Joey's Jon Jon

by andlat

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Chapter 1

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Only two hours ago, Sean and Devin had been wrestling in nothing but their underwear over who would get the light blue shirt and who would get stuck with yellow for Easter, but now they sat amiably side by side, watching their family chat. Sean surveyed the chaos, glad that Mom had at least bought them different shirts, even if he had ended up with the dorky yellow one. Despite being fraternal twins, everyone was always calling him Devin!

“Looks like Joey's here.” Devin said.

“Joseph now, remember?” Sean looked where he was pointing. “Oh, he's talking to Uncle David.”

“Yeah.” They both shuddered. David was a retired teacher, so he always asked a million questions about school. Even from across the yard, they could hear Joseph energetically talking about some history project. “He enjoys it more than we do.”

“Yeah.” Sean agreed.

Bored, his eyes wandered the yard. He saw Margaret in her disgusting Easter dress playing with a doll. Joseph would probably talk to David for like an hour, so what was he supposed to do until then?

“What should we do?” Devin asked with a dramatic sigh. Sean shrugged.

“You could go color with baby Johnny.” He teased, pointing over at the toddler sitting at a little table coloring with fat crayons.

“You're the one in baby chick yellow.” Devin said, punching his arm.

“That's not what it's called!” Sean looked back over at Joseph, then back at Johnny.

"Hey, have you ever noticed-"

"Don't change the subject."

"Shuddup. Have you ever noticed that Joseph and Johnny look like twins?" Devin looked and shrugged.

"Not really. Johnny's wearing baby clothes and Joseph's dressed"

"Not their clothes, dummy! Look at their faces, their hair. They're closer to twins than we are." Despite being twins, Devin's hair was a few shades lighter than Sean's, another reason why neither of them understood why they got mistaken for each other.

"But Joseph's taller."

"And you're a quarter inch taller than me." Sean said patiently. Devin considered it.

"I do kinda see it. They have the same lips." Sean nodded.

"See? Maybe they were separated at birth. It happens sometimes. Raised as cousins, but actually twin brothers."

"Do you think we should tell them?" Devin asked, his tone completely serious.

By the time Joseph had finished telling Uncle David all about school, Sean and Devin were well on their way to be convinced that Joseph really was Johnny's twin brother. Surely it was their duty as cousins to reunite the babies. There had been some debate about whether they were babies or big boys, but the more they watched Johnny, the more obvious it was that he was undeniably a baby and, therefore, so was his twin brother Joseph. The trick would be getting Joseph to admit it.

“Follow my lead.” Sean said, coming up with a plan. He whispered a few last minute instructions to Devin as Joseph began to walk toward them.

“Hey, guys.” Joseph said, pulling a hand out of his khaki pocket to wave at them. Devin eyed his groin, almost certain he could see a diaper bulge. Sean elbowed his brother's side to remind him of the plan.

“Hi!” Sean said in the exaggerated friendly tone you use to talk to a little kid. “How are you, Johnny?”

“Johnny? I'm Joseph.” Devin and Sean laughed.

“Nuh-uh! Joseph's over there, Johnny.” Sean pointed at the still coloring Johnny. Joseph turned to look, unaware that both Sean and Devin glimpsed at his butt to see the diaper they expected to be pressing against his khakis.

“No, that's Johnny. I'm…” he stared at Devin and Sean, trying

to figure out what their game was. “Ha, funny.” He said, figuring it would be best just to play along until they gave in and revealed whatever the joke was.

“You're Johnny.” Devin said. “You can't trick us!” Sean got to his feet and grabbed the confused Joseph's hand.

“Your mommy told us you'd come ask for a diaper change.” He said. “Come on, Johnny. We'll get you changed.”

“Diaper?”

“That's right.” Devin grinned, grabbing Joseph's other hand. “Let's go, Johnny.”

