

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

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Robbie received the lab report which he went on to examine carefully.

Jamie and Ellie gathered close and scrutinized it with their big bright eyes.

The younger boy waited for some time before he asked, "Do you know what's on it, Robbie?"

"I can recognize this," Ellie said as she placed the tip of her plump index finger against the one-hundred percent figure on the report. "Can't understand much of anything else though."

"These two I know." Jamie pointed to the text that came before that. "Paternity... is!"

Zachary was speechless.

He had been speaking to them so earnestly, but all the rambunctious trio seemed interested in discussing was which words they could read.

"Quit messing around, you two," Charlotte said. "It's okay if you can't understand it, Robbie. Let Mommy..."

Robbie raised his head to regard Zachary. "It states that the probability of paternity is one-hundred percent. I know what that means."

"That's good." Zachary nodded in relief. "So from now on..."

"Can I have a couple more questions answered?" Robbie asked. "Could I?"

"Of course you could. Please ask away." Zachary was quite impressed with the boy's assertiveness at his age.

"You didn't know we're yours before the discovery of my allergy, did you?" Robbie asked.

"Yes." Zachary nodded.

“Would you have treated our Mommy and us equally well if you did not have this set of tests done?”

It was a crucial question that the boy had just tabled, and one which elevated the tension in the room in an instant.

The two other tots did not get the underlying implications and knew only to echo his words. “That’s right, would you?”

Mrs. Berry looked at Zachary intently, as she too was interested to know.

Charlotte was surprised at Robbie’s incisiveness. It was a question that she herself had not considered before.

Zachary deliberated before he offered up a response. “I was aware that she had kids right from the beginning, and was quite upset with her because I thought they were conceived with someone else. I must admit that I’ve overreacted and did some things that I’m not proud of. However...”

He raised his head to regard the three children, and continued with sincerity, “I’ve never once had the intention to harm any of you, nor have I hated your existence, and never have I considered giving up on your Mommy because of it. Therefore, my answer would be that I would have loved your mother and accepted all of you just the same, even if you were not of my own.”

His words touched Charlotte profoundly. When she revisited the countless occasions in which she had doubted him previously, he had not tried to harm the children once even while he was under the impression that they were Michael’s.

When she assumed that he was the one who had abducted her children when they went missing, he did not try to defend himself. Instead, he quietly went out to find them and return them to her. Even though he did threaten her then out of spite, he had not brought harm unto them, just like he said.

Out of consideration for the safety of the children when she got into some trouble, he had Spencer fetch the children and put them up with Henry. It may be a credit to his kindheartedness that he incidentally found out about Robbie’s allergy to the kiwi fruit, which in turn led him to the truth about their parentage.

He really was a tough talking softie.

"That's good to know." Mrs. Berry was almost tearing up at this point. "It's beyond question that the children are yours. I know Miss all too well. She had kept herself chaste all these years and had never been with any other."

"I know." Zachary curled his lips.

"Thank you!" Robbie took a deep drawl before he continued, "The next question is, does Mr. Henry know that we are your kids? If he doesn't, would he be able to accept us?"

"He doesn't know yet." Zachary thought Robbie was one with a rigorous mind, being able to adopt a multifaceted approach to considering issues. "He has always been fond of all of you, so I expect that he should be very happy when he does."

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Robbie's eyes dipped as he went silent, as though deep in contemplation.

Jamie was conversely anxious. "That's right. Grandpa really likes us, so I'm sure he would be more than happy to learn that we are his grandson's children."

"Does that mean we can't call him Grandpa anymore? Ellie asked.

"Seems like it," Jamie said while he tilted his head. "The kindergarten books mentioned that Daddy's grandpa is called great-grandfather."

"Ah, are we to address Grandpa as Great-Grandpa then?" Ellie's eyes widened in curiosity. "That doesn't have the same ring to it."

"Yeah, it doesn't." Jamie was all business when he expounded upon that, "Grandpa's Daddy's Grandpa, not ours..."

"Oh." Ellie nodded, unsure as to whether she actually understood.

"Is there anything else you would like to know?" Zachary asked Robbie.

"Would you be marrying Mommy?" the boy asked as he raised his head.

"Of course I will," Zachary replied without hesitancy. "I'll start preparation as soon as Grandpa comes to."

"Hooray!" Ellie cheered with her hands raised high. "I want to be the flower girl."

"Me too, me too." Jamie chimed in. "I want to invite my friends from kindergarten to attend Daddy and Mommy's wedding."

"That's wonderful. I'd like to extend invitations to some of our old neighbors," Mrs. Berry spoke excitedly. "And a few of Mr. Windt's former bodyguards who had taken care of us, as well as Fergie and the others..."

"No problem. We'll invite all of them." Jamie thumped upon his own chest. "Let me make the arrangements."

"Me too. I want to invite a few friends too..." Ellie added as she did not want to be left out.

"There's Ms. Longman and Ms. Cheney..."

"Yes, that's right. And my Ms. Wiklund too..."

