

# The supreme sisterhood of girls: BFF



Emily, my six-year-old daughter, has a friend named Carly. She is my best friend Jana's daughter and they have known each other their whole, brief, drama-filled lives.

To say they haven't always gotten along swimmingly would be an understatement. There is a wake of tantrums, pouting tournaments and tattle-tell-a-thons that began almost the first day they peered at each other over their bottles. They are equally mean, kind and indifferent to each other, depending on the day.

Jana and I had dreamed of our daughters holding hands, skipping together through their childhood, 'tweens and (the dreaded) high school years, just like the sisters from "Little House," Laura and Carrie Ingalls—unfortunately, they were more like Nellie and Laura, switching parts evenly.

These girls just had a love/hate relationship that drove us to drink (those little, single bottle margaritas to be specific).

I clearly remember the first time Jana and I were able to have a decent chat without shrieks of injustice or tears (of course I mean by them, not us)...10 minutes went by...then 20...then 35..."Should we go check to make sure they haven't finally killed each other?" we nervously half-joked, then ran to actually check on them. They were well into four years old by that time and they were starting to have more moments of joy and giggling, but still, their relationship teetered from a happy one to a, well, a complicated one.

Now in first grade, they get along better then ever. They are in the same school, the same class, and sit at the same table. Lately, I have heard things that have made me think that

maybe, that topmost pre-adult female relationship, the supreme sisterhood of girls, the coveted BFF (Best Friends Forever), has begun to form.

The first sign came when I was looking for Emily one day on the playground and couldn't find her. I asked a classmate of theirs, "Do you know where Emily is?" Without looking up from the snail he was balancing on a stick he said, "Just look for Carly and you'll find Emily." Hmmm, is that true? When Jana or I ever ask if they played with each other that day we would always get a shrug...could they be attached to each other secretly?

The next clue was a story that Emily told me one night. She said a boy (who shall remain unnamed here, but will always hold a black mark on my opinion of him) at her table was making fun of her for not being at a higher level in math. As the teacher passed out their tests, the boy doubted out loud that Emily would be able to pass it. Then, the most remarkable thing happened. She said the usually shy Carly leaned over and said, "Just do your best Emily." Sticking up for Emily on the battlefield of the first grade classroom? Can this really be happening?

It seems there is an assumption that girls naturally bond to each other when put together. Like their ability to be sisterly is just hardwired into them. But, I don't think this is always the case.

Just maybe BFF status can be accomplished through fire, as well as through lipstick, first periods and a mutual love of Hannah Montana. Maybe, Emily and Carly's tumultuous beginning, their similar headstrongness, and, of course, the joy of making their moms demented with frustration has strengthened their bond.

I really hope that is true, having a friend that has known and loved you through your whole life is a priceless gift, and

since neither of them have a true sister, they are stuck with each other as the only option to fill the spot.

Emily + Carly = BFF (we can only hope).

Amazing artwork came from Etsy shop: Tamaradrama. Please take a peek...

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# Things they should call it besides Labor & Delivery

*I don't know, maybe it's just me, but Labor & Delivery sounds more like the back entrance to Macy's than the place where you go to have the most profound and meaningful event of your life. So, I wrote this, inspired by my visit today to see little 'enry.*



Pace & Push

Shock & Awe

Take Off & Landing

Come In Your Maternity Jeans & Leave In Your Maternity Jeans

Curses & Nurses

Pride & Disprejudice

End Of One Thing & Beginning Of Another

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# The Snow Factor



This morning my daughter, Emily, woke me up early to tell me her ear was hurting. “This one, Mom,” she whispered as she tugged on her left ear. “Maybe if you eat some breakfast, you’ll feel better,” I said. I don’t know why I said it, maybe because this was the kind of thing my Mom used to say to me, or maybe it was the sleepiness talking, or maybe I really truly believe Honey Nut Cheerios have a magical healing power, and milk can be some kind of ear pain elixir, but that was all I could come up with as I looked up at her sweet face from my pillow.

With advise like this, you can guess, “Dr. Mom” is never uttered in the Broughton house. Why am I expected to know when to “ice,” when to “apply pressure,” and when to “just go lie down for a few minutes?” My medical advice seems like a dangerous mixture of WebMD, hasty logic and things my mom said to me... and then there is always The Snow Factor to consider.

