

Santa's Secret of Siblings

written by

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EXT. ONE STORY HOUSE- DAY

NICK (25) pulls up on his motorcycle with a backpack on. His phone starts ringing as he parks in the driveway.

Nick answers POPS' (60s) phone call.

NICK
(sigh)
Hey Pops.

POPS
(V.O.)
So now you want to answer? I've called you several times today Nick.

NICK
I was working.

POPS
(V.O.)
At that restaurant? You know my friend still has a spot for you at his company.

Nick shakes his head.

NICK
I've already told you, I like where I am. Why can't you just respect my decisions?

POPS
(V.O.)
You're not thinking long term. You never have.

NICK
I gotta go dad, I just got to Linus's house.

POPS
(V.O.)
Good, maybe he can talk some sense into you.

INT. DENISIS'S ROOM- DAY

LINUS (31) puts DENIS (4) in his room. There are cartoon dinosaurs painted on the walls and stuffed animals on his bed. There's a baby crying in the distance.

DENIS
(shout)
You're being mean!

Linus sits Denis on his bed. Denis squirms trying to break free from his father's grasp.

LINUS
You're momma asked you to be quiet and said she is tired. Now your baby sister is up and crying all over again.

DENIS
(grumbles)
I don't wanna sister. She ruins everything!

Denis stops his struggle and crosses his arms. Linus slightly glares at Denis and takes a deep breath.

LINUS
You don't mean that. Shelly's a gift.

Denis pouts and turns away from his dad.

Linus leaves the room.

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Linus lingers outside Denis's bedroom. The bedroom door is cracked open. Denis is crying.

(A beat)

Nick bursts through the front door with a bright smile and his bag.

NICK
Merry Christmas! You filthy animals.

Linus face palms himself as he closes Denis's door.

LINUS
Not now Nick.

NICK
What did I do?

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- LATER

Linus, Nick and CHARLOTTE (30) stand around the kitchen island with cups of eggnog. Charlotte is holding MICHELLE (infant). Denis, with a milkstache, grabs an empty box and drags it from beside the trash.

Nick watches Denis tug the box outside the room.

NICK

How's Denis handling being a big brother?

CHARLOTTE

Not as well as we hoped. He seemed to like Michelle at first.

LINUS

When she was in your womb.

CHARLOTTE

Heh.

Charlotte looks down at Michelle.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

But now, he just gets so upset about having to share us. I don't know what to do.

LINUS

He'll get used to it eventually.

Charlotte nods her head and lets out a breath. Linus turns towards Nick.

LINUS (CONT'D)

So you weren't going to tell me about the restaurant?

Nick rolls his eyes and sighs.

CHARLOTTE

I'm going to put Michelle to sleep.

NICK

Goodnight Charlotte. Goodnight Shelly.

Linus gives Charlotte a peck on the cheek. Then, Charlotte leaves out of the kitchen.

NICK (CONT'D)

What's there to tell Linus? I've been working there for months and doing pretty well at it.

LINUS

You're not using your degree.

Nick shakes his head. Gets up from the table. Wanders around the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Outside the kitchen, Denis opens a closet door and pulls a large red blanket out. It falls on top of him. Nick notices while standing in the kitchen. His eyes linger on his nephew.

LINUS (O.S.)

Why not? You've worked hard for it.

Denis' head sticks up from the pile and he glances around. He walks to his room with the blanket around him. Nick's brow raises.

INT. KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Nick turns back to Linus.

NICK

I never wanted that stupid degree. Dad just kept pushing me to get it. I thought I'd probably use it, but now I've found something I like.

Denis closes his bedroom door. Nick walks back to the kitchen island.

LINUS

And you've thought this through?

NICK

(huffs)

Just stop! You're starting to sound just like him.

The room falls silent. Linus takes his cup of eggnog.

LINUS

I'm gonna go put Denis to bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Nick stares at his reflection in the window. He's dressed in a Santa suit. He takes a deep breath. Raises a fake beard and mustache over his frown.

A tree gleams with lights and ornaments beside Nick. A few gifts already sit beneath it.

He walks around outside of Denis and Michelle's room with sleigh bells jingling in his pocket. Then, he goes back into the living room and starts setting gifts down.

Denis peaks his head into the living room and smiles wide at the sight of a man dressed in a red fluffy suit.

DENIS

Santa?

NICK

Ho ho ho! If it isn't Denis.

DENIS

You know my name?

NICK

You and every little kid in the world.

DENIS

That's a lot of names.

NICK

Ho ho ho! Yes it is.

Denis looks behind himself at the 'gift box'.

DENIS

I got something for you.

NICK

You do?

Denis nods his head, then pushes a box into the living room. Nick looks into the box and sees MICHELLE (infant) stretching her legs and looking up at him on top of a red blanket.

DENIS

You can take her home.

Nick covers his mouth, coughing away his laugh.

NICK
 Denny, I can't take your baby
 sister with me. She belongs here.

Denis's face drops as he looks at Michelle, then up at Santa.

DENIS
 No. You take her.

