

Are you smarter than a 4th grader, trumpet playing, Cinderella's glass slipper, and plarn (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Our older son gets to read a book of his choice for 20 minutes each night. I love that this week that homework assignment turned into reading aloud to his little brother.

In other news, we finally acknowledged that we need to have a computer available to the children to use for their homework assignments. I held out for about as long as I could, but our fourth grader has math assignments almost every night on the computer. Naturally I can't understand the math homework at all. Someone should offer a class for parents called "How to help your 4th grader do math homework."

Of course the parents are all too busy running children to and from their soccer practices to go to class.

~2~

The week we celebrated 13 years of marriage our minivan hit 13,000 miles. Coincidence? I think not.

~3~



Trumpet lessons have started, and we officially have a trumpet player in the house! We also have a younger brother who desperately wants to play the trumpet. Every now and then he gets a turn, even though he's not actually taking lessons yet.

Because we are all excited about the trumpet, we just finished reading aloud one of my favorite books, E.B. White's *The Trumpet of the Swan*. If you haven't read it, skip the next four takes and rush to get your hands on this marvelous book. You will love it. Ko-hoh!

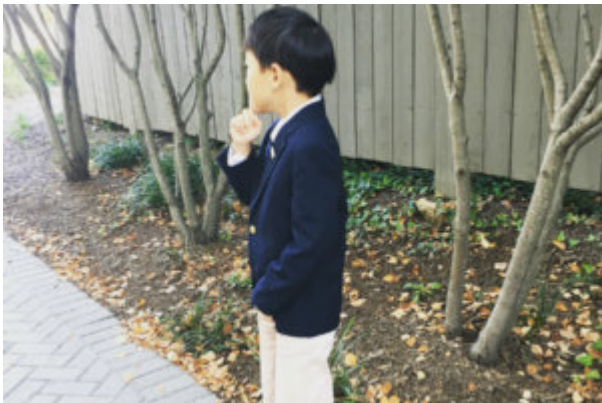
~4~

Our boys' school is an Under Armour school, so they have the opportunity to be chosen to wear free Under Armour shoes and clothes. They were telling me that someone came to school the other day to measure their feet.

"So it's like in Cinderealla," I said. "You just hope your foot is the right size so you'll be picked."

Both boys just stared at me. They had never heard the story of Cinderella. So we stopped everything and I told them the story right then and there.

~5~



When we adopted Daniel and became parents of two boys, we realized the importance of taking time with our sons one-on-one. Even though it has been more than six years now, we try to do special outings with just one parent and one boy. It's wonderful for them, but I actually think it's even more wonderful for the parents.

Last weekend I wanted to go to a work event, and I invited Daniel to join me. He had talked about it all week, and when the evening came, he went to get dressed. He came out all dressed up in a blazer and tie. He was so proud.

We went to the event, and we had such a good time. He was proud to be my date for the evening, eating plates of mini crab cakes and macaroni and cheese, and talking to everyone he met. And we'll pretend he didn't drop and do push-ups when he saw an open space on the floor.

He felt so grown-up, and I was so proud of him.

~6~



The other day at work I was looking for a place to write, so I set up in a chair in a campus lounge. I was doing well blocking out the happy noise around me until a student and professor sat down next to me and started tying strips of plastic grocery bags together.

They were making “plarn” to crochet into mats for people who are homeless. I had heard about this effort before, but I couldn’t help but stop and talk with them about their work. It turns out that it takes quite a while to make enough plarn to crochet the bed roll. You can learn more about Operation Bed Roll [here](#).

~7~

This week I subscribed to receive a daily Shine text each morning. It’s just a little encouragement in the morning—not spiritually based, but somehow a nice injection in the morning.

Hope you have a wonderful weekend! And stop by to find more quick takes on Kelly’s blog, This Ain’t the Lyceum.