Absolute Power Corrupting Absolutely

There have been various interpretations on the old theme of superhuman powers being transferred to another person. Last night, I revisited one of those in a season 1 episode of *Smallville*. During a freak accident during a lightning storm, Clark Kent's powers are passed to one of his high school classmates. Clark gets to discover what it is like to be a "normal" teenager while "Eric" comes to discover that being the world's most powerful adolescent is not all it is cracked up to be. Looking at the show, I realized that it is a spin on the old classic adage of Nature vs. Nurture.

Clark's initial reaction to his loss is one of confusion and fear. Being able to lift the family truck out of the mud, driving a stake into the ground with his bare hands, and other tasks that would be impossible for mortal men were a snap for the Boy of Steel. However, the sight of his own blood sends him into near shock. Over time, he learns to embrace his "normalcy" and not be afraid to engage in a game of two-on-two without fear of accidentally using his powers to injure one of his friends... even if one of them is Lana Lang's quarterback boyfriend. One of my favorite moments from the episode is Lana's observation that Clark doesn't seem to "have the weight of the world on his shoulders."

On the other hand, Eric takes a totally different approach to his new-found gifts. He flaunts them in front of people on the street. He flirts with a girl right in front of her boyfriend and flings him across the school parking lot smashing him on top of a parked car. When a powerless Clark attempts to intervene (his nature or is his nurturing), he receives a few bruised ribs and a cut to the head. Eric's parents are terrified of the "freak" he has become and determine to send him away to be studied and to find out what happened to him.

Overnight, the teenager has acquired strength and abilities he could only dream of before but is totally unprepared to handle them.

Nurture: Jonathan and Martha Kent discovered a toddler inside a rocket ship in the middle of a field and raised that child with morals and responsibilities. Clark was not meant to score touchdowns with his power but for something more. As his powers advanced over time, the Kent's were determined to hide these gifts and use them when necessary and secretly in order to protect their adopted son.

On the flip side, Eric was an awkward kid and constantly degraded by his parents; particularly his father. It may seem cliche to paint Clark in the best possible light and to show his counterpart in shadow. But I think the point here was to show how two different people from different backgrounds deal with extraordinary circumstances. A very good episode from the beginning of the series.

OK... nerdy sidebar: Shawn Ashmore who played Eric also was in the X-Men films as Bobby Drake/Iceman. His twin brother, Aaron played a certain cub reporter for the Daily Planet in the past two seasons of *Smallville*. Such a nerd!

and the bottom drops out

Semi cryptic post here, I'm not ready to write about it, if ever. Just to say some changes are very, very bad. I may not be posting for some time. Take care folks.

Things change

Well moving days are coming up. Yes, I did say moving days. There will be at least two of them.

The first will be next week at work. We are moving to a new building, and we are scheduled to move as soon as it passes inspection. That should occur this week. A little farther to drive, but it should be a nicer work environment. We will see how that goes. Good news, no students in the halls. Bad news, the way the cubicles are set up, my back will face the entrance. I never did like having my back to the door.

Then at the end of the month, my youngest heads off to college. That may take a trip or two depending on how much she needs to move into her college room. When I went to school, I was able to fit everything I needed into the back of a Chevy Chevette, I have a truck now, and I still wonder how many trips I will need to take.

At this point in time, I guess I should be feeling a bit of the 'empty nest' syndrome. I'm not sure I will in the same way other parents do. The whole point in my parenting was to get my children ready for the world. It is time for this one to spread her wings and see how she flies. A bit of anxiety, sure, but I'm ready to let her try more on her own.

There is another part of the empty nest that I really never expected when I first thought of this some 10 years ago when the first daughter spread her wings. I have the nest to myself. The question I really need to ask is "How will I spread my wings?" For more than a quarter of a century (over 1/2 my life) I've been a parent. For most of that time I've been a husband and then a widower. Before that I was in my childhood. What am I going to do with the time I will have for myself? What will I be when I grow up? \square

Life is all about the change...

