Leaving Las Vegas

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I think that was the name of a long-ago movie. *Leaving Las Vegas*. A depressing one, with Nicholas Cage drinking himself into oblivion...maybe to death; I don't remember.

I myself have just left Las Vegas, though not stumbling drunk. I was there very briefly...flew there Monday, flew home Tuesday!...for a meeting of ALAN:

(Founded in November 1973, ALAN is made up of teachers, authors, librarians, publishers, teacher-educators and their students, and others who are particularly interested in the area of young adult literature.)

Much as I thoroughly like and enjoy the members of ALAN, and was pleased to have dinner Monday night with a small but stellar group of them...I do find Las Vegas pretty depressing. Because of the time difference, I was up at 5 AM on Tuesday morning, and went down to the hotel lobby, in search of coffee, to find it unchanged from what I had walked thorough the previous night at 10:30: bright lights, loud throbbing music, no place to sit except in front of slot machines. No windows. People everwhere endlessly sliding money into the machines. A couple...she in a wedding dress!...side by side at the slots.

Earlier, I had actually been awakened by noise from the next room: thumping and banging, and shouts. A man's voice: "My money! My money!" Was he being robbed? Or just lamenting that he had lost it all gambling the night before? I briefy considered calling security but before I decided to do so, the noise subsided and I did nothing. If I had? Picture the people in the hotel security office:

"Woman on the phone says someone is yelling in room 1307."

"Yelling what?"

"About his money."

"Ha ha. What else is new?"

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