### Life Lost... And Found

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### Summary

Josh’s life was stolen away from him long ago. Now Matt has to help him get it back.

### Notes

Littles are known and Dom/Sub universe

Josh- Little (1-2 closer to 1 at the begining)
Matt-Caregiver
Ian- Dom
Mike- Nutral
Amanda- Dom
Chapter 1

It was 6:35 A.M. when Matt Webb's phone rang. He sat up with a groan. Matt, for once, was actually able to go to sleep the previous night without laying up staring at the ceiling for hours. His last mission had been successful. They were able to rescue the Sub and bring her back to her Dom in one piece. It did not always end like that. Matt shuttered as he tried not to think about when it did not end like that.

"Webb," Matt answered, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

"Sorry for waking you," Matt heard Mike's voice through the phone, "but we are needed."

"What is it?" Matt asked already up. The young man grabbed his keys, badge, and gun from his bedside table as he listened to Mike's voice.

"Unidentified male, early-to-mid-twenties, status unknown. But Matt," Matt heard the concern in Mike's voice, "we think he is a little."

Matt stopped, mid grabbing his go bag, "what?" the young man knew that no one messed with littles like with normi Subs. They were just babies. Even criminals looked down upon criminals who hurt littles. Matt tried not to think about what happened to the last little they tried to rescue... tried.

"Sorry, we've received a video of him. He has all the signs."

Matt swallowed thickly, unsure if he could work another case with a little.

"You don't have to, Man," Mike told him, "you can sit this one out."

Matt breathed, thinking about the last little case. They had been so close to saving her. What if this case was like that? What if he could not handle that again? But at the same time, he knew it would kill him if he did not help this baby.

"I'm doing it," Matt said, voice firm.

Matt could hear Mike's smile through the phone, "get your butt over here then, we're meeting in thirty minutes."

... 

Matt's heart ached as he saw the baby on the screen in front of him and the rest of his team. Mike was right to say that the baby had all the signs of a little. If the fingers in his mouth- the poor baby did not seem even to have a pacifier - was not enough, he had chubby cheeks and big, crystal blue eyes, that held an enormous amount of fear. The baby had his knees up to his chest, and if Matt looked closely, he could see that the baby was shaking. Whether it was from fear or cold, he did not know.

It could be from both, Matt thought to himself, he had fear in his eyes and only had a wet diaper on. The baby did not even have clothes on or a blankie around him. Nothing.

Matt's heart ached for the poor baby.

Matt cleared his throat and asked, "where did we get this?" Matt asked Ian, doing his best to keep the emotions out of his voice.
"Some porn site," Ian answered, "the guy who sent it said that he was disgusted when he realized the boy is an actual little."

"We know who set it, yes?"

"Mike's with him now."

"What do you want me to do?" the tech of the four-man crew, Amanda, asked.

"Once we know where the original video is, trace the IP address and see who uploaded the video. With any luck, this boy will be with him," Ian told her.

Matt turned back to the video when he heard the baby whimper. A man was kneeled down in front of the baby back toward the camera, touching his too full diaper. The baby needed a change hours ago. When the man pressed into the baby's diaper, the baby whimpered again and tried to move back.

"Aww," the man cooed. The baby shuttered, "does baby need a change?"

The baby shook his head, eyes huge with fear. His lower lip trembled, and he sucked hard on his fingers.

"Oh no. I think the baby is laying."

The baby curled up, and tears gathered in his eyes. The baby shook his head, hard.

"Over my knee."

"Turn off the video," Matt said. He could not watch anymore. Amanda listened, sending a concerned look toward Matt.

Matt sighed, he did not want to think of why the baby looked so scared to have a diaper change. Matt did not want to think of the fact that the baby was getting punished for being scared.

Matt breathed, trying to control his emotions. He needed to keep his head on if he was going to get this little out of that horrible situation.

"Amanda!" Mike shouted as he entered the room, "I sent you a link to the original video."

"I'll do my thing," Amanda said leaving to go to her "tunnel" as she calls it.

Matt nodded, looking at the paused video of the baby. He looked scared, looking up at the man who never showed his face with tears in his eyes, fingers in his mouth. They needed to find him.

Matt would find him.

Josh whimpered when he heard the door to his room open. He shook, he was cold. He would do anything to have something other than a diaper to wear or to have a blankie. I blankie sounded nice. So did a paci. His Daddy let him have clothes and blankies and pacis. His Daddy changed him whenever he needed it and fed him a lot. He missed his Daddy. He had been with his family for so long he started to forget what his Daddy looked like. He was tall and muscular. He had blond hair that Josh liked to play with when it was long enough. He remembered that he did not like it when Daddy cut his hair short because Josh could not play with it. He missed Daddy. But that is all he could remember. He wanted to remember more. But that was eight years ago. He could not
"Josh, look up," he heard his mom's stern and cold voice tell him. He looked up at his mother with fear in his eyes. The woman who used to read him bedtime stories when he was a child and would sing to him and fostered his love of music and taught him how to play instruments, she now looked at him with disdain and hatred at the best of times when she would clean the wounds that the "clients" had given him. At the worst of times, she would not come in for days on end. Making him soak through his diaper and get rashes, and he once got a bad infection in his right leg. That hurt. He did not want to hurt anymore.

She would not come in when she or his dad was mad. Not until a client refused to pay for him until he was clean and did not look so damaged. That always got blamed on him. Everything got blamed on him. He was not allowed out of this room, and he was still blamed for everything that goes wrong. He hated being locked up in this room. He hated getting the blamed for everything. All because he was a little. He just wanted to be little and be out of this room and not be scared or hurt. He wanted to have a life.

His family always told him that being little was a chose, an abomination and if that he or any of his older siblings choose to be little then they were not a part of the family. When he got himself tested at sixteen (most people got tested at thirteen), and the test came back that he was little, his dad was mad and kicked him out when Josh said that he did not want to push that side of him away anymore. It made him sad. Why they came for him three years later, Josh would never understand. They could have just left him with Daddy, (the only one who ever truly loved him) but no. They had to come and lock him in this room. This room was dark and scary. He did not like it.

They had to lock their abomination up, Josh remembers what his parents said to him when they took him, so that he did not tarnish the rest of society, and why not use the abomination to make some money on the side.

His mom walked over to him. Josh shrank away from her as she knelt down toward him. His mother grabbed his chin, and she turned his head from side to side. Holding on tight when Josh tried to move his head back. Josh whimpered when she held on tight enough to leave bruises.

"They played nice with you today," Josh's mother commented.

That was true, Josh thought to himself. They all had been nice. It was only good clients that day. Josh could only hope that there were not bad clients tomorrow. Bad clients really, really hurt. He did not want to be hurt.

Josh whimpered when his mom lifted his arms. He tried to take his arms back. She was grabbed him by the wrist, which hurt because one of the clients tied him up the other day and loved seeing the baby struggle.

"Oh, hush," his mom said her face twisted in hatred, "if you did not choose this lifestyle we would not have to do this to you."

Tears pooled in his eyes. If this were eight years ago, Josh would point out that they should have left him with Daddy. God, he wished that they would have left him with Daddy. Daddy loved him. Daddy took care of him. He wanted Daddy.

His mom slapped him for crying. Josh whimpered, curling up on himself more, trying to hide his tears, arms coming up to cover his head. He had to protect his head. He did not want to become dizzy or get sick again.
"Pathetic," his mom sneered.

Josh curled up even further on himself, not making a sound. His mom was mad at him. She was even scarier when she was mad. He rubbed his chest in a circle. Sorry. He was not allowed to speak, no one wanted to hear a stupid baby talk, but he knew a few signs and his parents allowed him to use them to communicate.

"Better be," his mom said, reaching for a bottle full of water from beside her, "I don't have to do this. I could leave you in here," she shoved the bottle in his mouth, "but you don't want that do you? You need someone to take care of you," Josh sucked down the water, trying his best to ignore his mother's taunting words. "Can't be a man. Need someone to tell you what to do. Treat you like a baby."

Tears streamed down his face. His mom's words were right. He did want to be taken care of and treated like a baby. He liked to be fed and cuddled. He wanted to play with toys and watch kid's shows and movies. He wanted to wear diapers and his baby clothes and suck on a paci or his fingers. He is a baby. Just a little. He just wished that his family would accept that. Wished that they would not mock him for being a little. He could not control it. He wished they would let him out of this room.

"That's enough," his mother said, pulling the bottle from between his lips.

Josh whimpered he had not drunk half the bottle. He needed more, and he was still thirsty. But as long as he was a little thirsty, he would not pee as much, and they would not have to change him as much. It was better for his family this way. It made him feel dizzy sometimes and gave him a headache and made his muscles cramp. He did not like this, but it's all he got, and he knew not to complain.

He pressed three fingers to his lip and pulled them back. Thank you. His mother hummed, got up and left the room leaving the baby in complete darkness.

Josh whimpered and curled into himself shaking once more due to cold and fear. He hated the dark, always had. That was the first sign to his family that he was little and they hated him for it. They hate him more now.

He put the first three fingers of his right hand in his mouth and sucked, trying to calm himself down. Hoping that one day someone would find him.

Josh felt tears enter his eyes and he could not hold back sobs if he tried.

Please, please someone find him. He did not know how much longer he could hold on. He was always so scared, and he was always hurt. He did not like it. He did not want to be scared or hurt anymore. He just wanted to be a normal little, with a Daddy that loved him. He wanted his Daddy back. He wanted his Daddy to come and save him.

He wanted anyone to save him. Whoever save him, he would be a good boy. The best boy ever.

He just needed to be saved.

Please...

"Okay boys, it's your lucky day," Amanda said as she walked into the room that Ian and Matt were in. She was carrying a small folder in her hands, "The IP address belongs to one Miles Ramsay," she
handed Ian a photo of the man, who showed Matt a few seconds later, "I did a little digging on him, his son Joshua Ramsay went missing a little over eight years ago, who does he look like?" she put two photos on the table of the same man. One was a screenshot for the video, and one was of a younger, possibly late teenage, version of the man. While it was obvious that the two pictures were of the same man, the difference was shocking. In one his looked small and scared and fragile. In the other, he was smiling with his arms outstretched looking at someone outside of the picture.

How was that even possible? How could his own parents do this to him?

"Go get Mike and send us the address," Ian ordered.

"Right away," Amanda responded, running off to go get Mike.

Not even five seconds later, their phones biped.

"Not even an hour from here," Matt commented.

"C'mon, we'll brief Mike in the van."

An hour later they were sat in front of the Ramsay household.

"How do you want to play this?" Mike asked.

"Blow everyone's head off and get Joshua," Matt said.

"Okay, Matt's going around back," Ian said, a cross between a joke and an order.

"I'll go with Matt, and you and Amanda can talk to the family," Mike suggested.

"Yeah," they got out of the van. Amanda and Ian put on and zipped up jackets, so the family did not see their vets and put their guns in the holsters. They walked up to the front door as Matt and Mike went out back with their guns drawn.

Amanda knocked on the door. A few seconds later, Miles answered the door, with his wife right behind him.

"May I help you?"

"Yes, Mr. Ramsay, this is Agent Amanda I am Agent Casselman, we are apart of the RCMP, and we would like to ask you a few questions," Ian told them as he and Amanda showed their badges.

"What about," Mrs. Ramsay asked.

"Your son," Amanda said, and she did not miss the way both of their faces twisted in disgust, "Joshua, we have some questions about his whereabouts."

"We don't have a son," Mr. Ramsay denied.

"So, you have no idea who this is?" Ian asked, pulling out the photo that depicted a younger, happier Joshua. Miles turned away.

"Or what about this?" Amanda showed him the screenshot of the boy in the video sent to them.

"I do not know what you are talking about!" Miles shouted, "I do not have a son!"

Knowing that he was not going to get anywhere with Miles with this line of questing, Ian asked,
"then you would not mind me looking inside your house."

"Not unless you have a warrant," when no such paper was produced Miles demanded, "get off my property," and slammed the door in the agent's face.

"That man is hiding Josh somewhere," Amanda thought out loud.

"The question is where," Ian responded.

"I think I might have an answer to that," Matt said over the earpiece.

"Hopefully legal," Ian told him, know that Matt had the tendency to bend the law when it came to saving Subs and, in this case, a little.

"100 percent," the younger man answered, "heard crying, gonna check it out now."

"Take Mike with you and be careful, call for back up if you need it."

Matt strained to hear the crying as he moved down the steps that lead to a basement. His gun pointed to the ground, and he could feel Mike behind him. Matt motioned for Mike to go right and he when left.

Just as Mike yelled, "clear!" from across the basement, Matt came to a wooden door where he could hear that the crying was coming from. He tried to open the door. It was locked.

"Mike, over here!" Matt shouted. Mike ran over to him, "it's locked, man."

Mike pulled out two bobby pins out of his pockets and quickly opened the door. They both entered with their guns drawn.

Matt heard a sob, and his eyes landed on a figure in the corner of the room. Josh was huddled in the furthest corner of the small room, sobbing into his knees.

"Hey, Joshua," Matt said as he and Mike holstered their weapons.

The baby looked up, and Matt's heart broke when he saw the tears streaming down his face and the fear in the baby's eyes.

"It's okay, Buddy," Matt said in a soft voice, coming closer to the baby, "we're here to get you out of here."
Life Saved

Chapter Summary

Josh is saved.

Chapter Notes

K, here we go. Chapter two.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Josh whimpered when he heard loud footsteps outside the door. He curled up, pressing his back to the wall. No more clients were supposed to come today. He sucked on his fingers and tried not to make any noises. Maybe if he were super quiet, they would not come in here. He knew that it would not matter and that he needed to stop crying. Dad would be mad if he came in and he was crying, but he could not stop. He hid his face in his knees and wept.

Josh jumped and cried out in fear when he heard the doorknob jiggle and heard a man yell "clear" what was clear? Josh whimpered, confused.

"Mike, over here!" he heard a man shout. He sobbed at the deep man's voice. No more hurt today, please. While the clients were nicer today, they still hurt. He did not want to hurt anymore. Please.

His breathing picked up when he heard the doorknob jiggle again his shoulders hunched up. He heard the door open. He sobbed, scared with tears streaming down his face. He did not want to be hurt. No one should be in here. Mom already cleaned him.

No more.

"Hey, Joshua," Josh heard a very gentle, soft voice say. He looked up because the baby was always supposed to look up when someone said his name. He was a little confused about why the man said his full name. He is Josh.

"It's okay, Buddy," the man stepped closer to him. Josh curled up a little more, but it was more out of instinct than anything else. The baby did not feel scared of the man. He looked nice. The man had fluffy, wave dark hair he was a little stubble and a tiny goatee. He had soft brown eyes. Josh could not explain it, but the man looked nice and safe. The tears leaking from his eyes slowed.

"We're here to get you out of here," Josh perked up a little. The man was going to save him. Josh hoped that the man was not laying to him. Please get him out of this room. Please.

"C'mere, Buddy," the man said once he was close enough, extending his hand.

Josh hesitated for a moment before taking the man's hand. The man helped him stand, but he was not used to standing. His parents and the clients always made him crawl. Josh whined as his knees buckled and he collapsed. The baby felt the man's hold on to him and pull Josh to his chest.
Josh whimpered, but he could not help it when his arms came up and wrapped around the man’s lower back.

"Ian," Josh heard another man say. Josh whimpered and buried his face in the man chest. He did not realize that anyone but the man holding him was in the room.

"It's okay, Buddy," the man whispered in his ear, "they are my friends. No one will hurt you."

Josh breathed, deciding to trust the man.

"Everything's okay, Little Guy, we're gonna get you out of here. You're okay, Buddy. My name's Matt by the way," Matt continued to say comforting nothingness in Josh's ear, swaying from side to side. Josh for his part relaxed into Matt with a sigh. The man felt safe and nice and warm. The baby liked that. He felt safe and warm for the first time in years. Josh sighed, closing his eyes and letting the man's voice wash over him. His tears were finally gone.

The baby heard another pair of footsteps enter the room. He whimpered curling around Matt more. How many more people were going to come into the room? Josh felt Matt turn around a little, and Josh whined holding onto the man tighter, and his fingers came back into his mouth. He did not want the man to leave. Please, Matt. Don't leave.

"Hey, Buddy it's just my friend, Amanda. She is really nice and smart. There's nothing to be scared of," the baby heard Matt reassure, scratching the baby's scalp. Josh nodded with a sniffle. If Matt were nice and safe, then his friends would be nice and safe too, right? He did say that Amanda was nice. She had to be. Right?

Josh felt something being draped over his shoulders. His shoulders hitched not knowing what Amanda put on him.

"It's just a blankie," Matt told the baby, rearranging the blankie so that it wrapped around the baby completely. Josh made a small cooing noise. He liked the blankie it was warm and felt fuzzy. Josh sighed and closed his eyes. He felt good in Matt's arms and the blankie wrapped around him.

"We need to get him out of here now," he heard Amanda say with worry in her tone.

"Up we go Joshy," the man lifted Josh so that the baby was on his hip. Matt did not like how easy it was to lift the baby. The baby was a few inches taller than him. He should not be this easy to lift. Matt felt his heart break for the tiny bundle in his arms for the thousandth time that day.

Josh whined in surprise but still wrapped his long legs around Matt's waist and his arm around his neck so that he did not fall. He was not used to being lifted anymore. His Daddy used to lift and carry him around all the time, Josh remembered. His Daddy said that he had too or Josh would run off. He used to be an energetic baby when he was with his Daddy, and the baby would sometimes run off because of curiosity, and he would scare his Daddy. Josh whimpered, the baby missed his Daddy.

Josh felt himself being carried outside by Matt and felt the sun on the top of his head. It felt good to feel the sun after what felt like forever and although the sun hurt his eye to the point that he had to hide his face in Matt's chest the baby wished that he could stay outside for a while.

"Josh!" the baby heard his dad shout. Josh whimpered curling up around Matt but looked over where he heard the voice. He whined when he saw his dad struggling against the cops, hatred burning in eyes that mirrored his own.

"We are going to find you!" Josh felt tears prick his eyes again. He heard Matt talk to him too, but all
he could process was his dad's abusive words. By the time he was in a black van with Matt and all his friends, the baby was sobbing against Matt's chest.

Matt bounced Josh on his lap, "shh, Buddy," Matt tried to comfort the upset and terrified baby. Matt rubbed the baby's back and scratched the baby scalp, but nothing the man did would stop his crying. Matt did not know how this came to mind, but suddenly Matt started to sing.

"Hush, little baby, don't say a word.
Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird
And if that mockingbird won't sing,
Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring."

Josh rubbed his eyes, holding onto Matt and burying his face into Matt's neck. Already a little calmer by the end of the first verse, but terrified tears still streamed down his face. He could not stop them.

"And if that diamond ring turns brass,
Papa's gonna buy you a looking glass
And if that looking glass gets broke,
Papa's gonna buy you a billy goat."

Matt continued through the nursery rhyme rocking the baby from side to side slowly. Soon the baby calmed down completely and started to listen to the man singing. The baby liked his singing.

Josh sniffled, lifting his head a little so that he could see Matt's face, the man smiled down at the baby. Josh smiled shyly back up at the man.

"There you go, Little Guy," Matt cooed, wiping the rest of Josh's tears away. The man smiled when he felt Jose lean into the touch. He moved his hand to brush the baby's dark brown bags out of his eyes, "everythings gonna be okay. They're never going to get you again."

Josh nodded, sucking on his figures harder. The baby did not want to think of his parents right now. He was safe now. Matt was nice and safe. And he was holding Josh, that felt nice. He always loved being held and cuddled. That is what Matt was doing. It felt nice. Josh felt safe. He did not want to think of something that was scary not when he just got saved. No, no thinking or talking about it. Please.

Josh suddenly yawned passed the three figures in his mouth. He rubbed his slightly sore eyes. The baby did not realize how sleepy he was, but now that everything calmed down he felt very sleepy.

"Sleepy, Little Dude?" Amanda asked with a small smile on her face. She never saw Matt act like how he was toward Josh. The slightly younger man was usually awkward around people, never knowing what to say or do. She knew that Matt was categorized as a caregiver, but she did not know that he would act so different toward a little. It was cute to see the interaction between two, and Amanda was amazed that Josh could trust someone so quickly after everything that he had been put through. Maybe the baby could somehow sense that Matt was a caregiver. It was also interesting seeing Matt easily taking control of the situation, and she was glad too. She had no idea what she would have done if Matt was not there.

Josh made a little, high-pitched sound of affirmation, and the baby nodded, yawning again and burying his face in Matt's chest.

"Go to sleep, Baby," Matt said, running his fingers through the baby's hair and patting his back.

Josh looked up at Matt again, a look of fear and question in his eyes. Fear because he did not want to
go to sleep scared that Matt would not be there when he woke. He liked Matt. The baby did not want Matt to go anywhere. Question because Matt called him baby. He liked that. It felt nice. He wanted Matt to keep calling him that. The baby wondered if the man would.

Apparently able to read the baby's mind, Matt said, "I'll be right with you when you wake up, Baby. Promise," Matt rearranged the blanket around Josh so that it wrapped around his shoulders completely and hugged the baby, rocking him.

Josh decided to take Matt at his word. Matt saved him. He was nice and safe and did not do anything to hurt the baby. Josh rested his head back on Matt's shoulder and closed his eyes. The baby was soon asleep feeling safe in Matt's arms.

"Quiet little guy, isn't he?" Ian asked, looking at the sleeping baby in his agent's lap.

"Yeah," Matt agreed looking down at the baby and running his figures thought his hair, recalling that Josh had yet to say a word. He did make sounds- whimpers, whines, sob, and little (adorable) cooing noises- but he did not say anything. That was slightly worrying and made him wonder how old he was in little space. He acted like he was not even a year old, but that could be because he was shaken up with everything that happened today and the past however long he had been in captivity by his parents.

Parents.

Mat still wondered how someone could do this to their own child. What made them hate Josh so much that they would allow multiple people to sexually, physically, and emotionally abuse the baby for money. What could Josh possibly have done to diserve that?

Nothing, Matt thought to himself, nobody deserved what Josh was put through.

Matt knew that there were people who were against littles, believing that littles choose to be the way that they are. Some people went as far as calling littles mentally ill, completely ignoring the science behind classifications and littles. It was not uncommon for parents who thought like that to kick their children out, which was horrible as well, but Matt never heard of a little being locked up in a tiny, dark room for being little.

This poor baby.

Matt rubbed that sleeping baby's back. He promised in his head to the baby that he would do anything to help the baby.

Anything.

Chapter End Notes

I was going to make this longer, but I am sick so whatever I left out of this chapter will be in the next chapter. So, prepare for a long next chapter. =D.
Chapter Summary

Josh goes to the medical wing of RCMP.

Chapter Notes

Long ass chapter. I'm so tired.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When the van stopped in front of the RCMP building, Josh seemed to develop a sixth sense and stirred. The baby made a small cooing noise and cuddled into Matt a little more as if he wanted to go back to sleep. He yawned and rubbed his eyes.

Matt smiled down at the baby, rubbing his back as he stepped out of the van as carefully as he could so that he did not drop the baby. As soon as Matt was to his full height, Josh made a high pitched whining sound and wrapped his legs and arms around the man and rested his head on Matt's shoulder. Josh looked up at the man holding him who smiled back down at the baby and made sure he had a firm hold him before he started to walk toward his workplace.

"Hey, Buddy," Matt whispered.

The baby made a little noise and gave a shy wave.

"This is where me and my friends work," he told the baby. The baby looked up at the building. It was a very tall structure, and the baby was taken aback by the height of it.

"Okay, listen to me for a second, Buddy" Matt ordered to get the baby's attention as he and the team walked into the building. The baby looked up at the man with questioning eyes but nodded. He would listen to Matt.

"Good boy," Matt praised, rubbing the back of Josh's head Josh leaned into the touch, "we are going to go to the medical part of the building and have you checked out by some doctors, okay?"

Josh thought about that for a second. Doctors were going to check him out. He did not really like the idea of strangers touching him, and he wondered if the doctors were going to take him away from Matt. He did not want Matt to go away. He wanted to stay with Matt.

Josh whined and patted Matt's shoulder as his way of telling him not to go away.

Matt seemed to understand the baby, "I'll stay with you, Baby," the man reassured. Josh made a small sound and nodded.

Matt sighed, wondering how many strings he or Ian would need to pull to have Matt stay with Josh. He knew that the medical staff is strict about only having patients back with them when they are doing a medical exam, which is what the baby needed and a possible overnight stay. He hoped that
they would make an exception in this case. God, please make an exception. Matt did not want the baby to cry again. The baby crying broke his heart.

The baby stuck his fingers in his mouth and curled up around Matt when they all entered the building. He could feel people's eyes on him. He whimpered and hid his face in Matt's shoulder. The baby did not like all of the attention. He did not know what everyone was thinking, but he knew that a few of them had to be thinking why was there a stupid baby in a building for big people. The baby could feel his face heat up as he heard people whispering wondering what they could be talking about. Probably about him. Josh did not like that.

"Don't pay attention to them, Baby," Matt whispered in the baby's ear as Ian told the people that were upsetting the baby to move on and get to work and to stop staring at them.

Soon they were at the medical wing, with only Ian following. He told Mike and Amanda to get started on their paperwork. Matt smirked at them. They all hated paperwork.

As soon as she saw the men approach the woman at the front desk asked, "Joshua Ramsay?"

Josh came out of his hide spot a little to hummed in question, wondering why she was saying his name as Matt answered with a simple "yes."

"I will call a nurse to escort him to a room," she said then moved to grab her phone.

Josh distantly heard the woman say that he was there to her phone, but he hid his face back into Matt's shoulder again. The way the lady said that made it sound like the nurse was going to take him away from Matt. He did not want them to take him away from Matt. The baby wanted Matt. Matt needed to stay with him. The man promised.

A few minutes later a young, tall woman with rich, dark hair in a tight bun and dark brown eyes came up to them with a wheelchair. She gave the men and baby a sickly sweet smile and said, "I am here to take Mr. Ramsay to a room for his exam."

Josh whimpered as she tried to take him from Matt. He held onto Matt a little tighter. The baby did not want to go with anyone else. He wanted to stay with Matt. The baby felt tears enter his eyes. Please. Let him stay with Matt.

"Let's go, Little One," the nurse told him, a little frustrated when the baby would not come with her. Josh whined again, but he knew that he should not argue with adults. That was bad. If he were a bad boy, he would get hurt. He did not want to get hurt. He wanted to be a good boy. The baby's breathing picked up as Matt put him in the chair but did not make a noise of complaint. The baby looked at Matt with begging eyes. Begging the man to continue holding him, begging the man to come with him, to not leave him alone. He did not want to be alone.

"I-Is there any way that I can go with him?" Matt asked the nurse when he saw the baby's sad eyes. He had tears in his eye but was not letting them fall. Matt's heart broke.

"Agent Webb. You know the protocol."

"But this is a special circumstance," Ian looked at Matt and Josh and sighed, taking the nurse to the side and out of earshot from his agent and the baby. The baby did not need to hear what he was about to say to the nurse.

"Josh is traumatized and has attached himself to my agent. I do not think it would be a good idea if Josh went in by himself," Ian told her, but the woman did not seem like she was going to change her stance, "can you please make an exception."
"I am sorry, Agent Casselman," the nurse said in a voice that did not sound very sorry, "but I cannot. The protocol is that no one but a nurse, doctor, and the patient is allowed in the room while an examination is going on unless it is a Sub with a Dom. And because I do not believe that Josh has a Caregiver, I cannot allow Agent Webb in the room. He can wait and come in when we are finished."

She walked toward the baby and smiled once again, "let's go, Little One."

When she was about to move behind him to wheel him away, Josh whined and put his hand up as if to ask her to stop with his thumb and index finger making an 'L' shape and with his pinky out. He then put his hand down so that his arm was completely parallel to the floor while moving his first three fingers to his palm and his thumb and pinky still out. The baby then pointed at Matt with a shaky finger. Matt stay. He put his hand on his chest and moved his hand in a clockwise circle. Please.

"I don't know what you're trying to say, Sweetheart," the nurse told his crouching down in front of they baby, who curled up a little more and looked down at his lap. The baby did not make eye contact with the woman.

"I think he's asking me to stay," Matt told her. Looking at Josh with sympathy in his eyes. He knew that there was no way that the nurse was going to let Matt go back with Josh. It made Matt feel horrible.

Josh nodded and did his sign for please again. He really needed Matt to stay with him. The baby was scared. The baby needed Matt. Please, please.

"I'm sorry, Sweetheart," the nurse apologized in an unnecessary high-pitched voice, "Agent Webb can come after the examination."

Josh's lip wobbled, and more tears entered his eyes but did not let them fall. He curled in on himself and stared at the floor. He sucked on his first three fingers on his right hand as the nurse wheeled him away from Matt and Ian. Josh whimpered, he needed Matt.

"Hush, Joshua," the nurse told him, voice no longer sickly sweet, "if you are a good boy it will be over before you know it and you can have Matt back."

Josh nodded, more to himself than to the woman wheeling him down an unfamiliar hallway. Just be a good boy, he thought to himself. He just had to be a good boy then Matt would come back. Matt, please come back. The baby needed Matt.

The nurse rolled him into a room marked exam. Behind the door stood a large, intimidating man with stark white hair and emerald green eyes that seemed to stare into his soul. He looked down at his lap and worried the blanket in between his thumb and index fingers. Be good.

"Hello, Joshua," the man said in a low baritone voice, "I am Dr. Danny Reid. I will be performing a small physical examination today. Nurse, if you would roll him up to the bed, please."

Josh whined and tensed as the two grabbed him by the arms firmly and lifted him up onto the examination bed. Once on the bed, the baby curled up and covered himself with the blanket. He lifted his knees to his chest and rocked a little to try and comfort himself. He sucked on his fingers.

"I need you to sit up straight, Joshua," Josh curled up a little more, but then remembered what the nurse said. He needed to be a good boy. Matt would come back if he were good. Be a good boy, he thought to himself. Be a good boy. The baby just wanted to be with Matt and the baby felt like there was a hand in his chest that was squeezing on his lungs and breathing was harder than it should be
now that he was away from him. He needed Matt. Please, come back.

He uncurled himself and allowed his legs to dangle off the bed. Be a good boy. Just be a good boy.

The nurse grabbed a Blood Pressure Cuff and handed it to the doctor after Josh uncurled himself.

"Extend your arm, Joshua," the doctor ordered after he sat in a rolling stool. When Josh listened the doctor put the cuff on his upper arm, and the doctor pumped the cuff four times. Josh tried to pull his arm away as the pressure became too much and started to hurt a little.

"Don't move, we're almost done," the doctor said. Don't move, he thought to himself, just be good.

When he was done, he told the nurse, "60 over 90. Just at normal," the nurse wrote that on a paper that was on a clipboard.

The doctor quickly checked his heart rate, breathing, temperature, ears, throat, and nose. He noted that he was surprisingly healthy for the conditions he lived in for the past eight years. He was obviously malnourished and dehydrated, but that could easily be fixed through an IV and a healthy diet. He also noted that his throat was slightly red and swollen and Josh whimpered as he remembered the reason for his sore throat. But he was good. He was being a good boy. Matt would come back soon, Josh hoped. He was being a good boy. Matt would come back. He would. He had to come back.

When the doctor said that he needed to take a blood sample, Josh's eyes widened, and he shook his head. He did not want a needle. Needles hurt and made him see things that he did not want to. He did not want a needle. No needle. Josh whimpered, and tears entered his eyes as he remembered the reason for his sore throat. But he was good. He was being a good boy. Matt would come back soon, Josh hoped. He was being a good boy. Matt would come back. He would. He had to come back.

He curled up more when the doctor said, "give me an arm, Joshua."

Josh shook his head and held his arms to his chest. He had enough. Enough of this man touching him, enough medical things. He did not want a needle. He just wanted Matt. Matt, come back. The baby needed Matt.

He had to be a good boy to get Matt; he reminded himself. Josh sobbed as the nurse grabbed his right hand. The hand in his mouth. He let his fingers fall out of his mouth. With his left arm, Josh took his index and middle fingers and thumb and tapped them together. No, no, no, no.

The doctor did not understand what he was trying to say and must have thought that he was trying to pinch him because he clinched Josh's tiny wrist in an iron grip and pined it to the bed. Josh cried out. That hurt.

"Uh-hu," Josh cried over and over again, the first real verbalization he made sense rescued. He struggled against the doctor and nurse, tears streaming down his face. He knew that he was bad and that he should fight against big people. The baby was supposed to be quiet and do whatever big people wanted him to do. He could not. He could not be good. He wanted Matt, but he could not be good.

Josh sobbed again as the doctor pressed harder on his wrist.

Matt help.

...
"I didn't know you knew sign language," Ian said, trying to start a conversation with Matt after about five minutes of complete silence.

"Yeah," Matt nodded, "I dated a girl in high school and part of college whose little brother is deaf. I learned ASL because I wanted to communicate with him because it was really important to her," Matt explained.

Ian nodded, "why did you guys brake up?"

"She did not like that I am categorized as a Caregiver. She was a natural and thought that I would force her to act like a Little if we moved in together or if we got married."

Ian shook his head, "cause that's what Caregivers do," he said sarcastically.

"And Littles choose to act the way they are," he said equally as sarcastic, he shook his head, "I still like to practice and I teach deaf kids and Little who recently gone deaf ASL."

Ian nodded, not surprised at all that Matt would use the second language to help people, but he did wonder how the Little in the other room knew the language. It was obvious that Josh was not deaf. He responds to sounds and voices. He brought up the question to Matt, the young man shrugged.

"I don't know. I'm more worry as to why Josh does not talk," he told Ian "most Littles talk, Ian."

"It's probably from trauma," Ian said, "let's just hope that he starts talking sometime soon."

Matt sighed. Poor baby, he should not be so traumatized that he could not speak. He wondered what would happen to Josh after all this. Probably be taken into government care until they could find a Caregiver for him. For whatever reason, that made Matt feel sad and nervous. He did not want Josh to go into the hands of a random Caregiver. Not all Caregivers were like Matt, and there are terrible Caregivers just like there are bad Doms. Matt did not want Josh to go to a faulty Caregiver who would not understand him. The SLA was good about placing Littles with Caregivers if need be (and this situation was a need be situation) but they were not perfect and Littles being placed with abusive Caregivers was not unheard of.

Matt could not allow that to happen. The man just wanted to take Josh in himself, but with a situation like this, there was no way that the SLA was not getting involved. His house was in no way ready to house a Little. Matt had no crib, highchair, toys, pacifiers, clothes, blankies, or even diapers for a little.

Matt sighed and was about to bring up his thoughts to Ian when he heard a scream. Ian and Matt looked at each other and ran in the direction that the scream came from, knowing that the scream came from Josh.

Ian opened the door, and both of the men's heart broke at the scene in front of them. The baby was curled up in the far corner of the room with his blankie covering him from head to tow. Little whimpers and cries came from the bundle under the blankie. Matt stepped toward the baby but was stopped by the nurse.

"I need you to step out," the nurse tried to push him back.

Matt sidestepped the woman without a word but glared at the woman, knowing that if the woman would have just listened to him, Ian, and Josh that the baby would not be scared and crying in the corner.

The man kneeled down by the covered up baby and said, "hey, where's the baby?" Matt tried to pull
back that blankie to see the baby, but the baby held the blankie tighter around himself with a ragged sob.

No more, Josh begged in his head, not registering Matt's voice. He did not want anymore. He wanted Matt. Please.

"Baby Boy, you need to calm down," Matt whispered to the baby, "it's Matt baby. Can you come out for Matt?"

Matt? Matt! It was Matt. Matt was back. Matt was going to help him. He would make the nurse and doctor stop. He would make the needle go away. Matt would hold him.

Josh peaked out of the blankie as if not expecting Matt to be there, but when he saw that Matt was there the baby practically threw himself at the man. The baby cried into the man's chest.

"Ohh, Baby," Matt whispered in his ear rubbing his back and running his fingers through the baby's thick, dark brown hair, "can you tell Matt what's wrong?" the man asked while wrapping the baby in the blankie once again.