“What are you guys doing?” Joseph asked, walking along with them, even if it was a little awkward having both of his hands held. They just looked at each other and laughed. It always stung a little bit being the one out of the loop, but Joseph figured all he could do for now was go along with it and wait. Maybe they had found something cool inside and were just being weird as a way to show him without arousing suspicion. Maybe they'd found where the adults had hidden the Easter baskets!

“Don't dawdle, Johnny.” Sean said, giving Joseph's hand a squeeze. “That diaper can't hold on much longer, I bet!”

“Dude, quit saying I'm wearing a diaper.”

“Yeah, Sean. Johnny's a big boy, aren't you, Johnny?”

“I'm Joseph. Or Joey, I guess.” Where were they going? And why did they keep calling him Johnny? Joseph had a bad

feeling about this, but Sean and Devin usually committed to their games.

Spying a photo of Johnny on the wall, the trio stopped to admire it. If you squinted just a bit, it really did look like it was Joseph wearing a yellow bubble romper as he gazed up at the camera, chubby cheeks split in a big grin.

“Wave hi, Johnny!” Sean said. “That's you!”

“It is not- Quit!” He tried to pull his hand away as Sean made him wave.

“Baby chick yellow.” Devin mumbled at Sean, who glared at him.

“Where are we even going?” Joseph demanded.

“He's getting fussy, Dev. Let's get to Johnny's nursery.”

“I am Joseph!” He yelled, digging his heels in.

“You're just being silly, Johnny.” Devin replied. “Twins can't fool other twins.”

“Twins?” Joseph looked at the photo of Johnny and frowned. “We don't look anything like each other. And I'm like… so many years older than him!” They began to drag him along. “And we're cousins. Twins are brothers.”

Joseph was still convinced this was a joke, but when they reached a door with Johnny on it in colorful block decals, he started to worry they had more planned than he had thought. The door creaked open and the three of them smelled baby

powder as Sean and Devin yanked Joseph inside.

“What are we doing here?” Joseph asked, looking at the crib, changing table, and other pieces of furniture. He supposed if they had swiped the Easter baskets, no one would expect to find them in here.

“We told you, Johnny.” Sean said. “You asked us for a diaper change and we need to change you!”

Sean was a champion youth wrestler. Devin took jiu jitsu. They had spent the last hour convincing themselves and each other that Joseph was a baby. Between the two of them, Joseph did not stand a chance.

“Look!” He panted in desperation. “I'm wearing underwear! Because I'm Joey, not Johnny!”

“Uh-huh. Sure.” Sean said as if he could not see Joseph's underwear with his own eyes. “Who's gonna take his stinky diaper off? Nose goes!” His finger flew up to his finger.

“No fair!” Devin protested.

“What is going on!?” Joseph exclaimed. They were making enough noise to be any of the jungle animals on the walls of Johnny's nursery. Was everyone outside? Some adult always came to yell at them when they were playing loudly.

“Alright, I'll do it since baby Johnny's all fussy.” Devin held his breath as Sean held Joseph down. Devin quickly yanked his cousin's underwear down his legs and, noticing the diaper pail, ran over to it.

“No! No! No!” Joseph was now completely naked. They had even taken off his socks!

“Grab a diaper and stuff on the way over, Dev.” Sean instructed, grinning. “Widdle Johnny's excited for his diaper.”

“Joseph! I'm Joseph!” Why were they not believing him? “And don't you freaking say Joseph's outside coloring. He's not. I'm not!” He tried to see around Sean, who sat on his chest. “Did you really throw my boxers in the diaper pail!?” He demanded.

“No, it was your stinky diaper.” Devin said, sounding almost like he believed it.

“You two have lost your minds!”

“We're gonna put you in a nice, clean dry diaper and then you'll get to go color with your twin brother Joseph.”

“I am Joseph.” He hissed through gritted teeth, nearly apoplectic. “And I am not Johnny's twin brother.”

