

Marley and Me

Reluctantly, I saw [Marley and Me](#) in the movie theater yesterday. It's not that it was a bad movie, but I didn't want to see it in the theater because I knew it would be a tear-jerker since I read the book by John Grogan. Unfortunately, I don't remember much about the book since I read it a long time ago, and I do all of my book reading while I'm dozing off just before bed, which sometimes makes it difficult to remember what I've read. But I know I really enjoyed the novel and recommended it to my family and friends. The story is about a family who gets a puppy named Marley, and the novel follows his journey through life as the 'world's worst dog'. But eventually, Marley charms his way into the hearts of his family, even helping them through life changes and tragedies.

From what I remember, I think the movie stays pretty close to the book, although I don't necessarily agree with the casting choices of Jennifer Aniston and Owen Wilson as Marley's masters. I was a big fan of the tv show Friends, but every movie I've seen Jennifer Aniston in since seems like she's still Rachel, her character from Friends. She's just not a very diverse actor in my book, which I also think she has in common with Owen Wilson. But characters in this heartwarming family film were not very deep, so in the end the poor casting did little to sink the movie. And you'll notice that I crossed out family film. Another thing that disappointed me was the PG rating Marley and Me received. There are about 3 too many adult-themed scenes that I wouldn't want my kids to see, and I'm really glad I previewed this film before I let them see it, which I usually do anyway. This movie should NOT have received a PG rating, and it will make me more careful about making sure I preview *everything* before the kids view it, regardless of rating.

But overall, cute movie. If you're an animal lover or have

ever owned a dog, prepare to cry. Sorry if you consider that a spoiler, but it's been all over the media and has dominated water cooler talk everywhere about how sad the movie and book are. I'm sure you can guess what happens and you think you can prepare yourself, but you can't. I was a total wreck in the theater and have had a bit of a cloud over me ever since. But don't let that scare you away from seeing Marley and Me. I think it just struck a chord in me because we own a dog who was once 'The World's Worst Dog' and is now an old lady who has been a huge part of our family for over 10 years. I probably would not watch this movie again, but only for lack of wanting to ride the emotional rollercoaster it provokes in its viewers. The big screen version of Marley and Me was entertaining, and it made me definitely want to read the book again... if only I had time for that.

High School – yuck

I don't have many fond memories of high school. It wasn't horrible, but it certainly hasn't come close to being the best years of my life as some people had promised. Even so, when I saw this copy of an email forward on my friend's blog, I couldn't resist filling it out and making it a blog post of my own, especially since he didn't send me the email version for me to forward. Feel free to make it an email and forward it to your friends. Coincidentally, I've been working on a post about a different version of classmates.com... stay tuned – I might eventually have time to finish it! Here is a copy of the email forward:

Here is a fun email I received from my cousin who shares my alma mater as well as the year I graduated. Some of the questions brought a chuckle as well as made me think. See if

it does the same for you.

Fill this out about your Senior Year of high school! The longer ago it was, the more fun the answers will be!! FORWARD (or post in comments) with name of high school and graduating year in the subject box. Send this to all your friends, but don't forget to send it back to me.

> >

> >

1. Did you date someone from your school? No

2. Did you marry someone from your high school? No

3. Did you car pool to school? yes

4. What kind of car did you have? black Pontiac Sunbird

5. What kind of car do you have now? minivan

6 . It's Friday night...where are you now? In high school? hanging out at a friends house, shooting pool or hanging out at Denny's – lots of hanging out

7. What kind of job did you have in high school? Wendy's

8. What kind of job do you do now? Homemaker

9. Were you a party animal? more than some, less than others

10. Were you considered a flirt? no

11. Were you in band, orchestra? band freshman year

12. Were you a nerd? depends who you asked I guess

13. Did you get suspended or expelled? no

14. Can you sing the fight song? no

15. Who was/were your favorite teacher? I don't remember

16. Where did you sit during lunch? in my car – how dangerous

was it to speed to McD's and back in 25 mins every day?

17. What was your school's full name? this makes me nervous – are you trying to track me down?!?

18. When did you graduate? 1996

19. What was your school mascot? Tigers

20. If you could go back and do it again, would you? no thanks

21. Did you have fun at Prom? not really

22. Do you still talk to the person you went to Prom with? No

23. Are you planning on going to your next reunion? no

24. Do you still talk to people from school? trade a few emails a year with some people back and forth

25. School Colors? orange and black

26. If you could do 1 thing differently in high school, what would it be? I would have been a little nicer to people – not that I was mean, I was just quiet and disconnected from my huge community of a school.

