

Queen bees and kingpins not perfect

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—Do mean girls become mean moms?

Not necessarily, but if enough cattiness remains under their well-dressed and well-coiffed exteriors they end up perpetuating the "perfect-parent" myth and leaving everyone else feeling inadequate, says Rosalind Wiseman, the author of "Queen Bees & Wannabes," which was the basis of the Lindsay Lohan flick "Mean Girls."

And these women marry "kingpin dads," who take charge of too many situations and always act as if they're speaking on behalf of the group—even when they don't know anyone else's name.

This forces an almost unbreakable cycle, Wiseman says, because the apples don't fall far from the tree. If you see children behaving in a way that makes you cringe, look at the role models, she adds.

"Kids can be a great mirror. It's a great exercise to ask yourself why you are making the extravagant purchases that you do, or 'Why I am I reacting to this person in such a horrible way?'"

In her new book, "Queen Bee Moms and Kingpin Dads" (Crown), Wiseman first gathers insights and opinions from parents, teachers, coaches and other important adults in children's lives and then she advises how to deal with all

these folks with your pride and values intact. She also takes readers through Back-to-School Night, big sporting events and the college application process, examining the different ways to approach these milestones that have become as important to parents as they are to students.

"You judge yourself and other parents according to perfect-parent myths," says Wiseman, a mother of 3- and 5-year-old boys.

Of course, there is no such thing as perfect parents, which leaves real parents conflicted, especially when all sorts of advice is thrown at them. First, parents are encouraged to be their children's advocates—fight for

that great teacher, make your kid's case to get more time on the ball field—and then they're told that they should let kids work their problems out for themselves.

How do parents know which battles they're supposed to fight? Wiseman wonders. "You can't blame people for being inconsistent parents if they're receiving inconsistent advice."

Unfortunately, there is, says Wiseman, though a lot of blame going around, and it comes mostly from the queen bees and kingpins who criticize others as a self-defense tactic when they realize they can't do it all.



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Humans may pass superbugs to pets

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA—People can get plenty of diseases from animals—bird flu, for one.

Now there are signs dogs and cats can catch a dangerous superbug from a people.

At a large Philadelphia veterinary hospital, scientists report that over a three-year period, 38 dogs, cats and other pets caught a drug-resistant staph infection.

They think six of the animals caught the bug from hospital workers. But it's likely that at least some of the other cases were spread to pets by their owners, said Shelley Rankin, chief of clinical microbiology at Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine.

"I don't think it's necessarily that you come home and pat Fluffy on the head and then Fluffy gets sick," said Rankin, who presented the data this

week at a medical conference in Atlanta.

But given that an estimated 1 in every 100 people carry such bacteria in their noses, it could be transmitted by closer contact, she added.

"We pick them up, kiss them on the face. We let them lick us," she said. "Then they lick their skin."

The animals were infected with methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, a bacterial infection that is typically hard to treat, although all the pets recovered.

They included 26 dogs, eight cats, three parrots and one rabbit. The dogs developed skin and ear infections. The cats got urinary tract infections, the parrots, skin infections, the rabbit, an ear infection. In people, the germ often appears as a nasty skin infection but can also cause other symptoms.

Researchers don't know if the bacteria spreads from animal to animal, although dogs don't naturally harbor it.

The animals may have caught the bug at other vet clinics before they arrived at Penn's Ryan Veterinary

Hospital or they may have caught it from their owners, Penn researchers said.

Last year, Penn's veterinary and human medical schools began a study of the health of pets and their owners. But want to expand that number.

Biker see country

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pedaled. For awhile, she was a passenger in the cart, but her weight caused the rear tire to flatten beneath her. These days, Camfield just pushes the machine at a pace they can all live with.

Both Goldie and her human appeared tired as they rested a while with Jake Wednesday morning. They were all lying or sitting on the sidewalk beside Holy Innocents Episcopal Church on Chestnut Street, where Camfield had just photographed the sanctuary.

"She looks like an old lady, but she's very chipper," Camfield said, smiling at Goldie.

Jake can be a brat, especially when he picks on his adopted sister as they are walking along behind the bicycle.

"He'll pull on her ear," Camfield explained. "She'll put up with it for so long, then she'll beat the crap out of him. When she gets tired of it,

she'll nail him."

Camfield thinks Goldie secretly enjoys it.

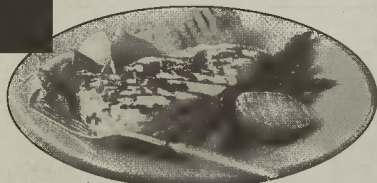
All is enigma at night, when the two daytime foes snuggle up together.

Goldie and Camfield, who consider Jake a newcomer to their expedition, have walked or ridden through New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

"We've been through a couple of the states twice," said Camfield. She plans to reach Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey by June 17.

During all that time, Camfield has been taking pictures of all kinds of churches, as well as mosques near Richmond and in Savannah.

While she isn't sure where she was at the time, "I got to sit outside a black church and listen to the minister preach and the people sing," Camfield said.



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