
CLEAN UP ON AISLE TWELVE

SARAH RAMSEY

I am not ok.

Walking through the grocery store,
I am paralyzed with fear,
Waiting to see who pops up around the corner.

I can already hear the conversation in my head.

Hey Julie! Oh my gosh, you look AMAZING!
I am so proud of you,
How do you stay so positive?
You are such a fighter,

You

Inspire

Me.

My stomach curls inward as I see a blonde bob in the distance,
Belonging to a woman whose son used to be friends with my son,
Until my son was dubbed, not “cool” enough.

She sees me, and rushes over,
Almost hitting an old lady in the process.

Oh my gosh, Julie!
How are you? It has been too long!
You look so great!
We should catch up some time!

Let me know if you ever need me to take Tommy off of your hands.
Billy has missed playing with him!

She quickly glances at her watch,
So she doesn't have to wait for a response,
Or wait to hear what I really want to say.

As she retreats,
Her hair swishes over her shoulders,
And starts to turn into Medusa's terrifying locks,
Heads with huge eyes form on the base of each luxurious golden strand,
Taunting me because they know the truth.

I am not ok.

I do not look good, I have lost thirty pounds due to the countless hours I have spent at chemotherapy, throwing up, stressing about what is going to happen, to my family, my son, my husband, my mom who has Alzheimer's and only has me to look after her.

My hair is falling out, but not all at once. So it mocks me. I have too much of it left to justify buying a wig, but too little of it left so people know **something is wrong with me**.

You should not be proud of me.

Do you know the amount of times I have yelled at my husband, cursed God, acted like a baby, started crying in front of my son, and screamed at the top of my lungs?

I am not positive.

I feel hopeless, sad, and distraught with fear and worry. I am not a bloody happy go lucky person.

I am pissed.

I am not a fighter, cancer is fighting me.

I am not your hero.

I am pathetic, weak, and angry.

When I die, I don't want my obituary to say I went down fighting.

That is bullshit.

I went down
starving,
crying so hard that snot was running from my nose,
laughing when my husband shaved his head for me,
asking God WHY I deserved to be punished,
feeling like shit when people glorified my fight.

If it is so inspiring, why don't you do this?

Want me to ask God if I can hand the baton to you?

I am not ok.