

## **Does Your Mother Know?**

December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

I've always known that I wanted kids someday, but what I didn't know is how scared I'd be to have one. Not because of pregnancy or childbirth, but for a completely different reason. I'm scared to have a daughter because I worry of how men will treat her. What if they treat her the same way that they treated me? But I'm also scared to have a son, because what if he turns out like the men I know?

I've seen the way that men act towards women, they act with violence and hate. I've seen the way my father talks to my mother. I've seen the way my pervious boyfriends have talked to me and treated me. Being yelled at, screamed at, and constantly being put down. I see it every day. I see how men treat women, and I worry that my daughter will grow up and have men treat her the same way. And I'm scared that my son will grow up and mistreat someone else's daughter.

*-I fear a son and worry for a daughter*

When I was dating, I always wondered what their mothers would think of them if they knew how they treated women. Because I dated these men for a while, I got to know their families pretty well, but mainly their mothers. Would they have behaved that way if their mothers knew how they acted? Would they speak to their mothers the same way they spoke to me? But their mothers were always so sweet, and I always thought how their sons could treat me in such a way. I know it's not her fault, but does she know?

*Does your mother know the things you said to me? Does your mother know about the lies you told? Does your mother know that you used me for sex? Does your mother know that you ignored me when I said no? Does your mother know that you that you held me down and told me not to make any noise? Does your mother know that I tried killed myself over what you did to me? Does she know?*

*-Would you feel remorse if your mother knew?*

## Stuffed Animals

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

When I was little, I thought my stuffed animals had feelings. And I still think that my stuffed animals have feelings. I still have almost all of my childhood stuffed animals, and I have no intentions of ever getting rid of them.

When I was around nine years old, my dad told me that I had too many stuffed animals. He told me that I had to get rid of half of them. He got trash bags out and started putting them in. I screamed and cried as he took them away. I still think about the ones that he got rid of even to this day.

I was always told that having stuffed animals was a bad thing, that having an emotional attachment to something like a stuffed animal was childish. That I should get rid of them and grow up. But I don't want to get rid of them. And maybe I'm not ready to grow up just yet. *Tell me, is being childish bad?*

All I want is to lay awake in bed and feel the familiar sensation of my teddy bear's soft matted fur against my skin.

*-To be worn, is to be loved*

I want something to hold, and *something to hold me*. I want to smell them and be brought back to when life was so much simpler. (I never liked to wash my stuffed animals for that reason.) To be brought back to my childhood room, with all my stuffed animals, my colorful bed, my dollhouse, *the laughter*. I want to be that little girl again. The one who held her stuffed animals and took them everywhere she would go. Maybe the child in me will never grow up. And maybe I don't want her to.

*-I may be a woman now, but a girl still lives inside me*

## Dad

October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

When I was little my dad would always work late. When he would come home there would be panic, like a siren was going off. Quickly putting away all the toys, cleaning all the clutter, *all the fun*. So that when he walked through the door, there would be no stress, nothing to set him off. We were always walking on eggshells around him; like I could hear the sound of crunching under my feet.

I would still try to be around him as much as I could, even with how unpredictable he was. He wasn't around all that often when I was little, so the time that I spent with him had to be memorable. I would work outside on his projects with him, play music with him, and watch tv shows with him. Sometimes he would enjoy my company, but other times I would just annoy him. Even so, I was glued to him like a magnet. *His hobbies became mine*. I wanted him to like me; so, I wanted to be like him. I craved his attention; so, whenever I had a chance to spend time with him, I took it. Even if it didn't end well.

I am still very grateful for all my dad has done for me. Do I wish sometimes that things were different? Of course. *Do you wish things were different too? I hope you do*. Sometimes, I think he wishes that he never got married, that he never had kids, that he didn't have a family. But, despite that I still have good memories with him, my favorite being when he would scratch my head:

When I was little, sometimes at night - if I couldn't fall asleep - I would go into my parents room while they were still watching tv. I'd lay down next to my dad and he'd put his palms on my head. He'd comb through my hair and massage my scalp. His hands were big, so my whole head could almost fit in his entire palm. I'd watch him lay there, as his chest would rise and fall with his gentle breath. By the cradle of his warm palms, the muffled sound of the tv, and the sensation of his fingernails against my scalp; I'd fall asleep right there next to him. (Sometimes I'd pretend to fall asleep if I couldn't, just so he'd carry me back to bed.) If only he still did this.

*-Hold me in your arms, like I am a child once again*

