As I turned my truck off, I was anxious to get inside the house and get comfortable.
My afternoon interview had went later than I had expected, and I was ready to throw my shoes off and fall into my recliner. With the approaching rain clouds and thunder rolling across the hills, I even debated on relaxing on the front porch.
Entering the back door, I instantly knew that might not be happening.
The kitchen looked like a war zone. Broken pieces of colored chalk and markers without their tops littered the floor. The placemats from our dining room table were sticking out from underneath the fridge. There were empty Tupperware containers scattered all over the counters. The fluorescent light above kept flickering like something out of a horror movie.
Continuing to make my way around the clutter, the dining room was in the same condition. Hunting magazines were thrown all over the dining table. Wrinkled shirts were dangling from the back of the dining room chairs. A spare shoe was alone in the baby's highchair. I stepped on a dirty spoon on the way to the living room.
And in the living room? Monster trucks, airplanes, baby dolls, a playhouse and stuffed animals covered every inch of the floor. There was a container of pistachio pudding on the side table. The spoon used to eat that pudding was on top of my oriental rug. More hunting magazines were thrown on the coffee table.
And then there was my husband Jason. He was sprawled out on the couch with a dazed look in his eyes. He looked like he had been attacked by a wild animal. His hair was sticking straight up in the air. His eyelids looked like they weighed a ton.
"Thank God you're home," he said, with barely enough breath to muster a sentence out.
Looking around at the mess of what was once a clean home, I realized one important detail was missing.
"Where are the kids," I asked.
"James is watching a movie in his room," he said, easing off the couch. "Elsie is asleep. She just went down."
"What's wrong with you," I asked, putting my purse down. "What happened in here."
I quickly began to pick up the toys and put them in a basket. I gathered up the assortment of chalk pieces and markers off the floor. The magazines were piled together on the book shelf. The laundry was placed inside the hamper. I threw the food containers in the dish washer. And I put the placemats on the table.
Within minutes, the mess was clean and all was calm.
"The kids went crazy," Jason said, picking up the pudding-covered spoon. "James started throwing stuff around. Elsie is out of control."

Elsie, who is 14 months old, has the ability to “lose control” in the presence of her daddy. My little dumpling causes sheer havoc when I leave her alone with Jason.
“I had some pudding for them, and I left the bowl here on the table,” Jason said. “James called me from the bathroom so I ran in there. When I got back, she was shoving the leftover pudding in her mouth. Then she picked up the phone and smeared the pudding all over it. And she made a phone call.”
I was baffled. It amazes me how when I have both of the kids alone with me, we don’t have these “issues.” But when poor Jason has them alone, it looks like a bomb exploded in the house.
I hate to admit it, but it is funny to me to see how exhausted and confused Jason looks like when I return home.
Now mind you, with this particular episode, I wasn’t that late getting home.
We had only parted ways an hour...yes...an hour. Within an hour, our son and daughter were able to empty every art collection onto the floor. They were able to throw a magazine collection into the ceiling fan. They were able to devour an adult-sized helping of pudding and spread the little bit left over on the TV controller and Jason’s phone. They stripped themselves of their clothing and tossed them like Mardi Gras beads around the house. They got every single toy they own and planted them in the living room.
And they were able to start a movie with popcorn and be put down for the night.
It’s amazing how fast and destructive these little creatures can be in an hour.
The fun stopped that night when I got home. It was time to get down to business.
I immediately made James tidy his room up. I sneaked a peek in on Elsie. I did a quick load of laundry and made James’ supper.
I let Jason relax. He had a busy hour filled with art projects, streaking moments and pistachio pudding vandalism.
And he handled it quite well. He handled it like a daddy.