Getting close now...

Well, school is almost upon us once again. Depending on where you live, it can be a week or three, or maybe your kids attend an all-year school that started up again in July after a much shorter break. In the two districts I'm signed up with, it starts in $1\frac{1}{2}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks. What's that you say? *Two* districts? That's right. I am only in hometown and supersized districts this year due to my continued job of shooting pictures of cars. I have chosen to work three days a week on the cars for now leaving two days to teach. Of course it will likely be another month before I am needed as a sub, but that's the plan. As you probably figured out already, these two districts are where I have gotten most of my work in the past and so I stuck with them, losing the less productive ones, even though near-urban paid me the most.

So how is the new job going? Well, I got my first store finally- unfortunately it's 45-minutes away! The one who had this store didn't do a very good job so he was replaced. the best way to start, but I'll take whatever I can get. Today, in fact, Kim (one of the owners of the company I work for) and I spent much time fixing the stickers on the cars that were tilted, stuck over unremoved adhesive from previous buyer's guide (warranty info which by law has to be in the window even if just handwritten) or otherwise placed with a lack of care. I think we did no less than two dozen. rest of my time was spent in doing four cars that were ready for me. Not a lot, but the idea is to have three dealers (four if they are small like this one) in one day to shoot a reasonable amount. The most I had in one day training with Rene was 42. At \$7 a car that was nearly \$300 for the day for Of course that was three large dealers, and even then her.

that number is rare. My goal is eventually 20-30 cars per day. Another trainee may be leaving as his school just gave him a reality check- no, it is not possible to graduate in a reasonable time if you only have classes two days a week. he leaves then I am hoping to get one of the stores promised to him, but not the other one. There is a dealer that is way over toward Chicago (strike one for the bad traffic). They require the cars to be shot in their warehouse a mile away, meaning the cars have to be driven from their lot to there, adding a tremendous amount of time (strike two). warehouse has bad lighting with three of the five lights burnt out the last two times I was there making it difficult to take pictures inside the cars (strike three). I am scheduled to do new cars every other week, but the one who has been doing the used cars while Pat was training to take it over can keep that part as a punishment for his bad performance at the dealer he lost (yes, same guy)!

In the meantime, all this work has meant that I haven't gotten the DVD done yet for my kids from camp- I'd better start on it soon, or just do what I did the first year- give them a CD with all the pictures, but that's no fun and can't be viewed without a computer.

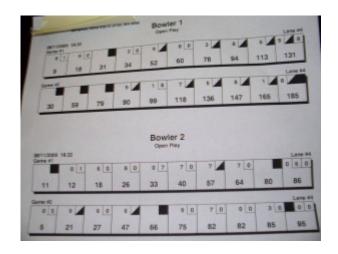
Bowling For Columbine

While I'm on the topic of date night (see my previous post)...

This week we did not feel like mini-golfing again on date night, so we went bowling instead. I did so well, we got a printout of the scores, much to my husband's dismay — I've already mentioned how he has bad luck at physics-dependent sports like bowling and mini-golf. And I got tons of practice

at bowling as a kid — I was in a weekly bowling league for I don't know how many years. Later in high school, I took bowling in gym class and joined intramural bowling after school where I was crowned, "Female Bowler of the Year" for the two years I was in it — not a difficult feat, seeing as how there were under 10 girls involved, but still, if we had had a competitive bowling team in high school, perhaps I would have been a high school athlete, hehe!

I've spent about 23% of my adult years pregnant (!) and most of the rest of those years raising small children who would wreak havoc with a bowling ball, so needless to say, I have not had a chance to hone the skill I developed as a youngster. I do enjoy the occasional bowling game, though, and rarely do I top my previous bowling average from back-in-the-day: 132. Well, the other date night, not only did I top my old average for the two games we played but I somehow tied my all-time high score! Well, anyway, here are the scores, and this reminds me to make joining a weekly league a priority when the kids get a little bit older!



