

I'M NOT
PERFECT.
I'M A
MOM

Jasmine Han & Shelly Holly

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**To my husband and my
two lovely children.**

— JASMINE

**To the amazing mother who
raised me, the loving husband
who takes care of me
and the dearest son who
keeps me laughing.**

— SHELLY

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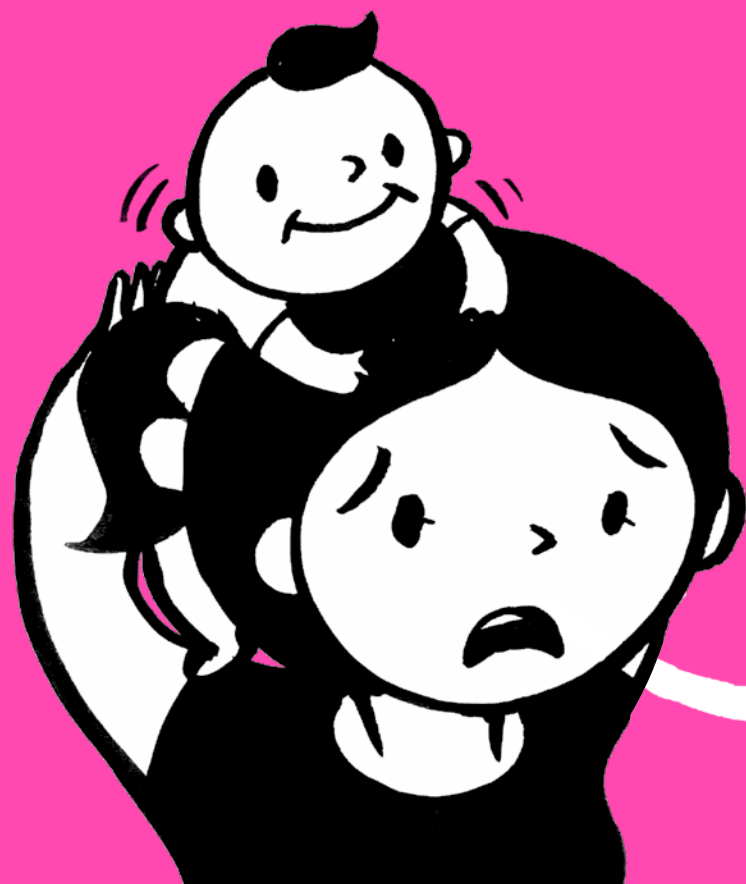
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life as
PARENTS

LIFE AS PARENTS

What do you get when you mix two crazy moms, two semi-clueless husbands and three wacko kiddos? A damn good book full of hilarious stories!

The list of things we would do to avoid a tantrum, get five extra minutes of sleep, ensure that our children who are fussy eaters get some kind of nutrients into their bodies, avoid being late (or at least, not too late), restrain ourselves from punching our husbands in the throat, control our tongues (or not, and instead stir up trouble) when judged by our friends, other moms or even our own mothers, is endless. This book is about some of our crazy experiences.

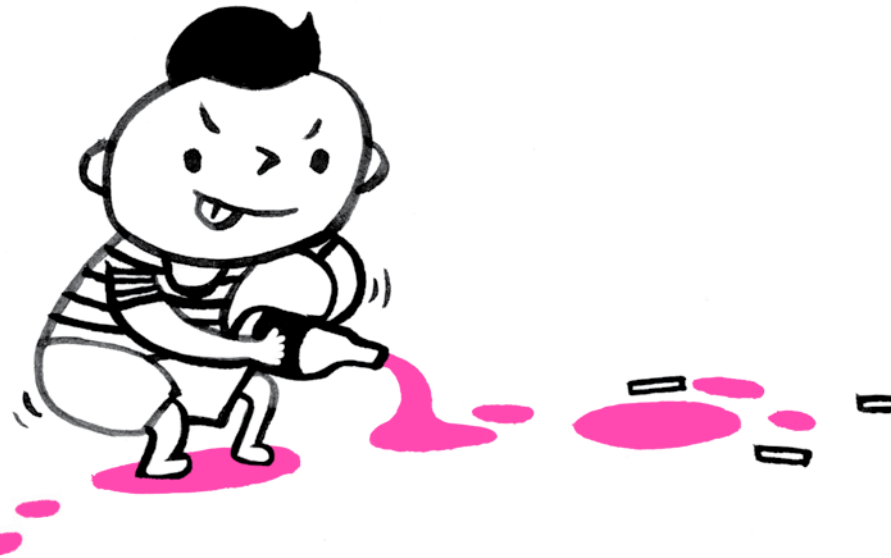
As first-time moms, we have lost count of the number of times that we have emailed, messaged or called friends just to ask, “I just did this—is it normal?” Surprisingly, most of



