



Confessions of an (Almost) Full-Time Grandmother

Clara Frank

I had been looking forward to grandchildren for a long time. I imagined how it would be. My only daughter a working mother, would be relying on me to take care of one or two adorable little ones. I would be a GRANDMOTHER. I would live next door in a little cottage with a white picket fence. I would always be smiling, singing lullabies to the baby, and cook everyone's favorite meals. I would learn how to bake cookies.

But my daughter hired a nanny, and when the boys were old enough, she took them to daycare.

Then COVID happened. All of a sudden schools and daycare were closed, and I finally got my wish. I got the two boys, A.J., now five and a half, and Morgie, two and a half, all day.

They arrive at 9 am. Happy go lucky, curly-headed Morgie, and serious but sweet A.J. They show me the toys they brought, to be tossed aside later in favor of anything I have with a push-button. They snack on fresh fruit—cookies are bad for them—anyway, I failed to learn how to bake.

At ten we head for the park, by the schedule A.J. made. This involves finding their shoes, convincing them that we can't take all the toys, getting A.J. to wait for Morgie and me, finding my cellphone, which I hid so Morgie won't drain the battery, finding my shoes, putting on their helmets, keeping the dog inside, getting them to wait until I lock the door, etc. Once outside, while I help A.J. pull out his bike from the garage, I find Morgie trying to unscrew the cap on the rear tire of my car. I hurry to screw the cap back on and get Morgie's scooter and catch up with A.J. who is wandering off with his bike.

Getting them into those child seats with arthritic hands is a nightmare. Someone, PLEASE invent a baby/child car seat that is grandmother friendly. I would pay big bucks for such a thing.

As soon as we get to the park, bicycle and scooter are discarded and they head for the old oak tree. It is bent over its tired crown almost touching the ground. To get to the tree, they have to climb a short, but steep grade. Morgie follows his brother, falls, but quickly figures out how to slide down on the seat of his pants. I stand at the bottom, holding my breath watching them...

Back at the condo full of dirt, change clothes, wash up, and then on to Zoom sessions. They each have sessions at different learning levels scheduled at the same time. No matter, A.J. is computer savvy, all he needs is the password for my tablet. Is he learning anything? He gets to see his friends and his teacher. The little one is happy for

about five minutes sitting on my lap to wave to his nursery school teacher.

TV time is next on the schedule. There are some good educational shows, those are NOT their first choice. So TV is limited to a half-hour while I prepare lunch. Easy, they never eat anything I cook—they only eat peanut butter and jelly or Mac and cheese or chicken McNuggets from McDonalds. They prefer that over my chicken paprikash. I'm over it.

Story time is next and then quiet time by the schedule, thankfully. Morgie takes a long nap and AJ is quiet. I retreat to the couch with my coffee and book. Around 3:30 activity resumes with more fruit and yogurt for snacks.

Alexa is blasting "Lion King" on command and they get in a pillow fight with A.J. standing on the sofa and winning. Morgie will be crying soon. I peek at the clock. Their mother picks them up at 4:30 and she is usually on time, bless her.

By 4:45 I miss them.