“But you look so much alike!” Sean said. “You both have blonde curls, chubby wubby cheeks.”

“And you both wear diapers.” Devin finished.

“I don't wear diapers!” Joseph protested, unable to overpower them as the twins worked together to prepare him for a diaper. “I'm a year older than you!”

“Nuh-uh!” Sean said. “Me and Devin are ten. You and Joseph turn three in a couple months.”

“Roll!” Devin decreed and the brothers rolled Joseph onto his belly to powder his butt.

“I'm eleven! I'll be twelve before you turn eleven.”

“That's just silly, Johnny. You're a baby with a powderpuff butt!”

“Stop!” Joseph managed to get a foot free, but with his face in the carpet on the floor of the nursery, he could only swing it around, trying to hit either Sean or Devin. He groaned as they pinned his foot again and rolled him back over.

“Just powder around his weiner. I think the diaper'll rub it in for us.” Sean said.

“I am not wearing a diaper!” Joseph's voice slid into a higher, shrill register as he screamed at the top of his lungs. Sean and Devin covered their ears, leaving powder in their hair.

“Babies always cry so loud!” Devin said.

“Joseph's going to be all done with coloring all the pictures before your diaper's done being changed, fussy baby Johnny.” Sean said.

“I am not-” he groaned in frustration. There was no way to get through to them.

“See how he calms down as soon as I tape his diaper on?” In truth, Joseph had reached a level of rage where he was unable to even speak. This had gone too far. His underwear was lost, they had put him in a diaper, and they kept saying he was Johnny! A joke was a joke, but this wasn't one. He had to say

something though.

“I. Am. Not. Johnny.”

“Are too.” Devin said. Sean spied the footprint on the wall and gestured his head toward it. Devin nodded, understanding immediately. There were certain benefits to being twins.

They pulled Joseph to his feet, the excess baby powder leaving a silhouette of his diapered butt. Joseph winced as the diaper crinkled and pressed against his legs with every shaky step as he stumbled over to the wall where an imprint of Johnny's feet hung on the wall. Sean grabbed one of Joseph's ankles and raised his foot up to the clay imprint.

“Your feet have grown a little since you were born, but those are obviously yours, Johnny!” He laughed.

“For the last freaking time! I'm Joseph!”

“I think he really misses his twin brother.” Devin said.

“Well, get him dressed then.” He nodded over to a jon jon hanging on the wall. It was almost eerie how well it matched the one the real Johnny was wearing, right down to the cursive monogram on the biblike collar. Why were there two, unless Aunt Clara had been expecting Johnny's long lost twin brother to need a matching outfit?

Devin grabbed it as Sean held their captive in place. Devin fumbled with it, puzzled by the buttons on the side and the snaps along the thighs and crotch.

“How's this thing work?” Devin asked.

“It's baby clothes. How hard can it be?” Sean retorted.

“The buttons on the side.” Joseph immediately regretted saying it. Why had he?

“Of course baby Johnny knows how his clothes work!” Devin crowed.

“Smart baby.” Sean praised mockingly.

Once again, Joseph tried to fight, but he was outmatched as they got him dressed. The infantile garment was obviously too small for him, but it fit well enough that Sean and Devin were once again a little unnerved.

“I think he's set!” Devin said. The boys stepped back and Joseph glared at them. Standing there in the nursery, the effect was obvious. He really did look like a giant Johnny.

“I guess his bib-”

“I think it's a collar.”

“Collar does kinda look like it says Joey since it's cursive.”

“It says Johnny, cuz this is Johnny.” Sean corrected, loving the way Joseph grumbled. “Joey's outside coloring, remember?”

“I am Joseph!” Joseph all but roared. Devin elbowed Sean and they nodded almost imperceptibly.

“Oh, my god! You're right!” Sean said in mock surprise.

“You are Joey!” Devin laughed. “You two look so identical,

we mixed you up."

