

## **‘Just Like Anyone Else’ Ivanka Trump Wanted Love**

**The Australian**

**By Caroline Overington**

**December 3, 2016**

There are a billion things to love about Ivanka Trump’s childhood, as detailed in her recent biography, but my favourite anecdote? It’s the one where her dad decided to buy a casino in Atlantic City, for in that casino was a foyer and in that foyer was a Perspex box, and in that box was a steel claw, suspended above a collection of stuffed toys.

Ivanka, being the daughter of the owner, was allowed to play all day for no money. And if the claw refused to seize the toy she wanted? Ivanka could — and did — tap the security guard on the shoulder, he’d open the box with a key and give her whatever toy she wanted. As she writes: “Sucks to be me, right?” Right on.

Ivanka had the keys to the box of stuffed toys. And probably the keys to the candy version, too. That’s surely every kid’s dream. Or is it? Let’s delve a little deeper ...

Now 35, married and a mother of three, Ivanka was but 27 when she wrote *The Trump Card: Playing to Win in Work and Life*. I can’t remember the book making much of a splash when it landed but now that Ivanka’s dad has been elected president, it has been taken apart and mocked.

As memoirs go, you’d have to agree that it has something of a fatal flaw, in that it lacks a certain self-awareness. Take the opening line which, I kid you not, reads: “In business, as in life, nothing is ever handed to you.”

She goes on: “Yes, I’ve had the great good fortune to be born into a life of wealth and privilege, with a name to match ... Yes, I’ve chosen to build my career on a foundation built by my father and grandfather ...”

But that doesn’t mean it has been easy. The first time Ivanka had to walk into a board meeting, at the age of 25, she felt sure that all the middle-aged men sitting around the table thought she was there only because of her dad.

In fact, she says, “we didn’t rise to our positions in the Trump company by any kind of birthright. We had to earn our place. And we’ve all had some kind of advantage somewhere along the way ... People think Donald Trump’s daughter could not possibly have ascended to the role of vice-president of his real estate company for any reason other than the fact that I’m my father’s daughter ... In fact, despite my title, my pedigree, I’m just like any other young woman in the workplace.”

This is complete nonsense, but also not what I’m looking for.

Growing up Trump. That's what I'm looking for. Ivanka obliges. "When I was a child my home was the top three floors of Trump Towers on Fifth Avenue," she writes, "and it had my father's name on it, up there in big, bold letters. In fact, when I went to boarding school, they were the first buildings I'd lived in that didn't say TRUMP."

Ivanka's bedroom was on the 68th floor, and "in many ways it was a lot like the bedrooms of other little girls my age". Except, of course, that "during this time, Michael Jackson was living one floor below us ...". The book is filled with lines like that, including this one: "After my father bought the Plaza ..." And: "I went to dad and said, why don't you surprise Tiffany with a credit card for Christmas?"

Lest you think she was spoiled, Ivanka insists she was not. Her friends from boarding school would talk about "my jet, my villa, my yacht, my stuff" but "there was no room for that type of thinking" at Trump Towers.

Indeed, Ivanka once had to fly economy class to the south of France, while her mum sat up in first, something Ivanka regarded at the time as "the most spectacularly unfair development in the history of travel". She stood at the gate, saying: "That's totally not fair! Why do you get to fly first class?"

Her mother, Ivana, coolly replied: "You're modelling now, Ivanka. If you want to spend some of your modelling money and upgrade your ticket, great!"

Speaking of the modelling, Ivanka wants you to know that she saved her money, saying: "What I made, I sent straight over to Ace Greenberg at Bear Stearns who handled our family accounts." That came after the time she and her brothers Donald Jr and Eric decided to go into business, by opening a lemonade stand at their country estate. Problem was, they had a bodyguard whose presence intimidated potential customers. The guard ended up having to buy all the lemonade himself.

Now, some of you are perhaps thinking OK, enough. She's spoiled. But then comes this, from page 60: "When I was nine years old my parents sat me down and explained that they were having problems in their relationship ... and none of us had seen it coming." Like plenty of kids, Ivanka's first thought was: "This can't be happening. They have to get back together." But, later that same week, she saw a headline on a newspaper poster: "Love on the rocks!" A few days later, she was with one of her little school friends when she saw another poster, this time with a photograph of Marla Maples — described in the book as "a woman I'd never met" — being talked about as her father's new girlfriend.

Ivanka writes: "She was claiming she had spent the night with my father beneath a headline that shouted: The Best Sex I Ever Had!"

How was that for a nine-year-old? Mortifying. “It was the darkest, most difficult period in my life,” Ivanka says. Her dad moved out, and she found herself trying to find excuses to visit him at the office, just to see him.

Ivanka makes the best of this, saying neither of her parents had been the type to “spend their weekends at soccer and ballet recitals ... but they made sure there was a tremendous support system in place. In fact, outside my parents, I’d have to say my biggest childhood influences were Bridget and Dorothy, two wonderful Irish nannies!”

If you can’t feel bad for a nine-year-old in that situation, forced to rely on the help while the family implodes, you’ve got a heart of stone. So for those who say Ivanka’s book has no redeeming features, I disagree. The message is right there: you can give your kids every toy in the Perspex box, you can even give them the Plaza, and what, in the end, will they want? Not your money. Your time.

Source: [australian.au](http://australian.au)