

Childhood Trauma

I don't remember why I needed the band aid in the first place. I'd probably fallen off my bike, dove onto the playground grass, bumped the wrong branch while climbing a tree, pick your favorite of the infinite reasons kids get skinned knees. The why is not the story. Just know that there was a band aid, and that, as far as I was concerned, it would remain adhered to my leg until the day I died if need be.

It was one of those fabric band aids, the flexible kind lacking any cartoon characters or bright colors but with the sticking power of Gorilla Glue. They survive showers, for god's sake! And I was prepared to avoid the pinching, stinging agony that was band aid removal even if it meant I had to adopt the thing as a new addition to my body. At five years old, this was the hill I was prepared to die on.

So, you can imagine the scene when my parents finally confronted me. "It's already half falling off!" they declared.

"No!" came my futile reply. But, alas, it was all for naught! They were a united front and no amount of whining, weeping, or wheedling could move their stony hearts. I was led to the bathroom.

They sat me down on the edge of the tub, as dry and empty as their promises would prove to be: "It'll be over so fast you'll hardly notice."

We haggled. Back, "Please?" And forth, "It would be done already if you'd cooperate." Until, at last, a bargain was struck.

Dad would peel the band aid off slowly, he promised. The process would last longer, but minimize my suffering in each moment. These terms of surrender, while unideal, were tolerable. Like a fool, I extended my leg for the execution.

"YAAGH!" I squealed and pulled away, bearing witness to the worst sin a parent can commit: "You *lied* to me."

My tormenters could barely stifle their laughter. "Well, isn't it better to have it over with?" Said my dad, in a patronizing attempt to sooth my angry spirit.

"No! It was *terrible!* And *you lied!*" I raged. Sure, technically they were right. It had hurt less to remove it all in one fell swoop. But the shock! My cheeks flushed crimson with the burn of betrayal; to a five-year-old, there are few things more painful.

They hugged me and sent me back out to play, as if everything were normal. As if I could just forget what had happened and move on. But there is no band aid that can cover this wound; besides, they would probably just rip that one off, too! I fumed as I flew back and forth on my swing set, forgiving but never forgetting, a little more jaded than the day before.