



ISSUES

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Tenets to...

FAMILY DRAMA

Here's Some Of The Stuff You Won't Expect When You're Expecting

You will suffer this psychotic laughter at very inopportune moments. Like when you are watching Rue die in "The Hunger Games" in a crowded theater on opening weekend.

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When you first find out you are pregnant, it will not go down quite how you expected, with you and your husband tenderly holding hands, sitting on the edge of the tub, staring down at the little First Response stick with giddy elation.

Rather, it will be that you, on a whim, decide to take a test on your own. You actually feel certain your period is due to arrive any minute, but what the heck, why not go ahead and urinate on some plastic for some morning fun? You sleepily put the stick on the sink beside you, and then you don't even have your pajama pants back up before your life is changed forever.

You will at once be so shocked it will feel as if all of the blood is leaving your face and is now pooling in your big toe, and yet somehow, at the same time, you will also kind of feel like you knew all along.

You will stumble out of the bathroom in your robe -- gray-faced and wild-eyed -- looking like you've just seen the ghost of Amelia Earhart hot ironing her hair in your shower. Your husband will be sitting at the kitchen table, surfing the web, and you will thrust the stick at him. He will stare at it like you've just handed him a Rubik's cube made of eyeballs.

And when he tries to respond, his Irish accent will turn full on Darby O'Gill, which tends to happen to him in moments of extreme emotion. And then he will blurt out, "Are you taking the piss?!?"

Which, in leprechaun speak, loosely translates to, “Are you fucking with me?”

You will shake your head no. No, you didn't somehow smuggle home a positive pregnancy test to use as a whimsical prank. The test is in fact yours!

Once he takes a second to digest this news, he will then be on his feet and hugging you with stunned excitement, and the whole scene will be sort of (almost) like a Hallmark ad. If Hallmark's advertising team were composed of zombified women and drunken rugby players.

You will not expect your female friends to act like weirdos upon hearing your news. But, lo, they will! While most of your friends will be super supportive and excited for you, a few will react as though you have just informed them that you have a rare form of genital crabs that lives in your eyebrows and is transmitted through hugging. A bizarre glaze will come over their eyes, and they will become stiff and strange.

You will not know what to make of this. Granted, you are not expecting people to fire confetti canons merely because you have accomplished the rather unremarkable feat of getting semen into your cervix, but you are also not expecting people to shut down like malfunctioning cyborgs.

Most baffling of all, two of your friends will actually respond to your emailed announcement with zero acknowledgment of the fruit in your womb, and will instead reply with invitations to cocktail parties. What to make of this? You have no idea! People sure are complex!

You ultimately decide to just shrug and move on. But you will also make a mental note that should you ever receive a wedding invitation from these women, you will respond not with well wishes, but will instead send an invitation to the world's sexiest, most fun singles orgy.

Along with the usual side effects of pregnancy -- nipples suddenly becoming the size of dessert plates, the primal desire to eat nothing but frozen waffles -- there are other side effects you will not anticipate. For instance, you won't expect to find yourself singing Eddie Money a lot. But you will.

How this begins, you can't recall. But one day you wake up and find “Take Me Home Tonight” playing on a loop in your brain, forcing you to shout out random bits of the lyrics as you go about the daily business of buying kale you won't eat and reading about Kegels you will forget to do. You will wonder how this repetitive singing is affecting the baby's developing brain, as this is most certainly not Mozart. There are no “Baby Money” educational CDs out there.

Your Money compulsion is greatly irritating to those around you, for once the melody is out there, they too find themselves singing Money, and it becomes like some sort of aural yeast infection: contagious, irritating and persistent. Fortunately, it appears to be confined to the second trimester, for one day you awaken, and Money has left you.

Many people will ask if you have any food cravings, or food aversions. You'll find that people are suddenly very curious about what makes you gag. And you will feel rather boring, for aside from your newly discovered passion for the Eggo brand, you don't really have much nausea news to report.

Except that the smell of your jeans for some reason makes you want to puke. Even when they are clean, something about the fabric's scent makes you want to vomit. So when people smilingly ask if there are any food items you can't go near, you wish you could giggle and complain how the sight of eggs sends you running to the bathroom. But instead, you must reply, "No. But my jeans really stink."

You might have expected your pregnancy wardrobe to be funky and chic. And if you are Heidi Klum, or just have lots of money to blow on pants with built-in cummerbunds, this will be true. If you are neither of these things, you will likely find yourself clad in Old Navy and Target's finest.

The clothes purchased at these establishments will provide you with two opposing looks: that of a Teen Mom cast member or that of a Hasidic mother of 7. And so you spend your days alternating between denim shorts and knee-length jersey skirts. Amazingly, you will still somehow manage to be surprised when your sex life falls into a slump.

