

Bad Dreams

When the girls were growing up, they had their share of bad dreams, monsters under the bed or in the closet. At one point during all of this, I gave a daughter one of my stuffed dragons. I had quite the collection of stuffed dragons. They were out numbered by the stuffed raccoons, but I didn't buy the dragons.

One fateful, and apparently dreadful, night I gave my daughter a little stuffed dragon. I told her how it would protect her from all the scary things at night. Dragons, of course, can breathe fire, and attack all the scary things in the room. This little dragon would do all it could to keep my little girl safe. It worked, and there were far less scary dreams or things that went bump in the night.

The dragon was passed to the next daughter and so on. My youngest still has him sitting on her bed. Her nightmares seem to be under control.

As it happens, my darling granddaughter was having nightmare/monster problems. I went out to pick up a dragon to protect her from the bumpy night things. I think I'll need to ask how it is going with that little dragon.

Another little thing in life, that seemed to make a difference.

Little things in life

Many years ago, when my oldest daughter was my only daughter I took her to a movie. She was being a bit of a handful at home,

and my dear wife was confined to bed rest with limited mobility. The circumstances requiring that rest are for a different time, this is a bit more light hearted. With that said I embarked with my 3.5 year old daughter for a day of father/daughter fun.

Fun was a conditional word for the day. My darling little girl would not sit still for much of anything. She was (and still is) on the go most of the time. The only thing I know of that does slow her down is a good book. At that time, good books only lasted 5 to 10 minutes tops. My wife questioned my decision of taking her to a movie, but since she wasn't going to be there, she wished me good luck as I left the apartment.

The conversation on the way to the theater went something like this:

"What is a movie Daddy?"

"It is kind of like your cartoons, without the commercials."

"But, I like commercials Daddy, they show me all the new toys."

"I think you will like the movie."

"What is the movie about Daddy?"

"I don't know, I haven't seen it. It has bears in it."

"I like bears. Are these friendly bears, I only like friendly bears."

"Well, it is called "The Care Bears Movie", so I think they are friendly."

"WHAT is a Care Bear? Is it like a polar BEAR? You know, the white ones."

"No, not a polar bear, these bears are blue, pink, and other colors."

"I've never seen a pink bear. I think I will like that one. Will there be red ones? I like red. I like blue too. I wonder if there are purple bears. I would like to meet a purple bear. Do you think I will ever meet a purple bear Daddy?. That would be neat. I think a purple bear would be lots of fun. I wonder if the bears growl. Do you think they growl Daddy? Most bears

growl you know. Bears are big and they eat meat. Did you know they eat meat. I saw the bears at the zoo eat fish and other stuff. The fish wasn't cooked. Did you know they don't cook the food for bears? I wonder if there are other animals in the movie. I like all kinds of animals. Mommy likes Raccoons. I like them too. They always wear masks. Did you know that you can't take off a Raccoon's mask Daddy?...."

Yes, my daughter just started rambling after a bit. Funny how that didn't change much. I don't think I had much to say after she started going. If this was going to be the way the afternoon went, the movie was going to be really long. We got to the theater and it was packed full of very young children and their frazzled parents or grandparents. I'm sure there were a couple of frazzled friends, uncles and aunts around too. The theater was just full of noisy, energetic children.

And then the movie started. There was a pre-movie to the main feature. If I recall correctly it was a "Rainbow Brite" short. The kids, if possible got louder during that short. It didn't seem to hold anyones attention. I was glad it was a short film, and that the main film was just over an hour.

But then the main feature started. I'm not sure how it started, it has been a while since I've seen it, but a hush fell over the theater. Every child in the room was staring at the screen. It was amazing. As the children started to get a bit antsy, the movie switched course. As they got scared, it switched course again. The attention of all of the children was rapt during the 77 minutes of the movie. My attention was on the course of the movie and the affect it had on the audience. I had never been in a movie that seemed to be completely made for its target audience. I was impressed. I heard similar ponderings from other parents as we left the theater. I would have to tell this to my dear wife. If it had been possible, it would have amazed her too. My daughter, fell in love with Care Bears that day....

At some later date, we were doing a bit of shopping. At the checkout counter there was a package of "Care Bear" underwear in my daughter's size. I said to my lovely wife that we should get some for the dear daughter. I was told that she didn't need them. This wasn't about need, it was about giving her something she would really like. The cost wasn't much. They weren't the best, and wouldn't last that long. But they would make a little girl happy for a while. Little things like that can really make a difference. I'm not sure my wife understood at the time. She hadn't seen the movie yet, and it seemed like a silly thing to get. Of course it was silly. It was a spur of the moment decision. That's why they put those things at the check out counters.

