

The Conscious Killer
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Monday, October 5th

It may seem silly to write all this down, but I have to do something. All these thoughts in my head are driving me crazy, and I don't have anyone to talk to. We've been in the godforsaken piece of land for two months now, and there is nothing to do. This town is one of those so tightly-knit communities that they won't allow anyone else inside - the kind of towns that horror movies take place in, where everyone is suspicious of outsiders for no apparent reason.

I still can't believe I left Cincinnati for this. Can't believe I married who I did, followed him here on a job offer (for him). And of course since I'm pregnant, Alex doesn't want me out looking for a job like I had hoped to do, so I'm stuck in this little house in the middle of nowhere all day, by myself, doing NOTHING but unpack, clean, organize, and sit. Just sit, getting fatter and fatter each day. I am so terrified of staying fat after the baby. Alex is fat enough for the both of us, and I don't ever want to have anything physically in common with him.

I'm also terrified of giving birth. I'm not going to be hardcore and do it completely natural, like some women do. I'm definitely getting drugs. But I'm still scared. What if I hemorrhage? What if my pelvic bone cracks? What if I need stitches? What if something bad happens to the baby? What if I die?

The view out the window isn't even that great. It's just flat fields for miles all around, no houses in sight, and I rarely see another car on the road. There's a river within sight, which excited Alex to no end, but I could care less. I want to be near *people*. And don't even get me started on the uncomfortableness of the long drive here whilst pregnant.

Tuesday, October 6th

I sound so harsh when I re-read what I wrote yesterday. I think I knew it, too, and that's why I stopped writing.

It's true, though. I cringe as I admit it to myself slowly, instead of that all-out burst of yesterday before thinking about childbirth.

I hate my husband's appearance. He's always telling me that he'll lose weight, eat better, go for walks with me...of course nothing ever comes of it. And now of course I'm eating more and more, and getting bigger and bigger by the day (it seems), and I think that makes him feel better about the three helpings that he inhales at dinner, followed by a huge bowl of ice cream (he buys it, I don't: I'm really trying not to get disgustingly fat).

I started doing yoga when I found out I was pregnant. It helps to remind me that I am at least trying to not become a giant blob of jigglings, sweating, formless human flesh. Unlike my husband.

I feel as though I need to defend myself. This is insane, I know, defending myself against a blank piece of paper, that can only echo back to me what I've said and nothing more. But still. Perhaps I'm only convincing myself. I don't know. But defend myself I must. My husband, Alex Royd, (lord how I hate his last name! It's stupid, and everyone who hears it usually makes some kind of stupid joke about steroids. And I usually just want to pull out a gun and shoot them between the eyes. I used to say shoot myself between the eyes, but that changed after I got pregnant. Even though I said it jokingly, it seemed like a bad omen to suggest things that could harm my baby) Anyway, he weighs over three hundred pounds. None of which is muscle, mind you. You would think that, as sports therapist, he would take better care of himself...but no. Not even after getting this job at an expensive therapy facility designed to cater to well-pampered high school athletes that go to the prep school in the next big city, only a few miles away. And not even after seeing the devastating effects being fat can have on a person later in life.

Wednesday, October 7th

I wrote so much yesterday my hand cramped! I've been trying to write in the afternoons, so I know I have plenty of time to finish and hide this little notebook before Alex comes back home. I don't want him to know that I've been writing like this, because I know he'll just try to read it, to "try to understand me better". What a load of crap! He's just nosy and prying. He's done it before. I kept a journal, when we first got married - before we moved - that I wrote in every day, until I came home one night from a shopping trip with my friends to find him reading it like it was the new book on Oprah's reading list. That was when he said that he was just trying to understand me better, and that was the only time I've hit him. I burned the journal the next day, and I haven't written in one again until now, out of desperation. And that's why I'm so careful when I write in this, and where I hide it. I keep it behind a shelf of books in the living room, where I'm sure Alex will never look. He doesn't read.

I've finished unpacking everything in the kitchen, so cooking will be much easier now. Now I can cook those huge meals for my husband with ease.

Soon I think I'm going to have to go buy new maternity clothes. I only have a couple pairs of pants, besides my regular sweatpants, and I'm getting too big now for even those. I don't even want to think about how much I weigh now, let alone write them down here. Seeing those horrible fat numbers in black and white I'm sure will drive me over the edge. Sometimes I feel so fat and ugly that I can't move, and I'll just sit there in front of the blank TV, without even turning it on, just feeling the fatness of my own self. I won't move until I feel the baby kick, to remind me that it's not *all* fat - some of it is a baby.

