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And then came Mirna

A text for circa two performers or one with an intense split personality.

Person 1 (big person)

Person 2 (small person)

Can be extended to many big and small people as needed.

Previously on “The manic youth choir”:

That time -

let's say -

a few years ago.

I was young.

And

endless

average in my feeling that I wasn't average.

But

the facts spoke against me:

I was neither an abuse or migration victim -

sorry quick gag, hate the word migration -

I didn't have any interesting conflicts to show -

if you don't count my dad being locked in the cellar.

The dad who I locked in the cellar, I should add, winky smiley.
"Winky smiley" is like the new exclamation mark, I've noticed.

I never had a granddad who was in the SS.

I'll just leave that there.

So I could forget a career as the prize-winning author of family sagas in which I faced my past critically yet with a note of melancholy.
With such a weak biography you lose any hope of getting any authentic empathy in this country. With a biography like that and your roots in the urban green-belt you have to develop strong visions to believe you're more than -
let's say - a human being.
Cheers.

I've stopped drinking since -

that night - a few years ago, which began with the usual boredom of trying to find a sex partner. Roof party, bad music, like David Guetta, a surplus of beautiful people who can't make up their minds to let someone lick the precision instruments they've disguised as their bodies, there could be viruses in the saliva and that might wear the muscle tone with their viral secretions,

and then there was a young man standing there with interesting ears, who asked if I also thought that people nowadays only perfect themselves for their mirrors, and I thought that was interesting, because we were the only ones there without perfect bodies, and then we showed each other our watches, which transmit bio-data straight to our health insurance companies in case they need to raise the rates. Oh man.

Then we were drunk and went back to mine, and the lamplight shone from behind through the young man's ears, which floated round the room like spaceships.

He said: Er.

I said: Yes, well -

Dialogue that burned into the collective memory.

That was followed by a sexual act that resembled a traffic island covered with daisies.

We weren't particularly in love, or drunk enough to get rid of the embarrassment of our physical union. We got the thing done, and there wasn't even any music to drown out the strange noises that two bodies make when they get sexual. In the morning we saw the sun outside the window, and he said: look, the sun is also ...

And I was like: it sure is.

After that we had a relationship.

If that means visiting each other hungover in the early mornings now and then, watching a few gifs on the internet, and kissing each other because there's nothing to talk about.

Later, after I'd forgotten all of that, there was a Skype chat in which one person, me, was lost and helpless and the other person said:

Thank you - I've wanted my own family since I was seven. To be honest I've always masturbated to pictures of pregnant women. Shall we have a water birth? Should I start looking around for child-friendly flats? What do you think of the name Chantal, if you use it ironically?

At the same time and totally without any influence from me,

Gemma

experienced the moment of her
conception -

Gemma, who in the wild years of her life, when she was flying recklessly through the universe, met Greg. Who was somehow different. He worked as a thing, oh you know - suit, low shoes, train in the morning, antacids for lunch, pay the bills in the evening - and he said, sat on his vegan leather sofa, behind which the fireplace was, you know, like, burning:

"What a beautiful day, perfect for realizing myself in you. Pregnant women make me feel incredibly - erm - horny."

At the same time and totally without any influence from me,

Minna

experienced the moment of her
conception -

in her gay friend Greg's toilet. Greg consummated the union holding the latest edition of Leather Teddy magazine, while Minna flicked through "Hot Tractor Tomboys". It was important to both of them to break heteronormative relationship formulas. Etc etc.

At the same time and totally without any influence from me,
Lina

experienced the moment of her
conception -

on a gynaecological chair in Holland. She'd bought herself some pan-racial sperm, so as not to be kept from her so-called career - brackets: her 14th semester of art history or theatre studies or cultural management - by a so-called relationship.

But whichever way it happened - after the

act,

we were all looking forward to

the happy feelings one expects to follow successful fertilization, as promised by viral marketing

- or should do anyway.

But - a few questions did come up:

Why am I becoming a mother, when I hate my mother?

