

By Erma Bombeck

I have discovered that one of the rich rewards of motherhood is casting maledictions on your children in the event they become parents. It's an unique way of saying, "Just wait, kid . . . you're gonna get yours."

One of my earliest recollections of this tribal custom dates back to my childhood when one day I was nailed in the act of throwing mud balls at mother's corset flapping on the clothes-line. Enraged, my mother shook her fists at me and yelled, "May all your children have ingrown toenails!" Observing that didn't shake me, she added a bonus, "And may your tears be so salty you spit brine for a week!"



Erma Bombeck

I'm not saying I fully comprehended all this, but from her tone I sensed she wasn't wishing me a happy birthday. I noticed grandma talked this way, too. Sometimes when mother had had a day grandma would smile, rather pleased with herself, and say, "I told you, Missy, if you made your bed of thorns, you'd have to walk through it in your bare feet." Or when she really wanted to sink mother, she'd say, "Didn't I predict that lip of yours would grow so long you'd have to take a tuck in it?"

Throughout childhood, the words of wisdom continued to flow until I felt as if I were living with a couple of hollow-eyed gypsies. Words of encouragement, like "May you have a wart on your nose on your wedding day and heartburn on your honeymoon." Or, "Take care, Missy. Little girls who sass their mothers live to see their best friends chalk dirty words on their tombstones." None of his made much sense until I had children of my own. Now, casting curses on my children is a way of life. It's the most comforting way I know to get rid of all my anxieties, hostilities and frustrations. And the beauty is that the kids don't comprehend a word I'm saying.

I have one that's a real teaser. I just drop my shoulders, let my arms fall limp to my side and nod my head tiredly. I don't say anything at first until I am sure I have their attention. Then I say, "Wait . . . just wait . . . until you're a mother." (Occasionally, my son, who is very bright for 11, will remind me he's a boy and only the female species bear their young, but he gets the message. I know he does.)

Casting curses isn't the easiest thing in the world. To work up to a pitch you need incentive, like the other day when I found a pile of dirty socks stuffed in the erector set box. I yelled at the top of my voice, "I hope you have identical twins . . . two weeks apart. May your patio face southwest. May your father belch loudly at the father-son banquet. May you have a rainbow over your playpen!"

When they get home from school, I'll think of some more.

Needle Points

Rocky is photographed riding a GOP elephant. That's the trouble. Everybody wants to ride the elephant, but nobody wants to lead it.

George Wallace says you could put Lyndon, Hubert, Bobby, Rocky, and Romney in a sack and shake it, "and it wouldn't make any difference who you pulled out." Perhaps not, but let's consider first problems first: Who'd want to stick his hand in that sack?

"Tomorrow will be better than yesterday," promises Lyndon. The safest political statements continue to be those which cannot be proved or disproved at the moment.

McNamara asserts that the U.S. will build up its forces in Vietnam even at the risk of war with Red China. When John Foster Dulles stated a similar policy, it was called "brinkmanship."

De Gaulle is a neutralist. He wants Southeast Asia to be free to make whatever decisions he likes.

Peking and Moscow pull apart. It's a case of political halitosis on the one hand and ideological B.O. on the other.

—Harry Karns

By Clayton Fritchey

China's Isolation

Washington—Mao Tse-tung has finally succeeded single-handedly in doing what the U.S. was unable to do in 20 years of trying—that is, bring about the total isolation of China.

Other leaders, from Genghis Khan to Hitler, have succeeded in offending large sections of the world, but Mao is the first to achieve virtually universal alienation.

The insulting speech of Defense Minister Lin Piao at China's 17th anniversary celebration (charging collusion between Russia and the U.S. over Vietnam) is only the latest of a series of boomeranging blunders. And the protest-walkout of seven diplomats representing other Communist nations is only the latest of a series of world-wide defections against the Chinese.



Clayton Fritchey

Even before the walkout, it was clear which way the wind was blowing, for not a single head of state anywhere in the world accepted China's invitation to attend the celebration in Peking last weekend. Indeed, Mao might have been able to achieve 100 per cent isolation at this time had it not been for America's success in keeping North Vietnam dependent on China, and therefore at least temporarily loyal.

In Asia it is recognized that the Vietnamese over the centuries have detested the Chinese as much or more than the Indonesians, and the general opinion is that, also like the Indonesians, they too would assert their independence of China if the war with the U.S. did not require Chinese aid. In any case, the defections continue in an unbroken string, with such formerly ardent friends as North Korea and Poland now joining the ranks of the disaffected. Even little Albania seems to be turning cool.

Yet Mao, despite other major setbacks in India, Ceylon, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, apparently is determined to convince himself, or at least his people, that Chinese communism (as distinct from the Moscow brand) is about to conquer the world.

There is some possibility that Mao may really believe this pipe dream, for his advanced egomania is aggravated by a profound provincialism, which obviously and wildly distorts his estimate of the world. Unlike most of the Peking hierarchy, he has never been out of China, nor had

a chance to study abroad. Even his interpretation of Marxism, based on secondhand knowledge, diverges from the orthodox intellectual concept.

Moreover, his sense of infallibility has been fortified by his prodigious success in leading the Chinese Communist revolution to victory against what seemed insuperable odds. Even Stalin had a dim view of Mao's future, especially since the latter disregarded Moscow's advice, and relied on the peasants, rather than the urban workers, as the mainstay of the revolution.

