

The Nexus of the Sun, the Moon, and Mother
A Multicultural Parenting Journey

KJ Hannah Greenberg
with Rivka Gross

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Cover Art: KJ Hannah Greenberg

Note: **DO NOT** try any of the strategies, which are mentioned in this book, at home. Hannah is certified in herbal medicine and feels comfortable ministering to her family's health needs. Given society's litigious nature, though, she is intentionally not providing you with a complete list of ingredients or even with notations about the ratios of ingredients used in the referenced mixtures. Please, instead of guessing, support your local herbalist; pay her for guidance on how to acquire and to use these and other alternatives to nasty pharmaceuticals.

Preface

It is not so much that I don't feed my offspring properly, dress them appropriately, or otherwise keep them off of the streets. I even entertain them with my efforts to not look frumpy and to speak in local discourse.

Nonetheless, they protest, saying that grown women ought to wear colors other than black or navy and that it would suit them if I didn't talk garbled Hebrew in front of their friends, specifically, or in front of anyone who might know them, in general. They insist, as well, that my behavior evidences my failure to grasp the rudiments of parenting. Those kids gripe, too, that they needed a raise in allowance about twenty months ago.

In response, I smile and nod. They can blather all they want; I've earned every bit of my maternal status. Whereas, when they were small, I used to regularly rise with the sun, these days, I meet that celestial body at the end of my work hours. What's more, I am charmed, not alarmed, by my sons' and daughters' adolescent goings-on.

I'm not sure that I ought to worry over the fact that a sister's friend's dog has eaten someone's homework. Likewise, I'm not convinced that fretting over the fact that a brother's undies turned pink, because someone else mixed up the laundry, is a good use of my resources. Perhaps, it's of no matter that these boys and the girls tower over their father and me or that they bake chocolate chip cookies that leave mine at the starting gate.

In exchange for merely observing their sibling feuds, their "creatively" decorated rooms, their unusual approaches to emptying the dishwasher, and their "interesting" means of acquiring pets, my offspring offer me adrenal "delights." Turbulence is the norm in a home full of teenagers.

Accordingly, it is to their merit that Mom's taking a remarkable writing journey.

KJ Hannah Greenberg
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Introduction: Boys' Dolls, Matchmaking, and Kitten's Play: A Slice of Strife

Not too long ago, on my familiar planet, I was besieged by a red and angry monster and by his cruel, blue compatriots. Without so much as a warning growl, that rouge rogue shot nuclear torpedoes from both of his laser cannon arms at me. Before his indigo compadres or I could respond to that invective, Younger Dude ambushed that bad guy. Bent shirt hanger in one hand, borrowed doll cape in the other, Younger Dude meant to deconstruct the demon (that is, until Kitten hissed and sprang from the room).

Even with Older Dude's tallest cactus, his pile of dirty laundry (ever-so-conveniently stacked in front of Older Dude's door), and his latest Language Arts paper almost thwarting that brave defense, Younger Dude belayed me from the clutches of the two inch toy. My valiant kindergartener, though, had not been focused on stopping the bad guy; he had entered his brother's kingdom to destroy the 'bot since the plaything had been commandeered from Younger Dude's private collection.

I reached for some of the jammies and T-shirts scattered amongst architectural renderings, half-painted model airplanes, and not-yet-retired elephants before righting the prickly plant. The boys, absorbed in redefining territory, took no notice of either the crumbled papers I had appropriated or the game of Bowling for Dust Bunnies that had been begun by their sister one floor below.

Kitten, who, was now a flight down, was batting at imaginary friends instead of at the small, plastic balls which had leaked from a birthday party goodie bag, and which had collected under the parental bed. While Kitten was otherwise occupied, those toys idled among lost socks, dirty tissues, and missing library books. When she became interested, her

resulting reverberations were unremitting. “Rummmble,” warned a ball as it coasted over the bedroom’s wooden floor. “Rummmble,” sounded another immortal party favor. “Rummmble,” resonated a third, as our young feline perfected her pounce. Then the phone clanged.

We get three rings before the machine picks up and four before a total disconnect. I grabbed the receiver mid-message. Demanding my ear was a stranger with a pleasant voice, who happened to think that I could put her in touch with a miracle.

Given, I like little people who squish applesauce into their plastic trucks before putting their toys away. Similarly, I adore furry critters that bring spasming rodents into my office only to release those live prisoners at my feet. Certainly, I am enamored of a man of in-between years, who might remember, the day after tomorrow, to clean his nail clippings out of the bathroom sink. Howsoever, I manifest little affection for unfamiliar females, who call me with requests for eligible doctors, lawyers, and tax accountants, and even less love for unknown gentlemen, who won’t dream of marrying anyone bigger than a size four.

“I see.” I didn’t. I didn’t know her name or her references. I had no idea how she had found me. I did realize, though, that Missy Younger’s voice had since joined Younger Dude and Older Dude’s and that more of those block-made creatures seemed to be flying across the top floor of our home. Come to think of it, why was Younger Dude running around with a bent shirt hanger? Eyes are precious.

“At least five ten in height,” Miss Mystery continued. She had been droning on while I had been pondering. Tenacity and looks were her bids for love.

