

Kjersti Milliner

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“Childhood Mementos”

One of my favorite childhood play things was a “sock monkey”, my mother had sewn for me. (I need to clarify, it was not the kind with a red rear end and big red lips. In my opinion, at the time and still today, mine was much better looking than your average brown and red sock monkey.) I have a lot of good memories of Monkey and me together.

Monkey and I went on many long trips together, all over the country. My dad was in the Army Reserves and since he was an officer he could take us with him and stay off base. (I wish I had known that him being an officer is what had afforded him this privilege, before I joined the Navy Reserves – as not an officer! I had many good and bad experiences with roommates I had to share rooms on base with, rather than staying alone at the nice hotels I had been raised to expect I would be in!)

On these trips, I would sit in the middle seat (my brother and I had to be separated, him being in the third seat) of the family station wagon with Monkey and a container of hand wipes. I'd pull out the hand wipes, let them dry against the window and against the inside of the car door and create diapers for Monkey. I don't remember what I did with his tail when I put them on him, but I don't remember him ever complaining about tail pain either. This kept me busy and quiet for hours, so my parents never complained about supplying the hand wipes. We visited many historical sites

on these trips, sat on many old tanks together and stood in front of many old cannons for picture taking. Of course we also slept together on trips and at home.

On one trip, Mom taught me how to sew a sock monkey and Monkey's brother was born! Developmentally, he was always a little behind Monkey, although I never let him know. I always tried to treat them both the same.

The first and I think only fight I was ever in, occurred when a friend of mine came over and viciously swung Monkey (keep in mind, this was on purpose, because she knew it would hurt him and drive me nuts) around in the air by his tail. I was so angry with her. The worst part was that she was a lot taller than me and it took me awhile to retrieve him.

I played and slept with him and his brother for many years. When I married my husband Nick, I graciously shared Monkey with his five year old daughter, who proceeded in secret, to write with an ink pen on his face. Needless to say, I saved Monkey once again and put him up high in my closet. He and his brother live there today, in a secret place behind my sweaters, because - Lord only knows what a teenage stepdaughter could do to them.