Do I have to have a fitted kitchen now?

Do I have to bury the placenta under an oak tree?

Where did I get these unpleasant words from anyway?

Can you -

let's say -

remove -

an embryo

inoffensively -

if the markets are already collapsing?

If the embryo does become a child, how can I justify that, what with: the environment, the civil wars, the over-population, the insecurity, the dollar rate, the cyborgs, climate change, ISIS, the shutdown of car factories, the multi-resistant viruses,

but more than anything how can I do it with the question: why are mothers always despised?

Whether they work or not, whether they breast-feed or not, whether they live or not.

Why are they always, always despised?

And while I was weighing up the pros and cons of childbirth, it started to move.

What people call moving. What I call not-being-able-to-sleep because of the noise. Music. What a joke. Young women with guitars, mournfully shrieking their problems into the world. For example the problem of not being able to play the fucking guitar. I'm gonna smash them up as soon as I get out of here.

I was, 20 kilos later, surprised at the lack of mass-euphoria, which would have lifted me up and out beyond myself, so to speak,

yes,

could have.

No one's standing there waving flags at the side of the road: Amazing, young lady, you're not freezing your insides, ignoring your natural urges so you can develop thinking phones!

Thank you - you who until recently could have been described as a benefit scrounger with well-developed violent urges - for getting over your homoerotic impulses, dismissing your quota-regulated entitlement to a seat on a supervisory board, and accepting your registered place

as

a woman.

And also thank you for saying goodbye - with the birth - to any positive characteristics like, er -

a sense of humour

or

aggression

say goodbye and take your place in the line-up with the caring, warm, soft, forgiving, constantly offended women.

Go and do some crochet, you poor little bird.

Now you can establish yourself in your economically useful niche as a fear-consumer. Anti-fungal cream, sterilised baby clothing, tricycle helmets, pads, healthy products baked by organic German farming girls. There's so much stuff you need. So much can go wrong. Horde little boxes in the cellar, mind your domestic peace, and keep out of public life.

Is what society seemed to be whispering to me and my belly.

But me and my - deep breath - friends - were so sure: we would keep doing everything the same. Drugs and alcohol, up all night on the computer, minor shoplifting, illegally producing pharmaceuticals, unhappy love affairs, except with a child.

That is very, very funny.

The longer our pregnancies lasted, the more uncertain we became. Grief and relationship counselling help to guide damaged people back into the herd. Is there any delivery work going? No there isn't. Is there a social rehabilitation programme that turns mothers back into productive opinion makers? No there isn't.

Reproduction is the perfect female disposal system.

The elbows of stressed workers stabbing into my motherly belly, the looks of young people that go through me like I was glass, all saying: you're not one of us anymore. You have fucked your way into the caste of untouchables.
Into the caste of the despised -
the mothers.

How can you like someone who has a fist pushing out of them from inside?

About that:

When I lost my athletic appearance, all of my 500 acquaintances disappeared. No news, no "what you up to?", no "I've just rated some bullshit online somewhere", no animal pictures, no one there.

Gemma lives with her boyfriend, brackets: junior consultant in a reinsurance company, in a fitted kitchen, and listlessly browses through higher education leaflets. Something to do with management. She writes to me sometimes: Greg thinks it's important for our child to grow up in a family environment. Meaning with its parents. Meaning with me. I've furnished the flat, but we're looking around for a little house, because of the garden, because of nature. I'm not bored, there's so much to do, and Greg is doing a personnel manager course, and I'm sure after a couple of years I'll be able to pick up my career again...

Hang on, I just need to laugh bitterly.

Minna lives in a commune and talks about the role of women in the future matriarchy while she's living on benefits. She's writing about the Mosuo people, oatmeal, anti-authoritarian pan-gender washing up, gender-neutral cleaning up plans...

Lina is still studying art history or literature or communication design. But online. Message from her: I'm certain my pregnancy won't change anything about my opinion that feminism is superfluous. I'm still against quotas, because women don't need a pity bonus. We have the same opportunities as men and we can take them without the help of state-regulated ... and so on.

