

A Good Night's Sleep

A Fictional Story By Jeff

“Jeff! Go to bed. You’re snoring,” I heard my loving wife say a little louder than necessary.

“Yeah Dad, go to bed. We can’t hear the television,” added one of my darling offspring.

In my own defense, I said the only thing I could think of, “Huh?” After all, I was only resting my eyelids. *Besides, I do not snore.*

Still in a daze and much too tired to put up a good fight, I lifted my lead-laden body from the couch. With a mighty effort, I made my way around our den and gave out goodnight kisses. Then I trudged up the fourteen steps to the second floor and the solace of my bed.

As I reached the upstairs landing, I tried to recall if my daughter’s boyfriend owned one of the foreheads that my lips kissed. I hoped not. I certainly didn’t like him that much.

I schlepped down the hall to my waiting bedchamber. A sudden thought entered my head, *wasn’t there something I wanted to watch tonight? Oh well, that’s what I get for having a couple of beers this evening.*

The thought left my head as fast as it entered; just too tired to care. For one reason or another, I had slept terribly all week. Not to mention the fact that five o’clock in

the morning comes much too quickly for anyone's liking. Therefore, with much anticipation, I looked forward to a good night's sleep.

As I entered the master bedroom my body erupted with the biggest yawn this side of the Rockies. This in turn, caused me not to notice one of my honey's daintily small shoes directly in my path.

Did I mention small? Oh yes indeed, but certainly big enough to trip over. Luckily, I managed to miss her makeup table and thus, a messy disaster avoided. Turning cautious, since I was too lazy, er... tired to turn on any lights; I made it to my side of the bed without further ado.

The cool, comfortable, flannel sheets caressed my bare back. I closed my eyes as I pulled up the covers to meet my chin.

Just as I started to drift away, my eyes popped open—I forgot to set my alarm. Most of the time, this was not a problem. My body-clock usually woke me up before the alarm went off with its annoying buzz. However, as tired as I was, I didn't want to take the chance on getting up late. Come to think of it, my body clock usually only worked when I remembered to set the alarm.

When I leaned over to play with the clock, I noticed the time—8:45 p.m. That turned out to be the earliest I'd gone to bed in years. This actually put a smile upon my face. So, I fluffed up my pillow, adjusted the covers, and closed my eyes.

As I felt myself drifting off to the land of nod, the telephone rang. This startled me back to reality until I looked back at the clock and smiled. It was still before nine o'clock.

Therefore, I returned back to the task at hand—sleeping. I pulled the covers a little higher, then, snuggled a little deeper into my goose down pillow and closed my eyes.

Clop, clop, clop...I heard the ungraceful footfalls of what had to be my son. I wondered what were on his feet. It sounded like twenty-pound work boots.

Next, my boy went through his nightly bathroom rituals: the toilet flushed, the water ran, and his electric toothbrush whined. A long, drawn-out gargling sound ended the familiar routine.

My eyes closed again for about a half a minute. They opened at the sound of a couple of loud thuds as my son tossed his clodhoppers across his room. This was followed by several bangs upon the floor to let his mom know to come up and tuck him in.

When my wife arrived, I heard her remind Nicholas that his dirty clothes belonged down the laundry chute, not all over the floor.

To this, he gave his usual reply, “Sorry, Mom.”

Finally, I heard the both of them saying prayers. That part actually helped to relax me once again. I glanced over to the clock to see the time change to 9:32.

Outside my window, I could hear someone next door taking out the garbage. I tried to ignore the noise as I rolled over to find a more comfortable spot. “Ahhh, much better,” escaped my mouth.

As time went by, I felt myself drifting off on a puffy white cloud. But then I heard voices, low voices, but voices nonetheless. The volume rose as they started to laugh. This was one of the problems of having your bedroom right above the front door.

My daughter must be saying good night to that guy. Then it got noisier as “Marvin” snorted his laughter, followed by mule sounding guffaws. Who the hell names their kid “Marvin” anymore? Even his laughter rubbed me the wrong way. I had an urge to yell out, “Say good bye, instead of good night!”

