

3 BROKEN HEARTS Cruel court ruling rips twins from mom today

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Bridget Marks will lose her 4-year-old twin daughters today - and it's going to cost her more than \$1,000 a day to visit them and as much as \$150 an hour to talk to them on the phone.

A state judge has ordered supervised visitation for the 38-year-old Manhattan mom. The children's wealthy father, Marks said, is insisting she pay for court-appointed social workers, who charge between \$100 and \$150 per hour.

"That's more than \$1,000 a day," Marks said yesterday, as she packed her children's luggage and struggled to fight back tears. "I don't have the money to pay for that."

At noon today, Marks, a former Playboy model and actress about to publish her first romance novel, will experience heartbreak as few mothers do.

She will have to say goodbye to identical twins she reared alone from birth, all because of a judge's order.

In one of New York's most unusual child custody battles ever, Manhattan Family Court Judge Arlene Goldberg awarded custody of the twins to their father, 54-year-old casino executive John Aylsworth.

Goldberg decreed that although Marks is a fit mother, it is in the best interests of her children that they live with their father because of Marks' "unbridled anger" toward him.

Aylsworth, chief operating officer of President Casino Inc., a riverboat gambling business based in St. Louis, fathered the twins during an extramarital affair with Marks.

Under the judge's order, Aylsworth and his wife of 34 years, Karen, 53, will move to New York.

Yesterday, Amber and Scarlet Aylsworth played their favorite board game, Candyland, sang songs and watched a video of their preschool graduation as their mother sobbed.

"Kiki," a lame pet Chihuahua the twins nursed back to health, got a wet goodbye kiss. Their father refuses to take their dog, Marks said.

"No!" Amber shouted, when asked if she wanted to live with her daddy, who apparently has told Amber she can now call his wife Karen her mommy.

Scarlet started to explain how she wants to stay with her real mother, but her lip quivered and she broke down into tears.

Amber frowned as she watched her sister. Then, they hugged their mother as all three wept in one another's arms.

In her ruling, Goldberg cited cases where New York appeals judges have declared children better off leaving a parent who badmouths the other parent.

But even a strong supporter of that principle in custody law, psychologist Richard Warshak of Dallas, said less severe remedies - like counseling for the accusatory parent and liberal visitation for the estranged parent - may make more sense for young children in a stable home.

"The idea that there should be an automatic transfer of custody is wrong," said Warshak, often labeled a father's-rights advocate and author of "Divorce Poison: Protecting the Parent-Child Bond from a Vindictive Ex."

Aylsworth and his wife have refused to speak to the press.

But the case has turned Marks into an outspoken critic of New York's Family Court. "This is a disgusting example of how people drunk with their own power ruin lives and destroy children," she said. "It is savage."