

## Spring Vacation

“Am I sleepwalking?” That thought passes through my mind as weird dreams float among my efforts to make sense of the early morning messages on our computer. The dreams keep over-riding today’s thoughts as I get ready for work and chat with Jim. What is going on? I do not say anything to Jim about this problem because I am too busy trying to figure it out myself.

The dreams gradually behave themselves and go away as we travel to work this morning. But, oh! I am so very tired now. Maybe a nap will help----good thing Jim is the driver of choice today.

It is time to sit at my work station and earn the money this company pays me to construct custom cables. What in the world am I supposed to do with these black cables in front of me? I bear down on my concentration and deduct that I am supposed to be soldering. But which end? Oh, there is already something on the one end of these wires!....must be the other end that I need to work with. After a great deal of effort, I find the other end of the cable but cannot solder because something is already on the individual wire ends. “Think, Linda, think!” Concentrating is so very hard but eventually I realize those wires have been terminated and my job is to plug them in the proper order into a connector. Is this thing what I am supposed to use? “THINK! “ Ah, yes, this is the connector. I hold it in my hand and have no idea how to use it.

Why am I all alone here in this room? Where is everybody? Through the haze, Pat comes into view and I tell her I think I am having a T.I.F. and walk to the bathroom in hopes of clearing my head. On my way back I ask Heather what she knows about T.I.F.s. She gives me a strange look and says she doesn’t know anything about that.

Once back at my workstation, Pat asks me what in the world I mean by T.I.F.s. I tell her I think I may be having a mini-stroke. She tells me the proper term is T.I.A. (transient ischemic attack) and asks me some simple questions about my name and where I live. I am well aware of why she is asking these things and think I am doing a pretty good job of answering but she is not happy with my speed of reply and goes to the mold room to alert Jim of my problems. In an instant Jim is behind me and tells me he is going to call the doctor’s office as soon as they open.

Jim and Gary decide that bypassing the doctor's office is a better plan and we are soon on our way to the emergency room. I just want to sleep but am aware of my surroundings now. Jim calls Cindy to tell her of current events.

Lynchburg General is filled with kind, caring people and they try to make me comfortable as we spend the day waiting and waiting. They have a lot of things happening here today. Cindy arrives and, after determining that I am in no immediate danger, proceeds to hand Jim and me packets containing our wills. She jokingly says, "Here, sign quick!" Freddie has been working on the documents for a while and only finished them this past weekend. She is a big help to Jim as they sort thru the channels of insurance bureaucracy. I sleep.

I am wheeled through the hallways to have a CAT scan, then a series of chest X-rays. Emergency Room Doctor Guanzon comes to talk with us. He says that I have probably had a T.I.A but he would like to keep me in the hospital overnight for more tests. This guy could pass for Willy Pickett's brother and he is so very kind. Amy, my boss at work, calls Jim to ask about me. It feels so good to know I have concerned friends.

We are moved to another holding area as the channels are navigated to admit me for the night. Hospital Doctor Di Guilio appears in the new cubicle and I ask him, "If all these tests show nothing wrong, does that mean I'm just nuts?" He does not miss a beat in answering, "Yes!" All this time more kind people are caring for me. The nurse, Basil from Pittsburgh, tells us how he came to live in Lynchburg and tells of his son. Each caregiver is efficient and friendly.

Eventually I am moved upstairs to a room. I sure do hope Jim has scattered some corn so he can find his way out of here. Here, too, the staff is wonderful. Friend Pat stops by on her way home from work to check on us. (Secretly, I suspect she is checking out just how bad off I am so she can get first dibs on my tools if I don't come back to work. No, that is not true. She is a good friend.) She says the Easter egg hunt which we missed was a success and most people got candy-filled eggs. Cody got the prized \$50 egg. We appreciate Pat's caring friendship. A pretty vase of flowers arrives from my beloved five and tears of emotion are shed.

Jim is totally beat and heads home as I enjoy a good supper and still more great nurses and aids come into my life. One lady tells me about her three

children, another shares her pride in her two-year-old grandson. My phone is hopping with calls from my five plus coworker Bridgett. I feel just fine and feel guilty and embarrassed at being here.

All is quiet and peaceful until a bit after nine PM when a tall, dark-haired fellow arrives at my bedside with his shiny bed on wheels. We are going to the MRI department and we breeze through the halls at break-neck speed. OK, he says we are not going very fast but, when you are flat on your back, those ceiling tiles look like a blur. This guy had plans for a military career until a running accident (Hey, no wonder he didn't think he was going very fast!) quashed that goal.

The MRI is an impressive \$2,200,000 monster. It looks much like an overweight white donut turned on its edge. And they want to stuff me into that thing? The operator is very professional and friendly as she explains each procedure. She warns that it will be quite loud, much like a jackhammer, and offers me my choice of music for the headphones. I am bundled and immobilized and shoved into that donut. Then the fun begins as the beast whines and snorts and hisses and thumps and pounds for about 40 minutes. At one point the operator shoots dye into my veins for yet another round of thumps and roars. As the dye courses through me I experience a flush of warmth over my entire body, then it is gone as fast as it happened. It is flat-out awesome! I don't hear much of the music though.

When I am finally released from the MRI's clutches, don't you just know, I have a million questions and the lady patiently answers them? All too soon my dark-haired racer returns and we embark on another wild ride through the halls of Lynchburg General. He gets me settled back in my bed, then takes my hand and wishes me well. Such a sweetheart he is!

The night shift nurses are great and we have a good time discussing the day, so many years ago, when I took a batch of newborn pigs to the grade school, then stopped off at the bank drive-through. The teller wanted to see the pigs, so I placed one in the tray and the teller pulled the little critter into the building. Nurse Janet misunderstands and thinks I sent the pig up the pneumatic chute. We laugh until tears flow. I say it could be called "Piggy cash" but Janet is sure that is the origination of the term "Piggy Bank."

Morning dawns and my Jim arrives. The daytime Doctor Cook tells me I can go home. She says I have had a T.I.A. which caused no lasting damage but

that MRI last night indicated two previous strokes. Baby aspirin every day is prescribed. Two night nurses come to say their good byes before they leave, then we pack up my belongings and prepare our own departure. This has been a very expensive spring vacation but I'm pretty sure I had already met the \$1200 insurance deductible when we drove into the hospital parking lot yesterday morning.

The sun is shining as we drive under a canopy of white-lace Bradford Pears on Memorial Avenue. Bright yellow forsythia splash along driveways and daffodils sway in the breeze. Everything looks especially brilliant today. I am so very thankful for God's protective hand over me. We turn onto Heath Avenue and our home comes into view. Oh, it looks so good. I am blessed!

