

the crying game

**'Keep a
diary for a
year and
write about
how having
a baby has
changed
your life,'
they told me.
What Life?**

Six weeks after my daughter, Janine, was born, I left home without her for the first time. Before dashing out the door, I had spent just 10 minutes on a Cinderella-like transformation: plastering makeup on ghostly circles under my eyes, pulling a sweater over my still-too-big belly, exchanging housecoat and slippers for a skirt and pumps.

Technically, I was joining the magazine staff for dinner at a Morningside restaurant. Actually, I was merely pretending for a few hours to be something other than an insecure new mom who was almost as umbilically attached to her daughter as she had been before birth.

I sipped a glass of wine and gravitated toward the co-workers who had children. With a little buzz from the alcohol and the glow of a schoolgirl out on her first unchaperoned date, I talked incessantly.

I tried to be discreet each time I slipped away to call home and check on the baby. I was fooling no one, especially not my editor.

"Motherhood becomes you," he said.

"It's wonderful," I blurted out. "It's different than I ever could have imagined." I blushed suddenly as I thought, He doesn't want a monologue on the joys and tri-

By Michele Cohen Marill
Illustrations by Roxanna Baer