Christmas With The Kranks

Ok, going in, I knew it would be a terrible movie. When [Christmas With The Kranks](#) came out in the movie theater, it was met with terrible reviews from critics, and its imdb.com rating is a measley 4.7 with over 7,000 votes. So why did I want to watch it? Two reasons – I wanted to watch a Christmas movie on Christmas Eve, and I had read *Surviving Christmas* – one of the rare John Grisham books that isn't legal fiction,

“Surviving Christmas” months ago – I always like to see books come to life on the screen. Well, ok, not always... because Christmas With The Kranks was simply awful – even worse than I thought.

The story is about a couple of empty-nesters who decide to skip Christmas since their daughter will be out of town. They plan to take a tropical cruise and go about getting fake tans and whatnot to prepare for their unconventional holiday celebration. Not such a big deal, you’d think. Except that the Krank’s live on a street that is famous for their Christmas decorations. Every house is expected to put a Frosty the Snowman decoration on their roof every year, and so when the Kranks are preparing to leave town without doing so, the neighborhood is abuzz. That’s it.

The novel was alright; it was a fun little story, and although it wasn’t one of the best books, I did get all the way through it. But I can’t say the same about the movie. We turned it off in the middle and I can’t say I missed the rest. My main problem with it was the casting of Tim Allen as Luther Krank. While reading the book, I kept picturing Luther as a crabby senior citizen, but Tim Allen made Luther more angry than crabby. In the novel, John Grisham does a nice job setting scene of a small, close-knit community, but all that is lost in the movie, especially with Tim Allen involved. I was shocked to read on imdb.com that John Grisham has casting approval rights for movies based on his novels. Maybe that was established *because* of Christmas With The Kranks. Well anyway, that’s enough time wasted on this movie. From what I hear, it’s not the best example of a John Grisham book, but worth a try, I suppose, if you have lots of spare time and like to read. On the other hand, I wouldn’t recommend the movie to anyone.

It WAS A Very Merry Christmas, Thank You!

Our Christmas was wonderful, thanks for asking! Our 8 & 9 year old and our 2 year old were awake first on Christmas morning, and they crept downstairs to see if Santa came. He did, and surprisingly, they waited very patiently until Mom and Dad were ready to roll out of bed to open their presents. Christmas Eve was a late night, and because we weren't really being pestered, we stayed in bed until about 9:45 Christmas morning. After that, it took A LOT of prodding to wake our middle daughter who is 4. Believe it or not, even telling her to check if Santa came didn't do the trick... she was apparently tired! Like I said, late night last night.

Finally she was awake and excited, so then the kids opened their gifts, and they were really happy with what Santa had picked out. So happy, in fact, that they were really good during the day, and we had few fights amongst the natives – a rarity in our house. Their favorite toys seem to be these large inflatable balls with handles that they sit on and bounce. I guess Santa didn't realize how annoying it would be to have 3 little girls bouncing all around the house ☹

So what did I get? My husband got me a game based upon our favorite tv show, The Office. A good friend had gotten us another board game (with a dvd as a big part of the game) based upon the show, and so now we have both games – the complete set. I love it. I was looking forward to playing it all day, and it's easy to see that the game is REALLY cool. It's different than your average trivia game; lots of added elements, making it a stand-out favorite board game. But then again, we feel the show is a stand-out favorite. My husband

also got me a Snuggie – ever heard of them? Snuggies are big blankets with sleeves, essentially. That way you can do many a chore (or even fun things, like changing channels on the remote or blogging) while still being covered by a blanket. We're waiting for mine to arrive, and once they do, they will be an especially appreciated gift since our electric bill *doubled* between last month and this month – must be all those space heaters we were using to supplement our giant furnace because we thought our gas bill was too high. Just wait til we get that bill in the mail this month... ugh. At least it didn't come on Christmas Eve like I was sure it would.

So what did I get for my wonderful hubby? It's lame I know, but months ago while I was still pregnant with our son, I found a picture frame that says "I get my good looks from my Daddy". I liked it immediately and bought it, and it's ironic that at that time, I thought we were going to have a baby girl instead of a boy which would make more sense when it comes to the photo frame. But then we found out we were indeed having a boy, and so I was able to give my husband the picture frame with a picture of our son inside. A good gift, but I had wanted to get him something else.

