



Reluctant Press presents:

TOKYO DIARY

Briana Vermont



A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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Introduction

Dear Reader...

Much of what I write comes from my actual, real-life experience. Oh, I clean it up, put a brave face on it, and take out the truly horrific parts, but when you read one of my novels, you are getting a glimpse into my life. Of course, the names have been changed to protect the innocent. Well, more often, the names have been changed to protect the guilty. You know who you are.

I can't tell you why these things continue to happen to me. It always starts out innocently enough, like the time I helped my sister to sneak out of the house when she was supposed to be grounded. The next thing I knew, I was wearing her cheerleader outfit at a college frat party. Events just conspire against me!

You might wonder why I don't say something early on, try to stop things from spiraling out of control. It's just that the situation is never that simple. In hindsight, yes, there were numerous occasions when I could have saved myself a lot of grief if I had simply said, "I'm sorry, you've mistaken me for a girl." But at the time, it always seems simpler to nod and smile, hoping to avoid some embarrassment, hoping the situation will just go away. It never does, but that's what I'm hoping.

It's not even as if I enjoy dressing like a girl, being mistaken for a girl. It's always so much effort! All the clothes, especially all the confining underwear, the bras and panties and pantyhose and everything with little clips and clasps and bows. And all the time spent on hair and makeup, and shaving! Really, there are so many other things I could be doing, spending my money on.



And I really don't appreciate the attention I draw from all the guys. I mean really, what makes them think I have any interest in them whatsoever? So I have a pretty face, nice hair, and a cute figure. That doesn't mean I'm interested, okay? It's difficult enough, trapped into spending the night at a dance club wearing a tight, sequined dress that barely reaches my thighs, high-heeled sandals held on by delicate straps, bright red lipstick and long, manicured nails. But then to have every guy in the place trying to make me his personal conquest for the evening, it's just too much.

I used to keep all these experiences to myself, never telling anyone. But then I began to wonder if maybe there were others like me out there. Other guys who, through no fault of their own, would find themselves forced into joining an all-girl rock band, or participating in a beauty pageant, or trapped working as a pearl-diver in a small village on a South Sea island. Maybe, by writing about my experiences, I could help them to avoid the mistakes I made. Even if all I achieve is to let them know that they're not alone, that would make it all worth while.

Recently I took a trip to Japan. Here is an interesting and little-known fact about this fascinating country – it is the only country in the world where everyone speaks Japanese. Okay, obvious when you think about it, but then again most people traveling to Japan don't think about it beforehand. They simply arrive, and are then astounded to find that they can't communicate with anyone. Now I only speak enough Japanese to order a pizza (*Pizza o kudasai*) or get my face slapped (*hitori desu ka*). So as you can imagine, several of my experiences were made all the more difficult because I didn't understand what people were saying to me. It was often only later, with the help of hindsight that I was able to figure out what they were trying to tell me.

This leaves me with a problem. I want to tell my story, to give you the benefit of my experience, and ensure that the troubles I had will never have to happen to another. But if the whole point of the experience was that I had no idea what was going on, how can I convey this to the reader without thoroughly confusing them? I can't tell the story in English, because the reader will wonder why I don't understand what is said to me. But I can't tell the story in Japanese, number one because I don't speak it, and number two because that would make the story incomprehensible to most English-speaking readers.

In order to overcome this problem I will need to use a variety of methods. First of all, I will use the occasional Japanese word or phrase with which most English-speaking people are already familiar, without translation. For example I may use "Hai" ("Yes"), "Arigato" ("Thank you"), "Kon-nichiwa" ("Hello"), or "Sayonara" ("Goodbye") without offering any translation.

Second, where it is important that the reader understand what is said, but it also needs to be clear that I did not, I will write the character's words in italics, enclosed by square brackets. For example, if the story should read:

The attendant warned me, [*"Do not enter. This bath is for women only."*]

You should understand from this that the person spoke in Japanese, and I was completely unaware of her meaning.

