

Lydia Davis - Oral History (with Hiccups)

My sister died last year leaving two daughters. My husband and I have decided to adopt the girls. The older one is thirty-three and a buyer for a department store, and the younger one, who just turned thirty, works in the state budget office. We have one child still living at home, and the house is not big, so it will be a tight fit, but we are willing to do this for their sake. We will move our son, who is eleven, out of his room and into the small room I have been using as a sewing room. I will set up my machine downstairs in the living room. We will put a bunk bed for the girls in my son's old room. It is a fair-sized room with one closet and one window, and the bathroom is just down the hall. We will have to ask them not to bring all their things. I assume they will be willing to make that sacrifice in order to be part of this family. They will also have to watch what they say at the dinner table. With our younger son present we don't want open conflict. What I'm worried about is a couple of political issues. My older niece is a feminist, while my husband and I feel the tables have been turned against males nowadays. Also, my younger niece is probably more pro-government than either my older niece or my husband and me. But she will be away a good deal, traveling for her job. And we have developed some negotiating skills with our own children, so we should be able to work things out with the two of them. We will try to be firm but fair, as we always were with our older boy before he left home. If we can't work things out right away, they can always go to their room and cool off until they're ready to come back out and be civil. Excuse me.