

Week in My Life: Thursday

This week I'm trying to blog every day as part of the Week in My Life series.



Because John has offered to take Daniel to school today, I take a leisurely approach to the morning. I don't get up until after 7 a.m., when the boys climb into our bed. Even then I am relaxed, wandering out to the kitchen to pack lunches and make breakfast.

Leo remembers that we have leftover Chinese food, and the only thing that beats chicken noodle soup for breakfast is Chinese take-out. I start microwaving a cube of lo mein, straight out of a take-out container.



Having lo mein for breakfast takes me back to the hotel breakfast buffets in China—when we adopted our sons—where I would fill my plate with noodles and rice and dumplings some mornings and oatmeal and waffles the next. Breakfast was always free, so John and I ate big breakfasts and then not much else the rest of the day. It doesn't work that way here, but breakfast was quite popular today.



I've been enjoying my relaxed morning so much that all of a sudden I realize Leo and I are late. Now I'm rushing and grabbing Leo's Darth Vader backpack and the Lego Chima lunchbox and the bag of cheese sandwiches we are invited to bring every Thursday to donate to a local soup kitchen.

Then we're on our way, and it's only as we're pulling into the drop-off line that I realize, "Hey, there is no line," because it's just our car and we're there with two minutes to spare before school starts.

The teachers in the parking lot recognize me—either as the mother who forgets sandwiches every week or the one who loses the argument with her son every morning about the need to wear a jacket.

"You're usually here so early!" they say. And I explain that I had all this extra time because I didn't need to take my younger son to school, and they nod and agree that nothing makes you late in the morning like extra time.

Today I have won the jacket argument—not because it is freezing, but because Leo's teacher emailed me yesterday that she has talked with him about the need to wear a jacket. So Leo is complaining that he is *so hot*, but I tell him that's OK because it's really cold out here and I love you and have a fun day.

Then he's up the steps, on his way to his classroom, and he waves at me from the top, as I yell, "Don't stop! Go! Go! Go!" though I think as I drive away that maybe "I love you!" would have been a nicer thing to yell.

Then I'm off to work, a wonderful blur of activity and a lunch with colleagues, and then all of a sudden it's the end of the day—or maybe just a bit past—and I'm on my way to pick up the boys.

A grinning Daniel runs to me yelling, "Mommy!" which he thinks is hilarious because he and I both know that's not my name. I'm "Mama." But the other children call their moms "Mommy" so he does, too—but only when others are watching.

Then we head to Leo's school, but because all the other parents have been early today, he is the very last child at after-care. And he's giggling and hiding from me, as he loves to do lately, so that Daniel has to run and find him.

Being the last parent at pick-up makes me feel like Ping, the duck who knows that if you're the last duck who climbs onto the wise-eyed boat, you get smacked across the back. Smacking might be preferable to hearing "Mama, why were you so late today?" over and over again on the way home.



But I'm happy to have both our boys in the car—well, until we're stopped at a light and Leo says, "Mama, can you take this?" and I instinctively reach back toward his seat and something sticky and slimy drops into my palm.



Apparently my older son only likes part of the candy corn.

"Where did this come from?" I ask, and I learn that the candy was part of a math lesson today.

Then we're home and Leo is doing his "C" and other homework with his Baba.



It's only then that I notice that Daniel is listless. He's lying on the floor, and then he's lying on the couch.



He doesn't really want to eat dinner. Since I have been waiting all week for his cold to become something worse, I can't really say I'm surprised.

We have the rest of our Chinese leftovers for dinner and I boil some frozen dumplings to stretch what's left into a meal.



The conversation—again tonight—is led by Leo and it's all about Leo's birthday, which is just a few weeks away. The Darth Vader-shaped brownie may be morphing into a cake of outer space featuring X-wing fighters.

"Maybe we should surprise you," I say. He's considering that option.

Then we put on a movie and I hold Daniel for a while and try to figure out what might be going on with my son who seems to be ill, but who ran into my arms at preschool just an hour or so earlier. And Leo tells me he feels jealous that Daniel is

getting all the attention, and for a moment I'm a little annoyed until I realize how grateful I should be that he can articulate that rather than acting out.

Leo isn't jealous for long, though, because soon enough they're both in bed and fast asleep. And we made it through Thursday, which means we just may make it through Friday—though I'm fairly sure two of us will be at the pediatrician's office in the morning.

What are the chances Daniel just ate too much candy corn on the way home?

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