Josh squirmed so that he could place his hands to his chest and he moved them away from his chest, palms down. He then pointed to himself. I'm all done.

"All done?" Matt asked, "with the exam?"

Josh nodded, then pressed both of his index fingers together while the rest of his hands were curled up. Hurt.

"Hurt?!" Matt exclaimed louder than necessary, "what hurts, Baby Boy?"

Josh pointed at his wrist and made the hurt sign again then curled up his left hand slightly and used his right hand to tap the tips of his fingers to the inside of his left wrist, his thumb out. Doctor hurt.

Matt turned to the doctor, asking for an explanation from the doctor.

"I was simply performing a normal physical exam. He must be scared of needles and struggled, and we had no choice but to try and restrain him."

"You restrained a traumatized Little," Ian shouted for Matt, "how could you?"

"It is protocol," the nurse tried to explain again, but Matt interrupted her saying-

"Protocol, protocol," Matt mocked, "everything is fucking protocol. You know what else protocol is? Putting patients in a gown, but Josh is still only in a fucking diaper. How do you explain that?"

There was no answer. How could they explain that? They were preaching about protocol but failed to follow the most basic of the protocol.

Josh whimpered curling up onto himself. Matt was mad. One part of his mind knew that Matt was not mad at the baby. Matt was mad at the doctor and nurse. But another side of him thought that he somehow made Matt mad. He was the one who freaked out because of nothing. The baby struggled against big people. He was bad. Why did he always have to be a bad boy? He just wanted to be a good boy.

Matt looked back down at the baby again. He saw the boy shaking in fear. Matt felt a small ping of guilt when he saw the baby's state. When Josh noticed that the man looked at him again, he put his
right hand, which was balled up into a fist, and the baby rubbed a few circles counterclockwise. Sorry.

"You have nothing to be sorry about, Baby," Matt said, shock in his tone.

The baby out four of his fingers his mouth and pulled the fingers back and turned his hand so that it was palm down. Bad.

"You're not bad," Matt said in a tone that said 'don't be silly.' "You are a good boy. Just never repeat the words I just said, and we'll be good okay?"

The baby smiled up at the man and leaned back into the man again. Matt hugged the baby back and held Josh to his chest. He rubbed the baby’s back and rocked him from side to side. That felt good. He wanted Mat to keep holding him.

Matty stay.

... 

Josh groaned as he woke up. The baby tried to open his eyes, but the light hurt them. He whimpered, rolling over to his side and curling up around the blankie that covered him. Wait... a blankie? He never got a blankie. He did not deserve one. Josh opened his eyes as he sat up and looked around the too bright room. There was not much in the room. To his left, there was a door that was slightly ajar and a big machine right next to the bed. The device made a beeping sound. That was his heartbeat. He once had to go to the hospital as a little kid when he needed surgery to repair a break in his arm, and he was hooked up to a heart monitor then too. Josh was not allowed to say who did it. Mom said that he was going to be okay; Dad just got angry sometimes. Did Dad get angry again? Is that why he was in the hospital?

Josh tried not to think of that.

The baby also noticed that there was a needle in his arm he followed the tiny tube up to find that there was a bag full of a clear liquid that was slowly dripping down the tube and into his arm. Josh wondered what that was for. And was a little scared to know, but he did not see anything weird, so he decided not to mess with the needle.

The baby then looked to the right after taking a moment to look at the wall in front of him. It was painted blue, like the ocean and had paintings of sea creatures on it. The baby liked the wall but wondered why his parents would agree to put him in a room like this. Would they be mad when they found out? Yes.

To his right, there was a thin blue closet that matched the wall paint. Josh wondered momentarily what was in there. Extra hospital clothes, probably. Next to the closet was a cabinet that was built into the corner of the wall. The cabinet did not have anything in it, but the table that it looked like it was sitting on top of had a laptop and a phone on it, alongside a comic book.

Josh did not have to look long to see who the laptop, phone, and comic book belonged too. On the white couch that separated the closet and cabinet/table was a man. As soon as Josh saw the man, Matt, the memories came crashing down on him. He was not with his parents. He was safe. Matt and his friends saved him from his parents and the doctor and the nurse. And Matt was safe and nice and warm and gave Josh the blankie that covered him up and sang to the baby to calm him down and cuddled him. And said that he is a good boy. Josh breathed a sigh of relief. He was safe with Matt.

It took a second for the baby to realize that the man was taking a nap. The baby cocked his head,
wondering if the man would get in trouble for taking a nap when at his workplace. He did not want Matt to get in trouble.

As soon as Josh thought that another man entered the room, he had brown hair that was spiked and brown eyes. Josh recognized him as one of the men that helped save Josh. He was one of Matt's friends. He was okay. Right?

"Hey, Little Guy," Josh dropped his eyes and waved shyly at the older man. The man smiled at the baby before looking at the other man.

Mike sighed, walking over to the man and shaking him feeling the baby's eyes on him the whole time, "c'mon, dude. Ian's not going to be happy if he sees you sleeping."

Matt groaned and rolled onto his stomach. If the baby were not in the room, he would have hit Matt upside the head to wake him up. Damn, why was Matt such a heavy sleeper? Mike heard Josh make a few cooing noises. Mike looked back at the baby, and he was holding a pillow out to Mike. The older man looked at the baby with a confused look.

Josh saw the confused look and put the pillow down a put his index finger of his left finger up as if he was telling Mike to wait for a second then he brought his curled up right hand into a fist and lightly hit his finger with his right fist then he pointed at Matt. He held the pillow out to Mike again.

"You want me to hit Matt with the pillow," Mike guessed with a smirk, Josh smiled back and nodded.

Mike took the pillow from the baby then walked up to Matt. Mike looked back at the baby who nodded. He hit the younger man with the pillow upside the head.

Matt yelped in surprise and sat up, "what the" the young man heard Mike chuckle, but also listened to little giggles coming from the baby. As much as he did not like being the butt of the joke, he also loved hearing the baby laugh.

"It was the baby's idea I swear," Mike said, high-fiving the baby before placing the pillow behind his head. The baby giggled again, looking at Matt and signing sorry. Josh put his first two fingers to his thumbs like he was signing 'no' and put them to his closed eyes and opened his eyes with his fingers and pointed at Matt. You wake up.

Matt chuckled at the baby, happy that a joking side of the baby was coming through.

"Yeah, I needed to wake up, didn't I?" Matt asked the baby, ruffling his hair.

The baby smiled at Matt and nodded. Matt did need to wake up. The baby still wanted to cuddle with the man. Josh held his arms out and made grabby hands toward Matt. He wanted to be held.

Matt smiled at the baby and sat down next to him on the bed making sure not to sit on any of the wires and wrapped his arms around the baby. Josh curled around into the man's side.

"Why did you came in here?" Matt asked Mike.

"Making sure you did not fall asleep. Just be happy that I am not Ian."

Matt winced, nodding. Now thankful that Mike came into the room and not Ian. His boss/friend could be a hardass at work at times.
At night, Matt watched over the baby as he slept. It was about 9:30 and Matt could not gather the heart to leave yet, he did not want to know what his reaction would be if he woke up and Matt was not there.

"Somehow I thought you would be here," Ian said as he entered the room.

Ian came to sit next to his agent. He looked at Josh. The baby now had a blue pacifier in his mouth, that a nurse gave him, that he was sucking on it in his sleep. The baby seemed to be sleeping peacefully. The blanket that Matt gave him tucked around his shoulders.

"Yeah," he nodded, sleepily. Even though it was only nine, he was tired. The day had been exhausting. Both mentally and physically. Matt yawned and rubbed his eyes.

"You should probably go home and go to sleep," Ian told Matt.

Matt shook his head, "I can't leave him."

"You've gotten attached to him, haven't you?"

"A little," Matt said, Ian sent a look over to his agent, "okay, a lot."

"How will you handle when SLA comes?"

"I don't know, Man," Matt admitted, "I don't want to see him go. I want to take him home with me," Matt smiled.

"I think that would be good for both of you," Ian said. He knew that it would be emotionally devastating for Josh and Matt. Mostly Josh.

"Gotta get my house ready for that," Matt said, rubbing his face, "God, it's been so long since I've had a Little," Matt told Ian, trying not to remember what happened to his last Little.

"Are you ready?" Ian asked, knowing that Matt was, but Matt just needed to realize that he was as well.

Matt considered the question and nodded with a "yes."

He was ready.

Chapter End Notes

Yay. Next chapter is going to be getting Matt's house ready for Josh.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

More of Josh's past.

Chapter Notes

Chapter four hath arriveda

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Josh woke up at about 7:30 the next morning to see that Matt was on a couch and typing on his computer. Josh cooed passed the pacifier in his mouth to get Matt's attention.

Matt looked up as soon as he heard the baby. The man smiled when he saw the baby's blue eyes. Josh smiled back. He then took both of his hands and moved them, so the palms were in front of him, last three fingers to his palms, he tapped his first fingers and thumbs together like a crab. What are you doing?

Matt shook his head with a sigh, "paperwork."

Josh nodded and did the sign for bad.

Matt chuckled with a shake of his head and said, "more like boring."

Josh nodded, then his tummy growled loud enough for Matt to hear. The baby blushed and held his tummy.

"Is the baby hungry?" Matt asked with a small smile, already getting up to get a nurse.

Josh shook his head and did the no sign. He already ate. He could not have too much to eat. Clients would not like it if he ate too much and got too big. But there were no more clients. Josh was with Matt. Matt would not hurt him, but would Matt let him eat once a day or just every other day? He already ate yesterday. That was enough.

Matt sent a concerned look toward Josh and said, "I think your tummy is saying something else."

Josh made a 'thumbs up' form with his right hand, the baby pressed his thumb to the side of his chin and then moved his thumb up to the middle of his cheek. Yesterday. Josh then put all his fingers on his right hand on his thumb and put his hand in front of him, with his fingers up and brought his hand to his lips. Ate. Ate yesterday.

Matt felt his stomach drop. Fuck, fuck, fuck Mat thought, that was all he could think. Josh thought that he could only eat every other day or something like that. Matt knew that the baby did not eat three meals a day, he was way too scrawny for that. All of his ribs were prominent as were his hip bones and collar bones. His cheeks that had been pudgy in the video were now slightly concave, and he had dark circles under his eyes. It was sad because in the photo that they got of him when he was
nineteen he looked healthy. But he was not now, and they needed to get him healthy again, but at the same time, Matt did not want to force the baby to eat when he did not want to. His health mattered more than anything right now though, and Matt would have to play bad guy if Josh did not agree to eat.

Matt walked over to the bed and sat down next to the baby with a serious look on his face, "listen to me, Baby," Matt said in a soft tone, as not to scare the baby. When the baby refused to make eye contact or nod Matt asked, "are you listening?" Josh nodded. "Good boy," Matt wrapped his arm around the boy with a sigh, pulling him close until the baby's head was resting on his shoulder.

"You can eat whenever you want," Matt said.

Josh pulled back and looked at Matt like he grew a second head. He pointed to the side of his chin with his index finger of his right hand and then opened up his hand so that all five fingers were spread and tapped the front of his chin twice. Mommy said. Then he baby froze and dropped his hands to his lap and clenched them together. He did not know how to explain what his mom said to him, and he also did not want to re-live it.

Unfortunately, Matt was nothing if not persistent and asked, "What did Mommy say?"

Josh raised his right hand to his forehead, pressing his first four fingers to the side of his head and his thumb tucked in slightly making the letter 'b.' Josh then moved his hand away from his forehead and held it open with the palm facing outward. Josh then took both index fingers and circled them around each other. Don't know the signs.

Matt hummed and looked around the room. When his eyes spotted his notebook, Matt got an idea and asked, "do you know how to write?" Matt knew that it was a stupid question, and was proven right when the baby nodded. The man got up from the bed to retrieve his notebook and pen from the table. He turned to a blank page and handed it to the baby.

"Can you write down what your mommy said?" Matt asked, sitting down on the bed next to Josh.

Josh gulped and wrote on the paper with a shaky hand, making his handwriting worse than normal, and he hoped that Matt could read it. After the baby was done he handed Matt his notebook and looked down at his lap with a lump in his throat. He tried to fight back the tears threatening to come to his eyes, but he could not.

Matt read what Josh wrote and felt his stomach drop. Matt breathed and tried to decide where to go from here. Matt suddenly remembered something that his therapist did with him once. Maybe it would help Josh. Only one way to find out. Matt ripped the paper out of his notebook and folded the paper in half and looked toward Josh.

"Josh," the baby looked up for a second at the serious tone but looked back down at his lap when he saw the look on Matt's face. He could not tell if Matt was angry or not, but he did not want to look at Matt if he was angry.

"Whatever they said to you is not true Baby Boy," Matt told him as he handed the paper back to the baby. The baby looked at Matt, put the paper in his lap. He took both of his index fingers and made an 'x' with them then pulled them apart. But. Matt put his hand over Josh's as he went to sign more. The baby flinched back a little but relaxed when he realized that Matt was not going to hit him.

"But nothing, Baby."

Josh whined, sucking on his pacifier harder and worrying the hospital gown that a nurse put him in
last night. What his family said for all those years running through his head. They said it so much that he had started to believe it. But Matt said that what they said was not true. He did not know what to think.

He was brought out of his thoughts when he heard Matt continued speaking, "I want you to tear up this paper."

Josh cocked his head to the right and looked at Matt with questioning eyes.

"Go on."

Josh moved his hands so that they were Cs. His right hand was faced palm down, and his left palm up he then moved them so that his right hand was faced palm up and left hand palm down. Mess.

Matt could not help but chuckle at that. He had never met a little scared to make a mess. It was a bit funny but also sad, "you won't make a mess."

Josh looked down at the paper and took it in his hands. He looked back to Matt who nodded. The baby gulped and ripped the paper a little. He looked at Matt again.

"It's okay, Baby."

Josh then ripped it entirely in half, he then put the halves on top of each other and ripped those as well. That felt good. It was like the words were being destroyed as he ripped the paper. He looked up at Matt with a small smile and balled up the paper and threw it toward the trash can. The baby made a noise that sounded very close to "oopsie" when he missed.

Matt chuckled at the baby. The man got up and threw the paper away for him. "I'm going to go find a nurse to get you something to eat, okay."

At the mention of food Josh's tummy growled again. The baby blushed and held his tummy again. He was hungry. He nodded and sucked on his paci when Matt left the room.

Matt returned not even five minutes later with some oatmeal.

"Do you want me to feed you, Baby Boy?" Matt asked as he brought up the rolly table to the bed.

Josh nodded. The baby liked when Matt fed him. It was not like when his mom fed him. His mom would scoop as much as she could in his mouth at once, and it made him choke on many occasions and caused him to throw up more than once. He shuddered when he thought of that.

But he did not need to think about that, Matt was feeding him, and the man was nice when he fed the baby. He gave him small bites and allowed him to swallow before offering him another bite. Josh did not feel like he had to eat fast and he could enjoy the food. Not that there was much to enjoy with hospital food, but Josh did not complain. He was getting fed.

After seven bites he was full and turned his head away from the spoon being offered.

"All done?" Matt asked the baby, wishing that he would eat more but also knowing that his tummy could not handle much right now.

The baby nodded, then moved his right hand like he was taking a drink. Drink. Matt reached beside him and grabbed a sippy cup full of water and handed it to the baby.

The baby drank slowly, remembering when Matt told him that he had to drink slowly or he was
"Good boy," Matt praised rubbing the side of Josh's head and pressing the pacifier against the baby's lips. The baby sighed, taking the pacifier and leaning into the touch.

The baby was content with a full tummy and paci.

... Matt walked out of a, thankfully short, meeting with an SLA agent. Ian had called and informed them of the situation the previous night after talking to Matt and informed them that Matt wanted to take him in. The agent deemed him as a quality caregiver, all they needed was a talk with Josh (that they were going to do tomorrow when they could get an ASL translator that was not Matt) and a home check. That, after Matt explained he did not have his home ready, told him that they would perform in two days. Before Josh was released from the medical wing.

Matt felt like he was on cloud nine as he walked back to Josh's room. Mike was currently babysitting him. Josh had not liked that idea. It was not that he did not like Mike, Matt was sure that the baby did, but the baby just wanted Matt around. Unfortunately, he would have to get used to Matt being gone for a few hours while he got his house ready for the baby. Matt felt excitement but also nervousness at that thought. He had to get his home ready for a Little. The man had no idea where to start. He had not had a Little for so long. Matt knew that he would have to call one of his friends, Jessie, who was also a caregiver for some advice. Knowing her, she would get extremely excited (more excited than him). She had been trying to convince him that he was ready to have a little for a few years now. Jessie would be happy, but she would also say told you so.

He was brought out of his thoughts when he saw Amanda walking toward him with a look on her face that said that she needed to talk to him. He lowered his eyebrows.

"What's up, Amanda?" Matt asked the woman before she had the chance to speak.

"Well, you asked me to look into Josh's past a little," she started. Matt nodded not wanting to interrupt the woman. "Well, it's not good."

"What is it?" Matt asked, concern for the baby.

"Well, his family preached that Littles are abominations," Matt nodded, expecting as much, "when Josh was fifteen he was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. He was put on medication, but he never seemed to take it as it was never refilled. A year later he was sent to rehab for heroin addiction. In rehab, they found evidence of self-harming and..."

"Eating disorders," Matt whispered when he read on the file that he took from Amanda.

"Yeah," Amanda said, pausing for a second when she saw the look on Matt's face.

"He got better, Matt. He found a Caregiver, went on anti-depression medication and never seemed to have a relapse with addiction or eating disorders," Amanda said, dreading what she had to say next.

"It's something that his mom would say to him," Matt shook his head, not knowing how much Josh would want to be revealed to Amanda.

"What?"

"She said that she would not feed him often because he did not need to get too fat for 'clients,'" Matt said putting air quotes around the word clients.
"Oh, God," Amanda said covering her mouth. She could not believe that. How could a mother do this to her own child, how could she say that to her child who was diagnosed with anorexia and bulimia? Amanda never truly believed in evil, she believed that everything had some good in them. But even she was having a hard time finding any good within Josh's parents.

"Um, he went missing eight years ago, and three years ago Josh's caregiver..."

"What happened?" Matt asked when Amanda paused, not sure if he actually wanted to hear what happened to the baby's caregiver.

"He died in a car wreck."

Matt sighed. He knew that he would have to tell Josh that his caregiver died. There was a chance that Josh did not remember him. The baby had not mentioned him, and Matt hoped that he never did. Josh did not need any more heartbreak.

"Thanks, Amanda," Matt said, handing the file back to the woman.

Matt now felt heavy with the weight of the knowledge of Josh's past. Depression, anxiety, anorexia, bulimia, self-harming. What drove the baby to all that. Matt had an idea, but he did not want to think about that. That was the past, and Amanda said that he had not fallen back into the behaviors for three years. But Matt could not help but wonder if he would fall back after all that he went through for the past eight years. He already did not want to eat. Matt shook his head. They would all have to keep an eye on him, make sure that he did not fall back into his past behaviors.

Matt was once again pulled out of his thoughts when his phone rang. Without checking who was calling him, he answered with a curt, "Webb."

"Hey, Matt. As much as the kids and I love watching your puppies when are you coming home," he heard his friend, Jessie, ask with a slightly annoyed tone.

Matt could hit himself. The man had been so caught up with everything and Josh that he completely forgot that he had asked Jessie and her Littles to watch his dogs.

"I'm so sorry, Jess," Matt apologized, "it's just..."

"What is it?" Jessie asked recognizing the tone that Matt used when he wanted to tell her something but did not know how to say it.

Matt told her everything from rescuing Josh to the small talk he had with Ian to the conversation he just had with Amanda, everything.

"Matthew Ian Webb," Jessie squealed like a teenager, "after all these years you finally found your little."

Matt nodded, happy that she was happy, "yeah, but I'll need some help getting my house ready."

"Of course. When Josh takes a nap, I can pick you up, and we can go shopping for things. How old does he seem to be?"

"One or two."

"Aww, just a baby. I'll never understand people," Jessie said, referring to the people that hurt Josh.

"Yeah," Matt said nodding again. He then checked his watch noticing that he had been gone for two
hours. "uhh, I need to get back to Josh. I'll see you later."

"Bye, keep me posted," Jessie told him.

"Will do," Matt said, hanging up.

When Matt entered Josh's room, the baby looked up from his coloring and smiled at Matt. He opened his arms, asking for a hug. Matt smiled and walked over to the baby and hugged him. The baby cuddled into his chest with a content hum.

Matt saw out of the corner of his eye Mike leaving the room so that he could get back to work.

Josh squirmed around for a few seconds. Josh felt hungry and sleepy. He wanted to just sleep, but then the baby remembered that Matt told him that he could eat whenever he wanted, so the baby told the man that he was hungry.

Matt smiled at the baby, happy that Josh told him that he was hungry. It made him feel a little better about the note and learning about the eating disorders. Matt rang up a nurse and asked for some lunch for Josh. His own stomach then growled. Josh pointed at him as a way to tell him to order food for himself. If Josh needed to eat when he was hungry so did Matt.

"I'll have something too," Matt told the guy on the other end.

"Can't get away with anything with you, can I?" Matt asked the baby, ruffling his hair.

Josh shook his head, snuggling back into Matt side. Matt chuckled and kissed the top of Josh's head. Matt felt on cloud nine for the second time that day. He found himself looking forward to the future for the first time in years.

I realize that this story is started to revolve more around Matt. Which I don't mind too much and I hope that you do not mind.
Life Lost... and Found CH 5

Chapter Summary

Matt goes with his friend to get Josh some stuff and Mike spends some quality time with the baby

Chapter Notes

This is a more fluffy chapter because I feel like too much dramatic stuff is happening in my other story. =( 

See the end of the chapter for more notes

About an hour later after a small meal that Matt fed him Josh fell into a deep sleep, and it was apparent that he was not going to wake up for a while. Time to call Jessie. But before that.

"Hey, buddy,
I'm going to be gone for a few hours. Don't worry I'll be back as soon as I can. Be a good boy for the doctors and nurses and my friends.
Love, Matt"

He put the note on the in the table next to Josh's hospital bed, hoping that the baby would see the paper when he woke up.

The man then pulled out his phone and called Jessie while walking up to Ian's office.

"Hey, Matt," Jessie answered the phone, "is the baby sleeping?"

"Yeah, are Sami and Tim coming with us?" Matt asked, hoping that Jessie's littles were not coming with them. It's going to be hard enough shopping for Josh and trying to remember everything that the baby needs. It would be ten times harder to try and shop with two overactive littles.

"No, they are at the babysitter's," Jessie answered, thoughts the same as Matt's.

"I'll be there in five minutes," Jessie hung up the phone.

Matt smiled down at his phone. He made a quick stop by Ian's office to tell him that he was going to leave for a few hours.

"You're off for the next few days," Ian told him as a way to say that it was okay.

Matt nodded with a "thanks" and left the room.

"Good afternoon Mr. Webb," Jessie said when she drove up to where he was standing outside of the RCMP building.

"That's Agent Webb to you," Matt replied with a smirk.
"Well, Agent Webb get in the car."

"Yes, ma'am."

He climbed into the passenger's seat of the car, and once he was buckled up, she started driving.

"Which shop are we going to?" Matt asked looking over at the woman.

"Tykables," the woman answered. Matt nodded. He had been there several times when he had a little. It was a smaller store, Matt remembered but had everything that he would need to get for Josh.

"I made a list of basics that you need to get him," she reached into the center console and pulled out a piece of paper to hand to Matt.

Matt read the paper that included the most basic of things- diapers, pacifiers, onesies- to things the Matt might have forgotten like a changing pad. Good thing Jessie was there.

When they got to the store, Matt realized that a lot had changed in the past six years.

"Wow, umm," he looked toward Jessie as if asking for guidance, "where do we start?"

"Diapers will probably be the hardest," Jessie told the man as they went to get a cart, "do you want to get that over with?"

"Yeah," Matt nodded not having another suggestion.

Matt allowed Jessie to lead him to the diaper section of the store.

There were a lot of different types of diapers. Matt knew that Josh was a small with, thankfully, eliminated some of the options but not nearly enough to make the decision easy.

"We could start with daytime," Jessie suggested as she could tell that Matt was a little overwhelmed by the options.

Okay, Matt thought to himself, Josh would need one that was absorbent as he would be in diapers 24/7 so no pull-ups or Depends. Matt thought back and remembered that ABU and the Tykables brand was the best. He focused in on those. There were a few that would be good for daytime, and he asked Jessie her opinion as he had never worked with these specific products.

"Tim uses Super Dry Kids when he feels little enough," Jessie responded, "they are absorbent enough for day but definitely not for night-time use. If you want one for both, go for the PeekABU."

They both seemed okay, if not for different situations, one for staying at home one for if they were going out for a while or for night-time. He liked both. He looked at the prices and did a calculation in his head. The man could more than afford both. Plus, they were both adorable in there own way.

"Clothes next," Matt said.

The way Jessie smiled made him regret saying that. She was slightly obsessed with buying little clothes. In the end, Josh might end up with more clothes than what Matt has. Matt shrugged, the baby deserved it.

"What size is he?" Jessie asked, not bothering to hide the excitement in her voice.

"Small, medium when he gains some weight," Matt responded, and as soon as he did, she was off toward the clothing section, "don't buy out the whole store," she was already out of sight, "please."
Matt sighed, Jessie walked toward the onesies, so he was going to check out jammies.

A lot of the jammies were character based- Mikey Mouse, Elmo, Thomas, Spider-Man, Star Wars- but Matt felt bad. He did not know what characters Josh would like. While it made sense, it still made him feel bad. Matt wished that he would have asked the baby what he liked to watch or do but too many things had been going on these past two days.

Matt ended up looking at the sleepers that were less character based. He might come back to them once he knows what Josh liked. He stared at the options for a while almost like he was making the biggest decision of his life. And he knew that he was being ridiculous and that Josh probably would not care what he slept in. Matt knew that. But at the same time, he wanted the baby to like what he wore. The baby had gone so long without anything to wear aside from a diaper, and he deserved to like what he was wearing now.

Matt chose four jammies. Three sleepers and one set. One was made of fleece and was plain baby blue. One was warm and fuzzy. It was admiral blue with yellow crescent moons and white stars. The last sleeper was thinner than the first two. It was white with little red, dark, and light blue with turquoise trim. The set was more for summer time. It was both the sleeveless shirt and shorts that would come just above the knees were orange. The shirt had a big monkey with a light blue electric guitar, and the shorts had several of the same little monkey all over with speech bubbles that said "rock." Matt might put Josh in the moon and star sleeper tonight because the poor baby always seemed cold.

Matt knew that he would need to get the baby more jammies, but these four were a good start. He looked down at his watch. Five minutes. Matt wondered how much clothes Jessie decided to spoil the baby within a matter of five minutes.

Matt walked over in the direction that he saw Jessie walk to a few minutes earlier. Totally not getting distracted along the way and picking up a couple of pair of cute fuzzy socks and a coat.

"Jessie," Matt called out to her once he saw her. She had her own cart now the was almost filled with clothes as well as toys.

"Hey, Matt!" Jessie called back as if she was not about to buy half of the store's clothes and toys for one little boy.

"You don't have to buy all of this for him," Matt told her picking up a part of coveralls with a little bear on the chest. He knew at the start that there was no way that she was not going to buy the baby something, but this was too much. Matt would be able to get it over time.

"I know I don't HAVE to, but I WANT to," the woman said, exaggerating the words 'have and want.'

"Plus I'm Autie. I'm supposed to spoil the baby and leave you with him saying, 'but Antie Jess lets me do it,'" Jessie smirked.

Matt chuckled. He had absolutely no problems with spoiling the baby or having Jessie spoil the baby. Josh deserved it after everything he went through. The baby needed to know that he was safe and that he could have the things he needed and wanted. "Fine," Matt said, "But if Josh starts saying stuff like that, me and 'Auntie Jess' are going to have some words."

The woman laughed and looked up at Matt innocently. Matt rolled his eyes.

They went to get more things that the baby needed. Bottles, sippy cups, some plates and bowls and
other eating essentials, pacifiers (choosing one only after a long conversation about latex vs. silicone), changing pads, baby monitor, nightlight, wipes, diaper cream and powder (after another long discussion about what works best), soap and shampoo for sensitive skin (Matt did not know if Josh had sensitive skin, but he did not want to take a chance).

Matt gets the chance to go back to the toy section and pick out a few things. Once was a monkey about 12 inches in length. It was a light brown, almost the color of Josh's hair, and fat from the stuffing. It was too cute not to get his little boy. He got the baby some colorful blocks (one of the only toys that Matt thought that he would like that Jessie had not gotten him.) The last thing the man picked up of the baby was a few books. Josh loved it when Matt spoke to him and paid attention to every word he said. There was no doubt in Matt's mind that the baby would like to be read to sleep.

Now, they were choosing what blankies to get Josh. He seemed to attach himself to the one that Matt got him when the baby was rescued, but that was just black. These blankies had patterns and bright colors. One that Matt liked was baby blue with brown monkeys with bananas.

"I see a theme," Jessie observed. Matt nodded with a small smile.

Jessie picked out a fuzzy baby yellow with blue 'Papa's little boy' printed on it. The man smiled at that one.

"Do you want to pick up some furniture?"

Matt considered that question for a second. They picked out a ton of things for the baby today. Matt was going to be surprised if they could fit it all into Jessie's car. Plus he was not sure if Josh would like a crib or highchair. The baby had been trapped in a small room for the past eight years. There was no way that he would not be traumatized because of that alone and not have some claustrophobia from it. Matt did not want a crib or highchair to trigger any trauma. He could talk to Josh later and make a discussion from there.

"Maybe tomorrow. I don't know if Josh has trauma surrounding a crib or highchair and I have an extra dresser," Matt explained to her.

Jessie nodded at the explanation.

"I don't wanna see the bill," Jessie commented looking at both of the carts.

Matt cringed.

But his baby was worth it.

...

Josh woke up sometime while Matt was at the store. Not that Josh knew that yet. All he knew was that Matt was gone and that he was alone. Josh whined, he did not want to be alone. He wanted Matt.

Josh looked around that room trying to see if anyone was there, no one was, but there was a paper on the table next to him. He picked up the paper and read it.

"Hey, buddy,
I'm going to be gone for a few hours. Don't worry I'll be back as soon as I can. Be a good boy for the doctors and nurses and my friends.
Love, Matt"
Josh's heart clenched. Matt was going to be gone for a few hours. How long were a few hours? How long had Matt been gone? Did he leave when he first fell asleep? That would be one and a half hours ago. That was not a few hours ago. Was it? How much longer was Matt going to be gone? Josh did not want Matt gone. He should be here.

But Matt told him not to worry, that he would be back soon. Josh could not help but worry. He did not like that he did not know how long Matt would be gone or where he was. Josh assumed that he was outside of the building. Was he at his home? Was he out talking to someone again? That is what happened the first time Matt had to go that day. That time was a little better. He knew that Matt was talking to someone, and about how long he would be gone. That was better.

Matt also wrote that he had to be a good boy and listen. Last time someone told him to be a good boy, he tried his best but still ended up getting hurt. What if that happened again? What if he could not be good enough? And Matt was away so he could not save Josh this time.

Josh whimpered feeling alone. He wanted Matt.

The baby suddenly heard the door to his room open. He looked up with fearful eyes. It took him a second to recognize Mike. He was Matt's friend. He looked over the baby when Matt was gone the first time that day. That was different. Matt was gone out of the building now, and he was not the first time. Josh knew how long Matt was going to be gone the first time, and now he did not know how long the man would be gone.

Josh whined at Mike and held out the note to the man. Mike took the paper from the baby gently and read it. He knew that Matt had to go and get stuff for the baby. The man also knew that Josh would be upset that Matt would have to be gone.

"It's okay, Little One," Mike reassured the baby, "Matt will be back in a while."

Josh whined. Matt had left his notebook and pen on the table where the note was. He wrote 'when?'

Mike sighed, "I don't know. Matt has some very important things to do," Matt had yet to tell the baby that he was going to come home with him. The other man did not want to get the baby's hopes up if Matt could not get accepted by SLA. Even though there was no way that would happen, the other man was still worried.

Josh looked down at his lap and nodded. Matt had a lot of important things to do today. Too important to be with Josh.

Seeing that Josh was still upset by Mike's answer, Mike thought of something to do to distract the baby. Coloring.

"How about we do something to kill time," Mike told the baby, going over the cabinet where he knew the medical staff kept thing to entertain littles. One of those things being a few coloring books and a big box of crayons.

When he turned back to Josh, he saw that the baby's face held a look of confusion with his head cocked to the left like an adorable puppy.

"Do you like to color?" Mike asked the baby.

Josh smiled and nodded. He loved coloring. When he was with Daddy, he let him color a lot. He liked making pictures for Daddy and Daddy would put them on the fridge. Josh could color a picture for Matt when he came back. The man would like that. Right? Josh was sure he would.
"You could color a picture for Matt," Mike suggested to the baby with a smile, happy that there was something to take Josh's mind mostly off of the fact that Matt was gone, "Matt would like that."

Josh clapped and cooed. Mike even agreed that he should draw a picture for Matt and that the man would like it. As far as the baby could tell Mike had known Matt for a long time, and the men were friends. Being friends meant that Mike would know that Matt would like it if he colored for him.

Mike showed the baby three coloring books. One had fish, one had puppies and kittens, and the last one was Disney. Josh thought for a second. He remembered that last night Matt said that he had a puppy and two kittens. Matt would probably like it if he colored a picture of puppies and/or kittens. The baby pointed at that book.

Mike smiled at the baby placing the coloring book and the crayons on the rolly table in front of the baby so that he could color. He turned to put the remainder of the books in the cabinet but turned back around when he heard the baby whine. He thought that he must have given the baby the wrong book. When he turned the baby pointed at the man then at the books. At first, Mike thought that the baby wanted he to leave all the books out in case he got tired of the pages in the puppy and kitty book, which Mike was fine with. He would just have to put them away a little later.

He sat the remaining coloring books on the table next to the baby and sat down on one of the uncomfortable plastic chairs that Mike knew Matt spent a majority of his night on the night before. Mike winced, feeling bad for Matt's back.

Mike was content to watch the baby color, but the baby did not seem to like that idea. He whined again and picked up the Disney coloring book and handed it to the man. After the slightly confused looking man took the book, Josh held his right hand in front of himself and moved his left pinky around his right palm as if he was drawing on it. An adjusted sign for draw, as Josh thought that Mike would understand better than if he did that than the actual sign. He then pointed at Mike.

It took Mike a second to understand what Josh was trying to tell him. The baby wanted Mike to color with him. Mike was not about to make the baby upset by telling him no so, the man gave a small chuckle and nodded, "you got it, Kiddo," the man said, affection clear in his tone.

Josh giggled and clapped, happy that the man wanted to color too. Mike smiled back with another chuckle, amused that it took so little to make the baby happy.

They both turned their attention to there respective books. It took Mike less than a second to find a picture that he liked, he always loved Goffey as a kid. He would need the green. Josh, on the other hand, took a minute to find the picture that he wanted to color. This was going to be for Matt. It had to be a picture that Matt would like. It had to be good.

He settled on a picture that showed two tiny kittens and a larger puppy. The puppy was sitting on the floor and looking down at one of the kittens that seemed like she was about to pounce on a ball of yarn. The other kitten was on the puppy's back, looking like she was about to jump on the first kitten. Matt would probably like this one. He had two kittens and one puppy, plus the scene was cute. Josh liked it too.

Josh took the brown out of the box and started to color in the puppy carefully. The baby took time to color in the lines, sucking on the pacifier in his mouth a little harder in construction.

The scene carried on like this for the next hour and a half. Mike not really caring what he was coloring and stopping more than once to just to look at what Josh was coloring. The baby was being very careful about drawing inside the lines and chose each color carefully, making sure that each color went with the next and made sure that the foreground stood out from the background.
The two were so lost in there own little world that they did not notice that someone was in the room until they cleared their throat. They both looked up, Josh flinching slightly as the only time someone cleared their throats was to get his attention before they hurt him. When the baby saw that is was Matt; however, the baby smiled and held out his arms asking the man for a hug.

