The Natural

by cindergal

Summary

"Look, like I told you, I don’t do things I’m not good at..."

Notes

Importing some of my older fic from LJ. This originally posted there 6/17/12.

When Reid agreed to play in the father/son baseball game with Ethan, he really didn’t think it was that big of a deal. Holden was in bed with the flu and a temperature of 102, Luke was out of town and wouldn’t get back until that evening, and there was no one else to do it. And of all Luke’s siblings, Ethan was his favorite. He was smart and sweet, very much like his big brother, and even if he hadn’t been, Reid would’ve done it for Luke. Not to mention the fact that he knew he’d earn points with the Snyders, which was always helpful given Reid’s propensity to occasionally piss them off. And, he’d have Luke’s undying gratitude, which Luke was likely to show him in some very hot and sexy ways. All that on top of the fact that Reid actually liked baseball, and hadn’t had the chance to play for a while. In fact, not only did Reid like baseball, but he was good at it.

As a matter of fact, he was really good at it.

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“And then,” Ethan said, “Reid hit a triple!”

“Really?”
Ethan had been so excited to tell Luke about their win that he was practically vibrating out of his skin. Of course, the Coke and Snicker’s bar Reid had bought him after the game might have had something to do with that. Anyway, Ethan had insisted on coming back to their apartment and waiting for Luke to come home, and then barreled into him as soon as he’d walked through the door, barely giving him a chance to put down his suitcase. And he’d been in full-on Snyder babble mode ever since.

“Yeah! You should have seen it, Luke! It was awesome! He could have made it all the way home, but he didn’t want to show up the other dads.” Reid really did like this kid.

Luke smirked at Reid over the top of Ethan’s head. “Yeah, that sounds like Reid,” he agreed. “Always so humble.” Reid grinned.

“Because, after all, none of the other dads were ever the starting shortstop at Harvard,” Ethan continued without missing a beat.


“I didn’t mention that?”

“You said, and I quote, ‘I might have played a little back in college.’ That was code for starting shortstop?”

Reid shrugged and Luke shook his head and laughed. “You are full of surprises.”

“Always.”


“Well… I struck out three times. But Reid said all the best hitters have a lot of strikeouts, too. Like Sammy Sosa! That’s Dad’s favorite player.”

Luke beamed at Reid and ruffled Ethan’s hair. “That’s very true, buddy.”

“And I did get one hit! It was an infield single, but I made it to first before the throw because I’m small and quick like Reid was when he was my age.”

Luke grinned even wider. “Is that right?”

Lily chose that moment to ring their doorbell, and for once, Reid was genuinely happy to see her. As much as he liked the kid, he was looking forward to getting Luke alone and finding out just how grateful he really was.

“Bye, Luke! Bye, Reid!” Ethan said, before throwing his arms around Reid’s neck and squeezing tight. Reid patted his back awkwardly.

“Bye, kiddo. We’ll go to the batting cage next week, deal?”

“Deal!” Ethan said, giving him a high five. That was better. High fives were much more Reid’s style.

"Seriously, starting shortstop? I thought you were a science nerd." Luke asked, once they’d left.

"Well, they say baseball is a lot like chess..." Reid said.

"Right." Luke smile and approached him slowly, finally coming to a stop in front of him. “So, are
you good at everything?” he asked, his voice pitched dangerously low.

“Nope. It just seems that way because I only do what I’m good at. Lucky for you,” he said, pulling Luke close, “I’m good at a lot of things.”

“Mmm,” Luke agreed, kissing him softly. “Lucky me.” He pulled back to look into Reid’s eyes. “You sure are good with Ethan.”

Reid shrugged. “He’s easy.”

“Maybe, but you were great. Really, Reid. Making him feel better about his striking out and everything, building his confidence? You’ve got good instincts. You’re a natural.” He leaned in to press another sweet kiss to Reid’s lips. “You’re going to make a great dad someday.” He leaned in again, but Reid put a hand to his chest.

“Whoa. Who said anything about fatherhood? I’m just getting used to favorite uncle.”

Luke laughed, a little uncomfortably. “I…I know. But haven’t you thought about having a family some day?”

“Um, no.”

Reid pulled out of Luke’s arms quickly, standing up and walked into the kitchen. He grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge, twisted the cap off, and downed half of it in one big gulp. When he walked back into the living room, Luke was still sitting on the sofa, staring at his hands.

“What?” Reid asked.

Luke looked up at him with those big, sad eyes of his. “You don’t want kids?”

“Never been a big dream of mine, no. Is this a big shock to you?”

Luke looked pained. “Kind of?” He cleared his throat. “Look, why don’t you just sit back down and we can talk about it.”

Reid could feel his heart racing, and he was starting to sweat. He pulled at the collar of his shirt. “No.”

Luke bristled. “No? We can’t even talk about it? Who died and made you the king of the world?”

“Look, we just moved in together. I like our life the way it is. Why would you want to go and ruin it?”


“I know you want the 2.5 kids and the picket fence and all that crap, but…”

Luke stood up. “Oh, so now wanting a home and a family is crap. This just gets better and better.”

Red felt like he couldn’t breathe. “I’m…I’ve got to get out of here.”

“Reid, wait…”

But he was already out the door.

