

ACBA: Fiction and Prose

## DRIVING TO CAVY SHOWS

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The show in Woodinville, Washington had been fun, and we had stayed 'til the very end, having 2 Best of Breeds at the table.

In the course of the show, we acquired a pair of Satin Americans for a friend. The sow was mild mannered but the boar, Freddie, was full of personality. Imagine if Michael J. Fox were a cavy! Since we hadn't planned on bringing home the extras, a kind, fellow breeder lent us the use of a large Tupperware tub.

After attending a show for eight hours, (we all know what that is like), it was finally time to pack up for the drive home. We loaded all the carriers and miscellaneous into the car, set the tub on top of the carriers and waved goodbye to the few remaining. Since it was about 5:30 pm, we anticipated we would be home in the Portland, Oregon area by 9:30 pm. A long drive, but worth it to dedicated cavy crazies.

As we settled into our seats, the cavies quieted down to sleep during the drive home. All but Freddie. His funny satin face kept popping up over the edge of the tub for a look about. His eyes were bright and his whiskers quivered with curiosity. We laughed at his antics, as it really did appear he was having the time of his life looking out the window and watching the highway traffic.

Dusk was upon us and we hadn't traveled far when a car passed and honked at us. Then another car passed, honked, and the passenger was pointing at Deena's car. Deena was on the phone with her husband at the time. "I gotta go - something's wrong with the car!"

As we pulled to the side of the road, smoke was billowing out from under the hood. Car trouble was the last thing we had expected. A newer car with low miles, Deena's husband had checked the fluids and everything for us before we had left.

So, there we were. A car full of cavies and two women sitting on the edge of I-5, a bit north of Tacoma, on a Saturday night. We managed to get the hood open for a look at the engine compartment. By now it was dark, and the small light under the hood flickered and went out. "Don't worry," I told Deena, "I have a flashlight in the glove box." She looked at me and said dryly, "Beck, we don't have your car."

Right. I'm obviously handling this well. We determined it wasn't the radiator, as if we would be able to figure this one out on our own. Yeah, right. Time to call Triple A. But now the question of where to be towed arises. Deena's Triple A policy gave her up to 100 miles of tow. Hmmm, 125 miles short. So, where should we go?

Fortunately, Deena had family in the area, but of course, didn't have their phone or address memorized. Back to the cell phone for more info. Deena's husband was back home calling family for us and making sure we had a place to go.

Once arrangements were made of where to be towed, we started wondering what to do after that. Dealerships wouldn't be open for repairs 'til Monday, and we both needed to be at work by then. "OK, your husband handled the first immediate part of our emergency, now it's my husbands turn." Of course I couldn't find my husband, Kevin. After I had called everyone I could think of, the phone rang. It was Kevin, on his cell phone, the most logical number for me to reach him on, and the only one I didn't try to call. Finally, our rescuers are all working their magic and we just need to sit and wait.

Meanwhile, Freddie is wondering why we have stopped and is popping his head out of his tub every few minutes. I'm getting cold, waiting for the tow truck so I pick him up and cuddle him in my jacket. He starts talking and wiggling and is just a generally happy guy. Now remember, I have just spent all day at a cavy show, holding and grooming cavies. I am covered with fur and now Freddie notices some lovely girl smells on me. Bbbrrrrrr, he rumblestruts at me and adds to my aroma. Yuck. So back into the tub he goes.

All this time, there has been a car that pulled off the highway and is parked behind us with it's lights on about 50 yards back. Getting nervous, we lock all the doors and hope the tow truck arrives soon.

Freddie continues his imitation of a jack-in-the-box. We are thinking of famous "Fred's" and of course think of Freddie Kruger. Big mistake, and we check the locks again. As the car behind us drives off we heave a sigh of relief. Then the tow truck arrives!

A decent man with all his teeth and not too smelly, he invites us into the warm tow truck while he hooks everything up. Gratefully, we climb in the cab. He introduces himself as Wayne, and shows us how to operate the heater and the radio for some tunes if we like. "Ummm, there is something you should know about the car," Deena warns him. "It's full of guinea pigs."

"That's fine," he assures her. "I've seen it all."

"Even a car full of guinea pigs?" I ask.

"Well, no," he admits, "not that."

Wayne goes about his business hooking up the car and winching it up onto the big flatbed behind the cab. By now, we have thawed out and are worried about the pigs. Wayne climbs up behind the wheel, and flips on a light that illuminates the car sitting behind us on the flatbed. Sure enough - there is Freddie watching the world go by.

Next thing we see is Freddie running back and forth on the rear window shelf! His view had become too limited and he wanted a better vantage point. Deena and I start laughing at the silly pig as he merrily runs back and forth. "Oh, I hope he doesn't pee." Deena giggles.

Wayne attempts to take our minds off our misery by telling us jokes. He's no Jay Leno. Then he proceeds to tell us all about his family and love life. Seems his business partner put up the money for start up about eight months ago. At that same time, Wayne was marrying his business partner's ex-wife. Then we hear about Wayne's grand daughter, who told her grandfather, "I love you grampa, but you're just crazy." Out of the mouths of babes.

Finally, concentrating on directions to our destination stems the flow of jokes. Glancing behind us, we can see Freddie is still enjoying his freedom. We reach our destination, and Wayne unloads the car. As soon as the car is on the ground, I grab Freddie, who was a good boy and didn't pee, but did chew up his pedigree. We then put an end to Freddie's fun plunking him into a carrier that latched, and put a baby cavy into the tub instead. So much for Freddie.

We fed and watered all the cavies, and went inside to wait for my husband Kevin to come get us. Deena had a game of dominoes with her sisters-in-law, and I took a nap on the couch. All the excitement had done me in and it was now way past my bedtime.

Around 12:30 am, Kevin called to say he was nearby and to get the final leg of directions. When he pulled up in front of the house, I felt a very lucky woman. My husband had hooked up the 5th wheel trailer after working all day, and driven 200 miles to load us and the car up and then drive all the way back.

We thanked Deena's family for their help and hospitality, and wearily climbed into the truck. Empty Pepsi cups and hamburger wrappers were in the front seat of the truck, giving evidence of Kevin's gourmet dinner. But that dinner had been several hours ago, and we all were hungry. Not much is open at two in the morning, so when we stopped for fuel, we picked up snacks at the truck stop.

Deena was feeling a cold coming on, so she laid down in the back seat while we refueled and shopped. We returned to the road with donuts, pop, chips, and such. By the time we got home, the cab looked like one of those Foster Farm Fryer commercials, where the chickens are on a road trip eating junk food.

We reached Deena's home in Portland, and unloaded the car, then the cavies. Thankfully, all the cavies were just fine, although a little tired.

When Kevin and I reached home in Oregon City, we put the cavies away in their cozy condos. They were so happy to be home among the hay and familiar surroundings, a few of them actually popped. Kevin went in the house to pour a stiff drink while I fed and watered. It was around 5:00 am when we finally hit our pillows.

I went to sleep thinking about Freddie. By this time, I was secretly hoping our friend wouldn't want him and he could come stay with me. Freddie had kept us entertained and broke the tension many times during our trip. I guess I can always go visit him at our friend's house. If the car doesn't break down. Maybe she can just email me his picture.

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