Gigglefest

by andlat

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Chapter 1

Gigglefest - Chapter 1

Jack felt as if the scales had fallen from his eyes as he watched his brothers go back and forth. How had he never seen it before? He was so puzzled and bemused that he actually scratched his head as he watched James and Jonny play Jonny's favorite game. It had no name, but it was mostly saying silly gross things in goofy voices. Jonny was only five, after all.

"Fart!" Jonny said, squealing and giggling.

"Booger!" James replied, grinning. Jack could not find out if James actually found it funny or was just humoring his little brother. What mattered was that they almost looked like twins, despite the vast age difference.

For most of Jack's life, James had been his big brother. He was two years older and had always seemed so mature. Then somehow, Jack had hit a bizarre growth spurt and now towered over James and Jonny both. Out of habit, he still considered himself the middle brother, but why? James and Jonny were what? Seven years apart or something like that, yet they really did seem like twins.

As the game ended and James stood up to go figure out dinner, Jack eyed his brother. He was taller than Jonny, but by how much? Had James always been so... scrawny seemed right, but itty bitty sounded better. Yes, James was itty bitty! Bewildered that he had never noticed it before, Jack followed

James into the kitchen under the pretense of getting a glass of water.

"Here, let me help you." He said as he saw James going to grab the kitchen stool. "I don't need that." He got everything James needed and set it on the counter.

"Thanks." James said, his face still red from playing with Jonny. Their parents called it a gigglefest when those two got going.

"No problem." Jack walked back out to the living room and smiled down at Jonny, who was happily playing on the floor. "Hey, bug."

"Hi." Jonny craned his neck to look up at Jack.

"James and I had a fun idea." He sat down on the floor. "Remember when you and Tommy took a bath together when Tommy visited last summer?" Jonny nodded. "Wasn't it fun having a bath buddy?"

"Yeah."

"Well, James and I, it was really James's idea." He leaned in to whisper, knowing Jonny loved nothing more than whispering conspiratorially. "What if James took a bath with you tonight?"

"Tommy's my age. James is big."

"Yeah, but even bigger boys need to be clean, don't they?"

"I guess."

"You two have so much fun with your gigglefests, why don't we just go ahead and have you two take your baths together, huh?"

"I thought James took showers."

"Nope. Like I said, it was his idea." Jack smiled and held a finger to his lips as he heard James coming. "But he wants it to be a surprise, so shhh."

“Jack, can you set the table please?” James asked, bracing himself for Jack to argue.

“Sure can.” Jack walked merrilly into the kitchen, listening to make sure Jonny did not spoil the secret. He heard high pitched giggles, but it was impossible to tell if they were Jonny’s or James’s. How had he not noticed, he wondered, slapping the kitchen counter in frustration.

He grabbed two worn plastic Sesame Street cups and then a glass for himself, carrying them to the dining room table and placing them at each boy’s time-honored spot. He wondered if James would question it.

With Jonny on board, Jack could hardly wait through dinner. He ate, sneaking peeks at both of his brothers. He could tell Jonny was excited, but James seemed none the wiser, figuring Jonny was just excited to have his favorite smiley face french fries. He did not even question the Sesame Street cup, which Jack took as enough evidence to justify his plan.

"Here, I'll clear the table." Jack said. "James, do you want to go get Jonny ready for his bath?" Behind James's back, Jack

mimed zipping his lips, winking at Jonny, who nodded so energetically, Jack almost expected his head to go flying off.

Loading the dishwasher took no time at all. As Jack climbed the stairs, he could hear the sound of Jonny's bathtime song playing. He poked his head into the bathroom to see James sitting on the toilet while Jonny sat in the water.

"Oops, looks like we forgot towels." Jack remarked, grabbing two from the linen closet. He had a feeling James would not look closely enough to notice. He stepped back into the bathroom. Jonny kept looking at him expectantly. "Hmm" Jack mused. He had been planning this throughout dinner. "We've got Jonny in the tub, but what about you, Jimmy?"

"What did you call me?" Seemingly the moment James had turned ten, he had put his foot down hard. It was James and nothing but. Jack laughed.

"Your name, silly. C'mon, quit lolly gagging. Jonny set a great example by getting right in the tub and it's your turn."

