

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

Contributed by Polly Frost

THE LOVE OF PARENTS AND PET OWNERS

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SCENE: A HOME OFFICE. SANDRA AND JAMES, A MARRIED COUPLE, ARE SEATED IN FRONT OF THEIR COMPUTERS AT DESKS ACROSS THE ROOM FROM EACH OTHER.

SANDRA: Honey, I need your help.

JAMES: Oh, alright.

JAMES RELUCTANTLY GETS UP, CROSSES ROOM, LOOKS OVER SANDRA'S SHOULDER.

SANDRA: Which one, do you think?

JAMES: Oh, no, you're not putting up more photos of Ethan on Facebook, are you?

SANDRA: Says the man who's known as the king of Facebook's political linkers?

JAMES: This is an important moment in global financial history.

SANDRA: Forget I said it. I'm leaning towards this one of Ethan hugging me.

JAMES: I don't know. What about the shot where we can actually see his face?

SANDRA: But is he conveying all the love and adoration he does in the other one?

JAMES: Well, you look great in both.

SANDRA: You really think?

JAMES: Never better. Now, I need to finish my own Facebook posting. I don't want that point I was making about China's GDP to slip away from me entirely.

JAMES RETURNS TO HIS COMPUTER. A FEW SECONDS PASS.

SANDRA: What do you think of my caption? "As a mom, I have the hardest job in the world. But when I get this kind of look from my five-year-old Ethan, it's all worth it."

JAMES: It's lovely.

THERE'S SOMETHING IN HIS TONE.

SANDRA: But what?

JAMES: OK. There is something I have to raise. Are you sure you aren't overdoing it?

SANDRA: Don't be silly.

JAMES: You put up two dozen photos of Ethan just this week.

SANDRA: He's not going to be four forever, and that is such a great time in a child's life. Now, why don't you tell me what's really worrying you?

JAMES (struggling with his feelings): I don't know if it's a good idea for my son's future employers and colleagues to be able to find a bunch of baby shots of him scattered online.

SANDRA: Oh, James, that's years away.

JAMES: You don't have any idea how important it is for a man to look like an Alpha.

SANDRA: Hard day at the office?

JAMES: That's not the point.

SANDRA: Tell you what. I'll cut back on the photos of Ethan when you cut back on the political updates. You did at least a dozen on the Obamacare mess just today. See? I do keep track.

JAMES: I'm trying to change the world our son is going to inherit.

SANDRA: By posting on Facebook?

JAMES FUMES.

SANDRA: Honey, I do follow your Facebooking. And one thing I noticed was that you didn't get any Comments on the last two you did. You got maybe ten in total today.

JAMES: Have I lost my touch? I really made an impact when I first started.

SANDRA: You're brilliant, we both know that.

JAMES: I sometimes get the feeling that some of my Friends have Un-Friended me.

SANDRA: But maybe it's a little too much for some people. Hey, here's Howard Mandover's page. Look at this. He just put up an album of their six-year-old twins!

JAMES: My boss is putting up kid photos?

SANDRA: Three albums this week!

SANDRA MOVES OVER TO JAMES' COMPUTER. GRABBING THE MOUSE, CLICKING AROUND.

JAMES: What are you doing?

SANDRA: Just give me a second...

JAMES: You uploaded a photo onto my Facebook page. Without even asking. If I did that to you --

SANDRA: Look at that, honey! You and Ethan so happy ... Remember? You were teaching our son how to play the bass line from 'Walk Like This' and his little fingers were trying so hard ... And --

SHE GIVES THE MOUSE A CLICK

SANDRA: -- would you look at that? You've already got two people Liking it.

JAMES: I do? What happens if I refresh the screen again? ...[^] Wow! There's four more Likes.

SANDRA: Now, aren't you proud of being a Dad?

JAMES: And the Comments are already starting to show up. Listen to this one from my cousin in Tasmania, the one I've never met. 'Dude, glad to see you passing along the wisdom of the elders. This is your legacy, man. Forget your personal dreams. Your kids are all the earth will know of you once you're dead and gone.'