As it turned out, I was entirely correct in my assumption that they would be accepted with glee. I think we had to go out to get at least one more set, since they were the underwear of choice for a long time.

Little things in life make lasting impressions. My daughter will still tell of getting the "Care Bear" underwear to this day. She remembers it from all those years ago. The reason behind the first father/daughter movie day is still etched in my brain, but the results of that day are engraved with a deeper groove. Time spent with those you love. Sharing things that you enjoy. Sharing new experiences. Little things that grow into bigger things. They become family stories. They shape our memories.

Little things in life don't take much effort, but the reward can be great.

I hope the little things in your life were good memories. I know that "little things" do not have to be good things, but I find as I look back I remember fewer of the bad things. Memories are like that. For that I am thankful.

As a side note, the three of us went to see that movie one

more time. Little one wanted to share it with her mommy. The same thing happened in the theater again. In all these years, I've never seen that reaction to a movie again. Maybe that isn't such a little thing after all.

Interesting April

So far April has been a time for family. I was able to see all of my daughters at one time. This is rather difficult since one of them lives in Florida. I wish we would have had time for dinner together, but that did not happen. Time seems to get in the way. Lives have to be lived. My daughters are now all adults (even the youngest WOW!), so they have their own priorities. Of course they had their priorities when they were younger, but let's just say thier parents' priorities overruled the wishes of the children. Now, as adults, they have more to say on what they do. This is as it should be. I may not like the choices they make, but they need to make their own way.

The hardest thing for a parent to do is let his/her children live their own lives as adults. I no longer have final approval on their activities. I can no longer press my will on them. I do let them know what I think. I've never been shy about that with them. I will give my advice when asked, or if I really feel it is needed. The choice to follow it, is theirs. I try not to intrude, as I say they are all adults.

Those thoughts filled the early days of April. It seemed just as my daughter and her family headed back to Florida, they two youngest were in a play. I spent most of two weekends at the theater watching them sing and dance. Family members from near and far came to see the show. I was happy to see all of them

at the show. So far, April has been a time for family, and it will continue next week for Easter. As I get older, it seems that family becomes more important than it was before. Of course, the very thought of family becoming more important to me would not have made much sense 10-15 years ago. I always held my family as important. It just seems that I found that sense of importance grows every year.

It was wonderful to see all the family I did. I'm sorry I missed seeing a few. And I miss the many who are no longer with us.

Hold your family to your heart. Treat each meeting with love and respect, as you will never know when you will see them next.

Saturday In The Sticks

WOW! My first Saturday off in at least 2 months (I'm not counting the three weeks I was pretty well incapacitated... no fun!). Gloomy, wet, cold day that it was there were moments of enjoyment. Decided to tag along with Mom and my oldest niece to grocery shop and use my gift card to pick up a certain DVD that came out yesterday. As we parked at the grocery, I noticed a vehicle with a very recognizable license plate holder. I told Shelb "Guess who's here?" Always fun to run into your best friends (all 6 of them).

Tonight, Shelby and I went to see the musical version of the Adam Sandler/Drew Barrymore flick *The Wedding Singer*.

Although the cast and crew were phenomenal, I would definitely not have taken any of my nieces and nephews under the age of 15. I'm sure that the innuendo would have flown over their head but some of the language would be cause for

concern.

The show was great fun and a great transport back to the age of excess with catch phrases, pop culture references of 1985, and the CLAPPER!!! YOU HAVE TO LOVE THE CLAPPER! And who doesn't love seeing the fake Rainbow Brite (Played by another one of my nieces... Alyssa Davis... and I thought she was only 7), Joan Jett, Cyndi Lauper, Brooke Shields, Punky Brewster, and I did spy a nerd who had the orange and black striped shirt and rainbow suspenders of a certain Orkan. Plus, a Princess Leia wannabe complete with a cinnabun hairdo. I wonder if the script called for the Princess Leia character; knowing the actress, she probably had some input.

The leads and ensemble were all wonderful but there were several standout scene-stealing cameos particularly the always engaging Tiff who brought the house down as Linda, Robbie's fiancée. Another pure delight was a fellow [tangenteer](#) who was ALMOST unrecognizable as Robbie's grandma. The rap she performed with the flamboyant George was a hoot! If I've said it one, I've said it a million times... lots of times a show is not all about the leads. Give a cameo or supporting role to the right thespian and they will steal the show. It just so happened that this show had more than one great cameo role ☐

I stopped at the entrance after the show long enough to congratulate Carol and say hi to Megan. My leg was getting tired and I did not want to fight the mob but the show was a TOTALLY TUBULAR!

