

Luke's Treat

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Luke gets caught up in a plot to play a halloween trick on the star of the local baseball team - but things go array when his feelings get in the way of the plan.

The Costume Box

2025

Chapter 1

Luke's Treat

“It’s his fault.” Marcus insisted.

“He’s the one who squealed on us.” Jeremy agreed.

“So stop being a wuss, and do it already!” Austin demanded.

Luke Roberts wasn’t so sure. Afterall, freshmen weren’t really supposed to even step foot in the senior lounge. He’d never really been comfortable with Austin’s plan to bunk off gym class so they could play pool and drink the proper full-fat soda they had in the vending machines there - instead of the lame sugar-free stuff from the ones in the halls. It wasn’t really surprising when they got caught, and frankly Max Rushmore would have been well within his rights to hang them from the flagpole by their underwear. He was the most popular boy in school, afterall, and the captain of the celebrated baseball team. The way Luke saw it, he’d gone easy simply giving them up to Mr McMartin.

Unfortunately, the other boys didn’t see it that way. They were out for blood. The freshman quartet officially graduated from trick or treating, Austin had instead decreed that they would spend that Halloween egging and toilet papering the Rushmore residence. As by far the smallest and therefore logically the stealthiest, Luke was to strike the first blow - sneaking up onto the porch to splatter the front door. As the cardboard carton of twelve free-range eggs was thrust into his sweaty palms however, the tiny teen couldn’t hide his

trepidation.

“Does he really deserve it?” He squeaked. “Maybe I could just...knock on the door and run away.”

His three friends could hardly believe their ears. “Are you kidding?” Jeremy demanded.

“It’s his fault we had detention!” Marcus seethed. “All afternoon!”

Austin could be bossy, but he was also by far the most intelligent of the four boys. It was why he had always naturally assumed the role of the leader, even as far back at the first grade. He knew Luke needed a softer approach. “Listen, bud.” He said gently, smiling down at the nervous freckly face of his friend - not much taller now than he’d been when they first met. “It’s not like you’re gonna get arrested or nothing. The cops go easy on stuff like this at Halloween.”

Luke bit his upper lip. He hadn’t even thought of the cops. Even so, ordinarily he’d quite happily have egged any other door in town if Austin told him to. He’d have TPed mean old Mr McMartin’s topiary, or even lit a bag of dog poo on fire outside Principal Peterson’s porch. Hell, given half the chance he would have set Coach O’Hanaran’s house on fire! Anyone but Max Rushmore. It wasn’t just that he was cool, and popular, and handsome. The truth was, Luke had the teensiest bit of a crush.

He scrunched up his face in consternation, trying to think how he could possibly get out of this. One thing was for sure.

He wasn't telling them that.

"Alright, I'll do it." He peeped, clutching on to the carton so hard it was a wonder the eggs didn't crack. He wondered briefly if he could get away with 'accidentally' dropping them on the short walk across the street. Everyone knew he was clumsy, and they probably wouldn't bother schlepping all the way back to the store to buy more. But no. He'd made too much of a big deal out of it. It'd be way too obvious he'd done it on purpose.

"Attaboy!" Austin praised, even though Luke was a good two weeks older than him. "Its easy-peasy, you'll see."

Luke was all out of ideas. He gave a terse nod, turning stiffly away from the trio and walking across the road like a boy possessed. He could hear his own heart pounding in his chest, holding the carton of eggs out in front of him as if it were a stick of dynamite. It's chill. It's cool. It's just a prank. He tried to tell himself, the same way he'd done when Marcus had dared him to push Becca Bullock into the pool last summer - but for some reason it wasn't working this time. What the hell was wrong with him?

Much too soon, he found himself ascending the creaky wooden steps out the front of the Rushmore residence. He stood motionless in the yellowy glow of the porch light, imagining what he might look like when viewed from behind the Rushmore peephole: stiff, still, and sinister - like a creepy cursed little kid in a horror movie.

He brought up a shaky hand, fiddling to unlatch the simple

mechanism on the carton as he surveyed the front door for the points that would make the minimum amount of noise when struck. If he got this right, perhaps he could unload the entire dozen strategically against the most acoustically favourable targets? He would fire off his shots like a skillful assassin with a dainty silenced Smith & Wesson and then fade back into the inky blackness towards their hedgerow hiding place - greeted with muffled cheers and high-fives by his accomplices.

