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## The Red Coat

by Sho Botham

One night I was sitting on the bed in my hotel room, as you do. And there was a knock at the door. I wasn't expecting anyone. I went to the door and looked through the peephole. A man in a suit stood facing me. I paused to take a breath and opened the door slowly, half expecting him to rush in and hit me over the head.

He waited until I opened the door fully before speaking. Introducing himself as the hotel manager, he asked if everything was to my liking. Yes, lovely, thanks, I said. I couldn't help but be puzzled. Why was the hotel manager coming to see me and enquire about my stay. He didn't come into my room. And he didn't stay long. It was a brief but very professional enquiry. I watched him walk confidentially along the corridor to the lifts before closing the door.

I sat on the bed wondering why I got a visit. No one had ever visited me before. And I had stayed in the same hotel once or twice a year for the past five years. I had never seen the hotel manager before and I suspect he hadn't noticed me during my previous visits. What was it all about. Maybe because they'd given me an upgrade, that might be it.

Coming out of the lift, always catches my breath with it's rapid decent, I heading for the nearest one of three smartly dressed men at reception. But someone beat me to it. A woman with a red coat on approached him first. She seemed to have a bit of an entourage with her included someone carrying a small, white dog on a red cushion. I stopped, fascinated by the group in front of me.

Welcome madam. Oh come now, Pierre, you know it is Madeleine. Okay Ms Smith, Madeleine your rooms are ready for you. The penny dropped, My upgrade, wasn't an upgrade at all. I was in the wrong room on the wrong floor. The hotel manager must have thought I was that Madeleine Smith and not this Madeline Smith.