"What are you" Jack lifted James off of the toilet, chuckling as he kicked in the air. He was almost as light as Jonny or maybe those afternoons in the garage with dad's old weights had been paying off.

"Here we go! Time for tubby time!" He lifted James over the tub, Jonny giggling uproariously.

"Stop! Let me down!"

"You don't want to take a bath in your clothes?" James

squirmed and grunted.

"Let me go! What are you doing?"

"Well," Jack continued. He knew from Jonny -- and Tommy -- that you just kept going and doing what was best for the little boy until he relented and accepted it was happening. "Let's get you undressed then." In one motion, he set James down on the bath mat, knelt, and lifted up his shirt. "I see Jimmy's tumtum!" He teased, giving it a playful pat as he held the t-shirt over James's face.

"Stop! What are you doing?" Jack kept going, catching James's hands as he tried to push him away and threading them through the sleeves of his shirt. "Give me that back!" He yelled as Jack tossed it aside. He allowed James to pursue it, if only because it made it extra easy to reach out and yank down James's pants and boxers as one.

"I see James's butt!" Jonny crowed from the tub, splashing in his excitement.

"That's right, Jonny. Jimmy has a bumbum just like you." Jonny giggled. He effortlessly grabbed James's arm and pulled his brother back over to him. He stumbled and all but fell into Jack's lap. "And see? What's this?" He shamelessly pointed.

"Jam, uh, Jimmy's dinky!"

"That's right. Jimmy is a boy, just like you and me, isn't he?"

"What is wrong with you?" James snarled. "Let me go!"

"You're one step away from tubby time, Jimmy. Now do you have to go peepee or poopy?"

"Fu" Quick as a flash, Jack brought a hand over James's mouth.

"Don't you dare use that language in front of Jonny." Jack's voice was the epitome of warning. "Unless you want the first thing we wash to be your mouth." James, all too aware that, naked as he was, he was completely at Jack's mercy, mellowed. "Now let's get you into the tub." He stood up and picked James up, holding him there in midair. With his hands under James's arms, there was no way for him to cover himself. "Jonny, can you start bathing yourself while I get Jimmy situated?" Jonny nodded, eager to prove himself as the easier to handle of the two.

James soon discovered that Jack had much more extensive plans than simply getting him situated. He squirmed and wiggled and snarled, but Jack was bound and determined to give him a complete bath as Jonny looked on.

"Did you get behind your ears?" Jack would say whenever the washcloth stopped moving across Jonny's body. He was so focused on keeping James under control that he was halfway through before it really sunk in just how comfortably James and Jonny fit in the tub together. Sure, he knew it would work since Tommy and Jonny had shared, but the part of his mind that still considered James to be his big brother had had its doubts. Well, doubt no longer, he thought.

"All that's left is your dinky and bumbum, Jimmy. Can I trust

you to wash those yourself like a good little boy?" James grunted. "Now, Jimmy." Jack was about to scold him when he thought of a better strategy. "Jonny, what do you do when Mommy or Daddy asks you a question?"

"Answer it."

"With?"

"My big boy words."

"That's right. See, buddy?" He rubbed James's back. "Now let's try that again. Can I trust you to wash your dinky and bumbum like a good little boy?"

"Yes!" James whined.

"What do you think, Jon? Did Jimmy sound like a good little boy there and use his big boy words?" An inarticulate whine escaped James's lips as he realized what was happening. His refusal to cooperate was getting him busted down to a level where even Jonny was bigger than him.

"Don't think so." Jonny said.

"Well, I guess we'll just have to let you do it next time." Jack said.

"But"

"My mind's made up, snuggle bug." He could tell from James's face that he had noticed being referred to by the nickname Jonny had had since infancy. Were those tears welling up in his eyes? "I'll do it for you tonight."

"Can I help wash Jimmy?" Jonny blurted out. Both of his brothers stared at the five year old, although James was thoroughly offended and Jack was simply surprised, as well as intrigued.

"You know what? That'll save us some time. Up on your knees, Jimmy." Jimmy tried to formulate some sort of protest, but Jack slipped his hands under his squeaky clean arms and lifted him to a kneeling position. "Jonny, you take his bumbum, I'll handle his dinky."

