

MISSING
(A True Story)

It was Saturday and the weather was lovely as I left home around 5 p.m. to drive out into the country for an early Thanksgiving dinner with friends.

I cruised down the Minaki Road, then turned left onto Hwy. 641 and then right, onto the road where my friends lived (Ostersund Road). I drove past their house and came to a fork in the road and I chose to drive onto the road to the right. The road became a road covered with stones (rocks-3"-4" size). It was a rough surface, but I continued on. As I drove on I realized I must be too far out in the country from my friend's home, so I found a place to turn around and headed back the way I'd just come. Driving back was about the same, until, as I was nearing the fork in the road, I heard the bottom of my car scrape on the rocks. I turned the wheel thinking I would cross to the left side of the road - but, I got stuck on the rocks - I couldn't go anywhere.

I got out of my car to see my situation - retrieved my "snow" shovel from the trunk and tried to move some stones away - to no avail. I discovered my blanket, to my delight, in the front seat, thinking I may need it later.

I looked around at my surroundings - the road ahead of me, some trees on the right, a bit of swamp or marsh on the left. I walked around a little and thought, fleetingly, of walking to my friends' home. My reluctance to do this stemmed from knowing I was in "bear country", and so I stayed with my car.

Evening came and passed slowly. As the sky darkened, in my car, I thought "what to do?" I put on my flashing lights to the count of 30, then switched them off and turned on the headlights to see the road ahead ("Any bears?"), get my bearings, see the dashlights for the time and temperature. The radio also came on. Voices. I then turned back to having the flashing lights on. I continued this all night and it passed by faster than the evening. I tried to nap with my head on the steering wheel - but, couldn't sleep. I put my seat in reclining position, but couldn't sleep. There was no comfortable way to lie across the front seats. I was awake all night. Towards morning, it grew quite chilly (-5'C) and I was thankful for my blanket. I had also looked in my glove compartment earlier and found an unopened bottle of water, some "energy bits" to eat and a sign that said "CALL POLICE", which I placed on the dashboard thinking if someone walked up to my car, they would know I needed help. When I was in my car, I kept the doors locked so there would be no surprises.

Morning came and it was delightful to see. I could again see the road, trees, grass and sky. I had become aware in the night that I was stuck right alongside a railroad track and a train (box cars) would go by travelling east and returning and bending west. Everytime it went by I had my flashers on (Thinking, there are people on a train). The seventh time the train passed going east, it was lighter in the day and I spotted a man in the engine, standing at the window and thought, "He is my faint hope" and "I hope he has good eyesight and sees my sign". He did, indeed, see it, but thought it said, "For Sale" - however, he called the police.

Shortly after this train passed by, as I was sitting in my car, I saw a vehicle - an ambulance - in my rear view mirror! I was out in a flash and two ladies were walking towards me. I said, "I am SO happy to see you" - "I am so glad to see you". They hugged me, gave me an arm on each side and walked me to the ambulance. It was P.U.F.F. (Pellatt United Fire Fighters, Laclu). They were accompanied by two men driving a truck, which they used to free my car, later. The O.P.P. arrived on the heels of P.U.F.F. and talked with me. They commended me on staying with my car. Also, one told me they had been "looking for me half the night". I was a "missing person".

During the night, I had no fear - no panic (I had faith that I would be found.) I later learned there were many concerned friends praying for my safety while I was "missing". My family in southern Ontario and neighbours in town were worried about me ("Where was I?") As I spent a sleepless night, I remember "hearing" the words and music that I was familiar with from our choir music and from listening to the music Sundays of the worship team. The tunes kept playing through my head - encouraging words. I never felt alone. I did not encourage fear by just sitting in a dark car - I was busy with thinking what more can I do to help myself out of this situation.

After being found, I was reunited with my friends - their open and welcoming arms, and enjoyed a "Thanksgiving" dinner!

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