

Bad Reception

Hello? Linda, can you hear me? Yeah, this town has really bad phone coverage. And this is the Metro [_____]! If the connection drops, I'll call you back.

Well, I made it to Brian and Jessica's wedding on time. If it were anyone other than Brian getting married, I wouldn't have RSVP'ed, but I owed it to him. Yeah, I can't believe I missed Downton [_____] for *this*! ...They did what? No, no spoilers! My [_____] is recording it.

Anyway, this is the *last* time I go to a reception without a date. Every guy there was a total loser. First, I stopped to sign the guest [BOOK] -- I thought about leaving a fake name, but "Ben Dover" was already on the list -- and I turn around to see this guy in a cheap suit, staring at me with [_____] in his eyes.

"Are you a caterer?" I asked.

"I'm a government [_____]," he said, trying to look dark and mysterious.

I tried to keep a straight face. "Oh, like Mulder and Scully?"

"No, ma'am, that's the FBI. I'm with the [_____]. We [_____] outside the borders of the United States, covertly gathering information."

"Oh, you're a spy? Is there intrigue [_____]?"

He held one finger to his ear, listening to an imaginary earphone. "I can neither confirm nor [_____] that, ma'am."

Now, I flunked [_____] but I can [_____] any test in logic. "Government agent, huh? You're a [_____] and a bad one at that. [_____] it, you're a computer programmer, aren't you?"

"I... That's... How did you know?"

"You're wearing a pocket protector to a wedding reception," I said as I walked away. Yeah, he really was. Part of the uniform, I guess.

Right away, I knew this reception was going to be a disaster. They had hired the worst DJ ever: he had no idea what to play at a wedding! Sure, a Gershwin tune isn't necessarily a bad thing, but a number from Porgy and [_____] ? When "Summertime" [_____] through the reception hall, that doesn't really make folks want to get up and dance. Get up and leave, maybe....

He was playing "Take On Me" when I walked in -- remember that 80s song? From some one-hit wonder named, umm... [_____]! What? No, I didn't just remember it, that *is* the name of the band. Anyway, you which you can't really dance to that song because the [_____] is too fast, but some of the bridesmaids were having a go at it anyway. At least until the [_____] iPhone he was using to play the songs crashed for the third time. He'd have to [_____] it every twenty minutes or so, and then he'd stand there for another five minutes, checking his [_____]. I hope the bride and groom got their money back.

Oh... my... God. Linda, you would not believe how bad Jessica's gown was! It was this ridiculous thing, all tulle and gold sparkles. Everybody [_____] and aahed, of course, but as soon as her back was turned they were laughing their butts off and calling her [_____]. I don't know if it was the tiara or the gold belt that looked like a cowgirl's [_____] , but she did look like some kind of lame superhero. Maybe a supervillain in her case.

I left my present on the gift table -- some modern [_____] from southeast [_____] . Supposed to be carved by a famous swami or fakir or something like that. What? No, not a faker, a *fakir*. Kind of like a Hindu [_____] ? No, not the bear! No, not a fake bear either! F-A-K-I-R. They're [_____] who take a vow of poverty and study universal enlightenment and stuff. At least, that's what the description on [_____] said.

I think Debbie gifted the newlyweds with one of her herbal potpourri mixes; the whole table smelled like parsley, sage, rosemary and [_____] . But, it's the thought that counts, even if it smells like turkey stuffing. Though, it was really making me hungry. I knew the buffet was going to be my first stop.

Unfortunately, on the way there I ran into the bride's uncle, Bernie. Bernie thinks he's the spitting image of Brad Pitt, but he's barely 5' tall, and he looks more like [_____] Brooks to me. And when he's been hitting the open bar, he looks a bit like Rudolph the [_____- _____] Reindeer. He's looking me up and down like he's watching someone do tricks with a [_____] , his red schnozz slowly bobbing up and down.

"Uh, hi, Bernie. How have you been?"

Bernie's mental rowboat has always been short one [_____] . He just stared at my cleavage, [_____] , blissfully [_____] that his breath would be [_____] to small animals. Times like these, I [_____] for [_____] citizenship so I'll have another country to escape to. But I never did get my passport photo taken, so that

wasn't an option.

