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Daddy's Little Valentine

By Susan Bland

IT'S IN THE HEART OF EVERY DADDY. Whether his daughter may be four or 40 years old, he holds the notion of her being "daddy's little girl" close to his heart.

Fathers forever cherish the memories of dancing with their daughter's tiny feet atop their shoes, kissing away the ouches and the tears, and just the quiet moments spent knowing that – for now – he's the love of his little girl's life.

Mark Kinsella, a Comerica branch manager, says his daughters Madeline, 6, and Emily, 4, get a giggle when he extends his hand and formally asks them for a ballroom dance in the middle of the living room. "They think it's really funny," he says. "When I think about [them growing up] I get kind of teary."

Such moments of princess fantasy can also lead to much-dreaded questions, Mr. Kinsella says, such as "Daddy, how

old are you when you get married?" His answer: "When you're 30."

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As every father watches his daughter grow up and slowly reach the age that either she becomes interested in the company of young men or the young men begin pursuing her, the fear of losing that

special father/daughter bond looms large.

Some are tempted to resort to drastic measures to protect their daughters. While most fathers may, deep down, feel the desire to intimidate, or as the daughters may feel, interrogate, the gentleman caller, rarely do the fathers actually produce an Application For Permission to Date My Daughter.

Ask any group of fathers and they will whole-heartedly agree that the answer to questions like, "In 50 words or less, what does LATE mean to you?" may have some effect on their granting permission for a date. Another head turning question resurrected from the father's own youth might be "Do you own a van? A truck with oversized tires? A waterbed?" Depending on the answer to the previous question, the following answer may be telling as well. "How fast can you run 40 yards?

How fast can you run two miles?"

Mr. Kinsella said he hopes any prospective boyfriends that come knocking on his daughter's door would have the same kind of strict Catholic upbringing that he did. "I had such fear of just kissing a girl," Mr. Kinsella said, "it was a sin!"

As an afterthought, he says maybe a mixture of that strict upbringing and the use of some good, old-fashioned common sense may be preferable – but "a healthy dose of fear would be nice." He says it's important to him to build his daughters' self esteem so that they will be confident in making their own choices –not somebody else's.

Does that innocent romance between dads and their daughters diminish as time goes by?

Does that innocent romance between dads and their daughters diminish as time goes by? From a personal point of view, at 41, I'm today as much my daddy's girl as I was when I was six years old. When he hugs me, that secure feeling is like no other. He's still my hero and the first love of my life.

From a dad's point of view, my father, Dr. Sid Ayala – the Baptist minister who has seen his daughter through the teenage years (for which he deserves a medal for bravery), college, marriage, career and children – says the eyes of a father never need glasses. "When someone's the apple of your eye, you always see them at their finest moment, their sweetest nature – you see the best in them," he says. "The rest just kind of fades away."

Mr. Kinsella says when he thinks about his teen years, it makes him wary about tiptoeing around when giving his daughters advice about boys: "I'm going to be blunt with them," he says. "Men - you just can't trust 'em."

Susan Bland is a freelance writer living in Frisco.

Application for Permission to Date My Daughter

1. Name _____
2. Date of Birth _____ 3. Height _____ 4. Weight _____
5. IQ _____ 6. G.P.A. _____
7. Social Security # _____ 8. Driver's License # _____
9. Boy Scout Rank _____
10. Home Address _____
11. How fast can you run 40 yards? _____
How fast can you run two miles? _____
12. Do you own a van? _____
A truck with oversized tires? _____
A waterbed? _____
Do you have an earring, nose ring, or belly button ring? or
Tattoo? _____
If you answer yes to any of #12 discontinue application
and leave premises.
13. In 50 words or less, what does LATE mean to you? _____
14. In 50 words or less, what does DON'T TOUCH MY DAUGHTER
mean to you? _____
15. In 50 words or less, what does ABSTINENCE mean to you?

16. Church you attend _____
17. How often do you attend? _____
18. When would be the best time to interview your father,
mother, and pastor? _____
19. Answer by filling in the blank: please answer freely.
If I were shot, the last place on my body I would ever want
to be wounded is in the: _____
If I were beaten up, the last bone I would want broken is
my: _____
A woman's place is in the: _____
The one thing I hope this application does not ask me about
is: _____
When I first meet a girl, the thing I notice about her
first is: _____
Note: if answer begins with T or A, discontinue and leave
premises-keeping head low and running in a serpentine
fashion is advised.
20. What do you want to do IF you grow up? _____
21. Have you ever been finger printed? _____
22. Have you ever had a DNA sample taken and recorded? _____

This application will be incomplete and rejected unless accompanied by a complete financial statement, job history, and lineage.

I swear that all information supplied above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge under penalty of death, dismemberment, red hot poker, and a Hillary Clinton kiss.

Signature

Thank you for your interest! Please allow four to six years for processing. You will be contacted in writing if you are approved. Please do not try to call or write. If your application is rejected, you will be notified by two gentlemen wearing white ties and carrying violin cases.