

A slightly different twist

A complete story this time. Some who have heard it before, may see a different spin on it.

It was a warm sunny day in the early spring. A young mother was waiting for her daughter to get home from kindergarten. Her youngest was getting rambunctious and really needed her older sister to play with. It was a trying time for the mother, she spent most of her day alone with only children to talk to. If you've ever been the parent of young children, you can understand the yearning for adult conversation. Yes, motherhood could be trying, but to see the smiles in her children's eyes made it all worthwhile.

Little Katie finally made it home from school with a big "Hi Mommy, I'm home."

Hugs were given and received. Lunch was served and eaten. The two girls went off to play. Finally, the mother could get some things done. There was laundry to do of course, but she really wanted some time to sit with a project she had going. Who knows what the project was for the day. It could have been anything from finishing a dress for one of her children, or knitting a blanket for someone's new baby. These were much easier to handle when the two girls were playing together. And with the older one gone part of the day, it seemed like they didn't have as many fights.

It didn't take too long before the girls wanted to go outside. It had been wet and rainy recently, and this was the first sunny day in a long time. Jenny came to ask her mother if she could go outside with her sister.

"As long as you don't get your clothes dirty, you can go out to play." , was her mother's reply. And she returned to her project.

It didn't take long before Katie came into the room and wanted to use the hose. Of course her mother said, "No Katie, I don't want you to touch the hose."

Slightly saddened, Katie went back outside to play.

A long time passed, the project was finished and it was quiet. Too quiet. From some premonition that some parents get, she knew that something wasn't quite right. The mother went outside to see what was going on with her two darlings.

She found them. Oh yes, she found them kneeling in a puddle, covered with mud and the hose was running, slowly making the puddle bigger. They were playing, splashing and laughing. They didn't see their mother come up to them.

With her temper rising, the mother first asked her youngest daughter, "Why are your clothes dirty? I thought I told you not to get them dirty."

Jenny's response was "But these aren't my clothes mommy, Katie said I could wear hers."

Her mother looked and sure enough, the clothes were a bit too big.

"What about you young lady? I told you not to touch the hose."

"But mommy," piped in Jenny again, "Katie didn't touch the hose. I'm a big girl now, I can turn on the hose myself."

What was a mother to do? Her daughters followed her instructions exactly. Oh yes, the letter of the law was stretched, but the elastic didn't break. What would she do?

Firmly she said "Stay here!" to her daughters. She went inside. Her daughters trembled with a little fear. Of course they knew their mother was mad. They had no idea of what was to come. They didn't like thinking about it, but they didn't want to make matters worse, so they stayed right where they

were.

In a few minutes the young mother came out again. In her hands, she held a camera. Pictures of two very muddy girls were taken. Excess mud was rinsed off. Baths were taken. Snacks eaten. All was right with this little family. The rest of the day was as normal as any other.

May you find, as this family did, that it is usually best to keep your temper, and try to find something good in every situation.

Would you read stuff like this?

It was a fairy tale life. Everything went well for them. They had beautiful, loving daughters. They had a roof over their heads, and food on the table. They were living their happily ever after. Now don't get me wrong, the two were not a king and queen. They weren't even a prince and princess. They had no royal blood to speak of, but they had each other. This meant that they had everthing.

As their children grew, they knew that they would need to adjust their lives to accommodate knowing each other again. They started when the youngest was almost five years old. They made time to be friends again. During this time they talked of their children, of course. Their daughters were an important part of their lives, and their well being was discussed often. But they also talked about themselves. They talked about their problems and joys. Most of all they talked about their futures.

I will have to say that the future looked bright for this pair. Everyone who knew them would have said the same thing. It was funny, but they really seemed to be on the same page. Most of the time, if you saw one of them, the other would not be far away. They liked it that way. Together, they were more than they could be apart.