I'M NOT PERFECT. I'M A MOM.

them have done the same thing or something similar; if not, they at least laugh and say that it is completely understandable.

This book reassures you that we have been there and probably done that, and that we are just as crazy as the next mom! By no means have we done it all—neither of us had difficult pregnancies or even a difficult or special-needs child—but as first-time stay-at-home moms, we do have stories that are funny and sad, and are just that of any crazy and normal parent. Enjoy!



HOW WE MET

It was love at first sight at the poolside. Shelly was taking a walk around her condo and found Jasmine and her kiddo at the pool having a swim lesson. The next thing we knew, we were having lunch together, and talking about delivering babies as well as baby poop.

But it was not until we encountered the “perfectly neurotic mom” (PNM) that we really got to know each other. We went to a playgroup to participate in kiddo fun and Jasmine, the nice woman that she is, asked the PNM and her cute kiddo to join us for lunch. We sat at low-rise tables since the restaurant did not have high chairs. As our two kiddos proceeded to spill water, drop ketchup-covered French fries all over the floor then run around the restaurant, PNM’s poor kiddo was forced to sit down on the bench and listen to white noise from her mom’s iPhone. Yes—white noise in the middle of a chaotic restaurant while the rest of us ate and the other kids played. According to PNM, it supposedly calmed her kiddo down. But no, her

kiddo was bored and pissed, and just wanted to play with the other kids.

Let’s not forget that this PNM also had on full makeup, tight pants, properly set hair, manicured nails and white shirt...in the middle of summer in Singapore (it’s always summer in tropical Singapore), at a kids’ play date.

