**5. In Atlantic City**

On a recent weekend in Atlantic City, a woman won a bucketful of quarters at　a slot machine(老虎机，一种赌具）. She took a break from the slots for dinner with her husband in the hotel dining room. But first she wanted to stash （贮藏，隐藏）the quarters in her room.

"I'll be right back and we'll go to eat," she told her husband and she carried the coin-laden bucket to the elevator. As she was about to walk into the elevator she noticed two men already aboard. Both were black. One　of them was big ... very big ... an intimidating figure. The woman froze. Her first thought was: These two are going to rob me. Her next thought was: Don't be a bigot（顽固者）, they look like perfectly nice gentlemen. But racial stereotypes （种族成见）are powerful, and fear immobilized （使固定不动）her. She stood and stared at the two men. She felt anxious, flustered（慌乱的，狼狈的）, and ashamed. She hoped they didn't read her mind, but knew they surely did; her hesitation about joining them on the elevator was all too obvious.

Her face was flushed. She couldn't just stand there, so with a mighty effort of will she picked up one foot and stepped forward and followed with the other foot and was on the elevator.

Avoiding eye contact, she turned around stiffly and faced the elevator doors as they closed. A second passed, and then another second, and then another. Her fear increased! The elevator didn't move. Panic consumed her. My God, she thought, I'm trapped and about to be robbed! Her heart plummeted(垂直落下）. Perspiration （出汗，汗水）poured from every pore（毛孔）.

Then....one of the men said, "Hit the floor." Instinct （本能）told her: Do what they tell you. The bucket of quarters flew upwards as she threw out her arms and collapsed on the elevator carpet. A shower of coins rained down on her.

Take my money and spare me, she prayed. More seconds passed. She heard one of the men say politely, "Ma'am, if you'll just tell us what floor you're going to, we'll push the button." The one who said it had a little trouble getting the words out. He was trying mightily to hold in a belly laugh. She lifted her head and looked up at the two men. They reached down to help her up. Confused, she struggled to her feet.

"When I told my man here to hit the floor," said the average sized one, "I meant that he should hit the elevator button for our floor. I didn't mean for you to hit the floor, ma'am."

He spoke genially. He bit his lip. It was obvious he was having a hard time not laughing. She thought: My God, what a spectacle I've made of myself. She was too humiliated to speak. She wanted to blurt out （脱口而出）an apology, but words failed her. How do you apologize to two perfectly respectable gentlemen for behaving as though they were going to rob you? She didn't know what to say.

The three of them gathered up the strewn （散落的）quarters and refilled her bucket. When the elevator arrived at her floor they insisted on walking her to her room. She seemed a little unsteady on her feet, and they were afraid she might not make it down the corridor.

At her door they bid （祝愿）her a good evening. As she slipped into her room she could hear them roaring with laughter while they walked back to the elevator. The woman brushed herself off. She pulled herself together and went downstairs for dinner with her husband.

The next morning flowers were delivered to her room - a dozen roses. Attached to EACH rose was a crisp （硬的，脆的）ten dollar bill. The card said: "Thanks for the best laugh we've had in years."

**大西洋城惊魂**
大西洋赌城的一个周末，一个老太太玩老虎机赢了一桶25分的硬币。她决定休息一会，和丈夫到酒店餐厅共进晚餐。进餐厅前，老太太要将这一桶硬币放到酒店房间里。

“我马上就回来，然后咱们一起用餐。”老太太边对丈夫说，边捧着这桶硬币走到电梯前。老太太正要跨进电梯，却看到电梯里已站着两个人。两个都是黑人！

其中一个非常高大，高大得有些吓人！老太太惊呆了，她的第一个反应就是：这两个黑人会抢劫我。但老太太马上又告诉自己：不要有偏见！他们看起来都颇有绅士风度！但是那种根深蒂固的种族观念非常强烈，一种恐惧感让老太太不知道是否该乘这趟电梯。

老太太站在那里看着两个黑人，既紧张又害怕又感到羞耻。她希望两个黑人不知道她在想什么，但她知道这只是自欺欺人。她的犹豫紧张如此明显，任何人都能看出她在想什么。

老太太的脸开始变红，她知道自己不能总站在那儿不动。经过一番挣扎，老太太最终提起右腿，跟着又迈起左腿，踏进电梯。老太太不敢直视两个黑人，眼睛盯着关好的电梯门，一秒钟，两秒钟，三秒钟，随着时间一秒一秒的滑过，老太太的恐惧开始一点点增加。电梯依然原地不动，我的上帝，老太太想，我被锁进电梯里，孤立无援，他们马上要动手了。老太太心跳加速，浑身所有毛孔开始冒冷汗。就在这个时候，她听到一个黑人说道：“Hit the floor (趴到地上)，”本能告诉她：不要反抗，按照他们说的去做。老太太迅速地两手按地趴下去，一桶硬币全倒在地板上，到处滚动。老太太两手按着地板，心里默默祷告：钱都拿走，千万别伤害我！如此静静的又过了几秒钟：她听到那个黑人很礼貌地问她：“夫人，如果你能告诉我们你住在那一层，我们会很高兴帮你按一下按钮。”

说话的黑人几乎忍不住要笑出来。老太太抬起头，看着两个高大的黑人，他们伸出手来，要拉她起来。老太太有些疑惑，一时腿也不停使唤。“当我对我的朋友说hit the floor，”先前讲话的黑人开始解释，“我指的是按一下我们所住楼层的按钮，而不是让您趴到地上，夫人。”(hit the floor既可做“趴到地上”，也可做“按电梯里楼层的按钮”解释)

讲话的时候，这位黑人不断地咬自己的嘴唇，显然他在极力控制自己不笑出来。我的老天，我犯了一个多么愚蠢的错误！老太太心想。她想道歉，又不知说什么好！你如何向两位自己认为要抢劫自己的绅士道歉！三个人将滚了一地的硬币捡起，放进她的小桶里，电梯到了老太太所在楼层以后，两个人坚持要把老太太送到房间门口，因为老太太看上去走路还有些吃力。到了老太太门口，两个人向老太太道声晚安，转身离开。老太太走进自己房间时，听到两个人在楼道里大声笑起来。

老太太重新梳妆一番，然后回到楼下与丈夫共进晚餐。第二天早晨，一束鲜花送到了老太太的房间--十二只玫瑰！每一只玫瑰花上挂着一张崭新的一百美元纸币。随鲜花一起送来的卡片上写着：多谢您送给我们多年来最欢畅的一次开怀大笑。送花人：迈克·乔丹，爱迪·默菲。