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Looking Forward To The Next One

Well, here we are only 2 months out from our last trip to Disney World, and I'm already wanting to go back. That's nothing new, it's an awesome place, but I'm also reading about many changes taking place. Ok, so I'm not exactly planning the next trip (step one would be how to fit our family of soon-to-be 7 into the minivan along with a week's worth of luggage for a 20 hour drive), but articles like the following tempt me. Especially interesting: Disney's \$1 billion Next Generation project, which includes interactive line queues – they're adding things like an interactive mystery experience to the line of the Haunted Mansion attraction. And apparently they've already added interactive video games to Soarin' and Space Mountain, none of which I had noticed on our last visit! Maybe because we did the Fast Pass? That reminds me, Disney is going to try a new concept as part of the Next Gen project: guests will be able to book their ride times for various attractions from their hotels or from home ahead of time, drastically reducing or even eliminating the need to wait in line (and to see all these brand spanking new queue attractions?). Also something I missed this last time around:

the new playground and interactive video games in the line for the Winnie the Pooh ride. Now where would they have room for that, I wonder? But no wonder that we didn't notice these enhancements; that ride normally has an over 40 minute wait even in the down season, so we don't usually indulge in it.

Lots of interesting changes and enhancements on the horizon, [check them out for yourself](#).

It Was The Rat Poison

Last night, I FINALLY was up to attending a great game night with marvelous friends and one newcomer (a newcomer to me although, he had been to at least the Super Bowl extravaganza, I believe. My first game night in three months was full of laughs and great times. I got to see dear friends I have not seen since New Years or before and this also helped my continued progress. Laughter and wonderful times with some of my closest compadres is indeed the best medicine... better than rat poison, that is for sure.

I also got to see the four kids (plus two tagalongs which one of our regular game nighters brought along). Poor Beebs definitely was NOT feeling up to his normal self. The other little ones played on the Kinect system... something which I think looks interesting in the near future.

After the merriment of the evening wound down (about 12:30), I set out to make the 12 mile trek home. Before I even left town, I was traveling along and all of a sudden, a raccoon jumped out in front of me. Instinctively, I swerved and crossed the yellow line. Unbeknownst to me, one of B-town's finest was right behind me and turned on his red and blue lights.

“Did you see the raccoon I had sicced on you?”

Indeed I had! Apparently, the town has gained quite a surplus of the critters... living in the sewers until they plot their take over. Sounds like a bad B-movie to me. The friendly officer and I engaged in a conversation about any future theatrical endeavors I have coming up which led to the tale of my 3 month journey. After my identity was confirmed and I was not deemed a known terrorist, I was sent on my way. Good thing I did not indulge in the wine that was brought to our night of fun! I don't think it would be good to mix with the rat poison, anyway. ☐

THEN, I got back home and learned that the Buckeyes were defeated by two points by Kentucky with a buzzer beating shot. So much for my bracket... and I was doing so well for my first time ☐

Make the day special

This is one of those days, a day made special. What makes it special? Not much going on, other than a breakfast of pancakes, sausage and real maple syrup. My little family looks forward to this day all year. The pancakes are pretty ordinary. The sausage is usually top notch. The maple syrup is locally produced heaven in a bottle. In all of that, the day is just another day. But for my little family, this day is special. It has been special for many years.

I'm not sure what year it began, but our little town has a Maple Syrup Fest every spring. This was not the first maple syrup festival I went to, but it has been one that I've been to the most. Our local Maple Syrup Producers use this day to

advertise their product, and share it with the community. An educational day, to see how the syrup is produced. Of course you get to taste the finished product in many forms. But really, once you've seen it a few times, you could give the tour yourself. Again, not much there to make it special is there? But for us the day is still special.

You may ask yourself why. I have many times. The answer is quite simple. We took an ordinary event and made it that way. We found a shared joy in family and friends. A simple task of sharing a meal of sticky sweet syrup, combined with a wagon ride to see a few maple trees. A choice was made to make this day a little different than the rest.

This day had its beginnings in the shadow of a slight bit of depression. It was a day to help someone get out of the "winter blues". One year, a choice was made to get out and enjoy an earlier spring day. And so, our yearly visit to a maple syrup festival was born. It became the thing to do in early spring. It continued, year after year, to be a source of fun for the entire family.

Other days were added to that list, not just in spring time, but all year round. Not just to combat a bit of the seasonal blues, although that was on the top of the list, but to enjoy family and the company of others. We make those days special.

