

*Let me tell you a story.*

*Once upon a time, I was a soccer mom. I had two children, a husband, a dog, a picket fence, two cars and a mother-in-law who always reminded me I would never be good enough for her son. I spent all my time trying to make myself the kind of mother and wife I saw on television, but I never could master anything.*

*The garden I planted grew but never as good as Margie's. I sewed until my hands were sore but my sweaters never came out as good as Glenda's. My children were well-behaved, but never as smart or clever or talented as Georgia's.*

*I was a mediocre wife and a mediocre mother trapped in what seemed to be an endless, mediocre life.*

*And then the zombies came.*

*Fortunately, we lived in one of the better neighborhoods—isolated from the poorer parts of the city. Our gates didn't matter much, but they mattered enough. And we were wealthy enough to afford the kind of protection we would need. At least, that's what we thought. That's what my husband thought. He was wrong.*

*My husband and children were both lost within thirty days of the first outbreak. I grieved for them. I grieved for all of two minutes. We all did. We didn't have time for funerals or wakes or anything Martha Stewart deemed appropriate. My family was dead and if I needed to survive. So, I found other survivors and they took me in. They looked awful. Hungry, cold. They needed help. And what surprised both them and myself was this: I was the help we needed.*

*I discovered that all the useless skills I acquired as a soccer mom were valuable. More valuable than I could ever dream.*

*I could cook. I could knit. I could repair clothes. I could drive a car while distractions were flying all around me. I had every single shelf of the supermarket memorized. Clean bandages? Aisle Eight. Canned goods? Aisle Two. Rubber gloves? Aisle six, right next to the mops on the left hand side, about half way down.*

*I knew how to plant and grow a garden and I planted one right on top of the high school. Fresh vegetables. No more trips to the grocery store unless we absolutely needed something.*

*I knew how to get blood out of their clothes and repair the tears and holes. I knew how to prevent infections in open wounds. I knew how to calm down a temper tantrum before it even got started.*

*People ask me if I miss my family. I do. Time and again, I do. But I went from soccer mom to domestic goddess in thirty days.*

*Before the zombies, I was useless. I was irrelevant.*

*Now, I'm irreplaceable.*