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## THE DAY I THREW TILLY IN THE BIN.

This occasion was also a life changing experience. I met Albert. More about him later.

It was sheer frustration. I had just not realised that when you wrote a story that it was not the end of the job, merely the beginning of the hard work. It takes so much more than writing a little story to get it fit to print and sell as a book. No-one tells you all about the time that it takes to get it edited, revisions written, altered to meet global language translation requirements. Who knew there was such a thing as global language? I certainly didn't. Then there was proof-reading, Agreement on how the finished book could or should look and what paper should be used. Colour schemes, ethics, legal issues addressed for tax purposes and in which countries they applied, and don't forget global marketing. All these before the cover gets created and the back cover written. All these involving numerous emails, phone calls; especially if not done "in house" or heaven forbid "in country". However, all this does not take into account any job changes, house moves, daily family life or emergencies that you might want or need to take part in.

Then there is the whole minefield of Social Media and your presence. Yes, you do have to have a presence in this day and age if your book is to make any impact at all. Yes, you have to have a website, Facebook page, Twitter, Tick and Instagram and goodness knows where it all ends. Just keeping up with one page is enough work for me! All of this plus the dreaded question .....Do you have another book in you? Raises its head once again. Yet, I had thought that just being a wife, mother, grandmother, friend and general slave was not enough for me.

By two months of this I felt besieged, overwhelmed and wondering why I had ever thought writing a book was a good idea? Help Lord, Please. Am I meant to be doing this and if so, why? There was no immediate answer. So, I stood up from the desk and threw the stack of pages that constituted all my work on Tilly straight into the bin. I had decided I should be enjoying this wonderful break in beautiful Edinburgh to celebrate our wedding anniversary, not dreading the next phone-call or email. Decision made it was soon enacted and we made a run for the lift giggling, to head on down and out the hotel doors and onto a tram into Edinburgh for a walk round its historic sights.

Getting off the tram we walked downhill to Princes Street and stood outside a shop doorway while my husband delved into his pocket for a tourist type street map. Once opened up and perused we were discussing do we make a start by going left or right round our chosen route. In other words, uphill first or down. While doing so we were spotted by a woman pushing her husband along the wide pavement in his wheelchair. She must have thought that we were lost and kindly stopped and came over to offer her service with a lovely gentle smile. She asked were we looking to find somewhere in particular while explaining that she had at one time been an Edinburgh tour guide herself. Thanking her for her thoughtfulness my husband explained that we were not lost at all, in fact, I was a local, Edinburgh born and bred. This opened the door for her to introduce her husband, Albert, the man who would change my life.

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The next forty five minutes flew by unnoticed as I crouched down by the wheelchair to reach his eyelevel and talked with Albert and my husband chatted about Edinburgh and marrying a Scot and other momentous topics. Meanwhile Albert was asking what I was doing living down south when we both agreed that Edinburgh was the best city in the world. Once, he had forgiven me for my lapse in taste, marrying an Englishman, we got onto the more serious topic of why I was here now. Relative bashing and research, was my swift reply. At least that is what my husband called it I explained. In Princes Street he queried. I explained that I had let myself of the hook of writing a book and was revelling in the unexpected freedom.

“Oh so you’re writing a book?” He had continued and I found myself telling him all about my struggles and that it was now in the bin and I was free. Albert was swift to disabuse me of that notion. He explained that if I never completed the process of creating my book, I would never know if I really could be a writer. Without the public at large giving you their feedback it would always haunt me. I told him that it sounded as though he was talking from experience. He nodded his head and added that he did write a bit, but left the subject there as we could hear John and Elizabeth winding up their conversation as John was eager to stretch his legs. The discussion ended with us saying that it had been a shame that as it was raining a bit we would not get to see the wonderful view from Arthur’s Seat this visit. Albert broke in to assure us that the view from his own house was the best in Edinburgh and we should come over and have a coffee with them while we were up. Sadly we had to decline their kind invitation as we were leaving very early the next morning and had more relative visiting engagements to fulfil that afternoon and evening. They both insisted that they would be happy to see us on our next visit instead.

When would it be? March, we replied. It’s a date then. Albert insisted on writing his email address and home telephone number so that we would keep in touch. His parting words to me were, “Now you mind to get that book out of the bin and sit yourself down and finish it and GET IT PUBLISHED!” I, in turn promised I would.

As we walked off down and round the back of the Castle and round past the parliament building etc. we swapped impressions of the lively minded couple we had met and so enjoyed conversing with. We shared the topics under discussion and how wide ranging they had ended up being. Once he had the context of Albert’s instruction at the end he stopped and turned to face me full on and asked if I was really going to follow Albert’s advice. After all, I had seemed pretty adamant that I was never going to put pen to paper again to write my book he reminded me. I smiled as I thought of Albert and said, I think I ought to as he is quite right, it would haunt me and besides which I have always hated leaving a job unfinished! The rest is, as they say history.

If you would like to learn more about the amazing life of Albert Morris you might like to check him out on the website of Scotland’s national paper, The Scotsman. Or just Google him. Not only did he write columns, articles and books; he painted, made models and gave of himself and his riches to those he met. Ably challenged, encouraged and loved by his dear wife, Elizabeth. A star in her on right. I am forever grateful for those forty five minutes and the warmth of Elizabeth subsequently.