Tears of humiliation began to streak down James's cheeks as his brothers tag teamed bathing his most private areas. Why was this happening and why did he feel powerless to stop it? He fought to regain control of himself. It was almost over, right? It had to be.

"There we go! Two squeaky clean little boys!" He grinned, admiring his handiwork. "Wow, you did pretty well washing yourself, Jonny! Jimmy could learn from your example."

"That's not my name." James muttered, feeling drained by all the embarrassment. He lowered himself back down so that he was sitting on his feet.

"Is so." Jack replied cheerfully. "Alright, who wants out first?"

Lifting Jonny out of the tub, he rubbed him vigorously with a hooded towel before letting him wrap it around himself.

"You're a shark!" Jack said with a laugh as Jonny wiggled back and forth to make the fin atop his head wobble cartoonishly. "A silly little sharky!"

"I’m a silly shark!" Jonny agreed.

"Go wait by the door for us." Jack said, knowing that it was very likely James might try to make a break for it. Jonny, none the wiser, took up his position at the bathroom door, still playing with his fin. "Up you come!" Now that he had just lifted Jonny, he could confirm that James was heavier, but not uncomfortably so. Certainly lighter than he would ever expect a boy two years older than him to be. Then again, he thought. He was an eleven year old who was often mistaken for a teenager, so anything was possible, right?

He dried James off, holding back a thousand comments about the boy's body. He had had a lot of excitement so far and the night was not over yet. Jonny, standing by the door, yawned loudly.

"Getting close to bed, huh, Jonny?" Jonny nodded, which set off a fresh wave of giggles as his fin flapped again. Jack shook his head and James snorted derisively. "Your brother took the shark, so you get to be a ferocious dinosaur!" Jack said, wrapping the green hooded towel around James's shoulders. "Roar!"

"Roar." James mumbled, seeming to not even notice he had done it. Jack smiled and stood up, stretching his back a bit. He looked at Jonny, who was eyeing James's dinosaur towel's row of spikes covetously, and grinned.

"Think I can manage to carry the both of you?" Jonny nodded.

"Carry us? What? Where? Wh" reminding himself that

continuing on heedless of James's protests had gotten him to comply with a bath, Jack tuned out his stream of frantic questions. Amazing how an almost thirteen year old responded to the same things as a toddler, Jack mused.

“Up comes Jonny,” he grunted. “And up comes Jimmy!”

“Put me down!” James protested, squirming.

“Settle down. We’re just going down the hall, not across town!” He left the bathroom, nearly losing his hold on James as the boy wiggled desperately. Thankfully, he thought, Jonny’s room was the closest to the bathroom. He charged in and tossed the boys onto Jonny’s shark bedspread. He grinned at how similar they looked lying there, towels immodestly open. “Don’t fall asleep yet!” He said before they could even sit up. “Let’s get you two dressed.” He held out a hand for each of them, pulling them up. He kept hold of James’s hand, leading the boy away from his towel and over to Jonny’s dresser.

“What are you doing?” James demanded.

“Are you going Spider-Man or Batman?” Jack asked Jonny. Jonny immediately grabbed a grey and yellow pair with Batman’s logo on them. Jack nodded and grabbed a pair of Spider-Man briefs. “These are for you, Jimmy joe!”

"What? I can't wear those!" Jack sighed, rolling his eyes the way their parents did when one of them protested something silly.

"Jonny, is it okay if Jimmy wears a pair of your underwear?"

"That's not what I meant!" James protested as Jonny eagerly gave his consent.

"These are so much better than those droopy, saggy boxers you wear."

"You wear boxers"

"We're not talking about me right now." Jack said. "We're getting you dressed. Now do you want to put your undies on like a big boy or do I have to hold them out for you to step into?" James muttered something dangerously close to a swear word, but snatched the red and blue briefs from Jack and pulled them on. "Thank you." Jack suddenly gasped. "You know what we forgot to do? Brush teeth! God, I'm absent minded!" Knowing his brother too well, Jack picked James up and led the way back to the bathroom.

