

Excerpt from

The Pain Chronicles

by

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Farrar, Strous, Giroux, p263-4, 2010.

The author (age mid-40s at the time of writing) is a contributing writer for the NY Times Magazine and this is her third book. She received a 6-figure advance for her first book, written initially as her honors thesis at Harvard. Her father is a distinguished professor of history at Harvard and her mother is a prominent political scientist. The author suffers from several years of pain in her neck and one arm, which this book describes in detail along with much about the history and science of chronic pain. In the following section she writes about possible links between some of her encounters with men and her symptoms (*italics in the text below are the author's*):

When I was single, I'd often schedule physical therapy appointments at the end of the day and arrange to meet a date for a drink afterward, just as the pain was setting in from the exercise. Dating and physical therapy struck me as bleakly parallel: small futile-feeling gestures that require faith to believe they will eventually lead you somewhere. The feeling of pain would set in at just about the same time as the feeling of disappointment in the date: the person across the table would come into focus, and I would see that despite the initial intrigue, he was not my type after all – not at all, again and again. And the rare occasions I imagined otherwise, the relationships turned out badly – physically as well as spiritually.

At times I had the illusion that there was a conspiracy of men to thwart my attempts to get better. I got into a silly teenage-type spat with my large, ursine father involving a car, and in trying to wrest the car keys from my hand, he accidentally twisted my bad arm, and the bruises lasted all summer, and I was too embarrassed to go to physical therapy. [Clarke Note - this encounter was recent, perhaps a year before, and her arm was already in pain at the time.] And when I recovered from that, my relationship with the man I was dating then kept setting me back.

I had dated many men whose problems as a partner I had concluded stemmed from a lack of sufficient maternal love – a lack for which the women in their lives were doomed to try to compensate, *forever*. Zach, however, had a lovely doting Jewish mother who treated him like a prince; I fell in love with him when I met his mother. Unfortunately, I discovered, his conviction of his princeliness seemed to free him from the burden of *behaving* like a prince.

My book bag, gym bag, and duffel bag at that time were a set made of a flowered Laura Ashley print. "*Laura Ashley?*" he'd say when I couldn't bear the weight and would try to hand any of

them to him. I bought a bunch of black bags and suitcases. Carrying those would make him look like a refugee or a homeless man, he grumbled. "I'm not a *camel*." My therapist advised that I try acknowledging his feelings. "I don't want you to feel like a beast of burden," I would begin, "but..."

Question: Using clues in the paragraphs above, provide insight into the writer's past experience and current personality that may be playing a role in creation of stress-related pain and post on the Discussion Board.