

An Open Letter to Penny and Charlie  
SLCC Community Writing Center  
Salt Lake Teens Write Anthology | Mentor Feature  
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Dearest Babies,

From the moment we brought you home individually, our life has changed dramatically. For better or worse, you have truly brought us so much joy and have filled the house with warmth, camaraderie, and endless love. We have deeply cherished the moments of endearing affection you have shown to both of us.

When we brought you home, Charlie in 2009, and Penny a short year later, you were both absolutely darling. Naturally, both of you—with your beautiful big eyes, soft hair, and small cries—left us wilted and weak, always yearning to hold you closer before you grew too big. Even now, you both are sweet, playful, loving, and curious. But you know what they say. Curiosity killed the cat, which brings us to the reasons for writing this letter.

First, we'd like you both to know that we love you dearly and forever. We will always love you; but your behavior over the past year or so has tested our patience and while our unconditional love is unwavering, our sanity is not, nor is our pocketbook.

To the both of you: Your graciousness and acknowledgement of how much we provide for you is subpar—at best. At times your cooperation is nonexistent and your ability to compromise exists solely on bribery. Your pride and sense of entitlement is ridiculous, to say the least. Your compassion toward each other could be better, and that is speaking positively. You have yet to show any empathy toward anything or anyone. To put it bluntly, you are often downright rude, not only to your parents, but to guests in our home.

If you don't believe me, you need not look any further than last week. Father left his keys and wallet on the kitchen counter like always. Charlie, you quietly climbed up on the counter and with a single deliberate swipe, pushed it on to the floor. Startled, we ran to the kitchen only to find you staring at us blankly. Not even a blink. Just a cold dramatic stare as you reached to scratch your head, after which you dangerously jumped down from the counter and exited the room without a sound. We were speechless.

And Penny, while you seem to exhibit some cordiality on most days, it hardly outweighs your incessant whining and high-pitched shrieks of impatience. Just a few days ago, Saturday to be exact, your father and I decided to sleep in a bit longer than usual after thinking both of you were still sleeping quietly in your beds. But then you stood outside our bedroom door crying to be let in, refusing to be quiet until we opened the door so you could take over our bed with your constant movement and rowdiness. This has happened over and over again; quite frankly, we are tired and worn.

And that is just the tip of the iceberg. This morning as I left for work, you were wrestling each other, running and jumping from couch to couch as if it were a playground for children. Even against our house rules you continued your horseplay as I tried to tell you goodbye for the day, and when I opened the front door Charlie darted out to the street. Fully unaware of the dangers of not looking both ways, the neighbor's van screeched to a stop, just barely avoiding a tragedy. And Penny, as confident and sure of yourself as you've always been, climbing the bookshelf is a recipe for disaster, yet you do it anyway. In front of us. Even after we tell you not to. All of this has taken its toll on us.

We'd like to make you fully aware of your actions, as you both are clearly unable to comprehend actual damage that you've done: The couches, the rug, the new dinette set, the buffet, the bookshelf, the lamp, and the cabinets—oh, the cabinets! Two weeks after remodeling the kitchen, you both decided that it would be fun to scratch and chew on the cabinets. We don't even know what to say. Only dogs do that. Have our sweet kittens turned into naughty dogs?! I say that figuratively, of course. I know

you are not dogs, in fact, I'm sure you are insulted that I'd have such thoughts about my own sweet babes. For that we are sorry. But do you see our point?

Mother feels like such a meanie when she must lock you in the bathroom because you are being so naughty. And father hates to swat at you when you've been disobedient. But enough is enough. We have spoiled you long enough and we need to see some change.

For starters, would it kill you to at least fake being pleasant to us if we interrupt your naptime? We realize that naps are important for your young and growing bodies, but sleeping is hardly a long-term activity, and we feel it has made you both lazy. Also, we really hate to do this to you, but we're going to have to cut down on the expensive dinners of lamb, beef tenderloins, and salmon every single day. We've been awful to allow this to continue for so long, but for a three and four-year-old, it's just absurd and uneconomical. You'll just have to get over your pickiness and learn to like the food we so lovingly provide. And finally, let's talk about your grooming and hygiene. You are hardly able to hold a brush, let alone bathe yourself in a tub, and while you are both meticulous about cleaning yourself when you *really* feel the need, the way you go about it is inappropriate and appalling. We certainly didn't teach you these habits. With that said, there is a proper time and place to lick your bottom, and it's not on the coffee table in front of guests.

Much love,  
Your mother