

Little Buggers

There I was, frantically calling my 'essential oils' connection to bring all the tea tree oil she had in stock down to the nursing home, immediately! I don't "do" essential oils and up until this time, Krystal's business mainly acted as an irritant to me because I had to avoid her when she tried selling me the stuff.

But I needed her oils now! There were thirty leadership kids going to make small talk with the nursing home residents and I knew for a fact that that residence was infected with scabies. We got it from my husband's grandmother when she was a resident there. It took six months and thousands of dollars in disinfectant supplies to get rid of it, and we had to cover ourselves in toxic gel three times a day AND lie to Stanley Steemers about the fact that we had scabies or they wouldn't even come to the house to give us an estimate, even if we doubled their money. It was the greatest test on our marriage we've ever had, and we'd been through 9/11, our dogs' death, and our kids' obsession with Gangnam Style (which I like but feel threatened by when I have no idea what the words we're singing actually mean). Nothing compared to scabies.

There was NO WAY those disinterested attendants had gotten it out of that nursing home, if it took us several complete baths in gel everywhere and I mean, everywhere, including under the fingernails, and the folds of our bodies, and the folds of the kids' bodies. Our Leadership team director assured me it was okay, that she had hand sanitizer and I scolded her that hand sanitizer wasn't nearly enough. "Google it!" I hissed, "Once thirty kids bring it back to their homes and our school, we're done for, especially with the other parents who, unlike us, would sue! We'll never get it out of our schools or homes again!! The next playdate you host will be an infestation in your body!"

Happily, the image of microscopic parasitic mites laying eggs in her folds, worked.

We doused the kids in tea tree oil and they were off to chat to the nursing home residents who couldn't hear a word they said, but smiled solicitously anyway, except for one guy who just got up and left while he was surrounded by three ten-year olds.

The discussions were more or less progressing apace, which meant very, very slowly, when one of the other mothers approached me to tell me that although she appreciated my forward thinking approach to gathering the tea tree oil, I had to stop telling the ten-year olds that we were all bound to get scabies if they didn't use this oil all over their hands. And forearms. And upper arms. But parental moralizing aside, the visit went well, and my son actually played the piano for everyone of his own volition. I was terribly proud of his initiative, his compassion, his...leadership. But all I could think was, "I didn't wipe down that piano!"