Ahhh, intercourse when pregnant. You've heard so many stories about how fun it can be! *All those hormones, right, ladies?*

Of course you've also heard that it can be uncomfortable and awkward. But what you will not expect is for it to be a full-on, slapstick comedy routine. Which it is. It is truly the stuff of Laurel and Hardy, and there might as well be old timey piano music and pies being thrown in the background.

Because you are now a lumbering manatee, and are unable to assist with the most basic aspects of the lovemaking process. So when your husband spends 10 minutes searching for the button on your maternity shorts (hint: there isn't one), you will find yourself snorting with laughter. And your weary husband will then suggest having a threesome, wherein the third party's only role will be to help remove your pants.

You will not expect to be freaked out by "What To Expect When You're Expecting." But you will be. Even though much of the book is quite helpful and useful, it occasionally veers into absurdityland, as if the author became bored with scaring women about the dangers of brie, and just decided to throw some random shit in there to mess with them.

For example: the warning to not let anyone blow air into your vagina, as this can apparently cause a fatal embolism. *Really?* But how was this even discovered? As if your husband is often down there whistling "I've Been Working on the Railroad"?

And so you must decide to read this book with a filter. And when you get to the bonkers warnings that seem on par with "Don't ever let anyone press marbles into your eyeballs as hard as they can," or "Don't ever swallow a cocktail fork," you will feel free to skip ahead.

You might expect your birthing classes to be intense. And they will be. When Latifah the nurse explains to the room the texture and color of a mucus plug, you will be amused by the expression on the fathers in the room and will wonder if their penises are actually inverting and ascending back into their bodies.

You will be further amused by the birthing videos, which of course were shot in the 80s, as there appears to be a government law that all footage of women in labor must feature a home perm and a man in a patterned sweater. You will not be so amused by the gentleman beside you, who chooses to watch the episiotomy scene while munching on the complimentary guac and chips.

And you certainly won't expect the scene in which the baby emerges, covered in what looks like cream cheese, to cause your eyes to fill with spontaneous, inexplicable tears.

I mean, you expect to cry a lot from the hormones. And you will. You will cry over pretty much anything. But your tear ducts will be particularly affected by anything triumphant. For instance, when you are flipping through the channels and see a Ukrainian woman do very well on an ice skating routine, tears will stream down your face. *Because just think how long she's trained, her whole life she's worked so hard, just for this moment.*

Therefore, if you do not wish to sob uncontrollably, it is strongly advised to stay away from YouTube clips involving:

1. Injured war veterans doing lots of yoga and learning to walk again
2. Special needs children completing field day races
3. [The trailer for the new "Les Mis"](#)

The crying you will expect. But what you will not expect is to have long bouts of hysterical laughter. And I don't mean hysterical as in, "Ho ho ho, Amy Poehler is hysterical!" I mean hysterical as in: I-am-laughing-so-hard-at-something-so-stupid-I-am-worried-I'm-on-the-verge-of-a-psychotic-break-why-can-I-not-stop-laughing-won't-someone-please-help-as-I-am-now-losing-bladder-control.

Even better, you will suffer this psychotic laughter at very inopportune moments. Like when you are watching Rue die in the "Hunger Games" in a crowded theater on opening weekend. It's important to note that you will not be laughing because a small child has just had a spear thrust through her abdomen. Rather, you are laughing because you just remembered something kind of funny -- something wholly unrelated, from days earlier -- and it has for some reason just popped into your brain.

And so you will begin laughing convulsively, and the harder you try to stop it, the worse it will get, until your fellow audience members are shifting in their seats, giving you disgusted looks, and your husband finally orders you to leave the theater and pull it together. And so you will stand and try to leave, but you will forget you have unbuttoned your jeans because they have become too snug, and so you will then be hysterically laughing and also trying to pull up your pants. Which isn't so unusual a scene for New York City. But still. Embarrassing.

You will not expect there to be so much embarrassment with pregnancy. But there is. Humiliation is apparently all a part of the miracle of life and as Mother Nature intended. So, yes, you will wet your pants in the elevator on at least one occasion. And while you will be mortified, you will mainly just be glad that you are alone, and the hot English underwear model who lives on the top floor is blessedly not in the elevator with you.

When the baby finally starts moving, you might expect it to be like light flutters, or like pastel butterflies frolicking through your innards. As that is how you've heard it described. You will not expect it to feel like he is pounding on your stomach like it's the walls of Shawshank, and he is demanding to be let out of this godforsaken, amniotic prison. You will not expect to take a swig of orange juice, and then suddenly feel like there's a one-man band playing the spoons on your kidneys.

And when you can actually see your baby -- your son -- move beneath your skin, and you can see his tiny legs ripple under the surface, like that one scene in *Nightmare on Elm Street*, when Freddy pokes through the wall to peer down at Nancy while she sleeps, well, you might not expect to be wholly crushed/smothered/obliterated by a crazy, all encompassing, explosive kind of love that kind of makes you feel like you've lost your mind.

But you will be.