Matt smiled shrugging off his coat and placing it in a chair next to him with some bags that Josh had yet to notice. He walked up to the baby sat on the bed and pulled him into a hug. The baby happily snuggled into the man's side. The baby completely forgot about the pictures that he drew Matt until the man said-

"I see that you boys have been hard at work since I've been gone," he took the coloring book from in front of Mike, "I didn't know you liked Diesny, Mikey," Matt said in a teasing tone.

"It was the baby's idea," Mike defined himself.

Matt hummed as if he did not believe the other man, giving him the side-eye as he slid the book back over to him. Mike rolled his eyes.

Josh pulled on Matt's shirt sleeve. The baby pointed to himself before bringing the pinky of his right hand to his temple then brought it away from his head. My idea.

Matt chuckled, and he was about to verbally respond to the baby to tell him that he knew and that he was just teasing the older man, but he smirked as he signed it to the baby instead.

Mike felt left out of the conversation as the two continued to sign back and forth.

"I'm going to learn some sign language," Mike said, more to himself that the two on the bed.

Matt looked at the older man seriously brought his right hand to his chin and place his left, palm up at about chest level. He took his hand away from his chin and placed it on his other, palm down. Good.

Not that Mike knew that. The older man sighed and side, "it's not polite to speak with your hands."

Matt placed his hand on his forehead, pulled it away until it was in front of his face with his thumb and pinky out. Why?

"You're exhausting, Webb," Mike sighed. The older man stood and stretched, "see you later, Kiddo. It was nice spending time with you today," the man ruffled the baby's hair.

Josh pulled away from the man, not out of fear, but because he wanted a hug. He stretched out his arms to the man to ask for one. Much like Matt, Mike happily hugged the baby.

"See you later, Kiddo," Mike said as he pulled back from the hug.

Josh put his thumb on the side of his chin and moved it so that it swiped in upward on his cheek before it ended up in the thumbs up position.

Mike looked at Matt for a translation and, luckily for Mike Matt was done being an ass and said, "his asking if he'll see you tomorrow."

"I thank I can make that happen," Mike told the baby. Mike said his goodbyes to Matt and walked out the door.

Once Mike was out of the room Matt turned his attention back to the baby and asked, "what have you been up to?"
Josh smiled as widely paced his pacifier and showed Matt the pictures.

"These are really good, Baby," the man praised. He was not laying to make the baby feel good. It was apparent that the baby took his time with each picture. He baby handed the man all the pictures that he finished and pointed at him, trying to tell the men that the pictures were for him.

"For me?" Matt asked.

The baby nodded happily.

Matt smiled, "Thank you, Baby. These masterpieces are going on my fridge Asap."

The baby smiled and snuggled into the man's side. It felt good to know that the man liked the pictures that he worked so hard on.

"Ohh," Matt said, having almost forgotten about something, "There is someone I would like for you to meet, Baby Boy," Matt hopped up from the bed and went over to the door and told someone that they could come in.

Who stepped in was a beautiful woman with curly red hair and dark, almost black, eyes. She was only slightly shorter than Matt, and she was petite. She also wore a kind smile that was hard not to return, which Josh did shyly, looking down at his lap.

"Hey, Josh, I'm Jessie. I'm Matt's friend."

Chapter End Notes

K, so a few more chapters until Josh comes home. Do you guys have any suggestions about what to happen? I have a few ideas, one of the main ones is one of Jessie littles being jealous of Josh, but other than that mostly small things. Anything you guys want to happen?
Chapter Summary

Josh gets presents and some bad news

Chapter Notes

So, a few hours ago I got my mind blown by the realization that there is an app for this website. I did not know this. Please tell me I'm not the only one.

"Hey, Joshy. I'm Jessie. I'm Matt's friend," Jessie told the baby. Josh looked up at her with questioning eyes. He balled both of his hands into fists. He held his right hand so that it was parallel to the ground and tapped his wrist on top of it. The baby then pointed at Matt. Work with Matt?

Jessie looked at Matt for translation.

"He's asking if you work with me," Matt said with amusement in his tone, he then turned to Josh. "No, Baby, she doesn't work with me. She's just a friend."

"Just a friend," Jessie said with her hands on her hips.

"You know what I mean," Matt said.

"No, not really," the woman said sarcastically.

Matt ran his tongue across his teeth, "she's a stinker," he whispered in Josh's ear.

"Heard that," Jessie told them. Josh giggled while Matt rolled his eyes.

"Get Josh's presents," Matt told her.

Josh perked up at that. Presents? Matt and Jessie got them persents? Why? He did not need gifts. At least that is what his parents told him from a young age. He was a mess up. Mess ups did not deserve presents. His Daddy had tried to prove them wrong and convince Josh that he was not a mess up. Daddy told him that he was a good boy and deserved the world. He wanted to ask Matt about his Daddy, but he would wait until they were alone. Plus, even if he was not completely convinced that he deserved gifts, but he was still curious.

"Here you go, Sweetheart," Jessie said, placing three gift bag down on his lap. Josh sucked on his pacifier and looked up at Matt. He needed reassurance that he would not get in trouble if he opened the bags.

"It's okay, Baby," Matt reassured but seeing as the reassurance was not the only thing that the baby needed Matt scooted so that they were shoulder to shoulder and said, "let's look in here, Baby Boy."
Jessie pulled up a chair closer to the bed and sat down looking as if she wanted to know what was in
the bag too.

Matt opened the bag and pulled out the monkey that he got the baby. Both gasped overexuberantly.

"What's that?" Jessie asked.

"A cute little monkey," Matt answered. Matt then looked at the monkey as if it spoke to him, then
held it up to his ear. Matt hummed then said-

"The monkey said that he needs a good friend," Matt looked at Josh who was smiling at the adults'
antics, "do you think you can be the monkey's good friend."

Josh giggled and nodded holding out his hand for the monkey. Matt handed the baby the monkey.
Josh hugged the monkey to his chest. Matt and Jessie smiled at the baby, happy that he liked the
monkey.

"What're you going to name him, Hon?" Jessie asked.

Josh fingerspelled the name that he wanted to give to the monkey.

"Abu?" Matt asked. Josh nodded and looked at Matt, hoping that he liked the name.

"What a perfect name," Matt told him wrapping his arm around the baby.

"Do you like Alidian, Josh?" Jessie asked. When Josh nodded Matt and her made sure to remember
that.

"What else do you have in there, Baby?" Matt asked as he pushed the bag closer to the baby.

Josh timidly reached into the bag and pulled out a few books. "Goodnight Moon," "Little Bear," and
"The Cat and the Hat," Josh remembered all the books from his Daddy. Daddy was never able to
sing him to sleep because he would stay up to listen, so Daddy got him lots of books so that he could
read Josh to sleep.

"Looks like Matt wants to read these to you, Sweetie," Jessie told the baby with a smile. Josh smiled
back. That sounded nice.

"I can do that later," Matt promised, "first I want you to look in the other bags."

Josh did as he was told. The other bag held a sippy cup and bottle. When he saw the bottle, Josh
babbled in a way that sounded close to "baba." Matt smiled, hoping that this was the first step to Josh
talking.

The last bag held a very fuzzy onesie that was blue with moons and stars, and it looked warm, and
Josh thought that he would cry. He had not had real clothes in a long time, and this onesie seemed so
nice and warm and babyish that Josh could not help but fall in love with it like he did the Abu. Josh,
for whatever reason, forgot the signs for 'can you help me change,' so he made a high pitched cooing
noise and handed the onesie to Matt and pointed at himself, hoping to get his point across.

"Okay, Baby, I'll put you in it," Matt said. He knew that there was no way that the nurses would let
Matt put the onesie on the baby (protocol) but there was not much that the can do if Josh was already
in it when they came in.

"One more thing," Matt said to the baby once he was done changing him into the onesie. Josh
excitedly reopened the bag that he got the onesie out of, no longer scared that he was going to get into trouble if he opened the bags.

What he pulled out made just as excited as the onesie if not more. It was a blankie! The blankie was soft and fuzzy and was blue like his onesie and had monkeys on it that looked like Abu. He loved it!

He did the thank you sign over and over again.

"Your welcome, Baby Boy," Matt said.

The baby threw himself at Matt. Wrapping the man in a tight hug. He felt tears come to his eyes and he buried his face into Matt's shoulder. He did not want Matt to think that he was sad. He was not sad. He was happy. Really, really happy. Happy that he had people who would buy stuff like this for him. Happy that people cared enough about him to do this. Happy that he had someone who would hug and cuddle with him when he needed or wanted to. But most of all he was happy that he was out of that room. He hated that room and the clients, and he did not like his parents for what they did to him.

Josh was brought out of his thoughts when he heard Jessie coo. Most of the time he would not be comfortable hugging someone this soon after meeting them (Matt was an exception) but Josh could not help it when he hugged her too because he had a feeling that she got him something also, even if it was not in the thing that was just given to him.

"I think someone likes you," Matt whispered to Jessie even though he knew that Josh could hear him.

Josh pulled back when he heard a phone ring. Jessie got her phone out of her pocket and got a sad yet happy look on her face.

"Hate to hug and run, boys, but I need to get home," She kissed Josh's forehead which caused the baby to blush and look down at his lap again.


After a few seconds of comfortable silence, Matt spoke again, "Josh I have to ask you a really important question," Josh raised his head of the man's shoulder and looked at him with curious, questioning eyes.

"How do you feel about sleeping on a crib," Matt asked.

For most people, the question would seem silly. Josh is a baby and baby sleep in cribs. Therefore Josh needs to sleep in a crib. But, by the look Josh was giving Matt right now and the way the baby was frantically shaking his head, it was not that clear-cut.

Josh did not want to sleep in a crib. Cribs were too tight and scary. He did not want to sleep in one. No, no, no. Please, Matt, no. Josh did not want a crib.

"Okay, baby, okay. Clam down," Matt said bringing Josh in close for a hug and handing the baby his monkey.

"No crib. No crib. I promise."

Josh sniffled but relaxed at Matt's reassures and the monkey in his arms. No crib. He did not have to sleep in a crib. The baby let out a sigh of relief. No crib.
Josh did have one question that was burning him, and he needed to ask Matt, even if the man did not know the answer. Josh pulled away from the man and opened up his right hand so that all his fingers were spread he tapped his forehead twice with his thumb.

Matt felt his stomach twist, "what about your dad, Baby Boy?" Matt said, thinking that Josh was about to tell him something that Miles did to make his so scared of sleeping in a crib.

Josh's eyes widened, and he the no sign and shook his head. He did not mean his dad. He meant his Daddy. The baby wanted to know about his Daddy. The baby did not care about his dad. That old man could die for all Josh cared.

Josh did the sign for good then did the sign for Daddy because that is what Daddy was. He was a good Daddy. He was not Josh's dad.

"Your caregiver," Matt said, and Josh nodded. Matt sighed. The man knew that Josh's caregiver did not do anything bad to Josh. Hunter Corey was a good man and dedicated his life to helping littles. That is probably how Josh and Hunter met. Hunter was simply trying to help Josh, and the man fell in love with the baby much as Matt had and decided to become his caregiver. Matt could understand the pain that Hunter went through when Josh's parents kidnapped him.

"Baby Boy," Matt started trying to keep emotion out of his voice but failing, "your caregiver... he died in a car crash three years ago. I'm so sorry, Baby."

Josh felt like his world shattered. Daddy... Daddy was gone. No, no Daddy could not be gone. No. Josh needed his Daddy. The baby wanted his Daddy. Daddy had to come back. Matt was laying. His Daddy was still alive. Daddy had to be. Josh still needed his Daddy.

Josh's heart rate picked up, and the baby felt like he could not breathe. He curled into himself as much as possible and let out a heartbroken sob.

"C'mere, Baby," Matt said, knowing that there was no use in telling the baby the calm down. Josh needed to cry it out and needed to be able to grieve.

Instead of snuggling into Matt and crying into his chest as the man expected, Josh pushed back against Matt clearly saying, "Naw, naw," in a rough voice. Josh did the sign for liar and pushed Matt away again. Josh did not want Matt around. He did not want to snuggle. Even though a small part of him wanted nothing more than to cuddle into Matt and cry into his chest and Matt would run his fingers through his hair and sing to him. That sounded nice. But Josh was too mad to process that side of himself right now. All the baby knew was that he wanted his Daddy and Matt was not going to let him had his Daddy, so the baby was mad.

"I'm so sorry Baby, but I'm not laying," Matt said.

When Matt tried again to pull the baby into a hug, Josh reacted in a way that Matt never expected him to. Josh hit Matt in the chest. Over and over again, trying to make Matt stop and trying to make Matt go away.

Josh knew that he should not hit. He was being a bad boy for hitting, but he could not stop. He was mad that Matt kept telling him that he could not have his Daddy when all the baby wanted was his Daddy. God, the baby needed his Daddy, but he could not have his Daddy. The baby could not have his Daddy because his Daddy died. Daddy died, and there was nothing that Matt could do about that, but the baby was hitting Matt. He was hitting Matt and being a bad, bad boy.

Josh sobbed again as Matt grabbed both of Josh's wrists with one of his hands gently and pulled Josh
into a hug. Josh continued to cry openly against Matt's chest. Matt ran a hand through the baby's hair, scratching the baby's scalp and rocking the baby from side to side.

"S... s," Josh tried to say sorry, but there seemed to be a disconnect between his mouth and brain, and Josh could not force the world out. Josh was sorry. So, So sorry. Sorry that he called Matt a liar and sorry that he hit the man when he was trying to tell the baby the truth and comfort him. He was sorry.

"It's okay, Baby Boy, it's okay," Matt whispered in his ear, "I forgive you. Just let it out Baby Boy. Let it out. I'm right here, Matt's right here. Everything's going to be fine, Baby. I promise."

How could everything be fine, Josh though?

His Daddy died.

Chapter End Notes

Do you guys want a one-shot about how Josh and Hunter met? I think that would be fun and fluffy and a little sad, but not as sad as this chapter turned out to be.

(I am totally not working on that one-shot instead of sleeping)
Chapter Summary

Starts with a nightmare but ends with everything okay

Chapter Notes

It's been too long, guys. So, here we go.

It had been a good day, Daddy did not have to go to work, so he and Josh got to spend the whole day together!

They had walked around town for a little bit after breakfast before going to Josh's favorite park. It was a big park just for littles. It had a playset with monkey bars and slide, and swings, and everything that a child would love to play on, and Josh loved it.

"Hi, Daddy!" the baby shouted with a big smile when he was at the top of the playset.

Daddy smiled back up at the baby, "Hey, Bubba!" he shouted back with a big smile of his own and waved.

The baby waved back, then one of the other little boys that Josh was playing with told him to go down the slide with him, and Josh ran off with him. Josh went down the slide with a little boy by the name of Geo. He smiled and looked back at his Daddy, but when he did, his Daddy was turned away from him. He was looking toward a little girl who looked like she got hurt. Josh pouted, he hated when someone got hurt.

Josh looked around the playground to try and see where his new friend went and ran after him when he saw that he was back on the playset, looking down at him with a big smile and waving him over.

The baby smiled back and tried to run over to him, but he felt someone pull on his shoulders and pull him toward them. Josh tried to scream, but a hand came to cover his face before he could. Whoever it was turned him toward them and held his face in their shoulder. Josh tried to struggle. He did. But whoever had him was too strong, and he could not get away.

Josh felt himself being thrown into the back of a van. It was only then that Josh saw the person's face. Josh felt tears come to his eyes and he started to shake with fear. The person was his father. He turned his head to see his mother. Josh whimpered, These were the two people in his life that hated him the most — the people who told him that he could not be little. That it was terrible and an abomination.

His father slapped him across the cheek. Josh whimpered again and curled up as much as his body would allow him to. He was scared. He was so scared. More scared than he was when he was on the streets. He wanted his Daddy. Where was his Daddy? His Daddy needed to save him. Dada, please.
His father put a blindfold on him and tied his hands up his mother started to drive. Josh struggled against his bounds the best he could in the tight space.

"'addy," Josh groaned out passed the gag. His breathing picked up as he felt a needle go into his arm. What was that? He whimpered as he felt warmth and pain seep through his veins. He then felt light-headed and sleepy. He did not want to sleep though. He wanted his Daddy. He had to get away from his parents. He did not want his parents. His parents were mean. They hurt him. He wanted Daddy.

Josh could not help it as he closed his eyes and gave into sleep. His last thought was that he wanted his Daddy.

When Josh woke up, he was not blindfolded anymore. He was in a small, dark room. His head hurt. He was thirsty. He squirmed into the sitting position and could feel that his diaper was wet. Josh whimpered at the feeling. He did not like his diaper wet. Where was Daddy? Daddy would fix everything. Daddy would take all of his discomforts away and cuddle with him and make him feel better.

"Daddy?" Josh called out to the dark, scary room but no one answered his call. He was alone. Josh felt tears come to his eyes and he stuck his fingers in his mouth to try and self-soothe. The baby wanted his Daddy. Where was he?

Josh whimpered once again when he heard the door to the room open. He looked up to see a stranger.

"Hey, Bade," the stranger said in a way that Josh did not like. He squirmed away as the stranger came closer.

"Let's have some fun."

"No," Josh whimpered as the stranger started to take off his diaper.

... 

"No, no, no, no, no," Josh whimpered in his sleep. Tossing and turning to try and get away from whatever was haunting his nightmare.

"Hey, hey Baby Boy," Matt said in the most soothing voice that he could manage when he realized that the baby was having a nightmare, "wake up, Baby, it's just a nightmare," Matt rubbed the baby's back.

"No!" Josh shouted as he shot up in his bed. He had tears in his eyes, and his breathing was ragged.

"'addy," Josh cried and started to sob. The baby wanted his Daddy so bad. He missed his Daddy.

"Daddy was died."

Josh felt firm but gentle hands on him, and they pulled the baby to a firm chest. Josh struggled momentarily, still terrified by the nightmare, but he soon relaxed into the hold when he realized it was Matt. Matt was okay, he was nice. He was warm and safe. Josh cuddled into the man's chest and curled into him as much as possible and sobbed.

"Shh, Baby Boy. I was just a nightmare," Matt reassured the baby, rocking him back and forth slowly and running his hand through the baby's hair to try and calm him.

But it was not just a nightmare. It was a memory. A horrible memory of Josh's parents taking him
away from his Daddy. Josh sobbed harder.

"'atty, 'atty,' Josh cried, trying to say Matty, but his mouth was not wanting to work right, and he could not make the 'm' sound.

"I'm right here Baby Boy," Matt reassured the baby.

Josh tried to get his mouth to work. He wanted to talk. To tell Matt what happened in his nightmare, but his mouth was not cooperating. This only made him more upset and frustrated.

"Hey, hey calm down Baby Boy. You don't have to talk. Calm down Baby," Matt told the baby, seeing how difficult it was for the baby to talk.

Josh whined, he wanted to talk. He should be able to talk. Why couldn't speak? He wanted to tell Matt his dream. Maybe then it would get out of his head.

"T-take 'way," Josh sniffled a few minutes later when his tears finally slowed.

"What do you mean, Joshy?" Matt asked, wanting to encourage the baby to talk, hoping that asking would not make him stop.

"D-dad take 'e 'way fwom 'addy," Josh slurred, more tears entering his eyes. Josh went on to explain everything that happened in his dream with stuttered, slurred speech. Matt felt his heart break for the baby. He was just at a playground with his Daddy, playing with other little and while his Daddy's back was turned his dad kidnapped him.

"I'm so sorry, Baby Boy," Matt said, running his hand through Josh's hair and rubbing soothing circles on his back, "that shouldn't have happened to you, Baby. I'm sorry."

Josh whimpered, curling into Matt's side with a yawn. The baby felt exhausted after talking after so long.

"It's only six in the morning, Baby, you can go back to sleep," Matt said holding the baby a little tighter.

Josh nodded and yawned again. He felt a little better to get all of that off his chest. It was also nice to be able to talk without being punished, but it drained him of all the little energy he had. The baby closed his eyes and soon fell asleep, feeling safe in Matt's arms.

... 

Matt felt horrible. He needed to leave the room so that they could do the interview with Josh alone. The poor baby looked devastated, tears sprung into his eyes, and he shook his head. The woman in there with him reassured the baby that Matt would be back soon, and with that Josh allowed the man to leave with a pout.

Matt sat down in a chair right outside of the room to think. The poor baby was grieving. He looked so sad. Matt had never seen that look on Josh before, and he hated it. The man wished that he could take all of Josh's pain away. He wished what happened to Josh never did so that Josh could be happy. He knew that no matter how much he wished that something could be different, it could not be any different. The man also knew that Josh would be okay. Matt would make sure of it. Whatever he had to do to make the baby feel better, Matt would do.

Matt also wondered how he was going to get Josh's room set up. He already ordered Josh's bed and changing table that he would need to pick up from the store. He needed to do that today. SLA was
going to go through his house tomorrow afternoon to make sure that it was ready for the baby. Matt knew that he could not leave that day. Josh needed Matt too right now for him to leave. He could go get some of it done when Josh takes a nap (which would be around 12) and have Mike watch over him and text him when he was awake. Matt had no idea how Josh would react to Matt being gone when he woke up, but he would have to. He could then get the rest of it done tonight when the baby is going to sleep for the night. Hopefully, no more nightmares happen tonight like one did last night. That is was would need to work. Matt suddenly felt like he was back in high school and trying to figure out how to get a project done after procrastinating.

None too soon, the interview was done, and the interviewer smiled at him as she said that he could come back into the room as she left.

Josh looked relieved when the man walked back into the room and raised his arms for a hug. He hated when Matt had to leave the room. He felt alone, and he just wanted Matt to come back.

"Hey, Baby Boy," Matt greeted with a small smile. He came over to the bed and hugged the baby. "What do you wanna do today?" Matt asked, running his hand through the baby's hair. Josh's hair was starting to get greasy, and he needed a bath.

Josh shrugged, he did not want to move from Matt's side. He wanted to cuddle with the man all day. Maybe watch some T.V.

"How about we have some breakfast, Baby."

Josh nodded. He was a little hungry as he had not had anything to eat that morning before talking to the woman.

"Pan'kicks," Josh whispered, hoping that Matt would not get mad at the request. The baby had yet to ask for a specific type of food. He could not do that with his parents. They would get mad and say that he should be grateful with whatever they decide to feed him. His parents would also get mad when he would ask for food in general, and Matt did not get mad at that, so he would not get mad at the baby asking for pancakes, would he?

"I'll see if they have some, Baby," Matt responded, proud that the baby was asking for the food that he wanted. The baby should be able to have whatever he wanted when it came to eating. 

He asked the nurse for the food and went back to snuggling with the baby. The baby sighed in contentment and suckled on his pacifier while waiting for the food. He tried his best not to think about his Daddy. It made him sad. Josh did not want to be sad anymore, but he could not help but think about him. Everything reminded Josh of his Daddy, especially Matt.

Josh nurse for the day, a large man named Bart, brought the food in for them. Matt noticed the way that Josh tensed and huddled a little closer to Matt. The baby got nervous, and a bit scared with men. Not that Matt could blame him, but he hoped that the fear would go away with time though the man knew that it would never completely vanish.

"Mmatty do it?" Josh asked scooting his plate of pancakes closer to Matt.

"Of course, Baby Boy," Matt responded, cutting up a piece of the food to feed the baby.

Feeding the baby was a slow process as the boy was not used to eating solids anymore, but they were soon done, and Matt was wiping the baby's pouty face clean with a wet wipe.

"Pouty baby," Matt teased gently with a small smile when he was finished cleaning the baby.
Josh wined at the teasing and hid his face with his blankie. Josh heard Matt chuckle as he pulled his blankie back down to show the baby, "there you are," Matt cooed with a small smile.

"No hewe," Josh giggled with a small smile of his own. The baby pulled his blankie back up to hide his face again.

"Peek-a-boo," Matt said as he pulled back the blankie again with a chuckle.

The baby smiled and giggled when Matt pulled his blankie back again, "naw-hu," Josh pulled his blankie back over his face.

"Peek-a-boo," Matt smiled, pulling the blankie back after a small pause to make the baby giggle again.

Josh gigged a little harder, and Matt felt his eyes crinkle, "I hide," Josh said as he covered himself up again.

"You sure you wanna hide?" Matt asked, tickling the baby's tummy.

The baby squealed and giggled as soon as Matt tickled his tummy, "naw, 'atty," the baby squeaked rolling over to his side and curling up.

The game continued like this for Matt does not know how long until the baby was out of breath from laughing so hard and tears of laughter were streaming down his face.

"Let's calm down a little, okay Baby," Matt said, running his fingers through the baby's hair. The baby caught his breath and snuggled up into Matt side, sticking his fingers in his mouth. He felt okay now. He was full and happy that Matt was willing to play a game with him. The baby was still sad about his Daddy and will be for a while. But he was okay.

Matt smiled as Josh curled up into his side once again. He felt light and happy. Matt was happy that the baby could still laugh and play like that after everything that has happened to him.

Matt knew that Josh would be okay.
Matt gets Josh's room ready with the "help" of Ian.

This is supper short. Sorry about that. I just wanted to write Matt with one of his friends.

Much as Matt had planned, when Josh fell asleep that night, he went home to try and get Josh's room the rest of the way ready. Jessie and her littles had already set up the place a bit, and for that Matt would be forever grateful. The man knew that Sami and Tim could be a handful from the times that he had watched them and it could not have been an easy task to move the bed that was originally in the room out and put most of the clothes and toys where they needed to go. Matt would have to set up the new bed (a toddler like bed), changing table, and get all the odds and ends sorted.

Once the room got approved, he would be able to take Josh home, hopefully, sometime tomorrow. This made Matt both very excited and a little nervous. Excited because his baby was finally coming home. Matt would not have to leave the baby in the medical wig anymore, and they would not have to be monitored by the medical staff anymore. He would also get about three months of paid leave in paternity leave. During that time, he would get Josh on a schedule and get used to everything. He was nervous because he would be out of work for almost three months. That would be the longest that he would ever by off of work. Aside for getting Josh used everything, he had no idea what to do with himself. Matt had no idea how much he could handle with being outside. Josh was obviously scared around strangers. He would get tense and lean closer to Matt.

Matt wondered how Josh would react to his animals. Bennie and Fred could be very hyperactive when they wanted to be. Jumping on people like they did when he first got home and they would bark when the doorbell rang or if they got too excited. They loved to play fight with each other (Matt had to kick them out of the room because they were doing just that). There were other times where Matt was not sure if they were breathing. Laying around on the couch or floor for hours then randomly get up and play around. Matt loved the randomness of his pups, but Matt was concerned that Josh would not like it. His cats, Tux and Anemone, where more chill than his dogs. They could be asses (like all cats). Anemone loved to sleep in Bennie's bed because it annoyed her. Tux loved to climb on the counters. It did not matter how many times that Matt had told him not to or how many cat trees he had. They loved to jump on Bennie and Fred in they stepped out of line. To get attention, they lay right next to Matt and purr as loud as they can until he stopped whatever he was doing and pet them. Josh would probably do better with them because of the simple fact that they were not as loud or rambunctious as Bennie and Fred.
Matt was brought out of his thoughts when he almost had a heart attack! Someone grabbed him from behind and shook him. Matt had not heard anyone enter his house because he had headphones in his ears. The man turned and was about to stab whoever attacked him with a screwdriver when he saw that it was just Ian.

"Man, you gave me a fucking heart attack," Matt said, putting a hand on his chest as he put the screwdriver down and sat down next to Josh's half-made bed.

Ian smirked, "why do you even have headphones in?" the older man asked.

"The music sounds better," Matt muttered, "seriously Ian, you really scared me. I think I'm having heart palpitations," Matt dramatically laid down on the floor, "do me a favor, dial nine one and wait for me to tell you to press the other one."

Ian snorted, looking around the bedroom. Josh's room was a little bit of a mess, what with boxes from the bed and toys and toys having yet to be put in their proper spot. But Ian could see how the room could look nice.

"Good job so far," Ian praised, looking down at his friend who was still laying on his back.

"Thanks," Matt responded, sitting back up and picking up the screwdriver to finish making Josh's bed, "any particular reason you wanted to stop by?"

Ian shook his head, "no, just wanted to see how the place was coming along."

Matt hummed, thinking that there was more than likely a different alternative motive for the man stopping by than just seeing how Josh's room was coming along, "you think that you can help me then?" Matt asked, "this bed is being a pain in the ass."

Ian rolled his eyes like that was not the reason he came over in the first place and said, "sure," and sat next to the Matt on the floor.

With the help of Ian, Matt was able to finish Josh's bed in no time.
"What's next?" Ian asked as Matt put the monkey theme comforter of the bed.

"Changing table," Matt responded, moving to open the large box that it came in.

They laid out all of the pieces of the changing table and Matt could not help but sigh in relief as the changing table for not come with nearly as many pieces as the bed.

"This should be easy," Matt said, pulling out the instructions.

"Don't say that. Last time you did I got shot," Ian said, cringing at the memory.

"How me many times do I have to tell you it's not my fault," Matt rebutled in a high pitched voice, waving his arms around.

"Until I believe you," Ian told the younger man without missing a beat.

Matt rolled his eyes, "are you gonna help me or not?"

"I don't think this will get me shot," Ian shrugged, "so why not."

Matt rolled his eyes again with a small smile.

Much like with the bed, it did not take long to put together the changing table. Through Matt did smash Ian's finger a little with the hammer.

"First you get me shot, then you smash my had with a hammer," Ian scoffed with his hands on his hips.

Matt could not help but laugh as he picked up a few boxes to take out to the dumpster.

"Smash it with a hamma," the man said in his best Yzma voice.

"God help me, he's quoting Disney again," Ian mattered, looking up at the sky as if he was praying.

"Heard that," Matt said with a yawn.

"You need to get some sleep," Ian told the man, knowing that Matt had hardly slept in the past three days. Having been too worried about getting everything ready for Josh or sleeping on the couch in Josh's room.

"I'm fine, Mom," Matt said stubbornly, holding back other yawn.

Ian suppressed to erge to roll his eyes as he said, "c'mon, man. I'll even tuck you in."

"Come anywhere near my bed, I'll shoot you myself," Matt threatened with a glare. But the glare had all the effect on Ian as an angry and sleepy puppy.

"I'll deal with the boxes," Ian said as Matt yawned again, "you go to bed. That's an order."

Matt rolled his eyes, but listened to the older man and walked into his room to get some sleep, both excited and nervous about tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes
Once again, sorry that this is so short. My laptop broke halfway through writing this and I did not want to type so much on my phone.
Chapter Summary

Ian gives Josh a very important job and the baby finally gets to go home and meet Matt's animals.

Chapter Notes

Still don't have my laptop, so this chapter was written on my phone, so sorry for any and all mistakes.

Josh was going to go home with Matt today. Josh did not know how to feel about that. One side of him was extremely excited. He liked Matt and Josh felt safe around him. The baby loved to be around him, and felt bad when Matt was away, and Josh did not know how he would feel if he had to be taken away from Matt forever. Josh's tummy felt sick with that simple thought. He did not want to be taken away from Matt, and Matt telling him that he was taking Josh home should be the best news ever. Just like when Daddy said the baby was going to stay with him. And that was the problem. Matt made Josh feel the way the Daddy made him feel. Matt made him feel warm and safe and protected and made him feel like he could be a baby without getting hurt. Daddy made him feel like that. Josh felt guilty that someone else, who he just met, was making him feel safe and warm like Daddy did. Josh felt like he was replacing Daddy with Matt and Josh did not want to do that. Daddy could not be replaced.

Josh did not know how to bring up his feelings, though the bigger side of him was saying that he should, or if he even should. Even though Matt was taking him home that did not mean that Matt wanted to be a caregiver to Josh. If Matt did not want to be Josh's caregiver then his feelings did not matter.

Josh was brought out of his thoughts when Matt said, "Hey, where's my Baby Boy?"

Josh cocked his head to the left like a confused puppy and lowered his eyebrows. The baby did not go anywhere. He had been in this room for the past few days, and he did not go away when Matt was in the room.

"There he is," Matt said, running his fingers through the baby's hair, "hi, Baby Boy."

"Hi," Josh whispered, looking down at his lap.

"What are you thinking?"

Josh shrugged, not feeling up to talking to Matt about his thoughts.

Matt pressed his lips into a thin line, not sure if he should push it or not. It was obvious that the baby was thinking about something, but if the baby did not want to talk about it then he should not have
to. Matt changed the subject with a-

"So, I brought you a few clothes," Matt showed the baby the two outfits that they he had to choose from, "what do you want to wear?"

The baby looked at Matt as if he grew a second head. Josh did not deserve clothes to wear like the one's Matt was holding up. That's what his mom and dad said. Josh was just a stupid, bad baby and did not need clothes. He needed to be put to use to make his parents money. That's all Josh was good for.

But his parents were wrong about so many things. He could be little if he wanted and needed to. He could eat when he wanted. Maybe he could have the clothes that Matt was holding out for him.

Matt saw the change in the baby's body language as soon as the man showed the baby the clothes and he knew that this time he could not just let it go, so the man asked, "is something wrong, Baby?"

"umm," the baby squirmed around on the bed for a second before signing what his parents would say. That he did not deserve clothes and that he was just a way to make his parents money.

Matt sighed and put the outfits back on the chair. He came to sit right next to Josh on the bed and wrapped an arm around the baby's shoulder.

"You can't believe that, Josh," Matt told him. Josh thought for a second and shrugged. He honestly did not know what to believe. His parents telling him the he was a disgusting freak who needed to be locked up for the better of society and could only be used to make them money was running through his head. He had simply learned to accept those hurtful words as truth and did not question them until now. Now that he had Matt and all his friends telling him that he was good. That he deserves things like food and clothes and safety and protection and love. Just like Daddy. The baby desperately wanted to believe Matt. He wanted to believe Daddy. But the baby did not know if he could, what if his parents were right and he was nothing more than a freak who did not deserve to live.

Josh did not know.

"Josh you are not a freak. You are a sweet little boy," Matt started, and before Josh could say anything Matt continued, "you are such a good baby. You are smart, brave, adorable," here Matt lightly pinched Josh's cheek, and Josh giggled and hid in Matt's shoulder with a blush as the complement, "you are worth so much more than you think. Your parents are wrong, Baby Boy, they are so wrong about you. You deserve the world, and I sorry that they could not see that, and I promise, Baby Boy, that I will make sure you believe that you have much more worth than what your parents put in you. Okay?"

Josh sniffled and nodded his head, snuggling a little deeper into Matt. The baby wished that he could believe everything that Matt was saying, but right now it was too much to believe. Maybe he would be able to believe it one day, but not right now. Right now he could believe that he deserved the clothes that Matt showed him a few minutes earlier.

Matt held the baby for a few more minutes before he pulled back to see the baby's face. The baby had red rim eyes from holding back tears and his nose was slightly runny, but aside from that he seemed to have a spark in his eyes that Matt had only seen a tiny glimmer of when Josh felt completely at ease. Matt had yet to see it so bright, and the man hoped that one day he will be able to see the spark all the time.

"How about those clothes, Baby?" Matt asked with a small smile.
"O-Otay, 'atty," Josh stammered.

Matt practically bounced up and grabbed the outfits. One of them looked like it would be for a toddler. It was a grey t-shirt that had tiny brown bears all over it with navy blue long sleeves. There was a light brown vest with a grey hood and dark blue jeans finished off the outfit. The other was long sleeve baby blue onesie with a big monkey head on the chest. The monkey was smiling big kind of like Abu. Black sweats and a red bubble jacket finished the outfit. Josh ran his tongue ring across the back of his teeth (a nervous habit he picked up as soon as he got it when he was sixteen) and considered his options like it was the biggest decision of his life.