Just as Luke was contemplating converting his fantasy into reality, the door opened. The boy let out a high-pitched gasp of a surprise - sounding like a startled duchess in a detective serial. Of course, it was Max.

The intervening silence was similarly melodramatic, a couple of cricket chirps counting out the seconds. "Hey, Luke." The tall, blond, breath-takenly gorgeous older boy eventually greeted. His voice carried only a negligible degree of judgmental bewilderment. Max was socially merciful enough to disguise things like that. It was just one of the many reasons he was perfect. "What's with the eggs?"

Luke hadn't quite caught up to that part of the sentence yet, so he kept on holding out the eggs rigidly in front of him as if he were a cardboard cut-out at the farmer's market. A single much more important thought kept running through his mind. Max knew his name! Luke had spent the first two months of high school life under the agonizing assumption that his crush had absolutely no idea who he was. He was just a freshman, after all. And a puny, pre-pubescent pigmy of a

freshman at that. Even after the incident in the senior lounge, he'd assumed that Max paid no more attention to him than he did the silverfish nibbling on his sneakers.

“You coming in or what, buddy?”

How could he resist? The smaller boy stumbled dumbly over the threshold as if he were a puppy dog promised a heaping bowl of brown slop, tongue all but lolling from his mouth. He'd completely forgotten his friends by the time he'd kicked off his shoes and padded obediently down the hall, placing the eggs neatly down on pristine granite counter-top of the kitchen island. Max knew his name! He wanted him to come in! He was going to be friends with Max Rushmore!

“Y'know, a lot of kids bring presents for their babysitter - but this is the first time I've been given a twelve pack of eggs.” Max chuckled, picking them up and packing them away in their proper place in the fridge.

Luke might have been in love, but he wasn't stupid. His dopey smile faltered, the sentence dealing a pristine crack down through the perfectly framed picture of his fantasy. He blinked stupidly a couple of times, trying to process what had just been said. Max seemed to think he was his...babysitter?

“You alright, lil buddy?” Max continued in a tender tone, going right ahead and placing a gentle, huge, baseball-calloused hand on top of the boy's forehead, carefully brushing his fine caramel-fudge brown fringe to the side as he did so. “You're not feeling poorly, are you? I'd hate to have to interrupt your Mommy and Daddy on their date night...”

Now Luke was really lost. His Mom was at her book club, his Dad had been living at the Extended Stay America in Oak Grove ever since the divorce, and he certainly didn't call either of them 'Mommy' or 'Daddy'. He winced, the humiliating conclusion starting to piece itself together as Max continued to study his face with an almost saintly degree of concern. His previous elation popped like a balloon, instead replaced with an ever increasing sense of dread. Max didn't know who he was, and he didn't want to be friends. Clearly, he'd been confused for someone else. Someone Max was supposed to be babysitting.

Luke searched for the right words, but they didn't exist. As soon as he explained who he really was, Max would certainly remember him from the senior lounge incident. From there, the eggs made it painfully obvious what he'd been up to. Luke couldn't imagine Max would be merciful this time. Not only would he blow whatever infinitesimally tiny chance he had that Max would ever so much as smile at him, but the jock would probably spend the rest of the school year getting his own back. He imagined himself becoming the victim of a daily punishment ritual - Max efficiently wet-willying, wedgying, and pantsing him all before the first bell - and tried to pretend his fascination with the scenario was nothing more than a particularly acute kind of horror.

"Hmmm, you don't seem warm." Max concluded. "But you're awful quiet today, little guy."

"Ummm....Max?" Luke eventually managed to stammer.

“Ummmm...Luke?” Max imitated playfully.

“Err...What’s my name?”

Max laughed. “I would have thought you’d have worked that out by name.”

Luke looked away, nervously crossing his legs. “I mean my last name.” He added hurriedly. The question was pretty on the nose, but he had to be sure.

Luckily, Max humoured him. “Luke Wilson.”

That confirmed it. “And...how old am I?” Luke added without thinking, morbidly curious.

