



Mommie Brain

Rachel Zients Schinderman

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Hating the one you love most

THE BEST ADVICE ANYONE GAVE ME before I had my baby was not what diapers to buy or how many times to nurse. It was that, at times, I would hate my husband.

This did not actually mean that I had married the wrong man. In fact, it was normal, my friend said.

I smiled kindly at this advice. "Oh, I see," I said, as I rubbed my happy belly. But all the while I thought, that may be you. But not me. Not us.

But then, my son was born. Then, I was no longer pregnant. I was fat. Then, we were not sleeping. Then my husband could go back to sleep while my son fed from my body attached to me, always. Then, I got mastitis. Then, my husband could go out into the world to work, and I was still fat. We were still not sleeping.

Then, when my husband and child played, I would listen from bed trying to sleep, commenting, judging. What are they doing? Why isn't he feeding him? Has he been changed?

Then, oh then, I admit, I hated my husband. Now, for the record, I love my husband. I stood up before all of our friends and family and declared it loudly. I would marry him again every day any way from Vegas to City Hall, if possible.

But when he asks me to hold our son so he can eat his cereal, I want to remind him that I have yet to have had my breakfast either and that he will be leaving for work soon and I will still not have had breakfast, lest he forget, and he will be gone and there will be no one for me to pass our son to, so **FIGURE IT OUT!** But I do not. I quietly, or if you ask my husband, not so quietly, take our son and pout away.

When I get up at night when our son is wailing, it does not matter that my husband has been up with him every other night or even an hour earlier. At that moment, he is asleep. I carry the weight of all the world's mothers vs. all the world's fathers as I stare him down and walk out of our room pounding the floor just a little too loudly.

It is not a good feeling to flash these thoughts on the man you love. But what I don't feel terrible about is that I have these

thoughts. I do not worry when we are stretched by our new parenting duties that I need to worry about us as an us. It is normal. I am not going anywhere. My husband is not going anywhere. And I am sure he has had these thoughts about me as well. But I may not have figured that out as quickly, if I had not been reassured by a knowing and caring friend. And so now, when I can, I try to pass the same advice along.

Parenting is a monumental task, one with enough worries. So when I haven't showered for the umpteenth day and my hair has yogurt, spit up and whatever other unmentionables in it and my husband is clean, I take a deep breath and admit that part of me is jealous as he goes into the day. My husband may wonder what a little more time with our son would be like, so too do I wonder about just a little less time.

Parenting is not easy. We have battled over who works harder. We have needed to establish new household routines and rhythms. This takes time. But through these bumps, we have learned to parent our child together. In doing so, we have fallen in love all over again by getting to know the three of us as this new family.

And in this new family, when I look at my son, I see my husband in his face. When I look at my husband, I see the man this little boy will want to become. I see them together laughing. It is so raw, so pure, so delightful. This has replaced the grumpiness.

And now that our son is older, we are not so new at this, not so grasping, not so scared. Our comfort level has increased and so our annoyance with each other has decreased.

For Father's Day this year I wrote on his card, "I couldn't do this without you." I did not mean I couldn't be a single parent. I meant I wouldn't want raise our son without him, even on those mornings when he chooses to sleep in.

RACHEL ZIENTS SCHINDERMAN lives in Santa Monica with her husband and two-year-old son. Through her business Mommie Brain, she helps expecting mothers document their pregnancies. She can be reached at rachel@mommiebrain.com

A mixed sleigh full of holiday books for kids

BY LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press Writer

A peg-legged pirate St. Nick with a sleigh pulled by sea horses, and a big-headed flying caribou who's fed up with the cult of Rudolph provide fresh spin for the holidays on a beloved Christmas poem for kids.

Clement Clarke Moore's "Twas the Night Before Christmas" has delighted one and all since it first appeared anonymously in a newspaper in 1823.

— "A Pirate's Night Before Christmas," (\$14.95, ages 4-8, Sterling) by Philip Yates, with illustrations by Sebastia Serra.

This is a bellylaugh of a book for young buccaneers, loaded with jargon that lends itself to amusing readalouds.

— "The Dinosaurs' Night Before Christmas," (\$18.99, ages 4-8, Chronicle) by Anne Muecke, with illustrations by Nathan Hale.

A boy is snug in his New York City apartment bed when a clatter from the American Museum of Natural History across the street

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