“Jonny, can you get your toothbrush and Jimmy’s ready for us?” He kept holding James. “Isn’t he helpful?” He asked the struggling preteen.

“Not the grape toothpaste!” James whined.

“You’re brushing your teeth with it, not eating it.” Jack teased. “Jonny, what’s the rules for tooth brushing?”

“To get all my teeth, I keep brushing through the whole song.” Whole song? James groaned as he remembered that Jonny had a song for everything. Bath time, tooth brushing, even for buckling his booster seat in the car.

“Jimmy’s going to join you, so can you show him your tooth

brushing dance?”

“There’s a dance too?” James asked, irritated. Dance proved to be a bit of an exaggeration as Jonny mimed brushing his teeth while wiggling his bottom back and forth and stomping rhythmically in place.

“Think you can handle that?”

“You’re not seriously gonna”

“Go on!” Jack set James down, blocking the door and his only means of escape. “Go on, Jimmy.”

“I am not doing this!”

“It’s fun!” Jonny said. “And it helps us have good healthy teeth. Right, Jack?”

“That’s right!” He gestured for Jonny to demonstrate again. “Go on, Jimmy.”

“Stop calling ow!” He rubbed his bottom.

“I don’t want to have to actually swat your grumpies away, Jimmy.” Jack said.

“You can’t spank me!” James protested, voice wavering.

“Well, I hope it doesn’t come to bumbum swats. Try out Jonny’s dance.” James sighed and half-heartedly copied his brother. Two little boys dancing around in their underwear was almost too adorable for words. “See how Jonny’s closing his eyes to really feel the music?” Jack said with a chuckle. “Don’t be afraid to get into it like your brother, Jimmy!” He

checked that his phone was in his pocket and then handed them their toothbrushes. “Ready?” He hit play on the music.

“Don’t start brushing until it says.” Jonny said to James. “We just dance a bit first.”

“Great” the music stopped.

“Jimmy, you need to dance.”

“What? Why?”

“Maybe you’re too little to brush like a big boy. I needed to bathe you, after all.”

“You really think that’s going to work?”

“Do you really want me to brush your teeth for you?” Jack asked with a confident smirk. “Dance or you’re doing it naked. On the front porch.” It was a meaningless threat, but James seemed like he would comply. “Restarting the song.”

The cheery music played and the boys danced as they followed the singer’s instructions on how to properly brush their teeth. Jonny was far more into it, but James danced enough that Jack felt confident in sneaking photos and a few seconds of video to show their parents. According to the evidence, they were both happy little boys brushing their teeth and having fun. Having them do it in their underwear instead of their pajamas was an accidental stroke of genius, he mused.

They spit into the sink, which seemed to be the most fun part for the both of them. Jack could not resist pulling out his

phone to document their impromptu spitting contest, Spidey and Batman unironically waggling on their butts. He smiled, glad that fun triumphed over embarrassment.

“Back to the bedroom for jammies, you two ragamuffins.” He said, tapping their shoulders and gently nudging them toward the door. He grinned as Jonny took James’s hand and led him back to his room, as if he knew just as much as Jack that James might run at a moment’s notice.

James only returned to himself once they were at Jonny’s dresser and the five year old was handing him pajamas. He looked at the pajamas and then at Jack.

“You put them on, dork.” He said fondly, patting James’s soft hair.

“But”

“Jonny’s gonna beat you!” James looked at Jonny and quickly dressed, the two of them stumbling around as they tried to get their shorts and shirts on first.

"Isn't that funny? Jonny's wearing Batman undies, but Spider-Man jammies and Jimmy's wearing Spider-Man undies, but Batman jammies." Jonny giggled appreciatively, but James glowered, all too aware of how he had been tricked yet again. "Don't worry, Jimmy. You two can swap jammies tomorrow night."

“Tomorrow night?”

“I think it’s bedtime. Does anyone have to go peepee?

Hopefully not since we were just in the bathroom."

"I gotta go." Jonny said.

"Of course you do." Jack said with a laugh. "Come on, you two."

"I don't need to."

