

There are very few things that fill my family with terror, but I'm slightly ashamed that the top two things that send my family scattering are: me. Yes, me. Like when I'm making mayonnaise. Specifically the vegan mayo that swears it's perfect and works and- Look, let's not get too close to the details quite yet, let's just be honest here.

When my kids hear me say, "Hey can you grab me a can of chickpeas?" They run. Fast. One hides, close enough to watch the chaos ensue, but far enough to be out of firing range. Because honestly, I turn into a psycho when I'm making the stuff. The recipe swears all you need is 3 T of that and 12 of those funny little chick peas and it will emulsify into this perfectly thick white glob of mayo. My friends, it does not. Sometimes it takes 12 T and 18 chickpeas, and sometimes it takes less. And all the while I'm heard grumbling and quietly raging until it spills over. My eyes reach epic proportions of largeness, and apparently my kids swear they've seen actual steam coming from my ears. And my hair?! I'm sure you can imagine the tangled mess.

And then there's me making a bed. More specifically, when a doona is involved. I endured such horrors for 15 years while living on The Island. Each week when I'd change the bed and my husband would unsuspectingly come traipsing into the bedroom to find me tangled up in a king size doona and it's cover, he'd start retreating backwards while saying, "You don't really want my help do you?"

Sometimes he managed to escape before my words, or a flying slipper found him. Oh, I know all about the funny Russian guy on YouTube who has a "quick hack", and the 4' 2" Chinese ladies who all show you in 30 seconds how to put one on. I've heard all about the equivalent known as a duvet where people use strings and buttons to put the interior in place and keep it there.

My friends, that's now how it worked on The Island. I'm not Russian, and I'm not 4' 2". Those tricks didn't work either. Trust me, I tried. My husband might have come in to find me inside the doona cover screaming, "What the ever living heck went wrong?!"

For fifteen long years I grumbled and complained about the stupidity of doonas. I taught my children how to use them. I dutifully made sure everyone had one for every season, so that

no one died of heatstroke or inadvertently froze to death. But I never loved them. Not once did I say, “Oh hoorah I have a doona!”

The first thing I did upon our return to America was buy everyone a proper comforter for their bed. Never mind that my 6' child has to sleep frog legged to keep warm under his. Or that my other child thinks comforters feel funny and are, “quite honestly horrible. I'm glad I packed my doona, how much longer until the boat gets here?” I glared at him.

As for our comforter, it kept us toasty warm in the winter. We're not used to heated bedrooms so I'm afraid our home is nice and chilly upstairs. I'm talking “get out of bed and shiver all the way to the bathroom, or to check the thermostat and find out someone left it off and the windows open” while it's snowing outside kinda cold.

But, come summer we were nearing heatstroke proportions of overheating when I finally succumbed to the idea that I'd have to brave the chaos that is our local WalMart and find another comforter. I did so in record time. The packaging made it look like an old fashioned quilt, how quaint!

Dear Reader, do not be fooled by the sweet red headed lady on the packaging all over the local WalMart. Do. Not. Be. Fooled. I brought that thing home, opened it up and was horrified by how gaudy it was. My husband cooed with words like, “Hey I had one like that when I was a kid!” Which might have gotten him an, “Yeah, it looks like it's from the 70's. It should have stayed there.”

Worse yet, the comforter is not quilted. It's just three pieces of *stuff* all together as one, with little bits of random yarn all over it to keep the guts from clumping up. The problem is, whenever someone rolls over at night you hear the cotton around the yarn rip. And, each time I'd walk into our bedroom I'd let out a small yelp followed by, “This is truly awful, I really wish I'd returned it.”

But I hadn't, and now it was too late. So, I did the only thing that I could do. I braved the raging weekend thunderstorms and went out to hunt down new bedding. I failed. Miserably. There was nothing adequate. It appears all comforters are now made the same way, why?

Who's idea was this? And why would anyone pay hundreds of dollars knowing it will eventually lump up or rip? Not me.

