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# A Mother's Book Report: the Joy of Socks

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# A mother's book report: 'The Joy of Socks'

By GLENNA ANDRADE  
Special to The Bee

Every mother's had the experience of buying, washing, folding, and finding them. And the moms who hate to darn them either throw them out or make them into puppets. One very knowledgeable mother, my friend Gerry, has examined these tasks quite seriously. She describes mother's positions in her forthcoming handbook, "The Joy of Socks."

**BUYING THEM:** The mother assumes the following stance in the store: The right arm restrains the child from snatching the expensive brand while she sorts through the Fruit-of-the-Glooms with the left to find the basic blues and browns. Next, the right offers a tissue to

the sniffing child as the left selects one — only one — of the expensive pair in white. "Over-Priced," mother mutters, reinterpreting the brand name's initials.

**WASHING THEM:** The mother straddles the space in front of the washer and dryer. She inserts one hand in the washer to pick out dark socks from the bleach-filled water or to prevent one of each pair from being swallowed during the final spin cycle; meanwhile, she stomps both feet on the electrified mass just drawn from the dryer. The other hand tugs at the elastic string which strangles the socks.

**SORTING THEM:** The mother bends over the kitchen table to perform this since the dryer is perennially stacked with wet towels. Before she folds the socks, she probes them with her index

finger to assess which child needs his toenails clipped and which has developed twenty-inch calves. Pinching off the fuzz- and gumballs, she lengthens the time the socks will be worn, but shortens the time between manicures. Last, mom scribbles a note to the sock company, suggesting they create white socks with footprint-shaped soles, colored black or green. She concludes the complaint with, "Mother is the necessity of invention."

**FINDING THEM:** Circumstance A — when the child is at home. The mother opens her mouth widely and shrieks, "Has your leg been amputated this week? If not, where are the mates to the socks in the laundry!"

Circumstance B — when the child is  
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## Socks

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not home. The mother rests her knees and elbows on the floor, parallel to the child's bed, lifting the spread with the left shoulder, sliding the arm along the floor. Repeat the procedure on the right side and at the foot of the bed. As a bonus, the mother finds missing knives and scissors which leads her to fear something has bitten her. On her luckier day, she retrieves her Limoge dessert plate now permanently etched with dried Alpo.

Variation on this position: If the bedspread is lumpy, the mother should elevate herself from the previous position and repeat the process, sliding the arm between the bedspread and blanket, blanket and top sheet, top sheet and bottom, bottom sheet and mattress pad, and finally, mattress pad and box spring. The last exercise is guaranteed to bring out at least two socks, even if they don't match. If this doesn't work, the mother may want to search between the box spring and mattress.

**DARNING THEM:** The term

"darning" is somewhat old-fashioned when used in the sense of "mending." In more current usage, it refers to mother's swearing when she discovers the socks have more holes than material. Three positions are favored.

In the first, the mother simply pinches each ragged sock between the thumb and forefinger, steps on the lever to the garbage can, and then releases the sock.

In the second position, the mother slumps into a chair near the television and begins to sew up the holes. After the sock is mended, one of two things occur: either the child says, "Mom, I won't wear a sock that you sewed because it makes big blisters on my heel," or the mother realizes her velour robe has instantly acquired a beautifully mended but superfluous attachment resembling an overgrown appendix.

In the third position, the mother slinks to the closet and buries the vagrant socks beneath the pile of things-which-may-get-ironed-someday. If she feels guilty, she plans alternate uses for them: wooly ones make great dust mitts; many wooly ones, distinctive appliques on a worn blanket. Her ideas

range wider and wilder as the bag increases in size.

**MAKING PUPPETS:** The mother withdraws her fingernails from her scalp, careful to avoid yanking out more hair since she has just come up with an answer to the "I'm bored, bored, bored" chant of her children. "We'll make puppets," she says, happy to have found a use for the socks in the closet. Inevitably three days later, she discovers the mates to those socks which now have not only a button mouth and yarn fur, but also a red mouth inked by an indelible marking pen. Mother then consoles herself, planning to enlarge the children's puppet theater with a Noah's Ark scene since animals as well as socks come in pairs.

In conclusion, "The Joy of Socks" should move every mother, heart and soul. While the above sections are just excerpts from each chapter, the readers will be glad to know that Gerry H. Berry's book will be published in its entirety soon by the Doubleway Press. The price for the hardcover, Special Gold Toe Edition is just \$10.95; the paperback is \$5.45 for the pair.