The Day the Kids Went Loose
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Today, I made a visit to my nail salon. Now, it is not my nail salon per se, but I am a frequent customer (sun coral or sexy sangria), and have been for eight years, so I do qualify for some special reward, right? After a long, very long, tedious day in classes I decided that I was worthy of a nice afternoon treat. To begin my wind-down, and before leaving for the salon, I devoured a wonderful glass of my favorite champagne, Mumm Cuvee Napa Brut, yes, only one glass, and headed to the salon. Here is where the chaos began, and where it seemed to have never ended.

I observed two children: a young boy about seven years old, and a girl, maybe about ten years of age, or even add a few years to that. The two were obviously brother and sister and in my opinion were dressed very badly. The boy wore washed-out blue jeans that were at least four inches above his shoe line, exposing his dingy white socks scrunched down to his ankles. His feet were dressed in generic Adidas shoes, laces untied on both, that looked fresh-out-of-the-box brand new, and besides the replication from the real thing, they could have been worn in the opening game of the Lakers, pounding the soft wooden surface, stride by stride. The young boy’s fleece, something ridiculously worn on days like today, was black with a tan stripe expanding across his upper chest. His hair, greasy and unbrushed, molded to his head like melted candle wax the color of sand over a beach ball.

The girl, more of a disaster than her younger brother, wore blue jeans that she obviously appeared to be swimming in. They were so baggy, and frankly looked to me as if they were boy jeans, and not just boy jeans, but maybe husky boy jeans, just like the ones they have in the husky section in Gap Kids. She wore a soft brown belt, where I could see that extra holes were added to accommodate her small petite waist. Her shirt was a pale pink, discolored at that, and sat loosely on her chest. Her bulky, brown item #2917 - Men’s - Chelsea shoe (Red Wing Shoes) looked like the same ones my father wore to work; they lengthened her small feet and forced her to walk with an unstable awkwardness. The young girl’s hair, typical of a girl that age, was
stringy, thin and strewn about in a hectic manner across her face as a few strands seem to cling to her lower left lip.

The mother sat patiently without a worry in the world under the neon UV lamps to dry her nude pink nails. Not only did she sit, she sat and watched gloriously as her children rummaged through boxes of tools, baskets, and opened doors to the “employees only” rooms. These tools, sitting and waiting to be disinfected, are no toys. Sharp, pointy blades, and clippers, fill the nail salon. The tools included filers (metal and plastic), nail clippers of all sizes, toenail clippers, an assortment of disinfectants, abrasive scrubs for skin, lotions, cuticle remover oil, brushes of all sizes and shapes, acrylic nails, pedicure shavers, foot files, and let’s not forget, the hundreds of different colors that sit faithfully in a rack, on the wall, specifically so they are not misplaced.

The children asked what every item was that their roguish hands seemed to come across. They searched in the drawers and through the racks on the walls, lurking in the cabinets and delving into items sitting on desks. While I observed the children making a circus of the salon, and anticipating the wrinkly gray dancing elephants with colorful smocks covering their backs, miniature clowns about three feet in height juggling bowling pins and stilt-walkers as high as the Space Needle to walk through the door—a thought arose within me: I would not want to be caught in a nail salon in a tornado. It would be similar to the shed in *Twister*, where Bill Paxton and Helen Hunt seek shelter, only to find it full of razor-sharp tools anticipating the moment to slice the flesh and bone of their necks. I would say to this: *No thank you.* Moving on.

These obnoxious children asked questions to every employee in the salon, and every customer at that. They stood, hovering over the technicians, as they intricately worked on people’s hands and feet. I sensed the young boy standing perched over my own teal blue water where my feet soaked, massaged by the pounding jet water. They are like flies attracted to fresh poop, all over the admiration of a nail salon. My eyes closed, I could feel the pipsqueak
breathing, the inhale and exhale of his snotty, allergy-filled nostrils. I shivered with disgust.

I opened my eyes slowly to see the boy staring at me. I glared at him with my *eye*. Here is how it went: I looked at him, he looked at me, our eyes met. The evil eye crepted up from the black hole it resides in when I am in happier moods. The left eye squinted, slanted down and the right eye widened. The right eye extended so much I resembled a young boy seeing the breasts of my older sister’s smoking hot friend for the first time. My right eyebrow lifted in a peculiar manner, and the gap from eye to brow seemed to elongate to an unspeakable length. My lips then smuckered up to a pout, no, not the cute flirtatious pout, you know—the tart pout. It’s the ugly pout, the sour pout, the “what-the-hell-are-you-doing-pout.” His face, however, looked lost in a world of foreign objects and the barbaric routine of one person touching the feet of another. “Hi there little boy, my name is Jennifer. I am not a circus animal, so please stop staring at me as if I were an ape with eight arms juggling oranges and breathing fire... thank you.” Not literally spoken, but definitely thought.

The salon is owned by Anna, a Vietnamese woman and her three employees, Lisa, Lee, and Tammy, all Vietnamese who have adopted American style names. The employees were obviously getting very annoyed, as I sat watching the timer tick away, counting down the milliseconds until their mother’s soon-to-be departure. The women exchanged dialogue in Vietnamese, and I envied them: If only I could understand the abrupt and high pitched tones that left their mouths. Looking at their faces, expressions, and the tone of their language though, I could put together the conversation quite well. I wouldn’t put it past them that curse words and curses on the mother and her disruptive children were not a mutual feeling among them and the other customers in the salon, who, by the looks of them were all clenching down on teeth and lips; holding in remarks; and trying to display some kind of courteous manner. This is the perk of speaking another language; I could say some very harsh words that may deter the mother and the children from ever com-
ing back again, all to her face while smiling and she would never know the difference.