Alex will, I'm sure, not be pleased by me spending money, but he brought home two new videogames last night, which is something we don't need, and maternity clothes are something we do. Besides, it's my money that we used to buy this house, and the new car, and all his scrub uniforms he needed to buy specially to fit his fat body. I was the one with the job for the first year of our marriage, not him. And I would have a job now, if he'd let me.

I should get some cleaning supplies, too. Cleaning helps distract me from my body, from this stupid town, and from my giant husband. If there's the slightest mess to be cleaned, I take care of it right away - not because I love cleaning, but I love the satisfaction that it gives, and the distraction. I think if it weren't for all the unpacking and cleaning that needed to be done in this house since we've moved here, I would have gone crazy a long time ago. Besides, the windows on this house are filthy. If I run my finger through all the dirt on them, I leave behind a clean streak that makes the rest of the window seem even more dirty.

Thursday, October 8th

I spent all day today getting the baby's room ready. It's just a plain white room, and Alex put the border of teddy bears up when we first moved in, so I was really just dusting and vacuuming, re-arranging furniture, and unpacking some of the toys and books and clothes that friends and family had sent us from back home.

I love this room. It's my favorite room in the whole house. It faces west, so the sunlight won't be blinding on the white walls in the morning, but it has the best view of the sun setting. Alex wanted to fill the crib with stuffed animals and blankets, but I know how dangerous that can be, so I put the stuffed animals in a net hung from the corner of the ceiling. I set up the books on the little plastic bookshelf, and cut price tags off of cute little onesies and folded them up in the dresser. I added diapers and baby wipes to my shopping list, even though I know it's kinda early. I just want to be ready.

This room is perfect. I don't think it could be any better than it is. I hope the baby likes it.

Monday, October 12th

Whatever possessed me to go shopping on a Saturday in a little town like this, when everyone else is bound to do their shopping?! The only reason I went Saturday instead of Friday was because it gave me an excuse to get away from Alex for a little while, but I think I would've rather dealt with him instead of all those people!

Everyone saw me, and no one introduced themselves to me, but they all stared - at me, at my growing chest, at my bulging belly, at the expensive new purse I bought before I moved here, at the maternity clothes and cleaning supplies I bought...

I know what they were all thinking. They were wondering if I was really pregnant, or if I was just fat. I know that's what they were thinking. And I even saw quite a few of them - including the butch woman at the register - scan my hand for a wedding ring. What is wrong with these people?!

Only one person said something to me. An old man, actually friendly-looking, advised me to get a mask to wear - the paper kind people use when painting inside in a tight space so they don't get high. "You don't wanna hurt the little one breathing in all them fumes," he said, smiling. I thanked him, grateful for any sign of normal human behavior, and added a mask to my cart. Besides, his warning actually scared me. I hadn't thought of breathing in any fumes, I had just thought of getting my house clean.

Of course, maternity clothes shopping was embarrassing, and would have been even without all the silent, rude people of this place. I just felt to utterly huge and disgusting, standing there in the dressing room, looking in the mirror at my pregnant self. The stretch marks seemed to stand out even more in that gray little space, and that gray little space seemed even smaller with my stomach sticking out in front, and from the sides, and the increased flesh on my thighs and breasts. My entire body felt enormous and unnatural, and I felt both lazy and sick from the feeling. And it was even worse when I had to change back into the clothes I had worn to the store, which had not fit well to begin with (hence the need to buy more maternity clothes) and now seemed even smaller, showing every bulge and fold of my bloated body.

I hurried out of there as quick as I could, waddling to the car with my cart, heaving the heavier bags against my soft sides and then into the backseat, and then swinging my swollen fat self into the car where I've had to push the seat back further and further from my vastly expanding stomach, and drove away as fast as I could.

For supper I could hardly eat, except that my huge belly grumbled painfully until I filled it full. Alex, of course, didn't notice, but was too busy complaining about the money I had spent on "unnecessary" cleaning supplies. Has he not seen the filth on the windows, blocking out the sunlight? Then he just droned on and on and on and on about his new job, and how he's making so many friends, and everything is really going great there.

I really could have hit him.

And then, after dinner, when we were lying in bed, he had the nerve to try to have sex with me! We hadn't had sex in a long time, but he hasn't asked about it - probably because of the baby. Anyway, I was lying on my side, facing away from him, and he pushed his flesh against my back, put his big hand on my big belly, and started kissing my neck with those huge sloppy lips of his. I rolled over to tell him to stop, and our stomachs pushed into each other. I gagged, and barely made it to the bathroom before I threw up everything I had eaten. Alex, of course, lumbered after me, clumsily trying to comfort me while I sat on the cold linoleum, gasping for air. He thought it was just the baby that made me sick, and thankfully didn't try anything else for the rest of the night.