“Why is height so important? There are good, short men.”

“I never dated anyone under six feet,” Madame Five Two parried.

“Would you relocate?” I offered, hopeless to the noise of glass and metal above my head.

“As long as he moves to my neighborhood,” addended Sally Sensible.

“What about children? Divorced guys? Widowers?” Suddenly, my home was too quiet. On balance, no one was seeking ace bandages, comfrey compresses, or stitches.

“Not messy. Not too cute. Not too young,” insisted my calculating client.

I took a deep breath and listened for further evidence of violence. The cats obliged. A rotund grey and white bit chased a svelte, striped thing down three flights of stairs.

“How old?” I refocused.

“In college is best. I don’t want to raise someone else’s.”

Thud. My public service was interrupted by a bulletin concerning Captain Contagious and his sidekick, Mr. Annihilation.

“The boys are attacking! The boys are attacking,” sired Missy Younger. Having gleefully dispatched the news, she ran back up the stairs, skipping over the towels that she had meant to put in the laundry closet and her dollies’ collection of plastic shoes. My family’s stairs and halls are not conduits, but repositories.

Just the other day, Missy Older insisted that she needed to annex part of Missy Younger’s room to contain her spillage. I suggested that she toss her deflated plastic hammer, her broken beanbag chair, and her incomplete crochet projects. She countered that her father and I didn’t love her because we refused to rent space for her collection of *Little Missy* magazines and refused to make a place, in our closet, for her outgrown, but “cherished” fancy dresses.

Offering apologies, while ending my unwanted and unsolicited phone call, I pursued my zealous offspring. The

upper regions of my home were strewn with empty toilet paper rolls, streams of building blocks, and yet more misshaped shirt hangers. I stepped over last year's sunglasses while putting my shoulder to my elder son's door. It did not yield.

"Move!" I bellowed in my best Mommy voice.

"What's going on?" I demanded as the household's regulator. "I don't like what I see." My inner politician helped me to reframe my rhetoric; if I punished all of them, I'd have no one left to help me with the grocery shopping.

"Older Dude did it," sacrificed Missy Younger.

"Did not. Get outta my room. Now!" defended the local champ.

"He hit me," added the usually overlooked Younger Dude.

"You get out, too," vexed the beleaguered local.

"Scoot," the riot police proclaimed before ticketing the townie for littering municipal streets. A follow-up lecture would have ensued had the phone not started ringing, again.

I bounded down two flights of stairs only to discover that it was not my agent protracting a deal, but a second call from the aforementioned young woman; she wanted to know if I had read her follow-up email. The pictures were shot in good light, she reassured. A renowned school had conferred her philosophy degree, she rejoined. She wanted me to know, as well, that during our prior, twenty-seven minute-long, chat, she had decided that she could "settle" for an executive, as long as he was willing to vacation in warmer climes. I glanced up long enough to see one of our senior felines stalking Kitten.

My striped wonder was no sooner screaming past my office door, away from a suddenly ambulatory, fur-covered, overfed bolster, than the front doorbell rang, and rang, and rang. Missy Younger and Older Dude pushed each other all the way down two flights to answer it. Their shoulders and foreheads vied to get to the screen first. That they made an immediate return trip

back up to their andocentric wonderland belied the identity of the “guest;” Missy Older had returned home, smiling from one glittering silver tooth to another. She liked to make scary grins with her braces.

“Back door friends are best,” I corrected, regarding the handset that I was holding and turning from my not-quite-child back to my caller.

“Ma, about that play, the one Mandy’s going to. She asked if...” prepared my trial lawyer.

“No,” overturned the court.

“So, that guy, who owned his own jet, frequently flew from California to see me,” droned my other client.

“No, dear child,” snarled the enforcers sent to monitor the crime scene.

“... so I told him I couldn’t marry anyone’s mama’s boy...” segued my captor.

“Thanks, Mom. I knew you’d say ‘yes,’” barked my clever adolescent upon realizing my phone phantom wanted to keep talking about khakis versus dress pants on men.

Later, after I was able to pull myself away from that spectator’s monologue about the relative merit of a symphony hall as a dating venue, I nestled among a green stuffed lizard, a reading pillow, and a pile of almanacs. I traced my eyes over half-emptied water bottles (the stains on the flooring beneath the carpet would prove those vessels had not been “half full”), a yet incomplete atlas of an alternative universe, and an unfurled karate belt.

“Did ya know,” I proffered.

“What?” was the disinterested response. Older Dude was busy adding another continent to his imaginary map, oblivious to the fact that much of the debris from the previous war still lay strewn across his room.

“Your monsters, the ones you and your friends build and trade, are really dolls... over-priced tie-ins, moneymakers for some toy company. They’re marketed as scary creatures so “macho” kids will buy them.”

“I knew that. I also know you’re a terrible matchmaker.”

“Why not assume a different favorite toy? What about art projects? Basketball? Bike rides? Staring out the window? Staring at your sisters?”

“Mom...” Older Dude rolled his eyes at the ceiling, likely wondering why parents state the obvious.

“What? The dolls?”

“Just don’t tell my friends.”

Preface

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Acknowledgments

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Credits

Other Books by KJ Hannah Greenberg

About the Authors

