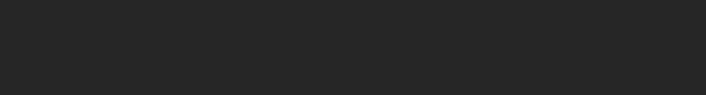


The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book One: Chapter 32



"Mommy! Daddy!" Aria shrieked as she and Caden bound up to their parents unable to hold themselves back any longer.

Julius scooped up Caden as Macey picked up Aria. His free arm encircled Macey's waist pulling her close so that his entire family was in his arms. His family was finally complete and he would never let them go.

"Daddy, does this mean we'll be together forever?" Aria asked.

"That's right," Julius smiled. "Forever."

"Does that mean you're coming to Paris with us?" Caden asked.

"Yes it does," Julius assured him.

"Really!" Aria clapped. "Yeah! And you'll go with us to Milan and Rome and Barcelona too?"

"Aria," Macey admonished.

"You bet," Julius readily agreed. There wasn't anywhere he wouldn't follow them.

"So does that mean we're staying in Paris?" Caden asked. Despite the fact he had grown up there he didn't have any particular attachment to the place. In America they had family and he didn't want to leave them behind forever.

"Well, you have to finish the school year," Julius said. "After that...we'll have to decide whether to stay in Paris or move to America."

"But you'll stay with us right?" Caden asked.

"That's right," Julius nodded. "Whether we live in Paris and vacation here or vice versa we'll be together."

Caden smiled hugging him. Julius squeezed him tight hoping to comfort his lingering doubts. In truth, he didn't care where they lived or how they split their time between one place or the other. The kids had to finish out their school year at the very least. Julius wasn't sure how difficult setting up offices overseas would be but as long as he was with his family he didn't mind. Somehow they would make it work.

Julius could see the same lingering doubt in Macey's gaze but he smiled and rested his forehead against hers. He would not let them be apart. They had been apart for too long.

"Mommy, can I be the flower girl?" Aria suddenly asked. "And Caden can be flower boy."

Julius chuckled, "I think you mean ring-bearer."

"Oh. Yeah, that."

"And I'll design your mom the most fabulous wedding dress," Victoria announced coming up to them.

"Vicki, you don't have to do that," Macey argued. She certainly wouldn't mind wearing one of Victoria's gowns but there was no need for it to be specially designed.

"If I may paraphrase a very intelligent woman," Victoria said, "while it is true I don't take custom orders...a favor for a friend is completely different."

Macey chuckled hearing her words thrown back at her but she guessed she shouldn't be surprised. Victoria was a woman who was always shocking everyone around her.

"Will you make my dress too?" Aria asked.

"Aria!"

"Of course, ma chérie!" Victoria laughed. "I wouldn't have it any other way!"

"Yeah! And then Caden and me can play mommy and daddy a special song!" Aria declared.

"That sounds fun," Julius chuckled.

"Should we play one for them now?" Aria looked to her brother who shyly grinned.

"Oh sweetie, you don't..."

"Okay," Caden agreed as they squirmed out of their parents' arms. He was eager to show his dad what he could do. It had been tough holding it back.

The pair immediately darted to the piano. Julius pulled Macey against him so her back leaned against his chest as they watched Caden climb onto the piano bench. March and Rose moved next to them as they curiously watched the twins.

Caden tapped the keys familiarizing himself with the instrument then he settled down and began to play Beethoven's Für Elise much to everyone's surprise. Even those who had been unaware of the proposal a few moments ago now turned to watch and listen to the melody that was familiar even if they didn't know the title. Julius listened, his mouth falling open. He glanced at March and Rose to see equal expressions of surprise.

"Did you know?" March whispered. Julius shook his head. His gaze slid to Jude who was smiling. As if feeling his uncle's gaze Jude glanced at him.

"Jude, did you know?"

"Yeah, of course."

"How?" March asked equally startled.

"When mom and I visited them we heard piano playing from the door so while we were flying the kite I asked about it. Caden told me but asked me not to tell. He said it was a surprise. Are you surprised?"

