

A Hospital Scene: Comforting Lisa, Comforting Me

Cancer patients get real good, real quick at comforting people about our diagnosis, observes glioblastoma blogger Adam Hayden.

September 30, 2024 By [Adam Hayden](#)

“Oh, Lisa.”

It’s a strange feeling to see your blood pooling on a TV table.

It’s not a TV table.

Well, we’re in the hospital, so, like, TV table seems weird. Too familiar. Too not sanitized.

But it is a table that rolls. And TV tables roll. Or some of them do. And they have that L sort of shape with one main vertical piece that connects to the two flat horizontal legs with casters to slide under the hospital bed. Come to think of it, so do TV tables to slide under the couch. Shit. Well, I’ll be. I guess it is a TV table. Quack like a duck sort of thing.

It’s a strange feeling to see your blood pooling on a TV table. Lisa had pulled the needle with the butterfly wings from my arm, untwisted the blood vile, and set the needle thing on the table, where my bright red blood dripped heavy drops into a small pool.

It’s strange because this inside-the-body thing is now an outside-the-body thing. Its color is rich and bright and deep, all at once. There are Adam parts in that little pool. Little bits and pieces that I cooked up inside my bones and pumped all around my body. Then we draw it out and learn things about it, which is learning things about me, with those little Adam parts in the blood.

Lisa reached for gauze and knocked the entire needle assembly onto the ground, but not without a small splatter of blood across the wall as it fell.

“Whoops!” I must’ve said. “I’ll get that later,” Lisa said back.

“Send good platelet vibes,” I said while she held the gauze on my arm where the needle had been and used the pull tabs on the back of the band-aid to adhere the gauze to my arm.

Lisa made what I’d call jazz hands and said slowly, “p l a t e l e t v i b e s.”

She lowered her hands. “I had that problem a long time ago.”

[What problem?]

“Hopefully, it wasn’t too bad,” I searched for the right words to comfort someone who had an otherwise undisclosed and somewhat opaque platelet problem some time ago.

“Mine’s to get the go-ahead for chemo,” I said matter-of-factly. “I’m parked in the visitor garage.” That sort of delivery. I didn’t say I was parked in the visitor garage. I don’t even drive. I just said it that plainly, “Mine’s to get the go-ahead on chemo.”

“Oh no!” Lisa’s face fell.

[Cancer ruins every fucking conversation. Can we just all collectively agree that cancer sucks and people get it, and we don’t need to be “Oh no” all the time. We’re at the hospital, for godsakes. The hospital. Like very, very sick, trauma, surgery, the hospital. It’s a place where you may run into someone with cancer.]

“It’s okay.”

Now I’m comforting Lisa, apparently for the second time.

Patients get real good, real quick at comforting people about our diagnosis.

My wife, who works in this same hospital and carries the benefits covering this very blood draw, meets me with just enough time to say hey before she’s headed to rounds.

“How was the blood draw,” Whitney asks.

“Oh, Lisa,” I reply.

I hope I see her next time. She’ll be happy to know her jazz hands worked. Chemo starts tomorrow.

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