If she pried her eyes away from the recent gossip column in *US Weekly*, then she would realize that her children, acting in such an annoying manner in a public place, are bothersome, irritating, and getting into mischief they do not belong in. Jamie-Lynn Spears’ new bastard baby and Miley Cyrus’ nude cover shoot scandal could not have been that infatuating when her very own ludicrous mannered rugrats were running untamed like naked children at Wild Waves. How could she not have realized the nuisance they were to the workers and customers?

A mutual facial expression was shared between the older lady next to me receiving a pedicure (magenta), the young sisters across the room receiving manicures (amethyst and fuchsia with white daisies), another young woman receiving a pedicure (French tipped), and the middle-aged woman waiting silently for an open station (probably a red). I knew what they were thinking, as they too, knew what I was: *What closet could we stash them in? What excuse could we make up to make the woman leave and to take her offspring she calls children with her? What natural disaster are we all praying for at this particular moment?*

Nothing beat the workers’ faces who had endured this ludicrous scene of a performance far past the fifteen minutes I had tolerated. I saw it in their eyes that their culture may differ from that of America’s in raising and punishing children. Perhaps screaming, yelling, and shouting works in America, but in other countries, punishments range from beatings to private incarceration, to abandonment. They must see us Americans as foolish imbeciles who cannot even manage a simple, small, and young human being who is supposed to be disciplined and obedient. Maybe I am going off the deep end here, but my irritation level was rising by the second, and patience certainly is not my virtue, as clearly seen so far. The only thing I was thinking about in that moment was how I wished I would have finished off the bottle of champagne rather than a measly eight-ounce flute glass.
I noticed today that some parents just do not know how to be parents. I guess I really have no authority to judge, or even to observe good or bad parenting skills, for I am no parent, nor do I possess any type of caring, nurturing, or patience to understand children. Children, to me, may as well be distant children from the Amazon who speak Hebrew, unrealistic I know; this is the point. Children are as disconnected from my life as fashion supermodels would be directing shuttles at NASA; foreign to put it bleakly. Although my parenting skills have not flourished, nor do I think they ever will, I do know that there are times when I feel like some type of regulation should be enforced.

This much is true: regulation to me is not blunt force trauma to the head or dismissed to solitary confinement for weeks in a concrete cell block five-by-five feet in size. I can empathize with parents in being at their wits’ end with their children. I, too, reach my breaking point with my dog, my Pomeranian, whom after five years still prances around prissy-like, snout in the air, with a Giselle supermodel strut. He, just like children are to me, is public enemy number one with his pompous attitude and sneer grin. So, yes, I too feel the pain and burden the lack of discipline can force one to embark about. However, I am rational and can understand, with no notches under my belt, how children have a devious demeanor regardless of techniques taught or lessons learned. Regulation does consist of rules though, and punishment when needed. If my unconceived child bore the behavior and manner of these children I witnessed today, reprimand would only skim the surface of what the consequences would be. The bottom line I am concerned with now is that children must be taught that running wild and free like horses in the prairie does not fly in public places, especially public places where I tend to be.

This, too, is very much true: I am an only child, so noise, curiosity, and sudden actions startle me. I am not immune to a spectacle of children performing in such a manner to cause a disruption in strangers’ lives. Public places are for the public, not a breeding ground for manifesting mischief, or,
in my eyes, disaster—save the charades for the playground. My selfish ways and self-centered view on life has led me to believe that some people must not realize that their actions and lack thereof produce a product that disrupts the lives of others.

Blame it on this, or blame it on my rebellious attitude that I seem to suffer from. Call me callous or vulgar, and tell me I lack human empathy, and I will tell you that I have heard this same repetitive routine of my characteristics more times than Britney Spears has heard she is mentally and emotionally unstable. One could even blame it on the premenstrual cramps that I have been suffering from all day in my lower back as they tap, tap, tap from one aching side to the next. Does anyone have a Vicodin? One could even take it as far and blame it on my bad credit, the outrageous and preposterous fights with my boyfriend this morning, or even, as foolish as it may be—my first day frizzy hair, with fly-always that are continuously getting stuck to my extra shiny, thick and voluptuous, gloss-covered lips.

The sweltering heat of this nail salon could have been a factor. I could feel my buttocks intensify with heat, damp between my flesh and my cotton capris as I sat on the faux leather chair. The back of my knees sweated profusely and I could feel a drop of sweat beading up and fall vertically down my calf and past my heel into the raging water below.

The smell of the nail salon may have even leaked into my brain, causing some type of chemical imbalance where I have lost all concern and tolerance, as my endurance decreases to the pits of nothing within me. This outrageous salon is full of ammonia, toluene, formaldehyde, dibutyl phthalate, and other carcinogenic chemicals that might have been seeping into my lungs, my blood, and my brain, killing me softly—but that’s a whole other issue at hand.

One could blame it on the combination of heat plus the toxins as they create a dynamic cause to the problem, but I am choosing to blame it on the woman with her nude pink nails; nineties Paula Abdul style, tapered Jordache jeans; white Old Navy flip-flops that have been worn to the bone
with smudged colored outlines of her toes; red and white latitude stripes that crossed her bulging belly, (fashion alert: the large and curvy should not wear lateral lines); and eighties hot pink lip shine, whose children ran loose like cats and dogs in heat on a scorching summer afternoon in my non-air-conditioned nail salon.