And about the title I chose for my post... I just finished reading the book *Columbine* by Dave Cullen, and it was a fascinatingly detailed account of the 1999 Colorado high school massacre dissected from just about every angle. If you like to read true crime or just want to know every detail about the massacre (it holds a special fascination for me since it was unfolding just as Hubby and I arrived at our

honeymoon destination after a 24-hour road trip back in '99), you should read this book. It's both sad and informative, and the author does mention that the Michael Moore movie, Bowling for Columbine, has little to do with the circumstances involving the high school massacre. But, Bowling for Columbine is a catchy title nonetheless, which is why I borrowed it, not because I'm a Michael Moore fan. Actually, we saw a parody of his movies the other day, and I will be sure to include the movie review in an upcoming post called "It Was A Redbox Summer". Stay Tuned!

Full Moon = Mini Golf?

Earlier this month, I got a whim on date night for us to go mini-golfing. Apparently I was not the only person who felt this way — the local mini-golf course was packed end-to-end with groups of golfers — on a Wednesday night! We began our putting only to find ourselves stalled at every hole waiting for the group of 4 in front of us — which backed up the group of 2 behind us, etc. We didn't realize it was this crowded when we began golfing otherwise we probably would have chosen something else to do (not big fans of crowded places), but it ended up being lots of fun; we found plenty to chat about while waiting to play the next hole. Among the topics were the strange occurrences befalling the behavior of our golf My husband's normally bad luck (especially at laws-ofphysics sports like mini-golf and bowling) seemed to be exaggerated, especially by my good luck. An example - my husband took his shot, then I took mine, and my ball hit my husband's ball sending it further from the hole, while mine bounced off his and into the hole for a hole-in-1! Unintentionally, of course □ After a few more of those wacky incidents and (to my dismay) the appearance of dozens of live frogs in the mini-golf pond, we had had our fun and were finished. But on the way home, we couldn't help but notice the full moon beaming overhead — a coincidence or is there something about a full moon that makes people want to minigolf? Friends in the fields have shared with me that hospitals and law enforcement agencies are extra busy on the nights of full moons — interesting. How about you guys? Did any of you have a sudden golfing urge last Wednesday night / early Thursday morning?

Hello. How are you? It's been a while.

I haven't really been in a mood to write anything recently.

I've been reading the comics again, and once again Funky Winkerbean has me thinking.

The current story line has a character return after being presumed dead. His 'widow' in the story has remarried and lived with the thought of him being gone forever.

I'm not sure how the story will sort out, but the concept of it bothers me a little bit. As I've said before, the author of this comic does not shy away from touchy subjects, and this is no exception. What would this do to family, friends and others when a person they know to be dead, comes back to life?

On a material note... Do you have to pay back any insurance, Soc. Sec. benefits, and other things only received on one's death?

On an emotional note... What happens to the new people in the

lives of loved ones? People grow and change over time and generally change together when their lives are shared. People who are apart change in different ways. Rough go.

And on others... There is another family that lost a loved one in this strip. Are they overcome with envy when they see someone else come back from the dead, and not their lost love?

And this is only a daily comic in the newspapers. Deep thoughts for the funny pages.

As a widower, there were many (are many?) times that I wish my dear wife could come back, but I know that this is only a wish. As in the song "One More Day" by Diamond Rio, we keep wishing for that one extra day, but what happens if we actually get it?

Rock Racing

Sunday afternoon in an attempt to beat the heat, I went to my brother's for a swim. After, I watched Race to Witch Mountain. Last winter when it was in theatres, I really was unsure about seeing it. I really liked Escape and Return but have found most updates/reboots/prequels to be less than ideal. Also, the added attraction of Dwayne "the (c)Rock" Johnson was enough to make me question it even more. I am pleased to say that the movie was not THAT bad. The action and effects were heightened from the original movies from the 70s but there were nice touches from the previous films to delight fans.