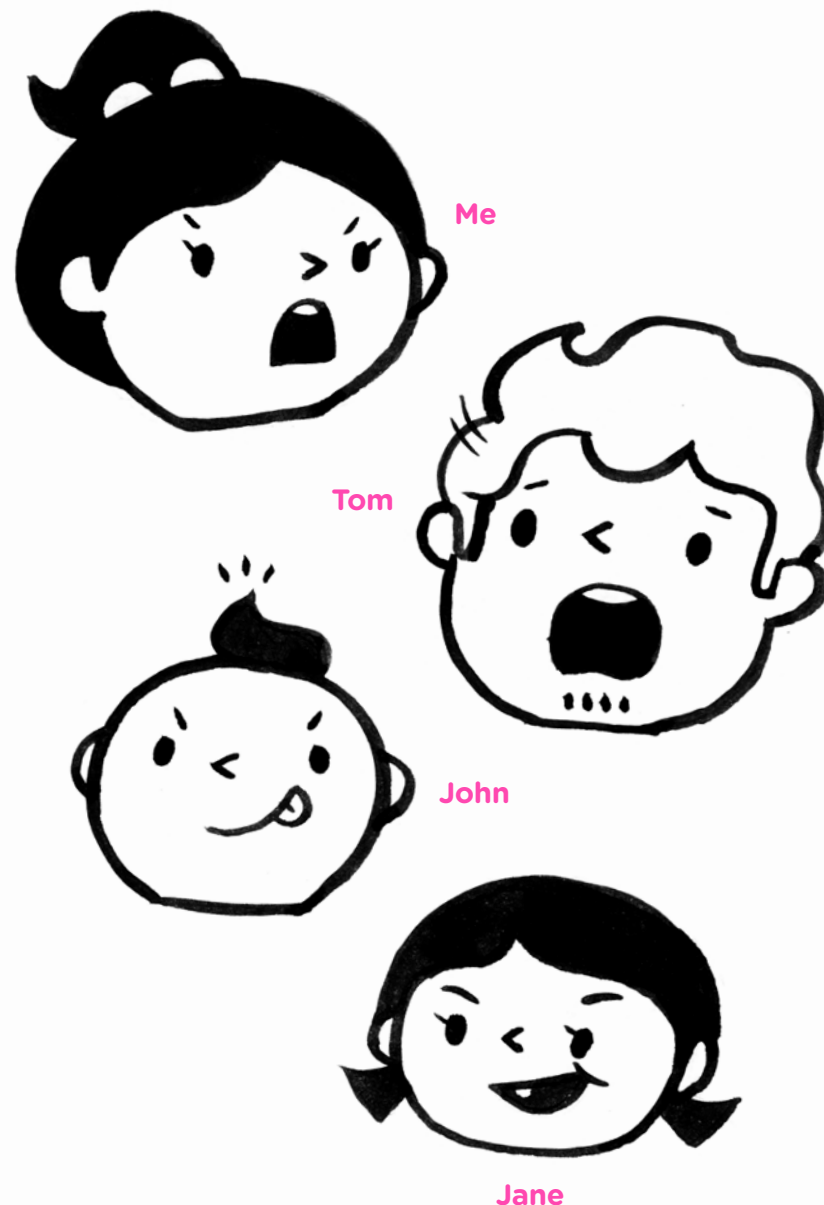
A few days later, when we were chatting, the topic of PNM was brought up. Jasmine put into words what we both thought: “She needs to remove that bamboo stick from up her butt.” Jasmine then let Shelly in on a little secret of hers—many PNMs she meets are not “phone worthy”, meaning that she never actually adds their telephone numbers to her phone. She pretends to type in their numbers, but never has any real intention of calling them. Poor things...they never made it into Jasmine’s Little Black Book of Acceptable Moms.



With such straight up honesty between each other, we ended up becoming great friends. The floodgates opened and we were able to talk to each other about anything. And so the stories began.

As we began to share our parenting stories of our daily lives and the obstacles we faced, we began to notice that we regularly said, “This is funny—it should be in a book!” We finally agreed that we would write that book and share the real stories of our lives as crazy moms with wacko children. Please enjoy, please laugh and most of all, please relate, or it will officially solidify our misgivings that we really are the two craziest moms in existence.

As many of our stories and experiences are similar, we decided to combine them into one book. For the protection of our children and husbands, we have given our family members pseudonyms. The book is written from the perspective of one narrator, a mommy, her husband “Tom” and their two children, “John” and “Jane”. Telling our stories with a collective narrative voice enables the reader to read the book without mixing up two families. All stories are based on actual events that have happened in our roller coaster lives as moms.





and
**SO IT
BEGINS...**

AND SO IT BEGINS...

I woke up at 5am, just before I was to load up the car and make the 12-hour drive to visit my family for the week. There was a chance I was pregnant as I had used an ovulation predictor kit and I knew my seduction that month had been on the right day and time.

I was testing early, but there was a chance that I might be pregnant. I whipped out the fancy digital pregnancy test that had come free with the ovulation predictor kit. I prefer the digital test, since there was no debating a test that clearly said “pregnant” or “not pregnant”, rather than squinting at the teeny weeny faint line while trying to figure out if it was really there. Three minutes later, or more like one minute later, the test clearly announced, “pregnant”. Even though this had been planned and I was already 33 years old, I just about crapped in my pants and my stomach was all knotted with excitement and fear. I had to share the news with my husband, Tom, immediately.

He was sleeping peacefully—duh, it was 5am—but I shook him awake and handed him

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the test. So long as he could read, he could decipher the test as it clearly said “pregnant”.

As I laid the test on his chest—please note that the cap was covering the end I had peed on—I said, “Tom, wake up! Look at this! Read it!”

Picking up the test, he mumbled, “What is this? It is dark in here; I can’t see anything.”

“It is a pregnancy test.”

As he slapped the test off his chest, he said, “Oh my god, you mean you peed on this thing?”

