



This is the poster of Hugh Jackman that Laura Parnell made for me. I left two of the puzzle pieces on him so you could see. When she gave it to me, he was covered in a tuxedo. I got to take off pieces if I behaved myself and minded the doctors!

that it was like trying to read Chinese! My friends were very patient with me, and we managed, but, mostly, if I had something wrong there was not much I could do to communicate it. It was very frustrating. Patty Brown-ing said that talking to me was like talking to her dog! HUMPH!

I really wanted a drink of water. The nose feeding is all well and good. I never felt hungry, but I REALLY was THIRSTY. The morphine they gave me was making me have

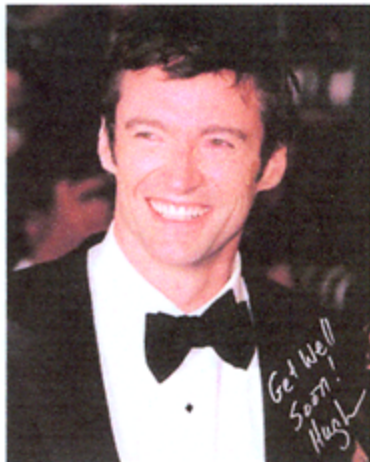
some really weird dreams (I'm going to tell you about some of the better ones later!), and I got so I did not know what was real and what was not! I had Judy Beard quite frustrated one day because I was absolutely convinced that my friend from San Antonio, Vie Dunn-Harr, had been to visit me, and she had brought me some water strips. It was a new thing that they had come up with that was good for hospitals. They consisted of 4 strips of plastic held together that contained water and all you had to do was rip off the top and you would get just enough water that hospital patients were allowed to use them. The 4 strips came in packs that had a door knob holder at the top. They sort of looked like those Kool-Aid frozen strips that the kids used to get. I was damn sure that Vie had given me one strip to drink and had left the rest of the strips hanging on the back of the door to my room in the ICU. This was totally my imagination, I guess, although, to this day, it seems so real! I was getting worked up because Judy would not get me one of those strips. I tried wagging and twisting my finger at the door, and I have never seen such a perplexed look on anyone's face ever before! She actually had to go over to the door and wave her hand back and forth under the door knob before I would believe that there were no strips of water hanging there. It was fascinating to me! Judy and I can laugh about it now, but, at that time, it was a bad day at Black Rock! Of course, I couldn't see very well, and was seeing double for a long time. I didn't begin to see straight until a couple days after I was transferred to the Triumph Rehab.

My old next door neighbor, Laura Parnell, had made an 8x10 photo print on her computer of Hugh Jackman (my latest heart throb. It used to be Mel Gibson, but he got a little long in the tooth for me). She went to a LOT of trouble and made a jigsaw puzzle of a tuxedo. The main picture was of Hugh Jackman standing on the beach. She put tacky stuff on the back of each tuxedo piece and covered him all up in the tuxedo, She said if I

was good and did everything the doctors said, I could remove two pieces a day! Everyone that visited me and myself were sort of looking forward to a naked Hugh Jackman under the tuxedo but, sigh, he was wearing some shorts...bummer! All the nurses and doctors really liked the Hugh Jackman puzzle and would check on the progress every day. Larry the Respiratory doctor who was helping me wear off the breathing machine, thought he was just as good looking and was very disappointed when Shirley, Shida and I all looked a little doubtful about that! Wasn't that something that Laura did that for me?! It was so cool! I took that with me to the rehab hospital where we finally got him disrobed! After I got out, Laura brought me a picture of Hugh where he had signed it "Get well soon, Hugh!" Of course, by that time, I knew Laura was good at forgery.

That brings me to another bit of craziness (I hope I'm not boring you, but this stuff fascinates me..how much I believed it was real!). Mary came in one day and she said she would not be coming in the next day to visit because she had to go to the doctor to get her face fixed. I thought that was a good idea because anyone could see she had two mouths and her ear lobes were beginning to melt and droop down. WOW! The next day she came in, and they must have cut back on the meds, because she looked fine again. I sign languaged that the doctor did a good job, and she looked beautiful again. She got that same perplexed look that Judy had about the water strips and ignored me! HA!

I was moved to Triumph Rehab on July 9. After a couple weeks, they took out the first trachea doohickey to reduce the hole to 6 millimeters and then a couple days after, they took out the next doohickey to reduce it to 4 millimeters. After that, I could talk pretty well. Prior to that time I was using the board Mary gave me to write (and that was not easy because of the shakes) Later, Leah Blasingame went out and bought me a label maker at Fry's; so, I could type out messages. That worked much better, and people could actually read my messages. A couple days after that I was reduced to 4 Millimeters and then could talk. They took out the nose feeder, and I was able to eat real food. After that it was only a week before I went home.



Hugh's Get Well Autographed picture that Laura gave me!

My friends were re-