“Five years old.” Max answered, showing him five outstretched fingers as if he might be too little to understand the word. The older boy gave an amused tut, reaching out and mussing up his hair. “Are you sure you’re doing okay, bud? Usually you can’t go three seconds without telling me you’re a big boy five year old.”

“I’m good.” Luke answered, summoning the kind of dopey smile he imagined a real kindergartener might give to his favourite babysitter. He’d made up his mind just then that he simply had no choice but to play along. Besides, being a five year old wasn’t the worst thing in the world. Especially if he was Max Rushmore’s five year old. He could do five. Couldn’t he?”

“Glad to hear it, Lukey Dude.” Max accepted without question, producing a bag of sugar from inside one of the

kitchen cabinets. “How about we whip up some Halloween cupcakes with those eggs you brought?”

“Errr...okay?” Luke agreed, figuring if he was going to be five it was as good an activity as any. It certainly beat talking back to Dora or making fire-truck noises while crawling around on the carpet.

“Attaboy.” Max praised, in just the same tone that Austin had used.

It turned out that baking wasn’t quite as mature an activity as Luke had hoped for - at least not the way Max did it. First came the apron, a plasticky tractor-covered thing plastered with the slogan ‘DADDY’S LITTLE HELPER’ that might as well have been a bib. Then, there was the chef’s hat - a perfect fit perched adorably atop his cake-batter-brown hair. Worst of all however, Max insisted on making him use this bizarre step-stool apparatus that was enclosed on four sides like a kind of kitchen crib. Frankly, Luke failed to understand how something like that was supposed to make anyone safer. As far as he was concerned, it only served to keep him firmly rooted in one spot - making clear that he was merely playing at baking a cake, rather than helping in any meaningful way.

Still, Luke wasn’t going to let a little thing like that get him down. Deciding to make the most of his time with Max, he peppered him with questions - making sure to put a kindergarten spin on them just enough so as not to blow his cover. ‘Who’s your bestest friend at big school?’; ‘Are they a girl?’; ‘Do you wanna marry them?’

Annoyingly, Max was very skilled at saying nothing - going off on long boring tangents about the time he hit a home run, or re-directing Luke's persistent wagging tongue to licking out the bowl. Still, Luke got what he was looking for - confirming that Max was indeed dating Stacey McGuffrey, just as rumoured. His cheeks burned with envy at the news, allowing himself to vent with a few more pointed infantile interrogations. 'Why're you best friends with a girl?'; 'Don't you think boys are better?'; 'Why don't you be best friends with me instead?'

By the time the cupcakes were in the oven, Luke was totally encrusted in flour and cake batter. The boy had always been rather clumsy, but the authentically five-year-old levels of messiness hadn't been helped by his bad mood. Increasingly frustrated by the tantalising babified snippets of Max's relationship, he'd spilled the flour on the floor, cracked egg white on his fingers, and stirred the batter much too fast - splattering himself and a good portion of the kitchen in yellow goo.

"Oh boy." Max remarked with a smile, putting his hands on his hips as he regarded his cake-covered charge. "I forgot you were such a mucky pup."

Luke smirked back smugly as Max licked his finger and made a half hearted effort at smudging away some of the mess from Luke's cheek, deciding to consider the obviously innocent gesture a kind of inadvertent adultery on Max's part. He imagined Stacey McGuffrey happening to walk in on them and dumping Max on the spot, leaving the older boy

with no choice but to take him to the winter formal.

The smaller boy was still deep in fantasy land when the doorbell rang, half-convinced that Stacey McGuffrey really was about to walk in through the front door and make all his dreams come true. It was only when he they were half-way down the hall, Max leading him obediently by his sticky hand, that he considered who might actually be waiting on the other side.

A panicked lump quickly formed in his throat. It would probably - no, it would definitely - be the real Luke Wilson, the little boy already in costume as a cowboy or a pirate or something and flanked on either side by his Mommy and Daddy dressed up to the nines for their date night. There would be a few agonizing moments of confusion as the Wilson's inquired why Max was looking after some other kid on their night, and as Max worked out the mistake he had made. Then, it would only be a matter of time before he remembered Luke from the senior lounge incident - and the game would fully be up. The Wilsons would shout, the real Luke would cry, and Max's thick blond eyebrows would fall into a furious glower before he sternly led Luke into the hall bathroom to wash out his lying mouth with a good old-fashioned swirlie.