“Tom, I am pregnant!”

But Tom said nothing; he just pulled up the covers and went back to sleep...

It was safe to say that we were both shocked and not sure how to take the news. It took a while for reality to set in and the excitement to build up, then we happily shared the news with our family and friends.

And so the whirlwind of pregnancy and having a child began...with crazy hormones and puking and pooping.



Hormones. They are real and any pregnant mom soon realises that she could, at any moment, at any second, turn into a crazy emotional lady. It was almost as if my body had been temporarily possessed and I had no physical or emotional control over myself. I had tears and laughter, and felt joy and love and fear and hate and everything all at the same time. Yes, it was possible to feel all these emotions at once, and my brain and body went into overdrive resulting in a psycho pregnant woman in tears. My husband just loved the hormones (hint of sarcasm there) and I still cry at every movie and

sweet sentiment as if my hormones had really gone back to my pregnant and pre-kiddo state.



**HORMONES
ARE A
BIATCH!**

During my pregnancy, I was, for a while, worried about my weight, as was my gynaecologist. I had only gained 4.5kg during my second trimester, but she wanted me to only gain between 4.5 and 7kg in total. (For my crazy obese starting weight of about 84kg, it was apparently a terrible sin to gain more than 4.5kg during pregnancy. Whatever.) I finally had a complete breakdown in her clinic one day when the nurses weighed me and I discovered that I had hit the 90kg mark. I freaked out and yelled at my gynae to stop with the weight comments as I was about to lose it—it must have been the hormones. But I won that battle and she stopped commenting on my weight. The final weight gain tally was about 12 to 13.5kg but since I gave birth to an almost-4kg baby, I lost half of it pretty quickly. Screw you, gynae!

Cereal was my favourite food during my pregnancy—I loved my honey bunches of oats cereal with bananas. One day, I was craving Chinese food so the husband and I placed an order for a home delivery. But when the food arrived, I no longer wanted anything to do with

Chinese food. I wanted my coveted bowl of cereal instead, but we were out of milk and out of cereal... This was, of course, my husband's fault. Why? Because of hormones.

I was pissed at him, and rude, so I left the house on my own to go pick up milk and cereal from the nearby supermarket. I arrived home, made a large Tupperware container of cereal, then realised how mean I had been to my husband for no reason. I started to cry...and then laugh...and then cry...and then laugh?!?! I was honestly not sure what had come over me as I was out of control with the stupidity of crying and laughing simultaneously.

I walked into the room where Tom was and while the stupidity was still going on, I attempted to apologise to my husband, "Ha ha ha, I am so sorry... Wah wah wah, I am moody today... Ha ha, wah wah, what is wrong with me?... Ha, wah, ha, wah, is it hormones?... Ha ha wah wah, I am acting stupid, I am crazy... Why can't I control this?"

I lumbered back into the kitchen. When Tom came to check on me and asked if I was okay,

I answered "yes" and took a bite of my cereal... but immediately the tears turned into outright bawling.

My terrified husband asked, "What's wrong?"

I promptly replied, "Annnnnnd noooooow, MY CEREAL IS SOGGY!"

He simply said, "Okay, then," and walked away.



Oh. My. Gosh. The stupidity and random crap that can be caused by pregnancy hormones are insane!

