

The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book One: Chapter 9



Macey made sandwiches for the kid's lunch still silently debating. Having someone she could trust to watch the children would definitely be an advantage. Her list of reliable babysitters was extremely short and all of them were in Paris. But did she dare open herself up to the DaLair family drama that was sure to ensue. Augustus was bad enough but what would she do once she faced March and Julius?

Suddenly her phone rang. For a moment she was afraid it was Rose. Very few people had her number after all. After seeing the caller ID Macey relaxed. She picked it up without further hesitation.

"Hello Syl, what's up?"

"I'm so sorry to be bothering you at home but there's a problem with the new installation."

Macey pursed her lips together saying, "Are you sure you need me? I mean I have the kids and I'd rather not drag them into the middle of a construction area."

"What if I send my assistant? She can babysit while you help me."

Macey hesitated, "Is your assistant responsible?"

"Yes. Yes. Of course!"

"...Okay."

Twenty minutes later there was a knock at the door. Macey answered to see a young lady no more than twenty-five dressed in a rather short skirt considering she was meant to be assistant curator. Still who was she to judge? Macey had met a number of characters since starting her career.

"Hello, are you Teresa?"

"Yep." The woman looked bored.

"Won't you come in," Macey led her to the living room where the kids ate their lunch at the coffee table. "This is Aria and Caden. They're finishing their lunch now so they shouldn't be any problem until I come back."

"Sure."

"...Okay. Aria, Caden be good until I come back."

"Okay mommy!"

Still nervous Macey headed out. It was only a short drive to the gallery. Hopefully the installation wouldn't take long and she would be home soon.

Once Macey was gone the newly appointed babysitter sat down with a huff. Babysitting rugrats was not her idea of a good time and certainly not something she signed up for when she applied to be an assistant curator. She had plans to surround herself with famous artists and hopefully catch their eye. Taking out her phone she immediately zoned out as she browsed websites.

Aria and Caden finished their lunch and colored a bit longer as they observed their inattentive babysitter. Trading silent looks they eventually stood.

"Excuse me Miss Babysitter we're going to take a nap now," Aria declared.

"Fine. Whatever."

Satisfied the twins made their way towards the hall that led to the bedrooms. They paused looking back to see their babysitter absorbed in her phone. With a nod they turned and scurried to the front door. Slipping on shoes they quietly opened the door and stepped outside.

Hurrying to the sidewalk Aria paused and asked, "Did you get the information from auntie's phone?"

Caden nodded, "I got uncle and daddy's phone numbers and their work numbers too. I looked it up on mommy's computer. They work at the DaLair office downtown."

"So how are we going to get there?" Aria asked.

"Subway."

"The what? You mean the Métro?"

"Here they call it a subway," Caden shrugged.

"Americans are weird," Aria sighed.

Hand in hand with her brother they walked down the street. Caden seemed to know where he was going and a five minute walk later they reached stairs leading underground. They traveled the Métro many times with their mother and were a little apprehensive that they didn't have her Métro card as they approached the turn styles.

They walked underneath them without issue and hurried on. Caden paused at the map to confirm their train before pulling his sister onto one. Aria happily seated herself on a bench and Caden crawled up beside her. The pair held hands as the train pulled away from the station. Though they received several curious glances no one bothered the pair. They sat silently observing the people around them until the gentle rock of the train lulled them to sleep.

A sudden jolt as the train came to a stop woke the pair. They took in their surroundings with a note of surprise before remembering their mission. Neither was particularly panicked.

"Are we almost there?" Aria suddenly asked.

"Hmm. I'm not sure," Cade answered. "Everything looks the same."

Normally falling asleep on the Métro wasn't an issue because their mother stayed awake watching for their stop. Without her they simply had no idea how long they had slept, how many stops they passed or even if they missed their destination.

"What should we do?"

"Let's get off and find a map."

Aria followed her brother off the train. This station was much more crowded than the last and they had to scurry out of the way of the other commuters. There were several in business suits which gave Caden some semblance they hadn't missed their stop. Yet everyone was in such a hurry which made it difficult to ask questions. This was a sharp contrast to the French commuters they were used to. After several moments the train departed and they were still not sure of their location.

