

~~She went~~~~The day she had gone~~ insane ~~on~~was June 11, 2008. ~~The particular day~~It was easy to remember ~~that particular day~~ because it was ~~the same date as~~ her son's birthday. In fact, one could say ~~the birth of her first son, Thomas~~~~—the~~ ; ~~and the corresponding~~ trauma of ~~having~~ a tiny, mewling, wax-covered human ~~emerge~~ from her body ~~—~~ , was what loosened the string on her bag of marbles. One might say that June 11, 2008, was the beginning of the end of her rational, ~~and~~ logical side. But not even the young mother herself, ~~even though she had a deep-seated suspicion~~ , would ~~say~~ ~~claim that~~ Thomas or any of her subsequent ~~three~~ children had driven her to insanity. ~~Because~~ ~~saying~~ that would make her a bad mother. ~~However~~ , ~~she had her suspicions~~ . ~~Which she knew she was not~~ .

Within the first week of motherhood, she ~~had~~ lost three marbles ~~already~~ because ~~becoming a mother had made her~~ ~~she~~ obsess~~ed~~ over the oddest things; she lost one ~~marble~~ when she googled “‘how often do thirty-six-hour-old babies have a poo.’” The second ~~was disappeared~~ when she checked the ingredients list ~~for~~ ~~on~~ Thomas's nappies to see ~~which ingredient~~ ~~what~~ wasn't organic so she could blame it for ~~Thomas's his nappy~~ rash. The third marble ~~was vanished~~ when she developed a painful breast infection because her milk wasn't draining properly, and ~~although she now had a truly magnificent bosom~~ , she contemplated throwing her baby out the window so that her life could go back to normal.

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Commented [SU1]: Aren't these the same thing? It seems we should combine them.

Commented [SU2]: I don't think it's necessary to mention the number of children right now. That'll be shown later in the story.

Commented [SU3]: I don't think we need to say this. Instead, the rest of the story shows that she's a good mother.

Commented [SU4]: Haha, I love this!

She had eventually found the nappy marble (it was in the bottom of the nappy bag) and the poo marble but had been too ~~tired-exhausted~~ to search for the infection marble because she ~~was exhausted and~~ hadn't yet learned to ~~nap-sleep~~ when the baby ~~napped~~ slept.

Commented [SU5]: I revised this because having "nappy" and "nap" in the same short paragraph might be a bit distracting.

~~She had a loving~~ Her husband, ~~though he loved her, but he~~ didn't understand her ~~ordeal~~. ~~There was o~~ Only one person ~~who could completely understand, and Sso~~ whenever ~~the young mother~~ wanted to tether herself to reality, she called on her own mother, who had ascended to near regal status and only answered to ~~the title~~ ~~“Grandmama.”~~ The young mother thought that particular matriarchal title was a bit pretentious ~~because considering that, until now,~~ nothing had ~~ever~~ seemed particularly grand about her ~~own mother~~ ~~mum~~ when she'd been younger. But still, she called.

Commented [SU6]: Can definitely be changed!

Commented [SU7]: Referring to her only as "the young mother" *might* be a bit distracting to readers. Maybe you could go with a simple name, or just "Mommy" or something. If you prefer to keep "the young mother," though, it'll probably be okay.

Commented [SU8]: Revision OK?

~~“Mum, I think I'm going insane,”~~ she said while trying to wash little Thomas in the tub ~~after he'd gotten into the peanut butter and then the flour and was now a greasy cake-baby.~~

Commented [SU9]: How old is Thomas right now? It doesn't seem like more than a few weeks have gone by, but here he seems to be at least several months old. Perhaps we could include a hint about how much time has passed since his birth? Also, *how* did he get into the peanut butter and flour? Readers will probably want to know, since those items are usually in places that are out of reach of babies.

There was a pointed silence on the phone and the young mother ~~sighed~~ ~~gritted~~ ~~her teeth~~; she needed her own mother's wisdom and experience and, most importantly, her grasp on reality. ~~The young mother gritted her teeth.~~ Why did ~~her mother~~ ~~she~~ have to be so difficult? ~~“Grandmama—”~~

call me?" Another call: "Grandmama, I think you'll need to have me committed. Thomas was ~~outside~~ in the front yard, completely starkers. I yelled at him to come inside, but he insisted he was helping Mrs. Blake water her plants the natural way, and I'm at my wit's end."

But no matter how the conversations started, they always soured when Grandmama offered a cocktail of "If you simply," or "When I was your age," or "In my day." The young mother hadn't had time for a drink in ages, and she certainly had no time for imbibing in Grandmama's offering. Eventually she stopped calling and felt much better for it.

One evening, ~~all the children were sick~~. Thomas and Justin had head colds so bad they couldn't pronounce their "b's" and "d's," and Marin—who insisted on being called "Pink Death, Goddess of ~~W~~war and ~~C~~ehocolate"—had coughed so hard she ~~had~~ vomited on the new white rug. The young mother stared at the damp, ~~and~~ yellowish ~~sick~~ spot on her rug—which had stayed gloriously clean for three blissful days because ~~the mothershe~~ had guarded it with ~~enough a vigilance and strategy and vigilance thatto rival~~ ~~even Admiral Lord Nelsonany admiral~~ would have found ~~impressive~~. The young mother knew that ~~the purchasing of such a~~ rug for a home with four young children was further ~~evidence proved that of~~ her ~~lost~~ sanity ~~was~~ ~~disappearing~~.

~~because what person in their right mind would ever acquire a white rug with four children~~. After ~~the worst of the sickness had passed~~ that evening ~~of sickness~~, the

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Commented [SU11]: I revised this because not all readers in this genre will know who Admiral Lord Nelson is.

mother sat on her worn and lumpy sofa, closed her eyes briefly, then raised ~~her~~ ~~eyes~~them heavenward ~~to look at the ceiling~~. Her marbles weren't ~~there~~ ~~there on the ceiling~~ either. She ~~honestly~~ didn't know where most of them were. She should probably try to find some.

Justin gave a snore and rolled over, his hand hitting the silver mixing bowl—now a vom vessel. ~~—and~~ ~~A~~ bit of drool landed on the last clean patch of the cheery, daffodil-yellow pillow she'd defiantly bought ~~when at the same time she'd ordered~~ ~~as~~ the rug.

Commented [SU12]: Drool from Justin or from the bowl?

Alexis's curly ~~hair~~ ~~head~~ pushed deeper into the crook of her arm as he slept, his hot fat cheeks sticking to the skin of her neck. Soon he would ~~be~~ too old ~~to be held for her to hold~~ like this; ~~—even~~ ~~at for a~~ ~~five-year-old~~, this was a rare moment.

Marin ~~—(sorry, Pink Death—)~~ snuggled in the sofa corner with her own barf bucket, clutching ~~tightly to~~ the foam sword she'd used earlier to nearly poke out ~~her~~ ~~brother's~~ eye on purpose so he would look more like Odin.

Commented [SU13]: Addition OK? Just wanted to specify where Marin was snuggling.

~~““Excuse me,””~~ a gentle voice said. ~~““Would you like the~~ ~~sem~~ ~~back?~~ ~~—Your marbles.””~~

Commented [SU14]: Which brother?

The mother turned to see a being, enveloped in a soft white light and hovering a few inches above the now-stained white ~~area~~ rug. She blinked, once, then twice, and ~~came to the conclusion~~ ~~concluded~~ this was probably an angel of some sort. Or a hallucination. She wasn't even startled at his appearance; ~~—and~~ ~~though~~ ~~slightly~~;