This is very important in life. We go along day by day. We do the same things over and over again. We go to work or school, we come home after the day has ended and we wait to start all over the next day. How boring that would be if that was all we did. But our society made some special days. Most of us call them the weekend. Days outside of the ordinary. Days we look forward to. I also think we need to add extraordinary days. Something to anticipate. Something to hold in heart. Those days need to be shared. They can be shared with family or friends. They are days that lift the heart and the mind. We make them that way and those days find their way into our

stories and shared experience.

Some of the special days were started and shared with just one person. Those days are no longer shared, but they still hold a comfortable place in my life. They were days we made together.

A very important life lesson was learned many years ago. Any day can be special. Any day can be held above the rest. We look for those days and hold them dear, because we made them. They are ours. Maybe this is part of seizing the day?

... To be continued...

BOY DID I NEED THAT!

My adventures for the week have been very rewarding and gratifying. Monday, I went to a board meeting of which I have not been since January ☐ Everyone was happy to see me and inquired about my well-being and progress. Slow but sure and limping along but progressing however little. After the meeting, C,L, and I went to dinner and had a nice, engaging conversation that entailed a lot of topics not the least of which was some possibilities about my next great adventure. One **VERY PROMISING** possibility will depend upon my current manager. Since I seem to see her less and less frequently, I left her a message informing her of the possibility. I just pray that she makes a decision that will be beneficial to both of us. I told her I will not pursue anything until I am as close to 100% as possible.

Today, I went to my first voice lesson in three months. I was immediately bombarded by two adorable boys. One who kept regaling me with jokes typical of a three or four year old. By the time the 6 year old was read to whoop me at

Battleship, it was time to begin my lesson. I did AMAZINGLY well for sitting in a chair... of course, I tried to sit with correct posture. But I narrowed my recital choices to two.

One requires a female to join me. K informed me that there are a few of her other students who would be up to the challenge but she hesitated to have a teenager perform the number with a 30 something. So, she allowed me to try finding a guest performer. Very fun piece while just a bit challenging. I can think of a few ladies I would enjoy performing with.

So... while still gimping along, the two days venturing around helped immensely! Being with great friends and doing what I love to do definitely helped! Just learning to accept the fact that it is a talent which I need to begin to share more and more. One of the many gifts I have been told that I possess which can only come from Above. Thank Him for that!

PLUS... as an added plus, I got to catch up with a GREAT friend from my WM days. Via facebook on which I found her a few weeks ago. Go to chat a bit, discuss lots of things including the dismissal of our former boss which seems to be interesting yet surprising all at once.

Too many thoughts flowing...

I'm have a lot of things flowing through my brain this evening. Instead of what I was going to write about, I have to say just a little bit about a sad little grey donkey.

If you've read Milne's Pooh stories, you know that Eeyore is a sad little donkey. It always seems that there is a dark cloud hanging over his head. He had nobody to remember him on his birthday, until he said something about it. He lost his tail.

He was bounced into a river. And he didn't have a house during a snowstorm.

Only Eeyore could see the benefit of a broken balloon, the fact that there wasn't an earthquake during the snowstorm. But in all this, he was very happy to have his tail back. A useful item just made for swishing about.

May you find good in all things, optimism during dark times, and have something to swish around just for fun.

Best In Film

Seriously, how many different groups must we listen to in order to determine what is the best film of all time? We already have the periodic AFI specials. Tonight we had another group telling us which was supposed (I believe) to take the popular vote into account. One of several genres I caught was "Best Musical." Of course, I had to comment on that one. I took umbrage with the five choices and their placement. Now we have "Best Kiss?" OH< PLEASE! Back to the topic at hand...

Best Musical:

- *West Side Story (1961)* I don't believe that there has ever been a more celebrated movie musical... winner of 10 Academy Awards. The Romeo and Juliet story told amidst the backdrop of gang infested New York City. Elvis was offered the lead role of Tony; however, turned it down because he thought it would tarnish his image if he were associated with a film that dealt with violence. Fascinating, since one of his earliest films, *King Creole*, dealt with just that. I, personally would have

placed this one higher.

