

Once Upon a Story: Lynne Vertannes

“Mumma, can we read a story?”

“Um, yes. Hang on. Let me just finish this first darling.” What Sarah wanted to finish was the washing up.

“No. Now.” Ella is a strong-willed 5 year old. Knows what she wants and washing up instead of storytelling is not one of them.

Crash. “Oh bugger, I mean oops”. The glass slipped from Sarah’s washing up gloved hand and shattered on the kitchen floor. She knelt down just as Ella moved forward. Putting her hand in front of her chest, “Ella stay there.” Sarah started to pick up the larger pieces. “Sugar!” a pool of blood was gathering beneath her. The large piece she picked up sliced straight through the glove and cut her finger.

“Mummy. Story.” Her little hand was on her hip. “I want to read the formidable snowman.”

Sarah fell back onto her backside giggling. “You mean the abominable snowman?”

“What’s so funny!” Her little face was screwed up and now she folded her arms across her chest in defiance. “It’s the formidable snowman.”

Sarah pursed her lips, daring not to laugh again. “Yes. I believe I know that story and I’d be happy to read it to you. Although, I haven’t seen that book on your library shelf?”

“It’s new. Daddy gave it to me.”

Sarah’s eyes narrowed. “Did he?” Sarah and her husband had recently separated. He was not happy with Sarah’s return to work because he wanted another baby. Sarah was not opposed to the idea, but she wanted to return full-time to take advantage of a promotion and then she would think about the right time to have another baby.

“That’s an unusual book for daddy to give to you.”

“No it isn’t. I like Frosty the snowman.” She grabbed Sarah by the hand and led her to the sofa. “Daddy says you’re abominable.”

“WHAT?” Sarah blurted out.

Ella jumped at the intensity of the word.

Sarah put her hands on Ella’s ears softly and kissed her head. “Sorry darling. I got a surprise that you could say that big word. I think what daddy meant to say was that mummy is formidable.” A big smile came across her face as she said the word.

She then opened the book. “Once upon a time there was a little snowman who rolled down the mountain and gathered so much snow, that he looked formidable.....”