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Spork Nazi

Sporks-- neon orange, soft plastic, tine-lipped spoons-- are what the State provides us to conquer the chow hall gruel, miscellaneous faux meats, and soy-infused-every-other-food-group not already mentioned. (Side note: Do not for a minute assume, because I've said the word soy, that prison offers wholesome, if bland, faire for nutritional sustenance.) These sporks are seldom as clean as one would prefer, and inevitably the one you grab has been Swiss-Armed into a doorstop or grout scraper, then cycled back into life as an eating utensil, now sporting malicious lip-catching burs-- tenement housing for food particles and bacteria in the form of gouges and surface scratches.

Due to such factors, and possibly a spore of homegrown prison O.C.D., I've taken to grabbing three or four at a time in hopes of finding two, neither caked in yesterday's soy cake nor bearing the scars of some unnamed molestation. Call me old-fashioned, but if forced to dine with utilitarian flatware I prefer them virgin or, at least, second handable.

Which brings us to the Spork Nazi, a rotund, gray-haired faintly Germanic hamster with rosacea and wire-framed unisex eye glasses covering a large portion fo her face.

Having passed through the chow hall line, collected my 5:30 A.M. breakfast tray, moo juice, and requisite number of potential eating utensils, I was about to take my seat, mumble a short pray

and begin my longstanding spork assessment ritual, when this hamsteresque prison guard, racked with nervous enegry, eyed my sporkucopia and began a fevered interrogation as to the reason I possessed four sporks:"Sir! Why do you have four sporks?! Four sporks is not normal! I've seen people eat with two sporks, but four is not normal! I'm going to need you to give me two of those spoks, Sir!"

I was caught off guard by her hypervigilant focus on such a mundane item-- especially when she should have been more concerned with line-jumpers trying to filch a second or thrid tray, or the well-practiced kitchen thieves handing off bread sacks and Saran Wrap belts of meat (and other ingredients meant to be lunch) now destined for the prison yard's black market.

How does one argue against such sound reasoning as quanitative normality, a value no doubt based upon extensive research, algorithmic patterns, and hours of philosophical quandry over the phschological no-man's-land of sporkist iconicity? Partly out of shock and perhaps partly out of subliminal sympathy for her obviously delicate normalcy-dependent world, without a word and as cautiously as a man setting down a slingshot before a phalanx of gun barrels pointed at his necessary parts, I handed over two of the offending utensils.

Crisis averted! Without again diverting her sentinel gaze from the shuffling line of bleary-eyed criminals collecting their issue of lukewarm gelatinous oatmeal and canned fruit, she slid the sporks into her fat little pocket, no doubt to be tagged and bagged as evidence to accompany the field report later-- or

possibly to end up as part of her candlelit Shrine to Normalcy, which Spork Nazi surely keeps in the closet of her one-bedroom apartment.

Granted, we'd just come off a prison-wide lockdown. Only four days prior, an inmate had got himself stabbed to death on his way back from breakfast, and in light of the event, staff had likely been given a directive to look for suspicious behavior. While it's not impossible to accomplish grievous acts of violence with a spork there are far better options to be had. Such were utilized in that particular event.

Meanwhile, I'm faced with a moral dilemma. Do I forego my God-given right to sanitary sporkage, or do I set aside the progress of so many years of perfunctory, state-mandated rehabilitation? I'll have the reader know, when Fraulein Haamster is afoot, I now palm all my sporks. Criminals are made, not born.