"Maybe we should ask le policier for directions," Aria suggested.

"They might take us to a station and have mommy pick us up there," Caden said.

"Right."

That would defeat the whole purpose of their plan.

As they fell into silent debate a new sound attracted them to a corner where a rather lanky, African-American played the saxophone. His clothing was haggard and faded but his instrument glistened indicating it was well cared for. Though he preferred Beethoven Caden appreciated all music. In fact they knew a street performer in Paris who often played the jazz.

"Look Caden," Aria pointed to a keyboard that had been set up on top of its case resting on the ground. "Do you suppose he'll play that next?"

Caden wasn't sure. At the man's feet was his saxophone case. Inside was money tossed by the crowd but it added up to a paltry sum. Perhaps he was meant to have a friend to perform alongside of him.

"Caden, you should play with him," Aria reached the same conclusion. "Then maybe he'll tell us how to get to daddy's work."

Caden considered the logic before nodding. It was worth a shot. Besides he sometimes played with their friend when they met him on the street. The crowd usually warmed up once the five-year-old joined the performance.

* * *

Franklin finished his last song with a flourish. He glanced down at the case with a grimace. Playing in the subway started on a whim and as a social experiment. He tested a number of music genres to see if there was a difference in how much money he earned. So far his results were inconclusive.

He intentionally dressed in thrift store finds to play the part of a street performer. Franklin was actually classically trained and a much sought after concert pianist and orchestral saxophone player. He was employed as a music instructor at the most prestigious educational facilities, although he had the clout to pick and choose the students he directly tutored. If the people rushing by him now knew that would they stop to listen?

Lost in thought he didn't see the two small forms as they moved closer. He didn't stir until he heard someone run their fingers down the keyboard creating a cascading sound that begged for attention. Franklin was jolted back to reality and turned to see a young boy kneeling at the keyboard.

Grinning, the boy's green eyes shined with amusement at his surprise. Maintaining eye contact he began to play Cheek to Cheek by Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald.

Franklin's astonishment turned to admiration for the boy's playing. His skill was apparent. After a moment Franklin joined him with the saxophone. Not only was the boy's playing excellent but it was filled with exuberant emotion and true passion for the music that quickly garnered them a crowd. Soon dollars floated into the case where it once only held a few coins.

Once the song ended Franklin challenged him by playing the opening to L-O-V-E by Nat King Cole. Without hesitation the boy answered the challenge by playing along. Despite his young age he seemed to be an encyclopedia of music.

As they played Franklin noticed the redhead girl standing close by smiling at the boy. He wondered if they were related. Once they finished the boy continued into the next song. The opening bars were simple and Franklin quickly recognized it: What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong.

The boy's playing was fantastic but Franklin wasn't prepared for the girl to start singing in a clear, charming voice. He didn't recover from his shock until the second verse and finally joined in with his saxophone.

I see trees of green

Red roses too

I see them bloom

For me and you

And I think to myself

What a wonderful world

I see skies of blue

And clouds of white

The bright blessed day

The dark sacred night

And I think to myself

What a wonderful world

The colors of the rainbow

So pretty in the sky

Are also on the faces

Of people going by

I see friends shaking hands

Saying how do you do

They're really saying

I love you

I hear babies cry

I watch them grow

They'll learn much more

Than I'll ever know

And I think to myself

What a wonderful world

Yes, I think to myself

What a wonderful world

Ooh, yes

The boy's saxophone case filled with notes and suddenly the entire station resounded with applause. Franklin looked down to see his saxophone case filled with cash. The boy stood taking the little girl's hand. They bowed to the crowd together amid the applause. Slowly the crowd dissipated leaving the trio of musicians alone.

"That was something else little man," Franklin grinned. "And you too little miss."

Caden shrugged and his sister said, "Thank you Mister. You are almost as good as Elias. We play with him all the time."

"Ah...so you've done this before," Franklin said as he carefully placed his saxophone in his case after gathering up the cash. He would donate it to his favorite charity: All Kids Need Music, like usual.

Caden nodded helping to store the keyboard in its case. Franklin watched the boy do it with practiced ease. It was clear he had done it many times before. He wondered if the other street performer also had a keyboard for the boy to play.

