

CONFESSIONS

Playing with the Big Girls

BY KERRI POMAROLLI



I just moved into my first grown-up condo. It's the size of a postage stamp, but I own it! You gotta love California real estate. I can only have one person over at a time, but who's complaining? I'm in the game.

I recently met my first across-the-hall neighbor, Abbey. She came over to admire my "more is more" design scheme. Every room has a theme—from the "Under the Sea" bathroom to the retro orange living room with a mac daddy red velvet couch. It's says *me*. It also says, "Get some sunglasses to shield you from all the colors when you walk in!" I thought I was doing just fine till I went to Abbey's place, and I smelled the aroma of freshly baked bread in the oven and her perfectly placed *everything*. Her condo looked like Martha Stewart herself lives there. She had picked all the right cabinet colors, all the right wood floors and replaced the old shelves with the new stainless steel kind because everyone knows you have to have stainless steel (I missed that memo).

My heart sank because I wanted to be like Abbey. She's the kind of girl who looks good in an apron and never has a hair out of place. I asked her over to help me in my kitchen. First I said, "So where do you think I should put these new shelves?" (They were iron and silver, for spices, and I got them on sale at Ikea.) She smiled and said, "Um ... I would ah ... conceal them if I were you!" I was like, "No, that is not what I asked, honey. I want to display them in some wonderful way!" But alas, I would have to decide on their placement myself.

That same day I was binge eating, and I decided to make my famous peanut butter ball recipe ... basically lumps of peanut butter covered with chocolate (they're ugly, but they taste good). Abbey invited me over for cake for her birthday. "Great, let me bring a treat."

I gathered up my peanut butter clumps and placed them on waxed paper on a plastic platter, and I showed up to see Abbey's absolutely stunning Easter Bunny cake ... the same one on the cover of a magazine. It was perfect in every way. It looked like a real bunny with ears and icing fur and eggs, and all I could say was, "Here are some rabbit droppings! Dig in!"

The very next morning on my doorstep was a beautiful, handwritten, gold-trimmed thank-you note from Abbey for coming to her party. She even writes thank-you notes in 12 hours. She's not human! She owns a sewing machine for goodness sake! Who sews? To top it off, she teaches preschool! How can I compete with that? Ever?

Maybe I'm not supposed to. Maybe God has blessed me with my own set of talents, and they just don't include perfectly placed fresh orchids in every room of my house? Maybe I have the gift of making Abbey laugh when she's had a bad day, and then she'll give me some more of her homemade fancy cookies. Or what if my gifts and talents include being a good Christian witness without scaring her off to religion in general? I don't know where my new neighbors are faithwise, but if I'm willing, then I hope God will give me the opportunity to bless them and show them His love through a domestically challenged but good-hearted, blond girl who thinks chicken out of a box is totally acceptable for dinner. For now I'm just enjoying the yummy treats and the extra five pounds I've put on since meeting Abbey. Who knows ... maybe some of this will rub off, and next time I'll be sharing my latest cake recipes and sewing tips. God parted the Red Sea, didn't He?

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