

Zombies Ate My Homework

by Paul-Gabriel Wiener

<pgwfolc@netscape.net>

Rated: PG

Submitted: November 2003

Author's Note: Tank suggested to me that I might like to write a Halloween fic. As I was trying to come up with an idea, I remembered an old challenge on the boards. It seems there were no stories on the archive starting with the letter "Z." A few were written, but none have been submitted yet. So, unless there's something I don't know about currently in the upload queue, this will be the first "Z" story on the archives. Just a little something to make this story special, just like the fact that "Web of Steel" was uploaded in the batch that ticked the archive over past 1000 stories. Small things, but still fun. :)



Life isn't always easy when your mom is Lois Lane, trouble magnet and your dad just happens to be Superman in his spare time.

For one thing, it's kind of hard to get a grip on reality when your parents talk about clones, villains who come back from the dead, psycho druid ex-boyfriends, evil vigilante androids, time travelers, and ancient curses as if they were just another part of living in the city. I mean, most people, when they talk about a vacation gone wrong, will tell you about lost luggage or an unexpected illness or bad weather or something like that. My parents went on vacation and were thrown in a dungeon by a guy who wanted to cut off Dad's head and take the body for himself.

Not that I was supposed to have heard that story, mind you. Unfortunately, my hearing was sharper than Mom and Dad realized at the time. They didn't really know I was starting to develop super powers until last year, when I came to them in a panic because I'd been seeing things. That's when they explained to me about Dad being Superman.

I have to admit, that part is pretty cool. My

dad is Superman, and when I grow up, I'll probably have most, if not all, of his powers. Not that I can tell anyone about it, but still -- someday, I'll be able to fly!

Of course, that's also when I found out that along with the other reasons I'd previously been given for why Mom and Dad picked out my name (L names run in the family, they liked the sound of it, etc.), Dad had kind of wanted to honor his birth parents, who, as it turns out, were aliens brave enough to put their newborn baby into an untested rocket ship and launch him into space just before their whole planet exploded. I'm named for a couple of dead aliens whose names are known by roughly five people on earth. Right.

So, as I was saying, I have a pretty strange life. It took me a while to understand the difference between what happens around me and what most of the rest of the world considers normal. For example, "Oh, it was probably some jerk with a shrink ray." is not, in fact, considered a normal response to the question, "Hey, what happened to my lunch?"

Still, I get by. Usually, I remember to think twice before telling a family anecdote. For the times that I forget, I've learned to carry a scrapbook of old newspaper clippings. So, when I slip up and say something like, "Yeah, that reminds me of the time my dad was brainwashed by a voodoo priest..." I can pull out the article and avoid being teased or sent to the principal's office. Of course, I still have to explain that my dad was one of many victims and that my parents chose to focus more on what happened to Superman, but at least I have evidence in black and white taken from the Daily Planet to show that I'm not completely off my rocker.

That doesn't save me from everything, though. Yesterday, our house came under attack again. You see, some scientist or other had tried to recreate the work of another scientist named Dr. Hamilton. In case you don't know, Dr. Hamilton is the guy who brought Bonnie and Clyde and a bunch of other gangsters back from the dead. Surprisingly enough, the experiment did not go well and Hamilton ended up destroying his equipment and notes. So, anyway, this other guy hears about it and decides to see if he can do it,

too. Not sure what he was planning, but it doesn't matter because his experiment turned out even worse than Hamilton's. Instead of bringing people back as healthy as they'd ever been, this guy ended up turning them into a bunch of stiff half-mindless thugs. Translation: he made zombies.

So, I guess he figured "if life hands you lemons, make lemonade" or something like that. Maybe more like "if life hands you lemons, laugh maniacally and use the chemical energy to power your evil device." Anyway, he sent his zombies to our house. Of course. Somehow, these things always end up coming to our house. I'm not sure exactly what he was thinking when he sent them -- probably looking to kidnap Mom, but who can say? - - but whatever it was, I ended up with zombies in my room.

They trashed the place. Smashed the door, tossed stuff around, walked over things without looking where they were going... it wasn't pretty. One of them, for no reason I can figure, started rifling through my desk. I'd just finished stapling together a stack of neatly written pages that carried the title "The Catcher in the Rye: A book report by Laurel Kent." He went for that first, of course. Ripped it to shreds, and, I am not kidding about this, shoved some of the pieces in his mouth and ate them. Meantime, another one was poking around the rest of my room.

Well, one of the good things about growing up in this family is that I've learned not to scream and panic when things like this happen. I ran out of the room (I'm pretty fast now - nowhere near as fast as Dad, but fast enough to get past a few zombies without much trouble) and went for the phone. I wasn't sure what had happened to Uncle Jimmy, but since I couldn't hear anything happening downstairs, I figured he probably wasn't in good shape. So, I hit the speed dial, waited for Dad to pick up his cell phone, and then calmly said, "Dad, there's a monster in my closet." Dad knows to take these things seriously, and, a second later, Superman was on the scene. He took care of the zombies, got Uncle Jimmy to the hospital (he'll be okay, but they want to watch to make sure he doesn't have a concussion), then called Mom and told her what had happened.

Mom and Dad tracked down the bad guy late last night, which is all well and good. Tomorrow it'll be in the papers, I'm sure, and I'll have another clipping for my scrapbook. Now, though, I have to go to school. When it comes time to turn in our homework, I'm going to have to hope that no one makes a big deal of things when I hand the teacher a note that says, "Please excuse Laurel Kent. Her book report was eaten by a zombie. Sincerely, Superman."

On the up side, at least my life isn't boring. And I'll never have to worry about bullies. And, even if I can't tell anyone, I know my Dad has single-handedly saved the world more than once. And my parents have put away more major criminals than anyone on the police force. And some day, I'll be able to fly. Strange isn't always bad. Some days, though, it takes a little extra effort to remember that.

Anyway, time for me to get going. Dad's going to drop me off at the alley behind school on his way to work, and, even if we don't have to worry about traffic, we need to leave soon or we'll both be late. Bye for now!

Author's Postscript: When I remember my sources, I like to give credit where it's due.

The line if life hands you lemons, laugh maniacally and use the chemical energy to power your evil device." was inspired by one of my all-time favorite teachers, Prof. Alex Slocum, who told us, among many other memorable things, "You're MIT students! When life hands you lemons, you go 'HA!' and then run off and make some kind of weird lemon-powered gizmo."

Laurel's scrapbook was inspired by a memory of a certain "Ozy & Millie" comic strip, which, if you're curious, can be found at the following URL. (Thanks also to Bethy for introducing me to "Ozy & Milie." :))
<http://www.ozyandmillie.org/1999/om19991130.html>

The rest of the story, with the exception of events from the show itself, is, as far as I can remember, original. ;)