

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE?

"... and I'll be the guy hanging on the back." "...I'm going to be a doctor like my daddy." "I'm going to be Batman." "I'm going to be an engineer." "When I grow up, I'm going to have a bionic arm...maybe two." When I grow up. "I'm going to be. Each little boy's face was alight with anticipation as he presented his plans for the time "when I'm grown up." Each little BOY. The little girls listened quietly. ~~Statedly~~-Contentedly? Passively. I looked at the little girls. "And what are YOU going to be when YOU grow up," I asked in a bright and anticipatory way. Stunned silence. Astonishment. Bewilderment. Confusion. There was not one firm, confident response. The little boys looked mildly interested. With prodding, the females of tomorrow's world began to think. Linda always had good ideas. We looked expectantly at her. Linda said slowly, "I think, when I grow up, I'll probably be a mommy." AHA! and OF COURSE! Each little girl sighed with relief and jumped on the wagon. THEY would be mommies TOO. The little boys nodded.

"Little boys are going to be daddies, aren't they?" I asked. Total agreement. "Little boys are going to be daddies AND doctors and firemen and engineers. Little girls are going to be mommies. And what else?" Stunned silence. Astonishment, Bewilderment, Confusion. Back to Linda. "Well," she slowly, "I'm probably going to be a nurse, too." The other little girls announced with relief that THEY would be nurses, TOO. "Aww," "we're just copying Mommy." Thus challenged, the other girls

FRIBS AND GIBS

furrowed their brows and began to think. Slowly, haltingly, little females began to envision for themselves a place in the great world. "I'm going to be a teacher, I guess," said Cathy. And that was it. The field was wide open for boys but little girls could only be nurses, teachers, or "just a nurse, I guess."

Do we as parents and teachers make sure we give equal consideration to the futures of our girl children as well as to the futures of our boy children?— futures as independent, self-reliant, self-supporting, world enriching individuals? Rearing a girl child to believe her only future depends on entrapping a man to support her is hobbling her whole being as surely as the ancient Chinese bound the feet of their females. Does our culture of this modern day still so restrict the thinking of little girls?

I gave it one more try. "Little boys said they are going to be firemen, policemen, engineers, doctors, and even a man with two bionic arms. Can't girls be anything but nurses or teachers or nannies?" Megan came to the rescue and as all waited expectantly she announced grandly, "I...I am going to be a fairy godmother!"