I almost asked a friend to get something for him from me. My husband usually wants-for-nothing, but this year, he did spy a few gadgets for his wish list. Since he's usually with me when we're shopping at the stores that carry the items, I was going to ask a favor of someone to pick them up. But alas, my plan was foiled when I told my husband (and the captain of our family finances) I need some money for Christmas shopping. He basically vetoed the idea of me getting him anything, and I was under the impression it was mutual, that we were going to focus on the kids this year and not get each other anything. But he sneakily got me some really good gifts, and I'm not going to let this happen again – I'll be squirreling away some money here and there until I have enough to buy him a birthday present in June – HA!

Hope you and yours had a very Merry Christmas!

Greenstuff

Ok, I have to issue a warning for the following post because admittedly, it's in poor taste. And I usually try to write a family-friendly blog, but the following video has some non-family friendly content. If your kids are anything like mine, they come running when they hear audio coming from the computer. Too many fun forwards and youtubes of the DoodleBops and Barney, I guess. But shoo the kids away and consider yourself warned. Those of you who find sloppy drunken behavior funny should proceed to watch the following video. It's a version of the 12 Days of Christmas sung by the late comedienne Fay McKay. In the song, she replaces all of the presents from the true love with gifts of liquor, leading to her being completely trashed by the song's end. I heard it when I was a kid; they used to play it on the radio. And although I didn't understand the scope of what was happening, I knew that the singer was acting goofy and it was fun for a kid. So my sister and I called the song "Greenstuff" (you'll know why when you hear the song), and we made a cassette tape of it. Oops – I didn't mean to lose all you readers who are under the age of twenty (a WHAT tape?). On the other hand, maybe you shouldn't be watching this video if you're not old enough to legally enjoy alcohol responsibly. Thanks to the modern invention called youtube, I was able to dig up the recording of the song I enjoyed so much as a kid. Maybe I shouldn't admit that, it seems kind of strange...

The only video I could find of Fay McKay performing the song was audio/video mismatched, if you know what I mean. The

audio didn't match the way her lips were moving, and it was annoying, so I'm reluctantly posting a different version instead – one with a slide show that matches the lyrics. Some of the add-ins are funny, while I failed to see the humor in others. And I don't know why they showed the woman on the table so many times... maybe she is someone that knows the youtube poster – how embarrassing. How does something like that happen anyway? See for yourself, if you dare, and don't forget to listen to the song:

Merry Christmas!



Merry Christmas!



We hope this Christmas Blogcard finds you and yours happy, safe, and healthy. We want to thank all of you who thought of our family this year and sent us the wonderful Christmas cards. I was going to send out Christmas e-cards with pictures of the kids this year, but somehow time got away from me (somehow? I have 4 kids!) and wouldn't you know it – it's already Christmas and we never even got our family Christmas picture taken! So I gathered the kids, put them in front of the Christmas tree, and viola! Our family's 2008 version of Christmas cards, and this is the fastest way to make sure we sent our Christmas wishes before the holiday is over.

As for our family, 2008 was busy but great. The kids are doing wonderfully! Taylor just turned 9 and really likes 3rd grade. She loves to read and is a very talented artist. Sammie is 4 and in preschool. She is learning to write her name and loves Barbies. Disney is 2 and still very sweet.

She loves to play with baby dolls and play-doh. Baby Christopher has learned to jump in his bouncy seat, and he loves to use his hands, especially to grab his toes. God Bless everyone and we wish you and your family a truly happy holiday season, as well as the rest of the year, of course! We are so lucky to have such wonderful friends and family! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Love,

Chris, Lisa, Taylor, Sammie, Disney, and Christopher

Who Needs Pockets?

Given my fear of frogs, no matter how illogical it is, this video terrified me to the very core. I couldn't even watch the whole thing, and what I did see was watched with my feet picked up off the floor – just too creepy. But I still hope none of the buggers were injured in the filming of this video from youtube called “Who Needs Pockets?”

Front Page News

My husband, aka Admin, logged into my computer to check stats, and never logged out, so my spellbinding account of unusualhotelsoftheworld.com was posted as an admin post and is now on the front page of tangents.org! Just wanted to let you know what happened. [Check it out here](#) – it's called, "I Feel Like I Already Am Sleeping In An Igloo".