Matt was patient with the little boy as he made his decision. Matt was in no big rush as they were still waiting for the rest of the team to say their goodbyes. Plus, rushing the baby would only make him more nervous which is not what the baby needed.

"'onkey," Josh whispered, bringing his fingers to his mouth.

"Alright, Baby Boy," Matt said, putting the other outfit down and helping the baby change into the monkey outfit. All aside from the jacket.

"There you go my little monkey," Matt smiled, ruffling the baby's hair. The baby giggled and opened his arms out for a hug the Matt happily accepted.

"Now all we are waiting for is the doctors with the discharge papers and my friends. Then we can go home."

Josh nodded, "uhh, h-home an'mals?" the baby asked.

"Yeah, Baby. The animals are at home."

"Tell 'e 'bout 'em," the baby asked. Josh had asked to hear about Matt's pets a couple of times. Each time that Matt talked about them the baby seemed to get very joyful. He seemed to be excited now that he knew that he would go home with Matt.

"Well, there's Bennie. She's a big goofy black lab..."

Matt continued to ramble on about his pets while the baby rested his head on the man's chest. Josh let Matt's voice wash over him. Josh knew what Matt was going to say about his animals, but the baby just wanted to hear the man's voice. It had a calming affect on the baby, and let the baby think of nothing else but Matt.

Matt was in the middle of telling the baby about Tux when Josh's doctor came in, soon followed by Mike and Amanda.

"Let's get these papers signed then you can go home, Little One."

Josh and Matt signed on the appropriate lines and soon the doctor left saying that he was going to get a nurse to see them out.

"Hey, Kiddo," Mike greeted the baby, the baby waved with a shy smile, "are you ready to go home with Matt?"

Josh nodded, looking at the other man with bright eyes.

"Hey, you finally got someone who likes you, Webb," Amanda joked, hitting the younger man's shoulder.
"That hurts," Matt held his heart.

Josh cocked his head, not sure if Amanda was being serious or not. Of course Josh liked Matt. The man rescued him and made him feel safe. The baby snuggled into Matt a little farther and barred his face into Matt side.

"Aww, don't go getting shy on us, Little One," Josh heard someone say. The voice he did not completely. Josh came out of Matt's side a little to see who entered the room. Josh recognized him as someone who helped rescue him. Ian was his name. Josh did not know anything about him because he had never been around Ian for any length of time.

The baby looked down bashfully and leaned into Matt more.

"You can't get any closer, Baby," Matt said with a fond chuckle at the boy's shyness.

As if the prove Matt wrong Josh snuggled into the man's side. The others in the room chuckled at the baby's behavior, and Josh could feel himself blast at the attention. Not used to it but at the same time not hating it.

Once Ian was able to contain his laughter he came to sit on a chair right next to the baby, "hey, Little Man," Josh looked at Matt for a second, as if time was trying to figure out of Ian was talking to him. When Josh realized that Ian was talking to him he looked at the man, not quite meeting his eyes.

"Okay, let me tell you a little something about Matt," Ian started, "he is very good at taking care of other people. I'm sure you know that, don't you?" Josh nodded. Mat had been very good at taking care of him throughout these past couple of days, and Josh liked it when Matt took care of him. Just like when Daddy would take care of him.

"But Matt is not very good at taking care of himself," here Matt rolled his eyes which earned him scowl from Ian, "usually it's my job to make sure he cares for himself, but since I want really see him for three months I can't do that. Do you think you can do that for me? Make sure that Matt takes care of himself so that he can take care of you?" Ian asked.

Without a seconds hesitation, Josh nodded. Of course he could make sure that Matt takes care of himself. He did that for Daddy. He made sure that Daddy ate and that if Daddy was stressed about something Josh gave him extra cuddles. He could do that for Matt. Though there was a part of him telling him that doing all that for Matt he would be replacing his Daddy.

"Good," Ian smiled reaching into his pocket and pulling out a fake RCMP badge with a long chain so that the baby could wear it around his neck, "now, this is a very important mission, Little One, and I think you have earned this badge," Ian put the badge around the baby's neck and clapped his mentally on the shoulder. Josh let the man and looked down at the badge that fell about to his diaphragm. He picked it up to look at it and showed Matt, who was a little blown away by Ian's show of kindness to his baby.

"Yeah, Baby Boy," Matt said with enthusiasm in his tone, "I see."

"Did you know that Matt has one just like that, Kiddo?" Mike asked.

Josh's eyes widened to the size of dinner plates. He looked at Matt to confirm this. Matt chuckled and pulled his badge from his pocket and showed the baby, holding it to the baby's badge.

Josh touched Matt's badge and compared it to his own. The where almost the same!

"'e wike 'atty," Josh said to no one in particular, looking up at Matt with a small, shy smile.
"Yeah, just like me, Baby Boy," Matt said, kissing the side of the baby's head. Josh hid his face into Matt's chest. Everyone cooed.

"Hello," they heard a cheerful sounding voice say. A short nurse entered the room with a wheelchair.

"I hear that there is a little boy who wants to go home."

"Yep," Matt said as Josh nodded, eager to get out of the medical wing and to Matt's house.

"Oaky, let get you into the wheelchair, Little One," the nurse said, rolling the wheelchair to the bed. Matt stood up and helped the baby stand. Josh was still shaky on his legs, something that Matt would have to work with the baby on. The man helped Josh sit.

Soon they were in Matt's car and heading home.

...

"Home sweet home, Baby Boy," Matt said as he carried the baby into the house. As soon as Matt opened the door they heard barking. Matt saw a black and light brown blur run toward them.

"Hey guys," Matt greeted with a smile, "calm down a little, guys. I have someone who wants to meet you."

Matt bounced Josh, who was looking down at Matt's dogs looking excited and not at all scared by their barking, on his hip. Josh nodded with a smile. The baby reached down to pet Bennie as she jumped up on her owner.

Matt walked over to the couch. The man sat with the baby by his side so the he could see how Josh and his big interacted. Fred, the smaller of the two dogs, came to sit on Matt's lap and sniffed at the baby's face. Josh turned to look at the small puppy. Fred cocked his head to left the moved fast to lick the baby's nose. The baby jumped back and giggled, not expecting the puppy to move that fast or the lick him. He wiped his nose of the wetness. He reached a timid hand to pet Fred. Eventually Fred ended up in the baby's lap with his head on Josh's chest.

"Someone likes you, Baby Boy," Matt smiled, reaching over to pet Fred as well.

"yike 'im," Josh said, reaching to put his fingers in his mouth. Matt intercepted the fingers and press a pacifier to the baby's mouth. The baby took it without complaint and continued to rub up and down Fred's back.

Bennie, finally getting jealous that Fred was getting all of the attention, came up to the couch and sat in front of the baby.

"Hi," Josh whispered to the pup when he noticed that she was in front of him.

"Hey, jealous butt," Matt said rubbing the top of Bennie's head.

Josh reached out a hand so the Bennie could smell it. The pup sniffed the offered hand for just a second before deemed him as good and moved her head so the baby's hand was on her head. Josh smiled and gently rubbed her head.

A few minutes later, Josh heard soft purring next to him. He turned his head to the left to see a calico cat who was staring right at him. Anemone.

"Hi," Josh whispered to the cat. Anemone meowed at him and bumped his head with her's. The
baby smiled and removed his hand from Fred to scratch behind Anemone's ear.

"Well, that's three out of four," Matt said, "where's Tux?" Matt looked around the living room and saw the baby do the same. He liked all of Matt's animals and wanted to meet the last one.

When Matt did see the missing cat he wished he could say that he was surprised by where he was, but unfortunately, Matt had been Tux's owner for way too long to be surprised by his behaviour. But he did say-

"Hey get off of there. You little..." as he walked into the kitchen to retrieve the cat. Tux meowed angrily as Matt picked him up from the counter and continued to lecture him, "how many times do I have to tell you. You cannot get on the counter. You are not clean. Now I have to wipe down the counter before I make lunch. Are you happy with yourself?" Tux's response was growling at Matt. All the while Josh was watching the interaction between the angry kitty and Matt with interest and slight amusement. Matt rolled his eyes at his cat and put him down. Matt could not introduce him to Josh when he was mad. He did not want to risk Tux scratching the baby out of anger.

"Go pout somewhere else," Matt told him. Tux did just that, going up one of the cat trees and glaring daggers at Matt.

"Angwy kitty," Josh observed, fine with meeting Tux when he was less mad.

Matt chuckled at the baby's observation and said, "yeah, he can get mad when he does not get his way," Matt looked over at Tux from his place on the couch, "hu, Tux?" if cats could roll their eyes, Matt knew that Tux would.

"uhh, 'atty," Josh asked.

"Yes, Baby Boy."

"Hungwy."

"Okay, Baby what do you want for lunch?" Josh shrugged and watched as Matt went to the kitchen, "that's okay I'll figure something out."

Josh nodded and continued to pet Matt's animals.

Chapter End Notes

There you guys go, Josh is home and we will see Sammie and Tim next chapter, promise. : )
Chapter Summary

The rest of Josh's first day home.

Chapter Notes

Still don't have my laptop, but I will be getting it Friday, so this is the last phone chapter you guys will ever get.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

While Matt was cooking lunch, fruity chicken and rice, Jessie texted him and asked if her and her littles could come over for dinner. The man had said yes, and gave the news to Josh.

Josh was very excited to see Jessie again. She was one of Matt's friends and she was nice. Josh liked her. The baby was also a bit worried about meeting her littles. He made friends with most of the littles he met, but most of the littles he met where around his "age" or just a couple years older. Whenever he met little that was too much older (five or older) they usually did not like him too much because he was just a baby. Josh tried to avoid those littles whenever he could and just hung out with littles who liked him. That made life a lot easier. But Josh had no idea how old Jessie's littles were, they could both be much older than him and not like him, they could also be his "age" and like him, or they could be his "age" and not like him or...

He needed to stop thinking about that. Josh breathed slowly. Whatever was going to happen was going to happen, no need to overthink everything. That's what Daddy would tell him when he would get anxious and his thoughts would go too fast or if he could not really feel anything at all.

Plus, both Matt and Jessie were nice so the littles had to be nice too. Right?

Currently, Josh was trying to color a picture for Jessie. It was a doll. The baby was coloring it to look like Jessie and was trying to do her dress green (green always looked good with red hair) but Tux was getting in his way. The angry kitty was not so angry anymore and laying on his picture.

"Go, angry kitty," Josh pouted at the cat who meowed at him when he spoke.

"Matty!" Josh whined.

"What is it, Baby Boy?" Matt asked from the kitchen where he was cleaning.

"Angry kitty," Josh told.

Matt walked into the living room, drying his hands off on a towel. He smirked when he saw his baby's predicament. His "Angry Kitty" was on his baby's coloring book, preventing him from coloring.

"C'mon, Tux," Matt said, grabbing the cat and placing him on the ground next to the baby. The
meowed like a teenager giving attitude and jumped back on the table. Tux, thankfully, did not move to lay on the coloring book but sat next to the book before laying down.

"Hey, Baby," Matt sat next to Josh and looked at the doll the baby was coloring, "whatcha doin'?"

"Coworin'."

"Yeah?" Matt smiled, running his fingers through his hair.

Josh nodded, "fow, 'essie."

"Aww," Matt cooed, kissing the baby's hair, "you're such a sweet boy."

Josh blushed and smiled shyly; looking down, suckling on his pacifier, and leaning into Matt.

"Don't go shy on my, Baby," Matt said, poking the baby's ribs. Josh giggled and tried to squirm away from the man.

"Oh, no, Baby. You're not getting away from me," Matt told the baby pulling Josh toward him so that his back was to the man's chest. Matt tickled the baby's tummy and ribs. Josh let out a high pitched squeal and giggled.

"Matty, naw. Matty naw," Josh giggled out. Matt did not listen to the baby and continued to tickle the poor boy.

Bennie seemed to think that the baby was in danger and barked at Matt to get him to stop tickling him. She got in the middle of the two and forced the two apart. The pup turned to the baby once he was sitting on his own and made sure he was not hurt. She sniffed at him, licking his face. The baby giggled.

"I guess I never have to worry about you getting hurt around her," Matt said mostly to himself.

Josh looked over at Matt, "no huwt," he reassured.

Matt smiled at the baby, "I know you're not hurt, Baby Boy," Matt wrapped his arm around the baby once Bennie sat down on Josh's other side, "between Bennie and me, you're never going to be hurt ever again. Okay, Baby?"

Josh nodded, leaning back into Matt and turning his attention back to his coloring.

...

Matt heard knocking on the door. The man answered it and was attacked by two very excited littles.

"Uncle Matt, Uncle Matt!" they both exclaimed.

"We haven't seen you in forever," the younger, Tim, told him. Tim was a handsome boy of around five normally, but he could regress to three when he wanted or needed to. He had blond undercut hair (that would in no doubt be messy by the end of the night) and crystal blue eyes that could not hold a secret.

"It's only been a week," the older, Sammie, rebutted. Sammie was a pretty girl of about eight or nine years. She had curly brown hair that was pulled back in a ponytail with a side bang and mischievous, light brown eyes.

"Yeah, forever," the younger sassed.
"Well c'mon in, c'mon in," Matt ushered the littles in, "I have someone who wants to meet you two."

Josh, who had been playing with Tux and Anemone, was now looking up shyly at the guests. He waved the hand that did not have the cat wand in it. Bennie noticed the baby's nervousness and nudged him with her head as if to remind him that she was there if need be.

"Hey, that's mine!" Tim shouted at the baby and before anyone could stop him, he snatched the cat toy out of his hand. Josh curled up and whimpered. Tears entered the baby's eyes as he prepared for the older boy to hit him for taking the toy.

"Timothy," his Mommy scolded, rushing over and grabbing the toy before handing it back to the baby. But Josh did not want to play with the cats anymore and put it on the ground, looking up for Matt who was approaching the baby quickly. Josh raised his arms to be picked up by Matt when he got close enough. Once he was in Matt's arms, the baby buried his face in the man's chest to hide. He took in Matt's warmth and sucked on his pacifier to calm himself.

"It's okay, Baby Boy. You're okay," Matt continued to whisper soothing nothingness in his ear until Josh did not feel like he was going to burst into tears.

"I'm sorry," Tim said in a voice that did not sound very sorry.

"I'm not the one you should be apologizing to, young man," Jessie said, pointing to Josh.

"Sorry," Tim said. Josh came out of his hiding spot a little. He held his right hand in an "O" shape and brought it down to his left hand that was faced palm up and made the letter "K". It's okay.

"Josh said it's okay," Matt told Tim after he saw the confused look on the boy's face.

"I never want you to do something like that to him again, do you understand? Josh is just a baby, you have to be nice," Jessie finished.

"Okay, Mommy. I'm sorry," Tim apologised again.

"Okay. All is forgiven," Jessie assured.

"Let's make formal introductions," Matt suggested, kneeling down so that Josh was sat in his lap. Sammie took this as her cue to step forward to introduce herself.

"Hi," she waved, trying to take a peak at the shy baby but he hid further into her uncle.


Josh waved.

"Can you tell Sammie your name?" Matt asked, not sure if the baby was going to say his name or sign it.

Josh licked his lips. There was no doubt in his mind that Sammie heard his name, but he wanted to make Matt happy so he whispered "Josh," in a small quit voice.

"I'm Sammie," she pointed at herself, "that's my brother, Tim," she leaned in close to whisper this next part to Josh, "call 'im Timmy, he hates that. I'll get 'im back for 'im being mean."

Josh gave a small smile, trying to decide if he would call the other boy Tim or Timmy.

"Why don't you three play?" Jessie suggested, "and Matt and I can start on dinner."
"I don't wanna play with a baby," Tim said as he crossed his arms.

Josh looked down at his lap. He knew that Jessie's littles would not like him.

"It's either you play with the baby or you play alone," Jessie told Tim in a tone that left no room for argument.

Josh gulped. He did not want to be the reason that Tim had to play alone. Tim looked sad at the very thought of playing alone. Josh could play alone. He was use to that, and he had the dogs and cats now. The baby could play with them and be fine.

Tim pouted but walked over to where his sister and the baby were. The baby was still in his uncle's lap. Cuddling. That was something that just Tim and Sammie got to do. A random baby should not be able to do that.

"I'm going to be right in the kitchen, Baby Boy, okay," Matt told the baby. The baby nodded.

Matt kissed the top of the baby's head, "good boy," the man praised.

Josh watched as Matt and Jessie walked into the kitchen before turning his attention back to the other littles.

"What do you like to do, Josh?" Sammie asked.

"I yike..." Josh was about to say play with the animals or build with his blocks or color, but he did not get the chance to when Tim snatched the blue pacifier he had in his mouth out. Josh let out a high pitched whine and reached for the pacifier. Matt gave him that pacifier. It was the baby's. Not Tim's.

"Hey, don't be mean," Sammie told Tim, taking the pacifier away and giving it back to the baby. Much like their Mommy had done earlier with the cat wand.

Tim glared at his sister and said, "I can't understand him."

"I can understand him just fine..."

"Kids, are we arguing?" Jessie asked from her place at the stove, looking into the living room.

"No Mama," the two older littles lied.

Jessie nodded, turning her attention back to the pot.

Sammie looked around the room. The baby did not look like he wanted to talk anymore. She saw that there was a table with a bunch of markers and crayons and colored pencils and coloring books. That would be something that they could all do together. And Tim should not get the chance to pick on Josh anymore. Hopefully.

"Do you like to color, Josh?" Sammie asked the baby.

The baby's eyes lit up, happy that the girl wanted to still include Josh in play. Josh nodded to answer the girl's question and crawled over to the table. The other littles walked, Tim not looking too happy about it but not complaining.

As soon as they got to the table Josh saw the doll that he colored for Jessie. The baby had forgotten about that. He needed to give it to Jessie!

The baby crawled into the kitchen with Sammie following right behind him, asking where he was
going. Josh ignored her for a minute going up to Jessie and gently pulled on one of her pant legs. Used to having her clothing pulled on she looked down and smiled at the baby. She keeled down.

"What's up, Joshy?" Jessie asked.

Josh sat on his bottom and held up the picture to Jessie, "fow 'oo," the baby said shyly.

Jessie took the coloring from the baby and studied it. It was beautiful.

"Beautiful, Sweetheart," she said, pulling the boy in for a hug and kissing the top of his head.

Sammie felt a pang of jealousy and keeled down to hug her Mommy too. Jessie kissed her little girl then told them both to go play.

"You got a sweet little boy there, Matt," Jessie said, looking over at the man who was tearing up some herds to put in the mac and cheese and who had a large smile on his face.

"Yeah, I'm lucky," Matt said, and he ment that. It was not everyday you met such a well behaved little. Though there was a part of him that wished that the little boy would throw a tantrum over nothing. Just to prove that he could. (The whole punching incident does not count).

"You're thinking something, Webb, spill it," Jessie demanded putting one of her hands on her hip.

"It's just... I feel so bad for him, ya know. He has gone through so much, and," Matt sighed, "I don't know. He didn't deserve it."

"Yeah, no one deserves what Josh went through," the woman agreed. For the past few nights she had found it hard to sleep, knowing what the little boy in the other room went through by the hands of his own parents. It was sickening.

"Josh had a caregiver before everything. A good one," Matt said.

"What happened?"

"He died," Matt said with emotion leaking into his tone.

"Oh my God, does Josh know?"

"Yeah," Matt nodded sadly, "his grieving."

There was a slight pause in the conversation as Jessie brought the pot of cooked noodles to the sink and dumped them into a strainer.

"I have a number to a therapist that work with littles. I can give you her number if you want?" Jessie offered, already making a move to go to her purse.

"Yeah, I've been looking into therapy for Josh," Matt took the offered card and put it in his back pocket, "thanks. I'll call tomorrow."

"What's going to happen with Josh's parents?" Jessie asked.

"Oh," Matt smirked a slightly evil one, "they have a whole laundry list of charges. Kidnapping, abuse, endangerment of a little, prostitution, so on. They should go away for a while even if they plead guilty."

Matt prayed to whatever God was up there that Josh's parents would plead guilty. Josh did not need
to go through a trail. The poor baby had been through enough at the hands of those monsters.

There was a sudden shout that came from the living room. Both Jessie and Matt went in to see what was going on. When they got in they noticed that everything seemed fine, but the littles' body language said that something was wrong.

"What's going on?"

"Josh's hogging the red!" Tim shouted and Josh winced at the loud voice, "he needs to share!" Josh did not know that the other boy wanted the red. The baby would have given him the red if he knew. Josh curled up a little more on himself. Sorry

Jessie went to set next to her little and Matt sat next to Josh who was curled up into himself from being yelled at. Matt wrapped an arm around the baby and was about to tell Josh that he did need to share, but Jessie asked-

"Tim, calm down. Did you ask Josh if you could have the red or did you look around for another red," as she looked for the red that Josh had in his hand. She found one right away. "Here's one."

"It's not the same," Tim whined, "and I did ask, he won't gimme it."

"No you didn't," Sammie jumped in, tired of her brother being mean to Josh, "you took it out of his hand and scared him, that's why he yelled."

"Tim, I told you not to do that," Jessie scolded, "and you lied to me to try and get Josh in trouble. Is that right?"

"Yes Mama," Tim muttered, looking down at his lap and angry that he got caught.

"Timeout, five minutes," Jessie ordered.

"But..."

"No buts."

Tim went to face the corner with tears in his eyes. He did not know why he was treating the baby bad. He was just... mad and scared. He was scared that the baby ment that his Uncle Matt would not pay attention to them anymore or love them. His Mommy seemed to really like the baby too. What if she liked the baby too much and forgot about him. Tim didn't want that. Tears started to stream down he face and he sniffled.

"We are going to cook the rest of super, okay? You guys play nice."

...

Later that night, Matt stretched out on the couch. He just read Josh he bed time story and sang a little bit to him and the baby was finally asleep.

Today had been better than he had hoped. Yes, there was a little bit of trouble with Tim, but Jessie was going to talk to him about that when they got home and hopefully they would get it straightened out. Sammie and Josh got along together nicely and Matt could tell that the two enjoyed being around each other.

All of his animals adored Josh, especially Bennie. After Matt tickled Josh Bennie did not leave his side. From Josh playing with the cats, to coloring, to playing Candy Land, to dinner, to the movie
Bennie did not leave the baby's side. Even now, she was in his room watching over him as he sleeps. Josh adored his animals too, but there seemed to be a connection between Bennie and Josh. That would probably be a good way to get Josh out of the house if that became a problem. Josh would love to take Bennie and Fred out for walks.

All and all, Matt could not have asked for a better day.

Matt was brought out of his thoughts when his phone rang. He saw that it was Mike and answered it. A sick feeling in the pit of his stomach.

"Webb."

There was no joke about how he must never look at his caller ID or Mike saying that he already knew Matt's name. This was not a personal call to chat about how the day went, and since Matt was off for three months it was not about a case. At least not a new one.

"The Ramsay's are pleading innocent."

Chapter End Notes

Does this count as a cliffhanger I don't know, I don't think so.
next chapter will start with this conversation and kind of bounce around a little, so be prepared for that.
As always I would love any and all suggestions that you guys have.
See you all next time.
<3
*I feel like I need to clarify that this is an actual haircut. Sorry if you knew that and I just became really annoying.
Chapter Summary

Matt has a bunch of conversations and the next morning he takes the baby to the park.

Chapter Notes

Originally this chapter jumped around a lot more, but I was able to condense it more and here is that result.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Matt felt his eyes widen in horror as it felt like his heart stopped. The Ramsays' are pleading not guilty. Josh is going to have to go to trial and face his parents all over again. The baby is going to have to relive everything and have his turmoil questioned before a jury.

"Matt?" Mike asked when he did not hear his friend say anything for a while, "you still there?"

"Yeah," Matt shook his head and forced himself to breathe. He needed to keep on a straight head. For Josh.

"Yeah, I'm here."

"They are going to have a bail hearing Wednesday," Mike informed.

"Okay," Matt nodded, wanting some more information.

"Do you still have that lawyer friend?"

"Yeah, I'll call after we hang up," Matt told the other man.

"Just so you know, the mother wants to see Josh," Mike said.

Matt paused, having to process what Mike just said. Corlynn Ramsay wants to see her son. The son that she held captive and abused and let other people abuse for eight years, and she thought that the very people who rescued him and was now taking care of him would let her see him — no way.

"That's not going to happen," Matt said.

"I thought that you would say that. She's saying that it's the only way she'll plead guilty and testify against Miles," Mike informed.

"They'll be found guilty with or without her," Matt declared, hating that it would mean that his baby boy had to testify.

"If you were only this sure of getting Josh," Mike said to try and lighten the mood slightly. Matt gave a small chuckle and rolled his eyes.
"Okay, Buddy, I gotta go," Mike said before remembering something, "oh one other thing, did you know that Corlynn has Lewy Body Dementia?"

"No," Matt answered, "when was she diagnosed?"

"A few months ago, I think."

"Okay," Matt nodded, "thanks Mike, for everything."

"Your welcome," Mike smiled, "I'll try and stop by withing the next few days."

"Yeah, see you then," Matt ended the phone call then sat back into the couch with a sigh. He needed a moment to process all of the new information, but he also really needed to talk to someone. The man looked at the clock. It was only 8:30, but Jessie was probably in the middle of putting Tim and Sammie to bed, so he did not want to interrupt her. Matt thought about who he could call for a minute before the right person entered his mind. Plus, she would love to hear that she has a grandson now.

"Hey, Mom," Matt said when his mom answered her phone.

"Hello, Matt, why are you calling so late? Did something happen?" she asked, concern in her tone.

"No nothing happens, but I have something to tell you."

"I'm listening," his mom assured.

Matt told his mom everything. From rescuing Josh to staying with him in the medical wing of RCMP to getting his house ready for the baby to bring him home and how Josh and Matt's animals love each other. Everything.

There was a pause in the conversation, where his mother must have been processing everything that Matt had just told her.

"I have a grandson?" his mom asked.

Matt smiled, "yeah."

"When can your father and I meet him?"

"You can come over tomorrow," Matt offered his mother, knowing that his mom and dad would want to meet Josh as soon as possible and that Josh would love his parents.

"We'll come over at one," his mom told him.

"Okay, I can get his settled."

"You'll need to tell him about his mother and everything," his mom said.

"I know," Matt sighed, not looking forward to it at all. Josh would be terrified.

"See you tomorrow, Son," his mother told him.

"See you, Mom," Matt hung up the phone.

One more person to call.
"You need a favor?" his lawyer friend, Steven Dunn, asked.

"Hello to you too," Matt said, rolling his eyes.

"Hello, Webb," Dunn quickly said, "is this about your little's parents pleading innocent?"

"Yeah," Matt answered, not even questioning how his friend found out about everything.

"I'll defend you, my friend," Dunn said, "we need to meet Monday at noon to discuss the case and the bail hearing."

"Okay," Matt nodded.

"Goodbye, my friend," Dunn said, "get some sleep."

Matt hung up his phone for the last time that night.

...

At 8:00 the next morning, Matt walked into his baby's room and sat down next to the curled up figure on the bed. The man ran his fingers through the baby's hair to try and wake the baby up.

"Hey, Baby Boy," Matt whispered in Josh's ear, "it's time to wake up."

Josh whined in his sleep and suckled on his pacifier, squirming around and holding his monkey closer to his chest. Matt rubbed his back and shook him gently.

"C'mon, Baby Boy. It's time to wake up," Matt whispered in the baby's ear, "I have some breakfast ready. Do you wanna eat?"

"No," Josh whined with the shake of his head, "sweep, pwea'," Josh curled up a little further and closed his eyes tightly. He was still sleepy and just wanted to sleep.

Matt smiled, "c'mon, Baby. Do you wanna walk the doggies with Matty?" the man asked, trying to bribe the baby into waking.

"Yeah," Josh rolled over to his back to look at Matt. Walking the doggies sounded nice. He liked walking his Daddy's doggie. It was fun.

"Then we have to wake up, Baby Boy," Matt told him, brushing the baby's bangs from his eyes.

Josh sat up so that he could lean into Matt's side. Matt wrapped his arms around his baby and rubbed his back. The baby was still very sleepy but was slowly starting to wake up.

"Tay, 'atty," Josh said, rubbing his eyes rubbing his head against Matt's chest like a kitty.

Matt picked up the baby and laid him down onto the changing table to change the baby's wet diaper, and he continued to talk while he changed the baby, "today we are going to eat some breakfast. Then we are going to work on walking a little bit, remember that the doctor said that we need to work on walking a little, Baby Boy?" Josh nodded, rubbing his eyes, he remembered that the doctor told him that he needed to try and walk, "then we could go walk the dogs for a while, I have a comfy stroller for you, and you can hold Bennie's leash if you want to. We could stop by the dog park if you wanna. Then we can come back home and get a snack and play some. Then there are some people that are going to come over, and then we will play it by ear."

"Who comin' ovew?" the baby asked, looking up at Matt.
"My parents," Matt answered.

"'atty pawents," Josh repeated after Matt.

"Yep, I talked with my mom last night, and she is very excited to meet you. They are gonna spoil you rotten," Matt smiled down at the baby who smiled back up. He was excited to meet Matt's parents. All of the adults that Matt had introduced to him had been nice, and he could not wait to meet more.

"But first we have to get you dressed," Matt told the baby, taking off his dirty sleeper and putting it in the hamper next to the changing table. Picking out two outfits for the baby to choose from seemed to work great yesterday, so Matt selected two outfits and showed them to the baby.

Josh studied the outfits carefully from where he was laying down of the changing table, "baby beaw," the baby said, pointing at the desired onesie and pants. The onesie was grey and had the words "Baby Bear" written in bold, black, cursive letters with a black walking bear on top of the words. The sweatpants were navy blue in color and looked very soft.

Matt quickly dressed the baby and picked him up, but before the man could carry him to the kitchen where Matt already had eggs mixed with sausage ready for the baby, Josh said, "badge," while pointing to his chest.

"Right here Baby Bear," Matt smiled as he put the badge that Ian gave to his baby around Josh's neck. The baby loved it, and Matt was only able to take it off the previous night when the baby went to sleep.

"Ready to go eat?" Matt asked.

"Yeah."

"C'mon, Ben, you need to eat too," Matt told his dog, who had been watching from the bed the whole time that Matt was changing the baby. Bennie jumped off the bed and walked next to her master and boy. Once they all got into the kitchen, Bennie rushed over to her food bowl that Matt had filled before he went to wake up the baby, and one that, thankfully, Fred did not try and eat out of.

Matt put the baby down on one of the kitchen table chairs, "let's eat, Baby Boy," the man ordered, picking up the fork with some egg and sausage. Josh opened his mouth and ate the food. The baby hummed in pleasure as soon as the egg and sausage hit his tongue. Matt was an excellent cook. All the food that he cooked for the baby was much better than whatever the medical wing fed him.

"'ood 'atty," Josh complimented the man.

"Thank you, Baby Boy," Matt smiled at the baby.

The baby ate the rest of his food in silence. The baby then noticed that Matt did not eat anything. It was the baby's job to make sure that Matt took care of himself. Ian said so.

"'atty eat?" Josh asked with a pout.

"Don't worry, Baby Boy," Matt assured, running a hand through the baby's hair, "I ate before I woke you up, Baby."

"tay, 'atty" Josh nodded.
"Do you want to try and walk some?" Matt asked, "we just have to walk to the storage room to get the stroller so we can take the dogs on a W-A-L-K," Matt finished spelling out 'walk' so that the dogs did not hear and get too excited.

Josh squirmed a little, nervous. He knew that Matt wanted him to walk and so did the doctor, but he had not been allowed to walk in so long. The baby was not sure if he could. The baby did not want to fall if he was too weak to walk.

Matt seemed to read the baby's mind as he said, "I'll hold onto you, Baby Boy," while rubbing his back with on hand and pressing a pacifier against his lips with the other.

Josh took the pacifier into his mouth and suckled on it, nervously. Matt stood up in front of the baby and held his hands out for the baby to take. Josh hesitated a moment, looking up at Matt. The baby decided to trust the man and took his hands.

"You're going to be okay, Baby Boy," Matt assured the baby with a small smile, happy that the baby trusted him, "I got you."

The baby nodded, both in response to what the man said and in consent to be lifted up to his feet.

"Up we go, Baby Boy," Matt said, helping the baby to his feet.

Josh whined as his knees buckled slightly. He looked up at Matt with fear in his eyes, scared to fall. Matt held onto the baby's hands a little tighter he said-

"It's okay, Baby. Get you're footing. You're okay, Baby Boy," Matt continued to whisper soothing words to the baby as he got a little steadier on his feet. Josh nodded, more to himself than to Matt as he held onto Matt's hands. The baby knew that he would bite his lip if he did not have a pacifier in his mouth, so he sucked on his pacifier a little harder.

"Okay, take a step, Baby Boy," Matt said. The man took one step back and pulled gently at the baby's arms. The baby whimpered and hunched into himself slightly. Bennie sensed the baby's distress and walked over to the baby's side. Bennie bumped the back Josh's leg with her head lightly as if to encourage the baby to take a step forward.

The baby breathed in and out slowly for a second, assured by Matt's warm hands in his and Bennie being there. He slowly lifted his right foot and put it in front of him. He looked up at Matt who was smiling at him, and the baby did the same with his left foot.

"Good job, Baby Boy," Matt praised with a big smile, proud of his baby, "let's take another step," the man stepped back and pulled the baby to walk toward him, Bennie following to encourage the baby as well.

The slow walk continued until they were to Matt's storage room at the other end of the house. Once they were there, Matt engulfed the baby in a hug.

"Good job, Baby Boy. Such a good job. Such a good boy, Baby," Matt praised the baby, scratching the back of the baby's head and rubbing his back. The baby buried his face in the man's chest and hugged the man back. He smiled at Matt's praise, happy that the man was proud of him.

"Wove 'oo, 'atty," Josh said, holding onto Matt a little tighter.

Matt felt his heart explode with happiness. Matt knew that Josh loved him, it showed in the way that the baby loved to cuddle with him and went to Matt whenever he was upset or scared and in the way that the baby trusted, but it was the first time that the baby said it out loud.
"Love you too, Baby Boy," Matt responded with affection clear in his tone, "love you too."

Matt lifted the baby onto his hip and opened the door to the storage room to get the stroller for the baby. The stroller was blue with a canopy to protect the baby from the sun and also to hide the baby a little but also to let the baby still look around. There was a reclining seat with a five-point safety harness. There was a storage compartment for a diaper bag or other things and a footrest for Josh right above the wheels.

"You want to take the dogs for a walk?" Matt asked as he left the storage room pushing the stroller with one hand and still holding under the baby's bum with the other arm.

Josh nodded with a small smile. He wanted to take the doggies for a walk ever since Matt told him earlier that morning. He wanted to hold Bennie's leash as Matt said.

"Let's go then."

Matt put the baby in his jacket before putting him in the stroller and buckling him in. The man grabbed the diaper bag with diapers, changing essentials, a sippy cup, bottle of water, pacifiers, small toys, a snack for the baby, and an extra change of clothes just in case and put the diaper bag in the bottom of the stroller. He retrieved the leashes telling Bennie and Fred to come. The dogs barked excitedly, running over to Matt and jumping up.

"Calm down," Matt said as Josh, who had been watching Matt's every move from his place in the stroller, giggled. Matt smiled as well as he put the leashes on his dogs and grabbed a sippy cup full of apple juice to hand to the baby.

"Let's go, guys," Matt said, ruffling the baby's hair before walking toward the front door and walking out.

...

Halfway to the dog park with Josh holding onto Bennie's leash Matt leaned over to look at the baby in the stroller. Josh smiled, giggling and waving at Matt.

"Hi," Josh smiled.

"Hello, Baby Boy," Matt said back, smiling so big that his eyes crinkled, "enjoying it?"

"Yeah," Josh nodded with a small clap.

"Do you want to stop by the park for a little while and play with the doggies?"

"Pwea?" Josh said with a small smile and showing big puppy dog eyes.

Matt smiled with a small chuckle. His baby was already learning how to do puppy dog eyes, and Matt knew that he would never be able to say no if it was used against him in any other circumstances.

