

Storytime with E. E. Zulkoski

by Erin Zulkoski

It was a dark and stormy night.

No, wait, that's rubbish.

It was a glorious and beautiful afternoon.

No, no, no. All wrong....shit.

The church bells rang, bringing in the hour. It chimed nine times, which is odd, considering it is eight o'clock. God must have forgotten the time change.

I sit in silence in my living room. The dog, who is lying on the other couch, sighs heavily. I find myself sighing, as well. I am alone, save the dog, so I guess I'm not really *alone* alone, but you get the idea. It is odd, being alone. Some days I yearn for the solitude, other days, I crave attention and companionship.

It is mid-November, and marks the one year anniversary of when things turned to shit for me personally. What a year it has been. Love lost, marriage done, suicide attempts and to top it all off, I didn't get a raise at work. Fuck.

Had you asked me a year-and-a-half ago where you thought I'd be in my life, I'd probably have replied, "happily married, in love, and if we play our cards right, a little bundle of joy in the future!" Ask me now where I am in my life....well, read the previous paragraph. Things don't always go as planned.

So here I sit, as I said previously, alone and afraid. Afraid of what the future holds, afraid of staying alone forever, afraid of myself, afraid of cancer, fire, floods, famine, being audited by the IRS...the list goes on and on.

The future, at this point, looks bleak. As I currently see it, I have no discernable future. I am stuck in the rat race that is eating, sleeping, working, eating sleeping working, eatingsleepingworking. Oh, throw in some drunken nights just for "fun." Nothing's more fun than being depressed than waking up with a hangover AND being depressed. Talk about your double whammies.

I will be alone forever. I know that sounds dismal and pessimistic, but really, if you really think about it, even if you're with someone, you are alone. This person, no matter how fervently they insist upon it, will never quite understand you; they'll never quite get what's going on in your world. They will say to you, "I understand what you're going through," but they are fooling themselves, as well as lying to you. It isn't by any means malicious of them, on the contrary. People are people. It's our great advantage and our great curse.

I scare myself. I am capable of ungodly things, and the only thing that stops me from committing such atrocities is laziness. Sloth, if you're Catholic. You may have noticed I mentioned suicide attempts. Guilty. Grant it, it was a pathetic and sorry excuse for an attempt, but goddamn it, I fucking meant it at the time. No pills, no razor blades, no auto-erotic asphyxiation....just me, my car, and a desolate stretch of highway. I had considered driving head-first into on-coming traffic, but this would harm another person, possibly several people, and I didn't want that on my conscience, although, why would I care? I'd be dead. I wanted to drive my car down a lone stretch of highway, accelerating to an unsafe speed, and then yank on the steering wheel in hopes the car would flip, roll, sommersault, explode, anything to end my existence. I don't know

what is more perverse: wanting to kill myself, or picturing my funeral. I would lie awake in bed, imagining what would happen at my funeral, who would be there. I'd get a sick pleasure out of thinking of hundreds of people showing up, all beside themselves with inconsolable grief, maybe some would be wailing loudly and collapse due to the enormous sadness they felt for my untimely death. I'm fucked in the head.

Obviously, I did not kill myself. I sought out treatment at a lovely little mental affective disorders unit at a local hospital. I am on medication. Life is...liveable, to an extent. There are days where I'm rendered useless by the barrage of emotions I'm feeling about losing my husband to the walking death that is divorce. There are days when I find joy in the most simple of things, like watching my dog sleep on the couch. Depression is a wicked beast. And obviously a female. Why else would it be so fickle?

The other fears I mentioned are common. I think an even greater fear would be discovering you have cancer while your house is on fire during a flood. And then the IRS comes and audits you, which causes a famine. The bittersweet irony...Alanis Morissette was right; it IS ironic.

Don't ya think?