As an added bonus, I even get NEXT Saturday off! Not going to complain since I will have a Saturday and Sunday off (provided that the store I work in continues to recognize the resurrection of our Savior).

BookWorm

I was always an avid reader, but then I took an almost decade hiatus from reading books. Because I did (and do) my reading before bed, I think the hiatus was due to the combination of getting used to parenting and also being fresh out of college which meant that I wasn't used to getting to read what I wanted rather than what was assigned to me. But a few years ago, I took up the hobby once again, and I've been thoroughly enjoying it. I began by reading non-fiction because I liked the idea of learning something while I was reading. I read biographies and stories that ranged from fun to inspirational, and my favorite reading was centered on true crime.

I read [*In the Presence of My Enemies*](#), the inspiring true story of the Burnham couple who, after years of missionary work in the Philippines, were taken hostage during a vacation there and held for a year. I read [*My Lobotomy*](#), the biography of a man named Howard Dully who underwent a forced frontal lobotomy at the age of 12. I read [*How Many Hills to Hillsboro*](#), an account of a family of 5 who attempted and almost made a cross country trip together in the '60s – on their bicycles. I delved into fiction, reading the entire Harry Potter series and loving it. And now I call myself an avid reader with a “to read” book list a mile long – and by the way, all of the above mentioned books I enjoyed immensely, and I highly recommend them.

I think that's how I ended up reading 3 books at the same time. It began when I was looking for something to read that would compare to Harry Potter, so I tried C.S. Lewis' Narnia series and began with *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. While enjoyable, it wasn't quite the can't-put-it-down book that I was looking for, so I consulted my “to read” list and decided to try a Stephen King book that had been recommended by a local newspaper columnist – [*Under the Dome*](#). With the exception of some short stories, I haven't read Stephen King

before, but I've enjoyed a few of his movies. So far, *Under the Dome* has been exactly what I'm looking for – page-turning excitement that is hard to put down! The novel is about a small town in Maine that is suddenly and inexplicably cut off from the rest of the world by a mysterious, invisible – yet very real barrier. Between trying to draft and enforce their own laws, keeping lawless individuals under control and townspeople from going crazy – literally – and attempting to figure out what the dome is and how to get rid of it, the little town has more than its fair share of strife.

A few weeks before my request for *Under the Dome* came in at the library, I had decided I wanted to read the Bible, and so I find myself switching between two 1000+ page books in bed at night – I am so grateful we found a great sale on that e-book reader, which makes switching between these two books easy on my arms and my bed partner. I know a lot of people are intimidated by the complex language of the Bible, but the NIV version is fairly easy reading, and I really enjoy reading it and especially learning more about the chapters I've read when I go to church on Sunday.

As if reading two 1000+ page books at the same time weren't enough (though on the plus side, it's not like I can possibly get the characters in the Bible and those in *Under the Dome* mixed up – a complication I used to run into in my heavier reading days when I would try to read a book for pleasure and a book for school at the same time), another one of my requests came in at the library – *Caril* by Ninette Beaver. Being a more obscure book, I don't know that I will get the opportunity to get it from the library again, so I'm attempting the book-reading tri-ecta. *Caril* is the unauthorized biography of Caril Fugate, the alleged accomplice to [Charles Starkweather](#) who went on an infamous murder spree centered in Lincoln Nebraska in 1958. Although Caril was tried and convicted in a court of law, there has been much debate about her actual role in the murders because of her age

at the time – 14. The book follows the cases and Caril's incarceration and is written from the media's point of view in the 1970's before Caril was released from prison. It's been interesting to read about other news items of the day (breaking news items in 1958 included: Liz Taylor's husband killed in a plane crash and Elvis being drafted into the Army) and also how differently people reacted to news reporters taking interviews for the brand-new medium of the day: television. Family members of suspects, law enforcement, and attorneys were all much more willing and able to talk to reporters and share details for the camera than they are today. You may have seen one of a number of movies made about the Starkweather cases; the most famous is Natural Born Killers, although that movie DOES NOT follow the cases accurately and is, in my opinion, a terrible movie. I guess the reason I'm so interested in these cases is because Charles Starkweather was a different type of serial killer and one who has escaped the major notoriety of say, Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy. I also lived in the lovely city of Lincoln Nebraska for a year, and I've seen many of the places where the crimes took place for myself – including the penitentiary where Starkweather was electrocuted and the cemetery where he is buried.