Another bitter laugh.

With their white wedding dresses over their fat bellies, everyone flies through the sky like a helium elephant and looking down disturbed on the Earth.
On which I am moving. Determined to do it all different. To fight on, doesn't matter what for.
Maladjusted, strong, awe-inspiring -
Every now and then we meet at pregnancy yoga.

It has to seem quick.

Okay.

And we swore to stay a family and to backpack to Iceland with the kids,

but

then came

Mirna -

On the 9th of November,

Uncertain silence. Quiet murmur-mode -

The night of the Kristallnacht pogrom, the creation of the SS, the fall of the Berlin Wall - the Hitler-Ludendorff putsch, the November revolution ...

The date fixes my birth within a historical series of extraordinary events that put a genetic burden on me and drives the various therapists that my mother sends me to, to despair. No idea what's so abnormal about setting the odd barn on fire.

On this 9th of November, a few -

but very meaningful -

quasi-intense

years ago, I ran with a small person I didn't know through something that seemed to be like snow, but which was really fine dust, and tried to feel moved.

Moved like: ohhh - what a tiny face. These perfectly-proportioned limbs, there, look, those toes. Ten of them, surprisingly enough... and so on.

But the emotions wouldn't really arise completely, I was scared and had even more questions.

Can I ever fall in love with anyone who's not the baby?

Can I keep watching TV series?

Can the kid survive a 30-centimetre rise in sea levels?

What do you wear in the water?

Will this child become a ketamine dealer?

Can it inherit my exceptional music taste?

Can it inherit anything from me at all, and is that something I even want?

Every step was the manifestation of the thought: I will never, ever be a mother like my mother was.

And me like: laugh out loud.

I will never be like my mother, who I inherited nothing off except mortgage bonds and municipal bonds, I will never be as anxious, middle class, badly dressed, embarrassing and never as fucking cheerful as her.

Today the first years all blur together into a -
erm, let's call it -
heaven.

Of love. In which I float round like a total dickhead. Yeah, I float and say: it laughed, it looked at me, my little bump, look, the fucking bump, we should put up a little bump statue. I say to myself, because strangers always run away fast, and like I said I don't have any friends anymore.

Then a dark cloud appeared in this heaven, made of overweightness, of overwork, and the recognition that nothing is like it was before and will ever be the same again and that I've lost my rage and my social significance. Mothers are irrelevant. They're busy. But with shit. No one ever wants any pertinent, professional, politically-informed information from a mother. Not even my friends, who I Skype with quickly and rarely. There's always some child screaming. There's always some issue left hanging in the room.

Issue: Do you have to stay together with the kid's conceiver?

If not, can you expect the kid to deal with constantly changing sex partners?

If yes, where do you find them?

And what about a forest kindergarten?

Forest kindergarten. If I really have to play with pine cones in dampness and darkness, I could do it in the cellar. By the way.

The mother's brain slipped into the baby at birth.
Where it bakes on a low heat.

And whatever you do, young lady, don't you dare dress like a mother:
tracksuit, greasy hair, acne.

Haven't you got your abs back yet?

Or have you? That's bad too, because then you're putting pressure on all the ab-less women.

You should be completely happy now, your mouth stuffed with a baby foot. Why aren't you calm, gentle, and fucking well happy?

Deal with your role, mother, you want to tell your mother. And shake her. As she's sitting in front of Skype looking hopeless, because none of her hopeless friends will talk to her. Because all her hopeless friends are utterly unable to cope with bringing up a child. But - then you put on some more tea and go: You're doing so great.

If you haven't developed any burning interest in anything before your motherhood, you won't develop it afterwards either. I just realize apropos of nothing.

My mother talks about the past like it was the war. I try to square her descriptions of herself with the person sitting in front of me, with about as much charisma as a sideboard.

Of course there are a few fascinating theories on mother-daughter conflict. The mother who envies her daughter the sexually-connoted looks she gets from older men and so on. But to the massive disappointment of so many male psychologists and bloggers, I have to say: most of the time the reason I can't stand my daughter is because she's really annoying.