A few minutes later, they arrived at the dog park. There was not many other people or dogs there, and Matt supposed that it was a small blessing. The man did not want the baby to get overwhelmed on his first real outing with Matt, especially when it was already going so well.

"Uhh, 'a-atty," Josh asked when they stopped next to a bench, and Matt took off the dogs' leashes with a "be free!"
"Yeah, Baby Boy?" Matt asked.

"Out 'a pway wif doggies?" the baby asked in the sweetest voice ever.

"One second, Baby Boy," Matt told him, "I have to lay down a blankie so that you can sit down on it okay."

Josh nodded, waiting patiently as Matt laid down a thin blanket to protect him from the ground. When Matt got done with the blanket, Josh opened up his arms to ask once again to be let out. He wanted to play with the doggies.

"Okay, Baby Boy." Matt said, unbuckling the baby and picking him up and putting him on the blanket, "watch this, Joshy," Matt instructed, and the baby listened and watched as Matt pulled a ball out of the diaper bag. As soon as Bennie and Fred saw the bright red object, they stopped their play fighting and ran over to Matt. The man smiled as he threw the ball as hard as his arm would allow. They both chased the ball, but Bennie was much faster than Fred and reached it before him and picked it up with her mouth. She ran back over to where the baby was watching them with a big smile behind his pacifier. She dropped the ball on his lap. Bennie then sat down and watched as the baby picked up the ball, wagging her tail waiting for him to throw it. Fred was still some ways away, knowing that he could not outrun the bigger dog, but that he could still get the ball if he stayed further out.

Josh looked up at Matt, silently asking the man who was sitting on the bench what he should do.

"Throw it, Baby Boy," Matt answered the unspoken question, " as I did."

Josh nodded, throwing the ball and giggling as Bennie ran after it. Josh could not throw as hard as Matt could, but he threw it far enough so that Fred could reach it before Bennie and bring it back to Josh. Fred wanted to hold on to the toy, though and Josh had to play a game of tug of war with the small dog to get it back so that he could throw it again.

The game continued on much like this for a while. Bennie was getting the ball most of the time and bringing it back to Josh and laying it in the baby's lap, and Fred was getting the ball sometimes but making the baby fight to get it back.

Matt for his part stayed on the bench and watched as his dogs and baby played. He was extremally happy that his baby was having fun. He had been slightly nervous that the baby would get overwhelmed going out of the house, but Matt needed to try to get him out of the house. It would not be healthy for the baby to be inside the house constantly.

Matt chuckled as Fred jumped on the baby and licked his face when Josh would not throw the ball. The baby giggled and wiped the puppy slobber off of his cheek.

"Fwed," Josh giggled, once again throwing the ball as hard as he could.

Matt ruffled the baby's hair, affectionately. The baby leaned into the man's legs and said-

"Hi, 'atty."

"Hi, Baby Boy," Matt said, running his fingers through the baby's hair, "having fun."

"Pway wif doggies," Josh said, pointing at Fred and Bennie as they ran back to the baby.

"I can see that," Matt smiled.
As the game continued between the baby and the dogs, Matt saw a woman out of the corner of his eyes. She was approaching him and Josh with an almost supercilious demeanor about her. The woman's attitude caused Matt to sit up a little straighter and move over to shield Josh slightly. Matt wracked his brain, trying to think if he had ever seen her before. Maybe she was a part of a case? The man did not know. He could not place her.

"Excuse me," the woman said with a snobby tone of voice.

Josh, thankfully, was still playing with the dogs and not paying attention to the woman. Matt for his part looked up at the woman who his know noticed had a scowl on her face.

"Hello," he said in the most innocent tone that he could. Josh now looked up at Matt, wondering who the man was saying hi to. The baby followed Matt's line of sight to see a very mean looking woman. Josh huddled into himself and leaned into Matt's legs. The doggies came back with Bennie holding the ball in her mouth. Bennie sensed the baby's distress, so she dropped the ball in the baby's lap and pushed the baby's hand to try and distract Josh while Matt dealt with the woman. Thankfully it worked, and the baby picked up the ball and threw it.

"Just so you know, I don't like with this lifestyle," she said with a snarky tone looking and point down at the baby. The baby, whose attention had been diverted by Bennie, looked back up at the woman with fear in his eyes. Anyone who had said something like that to him had hurt him. His parents hurt him a lot and let others beat him. This woman could hurt him. He curled in on himself. He did not want to be hurt. Matty, don't let this woman hurt him. Matty had to protect him against this woman, right. The man never let the doctor or nurse hurt him, and he took the baby away from his parents and said that no one would ever hurt him again. He would not let this woman hurt him. Please.

Matt furled his brows. He did not know what the woman wanted to accomplish by saying that. She may have wanted to upset him, but he honestly did not care. All he cared about was that the woman's words obviously upset his baby.

Matt shook his head with a "cool," and turned his attention back to the baby. The man ran his hand through the baby's hair to try and comfort the poor baby. Matt saw out of the corner of his eyes that the woman looked appalled. Matt could not help but smirk, knowing that his dismissal of the woman was upsetting her. He scoffed in his head. Serves her right for upsetting his baby. To make the woman angrier, Matt bent over to kiss the top for the baby's head.

"Keep playing with the pups, Baby Boy," Matt encouraged, picking up the ball and handing to Josh. The baby gave Matt a small, shy smile and gently threw the ball, not with the same enthusiasm as he had all throughout the game, but the result was the same. Bennie and Fred ran after the ball, barking at each other, each trying to get the ball before the other.

The woman seemed to finally get it through her head that she was not going to make the pair mad or whatever her ending goal was in approaching them and walked off with the same condescending air that she had when she approached him.

Knowing that his baby was still a little upset by the woman Matt sat down next to the baby and rubbed his back.

"Don't listen to people like that," Matt pointed to the direction that the woman walked away, "they don't know anything, okay Baby."

"Why she do it?" Josh asked, looking up at Matt with sad eyes.
"I don't know, Baby Boy," Matt shrugged, trying to think of a way that he could explain why the woman did what she did to the baby without upsetting him further and in a way that the baby would understand, "some people... they just want to make people sad, but you can't let them make you sad, okay?"

"'tay, 'atty," Josh nodded, forcing himself to smile at the man. It came out as more of a grimace.

Matt smiled back and tickled the baby's side, hoping that playing with the baby and play with him would take his mind off of the woman. His baby did not deserve to be upset by the woman's words. The baby giggled and squirmed away from the man attacking him with tickles. Josh shook his head-

"Naw, 'atty," the baby said, "naw ticka."

"Oh, you love being tickled," Matt argued, bringing the baby closer in order to tickle his tummy.

"Naw I don'," Josh giggled out.

Bennie must have realized that tickles did not hurt the baby and jumped on the baby with Fred, licking the baby. The pups jumping on him and licking him caused the baby to giggle harder and try and squirm away from his attackers.

"Naw mowe!" the baby shouted, "naw mowe, 'atty!"

"Okay, okay," Matt helped his baby sit up and made the dogs get off of him, satisfied that the baby was no longer sad and that he forgot about the rude woman.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter, Matt will tell Josh about the parents and we will meet Matt's parents. I thought that all of that would be too much for this chapter.
Life Lost... and found CH 12

Chapter Summary

Matt tells Josh about his parents.

Chapter Notes

This chapter took me so long to write. I don't like making the baby sad. =,( See the end of the chapter for more notes

After walking the dogs, Matt and Josh were on the couch watching a show that Matt noticed that Josh liked. Josh had his diaper changed and a snack. He was now cuddled into Matt's side with Bennie laying by the baby's feet with her head on top of his ankles. The baby was trying his best to keep his eyes open so that he could watch the show that Matt had put on for him, but he had done so much that day, and the baby was tired. Matt's hand in his hair was not helping the baby stay awake at all, and neither was Abu in his arms or Bennie by his feet, but Josh was not about to complain about that. The baby liked it way too much.

Matt for his part was thinking a little too hard for his own good. He knew that he needed to tell the baby about his parents and that they needed to get ready for the trial. Matt at least needs to get the baby prepared for the meeting that they were going to have with Steven Dunn tomorrow. But the man did not want to shatter the perfect moment that his baby was having, especially not when Josh looked like he was about to fall asleep at any moment and not when the baby seemed so comfortable. At the same time, the meeting with Steven was tomorrow afternoon. There was no way that Matt could tell Josh about his parents right before the meeting, there would never be enough time for that tomorrow. Josh was going to be so scared, and Matt hated that. Hated that he was going to have to tell the baby something that would scare him, but there was no way around telling the baby. He had to. No matter how scared it would make the baby.

Matt gave a small sigh he had to tell the baby now. He shook the baby a little to wake him out of his doze. Josh whined a little, rubbing his eyes looking up at Matt, wondering why the man shook him out of sleep. He was so close to falling asleep. All the baby wanted to do was cuddle with Matt and go to sleep, but Matt looked like he wanted to tell him something.

"Hey Baby," Matt said with a sad tone in his voice. Bennie lifted her head looking up at her master, cocking her head to the left as if she was asking why he was waking up the baby and what was wrong at the same time.

"’atty sad," Josh told the other man pushing back so that he was on his knees and looking at the man, "why sad," the baby did not want the man to be sad.

Matt sighed looking down for a second before looking his baby, "I-uh I need to tell you something, Baby Boy."

Josh cocked his head to the right and hummed in question. Now fully awake. Whatever Matt needed
to tell him had to be very important if he pulled Josh out of his doze, and Matt's voice sounded serious and sad at the same time. Josh needed to pay attention.

"Your parents," Matt began and felt like someone had punched him in the gut when he felt Josh squirm and saw his eye widen in fear just at the mention of his parents. Sensing the baby's fear, Bennie jumped off of the couch so that she could lay her head on the baby's knees, offering the baby support.

"They are pleading innocent to all the things they did to you."

"Wh-what?" Josh stammered as tears came to his eyes. He knew what that meant. It meant that they would have a trial. Did that mean that he would have to get up and testify against his parents? Josh did not know what that could entail, and he did not really want to know. He did not want to do that. The baby never wanted to see his parents again. Never! Matty don't make him.

Rip it off like a band-aid Matt told himself, "you will have to testify, Baby," Matt told him, stroking the boy's cheek as more tears gathered in his eyes. "That means that you will have to tell a lot of people what happened while you with your parents, and you will have to answer questions about it," tiny sobs started to escape Josh's mouth, and he shook his head. He did not want to do anything that Matt just told him. That sounded like too much; it sounded too scary. He did not want to. Matty, don't make him. Matty had to, please.

Bennie whined when she heard her boy sob. She moved her head and pushed the baby's hand to encourage the baby to pet her. He did while Matt started to speak to him to try and calm him.

"I know, Baby," Matt said in a comforting voice, running his right hand through the baby's hair, "I know, come here."

Josh practically jumped into Matt's arms and cried into the man's chest, nearly in the man's lap. He curled up as much as he could and clung a little tighter to his monkey with one hand while clinging to Matt's shirt with the other. He brought his fingers to his mouth and sucked. Matt rubbed the baby's back and scratched his scalp trying his best to calm his baby as much as he could.

"Everything's going to be okay, Baby Boy," Matt told the baby in a soothing voice, "I will not leave you, okay, Baby. Your parents will never ever hurt you ever again. I will not let anyone hurt you, okay, Baby Boy. Calm down, Baby Boy. Everything will be okay."

"Don' w-wanna do it," Josh sniffled when he was able to calm down slightly. The baby pulled back slightly and looked up at Matt with tearful eyes. The baby continued to pet Bennie, welcoming her comforting presence as well as Matt's.

"Don' make do it, 'atty," Josh sniffled, resting his head down on the man's chest. Bennie whimpered moving closer to the baby. She hated that the baby was sad.

"I know Baby, I know you don't want to do it, Sweet Boy" Matt ran his fingers through the baby hair, "I am so sorry that you have to, but it's the only way that your parents will go to jail."

"Only way?" Josh repeated. He wanted his parents to go to jail, they deserved it, and it was the only way that they would never be able to get to him and hurt him. At least for a few years. Hopefully forever.

Matt pulled back so that he could look at the baby in the eyes "Yeah, Baby Boy, and they will go away for a long, long time if you testify," the man promised him, and they would. Matt had already gone through all of the charges in his head a few times (more than a few times). If everything went
Josh and Matt's way, and Matt had every reason to believe that it would, they would both be in jail for thirty years minimum. Hopefully, that would be for the rest of their lives.

"'m scaw'," Josh whimpered, lowering his head as if he was embarrassed to admit it.

"It's okay, Baby Boy," Matt said, stroking the baby's cheek to wipe away the remainder of the baby's tears, and the man wrapped the baby in a tight hug that he never wanted to let the baby out of, "it's okay to be scared, Baby Boy. I would honestly be more concerned about you if you were not scared, and I will not lie to you my Sweet Boy, it will not be easy. You will have to be brave for the trail. Can you do that, Baby Boy? Can you be brave for Matty?"

Josh thought about that for a second. He was not too sure how brave he could be. The baby was too scared. God, he was so afraid. He felt like he was going to throw up at just the thought of testifying against his parents. It was not really testifying against them that frightened the baby. He could tell people what they did to him. He was not too scared of that (not that it did not scare him a little bit). Not so afraid that he felt like he was going to cry or throw up. No, testifying against his parents did not make him want to hide in a corner for days. He knew what his parents did was wrong and that they needed to be punished. He was not too scared of telling people what his parents did to him. He was afraid (no terrified) that he was going to see his parents again. He was going to see them, and there was nothing that he or Matt could do about that. The baby did not want to see them again. That scared him, and the baby was not sure if he could do it. Josh did not know if he could handle that. But it was the only way that they were going to get what they deserved. Josh thought that he might be able to see his parents again if the end result was that his parents would be in jail.

Josh whimpered as he nodded and said, "tay, 'atty," in a very small voice, "c'n do it."

"Good boy," Matt praised, "such a good, brave boy," the man rubbed the baby's back and held the baby tight. The baby held the man back rubbing his face against the man's chest much like a cat and yawed. He was now even more sleepy after his crying fit, and no matter how scared he was at the prospect of seeing his parents Matt always made him feel safe and warm. He loved his Matty.

Matt could not help but smile and rested his head on the baby's head, "everything's going to be okay, Sweet Boy. Take a nap for a little bit. We'll talk about it after you wake up."

Josh forced himself to open his eyes and stay awake, "t-talk now," Josh asked him. He did not want to go to sleep without Matt telling him everything. He would not be able to sleep if Matt did not tell him, the baby would think about it too much to sleep.

"How about you sleep for a little bit, Baby," the baby needed to sleep. He was tired, and it was past his nap time. If the baby stayed up for too much longer, the baby would not be able to take a nap without risking messing up his sleeping schedule. The man did not want the baby to be cranky when his parents were coming over in just under an hour.

"N-no able," Josh whined, "pwea'," Josh begged the man, giving his best puppy dog look.

Matt sighed, "all that you need to know is that we are going to see my lawyer friend tomorrow right after your nap," the man told the baby, "the rest we will talk about during the meeting. Now go to sleep, please."

"Gotta be big?" Josh asked. The way that Matt said that made it sound like the baby needed to be a big boy for it. Not that Josh wanted to, but he would. If Matt needed him.

"Not if you don't want to," Matt told the baby, knowing that it would be much better if Josh could be big for the meeting tomorrow and trail. Matt wondered what big Josh was like, how he would react
to Matt and if that side of Josh would even remember anything that happened to him.

"Now it's nap time, and I mean it, Josh," Matt ordered as he reached over to the coffee table to one of Josh's pacifiers, "go to sleep."

Matt moved so that he was laying down with the baby mostly on top of him. The man knows that there was no way that the baby would want to sleep alone. Not after everything that the man told him.

Josh finally closed his eyes. It took a few minutes, with his thoughts running about the trail and his parents. But he eventually gave into sleep with Matt rubbing his back, Bennie next now on the couch by his feet and the show playing in the background.

...

Matt jumped as he heard the doorbell ring about forty-five minutes after the baby fell asleep. He looked down at the baby who thankfully did not stir. Frank jumped up and growled a little bit (what did the feisty little dog think that he could do if a stranger broke in), and Bennie looked up but neither barked for once. Both must know that the baby needs his rest.

Matt was able to get up to his feet, but as soon as he did, the baby realized that there was no one beside him, and he whimpered and whined in his sleep. Moving around as if looking for Matt. Matt stroked the baby's head and shushed him. His baby calmed down right away, and Matt smiled a little, the door forgotten about until they knocked again.

Matt rushed over to the door and opened it to reveal his extremely excited looking mother and father. Who could blame them? They finally had another grandbaby.

"He's sleeping," Matt warned his parents as he moved aside to let them in.

"Aww," his mom cooed as soon as she saw the baby, "he is precious."

Matt smiled as his mother brushed the baby's bangs out of his eyes. The man saw his father smile so big that the lines around his eyes became deeper. Matt was just able to hold in a chuckle. The baby already had his parents wrapped around his finger, and they had not even formally met yet.

We will get more of Matt's parents next chapter, then the lawyer in the chapter after that. After that I fall off a cliff and I do not know where to go. (in a small voice) help me.
"Aww," Matt's mom cooed, "he is precious," Matt's mother brushed the baby's bangs out of his eyes. Josh cooed in his sleep and turned over as if trying to get closer to Matt's mother.

After he got over the enormous amounts of joy that engulfed him as seeing his baby and his mom together, Matt was able to remember his manners and asked, "do you guys want something to drink or anything?"

"No," his mother answered while his father said "yes."

"Let me guess," Matt rubbed the stubble on his chin as if he really had to think about what his dad wanted to drink, "ice tea."

His father just smiled at his son with a small chuckle, nudging him as he passed to get the requested drink. Matt chuckled.

When Matt got back into the living room and gave his dad the iced tea, his mother asked him to tell them about Josh.

"God," Matt smiled as he sat down on the floor next to Josh's head, "where do I start?"

"What's his favorite thing to do?" his mom asked.

"Coloring," Matt answered immediately, "he could sit down and color for hours," Matt stood and went over to the table that Josh loved to color at and picked up a few of his colorings to show his parents.

"These are nice," his dad commented with a smile, "are you going to hand them on the fridge?"

"I have a few of them up," Matt told him, "but I think that he likes to keep a few of them with him just because he can," Matt explain, and it was true. Now that Josh knew that he had things and that he could keep said stuff to himself, he could be a little selfish when it came to a few things. Some of his colorings, Abu, and his blankies being a few of them. Matt did not mind this, as Josh seemed to love to share with Tim and Sammie, and he thought that it was good that Josh had some things that he was a little selfish about.

"He also loves the animals," Matt said, and Tux took this as the opportunity to make his presence
known and jumped into Matt's lap and looked over to the baby and made a move to jump onto him. Matt responded quickly, putting the cat down on the floor with a, "even when this one tries to wake him up," Tux looked up at Matt in a way that made Matt feel like the cat was challenging the man's authority. Which Matt, knowing his cat, knew that he was.

But Matt ignored the trouble maker and focused on Benny, who was asleep at the baby's feet, "she has become his guard dog."

"A sleepy guard dog," his mother smiled.

Matt chuckled, "she deserves a nap, trust me."

Matt continued to tell his parents about Josh. About how Josh would revert back to sign language when he was nervous or too excited to speak, and how Matt found it adorable unless the reversion was because the baby was upset. Matt told his parents about how much Josh seemed to love music, how Josh would sometimes request to listen to music instead of watching a T.V. show or movie. About how Matt could not sing him to sleep unless he also read the baby a bedtime story after because he would stay up to listen. How the baby would quietly sing along to whatever song that Matt put on when he thought that someone was looking, but he would sing as loud as he wanted when he thought no one was looking. Matt wanted to get on of those moments on camera because it was not only one of the most adorable things that Matt had heard but because Josh was a good singer. Matt told his parents that he did not know if Josh played any instruments but that he would not be surprised if he did because of how musically inclined the baby seemed to be.

"Even if he doesn't," his father told him, "you could teach him."

This was about the time that it took a turn for the worse.

Josh whimpered in his sleep, and his whole body went rigid. Matt reacted immediately, running his hand through the baby's hair. Josh whined again, shaking his head and trying to get away from Matt's hand in his hair and whatever was haunting his dream.

"Hey, Baby Boy," Matt whispered into the baby's ear, hand firmly but gently on the baby shoulder, not shaking because the man knew that it would only serve to upset the baby further.

Josh let out a little sob and curled up, "naw, naw," the baby whined.

"Shh, Joshy," Matt said, rubbing up and down his arm, "it's time to wake up right now, Baby."

Josh seemed to hear Matt, and he opened his eyes. It took Josh a second to realize that he was not in the room with a scary client. He was at home with Matt, and if he was home with Matt that meant that no one would hurt him. Matt promised that no one would hurt him as long as he was around, and Josh believed that. The baby trusted the man. And right now Josh really wanted Matt to hold him. The baby was scared because of the nightmare and needed it, so he did the only thing that he could do, he reached out to the man with a soft whine and tears in his eyes.

"C'mere, Baby Boy," Matt said pulling the baby to encourage him off of the couch and to his chest. Once the baby was off of the sofa, he curled into Matt as much as he could, almost in the man's lap, burying his face in the crook of Matt's neck, his favorite place to hide. It was dark and safe and smelled like Matt's cologne and detergent. Josh felt so secure that he was not able to hold back a small sob. He needed to get out all of his emotions. He was still scared of the dream.

"It's okay, Baby," Matt whispered in his ear, "let it out, Little One."

And let it out he did, he let out a big, open cry. He curled up a little further and suckling on the
pacifier that he still had in his mouth from when he fell asleep. Matt rocked him gently and ran the man his fingers through the baby's hair and patting his back.

"Misha," Josh cried once he was calm enough, "eh, eh, eh."

"Who's Misha, Baby?" Matt asked.

Josh whimpered and shook his head. He did not want to talk about it. Misha was one of the most confusing clients. Josh never knew how to behave around him. It terrified the baby.

"It's okay, Baby," Josh felt the man shift a little, and he said, "I'm going to change him."

Josh came out of his hiding stop a little bit when he heard affirmative responses to see that there were two other older people in the house. They had to be Matt's parents. Josh buried his face into Matt's chest as he stood up and walked him into his room. When the man laid him down on the changing table, Josh asked, "'atty pawents?"

"Yeah," Matt nodded, "my parents are in the living room."

Josh worried his shirt in between his fingers and made a fist to rub his chest. Sorry.

Matt paused mid unbuttoning his onesie and said, "you have nothing to be sorry about, Baby," while putting his hand on top of his hand he was apologizing with.

"I cwy," Josh said and squirmed, "I sowwy."

"Hey, Baby," Matt said, "it's okay to cry, you had a bad nightmare, it's okay, Baby Boy. It's not good to hold in all of those emotions. They have to get out somehow."

"'atty pawents," Josh whined, sniffling. Matt had to understand that it was bad for him to cry in front of people. People would get mad at him. They always did.

"My parents don't care, Baby," Matt reassured. They would be more concerned that the baby had a nightmare, and would want to comfort him as he cried. And they would have if Josh knew them better.

Josh whimpered, he did not like that the first impression that Matty's parents got of he was that he was a cry baby, it was not good, no matter how much the nightmare scared him. Josh shivered as he remembered it.

"Misha, eh, eh, eh," Josh mumbled more to himself than to Matt, tensing at the memory.

"What does that mean Baby Boy?" Matt asked, considered that Josh was repeating the phrase and that the man had no idea what he was talking about.

"Misha cwy," Josh said in a voice that was just above a whisper. And then Misha would get mad and hit the baby, and then he would be big people things to him that Josh hated and made Josh just want to go hide in a corner and cry forever.

Josh did not realize that he said all of this out loud until Matt pulled back up his pants and pulled him into a big hug. "I'm so sorry that happened, Baby Boy," Matt said with emotion in his tone, "I'll never let anything like that happen to you ever again, Baby Boy."

Josh hid back into the crook of Matty's neck and sighed. He trusted that Matty was never going to let anyone hurt him again. He knew that Matty would protect and love him just like his Daddy did.
Matty was just like his Daddy. And Josh loved that fact but also did not like it.

Once Josh was calm enough, Matt carried him back into the living room with the baby to introduce his to his parents.

"Hey, Baby Boy," Matt said and bounced the baby a way to try and get him to come out of his hiding spot. It worked but only a little. The baby peeked up at his parents, shyly and they both smiled in response. Thinking that it was adorable that the baby was so shy, but also worried that the baby woke up crying and hoping that the baby was okay now.

"Hello, Little Guy," Matt's father smiled at the shy little one, sitting next to his son on the couch, waving at the baby.

"Say hi," Matt encouraged after the baby did not make a move to say anything or move.

"Hi," Josh waved and leaned into Matt a little bit more.

"Aww, shy little guy," Matt father said, rubbing up and down the baby's arm.

"No need to be shy with Mawmaw and Pawpaw," Matt's mother told him.

Matt looked down so that he could see the baby's reaction to what his mom said and was not disappointed. The baby cocked his head and his face contorted into a look of slight confusion.

"Mawmaw? Pawpaw?" Josh asked.

"Yeah," Mawmaw reassured.

"You don't have to call us that if you don't want to," Pawpaw said.

Josh smiled, "Mawmaw Pawpaw," he liked the way that the titles flowed off of his tongue, "yike it."

The adults in the room chuckled at the baby. The baby squirmed shyly.

After a moment of silence, Josh looked up at Matt and asked, "c'n pway wif bwocks?"

Matt kissed the top of his head, "go ahead, Baby Boy," with a nod.

Josh squirmed off of the man's lap and crawled over to the blocks that he and Sammie got out of his room the previous day with Bennie on his heels. Matt unconsciously thought that he would have to tell Josh to put some of his toys back into his room and enforce the rule of picking up after himself, but yesterday he was too tired and too happy to have his baby home with him that he forgot about it.

Matt's father got up and went over to where Josh dumped out some of his blocks and sat down next to the baby enough though he knew that it would be hard for him to get up when he needed to.

"Hi -uh- P-Pawpaw," Josh stammered, subconsciously petting Bennie's back.

"Hey, Kiddo," Pawpaw smiled at the baby, "what are you building?"

"Yike castle," Josh told him, picking up an arced shaped block so that he could finish the wall of arched shaped blacks and long rectangular blocks, "Pawpaw help?" Josh asked in a sweet voice. Matt liked to help the baby build whatever he wanted to create with blocks, and the baby hoped that the man's father would be the same.
Pawpaw grinned and said, "I would love to, Little One," the older man picked up a triangular shaped block and put it on top of the longest regular block that Josh made apart of the wall. Josh smiled and put a short regular block on top of the wall. They continued to build the castle until it was complete. Pawpaw said that they needed a moat.

Josh turned to his Matty, who was talking to Mawmaw about something, "'atty," the baby asked.

"Yeah, Baby Boy," Matt asked once he was done telling Mawmaw whatever he needed to say to her.

"Need'a bwue bwankie, pwea," Josh said, politely.

"Why do you need a blue blankie?" Matt asked it was not rare for the baby to ask for a blankie, he loved them, but the baby usually did not request a specific color (he usually only asked for his monkey blankie or the papa blankie.)

"Uh, need'a moat," Josh explained to his Matty excitedly. He put his left-hand palm up and about to chest height and brought his right hand down to his left hand as if he was chopping something. Stop, "the bad guys."

Matt smiled at his baby and said, "you got it, Baby Boy."

"Fanks, 'atty," the baby said once the man brought him a blue blanket, "c'n, 'atty do it?" Josh asked giving the man his puppy dog eyes, pointing at the castle.

"Sure, Baby Boy," Matt put the blanket around the castle about three inches from the structure.

"How are the good guys going to get in?" Mawmaw asked from her place on the couch.

"Uh," Josh thought about that for a second. Mawmaw was right the good guys did need to be able to get in.

"A bwidge," Josh answered, "nd a boat."

"Can you build that for Mawmaw?" she asked.

"Yeah," Josh nodded, picking up a rectangular block that was taller than the blanket, and quickly built the bridge and the boat that he put in the blanket, "see Mawmaw? 'atty?"

"Yeah, we see, Baby Boy," Matt told him, "good job, Baby."

"Weave it up?" Josh asked his Matty.

"Of course you can, Baby," Matt said in a way that had it sound silly that there was any other option.

"Fanks, 'atty," Josh crawled over to the man and hugged his legs, "wove 'ou."

Matt smiled and rubbed the baby's back and said, "love you too, Baby Boy," back.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be with the lawyer and big Josh will make an appearance.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Big Josh is introduced.

Chapter Notes

I lied about the lawyer thing... I sowwy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The rest of the day had been fantastic. Pawpaw and Mawmaw continued to play with the baby, and they had lunch that Matt and his mother cooked.

It now the next morning and Matt was waking up to... a piano playing, in a one and two and three and four and pattern? That was not right the only other person in the house was Josh, and as far as Matt knew, Josh did not know how to play the piano. This was not just someone hitting notes on the piano to see how it sounded. It was a song that the person at the piano knew how to play and one that Matt recognized. Matt grabbed his gun out of his safe that was in his bedside table. The man pointed the gun down as if he was clearing a house. He walked slowly to the living room, noticing that Josh's room door was still closed.

One and two and three and four and. Now there was a one two three and four and rhythm on top of the original.

When Matt was finally able to turn the corner after what felt like a lifetime (when it was only about twenty seconds), and he saw that it was Josh at the piano, much to the young man's relief. Matt put his gun in the back of his pants, not wanting to scare the baby if he saw it.

Josh playing piano confirmed Matt's thought that he knew how to play an instrument but opened up a whole bunch of other questions about Josh. Why didn't he mention it? Why was he playing this specific song?

Matt decided to ignore the questions and focused on Josh playing. Matt did not know the name of the song that the boy was playing, but it seemed to mean much to Josh as Josh's whole body move skillfully across the piano. From what Matt could see and hear the boy's left hand was playing the first pattern and the notes where A, C#, F#, A that was repeated eight times before he switched the notes to B, D, F#, G and he switched every two measures. His right hand was playing different rhythms. With the first set of eighth notes, he played two quarter notes F# and A then there were six beats of rest. Josh then play the rhythm of and two and three and four and two and three and one, two with the notes B, D, B, A, B, D, B, A, D, B, F#, A. After that he played one two three and four and with the notes B, D,(high) B, (high) A, B, D and repeated it once before he played B, A in two quarter notes. All the while his left hand maintained steady with the rhythm and notes the support the top part. Josh then crossed his arm right over his left. His left hand retained the same pattern with his right hand followed the rhythm of his left hand and the notes where about seven notes down from the original notes. The song ended how it started lowered about a fifth*. 
Matt walked up to the boy before he could play anything different and so that the man could make his presence known as the boy did not seem to notice him yet.

"Hey Joshy," Matt whispered, trying not to scare Josh, but he jumped and removed his hands from the piano quickly as if he thought that he would get it trouble for playing. At the same time Anemone, who was on the piano where music usually went, meowed at Matt as if she wanted to get on to him because he made the boy stop playing.

"Hi," Josh whispered back, squirming, he placed his folded hands into his lap and looked down at them. He wondered for a second if Matt would be mad at him for playing his piano without permission. Matt had never said anything about it, not that he could remember, but after Josh got up and changed himself, got himself into a new (thinner) diaper and a shirt and a pair of jeans, he could not help it. Josh had not been able to play any instruments that he liked to play I so long, Matt also had a few guitars, but Josh was not going to risk playing that, he could not help it.

"I'm not mad, Baby," Matt said as if reading the boy's mind. He noticed that something was different about his baby. First off, he did not seem to be a baby at all, when Matt was able met the boy's eyes, they did not have the childlike spark that Matt had seen. His poster was different, straighter and much more distinctly adult with his legs crossed, left over right. The boy did not even have a pacifier, something that the baby would hardly go without. Josh was big.

Josh nodded as a way to respond to Matt's statement, and he relaxed, glad that Matt was not mad at him, but Josh could tell that the other man could tell that Matt knew that he was not little. Josh woke up feeling totally big. It was an odd feeling as he had not been big in a while. The last time he was big the first client of the day beat him until he slipped into little space out of necessity.

Josh ran his tongue right against the back of his teeth, and he shifted slightly, hoping that Matt would not be mean. The man was never mean to his little side. He was the exact opposite. He was nice, and he took care of him, and Josh was grateful for that. But being big and being little where very different.

Matt could see that the boy was still nervous, what about, he did not know. To try and make Josh feel a little bit better Matt asked, "did you eat yet," so that if he did not, Matt could get something. It was already 10, and Matt needed to make sure that both of them ate before went to meet with Matt's lawyer friend.

"No," Josh said, shaking his head, wondering if that was something that Matt wanted him to do himself, "I-I fed the animals," he told the man hoping that the man would be happy with that.

"Thanks," Matt smiled, "what do you want?" Josh shrugged, "okay, I'll get something."

"I-I can help," Josh offered.

Josh offering to help was not something that was new to Matt, the boy always wanted to help, and it was adorable to the man, but right now Matt thought that the boy might be wanting to help to get on the man's good side, which was not something that he needed to do, so Matt said, "you don't have to, Josh."

"I-I want to, Matt," Josh muttered, squirming around for a second, hoping that the man would let him help. Josh could take care of himself if he were big (even though he sometimes still wanted to be taken care of) and he could help cook. Josh wanted to prove that he could to Matt. The boy cared about Matt's opinion. Matt was his caregiver now. And even though Josh had no idea how he should act around him while, he wanted to get on the man's good side as soon as possible.
"Okay, Buddy," Matt said already walking into the kitchen, "c'mon, man."

Josh practically bounced up from the piano and stood at his full height. He was still slightly unsteady on his feet when he first woke up the boy had to get his footing, much like he did now, for a while before the boy took a step, but he was able to walk and get changed all by himself and walked to the living room. Right now he was able to walk into the kitchen right behind Matt.

"Bagels?" Matt asked.

"Sure," Josh responded, going to get the toaster when Matt asked. Matt went over to the stove to start the bacon and eggs.

"What fruit do you want?" Matt asked.

"Uh- strawberries, no I want an apple. No, I mean blueberries- no a kiwi," Josh could not decide. After too long of having no options when it came to food (anything really) it could be hard for him to choose even when it was something as simple as a side dish.

Matt chuckled at the boy, not surprised at all that the boy would have a hard time choosing what he wanted to eat, "how about a little fruit salad?"

"Yeah," Josh said, "can I make it?"

"Uh," Matt said, not sure if he should trust Josh with a knife that he would need to cut up the fruit, "okay, Buddy," he would have to watch him closely and make sure the bacon and eggs don't fry. That should be easy.

Josh got out the fruits (all the ones that he listed off, plus a banana) that he wanted in the salad, a cutting board, and a small knife.

"No bananas in mine," Matt reminded the boy, not sure what the boy remembered from being little and not wanting to go back to the hospital for a while. Sometimes when a little went from little to big or big to little, they tend not to remember some things, and he would rather not have any adverse reactions from the boy making something for him when he wanted to help.

Matt was expecting the boy to say something like 'okay' or 'sure' but what he was not expecting Josh to say, "don't want you going into anaphylactic shock do we?" in a slightly sarcastic tone. Josh honestly surprised of the words that came out of his mouth. Why would he say something like that when if he ever said something like that (said anything at all) in the past it would have gotten him hurt. But Hunter never hurt him for being sarcastic or sassy, and he only ever scolded if he was rude (which he hardly was), but the boy did not know what Matt thought was rude.

Matt surprised the boy by chuckling and saying, "I was hoping that you wouldn't want to kill me."

Josh shrugged, deciding to play the sarcastic bickering game with Matt and said, "maybe not today."

"And I'm trusting you with a knife," Matt muttered at a volume that he knew Josh could hear him.

"Gurr," Josh growled at him like a dog.

"Last time I checked, I did not adopt another puppy," Matt said with a big smirk on his face, crossing his arms and leaning against the counter next to the oven.

