

The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book One: Chapter 11



Augustus stepped into his office to see Aria and Caden seated comfortably on one of his couches. Stephen placed a plate of cookies in front of them and handed them each a juice bottle as the DaLair patriarch entered. Ever efficient even Augustus had no idea how Stephen always managed to procure proper refreshments so quickly.

He sat down across from the content pair eyeing them carefully. They certainly didn't act like five-year-olds who had just survived a harrowing experience. In fact they seemed quite pleased with themselves. Augustus accepted the coffee Stephen offered while he considered his grandchildren. Despite their innocent looks he couldn't treat them like normal kids.

"All right...you two want to tell me why you are really here?"

Aria and Caden shared a look before Aria spoke up, "We're here to start Phase Two."

"Phase Two? Of what?"

"Our plan to get mommy and daddy back together, of course," Aria smiled as if it went without saying.

Augustus couldn't stop the look of surprise that suddenly plastered his face as he sputtered into his coffee cup. Clearing his throat he asked, "You have a plan?"

"Yes." Aria nodded. It was a plan almost a year in the making one they had carefully considered ever since they first asked their grandfather to tell them about their father. "Last night was Phase One. Daddy finally saw us so now he knows we're here. Now we have to start Phase Two."

"And just what is Phase Two?"

"To spend time with him, silly. Daddy needs motivation to talk to mommy," Aria said. "He also needs to get to know us."

"And we need to get to know him too," Caden added. Like his sister he was curious about the father they had yet to meet.

As much as he wanted a father it was important to be certain theirs was the right one for their mother. Their mother was the pinnacle of beauty and kindness and Caden would not settle for anything less than the best for her. He could only hope his biological father was the perfect match for her otherwise they would have to change their plans. That was the one point of contention between him and his sister who simply assumed their father would be as perfect as their mother.

"And you both came up with this."

"Yes," Aria said. "Daddy didn't try to see us at all last night. If he's too shy to come to us then we have to go to him."

Caden nodded in agreement.

"And grandpa...you're not allowed to be mean to daddy anymore. You have to be nice."

Augustus choked trying to finish his coffee while Stephen hid a smile. After a moment the DaLair patriarch said, "Now hold on..."

"No grandpa," Aria held up a hand and pointed at him. "Daddy needs encouragement so you have to be nice."

Caden solemnly nodded.

Augustus fell silent as he faced his serious minded grandchildren. From a very early age he knew something was different about the pair. While Aria said her first word before the age of one Caden remained silent until almost three when he finally began speaking in full sentences. From the time he could crawl Caden's favorite toy was a little child's play piano. Though it had only five keys he often tapped simple tunes that were instantly recognizable as nursery rhymes.

He kept to himself while Aria was far more gregarious; however, Augustus noticed her attitude and approach changed drastically depending on the people she was introduced to. On a number of occasions he saw her easily manipulate situations to her benefit especially with adults who naturally underestimated her because she was so young. It was clear to him the pair possessed intelligence far exceeding normal children. His suspicions were confirmed as soon as Caden was given a proper keyboard. Once Macey taught him the basics on how to play there was no stopping him.

Augustus often wondered if Macey was aware of her children's unique intelligence. Certainly she had to have an inkling given she raised them. On the other hand mothers tended to see their children through rose-colored glasses. In addition, the kids seemed intent on hiding their intelligence to avoid standing out. Their grades tended to be only slightly higher than average. In addition Caden shied from showing his full skills to large groups keeping his piano playing only for familiar ears unless he was playing on the street with the performer they liked.

"So what do you plan to do?"

"We're going to play hide and seek but you're not going to find us," Aria said, "that way we can spend time with daddy. After that we can talk about Phase Three and Four."

"Ah...I see," Augustus nodded his eyes glinted mischievously, "if I might make a suggestion..."

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Julius silently fumed as he listened to his children explain how they arrived to the office building only to be rejected at the door because no one knew their connection to him. He no longer cared about their failed meeting with Leon or the fact the deal had been salvaged by Aria's intervention. All he cared about was finding the person responsible for dismissing his children but even retribution was denied him when his father handled the receptionist.

"Such a spiteful old man," Katherine grumbled. "Come on baby, let's go on that date."

She clutched his arm but Julius jerked away glaring at her demanding, "What are you still doing here? This is an office building for people who work! Do you know anything about that?"

Katherine's mouth opened and closed several times as she struggled to think of an answer. No one had ever expected her to work. Her parents treated her like a princess and insisted she not worry about money. She reached for him again but he turned away grabbing a phone off the receptionist's desk and demanded security. A pair of security personnel in suits appeared moments later.

"Throw this woman out!" Julius gestured to Katherine. "She's barred from this building for life. If I see her here again it will be your heads!"

"Yes Mister DaLair!" the security personnel nodded immediately grasping her arms and dragging toward the door.

"Julius! Wait! Julius! You can't!"

He turned away in disgust heading toward the elevators. Only March gave Katherine a glance and smirked. It was about time his brother tossed her out. In fact it was long overdue. The woman was shameless and had no sense of propriety. It suddenly felt a lot more like spring and he couldn't wait to tell Rose the good news.

"Julius!" Katherine called as she was dragged out and tossed onto the sidewalk.

She stumbled and fell on her backside. Getting up quickly she moved to reenter but the security personnel barred her from the doors.

"Do you have any idea who I am? I'll have your jobs for this!"

Her threats fell on deaf ears. The only people with more authority than Julius were his brother and father. Since neither was fond of her they had no fear of the woman in front of them. They stood firm and refused her entry.

"Just you wait!" Katherine declared before stomping off completely unaware of paparazzi snapping photographs of the embarrassing scene.

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"Julius!" March called jogging to catch up to his brother.