"You're still gonna try." Jack said, reaching down to pick James up. James dodged around him and followed Jonny to the bathroom, stopping at the door. "Just a couple steps more, snuggle bug." Jack said, lifting him just enough to carry him over the threshold. Jonny went over to the toilet and tugged his shorts and underwear down to his ankles. Jack smiled. "Go on, Jimmy. Try and pee."

"But Jonny's using"

"Jon can share." He pushed the stammering teen over to the toilet and yanked down his shorts and underwear so that he mirrored. "We both saw your butt and dinky earlier. We're all boys here." He grinned at the scene before him as James tried to go. "Don't cross the streams!" He joked.

He watched as the boys finished up, tugging up and rearranging their clothes before Jonny led the way over to the sink to wash their hands. It was so bizarre how James would be sullen one moment and then acting like he and Jonny were twins the next. Had he secretly been wanting this? No, that had to be Jack reading too far into things, didn't it?

"Another yawn! Who was that?" He snickered as Jonny and

James each pointed at his brother. “Well, I guess you two will both have to go ninis, hmm?”

“What? Already?” James protested. “C’mon. I’ve been playing along.”

“We’re not playing a game, are we, Jonny?” Jonny held back a giggle as he tried to shake his head as solemnly as possible. “See? Off to bed we go!”

“Can you carry us again?” Jonny asked. “That was fun!” Jack grinned, unsure if Jonny just wanted to be carried out of pure innocent joy or if he knew it would both annoy James and keep him from escaping.

“I’m glad you two had fun! Let’s do it, but” he paused and bent over to meet Jonny’s eyes and James’s glare. “There’s a toll this time. You both have to kiss my cheek.” Jonny giggled and immediately complied. “C’mon, Jimmy. Kiss big brother’s cheek.” Jack snorted as James looked positively scandalized.

“Just do it.” He said, pulling James closer. He sighed and pecked Jack’s cheek. All he got for his sacrifice was being scooped up and carried back to his youngest brother’s room. Jonny giggled as they once again got tossed onto the bed. “Alrighty ho, sleepy little boys under the covers.”

“Both of us?” James asked.

"This bed's more than big enough for both of you." Jack said. "You and I shared a bed before we moved here."

"Yeah, when we were little."

"Jimmy!" Jack laughed in surprise. "You're still little, sweetie. That's been the whole point of this. To remind you that you're little. For goodness sakes, you're wearing the same jammies and undies as your five year old brother. Does that sound big to you?"

"I'm big." Jonny protested.

"Yeah, but compared to me?"

"You're bigger than me." Jonny allowed.

"Which makes you?" Jonny thought about it for a second.

"Little."

"Yep. See, Jimmy? Jonny accepts it. Isn't Jimmy little too, Jonny?" Jonny looked over his brother.

"Yep."

"There we go. Two itty bitty" yes, that was the right word. "Boys who need to get to bed." He tousled James's hair. "You both seem tired."

"He's the only one yawning."

"Yes and you, mister, you're pretty grouchy. Sounds like a sleepy little boy to me." He pulled back the covers and herded them in. "There, see? You two don't even need to cuddle." He tucked them in, planning to snap a few more pictures of them once they were asleep to prove that they could share a bed, with room to grow. "Everyone all snug?"

“Yes.” James only grunted, so Jack assumed Jonny was speaking for both of them.

“Sweet dreams, little guys.” He said with a smile, turning out the light. He pretended to walk away, but sat down outside the door. He heard whispers and giggles, but that was fine. As long as James did not try to sneak out and stayed with what Jack dubbed a late night gigglefest. He smirked. Late night… yeah, right.

He ran through the photos and video on his phone to make sure they presented the story he wanted. Nodding affirmatively, he texted his parents that he had something to show them. Two curious replies later and he sent off his evidence that James was better off being little. He chuckled as both of his parents’ replies made it clear that they saw just what he wanted them to see: two adorable little boys having a blast.

“Why’s he in those undies?” Mom asked.

“I caught them peeking out of his pants today and he confessed he’s been sneaking them and wearing them under his boxers for like a month.” Jack replied. “They fit and I figured there was no harm in letting him be open. Turns out, he’s been jealous of Jonny.”

