

“We were always the second option for you”

Life was always difficult, always being the second option. In Jonas’s position he was always the last option. From his family to his relationships he was always the second option. Being 18 wasn't easy. Raising his sibling in a city like NYC wasn't easy either, having been the oldest out of 3 other of his siblings which in fact he had to raise. His mother was never around. She didn't care to take care of kids that she didnt want in the first place. So that meant weekly trips to his grandmother's house, just in order for him to be able to go to school and work so he could provide for his siblings. With the help of his grandmother life was just a bit more bearable.

\*Jonas picks up his siblings Azura (13) and Atlas (15) from school\*

"Yo Jonas, can you help me wit my math homework when we get home, cuz frfr I didn't understand a single thing that teacher was talking bout." Atlas was Jonas's younger brother and the only one besides their grandmother that knew what had really happened with their mother.

"Yeah maybe because all you do is talk to yo so-called homies, bout Hebe Thompson and how much you like her." Azura on the other hand was Jonas's very much younger sister. Blunt, straight up, no filter younger sister. She on the other hand was very much like Jonas's mother, from her looks to even the way she talked.

"Both of yall on something, “Atlas you know that on Wednesdays you both go to ma’s house because I have work. So not today sorry my boy, you already know the drill.”

Jonas shakes his head, while putting his hands in his pocket.

Jonas saw Atlas turn his head away because yes, he did already know the drill. Without Jonas going to work there was no money for the bills, even if ma's could help out. So he didn't make a fuss.

"So Jonas what are we doing for next Friday, you do remember right." Azura turned her head up to Jonas to see his face was red. In her head she knew that's what happens when Jonas gets nervous. Azura's birthday was coming up in a week and every year Jonas would take both kids out for her birthday. You could say it was a ritual to do so every year for them. Everything that Jonas couldn't get when he was younger he gave to his siblings.

\*They arrived at there grandmothers house\*

"So imma head out cuz i gotta catch the bus that comes in 20 min, oh Ma can you come here for a second." Jonas needed a plan for Azura's birthday; she was after all turning 14.

"So what are you gonna do for her birthday cuz you know i can call up Ricky and ask him to rent out the venue from last year." Ma knew that celebrating his siblings' birthdays was something big that Jonas took very seriously. But he had been so busy with school that he had almost forgotten about it.

"Nah ma, I don't want to have a big party for her this year. Maybe we could just have a family outing, you know and maybe we could invite Ma." Jonas hesitated when he mentioned inviting his mother to Azura's birthday party. They hadn't seen her in almost 3 years. Last time he saw her the last words she had for him were —

"I never wanted you, I only kept you because I felt bad to put you in the system."

The last memory of his mother were words that scar him for life. At that moment he didn't know how to feel, all he saw was the figure of a woman he didn't recognize.

“Jonas, that's all up to you, you're old enough to know what's right, if you want to invite her, invite her. But just remember how Azura and Atlas will feel,” Ma had a bad feeling about inviting her to the party but she didn't want to discourage Jonas, that maybe in those 3 years she had changed.

“Okay Ma, I love you take care, I'll be back to pick them up. Oh before I leave, just know that I paid the corner store from what we owed last week so don't worry about it,” Jonas hugged Ma and then left the house.

Jonas walked down to the bus stop. While waiting for the bus his head was running wild. Maybe bringing up the idea of inviting their mother was a bad idea, maybe it wasn't the right time. He got on the bus, still thinking about what he should do, then he remembered that Azura was talking about a place called Japetos that was really hard to get into, because of course it was in Manhattan. Soho to be exact. The land of expensive luxury clothing and the highest rent prices in NYC as a whole. While on the bus Jonas looked up Japetos on his phone, and as he had guessed making a reservation for that place was hard. But with Jonas's luck there was one last opening left, the problem was it was on a Wednesday night, 2 days before Azura's birthday he had to work the same time the reservation was open. It was either Azura's birthday or work, while being in a loop of not knowing what to do Jonas got off the bus and started to walk to his job. Jonas worked at a small mom and pop shop called Gingko which served middle eastern food from Iran.

“Ayo boss, do you think I can leave next wednesday? Azura's birthday is coming up and I want to take her out to eat with the fam,” Jonas didn't have a problem with asking his boss for a day off, especially because Jonas had always worked over-time and had even covered shifts for others when they were either out or sick.

“Yeah, yeah you can take the day off, no problem you over work yourself enough,” Jonas was happy that he could get time off. During Jonas's lunch break he went on Japetos online reservation site and by the grace of god he had made a reservation and the last one of the night. Now to figure out how he was gonna surprise Azura with the birthday gift.

After Jonas got out of work he decided to take a leap of faith and called his biological mother to see if she would want to attend Azura's birthday party.

“Hello, who is this”

“Um hi, this is Jonas. Jonas, your son. Um, I have a few questions.”

“Oh, um right now. I guess I have time to talk. What do you need from me? I'm busy.”

“Oh. Azura's birthday is coming up and I was just wondering if you wanted to come. Were going to Japetos for her birthday, and we wanted to have it as a surprise. So do you wanna come.”

“Japetos, okay okay I can make time to come by and say hi but then i'll have to leave early I have other things to do.”

“Oh okay i'll send you the time of day, on when to come.”

“Okay, bye”

\*Time skip to Azura's birthday outing\*

Azura was ecstatic when she found out she was going to Japetos for her birthday. Even much so that she had called up all of her friends to tell them about it. Azura was not just excited but she was thankful for all the work her brother did and as Azura being Azura and was very vocal about thanking Jonas. She had seen Japetos as such a fancy place that she took out her most special dress she had in her closet. One which she had gotten and never worn, a light green satin square-neck mini dress which she wore black mid-low heels. In Azura's eyes she was the main event and she showed it in style.

With that Atlas in his dark navy tux matching with Jonas, Ma wearing a ruffle sleeved cocktail dress, and Azura in her dress all got into an Uber and headed to Japetos. When arriving Azura's breath was taken away, it was beautiful and grand; of course they all felt out of place. Japetos looked like it had just come out of a movie. People all dressed up and looked like they deserved to be there, but Azura didnt care she could see on Jonas' face that he felt weird about being there. Azura then nudged Jonas and said

“Dont worry bro bro we chillin we vibing. All we're here for is to have fun okay,” Jonas took Azura's hand and walked into the restaurant with Ma and Atlas following after them. He had a feeling this was gonna be a good night.