

AN UNEXPECTED VALENTINE STORY

What connects a spool of thread, a battery, a bottle of aspirin and a small dog bone? Fabricate an interlocking story--and write it. That was the seemingly impossible assignment for the four couples at our Valentine banquet table. For what could these unrelated items have in common?

Here's the masterpiece (fiction, of course) produced by the Baneys, Johnsons, McNairs and McAlisters:

I sat on the porch, furiously stitching a dress--but not just any dress. This was my great-grandmother's wedding dress that I was refitting for my daughter. She would be the fifth generation to wear it.

Slaving over the old fabric, I felt a migraine coming on. "Mustn't give in," I resolved. "This is no time for a headache."

The wedding was only three days away. "Three days?" you ask. "Why are you so far behind on the dress when the wedding is that close?"

Actually, I had already completed one dress. And believe it or not, I had finished it the day before.

"What happened?" you ask. Well, let me tell you.

The trouble began with the electric shears I had grabbed with the intention of making a few last-minute adjustments. Dead battery! So I scrambled to find another battery and snapped it into the slot. The shears hummed furiously. Ready to go. I began snipping and trimming.

Horrors! With the fresh and powerful battery, the shears cut at a faster rate than normal. Then the switch stuck on, and I struggled to release. My hand slipped, and I slashed a huge gash. The dress was ruined, and I couldn't figure out how to either patch or repair.

My daughter hadn't really wanted to wear the ancient gown. But now, what choice did she have? And I had to explain this unwelcome turn of events to her. I popped my first aspirin.

Then my daughter's little puppy gnawed the old battery I had dropped on the floor. He must have mistaken it for his dog bone chew toy. Time for the second aspirin.

But my future son-in-law had such a sense of humor! He suggested that I sew the dog bone toy into the hem of the gown as something borrowed... from the dog! Seemed appropriate since my daughter so loves that puppy!

I snatched up the thread and did the deed.

Four days later. The wedding is history, and I've just popped my fourth aspirin. "What happened to the third?" you ask. Let me tell you.

As my daughter exited the sanctuary to the elegant strains of "Canon in D," the puppy-turned-ring-bearer forgot his duties when he smelled the bone--and yipped after her down the aisle!

Though the individual happenings through the varied seasons of our lives may appear to be isolated events, in retrospect they may blend into a story of unexpected meaning and consequence.