I'm really enjoying all 3 of my books right now, but reaching my goal of re-reading the last installment of the Harry Potter series before the final movie comes out mid-July is going to prove to be quite challenging!!

And one more note – further encouragement to read Under the Dome is the movie being made due to come out this year – looks like a made-for-tv movie, which is difficult for me to imagine based upon the violence involved and intensity of the story. But if Stephen King's other tv mini-series are any indication, Under the Dome the movie version will not disappoint and is an excellent reason to pick up this great book for some perfect summer reading!

Say Goodbye To The Suds

Today, April 14th 2011, is a bleak day for millions (my mother included). It was announced that 2 programs that have been on television for 40+ years will soon be leaving the airwaves to make room for more inexpensive fare... or... more daytime talk shows. When I returned from work, Mom sadly informed me that *All My Dingbats* (err... *Children*) and *One Life to Live* (err.. *Live*) have been cancelled. I might have laughed and poked fun at the announcement had I not been a bit shocked. I often tell people that I sit and watch the soaps to have a good laugh but like prime time television, the daytime scene is dramatically changing with the arrival of more cost efficient less plot driven programming. I also say that if you watch one episode of any soap, you can come back 6 months later and not miss a thing. Sometimes, the show may even be on the same "day" as it was six months earlier. Christmas can take weeks to celebrate on the suds.

Actually, the soaps have been the [training ground](#) for some of Hollywood's big name stars. Tommy Lee Jones was on *One Life*. Christian Slater (of Sabre fame) was on *All My Children*. Demi Moore was on *General Hospital*. David Hass (ok, maybe we won't mention him). Meg Ryan was on something or other. So not only are there the actors who stay on the series for 40 years but there are some who actually have made the transition to other ventures.

AND, the replacements for both series have been announced. *The Chew* (rhymes with *The View*) and *The Revolution* will be polluting the airwaves by January. Just what television needs... more gab fests. At least prime time comedies (the good ones, anyway) **SEEM** to be safe... for now.

This & That

It seems that the addition one of our newest [tangenteers](#) (I see a newer addition... but it has been years since I have taken a French class) I am quickly falling behind in my posts (although she does have a few hundred to catch me ☐).

Yesterday, I noticed real progress in the continuing dissolving of my blood clot. I still feel it... not really painful but it is still keeping me at a slow clip. Madame Peters was in tonight (haven't seen her since the day before I went to the doctor nearly two or THREE (?) months ago. I assured her that I am recovering nicely... however slowly. But I will be back to my 3-4 mile walks 3 times a week before long. Telling myself that I will be able to do the things I really enjoy doing in time helps with the psychological.

My recital with the rest of K's students is less than 4 weeks away. Memorizing my very wordy but very fun piece is challenging but I am really close. I have nailed down a fine female to do the bit with and once she completes her run in *The Wedding Singer*, we will get together and get 'r done.

Well... that is all... My food is probably over done and I have to watch *The Office* which I DVR'ed... Michael Scott's farewell is looming. I think next week is the extended special episode.

Is this the moment when the series will "Jump the Shark?" How will Will Ferrell fare in the new role? Time will tell.

Remember Your First Time

Yes, I very fondly remember my first time seeing Andrew Lloyd Webber's [*The Phantom of the Opera*](#). It was on a Saturday afternoon in October 1990 at the Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University (ok... so I had to check the Stagebill for the official venue name) in Chicago the day after our marching band performed it's halftime show featuring the music of the phenomenon.... complete with Phantom masks and capes. Tonight, as the family gathered at one of the first high school productions ever produced, I was taken back to that day 20 years ago. In the row in front of me sat a woman who turned around and asked if I was one of Emily Curtis' students. I very proudly stated that indeed I was and still am. The woman (who was a dear friend) told me that Ma2 spoke very highly of me on several occasions. We both told how much we dearly miss her. I knew that I was in for a memorable, magical evening.

I do not believe that I have ever seen a professional production of any show before I saw a high school production of the same. It has been many years since I have seen Phantom on stage (the movie does not do the musical justice AT ALL) so there were some things that I did not remember. But everything about tonight's production was shockingly gorgeous.

