

Susan Harding

*The Parent(hood) Trap: Imperfect Mothering in The Parent Trap (1998)*

The Parent Trap (1988) has three main mother figures – Elizabeth James, mother of Annie and Hallie; Meredith Blake, the bombshell blonde; and Chessy, the nanny. Elizabeth and Meredith compete for the twins' father, Nick Parker, falling into good mother and wicked stepmother roles while Chessy remains a neutral party, still possessing motherly qualities but with the mobility of a childless woman. Annie and Hallie fulfill the typical trickster-twin archetype as they seek the downfall of the wicked stepmother and the restoration of their true mother, completely ignoring the trauma of being unknowingly separated by their parents. Nick Parker fulfills the observant role of the patriarchy, benefiting from the conflict between all the women in the story.

Susan Harding is a creative writing major at Chapman University with minors in computer science and game development. She is from San Rafael, California. As a twin herself, she is very passionate about the representations of twins in media and twin culture.