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**Traumarama By Jenny**

**Dispatches From The Trenches Of Adoptive Parenting**

This is a blog about being mum to 11 year-old Rosie; half tiger, half lawyer, adopted by us when she was 4. Only the names and disguising details are made up. Bad jokes and gut-wrenching sense of guilt all my own.

Health warning: look elsewhere on the interweb for tales of epic therapeutic parents, apparently gliding like swans through their children’s volatility. This blog contains my emotional fall-out, the only place I let out what I’m left with after I’ve hugged, empathised, swept, and emailed, on repeat.

My daughter is brave, smart, funny and many other fabulous things. But she also regularly brings me to the very edge of my sanity. This is no one’s fault, certainly not her, not me or my partner, and not even Rosie’s vulnerable birth parents. The fact that she has this effect on me is not because I am deficient in some way, as our therapist reminds me every session (and although my unhelpful inner voice often suggests this). It is because her needs are so overwhelming that anyone would struggle.  
Trauma is a word that is now bandied around flippantly, but it means fearing for your life (on a regular basis in the case of chronic trauma). What follows is what it feels like to parent a child who spent her crucial first years constantly in thatsurvival mode. These are the moments that together add up to my experience of secondary trauma. I hope it helps non-adopters understand a little more how our children struggle just to live, and how we parents struggle to care for them, much as we love them and wanted them.   
  
My partner and I are ‘lucky’ that, so far, we only experience verbal aggression and the odd bit of kicking, not so much of the serious physical violence that many adopters experience daily. But even verbal aggression has an effect when it happens many times a day. And we’re very aware that Rosie’s teenage years are just over the horizon.

\*\* Obviously, all names and other identifying details have been changed. Our girl’s privacy comes first. \*\*