A third possibility is that I may just throw in some random Japanese phrases, that may or may not have any meaning. This will be mostly to emphasize to the reader the difficulty of my incomprehension. If you see what looks like real Japanese in this story and don't understand it, don't worry, you're not really expected to. If you do understand it, please forgive my laziness at not providing a proper translation.

My experiences were likely not typical of most visitors to Japan. I hope that by sharing them with you, I can help you to avoid similar difficulties in your travels.

Love Always,

Briana

Tokyo Diary

By Briana Vermont

Illustrations by David McKinley

Chapter 1

Japanese Customs

"Here, can you take one of these bags? They're too heavy for me to carry both," she said to me. I accepted a bag without comment, and set it on the floor at my feet. Ever since the plane landed, we had been standing in lines. This line hadn't moved in two minutes, the bag would be fine there for now.

"Sweety, don't give me that look!" All my life, I have apparently been starting arguments with my mother by giving her 'that look.' I've never had to say a word, 'that look' said it all for me. I have no idea what 'that look' is, or what it is saying to my mother, all I know is it causes me a lot of trouble. I tried looking for it in the mirror once – I couldn't see it.

"Just carry it through Customs for me. Then we can get a luggage cart. Come on, pick up your bag, the line is moving again." We stood quietly for a moment, then she added, "You really should carry it, you know. After all, it's your bag."

Somehow, I never know when to stay quiet. "My bag? How do you figure it's my bag?" I tried not to use 'that tone,' but I really have no idea whether I did or not.

"I bought it for you, for the trip. And we're each allowed only one carry-on bag. This one is mine, and that one is yours."

"Except they're both filled with your things. You brought way too much stuff. We're only going to be here for a week. I don't even know what's in this bag."

"I'll need everything, trust me. I'm a mature woman, and have a few more needs than you. You're still young and pretty, but you'll find out soon enough." My mother always says things like that, things that anyone listening would misinterpret to think I was a girl. I've learned not to say anything, except –

"Oh Sweetie, please don't give me that look. You know what I mean. I hope you brought enough things for yourself."

I had refused to let my mother help me to pack. I'm her only child, and I can't help getting the impression that she would have rather had a girl. Most of the clothes she buys me are just a little too pretty for a boy, and some of them I could never wear out of the house. If she had helped me to pack, or if I'd been foolish enough to let her pack for me, I know exactly what she would have wanted me to bring.

"I brought exactly what I'll need. Seven shirts, and seven pair of underwear. I don't need anything else."

"Well, I suppose you can borrow some of my things if you run out. I hope you at least brought a nightie."

We finally reached the yellow line in front of the row of Japanese Customs agents. "Pajamas, Mom. They're called pajamas. A nightie is what a girl wears to bed. I wear pajamas."

"No, I don't think so. A nightie is just a cute name for what you wear at night, right? Which did you bring, the pretty yellow one that we both like so much?"

I could feel myself blushing. "Yes." This was the one compromise that I made to my mother while I was packing. I figured it didn't matter what I wore in bed at night.

"Well, you see? That's so cute, I would call that a nightie. Especially if you only wear the top with panties."

"Underpants," I muttered.

"This bag is still too heavy, can I put a couple of things in yours?" My mother proceeded to move things from her bag to mine.

"Okii! Chiisai!"

My mother and I looked up to see who was speaking. A security guard was looking at us. "Nex-t!" he told us in English, pointing at an available Customs agent. We picked up our bags, and approached the window.

"Just one," said the agent.

"Pardon me?" asked my mother, not understanding what he wanted.

"Just one," he repeated. Then, figuring this might not be enough he pointed at me and said, "She will stand at yellow line."

"But we're traveling together," my mother explained.

The agent looked at my mother, then at me, then back to my mother again. "Hrmph," he grunted. "She is, your, daughter?"

"Yes," my mother agreed. I could feel myself blushing. Couldn't she just say, "He is my son?"

"She is, over, six-teen?"

"Yes."