“Well, he sure seems happier.” Dad replied. “You’re right, what’s the harm?” The giggles had been replaced by soft snores, so Jack stood up and, easing Jonny’s door open, snapping a few photos of the sleeping boys softly illuminated by the setting sun outside. He sent the photos to his parents

and knew Jimmy’s fate was sealed.

Chapter 2

Gigglefest 2 - Chapter 2

"Good morning!" Jack exclaimed as he pulled the covers off of Jimmy and Jonny's bed. He smiled as he gazed at the two drowsy boys, so alike despite the difference in their ages. "I still don't see how you two make sleep a contact sport!" he mused as JImmy rolled off of his makeshift pillow – Jonny's tummy. Jack noticed Jimmy's shirt had risen to his armpits while Jonny's pajama shorts had sunk enough to show the smiling face of Olaf the snowman on his bottom. What was the point of even dressing them for bed sometimes? Jonny stood up and began to undress. He knew the routine and thought nothing of crossing the room in just his Frozen underwear.

"C'mon, sleepy Jimmy!" He called as he reached Jack, smiling up at him.

Jimmy rolled out of bed and walked over for the first of their obnoxious morning rituals. Despite him still thinking of himself as James, the entire family -- mom and dad included -- had accepted him in a heartbeat as Jimmy, the middle brother but Jonny's de facto twin. It did not matter that he was older even than Jack: he was treated the same as Jonny. Jack chuckled and hugged them both, giving them both a playful pat on the bottom. He made a point of tugging down Jimmy's shorts enough to pat his identical undies-clad butt. Jonny loved begging Jimmy to wear the same thing as him and that was how the twelve year old now wore yellow Olaf pajamas

and Olaf briefs just like his kindergartener brother.

"Better hurry and get undressed, Jimmy." Jack said. "Jonny's already at your socks and undies bin!" A week ago, Jimmy had had his own bedroom and a dresser full of his own socks and boxers. Now, he shared a room and a big plastic bin with his five year old brother, chock full of socks and undies, not boxers. It was only after mom went out and bought numerous packs of colorful cartoon briefs that Jimmy learned she had seen the toothbrushing video and genuinely thought he wanted to wear the same undies as Jonny.

"Jonny's going with LEGO today." Jack announced. "What'll Jimmy pick?" Jimmy groaned as Jonny held out a matching pair.

"We matched yesterday."

"But it's fun!" Jonny said with a grin. "C'mon, middle brother!"

"I'm not" he knew it was pointless to protest. Jack had made him the middle brother and he was the only one who did not accept that. Being naked in front of his brothers had stopped being new, so he stripped and pulled on the LEGO briefs with their bright red waistband. All his boxers were gone. He wore briefs now.

There was still one pair of boxers, but Jonny had snatched those up a few days ago. That had been an awful day. As soon as they were all home from school, Jack had decreed it an underwear evening, which meant all three of them

stripped. Jonny had strutted around in boxers while Jimmy stared at both his brothers covetously in Spongebob briefs. Worse, he was almost certain Jack had destroyed them that night to make sure it could never happen again.

Breakfast passed normally, but it was soon time for school. At least Jimmy got to wear the more mature school uniform while Jonny wore what Jimmy still thought of as the ‘baby’ uniform. When Jonny demanded to know why, Jack had even explained that Jimmy was his big brother. Riding that high as he shuffled over to the front door, Jimmy grabbed his shoes and pulled them on before Jack stopped him.

“Remember, Jimmy? Jonny’s practicing tying shoes, so you’re supposed to let him do yours.”

“Jonny,” Jimmy said with a sigh. “Would you please tie my shoes for me?” Jimmy nodded and did just that.

“He ties them tighter than you do anyway.” Jack mused.

“Why don’t you just diaper me?” Jimmy muttered.

“Diaper you?” Jack laughed. “Jonny, do you two wear diapers?”

“No!” Jonny giggled. “We’re big boys, Jimmy!”

“That’s right. This is a diaper-free household and I expect you to keep it that way.”

“It was just a” joke didn’t seem like the right word, so Jimmy simply retreated into sullen silence.