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When Katie opened the door, she took one look at him, crossed her arms over her chest, and said "What did you do now, Reid?"

Reid pushed past her to throw himself onto her sofa. "Why do you always assume it's my fault?"

"Is it?"

"No! Yes. Sort of. I don't know."

She sat down next to him and patted his knee. "I love how you get all inarticulate when you and Luke have these little spats. So spill."

Reid rubbed his eyes. "This one wasn't little. He said he wanted to start a family, and I told him that I don't," he said.

Katie sat down next to him. "And...?"

"And now he's all...mad, and sad, and with the eyes, and it's my fault, apparently, and I think...I think he might..."

"Might what?" she asked softly.

Reid had to fight to keep his voice steady. "Leave. I think he might leave me over this."

"Reid," she said, reaching out to touch his arm. "Luke is crazy in love with you. He's not going to leave you. I tease you about these little lover's quarrels, but you're actually the happiest, healthiest couple I know."

"Well, this is Oakdale we're talking about, so that's not saying much."

Katie hit him on the arm. "In this or any other medium sized city, okay?"

"But you know him. He wants a family. More than me, maybe." Reid slumped down further into the sofa.

Katie shook her head. "That's ridiculous. You guys just need to sit down and talk it through."

"That's what he wanted to do. He just wanted to talk about it, and I said no, had an anxiety attack, and ran away."

Katie just shook her head. "Sometimes I think you've come so far, and then..."

Just then, three year old Jacob came barreling out of his room and took a flying leap onto Reid's lap. He was wearing the tiny lab coat and stethoscope that Reid had given him for his last birthday.

"Hi Reid!" he said, beaming.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Snyder."

"Are you here for your check-up?"

"Yes, I am. I'm not feeling so good. "Jacob placed his stethoscope on Reid's chest and listened intently. "So, what do you think, doc?" Reid asked. "What's your diagnosis?"

Jacob sat back and patted Reid's hand sympathetically. "You have a broken heart."
"From the mouths of babes," Katie said.

Reid sighed. "Very funny."

Jacob spent another ten minutes climbing all over Reid and diagnosing his various ailments before scampering off to examine the family dog. Katie just sat there, smirking at him.

"What?"

"Tell me again why you don't want kids?"

"I'm just...I'm not good with them."

"Seriously? Were you here just now? You're a natural! You always have been."

"Now you sound like Luke. But that wasn't...that was just playing. That's not, like, real life."

"Oh, Reid. It is real life. When you used to sing him to sleep when he was a baby, that was real life. When you stayed up all night with him when he had an ear infection until his fever broke because I was too depressed and exhausted to do it myself, that was real life.

"That's not being a parent, Katie. That was a few isolated incidents. Not...forever."

Katie considered this for a moment. "Do you think Luke is forever?"

"Yes." He pinched the bridge of his nose. "Unless he leaves me over this."

"He won't. He loves you. So tell me this. Did you ever think you'd meet someone like him? A forever someone?"

"No," he admitted. "I never saw him coming."

"But now you can't imagine your life without him."

"So, you're saying I should give in so he doesn't leave me?"

"No! I'm saying you should consider it because maybe, even though you never thought you'd have a child, it could be just as wonderful as that relationship you never thought you'd want, either."

Reid ran his hands through his hair. "What if it changes things between me and Luke?"

"What if it does? What if it changes things for the better?"

"I don't think it's possible for it to be better," he said.

Katie smiled. "If you really love him that much, then I think you know what you should do."

Reid closed his eyes and sighed. "I suppose I owe it to him to at least think about it."

"Yes," Katie said, giving him a quick hug. "You do. But even if you decide, after careful consideration, that you can't do this, I'll still love you. And Luke will still love you. I'm sure of it."

Reid wished he had her confidence.
"I'm sorry," Luke said as soon as Reid walked into their apartment.

"Hey," Reid said, "that's my line."

"No, really." Luke got up off the couch and walked over, close to Reid. "I love you and I love our life together, too. Just the way it is. And it was totally unfair of me to make you feel obligated like that. I apologize. We never talked about it, and I made assumptions that I shouldn't have. I'm sorry."

"The only thing you have to apologize for is apologizing too much."

"Sorry about that." Luke grinned and tweaked his side, right where he knew Reid was ticklish.

"Very funny."

"So, we good?"

"No."

"No?" Luke's brow furrowed, and Reid took his hand and tugged him closer.

"So, this kid thing. It's important to you."

Luke's eyes went all soft. "Not as important as you."

Reid rubbed a thumb along Luke's cheekbone. “Look, like I told you, I don’t do things I’m not good at. And I didn’t exactly have the best example of fatherhood growing up.”

Luke’s eyes went even softer. “I know.”

“So this is really uncharted territory for me.” Luke nodded, but didn’t say anything.

“But I know this is important to you. And you’re important to me. So… I'll think about it.”

Luke blinked. "You’ll what?"

"The kid thing. I'll think about it. Consider it. Weigh the pros and cons. For a very long time, possibly."

A slow, sweet smile spread across Luke's face. "Yeah?"

"A very, very long time, maybe. But...yeah. I’ll think about it."

Luke took Reid's face in his hands and kissed him, and Reid thought maybe it wouldn't be that long after all.

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