



'Her Story'

(As told by Jeanette K. Regnier & Emily Franz)

Installment Forty Nine (May 18, 2007)

It was a week or two before Emily and her family headed to Sturgis to enjoy the county fair and celebrate Cecelia's second birthday when Dr. J. came to her hospital room to discuss the last round of tests.

As usual he had Lindsay with him and he was in and out with so few words in between as he said, "Emily, the therapy does not appear to be working and my concern over how hard this last round of chemo was on you makes me think that it is time to stop treatment!" Matt and I just exchanged glances and then Em and I met eyes: Pools of liquid, salty pain, hanging like a waterfall on the brink of breaking free. Emily let the tears fall slowly and made no move to push them aside. Matt and I just allowed the burning flow to remain just at the edge of slipping past the rim. I could not see Emily or anyone in the room clearly: Cloudy, pulsing views of objects and people. Holy Crap! Now what happens?

Emily sent Matt home to be with Cece while she and I waited for her to be discharged. Emily had asked that the whole family be present at the house when we arrived. She wanted to talk to her sister and brother at the same time and let them all know that the end of help appeared to be coming. It took a few more hours to get all the paperwork and home medications ordered and dressing Em was a longer process now.

All she had clean to wear home that day was an orange knit top and a pair of psychedelic orange and yellow pajama pants with flip flops and a sweater. The nurses all came in to say; "Hope to see you later Emily!" and we were finally on our ride home. It took longer as the snakes of traffic were always slithering slowly at rush hour. Everyone was here when we arrived. Cece was so happy to see her Mommy and not have to go all the way to the hospital to get a hug.

Emily was tired. Her head was bald and round and her cheeks full from the medications and fluids. She smiled broadly when she saw her baby and was thrilled to be with everyone again. We ordered pizza and Em sat with Cecelia while Matt and I put away the medications and got the concentrator for her oxygen going at full tilt to give her a little boost so she could catch up from getting out of the car and into the house.

Soon we were all digesting pizza and sitting in the family room together. All making small talk when Em gave me an odd look. "Is there something you wanted to say Emily?" I asked. And that is when sorrow and insanity and hilarity all balled into a couple hours of talking, laughing and crying.

She started slowly, making eye contact with either Matt or I only. "I, um, well, the truth is, Dr. J. says the chemo is not working and there is more evidence that the cancer is spreading in my liver and spine and hip!" she calmly said. "He thinks it is time to start getting things in order and stop all treatment for now...I want to know from all of you if

there is anything at all you want me to do or something I have that you might want?" Emily added.

I looked from Adam to Jen to Liz, Chuck and Jim. All were trying not to cry but Jen was already at it and Liz was a close second. So hard to hear and Emily wanted to be the one to say it. In seconds we were all trying to comfort her, cry, be there in the moment and keep Cece occupied at the very same time. Suddenly, out of no where Adam asks Emily, "Did you mean that, what you said about giving us something of yours, cause if you do, I want those crazy pajama pants you have on and I don't want to see you wear them again!"

And that's when the pain turned into just what Emily wanted: Total insanity and crazy laughter. It was not what you would expect but if you knew Adam, he always had a way of making us all loose it at just the right time. It got serious every few minutes with talk about cemeteries and locations and who and where. Then Adam would go for a one liner again and she would laugh and so would we.

Emily was solemn when she said she wanted to be buried in Sturgis at the Locust Grove Mennonite Cemetery. She also begged to go into a hospital hospice when the time came. I said no so loudly that she was startled. "I want to be with you, all the time, Cece too and Matt. We don't need someone telling us that we cannot crawl next to you or it's time to go home, no, you need to be here at home Baby!" and with my having said that and all agreeing, we just got back to the silliness that ended with Emily needed to go up to bed and get her medication. The pain was fierce now.

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