"Hrmph," the agent grunted again. "Just one. She will stand at yellow line."

My mother turned to me, and used her fingers to push the hair from my eyes and behind my ear. "You go back in line, Sweetie. You'll be fine on your own, and I'll meet you in the baggage area on the other side, okay?"

"Sure, that's not a problem," I told her. I'm almost twenty, I don't know why she insists on treating me like a child. I started back to the yellow line.

"Don't forget your bag!" my mother called. Blushing again, I returned to the desk, and picked up the bag from where I had left it on the floor. Then I returned to stand behind the yellow line, waiting my turn.

The agent was done with my mother almost immediately, and waved for me to step forward. Honestly, couldn't I have stood there while he did that? It would have been faster than sending me back into line. I lifted my heavy carry-on bag onto my shoulder, and approached the agent.

"Pasupoto," he said to me.

I just stared for a moment, until understanding kicked in. "Hmm? Oh, passport! Do you want my passport?" He just looked at me, so I assumed I was correct. I looked through the pockets of the carry-on, and fortunately found my passport in one of them.

"Here it is," I said as I handed it over to the agent.

"Hrmph," he grunted, opening the small booklet and quickly scanning the photo page. He appeared bored and disinterested, but suddenly his eyes went wide. "You are a boy?" he asked incredulously.

This happens to me too often, and it's always embarrassing. I looked down, avoiding his eyes, and said, "Yes." I could feel my face turning bright red.

He looked at the passport, then back at me. "You are not a girl?" he asked.

"No – yes – no," I answered, and shook my head. I hoped no one could hear.

He looked at the passport, then back at me. "You said, you are girl!"

"No," I said, shaking my head and looking up at him. "No, you said I was a girl. I just, didn't ... you know, tell you ... I, wasn't. You know, a girl."

He looked at the passport, then back at me. "You are pervert, come to Japan dressed like girl?"

"No!" I said emphatically. I was wearing blue jeans and a sweatshirt! I have long hair, but so do a lot of guys my age. Maybe not as long as mine, but I wasn't dressed like a girl!

Suddenly I had the feeling someone was standing behind me. I looked over my shoulder, and saw the security guard from earlier. He pointed to me, then looked questioningly at the Customs agent. I looked back at the agent and mouthed one word, "No," as I shook my head.

"Hrmph!" said the Customs agent with a nod of his head.

The security guard took my passport, then picked up my carry-on bag. "Aoi, chairou kuroi," he said. Seeing my complete lack of comprehension he added, "With me."

With his free hand the guard took my elbow, and steered me to the side of the Customs room. It's quite a large room, holding hundreds of people from flights all over the world, every one of them staring at me.

The guard used a key to open a door, and led me through into a short hallway with a number of doors leading to either side. One of these he opened, and guided me into a small room.

"Empty pockets," he said, indicating a small tray on a table. That and two plastic chairs were the only contents of the room. "Wait here," he instructed, then left and closed the door behind him, taking my carry-on bag with him.

I emptied my pockets into the tray, then leaned against the wall to wait. And waited. Minutes passed like hours, in this tiny bare room. He didn't need to tell me to wait, as I soon found the door was locked from the other side.

When someone finally arrived they found me sitting in one plastic chair, my feet up on the other. I quickly stood as two new guards arrived, one a huge scary man and the other a slightly friendlier female guard. If this was good-cop, bad-cop, I was ready to tell her everything already!

The man had my carry-on, and placed it on the table. He picked up the tray with the items from my pockets and asked, "This is everything?" There wasn't much, just my wallet, a key ring with my house keys, and a few coins.

"Yes, everything," I replied. The man took the tray and left. I was alone with the less-scary woman, but I was a nervous wreck.

"Please," I pleaded to her. "I shouldn't be here. This is a mistake, that man just didn't understand!"

"You must answer my questions," she said. "Do not be afraid, you answer my questions, and all will be fine, okay? Please, do not worry."