"So what brings you two here?" Franklin asked keeping an ear out for panicked parents.

"We're on our way to see daddy," the girl answered.

"Wait. What? Where's your mom?"

"She had work but we didn't like our babysitter so we decided to go see daddy instead."

"So...neither of your parents know you are here?"

The pair shook their heads.

"Okay, we should probably call them," Franklin took out his iPhone. "Do you know their numbers?"

The pair shared a look before shaking their heads. If they told him their mother's phone number she would rush over and drag them home. On the other hand they weren't supposed to know their father's and it would be suspicious for them to tell their new friend.

"What about your address? Do you know where you live?"

More head shakes. Franklin bit back his irritation. Were parents not responsible anymore? Did they not know about teaching their kids the importance of contact information?

"So...where does your father work?"

"DaLair Plaza, 41 Nassau Street," Caden answered easily.

Franklin blinked surprise. If the boy could rattle off such an address so easily then why didn't he know his home address? The whole situation was extremely bizarre but at least now he had a place to take them.

"Well, good news. You're only a hop, skip and a jump away. Come on."

Franklin hefted his music cases and led the kids back to the tracks. They willingly followed him as he stepped on the next train. Climbing onto the bench they sat holding hands. Franklin watched them trying to figure them out. Neither looked panicked or afraid as he would expect from a pair of lost children. The boy in particular observed their surroundings with a detached air while his sister openly scrutinized those around them.

They reached their stop and Franklin led them up to the street. They walked several blocks taking almost fifteen minutes to reach the entrance of a tall high-rise due to the children's short legs, though neither complained about the rather long march through the crowded streets. Franklin grimaced when he saw the commanding structure that was their destination. He wasn't part of the business world so the DaLair name meant nothing to him but he recognized a substantial building when he saw one.

"Are you sure your father works here?"

"Yep!"

Franklin gave them a concerned look still harboring reservations despite their insistence.

"Thank you, Mister...um...what's your name?" the girl suddenly asked.

"Franklin."

"Oh. Thank you, Mister Franklin!" she happily said as the pair pushed their way through the revolving doors and entered the intimidating building without hesitation.

Franklin hesitated but the kids walked in with such confidence he had no reason to suspect they didn't know where they were going. It was clear they were not ordinary five-year-olds. Now that they were inside he was assured they would be taken care of at least. Still nervous Franklin walked back to the subway. Much later he'd come to regret not getting the boy's name. There was no doubt he was a musical prodigy.

* * *

Completely forgetting their benefactor Aria and Caden marched up to the front desk. They were able to see their daddy finally after years of waiting. Though their mother never mentioned their father they knew he had to exist so they asked their grandfather about him instead. Ever since he told them about their parents' past they had been eager to meet the father they had never known.

"Excuse me!" Aria called when the receptionist didn't acknowledge them.

After a moment she stood and leaned over to see the pair. Her brow furrowed making her narrow face even more unattractive. They weren't particularly impressed with her observational skills either as they had to struggle for her attention.

"We're here to see Grandpa Gus," Aria announced.

"Grandpa Gus?" the receptionist repeated. "You mean Augustus DaLair?"

"Yep. He's our grandpa."

"Ah-huh. Mister DaLair has only one grandson and no one sees him without an appointment. So shoo! Or I'll call the police."

The receptionist disappeared from their view. Upset at her dismissal they retreated to the waiting area with large comfortable chairs and even a small nook with a coffee and espresso machines.

Aria looked to her brother, "So what do we do now?"

Caden scrunched his face as he thought about it. They hadn't expected such an immediate rejection. At the very least he thought the receptionist should have called their grandfather. Even if their grandfather was busy he would have sent Stephen to help them.

While her brother considered their options Aria noticed a man in a finely tailored suit. He was practically screaming into his phone about how insulted he was and how he would never do business with the DaLair's again. But what really caught her attention was the fact he said it all in German.

"Maybe we should help daddy with his work," Aria said. "Maybe then he'll want to spend time with us."

"How?" Caden asked. "We don't know anything about his work."

"Watch," Aria smirked before skipping up to intercept the man on the phone just as he put it away and reached the door. She didn't hesitate to greet him, "Hallo herr! Wie gehts?"