

## “Tattoos that you cannot see”

By M. Randolph Mason

The slight, middle age, woman sat next to me on the plane. After a few minutes... well, seconds... I mused to myself that she *might* have a tattoo. Likely not. She was demur. Actually I don't know that. But my imagination chose demur. I slid up the shutter and tried to distract myself by craning forward to look out the ergonomically incorrect airplane window.

She had not lowered the arm rest when she moved in beside me. She had fastened her seatbelt right away. (Please! Can something happen outside this window to distract me.) The little woman did not require all of her allotted seat width. Her knees would not touch mine.

Knees. She wore trim khaki slacks.... the kind that Dockers sells. Obviously hers were at the low end of the number scale... the size that Dockers doesn't sell in every style. (Maybe I'll see them load my luggage.)

Her eyes were not blue... they were grey... um... Morgan Brittany silver. Michael! You don't know what color are her eyes... you've NOT looked at them! (I wonder if I turned off my cell phone?) Do NOT look at her.

I did not feel her warmth... not, the whole flight. I wonder if I can smell her. When you can't... don't dare... lean over and inhale... how are you going to know how she smells? Nothing. I closed my eyes. Still nothing. Did she not walk through that biscuit of spray cologne? Maybe she forgot this morning.

Smells like airplane air.

Then... baby powder. I am going to die of this. A woman who smells like baby powder does not have a tattoo. (Fasten your seat belt, Michael.)



If she DID have a tattoo, where would it be? I sneak a peek at her arms and neck. Damn sweater! (Look out the window!)

Maybe she has one in the small... very small... of her back. Just above the elastic of her... GET A GRIP! (We're taxiing now... must be SOMETHING else on which to focus.)

Probably Hanes bikini... white cotton. No... maybe she is... sure of herself. Ambrielle... boy panties. White? Black? Champagne? Ambrielle doesn't come in Champagne. Definitely NOT a thong. Can you wear a thong under khakis? You don't wear a thong with khakis and a white faux cashmere sweater... and baby powder... faux?

A rose? A ladybug? Certainly not that barbed wire crap.

Barbed wire and baby powder... NO!

Where would you put a ladybug anyway? Who would wear a ladybug on her hip? That's stupid! AH! That place just inside the hip bone! Yes! And just above the elastic waist of her panty.

No! Bugs crawling out of her underpants... nope... not there.  
In the hollow of her thigh. Which thigh?

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We landed at Phoenix. I never spoke to her. I don't really know the color of her eyes. She did not have on a wedding ring. I do remember that her hair was brown... or maybe auburn... perhaps black. I don't remember her purse or her roll-aboard. There was a baby a couple of seats forward of us.

But, a good stiff gin and tonic may help me decide on the underwear... and the tattoo.