After the front door closed, I heard my daughter yell, “Hey Mom! Could you remind me to pick up Tina in the morning?”

“Sure Honey. I’ll write a reminder and leave on the kitchen table,” my wife replied.

Nicole bounded up the stairs much lighter than her little brother. Then her footsteps went in the wrong direction. They were coming towards me instead of going to her bedroom.

My eyes opened at the exact moment she turned on the (bright as a super nova) overhead light.

“Uggh!” I gasped.

“Sorry Dad. I forgot you went to bed,” she said.

“That’s all right Honey [how nice to be forgotten so quickly]. I wasn’t really asleep yet.” *I wonder why?* The last part I said in my head.

After a couple of minutes, the girl found what she needed. Then she bid me “sweet dreams” and shut off the glaring sun (light).

With large spots before my eyes, I looked at the clock—10:45p.m.

“Well, so much for getting to bed early,” I moaned.

I plumped my pillow once again and lay down on my left side. After a couple of minutes, I turned over to my right side. I repeated several combinations of these attempts until I found the perfect spot and sighed. The noisy night grew quiet and once again I drifted away.

I drifted away until I heard new noises. This time they came from the kitchen. It sounded like my wife was preparing my lunch for tomorrow. *She's such a good wife.* Denise must have been making the kids' lunches also because it took too long for just one sandwich. After several cabinet doors and drawers opened and closed, I heard the refrigerator close for the last time.

Finally, Denny's long day ended. She performed her nightly inspection of the kids to make sure they were covered and gave each of them an extra kiss good night. Then, she made her way to our bedroom.

When she settled into bed, she noticed my opened eyes. "I'm sorry. Did I wake you?"

"No, no, believe it or not, I am still trying to fall asleep," I admitted. We kissed each other good night and I barely heard her say how tired she was.

"Tell me about it," I said in inaudibly. I fluffed my pillow for what seemed like the thirtieth or fortieth time. Then, I pulled up the covers and proceeded to gaze at the ceiling. I really did not feel tired anymore.

I looked over at the beautiful woman lying next to me and decided that a little cuddling would help the situation. However, before I could use any of my patented

moves on my baby, I heard something completely unexpected—snoring. My wife was asleep.

Thanks a lot, Dear. I thought dryly.

I looked at the clock once again—11:42 p.m.

I turned to lie on my left side and saw from the window what had to be headlights. No, make that two pairs of headlights, as another vehicle came to a stop.

I heard voices. One of them was much louder than the others. That voice, I recognized. It was my neighbor, Walter. He sounded as if he had had a few too many. Thus being the concerned (nosey) neighbor that I am, I quietly removed myself from bed (not wanting to wake my sleeping beauty).

As I spied out our window, I observed Wally getting out of his car from the passenger's side. Okay, I got it—he's too drunk to drive. I started to laugh. Then realizing that everybody else was sleeping, I covered my mouth. I didn't want anyone to catch the peeping tom in action.

Losing interest, I turned to go back to bed, when I heard his loud voice, "Thanks a lot, girls. I don't know what I would have done without you."

The reference to "girls" rekindled my interest. So, I turned back to the window. To my surprise, a gorgeous young lady disembarked from the driver's side door and strolled around the car to hand Wally his keys.

"Any time, handsome," she said as she proceeded to plant a slightly drawn out kiss upon the tipsy young man's lips. Then to top off the surreal scene, the driver of the second vehicle, a brand new Corvette, got out of her car and approached my neighbor.

This one was even prettier than the first one. She proceeded to plant an even longer smooch over the drunken sot's mouth. *I don't know how he does it.*

I watched Wally stagger up the four steps to his front door. Then after several minutes of trying to get the right key into the lock, I saw the porch light come on. Someone other than Wally had opened the door. From my angle, I could not tell who it was (probably his elderly mom). Yeah, elderly, she's two years older than me.