Wednesday, October 14th

That's it. I've had it. I can't take anymore. I have to do something about Alex.

It took longer to clean the windows than I thought it would yesterday, and Alex came home to find me standing on a ladder, cleaning the last of the windows, wearing my new mask, with supper still cooking in the oven instead of on the table and ready like he's used to. He threw a *fit*. He picked me up by my legs, pinned me against the wall, and asked me "what I thought I was doing."

"Cleaning the windows!" I was scared at this point, because my husband is a lot bigger than me (even when I'm fat and pregnant), but I was mad, too. Why was he so upset? Doesn't he want a clean house? And what else does he want me to do all day?

Well, to cut a long conversation short, he was upset because I was standing on a chair "in my condition", and that he didn't think it was safe for me to deal with so many "dangerous chemical cleaning supplies" even with my mask, and he was just worried about me and the baby, and blahblahblahblahblahblahblah. I told him the windows were filthy and they were driving me nuts and I was perfectly safe with my mask on and what did he think I was going to do, fall off the chair? And that he was just upset because supper was going to be a little late tonight. Then he started crying and said he didn't care about what time he ate, that he was just worried about me and the baby, and blahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblahblah. I smacked him and told him to get out of my way, that I didn't need him to worry about me, that I was fine.

His face turned really red then, and he scrunched his face up all mad and everything and went "yeah, well, what about the baby? You're eight months pregnant! You haven't gained nearly enough weight, and you insist on doing stupid things like climb chairs and breathe in dangerous chemicals! What about the baby? What if you fell? What if you breathed in too much of that stuff and something went wrong with the baby? What about the other night, when you got sick? Do you even care? You are the most selfish mother I've ever met! You only care about yourself! What about the baby? You won't even let the doctor tell us if it's a boy or a girl! You won't even sit down with me and pick out names! You won't even go out and attempt to make new friends or meet people or anything! I know you're not thrilled about the move here, but I did it for us! For the baby! What have you done?"

I couldn't believe he was saying those things to me. How could he think that I didn't care about the baby? Of course I care! If I didn't care, I wouldn't have gotten that mask! I wouldn't spend so much time getting the baby's room ready! How can he say that I don't care?! And how dare he ask me what I've done for the baby?! I've sacrificed *everything* for this baby! It's *my* body being destroyed, and I'm letting it! Not his!

I couldn't even say anything to him when he said that to me. Thankfully the oven started to beep then, letting me know that supper was ready. I ducked under his arm and fled to the kitchen, where I found sanctuary in my work.

Supper was silent, and Alex ate even more than usual before yelling at me again about not eating enough. I was too tired to argue - I had been cleaning all day! - so I let him fill my plate to overflowing, eating every last bite. Then he did it again. And then he got out the ice cream, and instead of just getting himself a bowl, he got me one, too. And he stood over me until I finished it, nearly in tears. Why was he making me eat so much? I know I need to eat more now that I'm pregnant, but not *that* much!

And then - and now I am in tears - we were watching TV, and he popped two bags of popcorn. One for him - that's normal - and one for me. Why he thought I needed to eat even more food was beyond me. I tried to eat only part of the bag and throw the rest of it away, but he caught me and told me if I didn't eat all of it, he would stay home from work tomorrow - today - and make sure that I ate everything that he served me. He said I need to learn how to be grateful, that there are people in other countries who don't eat every day, and that I need to take better care of the baby, and didn't I want to be a good mother?

Friday, October 16th

Apparently Alex still wasn't satisfied with my eating, even though I ate everything he gave me Tuesday night. But he switched hours at work with someone and stayed home Thursday, and made me sit on the couch and do nothing all day. He said he was sorry that we had fought, and that he didn't want to do anything to hurt the baby. Does he think I'm gonna miscarry at eight months?! I mean, I know it's possible, but not from just cooking and cleaning, like I have been my entire pregnancy!

I wouldn't talk to him. I took my shower, got dressed, and that's all he would let me do. I wasn't even allowed to get up for a glass of water - he had to get it for me. It was insane!!!

