

# FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

## Cannonball!

I'm not sure if this is a common problem with blokes my age, but I don't sleep as well as I used to. The days of plopping my weary head on a soft, fluffy pillow ... going out like a light in no time at all ... enjoying one pleasant dream after another ... and waking bright-eyed-and-bushy-tailed eight hours later – those days are a distant memory.

**B**roken sleep has become the norm on my side of the bed. And nights aren't much better on my wife's side. Oh, we've tried all the tricks in the book: a magnetic under-blanket ... lavender oil on our pillow-slips ... little blue knock-out pills ... and herbal capsules galore. We've tried going to bed early ... going to bed late ... going to bed hungry ... going to bed full. We've tried cutting out coffee, sipping green-tea, wearing earplugs or socks, and counting sheep. We've tried ignoring it, denying it, faking it, fighting it ("I'm gonna sleep if it KILLS me! And I do NOT need to pee!"). And we've even tried surrendering to the rhythms of life – getting up, turning on lights, making cuppas, reading books, and listening to insane radio-talk with other non-sleepers of the world.

But, some nights, I tell you, NOTHING WORKS ... and I toss and turn, grumping and harrumphing, fretting about my



present, panicking about my future, and worrying that my wife has stopped breathing.

Last week, however, my sleep was disrupted by something different: by a five-year-old bundle of energy, who kept

visiting our still-dark bedroom in the wee small hours and wanting to PARTY!

The grandkids, you see, had come to stay. And our youngest grandson, who seems hard-wired to wake up at 5:00am, couldn't see why WE shouldn't wake up, too.

On Night #1, for example, having finally fallen asleep, I was dragged into instant wakefulness by a loud shout: "CANNONBALL!" – and there he was, standing on the end of our bed, threatening to leap mightily upon my drowsy torso.

On Night #2, I woke to find him snuggling down between me and my wife, and asking in a too-loud voice: "Grandad, can you tell me lots of jokes?"

On Night #3, I tried in vain to hold him, rock him, lull him back to sleep. "Please let me go," he finally complained. "You're making my voice sound funny!"

On Night #4, he avoided my side of the bed and snuck in with his grandmother. Which was fine, until, come 5:15am, I heard him whisper, "Gran, let's play paper-scissors-rock ..." and, a few moments later, he yelled, "SCISSORS! GOT YOU!"

On Night #5, by which stage I was so sleep-deprived that I no longer cared, I had to tolerate a lengthy conversation between him and my wife that began with, "You're quite old, eh Gran?"

On Night #6, his last with us for the time being, he actually did what I asked, and lay quiet-as-a-mouse for at least five minutes. But his little mind was obviously doing overtime, because he suddenly announced in a loud stage-whisper, "My heart stops beating at night!" "Your heart stops beating?" I questioned, somewhat alarmed. "Yeah, my heart stops beating because my hips get tired – so it stops beating to have a rest."

His mother texted me the next day. On the way to school that morning, this five-year-old had told her, "I want to be a POLICEMAN when I grow up." But then he changed his mind. "Nah, I want to be a PASSENGER in a police car!"

As his mother asked in her text: "*Is this something we should be worried about?*" ❁

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GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER/EDITOR HAS LONG BEEN CONVINCED THAT PEOPLE WHO BOAST THEY "SLEEP LIKE A BABY" USUALLY DON'T HAVE ONE ...

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## THORT



***A cop just knocked on my door and told me my dog was seen chasing someone on a bike. But my dog doesn't even OWN a bike!***