Already convinced that this is what awaited him should he stay, Luke quickly wriggled his hand free from Max's grip. He had no choice. As soon as the door opened, and before anyone had a chance to work out who he was or what was going, he'd simply make a dash for it barefoot into the night.

If his friends were still out there, he'd spin up some yarn about how Max had caught him egging the house and, in revenge, had spent the last hour waterboarding him with cake batter. He'd tell them all sternly that Max was not to be messed with under any circumstances, and they'd all go home and spend the evening playing Super Smash Bros like normal.

It was only when Max had taken the door off its chain that Luke considered another possibility. What if it wasn't the Wilsons? What if it was his friends, no doubt convinced by his long absence that he was in dire need of rescuing? The consequences of this scenario were so sickening that any semblance of a plan was completely abandoned at once, Luke's brain instead short-circuiting into helpless fawn-like inaction. Max, of course, would instantly realize who he was. And given his little chef getup his friends, of course, would instantly put together what he'd been up to for the last hour. This, of course, would culminate in the four of them all agreeing that he was clearly too much of a pathetic spineless tadpole to attend high school and they would decide at once to collectively petition the administration to have him re-enrolled in preschool - preferably the two year old's class - where even Luke Wilson would view him as a helpless blubbering cry-baby.

In the end, it was only trick or treaters.

There were three of them, all dressed mercifully as ghosts so Luke didn't have to agonize over their identities, or whether any of them might possibly conceivably recognize him. Nevertheless, Luke hung back a little, nervously sucking

dried batter off his fingers while Max distributed some fun-sized Milky Ways into the kids' baskets. Their grown-up, a short dumpy woman with an interfering comportment, latched on to him right away.

“Who’s the little chef?” She asked meddlesomely.

“That’s Lukey.” Max gave him up at once, much to Luke’s annoyance. He shot the older boy a frustrated glare, which seemed to get the message across. “Sorry, he’s a little shy.” He told the woman.

“We’d be happy to take him out if you’re too caught up.” The woman continued, loudly. “A little boy shouldn’t be cooped up inside on Halloween!” She declared the statement proudly as if it were a well known aphorism.

Luke retreated fully behind Max, communicating his disapproval of the plan with a short curt shake of his head.

“Sorry, it’s err...past his bedtime. And he’s allergic to chocolate.” Max saved him, firmly shutting the door. He showed Luke a bemused grin. “Boy, what a weirdo!” he joked.

“Some people need to learn to mind their own business.” Luke grumbled seriously, forgetting for a moment that he was supposed to be a five year old.

Luckily, Max seemed to find his serious tone amusing. “Too right, bud.” He agreed, taking his hand again and tugging him towards the stairs. “Even if it’s not quite your bed time, we should get you a bubble bath. You’re all sticky!”

Luke felt his face burn bright red. “Err...I’m good.” He tried to insist, anchoring his feet to the floor. Unfortunately, that proved no obstacle for Max - the much bigger boy simply sweeping him up into his arms and parking him on his hip, little socked feet gripped either side of his torso.

“Errr...I’m good!” Max imitated, making Luke cringe at how adolescent he’d just sounded. It was a miracle he hadn’t been found out yet. Luckily, Max seemed oblivious. “Sorry buddy, five year olds don’t get to skip out on bath time.”

Stomping his feet, crossing his arms, and wearing a champion pout as he stared hatefully at the full bubble-bath, Luke figured he was doing a pretty good impression of a five-year-old. Unfortunately, Max wasn’t convinced.

“Lukey, you are acting like a two-year-old!” He declared in frustration, glaring at the still fully clothed little boy perched on the toilet lid.

Luke felt strangely aggrieved by the demotion. There was a pretty big gap between kindergarten and a high school freshman, but the three measly years between two and five somehow felt like an even more humiliating chasm. The accusation hardly helped his mood.

“Don’t call me that!” He snapped. “And...I’m not a two-year-old.” He added weakly, turning his gaze longingly towards the closed bathroom door.

He needed a way out. As things currently stood, he was about twenty seconds away from Max Rushmore giving him a bath.

