and arrived at 5 AM.

At 9, it was time to check out and we started the journey back to Sweden. Between Maastricht and Amsterdam, we found a good looking hotel, so we went in. There, we asked if they had room for three persons. The lady looked in the computer. “No, sorry, only for two persons.” So we asked if it was not possible for one of us to sleep on the floor. “No, but you could have two rooms.” Wow! After having installed ourselves, went went to the restaurant to have dinner.
The restaurant was closed for the day!

As the hotel was in the middle of nowhere, no other restaurant could be found in any reasonable distance, so we had to go to bed hungry. Well this caused an excellent appetite next morning at breakfast. After a very good breakfast we left. Everything went well during the rest of the journey, and we arrived to our home at 03.00 on Sunday. Now I have to admit that we skipped church that Sunday. And I have to compliment Marisol and Rosy about keeping good moods in spite of all the trouble.

Should anyone offer Marisol a trip by car to Paris, her answer is going to be: “NOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”



Finally, Don't throw away old clothes. Their value could be far more than you imagine!

Now, God bless you, and
Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Fröhliche Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr!
Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!
God Jul och Gott Nytt År!

Allan Emrén and Marisol del Mazo