

# WHAT'S IN YOUR POCKET

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At my first Long Dance, a sister wove this story in answer to a question I had asked. I found it delightful, amusing and symbolically poignant. It has been rumblin' around in my noggin for years. I am told it is a true story. I may have embellished a detail (or 12) over the years—a bard's prerogative! However, the ending and it's impact remain un-amended.

One fine summer day, a few families and friends packed their RVs and headed out for a week of community camping in the backwoods. They drove and drove, searching for "the perfect spot in the middle of nowhere." Upon finding it, the camp burst alive with activity, everyone getting busy, each with their own task at hand. The dads went hunting for firewood, a sneak peak at the fishing streams and perhaps a beer (or 12) in the scrub. The children, well, as children do, they went everywhere, intent on doing and seeing everything. As they veered further from the RV grove, their laughter gave away their new found hiding spots in the woods. Some of the mom's went with the kids, one went berry picking, one began her investigation into the most private of bathing pools.

This story is about the mother who stayed behind. Let's call her Lois.

Well, Lois was in charge of getting ready for the picnic. Her husband had set up the tables which she'd adorned with the darling, classic red checkered table cloth, a stack of paper plates held down by a stone and a basket of silverware. She laid out the hotdog buns, a jar of dills, grandma's marmalade, John's home-baked bread, a giant uncut watermelon, nuts, chips, dips and Uncle Joe's Famous Potato Salad. While in her RV, with her head stuck deep in the fridge on a reconnaissance mission...she heard some scuffling. She thought her people were starting to drift back to camp. She smiled and paid it no mind...until the scuffle was joined by an odd, ominous sort of grunting. The hairs on the back of her neck prickled up. Upon investigation she discovered that a behemoth grizzly bear had wandered into their camp and was lazily scrutinizing her picnic provisions. She stood frozen, watching, as he knocked her food around, down and into his gaping maw, with his dinner-plate sized paws.



The window of the RV were open, but screened. And holy moly the door was wide open! Lois didn't want to call the creature's attention to herself, but heavens she wanted to shut the door. She found she couldn't...the darn bears matted, furry buttocks was in the way! After a quick and panicked review of her options, Lois decided to remain hidden in the bowels of the RV and wait while the bear feasted. She hoped he would become bored, or filled and simply amble away. The bear ate and ate, and sat, ate a bun (or 12) and then ate some more.

About this time, her people began to appear on the edges of the camp. They too saw the bear and stayed their distance. Through the trees they shouted out inquires to Lois. She responded through the screens, yes, she was fine and yes, she was scared and no, she didn't know what the heck to DO. They all agreed it was best to wait. This went on for quite some time. Lois' every last nerve was frayed.

And then it became clear, the bear was finished with the banquet, was not leaving and wanted more! Everyone became deeply concerned that the bear would smell the food in the RV and decide to come inside. Lois was terrified. After an efficient, echoing, woodsy conference, they all agreed upon the next best course of action...throw the food IN the RV, OUT...far...so the bear would move away from the door, at which point Lois could close the door and lock herself IN.

This done, there was a bit of relief until the bear finished his second course and meandered back to the RV for a good scratch. He rubbed against the door, he slobbered on the aluminum siding and he scratched with his big claws, making terrible grating noises as he played and probed. When he shoved his bulk against the fenders and started the RV a' rockin', Lois screamed.

Lois' husband screamed back at her through the brush "Do you have the keys?"

"Yes, they're in my pocket."

After a pregnant pause and awkward silence, his chuckling man voice boomed back through the woods

"Honey, Just Drive Away!"



Here ends our tale. It is my hope, during this time of fear economy, changes, shifts and uncertainty, that we each remember we have the keys in our pockets, in our hearts, our minds, our bellies... inside of us. When we are off our heads in fear – feeling threatened, overwhelmed, lost or confused – may we remember to look to our keys, our innate gifts and our skills that will enable us to drive away or drive forward in ways that keep us safe and result in our ability to thrive. Blessed be.