Luke supposed there was nothing strictly wrong with the concept itself, but the context was all wrong. There were supposed to be candles, and dim lights, and rose petals. Not this. He could hardly imagine Max carrying Stacey McGuffrey wriggling up the stairs on his hip and sitting her on the potty while he fetched a plastic box of toys to fill the tub.

On his part, Luke supposed that Stacey was probably a little more eager than him to take off her clothes. But then again, she probably wasn't haunted by underwear that had originally been purchased in the first grade. Luke had been desperately trying to remember precisely what pair he had on today. They were definitely briefs - he could feel that - but was it a just-about-bearable plain blue pair, or was it a sickening set of Spiderman underoos? He hadn't paid attention. After all, he'd hardly expected to be stripping down in front of his crush.

Max eventually lost patience with the toddler tantrum routine, going right ahead and roughly grabbing the boy by the collar of his t-shirt. "Up!" He demanded, and Luke could do nothing more than squeak as he obeyed, letting Max pull him to his feet and roughly pull his top off over his head to reveal his soft smooth tummy. The boy's jeans proved even less of an obstacle, the jock disposing of them as easily as he would those of a geek in the school hallway.

Luke let out a little chirp of dismay as his briefs were revealed - but honestly, it wasn't the worst result. He was wearing a white set of New York Yankees themed briefs, the fake fly piped out in black and the 'NY' logo repeated in

sequence, interspersed between the signature thin black lines. He was pretty sure they'd been a gag gift from his uncle about five years ago, when he'd half-heartedly signed up to little league for a single season.

Max looked a little perplexed. "Oh." He remarked casually. "With all the fuss you were making, I was sure you had a soggy pull-up."

Luke's eyes bugged out in surprise, trying to tell if Max was making fun of him - but it didn't seem like it. It was just his luck. Not only did he apparently have a five-year-old doppelganger, but apparently Max was quite used to seeing this kid in toddler's training pants! And not just any old Pull-Ups, Pull-Ups that had been used. Frankly, at five years old it was unacceptable. He made a mental note to figure out where this Luke Wilson kid went to school and to give him a good talking to. He needed to get his act together on the potty training front - for both of their sakes.

Resisting the urge to wrinkle his nose in disgust, Luke decided to do his doppelganger a favour. "I don't wear those." he declared proudly, before realizing that Max almost certainly had more up-to-date information. "Um...anymore."

Max looked a little skeptical. "I guess they're not allowed now you're in Kindergarten huh?" He speculated, leaning down to help Luke step out of the jeans pooled around his ankles. His eyes now directly level with the underpants, he took a moment to inspect them - immediately picking up on a faint yellow discolouration in the fly area. "You got a little

wee-wee stain here, bud.” He reported with a disappointed tut. “You know you still have to go to the potty, even if it’s just a little dribble.”

Luke gave an outraged growl, but he’d hardly been expecting to have to explain drippage that was half a decade old. Fine, so he’d not always remembered to shake at the urinals when he was nine years old - was that really such a crime?

Max had no time for explanations however. The stained undies were just another reason little Lukey was in sore need of a bath. Mercifully, he was quick. Luke barely had time to register that his undies had come down between pouting standing on the bathroom tiles and pouting sitting cross-legged in the warm soapy water - only the copious bubbles affording him any modesty.

“I guess I’ll leave you to stew into some Lukey soup for a bit.” Max declared, pouring the plastic box of toys into the tub. “I’ll be back in five minutes. Don’t get up, and don’t put your head below the water.” He told the boy sternly, making the boy nod in agreement before finally leaving the room.

Luke let out a sigh of relief, realizing that he was alone for the first time since Max had opened the door. Absentmindedly bobbing a plastic sail boat along beside him, he considered his predicament. All things considered, he wasn’t in the worst position. It seemed like his friends weren’t coming to ‘rescue’ him (not that he wanted them to), and it was surely now too late for the real Luke Wilson to turn up. He wondered what had happened to his Mommy and

Daddy's 'date night', giggling at the thought that there might be another resident at the Oak Grove Extended Stay America that evening.

His only real problem was that, at some point, he'd have to escape. He surveyed the room, trying to put together some kind of plan. The front door was out of the question, but perhaps there was some way he could sneak out the window? It would be a decent plan, if Max hadn't taken his clothes off somewhere when he left the room. He imagined himself shimmying naked down a drain pipe, a few ever dwindling bubbles on his butt his only gesture at modesty. Was that really any better than Max discovering the truth? Yes, he decided right away. It definitely was.