"Oops!" Sean and Devin both descended into outright, bent over laughter. Joseph scowled, but he felt a small sense of relief now that they had admitted they knew who he was. How could they not? What did they mean that he and Johnny looked identical?

"We better get back out there." Sean said, wiping his eyes.

"Yeah, I'm amazed Dad hasn't come to check on us." Devin grinned at Joseph. "And we got Joey all dressed up!"

"What? You… you can't." They had thrown his underwear away, sure, but the rest of his clothes were still here. He had never imagined they actually meant to take him out where everyone could see.

"Seriously! This... you can't... I... I won't go!"

"Don't get grouchy now, baby Joey." Devin teased. Sean decided to try a different tactic.

"How 'bout this? We can either go back outside or Dev and I can get you in Johnny's crib for a nap?" Joseph frowned, but he could tell that this was a losing battle. He'd done embarrassing stuff before, true, but that did not mean he wanted to do this.

Sean watched Joseph weigh his options. What would he do if it was him in the diaper and babyish outfit? Probably die from embarrassment, he thought. He noticed the glimmer of an idea appear in Joseph's eye.

"I guess we can go outside." He said reluctantly.

"Sounds good!" Sean said, but he knew Joseph had something planned.

"Hold our hands!" Devin said. "We'll get you out to your twin brother!"

"He is not my twin."

"Oh, sure." Devin said. "You just have the same color hair, the same face, and the same clothes, right down to the same diaper!"

"I'm..." Joseph rolled his eyes. He wanted to get outside and arguing would only delay that. After all, once the grown-ups saw him, there was no way they'd let this stand. Granted, it felt dirty to bring grown-ups into this, but he had been shouting and hoping for someone to come only a little bit ago, hadn't he?

All three of them expected for the entire family to turn and stare as Sean and Devin led Joseph out into the backyard, but it took a minute for people to notice.

"I guess we'll take you over to your twin brother." Sean said.

"Uh, he's Joey, you're Johnny?" Devin frowned, feigning confusion.

"I thought twins could always tell."

"So you admit you're twins." Sean chuckled. "Bet he'll love to see you then."

In fact, Johnny accepted the bigger boy dressed in his spare jon jon with barely even a second look, he was so focused on coloring a picture of a cheery-looking bunny, scribbling away with brightly colored crayons.

"Looking good, dude!" Sean said. Johnny nodded as if he knew it.

"The egg's blellow." He declared.

"Yellow?" Sean replied.

"Blellow." Johnny agreed, giving him a big smile. Sean laughed.

"Well, Joey here's gonna color with you."

"Kay."

"Can you share your crayons?" Devin asked.

"Uh-huh!" Johnny handed Joseph a green crayon.

"Uh..."

"Just color, man." Sean mumbled.

"But-" Whatever Joseph was about to say was interrupted by an adult voice.

"What is going on here?" Aunt Clara asked. Thank god, Joseph thought, so relieved that he did not immediately notice Sean and Devin running away.

Clara watched them go. She would find them later, but her target right now was the boy wearing her son's spare Easter

outfit and, unless she was mistaken, a diaper.

"Explain." She said, hands on her hips. The way her sundress danced in the spring breeze made her look more intimidating somehow. Joseph took a fortifying breath. He still didn't like the idea of tattling, but desperate times.

"Sean and Devin made up a whole story about me being Johnny's twin brother and threw my underwear away and… and dressed me like this!"

"Twins?" Was that all she had heard? "You're six years older than him. Maybe even seven!"

"I swear, they think we're twins, so we had to dress alike and-"

"That's quite the story." She said, clearly not believing him. "It beats your 'I have to eat Easter candy before lunch or I'll die" story from last year."

"That was Devin!"

"Devin." She looked over at the boys who were doing a lousy job at making it look like they weren't watching everything happening from afar. "He's the one in yellow, right?"

"No, that's Sean."