Her tone was very reassuring, and I started to feel better. Her English was very good, and I knew she would understand what happened. She smiled, and I was able to smile back. We sat at the table.

"Now, please tell me, this is your luggage yes?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Did you pack it yourself?" she asked.

"No," I answered.

"No?" she asked, somewhat surprised at my answer although I couldn't tell you why. "Someone else packed this luggage?"

"Yes," I answered, somewhat puzzled in return and wondering what the problem was.

"What is in this luggage?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't know," I replied. "Probably clothes, and makeup, things like that." Then I added, in case she misunderstood, "It's not for me."

"So, this is not your luggage? But you say yes, this is your luggage!"

"Yes, I mean, it is mine. It was given to me."

"You mean, someone ask you to carry this luggage through Customs?"

"Yes, that's right," I agreed. She seemed to understand now, except she started to get very serious.

"Did anyone else ever have your luggage? Did they put anything in your luggage?"

"Yes," I answered. She was starting to get upset. "I only took it after the flight landed. I'm going to give it back once I'm through Customs."

None of my answers calmed her. Instead she picked up my bag, backed to the door, and knocked. The large scary guard answered.

["Check this for drugs, maybe even a bomb. Be careful, it could contain anything,"] she said as she handed my bag over to him.

["Will you search her clothes, then?"] he asked.

["I do not know if that is necessary. She is cooperating, I just think someone may have tricked her into carrying something in the luggage,"] she told him.

["If you think, maybe she stops cooperating, you should search her."]

The large scary guard left. My guard closed the door and returned.

"Please tell me, is there anything else I should know?" she asked.

"No," I said, still confused.

"I think, maybe you are not telling me something?"

"Nothing!" I replied.

She looked at me, thinking, I didn't know what about. She seemed to reach a decision and told me, "Take off your clothes."

"What? No, that's not necessary!" I tried to tell her.

"Please cooperate," she told me. "Take off all your clothes, or I will bring someone to do it for you."

This was crazy. I took off my shoes and socks, and placed them on the table as she instructed. Then I turned my back, took off my jeans and handed them to her. She gave them a quick search, then quickly folded them and put them on the table with my shoes. I removed my sweatshirt and handed it to her. Wearing nothing but my underpants, I crossed

my arms over my chest and held my shoulders for modesty. Then I turned and watched as she inspected the shirt, folded it and placed it on top of the pile. Finally she turned back to me.

"Please put your arms out to your sides," she instructed.

This was so humiliating. Taking a deep breath and biting my lip, I put out my arms. The guard's mouth dropped open, and she stared.

"You – you are boy?" she finally said. "You never say you are boy!"

"You never asked," was all I could think to say.

"Gomen nasia!" she said, backing to the door. "Apologies!"



She knocked on the door, and the big scary guy answered. After a brief conversation she left, taking all my clothes with her, and he stayed.

"So, you are boy. Then, you must be searched by me," he said. Looking at me he asked, "Why do you wear lady panties?"

"They're not!" I responded. "They're designer underwear, for men. I always wear them." I thought about telling him how my mother buys them for me, but decided against it. I had probably already said too much.

He gave me a look of disgust. "Put hands on table, and spread legs," he told me as he pulled a rubber glove from his belt and snapped it on his hand.

A few minutes later he was finished with his questioning. He knocked on the door and the female guard answered. After a brief conversation she left, only to return moments later with my carry-on and the tray of items from my pockets.

"Get dressed," I was told. "You have cleared customs. Leave by door at far end of hallway, into luggage area."

Then they both left.

I needed a moment before getting dressed to collect my thoughts, and so sat in one of the plastic chairs. I couldn't believe what had just happened to me. I sat for a couple of minutes, then stood to get dressed.

Except I didn't have my clothes!

I searched the entire room – it didn't take long. They had given me my carry-on bag, and the little tray with my keys and things, but my clothes were nowhere to be found.

Maybe they put them in the carry-on? I opened the main storage area, and searched. I found some clothes and shoes that belong to my mother, a lot of makeup, brushes and combs, a hair dryer, lots of things, but not my clothes.