The set design was phenomenal. My favorite piece was the bridge used during the "Don Juan Triumphant" scene. It honestly looked like it could have been used as the barricade in *Les Misérables*. The graveyard scene ("Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again") was dark and mysterious with just a faint glow of moonlight (but no fireballs thrown by the Phantom ☹).

I was also impressed with the illusion of the Phantom and Christine's journey to the lair beyond the lake.

The young thespians on stage when PHENOMENAL. The leads both began taking voice lessons a year ago in preparation for auditions and it certainly showed. The title character had an

extraordinary range. I was on stage with the young man in my first Village Players production (*Meet Me in St. Louis*) and he has come A LONG WAY since then. Every time I have seen Phantom, I measure the quality of the production on one thing: the amount of goosebumps I get when he sings his signature song "Music of the Night." Needless to say, the high school JUNIOR nailed it!

The actress playing the role of Christine in ANY show must have a wickedly outrageous voice. The runs in tonight's delivery of "Think of Me" were crazy good.

I must say that my least favorite character in the show is the third leg of the triangle: Raoul, Vicomte de Changy. He always seems to me to be a whiner. But again, a fine performance.

NOW for the real stars of the show: Msrs. Firmin and Andre, the theatre owners. They are the comic relief that holds the show together and their timing as well as their voices were impeccable. The outrageous "Notes" and "Prima Donna" pieces in which there are like 50 melodies at one time (ok... not THAT many) were handled very nicely. In younger days, I would have so gone out for the big two roles; however, after a little high school show that I was in (not a post about my on stage experiences), I definitely know which roles I am so suited for.

If I had one complaint, it is what could not be done in this production. Do not go to be blown away by HUGE theatrical spectacle. Some of the big stage pieces simply are not possible on a stage and budget of a small school and most are there (just no fireballs). Yet, if any school in my little corner of the world could pull it off, it was this one at the most glorious setting we have to offer.

My 6 year old nephew's favorite scene: "the dummy who dropped from the ceiling on the noose." Ok, that was enough for him

who slept through the last 10 minutes.

Yes, a small school CAN produce extraordinary things. Thank you to the lady in front of me for taking me back 20 years and making me remember how special my own “Angel of Music” is to me. Emily would have been ecstatic!

Are we there yet?

The next story will be totally made up from bits and pieces of the stories I heard about the road trip....

Many years ago, my oldest daughter was around 9 (almost 10) and the next daughter was 5. They took a road trip out to California with their grandparents. It was the oldest’s second trip out. What I remember from the stories is that the youngest on the trip would be able to find any McDonalds, even with her eyes closed. They were able to visit relatives. There were fireworks, but somebody slept through them. I think Uncle Butch had a Hot Tub. Their littlest sister was born that year (I think). If the little sister is correct, then a new cousin was waiting for them in California. It has been so long, I think I need input from the people who actually went. I have bits and pieces in my memory, and it must have been some road trip for the grandparents. Maybe, just maybe I will transpose different people and really make the thing up. ☐

Ready for a road trip of my own...

Seemed Like Old Times

Last week, our primary nighttime closer turned in her two-week notice. I was called into the cubby to discuss the issue. "You have another opportunity coming your way." An opportunity that I DO NOT WANT! I came out and told me employer that once my leg is fully healed, I am going to look for another job suited toward not only my gifts but also my epiphany of the last month or so. I also told her that my outside commitments would not allow me to close 5-out-of-7 nights. I think I am so at the point where I am almost burned out by retail. I don't know what it is. I love interacting with people but I really want something different.

I guess my feelings on the matter were not taken into account as I will be closing every day I work (interfering with everything I am involved in outside of the store... board meetings, voice lessons, however my Sunday schedule will allow me to attend church). But I am not complaining since this is the best I have at the moment. I do have another week to hopefully arrange something with my vocal coach since I do have a recital for which I have a female lined up to perform a number with.

The boss has hired another adult. Someone I am well acquainted with since she worked with me not only the last time I was at the store but also at the ol' Wal*Mart. I got to refresh her in some areas of the store... grinding meat, reducing meat, a little on the register, and a few other things.

Perhaps she will be inheriting some of these closing nights once she becomes better refreshed and more acclimated to the new owners. Making an observation and not complaining but if I were managing a store with no more than 15 total employed, I would ask if it was acceptable to change someone's schedule so dramatically, especially when the person affected has had a

prior commitment approved on Thursday nights for nearly a year. Some sort of compromise could still be reached.

Really not upset. This just reaffirms my belief that there is something out there just waiting for me to grab hold of.