

It had been a long day of hauling *this* kid and *that* kid to football and cheerleading practice. At the same time, trying to fit the schedule of a one year old in there in between snack duty and replying to my boss about a particular email dealing with the unwanted Reedus Account.

My thoughts were a jumbled mess and I couldn't remember for the life of me what the exact reason for us wanting to have another baby was. Having a third child on top of two older ones was difficult to say the least.

Joe, my husband, just returned with his Unit from overseas, and finally, I was able to have some help. At least for the next few months... or so I thought.

Swinging back into normal civilian married life was much harder on him than I expected it to be. Being patient was the key to making all of this work. He needed space; time to readjust, which meant taking the extra weight of family duties upon me.

I looked at my watch and the little hand was inching closer to five... Dinner. What was I planning on making? Forget that. Cooking was out of the question. Tacos would be easiest.

"NO, I DON'T WANT TACOS. I WANT HAMBURGERS!" Gav, my ten year old, complained about everything. Even if it *was* something that he enjoyed eating, like tacos. It didn't matter, he'd find a reason to hate any decision forced on him.

Now I remember. Gav was such a cutie before this attitude change. *He* was what made me want another child. Yes. This little black haired boy with freckles covering his pale cheeks, staring at me stomping around the kitchen.

"No, Gav. We had hamburgers for lunch. We aren't going to have them for dinner too," I replied with a soft voice trying to diffuse the situation.

Across from Gav, was Daisy my thirteen year old going on thirty. She responded with a head nob while tapping away on her damn cell phone. I swear, if I wasn't the one that would have to pay for a replacement, it would be tossed in the tank with the tiny fishes. "Daisy, do you want to come along or stay here and watch Gav for me?"

“Neither.” She rolled her eyes as she answered, glued to the small screen beneath her finger tips.

“Well, you have to choose one or the other. You can either stay here and babysit, or you can all come with me.” The baby was asleep, and I really didn’t want to wake him.

“NO, I don’t want to stay here with her!” Gav exclaimed, stomping again.

Daisy shrugged her shoulders and typed with her thumbs as she replied, “Fine, I’ll stay.”

“Gav, I’ll be back in fifteen minutes, I won’t be long. Don’t kill your brother Daisy.” Then I grabbed my purse and quickly headed out the door before she changed her mind.

Fifteen minutes alone in my car was currently the most glorious part of my day. I turned on my favorite talk radio. You know, the one where everyone calls in with their problems and the therapist tells them bluntly in twenty words or less how to fix them. I love listening to everyone’s problems, getting my mind off my own. And I couldn’t help but laugh at the stupid questions and eagerly listen to others that sound strangely like my own life.

The worst day of the entire week was Monday. Our dog, Jet, went outside for his nightly ritual of watering the neighbor’s yard and when he came back, he suddenly bit Gav on the hand. Jet *had* been a little more agitated than normal, and that night he was much worse. The next morning, foam gathered in layers around his mouth and the bite on Gav’s hand looked worse. A couple of nights before, there had been reports of a raccoon found with rabies in the woods behind our neighborhood, thus leading me to my conclusion that this bite was serious. I locked Jet up and rushed Gav to the hospital where they administered a round of expensive rabies vaccinations spread out over a few days, and then we immediately took Jet to the vet. Unfortunately, our dog had to be euthanized; they needed to sever his head and send it off for blood tests. However, even without the test results, they were sure he had contracted rabies.

After this, I really needed a weekend away for a girls’ night with my mom-friends. I was hoping Joe would feel better soon so he could watch the kids, giving me a much needed break.

The taco place wasn't far from my house and within fifteen minutes, I pulled into the parking lot and strolled pass the cars towards the drive thru. There was no need to look over the menu, I knew exactly what I wanted. "I need fifteen crunchy tacos and a bunch of hot sauce please." I yelled my order directly into the little box, wondering if the owner had gotten the speaker fixed yet.

A muffled voice on the other end bellowed in and out. I shifted the car's gear into drive and pulled up to the first window. A young man with shaggy hair stood on the opposite side, his bangs covered his eyes as if he just woke out of bed and he slid the window open.

"Ya, I couldn't hear you on the intercom back there. Did you get my order?"

"Yes. You said fifteen tacos, correct?"

"Yes, and please don't forget the sauce." If I didn't repeat myself and make sure he heard me, I knew I'd end up with four sauces for all fifteen tacos, which then would lead to another scream and rant from Gav.

"That'll be \$17.20." I dug around in my purse for my credit card as he popped his gum in between his piercing white teeth. Then I pulled up to the next window.

A girl with piercings, decorating the edges of her ears, handed me the bag of tacos and I checked the sack to make sure nothing was missing before heading home.

When I pulled up to the house, screams from Daisy and Gav filled my hearing like unwanted gnats and I took a deep breath before walking up the path and opening the door.

Gav was running, chased by Daisy around the living room and while he held her phone in his hands.

"Gav! Stop and give your sister her phone back. Now! And Daisy, give me your phone until we're done with dinner."

