



'Her Story'

(As told by Jeanette K. Regnier)

Installment Thirty Nine (November 9, 2006)

A Personal Note:

To all those who remembered Matt's wife, Cece's mother and Emily's family on the first anniversary of her passing: Thank you! The cards, e-mails and calls were very uplifting for us. Knowing she is not forgotten in the most important part for us. *-Jeanette*

Emily was able to be home about a week before her sisters wedding. Of course, she ended up back in the hospital a day or two later for breathing problems but she wanted this trip home to be different. I was driving her home after her release when she phoned Matt with instructions for a party. Hmm? When we finally entered the house there were balloons and a cake. It appeared that Emily was having a party for her hair. It became apparent that she would soon loose it all and it was already coming out in chunks. Emily and Cece had made a game of it whenever Cecelia was visiting her Mommy at the hospital. Em would take her own hands and run them through her hair and show the baby what she came away with and then Em would encourage her daughter to help mommy get rid of the falling locks of hair too.

The chemotherapy worked quickly, so in just a few short days, her hair, which was its normal color for the first time during treatment, began to abandon ship and cover her pillows and clothing in very short order.

When we arrived home from the U of M this time, a cake which said; "Yay for Mommy!" on it and it sat upon the table. It was very festive in the house and all the family was here. After we ate dinner that night Jim grabbed the clippers as Em explained to Cece that this was a party for her old hair and Mommy would be getting new hair after all of this hair was gone. Emily was determined to make sure that at the very least, her baby was not fearful of her so she made a game and party of it for the baby. Cece loved it and we all watched as Jim fired up the clippers and began to remove a still mostly- there head of hair from his daughter.

It was going very smoothly with cheers of "yippee" and "good-bye hair" from the crowd when I noticed that Jim had begun to cry. He was not directing the shaver in a good way and was missing long strands here and there. And then, Matt moved Jim slowly to the side and took the clippers in his hands and softly and very lovingly removed the last of the hair his wife would ever have. No more shouts of victory, just silence as Matt finished the job that Emily's Dad was unable to do. Cecelia was thrilled with the party and enjoyed her mother's new look. Emily was once again bald and beautiful. I always

thought so but there is something very innocent in the faces and looks of anyone who undergoes treatment. Like Angels is the way Em and I always saw them.

By this time the house resembled a hospital. I.V. poles, large and portable oxygen tanks, an oxygen concentrator in the living room with enough tubing to go all the way up the stairs and anywhere up there that Emily might need to go. Her room in particular was taken over with the paraphernalia of the sick. The drawers no longer held clothing but saline flushes for her arterial catheter, medications, I.V. drugs, vitamins needed to help Em stay strong, oxygen saturation monitors, alcohol swabs and a bedside toilet too.

With all of that here and so many people here all the time, it still felt like home to me and I hope it felt that way to Matt and Emily too. Miss Cecelia already had plenty of her own spaces in the house and Emily would laugh and tease us about just how much this one tiny infant had affected all corners of the house and our hearts. Still, someone had to monitor the oxygen concentrator to make sure the water for humidity was always cleaned.

The tubes needed to be changed on a schedule as well as ordering the tubing for the I.V.s, syringes had to be ordered and in the house to flush catheters and add medications to the I.V. bags too.

Matt got the job done each and every time. He worked tirelessly to make sure that things were here when we needed them and sometimes would coordinate with Emily or me if there was a medication change. All the while he would care so well for Cecelia and even be forced to clean with Jim this entire house if Em was to be released. That meant that she had a lowered threshold for infection so the old BMT protocol would swing into effect and all surfaces had to be cleaned and dusted every day when she was present. Matthew did all of this and I never once heard him complain or grouse or be anything but focused, loving and helpful. We all got to see why Emily loved this man so much during her illness. He is a mighty fine man!

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