He'd have to act fast. Max would be back soon. He got carefully up on his feet, hoping the nearby linen closet contained some spare clothes - or at the very least a towel. He hadn't even stepped out of the water however, when the door opened.

"Luke!" Max snapped, rushing over right away and grabbing hold of his hand - as if he might slip at any moment. "What did I say about standing up in the bath?"

"S-sorry!" Luke could only stutter, allowing Max to push him back down into a sitting position - the feeling of the tepid water tickling against his bottom a humiliating reminder of his failure. He felt his ears burn a hot red, realising that Max must have seen everything.

"Maybe you're not old enough for me to leave you alone."

The older boy grumbled, retrieving a cold wet wash cloth from the side of the bath and immediately setting about scrubbing the smooth underside of Luke's armpits - forcing his arms uncomfortably into the air.

Luke shivered from the cold. "Sorry..." He could only repeat, trying to think up an excuse. Max couldn't know what he'd been planning. "I was just looking 'cause there was a bird at the window and-"

"Drink your baba." Max interrupted, pushing the boy's arms down against and forcing a warm baby bottle into the boy's grip. "Both hands." He commanded.

The smaller boy stared at the bottle, a little confused. "But it's for babies..." he mumbled, but Max had clearly lost all patience.

"Lukey." He snapped, having moved on to the boy's chest. "We're not having another argument tonight. You always drink your milk in the bath."

As far as Luke was concerned, that was explanation enough. The last thing he wanted was for Max to think he was acting out of the ordinary, after all. He winced from embarrassment as he inserted the silicone nipple into his mouth, but was pleasantly surprised by the taste as he started to gently suck. It tasted sweeter than ordinary milk - almost like melted down warmed up ice cream. He greedily drank it down, not even noticing as Max's washcloth slowly migrated underneath the water. It was only when he brushed the rough cloth between his legs that Luke let out a squeak of protest,

bottle popping out his mouth and milk dribbling down his chin as he plunged a protective hand into the water.

“I can do it.” He garbled through a mouthful of milk, but Max wasn’t having it - gently re-directing both of his hands back to the bottle.

“Don’t fidget, Lukey. I’m almost done.”

Despite his earlier directive, Max then had the boy stand up in the tub - stabilizing him with a firm hand to the shoulder while he brought up the wash cloth to deal with his bottom. The bubbles long since popped, Luke wasn’t under any illusions about his privacy anymore. He just tried to focus on emptying the bottle as quickly as possible so that he could free up his hands again.

As soon as he was finished however, so was Max.

“All done!” The jock told him cheerily, going over to the linen cupboard to retrieve a warm white fluffy towel. With a tummy full of sweet yummy milk and a head full of intoxicating chemical shampoo scents, Luke was as docile and cuddly as a teddy bear as Max bundled him up in the towel and carried him like a baby out in the hall. Sighing contentedly, he allowed himself to forget his predicament for just a moment, pretending Max had invited him over for a pampering on purpose - and that he wasn’t impersonating some absent pants-wetting five-year-old.

The changing mat set up on top of Max’s chest of drawers swiftly shattered the illusion. A cream coloured soft squidgy

square decorated all over with flowers and hopping bunny rabbits, it was plenty big enough for a little guy like Luke - Max laying him down with room to spare. Luke let out three sniffling little yowls, the toddler-esque tantrum commencing like hiccups or a fit of sneezing - entirely involuntary. He was so upset he felt like he'd lost control of his own body, no longer capable of rational grown-up planning and action but instead reduced to hopeless whining and writhing as Max unfolded the towel and produced a thick, crisp, crinkly white diaper.

“N-nooooo-oh-oh-oh...” Luke managed to cry, taken completely off-guard by the escalation. He tried to focus on his fake story, holding on to a vain hope that Max had simply forgotten he was babysitting a kindergartener rather than a toddler. “I’m f-five. I d-don’t need diapers!”

“I know you don’t always, bud.” Max explained calmly, unfolding the papery disposable square and pinching Luke’s ankles together in one massive hand as he prepared to cantilever them into the air. “But I know you. It’s best to be on the safe side after your baba.”

