

That Was Lucky

On many occasions, Steve has found himself talking to someone and for some reason, the topic of his illness comes up. The conversation seems to follow the same course.

“You’ve had cancer?”

“Yep.”

“Where?”

“Illingworth, near Nottingham.”

“No, I mean more specific than that.”

“Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Ward 6, Bed 5”

“You know that’s not what I mean.”

“Testicular.”

“What...you mean in the old...?”

“Yeah.”

“Oooh...sounds painful”

Pursed lips and a rapid inhalation indicative of shared pain usually accompany this statement.

“Not particularly, the cancerous one was removed at a very early stage.”

This usually provokes more pursed lips and another rapid inhalation indicative of shared pain.

“Did you get better?”

“No, I died in nineteen eighty-four.”

“Don’t be like that, I’m only asking. I’m interested.”

“Sorry.”

There’s usually an embarrassed pause here, while the questioner tries to think of a question that won’t be met by a smart arse comment.

He fails.

“You don’t smoke do you?”

“No.”

“Have you ever smoked?”

“Not through my testicles, no.”

“You don’t seem that bothered about it.”

“I’m still here, aren’t I?”

“Suppose so. Would you have been more bothered about if you weren’t?”

“Weren’t what?”

“Here.”

Although Steve’s heard this several times, he’s still surprised by the stupidity of this line of reasoning. He gives an almost imperceptible shake of his head.

“I don’t suppose so.”

“That’s good.”

At this point there’s usually another pause before the questioner thinks of something more imbecilic to say. It’s usually the same thing.

“So you’ve had cancer?”

“Yep.”

“And you got better?”

“Yep”

“That’s lucky.”

“It wasn’t bloody lucky to get it in the first place, was it?”