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### Reflections on a day in the life of a mother

by Crystal Cook

**Writing:**

**Rating:**

My Daily Grind

It's 4:30 a.m. when I awake and attempt to open my sleepy eyes. I can't see anything, all is black and I can't move. I'm paralyzed from my shoulders up. Intense panic begins to set in. I feel trapped and suffocated. Just before pure terror consumes me, I take the sleeping baby off of my head and tell myself to stop being so dramatic.

I slide out of bed in slower than slow motion, partly because I am too stiff to move and partly not to awaken the youngest of my blessed offspring. As I stumble my way into the bathroom I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror. I wonder if those are dark circles under my eyes or if they are the result of the mega battle Batman had with Godzilla yesterday.

Batman can fly you know. Yep, that caped freak plowed me right between the eyes as I was innocently kneeling to gather laundry. I made one of those mommy rules when my vision returned. From now on, super heroes, their sidekicks and their enemies were no longer allowed to fly in the house or they would be sent to prison for an undetermined amount of time. The kids knew what that meant. They would go into the garage and probably never be seen again.

Feeling quite certain it wouldn't make much of a difference in my overall appearance anyway; I decided not to worry about it and made my way back to bed. I snuggled in knowing I was free to snooze the morning away. There was no school and that meant I didn't have to wake up until I was good and ready to. My moment of rest lasted exactly a moment. I'd forgotten kids have some sort of biological clock somewhere within them set to go off at the crack of dawn on weekends and holidays. This time it was set for 5:00 a.m.

I slid out of bed again and told them to play quietly so mommy could sleep for a little while. I knew before I said it that I was deluding myself but it was worth a shot. It's 6:30 a.m. when I again regain consciousness. It's the mind numbing blaring of the television stealing my slumber. I yell for the children to turn the blasted thing down and they yell back "Why?" I so very much dislike that word. "Because you're gonna wake up the baby!"

It occurs to me as I watch a soggy little diaper running from the room I should have kept my big mouth shut. The television is soon quieted and I begrudgingly arise to prepare breakfast. I notice the absence of one hungry little mouth, I knew she would sleep late, I heard the pound puppies making a jailbreak around midnight.

After the corn flakes had been poured and the toast had been served, our first fight of the day erupted. Apparently, even though the bowls and cups are a matching set, they can tell the difference and began to duke it out over whose bowl was whose. The whole issue is dropped when the youngest of the trio of trolls throws his cup across the table sending corn flakes and milk all over the place. We almost make it to lunch without too much incident, just the usual stuff. "He's touching me.", "He's breathing again Mommy.", "He say's I'm an alien." So on and so forth.

Around 11:30 a.m. the girl child awakes. This haggard little creature stumbles into the kitchen and asks for breakfast. I explain to her it's almost time for lunch and she can wait a few more minutes. This of course makes me the meanest and most unfair person in the whole world. In the most pathetic voice she could muster she says, "Even Cinderella got to eat breakfast." I gently reminded her that Cinderella got up before the sun and made her own dang breakfast!

It always amazes me how acute a child's sense of hearing becomes when the mention of food is so much as even whispered. Within seconds of the first plate touching the table all four of them were seated. Five minutes into the meal war breaks out over something

and everyone is sent away from the table for a time out.

Everyone except the innocent littlest brother who unbeknownst to me, helps himself to his favorite items from each of their unattended meals and devours the stolen goodies before they return. They come back to find half empty plates and begin accusing each other of grand theft Cheetos. I make a mental never to feed them all at the same time again and I replenish their food supply.

With full tummies, they retreat to other parts of the house to play and I begin to clean up and do the usual chores. Next thing I know, gut wrenching screams echo throughout our home. I run to the bedroom as fast as I can to find a sobbing little girl curled up in a ball on the floor.

I just knew that the boys had done something dreadful to her. They of course denied any wrong doing so I turned my interrogation to the injured party. "Did they hit you?" She shakes her head - no. "Did you get kicked, pushed pinched? What happened TELL ME!"

Through her tears she says, "He said the beast doesn't turn into a prince and marry Belle, he said he just stays a beast and eats her for dinner." I tried to be sympathetic, I really did, but something came over me and as I rocked her in the comfort and safety of my arms I said, "Well honey. He probably did." I am still to this day making up for that error in judgment. I can now recite every word of Beauty and the beast with amazing accuracy.

I realize as I begin to search for dinner items we need to make a trip to the grocery store. I tell the kids to get out of their jammies and get ready to go. Hey, it's a holiday, if they stay in their jammies all day that means less laundry for me. I load them into the minivan and head for the store.

Now I have a conspiracy theory about supermarkets. I think they have little devices in the sensors of those automatic doors that scramble the brain waves of young children. You know what I'm talking about, it makes their voices louder, it makes them become argumentative and it causes drastic mood swings. They make a fortune on impulse buys because of it.

