

# The ascended

Family



The Ascended Family may be the single most influential element of our lives. They are the people who, through support or neglect, mold us into who we grow to be. They are the people our psychiatrists ask us most frequently about. They are the people we strive to emulate or desperately attempt to avoid becoming. They are the causes of our fondest joys and our greatest disappointments. The short story "Saturday Climbing" by W. D. Valgardson portrays a father, Barry, and his teenage daughter, Moira, struggling to reconnect after a rift has tarnished their relationship. Although issues with their family may be the cause of their problems, it is through their openness and acceptance as a family that they are able to begin to heal. In the short story "Saturday Climbing," W. D. Valgardson suggests that individuals may be both negatively and positively influenced by family. This can be seen through their seemingly idyllic young relationship, the issues caused by divorce, the poor attempt at reconciliation through rock climbing and Barry's eventual epiphany to give Moira the independence she needs. Initially, Moira and Barry have a seemingly flawless family relationship despite his belief that she is delicate. His influence over her is what seems expected of a father and his child; they are happy to spend time together, but he is still her protector. Contentedly, Barry and Moira partake in a variety of activities together such as "going to foreign films, visiting Seattle, [and] beachcombing." It is explained that "[a]t one time, they had played chess nearly every day." These activities demonstrate a healthy father-daughter relationship in which the two are pleased to spend time with one another. In fact, their relationship seems to be so close that Moira divulges secrets to her father through her "signal" of "[lifting] her index finger and [rubbing] the side of her nose" to let him know that "she [is] going to impart a confidence

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or confess a wrongdoing" such as "[liking] some boy in her class, " "[getting] a detention" or "[spending] all her allowance before the end of the week and [needing] more money. " This demonstrates that Moira trusts her father with personal and potentially embarrassing information, and Barry understands his daughter's subtle codes suggesting closeness between them. Despite this tender bond, Barry is also protective of Moira. When Moira was three, " she had eaten a bottle of aspirin" and had to have her stomach pumped. This causes Barry to think of " her as being intricately constructed of fragile paper. " This metaphor explains Barry's reasoning for feeling the need to protect Moira. At this young age, she is reckless and ignorant, causing her father to shield her from the harm she can cause herself. Although this may be the beginning of Barry's overprotective tendencies, at such a young age, it seems warranted and appears to have no negative effects on their relationship. In spite of Barry's need to protect Moira at a young age, their relationship is initially one that is strong and affectionate. However, a series of changes begin to influence and alter Barry and Moira's close relationship as Moira becomes a teenager. As she became a teenager Moira no longer wanted to be around her father. Moira is a typical teenager wanting to do what she wants without being restricted. Her father has to constantly fill her with love and protection because he has to fill the part of her mother. Moira constantly stays out at night and goes to parties. One day Moira wanted to go to an all night party with a boy who has been drifting around their house two or three times. So she asked her father; her father replied with " good girls, don't stay out all night. " She shot back " Good fathers, don't think the worst of their daughters. " This demonstrates that their relationship is withering; they always seem like they're trying to prove to each other who is

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stronger. Moria is an average teenager trying to send her father a message, which he has to stop treating her like a baby. “ Over the previous months, she had come home late ...Each time, the sweet sour smell of marijuana clung to her. ” “ He had not dared to accuse her of smoking dope. ” This illustrates that they no longer share any personal or potentially embarrassing information; Moria no longer lifts her index finger and rub the side of the nose. It also shows that Barry loves his daughter and does not want her to hate him. Barry over protectiveness is pushing Moria and Barry’s relationship in a different direction, he is influence her in a crucial way. Consequently, Barry attempts to influence their relationship by signing them up for rock-climbing though his lack of consideration for Moira’s consent makes it less effective than planned. Barry wants to make up for being over protective by signing her up for rock-climbing, yet Barry signs Moria without her consent. “ At the foot of the cliff, his daughter let out the golden line of rope that joined them. ” The rope is a symbol of there relationship. They are together with love, responsibility and leadership. As they are climbing Barry is afraid of falling. The reason is that he made all these plans for their relationship to rebuild he does not want it to fall apart because of him. While Barry and his daughter are climbing, Barry tries to act as the bigger person so when Moria ask “(y)ou all right? ” which he answered “ yeah” he lied. This portrays that he does not want to show that he is weak. Also it reveals that if he tells her that he is not alright that she will think it is hard and leave, so their relationship will end. Rock climbing is their last hope of reconciling. Finally, Barry comes to realize that his desire to influence Moira’s actions may be pushing her away, and he chooses to support her desire for independence. When Moria and her father are sitting side by side on ledge after the past the

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obstacle. This implies that that they overcome an obstacle together which has strengthened their relationship. Barry could not find a way to climb up, so his daughter shows him a way up the mountain. This describes that he has finally realized that his daughter is intelligent and he should give her more freedom; then to be overprotective." I want to lead the pitch. " This indicates that Moria wants to show her dad that she no longer is a kid and can think for herself. " Don't climb, he thought, it's too dangerous. Let us go back the way we came and find somewhere that'll always be safe. " This is in italics because this is showing the epiphany when the Barry and Moria are finally reconciling their relationship. In addition it conveys, when he stated "(I)et us go back ... that'll always be safe. The author used diction for this part because he could have wrote "...somewhere that'll be safe. "Yet he used " always" to signify that they can go back to the relationship they used to have. Additionally it signifies that'll (always be safe) they will go back and they will always stay like that their relationship will not wither like their old one. " His daughter, easily, with the supreme confidence of youth, grasped a hand hold and pulled herself onto a ledge. "This part is the other epiphany when the relationship has finally reconciled and back. Furthermore it is when their barrier is broken between them and Barry finally realizes Moria is as capable as he is and that she can think for herself rationally. In the end Barry allows Moria to go off to college in an indirect way. When he states that he will be ready to absorb the shock of any fall. This depicts that he will always respect her decisions and if anything happens he will be there to absorb the shock. In the short story " Saturday Climbing, " W. D. Valgardson suggests that individuals may be both negatively and positively influenced by family. This is shown when Moria and Barry have a seemingly flawless family

relationship despite his belief that she is delicate. A series of changes begin to influence the changes of their relationship such as her being a teenager. Barry attempts to influence their relationship by signing them up for rock-climbing without his daughters consent. In the end Barry comes to realize that his desire to influence Moira's actions may be pushing her away, and he chooses to support her desire for independence. Family is the cause of our happiest times and our saddest times, yet we can never forget the impact they have on our lives. Family is the people who the shape us to be in our lives which ever way they mold us is they way we become.