

## Document A

"I'll really *have* to tell her today — even if everything doesn't seem absolutely right for it. A person could go on this way for weeks", Ferrelyn told herself firmly, as she finished dressing.

Gordon Zellaby was at the last stage of his breakfast when she reached the table. He accepted her good morning kiss absent-mindedly, and presently took himself off to his routine — once briskly round the garden, then to the study, and the Work in progress.

Ferrelyn ate some corn-flakes, drank some coffee, and accepted a fried egg and bacon. After two nibbles she pushed the plate away decisively enough to arouse Angela from her reflections.

"What's the matter?" Angela inquired from her end of the table. "Isn't it fresh?"

"Oh, there's nothing *wrong* with it", Ferrelyn told her. "I just don't happen to feel eggy this morning, that's all."

Angela seemed uninterested, when one had half-hoped she would ask why. An inside voice seemed to prompt Ferrelyn: "Why not now? After all, it can't really make much difference *when*, can it?" So she took a breath. By way of introducing the matter gently she said:

"As a matter of fact, Angela, I was sick this morning."

"Oh, indeed", said her stepmother, and paused while she helped herself to butter. In the act of raising her marmaladed toast, she added: "So was I. Horrid, isn't it?"

Now she had taxied on to the runway, Ferrelyn was going through with it. She squashed the opportunity of diverting, forthwith:

"I think", she said, steadily, "that mine was a rather special kind of being sick. The sort", she added, in order that it should be perfectly clear, "that happens when a person might be going to have a baby, if you see what I mean".

Angela regarded her for a moment with thoughtful interest, and nodded slowly.

"I do", she agreed. With careful attention she buttered a further area of toast, and added marmalade. Then she looked up again.

"So was mine", she said.

Ferrelyn's mouth fell a little open as she stared. To her astonishment, and to her confusion, she found herself feeling slightly shocked... But... Well, after all, why not? Angela was only sixteen years older than herself, so it was all very natural really, only... well, somehow one just hadn't expected it... It didn't seem quite... After all, Daddy was a triple grandfather by his first marriage...

Besides, it was all so unexpected... It somehow hadn't seemed likely... Not that Angela wasn't a wonderful person, and one was very fond of her, but, sort of as a capable elder sister... It needed a bit of readjusting to...

She went on staring at Angela, unable to find the right-sounding thing to say, because everything had somehow turned the wrong way round...

Angela was not seeing Ferrelyn. She was looking straight down the table, out of the window at something much further away than the bare, swaying branches of the chestnut. Her dark eyes were bright and shiny.

The shininess increased and sparkled into two drops sparkling on her lower lashes. They welled, overflowed, and ran down Angela's cheeks.

A kind of paralysis held Ferrelyn. She had never seen Angela cry. Angela wasn't that kind of person...

## Document B

Being part of a blended family<sup>1</sup> or a step-family<sup>2</sup> is not an easy transition by any stretch of the imagination<sup>3</sup>. There are so many circumstances, so many variables, and just so many people that are contributing factors to being part of a step-family, that you truly have no idea what you will be up against from one week to the next. You go into your relationship with the best of intentions and the picture of how things will be when you merge<sup>4</sup> together to raise a family together and then life really begins.

I don't regret my ventures in step-parenting, I just wish that I had been better prepared for what to really expect. If you start out in a relationship with younger step-children the problems seem small, just like the children, but they grow right along with the children. I have found that being part of a step-family has resulted in casualties<sup>5</sup> of the war, or what I like to call the side effects of a step-family. (...)

The notion of blending two families together to create the perfect *Brady Bunch* lifestyle is a wonderful idea and it would be nice if it always worked out that way. But if you notice, there are no other parents or other siblings or meddling in-laws<sup>6</sup> on the *Brady Bunch*, in the real world those things do exist and our lives can become more like a drama than a half-hour sitcom. The idea is nice, but the reality is not always so picturesque. Remembering that blending two families can be so very different for each and every family and you never know what the outcome will be, is sound advice for any parent getting ready to take the next step and become part of a step-family!

Rae Anna Blake, *Side Effects of a Step-Family*, July 16, 2008

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1. blended family (exp.)

['blendɪd 'fæmɪli] =

*famille recomposée*

2. step-family (n.) [step 'fæmɪli] =

*belle-famille*

3. by any stretch of the imagination (exp.)

[baɪ 'eni streɪtʃ əv ði:

ɪ,mædʒɪ'neɪʃən] = definitely not the case

4. merge (v.) [mɜːdʒ] = combine

5. casualty (n.) ['kæʒjʊltɪ] =

accident

6. meddling in-laws (n.)

['medlɪŋ 'ɪnlɔːz] = relatives by marriage who are interfering