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There are a lot of things

by Candida Lloyd

There are a lot of things we don't want to know about the people we love, especially our children. As soon as they are born, the painful pulling away towards independence begins. They grow up and have thoughts and experiences their parents think they want to know about, until they find out what they are.

Will was a liberal, easy-going sort of parent. He had read about helicopter parenting in the Sunday supplements and although his teenaged daughter had piano lessons and a maths tutor, he was definitely not one of those. Quite the reverse. Allowing children to get bored fostered creativity and sparked the imagination, he believed. It could also lead to dope smoking and underage sex, but Will was certain his Delilah wasn't doing either of those things.

No, children needed space to grow, he felt, and have friendships without their parents breathing down their necks. This belief came from the way Adam had been brought up in the 1970's. His parents were from the children-thrive-on-neglect school of parenting. His mum and dad ran a health food shop and after school he had to help out or find his own entertainment, which he did.

There was plenty Will's parents didn't know about him, including the fact that he'd had his first sexual encounter with a girl called Nicola at the back of the shop amid the sacks of oats and nuts. Now he came to think of it, she must have been about the same age as Delilah at the time.

Confirmation of Will's successful approach to parenting came one evening at dinner when Delilah announced that she would be going on the anti-Brexit march on

Saturday. Delighted with his daughter's independent spirit, together they brainstormed possible slogans she could write on a sign.

"Of course, you'll have lots of your own ideas," Will said, "but what about: 'Put it to the People'"

"I was thinking more about writing Brex with a pile of shit next to it," she replied.

"Hmmm," her father said, "How about, 'I'm fifteen and you've robbed me of my future!'" He looked pleased with himself, so she agreed.

"Yeah, that's a great idea."

She took paints and a large piece of card over to Bella's house. He didn't see why she had to go over there but took comfort in knowing that Bella's parents were Scandinavian and even more libertarian than he was.

On the day of the march the two girls joined the crowds of protesters in the centre of London and the day passed without incident. Will felt proud of Delilah but also sad that she didn't need him so much anymore.

That night he scanned the news coverage online and was excited to find a photograph of his beautiful daughter on the march wearing a huge smile. Above her head she held a banner which read 'PULLING OUT NEVER WORKS!'.

Will had a queasy sensation. In that moment he realised there were things he didn't want to know about his beloved daughter.