I came home, creeping along at 25 mph, rejoicing that not a single person was riding my bumper thanks to the semi-flooded roads. Hey, look when it's raining that hard you create your own rainbows! I made it into the house, collapsed, and then sulked before picking up my computer and checking the dreaded Amazon. And then, I did the most horrifying thing my family had ever seen.

I bought a duvet and a duvet cover. I stalked the mail person for three days until both pieces were here. I spent all day drying that darn duvet because the local HOA forbids me to hang laundry out. Then, when at long last it was all dry and ready to go, I went to put it all together.

My husband poked his head in the bedroom, "Hey, want some help?"

Somewhere from the depths of the duvet and its cover I screamed, "Save yourself! Run, I'm in the seventh level of doona hell, and if you don't get out of here, I'm likely to scream." He retreated. Rather quickly, from the sounds of his footsteps.

After wrestling with things long enough people began to wonder if we were going to actually have dinner or not, I stood back, surveyed the new bedding and deemed it quite lovely. Except, now our curtains don't match, and because I bought a duvet a size bigger than our bed, the shams look funny with our tiny little pillows inside. Still, I survived being bested by a duvet, and marched down stairs rather happily with my efforts.

No one spoke when I entered the living room, instead they all peeked over the tops of their books or devices. I suggested they all come and admire the new bedding, and assured them that there'd be no shouting because I'd already wrestled the duvet into submission within its casing.

The thing is, when you're not the one who's spent all day drying a duvet, haven't wrestled some oversized blanket into submission, tucked it in all around a bed, or smoothed out the wrinkles you lack a certain sense of appreciation for a job well done. Which was obvious when

everyone wanted to know what the deal with the funny pillows was.

And the real horror is, that every week for the rest of forever I will have to strip that coverlet off the duvet, wash it, dry it, and wrestle it back into place. All while my family is running for closets to hide in!



I confess, Dear Reader, there's something else about bed making that I'm a little neurotic about. I can't stand wrinkles in the bed. It's true. The blankets can be wrinkled from the dryer, that's fine. I'm talking about the blankets or sheets not pulled tight and straight. I dunno, it just drives me crazy.

Many years ago when my grandmother was still alive, we were staying in her house on an out of state trip. She came in to say goodnight on her way past the bedroom my sibling and I were sharing. Grandma paused in the doorway and said, "What on earth are you doing?"

"Making the bed Grandma, it got all wrinkled up!"

She laughed, and when she finally came up for air she said, "But aren't you just going to sleep in it? What's the point in making it at this time of night?"

And with a straight face I said, "Well, I can't sleep if it's all messed up." We heard her chuckling for a long time from the depths of her own bedroom.

The thing is, I don't just have trouble getting to sleep, I'll actually reach the point of panic if the blankets are twisted up enough and I feel like my legs are getting wound in them. It's why I refused to use a flat sheet, there's nothing quite like waking up in the middle of the night all tangled up in one and screaming loud enough to wake an entire apartment building.

Except, I realized upon our return from The Island that my kids have no idea what a flat sheet is. It's true! I use to only purchase fitted sheets, apparently that's not much of a thing anymore, or at least my local Wal-mart struggled to fill that need. So, I had no choice but to buy full sets of sheets and pass them around.

Upon opening their own sets my kids were a little confused. I had to explain that normally people sleep with both a fitted sheet, and then one they can pull up between themselves and their doona. "What on earth would you want to do that for?" my eldest asked. "Because some people are just weird like that," his younger sibling answered.

"Actually guys, we're the weird ones. Most people use that sheet, and sometimes a light blanket too. Then they use the doona if they are in need of more warmth. And because of that, they don't have to wash their doona's each week. Oh," I said, walking out of the room and ignoring their dazed looks, "by the way, most people call these things duvets."

"Duvet," my husband shouted from the depths of the office, "is a posh word and implies we should be drinking our tea with our pinky finger sup."

"We don't drink tea!" I shouted down the hall.

"But if we did..."

"Fine, doona, but no one else will know what we're talking about."

Now, while you, Dear Reader, continue to laugh at the insanity, I'm afraid I really must go deal with changing my fancy bed blankets. If you see my family running, chances are high things didn't go well.

The Reluctant Author