Julius couldn't believe it. He saw the piano at the villa but...His eyes widened and he searched for his father until his gaze found him. Augustus stood, drink in hand, eyes half closed as he listened with a smile.

"Dad. You knew. That's why you have a piano here and one at the villa."

Augustus merely smiled and offered no apology for keeping it to himself.

Julius's embrace tightened and he whispered to Macey, "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Caden doesn't usually like a lot of attention. I figured he'd tell you when he was ready," Macey gave him an apologetic smile.

Caden finished to the stunned crowd's applause. He smiled uncomfortably as Macey warned but he stayed at the piano and started playing a new song. This one was much simpler and familiar if one knew their Disney movies, especially ones starring dogs. Aria's voice soon joined him singing Bella Notte in Italian.

È dolce sognar e lasciarsi cullar

Nell'incanto della notte

Le stelle d'or con il loro splendor

Sono l'occhi della notte

Qui vicino é il tuo amore

Che a sé ti stringerà

La notte con la sua magia

Quanti cuor unir saprà!

È dolce sognar e lasciarsi cullar

Nell'incanto della note

Dolce é sognar e lasciarsi cullar

Nell'incanto della notte

Le stelle d'or con il loro splendor

Sono gli occhi della note

Qui vicino é il tuo amore

Che a sé ti stringerà

La notte con la sua magia

Quanti cuori unir saprà

È dolce sognar

E lasciarsi cullar

Nell'incanto della notte

As she finished Aria giggled at the amazed faces. Applause erupted throughout the gallery. Caden scooted off the bench to take a bow alongside his sister. The pair hurried back to their parents where their stunned father hugged them close.

"You little scamps."

"Are you surprised daddy?" Caden asked.

"Did you like our song?" Aria asked.

"Yes and yes," Julius kissed each in turn. "It was perfect."

"I knew I recognized them," Franklin said sidling up to them.

"What do you mean?" Macey asked.

"I met them in the subway," Franklin explained. "I play there as a sort of social experiment. These two showed up and started playing jazz hits with me."

"On the subway," Macey said looking at the twins her mind immediately going to the day they disappeared somehow arriving at the DaLair office building, "by yourselves."

Aria and Caden shared sheepish looks.

"Augustus," Macey turned to her father-in-law before he could back his way into the crowd and disappear. "Did you leave something out?"

"I...might have...glossed over a few details."

"You two are in so much trouble," Macey glanced at them.

Caden and Aria nestled themselves deeper into their father's embrace trying to look suitably apologetic.

"Oh no you don't. You're father can't help you."

Julius hid a smile. He was beginning to see fatherhood was not going to be easy especially with twins. Not only were they full of surprises but they seemed to have a knack for trouble. It was a dangerous combination.

Franklin cleared his throat, "If I may...I actually teach at The Anderson School on the upper west side. It's a public school but its curriculum is accelerated learning for gifted students. With your son's piano skills and your daughter's language skills along with my recommendation they wouldn't have any difficulty being accepted."

"We wouldn't have to repeat kindergarten would we?" Aria made a face. Neither of them particularly enjoyed their classes which were far too simple for their liking.

"Well, classes are based on age but depending on your knowledge they may advance you a bit," Franklin said. "You two are already in school?"

"In France they start schooling at three," Macey explained. "The first three years are considered kindergarten."

"Oh, wow." Franklin slowly digested the information. "You live in Paris. Then I assume you know French and you were singing in Italian if I'm not mistaken. How many languages do you know?"

"Caden knows three but I know five!" Aria proudly said. "He would know five too but he doesn't like talking."

Caden stuck out his tongue and scowled at his sister.

"You know five?" Franklin asked in surprise and looked to Macey for confirmation.

"English, French, Italian, Spanish and German. She's a sponge."

Aria smiled sweetly.

"Caden is really good with numbers," Macey added. "But he does speak English, French and Italian. Spanish too if he wanted since it is so close to Italian."

"Really?"

Caden shrugged.

"He has eidetic memory so he can recall almost anything even if he only sees it once, especially numbers."

