

STUPID PARENTS



by Armando Simón

Why, oh, why are so many parents so utterly stupid when it comes to their children?

I recently visited friends and parked in the driveway next to their car. Later that night, as I backed up out of the driveway, to my horror there were two tykes in their tricycles right next to my window—below eye level. Because it was dark, because they were so small, because the car parked next to me blocked my view and blocked their view of my entering the car, and because there was no adult next to them, they had been invisible. And if I had delayed my departure by a *mere 10 seconds* (!), they would have been behind my car. And because they were so small their heads did not reach the top of the car trunk, they would have been invisible.

They could not see me. I could not see them. And the “accompanying” adult was fifty feet away, oblivious to it all.

Without a shadow of a doubt—of this there is no doubt in my mind—I would have unintentionally killed them. Of that I have no doubt in my mind and, after I let them pass, for an hour afterwards I was a nervous wreck.

And not only would those two children have died, but I would also have been arrested and lambasted as a murderer of children and probably spent the rest of my life in prison.

In one of my stories inside a collection of fictional tales (*This That and the Other*) I write about a family that love each other, live in a perfect neighborhood, is well liked by everyone—and they die in an accident where they play no part. I related the story to some friends who were shocked and angry at the unexpected end and I explained to them that you can be living a nice, decent, life, be doing nothing wrong, but out of the clear blue, through no fault of your own, you can be fatally struck by a truck, you can be falsely accused of rape, you can lose your job because somebody decided (wrongly) that you are a racist, you can have a heart attack. And so on. Something that you have no control over and is unexpected, and even stupid, can destroy your life.

So, I repeat: why, oh, why are so many parents so utterly stupid when it comes to their own children?