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### **Take Yourself to Lunch**

I realized yesterday that life is about making wonderful choices when the road takes an unexpected turn. David and I were due to have lunch at a local restaurant that had just opened up in town. It had cloth napkins and tasteful décor. I got there at 11:30 on a Friday and the place was still empty, except for a large party on the patio. Imagine a picture perfect day in Colorado—low humidity, 70 degrees, sunny, light breeze, air that you can breathe effortlessly. That's what it was like, except only better. I had just come from my son's 5<sup>th</sup> grade graduation (yes, parents and teachers mark just about any milestone in a child's life, these days). It was the first day of summer break.

The hostess showed me to a table in front of the fireplace. Well, that sure didn't feel right, honey. How about something near the window to enjoy the sunshine? And then I spied the patio. Ahhh, the perfect place for a leisurely lunch with a friend. Yes, that table with the umbrella, next to the geranium box would be just right.

I sat down and waited. And wrote notes about that morning's graduation for a possible article down the road. The real subject of the article was yet to reveal itself but there were certainly clues. Like when the choir sang the Star Spangled Banner and just as I wanted to yell out, "Play Ball!" a man right behind me said it under his breath. We are conditioned beings aren't we? I was reliving the highlights of the morning when I realized that David was twenty minutes late. It was unlike him. I left a message at his office and told him to forgive me, but I was ordering my food. I started to munch on the bread. The restaurant was filling up. I could hear a waiter with an Italian accent greeting the customers and see colorful dishes being brought to the tables. If I closed my eyes and put my imagination to the test, I could feel myself at a cute café at the foot of the Spanish steps in Rome.

The great thing about being a writer is that you are never lonely. I was in a crowded restaurant on a Friday, with my companion no where to be found, and I was perfectly happy. Maybe a few years ago, I would have felt self-conscious and upset about the no show. But now, I had time to write down my thoughts on something interesting I had experienced. I had a cold glass of water and Colorado sunshine, and Italian bread with pesto sauce to dip it in. When David called, forty minutes after our scheduled meeting time, he was apologetic. Crisis at the office had made a meeting run way over. I thought about inviting him over at that point as I had the time, but something told me that this really was meant to be my lunch, alone. We agreed to reschedule.

And then it hit me. I was taking myself out for lunch. How nice! I could have eaten lunch at home with the family, leftovers from the fridge or sandwiches. But instead, I was just a couple miles away, sitting at a table outside, a fresh-faced waitress awaiting my every request, and all for the price of lunch. Bring me another glass of wine!

And now I could eat David's portion of the bread and pesto. Oh, that was even better. Take yourself out to lunch. Live the indulgence that usually only comes with a special occasion or an important business lunch. Are you really that special and important? YES, YES, and YES!

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