Come on, get up, or else we'll have to stay here, in my familiar surroundings, with my friends.

In a minute. In a minute I'm going to get up and start packing, I just have to gather my thoughts.

Okay. S'just a joke. I haven't got any friends. I have music. Your last present, so on the mark as always: a voucher for a David Guetta download. I can throw that out, right?

I have failed to imbue my daughter with my values. It seems.

My mother's values: bad music, obsessing over TV series and - yeah, maybe also avoiding politically inappropriate words. That's an obsession you can really spend a lot of time on. Dear mothers and fathers, dear trans-woman-to-man, trans-man-to-woman parents of all nations and creeds in the whole world, can we start packing now?

In a minute. I'm about to really get going. But I want to have another little fear for two more seconds.

Nothing out there means anything to me.
No one is begging for my presence in society,
and also
the constant twilight seems to have forced all living creatures
into a making a new start.

That impression can arise if the curtains are made of velvet and drawn shut.

Goodbye, city, you little cement ulcer, eating people up with all your so-called opportunities, your offers, invites, parties, sex, restaurants, performative installation pieces and Monday demos.

See ya, city where everyone is always just standing around at the wrong event, freezing.

Welcome, cute little wooden house in the country, where we'll sit on the rustic porch and later cook dinner on the old coal stove.

Manually prepared, as I would say, like a dick.

Welcome, countryside, you symbolize -

Abstinence, simplicity, connecting with nature, slowing down.

Exactly my issues.

Or else: boredom, narrowmindedness, xenophobia and intolerance, young gay people committing suicide -

We can reinvent ourselves any time we like, say idiots.

Sail round the world. Start a cupcake company, move to New Zealand.

All pretty exciting, for a year. And then they sit there and they're just as idiotic as they were before. You can never escape your circumstances. New surroundings. Yay, we're moving to new surroundings, where my pubescent daughter can disapprove of me in a thousand new ways.

I always thought, it'll work out - that stuff with life and its meaning. I'll grow up and suddenly find my calling. Everything will become clear overnight, something I burn for, passionately. A new country, a new person. Now I'm still sat here, and the only idea I can think of is to emigrate to the East coast, maybe to -

I'm going to pack my pink rucksack.

It's impossible for a child to summon any more disgust at their parents than when they see them wearing inappropriate clothes. It has to be pink and glittery, it has to involve skirts, the outfit of resistance against our unbelievably gender-neutral, unisex parents, one of whom is always called Greg but is unnecessary to the other parent, because the so-called attraction isn't happening anymore.

Not that I feel any particular attraction coming from my mother, but maybe there are family connections that are stronger than actual feelings.

We're alone. I'm raising a child alone. Well, raising, let's just say, kind of.

But

the sacrifice of living with someone I don't love just to fulfil a child's alleged need for two parents, did seem too big in the end. A bit.

A kid should live with two adults, so it loses the unbearable fear of ending up alone if one breaks down.

Greg didn't know what I meant when I talked about dying. He asked: What are you talking about anyway? He asked: How are you? He asked: Am I being thoughtful enough? He didn't have a plan. So that made two plan-less people too many. Sat in their dressing gowns in a flat in the dark tenderly watching a child.

I understand, mother, why you couldn't stand it. A friendly father in a dressing gown: the horror.

It was all wrong,

That's what I said!

starting with the sound of my own voice, delivering strange instructions about the rubbish, all the way to the position of my hands, flat against my body to avoid any contact.

I didn't like the person I became with Greg, because he used to piss me off just by saying "good morning". I didn't want to be unfriendly to a young man who couldn't help it that he was the wrong person.

Deep breath -

There followed a talk with words like: fair, space, good friendly relationship, the best for Mirna, anytime,

Words that urban couples use when they don't know what to do next.

Daddy. A word like ... pudding. He tries so hard to do everything right, like all the absent parents of the children I hang out with.

