



Off the Leash
by
Cleo Roberson

Indiana Jones-
Roberson

I've learned we have many roles in our lives as we go through this journey called life. We women know we will probably be wives, mothers, grandmothers, friends and neighbors to those along the way.

But then there are the surprise roles we have foisted upon us that we never expected. And this is where my husband's motto comes in, "If you're going to be stupid you have to be tough." We have that one on a crest!

We all know when we lose someone there is still a need to commune with them sometimes--not just in mind and heart but in body as well. The only way most of know to do this is to visit their graves and make sure their flowers are changed out and that everything looks nice.

It's about all that's left for us to do for them on earth. So I do that like widows before have done for centuries.

So last week after all the wind and rain I went out to the cemetery to make sure husband's wreath and flowers were still intact. The way the wind blows across our cemetery so many flowers and arrangements are displaced after heavy storms.

If I can tell where they belonged I pick them up and put them back. Sometimes even the concrete flower holders are blown over and I set those back up. But often when the caretakers go across the cemetery if they cannot determine where the flowers go they toss them in the tall wooden disposals spread throughout the grounds to hold faded or lost flowers.

As I neared the first flower disposal bin I saw yellow flowers barely sticking out of the top. I glanced over at Donnie's arrangement and saw the top of it was missing a cluster of yellow blooms.

So I pulled up to the flower bin, stopped my car and hopped out to go through the

"If you're going to be stupid you have to be tough."

bin looking for his missing cascade. As I was pulling yellow buds out I suddenly heard a beep, beep, beeping sound that sounded like a piece of heavy machinery backing up. 'Where in the world is that coming from? I wondered.

I pulled my hand out of the bin and turned around in time to see my car slowly driving away from me. I didn't believe it at first but then I realized--yep, it's driving away from me! I had hopped out of the car and left it in gear!

I quickly turned and began to run after the car feeling a bit like Indiana Jones. The car door was still opened so I grabbed it and pulled myself closer to the steering wheel and threw my right leg into the car.

I thought how proud Indiana would be of me. But the problem appeared when I was stretched so far I couldn't get my left leg to follow--it was just dragging behind. That's when I knew I was going under the car.

All kinds of visions flashed through my brain as I thought how I would be found. Would the car just roll on over me and crush my vital organs or would it stop on me as if I were just a giant speed bump?

I figured it would just stop on me. Even if it stopped and I was still alert my phone was in the passenger seat of the car. I would not be able to reach it. Just at that moment when I thought my right hip would rip from its socket I managed to pull the left leg into the car as well and step on the brake.

I was never good at the splits. But I had done it--thrown

myself into a moving car just like any good stuntwoman!

As I sat there relieved and thinking about what had just happened I visualized the next days' headlines had my own car run over me--'Local Greenville widow found crushed near husband's grave with car on body. Mysterious death being investigated.'

Yep, it would be just like me to go out that way. They would've never figured out I had been standing on my tiptoes looking for husband's flowers in the trash just moments before the car incident.

After catching my breath I went over to Donnie's grave to rearrange his flowers and tell him I had about dislocated my hip trying to salvage yellow blooms and that's when I could've sworn in my head I heard him say, 'C.J., you know the rule. If you're going to be stupid, you have to be tough.' And he's so very right. As always of course!

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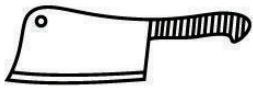
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