

“Second Chance Dance”

By Linda M. Harris

Standing behind the stage curtain, I wait for the ballet to begin. Upon my graying head is a pink tiara. My fellow ballerina, my granddaughter, Josie, dresses quickly in a tiered, multicolored skirt and shimmery pink fairy wings. Before the show begins she hands me a princess mirror – a stand-in for a fairy wand since she has the only real one. And out from behind her bedroom closet door (aka “stage curtain”) we make our way down the hall to the living room to our waiting, albeit, invisible audience.



Earlier Josie and I had watched her favorite video about a ballerina mouse who speaks with a lovely British accent. Video over, now it is our turn to dance. Josie is trying her best to develop my dance talents up to her three-year old level.

We begin to dance. Josie leaps. I twirl. She walks on tip-toes. I raise my arms and swirl. Enthralled, I listen as this Southern child speaks with a remarkably good British accent like her video’s ballerina mouse! My love for this child is so powerful it should be physically visible. She looks up at me and smiles. She has her mother’s beautiful brown eyes. Her silky brown hair is just like her daddy’s, and like mine. There were dark days during two serious cancer bouts

when I feared that I might never get to meet my grandchildren. God has graciously allowed me to live to see my precious granddaughter and her sweet older brother, Wyatt.

I am having a play date, though technically it is babysitting. We have moved this year from *Dora the Explorer* to a fascination with ballet. Her love for princesses, fairies, pink, purple, and all things glittery and shimmery is at its toddler peak. Sometimes we play with her dollhouse but today – we dance!

My joy just overflows! No one but God and Josie sees me, sixty-one years of age, dance. After a total hip replacement at age thirty and five subsequent revisions on the same hip, I do not leap. But I am singing, twirling, waving, laughing, and loving. Josie has helped me learn to play. That is something I never really learned to do as a child. Something I seldom took time for when my own children were small. Months of being in a body cast and unable to walk for so long that I forgot how when I was Josie's age kept me from running, jumping or climbing. Oh, but God gives second chances! As I dance in the bright sunlight pouring through the window, I praise God my loving Father for the joy of life and the sweet freedom I share in dance with Josie.

Then I look up to Heaven, and I laugh out loud.

Linda M. Harris lives near Scottsville, VA. She and her husband have two grown, married children. She is involved in lay counseling and teaches a women's Sunday school class at her church. Linda's hobbies include reading, writing, and enjoying her two extraordinary grandchildren. She would like to share her story with Dr. Quanjun (Trey) Cui, who performed her most recent hip revision surgery, and her UVA care team who provided excellent care during her hospital stay.