Gav stuck his tongue at Daisy.

"But mom! That's not fair!" she yelled, clearly not happy with my solution.

"Look, I think you can spare a few minutes to eat with your family and tell your mom and dad about your day. Okay?"

“Fine,” she replied with another eye roll.

During dinner, there wasn't much said, and the baby was still asleep. I had a mind of me to wake him, but then decided to let him sleep as long as he wanted, even if that meant I'd be up a little late entertaining him.

I noticed Gav was rolling his neck around as if he was uncomfortable. “Are you okay, Gav?”

“Yes, Daisy hurt me while I was running from her.”

“Did not you little liar!” she yelled.

“Okay, okay. I'll give you some pain medicine later if it's still hurting, alright?” I took another bite. The little taco place had lousy workers, but their food more than made up for the service.

After dinner, Joe finally came out from sleeping in bed and ate few bites, then went back to sleep. Besides me folding laundry on the bed on top of him while he slept, we didn't have any form of communication for the rest of the day.

I wasn't sure if this was going to work. Him and me.

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Later that night, I climbed into bed and noticed Joe looking pasty and disoriented. “Hey. You feeling okay?”

“I'm fine. Stop worrying about me. I'm sure it's just a virus or something.”

I immediately thought of Karl, our baby. He wasn't feeling good either, didn't even wake up after dinner. I checked on him, but he appeared fine. Just asleep. Maybe they both had a virus? “Do you want me to grab you some medicine?”

“No, I said I'm FINE. Okay?” Then he turned over and pulled the covers up further around his neck.

“Okay. I won’t worry about my husband, who barely even speaks to me anymore.” I whispered that last part not wanting to start a fight. Then I turned off the lamp and rolled over facing the wall. I didn’t know what his problem was, though whatever it was, I couldn’t take much more of it.

That night I woke to the sound of glass shattering against the kitchen floor. I quickly sat up. “Joe, Joe,” I whispered quietly. “I think someone may be in the house.” He didn’t budge. “Joe, do you hear me? I said I think someone may have broken in,” I whispered louder.

Still he didn’t move, instead he just grunted, which I’m sure stood for *get the hell away from me*.

“Fine, I’ll go check it out *myself*.” I grabbed the gun in the safe under the bed. I knew it wasn’t my kids; they never woke until well after sunrise.

Slowly, I walked around the corner of our bed, aware of the cedar chest that sat too far out blocking a clear path. Then I stuck my head around the doorway and looked towards the kitchen. Another wall blocked my view and I couldn’t see anything, so I quietly tip toed into the hallway that led straight into the kitchen.

Glass shattered again and I jumped at the sound. Then there was a muffling noise from a person shuffling their feet against the cold floor.

My heart began pumping harder and my breathing became heavier. My sweaty grasp on the gun was shaky as I neared the kitchen. A dark short figure walked around, the light from the fridge door open, and I squinted my eyes trying to make out the shape. It was Gav.

Lowering the gun to my side, out of harms way, I flipped on the light switch. “Gav, what are you doing awake in the middle of the night?” I was relieved, but irritated.

It took some time for my eyes to focus and within seconds Gavin turned around. His eyes fixed sharply on mine and his face was pale, foam oozed from the low corners of his mouth.

“Gav!” I ran over, trying to see what was wrong, he needed a doctor quick. Before I reached him, he lunged at me and we both fell backwards, and he landed on top of me. It took all my strength to hold his clenched teeth away from my face as he tried biting me. Foam dripped from his mouth onto my cheeks and blood began pouring from his eyes, spraying the walls as his faced thrashed side to side.

I chunked him off me and he landed on his back.

“Gav, what’s wrong with you! STOP IT!”

Then he flipped over on his stomach, looking like an animal with his hands and feet gripping the shattered glass on the ground. His eyes locked on mine, then he charged me again, this time biting my hand as I held it up trying to stop him.

“OUCH! GAV STOP IT!” I yelled as he ripped off a chunk of my skin. I tripped backwards falling over my feet. He leaped towards me, hovering me, ready to bite again, and I looked over and saw the gun that dropped to the floor during the commotion and I grabbed it.

**POP**

I shot him in the arm. “Gav... Oh my God. Are you okay?!” I stood up, but the bullet didn’t faze him. He began lunging towards me, this time ripping off a piece of flesh from my shoulder.

I threw him back on the ground again. Nothing was stopping him.

I grabbed the gun.

**POP**

I shot him again, this time in the chest. He leaped across the kitchen island and flew me forward with his weight as he landed on top of me another time. I quickly turned over and shot again. And again. **POP POP**

Still he kept coming.

I ran backwards and took one last quick aim.

**POP**

I shot him right between the eyes and he instantly fell to the ground.

I fell too and grabbed a towel hanging from the oven. Immediately, I wrapped my hand and saw that I was losing a little blood from my shoulder, but not a lot.

Daisy ran into the kitchen and her eyes grew big when she saw her brother lying on the floor and me, with a gun in my hand.

