

Child Is Borne
By Richard Tornello © 2008

INTRODUCTION

We are like many couples in our little town. We went to college, found decent jobs, purchased a comfortable house, enjoyed a few years as the two of us and planned for our child. Due to the resource and population pressures upon our society, we like everyone else, went for genetic testing. We had to make sure and get approval for this important event. As we discovered our combined genetic make up had the potential for marginal success as defined by The New State Child Welfare Administration. We were refused the permit. We told no one.

“She’s beautiful, how old is she? What’s her name?” asked an older woman. Without waiting for our reply, and to our mental discomfort, she continues, “I was not allowed to have any of my own, bad genes you know. So to compensate, I ran a foster care operation. The New State Administration eventually took that away too. All the child rules and regulations, they are even more stringent then when I was young. We didn’t have genetic prescreens. Today, oh my, look at her, you are so lucky.”

“Yes we are. Her name is Kathy.” We both agree in unison, not wishing to continue this any longer than polite coincidental meetings require. “We really must be going it is time for dinner. Please excuse us, and thank you for your complements.”

The old woman’s admission that she was rejected for children’s care for a number of legal reasons puts us on guard. I state more emphatically, “We have to get home for dinner. It was nice meeting you. Perhaps well meet again. Maybe we’ll have more time to chat.” My wife was concerned and interrupts, “Dear, we must be going. We have her schedule to keep.” This is the type of person we did not want to be seen having any association. Any connection with those who have been disqualified can be a reason for Child Family Observation. That would be dangerous.

We want to teach Kathy the proper methods of behavior even in a “bad situation” through our own behavior. We walk her every day in the early evenings when one of us returns from work. This lessens the chance of inopportune contacts and as we realized, even The New State “watchers” have to go home to eat. We stroll during the evening cusp, the twilight zone for shift changes.

She is wonderful, she is so alive.

Bringing a child up to fit in to today’s society is not a simple task. Our task is even more difficult given the structure of our situation. Child rearing never has been easy any time in history. As we all are aware, the restrictions imposed by The New State make it even tougher. We had to mortgage our lives. We wanted a child no matter what the cost. Our family asked no questions when they gave us the loans that we told them we desperately required. They knew it was unwise to Know too much. Plausible deniability was learned from the great artists themselves, those in political power. It trickled down.

Soon we will need to get her the normal checked ups. The official birth and medical records have to be filed with The New State. We purchased all the necessary forms. We have the sympathy of the older administrators who remember easier times before The New State came into being. The technicians at the office doing the tests will have all the correct data. They too are on our side. There are a number of us. We don't know them and they don't know us. We go by numbers. That assures our anonymity. Our little girl, Kathy, is just a production number, bless the wonders of science. Everything is taken care of. We can relax for a while.

As she grows, we noticed new speech patterns. She is becoming more mobile. She has all normal attributes of a healthy child. We breathed a sigh of relief. The doctors and technicians said, "Complications do sometimes occur with these children, and once discovered they are terminated."

We also have to watch what we say. She, like most children, is a parrot and a parrot with exceptional hearing as we discovered one evening.

"What do you mean I could be hurt? By whom? Why would any one want to hurt me?"

"She heard us from her room?" Her dad whispers to her mom.

"You heard us?" Mom asked surprised and aware she must have heard other things too.

"I can hear you now! What are you two talking about? Why are you surprised?"

Dad, "Honey you are different in very special ways. It's important not to let others notice the differences, your gifts."

We did our best to explain, up to a point.

Her mom was better at this type of explanation than I was.

"Kathy honey," she would tell her, "you can't always let people know you hear them speaking. It's, well, it's not polite. Keep it to yourself. You can tell us anything when we are home. Just keep it private for the home."

Anything else would be too much data for such a young growing mind. Or so we thought.

She runs and she plays with the others. She appears a bit stronger and mentally quicker. We have to warn her again and again.

Mom, "Please be careful. Don't play too roughly. It's not nice."

"What am I supposed to do, just sit here?"

We look at each other. That came from a child? As most children she wants more! It's difficult to keep her in check. We decided on a solution.

Mom, "Let's let her play with older children to see if we can match her capability without causing undue notice."

Dad, "That's a great idea. So, as she matures and upgrades her mental and motor skills it will be thought to be due to the influence of the older children."

Mom, "Yes but let's not use those technical terms, please. It worries me that any suggestion that points to a difference, could lead to questions."

Dad, "You worry too much! I do suppose you have a point. I will err on the side of caution."

