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[Grandpa Does Grandma](#)

My mom is a narcoleptic. She tried to read me fairy tales when I was little but she was always sleeping before Sleeping Beauty could be rescued by the Prince.

This has left me with a somewhat jaded sensibility about love. We only got far enough into the fairy tale to see our heroine suspended in a state of distress, not able to save herself and not yet saved by her hero. Pre-coitus interruptus.

Bad things happened to good princesses. They met a wonderful man -- and promptly choked on a poison apple. They pricked their fingers and fell into untimely comas. They were enslaved by wicked stepmothers. They got lost in forests never to be heard from again. They got cabin fever, stuck with seven tiny men with pesky ailments. If this was happily ever after, I wanted nothing to do with it. When I got older, I'd occasionally dream of movie love -- the weekend in Paris, the shared giggle over a lazy brunch -- but generally I was just hoping not to get locked away in a bell tower.

I wouldn't have minded a Prince Charming, but I wasn't banking on him. I was muddling through. But now, at 26, I've been hit with another hard dose of literary reality from my family -- once more complete with romantic illustrations.



"Uncle Phil is writing a book," my dad announced recently. He paused, then added: "It's called *Grandpa Does Grandma: The ABCs of Senior Sex*."

"It's kind of a picture book," he continued helpfully, as if cute drawings of senior citizens making like minks would somehow soften the blow of my 70-year-old uncle writing about sex. "He, uh, he goes through the alphabet and each letter gets its own picture."

"So K would be what?" I asked, horrified. "Kinky?"

My dad offered the same goofy Parker grin he shares with his older brother, the budding author. "Yep. So maybe grandpa takes a bowl of whipped cream and--"

"Dad, gross," I cut him off. "Enough."

It wasn't burnishing the family name. It didn't rise to the level of Dorothy Parker, or even Sarah Jessica Parker. My uncle's book became an uneasy joke in our family. We wished him well... and yet.

I suggested a new slogan for our family reunion: "The Parkers: Grandpa Does Grandma, while everyone else stands around awkwardly and eats bagels." My dad joked about writing the sequel, "Grandpa Does Grandma, Just As Soon As He Can Remember Where He Left Her."

My sister sent me a late-night email from college. After expressing her "mixture of pride (for Uncle Phil) and borderline repulsion," she ended her dispatch on a philosophical note: "This reinforces the reason we spend all major holidays with Mom's side of the family even though Dad's side is 'equally great,' just the more 'creative' and 'eccentric' side."

Creative, indeed. My dad forwarded me an email from my uncle, by way of alert, when the self-published book came out this month. I checked out [the website](#) with justifiable trepidation. Two naked cartoon characters that looked disconcertingly like my uncle and aunt, covered only by a small cupid's scroll, bounced gently above a red rectangle that warned, "Enter at your own risk." I tiptoed forward, clicking through to the "Sneak Peak" section, where you could preview the letter "L."

"I wonder if he went with 'Love,'" I mused, as I waited for the page to load. "That could be tasteful."

The word awaiting me was "lubrication." My uncle urged his readers to "Lubricate! Lubricate! Lubricate!" and suggested "an extended session of non-genital love-making (kissing, stroking, etc)." Above the text was another animated cartoon -- an older woman, with Palm Beach-style reading glasses, spread eagle on her back, while her partner holds her legs aloft and squirts her privates with KY Jelly. ("Why can't she just do that herself?" asked a friend, peering over my shoulder. "Arthritis?")

I nervously checked out a video of my uncle in his first TV interview, with a local affiliate in his hometown of Atlanta. The interviewer seemed as flummoxed as I was, while my balding and beaming uncle settled back into his oversized chair and chatted about "bed-hopping in the senior community" (Grandpa does Grandma and Contracts Chlamydia) and how he's something of an expert on the subject because he's "been practicing sex for 50 years."

Quickly straying into TMI territory, he noted that his "grandma," as he calls his wife, wears cowboy boots and that he sometimes leaves flirty notes inside the boots "so when she takes them off at night, she has some expectations of what's going to happen." ("Ooh, ooh, oh, ok," stammered the poor interviewer.)

Watching my uncle, so utterly comfortable in his utter quirkiness, I worried that my family represented some horrifying variation on Tolstoy: All horny families are alike, but...

But upon reflection, I was able to come to terms with the upside of having a family that is always cheerfully oblivious to oddities, and loyal in the face of hideous embarrassment.

A mom who never got to the Prince Charming part but who still managed to instill a love of reading by taking me to the library most summer days when I was growing up, checking out hundreds of books that she knew she'd have to struggle through just to make it to the end.

A dad who may be chagrined about his brother's public sexual renaissance, but is loyal enough to provide editing help. An uncle who is proudly Rabelaisian (and more romantic than I am) -- willing to literally bare all to anyone willing to look and listen.

The book party may be tough, but my family is a fractured fairy tale, and I'll take it. In the end, I decided, I prefer our motley version of Happily Ever After.

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Reader Comments

1) This is one grandma who does not need a grandpa and all the work that goes with taking care of him. I have a boyfriend named

B.

O.

B. a battery operated boyfriend and I don't need to get dressed up, comb my hair, take a shower or paint my toenails to have many, many orgasms more than most grandpas can help us achieve.