The children went back and forth to no end as they fervently started getting into details about the wedding already.

Mrs. Berry uninhibitedly partook in it. Even the dozing Fifi had been jolted to wakefulness.

"Me too. Me too."

That put a smile on Charlotte's face. She extended her hands towards Robbie when she saw the boy looking worrisome. "Come here, you!"

Robbie slid off the couch and approached.

Charlotte pulled him into her embrace and kissed his forehead. "Do you have any other concerns, Robbie?"

"Go ahead and speak your mind." Zachary looked upon him with gentle eyes.

Robbie took a moment to think. "Marriage seems like a complicated affair. Marriage into a wealthy family, even more so. There are some things that I don't understand and cannot predict, so I keep having this feeling that things won't go swimmingly... Should you encounter any difficulty, would you give up on Mommy and on us?"

"I won't." Zachary ran his fingers through the boy's slight wavy curls. "There's no quitting in my books! Come what may, I'll let nothing stand in my way."

Robbie's eyes sparkled. Such awe-inspiring confidence really resonated with him. That had him nodding furiously. "Yes, I believe you!"

"Let's shake on it." Zachary had learned how to communicate with children. He heard that to them, a pinky promise held the same validity as a legal agreement.

Robbie immediately linked fingers with him. "Pinky, pinky, a hundred years to test. Whoever turns is a bastard's ass!"

"I want to do it too." Ellie ran over to join in when she saw Zachary and Robbie at it. "I want a thumb seal!"

"Me too..." Jamie limped over as well.

"Done!" Zachary did the pinky promise sealed with their thumbs and swore to marry Charlotte against all odds and give them all a blissful and warm place to call home.

The sight of this family of five reduced Mrs. Berry to a sobbing mess. In her heart, she thought: Miss has finally found herself a good man she could lean on, Mr. Windt. You can finally rest easy now.

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"Okay, will you call me Dad now?"

Zachary wanted so much to hear the children hail him as their father. Never before in his life had he gone to this length to please anyone.

These days, he had his office lined with books on parenting, and invested time and effort whenever possible to research into how to interact with children.

All that work just to convince these three little imps to willingly acknowledge him.

"I don't want to..." Ellie pouted.

Robbie and Jamie rescinded their own attempts when they saw their sister expressed her unwillingness.

"Is something wrong?" Zachary asked cautiously.

It could very well be the first time he had tried to be careful about what he said.

"Dad doesn't sound nice." Ellie tilted her head innocently. "I prefer Daddy."

"Yes. Yes..." Jamie went along and said. "If we address our mother as Mommy, we should also call you Daddy."

"Then Daddy it is," Robbie declared with finality.

"Uh huh," Jamie and Ellie concurred with a nod.

The trio exchanged looks between themselves before they looked to Charlotte, and Zachary.

However, none of them opened their mouth.

Zachary had his head in his hands. He yearned for them to hail him, but it seemed that much harder than he could have imagined.

"Well, hurry it up." Even Mrs. Berry got impatient.

Charlotte merely smiled silently.

"On three." Ellie waved her hand like an orchestral conductor. "One, two, three!"

“Daddy—”

The endearing qualities of their three voices were amplified loud and clear when they shouted in unison.

Zachary’s heart almost melted. He then drew them into his arms.

He wanted very much to kiss them the way Charlotte did, but he did not know how.

“Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, Daddy...”

The children crowded around Zachary as they kept calling, and even snuggled close to smother him with kisses.

Fifi was startled from her slumber and beat her wings until she landed on top of the man’s head. “Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!”

Overwhelmed by their fiery passion, he was at a righteous loss.

“Ha, this is just beautiful to behold.”

This scene had Mrs. Berry smiling from ear to ear.

Charlotte, however, was in tears.

She felt truly blessed for having something that she could not have imagined before coming to fruition so quickly.

If only she could continue to stay in this perfect moment. This was when a sharp pain shot up her right arm. It crept upwards until it reached her shoulders and then radiated outwards from there.

In an attempt to mask her discomfort, she picked up a cushion and pressed it against her arm.

The pain grew increasingly intense, as though there were tens upon thousands of ants gnawing at her blood vessels until it verged on exploding.

Unable to withstand it no more, Charlotte abruptly stood up and took refuge in the washroom.

"Huh?" The children were astounded when they turned to look in her direction. "What's up with Mommy?"

"I guess she might be overjoyed." Jamie clambered onto the couch and threw himself onto Zachary's broad shoulders. "Carry me, Daddy!"

"Okay." As his focus was on the kids, he paid little mind to it. However, he was concerned enough to turn to Mrs. Berry. "Could you kindly check on her?"

"Alright." She nodded and smiled as she got to her feet. "I'm sure all the excitement must have been a little too much. She probably went in to dry her eyes."

"Mommy's wept till she got snot on her..." Little Ellie imitated the way Charlotte cried. "Like this, boo hoo!"

"Don't do that. Bad Ellie," Robbie chided.

The little girl made a face at him before she ducked into the safety of Zachary's arms. "Hold me, Daddy!"