"Oh, you were the one who made it his goal to steal their swimsuits in the pool last summer. " That had been him, not that Joseph was going to admit it.

"You've gotta believe me." He groaned in desperation. "I don't want to wear all this!"

"Well, you're going to because clearly you want to wear it. Joke or whatever motivation you had, there's no way they could get a diaper on you without you raising a fuss." She grabbed his hand as if sensing he might make a run for it. "Come on, you can color with Jonjon." Johnny smiled at his mom. “Is that okay, Johnny?”

“Uh-huh.” He said. “He's got my green crayon.”

“Yes he does.”

“What is happening?” Devin asked. They were far enough away that they could not hear everything Aunt Clara was saying with all the conversations going on in the backyard. They watched as their fake Johnny was forced to sit down and join the real Johnny in coloring, Aunt Clara taking photos. They could not help but cackle as she first made Johnny, then Joseph stand slightly so she could give their diapers a squeeze. Joseph was red faced and said, maybe a bit too loudly “I didn't use it!” An experienced mom, she only cooed reassuringly and pushed a pacifier in his mouth.

“Y'know.” Devin said. “I didn't really believe they're twins.”

“Me neither.” Sean said. “But she's acting like they are.” They exchanged a bewildered look.

“Do we rescue him?” Devin asked, starting to feel a little bad now that the euphoria had passed.

“I… I don't know.” Sean said, just as uncertain about the way this was playing out.

"Sean? Devin?”

“Uh-oh. What's Mom want?” Sean wondered. “Try not to look guilty.” The boys trekked over to her.

“You're the one with the guilty face.”

“We basically have the same face, dummy.”

"Come on, boys. Get the lead out." Mom said. "The spoon race is happening in a little bit and I know you want to win." They exchanged a look of surprise. Mom had not mentioned Joseph. Didn't she know? Didn't she care?

"I still think Wyatt cheated." Devin muttered as Wyatt triumphantly held the spoon race trophy high in the air. It wasn't like you even got to keep it. Your name just got written on the bottom. Sean's and Devin's names were both on there from years past, but it would still have been nice to win.

"They check for gum now." Sean said. Devin smiled roguishly.

"We'll just have to work hard to win next year."

"Yeah." Sean looked over to the little table where they had left Joseph. He was gone! "Hey, where'd Joey and Johnny go?"

"Dunno -- oh, there they are!" Everyone was heading to the tables for lunch, so it was no real surprise to see Joseph and Johnny already sitting by Aunt Clara, though it was a bit surprising they had managed to wedge Joseph into a highchair. He looked absolutely miserable with a light blue

terry cloth bib around his neck.

"They're really, actually treating him like a baby." Devin said in disbelief.

Word had traveled quickly among the adults that Joseph had been planning some sort of prank. If he was going to dress like Johnny, he would be treated like Johnny. That did not reach the kids' table, so Devin and Sean sat in bewilderment, watching and wondering if maybe Joseph actually was Johnny's twin somehow.

"They're not even close to the same age." Sean reminded Devin.

"What are you two whispering about?" Margaret asked accusingly.

"Oh, why Joseph's being treated like that."

"He looks adorable" was all Margaret had to say.

"You didn't think he was adorable when he was chasing you with that worm." Sean remarked, eating a piece of ham to punctuate his point. Margaret sniffed dismissively.

"Well, that's because boys outgrow their cuteness." She said as if everyone knew that.

"But-" Devin wanted to dig deeper, but Sean nudged him and silently signaled him to drop it. Margaret was a girl and therefore, she could never be expected to be an expert on boys.

"Alright, now that everyone's done eating." Uncle David said. Johnny and Joseph were being coaxed to drink their sippy cups of milk -- it was difficult to say who was more resistant -- but everyone else seemed full and sated. "We'll gather for the egg hunt!" Cheers and scattershot applause greeted the announcement. "Reminder, it's for ages three to twelve, so you'll just have to watch now, Max, and, Clara, we've got that fenced off little area for Johnny and Joey to play in." Sean and Devin exchanged a look. Joseph groaned, but it was hard to tell if he was dismayed at hearing he wouldn't be able to participate or he was annoyed Clara had taken that moment to check his diaper yet again.

