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A Screw Loose



by Liz Holzemer

Oh No Not Again!

No, I'm not talking about the fourth snowstorm in as many weeks that pummeled poor Colorado again, but rather the looming doom I always feel during this time of year....the dreaded MRI.

Three days from now to be exact, I'll get strapped into that all too familiar hollow tube and get shot up with enough gadolinium to rival the Fourth of July. All in the name of ensuring my ex-roommate, aka the baseball-sized meningioma brain tumor I had evicted seven years ago, isn't back and back with a vengeance. Last year I had a scare—the suspected residual tumor or scar tissue—doctors still can't determine which it is—indicated change. Not enough for my neurosurgeons

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(never thought I'd say that in my life time, *I have a team of neurosurgeons at my disposal.*) to be concerned at the time. So I'm on WAW or Wait and Watch as us brain tumor survivors call it. On the upside of having a brain tumor, I've mastered an entirely new lingo.

Wait for what? For the ex-roommate to defiantly proclaim its presence? Watch it move its prized possessions back in and get accustomed to former cushy and comfortable surroundings?

I certainly hope not, but it's not up to me to decide. I'm comforted by the fact that if my tumor ever decides to rally in cells and grows, I know what to expect. After all, I've read the *Meningioma Master Plan Eviction* otherwise known as my path report. I know how the doctors excavated my roommate.

Bipolar electrocautery was utilized as well as a large Leksell, Midas Rex, a 15 blade and for a lovely touch—a corkscrew to pop open my dura. The MMPE also states, "*The CUSA (Cavitron Ultra-sonic Aspirator) was used to try to debulk the tumor but the tumor was so tough and fibrous that it would not adequately work. Using an attachment, a ring attachment on the Bovie, this was used to internally decompress the tumor.*"

The first time I read those haunting words I had an image of the trademark mustard yellow Stanley Steemer cleaner vans delivering super powered vacuums to suck out my stubborn roommate.

And then... "*At this point, utilizing the bipolar electrocautery, the biopsy forceps, several various-sized patties were taken of tumor.*"

I couldn't help but think of McDonald's.

"*Meningioma Melt and super-size the fries please.*" I always knew there was a reason for my aversion to the Golden Arches.

"*This tumor was hard, fibrous,*" the MMPE made particular mention of a second time.

Well, what did they expect—it had been adhered to my brain for the last 10 years. Why would it want to leave all the comforts of home—free room and board and a plentiful food source?

I further learned that I had narrowly escaped having a

*Bad Hair Day

*Mommy
Hullabaloo

*dirty laundry

*The Morrison Boys

*side dish

*Comments From
The Carpool

*The Foggiest Idea

*Home Away
From Home

*Small Town Soup

*around the block

*From The Frontline

*livin' in my head

*Sigh, Moan &
Garbuckle

*Don't Get Me Started

*dad libs

*Blissfully Numb

*Mommy Chronicles

*Domestic Engineering

*College Daze

*music cometh




blood transfusion, and my bone flap was secured in place with three bone buttons. While that explained the three indentations I could feel in my head, similar to a bowling ball, it also raised more questions. Whose bone was now residing in my head—I certainly wasn't missing any of mine that I was aware of—and what if a button gradually unthreaded itself? I'm not much of a seamstress, but I don't like the thought of loose bone buttons floating around in a pool of cerebrospinal fluid.

Bottom line—I'm a brain surgery veteran with 15 hours of grueling and delicate surgery under my thin-skinned skull. I have the upside down question mark scar to prove it.

Oh no not again is right and hopefully next Friday will yield two pieces of great news--my ex is obeying its restraining orders and we're not in for another storm.

Liz Holzemer is a freelance writer, www.LizHolzemer.com, and is excited to announce that her first book, *Curveball: When Life Throws You A Brain Tumor*, is set for release in Spring, 2007. She is also the founder of MeningiomaMommies.org, a non-profit support group she founded after surviving a baseball-sized meningioma brain tumor. Liz is a 2004 *Woman's Day* "Women Who Inspire Us" recipient. She lives in Colorado with her husband and their two miracle children. Liz also maintains her sense of humor on a daily basis and can be reached at lizholzemer@comcast.net if you have a plum writing assignment to offer her.



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