

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I attended a lecture on the Long Term Health Benefits of Silicone Breast Implants at First Memorial Hospital with my Italian friend, Martina. Dr. Alfonso Ernstein said that silicone breast implants keep your whole body looking young because they prevent your skin from sagging. It's kind of like support beams on a house. I know this stuff because my husband, Sam, is an engineer and tells me these things.

After the lecture I turned on my cell phone and found a new message. It was from my husband. "Hi Honey, it's me. Just wanted to let you know that this morning I found a snake in the front hallway. I went to get my shoes on..." Do you stop to put shoes on with a snake circulating? Did he think he would make a better impression?

His voice, ever calm, continued "But when I came back, it was gone. It's about the size of a pencil. See you tonight at dinner. Love you."

I stared at my phone like it was the crystal ball of some gypsy with unpleasant news. Martina cocked her head, looking like an Irish setter, her thick auburn hair bouncing.

"Problems with your cell phone again? Why don't you switch to Verizon?"

"Sam just left a message. There's a snake in the house." My voice must have been like those characters on General Hospital when they find out they've got cancer and only have forty eight hours to live.

"He got rid of it, right?"

"No, he just called to let me know that it's still in the house." I was beginning to sweat in my white, two-ply cashmere sweater

Suddenly Martina's voice exploded like a soccer sportscaster when the ball makes it into the net. "It's still in the house? Oh my God, how can you go home? When will Sam be home? I won't allow you to go back to that snake infested house alone. I'm coming with you."

Martina laid out the plans as we drove home. We needed a wastebasket and a piece of cardboard. Martina is really smart because she watches all these different TV shows, just like some people read books.

The medals on my little Cairn Terrier, Trixie, clinked like jingle bells when we walked into the house. I was glad for that especially since I've seen those *Ripley's Believe It or Not* shows where a two foot snake eats a baby calf.

Turquoise wastebasket and cardboard in hand, we started our search, and it wasn't long before we found the slithery intruder behind a box of old Sports Illustrated magazines in my husband's study. He started to slink away like he was ashamed, but Martina was quick as a cat.

"Maledetto serpente!" I wasn't surprised to hear her speak in Italian. She always does that when she's nervous. *"Vattene via, brut to schifoso!"* Martina was gyrating and twisting like a yogi doing sun salutations in fast motion. Thank Jehovah and all his witnesses that her spike Dolce Gabbana heels didn't catch in the beige Berber carpet.

I had to leave the room because Trixie was trembling and barking at the scene. The yelling continued for what seemed like the first half of a football game. Then there was absolute silence. Waiting for the burst of enthusiasm of half time entertainment, I stretched my neck around the door. Martina stood with legs apart, her leather skirt like black saran wrap, stretching over thighs and hips. Her hair no longer bounced. She now resembled the logo on the Versace shopping bags.

"I got him. He's under the wastebasket. Call 911."

Clicking my sling back heels on the tile floor of the hallway, I ran to the kitchen for the phone.

"911, what is your emergency?"

"I have a snake in my house."

"Ma'am, that's not a 911 emergency. Hang up and call the fire department at 547-8693."

"Martina, they said to call the fire department."

"Do it! This cunning little *schifoso* might sneak out."

I was sure that if it snuck out and was a male snake, he would look up Martina's skirt and see that lacy thong she bought at Victoria's Secret, then rollover and play dead.

"Kingston Fire Department"

"Hello, I have a snake in my house."

"Okay, please leave the room immediately."

"I think we have it trapped under a turquoise wastebasket."

"Okay, ma'am, give me your address and we'll send out a crew right away."

Within five minutes the fire engine pulled up in front of the house. Martina and I peeked out the window to see three young, male bodies, their t-shirts rippling over biceps, triceps and forearms. I picked up Trixie, smoothed my camel colored suede pants then leaned my head back and with a quick sweeping motion, settled any stray hairs before opening the door.

"Ma'am, you've reported a snake."

"Yes, right this way. It's in my husband's study."

"Who lives in this house ma'am?" One of them asked when Martina slinked out of the study like a wild panther.

"I do, officer. My husband left me a message on the cell phone that there was a snake in the house."

The three firemen raised their eyes in unison as if praying to some familiar god then positioned themselves in a triangle around the hiding viper. "Okay, on the count of three, I lift and Scott, you've got the pole, you grab him."

Scott was walking out the door with the culprit wiggling on his hook when Martina whispered "Guarda le mele."

"What are you saying?"

"Guarda le mele." Her eyes seemed to swing out of their sockets toward the firemen and then quickly back like children's yo-yos then her hand, resting on her left hip, slid down to her buttocks. "Apples."

"Martina, that's what they call them in Italian?"

"Yeah, you in America go for the mushy stuff-buns. In Italy we like them firm."

I watched as the snake and the good looking apples walked out my front door. Martina followed them out asking if they knew of a good place for apple strudel.

Based on these recent events in my life, I plan to call all those people who write the Bibles you see in motel rooms and testify in favor of Eve. I'm going to clear her name as the temptress. I don't think she was given a fair trial. Eve had a good reason for what she did. Adam was probably so busy figuring out how to build a house out of the trees he could use that he left Eve to handle the snake on her own. Then her blood sugar probably dropped so she grabbed an apple and ate it even though apples are high in carbs. Because I'm sure Eve was on the Atkins diet, otherwise how could she have been so thin?

