

Boy vs. Girl

TW: brief mention of trafficking,
results from earlier programming

Home Life

2-2.5 years old, while our U.S. mother was pregnant with our sister

The girl was worried about her mother. After daddy brought her home last night, mama hadn't looked so good. She'd been sweaty and shaky, and the girl didn't know what to do about it.

She and her mama were sitting in front of the TV, watching *The Little Mermaid* again, but she was only halfway watching it. Or she was *fully* watching it, but something else was keeping an eye on mama. It was an ability she'd been praised for, something magical she could instinctively do.

The boy in the girl was the one keeping an eye on the mother. The older woman would let the boy know when he should take over, for training or if a client dropped by the house. It was something he'd practiced a lot since he and the girl had been born, even if she was still too good about remembering him. He was working on that.

It was almost time for midday snack, but mother wasn't getting up to make it. The boy knew he couldn't ask her for it. He'd learned about being 'self-sufficient' a long time ago. Those words meant taking care of himself and never asking for help. If he asked for help, someone would have to punish him for breaking the rules, and he didn't want to make anyone do that.

He waited until the movie was done. It was hard to feed himself and the girl, and sitting with the mother felt nice. She kept falling asleep and half waking-up, so that meant no monster mom. He liked being around the mother when she was nice.

But the movie ended, and she didn't move. So, the boy pulled the girl inside. He pressed the back of her neck once she'd fallen inside, and she went to sleep. Then, it was time to get up.

Jumping off of the couch, he wandered into the kitchen. He found a step stool by the fridge and put it next to where the food was. There were some snacks on the counter, and the boy grabbed a couple.

He was about to get back to the floor when he remembered the mother. She and the-sibling-growing-inside were probably hungry too, but mother ate grown-up food. The boy wasn't sure if he could make grown-up food, but he wanted to try. For the sibling-growing-inside.

He found some peanut butter and some bread. Opening the peanut butter was hard because his hands were still small, but he did it soon enough. He used his fingers to spread some on the bread. It broke a little while he was doing that, but he did the best he could anyway. Once he'd gotten enough on there, he slapped the bread together. He put everything away because 'leave no trace' was something he was still learning, but he already knew that no one else could know he was there.

Then, he brought the food to the couch. He didn't give the mother anything yet. If she was awake, she might say, "No food today", so he made sure to eat *all* of the snacks he'd gotten, licking the packages once he was done. But then, he crawled up on the couch and shook the mother. When she woke up, he put the sandwich on her round belly.

"For the baby," he said.

The mother blinked at him before picking up the sandwich. She looked at it for a moment and then, looked at him.

"Did you do this, (legal U.S. name here)?" she said.

The girl smiled.

"No," she said. "The boy did it."

She got back down to rewind the movie, and as she sat down to restart it, she didn't pay attention to her mama watching her. That was all up to the something in her head.

If these earlier memories sound more coherent than others (found later), that's because they've been filtered through an older one of us or were written by one of us who was allowed to grow up. In this case, it was one of our protectors.

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