

Only By Genetics

6/17/22

To You:

How many tears have I wasted on you? How often have I come home and cried to Mom that spending time with you hadn't gone as perfectly as I had hoped? I swear, for all of my childhood you've been my Disneyland: a rare, magical treat that I always looked forward to, and yet never turned out to be as great as I expected. You only visit when you feel like it. What kind of father is that? No one else I know has a conditional father, a father who only has to be a father on days he wants to be. No, my friends have fathers who pick them up after school, hold their hands when they got shots, are present for every school performance, and tell them how much they love them every night before bed. When have you ever told me you loved me and meant it? I used to fall for it as a kid, but Mom's taught me better. She's helped me see how foolish I was, always smiling at the bribes of love you bought me and blaming her for not getting to see you every day. She would tell me you were busy, that you traveled a lot; yet, whenever I saw you, you never had pictures of these trips or any real excuse for where you were. You gave the same speech about how much you missed me and how hard it was for you to be away from me. Why lie? Why play the victim rather than admit to being the villain?

The point of my letter is to tell you that I no longer require your services. I no longer care for the spontaneous phone calls telling me that you are available to hang out. How's this for a change, I'll call you when **I'm** free. I'll call you when I get bored and have no one else to spend time with. I'll put you at the bottom of my priority list. Actually, scratch that, you don't make the priority list. I'll put you with the spam and blocked calls. How does it feel? Yeah, I thought so. Now imagine having that feeling every day of your life; checking your phone as soon as you wake up in the morning to see if I reached out and getting excited when there was a text, canceling any other plans you had because when it comes to me, you had to take advantage of the once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity. My friends came to learn how fragile our relationship was. Every time I canceled plans with them, they wouldn't even ask what came up, they would simply say, "Have fun with your dad." Maybe you read this and still see yourself as some holy being who could do no wrong, but let me just tell you this, it's sad. It's sad that everyone can see you for who you really are even if you can't. Everyone can see your flakiness, your insincerity, your carelessness, except you. And if you can see it and have chosen all these years to handle yourself this way on purpose, then you never deserved to be a father, even if you never wanted to be one anyway.

So I write to you, not to ask for your apology (trust me I know not to expect such 'humility' from you), but to tell you I'm done. I'm done being there

for you only when you want me. I'm done with the high expectations you never meet. Even when I place the 'bare minimum bar' underground, you still somehow manage to trip on it. My friends and Mom are helping me through the next steps. I found a therapist who has helped me to move forward and let you go. I will no longer dwell on the past, getting upset when I think of everything you missed out on: my birthdays, Christmas, losing my first tooth, starting high school, etc. I am happily moving forward without you. This is my final farewell, and I really do hope one day you realize what you lost, not for my sake but for your own guilty conscious. Look for my name in local newspapers when my novel about a neglectful father wins every award, in the news when I travel to foreign countries to aid abandoned children in orphanages, and in magazines like 30 under 30. I'm going to do it all. Not for you, but for everyone who has ever been there for me, and to attest to the fact that I never actually needed you anyway. Look for my name, and don't be surprised when it is suddenly all around you, a guilty string of letters that remind you of all your failures. Having me was never a mistake, but letting me go will forever be your biggest regret.

- Your child -- only by genetics ¹

¹ Note from author: this is a work of fiction and is not a reflection of reality