Mom, "We are so attached to her. It's as if we can never cut the cord that we know some day we must do."

As time progresses, it becomes more difficult to get the forms we need. The older more sympathetic officials and doctors have retired or have been "retired" as they are discovered. One day we will have to tell her the whole story, especially when she has to undergo the screening for her genetic coding for college admissions. In the mean time we still have a few places we can go for her annual check ups and get the medical papers signed. It all costs money, lots of money.

The New State has become more intolerant of anything not considered "normal and approved." They have been cracking down on those who choose our family style. I pity those who just began the process of acquiring surrogate children. Surrogates now have been outlawed. The new extreme rightist government declared actions like ours, immoral. This declaration gives them the appearance of the legal and moral high ground. They can act as they see fit, bypassing the normal checks and balances put in place a long time ago.

The New State Law declared: Henceforth Children should be born of the approved parents only. The New State went on to propagate the law in a severe and quick manner. Those children, not of proper controlled lineage, would be withdrawn from their families and when located, the "parents", their accomplices and families eliminated in order to maintain the proper equilibrium as well as destroy those with the type of faulty genetic makeup as proscribed by New State Law.

We were lucky when we moved to a new town for our jobs. Timing is everything. By coincidence, or the displaced gods, hiding but never eliminated, smiled upon us. The old hall of records was destroyed in a fire. They had never gotten to our little town for records upgrades. The backups were never transported off site. Thank the gods for bureaucratic incompetence.

The gods give and take away, as they will.

Our potential problems grew anew. What to do with a teenager?

She excelled in school academically and socially, but Kathy was never a stand out. She was a good child. She hardly gave us any of the troubles that many parents mentioned at the PTA meetings. We nodded, as if agreement, when they mentioned their problems. Some would even say, "I wish our son/daughter was as academically interested as Kathy. And, she is so polite. You've done a great job bringing her up." We were proud and overjoyed. Kathy fit in just perfectly. Our hair turned grayer slower than her peer's parents.

Our forged papers worked. As far as anyone was concerned, Kathy was always our child. She was growing. Everything was working and evolving as it should. Yet we knew what the terms of endearment meant; all so what the terms of the end meant. We told her the whole situation before she left for college. We were shocked. She knew! We should have guessed the reality could not be hidden.

“What with all the data around, your hushed talk at night, and my own studies, you thought I wouldn’t figure this out? Please Mom and Dad, I love you both as if I was actually yours. But really, give me more credit, brain wise. How do you think I got through the tests? I am, as is our type in general, smarter than any of those in charge. Why do you think they fear us here? We could just be the future.”

Kathy went on with more explanations that were to say the least, eye opening. “Dad, when I was in high school, why do you think I took that part-time job at The New State Administration? I was in the lions’ den, the one place no one would look. I am young and cute, and smart. I was no threat. I didn’t bring attention to myself and I jacked into the system. I’m safe. There are no tracks. I made sure. I will be Okay”

“There are only a few of us left anyway. Mom, that’s one important reason the authorities are not as worried about our type as they were when I was borne. As I understand, the New State Administration feels they will catch us all, figuring and hoping we will slip up eventually. Please don’t worry about me.”

She’s now on her own. She has learned well. As for self upgrades, she uses business and holiday trips as a cover. Kathy flies out of The New State to Vancouver, BC or the newly independent Nation of Puerto Rico, where her type is just one of many. She picks and chooses her designer genes as she desires. No one here will ever suspect as long as they never get too close. And, as long as she can maintain her secret.

I met Kathy a few years back at a business forum in Vancouver BC. I was captivated by her beauty and brains. She was a bit standoffish. I thought she was a snob what with the better, smaller schools, the looks, and her smarts. As a whole package I was smitten. As a woman, she was my ideal.

In one of our first meetings, when I mentioned family she skirted around the issue.

“Tell me about your mom, your dad. What do they do for a living?”

“I really don’t talk about my family. Family is a very private affair in my world. If you don’t mind, please change the subject.” She had a cold detached machine like quality when she said that, and I interpreted that as she meant what she said.

I responded quickly, “Kath, I don’t care about your history, or your family. I was just curious, making conversation but not probing. I’m sorry that didn’t come out right. I hope you know what I mean.” I couldn’t believe I was apologizing. I would have normally just walked away from that type of encounter. I didn’t.

She came back just as quickly, “Maybe I do. But your questions are off-putting, to me.” Then she said in a milder tone, “My private and personal life stories are things we don’t give out where I come from.”