I clearly remember when I was Emily’s age trying to fake a stomachache to my Mom to get out of going to school. Oh, the moaning...the face-crushed grimace...the dramatic pushing away of my breakfast... I am sure it was a stellar performance. But, my Mom was unmoved, she looked me straight in the eye and said, “You’re not trying to snow me, are you?” It was one of those moments as a kid when you genuinely believe your mom can see right inside you—into your deceptive, lying soul. Frightened by her clairvoyance, I backed off my claims and, with hunched shoulders, went to get ready for school.

The Snow Factor: it has so been done before.

Skeptical...yes, I was. Emily's dubious earache could just be a ploy to stay in her pj's on a rainy day and watch Boomerang. I called in the reinforcements: Larry, my husband, agreed— she could at least try to go to school, we don't want her forming any bad habits. Apathetically, I got her dressed, out the door, and plopped her in the car, but by the time the marquee of her school was in sight, it was clear she was really, honestly sick.

At the doctor's office later that morning, she was clinging to her ear, sniffing softly into a tissue. "Am I the most evil mom in the world?" I was thinking, "How could I not believe her?"...The Snow Factor made me do it.

It wasn't the first time I have doubted her cries of being sick. Once, during soccer practice, she made with the "I have a stomachache" routine. It had become a regular occurrence with with her, so I batted her back on the field more than a few times before she insisted she wasn't feeling up to playing. It was just seconds after she got in the car that the "realness" of her sickness came out—everywhere, all over everything. It took a pep talk from my friend, "You just never know," and a \$100 car detail to get me over that misjudgment.

So, there I was again, feeling bad about my broken "mother's instinct," when the doctor came in and examined Emily's ears, "Yep, she's got a bad ear infection." Then, for no other reason than to deepen my shame, she asked me if I wanted to see the suffering ear through her otoscope (totally had to look that word up). I will never get that picture out of my mind in this lifetime—a sick ear should not be looked upon lightly—it was like the end of a Stephen King novel in there.

I felt like a heel all day and fetched her every juice, Littlest Pet Shop dog and Go-gurt she requested. Putting her to bed, I told her I was so sorry for not believing her, that I loved her and proposed a deal: She doesn't try to snow me and I will always believe her when she says she is sick.

We have a deal. It's solid. We shook on it and everything.

*@@@ illustration by Sarah Jane on Etsy. Please take a peek at her beautiful work...*

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**Gatorade-filled sippy cups, empty Tupperware bowls (just in case) and hastily engineered ponytails at the pediatrician's office today.**

Ben, my four-year-old, has been sick since Thursday with a fever and now head cold. I am a serial temperature-checker when my kids are sick. I want to have them in bed with us and then poor, patient Larry has to hear the beeping of the ear thermometer every five minutes, like a smoke alarm with a dying battery—beep...beep...almost asleep...beep...startle...beep...almost asleep again...beep..."Suz!"

I dragged Ben to the drop-in hour at my pediatrician's office this morning and there was a line out the door—literally all the way down the hall. Unkempt moms clutching Kleenex in one hand and our coffee in the other, holding the hands of our pj-wearing kids, forbidding them from touching anything in the office. "Sit down, but don't touch anything. Don't even look at the toys," was the futile command of one mom.

You could just feel the sinister germs swarming the room, laughing at our travel sized Purell bottles and Wet Ones.

The waiting room was filled with Gatorade-filled sippy cups, empty Tupperware bowls (just in case) and hastily engineered pony tails. To make things worse (it really isn't that bad), when I finally was able to pop my head in to see the weary nurse in the window, she stood up and announced to the line they were booked for the morning and we all had to make an appointment to come back later in the day. "Ummm, you don't mean me do you?" I said with my sweetest smile. The nurse, unmoved (and a bit annoyed) by my attempts to charm her, said, "Yes, you too." But, I could tell what she meant was : "Especially you."

Drats! So we are back at 1:30 today.

*Update 4:30- The office was empty, but I still didn't let Ben touch anything...*

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## The word we once longed to hear...now forbidden

My friend, who is an excellent mom, was telling me this story over lunch about her four-year-old daughter, Ella. After a day of repeating the word "mama" seven million times, most of the time for no credible reasons, this excellent mom (EM) was reduced to the following dialog with her:

Ella: Mama, mama, mama.

EM: Ella, you are only allowed to say mama three more times today.

Ella: Mama...

EM: That's one.

Ella: Mama...

EM: That's two.

Ella: Mama, mama mama...

EM: Okay, three, four and five. That's it, no more saying mama all day today...