Realizing he was mere seconds away from being diapered, Luke changed tactics. “NO!” He screamed at the top of his lungs, managing to break one of his feet free from Max’s grip and kicking the jock directly in the face. The empty baby bottle which he’d been gripping loosely like a comfort blanket clattered to the floor.

He regretted it at once. Physically, Max was totally unharmed

- but his demeanour changed completely.

“Lukey.” He growled. “That was very naughty. Do I need to call your Mommy?”

“N-No...” Luke mewled, sounding just like a scared little boy. He knew if Max made any kind of contact with the Wilsons, he’d be busted immediately.

“So you’re going to be a good little boy?” Max continued, calmly retrieving Luke’s flailing foot and securing it grasped together in the air with the other as if he were a captured turkey.

“Uh-huh.”

“Good.” Max nodded, resuming a calmer bubbly manner. “You’re such a grumpy guts, Lukey!” He teased, dancing ticklish fingers across the boy’s bare tummy.

Luke couldn’t help but let out a loud high-pitched giggle, Max using the opportunity to slip a pacifier into his mouth. Still primed from his bottle, Luke took two instinctive sucks on the silicone nipple before attempting to spit it out - but Max already had a forbidding finger pressing down on the shield, pushing it back in.

“Nu-uh, Lukey. Little boys who fuss at changing time need their binky.” He instructed him.

“Don’ wanna...” Luke tried to protest, wiggling around his bottom in an attempt to sit up on the changing mat, but Max silenced him with a single glare.

The boy knew when he was beat, letting out a dissatisfied moan as he collapsed back down on the squidgy mat and sucked his binky like he'd been told. While Max got to work sorting his diaper, Luke turned his gaze to glimpse himself in the nearby mirror. Supine on a changing table and with his pudgy features and cute caramel hair framed around the pacifier bobbing up and down in his mouth, anyone would have been forgiven for thinking the boy in the mirror was no more than three or four years old.

The pacifier, he now realized, was baseball themed - the white button on the front decorated up and down with red stitching to make it look like a ball. Looking up at the star player laying down the thick white diaper under his butt and carefully securing the tabs around his tummy, Luke realized how strange it was that the jock seemed to be running a professional babysitting business. He'd never really thought of Max as gentle or protective, but he was.

Despite everything, even as he first felt the humiliating infantile disposable material pushing his thighs apart, it only made Luke like him more. He scrunched up his face in displeasure, feeling with dread that he might be just an hour or two away from Max discovering the truth. Would he ever talk to him again? Would he even look at him? He felt a couple of tears gather in his eyes, feeling as if his entire world was crashing down.

Max noticed right away. "Aww, it's okay bud. I'm done now!" He reassured, helping Luke sit up on his changing mat. "How about you be a big boy and help me get you dressed?"

“Oh...oh-tay...” Luke mumbled through his pacifier, feeling generally exhausted.

“I bet you’re gonna be a real little baseball star when you grow up, just like your babysitter.” Max promised, producing a miniature baby blue and white striped baseball jersey from inside the dresser. The front featured a cartoonish picture of a smirking baby lion cub, the name of the local little league team ‘LAKESHORE LION CUBS’ plastered underneath in big loopy lettering. “Such a good boy!” Max remarked as Luke allowed him to feed his arms into either sleeve, carefully doing up the buttons for him. “And of course you need the hat!” He continued, plopping a matching blue baseball cap onto Luke’s still slightly damp hair.

It didn’t seem like any pants were forthcoming to complete the costume. Instead Max simply picked the boy up off the make-shift changing table and attached him to his hip like a baby monkey, a broad hand secured firmly under his thickly padded diapered bottom. Down the stairs and back in the kitchen, Max had already set out the cupcakes to cool on the counter.

“Down you go in your booster seat!” He said cheerily, placing Luke down at the breakfast table atop a throne of moulded red plastic.

The two of them had finished decorating perhaps half of the cakes with orange frosting when Luke worked up the courage to pop out his pacifier, cringing as he felt some drawl creep down onto his chin.

“Ummm...Max.” He asked in a nervous voice.

“Ummm...Luke.” Max imitated, just like he’d done earlier in the night.