The school day passed without incident. Jimmy could almost feel normal at school, even if his friends had heard Jack and Jonny call him Jimmy enough that they had picked up the habit. He pushed them to call him James, but his insistence only encouraged them more. Some friends, he thought. Still, other than the name thing, at least he felt like his real age around them. He did not dare even hint that, at home, Jack had effectively taken charge. Thanks to Jack's manipulation of the facts, their parents were convinced Jimmy had willingly submitted to Jonny's bedtime routine and now he was trapped.

"Dude, you okay?"

"Yeah." Jimmy muttered. Even imagining telling his friends about it made it seem silly. And they might even demand proof that he was wearing the underwear of a kindergartener. No, better to bear his burden in silence.

Even if I wanted to walk home alone, Jimmy thought, glaring at his brothers waiting for him, there's no way I could. Jonny was bouncing up and down with some nondescript stain on his white polo. Jack stood by calmly scanning the crowd for Jimmy. Does he think I'll sneak away? Jimmy thought. We all live together.

"There you are!" Jack said. "Brother chain activate!" Jonny grabbed one hand of each of his brothers so that he was in the middle. Jimmy rolled his eyes, but at least he was not in the middle.

"There's a new boy in my class." Jonny said almost as soon

as the school was out of sight. “I think he’s like really, really little, cuz the teacher has to help him take off his shoes and he always naps and teacher says I’m going to help him learn the ropes or something. Does that mean I gotta help him tie his shoes?” Jonny always did this when he got excited, rambling on and on. “He has these Toy Story clogs, so he doesn’t even have laces. His name’s Lu”

“Shuddup, Jonny!” Jimmy said. Enough was enough!

“Jimmy, don’t tell your brother what to do.” Jack said, giving his hand a warning squeeze. “You’re the middle brother and you need to set a good example.”

“Sorry, Jonny.” Jimmy muttered. Jonny smiled and gave him a hug.

“I forgive you.”

The after school period passed without incident up until dinner. Jack busied himself in the kitchen, leaving his brothers to entertain themselves. They always did with such aplomb, after all. He hoped Jimmy had not been lying when he said he did not have any homework.

“Alright, dynamic duo. Time for dinner!” Jack announced. Jonny came running, but Jimmy glowered.

"Come on, Jack. You can't be serious. I'm not really his... his twin."

"Did I say you were? Jonny sure seems to think you're his big brother, doesn't he?" JImmy nodded, taking his place at the

table.

"No, yeah, I mean... but the whole having to go to bed and all that."

"You two share a bed. It's easier this way."

"But"

"And that's not me saying that. That's mom."

"But"

"Didn't you notice when she had her day off? You still went to bed with Johnny, cuz you two share a bed."

“I’m not his twin.” Jimmy said sullenly.

"C'mon, man. I know that!"

"We're wearing matching underwear. We do everyday!"

"But do you wear the same uniform? Nope. He wears the kindergarten uniform, you wear the big boy uniform. Just like me!"

"You're younger than me too..."

"But so much bigger."

“I’m not a baby.” Jonny weighed in.

“There. You see? Jonny’s not a baby and you’re bigger than him, aren’t you?” He tossled Jimmy’s hair with a chuckle. “Now, aren’t you hungry?”

“Yeah…”

“Alright, go with your brother and get your faces washed for dinner.” Thanks to Jack’s ingenuity, the way they washed their faces for dinner was to have each boy wash his brother’s face. The way Jimmy saw it, he would have felt a lot bigger if he was just washing his little brother’s face. Having to sit there while Jonny scrubbed his face with the washcloth brought back horrible memories of that first night when he had shared a bath with him. Not that their current system was much better.

“Just let me do it.”

“But it’s fun.”Jonny said with a giggle.

“It’s washing your face.”

“Mommy says making things a game helps us remember to do them.”

“Well, mom”

“Why do you always do that?”

“Do what?”

“Call her mom.”

“That’s who she is.”

“Yeah, but” Jonny shrugged. “Just seems like you’re trying really really hard to be big.”

“I am big.”

“I guess, but” he shrugged again. “Like, Jack never has to

prove he's big, right? He just is."

"I'm older than you."

"Yeah." Jonny nodded. "But we have the same bedtime. You and me wear the same undies."

