

Eins

Eins didn't quite understand why his father kept going out for milk.

Since Eins turned five, he noticed his father had been going to the store more frequently and usually for long periods of time. But he never questioned his father because his father provided for the family.

When Eins was younger, he sometimes heard his parents arguing late at night. The arguments went something like this.

“Why does it always take so long for you to get the milk? What else have you been doing while getting milk, huh?” His mother howled.

“I was busy, babe. I'm sorry. I want you and Eins to have a good life. Look at the mansion we are living in now. We live in Los Angeles now, isn't that what you have always wanted?” Calm as the night, his father tries to reason with her.

This wasn't a lie. They live in a grand, capacious mansion and it was father who made it happen.

Now that Eins was fourteen, his parents argued daily, always about what his father did during his milk runs. The cavernous mansion now felt small and the sounds were deafening.



Eins is a well-sheltered kid, he doesn't understand jokes such as a father going to buy milk.

But recently, it's the only thing on his mind. Eins remembered a time when he was 7, a boy and his father came up to him and told him, “Imagine having a daddy who is always going out for milk. Haha! Couldn't be *me*,” At that time, he hadn't paid much attention to the boy's words. But now, he wondered if it meant his father was leaving him.

Then, on a sunny day, his mother took him to town for bread.

The market was bright and lighthearted, but there was still a darkened alleyway. On the other side, Eins saw the silhouette of someone that looked like his father with a woman and two kids. They were very close together.

“Mom, why’s dad with other children?” Eins tried to get his mother’s attention, but her head was buried in a pile of bread loaves. When he looked back, his father just disappeared.



Ten minutes later, Eins positioned himself in a dark, musky, damp alley near the alcohol store.

Eins knew all about the shot glasses dripping liquid onto the marble floor late at night. And just as he had hoped, his father arrived with the strange family.

He crept out and dragged the two kids into the alley.

They looked like twins, with green eyes and curly brown hair just like his. They even smelled alike, like lemon bars, fresh and fragrant.

For a millisecond, they looked at each other, then the twins screamed, “Dahhhhhh!”

Ronald

The boy forced his hand over Ronald’s mouth. The screaming ceased and the silence rushed in like a wave.

Then the boy hissed, “Why are you with my dad!”

He removed his hand.

“Your dad?” Ronald gasped.

He heard Samantha gulp. With tears running down her cheeks, she said, “Could dad be a cheater? Are we step-siblings?”

Cheat, what does she mean? Ronald was confused. He wanted to ask what she meant.

But, at that moment, the clock ticked and the boy turned frantic. He hastily blurted, “I gotta go. Nice to meet you. My name is Eins McRon. My number is 241-290-8763. Talk to me later.”

Samantha

Samantha watched Eins sprint toward the horizon. Then, the twins turned on their heels and marched into the musty alcohol store.



Over the next couple of weeks, Samantha texted Eins small things such as *I'm bored* or *where is dad?* She enjoyed texting Eins, he always understood her feelings, unlike Ronald.

Once, she thought she was ready to discuss about their father, but ended up under the covers crying away.

So, she just gave Ronald the phone, and he asked Eins if he wanted to expose *their* father.

Eins replied right away like he was waiting for that message. He said he was down for it, but he had no clue how.

“A perfect plan is needed it seems, Sam!” She could hear the excitement in Ron’s voice.

So over the next few days, they drew their plan on a piece of paper, which they hid in the closet. Nothing could go wrong, the plan was perfect. Father would never figure it out.



On Friday, Samantha and Ronald came home from school. Ronald had decided it was now or never. He wanted to send their plans to Eins. But, as they foraged through the closet, they realized the paper was gone.

All the plans, specific times, locations, and everything were gone.

Ronald's eyes dilated. They thought that losing the plan was the worst thing possible until their father came into the room with *the* paper.

His brows furrowed, his face red and he tears the paper in their face. He scolds, "What have you been planning? Doomsday? Go to your room, you're grounded for a week, no electronics!"

Eins

Eins had tried texting his step-twins for some time now, but no response yet.

He guessed they quit, some deserters. How could he be related to someone who abandons their duty? Such disgrace.

He was losing hope, but suddenly, his phone shook. It was a message and an image from Samantha.

I'm so sorry! Dad grounded us. But here is our plan.

In the image, Eins saw the plan. He had to drag his mom to the center of town at 2 pm, where the twins would be shopping with their parents.

Eins could see so vividly how this would work and it looked great.

Before breakfast, Eins threw out all the bread in the house.

"Mom, we have no bread, could we go to town at 1 pm?" Eins asked his mom at breakfast.

Ronald

That afternoon, Ronald was in town with his family. He couldn't wait to execute the plan. He waited for what seemed like hours, but finally, Eins came, his mother in tow.

She was moving towards them, near the bread stall. It was the hardest decision now. But, it seemed clear, "Dad, I think we ran out of bread."

They drew nearer to Eins. The world seemed to slow down. His parents' footsteps echoed in the wind.

Eins's mother looked up. Her jaws fell. She cried, "John, who is this lady? I thought you were buying milk!"

Their father turned pale. Ronald's mother snaps, "What do you mean 'who is this lady', I'm his wife!"

Slap! Their father crumbled to the ground. Flames burned in Ein's mother's eyes.

"So you're with someone else now?" She trembled in rage. "I don't know you anymore, be gone!"

Ronald's mother watched in shock. She shook her head in disdain.



The next day, both their parents went to a lawyer. They are divorcing.

That night, law enforcement called. According to the investigators, their father had committed suicide by jumping off the roof of a tall building. Their father's savings all went to Eins's mother.

Ronald heard Samantha crying in the bathroom.

"Are you sure this is right?" Ronald had a look of guilt on his face.

Samantha's lips wobbles as she said, "It had to be done, they had to know."

Ronald and his sister texted Eins.

idk how i feel about dad, it doesn't feel right ;(

You will be fine.

how?

Well, if it makes you feel better. Our mom decided we are going to be siblings and you are moving in with us.

wow!!! ofc, after all that has happened, there is nothing more that i would want other than to be with you :)

Samantha

When their family car arrived at Eins's place, she felt overwhelmed. The mansion was grand, almost royal looking. A front yard that could park an entire commercial aircraft. It was nothing like where she used to live, where the stairs were the only option and they lived on the 9th floor.

She could tell that Ronald was fascinated by the mansion as well. His mouth formed a perfect circle and his eyes sparkled. "This is so cool!" he would say every 5 seconds.

That whole morning, they worked on moving all their furniture into the house. The sun was searing hot, but inside, it was a freezer.



It has been a year since moving in with Eins. Samantha has been loving every second of it. She enjoys talking to Eins, who always seemed to understand her and was serious and intelligent. He also took care of Ronald, which was a huge blessing.

Sometimes, she would hear Eins reminisce, “Blood is only half of it. Spending time with those close to you is the other. Sadly, he never had time, he was always busy buying milk.”

Ronald always laughed when he said that, but Samantha just felt a sense of guilt. Their father had spent the majority of his time with them, instead of Eins.

Then again, now Eins had Samantha and Ronald. She promised herself that she would make it up for Eins one day. As for now, She was enjoying the time she spent with her newfound family.