“MOM, WHAT DID YOU DO?!” She began crying uncontrollably and ran over to Gav and placed her hands over his wounds, trying to stop the bleeding. But there was nothing she could do, he was dead.

I froze, I couldn't talk, my mind was racing. What just happened?

Did I really just shoot my own son?

Daisy then ran over to me, but stood far enough out of my reach. She was scared of me.

“Mom, what happened? WHAT HAPPENED?!”

“You. You. You don't. You don't understand,” I stuttered. “He came at me, he wouldn't stop, he wouldn't stop, he bit, it wasn't him, it wasn't Gavin.”

“What the hell do you mean it wasn't Gav. He's right there, that's my brother Gav, dead on the ground, from you, his mom who just shot him. MULTIPLE TIMES!”

“Where's your father?” Why hadn't he come out of his room when he heard the noise?

I stood up and stumbled quickly towards our bedroom. When I got there, the bed was empty, Joe wasn't in it. I flipped on the light switch and looked around the room and all throughout the master bathroom. But he wasn't there either.

Instantly, I heard Daisy scream, “MOM!”

I jumped and ran back to the kitchen. Joe was on top of her snapping at her face trying to take chunks of her skin off.

**POP**

I shot him, but my aim was poor. The bullet startled him a little, enough for Daisy to get out from under his grip and she ran towards me. He looked up at us, blood pouring from his eyes and foam bubbling at his mouth, just like Gav and the dog.

His eyes were glossy and he lunged for us, running fast and leaping into the air. One more step, and he'd for sure kill us both. I quickly raised the gun and shot another time.

**POP**

This time the bullet went through one of his cheeks, blowing the side of his jaw off.

The injury didn't faze him and his force threw me backwards onto the ground and as he tried tearing my ear from my face. Unfortunately, the impact hit the gun out of my hands and he was much stronger than I was. He started gnawing on my head. I could feel his teeth sinking into my scalp when I heard.

**POP**

His body went limp on top of me and I shoved him off rolling him over onto his back. I laid there and looked over at Daisy. She was holding the gun, still aiming it towards him.

I stood up and she didn't budge, not taking her eyes off of his lifeless body.

I slowly grabbed the gun from her tight grasp. "Daisy, it's okay. He's dead, you can give me the gun now."

She was silent... not saying a word. "Why don't you go sit down on the couch. I need to check on Karl."

I swallowed, fearing the worst. What if Gav had killed him already?

I walked into the room and turned on the lights.

But he wasn't hurt.

His little body was wiggling out of the swaddling blanket I had placed him in hours earlier. I slowly picked him up and kissed his forehead then placed him gently with his favorite toy back in the bed and walked out of the room.

Daisy was huddled with her knees to her chest, rocking back and forth on the couch.

"Daisy, it's okay. WE are okay. WE had no choice."

I grabbed the house phone and dialed 911, but the line was busy.

That was odd. I tried again a few minutes later and it was *still* busy.

I began hearing sirens outside the house and realized that the noise from the guns must've triggered the neighbors to call the police.

"Look, the cops are here. I'm going to talk to them. I'll be right back, okay?"

She was still rocking and didn't respond. I stroked my fingers through her hair and put the gun beside her, then I walked towards the front door.

When I opened it, the police that I had expected to be there pointing a gun at me weren't there. Two police cars were parked on the side, but the cops weren't anywhere. Lines of trashcans placed neatly at the foot of everyone's driveways. It was trash day. In the center of the road, to my right, were a few people huddled in the middle of the street and I ran over to see what was wrong. When I got closer, I saw them.

They were eating the officers' faces and torso, guts spilled out all over, and before I could figure out what was happening, one of them turned around looking at me. Then our old neighbor peeked her blood ridden face from behind the group.

I ran as fast as I could with old Mrs. Rice directly on my heels, trying to eat me too. Then I threw open our front door and slammed it behind me and dove for the gun laying beside Daisy.

There was a THUD at the door and Mrs. Rice was on the other side. I shot a few times through the glass, but it didn't stop her. Luckily, the door was heavy enough, keeping her out.

I grabbed the remote and turned on the television to see if there was any news about what was happening. But there were only reruns and infomercials. No news.

I picked up the phone and dialed 911 again. It was busy.

I wasn't an idiot, and I had seen enough movies to know what was happening. I wasn't sure how it started, or why Daisy and I weren't infected like the others, but we were alive and that's what mattered.

I grabbed Karl from his crib and ran to my husband's closet. He had a safe in there holding the rest of the guns and ammunition. Then I piled them all into two huge bags and ran back to the kitchen, tossing all the knives into another bag.

"Daisy, come with me, it's not safe."

I grabbed whatever food and drinks I could find in our pantry, and locked us in our room with Karl. Then I turned on the radio and television and waited for some sort of sign that would give me an idea of what to do next.

**The above short-story was included with a short-story collection called Trash Day from the Top Writers Block. To read other shorts from Trash Day, go to:**

**<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/297898>**