2) My mother called to tell me to read this... She was laughing and enjoyed it thoroughly. I'm always pleased when I see an openness about this subject. As one person here said our country is rigid about this, I'd add frigid to rigid. Sad because we age a lot longer than we remain young... I love what Hope Lives said... that you always see your beloved as your beloved was when the love began. What a blessing... and a sadness to those who do not get to linger lovingly through the years with our beloved. Thanks for this post! Thoroughly enjoyable and important!

3) I think it's wonderful that mother and daughter can be open minded regarding sex. After all, we are women and share all the same bodily functions! Sometimes we just don't want to think about our moms as sexual and yet, as moms ourselves, we certainly don't want to give up the intimate part of life. Such irony! Thanks for enjoying Ashley's article and for letting others in on your point of view!

www.GrandpaDoesGrandma.com is one fun website!

4) Isn't it great to have Ashley as my niece! I was so surprised when the illustrator for Grandpa Does Grandma emailed that he had read her clever, light-hearted review! As the Grandma Grandpa loves, adores and is 'doing' I can tell you for sure that aging has nothing to do with intimacy. Love improves as time passes and we are thrilled to be satisfied both in bed and in life. So, to our peers, I say do what you enjoy. To the younger generation, hope that you will enjoy the same pleasures when you are our age!

5) You go, girl!

6) I used to snicker at the thought of old people having sex. Then I realized I'll be old one day and I have no intention of giving it up. Kudos to your uncle. His open, straight forward & humorous treatment of this segment in our sexuality is a good thing. I bet he's lots of fun.

7) When I was a kid, I lived with my grandmother. She used to have a man that visited, but never stayed over. They always sat on the porch and talked like friends. He always asked me to read to him and as a child that was fun. When I was 45, I wrote my first screenplay about my life with my grandmother and it was during that writing that I figured out that he must have been her boyfriend. So, I called my aunt up and told her what I thought and she said, "Damn, you're slow". Ahhhahahahahahaha.

He came to see her even when she fell ill. My grandmother died when I was 14 and I wish I could thank him for being kind to her when she was ill. For her to be caressed in a way that only a man can caress a woman makes me happy for her. It also taught me that human beings need to be loved no matter what age. Your uncle sounds like a remarkably healthy man about sex. We are so rigid in this country, as if when you get to be a certain age, there's no more sex.

8) Funny how we don't like to think about old people having sex, but yet we also don't plan to stop desiring it when we become old ourselves.

9) Incredible. I LMAO with this because I can so relate. My dad has retired and decided that writing erotica is his new career. You described perfectly how weird, repulsive and hysterically funny it is all at the same time. As I've aged, I look at my parents more as people with their own inner lives that don't revolve around us kids, but sometimes when he asks me to edit his work, I have a hard time making it through the EEEEEWWWW factor. I love my quirky family also and it is just another one of the crazy things keeps it interesting.

10) Thanks for your post. It gave me a true belly laugh!

11) The hardest thing about senior sex is finding a partner - - especially if you're married.

12) Well, you can forget Mommadona (see above). She's not interested.

13) Ashley, From your perspective of a mere 26 years old, you seem to have missed the dichotomy of your own longing for a prince charming ! What, exactly, did you think Happily Ever After meant ?? That you never get older ?

Nope. It means that you never lose the romance, or the desire, even when you don't have the physical appearance of a twenty something.... shocking ! What you now think of as gross, will become quite natural to you, in time. Our particular perspective comes from 33 years of marriage - I was 18, and she was 19- we are now 51 and 52 respectively. We plan to remain sexual a good deal longer than that, so long as our health remains.

14) I have another delightful thing to tell you about this. The other day my husband and I were watching TV. We've been married over 25 years and are 57 and 58. There was a young model on TV and my husband said "wow she looks like you". I knew exactly what he meant. I looked like that when we met. But he still sees me that way and that is the way I see him. If I see a picture of him when he was younger I am sometimes surprised that there is a change... I don't see it day to day. It's lovely. It's something that people who don't understand true love and marriage will ever understand and I feel sorry for them. They are missing one of life's great treasures. it is the same with fathers who abandon their children without even considering marriage. There is absolutely no love like a child who loves you as their dear parent for all of your life.

15) my example were my parents who met and married in 3 months - and it lasted 56 years. and after all that time neither one of them could keep their hands off of each other. my dad said the worst thing he did was teach her how to drive, because he hated coming into an empty house. my mom would always put on a little lipstick right before he was scheduled to come home.....they were each other's air! i learned how romantic married love could be from them.....one night after dad passed away he came for a "visit". mom said she woke up to his kiss, she could feel his beard, and taste his breath.....she was so happy.

i feel so sorry for those women who have never had a really good lover. those pigs who consider "brace yourself Effie" adequate foreplay, don't think cleanliness is necessary, or are too stupid to know great sex starts w/ the brain and i feel sorry for men who are stuck with women whose attitudes are so twisted that they don't realize how wonderful God made our responsive bodies.....and what their marriages could be like with making love as a cherished perk.

ask any older person "how old are you in your head.".....if they are physically healthy their answer is going to be between 25-50.....their prime!

16) What a wonderful family! I think I should send this post to all my family so they will feel better about me and what I write about...thank you!