With the night's entertainment over, I tiptoed back to bed. I wondered why I tiptoed. The way Denise sleeps, a bomb could go off and she would not hear it. As I sat on the bed, I stole another glance at the clock—12:25 a.m.

The way this night is going, I'll be lucky to get just a couple hours of sleep.

Lying on my back once again, I looked up at the ceiling. There I noticed the light that blinded me earlier. With the help of the streetlamp attached to the telephone pole across the street, I could barely make out the different sized stars etched into the glass fixture. Like an idiot, I attempted (too many times) to count how many stars there were. This proved unsuccessful; my straining peepers could not do the job. I rubbed my aching eyes. It felt as if I had sand in them. I thought about using my eye drops but without help I usually got more of the liquid on my cheek or nose than I did in my eye.

I squinted at the clock (that, I could see)—1:42 a.m. The numbers appeared larger than before.

After ten or fifteen minutes, I got back out of bed and made my way into the bathroom. I ran the water in an attempt to get it cold and filled a little paper cup. Then with my eyes closed, drank the barely cool liquid. I think my eyes were still closed when I

schlepped back to bed. Instinct must have taken over or dumb luck because I did not trip or even stumble. Again I fluffed my pillow, adjusted the covers, but did not feel relaxed. I remembered the reason why I got out of bed to begin with: I had to pee. Truth be told, I had no recollection of ever being thirsty.

After I completed my bathroom venture, I returned to bed for the umpteenth time. This time I skipped the useless tossing back and forth in a lame attempt to find the perfect spot and went right to staring at the ceiling.

I never should have gone to bed so early. I know there was something I wanted to watch tonight (last night). Nonetheless, I still could not remember what it was, not that it mattered any longer.

In a vain attempt, I tried to shut off my brain and settle down by repeating the word, “relax” over and over.

Then I switched tactics and visualized myself laying in a lush, green meadow and began to count sheep as they nimbly jumped over a white picket fence. Yeah, that’s it. Just like in the old cartoons I recalled (one...two...three...).

To my surprise, my body and—more importantly—my mind relaxed (twenty-four...twenty-five...twenty-six...). The visualization was so strong and realistic, that I could even hear a babbling brook off in the distance, a beautiful sound that I used to float further into la-la land.

Wait a minute! That’s no babbling brook. That’s my toilet still running. I had forgotten to jiggle the handle for the rubber plunger to properly seat itself. To fix this

nuisance properly would take all of ten minutes. That is, if I could remember to go to the hardware store and buy the replacement parts.

With a half-hearted attempt not to disturb sleeping beauty, snoring away next to me, I got out of bed (again). Then I jiggled away at the handle, and mentally promised to fix the thing this weekend (yeah, sure).

While trudging back to bed, I saw the clock—2:57 a.m. I could have sworn that the numbers grew larger still as this never-ending night wore on. No, correct that. After all, it was no longer night; it was now morning.

I did not bother fluffing my pillow, nor did I bother to pull up the covers. I closed my eyes and pleaded, “Please God let me fall asleep.”

Z Z Z Z Z z...

BUUUZZZZ!

Strangely enough, when I awoke, my mind could not comprehend what made that sound. Then it hit me as my blurry eyes saw the numbers—5:00 a.m. “Oh no,” I moaned.

As I sat up and shut off the alarm, I heard my wife ask, “Why are you getting up so early?”

Sarcastically I replied, “Some of us have to go to work, my dear.”

Her sleep-filled eyes opened, “Why didn’t you tell me that you had to work today?”

“Emma, haven’t I worked just about every Friday for the last thirty odd years?”

My ever-understanding wife smiled as she said, “Yes dear, but today is Saturday.”

That last word penetrated my thick skull. I mulled it over in my head, then thought of something. “Wait a minute. I heard you, last night in the kitchen, making my lunch.”

“No you didn’t,” she said. “You heard me cleaning up all the messes everybody left for me.”

All I could think to say was, “Oh.” Then I watched her eyes slowly close.

So, I proceeded to fluff my pillow, lay back down, pulled up the covers, and looked up at the ceiling.

Good night.