

I don't like to camp. I don't like packing, dirt, bugs, clutter, crumbs, smelling like smoke, being in close proximity to people I don't know, sleeping outside, having sand on my feet, using a public bath house, cooking over a campfire, having everything I own feeling damp all the time, being too cold or too hot, and unpacking - I am high maintenance about the creature comforts of life, and I own that about myself. I married into a large family and while not all of them like to camp, there is a strong contingent of rabid campers who constantly badgered me to go camping with them.

My kids were four and two when my adult nieces and nephews finally wore me down saying, "Aww, come on, Jill! Come camping with us. The kids will have so much fun! Just come for one night."

They were all going to Silver Lake for five days.

"Well if I am going to go through all the work to pack up all the stuff I need to go camping with two kids, I am going with you for a three day weekend."

Those are words I would live to regret.

I knew I was in trouble when we were the last ones to arrive and set up. We had to pitch our tent up off in the corner of the campsite at the edge of a wooded area.

"Bugs," I thought. "We are going to be eaten alive by mosquitos here. I will be forced to bath my children in chemical-laced bug spray that will cause an early onset of some dreaded disease or barnacle growth—I am sure of it."

We also were nestled on a lovely patch of dirt that my kids thought was fabulous. Katie, who was two at the time, immediately sat down and took handfuls of dirt and ground them into her legs, making her beautiful skin a dingy shade of dirt gray.

"This is going to be horrible," I lamented. I am one of those mothers who wants my kids to experience all the goodness that life has to offer, but then take a bath and be clean before bed.

"I will never get them clean again," I thought.

Well, what I predicted could not prepare me for the horror of the reality of bedtime when the twenty-something nephews and their friends started drinking beer around the campfire. I had retired to the tent with the kids, one in a pack and play, the other in a sleeping bag, in hopes of getting some rest. Every time I drifted off to sleep I was awakened by what sounded like a faucet of water being turned on over a carpet of leaves in the woods very close to my tent. What I soon realized was we had pitched our tent in the middle of the party boys' peeing area! The more they drank, the worse it became, and I was trapped in a nightmare of urine for three nights.

Mode	Narrative
Media	Word processor
Audience	May put it on my blog
Purpose	Personal writing
Situation	This piece came from the Write-O game we played during the retreat. The original prompt was “I love camping” so I had to flip it to fit me. I had fun writing it and remembering the uptight mom I was when my kids were little. I am still like that to a certain extent, but I think I have a better perspective now.