

AGAINST CHILDREN

DARBY ANDERSON

IT'S NOT THAT I *ABSOLUTELY LOATHE* THE LITTLE creatures, not all of them. There are a few I do not shy from.

I can only readily name one that I will hold, gladly, though she's getting too big for it now a days, growing on *three years old* (and I cannot remember when she was born, it wasn't that long ago?!). Lilly Clementine Haff. My sister's daughter. My sister took both names I was going to use for a girl if I were to have one, so I suppose I'll settle with the better plan of being a D.I.N.K. (Dual Income, No Kids).

I figure I'm the same as my mother in the fact that she didn't want kids, either, and as the story goes, "until I saw you," and all that. But why fall for the trap if you know it's already laying there? Walk around. Skip ahead to the next chapter! Actually, tear the pages and use them as confetti while you dance with your partner and your money, in your lavish wherever, with no worry of waking up some spawn of the pair of you.

Can you imagine something even 50% like me running around? I've heard on two accounts— both by biology teachers— that if humans were to asexually reproduce, they'd be worried about more of me running around.

"How could the world handle two Darby's?" Mrs. Gorilla (I can't remember her real name, but she told us not to call her Mrs. Gorilla because it rhymes with her real surname, so we'll settle with it) says with a laugh and a shake of her head, pregnant belly engorged for the third school year in a row, turgid beneath a flimsy top. I figure I'm not too awful, but if I had multiples? Yeah, yikes.

And what is a kid if not a miniature of one parent? Yes, there's a mingling of both sometimes. Maybe not in all cases. Sometimes that's for the better, but not all parents are horrid. My mother is quite alright, and she tells everybody that I'm her "Mini Me". How sweet, right? But I feel as if I didn't only inherit her good qualities in small doses, but also the ones that make her human, make her and I faulty. Perhaps that's why we fit along so well; we can commiserate. That also means I have my own faults to pass on to someone. Horrid thought.

And what if my kid is a shit-hole? Sorry to say, but not every kid is as fantastic as I am. I don't need to list the great many things that "delinquent children" do nowadays, (okay, boomer speaking), but goodnight Irene. What am I supposed to do when my kid isn't my kid anymore, they're an adult doing their own things, figuring out life with me on a walkie-talkie (turned off half the time) in the bottom of their book bag? Maybe I get lucky and they carry my wisdom in their back pocket, maybe they call me when shit gets bad and they need a ride home because they trust me to save them and aren't afraid of me. Maybe they don't and OD one day because they wanted to try something at a party instead of at home first and— and then what do I do? What do I do when the thing most precious to me in the entire universe is gone? What if my child dies. No parent wants to think of it, no parent ever can prepare to plan for such an event, but I'm a horrid worrier. What if my child dies and I could have, in some way, prevented it? I don't know, folks. I think I'd check out and join them.

That's another thing; what if my kid doesn't trust me? What if I'm not family to them? I'm something to fear and avoid. That's awful, right? Why run the risk of disappointing something you're meant to be the hero to? And is there any righting of a wrong such as the mistrust of a child after the paper has been crumpled and warped and stained after so many years of abuse? How do you even go about fixing the swath of pain if you fuck up your first go-round with parenting?

Hopefully, if you realize the first was a mistake, you don't try again, but the majority of the population breeds with as much freedom as Catholic rabbits, so I know I'm probably the only one giving this much of a shit about the future.

Sure, this could all be irrational. Five years could go by and I could realize, "You're a moron, nineteen year old Darby. Kids are great with this person in mind, blah blah, all these rationalities." Everybody scoffs when I figure I don't want children— a woman with ample eggs and no halting defects not having a child? What a terror for people to behold in this twisted day and age! "Oh, dear. Just give it some time and you'll want them," "You don't know what you want, you're too young" (not entirely false), and the always asked "Why not?" with that silly scoff and roll-eyed look. See above some reasons as to "why not."

Perhaps this is more telling of my fear of failure and the inability of making everybody happy than children at large... but small children currently at large are awful and only getting worse (with poor parenting, of course, it's the same as training a dog, which is another topic; when does the kid no longer become second-tier family member to parent, to teacher?). Some of them... ughf, folks. I cannot describe to you the amount of bullshit children cause and get away with because "they're only kids!"

And for some reason it's a sin if I tell my child "No" anymore, or employ any sort of discipline to a creature that needs the proper sanctions provided by the social family

circle to *survive*, *thrive*, and *develop* in the “real” world. Socialization, people. It has to happen in the major spheres of life, and for childhood development it is most crucial that they learn the “ways of the social world” via their parents. What if their parents suck and never teach them properly, perhaps because they don’t know “proper” as it was never taught to them, either? That’s not their fault? That’s true, it isn’t the kid’s fault, and I hope they get attuned to the social continuums of the world before the world sends the kid’s head to the pavement, watches it bounce with a hearty, happy “thunk!”, and laughs about it.

I don’t know what happens to those kids, besides their parents keep them afloat for a while, and that’s all I’ve heard. I don’t socialize with those children, because they grow up to be assholes. Sometimes functioning, but other times raw and festering.

On the flip side: what if I adore my kid so much? Too much?! I force him to sign up for a sport he obviously doesn’t enjoy so I can live out some sick vicarious fantasy through his success— in the process crushing his self esteem and creating a self-imploding timebomb; I feverishly hound on all studies so the failures of my past can be masked by her triumph— because what are kids but a second try for a selfish parent, right? They can’t be their own being, developing too far from you, because that means... something bad, right? Or isn’t it good that you nourish a new human up to be something all on it’s own? I’d like to think I’d nourish something, someone, into something they could be proud of. ✱