

You can't choose your family, but

Posted on Dec 01, Posted by [Webmaster](#) Category [Telling Tales](#)

You can talk smack about them

By BECKY ANDREWS

Around this time of year when extended family members prepare to convene on our households, Angel and I participate in a spirited game of, 'I can out do you' or it's more commonly referred to name,

'Who has the nuttiest little family'. The conversation usually revolves around whose parent, grandparent, or other relative had the most success at humiliating us or making puberty more awkward than it already was. Because we both come from fairly outspoken people, the contest is always close.

This is usually how the conversations go:

Angel: "I had to sleep on a camp bed for a year in Greece!"

Me: "I was a Jehovah's Witness until 6th grade."

Score- Becky- 1, Angel-0

Later that same day...

Angel: "I never had a real birthday cake. It was always a lemon ice box pie or a sponge cake my parents liked."

Me: "I celebrated my first birthday, when I was 12 years old. BECAUSE I WAS A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS."

Score: Becky-2, Angel-0

Of course, when the game is not going her way, Angel pulls out the big gun.

Angel: "I had to move away from my friends to Greece when I was 12 years old. When we arrived, my dad told me I had one year to learn the language so he wouldn't have to pay for the American school.

Did I mention I was 12 and had to sleep on a camp bed for a year or that our neighbors in Greece referred to us as 'the crazy Americans who lived in a beautiful apartment decked out with lawn furniture'?"

Soon she starts talking about how her mom doesn't have an 'inside voice'. If her mom likes or dislikes something about someone, you're gonna hear about it. Nobody is off limits including her children, grandchildren or her daughter's very charming friend Becky whose weight has a tendency to fluctuate.

That's when I have to pull out my ace in the hole. Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce you to Barbara Andrews. The mother of my husband- her only child. The woman who, depending on her mood, has referred to me as 'Jay's first wife'. This is also the woman who insists any athletic ability my children have can be genetically traced to her, while any questionable behavior certainly comes from my side of the family.

Cut to the night before Thanksgiving. I'm trying to make my husband's favorite chocolate pie using his mother's recipe-something I've never attempted. While I'm stirring the mixture over medium heat my dad calls and goes through all the reasons he wishes mom could be here this Thanksgiving. He does this every year.

When it's clear that my chocolate filling will not set, I get very irritated because my dad is still talking about mom and muttering something about the FDA controlling the government. Without thinking I tell him he's welcome to bring mom's ashes for Thanksgiving dinner, I'll just set an extra place. How much space can an urn take up? Dad is silent at my suggestion... Mission accomplished.

The day after turkey, ham, dressing, potatoes, yams and rolls, a few of us head to Angel's house. Soon my sister and I are laughing hysterically as Angel's mom tells us funny stories about my friend. I love this woman. And because she's not my mom, the things that irritate Angel, I find endearing. Oddly enough, Angel feels the same about my mother-in-law and dad.

So no matter how dysfunctional, unconventional or strange you think your family is, keep in mind that they are no more dysfunctional, unconventional or strange than everyone else's; unless you have a mother in law who is prepared to donate all of your vital organs... while you're still alive.

You can reach Becky at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](#)

Tags: Untagged