I was trying to decide which [] to break to get his attention when the bridesmaids came flouncing in and distracted him. Yeah, lucky for him.

Yeah, the bridesmaids were awful, all of Jessica's snotty friends from high school. They pranced in like [] emerging from their castles to grace the commonfolk with their [] presence.... As if I didn't see them riding the [] every morning with [] in their stockings.

Tiffany -- remember her? The one who looks like [] Roosevelt? -- she starts giving me the stinkeye right away, clucking like a mother [] and looking at me like she expected me to step [] for her [] majesty. If she wore a [] on one of those sweaty fingers, it would turn black as her shriveled little soul. I didn't want to throw down with her, but she was obviously full of herself that day and spoiling for a fight. Well, I [] that in the bud.

"What a lovely dress," she cooed. "I didn't know they made a painter's [] in that size!"

I can play [] when the occasion calls for it.

"What interesting hair," I replied. "My cat barfed up something just like it last night."

Speaking of cat barf, who serves a seafood buffet at a wedding reception? So gross! The [] smell from the buffet table reminded me of low [] at Boston Harbor. Lots of slimy things on the half-shell: clam, [], mussel... And can someone please tell me why [] are supposed to be an aphrodisiac? They look like snot. There's nothing romantic about shellfish. They even had some sushi. Nobody bothered to tell me that "unagi" means []. Ugh!

While I was standing at the buffet trying to find something that won't make me gag, another Romeo lumbered over. Huge guy, no neck, looked like a professional weight []. He picked up a piece of calamari, and in a really cheesy [] impression said, "Here's lookin' at you, squid."

At first I ignored him. Jessica was reading the DJ the riot act, and everyone was focused on that drama. But then I saw something out of the corner of my eye that I couldn't ignore.

"Ummm, I'm not really a [] and I usually mind my own business, but... you just [] a fork, didn't you?"

He shrugged. "I always take home a few [] to commemorate the occasion."

"[] vey... Isn't that what the gift bags are for?"

"Well, yeah, but I need new silverware, not party favors."

I watched another salad fork disappear into his []-like fist. "Are you going to [] me for stealing?"

"No, but you shouldn't do that. Today it's forks. Tomorrow, you're robbing banks. Petty theft is the [] to grand larceny, you know. Besides, what if you're on the dance floor and flatware starts dropping out of your waistband? Then you've got no []."

"It really seems like much [] about nothing, but I'll tell you what... why don't I meet you []? I'll put back the spoons."

"You, [], are a true gentleman."

"[], Madame," he replied in a Clouseau-esque accent. "I am indeed. Want to come back to my place after the reception and see my utensils?"

He was clearly angling for some lover's [], but I wasn't about to set foot in that beast's [].

"Sorry," I lied, "I'm a [], and I've sworn a vow of chastity."

"You don't look like a nun. And I could have sworn I heard you speaking Yiddish earlier."

"I'm undercover."

I could see him searching for the perfect bon [], but right about then, there was a commotion over at the bride's table. She had just finished destroying the DJ when Bernie yelled "sneaky hobbitses!" and tried to pull the ring off her finger. I took advantage of the situation to get away from the klepto bodybuilder, telling him I was going to help. Bernie looked like one of the [] from the Wizard of Oz trying to tackle the Wicked Witch, and I was pretty sure Jessica was going to plant her tacky high heels where the sun doesn't shine.

Lucky for Bernie, the other guests got him under control before he could hurl the ring into a chafing dish. They really shouldn't let him near the open bar. The last time he had too many Tequila Mockingbirds, he [] his car backing out of the garage, so I was glad to see that they got his keys away from him before they hoisted him off his [] and [] him to the patio until he sobered up.

I'd been there about an hour and I'd had enough of that [], so I gave my regards to the newlyweds, a middle finger to Tiffany, and I got the heck out of there. I swear, I'm never doing that again!

But then again, my friend Tracy was hitting it off with the klepto bodybuilder. Love at first sight... and she caught the [].

God help us.

