

In this Holiday Season we pray for peace on earth and goodwill unto all mankind. It is my hope that the "special day" described in this essay will one day come to pass.

A SPECIAL DAY

By

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My alarm clock rang. It was 7 a.m. It had been a restful night. I was surprised the hospital had not called, considering that my last admission was quite ill. He was an elderly man from a nursing home who was admitted at midnight, in septic shock from a urinary tract infection. I called the ICU and was pleased to learn that the patient had stabilized and was off life support.

I went out for my morning run. It was a gorgeous day. The colors of the foliage were vivid green. I sensed that today was special, but I couldn't quite put my finger on the reason. I recalled a similar feeling last year, when I attended a baseball game. There was an electrifying atmosphere that gripped the crowd early in the game; something special was going on. By the 4th or 5th inning we all realized what it was: the pitcher was throwing a perfect game. As I ran, I thought that perhaps something equally exciting would happen today. Time would tell.

On my hospital rounds, I stopped by the Intensive Care Unit to visit my nursing home patient. He was much more alert and even responded to my questions with a feeble but reassuring "I'm O.K." I left for my office pleased that he had survived his illness.

My office schedule was light and I was able to end early enough to join my wife for lunch. We sat outdoors. My wife asked me if I had heard today's news. I said: "No."

"Well", she said, "the President announced that a peace agreement had been reached in the Middle East!" "Really", I responded. I doubted such a peace could last after so many years of hatred, but at least the bloodshed had stopped. We left for home.

My teenage son challenged me to some “one-on-one” basketball and was tough competition. Either he was getting better or I was getting older; probably a little of both. I briefly contemplated my own mortality; it’s never easy to grow old.

At dinner, the whole family was together. My three daughters were getting quite pretty. It was nice to have a chance to relax and enjoy the family. When we finished, I sat outside and greeted my next-door neighbor, a reporter for the city’s paper. “I guess the news about the Middle East will be the big story tomorrow.”

“Yeah” said my neighbor. “You’re home a little early this evening,” I said.

“Things are slow at the paper” said the reporter. “I was assigned to edit the obituary column but we had no names for tomorrow.”

“You’re charging too much money for the listings in your obituary column,” I said, half-jokingly. “Remember, we’re still in a recession.”

I went inside debating whether or not to watch the 10 p.m. news. I didn’t want the usual bloody headlines to spoil my day. My wife had already turned on the T.V. A major airplane crash was being reported: “Seventeen people were injured, but all passengers miraculously survived.”

I walked away. I went to our bedroom and looked out at the clear starry night. It was peaceful outside. I closed my eyes, looking forward to another restful night. I didn’t realize it and neither did anyone else, but something remarkable had happened that day. The earth, in millions of revolutions around its axis, had never seen such a day. All over the world, it was a day when no new mourning took place. Families gathered to enjoy their loved ones and life’s small miracles. It was a special day. It was the day when no person died.

Author Bio: Len Hoenig, an internist and writer from the environs of Miami, presents a fitting fable for this season. It resonates with me as I consider winter’s darkness and (the promise of) light. You may contact Len at: gooddocljh@yahoo.com