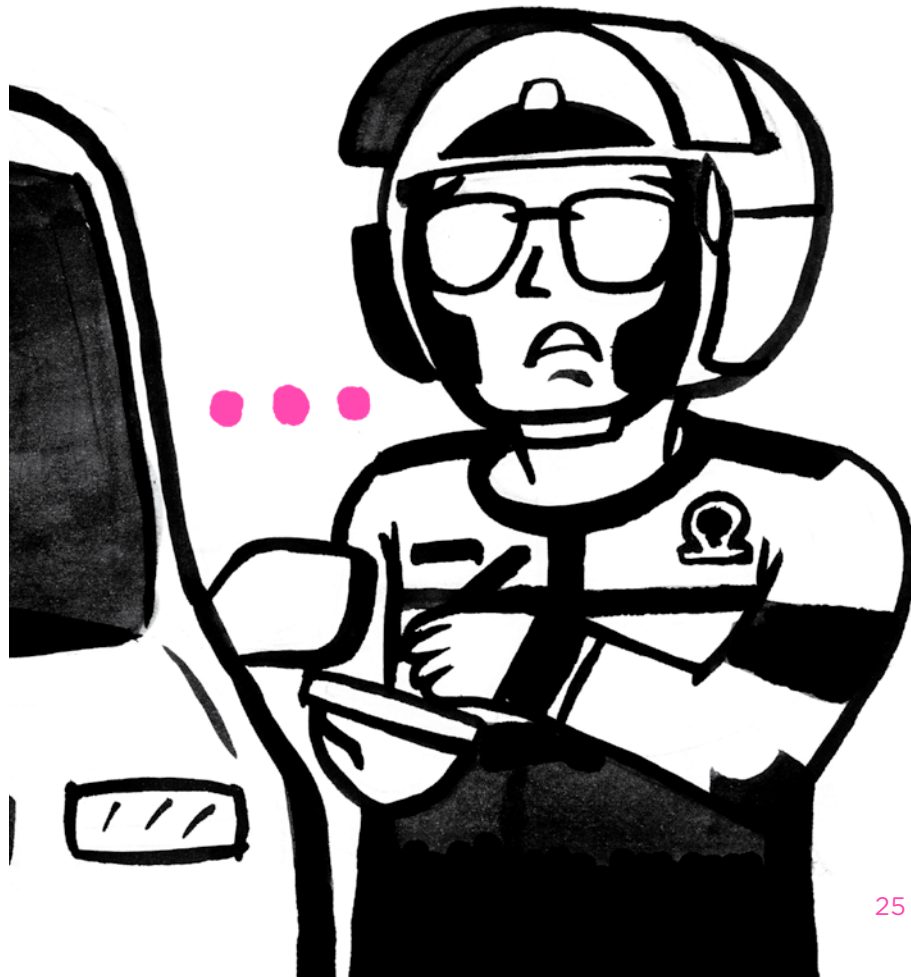
I was sick, sicker than a dog for the first 18 weeks of my pregnancy. I threw up at the drop of a hat—heck, I'd have thrown up in a hat if I had one. I was known as the "pregnant sick girl" at work to those who would see me run by and grab a rubbish bin from a random cubicle just so I could catch the puke before I made it to the bathroom without spewing all over the floor. I would dash out of "important" meetings after turning green and everyone could hear the heaving sounds I made after the meeting room

door had slammed behind me.

I was once talking to my boss at my desk when, in mid-sentence, I looked down and puked right in my rubbish bin, and then I looked up and continued the conversation. I went out for lunch with my co-workers and on the walk back to work, I threw up that lunch on the street corner. Tom took me out to lunch and then to watch some football. I ate a burger with a few fries when all of the sudden...I took off as fast as I could to outside the restaurant, which was closer than the bathroom was, ducked behind a car and tossed my cookies. I must have wasted a tonne of money on food during those 18 weeks—eat and throw up, eat and throw up.

The best was when I got sick in the car. I learnt to carry a disposable cup with me everywhere and it served as my puke chute. I would be driving down the expressway while puking vigorously into a cup, and then the hormones and crying would kick in so that I was driving, puking and crying simultaneously. Mothers are good at multitasking. I have often wondered if this was more dangerous

than drunk driving. If I were pulled over by the traffic police, would he be allowed to ticket me for being a **“puking hormonal crazy pregnant lady”**? I guess the automatic fine for that would be giving birth to and raising a newborn in a few months' time without a manual or proper sleep.



During the eighth month of my second pregnancy, we were on the way to the airport car park after seeing a few friends off when I felt a rumble. The toilet was all the way back at the main airport building and it was too far to walk back there, especially since by then we were close to the car, so I decided to wait till we got home. 30 minutes later, we were safely parked at the car park of our apartment building. I took my two-year-old toddler out of the car seat while Tom fiddled with the car (until now, I haven't figured out why he needs to spend 10 minutes checking the car after we have parked it). During that time, John had fallen asleep in my arms. Oh no, his weight was adding extra pressure to my belly and I was really feeling it.