That was the reason I didn’t just brush the push-away off. The tone in which she explained was one hundred and eighty degrees the opposite of her command not to probe.

Never one to miss an opportunity, I came back with, “Okay, how about dinner and a show?”

“Not yet, maybe some other time, but thank you.” She said. And then she smiled.

That was a smile that will live with me forever. I was toast. I was glad I didn’t bag the whole thing early on.

Even though I considered it a strike out, I knew would get up to bat again.

In reality and hindsight, those aspects of ones life, the genetic requirements for children, which, at this time in my career, I had no care for, were really non-issues. Anyway, her family was of no interest to me, especially at this point in our friendship. Later, maybe, that would be an important issue, as it is for most couples living in The New State.

I finally got to get her to go out with me. That was a long drawn out process. First we met for lunches here and there. We both paid our share. Eventually she accepted a few dinner invitations. She ate like the proverbial bird even though birds have to eat their body weight how many times over each day, I don’t remember. This went on for a goodly amount of time. And unlike me as it is to stick around if the prospects were not quickly forthcoming, I did.

We eventually started what I would barely classify as dating. She was strange in her protection of her relationship histories. I found it odd to say the least. I said to her a number of times, “No one cares about past relationships anymore. People just like to know a little bit about their partners.”

No answer. And then she would change the subject. Once she just left the table and took a taxi home.

Why I stuck around I couldn’t quite figure out. I assumed, maybe she was just a prude? There was a quality about her, a very different something. I had never ever put up with a lack of physical intimacy for this length of time, with anyone, for any reason. I was attracted to her and I just couldn’t let go.

I let her know that too.

It was over a year before we made love. Talk about prude. Up until then I wondered if maybe something occurred in her past that kept her from having sex. When ever I inquired about that issue she simply said “No, and don’t ask,” and left it at that. That line of questioning usually ended any conversation or anything else for that matter.

Eventually, things became normal, in most respects. Or, I got used to her idiosyncrasies.

I seem to recall that I may have run into someone of similar character once when I was young. He disappeared along with his family. I remember that when I asked, no one in town would talk about it.

One day while we're walking in a park, out of nowhere she says, "I trust you."

"Yeah, what does that mean? You trust me. Why wouldn't you? Can't you see I'm crazy about you?"

"Yes BUT..."

"Yes But what?"

"A secret."

"Who doesn't have them? I have my own too that may be ..." and I let it drop.

She puts her fingers to my lips. They are cool and well formed. Beautiful. I just want to suck on the tips and work from there. I keep my head. She is serious. She pushes me away.

"A SECRET," in hushed emphatic tones. "It will cost me everything; even you, if it ever gets out."

"Oh please, it's so different today. Where were you born, on another planet? You are so in the past."

"Hush!" is all she says with a look.

I glance around. There is no notice from the people passing us. I guess we appear like two normal people, who are simply having an animated, and seemingly, friendly discussion.

"Okay, Kath, no one is close. What's the big deal?"

She whispers to me, "humanoid." Her lips brushing my ear, with a slight kiss.

I stand back. I never, ever in my wildest dreams, or nightmares... expected this!
"Why me? You just put me in a difficult position." "Why me?"

"Why YOU?" she looks me square in the face.

"I had no idea given as intimate as we have been." I'm almost speechless.

A smile breaks her lips and she says softly, "MY experiment," smiling coyly.

That smile. Toast!

I gather my thoughts as quickly as possible. “As a matter of fact, a very dangerous experiment,” I state. “You, you feel like anyone else that’s... you’re so real...and”

“Hush.” A smile, her smile. “Yes-I-Am.” She says in a low sing-song fashion.

I smile, “Yes you are.” I shake my head in wonder.

I think ... I feel, I want. I curse my creator under my breath.

She’s smart, cool, calm and collected. She IS Pygmalion’s dream comes true.

“My experiment,” she continues, laughing and singing to an ancient tune I always hear her humming, “Hey, hey, you’re a monkey, and I just wanted to see.”

I look in her eyes, “I love you Kath.”

Her warm tender lips, inches from mine, whispers, “And I love you too... monkey girl.”

EPILOGUE

We are like most couples in this place. We went to college, found decent jobs, purchased a comfortable house, enjoyed a few years as the two of us, and planned.

We moved outside the confines of The New State. We told no one.

The End

This is a work of fiction. All characters and events portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely coincidental.