

Some day, they're gonna run.

My partner, Frank, and I are fairly contented D.I.N.K.s – dual-income, no kids. Okay, one income and one attempting to start a new career; almost the same thing, just less money. I admire Lyndsey's recent post as she wrote about wanting children. The world doesn't have enough great parents, so more power to her. I look at a baby and think "what a cutie – NOW – but could I deal with it for eighteen more years?" You already know the answer to that question. No effin' way.

That said we are fortunate to have great nephews and nieces. They're Frank's but I get them by, what, not marriage (there's that soap box again). I guess by partnership? Whatever. They're great; we get to play with and spoil them for days at a time and then give them back.

The youngest, James and Mica, are five-year-old twins. James is thick and stout like a linebacker; Mica (older by four seconds) is a waif. They don't look at all alike but often interact like they're attached to each other. It's fun to watch. And they say the darnedest things. On a recent visit, James was being punished for, I dunno, probably something any boy would do and Mica said, "Sometimes James doesn't make the right choices." Perceptive kid, that Mica. I know twenty-year-old athletes who make poorer choices than a five year old. Most involve beer or sex (often beer AND sex).

We also have older nephews in California: Mario, the aloof 13-year-old, and Gino, the 16-year-old future Pulitzer-prize winner. They both inherited the immense brainpower of their parents and definitely belong to the FHA – Future Hotties of America. Ladies, look out. Men too – who can tell at this age? Mario is already working it with his Bieber hair (cue the long narcissistic gaze in the mirror) and GQ-like attention to couture.

Gino, formerly a three-sport athlete (baseball, basketball and soccer), ditched it all to take up running. He made it to the state championships this year in Fresno while maintaining a 4.0+ GPA and writing his first novel, a detective story. The kid is brilliant. So is Mario, a soccer jock with dreams of playing for Manchester United. We're friggin' proud gay uncles.

I was exchanging e-mails recently with Jared, a bisexual former pro hockey player that I befriended while researching a screenplay. We were discussing a summer rafting trip with the older boys and how much fun we had. Jared said to enjoy it while it lasted because someday they're gonna run.

What?



"Sure," Jared said. "They're reaching the age where they start to distance themselves from their parents. Sooner or later, a friend will trash gay people and they'll need to deal with you. Just prepare yourself."

That couldn't happen, could it? I mean, we changed their diapers. We watched their ball games, introduced them to laser tag and disc golf and white-water rafting. We took them camping and to the beach. I made them pigs-in-a-blanket, damn it. You mean to tell me some kid that doesn't even know me could make Gino or Mario rethink our relationship with them? Make them question the "gay uncles?"

And I knew it was true.

And the thought just about kills me.

Maybe they'll do the right thing. Maybe they'll say what great uncles we are, and how much fun we have together (and maybe they'll pop the idiot kid in the mouth for asking such a stupid question). Or, maybe they'll keep quiet. Stew about it. Wonder if what they think about their gay uncles is right. Maybe our next time together will include: "Nay, I've got other things to do" or "I'd rather do that with my friends." And maybe, someday, when we try to hug them, they'll run the other way.

Maybe they'll go and come back, right? Teenagers do that. The parents "don't know anything" for a while then they suddenly need parents again (laundry is usually involved). Uncles too? If they watch enough media or search the web, they'll find enough reasons to shun us. There are plenty of people who would applaud that decision.

It comes to this: did we pour enough love into them to make a difference? Enough love to counter the hate and the outside forces that think "gay uncles" are wrong?

We'll see. For now, I'm contemplating their Christmas presents and looking forward to that hug when I see them. And if they run the other way, I'll swallow hard and pray that – someday – they'll run back to us.