NICK
 But Mom and Dad would miss Shelly.
 They'd be sad. That would be bad
 Denny.

Denis pouts as he pushes the box closer Santa. Tears well up
 in his eyes.

DENIS
 Please?

NICK
 (subtle)
 Denny?

Denis starts to cry and goes up to hug Santa's leg. Arms wrap
 around him and pick him up. Nick rests Denis's head on his
 shoulder.

DENIS
 It's not fair!

NICK
 It's okay.

DENIS
 Momma and Daddy are always sleepy
 and I get in trouble all the time.
 It's all her fault! But *she's* a
 gift and *I'm* not.

Nick sits down with Denis still crying in his arms. Linus
 stands in the doorway, peaking in for a moment. Nick shoos
 him away. Linus notices the 'gift box' but Nick shoos again.

NICK
 You're a gift too. I remember you
 were on your parents wish list for
 a few years.

Denis looks at Santa. Linus hides behind the wall.

NICK (CONT'D)

You know, it was hard for your dad too. When his little brother first came along.

Denis snuffles and pulls away from Santa.

DENIS

My uncle Nick?

Nick nods.

NICK

It was hard at first, because babies need a lot of care and attention. All they can do at Michelle's age is eat, sleep, and poop. But your grandparents love Nick and your Dad the same, you know? Just like your mom and dad love you two.

Denis hangs his head and plays with Santa's beard.

DENIS

I miss them. Momma is always with Michelle, and daddy plays sometimes, but he gets mad at me too.

NICK

I know, but that's not forever. They still love you. No matter what. And guess what else?

DENIS

What?

NICK

You know how much your uncle Nick and dad love each other?

Denis nods his head.

Nick points over to baby Michelle. Denis follows his gaze.

NICK (CONT'D)

You two will love each other too.

Nick glances at the doorway. Linus listens on the other side.

NICK (CONT'D)

She'll look up to you, like little siblings tend to do. And even when you two butt heads you'll be best friends. Built into the family. Nobody tells you that. It's like some sort of secret.

Denis looks at Michelle, still kicking on the blanket, and his brows raise.

DENIS

Best friends? Really?

NICK

Really. Just wait until she's older.

Denis smiles softly.

FADE TO:

INT. HALLWAY- MOMENTS LATER

Nick closes the door to Denis' room. Linus comes out of the kitchen. The two look at each other for a moment, then glance away.

NICK

I didn't mean-

LINUS

It was stupid to-

They stop and look at each other.

NICK (CONT'D)

Let me go first.

Linus nods.

NICK (CONT'D)

I know I'm young and dad thinks I'm being impulsive, but I'm not. I know what I want. I just want for my decisions to be respected. I didn't think you'd really take his side on this.

LINUS

I'm not. It was stupid for me to start off questioning you like that. I can care less about the job. Plenty of people don't end up using their degrees after graduating.

Linus shakes his head.

LINUS (CONT'D)

I was more upset that you stopped telling me these things. We used to go to each other first.

NICK

I didn't want you to judge me. I can take that from dad. Just not you.

Linus smiles at Nick and puts his hand on Nick's shoulder.

LINUS

That is the last thing you'll have to worry about from me. How can I judge you when my kid is trying to ship his sister to the North Pole?

Nick smiles back at Linus.

NICK

Well I haven't told anyone, but I got offered a promotion. Assistant manager.

LINUS

That sounds great.

Linus and Nick hug.

FADE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Charlotte sits with Michelle in her arms and Linus beside her. Nick is in a reclining chair, nearly snoring.

DENIS (O.S.)

It's Christmas!

Nick's eye peaks open as Denis comes running into the room.

Denis stops by Charlotte and Linus.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas Momma. Merry Christmas Daddy.

Denis looks at the presents under the tree and grabs one.

LINUS
Merry Christmas buddy.

Denis brings the present to Charlotte and Michelle.

DENIS
Shelly, look, this is a gift. Like
you. See? But this one I can open.
I don't think I can open a baby.

Linus and Charlotte glance at each other for a moment and
smile.

CHARLOTTE
That Christmas spirit got ahold of
you, huh?

DENIS
I saw Santa last night. He told me
something about Michelle.

LINUS
Yeah? What did he say?

Denis climbs on the couch between Charlotte and Linus. He
hugs Michelle and rests on Charlotte.

DENIS
I can't say. It's like a secret.

Linus looks over to Nick laying in the recliner. Nick closes
his heavy eyes and smiles to himself.

INT. KITCHEN-LATER

Charlotte stands by the kitchen island with Denis baking.
Nick and Linus sit at the kitchen table. The entire family is
in ugly sweaters. Linus is holding Michelle.

Linus gets a facetime call from Pops and answers it, showing
the full family around him.

POPS
Ah, look at all of you.

Denis runs over with a Christmas cookie.

DENIS
Pop Pop!

POPS
Hi Denny!

Pops focuses on Linus and Nick.

POPS (CONT'D)
Did you guys talk?

Linus and Nick smile.

LINUS
Yeah, and I think he has his head
screwed on right.

POPS
Well, okay.

THE END