Oh, and the food! For breakfast he made pancakes, bacon, and eggs. Normally I eat two or three pancakes and an egg, and maybe some bacon. Alex insisted that I eat an entire stack of pancakes - I was too horrified to count how many exactly - two eggs, and five pieces of bacon. Then he made me drink what seemed like the entire container of orange juice. For lunch, he made me eat three peanut butter and jellies, three glasses of milk, and an entire carton of strawberries with powdered sugar. For supper,

he cooked an entire box of spaghetti and made me eat half of it, smothered in sauce and meatballs and parmesan cheese. After supper Alex made brownies, and gave me one, and that was when I finally cried. I didn't burst into tears or anything, just silently let them run down my face as I forced myself to eat the stupid thing. Alex didn't even notice. He was too busy staring at the TV - I think he was playing a game. How I didn't puke, I don't know. I just let my mind go blank. It was easier not to argue. How could I argue? What could I say that would make him change his mind? He doesn't care about me - only himself and his spawn. I'm just the tool that gets him the things that he needs.

I could feel my skin stretch thinner and thinner across my stomach as I ate; the soft flesh growing on my hips and thighs and buttocks and neck and cheeks. I swear I saw the hand that held my fork grow plumper after every meal, and sure enough, by the end of the day I couldn't take my rings off for bed. Never in my life have I felt so disgusting. My body felt so heavy as I sat there on the couch, Alex next to me watching TV. I have no idea what was even on. I just sat there and tried not to feel out the extra weight on my body, crushing me, weighing me down, making me exhausted and scared and angry.

Lying awake last night, I came to a conclusion. All Alex wants is a housewife to breed with. And he doesn't deserve to breed. Not treating me like this, dragging me away from everything I've known and refusing me the small comfort of a job, or even talking to me about something other than the baby. He insists on protecting me from myself, and I am more than capable of taking care of me and this baby inside of me. He insists on force-feeding me, and I can't tell if he's honestly just concerned about the baby, or if he just wants to make me fatter so that I look more like him, so he doesn't feel so guilty about his weight. He can't even see how scared I am of having the baby, or how sick I am over destroying my body for this new person in the world. He doesn't care about anything but the picture perfect family, where the woman stays home to cook and clean and raise the kids, while he goes off and works. It's not practical. He's not practical. He's cruel and selfish. How can he say that I don't care, or that I've done nothing for the baby?! Like I said before, I'm already destroying my body for this baby, and I don't need him to come and screw it up any further.

No. I will not let him breed. This child will be his last.

Saturday, October 17th

Everything's ready for tonight. I spent all day yesterday getting ready, going over my plan over and over and over again. Everything's ready. He's at work right now, picking up the hours that he traded with someone else for Thursday when he stayed home with me. I just need to wait for him to come home.

Later...

It's done. It worked. Right now I'm sitting at the kitchen table, Alex's body slumped on the floor where it fell when he convulsed. I thought it was going to be horrible to watch, but it was actually quite a relief to see that fat jiggle and shake more than it ever has as he struggled for his life. Of course the struggle was useless. I put enough window cleaner in his wine to make sure of that. He didn't even finish his glass. It only took a couple minutes, which is good because I didn't want to have to sit here forever and watch him die, and I needed to make sure that it worked and that he didn't manage to call for help or anything. Not that I think anyone would have helped him. I think he has that look of "I deserve to die" written all over him. You can just tell by looking at him that he's done something terrible.

At least, I think so.

Anyway, I'm getting ready to cut up the body and burn it. Alex picked the house in the middle of nowhere, with no houses in sight. Alex liked the scenic setting - I didn't. I tried to reason with him, but Alex insisted on buying this house. As though my opinion didn't matter. Well, now it does. Now my opinion is the only one there is. I wonder if that makes it fact?

I plan on burning the body where we burn our trash, and then scattering the pieces that don't burn in the river. No one will ever find it, and even if they do, so what? I'm burning the chainsaw, too. And I've got several tarps that Alex kept for camping out in the shed, to put under and over the body, so the blood won't get on the floor or the ceiling. My story will be that he came home from work, went out to the shed to sort the recycables, and never came back. No one will suspect me. I'm eight months pregnant. Everyone will feel sorry for me. It's perfect. I'll have this baby, and love it. I never told Alex, but I secretly had the doctor tell me the sex. It's a little girl. And I'm going to name her Vivien, after the girl who seduced Merlin. He would have hated that name. I think it's beautiful. Vivien was smart and beautiful and always got what she wanted. My kind of girl.

And after Vivien comes, I'll find a job. I'll sell this stupid house and move away from here. Start over, just Vivien and me. I'll lose weight. I'll be pretty again. I'll never have to eat like Alex forced me to eat ever again, even if I have other children later. I'll find another man, one who's actually attractive. It'll be perfect. Perfect.