Slowly I realized – my clothes were not there, and I was going to have to ask one of those guards for help. I walked over to the door and knocked, but there was no answer. I tried the doorknob – it was no longer locked. Of course not, they told me I could leave when I was finished dressing. I opened the door and stuck my head into the hallway.

"Hello?" I called. There was no answer, there was no one else there. The hallway looked deserted. I couldn't step out, I was dressed in only a pair of panties – underpants!

I called out again, "Hello!" Still no answer. I stepped into the hallway, and walked naked and barefoot to the door I had come in. There was a small window, and if I stood on tiptoe I could look out. There was the Customs room, with all the desks and agents, and hundreds of airline passengers, but no guards.

I was secretly relieved. I mean, if I had seen them what would I have done? Opened the door and walked out in front of all those people to speak to them? I quickly tiptoed back to my room, closing the door behind me.

I looked at my carry-on bag again. Maybe there was something of my mother's that I could wear, something not too embarrassing, that I could wear just long enough to find a guard and ask for my clothes.

A skirt and blouse, that was out. A bikini, no, no way. A beach towel, I could just wrap myself in it, except it was too small for that. A sun dress, definitely not.

When I found it, I knew it was what I was going to wear. It wasn't a dress, it wasn't overly feminine, but it sure wasn't boys' clothing. I set my outfit aside, and repacked the bag, then took a deep breath before getting dressed.

It only took me a minute. Then I picked up my carry-on, scanned the room to see if I had forgotten anything, and headed out the door. I walked back to the Customs room, opened the door, and stepped out. It didn't take long to spot the security guard, who came running to see what I was doing. When he saw it was me, and what I was wearing, he stopped short and stared with his mouth hanging open.

For shoes I was wearing a pair of cork sandals with red straps and a three-inch heel. Above this, my ankles were bare. Then my calves were bare. Then my knees were bare. Then my thighs were bare! Finally with some relief, the guard's eyes passed over the pair

of bright red short-shorts I was wearing. My waist was bare, but above this I was wearing a tank top with bright red and white horizontal stripes, and thin red straps over my shoulders. The top had form-fitting cups inside, so it could be worn without a bra. In my case, they had just enough shape all on their own to give the impression of young breasts.

The guard sputtered several times, but finally managed to say, "What are you doing here?"

"I just need you to bring me my..." I tried to say.

"Get out!" he yelled, looking at me with disgust. "I tell you other door! Get out!"

"Yes, but see, I need..."

"Get out! I will deport you, get out! Get out now!"

I turned and ran through the open door, ran down the hall, and ran out the door at the other end. I closed the door and it locked behind me. My heart raced as I tried to collect myself once again.

I was in the baggage claim area. Looking around, I found the carousel for luggage from my flight. There was very little luggage left on the conveyor belt as it circled out of the back room, around, and back in. Just a few lonely looking cases, lost or forgotten, sort of like me. Of course my mother wasn't there.

I didn't waste any more time here, but continued on, following the signs through the airport, and finally emerging into daylight. I found my mother, waiting with all our luggage by the shuttle bus stand.

"Sweety, there you are!" she called when she saw me. "I was getting worried, you were taking so long. Oh, look at you! You stopped to get changed, that was a good idea. It's really warm out, you'll be a lot more comfortable this way. Come on, I think that's the shuttle to our hotel in Tokyo!"

Chapter 2

Japanese Vacation

"Sweety, if you're planning to wear shorts again while we're here, you should probably shave your legs when we get to the hotel."

This was so like her. I had just been through the most traumatic event of my life, and also one of the top-seven most embarrassing. Hey, it wasn't even over yet, so it still might move up in the rankings. So you would think she might have a little sympathy for me, but no.

I leaned over in my seat on the shuttle bus to speak with her. "My legs don't need shaving," I said as quietly as I could. "I don't shave my legs."

"Of course you do! You shaved them just two weeks ago, remember?"