Mother, is this ringbinder going in the box too?

My human resource portfolio, in which I've saved all my mails from Minna, Gemma and Lina.

Printed.

Yes, printed.

Last year, Gemma wrote:

"The short timeout after the birth went so fast. Ten years. And it just seemed like I was so busy with -

er,

yeah.

But the first years were so exhausting,

when the being-in-love time was over and I wanted to shower and couldn't shower, because the child wouldn't let go of my hand. And when I wanted to wear something nice or talk to Greg in the evening about something that happened that day, and everything I heard myself say sounded like I was offended."

Quick coughing fit.

"But now listen: we have a few things waiting for us.

That, er, thing, for example,

Life.

The leaflets for that cybernetics course. Are lying there.

But I just have to -"

Mother. The van.

Yes, in a minute. Just look.

Minna was writing action plans every day. She said. But the fucking action never happened.

"What should we fight first? Have to talk about that for a while. Aluminium in deodorants?

Men's rights activists? The banks? She hardly finishes one action plan and some other crisis

spot flares up somewhere. That thing, ISIS, for example, what are we gonna do about that?

How do we fight them? Will a vigil be enough, or do we have to go for the open letter? But

who to? We discuss it all night; and then the self-managing children come down - there are

six of them, I think - make themselves breakfast, there's always a bit of muesli left, and go to

school. We discuss our plans until the children come back from school. And sometimes I

wonder..."

They feel, they wonder, they debate, they smoke, and us children of constantly-chatting parents stand silently in a circle on the playground and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Lina, look. At first she was even writing letters, in her perfect handwriting, almost unreadable - "... continued my studies a week after childbirth. Art history or literary studies or communication design. Whatever. And since then I've been looking for a job. I expect it's just a temporary problem. Until I've solved it I'm working in the supermarket. Well, not directly in

the supermarket, more like in the basement..." I can't read the rest. Looks like the letter was left out in the rain.

Can you please help a bit now?

In a minute. I just have to -

The only quiet hours for me, the little timeout, when I can - kind of - commune with my soul -
right -

are at night. When Mirna is asleep. When I've drunk a little herbal sleeping aid, brackets: 70 % alcohol, and, hungry with longing, send mails that I never ever read again the next day. They contain sentences like: What I've always wanted to tell you. They contain words like: You are the most beautiful human being and so on. I send them to rock stars and DJs. They never answer.

I've written imaginary diaries. I put them away.

We don't write blogs. All that young-person stuff, mainly about hating your parents and glorifying sex objects, we record that in our thoughts. The people I hang out with don't waste their time with computer games, they don't pester people with Threema or Skype messages, they don't take pictures of themselves - they especially don't take pictures of themselves. We only trust our own minds. That's stable, while everything around us is constantly moving. Civil wars, assassinations, strange family relations. We trust each other, we're the clever ones, with the straight-As - the clever ones, who I'm supposed to leave behind so I can live with my mother and a few of her friends in the country. Which will probably turn out to be a toxic waste dump. I laugh. And keep packing.

I never chose my life. It just sort of happened. I changed overnight from an auto-aggressive, interesting young person with brilliant behavioural abnormalities, a talent for criticizing the system and insane ideas to a -

Sometimes I worry that my daughter hates me.

My mother's friends are embarrassing. They sometimes come over with their kids, all my age. I sit there with all these other embarrassed children, three of them, in the kitchen, we look like we're pretending to be an English tea party. We don't say anything, pass each other baked goods, and try to behave like children, because that's what people expect. Every now and then one of us screams for no reason, or we throw biscuits at the ceiling, which fall down again. It's exhausting having to keep encouraging one of your parents, keep clapping them on the shoulder, murmuring enthusiastically about their lectures on society, looking amazed and interested when they post political statements. We don't believe in capitalism or socialism, or in racism or gender problems, we only believe in us. "Can you pass me another piece of buttered toast?" we say. While our wild mothers smoke in the living room and say words like "oppression, ADHD, no opportunities," and we try not to groan.