

## **The Good, the Bat and the Undies**

by Anita Joldersma

Before I start, there is something about me you should know. I have been known to embellish or change little bits of a story, to make it better. But there is something else you should know. Nothing in this tale has been embellished. These are the facts as I remember them.

To acquaint you with the characters in this little adventure, meet my hubby and his wife (me). Married for over forty years now, we have six grown children who have all left the nest. That they are all launched is a source of pride and relief for both of us. Our children are technically in this story, but they slept through the whole kerfuffle, so it hardly counts. This little narrative includes a guest appearance by our cat. Meet Moush, our foster failure. We were supposed to keep her for a month or two and return her, but because of pleading children, we ended up adopting her. She was black fur and attitude. She excelled in displaying indifference like many cats do, but she would chase the red light of a laser pointer with wholehearted abandon. Another furry-ish creature is involved in this story, but I will introduce it later on.

My hubby and I get along well. We have our differences, like most married folk. I squeeze toothpaste from the bottom, and he squishes the tube all willy-nilly. Like that is normal at all. He likes sacred organ music and I like the musical Hamilton. I can be quite talkative, and he likes quiet. Our differences can also turn out to be strengths and that was often helpful while we were raising our children. We see things from each other's perspectives, and it has enriched our outlook on life. Sometimes our differences are imperceptible and other times very clear. I will explain.

To set the scene, we live in a two-storey home on a road which used to be called Kings Highway 53. It seems like there are always people and cars going by. There is a streetlight at the end of the

driveway which illuminates some of the front lawn at night. There is a Tim Hortons restaurant, and its drive-thru window is just across the street. This detail ends up being worthy of mention.

I will begin with these facts. It was in June 2003, in the middle of the night. Noises just outside the door of our darkened room woke us. All four of the upstairs bedrooms and a bathroom open up to a room at the top of the stairs and the four bedrooms each contained sleeping people. Listening to hear if it was one of our kids or the cat, we heard fluttery thumpity noises. Something was going on and one of us had to investigate. My thoughtful hubby took up the task. Now let me introduce the second furry creature.

After a short while, my hubby returned to our room and whispered, "Hey, want to see a bat?"

What on earth was he talking about? No, I did not want to see a bat! Why on earth would I want to see a bat? My curiosity got the better of me, and I slogged to the room at the top of the stairs. Hubby had closed all the doors to the bedrooms and turned on the light. My sleep-filled eyes beheld our exuberant cat running around as if she was chasing the laser pointer. Instead of a red light, she was chasing a little brown bat. Now I say it was little, but when flying, bats look larger and more intimidating than they really are. If there is one thing that I know about bats, it's these three things:

One: Bats eat mosquitoes and aren't really blind.

Two: Bats are head swooping, hair tangling, neck attacking, and blood sucking. . .well, maybe they aren't that bad but. . .

Three: Bats don't belong in my house. Ever. Even if they are just passing through.

Fluttering about in a panic, the bat flew to the curtains and picture frames. It tried to hang on our stippled popcorn ceiling. Back and forth, back and forth, it was looking for an escape route. Sensible hubby opened the window.

Our cat chased the bat. Imagine that. All I needed was a fat hat or a flat mat and I could have all the makings of a *Dr. Seuss* story. But I digress.

The open window was an invitation the bat did not take. Hubby grabbed one of the good bath towels. You know the ones. The towels that are not to be used because they are still nice and fluffy. The towels that were off-limits to the sixty sticky little fingers of our six children. He could have grabbed a regular towel but, no, he had to grab one of the good towels. He began swatting at the bat as it swooped. *Fwap. Fwap.* I tried to stay out of the way while the cat chased the bat and while hubby waved the towel with enthusiasm, if not with accuracy.

After some fruitless flapping, the towel connected with the bat. Hubby let the towel fall to the floor with the bat trapped under it. I scooped up the cat to keep it from pouncing. The cat would not have known what to do with a bat if she caught it, but I didn't want a dead bat, or even an injured bat. I just wanted a gone bat.

Vigilant hubby gently scooped up the towel. Keeping the squeaking bat contained within it, tossed the whole thing out of the front window. It landed with a plop on the roof of our front porch. At least it was out of the house.

We couldn't leave the towel there on the roof, we had to get it back. It was, after all, one of the good towels. Resourceful hubby got a broom, and like an acrobat, hung halfway out of the window to knock the towel off the roof and onto the front lawn. Mission accomplished. My hero.

We went downstairs to retrieve the towel. I suppose at this point in the story, you could use a little piece of information. I do not often need to report the underwear situation of anyone, let alone my wonderful hubby. but it ends up being relevant. My hubby was wearing only a t-shirt and tighty-whitey underwear. Thusly clad, my darling hubby skulked onto the darkened front lawn where the crumpled towel lay. His mission: retrieve the towel. I envisioned him bringing it back into the house with the

vampire varmint clinging to the towel with its itty-bitty bat feet. This would not do. We would start the complete debacle all over again. I wanted him to check the towel before bringing it back into the house, so I whisper shouted, “*Shake it. Shake it.*”

He began shaking the towel. Now, how else could I be helpful? What to do, what to do? A light went on, figuratively and literally. I turned on the front porch light—that way he could check the towel for a hitchhiker before he brought it back in the house.

I should have put more thought into turning on the porch light. After all, I hadn’t checked to see if anyone was out in front of our house to view the occurring spectacle. To be fair, the wiggling furry cat in my arms distracted me. Brightness flooded the front lawn and there in the halo of the porch light stood my remarkable hubby—furiously flapping a towel in his tighty-whitey underwear. Just after the light flooded the front lawn, a soft, still voice spoke to me. OK, it was a loud, irritated voice. It was the voice of my beloved saying, “Hey, what’s with the light?”

I don’t recall if there were any cars at the Tim Hortons drive-thru window or if anyone was passing by. It was, after all, the middle of the night. If there was, I imagine one might have wondered at the goings on that were going on at our house. Vexed hubby brought the towel, one of the good ones, back into the house with nothing attached. We turned off the front light, locked the door, and dragged ourselves back to bed where we tried to get back to sleep.

It was not the first bat that had found its way into our home, and it was not the last. Somewhere within our walls, we must have been running a bat hotel. We spent some good money to bat-proof our house, but it provided no lasting solution. We continued to be invaded from time to time, although my manly hubby never again ended up dancing with one of the good towels, under a spotlight on our front lawn, in his undies. It wasn’t until we removed our chimney that our Bat B & B closed down and they left for good.

The entire episode taught me one big difference between me and my spouse. While I saw this story as completely suitable to tell family and friends and strangers in the street, my hubby thought otherwise. He recounts the story with much more brevity. He recalls the events this way: "We had a bat in the house. I got it out."