Five minutes later, I could not wait any longer and told Tom that we were going to head up to our apartment first as I had to use the loo. After I had hit the elevator button, I realised that there was probably going to be a wee accident, but nothing too bad. But the lock refused to budge even after I had, for

the twentieth time, clicked the auto key sensor thingy that consistently drives everyone crazy. After the door had finally unlocked itself, I waddled at breakneck speed into the apartment towards the guest toilet and felt the warmth fill my size 14 high waisted maternity panties—oh crap! (Literally.)

I finally managed to make it to the toilet. There I was, seated on the toilet bowl with John still fast asleep on my lap and poo running all over the rolls of my cellulite enhanced thighs, over the back of my calves, my feet, the crevices of my toes and everywhere. Tom then walked in and asked me why I was sitting in the dark with my undies plastered onto the tiles of the once meticulously clean bathroom floor. I looked up and told him, “I’m doing a number two.”

“Okay,” he said nonchalantly and walked away...of course leaving my sleeping toddler still on my lap.

Maybe sometimes the madness isn't from the hormones.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jasmine Han is a locally bred Singaporean. She went to the US to study and came back with a BSc in Biology. For a while, she ran a pub and competed in the Singapore Body Fitness Competition, a local bodybuilding event.

She met a friend for dinner one evening in January and a lovely man named David was invited along. He added her on Facebook that very night, which was a Sunday; they went on a date the following Tuesday, she stayed at his place that night and hasn't left since. By April she was pregnant and they got married in August that same year. They now have two fabulous children—Sarah, who turned three in January 2015, and Jack, who turned one in September 2014.

Other than being a full-time mom with no helper, Jasmine is also the co-owner of SLAP Dance Studio (www.slap.sg) at Telok Ayer Street, where she is a pole dance and striptease instructor. The studio came about when a friend of hers wanted to lose weight and went to a pole dance class with Jasmine. She fell in love with teaching others how to work the pole, and in addition got hooked onto the art of strip tease and lap dance. To date, the luxuriously spacious studio which is centrally located in the heart of the central business district has 500 students and counting, along with six fabulous instructors.

How **Shelly Holly** would have described herself three years ago, pre-motherhood: crazy; funny; spontaneous; always up for a frosty beverage or happy hour; will meet you anytime, anywhere for any event—the more excitement, the better! Now she sees herself more as a stinky poopy diaper changer and vomit catcher; leftover food from the table, chair, wall and floor scraper; stain remover and laundry washer and folder (but screw ironing, they like wrinkles in their house); tantrum instigator and tolerator; sayer of “no”, “stop”, “enough”, “don't do that”. She goes to bed at 9pm now, or just shortly after she puts her kid to bed, next to her, in what used to be her bed.

She is a USA mutt, married to a German. They were married for eight months when they planned to get pregnant and had their son, Jake (fondly referred to sometimes as “Pig Pen”). She was a full-time career mom with a part-time nanny in the USA and they relocated to Singapore when their son had just turned one year old. She is now a EWSAHMWSACHAC (expat wife stay-at-home mom who sucks at cleaning house and cooking) and she takes care of their son, which she likes to think that she does a pretty decent job of (thank goodness).

Although her life is very different from how it was a year ago, she loves raising her son, to watch him learn new things and take him on many adventures that he would not otherwise be able to enjoy.

Most motherhood books tell you how to be the perfect mom and how to raise the perfect kid. This is not one of those books.

“[An] honest and humorous...memoir of the realisation that being a mom isn't about being perfect, but about being present and real.”

—Jasmine Siang, psychotherapist

I'M NOT PERFECT. I'M A MOM is a collection of light-hearted, true stories about the bizarre experience of pregnancy, attempting to avoid public toddler tantrums, making it through the terrible twos (and ones, threes and fours) and trying not to punch the husband while he is trying to be “helpful”. Jasmine Han & Shelly Holly, both moms with three young kids between them, regale us with their humorous collective experiences about surviving, and not perfecting, motherhood.



Jasmine Han



Shelly Holly

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