

## A Change of Heart

Posted on Apr 07, Posted by [Webmaster](#) Category [Telling Tales](#)

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Those who don't know me, think I'm kidding. Those who do know me, know I'm not.

So, as he was about to board his plane last week, I was not surprised at all, when his last words to me were not – “I love you.” Instead, he looked deep into my eyes and said – “please, please remember to feed the dogs.”

Now it's not the first time he has gone out of town and left me in charge of the dogs. What was different this time was that all three children were away also. So, he knew that there was only one way those dogs would survive the next four days – and he was looking at it!

That evening as I pulled into the driveway and walked into the garage, the dogs and I exchanged knowing looks. It was evident, they were no happier than I, that the only thing that stood between their starvation or sustenance -- was me.

“That's right,” I said, “you better hope I remember you,” then went inside and slammed the door.

And I'm not sure what possessed me, but after a few hours, I settled into the couch and turned on the movie – The Shining. If you've ever seen this movie, then no doubt, it has remained deeply entrenched in your psyche. It's a terrifying horror movie starring a young Jack Nicholson who goes on a crazy, murderous rampage while managing a haunted hotel. I was both petrified and riveted – until it ended – and then I was just petrified.

As the credits started to roll, slight panic set in. Suddenly, I remembered, I was totally alone in the house and would be for days. Immediately, I proceeded to turn on every light in the house. Next, I turned on the alarm. My heart was still racing, as I sat in complete silence trying to convince myself it was “just” a movie...and then...the floor creaked upstairs. Total panic set in!

In my terror it hit me, however, that we have dogs – big ones!

Now my husband's dogs are “outside” dogs. The only time they come inside is when someone leaves the door open and they scurry into the “promise land.” Thereafter, they hear my high-pitched scream and run back out.

So at 1 a.m., when I cracked the back door and, in my “nice” voice, said “Tucker and Molly, do want to sleep inside?” no doubt they thought it was a trick.

At first neither would budge. Finally, after finding their treats, I bribed them into coming inside. So there we all sat, lights on, staring at each other. It was a long night. But knowing they were with me, made me feel 100 percent better.

The next morning, I promptly let them out. We all knew that what had happened would likely never happen again. In fact, we agreed, we would never speak of it. Later in the week, when my husband came home and then the kids, all were amazed that the dogs looked well fed and happy.

And while I wouldn't say we are now friends, our relationship has certainly changed. In fact, if my husband were to meet an untimely demise, I've decided that there is a 50/50 chance I'll not bury them with him.

Baby steps....

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