"Should we apologize?" Devin wondered as they watched Joseph and Johnny holding hands as they toddled to their play area.

"They're all the way over there and we've got eggs to find." Sean said. Maybe they could give some of their candy to Joseph? All thoughts of Joseph vanished from his mind as the egg hunt began!

There was no winner for the egg hunt, but Devin managed to get two more eggs than Sean, so he figured he was technically the winner.

“That's not how it works.” Sean muttered, but Devin knew his brother would have insisted that that was how it worked if he had more than Devin.

“Mine!” Johnny yelled, drawing their attention.

“Maybe we should go rescue Joey.” Devin said. Sean nodded, but by the time they got over there, Aunt Clara was carrying Johnny and pulling Joseph by the hand into the house. Joseph had grass in his hair and grass stains on his bare legs, but that was all they knew about what had happened.

“You don't think she's gonna…” Sean grabbed his brother and pulled him toward the house, unsure what Sean was worried Aunt Clara might do.

“Why, hello you two!”

“We're busy, Uncle David.” Sean said, but he would not be deterred.

“Oh, it'll only take a few minutes. I just wanted to talk to you about-”

By the time they had managed to get away from Uncle David's droning questions about school – who wanted to think about school on Easter? – neither Devin nor Sean were too certain what they would find when they tracked down Joseph.

They stopped just down the hall from Johnny's nursery, hearing Clara's voice coming from the door that was only cracked open a bit.

“You go.” Sean hissed.

“No, you go.” Devin whispered back. “Nose goes.”

“No way.”

“Yes way!”

They bickered back and forth until the door opened and they quickly shushed each other. Sean and Devin exchanged a look as if each was making sure his brother was seeing what he was: Johnny and Joseph walking to the bathroom, holding hands in nothing but their diapers. Toddling along, they really did look like twins, despite the height difference.

“Don't you two have somewhere better to be?” Aunt Clara asked, noticing them and giving them an icy look. “If not-” they hurried away before she could even issue an empty threat about taking out Johnny's diaper pail.

Sean and Devin sat under the shade of the big tree in the backyard, almost certain they had got their cousin trapped in the life of a baby.

“I mean,” Devin began. “Won't Joey's parents not want to leave him here?”

“Maybe they don't want a baby and they'll just let him be raised with Johnny.” Sean said.

“He's not really a baby. He's obviously taller and they don't even look that alike.” As if on cue, Aunt Clara emerged from the house, but she was alone. Where was Joseph? “We've got to go find him.”

Back into the house they snuck, knowing all too well that they would be returning to the nursery yet again. It took all of their stealth to get down the hall and open the door. The soft melody of a lullaby played as they tiptoed toward the crib.

Side by side slept Johnny and Joseph in matching smocked blue nighties with fuzzy white bunnies on them. They sucked on matching pacifiers and Aunt Clara must have done something to Joseph's hair because now it was styled identically to Johnny's. Despite the size difference, they really did look like twins.

“Thought I might find you two in here.” Aunt Clara covered their mouths to muffle their screams, using her hands over their mouths to pull them back out of the nursery. Once the door was closed, she stared them down. “Haven't you two done enough?”

“We just wanted to make sure Joseph was okay.”

“He'll be fine. Once he wakes up, I'll let him put his own clothes on, though I'm not sure I want to know what you two did with his underwear.” She crossed her arms. “But more importantly, what am I going to do with you two?” Sean and Devin's hands found each other and the twins waited for the verdict. By the time the party wound down and everyone was on the road back home, what Sean and Devin had done to Johnny seemed mild compared to what Aunt Clara did to them.