

Awash in Anger

by
Celia Duffy

Celia Duffy
11 Worcester Street, Apt 3
Boston, MA 02118
cduffy@bu.edu

FADE IN:

EXT. A STRIPMALL -- DAY

An ordinary stripmall with the usual stores and busy parking lot. A utilitarian place where errands get done. A laundromat and cafe are visible.

A CAR reverses out of a space in the row of cars closest to the stores. A SECOND CAR waits. Through the wind shield of this waiting car, we see SUE, a cute woman in her late-twenties, patiently eyeing the exiting car.

The space is free. Sue's car slowly creeps toward it, but is cut off when a THIRD CAR makes a sharp right turn into the coveted space.

INT. ANN'S CAR -- DAY

This Third Car is an average, messy sedan. ANN, the woman in the driver's seat, is middle-aged, looks frazzled, and is oblivious to the parking injustice she's just committed.

INT. SUE'S CAR -- DAY

Still clutching the wheel, Sue scowls at Ann's car and hits the car HORN. She waits for a couple seconds, until it's clear nothing is going to happen. With a sigh, she returns to circling the parking lot.

INT. STRIPMALL LAUNDROMAT -- DAY

The typical laundromat with the dusty floors and a couple of machines whose "Out of Order" signs have probably been up for a few months. The hum of the machines drowns out most of the Easy Listening station that comes in over the radio.

Sue enters, carrying a basket full of laundry. She notices Ann who just cut her off in the parking lot is sorting whites from darks. Sue looks at her own laundry which is already sorted. Sue moves to a washer and puts down her basket. She smiles to herself as she passes Ann: at least she's more organized than this parking space thief.

Sue moves toward the detergent vending machine. Suddenly, Ann is steps behind her.

IN THE MACHINE: we see only one box of fabric softener remains. Both Sue and Ann notice this too, and take their last steps more quickly.

Sue had a head start, though, and gets to the machine first, stretching her hand to the coin slot. Sue inserts her first quarter. Victory is official. Ann scowls and waits.

Sue puts in the rest of her change and the fabric softener falls to the bottom of the machine. Sue grabs it, and gives Ann a smirk before also buying detergent. Ann is frustrated but pretends not to notice.

INT. STRIPMALL LAUNDROMAT -- LATER

Ann closes the door to the washer. She looks at the timer, which reads, "38 MINUTES." Ann folds her collapsible laundry basket, puts it on top of the machine and heads for the door.

INT. STRIPMALL CAFE -- DAY

The cafe is nicer than the laundromat, but just as anonymous. Ann and Sue wait at the front of a long line of CUSTOMERS, each pretending not to notice the other.

The BARISTA hands each woman her coffee with the lids off.

AT THE MILK/SUGAR BAR: Ann shakes out the last drop of the half and half and puts the empty bottle down. Sue picks up the bottle and tries to shake a few drops into her own coffee. No luck. She slams it down on the counter.

INT. STRIPMALL LAUNDROMAT -- 38 MINUTES LATER

Ann pulls her wet laundry from the washer and puts it in her basket. She pulls this load toward the dryers, only to find: One full, one out of order, another full, another full, another out of order, and then,

SLAM, Sue shuts the door the door of the last available dryer and inserts her quarters. They share a knowing glare. Sue has won the last battle of the day. Ann studies the row of machines and drags her clothes next to one where she will wait.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STRIPMALL -- DAY

The stripmall is as bustling as it was the other day. This time, though, we can see two open spaces in front of the stores. Sue's car and Ann's car circling the parking lot.

INT. SUE'S CAR -- DAY

Something catches Sue's eye. Her face lights up with hope and relief.

INT. ANN'S CAR -- DAY

Ann looks in her rear view mirror and sees Sue behind her. She is annoyed, but focuses her attention back on the two free spaces in front of her. She puts on her turn signal.

EXT. STRIPMALL -- DAY

A LARGE SUV rips through the parking lot. The bass from the radio is audible throughout the lot.

The large SUV cuts the line of cars and swings into the two empty parking spaces, taking up both before Ann's car can turn in to one.

INT. ANN'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Furious, Ann slams the palm of her hand against her car horn for an extended HONK.

EXT. STRIPMALL -- DAY

An over-confident, SMUG MAN in his thirties steps out of the car and before turning away, checks his hair in his side-view mirror. When all looks well, he puts down his dark sunglasses and carries his massive amount of laundry past the furious line of cars and their CHORUS OF WAILING HORNS.

INT. SUE'S CAR -- DAY

Hands on the wheel, Sue stares out of her car window in anger and disbelief.

INT. STRIPMALL LAUNDROMAT -- DAY

The laundromat has its usual hum and dusty floors. Fuming, Ann enters. Sue walks in right behind her.

Smug Man shuts one, two, then three washing machine doors. Next, he opens the door of a quiet machine whose clock reads, "0 MINS". There are clothes inside that look washed and waiting to be moved to a dryer.

Smug Man looks at these clothes for a moment, then looks around the laundromat. Smug Man takes the clothes out of the machine and drops them on the floor. Discarded lint sticks to the wet clothes. He throws a small amount of all-whites into a fourth machine and shuts that one. Sue and Ann watch in horror as he struts down the line of washers, putting his quarters in. He's occupied the only remaining machines.

Smug Man recklessly shoves between Sue and Ann on his way out of the laundromat.

Sue and Ann make eye contact. They look from each other to where Smug Man left the store and back to each other.

Ann drags her laundry toward the washing machines. She walks up and down the line. No luck. Each machine is occupied or broken.

Sue approaches. She winces at the line of four machines that Smug Man has taken. Then she looks down at the wet laundry he threw to the ground. On top of the laundry is a BRIGHT RED SOCK.

Sue picks up the sock. She shows it to Ann. Sue motions with her head toward the machine where the Smug Man's whites are just beginning to be soaked with water and detergent. Ann smiles and slowly nods.

Ann opens the door to the machine with the whites. The water automatically stops running. Sue throws the Bright Red Sock into the machine and shuts the door. The water automatically resumes running and the women share a mischievous, allied smile.

INT. STRIPMALL CAFE -- DAY

Sue and Ann sit opposite each other at a table, smiling and drinking coffee. Ann taps Sue on the wrist and points to the window. Both women stare outside and start laughing.

EXT. STRIPMALL -- DAY

On the sidewalk outside of the cafe and laundromat, Smug Man storms toward his car. He is in a rage, picking up and throwing down a basket of now pink laundry. He throws it in the trunk of his SUV and slams the door.

Smug Man punches the trunk door with the side of his fist. This seems to hurt, as he grabs his fist with his other hand right away.

INT. STRIPMALL CAFE -- DAY

Sue and Ann look away from the window and to each other. They "cheers" their coffee cups.

FADE OUT:

THE END.