

Tracy Altvater.....About 870 words

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## The Flashes

by Tracy Altvater

The flash of a hundred cameras blinded Amy as she pushed her tiny frame through the crowd of overweight balding men. She turned around as her co-worker Stacy came up from behind.

“Amy, wait,” Stacy said. Her short legs carried her as fast as they would go to keep up with Amy. Though not much taller, Amy was quite the speed demon.

“There is no time Stacy. If we don’t get a head of the crowd, we won’t get the story,” Amy said.

Amy made her way through the sea of testosterone, elbows nudging her in the ribs and feet stepping on her toes. The men around her, three times her size, were staring at their phones not paying a bit attention to the world around them.

“I can’t believe we are about to get this story. It’s been so boring around the office lately. I can only organize my desktop so many times,” Stacy said.

“I agree. I have waited for so long for this opportunity. My career definitely needed this. Not that I am happy about the robbery, but a story is a story,” Amy said.

Stacy's eyes hit the ground. Her smile faded and her skin began to pale. "Amy, I forgot the tape recorder," she said.

"You need to run like you are being chased by Jason, Freddy and Mike Meyers! Go now," Amy said. As Stacy bolted off, Amy began tapping her foot hard against the ground and looking at her watch over and over.

The men in suits, with their cameras, recorders and notepads stood next to her waiting for the museum director to come out and make her speech to the public to clarify the details of the robbery. Amy had her notepad in front of her. The few details she knew scribbled almost legibly on the first page.

She had been sitting at her desk, writing a story about a local car dealership in their 50<sup>th</sup> year of service, fighting off the urge to fall asleep with every yawn when the phones rang off the hook. Family and friends of the staff at the museum were hastily spewing words on the other end of the lines about the heist.

"There has been a robbery at the art museum. Paintings were stolen," one caller said.

"I think they might have found the suspects of the robbery," another caller said.

They all had their own ideas of what happened. Amy wrote each and every one of them down, just in case.

Amy grabbed Stacy by the arm. They ran out the glass doors of the newspaper office and jumped into the white company van.

Now they were here, waiting. She looked down at her watch, the second hand seemed to be going faster than normal.

"Stacy needs to hurry and get back here," Amy said. She looked around with a slightly red face to see if anyone had heard her talking to herself.

“Amy, I am here,” Stacy said. “I barely made it through the crowd.” Her breath came fast. “I wish I hadn’t eaten those donuts Dave brought into the office this morning.”

“Thank you. Oh my God...here she comes,” Amy said. Her eyes moved up towards the top of the concrete stairs leading to the museum entrance. The director was a dainty woman, looking to be in her early forties with strands of gray hair starting to show throughout her light brown shoulder length hair. The wrinkles in her face were prominent and her hands shook as she held her note cards. She began her speech and everyone in the crowd stopped speaking. The speech went on for about ten minutes. Stacy hit stop on the recorder once it finally came to an end. The once previous quiet, listening crowd now came alive with questions, one after another being fired at the museum staff.

“There is no way she is going to hear me,” Amy said. “Stacy, I need you to run one more time to the van.”

“Ugh..okay,” Stacy said. Stacy took off, running faster than Amy had ever seen her. Just mere moments passed when Stacy reappeared, this time sporting a “proud of herself” grin. Amy shot one back and grabbed the red milk crate that Stacy had retrieved from the van. She made her way through the body odor and cigar smoke. Once she got to a clearing, she placed the crate on the street.

“Stacy, come help me up. I have to make this work. If I don’t, we might as well pack up and go home,” Amy said. Stacy put her arm out so that Amy could grab it for balance as she stepped up on the crate. Her four-inch heeled black boots were not the right choice for milk crate climbing, but they would have to do.

“You got this Amy. Let them see what you can do,” Stacy said. Amy called the director’s name while simultaneously waving her arms. She caught her attention. A huge smile spread across her face as the men around her were silenced. All eyes focused on her.

“Stacy make sure you get every word,” she said. Stacy hit the record button.