- *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) **Classic, CLASSIC, CLASSIC!** Gene Kelly dancing and singing with a 103° temperature while being drenched by a mixture of water and milk (because water alone did not show up well enough). My favorite scene, Donald O'Connor's "Make Em' Laugh" song and dance.
- *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) **WHAT!!!! Totally missed out on this one!** Especially when you look at the next two. One tidbit I was not aware of: at times, Judy Garland could not stand working with Toto because his breath was so awful. Help me out, Taylhis... have you heard THAT one?!
- *Grease* (1978) While I do enjoy a viewing from time to time, this one gets on my nerves. Maybe it is from all the times my siblings and I were allowed to stay up past our bedtimes to watch it on a school night... maybe it was the drama of a certain community theatre's production. Definitely voted too high... should have been #5 at best. Well... at least the horrendous *Dirty Dancing* was not in the top 5. I guess there are some who consider it a musical.
- *The Sound of Music* (1965) The most profitable movie musical of all time. With inflation taken into account, it has made over \$1 billion placing it third all time behind *Gone with the Wind* and the original *Star Wars*. I would have a hard time deciding between this and *Oz* as the top musical. Both are personal favorites.

At least they got the "Top Action Film" correct. *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. No bloody Indiana Jones and the... placed before the title. When did they add that, anyway? I dunno... would anyone be game for a fifth installment? Harrison Ford would be if the story was right. Just do away with Indy's son.

Feeling Adventurous

I'm not sure if it was the 60^o+ weather of the past weekend (sure felt good) or just the idea of a little return to normalcy (whatever that is) but I have decided that this week I am going to set out on a few of the things I have been missing out on. Last Friday, I ventured out to get my first refill on my meds. A 90 day fill up... I guess I really am going to be on it for A LONG TIME, but it is for the best.

Later this afternoon, I am going to attend my first FCF board meeting since this all began (back in January... I refuse to miss more than 2). I am so excited to be able to get back and help get one of my favorite shows rolling along. I have finally come to the conclusion that thinking too much about auditioning for either [The Wizard of Oz](#) OR [Annie](#) (at another area theater) needs to take a backseat until I am 100% ready to go. Even then, I really want to focus on what lies ahead after I reach that goal. Still thinking about what that is going to be.

Thursday, I am going to my first voice lesson since January. K informed me that I picked the perfect time to do so. Her students are preparing for their annual recital and she was hoping that I would be back on my feet ready to go by then. I will pass along the details once I am confident that I will be strong enough to participate. God and everyone else knows I want to be but I am still being a bit realistic. It has nothing to do with my vocal ability; hopefully, my physical ability will be there as well.

AND FRIDAY... MY FIRST GAME NIGHT SINCE JANUARY! I cannot wait until I see some of my friends whom I have not seen since the start of 2011. Even those I have seen since. Hopefully, I

can convince a little buddy of mine that I do not live in the hospital. ☐

Goal setting and pushing forward just a bit surely will not impede my progress. After all... the doctor wanted me to go back to work the day after I was released from the hospital.

And in all this time, I forgot to wish my fellow Tangenteers a HAPPY THIRD BIRTHDAY! It has been a very fun and at times thought-provoking adventure and I truly enjoy continuing to get to know some of my best friends even better through their life experiences and thoughts! And WELCOME TO SPRING... it HAS been a long winter.

I think it was in the Spring

On an early spring day, I decided to host an apartment warming. There would be good food, good friends, wonderful conversation and maybe a game or two. All went as planned and a wonderful evening evolved. It was on that evening I met a very special person. When we were introduced, I received a quick, shy smile and a quick chaste hug. After that evening we became friends, started dating, got engaged and finally married. Our marriage lasted almost 20 years, until the time of her death. In the years that followed, I found that the seeds that marriage planted were far flung and all inclusive in my life. And to think, it all started with a smile.

I thought about writing a story of our life together. That is a story worth telling, but I have a feeling the audience would be limited. I think a better story, would be the story of the life lessons we learned along the way. Things that would and

do impact most people along their lives. I found through the years that the things we hold dear and important in our lives are usually shared ideals with others. to be continued...