Awesome Anthem Of Moms Everywhere

Apparently while people are on Christmas break – off work or just home with their kids – they like to send email forwards. I've gotten a burst of them lately, and 2 caught my eye so I will share them. The first is another personality quiz, but it had some different questions than ones in the past, so I'm posting it. Second is a really cute youtube video of a lady doing a marvellous job singing a song with which every parent will identify. She is very talented, and it's a good performance. Not only do the lyrics ring true, but the woman has a nice voice, and she just performs the song very well. It's amazing to me that she was able to memorize all those words – they come awfully fast!

Here's a copy of the personality quiz email with the answers I wrote:

A little fun thing to do.

44 ODD Things about you! If you opened this, FILL IT OUT! Learn 44 things About your friends, and let them learn 44 things about you! Send back to Me and to several more friends !!

1. Do you like blue cheese? yes
2. Have you ever smoked? yes
3. Do you own a gun? NO!
4. What flavor of Kool Aid was your favorite? mountain berry
5. Do you get nervous before doctor appointments? yes
6. What do you think of hot dogs ? like em – especially Vienna Beef or Nathans
7. Favorite Christmas movie? Elf
8. Favorite thing to drink in the morning:water
9. Can you do push ups? barely
10. Favorite piece of jewelry? my wedding and engagement rings
12. Do you have A.D.D.? I just might
13. What is one trait you hate about yourself? that I can be high strung
14. Middle name ? Marie
15. Name 3 thoughts at this exact moment. My Grandma's Christmas village is cooler than the one they're showing on the news – I can't wait until Christmas – I can't wait until Chris gets off work
17. Current worry? money
18. Current hate right now? arrogant, self-absorbed people
19. Favorite place to be? home
20. How did you bring in the New Year? with friends
22. Name three people who might complete this. Jamy, Megan, Mary Beth
23. Do you own slippers? no – I wear imitation Crocs around the house
24. What shirt are you wearing? a red sweatshirt with snowflakes on it
25. Do you like sleeping on satin sheets? yes – but only in the summer
26. Can you whistle? yes

27. Favorite color? green
28. Would you be a pirate? I've got a parrot... but I don't really know what this question means. I would not hijack ships and steal from people, so I guess not
29. What songs do you sing in the AM. Country
30. Favorite girl's name? Taylor
31. Favorite boy's name? Christopher
32. What's in your pocket right now? a piece of Barbie fake dog poop – don't ask
33. Last thing that made you laugh? My girls seeing their baby brother jumping in his bouncy
34. What vehicle do you drive? minivan
35. Worst injury you have ever had? emergency cesarean with a blood transfusion
36. Favorite Season? Spring
37. How many TV's do you have in your house? 6
38. Who is your loudest friend? Lisa H. I guess
39. Do you have any pets? 2 dogs, a parrot, and one hibernating ladybug
40. Does someone have a crush on you? does marriage count as a crush?
41. What is your favorite book? Monkeys on the Interstate by Jack Hanna
42. Do you collect anything? board games, Legos, Cubs stuff, local historical memorabilia and books
43. Favorite sports team? Chicago Cubs / Bears
44. What song do you want played at your funeral? Whatever other people want to listen to, I guess... it's not like I'll be enjoying it!

And here is the Mom's Anthem video:

KidsSpeak

Kids say the darndest things, as we all know – they even made a tv show about it. Here is a list of some of the cute mispronunciations my kids have made and their ages when they said them.

“ah-cro-poose” said by Sammie, age 3. Translation: octopus

“Taylor lelled at me” said by Sammie, age 4. Translation: lelled = yelled

“Beeber” said by Disney, age 2. Translation: Christopher (her baby brother). This has actually led to Christopher having nicknames of Beeber and Beebs.

“Kipper” said by Disney, age 2. Translation: Christopher. She moved out of the Beeber phase and now calls him Kipper.

“may-sa-peer” said by Sammie, age 3. Translation: disappear

“tormado” said by Sammie, age 4. Translation: tornado. Look closely at how I typed the word – she replaces the “n” with an “m” sound.

“ith ith” said by Taylor, age 1. Translation: kitty.

“diaper call off!” said by Disney, age 2. Translation: Help! My diaper is falling off!

“gggg” said by Christopher, age 5 months. Translation: various. I just wanted to put his sounds in this list too.