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That's Not My Baby...Thankfully

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One weekday afternoon during my lunch hour a coworker told me about Weddingchannel.com.

"You can type in your Ex's name and it will search all the registries. You can see if he got married," she said shoving a salad in her mouth and regaling me with tales of her own cyber stalking.

It had been five years since I'd divorced my ex husband Dave*. We met in our '20s and married in our '30. I told myself I didn't care if he got re-

married; it was my decision to end it...but I was curious. Not only did I find a bridal registry, but a Google search led me to his Facebook profile. I wasn't ready for what came next.

Pudgy cheeks, dark fuzz, big eyes. A baby, *his baby*, sat propped on my ex's chest.

He had a baby.

Then the mental comparisons set in. He was a husband and a daddy. I was still single. I may never have kids. He'll probably have four. This reminder that my plans to have a family one day were not going so well had put me into an instant funk.

Even though I had a successful career and had achieved my M.B.A. post-divorce, I thought of my chronically single status and felt unaccomplished in my personal life. For a second, I wasn't so sure that our divorce was such a good idea. Maybe our sexless and non-communicative marriage wasn't so bad? Maybe I could have dealt with his ESPN addiction better? Maybe I *should* have solidified our relationship with offspring.

I remembered the drive by conversation we had about kids less than a year into our marriage. We were brushing our teeth before bed.

"Should you stop taking the pill?" Dave said to my reflection in the mirror.

"Why?" My eyes bulged.

"Well, we're in our thirties; married; it's about that time."

Speechless, I shrugged. It didn't really matter if I was on the pill or not, we never had sex.

"So you're ready to trade Sportscenter for Dora the Explorer?"

"Yeah," his head bobbed. "Sure."

I brushed my teeth a little harder.

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Several things concerned me about taking this next step in our relationship. First, our sex life was M.I.A. We didn't even have sex on our wedding night, nor the night after, or the night after that. Second, we spent less and less time together. I still wanted us to go out with friends, but on more and more occasions he opted to stay home. Last, Sportscenter and ESPN had taken over Dave's life. All weekend long he watched sports by himself in the "man room"-- one of the rooms in our three bedroom condo that he turned into a home office and play room. The "man room" was inspired by an article he saw in a men's magazine and it became his obsession. Our trips to Home Depot were endless; Dave would power walk our pushcart through the aisles of tools and furnishings with me trailing behind.

The finished product had chocolate covered walls (same as in the magazine), a 55" plasma T.V., and a black leather man couch that pulled out into a queen sized bed. And of course we had satellite cable where he opted for the football package. All games, picture in picture, reminder alerts...the works. If ESPN wasn't blasting from that room, then he wasn't home. It was like he was a teenager all over again, which made me feel like his mother. While he watched games, I took myself out on day dates. On those weekends we barely spoke. We needed to work on our relationship, not on a baby.

I had finished brushing and turned to him.

"We could put a black leather crib right next to that monster couch. You can change diapers while you watch the game," I said.

Dave's face scrunched when I mentioned diapers, as if he could smell the poo.

"Yeah...well...there WILL be babies eventually..." His voice sounded a little scared but hopeful.

"Yeah..." I murmured and slipped my toothbrush in its cup. I thought of him power pushing a baby stroller with me trailing behind. I felt my uterus shrivel.

When he walked out, I popped a birth control pill in my mouth and swallowed hard.

Closing the laptop, I pulled myself back into reality. Any doubt that I had made the wrong decision to stay on the pill was instantly replaced by relief. Having a baby wouldn't have kept us together; it just would have made it more painful to part. A vision of Dave in his "man room", watching a game, while our baby flailed around on the monster couch flashed in my head. I shuddered.

Babies are still on my agenda, but I couldn't bring one into a home that was falling apart. I'm happy that Dave has a beautiful baby, but I'm overjoyed that that baby isn't mine.

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