This is the kind of conversation, that if heard from outside, would sound absurd. But, you know exactly what she means—don't you? Come on now...if you're a mom you've been there. It's like when you hear yourself saying something like, "You are going to sit there until you finish every last bite of that cupcake, mister."

Sometimes, the words "mom" "mama" "mommy" that we longed for before having kids, can become— after repeated to us, day after day, with no real purpose except to fill in the peaceful moments between requests and questions—like a little verbal needle poking at our last nerve, pushing us to the very edge.

I think this clip from "Family Guy" makes my point perfectly, here.

This is Pixar's darker, totally uncondoned by me\*\*, version of the scene, here.

\*\*This is only a dramatization. Please don't feed your children to the sharks...(remember their giggles and smooches).

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# How I know my daughter will



# transition into her teen years easily

My daughter, who is six, said to me tonight, "I am so weak with hunger, I can't even blink my eyes."

It is properly overly dramatic with just a hint of creativity, wit and angst...most definitely a good sign.

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## Rhetorical Questions I Ask My Four-Year-Old Son Everyday

Is Mommy laughing right now?

Why did you throw that (plate, battery, knife, army man, kitty litter)?

How did you get so cute?

What do you have in your mouth?

How many times have I asked you not to do that?

How come I love you so much?

What did I just say?

Am I totally ruining you? (Oh, wait, I only ask myself that question)

Who do you think is going to clean that up?

Why are you so handsome?

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# OC Mom Models Good Behavior



Larry found this note on his car when he came out of Lowes on Sunday. Yes, there was remarkable ding in the side of his car, but he was so moved by the integrity of this Mom, that he called to say it was fine. Isn't it just astonishing how doing the right thing can soften your heart.

I can see the Mom, searching for a pen and a pad of paper. Then writing the note (I like the way she added "hard") and then telling her daughter the repair will come out of her allowance. How refreshing that a Mom is modeling good behavior.

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## The Sad, Lonely Life of a Mom's Coffee Cup

I feel sorry for my coffee cup. I do. Here...I'll show you why. Below is a breakdown on its daily activities.

**6:30 a.m.** Pulled from un-run dishwasher and hastily rinsed.

**6:32** Abandoned in sink while I made Dinasa<sup>r</sup> Egg Oatmeal (which I swore I wasn't going to buy again—but, hey, it's oatmeal.)

**6:40** Poured coffee to brim, but not too high, must add froo-froo creamer.

**6:42** Forgotten on kitchen counter due to mini-brawl that broke out between kids, something to do with “Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!” or “She slugged me.”

**6:57** Found cup, placed it in the microwave for warm-up.

**7:00** Crap, 7 already? Ran upstairs to get kids ready for school—no cup in hand.

**7:20** Scuttled downstairs to retrieve cup from microwave...cold again. Re-zapped.

**7:50** Re-zapped, poured into thermos cup.

**7:59** Hurried out the door as not to be late for drop-off—forgetting cup on counter.

**7:45** Returned home to find cold coffee sitting on counter, poured back into microwaveable cup. Re-zapped.

**8:00** Upstairs to take shower, make self presentable—plum forgot cup in microwave again.

**9:00** Retrieved sorry cup of coffee from microwave, checked temp. Re-zapped.

**9:05** Started to return emails and check blog stats—Yeah! Two sips.

**9:10** Remembered clothes in dryer will relentlessly wrinkle if not folded immediately. Ran downstairs.

**10:00** Grabbed cup while rushing to put away clothes: left coffee cup atop Son’s nightstand.

**11:00** Official lunch time: Coffee out. Diet Coke in.

**8:30 p.m.** . While putting Son to bed, he complains of stomachache. “Do you think you are going to throw up?” “Can I Mommy?” “Yes.” “Okay.” Grabbed closest receptacle—dejected coffee cup on nightstand.

**11:30 p.m.** After barf-fest, with every towel, blanket and comforter in the house was in the process of being washed, went downstairs to do thorough, Silkwood-type rinse out of coffee cup.

Better luck tomorrow true and faithful friend.

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## Mensa Mommy

I just can't help myself—helping my first grader with her homework makes me feel like I'm a genius. Well, maybe not a genius, but at bit like Alex Trebek at a Spelling Bee, "I'm sorry (sweetie), the correct answer is B-I-K-~~E~~."

I realize this feeling will only last as long as her times tables are under "10" and her words are only single syllables. So, just for right now, I'm taking advantage of the little I.Q. stroke...so pathetic.