"Well" Jimmy glared. "I… I…"

"I just think it makes more sense for you to call mommy mommy and daddy daddy, that's all." Jonny smiled kindly. "C'mon. Race you back to the table!" How was he so fast? Jimmy wondered as he chased Jonny back to the dining room.

Dinner passed quickly and almost felt like the old days. All three of them laughed and chatted like brothers do and Jimmy did not even mind having to use a booster seat identical to Jonny's. Was he getting used to it, Jack wondered. He clapped his hands as they finished eating.

"Alrighty doodles, who's first for baths tonight?"

"He is!" His brothers said, pointing to each other. He smiled. Sure, they weren't really twins, but they sure had the unison down pat.

"Come on. I know you two have a system. Who's first?" He sat back and watched them deliberate.

"Well, I gave you my dessert last weekend." Jonny said.

"But then I let you play that game."

"And then"

“Who took a bath first last night?”

“Me!” Jonny said.

“Then doesn’t that mean it’s Jimmy’s turn?” Jimmy frowned, but there was no way out of it. Jack stood up. “Alrighty. You two know the drill.” They certainly did. He cleared the table while they headed off to their room to get ready for baths. He wondered just what their parents planned to do with Jimmy’s old room now that he and Jonny were sharing. He would have to remember to ask them.

By the time he had put the dishes in the dishwasher and had it running, he knew his brothers would be ready for toothbrushing. Sure enough, he arrived to the bathroom to see them playing some kind of hand slapping game, neither boy all that embarrassed about being in nothing but their Lego briefs. He smiled as he watched them. How could anyone suspect that one of them was (almost) six and the other was twelve? How could that tiny boy in his underwear be older than Jack? It made no sense.

“Get your toothbrushes ready. Here comes the song!” Jack said, pressing play. He grinned at the scene before him as they danced around, going far beyond the hip swaying of the first night to making the entire bathroom their dance floor.

Just as long as they brushed their teeth, Jack thought, slipping past them to get the tub filling. Having them taking separate baths meant it took longer to get them all clean, but probably saved water since there was less splashing with them separated.

“All minty fresh?” He asked as they spit a lot more than necessary into the sink. “Anyone need to pee?”

“We did that already.” Jonny announced.

“Alright then. Jimmy, undies off and into the tub you go! Jonny, can you go set out jammies for the both of you?”

“Already did.” Jonny announced proudly.

“Wow! Whose idea was that?”

“His.” Jimmy grunted, climbing into the tub.

“Use the steps next time.” Jack chided, giving his leg a light tap. “Well, since Jonny’s got everything set already, I guess you can hang out while I’m giving Jimmy his bath.”

“You don’t need to!” Jimmy insisted, but Jack refused to relinquish the washcloth. He never seemed to give Jimmy a chance to bathe himself.

“Nearly done.” Jack said. Jimmy glowered from the tub, but he knew it was no use fighting. In no time, he found himself with a towel wrapped around his shoulders, being shepherded to the bedroom.

“Put on your jammies.” Jimmy wanted to issue some snarky comment, but the warm water had done its work and he was starting to feel a yawn coming on. He fought to keep it down and knew a comment would not help. He dressed quickly, figuring the sea turtles on his pajamas were at least better than last night’s Olaf.

“Jimmy’s all ready for bed!”

“Inside voice, Jonny.” Jack whispered, pulling back the covers. “Climb in, Jimmy.” Jimmy complied. Even though they mostly alternated nights, it still felt so strange to have Jonny standing there, watching him getting tucked into bed. “Good night, Jimmy.”

“Nini, Jimmy.” Jonny echoed. Jimmy sighed and watched them walk away, leaving the door open just a smidge. He knew Jonny would come back to join him in bed in maybe twenty minutes at most. Jonny was always awake when he got second bath, so all he had to do was keep his eyes open for twenty minutes. Then again, he thought, this was his only chance to enjoy having a bed to himself. Maybe he should sleep while…

Barely fifteen minutes elapsed before his brothers returned, Jonny freshly bathed with a towel around his shoulders. It never took long with how quickly he bathed himself. Jack had even allowed him a moment to goofily flex in the mirror like he had seen once on TV.

“Oh, shh.” He whispered to Jack, who followed close behind him. “Jimmy’s asleep.”