I enter the store as quickly as possible to avoid prolonged exposure to the mood altering rays and begin my shopping enjoyment. My youngest son spots the bananas first thing and begins his usual repetitive request, ba-na, ba-na, ba-na. The sweet little tones of his baby voice soon dissipate into the torturous screams of a hungry troll. Screams, by the way, nobody else in the store want invading the empty space between their ears. Dirty looks, vicious glances and irritated stares ensue. Do they think I am enjoying this? I bag up a bunch of ba-nas and put them in the cart. This seems to anger the troll even more so I give him one.

Ahh . . . Peace and quiet. Does my silencing of the beast appease the angry masses? NO! Now the lady with the screaming kid is stealing a banana! I soon lock eyes with the most annoyed of my judgmental, mental being the key word here, grocery store patrons and it's on. The starter pistol has been fired. Ready, set, GO!

I follow her wondering if she knows what a grave mistake she has made. I keep pace with her throughout the store, down aisles I have no need to peruse. I forced her to endure the antics of my brain scrambled children for at least thirty minutes. By the time we reached the checkout line she looked haggard and seemed to have aged a few years. She knew she'd been beaten and took her place in line behind me.

Once we were home and the groceries were put away I engaged in a heated debate with one of the boys about why it is not polite to belch your ABCs in public. He had some good arguments, gave it his best shot but I was victorious. I always win with the good ole "because I said so" rule.

I changed the third diaper of the day, figured my checkbook, did a load of laundry, I even paired up the socks. I watered the plants just to see if they could be resurrected, mended a boo-boo, refereed three fights, read a story, issued four time outs and put Mr. Freeze in prison. I didn't even know he could fly. I made a joke that made me the coolest mommy in the world Don't ask, I can't remember what it was Finally after about a half a dozen other things I sat down . . . for about ten seconds.

Screams of pure terror were coming from the back yard. Racing for the door I imagine countless heart wrenching reasons for the horrible screams, none of which I encountered when I rounded the corner. What I did find was an insanely frightened two year old with an ant crawling on his shoe. No blood. No missing limbs. Just an ant. Relieved, I flicked the ant off his shoe and held my trembling

son. Poor thing, his little heart was pounding. I did a very good job keeping my laughter at bay until he recovered.

At around 4:30 p.m. the daddy-o walked through the door. I was still smiling when he came into the kitchen. "You look happy" he said in a thankfully relieved tone. "What'd you guys do today?" I told him of the ant encounter and my victory at the supermarket. He laughed about the ant but thought I was a little mean for torturing the lady at the store.

I start dinner and the whole house is unusually quiet. The baby-man was watching Pooh Bear for the gazillionth time and the other three were in the back yard creating an insect village. My dear husband disappeared into the garage and I enjoyed the serenity and harmony of my world. It lasted long enough for the water to boil.

My now not so dear husband storms in ranting about some missing tool which he soon finds right where he left it. The children begin to fight over the custody of a roly polly bug and the baby's diaper explodes. Calmly, I tell every member of my loving family if anyone wants to eat dinner they had better take care of whatever problems they had and leave me alone or I was going on strike!

The kitchen cleared out and I continued on with my duties. My darling spouse unwillingly changed the diaper, I heard the usual ewws and ughs along with comments like, "What the heck do you feed this kid?" and my favorite, "When was the last time you even changed him?" The roly polly escaped in the heat of battle and the kids were once again hunting for new pets'.

Shortly after 5:00 p.m. the children sit down and quietly consume the nutritious, balanced meal I had lovingly prepared for them. They rinsed their dishes and skipped off to brush their teeth. Their father made sure they were bathed and ready for bed. He read them a story while I relaxed and unwound in the shower. Once again refreshed and revived I snuck in to say prayers with them, I snuggled close and kissed them goodnight and they fall fast asleep.

You didn't buy into a word of that did you? In all honesty, they did eat dinner quietly. Hot dogs, mac & cheese, corn niblets and milk make a nutritious meal isn't it? It really was lovingly prepared. The dishes actually sat on the table until about 10:00 p.m. and I think at least two of them brushed their teeth.

Daddy wiped them down with a washcloth while I rinsed some unknown substance off my hand. Then we said prayers and gave hugs and kisses. Then there were drinks and bathroom trips and more hugs and monster under the bed checks and more kisses. All in all, it took the sandman a little over an hour to find our house and guide them off to sleepyville.

At 10:52 p.m. my husband gently kisses me goodnight and my eyes slam shut. I am rudely awakened not long after that by the deafening sounds coming from my snoring soul mate. My perfect husband, the love of my life, I pinch his nose shut until he grunts and rolls over. I say a prayer and thank God for getting me through another day and then finally, I sleep.

It is 4:30 a.m. again. I awaken and all is dark. I can't see. I can't move. I feel as if I am being suffocated. Trapped and helpless, terror begins to take over. In a desperate attempt to save myself, I take the sleeping baby off of my head and gently place him atop my husband's precious face to muffle the snoring and I drift back to sleep . . .

more options

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