"I would bark at that," Josh said as he put the knife down to point at Bennie and Fred, "but Ben and Fred are right there," said pups looked up at the boy when he said there names and Josh smiled,
picking up the knife to skin the kiwi. Matt watched him like a hawk.

"If you keep watching me," Josh told him, "the bacon is going to burn, and I'm going to be upset."

Realizing that the boy was right, Matt turned to the pan that he had the bacon frying in and said, "shit," turning off the burning that moving the pan just in time to save the bacon.

"Ohh," Josh said as if the man was a child and he was getting onto him, "bad words."

"You sassy little..." Matt did not finish that thought as he put the bacon on a plate to free up the pan to cook the eggs.

"You adopted me," Josh pointed out with a shrug, repeating Matt's earlier words.

"Got me on that."

Josh chuckled, now completely relaxed.

After breakfast, Josh started to squirm around, and it took the boy a second to realize that he had to go to the bathroom. While he had a diaper on, he did not want to have an accident like he thought he would. He did not have access to a bathroom for eight years, and even before that, he sometimes had accidents in big space. That was something that Josh had to deal with all of his life, sometimes in some very embarrassing situation, including once in high school that made the boy blush just thinking about it. The nurse had been helpful in the very least. The other (non-caregiver) kids and his parents, not so much.

"I'm going to the bathroom," Josh said, rushing to the bathroom and took care of his business.

Once he was done, he went back into the living room, but he did not see Matt anywhere. Josh felt his heart clench and tears entered his eyes, and he shouted, "Matt?" and walked further into the living room, hoping that the man would be there. Bennie looked up at him as if she was wondering why he sounded upset.

Matt rushed into the living room, shirtless, thinking that the boy was somehow in trouble, "hey, Joshy what's wrong?"

Josh jumped when the heard Matt's voice, but then rushed over to him and hugged the man tightly and buried his face into the man's neck, "don't leave,' the boy begged.

"Hey, hey, Josh," Matt pulled back so that he could see the boys face, he had red, tear-filled eyes and his lower lip was shaking, but he was still big, "I was just getting ready, Buddy. We have to meet my lawyer friend, remember?" he explained, pulling the boy into a hug, "I'll never leave you, okay?"

Josh nodded, leaning into the man and breathing deeply, trusting that the other man would never leave him again.

Chapter End Notes

*Links to the song that I was trying to descride.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BFAHAqjeWU
https://musescore.com/amandaichel/scores/591481
"Matty?" Josh asked while Matt was putting on his shoes.

"Yeah, Joshy?" Matt responded, looking up at the other man.

"Uhh- I know I'm supposed to be a big boy, but- uh- can I-I bring Abu, please," Josh rambled holding the stuffed monkey to his chest, he really really wanted to bring Adu with him to go to Matt's lawyer friend for protection and safety. When he did not get an answer right away, Josh started to get a bit panicky, wondering if Matt was going to get mad at him for asking. The man did not want Matt to be mad at him, but he really wanted to bring Abu with him.

"Pl-please, Matt. I-I'll be good, promise," Josh hunched over slightly in on himself. He would be a good boy no matter what, but he would be a really really good boy if he were allowed to bring Abu. Please, Matt.

"Hey, hey, Joshy," Matt said, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder to try and clam his down, "you can bring Abu, Buddy. Don't be scared, Buddy."

Josh sighed in relief, ever since Matt disappeared for a minute, the boy had been scared that Matt was going to leave him if the boy did something bad and he was stuck between his headspaces and the boy was trying to be as big as possible. Josh thought this even though Matt told him that he would not leave him. Josh was also afraid of meeting someone new. Man, in these past six days so much had changed and it was starting to all catch up with him, and all Josh wanted to do was be by himself of a while to think everything through, but at the same time, he wanted Matt. God, the boy did not know what to do anymore. Too many changes too fast, and he did not know what he wanted Matt so much. Well, he did, Matt was his caregiver now, but he still felt like he was replacing Hunter with Matt and the boy still missed his Daddy so much and he still wanted his Daddy and wished that he could take him home like these past eight years did not happen, but he would also miss Matt if Daddy could come back. The boy felt like whimpering, but he held it back. He needed to be a big boy for Matt to make him happy.

"C'mon, Bud," Matt said, pulling Josh out of his jumbled up thoughts, "let's get your coat on and go."

Matt noticed the slightly distressed look on Josh's face, and Matt's heat broke. He knew that the boy
was starting to get overwhelmed and Matt was waiting for it the past few days. It had only been not even a week since the man found the boy and everything in Josh's life had changed. For the better, yes, but one minute Josh was locked in a small, dark room for the better part of a decade scared at any minute that someone would come in and hurt him. The next minute he had ten people that he met and who cared about him and the baby was going to different places and doing different things, and the boy did not need to be scared anymore. Though the boy still had moments that the boy would get scared like right now and Matt wished that the boy would not get scared anymore because he did not need to. But Matt knew that it would have to come in time, he just wished that that time would come soon.

Steven Dunn was a lawyer with over twenty years of experience. To assume that he had seen some horrible things in his career would be correct. The lawyer had not been emotionally affected by a case in a long time, but when his RCMP friend, Matt Webb, called him the other night, the lawyer knew that baby Josh's case would be a case that would stick with him for the remainder of his life. He tried to keep his head on straight, if for no other reason then so that he could defend the little as good as possible, but the more the lawyer learned about baby Josh's case, the more that he realized that it would be extremely difficult.

Steven still had questions that he would need to ask Josh so that he would be able to make the strongest defense that he could. He knew the lawyer that was defending Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Her name was Nikki Muller, and she was not a nice woman. She would do anything to try and push someone into a corner and make them say something that they did not mean to or make their account sound contradictory. Steven had seen her make littles cry on the stand. If Steven was reading her correctly, she seemed to be enjoying it in a sick way. Steven knew that he would have to prepare baby Josh for her and even then, Muller would get under his skin.

First and foremost, they would have to talk about the bail hearing, which is what was on Steven's mind when he heard a knock on his office door. Steven fixed his tie and coat as he walked up to answer the door. When he opened the door, he saw the extremely familiar looking face of his friend and the face of a man that he only saw in photos, and the lawyer was surprised by what he saw in some ways. First off, Josh was very tall a few inches taller than the man he was trying to hide behind, which probably made Josh at least five inches taller than Steven. Second, Josh had put on some weight, which was good. From the photos that he got of Josh when he first got rescued six days earlier, and the baby looked like a skeleton. While Josh was not anywhere near where he needed to be regarding weight, it was apparent that Matt was making sure that the baby ate and he was starting to gain weight. Steven could see it in the baby's face. One thing that did not surprise him was the stuffed monkey that the baby had clenched to his chest.

Steven smiled in a way that he meant to be comforting and opened the door slightly wider and said, "come on in boys," Steven gestured them in.

"Thanks," Matt said stepping into Steven's office. Josh followed Matt's lead and took off his coat when Matt did, put his red jacket on the free-standing wooden coat rack next to the door when Matt did and sat down at the round table that he had in the middle of the room that Steven liked to have meetings at when Matt did.

"Hello," Steven said and waved to Josh once he realized that he had not introduced himself to the younger man, "I am Steven Dunn, and I will be representing you in court," Steven stuck his hand out for Josh to shake. Steven did not miss the hesitation or the way that the man looked over to Matt and the slight nod and small smile that Matt gave the man.
Josh took Steven's hand and shook it, "Josh," the man said under his breath with his head down, even though Josh knew that Steven knew his name.

Steven smiled at the man and said, "nice to meet you. Now, let's talk about the bail hearing," he had his left hand in a loose fist that was about to his chest in front of him, he then brought his right hand to cover his right hand that he had been waving around a little bit while he was talking.

"It's not going to end will, is it?" Matt asked, seeing his face turn slightly discouraged and noticed the hand gesture that meant that he was done talking or trying to think of what to say.

"I'll be blunt," Steven said as if he was never blunt in the first place, "they will more than likely make bail."

"Why?" Josh interjected, sounding extremely nervous, worrying his monkey's ear between his thumb and forefinger.

"Corlynn is sick, and Miles owns a business," Steven answered, "but I will do my best to make sure they don't," Steven went on to explain that he would use the fact that Miles had dual citizenship between the U.S. and Canada. He could easily slip into America with Corlynn then go anywhere he wants because they have money. He did inform both men that it was more than likely that they will make bail. Steven also told Josh and Matt that the bail hearing would be combined with the Arraignment.

"What's that?" Josh asked. Steven had to admit that he was a little bit surprised that Josh was asking the questions that he was. But the lawyer was not annoyed that Josh was asking the question as another lawyer might be, Steven was happy to inform Josh of everything and believed that Josh should know everything that was going on. Plus Steven loved talking about the law and courts (it was the reason that he was a lawyer).

So, Steven happily explained that the Arraignment was, "were Miles and Corlynn will be informed of what they are being charged with and they will enter a formal plea of guilty, not guilty, or no contest."

Josh nodded in understanding.

"Now that that is over," Steven said as a rough transition between the two subjects that the man wanted to talk about with Matt and Josh, "we need to talk about the preliminary hearing, which is basically the trail before the trail and the judge will decide if there is enough evidence to go to trial."

"How will he decide that?" Josh asked, cocking his head to the right.

Steven smiled and said while waving his right hand around, "I'm glad you asked."

Matt leaned toward Josh to whisper in his ear, "you're going to regret you asked, Buddy," in a joking manner, speaking for one of the first times. The man had wanted to set back a little and let his baby and the lawyer talk, no matter how hard it was.

Steven glared at him, not quite meeting the younger man's eyes and continued talking, "by delivering evidence to the judge. Witness you," he pointed to Josh and then pointed Matt as he said, "Matt. If we can find any of the clients," Steven tried his best to hide his grimace at the word clients because what Josh had were not clients, Steven has clients Josh had rapists that deserved punishment of the highest degree of the law. "Concrete evidence such as the videos and the restrains," Steven did not miss the flinch that Josh gave at the word restrains and it broke Steven's heart, but the man's heart felt a little better when Matt rubbed the back of Josh's neck to try and calm the boy.
"With that, I do have a few questions to fill in some gaps," Steven said. He liked to be informed as much as possible. Josh looked down and nodded, and Steven started to question the boy, "why weren't you classified until you were eighteen?"

"My parents did not want me to be classified," Josh answered, which was true, they must have been scared that he was little, "and I couldn't go get classified by myself until it was eighteen."

"Do you remember any of the clients' or their names?" Steven put his right hand over his left as his way of asking Josh to answer.

"I-I remember all of their faces. They didn't always say their names, but I remember some of their names," Josh admitted.

"Can you write down their names," Steven asked, standing to get a piece of paper so that Josh could write down all of the names that the boy could remember.

Josh wrote down twenty first and last names and ten first or last names. Steven and Matt felt sick, neither of them realizing how many 'clients' Josh had.

"Thank you, Josh," Steven could tell that Josh was done with everything. The boy was tucked in on himself and holding his monkey close to his chest. The boy was rocking himself back and forth slightly as if trying to comfort himself. Matt rubbed up and down the boy's back to try and comfort him as well. Steven had all of the information that he needed to make a stronger case. He could prepare Josh of the other hearing and the trail in a few of the future meetings. The baby did not need that right now.

Steven stood once again to put up the paper in Josh's file. Matt stood as well to talk to Steven so that Josh could not hear them. Matt patted Steven's shoulder. Steven looked at the hand on his shoulder but decided he did not mind it.

"Hey, can you send that list to Ian and tell him that they are the clients. I would, but he'll be angry that I'm working while on paternity leave," Matt explained.

"Sure," Steven replied with a nod, not understanding why Matt could not ask in front of Josh.

"I want to ask you," Steven hummed in question, leaning against his desk, "why are you calling Josh's parents Corlynn and Miles?"

"Because that is their names," Steven said.

"We usually say Josh's parents."

"They are not Josh's parents," Steven stated in a matter of fact way, "they may be biologically related, but parents don't do this to their kid. Those aren't parents."

Matt nodded, understanding what Steven was saying, "thanks, Steven."

"No problem," Steven said and as both Matt and Josh left the office, "see you Wednesday."

Hopefully, everything would go well, but Steven had a feeling that nothing within this trail will go 'well.'

..."Matty," Josh whimpered when they were driving home. Tears entered his eyes. He wanted to be
little, but he was not sure if he was allowed, even though there was a small part of him that knew that Matt would not be mad at him if he regressed. Matt had taken care of him for the past few days, and he did not complain or get upset once, but what if he wanted Josh to be a big boy for a little bit longer. Josh tried to blink back tears at that thought. Josh did not want to be a big boy anymore. He just wanted to be a baby. Please, Matty.

"Yeah, Baby," Matt responded, looking over to the passenger set and seeing a little boy how was trying to fight being a little boy with tears in his eyes, "what's wrong, Baby Boy?"

"Uhh-" Josh stammered, holding his monkey a little tighter as tears started to fall out of his eyes, "w-wanna be baby," Josh let out a small sob.

"Shh, Baby Boy," Matt said with a soft, comforting voice, "hey, Baby, don't cry. It's okay, you can be little."

Despite the comforting words that should have made Josh feel better and allowed him to slip no problem, the baby felt his mental age plummet, but he was still upset, and the baby let out quiet, little sobs. It was like the dam broke and the baby could not fix it right now. The baby stuck his first three fingers on his right hand in his mouth to try and self-sooth while he held Abu a little tighter. Matt looked over at the baby for a second and ran his fingers through the baby's hair on the back of the baby's head. The man wished that he could comfort the baby more, but he could not hold the baby until they got home.

"Everything's okay, Baby Boy. I'm right here. Matty's right here. Everything's okay, Baby Boy. We are going home now, and we can have some snuggle time, okay. Everything's getting too much isn't it, my Sweet Boy. I know, Honey, I know. Let it out, Sweet Boy, let it out. Everything is fine, Baby Boy," Matt rambled, trying to calm his baby, but it did not seem to be working. Josh continued to fuss and cry, not able to stop. Matt continued to talk to the baby, telling him to let it out and that everything was going to be okay.

The baby tried to listen to Matt and calm down and think that everything was going to be okay, but the baby could not get control over his emotions. Matty was right, everything was getting too much, and the baby just needed to cry it out. The baby's breath hitched, and he gave another big sob as he felt a warm spot spread around his groin area, making everything all uncomfortably warm and wet. Josh cried harder when he realized that the diaper he was in was too thin to absorb all of the wetness. The baby soaked through the diaper and his jeans and the seat that he was in.

"I sowwy," Josh cried, hunching over onto himself to try and hid the mess he made. Matt was going to get so mad at him and yell. The baby made a big mess just because he could not hold it. Whenever that happened people would at best make fun of him, and at worst hurt him and yell at him. Josh whimpered, he did not want to be hurt or yelled at. "I no mean it. I sowwy. No be mad," the baby begged.

"Ohh, Baby Boy," Matt said, seeing the wetness that surrounded the baby, "it's okay, Baby, it was just an accident. I'm not mad, Sweet Boy," Matt assured, rubbing the back of the baby's neck, "we are almost home, Sweet Boy. Then, we will get you all nice and clean. Wanna take a bath, don't you? Then you can take a nap if you want to, Baby."

Matt pressed a little harder on the accelerator and make it home not even a minute later.

"Okay, Baby Boy," Matt said when they got into the garage, "let's get you inside," Matt ran over to the passenger side and helped the baby get out. The man lifted the still crying baby onto his hip, not caring about his clothes or car (it would not be the first time that Matt would have to get soaked in urine stain out of his car) and carried the baby into the baby's bathroom. All the while Josh was still
crying into his shoulder.

"Let's get you into the bath, okay, Baby Boy," Matt told the baby, "we will get you all nice and clean, okay. But, first, let's get you out of these yucky clothes."

After the man turned on the tap of the bath in let it fill up, the man laid the baby down on the floor so that he could take off the baby's clothes and diaper. But as soon as the baby was put on the floor, the baby whimpered and tried to reach out to Matt. The baby was too unsettled, and he wanted Matt. The baby wanted to snuggle and be clean and... Josh whined, he did not know.

"Ohh, Sweet Boy," Matt cooed, rubbing the baby's tummy. Matt hated seeing his baby this upset and inconsolable. Right now all Matt could do was get the baby into the bath to try and calm him down, maybe get him a bottle and put the baby down for a nap. Matt undressed the baby and put his dirty clothes into his hamper.

"There you go, Baby Boy," Matt praised in a higher pitched voice than normal, "now let's get you into the bath and clean."

Josh sniffled and rubbed his eyes and trying to stop the next round of tears that were coming to his eyes, but he could not stop them. The dam still was not fixed. Matt put him into the bath, and Josh sighed in relief. Josh loved baths, water in general, it always made Josh feel calm. Usually, Matt would put in some bath toys so that Josh could play for a little bit and he sometimes added bubble bath, yesterday the baby put a bubble crown on Matt when he was not paying attention. It was funny. But right now, they both wanted this bath to be over as soon as possible so that they could snuggle.

By the time the bath was over, Josh was calmer and not crying anymore, but it was clear that the baby was still upset. Matt got him out of the tub and laid him on a towel to dry him off. Matt was suddenly very glad that he kept an extra sleeper or two and diapers under the baby's sink because he knew that Josh wanted to cuddle and he was proven right when Josh whined as soon as he put him on the towel.

"S-snuggles, pwea," Josh begged, raising his arms when Matt was done drying him off.

"Let's get you dressed first, Baby Boy," Matt said, "Lift your hips, Sweet Boy," Josh did as he was told and Matt slid the diaper under the baby's bum and tapped it around his hips, "good boy," Matt praised, "now let's get you into a sleeper," Josh nodded in agreement and yawned and rubbed his eyes, "sleepy, Baby Boy? Bet you are, Sweet Boy, how about we get you a baba and you can take a nap, okay."

Josh nodded again, Matt was right, the baby was sleepy, and now that he was clean he just wanted a snuggle, and a bottle sounded nice.

"Okay, Sweet Boy," Matt cooed when he zipped the sleeper, "let's get a baba and go night-night," Matt once again lifted the baby up onto his hip and carried the baby into the kitchen, he would not dare put the baby down, Josh was still too attached to Matt to put him down on the couch. That would make the baby upset again, and Matt was not taking that chance in making the baby cry again.

Matt got a bottle out of the cabinet and filled it with milk, not even bothering to get onto Tux when he saw the cat on the counter, "okay, Baby Boy, let's put your bottle in the microwave for a few seconds," Matt said, kissing the top of the baby's head. Matt was keeping up a constant stream of rambling, mostly just describing whatever he was doing for the baby's sake so the baby could hear him and so that he could know what Matt was doing when he was doing it.
"There we go, Sweet Boy," Matt said once the microwave beeped, "do you want to go to the couch and drink your baba?" Josh did not nod or shake his head, and Matt sighed, "let's go, Sweet Boy."

Matt walked over to the couch and sat down, rearranging the baby to that he was leaning against Matt's chest. Josh curled up slightly and took the bottle when Matt pressed it to his lips. The baby hummed in contentment and closed his eyes when the warm milk hit his tongue.

"There you go, Baby Boy," Matt whispered, "close your eyes, Baby," Josh snuggled a little deeper into Matt, fisting the man's shirt in his left hand. The baby felt the couch dip and felt something lay their head on his hip. Josh jumped a little.

Matt smiled, kissing the top of his baby's head again, "it's okay, Sweet Boy, it's just Bennie."

Josh opened his eyes slightly so that he could see the pup. The baby reached down so that he could pet Bennie before closing his eyes again.

Right before the baby finished the bottle his breathing evened out in a way that told Matt that the baby was dozing and Matt does not know what came over him, maybe it was because he ran out of things to say, but he started to sing-

"I got sunshine on a cloudy day, When it's cold outside, I got the mouth of May."

Matt removed the now finished bottle of milk of the baby's lips and before the baby could whine Matt replaced with a pacifier that the baby took without complaint.

"I'd guess you'd say What could make me feel this way,"

Matt smiled down at the now sleeping baby. Rubbing up and down the baby's back and running his hand through his hair.

"My boy, my boy, Talkin' 'bout my boy, My boy."

Matt kissed the top of the baby's head, "love you, Baby Boy."

Chapter End Notes

Some of you guys might be wondering about the 'Autism' tag (some of you might not have noticed). Steven is meant to be autistic. I did not originally write him this way, but the more I wrote and thought about him, the more I realized that Steven fits autism. So, yeah, Steven has autism and it won't play into the story too much, unless you guys want it to because I can make it play into the story a little bit more.

On a side note, look up Corlynn Hanney (Josh's mother) on Bing and look at the images. About three rows you will see a teenage picture of Josh with his mother and sister and it's honestly adorable, and can I just say, I think Josh has always stuck his tongue out for pics.
Life Lost... and found CH 16

Chapter Summary

The baby starts feeling better

Chapter Notes

My college has canceled classes two days in a row. That is the only reason that I have been able to work on this and it not be the weekend.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Ten minutes after Josh fell asleep, Matt got up so that he could clean up his car and get Josh's clothes clean. The man made sure that Josh was settled before moving to get Josh's clothes into the washer, and then the man focused on the car. There was no doubt in Matt's mind that the pee stain would be dry by the time that Matt would get out there. He combined half a cup of warm water and white vinegar and a fourth cup of dish soup so that he could make a foam. The man got one of his old scrubbers from under his kitchen sink. Matt walked into his garage and left the door open so that he could hear if Josh woke up, though Matt hoped that the baby would not wake up for a while. He needed his rest.

As Matt set out to work, he let his mind wander. His poor baby was stressed. What with the upcoming trial and his significant life changes. The baby needed an out so that he did not burst into tears whenever he was too stressed out. Music could be an out for the baby. Josh loved music and singing (even though he did not sing in front of people that was not Matt) and the baby he knew how to play at least one instrument, and with the way he was looking at Matt's guitars, the man thought that Josh might know how to play the guitar as well. Matt wondered what else he could do for the baby. Getting him outside would be the best. It was not healthy for the baby to stay inside all the time, and going based on their last outing he loved being outside. Maybe a day at the park with Jessie and her littles would help him unwind and get some of his stress out before the bail hearing in a couple of days. But there was also the fact that Tim would have to be with them, while Josh loved Jessie and Sammie, Tim was a whole different matter. Tim was insanely jealous of the baby. Probably because he was the baby and is getting all of the attention that used to be given to him, that was the only reason that Matt could think of. And Josh did not like being around the older boy because he was scared that Tim would be mean to him. But, at the same time, it would not be fair not to include Tim because the boy could not be around the baby, and it would not be fair to Josh not to invite Jessie and Sammie just because of Tim. Matt signed, they would have to talk to Tim and tell him to behave and be nice to the baby, or he would not be able to come to visit Matt anymore.

When Matt was done rubbing in the foam, Matt got out his phone to text Jessie.

"Hey, are you guys free tomorrow."

Not even a minute later Jessie texted back with a, "I just have to work a little bit in the morning, I'll be free around 8-ish. Why you have something in mind??"
"Josh is stressed," Matt texted back trying to be as vague as possible as not to give out all of Josh's problems. "I wanted to take his mind off of everything. I thought that we could go to the park or something."

"Sounds like fun!! I'll tell Tim and Sami."

"K," Matt texted back with a big smile on his face, happy that Jessie and her littles were able to hang out with him and Josh tomorrow.

Matt then put his phone down so that he could clean up the rest of the stain. Lucky the stain came up with the odor. The man breathed a sigh of relief. Relieved that the stain came up, he knew that the baby would feel bad if it did not come up and the baby did not need anything else to make him feel sad about. The poor baby was stress enough.

The man gathered up all of his supplies and went back inside, leaving his car door open so that the seat could dry faster.

Josh was still asleep, curled up on his side with Bennie still laying down on his hip, and Matt smiled down at him and ran his fingers through his hair. The baby leaned into the man's hand, and Matt smiled a little wider.

"Good boy, " Matt whispered as not to wake the baby up. The man continued to look down at the baby for a few seconds, a feeling of love welling up in his chest for his sweet little boy.

About two hours past and Matt finished all of the cleaning that he needed to do, and he was getting some lunch (veggie soup) ready when the baby started whining because he was waking up. The man rushed into the living room because he did not want the baby to be alone when he woke up.

"Hey, Baby Boy," Matt ran his fingers through the baby's hair to try and help him wake up entirely and calm him down a little bit. Josh blinked his eyes open and looked up at Matt. The baby held his arms out wanting Matt to hold him. The baby was wet and thirsty and hungry, and he just wanted to be held. Matt complied and lifted the baby onto his hip. Josh buried his face into Matt's chest and suckled one his pacifier a little harder and relaxed into Matt's touch.

"Hun'wy 'nd fiwsty 'nd wet," Josh whined into his Matty's chest with a pout and sniffle. Bennie jumped down from the couch and looked up at the baby, wanting to get closer to the baby to comfort him.

"Let's fix all that, Baby Boy," Matt whispered into his baby's ear, bouncing the baby on his hip and walking into the baby's room to change his diaper with Bennie following them.

"I made some veggie soup for us, and you can have some juice," Matt told him as he untapped the baby's soiled diaper. He looked down at Bennie with a small smile. He loved how protective she was over Josh.

"App'a duice?" Josh asked lifting his hips so that Matt could slide a fresh diaper under his bum.

"Of course you can have apple juice, Sweet Boy," Matt said, rezipping the sleeper and lifting the baby back up and walking to the kitchen, "can you wait at the table with Bennie while I get you some soup and apple juice?"

Josh did not want to wait at the table all by himself, but he would be able to see Matt from the kitchen table, and Bennie would be with him so he could deal with it.

Matt quickly got the baby some apple juice and veggie soup and sat down next to the baby.
"Do you want to do it or do you want Matty?" Matt asked, referring to feeding the baby the soup.

Unsurprisingly, Josh responded, "'atty do it, pwea."

"Of course, Sweet Boy," Matt told him with a small smile, spooning some veggie soup and feeding the baby. The baby hummed, he always loved whatever Matt cooked. It was all so good.

As Matt continued to help Josh eat and drink the baby started to feel better than he did earlier that day and he felt more normal, but the baby still did not want to do anything but snuggle with Matt and watch a movie. That sounded nice. Maybe after lunch, the baby would convince Matt to watch a movie and snuggle on the couch.

As the baby finished his lunch, he realized that he was still hungry, so he asked, "Mowe?" wanting more veggie soup.

"I don't have any more soup, Baby Boy," Matt told him, and Josh pouted for a second thinking that Matt would not keep him anything else to eat, but Matt asked, "do you want a sandwich or something?"

"G'iyed cheese, pwea," Josh asked, with a small smile, picking up his apple juice to drink some more.

"Give me a few minutes Baby Boy, okay?" Matty told his walking back into the kitchen. With his owner not paying attention, Tux jumped on the table to be with the baby.

"Hi, Angwy Kitty," Josh said, keeping up the nickname for the cat. Tux meowed at the baby as if to say hi back, and bumped his head with the baby, and the baby giggled but then the baby told the kitty "not 'lound a be on a table, Kitty", repeating the sentence he had heard Matt a lot of times picking Tux up and putting him in his lap so that Tux was following the rules. Tux surprisingly did not complain, he laid on his back, across the baby's lap so that that baby would rub his tummy. The baby smiled and happily rubbed the kitty's tummy. "Good kitty," Josh whispered to the cat.

The baby kept petting the cat until Matt came back with his grilled cheese, "fank 'oo, 'atty," Josh thanked him, reaching for the sandwich as soon as Matt put it in front of him.

"Leave the baby alone, Tux," Matt told the kitty, taking the cat from Josh's lap and placing him on the floor, Tux meowed at Matt as if to tell him off and ran off to go pout because he was not allowed to lay on Josh while he was eating.

"Angwy Kitty," Josh commented, taking a bite of his grilled cheese.

Matt chuckled setting down next to the baby at the table, and said, "I don't think Tux would be Tux if he did not get angry at me at least once a day, Baby Boy," Matt said. The man looked at Tux and Anemone in the living room who were now fighting over a feathery cat ball, "and he's over it," Matt told the baby.

Josh, giggled, looking over at the kitties playing while eating. Matt smiled, glad that the baby was more relaxed than he was earlier and that he was happy.

"What do you want to do for the rest of the day, Baby?" Matt asked after the baby was done eating and said that he was full.

"Watch a movie, pwea?" Josh asked with a small smile, "Fwozen, pwea

"Only if you sing along with the songs," Matt said with a teasing smile, he loved it when the baby
"Naw," Josh said with a shy smile and shaking his head, telling Matt that he was going to sing even if he said he was not.

"Aww," Matt said with an overexaggerated frown, "but you are such a good singer."

Josh looked down at his lap and squirmed shyly, "naw," Josh giggled.

"Fine," Matt said ruffling the baby's hair, "you crazy boy."

"Up, up," Josh asked, lifting up his arms to be picked up by Matt, "pwea, up."

"C'mere, Sweet Boy," Matt told him, lifting the baby up on his hip and walking into the living room and putting him down on the couch with his blankie and sippy cup, "wait here and I'll put in Frozen."

"Yey, Fwozen," Josh clapped with a small playing on his face. Frozen was his favorite newer movies that Matt had shown him these past few days.

Matt chuckled, shaking his head, then Matt said, "I invited Jessie and her littles to go to the park with as tomorrow," Matt watched Josh's expression, but thankfully the baby did not look upset or mad at the plans that Matt set up for tomorrow. The baby seemed happy and excited.

"'essie 'nd Sami?" the baby asked, the baby always loved the park, and the thought of playing with Sami at the park sounded like fun.

"Yeah, Baby Boy," Matt told him, "and Tim."

"Fine," Josh sighed, hoping that Tim would not be mean to him again.

"Get ready to sing, Baby Boy," Matt said after he got the movie playing with a smile.

"Naw," the baby smiled and shook his head, eyes bright.

Matt sat next to the baby and let the baby curl up into his chest, and as Matt said, the baby sang all of the songs.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be the park and maybe some of the bail hearing.
"'atty, 'atty!" Josh exclaimed the next morning jumping on his knees on Matt's bed. Matt groaned and rolled over to his stomach. "'atty, time a wake-up. Time a go to a pawk."

The corner of Matt's lip curled up into a slight smile, but he made sure to control it. Josh could not see it. Matt snored exaggeratedly.

Josh giggled, "'atty, wakey, pwea," Josh laid down next to Matt on his side and tapped his shoulder, "time a wake-up," Matt snored.

"'atty," Josh extended that word in a high pitched voice, shaking his Matty, "wakey."

Matt cracked open one eye, and the baby giggled again, "hi, 'atty," Matt closed his eye and covered himself with his blanket.

"Naw," Josh whined with a pout, "'atty. Time a wakey. Pwea," Josh tried to uncover his Matty. The man popped up and tackled the baby. The baby squealed in delight and giggled. Matt pinned Josh to the bed and started to tickle up and down Josh's sides.


"No way, Joshy," Matt said with a smile, "you wake me up early in the morning, you get ticka, ticka, ticka," Matt tickled the baby's tummy and ribs and neck.

"I sowwy, 'atty," Josh laughed, tears streaming down his face, "naw mowe," Josh tried to push Matt off of him.

Matt tickled the baby a few more times before he stopped. Matt chuckled as the baby rolled on to his side and curled up slightly to try and control his giggles.

"Naw mowe," Josh said rubbing his tears away with the back of his hand and looking at Matt, "naw mowe."

Matt made tickling hands and moved toward the baby. The baby squealed before Matt even touched him. "Naw, naw, naw," Josh shook his head, waving his finger.

"Is that your favorite word, Baby Boy?" Matt said with a small smile.
Josh smiled, "naw," Josh shook his head.

"You silly boy," Matt said with a smile, ticking the baby lightly again.

"Naw," Josh pushed Matt's hand away, "naw mowe ticka, onwy hugs," Josh held his arms open out wide, wanting a hug.

"Only hugs?" Matt said with an exaggerated question with his tone, "why?"

"'cause hugs good," Josh responded.

"And tickles aren't?" Matt asked him.

"Naw," Josh shook his head again, "ticka naw good."

"Okay, Baby Boy," Matt said with a small chuckle, "come here, Baby," the man open up one of his arms. Josh happily snuggled into the man's side.

"Wove oo, 'atty."

"Love you too, Baby Boy," Matt smiled. The man subtly checked the baby's diaper, and it was not much of a surprise to the man that the baby was wet, "c'mon, Baby, let's get changed."

"then go to a pawk?" Josh asked with his puppy dog eyes.

Matt chuckled, helping the baby stand and holding the baby's hand to walk him back to his room to change him. "not yet, Sweet Boy," Josh pouted at the words, looking down on the ground. "we have to have breakfast and wait for Jessie."

"Not hungwy," Josh lied with a pout, he wanted to go to the park. He did not want to eat breakfast, but at that moment his tummy decided to grumble and prove the baby wrong.

"I think your tummy disagrees with you, Baby," Matt smirked, rubbing his tummy.

"Naw," Josh shook his head.

"I think that is your favorite word, Joshy," Matt told him as he helped the baby onto his changing table. Josh giggled. Matt smiled back, "I love you, Baby Boy."

"Wove my 'atty," Josh said, lifting his hips so Matt could remove his dirty diaper.

"What do you want you for breakfast, Baby?" Matt asked the baby when he was done diapering the baby, wanting to know if he should wait to dress the baby if he wanted something messy.

"Eggs," Josh answered without thinking that not even five minutes ago he said that he was not hungry.

"I thought you weren't hungry, Baby," Matt teased the baby.

"Hun'wy now," Josh told the man with a shy smile playing with his fingers.

"Okay, Sweet Boy," Matt said, running his hand through the baby's hair, "let's get dressed."

"Caw'gan," Josh told his Matty smiling widely.

"You got it, Baby," Matt was pretty sure that the long, red cardigan that Josh loved so much was a
girl's cardigan, not that Matt cared, Jessie got it for the baby, and he loved, so it did not matter.

Matt got out a grey long sleeve shirt with a white elephant and jeans that Matt knew Josh would be able to run in. Matt quickly dressed the baby in the slightly feminine outfit and picked him back up.

"Badge, 'atty," Josh asked pointed to his chest, "pwea."

"Okay, Baby Boy," Matt said, picking up the baby's badge from his dresser and put in around the baby's neck.

"Fank 'oo, 'atty," Josh thanked the man, resting his head on Matt's chest, lifting his thumb to his mouth to suck on.

Matt smiled, rubbing the baby's back and walking into the living room, "you wanna play for a while I cook, Baby?"

"Yeah," Josh nodded, "music, pwea."

"Sure, Sweet Boy."

...

"Good boy, Tux," Josh said as the cat, and he was playing with one of the cat toys after breakfast. Tux jumped up to try and catch the wand but the baby moved the want too fast, and the cat was not able to get it. The baby touched the floor with the wand and ran it back and forth on the floor causing the cat to move his head back and forth with it. Then he pounced! The baby giggled as he moved the wand out of the way.

Josh suddenly felt a paw on his head. The baby flinched and moved forward slightly as he tensed. The baby looked behind him and saw that it was only Anemone and relaxed.

"Hi, Anemone," Josh greeted the cat, lifting the wand to her to try and encourage her to play with him and Tux. Anemone pawed at the wand and got one of her claws stuck in it, "oh no," Josh said.

"Oh no, Baby Boy?" Matt asked from his spot on the couch, looking down at the baby and cat with concern in his eyes.

"Nofin'," Josh said, helping Anemone get her claw out of the wand, "Anemone got hew cyaw ina toy 's all," Josh told the man.

Matt could not help but laugh at his boy as he continued to play with the cats, "okay, Sweet Boy."

A few minutes later the baby asked, "'atty?" looking up at the man.

"Yes, Baby Boy?"

"Can we bwing a doggies a pawk," Josh asked with his puppy dog eyes.

"No Baby Boy, I'm sorry," Matt told the boy.

Josh pouted, "why not?" the baby whined.

Matt sat down next to the baby so that he could explain to the baby why they could not bring the dogs along with them, "'cause we aren't going to the dog park, Sweet Boy," Matt ran his fingers through the baby's hair, "and we don't know know how other littles will react to them."
"Othw wittles be scawed?" the baby asked.