SANDRA: James, are those tears I see in your eyes?

THEY START TO HUG. THE OFFICE DOOR SWINGS OPEN. NICKI, THEIR THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, ENTERS.

NICKI: Mom, Dad, what have you been doing for the last three hours?

JAMES: Oh, hi, Nicki.

NICKI: Are you guys on Facebook again? I don't know why you get to be there all night and I can't even have an account.

SANDRA: Because we don't want social networking getting in the way of your middle-school career.

JAMES: Did you put Ethan to bed like we asked you?

NICKI: Yeah, yeah. And I read to him and I went through the whole ritual of helping him choose which stuffed animal he should hold. Don't worry, he's asleep now. Hey, is that another photo of Ethan you're putting up?

JAMES: Don't you have some math homework to do?

NICKI: I have an idea. Why don't you put up a photo of him with his finger up his nose hunting for boogers like he did for the last hour.

SANDRA: Ethan picks his nose?

JAMES: Nicki, Nicki, you're upsetting your mother.

NICKI: So why don't you have an album of me up there?

SANDRA: Your dad and I are protecting your safety. There are lots of creepy people on Facebook. When you're older you'll understand.

NICKI: You could at least put up a photo of me. A cellphone snap. At least one family photo where I'm in it.

SANDRA: I thought we'd wait until your acne settles down.

NICKI: It's not my fault I have zits! And I overheard you talking to Nana today about how you're embarrassed by my weight!

JAMES: Nicki, your mother and I are very proud of you. By the way, I bought some of that special diet chocolate ice cream that you like. Why don't you go have a bowl of it?

NICKI: I am so over ice cream and you don't even know that!

JAMES: Nicki --

NICKI: What's the point? I'm out of here!!

NICKI SLAMS THE DOOR AS SHE LEAVES.

JAMES: Phew, adolescence.

SANDRA: She'll be off to college in a few years.

THEY RETURN TO CLICKING AT THEIR COMPUTERS.

JAMES: Wait a minute.

SANDRA: What is it, honey?

JAMES: My golf buddy, Bill Mulrich? He has a photo of his dog up on his Profile page.

SANDRA: Not his kids?

JAMES: And that dog photo has gotten forty-five comments.

SANDRA: How many Likes?

JAMES: Fifty-seven.

SANDRA: You're kidding!

SANDRA GETS UP AND GOES TO JAMES' DESK, LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER.

SANDRA: Oh my god, you're right. That's way more than anybody gets for their kids.

JAMES: I didn't even know that Bill has a dog.

SANDRA: Look at that. It's only a labrador retriever! Labs are nothing special.

JAMES: Word. And the damn dog's just sacked out on the sofa.

SANDRA: Our Pronto is a way cuter than that.

JAMES GOES TO OFFICE DOOR AND SWINGS IT OPEN, CALLING OUT.

JAMES: Pronto! Here boy!

PRONTO SHOWS UP, BARKING. SANDRA AND JAMES ENCOURAGE PRONTO TO JUMP UP ON THEM.

SANDRA: There's our puppy!

JAMES: Funniest dog in the world!

SANDRA: Who loves you? Who loves you?

PRONTO BARKS ENTHUSIASTICALLY, THEN SITS AND STARES AT THEM.

SANDRA: Oh, look at those adorable eyes!

SANDRA URGES THE DOG TO LICK HER ON THE LIPS.

SANDRA: Kisses!

JAMES: See if you can keep him doing that! I'll get the camera.

SANDRA (to Pronto): Love you! Love you!

(to James) Once we get that shot, let's get one of him jumping in the air. No dog in the neighborhood can jump as high as Pronto!

JAMES: After that I'll break out the tripod so we can make a videoclip of Pronto's leg waving while we tickle him under the ribs. I love it when he does that.

SANDRA: Everyone will love it!! That shot will break the bank on Comments and Likes!

JAMES: Why stop there? Let's create a whole Pronto album!

SANDRA: James?

JAMES: Yes, sweetheart?

SANDRA: Let's do it tonight.

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