

PARENTS

Often, according to several sources, the most common causes of trauma are 1) Domestic violence, 2) Natural disasters, 3) Severe illness or injury, 4) The death of a loved one, 5) Witnessing an act of violence, 6) Sexual violence, and 7) Watching traumatic events on media (Duke). Indeed, traumas are defined by APA as the emotional response someone is having to an extremely negative event. However, the subject of parents and family relationships is not addressed. Which is rather surprising, given that this is supposed to be the main source of everyone's upbringing. A home, whether adoptive, foster, or family, is the foundation for evolution. When you google it, a household is defined with a mother, a father, and their children. The ideal cliché for a child's blossoming. And sometimes, if you look hard

enough, you will find single-parent or same-sex families. Nevertheless, these family forms are often much more criticized and judged. Apparently, this kind of situation is a constant source of stress for children. According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a single-parent household can disrupt a child's routines, which can be very difficult and even *traumatic* for some children. Yet at school, when children were asked what they preferred, there was always this little girl, only 8 years old, answering that she preferred the separation of mommy and daddy.

Actually the year 1993 is the beginning of what makes up her story, when a young woman and a young man marry. Much has happened before, but the words slip out without being able to be sure, so the somewhat truer narrative only begins on this date, December 18, 1993. Married at 22 and 27 in the cathedral of Fort de France, Martinique, along with 7 other couples, the couple was united. The name Felixine was passed on, and 3 children of the same name were born. 1995, 1999 and 2004 were the years of delight in the family, and indeed the years of peace. Fun fact: did you know that almost 50 percent of all marriages in the United States will end in divorce or separation? (Wilkinson & Finkbeiner)

Surely that is what this 13-year-old preteenager was hoping for, when for all those years the same routine was repeated over and over again. On Sundays - apparently the day of the lord - traditional music would resound, the smell of food would fill the house and her father would be at the church. A moment of calm, you might say. However, it was only a matter of time before he came home and an argument broke out as usual. After a while it even came to a sigh every time he returned, or she would even go to her bedroom to avoid being collateral damage. "It's not your father who would do this for you," her mother would tell her in the kitchen. "I don't want to make you choose between your mother and me but-" her father would say in the car. Yet, despite of everything, she had to choose even if she didn't want to, it was for the survival of her own mind and the family. By the way, did you

know that the biggest divorce peak in France between 2004 and 2020 was in 2005? (Statista Research Department)

A year after she was born, the 16-year-old wondered why they hadn't seized the opportunity. It was 11 p.m, probably a philosophy exercise in front of her, she was trying as hard as she could to concentrate on it. Her father had come home, and in less than 10 minutes, of course, her mother had found something to blame him for. What was it this time? The laundry, the dishwasher, the bed, the kitchen mess. It became ironic, so much so that he himself laughed. The thin walls of the 80m² apartment carried the sounds and even with her bedroom door closed - opposite to the living room - she could hear them. "Screw you," her 49-year-old mother seemed to have told him. Again the truth was that too many insults had been hurled over the years to remember. "Well, swear if that's all you can do," her father always replied. This one was real, it was one of his favorite responses. Then came the mockery, the sighs and the sidelong glances, until it got out of hand and started all over again. Actually, according to Msgr. Charles Pope, did you know that; "Practicing Catholics, especially those who enter matrimony with a practicing Catholic, have significantly lower divorce rates"? (Laugesen)

But was it out of love, or rather out of obligation to the church, the 18-year-old now questioned. After all these years, she had to understand it. Still, sitting in the passenger side of her mother's red Honda, she would ask: "If it's so hard, why don't you get a divorce?" Turning the keys, her mother turned off the engine and for a moment over the silence only the sounds of the night, with its crickets and frogs echoed around them. There wasn't much light, they were in the parking lot after returning from the grocery store. Like every time since she was born, the car was parked in this assigned but unassigned parking space, not far from the balcony of their apartment. There were two of them, one for her mother and one for her father, and on numerous occasions the latter grumbled that others had taken his parking spot.

"I thought about it for a while, then I remembered you and thought maybe after you leave, but it's more complicated than that." That's what she thinks she told her, or maybe it's just what the girl decided to remember because nothing has changed. Ultimately, she just came to the conclusion that it was a never-ending routine. In fact, did you know that apparently when the "three-year itch" occurs, it may be because couples lose passion and begin to focus on personality differences, different outlooks and goals, and incompatible lifestyle quirks? (Guarnaccia and Brant)

It will soon be 29 years, the year she turned 19 - couldn't they have noticed this before ? Having returned from college in May, all she could look forward to was a fun-filled summer with her friends. Never at home, she was always roaming the four corners of the island. Although even if it was the vacations, she still had to work to pay for this university in the United States. Her mother's boss had kindly offered her a job, and so every morning at 7 a.m, it was a 30-minute trip from Fort-de-France to Ducos. And this was all it took for the complaints and remarks about her father to start flying: "Don't say anything to your father about the retirement home, he'll probably find out on his own," "He's certainly not the one who gave you the money to leave," or "I can't see myself living with you Frédérique" on the evenings when he was already home. What a crazy vacation. But did you know that taking a break from the stresses of everyday life can help couples reconnect and rediscover the playful side of their relationship? (Elk Forge Company)

They tried in 2019 for the renewal of their 25th wedding anniversary, in 2020 when they left to make the pilgrimage to "Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle," or on numerous different retreats over the years. Apparently, they had promised each other things, in the rain and on the muddy paths, or so she had overheard in a conversation on their balcony next to her bedroom window. Yet another year had passed, and this time the young woman was asking in the groupchat with her siblings if they had wished their parents their 30 years of marriage

anniversary on this December 18, 2023. Her brother, still in the household, explained that they had not done anything, so he didn't want to broach the subject, while her sister living in Marseille replied that it was their problem. For her part, the young woman confessed with a touch of guilt that she had simply forgotten. "In any case, there's nothing left to celebrate" she believes one of them said as they were hanging up. Yet, did you know that 30 years of marriage means The Pearl Anniversary?

Nevertheless, this 20-year-old young woman still hopes that mommy and daddy will go their separate ways.

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