"Maybe, Sweet Boy," Matt told him.

"When we walk 'em today?" the baby asked, cocking his head to the right.

"We can take them on one after your nap latter," Matt answered.

"Aftw lunch, aftw nap," Josh said mostly to himself. The baby liked to know that he had a schedule now (at least an outline of one) that he could rely on daily and if there was a change to it (like walking the dogs at a different time), he liked to know that that was the case and Matt always told him when there was a change.

"That's right, Baby Boy," Matt said giving his baby a side hug. The baby rested his head on the man's shoulder, "cuddly baby," Matt cooed with affection evident in his tone and the man kissed the top of the baby's head. The baby smiled shyly.

They continued to cuddle for a few minutes until the doorbell rang. Bennie and Fred were on alert at once and barked at the door, "calm down, guys," Matt said as he stood to answer the door, "you crazy little..." Matt said with a smile on his face as Fred followed him to the door barking the whole way, "crazy dog."

Matt opened the door and was greeted instantly with a round of, "hi, Uncle Matt," that made him smile bigger.

"Hey, guys, ready to go to the park?" Matt asked the littles who said 'yeah' even from the little inside the house.

"Joshy," Matt called over to his baby who looked up at him, "grab your diaper bag and let's go."

"Tay, 'atty," the baby said, bouncing up and grabbing the bag that Matt told him to get and marched over to Matt and handed him the bag.

"Good boy," Matt praised the baby, working his fingers through the baby's hair, knowing that the baby almost needed physical contact as will verbal praise. Josh leaned into the touch and smiled at the man.

"Okay, let's go, guys," Jessie said, smiling when she saw the baby standing and walking. The baby was thriving under Matt's attention, and the woman could not be happier.

"Yay," Josh clapped, bounced on his toes.

... 

"See, 'atty, puppy," Josh pointed at a tiny Dalmatian puppy and could not be more than nine months old.

"Okay, Bud, I understand," Matt smirked, ruffling the baby hair, the baby kept pointing out dogs that he saw. So far the baby had seen four including the Dalmatian puppy. "I was wrong," the baby giggled.

"Why exactly does he keep sassily pointing out all of the dogs," Jessie asked Matt.

"He wanted to bring the dogs, and I told him no," Matt told Jessie before he turned his attention back to the baby, "we can bring the doggies next time, Baby Boy," Matt told him, "okay."
"Fine," the baby told him before spotting a German Shepherd, "'nother doggie," Josh pointed at the German Shepherd.

"Go play with Sammie and Tim, crazy butt," Matt told him patting the baby's back.

Josh listened and ran over to the other littles. Sammie was watching over Tim as he slid down the slide.

"I go down a syide?" Josh asked the girl.

"Sure Joshy, go," Sammie said with a nod and smile. Josh smiled at the older girl and ran to climb on the playset so that he could slide.

"Sammie do it!" Josh exclaimed, bouncing on his toes, "c'mon, Sammie," Josh took the little girl's hand to encourage her to slide with him and Tim. Tim was doing his best to be nice with the baby, and aside from one instance of telling Josh that he looked like a girl, he was successful. Though part of that could be that about every fifteen minutes, Josh would run to his Matty to talk to him and point out the dogs that he sees. The baby loved his Matty and could not go too long without talking to him, although this made Matt wish that Josh would stay with Sammy and Tim, but the man also knew that was not realistic.

The pattern continued like this for a while. The baby would play with Sammie and Tim for about fifteen minutes before he would run over to Matt to in the very least give the man a hug and at most to talk to him for a few minutes until Matt told him to go play.

"Hey, Sweetheart," Matt greeted the baby as the baby hugged him, "just need a hug, Baby?"

"Yeah," Josh said, snuggling into the man's side for a moment.

Matt kissed the top of the baby's head and rubbed his back, "go play, Sweet Boy."

"Tay, 'atty," Josh ran back over to Sammie and Tim.

"Why do you keep going over to Matt?" Tim asked the baby.

"'cause," the baby answered, trying to go over to Sammie, who was climbing on the big climbing wall.

"'cause why?" Tim whined.

"'cause wove 'atty," Josh elaborated before running over to Sammie so that Tim did not try and talk to him.

"You can't do that, Josh," Tim told the baby, running over to the climbing wall with the baby, just out of Sammie's earshot.

"Why not," Josh whined at the older boy.

"Because it's for big kids," Tim told the baby as if it was common knowledge, "your just a baby."

"C'n do it," Josh argued with the older boy.

"No!" Tim shouted, "you have to play on the baby stuff!" Tim tried to push the baby over to what the older boy deemed as 'baby stuff.'

"No," Josh whined as he tensed and squirmed away from the older boy, "no wanna pway 'lone."
Wanna play wif 'ammie."

"You can't even speak right," Tim told the baby, "you're just a stupid baby. Go play on the stupid baby stuff," Time pushed the baby toward the baby stuff.

"Notta stupid baby," Josh said the best he could as tears came into his eyes, "wanna play with 'ammie."

"Her name is Sammie, dummy!" Tim pushed the baby again, this time pushing him to the ground.

The baby burst into tears and ran to Matt, needing comfort.

"Hey, hey, hey," Matt said with concern in his tone when he saw the baby run to him, crying, "what's wrong, Sweet Boy?" the man asked bringing the baby into a hug, "are you hurt?"

Josh buried his face into Matt's chest and shook his head. The only thing that hurt was his feelings.

"What happened, Baby Boy?" Matt asked in a calm voice, running his fingers through the baby's hair and rubbing the baby's back.

"Tim bein' mean," Josh hiccupped, "he call me a stupid baby and called me dumb and pushed me," the baby cried harder, not wanting to talk anymore.

"Calm down, Sweetie," Matt told the baby, "calm down Baby Boy. We'll talk to Tim when you calm down a little."

Jessie stood to go get Tim.

"There you go, Sweet Boy," Matt said, getting out a white pacifier from the diaper bag, "hey, it matches your elephant," the man observed as the baby took the pacifier from the man to suckle on it.

By time Jessie was back with Tim, Josh was calm with his pacifier in his mouth and resting his head on Matt's chest so that he could hear the man's heartbeat.

"I hear you haven't been very nice to Josh," Jessie told Tim, who did not look very happy that the baby told on him.

"I didn't do anything," Tim denied.

"Josh," Jessie turned her attention to the baby, who looked at her when she addressed him, "can you tell us what Tim did again?"

"He called 'e a stoo'id baby 'nd called 'e dumb 'nd pushed 'e 'nd said I c'n't pway on a cwimin' wall," Josh sniffled, wiping his nose with his sleeve.

"Is this true, Tim?" Jessie asked her little, knowing the truth but wanting Tim to say it.

Tim tried to think of an excuse for all of what the baby said but the boy could not, "yeah but..."

Jessie interrupted whatever excuse that the boy was going to say, "no buts. You have no excuse to treat Josh that way. I want you to apologize to the baby then sit next to me until I tell you to get up."

"Sorry, Josh," Tim said in a way that did not sound very sorry and said next to the bench his Mommy was sitting on.

"You okay now, Baby Boy?" Matt asked the baby, brushing his hair back from his eyes. The baby
desperately needed a haircut before the trail.

"I fine," the baby said, rubbing his eyes with a small yawn.

"Are you sleepy already?" Matt asked.

"No, I no sweepy," Josh jumped up from Matt's lap in a way that told Matt that the baby was tired but did not want to sleep yet, "wanna pway."

"Go play with Sammie, Sweet Boy," Matt said.

"Wanna pway on the swing, " Josh said, looking down at the ground, "'atty push, pwea," the baby just wanted Matt around.

Knowing this, Matt smiled up at the baby and said, "okay sweet boy."

"Yay, 'atty," Josh clapped his hands and took the man's hand and ran over to the swings. Josh sat down on the swing and giggled when Matt started to push him gently.

"Highw, 'atty, highw, pwea" Josh smiled, giggling again when Mat did as the baby requested. A couple of seconds later, Sammie found them and asked, "where did you guys go?"

"We had to deal with a situation between Josh and Tim," Matt told the little girl, who took the swing next to Josh and swung gently.

"Was Tim mean to Josh again?" Sammie asked.

Matt shook his head; there was no beating around the bush with this little girl, "yes, but everything is okay now."

"Okay," Sammie nodded, accepting the answer. The little girl loved her brother, but she wished that he would not be mean to the baby anymore as she loved the baby too.

"Can I push the baby?" Sammie asked.

Matt stopped the swing. Josh whined, wondering for a second if it was time to go, but Matt asked, "Sammie wants to push you, Baby Boy. Is that okay?"

Josh smiled and nodded, "'ammie do it," Josh clapped.

Sammie smiled and jumped behind the baby to push him. Sammie pushed the baby, but it was not high enough for the baby.

"Highw, 'ammie, highw!" Josh exclaimed.

"Not too high, Honey," Matt told the little girl, not wanting her to push too hard that it scared the baby.

Sammie nodded, making sure to fulfil Josh's wish of going higher within Matt's warning about not going too high. The little girl was somehow able to do it perfectly.

Eventually, Tim and Jessie joined Sammie, Josh, and Matt and the five of them played until early afternoon when the baby was too tired to keep playing and just wanted to be carried around by Matt with his head on Matt's shoulder.
"Sleepy time, 'atty," whined, rubbing his eye with a fist, "go home now?"

"Okay, Baby Boy," Matt said to the baby, "I'm going to take this one home, guys, bye-bye."

They all said their goodbyes, and Matt walked the baby to the car.

"Good day, Baby Boy?" Matt asked the baby, rubbing his back.

"Yeah," Josh nodded with a wide yawn, "fun a pway at a pawk."

"I'm happy, Baby Boy," Matt said with a smile.

"'atty," Josh said a couple of seconds later.

"Yes, Baby Boy?"

"Puppy," the baby said, pointing to a black lab that looked a little bit like a bigger version of Bennie.

Matt could not help but roll his eyes. Yes, it was a good day with his baby. Yes, he would have to bring Fred and Bennie next time.

Chapter End Notes

Comments, questions, concerns, suggestions? You know what to do!
Chapter Summary

The bail hearing

Chapter Notes

Slightly sad chapter. =( 

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"'atty," Josh whispered as he walked into Matt's room at around eleven at night. He was not able to sleep because his thoughts were all over the place and he was thinking about the bail hearing tomorrow and the fact that he was going to see his parents again. It was making his tummy hurt and made him unable to stay still, and all the baby was doing is tossing and turning in bed, and he was not able to sleep. The baby was tired, and he just wanted to sleep, but he was not able to. Matty would make it all better. He had too.

Matt sat up in his bed. He was dozing when he heard Josh say his name, "Hey Josh. What is it?" the man said, rubbing his eyes and looking up at his baby. The baby looked awful. His hair was sticking up on end with bedhead, that would have looked cute if it was not for his red eyes from sleepiness and his shaking for nervousness.

Josh copied Matt and rubbed his eyes and said, "I sweepy but no sweep. No sweep," Josh pouted and whined.

"C'mere, Sweet Boy," Matt said, opening up one of his arms to invite the baby into a hug.

The baby took the invitation and curled up into the man's side and buried his face in Matt's chest. Josh felt a burst of warmth and safety that came when he snuggled with Matt. The baby held onto Matt tightly.

"There you go, Sweet Boy," Matt whispered into the baby's ear, wrapping the baby up in his arms and with that blanket "go night-night, Baby. I'll be right here when you wake up. I won't leave you, Baby Boy," rubbing the baby's back and running his hand through the baby's hair.

Josh yawned, "night-night, 'atty," Josh suckled on the pacifier in his mouth, "wove 'oo."

"Love you too, Sweet Boy," Matt smiled, holding onto Josh a little tighter so that he would not let go in his sleep, "I love you too."

Josh was asleep within a few minutes.

Josh whined as he woke up to someone shaking him. He did not want to wake up right now. The baby wanted to snuggle with his Matty. He did not want to go anywhere.
"C'mon, Baby Boy," the baby heard Matt say while the man rubbed the back of his head, "it's time to wake up."

"Naw," Josh whine, curling up into a tight ball, he did not want to get up "sweepy."

"I know, Baby," Matt assured with a comforting voice, "but we gotta get up so we can eat and get to the court on time," they were already running late as it was. Matt did not have the heart to wake him up earlier than this.

Josh whimpered, suckling on his pacifier. He knew that he needed to go to the bail hearing with Matt, but he did not want to. The baby did not want to see his parents again, and he did not want to try and be big, and he just did not want to. He wanted to stay home and stay with Matt and watch a movie and play and walk the doggies, and he just wanted to stay home.

"C'mon, Baby Boy," Matt said, patting the baby's back, "let's get up and get ready."

Josh sniffled and raised his arms in a pick me up way, "okay, Sweet Boy, up we go." Matt grunted as he lifted the baby onto his hip, "big boy. I'm going to have to go back to the gym if I'm gonna keep lifting you up, Sweet Boy," Matt kissed his baby's head as the baby rested his head on Matt's shoulder.

"Good Boy," Matt praised, stroking the baby's hair and patting the baby's bum gently like a mother with a newborn baby.

Josh sighed and closed his eyes while Matt carried him to his room. The baby sighed when Matt placed him on his changing table. Matt unzipped his sleeper and changed his diaper as quickly as possible so that the baby did not get upset again. Matt dressed the baby in a plain red onesie so that the baby could eat without worry that he was going to ruin the dress clothes that he would have to wear for the bail hearing. Josh did not like the idea of wearing anything that was not comfy like his onesie and sweeties or sleepers. But he would not complain to Matt. The baby knew that it was not the man's fault.

"Let's go eat something, Baby," Matt told him.

The baby whined, he was not hungry. His tummy hurt. Josh whimpered and pointed to his tummy with an upset face, not able to find the words for how he was feeling.

"I know, Sweet Boy," Matt said with a sympathetic look, rubbing the baby's upset tummy, "but you need to eat somthing," Matt lifted the baby onto his hip, "even if it is somthing little."

Josh sniffled and hid in Matt's neck, "otay, 'atty."

"Good boy," Matt praised rubbing the baby's back and bouncing him.

Matt was able to get the baby food and get him to eat within twenty minutes, but the baby did not want to eat much. Matt was not going to fight with the baby. It was not worth it.

"Good job, Baby Boy," Matt praised, carrying the baby back into his room, "let's get you dressed, Baby Boy, and we have to hurry up. It's already 7:30," and they had to be at the courts at 8:30.

Josh nodded, holding onto the changing table as Matt helped him into the dress pants he had to wear. The did not like them, but he knew that he had to wear them, they were uncomfortable and a little too tight and Josh did not like it. The white dress shirt was a little bit better, but the baby thought that was because of the onesie that he was wearing underneath the shirt. If not, the buttons would scrape against his skin uncomfortably.
"No tie," Josh begged shifting his weight from one side to the other and lifting his hand up to his neck.

"No," Matt said, fixing the baby's collar so that he was down, "you don't have to wear a tie if you don't want to, Baby Boy."

Josh nodded, taking the pacifier out of his mouth and putting it in his pocket. The boy did not want to suck on it while in the courts, but he did not want to leave it behind. He could not.

"Do you want your badge?" Matt asked, already going to the dresser to grab the badge.

Josh nodded, and Matt put it around his neck.

"Fank 'oo,atty," Josh said, putting his badge into his shirt so that it did not show.

"Your welcome, Baby Boy," Matt hugged his baby rocking the baby from side to side. Josh needed it, "you ready, Baby?"

Josh gulped and shook his head, "let's get this over with," Josh said in a way that sounded more big than little.

... 

"There you are," Steven sighed in relief when Matt and Josh rushed into the main lobby of the courthouse ten minutes before the bail hearing. Steven was a bit anal when it came clients being on time and he got slightly nervous when someone was not early, especially when he told them to be early.

"Sorry," Matt apologized on behalf of him and Josh, "we're still ten minutes early," Matt smiled awkwardly.

"Okay, I just need to talk to you about a few things," Steven said motioning from them to stand next to Mike, Ian, and Amanda who were at the bench. Josh sat down on the bench beside Mike. Josh's leg wobbled up and down uncontrollably. He was nervous and scared, too nervous and scared to pay attention to whatever Steven was saying. That made him feel a little bit bad because he knew that he should not ignore what Steven and Matt were saying, but the boy could not help it. The boy was too scared and nervous. He was about to see his parents after a while of not seeing them, and it was so scary. The boy never wanted to see them again, ever. Josh started to rock himself back and forth slowly to try and soothe himself, but he could not calm himself.

Matt must have noticed Josh's anxiousness and placed a hand on his shoulder and rubbed Josh's shoulder in a soothing way. Josh leaned into Matt's ribs. He could not help it; Matt's touch was comforting and warm and safe.

Matt wrapped his arm around the boy and looked down. His poor boy was so scared, and there was no hiding it. Matt rubbed up and down Josh's arm to try and comfort him.

"Everything's gonna be okay, Buddy," Matt whispered in Josh's ear, "it won't take long, Baby then we can go back home."

"W-wanna go home," Josh muttered leaning into Matt's touch further, breathing starting to pick up.

All of the adults' hearts broke at the whispered words, "I know, Sweet Boy," Matt replied, squeezing Josh's shoulder and kissing the top of his head. Josh soaked up Matt's touch, breathing in and out to calm a little more.
"Josh," Steven said like he tried to get the boy's attention a few times. Josh looked up at the lawyer to show that he was now paying attention to him. Steven kneeled down so that he could look Josh in the eyes without towering over the boy and intimidating him further, "how do you want to enter the courtroom? Do you want to pass Miles and Corlynn or not?" Steven asked the boy, cocking his head to one side.

Josh shook his head; he did not want to see his parents let alone pass by them. Josh gulped and curled into himself and hid behind Matt.

"Okay, Baby," Matt said in a soothing tone, rubbing the boy's back, "we don't have to pass them, okay."

Josh nodded, wringing his hands and scratching at his skin out of habit. Josh felt someone place his hand over them to get Josh to stop scratching. Josh flinched but did not pull his hands back. The touch was friendly.

Steven stood and checked his watch and said, "it's time to go, guys," in a slightly regretful tone, grabbing his briefcase and waiting for them all to stand before he walked toward the courtroom.

Josh held onto Matt's hand tightly when he saw his parents. The boy tried to hide behind the man, his heart racing in his chest and his breathing picked up in fear.

"Everythings fine, Sweet Boy," Matt said, rubbing the boy's knuckles in a soothing manner, "we'll all be right here. We'll protect you."

Josh nodded as he sat down next to Matt at the plaintiff's table slouching slightly so that he could not see his parents and his parents could not see him. He was holding onto Matt's hand the whole time holding onto hope that Matt was right and that everyone would protect and that his parents whole never hurt him. Josh closed his eyes and trying to stop his racing thoughts.

... 

"Do you understand the charges brought forward to you," the judge, Judge Julia Hut, asked the couple at the defendant's table. She knew that she was supposed to be as neutral as humanly possible, but right now she could not. Not when she heard this case and saw all of the evidence.

"Yes."

"What do you plead?" Judge Hut asked, even though she knew what they were going to say.

"Not guilty," Muller said. Judge Hut saw the way that Josh flinched at the words.

They then moved onto the bail part of the hearing, and at the end, she hated that she had to grant them bail. She hated it, but she had to remain neutral. She had to think if this was any other case. She knew that she would grant bail in any other case. The fact that Corlynn was sick with a disabling condition and Miles owning a business she could not use that Miles has dual citizenship between the states and Canada as her only reason that she would not grant them bail. The states would bring Corlynn and Miles back if they tried to escape. She hated it, but she had to grant them bail. But it did not mean that she could not give them the highest bail amount possible in this case.

The bail was set at 50,000$.

Chapter End Notes
Okay, question do we want Mawmaw and Pawpaw to come and visit the baby next chapter or do we want Jessie and her littles.
Josh was restless, unable to sit still from the moment that he and Matt got home from the courthouse. Josh tried to stay still while Matt was changing his diaper and clothes but he could not. He was too upset.

"Stop squirming, Sweetie," Matt said, gently, knowing that the baby might not be able right now and feeling bad that he had to, but the man had to zip up the baby's sleeper. Josh rubbed the side of Josh's head to try and still the baby.

"I sowwy, 'atty," Josh pouted, suckling on his pacifier hard and wringing his hands and trying to be as calm as possible so that Matt could zip up his favorite blue, stary sleeper. The baby did not know why he was moving so much, but he could not stop.

"It's okay, Baby Boy," Matt reassured, rubbing the baby's tummy. Josh whined, kicking his legs and lifted his arms to ask Matt to pick.

"C'mere, Sweet Boy," Matt said, hoisting the baby on his hip. Josh wiggled around for a second before finding a comfortable spot on Matt "there you go," Matt whispered into the baby's ear, holding the baby's head to his shoulder with one arm under the baby's bum.

"Do you want something to eat, Baby?" Matt asked, even though he knew what the answer would be. Josh shook his head with a whine, hiding his face in the crook of Matt's neck.

Matt sighed, rubbing the baby's back to try and calm him down. The man knew that the baby needed to eat something, but at the same time, Matt did not want to fight the baby on this, not right now when Josh was so upset.

"How about a baba, Sweet Boy?" Matt asked, trying to get something in the baby.

Josh sniffled but nodded, "'tay, 'atty," the baby whimpered. A bottle sounded nice.

"Good boy," Matt prised, kissing the top of the baby's head, "let's get a baba then."

Matt was getting good at making a bottle one-handed, the man though in the back of his mind as he put the baby's bottle in the microwave to warm it up a little. Matt sat Josh in the counter so that he did not have to carry all of the baby's weight, but he was still holding the baby in a hug. Josh whined,
fidgeting around, thinking that Matt was going to put him down. The baby did not want Matt to put him down. Josh wanted Matt to hold him. The baby held onto Matt a little tighter and whimpered and buried his face into the man's chest.

"Shh, Baby Boy," Matt whispered into Josh's ear, running his hands through the baby's hair, scratching his scalp and rubbing Josh's back, "everything's okay, Sweet Boy. I got you. I got you," Matt rocked the baby from side to side.

Josh rubbed his hands anxiously, starting to sniffle again and tears came to the baby's eyes, "hey, hey, Baby Boy," Matt whispered in the baby's ear, "don't cry, Sweet Boy. Don't cry. I'm right here. Everything's okay."

Josh sniffled again and sighed when Matt picked him up and placed the baby on his hip. Josh rubbed his eyes and tried to stop his tears.

The microwave beeped, and Matt got the bottle out of the machine and screwed the nipple onto the bottle. Matt tried to carry the baby into the living room, but Josh was still squirming and whimpering. It was obvious that Josh was going to start crying soon if Matt did not do something to settle his fussy baby.

"C'mon, Baby Boy, let's try something," Matt told the baby, putting his bottle down on the side table that was beside the couch. The baby whimpered and let out a small cry, a few tears escaping his eyes. Josh did not want to try anything. He wanted to snuggle with his Matty and drink his bottle, and the baby did not want to be upset anymore, and he wanted to go to sleep. He did not want to try anything.

"It's okay, Baby Boy, it'll make you feel better," Matt promised and hoped that what he wanted to do would work to calm down the baby. He did not need to start sobbing. The baby needed to drink his bottle and take a nap. Hopefully, after the nap, Josh would feel better. Matt walked to his linen closet and pulled out a large, thin sheet that he could cover the baby up with, without him getting overheated.

"C'mon, Baby," Matt walked back into the living room, "I'm going to put you down on the couch, Sweet Boy," Matt proceeded to do just that and put the baby on the couch.

Josh sniffled, and tears entered his eyes again, "no," Josh shook his head and tried to reach out to Matt, but Matt would not pick him back up, "'atty," Josh whimpered making grabby hands inward the man. The baby wanted Matt to hold him. He did not want to be on the couch all by himself. The baby was lonely and upset and just wanted to snuggle.

Matt laid down that sheet down in a diamond shape and folded down one corner as fast as he could, his heart breaking when the baby started crying.

"Come here, Baby Boy," Matt said, gathering the baby in his arms and setting down on the ground. The baby was in his lap, Josh held onto the man and buried his face into Matt's shoulder. The baby squirmed around for a second, trying to get comfortable but the baby was not able to. Josh whimpered, and tears fell out of his eyes, "'atty," Josh whined, wanting his Matty to fix everything.

"C'mon, Baby Baby," Matt whispered soothingly into the baby's ear, "lay down on the blankie, and then we can get you in a nice swaddle."

"Swa'yle?" Josh asked, looking up at Matt with questing eyes.

"Yeah, Baby," Matt told him, whipping the baby's tears from his cheek, "then you can have your
baba, and then you can go to sleep.

Josh nodded and said, "tay, 'atty," in a small voice.

"Good boy," Matt praised, kissing the top of the baby's head. Matt helped the baby lay down so that his shoulders were on the fold. Josh whined and kicked his legs and squirmed, "Shh, Baby Boy," Matt said, running his hand through the baby's hair. Josh leaned into the man's touch and stopped moving so that Matt could swaddle him.

"There we go, Sweet Boy," Matt whispered, "let's put your arms to your chest," Matt ordered gently, guiding Josh's hands to his chest with his arms slightly bent. The man then crossed the left side of the blanket to the right side of the baby's body and tucked it under the baby snuggly. "Good boy," Matt praised again as he pulled the bottom of the blanket up to tuck it around the baby's right shoulder and under Josh's body, making sure that the baby had room to move his legs, so they did not hurt after a while. Matt then wrapped the right side of the sheet over the baby's left side much like he did with the other side. The excess blanket Matt pulled over the baby's shoulder and under his back then Matt tucked it into the front fold.

"There you go, Baby Boy," Matt praised with a small smile, rubbing the baby's head as he brought the baby to his chest, "Feel better?" Matt asked, hoping that the swaddle was working, even if it was just a little bit.

"Yea," Josh nodded, rubbing his face on Matt's chest and suckling on his pacifier a little harder. The tight swaddle brought the baby comfort and did not allow the baby to move around too much. "Baba?" the baby asked, looking up at Matt with begging eyes.

Matt smiled down at his baby, standing so that he could sit down on the couch. Matt held the baby to his chest and grabbed the baby bottle, happy that it was still warm, knowing that a warm bottle would calm the baby down better than a cold bottle.

The man took out the baby's pacifier out of his mouth and before the baby could even whine he placed the baby's bottle in his mouth. The baby cooed when the warm milk hit his tongue. Josh closed his eyes and relaxed into Matt's hold.

Matt smiled down at the baby and ran his hand through the baby's hair and patted the baby's back. The man would have to remember that swaddles worked for his baby boy.

The baby was done with his bottle within ten minutes, "there you go, Baby Boy. Good job, Sweetie," Matt said as he took the bottle out of the baby's mouth and put his pacifier in on swift, practiced movement.

"Go night-night, Baby Boy," Matt told him in a soothing voice. The baby was close to sleeping anyway. Josh cooed and hid his face into Matt's shoulder.

Josh was asleep within ten minutes.

...

Thirty minutes after Josh fell asleep, Matt was still holding him tightly, rubbing his back and playing with his hair. The man's phone rang. Luckily, the man had turned down the phone enough so that it would not wake the baby up. Matt did not want to risk wake the baby up by placing him down, so he answered his phone with a whispered, "Webb."

"Do you check your caller I.D., Son?" Matt's father's voice asked on the other line of the phone.
"What's a caller I.D.?” Matt asked, unable to hold back his sarcasm.

"You're on speaker," Matt's father informed him with a small chuckle.

"How was the bail hearing?” his mother asked with slight concern in her tone.

Matt knew that the question was coming, but he still sighed and looked down at his baby, who did not seem to be bothered by the phone call, "about as good as it could have gone," Matt said, "they were granted bail."

"Have they made it," Matt’s father asked, voice hard, angry that the judge would grant those monsters bail.

"No, not yet," Matt said, but there was not a doubt in Matt's mind that they would. They had more than enough money.

"What will you tell Josh if they make bail?” his mother asked.

"I don't know, Mom,” Matt answered the woman honestly, "I don't think I'll tell him anything. It would be better for him not to know."

Matt heard his father sigh and could almost see him nod.

"How is Josh?"

"Josh's napping on me right now,” Matt answered with a small smile as his baby moved his head as he heard Matt say 'Josh' in his sleep, "but he was so fussy and anxious when we got home, I ended up having to swaddle him to calm him down enough for him to take a bottle and sleep."

"Poor little guy," Matt's father, sighed, and Matt nodded, even though he knew that his mother and father could not see him.

"Do you want us to come over?” his mother asked, "to help you take care of him."

Matt thought about that for a second. Matt knew that he was fully capable of taking care of Josh when he was fussy or anxious, but that was not what his mother was saying. She was asking if Matt needed help. Which, if he was honest with himself, he did. The man had no idea how he was going to do anything if Josh acted as clingy as he did when they first got home. Plus, the baby needed a lot of support right now, would throughout the whole trial. Josh would get much more support if it were from all of Matt's family and friend than just Matt alone, so Matt said, "sure, come on over," in a happy tone.

"We'll be over soon," his mother and father said at the same time. Matt could not help but chuckle at his parent's response.

The man looked down at his baby once again and ran his fingers through the baby's hair, "I hope you wake up soon, Sweet Boy," Matt rearranged them gently so that Matt was laying down on his back with the baby on top of him, knowing that this position would be more comfortable for the both of them while they waited for Matt's parents to show up.

"Mawmaw and Pawpaw are coming over."
More Mawmaw and Pawpaw next chapter, lovis. See you then.
BTW can we talk about how Matt has a baby IRL! I'm so happy for him!
Life Lost... and found CH 20

Chapter Summary

Mawmaw and Pawpaw play with the baby and Matt get some bad news.

Chapter Notes

It's been so long. Too long. Dammit school

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As promised, Mawmaw and Pawpaw came over about an hour and a half later. Lucky for them, the baby was up and eating lunch, but Matt was having trouble getting the baby to eat.

“C’mon, Josh. Eat, Baby Boy,” Matt practically begged the boy.

“Don’ wanna, ‘atty,” Josh whimpered with a trembling lip, tears coming to his eyes. He did not want to eat, he was not hungry. Why couldn’t his Matty understand that?

“You have to eat something, Sweet Heart,” Mawmaw said, running his hand through the baby’s hair.

“No hungwy, Maw,” Josh whimpered, curling up into himself slightly.

“Hey, Kiddo,” Pawpaw spoke up, “do you want to play with Mawmaw and Pawpaw?”

“Yeah,” Josh said.

“Then you gotta eat, Kiddo,” Pawpaw said, rubbing up and down the baby’s back almost wincing when he could still feel the baby’s ribs.

Josh whimpered, he did want to play with Mawmaw and Pawpaw. He wanted Pawpaw to help build with blocks. He wanted Mawmaw to play with the animals with him. But the baby did not want to eat. Not at all. Pawpaw said that he had to eat to play with them.

“C’mon, Buddy, let’s eat some then we can play,” Pawpaw said, taking the spoon from the bowl and brought the spoon to the baby’s mouth. Josh seemed to weight his options for a second before he opened his mouth and took the bite of rice. Josh chewed slowly and swallowed.

“Good boy,” Matt praised the baby with a yawn. The young man blinked several times and rubbed his hand across his face. Matt was exhausted, both mentally and physically. He did not sleep at all last night, not after Josh came in. The man had been too worried about his baby to sleep. Now, after the bail hearing and the baby being fussy, Matt could barely keep his eyes open. Matt was about to go to sleep when Josh woke up. Matt sighed. He would have to go to bed when the baby did tonight or else he would never get enough sleep.

“Son,” Matt’s mom addressed her son.
“Yeah?” Matt asked, sitting up a little straighter, looking at his mother.

“Do you need to sleep?” the woman asked, knowing that Matt was exhausted with everything that happened today.

“I’m fine, Mom,” Matt assured the woman, even though he knew that it would do him some good to rest, but he could not leave his parents to watch over Josh. That would not be fair to them.

“Matt,” his mother, turned to him with a serious look on his face and Matt was suddenly transported back over twenty years ago when he was a little kid and his mom had to explain to him why taking naps were important.

“Go rest for a while, your dad and I will be fine with the baby,” his mother promised in a firm tone.

Matt looked over at his baby, who was finally smiling as his Pawpaw was making plane noises with the spoon before feed the baby. The baby finally seemed to be relaxing with Matt’s parents around. Maybe Matt could take a short, little nap while the baby was in the care of his parents.

After a long yawn, Matt gave in and said, “okay, okay, yeah. I’m going,” Matt stood, trying his best to make sure that the baby did not notice that he went into his room to rest. Matt did not want to upset the baby if the baby saw him leaving the room.

After a few seconds when the baby was almost done eating, Josh finally noticed that something was wrong. Something was missing. Matty was not there! Where was Matty? “’a-atty?” Josh asked his Mawmaw and Pawpaw with a pout. The baby wanted his Matty.

“Aww, Josh,” Mawmaw started, rubbing the baby’s check, “Matty’s just taking a nap,” the woman explained.

“’atty s’eepy?” Josh asked, cocking his head to the right, concerned that his Matty was not sleeping. His Matty needed to sleep, like Josh needed to sleep.

“Yeah, Matty’s very sleepy,” Pawpaw told the baby, the older man having noticed his son’s exhaustion as well.

“So it’s going to be you, Pawpaw, and Mawmaw for a while, Little One,” Mawmaw said with a small smile.

Josh surprised them by smiling a little too. “We pway?” the baby asked, a little bit nervous about being around just his Mawmaw and Pawpaw without his Matty. They were his Mawmaw and Pawpaw, through, they were Matty’s parents. They were nice and never hurt him, and Matt trusted them enough to leave the baby alone with them. Plus, Matty was probably in his room. If something went wrong, Josh could go get his Matty from his room and be with Matty.

“After you eat a few more bites of your rice,” Pawpaw told him, spooning another bite and lifting the spoon to the baby mouth. Josh nodded, wanting to play with Mawmaw and Pawpaw, and opened his mouth to accept more of the food.

“Good boy,” Pawpaw praised.

…

“Do you want something to drink, Little One?” Mawmaw asked the baby as he and Pawpaw set up some cars after the baby had exactly said that he wanted to “wace caws wif Mawmaw and Pawpaw, pwea.” Who could resist that when the baby gave them his puppy eyes.
“G’ape duice, pwea, Mawmaw,” Josh asked politely.

Mawmaw smiled at the little boy and said, “sure, Little One. Do you want a sippy cup or bottle?”

“Sippy,” the baby answered, “baba fow night-night milk,” Josh explained.

“Is that so, Joshy?” Pawpaw asked with a smile.

“Yeah, ‘atty say so,” Josh told them, and that was all that mattered wasn’t it? Matty said so.

“And you have to listen to Matty, don’t we?” Mawmaw said, handing the baby his sippy cup of grape juice.

Josh nodded in agreement with a smile, “fank ‘oo, Mawmaw,” Josh took a drink before sitting the sippy cup down.

“We pway now, pwea?” Josh asked pointing at his cars. The baby wanted to race with his Mawmaw and Pawpaw. Matty liked to play the game and they played before going to bed sometimes. Fred like to play the game too. The puppy would lay down with his paws right out in front of him with his little, pink tongue sticking out at the end of his play rug that looked like a race track, much like he was now. When Josh or anyone else rolled the car down the play rug Fred would wag his tail and push the cars back. Sometime that made it hard to tell who really won, but it was amusing to watch the puppy having fun.

“Weady,” Josh said while laying on his tummy with his hand on his car while Mawmaw and Pawpaw sat up with both of their hands on their own cars, “steady,” Josh pushed his car back a little bit, “go!” the baby exclaimed, making sure not to be too loud so that he did not wake up Matty. The boy and grandparents pushed their cars down the play carpet. Fred pushed back Pawpaw’s blue car, making the baby’s pink car and Mawmaw’s yellow car go further than Pawpaw’s.

“Mawmaw win,” the baby clapped with giggle.