"Then why didn't he know your phone number?" Franklin asked. "It's the first thing I asked them for when I realized they were alone."

"Caden?" Macey asked. "You know my phone number. Why didn't you tell him?"

"Because then we wouldn't have gotten him to take us to grandpa's work."

"...We're going to have a very long talk when we get home," Macey fixed them with a hard stare that made both solemnly nod.

Franklin gave them a sympathetic look but he wouldn't interfere with parenting. Something told him there was more to the story but stayed silent. Right now he was just glad he hadn't gone crazy and made the whole thing up like his friends insisted.

"And that goes for you too," Macey turned on her father-in-law.

"Me? What did I do?"

"I don't know...yet. But I know you had something to do with all of this and when I find out how..."

He shared a look with the twins. It was doubtful they would be able to hide the whole truth once their mother started interrogating them but their plan had succeeded so it was a small price to pay. Augustus cleared his throat.

Victoria smirked at his discomfort.

"You're not off the hook either," Macey fixed her with a stare.

"Me? Why?"

"There is something going on and I'm going to find out what."

"I just got here."

Macey's gaze narrowed. She felt like she was being set up. It was too much of a coincidence that Victoria would be here to witness Julius's proposal. Even stranger was Franklin's presence: an acclaimed musician who just happened to work at a school for gifted students, and who just happened to miraculously meet the twins in the subway. She was going to find answers.

"Mommy, it's not their fault," Aria suddenly spoke up. "It was our plan."

Caden nudged his sister.

"You're plan?" Macey repeated. "And just what plan was that?"

The twins shared a look. They didn't want others to get into trouble for their idea. Finally Caden nodded. There didn't seem to be any way to get out of it without telling her.

"Well," Aria sighed, "our plan to get you and daddy back together."

"Excuse me?" Macey was shocked. "How'd you even know who your daddy was? I didn't tell you before we came here."

"Grandpa told us when we were three," Caden said.

"Cause we asked him to," Aria added.

"And did he also put you up to your little plan?"

"No. We came up with it ourselves," Aria said. "You were really sad without daddy around...we just wanted to make you happy."

Macey's mouth fell open but she couldn't formulate the words she wanted to say. Had it been so obvious? Had they been planning from the very moment they stepped off the plane.

"We had to get to grandpa's work so he could help us with the plan. That's why we told him to take you to see the Picasso," Aria continued.

"W-why would you do that?"

"Because he said daddy would definitely be there," Caden answered. "Since we were sure daddy saw us at grandpa's party he knew we were here so...we thought you should meet."

Macey wasn't sure if she should be mad or proud or grateful or embarrassed. How was she supposed to take this information? She had been set up. They conspired against her...her own children.

"Shh...it's okay," Julius's embrace suddenly encircled her from behind. "Whatever happened...they are safe. No harm, no foul. Right?"

"Did you know about this?" Macey demanded.

"No I didn't. I'm just glad they were on my side...our side."

Macey struggled to maintain her anger but it was difficult to do in his arms. He stroked her cheek gently turning her face toward him. His gaze was pleading.

"Fine. But they aren't off the hook yet," Macey conceded and looked at the twins. "You will be telling me the whole story...later."

"Let's play another song," Aria tugged her brother back to the piano hoping to appease their mother's wrath while their father continued to calm her. Franklin followed glad to have an excuse to escape the tense situation and hoped the twins would explain in more detail away from everyone else.

"Now all we have to do is plan a wedding," Julius said.

"And how is that supposed to work?" Macey sighed. "I mean, everyone will wonder why we got married twice."

"Well...it's more like vow renewal. After all we were never divorced."

"...But I signed the papers."

"I didn't."

Macey looked at him, her eyes wide with shock.

"I never signed them. They were never filed," Julius explained. "I kept them in my drawer at the office so when I found you we could burn them together. We'll do that tomorrow."

"So...we're still married? We've been married this entire time?"

"Yeah," Julius smiled and kissed her. "Welcome home, Missus DaLair."

Macey rested her head on his shoulder, relaxing in his embrace. It felt good to be home.