

An Open Letter of Apology to My Future Self For Introducing Our Toddler to “Whoomp, There It Is” by Tag Team

By K.E. Flann

There’s nothing I’d like more than to characterize what happened as a moment of thoughtlessness. I wish I could dismiss my decision as a simple, albeit shortsighted, homage to an unmistakable similarity with the toddler-speak phrase, *Whoopsie! There it is!* But I knew what I was doing—which was whatever it took to end the scourge of “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt.” I couldn’t go over it. I couldn’t go under it. So, I went nuclear. This is not intended as an excuse, but rather as an explanation of the accountability that I accept.

The consequence of going nuclear is the radiation. I’d like to tell you that you’ll be okay. I could be like, *Don’t worry. You won’t experience internal bleeding or the destruction of bone marrow unless there are super high doses of exposure.* Unfortunately, the worst-case scenario is imminent. It’s something I’ll have to live with. More importantly, it’s something you’ll have to live with. It won’t seem that bad the first dozen times you have Tag Team in full effect, kicking the flow with DC The Brain Supreme, and his man Steve Roll’n. We’re party people, right? We like to jump, jump rejoice, just like anyone else does. You might even think you imagined the potential harm that my decision could cause. But if I let you believe that, I’d be gaslighting you. The party is over here *and* it’s over there.

Our relationship has had its issues—just as one example, I’ve selfishly claimed the moment on the lips, leaving you with the lifetime on the hips. That’s why it won’t occur to you right away, when you’re winded during yet another sing-along, that nine times is a lot of repetitions of a chorus. You’ll attribute the shortness of breath to general lack of fitness from eating stray tater tots. You’ll wave the thought away like you just don’t care. You’ll shake your derriere. You’ll think about how *these three words mean you’re gettin’ busy.* Then, you’ll be preoccupied by the fact that there are actually four words.

As with other foolhardy toddler endeavors, such as answering *Why?* or attempting one-hour car rides, the situation will be your problem, not mine. I can only say that I didn’t grasp the extreme mood swings that exposure can cause in small children, and I also did not apprehend the way symptoms

increase over time. I understand that this explanation doesn't reduce the suffering I have caused, and it doesn't reduce culpability. It's simply a context that I am sharing.

During the opening bars, your child will gaze at you in the manner of little Drew Barrymore in *Firestarter*, a telepathic insistence on a heartfelt solo of *Tag Team, back again*. You sang those words the first time because they were the only ones you knew, and for your toddler, like a lawyer, precedents are everything. Soon after this, a wild euphoria will erupt, triggered by *Shaka-laka-shaka-laka-shaka-laka-shaka*. Tell-tale signs include spinning, screaming, and careening around the room. This will always result in a face plant or rug burn, leading to another symptom of acute exposure—swelling and redness.

The uncontrollable sobbing will continue into the call and response section, *Can you dig it? We can dig it!* Appropriate emergency response is for your husband to cradle the child on the floor while you frantically continue to dance for fear that failure to do so will incite more hysteria. You'll stuff down the concern that if something happens to you, these Nest kid-cam images will be your last—a middle-aged woman doing the shovel as if it's part of a hostage negotiation.

The silver lining to the fact that the child always comes in too hot, never finishing the song, is that you may never be asked why DC The Brain Supreme wants a honey to dip it in. Or whether gin and juice is available at your house. Or what the *B-double-O-T-Y* did to deserve being slammed, dunked, flipped, and ridden. Or most significantly, who *Puffin' Dank* is.

Regardless, you'll never be able to un-see your husband taking it back to the old school because he's an old fool who's so cool. You'll never be able to un-hear the cherubic voice of a toddler shouting, "Alexa, play 'Whoomp, There It Is' by Tag Team!"

I'm sorry.