Once upon a time Henry Ford conquered the world with his Model-T car. It was so successful that he stubbornly refused to make any changes for 20 years, but rivals did, and suddenly it was discovered that the old Model-T was obsolete.

Is that the situation with Mao today? The evidence is that he thinks his original format is still valid, and that Russia's gradual modifications of classic Marxism are a betrayal of communism and world revolution.

Potent Nationalism

He has totally lost out to Russia, however, in the competition for leadership of the Communist bloc, because he seemed incapable of accepting the fact that nationalism is a more powerful force than international communism.

In the nuclear age that has developed outside the ken of Mao, the bloc nations, as well as the unaligned, clearly prefer peaceful coexistence to revolution at any price. Also, when it comes to assistance they prefer Russian deeds to Chinese words.

Nevertheless, Peking asserts that "of all the assistance that China has given them, the most valuable is the invincible thought of Mao Tse-tung." It is true that people sometimes eat words, but they are seldom nourishing. If it were not for the Vietnam war, which is costing China nothing but some old arms, Mao wouldn't have anything going for him.

As it is, he can sit back and watch his chief adversary pursue a policy which is costing it (1) over \$25 billion a year, (2) ever mounting casualties, (3) leadership of the free world and (4) dissension at home.

It is easy to see why Peking takes heart and why it says that the Johnson administration is "entangled in all kinds of international crises and more isolated than ever before." When China needs reassurance it simply turns to the U.S. and Vietnam.

Heads and Tales

By Jack Altshul

Unsolved Mob Murders

The Queens grand jury which will get all those "I refuse to testify on the grounds it will incriminate me" answers from the 13 mobsters picked up at the Little Apalachin luncheon is still hoping to shed some light on a number of unsolved gangland murders lying around New York police files. Besides the Little Augie Pisano-Janice Drake job, which occurred in the Queens jurisdiction, the probes also are the first to get a crack at one of the chief suspects in the Albert Anastasia rubout, which happened in a Broadway barber shop. For years homicide detectives had an idea that the man to look for was Santos Trafficante, a high-ranking hood who handled the mob's action in narcotics and gambling for the State of Florida. They conjectured that Albert was ordered hit because he had been told to lay off narcotics in Florida and that Trafficante might have received the contract. But they could never find him until he showed up with those 12 other ghouls. That is when police learned that Trafficante has been conducting his business in Tampa, Fla., all these years. Now they have their first opportunity to ask him about what happened to Anastasia and I'll lay a bigger price than you can get on the Orioles that his most revealing statement will be: "I refuse to testify. . ."



Jack Altshul

Another man who fills a number of folders in police files and whose name has been mentioned in connection with the Sayville go-go murder isn't concerned a bit about the newspaper stories. That would be Julie Klein, the Suffolk plug-ugly who seems to be able to beat every rap pinned on him. Some years ago, it looked like they had Julie under wraps when he was convicted of coercion and sent up for a long stretch. But he was released when Suffolk and Brooklyn police thought he could help them solve a labor leader's murder. Since his release, Julie has been involved in one court case after another—the last one an acquittal in a forgery rap. Now they're mentioning his name because he has a hidden interest in the discotheque in which the go-go girl worked. Julie has

told friends, "I love those press notices. They make me valuable."

About three years ago, this corner carried an item mentioning still another well-documented hood. He went by the name of Ernie (the Hawk) Rupolo and the information we had was that he was being sought by underlings of Vito Genovese because he had given police information about the crime overlord before Vito was sent to prison. We mentioned he was living in Baldwin. Next day there was a frantic call from a woman who said she was his wife and wouldn't we please come over so they could tell us how wrong the item was. I had coffee in their Baldwin bungalow and Mrs. Rupolo trotted out a pretty little girl she identified as their child. "How can you hurt her," she asked me. "What do you think the publicity will do to her when she starts school next year?" Next on stage in his underwear came Ernie the Hawk, a patch over the eye that had succumbed to a bullet in his youth, and a twisted mouth that also was a scar of battle.

The Hawk pooh-poohed the idea that he was hiding from an execution, said he wasn't afraid of anybody, and took off some clothes to show where he had been tortured by lit cigarets in the hands of hostile hoods. He'd recently been released from prison and for the benefit of Mrs. Rupolo and me, he said, "I ain't ever getting in no more trouble." So we promised we wouldn't embarrass his little girl and through the next year or so Ernie repaid us with some information about what was going on in gangland. He couldn't have lived up to his promise about going straight—otherwise he might still be living in that bungalow. As it is, a man he used to mention quite a bit (Sonny Franzese) has been indicted for his murder.

Item carried here the other day about the Holiday Inn in Rockville Centre was misinterpreted by some readers. We mentioned the motel had gone into bankruptcy and been taken over by landlord Tom Moffatt. But we never meant to give the impression it was closed. Moffatt is operating a taut ship and the fine Michael's Steak House on the lower level is conducting business as usual . . . Don Rodney, one of the island's best entertainers and a long-time member of the Guy Lombardo band, opened last night at the Caucus Restaurant on Old Country Road, Mineola, with his guitars and pleasing vocals.