

Series: Daddy Danger

And all we ever wanted was a normal vacation

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Family vacations usually mean spending quality time together and making memories to share with other people. Well, my family's vacation to Myrtle Beach certainly brought us somewhere and definitely gave me a memory to share.

This vacation consisted of three key baffling moments. It all starts with the hotel room my father chose. Now, we try not to entrust my father with the task of choosing hotels, or motels, as it usually turns out, because all he ever does is find the lowest price lodging that matches his list of amenities. The problem? His list of amenities never correspond with anybody else's list.

I wish I could remember the name of this hotel so I can give it a scathing review, but I just can't. However, I do remember walking into the building for the first time. Wispy fingers of steam rolled from the door when my dad opened it. My mom, sister and I exchanged glances, struggling to hold up the luggage.

"Oh yeah, the guy at the front desk said that there's no air conditioning in the hallways," my dad said.

My mom rolled her eyes and snorted. I took a deep breath and looked toward the ocean.

Strike one, I thought.

But the front desk guy wasn't joking. When we stepped out of the boiling elevator, the equally blistering hallway just about made me faint. Instead of opening up to Paradise, I felt like I just stepped into Milton's Hell, and Satan would pop out from the air ducts at any moment, snatching me away to Pandemonium.

"Damn," I heard my mom say under her breath.

"Oh my gosh, it feels like hell in here,"

my sister whispered to me.

Thankfully, our room had air conditioning. You better believe that if it didn't, we would've camped out on the beach, with or without my father.

The second strange moment happened at one of the worst restaurants I've ever been to. It wasn't because of the food quality or the service. This restaurant served dolphin, my favorite animal.

However, the restaurant also served a delicacy known as alligator. My father decided to try this beachy treat. And by joking with the waiter, he got it for free.

When the alligator arrived, I couldn't help but to think, "It just looks like watery balls of fried chicken." So, since I'll eat just about any kind of chicken, I was tempted for a moment to try it. Then, I remember that it wasn't exactly chicken and I cowered against the wall.

The first thing my dad did with his free appetizer was to slather it in tartar and hot sauce.

"Really?" I asked my dad. "Do you always have to be so stereotypically black in public?"

"What? It's the way I like my fish," he said.

And, oh boy, did he like it. He even got a to-go box and took some with us back to the hotel/motel/hell. I can't even describe how badly that stunk up the refrigerator and the kitchenette. Note to any alligator eaters: Either eat all of it at the restaurant or leave it. Do not take it home.

Strike two.

The last event of the 'Walton Family Myrtle Beach Extravaganza,' or what I like to call 'Another Failed Walton Family Vacation,' almost ended in our deaths. No, but seriously.

We decided to eat out again, this time at Outback Steakhouse. My mother didn't

want to drive because she can't see very well at night. And, since neither my sister nor I were old enough to even take driver's education, my dad took the wheel. Please start your prayers now.

The Outback sat to our left, brightly lit and the parking lot jam-packed. However, seeing as we sailed along in the right hand lane, we needed to turn left across about three lanes of traffic. And we didn't choose a great time to dine out because the cars zoomed past us. Most people at that time of night ventured to various restaurants for dinner, too.

My dad sat next to the median, semi-patiently waiting for a safe - or so I thought - opening. My mom, sister, and I chatted and laughed about random things. Everything seemed all right.

Suddenly, my dad flung the car into the street. Everyone in the car lurched to the right; my face flattened against the window and my short life literally flashed before my eyes. I saw "the light," which I'm pretty sure was just the headlights of the dangerously close cars flashing in my face.

"Oh shit!" My mom shrieked, dragging out both words and making it seem like she spoke in slow motion.

Once the car righted itself in the Outback parking lot, I looked over at my dad with incredulous eyes. He just had his signature satisfied smile on his face and I shook my head in disbelief.

Strike three! Strike three!

"Oh, nuh uh, you need to let me out of this car," my sister said.

Sadly to say, this was our last visit to Myrtle Beach. Actually, I'm not too sad to say it; I have absolutely no desire to return especially not to Outback Steakhouse.

See, I love my dad, I really do. But that just ain't right.