



A Working-ish Mom's Journal in the Time of COVID-19

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Day 3 of my captivity

The invaders monitor my every move. (Must type fast.) Their relentless demands for sustenance are remarkable. They have tossed my house. What are they looking for? They demand my attention and then ignore me. They periodically turn on each other but remain steadfast in their plan. They threaten to stay for months. Must start binge-watching invasion films for solutions.

Day 5 of my captivity

I fear the invasion will become an occupation. They have built forts throughout the house. Are more of them coming? Our cats are traitors. They have left their regular spot in my home office for the promise of new masters. I see their smug faces peer out at me from plush pillow tents. I managed to drive the invaders outside, where they proceeded to dig up our yard...to what end I have no idea. They got back in, though.

Day 8 of my captivity

My review of invasion films yields little actionable information. I have no rocket, they seem gleeful when immersed in water, and giving them bite-sized peanut butter candies just makes them demand more. I persist.

Day 11 of my captivity

The invaders repeatedly suck the power from almost every electronic device we own. What are they doing with it? Other times, they've taken to lurking. I have only to turn my head to find one standing nearby. Today I drove them out as far as the yard, where they captured and enslaved a colony of potato bugs. I was hoping for more powerful allies.

Day 16 of my captivity

The invaders continue to ravage our food supplies. The small one wants nothing but

pizza. The bigger one wants everything. I watch in fascination and horror as she peels the skin from a hot dog, each piece drowned in ketchup and gobbled voraciously as red drips steadily from her chin. I back away slowly, stifling screams as I tread on pointy, interlocking, plastic minefields scattered by the invaders. My defenses are weakened.

Day 22 of my captivity

The invaders are attracted by cellular signals. Each time I start a call, there they are. Closed doors are no match for their curiosity. They try to mimic me, using sounds of their own to drown out mine, sometimes clawing at my hand to release the device or chirp their own sounds into it. I've taken to gnashing my teeth and gesticulating wildly to scare them away before contacting the outside world, but I am outmatched.

Day 33 of my captivity

The invaders have become destructive. Strangely, they seem the most intent on destroying themselves. One now lacks a tooth and sports multiple bandages. The other is bruised at every joint. I do not think they are built for these four walls. They operate only at high speeds and seem unable to rest in one place for any length of time. The cats have taken to flattening themselves to the ground every time the invaders pass. I try to do the same.

Day 41 of my captivity

My video uplinks to the outside world are severely interrupted by the invaders. Once they realize I've made contact, they block my feed with their own faces, often baring their teeth and closing in on the unwitting captives on the other side of my screen. My messages go unheard, drowned out by the cacophony of strange sounds they make. Planning their ouster remains a struggle.

Day 48 of my captivity

The invaders are a grimy lot. Bits of food, shredded wrappers and discarded outerwear litter our floors. Our furniture is haphazardly rearranged and upended in nearly every room. Rescue continues to evade us. The allied forces remain hamstrung, most with invaders of their own. Viva la resistance.

Day 57 of my captivity

The invaders have enlisted our pets. I happened upon a feast hosted for cats and rabbits. They gathered side-by-side around a makeshift sultan's table of gymnastics mats and blankets, being plied with vittles. What have they agreed to, I wonder? What new terrible plans were hatched at this clandestine quadrupedal gathering? We hunker down, clutching spray bottles.

Day 70 of my captivity

The invaders are rudderless this week without directives from above. Destruction increases proportionate to their boredom. With no defined mission, they devise chemical explosions for amusement. Must examine homeowner's policy.

Day 88 of my captivity

Attention my embattled brothers and sisters . . . camps have been set up to contain the invaders! We transported ours to one and reveled in an entire day of uninterrupted work and listening-to-ourselves-think time. Turns out they give them back, though. Will try again.

Day 101 of my captivity

Despite a short-lived daily extradition to the invader camp, our occupiers have been in residence again for weeks. They demand a full-time invader entertainer, while I remain a meager invader appeaser/working professional/hostage negotiator/food service worker/hazmat tech. I see the disappointment in their eyes.

Day 120 of my captivity

The invaders now man their battle stations for most of the day. They wield electronics, folders and handouts like Benihana chefs. They find dozens of ways to "sit" though their work. I see scores of invaders collaborating over video feeds. We are not alone. Meanwhile, our cats catch up on six months-worth of interrupted napping time. I watch them longingly. I wonder if they will need that energy for what is coming. If we all will.

Day 140 of my captivity

The invaders sparkle like unicorns. The lights are so bright now. I float on marshmallow clouds. Music hippos twirl all around us. Oh, look—silly people with a white strappy jacket. Are we going to the mother ship?

