

Essay-Wettbewerb 2019/20

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Is a good life a good life for everyone?

In this essay I am going to write about how people want everyone to be the same. By myself I would not have come up with that idea but after reading the short-story "Man Babies" by the Canadian story-writer Richard van Camp, I immediately knew what to write about. First of all, I will write about the author of the short-story, we then go on with a short summary. The last part will be my reading question and my personal opinion.

Richard van Camp is a Canadian story writer, who was born in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories in Canada, on the 8. September 1971. His nationality is Tlicho, also known as Dogrib, which is an ethnolinguistic group living in the Northwest of Canada. He started writing when he was only 19 years old because he noticed no one was writing about his home, the Northwest Territories, so he wanted to tell his stories. He then graduated from the En'owkin International School of Writing, the University of Victoria's Creative Writing and got a Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. Richard is now a storyteller and best-selling author who is internationally known. He does not just write for adults, he also wrote some children books, for example his first one: What's the most beautiful thing you know about horses? He is especially known for his short-story collections. Richard van Camp has already done a lot of different things, for example writing for the CBS's North of 60 television show, which is a Canadian television drama, for about two months. He also taught creative writing at the University of British Columbia. He also won some awards such as the NSK Neustadt Prize, which is an international children's literary award founded in the year 2003, in June 2014 for Children's Literature. 2015, he then was awarded for the R. Ross Arnett Award again for Children's Literature for Little You, which he wrote on the 1st of April, 2013.

"Man babies" is also a short-story by Richard van Camp and will also be my topic of this essay. The book is about a twenty-eight-year-old man, his mom Karen and her boyfriend Steve. The young man is still living at home and doing nothing except playing video games. And then there is his mom, who does everything for him and still calls him Baby, as if he is five years old. Steve wants Baby to have his own place, as Steve wants to move in together with Karen, but the overprotective mother does not want Baby to leave. One day, Steve had enough. When he arrived at home, he saw Baby sitting on the couch with his Xbox. The baby just looked at Steve telling him he should cook because he is hungry. And then Steve began yelling and he told Baby he has five minutes to leave the house with all his stuff. And then he explained to Karen, who came home later, that the most amazing thing happened: Baby decided to start his own life. She did not believe him and wanted to call her son

immediately, not knowing the phone was lying on the street. Baby came back a long time later. And there he was, he did not look like he did when he left. He drove with his new truck, was wearing new clothes and looked good. And the best thing was, Baby came to Steve and said: Thank you.

After reading the story, I thought about something specific. Why does everyone have to be the same? In "Man babies", Steve also wants Baby to be like all the other twenty-eight-year-old men out there. To have a good job, to have your own place to live and also have kids soon. But why? Is it really a problem if someone dares to go a completely different way? To be honest, I also want to have a job and my own place to live, when I am twenty-eight years old. But I would not have a problem if anyone I know would go a completely different way. My cousin made her final exam one year ago, she decided not to go to work immediately, but instead to see the world. She went to different parts of Europe and Asia and in a few weeks, she will fly to Africa for three months. For her, it was the best decision to not start working but seeing different countries and cultures. On the other hand, my brother wanted to start working as soon as he had his final exam finished and he also did that. They both took a completely different way but are both happy with their decisions. Imagine now everyone being the same. Having the same skin, hair and eye color. Having the same clothes and also going the exact same way. Wouldn't the world be boring? In my opinion it would. So, I do not see it as a problem that Baby still lives at home because I think he would have found his way sooner or later, like everyone does.

In my opinion, literature can make you see some things differently. Before I read the short-story I always felt like people who are not working at the age twenty-eight are lazy. But afterwards, I saw things differently, as you just read. Literature has the power to change minds.

Bibliography: van Camp, R. (2013) Moccasin Square Gardens. Madeira Park: Douglas and McIntyre

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Van_Camp
<http://www.richardvancamp.com>