



Idle Hands are the Devil's Workshop

Jeanne Robertson



By the time you read this, it may be as dry as toast in Piedmont NC. That wasn't the case when I submitted it to Southeast Lifestyle in mid-July. At that time, the ground was soggy beyond words after weeks of daily rain and wind. Unless you're just passing through this area, you'll recall it. If it didn't pour all day, it stayed cloudy until late afternoon and then the bottom fell out.

One night in the middle of this rainy stretch, a crack of thunder was so loud that I sat straight up in the bed. Husband "Left Brain" didn't move. So as any good wife will do, I shoved his shoulder to wake him up. "Did you hear that?" It turned out he had heard it because he mumbled, "Someone's building an ark" and went back to sleep.

During this monsoon season I became aware that Left Brain had begun to stand at a window for long periods, looking out, longingly. I knew the problem. No golf. No tennis. He was in some sort of a rain induced sports withdrawal.

Sadly, it went from bad to worse for him. The Fourth of July rolled around and the indoor courts for badminton and pickleball were closed for the entire week. With no golf, tennis, badminton or pickleball, he seemed to spiral further downward, going from window to window during a day to stare

and make sure it was raining on all sides of the house. I had a list of things he could do inside the house but I couldn't get him to stare at it. (Should've taped my list on one of the windows.)

By week three of the rain, I realized Left Brain was not only staring out the windows, but at times, was also wandering aimlessly from room to room, a racquet in hand, practicing tosses and swings at

some idle hands. What to do, what to do. Fortunately, that's when it hit me. Our trees! Our many trees! Those beautiful North Carolina trees that have little sticks that break off and fall to the ground during storms.

The next morning, after standing with him a few minutes at a big window, I remarked casually, "Lot of sticks in the yard. When it stops raining, you might have to go out there and pick 'em up."

"Nuff said! From then on, when there was a break in the rain, Left Brain announced with great importance, "I'll be outside picking up sticks." He was busy. He was happy. He was a man with a purpose.

He was also a man who didn't know I had quickly accumulated my own private stash of small wet sticks. When he was picking 'em up in the front yard, I was tossing 'em toward the back. No Idle hands here.

I posted on my Facebook page what was happening with Left Brain staring out the windows and picking up sticks. One never knows when her solution may help another person and I do love to be helpful. My day was made when someone named Melody posted back: "It rained here for so long one time that my now ex-husband also stood at the window for hours, just staring! I finally opened the door and let him back in."

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"Left Brain vs Intruder"

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imaginary birdies and balls. It's sad to see someone deteriorate so quickly.

All of this was of particular concern to me because (1) I truly love the guy and (2) I had been told repeatedly as a child, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." With all the rain, Left Brain clearly had