Luke shifted nervously in his booster. “I er, kinda hafta...go to the bathroom.” He admitted. The tall bottle of milk had had some time to work its way through him, and if he was honest the need was a little more severe than the word ‘kinda’ properly expressed.

“Ahh, gotta go potty huh?” Max answered slyly.

Luke nodded. “Yeah. Um...the toilet.” He insisted.

“Well, of course you’re too little to go on the real toilet.” Max said teasingly. “I’ll have to go all the way upstairs and dig out that little blue plastic potty of yours.”

Luke stared at the older boy and narrowed his eyes, starting to get the feeling that something was off.

“Or you could just pee your diaper.” Max continued.

“I don’t...” Luke tried to start, but he was so confused he didn’t even know where to begin. “You’re not supposed-”

Max interrupted him by picking up the pacifier, popping it back into the boy’s lips - which were flapping open in bewilderment. “Let me show you something, lil’ buddy.” He explained, bringing his chair a little closer and pulling out his phone - clicking on the Ring doorbell app. Luke felt an icy dread creep up his spine, already starting to suspect what Max was about to show him.

“This is you earlier in the night, with your little present.” Max explained, showing a poor quality black and white replay of Luke emerging from the bushes and nervously striding up to the porch with the eggs in hand. “And this is your little friends covering my Mom’s topiary in toilet paper.” The picture switched to another view out the backyard about a half hour later, a sped up video showing Marcus, Jeremy and Austin clumsily throwing white streamers of toilet paper around over the course of about ten minutes. After that, they fled bumblingly back into the darkness, taking two or three attempts each to jump the fence.

“You knew...” Luke mewled through his binky, caramel coloured eyebrows lowering in dismay.

“Of course I did, bud. I have to say though, you did a really good job pretending! Or, I dunno, maybe you’re just like that.”

Luke popped out his pacifier. “What about Luke Wilson.” He challenged, as if it made any difference.

“Oh, he’s real. But I wasn’t babysitting him tonight.” Max admitted. “He’s not half as cute as you, though. A lot more grown-up, too - as far as five years olds go. If I tried to put him in a diaper, I’d probably end up in E.R.”

Luke felt like he might throw up. If this got out, if any of this got out, his life would be over. He’d have to move schools. He’d have to move states! He shuffled uncomfortably in his booster, cringing at the sound of his crinkling diaper as he made big puppy dog eyes at his crush. “Please don’t tell

anyone.”

To his surprise, Max just ruffled his hair. “Aww, don’t worry bud. This was just for me.” He reassured. “But the way I see it though, I’m going to be sending some videos to Mr McMartin’s email tomorrow.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, it’s up to you. Mr McMartin’s gonna want the whole story. So you can either be Luke Roberts the teenage delinquent who tried to egg my house, or Luke Roberts the sweet little boy I happened to be baking halloween cupcakes with.” Max picked up the pacifier, holding it a couple of inches from Luke’s face. “What’s it gonna be?”

Luke didn’t say anything for a second, concentrating on the aching desperation in his bladder. He didn’t want to get in trouble, but he also didn’t want to betray his friends. And worst of all, he didn’t want to make Max mad. He kicked his legs back and forth nervously, eyes locking onto Max’s deep blue oceanic eyes. “I dunno…” he whined.

Max rolled his eyes. “How about I make it a little easier, then?” He smiled, pushing the pacifier into Luke’s mouth again before leaning in closer to plant a single kiss against his cheek. Luke’s heart started beating at a thousand miles per hour. He could feel the bristles of Max’s stubble, smell the strange musky scent of his aftershave, almost taste his lips - just a few inches from his own and separated only by a thin layer of plastic. A tiny bit of pee escaped into his diaper.

“Oh-tay...” He mumbled in a hushed tone into his pacifier, the word tumbling out unbidden. “Oh-tay. I’ll s-stay.”

“Good boy.” Max chuckled, again mussing up his hair. “Hey, maybe I can even watch you some other night, too? I’m sure your Mommy would be glad for the break.”

Luke gave a nervous nod, trying not to make it too obvious how excited he was by the prospect. He crossed his legs together with another conspicuous crinkle, trying not to completely flood his diaper. He popped out the binky, making one more nervous request.

“C-can I go potty now?”