



## **Knight In Shining Underwear, A Salute to Loving Fathers**

**By Judy Story**

It's about an hour before midnight and our 3 year old is loudly crying, "My Tummy HUUUurts!" The cry is unmistakably panicked and urgent--we both leap out of bed. My husband gets to her first, scoops her up and runs straight to the bathroom. We've heard this cry once before, so we know what's coming.

While the vomiting racks her little body, her daddy is offering soothing words and warm hands to hold her steady. I am getting a glass of water, a warm wash cloth, Rescue Remedy for calming, and a clean pajama shirt.

After we settle down, I plod back to bed with my daughter. She falls back asleep easily, nestled in my arm. I watch in the dim light as my husband lays down a trail of thick towels from bedroom to bathroom. We've learned the hard way that it's much easier to clean the towels than it is to clean the carpet. Next he brings the plastic trash bucket and sets it by the bed-in case we don't make it to the bathroom for the next episode.

It comes an hour later and we do a repeat of the last scene, only this time we're noticeably more groggy and it's a good thing for the bucket. As I am washing out the bucket, I am feeling thankful that there are two of us here caring for this little one. One to mop up the mess, one to hold and comfort her. We all snuggle into bed again, me holding my daughter, my husband holding me. Despite the lingering edge of worry (is she going to be okay?), it feels safe and warm with his body breathing next to mine.

And so the night goes on, with a new episode about every hour and a half, until the last one ends just before 5 am. Again my daughter is nestled in my arms, exhausted. But she's breathing easier now, and has more color in her face. Somehow I am certain we've weathered the storm and the worst is over.

Through half-closed, bleary eyes I watch my husband doing the final clean up. Since I am lying down, I can only see a portion of his legs and underwear. I smile thinking: Here is My Knight in Shining Underwear. I almost laugh at my own joke, but I am too tired. As he crawls into bed next to me a feeling of great love and happiness swells in my heart. We've worked as a team all night long, speaking very little, but knowing instinctively how to support one another and our child. While it was hardly a romantic evening together, I feel utterly blessed to be with this man who cares so deeply for our children-a true knight, even with his balding hair and wash worn underwear.

I am almost asleep, yet still basking in the love that we share. I am thinking there is nothing more wonderful to a woman than a man who is great with the kids. And I silently bless all the tender loving fathers, who are tired, yet still play with their kids; who are busy, but still find the time to listen; who may be stressed or distracted, yet still manage to pause long enough to recognize and participate in the sacred blossoming of their children. The effect of a father's love on a child is everlasting. Heartfelt thanks to all the fathers out there, caring for their children.

*Judy Story is a homeschooling mother and a freelance writer enjoying family life and the rich spiritual training it provides. She lives in Hawaii with her husband Rob, and their two daughters Lili (11) and Rio (4).*