Johnson plays Jack Bruno, a Las Vegas cabbie who has grown irritated with transporting weird Sci-Fi fans (including two Stormtroopers) to a convention at the Planet Hollywood. Enter siblings Sara and Seth, two seemingly innocent young teens who

hand Jack a huge wad of money for transportation to a remote, run down shack in the middle of nowhere.

Like the original children, Sara and Seth are victims of a spacecraft crash landing. The government has acquired it and is hot on the trail of the survivors to "study" them. Unlike the previous installments, the children are being pursued by an alien "Assassin."

Sara and Seth's powers are basically the same as Tia and Tony's with a few additions... probably due to the limited budget restraints of the 1970s. Sara's touch with animals harkens back to her predecessor only this time the trio is joined by a canine companion instead of a black cat. A Winnebago RV is also instrumental in the action. Also, don't miss a creative cameo by the original actors all grown up. I was expecting them to pop up as Sara and Seth's parents or other adult aliens, but that would be too logical. For fans of Star Trek II who aren't already in the know, Ike Eisenmann (who played Tony in the original movies) had the role of Engineer's Mate, Peter Preston. In the extended Director's Cut of *The Wrath of Khan*, it is discovered that he is the nephew of Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott.

I would recommend *Race to Witch Mountain* to fans of the original movies. There is a lot of action that may be a bit much for the really young, but it is a Disney movie.

Moose On The Loose

I forgot to mention another thrill the parents had on their trip. One morning, a large moose was wandering Charnel's yard. Dad was in the middle of dressing and ran out just in time to see the back end of the animal as it made its way

along. He quickly told her to take a picture but she was not about to snap the rear of any animal. To hear, seeing the large beasts is common place; they previously had a moose wandering around their area for a week. They have also seen a mother bear and her cubs in the wilderness near the roadway.

One the return flight, mom sat beside a businessman who had travelled to the state several times. He asked if they had seen any moose. The gentleman was slightly disappointed as he had never before seen one and my parents were blessed to see one on their very first trip.

My Parents Went To Alaska And…

all they brought back for me was this stupid tshirt. Well... not really stupid. I like it and was not expecting anything. I just remember some friends who went to Hawaii when I was really young and brought me a shirt with that momento printed on in (with Hawaii instead of Alaska, of course).

Like their trip last summer to California, their excursion had many memorable moments. As I knew he would, my father found plenty of time to engage in what must be his favorite pasttime: lawn maintenance. He mowed the lawn, pulled weeds, and whatever else he could find to do. However, all outside work had to stop at 9PM following the playing of Taps or there would be trouble. The sun rose at about 4AM and did not set until 11PM every night. Funny that I was asked if dad had sneaked his lawn mower in his carry on bag.

We were greeted by a slew of stories that seem unbelievable but with my family are quite probable. At the Army PX (store)

there were three different areas: grocery, clothing, and miscellaneous. You had to pay for the items you picked up in their respective departments. For example, you could not pay for a ball of yarn in the grocery area... as my father attempted to do. And you could not pay for anything without a military ID. Problems ensued and I half expected to hear that the three adults and two small children had been arrested for shoplifting, but no such luck.

While taking a walk along the beach (in 50 degree weather... I would almost take that after the past few days), they happened upon many musicians trying to make a buck. A person from China attempting to return to his native land and a woman trying to pay her way through college were just a few.

As this is a family friendly site, I will not go into detail on my next topic. Charnel has a friend who sells products ala Avon. However, the catalog she sells from is anything but beauty care. Charnel was asked if she would like to start selling. She vehemently turned the offer down. However, I can see where the woman could make money selling her wares.

Finally, the parents had as memorable a return flight as they did going. All of the flights on the return voyage were packed. Consequently (and I don't know how... only they could be so lucky), they only had one seat between the two of them following the layover in Newark, NJ. Thankfully, the airline took volunteers to be bumped to a later flight giving dad a seat.

As they got off the toll road after driving home from Detroit, the toll collector asked where they had been. Don't you wish you had stayed another week when it will be cooler? I was thinking the same as I heard the forecast over the last week... WELCOME HOME!