

Out Without the Baby

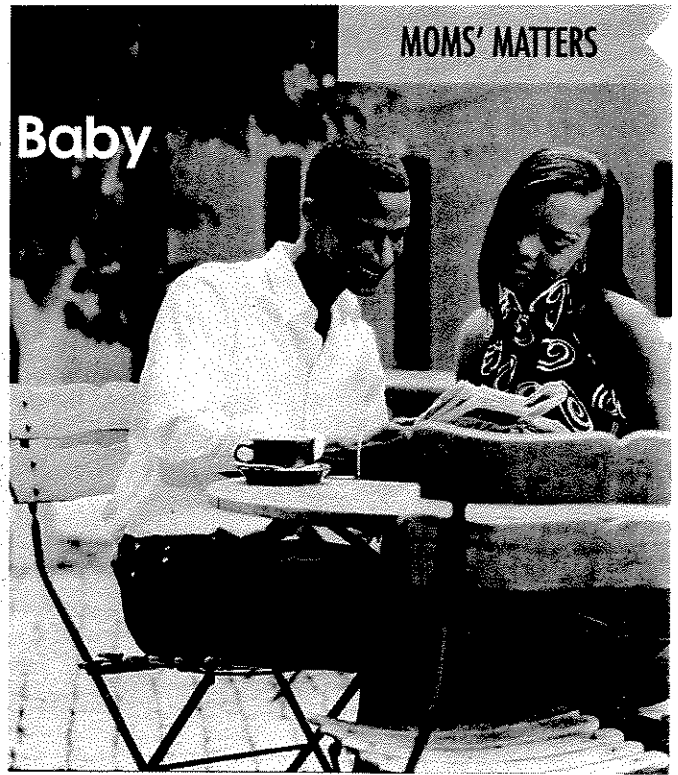
by Libby Carty McNamee

Five sleep-deprived weeks after our son was born, some friends volunteered to babysit so my husband and I could go out to dinner. Desperate for a break, we accepted the offer without a moment's hesitation. However, they imposed one caveat: we were not allowed to mention the baby's name or talk about anything baby related. It was a tough condition to accept, but we decided it was worth it. Heck, we were willing to sell flowers on a street corner in exchange for a night out sans our little bundle o' joy.


For the first time A.B. (After Baby), I actually put on some makeup and a splash of perfume. I was so ready to be my own person again, not just the local dairy queen. Since I did not dare try on my "regular" clothes, I slipped on my favorite maternity dress relishing the fact that it was luxuriously loose. I finally felt an inkling of my old self, giddy to temporarily shed my crazed new mother persona.

We enjoyed a leisurely dinner during which we held hands, referring only tangentially to our child as He Who Shall Not Be Named. Since we were such avid readers that we actually got engaged in a bookstore, the night was not complete without a trip to Barnes & Noble. After reminding each other that the baby/childcare section was off limits, we went to our separate corners—my husband to the religion section and me to fiction.

I browsed around savoring the feeling of anonymity. It was so nice to no




MOMS' MATTERS



**Got Positive
Last Wednesday**

Favorite Entree: Buffalo
Favorite Wine: House Merlot
Favorite Dessert: Key Lime Mousse



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longer be at the center of the public eye with a bulging belly. I was just a regular woman again, my personal privacy reinstated. After perusing the fiction section for a while, I approached the customer service desk and asked where the writing books were located.

The clerk gave me a blank stare. "The—what?"

"The writing books," I responded.

"You mean, like riding a horse?" she asked, still stupefied.

"No, like writing a book."

"Ooooooh, writing a book. I get it. I thought you meant horseback riding. I mean, how many pregnant women go riding after all?"

I froze. It was now my turn to appear stupefied. Did I still look noticeably pregnant? I had not thought so until that moment. My delusions of anonymity were shattered.

"I already had the baby," I remarked—quite calmly, might I add.

She blanched, her eyes crinkling up. "Oh my God. That is such a huge faux pas, the hugest faux pas ever. Well, I bet you just had the baby, like a week ago, right?"

"Actually it's been about five weeks," I replied, still calm and still stupefied.

As we walked over to the writing books, my husband caught up with us. Seeing her way out of an awkward situation, the clerk scuttled off with one last apology.

"I asked my husband the loaded question, "Do I look pregnant to you?"

"No. You look like the same girl I proposed to in a bookstore. Are you about ready to get back to the little guy?"

I realized that I was. I actually missed him, much more than I missed my old shape. **V**

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