“Rematch,” Pawpaw said, “this time I’m beating Mawmaw,” the man chuckled, pointing at his wife. Mawmaw smiled.

They raced a few more times, each time either the baby or Mawmaw winning, but never Pawpaw. Fred seemed to have it out for the blue car and always pushed that one back so that it could never win.

“Fred has something against this car,” Pawpaw said this a smirk, holding up his car. As if to proof Pawpaw’s point Fred growled at the car.

“I twade wif Pawpaw?” The baby asked, holding out his car to the man.

“Sure, Little One,” Pawpaw said, ruffling the baby’s hair and trading cars with the baby.

“Weady, steady, and go,” the baby said again, they all pushed their cars. Instead of going after the blue car, Fred went after Pawpaw’s pink car. Josh giggled and Mawmaw laughed at the puppy’s antics.

“I don’t think Fred likes me very much,” Pawpaw said jokingly. Fred sat up and cocked his head innocently to the right, as if he was doing nothing wrong. Josh gasped at what Pawpaw said, as if it should be a crime for someone to not like his Pawpaw. Nobody should not like his Pawpaw. His Pawpaw was nice. He played with baby and fed him and Pawpaw and Matty’s dad. He was good.
“I’m just joking, Munchkin,” Pawpaw said with a smile, looking down at the baby.

Josh’s face scrunches up, “I no mun’skin. I a big boy,” Josh pointed to himself. He was a big boy.

“Is that so?” Pawpaw asked, smile getting bigger.

“Yeah!” Josh exclaimed, opening up his arms.

“Tell him, Joshy,” Mawmaw said, running her hand through the baby’s hair, “said ‘I’m Mawmaw, Pawpaw, and Matty’s big boy.’”

Josh smiled, “I Mawmaw, Pawpaw, and ‘atty’s big boy,” Josh repeated Mawmaw’s sentence, loving the thought of being their big boy.

They raced a few more times, trying everything that they could to get Fred to stop going after Pawpaw’s cars. Getting new cars or trading cars did not work, neither did moving spots with the baby or Mawmaw. Nothing worked!

While his family in the living room were trying to figure out how to get Fred to leave Pawpaw’s car alone, Matt was in his room sleeping peacefully until his phone on the bedside table rang. Matt jolted up and ran his hand over his face. Once he realized that his phone was ringing he sluggishly reached out for his phone and grabbed it. The man answered it without checking the caller ID.

“Webb,” Matt answered sleepily, rubbing his eyes.

“They made bail.”

Chapter End Notes

Mawhahahahahahahahahaha cliffhanger.
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Fluff written on my phone because I’m the dumbass who forgets her laptop charger at home when I was packing to come back to school. :(

Chapter Notes

This chapter is almost completely pure fluff, then we get back into drama.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"What?" Matt whispered into the phone, shocked. He really should not be that shocked. The man knew that the Ramsay’s had both money and connections, but that did not make the news that they made bail any easier to process.

"They made bail, Matt," Mike repeated, knowing that his friend had to be in shock by the news, "they posted about an hour ago."

"Why are we just hearing about it now?" Matt asked, voice raising slightly, angry that they did not find out about it sooner.

"Your guess is as good as mine, Dude," Mike said bitterly, just as angry as Matt was. They were supposed to be the first to know when the Ramsay’s posted bail. After a sigh from Matt, Mike asked, "what are you going to tell Josh?"

"Nothing," Matt said, "it’ll be better for him if he does not know," and it would be. It would terrify his poor baby if he knew that his parents made bail and were now out and about and could find them at any time. Matt did not want his baby to be scared anymore. If it took lying to the baby to make him feel safe, that is what Matt would do

"Do you want us to post someone outside your house, just in case?" Mike asked the younger man, even though he knew what the answer would be.

"No," Matt shook his head, "if Josh notices, then he’ll have questions, and I can protect him if need be."

"I thought you would say that," Mike said, not liking it but accepting if for now, "just, call if you need anything."

"Okay."

"And I mean anything," Mike stressed.

"I will."

"Even if it's three in the morning and it's hailing with thunder and lightning..."
"I understand, Mom," Matt interrupted the older man's mother-henning, "cross my heart."

"You better."

Matt sighed once again, then the man remembered something, "hey, do you want to come over for dinner sometime?"

Mike was taken aback by the question but said, "yeah sure. Why?"

"Because I don't like you company, Ayley," Matt said sarcastically, rolling his eyes, "plus Josh's been asking about his 'Uncle Mikey' for a couple of days now. He wants to see you. Preferably not just in a court room."

Mike could not hold back the smile if he tried, "sure, I can come over tomorrow night, if that's not a problem."

"Of course not, see you tomorrow night."

Matt hung up.

The man then decided that it was time to go back and be with his family. He got out of bed and promised himself that he was not going to think about Miles and Corlyn, and that he would make sure that his baby would not have to think about them, until the trial.

"'atty!" Josh exclaimed when the man walked into the living room. The baby ran up to the man and engulfed him in a hug.

Matt smiled at the baby, and saw his parents do the same, as he lifted the baby on to his hip and held the baby tightly. Josh hid his face in Matt's neck and wrapped his arms around Matt's neck and his legs around Matt's waist. Matt rubbed the baby's back.

"Hey, Baby Boy," Matt greeted with a smile, "if this is how you are going to react every time I wake up from a nap, I'm going to have to take them more often."

"Naw," Josh whined with a pout, shaking his head.

"No what?" Matt asked looking down at the baby and chuckling softly.

"No nap. Miss you," Josh leaned in a little closer to Matt.

Matt sighed, "I guess no more naps for me then, eh?" he asked the baby as if he was disappointed that he could not take naps anymore.

"Naw. No mowe nap," Josh agreed shaking his head once again with a serious look on his face.

"You would like that rule for you, wouldn't you?" Matt teased, kissing the top of the baby's head. The baby smiled, not saying anything, but agreeing. Josh was not a fan of naps, even if he was tired.

"So, what have you guys been up too?" Matt asked, trying his attention back to his parents.

"Just playing cars with the little man," Matt's father informed him, pointing at the baby in his son's arms.

"Yeah," Josh interjected lifting his head from Matt's shoulder, "We wace caws 'nd Fwed push Pawpaw's caw back evwy time. Pawpaw say Fwed no wike 'im," Josh said in a rush with a big smile.
"Sounds like so much fun, Baby Boy," Matt said with a wide smile to match his baby's.

"It was," Josh said with a nod.

Matt smiled, his belief that it was the right thing not to tell Josh about his parents supported now that he saw how happy the baby was. Matt could not take away that happiness.

... 

The next day, Josh was extremely excited about his Uncle Mikey coming over for lunch and possibly staying for dinner. So excited that he was arguing with his Matty about rather he would take a nap after lunch or not during his morning change when the man brought it up.

"Just because you said Matty can't take naps anymore doesn't mean that you don't have to, Baby Boy," Matt told the diaper clad baby who was on the changing table as he went to the baby's closet to pick out a couple outfits for the baby to choose from as he always did in the mornings.

"But Unca' Mikey gonna be hewe, 'atty," Josh pouted, trying to look at his Matty with his puppy dog eyes, but Matt's back was turned to him so he could not see the baby.

Matt made sure to hide his amused smile before he turned to the baby. The man wanted to nip this tiny argument in the bud, even though the man was, in a way, happy that the baby was arguing with him. All littles argued with their caregivers over (sometimes silly) things, to Matt it was a good sign. It showed that the little had a mind of their own and was not afraid of their caregivers. As long as a caregiver was not too permissive and did not give into everything that the little wanted (even though Matt had to admit he was a little on the permissive side with Josh, but how could anyone blame the man) it should be fine.

"You don't want to be a grumpy boy for Uncle Mikey, do you?" Matt asked the baby, knowing what the answer would be from the baby.

Josh shook his head, "no," he did not want to be grumpy for his Uncle Mikey. He wanted to be a good boy.

"Then you have to take a nap, Baby Boy," Matt told the baby firmly, "period."

Josh huffed and pouted in only the way that a little who did not get their own way knew how to. Matt could not stop the smile that overtook his face if he wanted to. Josh, on the other hand, did not see anything funny with the situation at hand and pouted even harder and furrowed his eyebrows.

"Your face is going to get stuck like that, Baby Boy," Matt said, rubbing the baby's cheek.

"Nu-uh," Josh argued with a small huff, not giving up his pouty, angry look.

"You know who like pouty babies?" Matt asked, raising his left eyebrow.

Josh, ever so curious, made a small noise of question.

"The Tickle Monster," Matt whispered, as if telling a scary secret. The baby's eyes widened and he did the no sign, not trusting himself to open his mouth. The baby did not want to giggle.

"Yes he does," Matt said with a nod taking out what Josh called 'tickle monster hands', "and he's gonna get'ch, get'ch, get'ch, get'ch, get'ch," Matt tickled the baby's exposed tummy. Josh tried not to giggle for as long as he could. The baby could not stand the wrath of the Tickle Monster, though, and he was soon giggling loudly. The baby squirmed the try and get away, but it was no use.
"Naw mowe," the baby giggled out.

"No more pouty baby?" Matt asked, serouly.

"Naw mowe, naw mowe," Josh told the man.

"Promise?" Matt asked, cocking his head as if he did not believe the baby. Josh nodded and crossed his heart. Matt chuckled.

"Good because Matty only wants the see his happy boy today," Matt told the baby.

"I 'atty's happy boy," Josh said with a big smile, "pwomise."

"Good baby," Matt praised, kissing the baby's forehead, "let's get the rest of the way ready, okay."

"Tay, 'atty," Josh nodded looking over at his clothing choices, "wanna wear beaw, pwea" the baby pointed to the pair of coveralls that Jessie got him that Matt was going to put over a plan baby blue t-shirt.

"Got it, Baby."

"C'n I walk the doggies wifout the stwollew aday, pwea, 'atty," the baby asked nicely, wanting to help walk Bennie and Fred like a big boy.

"You think you can walk all of that outside, Baby Boy?" Matt asked as he helped the baby into his shirt.

"Yeah, 'atty," Josh stated with a nod, "I a big boy."

Oh no, here Josh comes with the 'I'm a big boy' statements. Next thing Matt knew, Josh would want to get himself dressed or he would want to feed himself. Matt silently prayed to whatever God was up there that those things did not happen anytime soon.

"Sure, Baby Boy."

...

Mike came over at about 11, a time that he knew that Matt and Josh would be done walking the dogs with enough time before lunch for Mike to play with the baby some. Mike had, honestly, missed the baby. The bail hearing did not really count as "seeing" the baby because he had been so scared and nervous that he did not talk to anyone.

Mike knocked on the door. Through the door he heard barking then, "Joshua Keeler Webb, don't you dare open that door," Matt scolded the baby. Mike could barely hold back a laugh as he imagined Matt's serious face.

"I sowwy, 'atty. I won't," said a very sorry sounding baby.

Fianly the door opened to reveal both Matt and Josh.

"Unca' Mikey," Josh bounced on his toes, happy to see the man again. Once Matt invited Mike in, Josh held out his arms to ask for a hug. Mike happily accepted the hug.

"Where did the whole 'Uncle Mikey' thing come from?" Mike asked no-one in paricular.

Matt shrugged, "I think he heard Sammie and Tim call me Uncle Matt and applied the title to you."
Mike smiled, happy to be the baby's uncle, "does this make he the cool uncle?" Mike asked, breaking the hug with the baby.

Josh nodded with a smile while Matt snorted and said, "you're too much of a mother hen to be a 'cool uncle', Ayley."

"Shut it, Webb," Mike glared at the younger man, making sure to keep his language as PG as possible for the baby.

Deciding to ignore the adults' bickering, Josh asked, "c'n Unca' Mikey play hide-'nd-see wif us, pwea, 'atty?"

"I think that's a question for Uncle Mikey, Baby" Matt told the baby, pointing over at the older man, wanting Josh to get used to talking to more people.

"C'n you pway wif us, Unca' Mikey?" Josh asked in a sweet voice, using his puppy dog eyes on Mike.

Mike chuckled at the baby and his puppy eyes, "sure, Kiddo."

"Yay," Josh bounced up and down on his toes and clapped happily, "'atty count.

"Hey, isn't it your turn to count isn't, Baby?" Matt asked the baby with a raised eyebrow.

"I count next time, pwomise," Josh told the man.

Matt rolled his eyes but said "fine" and covered his eyes and started counting down from ten loudly.

Josh and Mike ran in separate directions. Josh ran into his Matty's room and hid under Matty's bed. After his Matt got done counting, he started loudly proclaiming where in the house he was going. He checked Josh's room, the bathroom, and kitchen but did not find anyone.

"Where o where is Joshy," Matt asked out loud. Josh tried not to giggle, even tough by Matt's ramblings he still coming from the kitchen. Josh would like to keep it that way.

Bennie then barked and Josh could hear her paws get closer. Oh no, she was going to give away his hide out again.

"Go, Ben," Josh told the dog, trying to push her face out of the way gently, not wanting his Matty to find him because of Bennie.

But it was too late for the baby, and the covers hagging over the side of the bed were pulled up and the baby could see his Matty smiling face.

"Got you, Baby Boy," Matt said with a smile.

"Bennie gave it away again," the baby whined with a pout.

Matt chuckled, helping the baby out from under his bed, "well now you can help me find Uncle Mikey."

The baby smiled, liking the idea of finding his Uncle Mikey with his Matty. The baby thought for a second. Mike was not in the living room, kitchen, his room, or either of the bathrooms, Matt checked. He was not in the laundry room, there was not place to hide in there. That only left the spare room.
"Spawe woom, 'atty," Josh told the man confidently.

"You think so," Matt asked with a smile. He had such a smart boy.

Josh nodded then took off in the direction of that room with Matt as quickly as possible without making a sound.

Once they got into the room, it was easy to deduce the Mike was in the closet because it was opened a crack.

"Gotcha, Unca' Mikey," the baby smiled brightly at the man when his Matty opened the closet door.

"Oh man," Mike said jokingly, "looks like you did, smart boy," Mike ruffled the baby's hair. Josh giggled.

"Okay, Joshy, go into the living room and count," Matt ordered. Josh nodded and rushed to listen to his Matty.

The game continued like this until Matt had to go fix lunch, then it was just Josh and Mike until lunch time.

Josh loved it.

Chapter End Notes

Did not realize that I made a cross my heart reference until my friend told me. Also, yes, Matt ment to call Josh 'Joshua Keeler Webb' when he got onto him.
“It’s time for your nap now, Baby Boy,” Matt told the baby often after he let Josh play for about thirty minutes after lunch with his Uncle Mikey.

“Aww,” Josh whined with a pout and putting his toys down, “I no tiwed, ‘atty,” the baby complained, even though he was starting to feel sleepy. As if his body wanted to prove Josh wrong, he let out a big yawned and rubbed his eyes without thinking about it.

“I’m sure you are not, Baby,” Matt said sarcastically, putting his hands on hips. Josh pouted. It was worth the try to get out of a nap even though he knew that he would never get out a nap on Matt watch. “C’mon, Sweet Boy, say night-night to Uncle Mikey and lets go to sleep.”

Josh nodded and turned to Mike, “night, Uncle Mikey,” Josh opened up his arms to ask for a hug from the man. Mike hugged Josh for a few seconds and said-

“Night, Kiddo. See you in a while.”

Josh waved to his Uncle Mikey and crawled over to his Matty and raised his arms in the classic ‘carry me’ position. Matt smiled and lifted the baby onto his hip. “Good Boy,” Matt praised the baby and kissed the side of his head. Josh smiled shyly and suckled on his fingers while resting his head on his Matty’s shoulder.

Matt placed the baby down on the changing table to quickly change the baby’s wet diaper. After, he placed the baby in the bed and tucked the baby into his bed snuggly. Matt took the baby’s fingers out of the baby’s mouth and placed a pacifier into his mouth and the baby held his stuffed monkey close to his chest.

“’atty, c’n sing, pwea?” Josh asked the man kindly with puppy dog eyes, knowing that Matt sometimes did not sing to him because he stayed up to listen to Matt sing because he loved Matt’s singing.

“Will you sleep?” Matt asked, with an amused smile. Josh nodded, closing his eyes tightly, smiling when he heard Matt’s giggle. Josh felt the bed dip and Matt wrapped the baby in his arms. Josh rested his head on Matt’s chest, loving the warmth that spread through his body. “You’re a cutie,” Matt told the baby as if it was a fact.


To say I love you back to the baby, Matt started singing in a comforting tone-

“And I’d give up forever to touch you  
’Cause I know that you feel me somehow  
You’re the closest to heaven that I’ll ever be  
And I don't want to go home right now”
Josh relaxed his face and gave a small smile. He really liked this song. It was one of the last songs that he listened to with his Daddy. The song reminded Josh of the good memories of his Daddy. Though Matt did not know that, he just knew that Josh liked the song.

“And all I can taste is this moment
And all I can breathe is your life
And sooner or later it's over
I just don't wanna miss you tonight
And I don't want the world to see me
’Cause I don't think that they'd understand
When everything's meant to be broken
I just want you to know who I am”

Josh hummed and squirmed, trying not to fall asleep so that he could listen to his Matty. Josh cracked open his eyes for a second before he closed his eyes again because he could not keep his eyes open.

“And you can't fight the tears that ain't coming
Or the moment of truth in your lies
When everything feels like the movies
Yeah you bleed just to know you're alive”

Josh yawned and started to slowly doze off. After Matt sang the chorus again, the baby was asleep. Matt smiled down at the baby, “you really were sleep, weren't you, Sweet Boy,” he said mostly to himself and kissing the baby on the top of the head. Matt stood slowly so that he did not wake the baby.

…

After about an hour and a half of sleeping Josh woke up. He was completely big. The man squirmed around for a second before pulling off his covers, and taking his pacifier out of his mouth. He placed it on one of the shelves of his changing table and he left his monkey on his bed. The man then went to his closet to pick out an outfit that was more “adult” than the shirt and diaper that he was currently wearing. He picked out a blue shirt, light grey zip hoodie, and a pair of sweets. Matt kept it a little bit cold in the house, but Josh did not mind. It was the perfect excuse the wear comfy, warm clothes that the man (and baby) loved to wear. Plus, it was a good excuse to cuddle and hide under a blanket. The man also grabbed a diaper because it would be better to be safe than sorry. He made sure to pick out a diaper that was thicker than the one that he picked out a few days ago. He did not want to leak again and he squirmed a little bit at that thought.

Josh quickly changed and threw his dirty clothes in the hamper and his soiled diaper in the trash like Matt always did when the man was little. Josh ran his fingers through his hair to try and fix it, but it did not work. Maybe Matt was right, he did need a haircut. Thought he knew that he little side would never admit it, especially since he was not a big fan of haircuts. Josh always argued with Hunter about getting haircuts, saying that they were going to hurt. The man shivered as he remembered how his mother really would make haircuts hurt by pulling hard at his hair.

Josh gulped and breathed, trying not to go completely back to that time just days ago. “I’m with Matt,” Josh said out loud to himself, something that Hunter taught him to do a long time ago. ‘I’m not out on the streets, I’m with Hunter, he won’t get mad at me for being little and Hunter won’t hurt me,’ is the sentence that Hunter taught him to say whenever he would get too scared or would go back to him time out on the streets or with his parents when his parent would say hurtful things to him. “I’m not with my parents, I’m with Matt. Matt won’t hurt me,” Josh finished the modified
statement, so that it would bring him back to the present. It worked, but Josh still wanted some more proof that Matt was still there (AKA he wanted Matt). The man walked into the living room and looked around for Matt. He saw Matt immediately, but he did not know what to do. Not used to being big around Matt yet. Plus, Mike was here. Josh knew that Mike was not going to do anything to him. Mike was nothing but nice to Josh when he was little, but he was still shy around him.

Matt felt Josh enter the room, and Matt turned to see Josh standing there with different clothes than when he fell asleep, though Matt could see that Josh was wearing a diaper by the diaper bulge. There was something more adult about the man.

Matt smiled, knowing that Josh was a little bit more nervous when he was big than when he was little. It was like he did not know what to do, and Matt wanted to make the man as comfortable as possible.

“C’mere, Man,” Matt said, patting the seat next to him, “me and Mike are watching some hockey.”

“Mike and I,” Josh said under his breath, as if he did not mean to say to.

Matt could not help the smirk at the correction. Matt knew that Josh had a habit of correcting people when they used incorrect grammar, even in little space he would kind of cringe when someone used bad grammar around him and he would correct it under his breath much like he just did now (even though he had a worlds cutest lisp when he was little). It was like it physically pained him when he heard bad grammar.

“What did you say?” Matt asked as Josh made his way over to sit in between Matt and Mike.

Josh blushed bright red and said, “n-nothing,” Matt and Mike scoffed and shook their heads before turning their attention to the game.

Josh did not seem to like hockey that much, quickly becoming board with the game. Josh bounced his leg and looked around the room for anything to do but be board with the game. He looked over at the piano and had a really strong urge to play it. Matt had let Josh play the piano whenever he wanted to when he was little, and he even let him play his guitar. “I think you play the guitar better than I do, Baby,” Matt had said the first time Josh had played it. Josh had smiled shyly and looked down at the floor.

Josh pulled on Matt’s shirt to try and get the man’s attention. Matt’s turned from the T.V. when felt a pull on his shirt. Matt wrapped an arm around his shoulders, “what’s up, Man?” Josh silently pointed at the piano, asking to play it without saying the words. Matt had expected Josh to ask to do something else that was not watching the game. Josh seemed not to be as interested in it as Matt and Mike were, if at all. It did not surprise Matt that Josh did not like sports.

“Sure, Buddy,” Matt said, patting the man’s shoulder. Josh smiled like he was promised all the money in the world.

“Thanks, Matt.”

Josh bounced up from the couch and walked swiftly over to the piano and started to play his favorite song to play on the piano, well, it was Hunter’s favorite song and it quickly became his favorite song. Anemone jumped onto the piano to listen to the man play. Josh paused momentarily in his playing to scratch behind her ears.

After a minute of playing the piano, Josh felt a presence to the side of him. He looked over to see Mike. Josh smiled at the older man and moved down the bench to allow Mike room to sit down next
to the younger man and let him finish his song.

“I’ve never heard that,” Mike told him to try and start a conversation, “what’s it called?”

“Brother,” Josh answered, “it’s by Road Hawgs. Uh, d-do you know how to play any songs?”

“A few,” Mike told the man, placing his hands on the piano, “tell me if you recognize this.”

Mike played Dm7 four times in quarter notes then played the b-flat chord four times, three quarter notes and one eighth note that the and was played as an A. then Mike played the F chord four times in quarter before playing the Dsus2 four times. He then repeated the chords from the start. Josh recognized the song immediately, but he had never played it on the piano.

Well, now was a good enough time to try.

Josh placed his hands on the piano just in time to start playing. One would believe that the two had been playing the song together for a while, but one would also assume that Josh had played the song before. Assumptions were funny, Josh thought. Even though Josh was playing the lyrical part of the song, he did not start singing until the chorus because he wanted to make sure that he was playing the song right. And, maybe because he still got shy while singing in front of people.

“Nobody said it was easy
It’s such a shame for us to part
Nobody said it was easy
No one ever said it would be this hard
Oh take me back to the start”

Josh sang quietly at first, but soon he was singing at an appropriate volume to match the piano playing. Josh could feel Matt watching them. Josh smiled as he pictured the small smile that was playing on his lips.

By the middle of the second verse, Josh missed up the lyrics with a look on his face-

“Tell me you love me
Come back and something
Oh and something, something
I don’t know this part
I’m sorry,”

All three of the men laughed at Josh’s mistake but soon Josh was singing the lyrics correctly and Josh and Mike finished the song. The younger of the two played a little impromptu melody with a small smile.

“Now that’s just showing off,” Mike playfully scolded the younger man, pushing him gently by the shoulder. Josh laughed, surprising Mike by pushing him back. He was about to play something else when he heard Matt behind him say-

“I didn’t know you knew that song, Buddy.”

“I don’t, uh-uh I least I di-didn’t. Uh, O-on the the on the piano I mea-mean,” Josh stammered on the explanation with a small blush.

“That was the first time you played that?” Matt asked with a surprised look on his face. Matt knew that Josh was a good musician, but he did not know that he was that good of a musician. Josh nodded an affirmative.
“So, let me get this straight,” Mike started, “the first time you play a song on the piano, you do it perfectly, but the lyrics that you have had to have heard a few times, you screw up?”

Josh’s blush got a little bit deeper, “oh, shut it. Lyrics are hard,” the man muttered under his breath while looking down at his lap and wringing his hands. The two other men chuckled at the explanation.

“Any other songs?” Josh asked.

Mike nodded, “just don’t mess up the lyrics.”

Josh pouted up at the older man, but soon smiled when he once again recognized the song that Mike was playing.

…

“Josh, trash!” Matt shouted from the kitchen after dinner.

“I would hope you had a higher opinion of me,” Josh said back, walking into the kitchen with a smirk.

Matt rolled his eyes at the man’s humor, “you know what I mean,” Matt said.

Josh looked up as if he was thinking before he said, “no, I don’t think so,” with a small smirk.

Matt sighed, looking down at the sink that both he and Mike were doing the dishes at, “I adopted you why again?” Matt looked back at the other man to wait for whatever answer Josh would come up with.

Josh shrugged, “I think there’s still time to give me back,” the man said while going to the trash ben and tying the bag full of trash so that he could take it outside.

“No way, Buddy. You’re stuck with me.”

“I don’t get a say in this?”

“Nope,” Matt popped the ‘P”

“Bugger,” Josh said picking up the trash and carrying it outside.

“Just don’t runaway!” Matt shouted.

“I’ll think about it.”

“Are you two always like this?” Mike asked, with a small smile on his face.

Matt seemed to consider that a moment before he said, “pretty much.”

Mike chuckled with a small shake of his head. Matt turned to put a plate away, but then he heard a blood curdling scream that came from outside. Goosebumps broke out on Matt’s arms and he dropped the plate. He did not care when he heard it shatter. Matt rushed outside after grabbing his hidden gun. Mike was right on his heels. Both knowing who screamed and terrified to find out why.
Sorry for the cliffy, but I do love them so.
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

"NO it's not! It's not okay!" Josh screamed, then shook his head, "it won't ever be okay," Josh's voice cracked as tears entered his eyes.

Chapter Notes

Angry Josh in this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Are you two always like this?” Josh smirked as he heard Mike ask the question. The man was tempted to answer, but he was supposed to be taking out the trash like Matt asked. Plus, Matt was answering the question.

Everyday Matt asked Josh to do one or two chores for him, not that Josh minded. To Josh chores were much better than where he came from. Plus, Josh was used to them. Hunter had Josh to chores too.

Josh sighed at that thought. He honestly tried to keep Hunter off his mind as much as possible, but today for whatever reason, he just kept popping up in his mind. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that everything always reminded Josh of Hunter, especially Matt. Matt was just like Hunter. The only big differences was that Hunter was the more strong silent type and Matt talked a lot more and Matt was a lot more sarcastic and bickered with big Josh on things. Other than that, Josh could not pinpoint a big difference between the two. That made keeping Hunter off of his mind so hard because Matt would do things that Hunter would do. Letting Josh sleep with him and picking him up and carrying him. Josh loved all of that, but he could not help but get slightly sad went he thought about it too much, so he tried not to think about it too much, he would rather ignore it all than be sad.

The boy shook his head and took a deep and calming breath, trying to get everything off of his mind. It worked for the most part. Josh opened up the big trash can lid and placed the bag inside. He then closed the lid and turned back around with his hands in his pocket. The man was about to start walking back home, but he saw something in front of him and he froze.

Josh felt his chest tighten, and he could not help the scream that ripped through his throat. His mother was right there. Josh stepped back when his mother stepped toward him. Josh looked around, expecting to see his father somewhere, but to Josh's relief his father was nowhere to be found.

“No, no, Babe. Don’t be scared. Mommy’s here, you’re safe.”

What was his mother talking about? Of course he should be scared, his mother, the person that helped lock him in a cold, dark room for eight years and let men and women use him in more ways than one. And now that woman was right in front of him, he was not safe. He was scared. The boy wanted Matt. Matt would make everything nice and safe and not scary again. To Josh's relief, both Matt and Mike came running outside with their guns drawn. While the guns scared the man a little
bit, he was too relieved to have them around to be scared by the guns.

"Matty," Josh nearly whimpered out, wanting to run up to Matt, but he did not know if he was allowed to. Matt had a gun and it was pointed at his mother. He should not get in the way of that. It could hurt him.

"Josh," Matt said, looking at the boy from the corner of his eyes to make sure he was not hurt, “are you okay, Baby?”

Josh nodded, “I-I’m fine, Matty” Josh said in a quiet voice, looking over at Matt.

Josh’s attention was brought back to his mother when Mike said, “Mrs. Ramsay, don’t move,” as his mother took another step toward Josh. Josh for his part tensed up and stepped back as if he was expecting his mother to run up and hurt him. Luckily for the man, his mother listened and stopped. She put her hands up in the air when she was asked, and Mike walked up to the woman and cuffed her.

When she was cuffed, Matt moved over to Josh so that he could be closer to the boy and offer comfort.

“It’s okay, Buddy,” Matt reassured the man, “I’m going to call Ian and everything will be alright.”

Josh just simply nodded, throat too tight to form words at the moment.

…

“Why did she show up at your house?” Ian asked Matt as Mike was asking the same question to Corlynn in the interrogation room.

“I don’t know, Ian,” Matt said, “she’s not saying anything.”

“Do you know if she said anything to Josh?” Ian asked.

“Not that I know of.”

“‘No, no, Babe. Don’t be scared. Mommy’s here, you’re safe’,” Josh parroted what he heard his mother say to him.

“What was that, Buddy?” Matt asked the man.

“That’s what Mom said to me. After I screamed,” Josh explained.

Ian and Matt looked at each other before Ian asked, “did she ever treat you like that when you were…”

Josh shook his head, resting his head on his arms that were folded on a desk, “no. She was much more likely to slap me across the face than to offer words of comfort,” Josh said in a bitter tone.

Matt sighed, placing his hand on Josh’s shoulder and rubbing it to try and offer some comfort to the man. Josh leaned into the touch, “it’s okay, Buddy,” Matt said in a gentle tone.

“Maybe it has something to do with her dementia,” Amanda offered from her place next to Josh.

All but Josh hummed in question, asking for elaboration.

“Sometimes memories get mixed up and separated with dementia. Maybe she’s separating Josh from
the past eight years from Josh before that and after,” Amanda explained.

“That makes sense,” Matt said with a nod, “so, if her dementia is effecting her so much will she even be able to stand trial?”

“That is something for a physiatrist to determine,” Ian said. Crossing his arms over his chest.

Before anyone could say anything else, Mike came out of the interrogation room with an exhausted look on her face.

“Has she said anything?” Matt asked the older man.

“Just that she wants to see Josh,” Mike looked over at the younger man with sympathy in his eyes.

“No way,” Matt immediately said with a shake of his head.

“Why?” Josh asked a second after.

“She said that it was the only way that she would testify against Miles and all the other people who hurt you,” Mike explained to Josh.

“We don’t need her to testify,” Matt said, his tone almost murderous.

“I know we don’t Matt, but maybe Josh should decide if he wants to see his mother or not,” Mike said. All eyes were on Josh in a second. The man looked uncomfortable with all of the attention, but he looked at Mike and asked-

“If I do decide to talk to her, I won’t be in danger, right?” Josh asked in a hesitant voice.

“No, she’s cuffed to the table, and if anything does go wrong, Ian, Amanda, Matty, and I will all be out here,” Mike reassured the man.

Josh thought this over for a second. Matt did not want him to go in, but at the same time he was curious. Why would his mother of all people want to see him? Without his father it would seem. Josh wanted to get answers, and if it would help the case that much more and he would be safe while doing it. Why not?

“I-I uhh- yeah, sure.”

“Josh,” Matt said, not sounding very happy with the man, “are you sure.”

“Yeah, yeah. I’m sure,” Josh nodded.

…

A few minutes later, Josh walked into the interrogation room that his mother was in. Josh gulped, looking toward the glass with nervous eyes. Although he could not see them, he knew that Matt and his friends were behind the glass and that made him feel a little bit safer.

Josh looked towards his mother, and he wondered, not for the first time in the past decade, that the woman who used to tuck him into bed and read him bedtimes stories and taught him how to sing and play instruments and taught him music theory turned into this. A woman that he was so scared of because she did so many horrible, inhumane things to him, and now was so confused because of a disease that was slowly stealing away her memories. Josh supposed that was karma at work.

“Oh, Baby!” Josh’s mother smiled when she saw him.
Josh could not help but cringe at the nickname. That was a name that only Matt could use for him.

“Don’t call me that,” Josh demanded.

His mother looked at him like he grew a second head, “why not.”

“I’m not your baby,” Josh said bitterly, coming to sit down across from his mother with his back to the glass. There was silence for a moment before Josh asked, “why?”

“Why what, Sweetheart?” his mother asked, seemingly confused by the question.

“Why did you do it, Mom?” Josh asked, emotion starting to leak into his tone, but he cleared his throat and blinked away the tears that came to his eyes. He would not cry in front of her. Never again.

“What are you talking about?”

“You locked me in a room of eight years,” Josh stated stressing the eight years, starting to become annoyed with the conversation.

“No, I didn’t. That wasn’t you,” his mother said in a matter of fact tone.

Josh looked his mother up and down for a second. Maybe Amanda was right. Her memories were all messed up.

“Yes, Mom, it was. I think I know if I were locked inside of a room for eight years,” Josh rebutted, slight sarcasm in his tone.

“No, no. You are not a little,” his mother said, hissing out the word little.

Josh sighed, not sure what to say next, he mother was never going to believe that it was him that was in that room for all of those years. “Mom, sorry to break it to you, but that was me you help lock in that room for so long, and I am a little.”

Josh’s mother tried to speak, but he would not let her, “and besides, even if it was not me, being little is a good enough reason that you would lock someone in cold, dark room for eight years,” Josh was not sure where it came from, but all of his nervousness was replaced with anger. So much anger that his chest felt tight with it and his hands started to shake. Josh held his hands under the table so that his mother would not be able to see them.

“Being a little is enough reason for you to let strangers rape and beat him, Being a little is enough reason for you to starve him, for-for you to smack him around and tie him up and to steal him away from the one person that really ever love him for who he really was and so many other unspeakable things that you did to me, Mom. Not to some little off the street, thought that was fun when you did that to me. Do you remember that, Mom? When I got the results of the test, you and Dad just kicked me out of the house to fend for myself. For three months.”

By time Josh was done speaking, his mother was shaking her head, as if trying to not let the words enter, “no, no.”

“Mom, no matter what you want to think, it was me,” Josh seethed.

“Oh My God,” something snapped in Corlynn’s mind snapped together, “it was you,” Josh nodded.

“Oh God what have I done?”
“Everything I said and so much more,” Josh told her, “and you are going to go away for a long, long
time because of it, even if you do testify against Dad,” Josh got up to leave. He did not want to be
here. He wanted to go home with Matty and be little and forget that this night even happened. Maybe
have a cuddle and watch a movie. That sounded nice.

“Josh,” the man paused and turned back to his mother, “please forgive me.”

“No,” Josh said, shaking his head, angry that his mother would even ask him to forgive her, “I
can’t.”

“You have to I’m your mother.”

Josh gave a humorless laugh, “no you’re not. A mother would not do all that to her son.”

Josh then walked out of the room. He anger was obvious to everyone in the room. “I wanna go
home,” Josh said to no one in particular.

“Okay, Buddy, Matty’ll take you home,” Mike said, “just calm down, it’s okay now.”

Josh was not sure why that statement made him so mad, but it did, so the boy screamed, “no it’s not!
It’s not okay!” Josh breathed heavily, looking around at the shocked look of the people around him,
“it’s never going to be okay,” that sentence was said in a whispered tone, voice breaking halfway
through. Tears entered Josh’s eyes.

Josh walked out of the room.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be a lot of Josh and Matt talking and the return of Little!Josh

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