

Leftovers

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It's no secret to my friends, family and anyone wandering the cleaning aisle of the local grocery that I don't enjoy cleaning. I enjoy cooking, eating, reading. I do not enjoy cleaning. It's a necessary evil though, so I oblige with my barrage of cleaning products neatly placed in a storage caddy that I carry from room to room. The only time I stop complaining is when I'm gagging while cleaning my boys' bathroom. (I will never understand how a man can be trained to hit a target at one thousand yards away but hitting the space inside a toilet eludes him?)

It's the time it takes to clean that bugs me most. When I go at it, I go at it with both barrels. Everything gets cleaned and organized; even the toothpaste cap and pantry. There are times when someone "pops" over without notice or I agree to host a jewelry/cooking tool/clothing party when I must rush the cleaning process. This is what I call giving my home the "illusion of clean." Don't open a door, you might get hurt.

My youngest child is very much like his dad. Major Type A personality. He knows where his shoes are and probably yours. His room is always clean. He's the child that's with me when I lose my car keys, can't find a pen or run out of gas (don't ask!). When he shows me that my keys are hanging in the front door lock or points to a pen stuck behind my ear, there's always a note of sarcasm in his gestures and a look in his eyes that say, "There had to be a mix-up at the hospital. There's no way this lady is my 'real' mom."

I'll admit that there are times when cleaning the refrigerator out gets overlooked... many, many times. So a few days ago, I decided it was time. Mostly, because I had run out of plastic storage containers and it was either buy more or clean out the fridge.

If it were a crime to purchase produce, take it home and let it sit in the back of the fridge until it changes colors and shrivels to half its normal size, I'd be serving a life sentence in prison.

After spending two hours throwing away, washing out and swearing that this will be the last time I ever wait this long to clean it out, the task was complete. It's amazing how much brighter that interior light is when there's not so much stuff crammed in. I don't mean to brag but, it looked brand new.

A few minutes later I heard my boys bound down the stairs, most likely heading to the kitchen to get a snack. When the pantry door shut I knew the fridge was next on their quest for sustenance. Suddenly I heard my youngest scream out in a terrified voice, "WE'VE BEEN ROBBED! WE'VE BEEN ROBBED!" My husband and I ran into the kitchen where he was standing in front of the open fridge with a very confused look on his face. When he saw me he said, "Where's all the food?" I had the opportunity to tell him the truth. That this is the way a refrigerator is meant to look. But, that would mean I'd probably get that all too familiar look from him. So I did what I had to do.

"Jackson, WE'VE BEEN ROBBED!"

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