Julius paused slowly catching his breath and tried to calm his racing heart. A migraine was beginning to form from the emotional roller coaster of the morning. His babies could have been abducted and he hadn't been there to protect them.

"Julius, it's okay," March said.

"How is it okay?"

"Well...for starters they are safe."

Julius sighed. They were safe. His father had successfully absconded them to his office where they would no doubt remain. Would he ever be able to spend time with them? Finally he spoke, "Yeah. They are safe and somehow saved our European deal."

March smirked, "That they did. Who knew Aria could speak German? I thought dad said they were living in Paris."

Julius grunted. Just the memory of his daughter seated in someone else's lap irritated him. He wanted to be the one to hold her.

"I wonder..."

"What?" Julius stirred from his spiraling thoughts.

"Well, it's just...Macey and the kids have been living in Paris and dad's been pushing to get a foothold in Europe. You don't suppose the reason why was to be able to stay closer to them, do you?"

Julius considered his brother's remark. Entering the European market made perfect business sense but their father hadn't cared much about it for decades so it was strange he would suddenly push for it. Yet knowing he had been watching over Macey and the kids it started to make sense. Six years of maintaining so much distance was probably trying the old man's patience. After all he vowed he would not be deprived of his grandchildren.

With new thoughts in his mind Julius headed to his office declining a lunch invite from March. Pouring himself a drink Julius nearly collapsed into his chair. He ran his fingers through his hair wondering if he should call his secretary for aspirin. Giggles interrupted his thoughts. Julius straightened glancing around his office but he seemed alone. Another giggle made him look at his desk. Easing his chair back he peered under it to see two sets of giddy eyes staring at him.

He opened his mouth to speak but Aria quickly put her finger to her mouth signing for quiet. A knock at the door made him sit up as Stephen stepped inside.

"I beg the intrusion Mister DaLair but have you seen the little miss and master?" Stephen asked. "They are playing hide-and-seek and have hidden themselves quite well."

Julius hesitated glancing down before making a decision, "No. No I haven't."

Stephen nodded and quickly departed before he accidentally broke his impassive expression with a smile and ruined the ruse. So far the twins' plan was going exactly the way they hoped.

Julius hesitated before looking down at the adorable pair crouched under his desk. He grinned asking, "He's gone. Do you two want to stay under there? I think you will be more comfortable out here with me. He won't come back unless I call for him."

The twins shared a look before crawling out. Aria hopped onto her feet bouncing so that her pigtailed swung wildly. Caden stood up more cautiously glancing toward the door to be certain they were indeed alone.

"Thank you mister," Aria smiled brightly.

Julius's face twitched and he clenched his jaw before saying, "Julius."

"Julius?" Aria repeated with a child's careless pronunciation.

"Jules."

"Jules?"

"That's what my brother calls me."

"You have a brother?" Aria asked as if she were unaware.

"Yes. An older one. He was my hero growing up."

"Mommy's our hero. I'm Aria. It's nice to meet you," Aria held out a hand.

A smile twitched his mouth Julius gently shook it though he would have preferred a hug. He would have also preferred she called him daddy but not knowing if she knew their connection he kept his desires to himself. Somehow he needed to learn what Macey told them about their father. He wouldn't blame her if she had said nothing, but he was desperate to be a part of their lives hopefully he could convince her to allow him to be.

"I'm Caden," Caden also shook his hand.

"Is your brother like you?" Aria asked.

"For the most part. He used to pick on me when we were kids."

"That's not very nice."

"I thought you said he's your hero," Caden added to her sister's protest.

Julius smirked before saying, "Well, I might have deserved it. I was an annoying little brother."

"Just like mine!" Aria giggled at Caden who scowled. She was only three minutes older but she never passed up a moment to remind him.

"What do you do here?" Caden asked his somber gaze slowly taking in the office.

"Oh well...I—ah...Well I'm a project VP. When people have an idea they bring their idea and any research they've done to me. I go over it and then decide if it's something the company wants to invest in," Julius wasn't sure his answer made sense to the children.

"Wow that's an important job," Caden said in awe.

"Thank you...do you want to see how I do it?"

"Yeah!" Aria clapped her hands.

Smiling Julius pulled her into his lap sitting her on one knee then picked up Caden and set him on the other before scooting closer to the desk. Opening up his laptop Julius called up the latest proposal to come through. It was a submission for an ad campaign. They had given him three options from which to choose.

"What's this?" Aria asked leaning against him while Caden leaned forward to study the screen.

"These are ad campaigns. I'm supposed to pick the best one."

"Huh. I like that one," Aria pointed to the first. "It has the best colors."

"But the words are too small," Caden complained.

"How about this one?" Julius highlighted the third option.

"The color isn't very bright."

"The words are better."

"So how about we send an email telling them to tweak the color on this one to be closer to the first option?" Julius said doing exactly what he suggested. "There now they will make adjustments."

"Just like that?"

"Yep. Just like that."

"Is that all the work you have to do?"

"For the moment." His schedule had been kept clear in case his meeting with Leon ran long. Now his afternoon was wide open. He could use the day to catch up on other work but the desire to do so was low now that he had company.

"Then how about a joke!" Aria suggested.

"You know a good one?"

"What has four legs and is always ready to travel?"

"I don't know."

"An elephant!" Aria erupted into giggles making Julius laugh.

Without thinking he leaned close and kissed her temple making Aria giggle more.

"That tickles!"

Julius pulled back and Aria patted his cheek.

"You're face is all scratchy!"

"Oh yeah...I forgot to shave this morning," Julius explained. He didn't add that the reason he forgot to shave was because of his plan to confront his father earlier for the truth about the twins.

"You forgot? That's so silly!"

"I guess it is," Julius chuckled. "You want to play a game?"

"What kind of game?"

"Let me show you," Julius reached for the laptop again.