

# Platonic

## Platonisch ist genauso gut wie romantisch

Von Oogie-Boogie

### Kapitel 4: Of Bath and Naptimes

**Oogie:** From now on, the plot begins to be set really in motion.

**Maniak:** The sibling related apocalypse begins.

**Oogie:** Let's see if Lincoln will soon have enough of his sisters' love, baby.

**Maniak:** Yeah... I don't know why he could get enough of their love.

**Oogie:** But what kind of love is it, that they will be giving him?

**Silence**

**Maniak:** Okay, let's end the Barry White reference now and get on with it.

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### Chapter 4: Of Bath and Naptimes

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Despite it being around 7:30 a.m. at a Sunday morning, most people in the Loud House were already fully awake. Lola and Lana were downstairs watching cartoons, trying their best to ignore Lori working on the breakfast in the kitchen and getting constantly more annoyed at her sister Leni trying to help her, but screwing up some of the most basic orders.

"No Leni. When I say "separate the eggs", you aren't supposed to literally just lay five on the kitchen table and put the rest into the sink!"

Upstairs meanwhile, Luna and Luan were still enjoying their stay in dreamland, while a slowly awakening Lynn was confused as to where her little goth sister was.

"Lucy?" Lynn asked into the room, "Are you here?"

She didn't get an answer.

"Did the ghosts finally take you into the mystical realms? If so, can you send me magical Baseball equipment?"

Still no answer.

"I better find ya. Good thing that I put my roller skates on before I went to bed."

Lynn jumped out of bed and rolled on her trusty skates out of the room. Skating through the second floor, she didn't find the young goth in the room of Luna and Luan, who got an abrupt awakening after their younger sister skated through their territory, jumped over them in their beds, did some acrobatics on the bedposts of the bunk bed and used one of the bedposts as surrogate for a horizontal bar (more vertical in this case) to generate enough momentum via a swing maneuver to catapult herself into the ventilation shaft opening of the room.

"What in the name of Jimi Hendrix was that?!" Luna wanted to know, slightly shocked.

"It was the skating Dutch-Kynn," Luan mused, followed by a snicker. "Get it?"

Lynn wasn't able to find Lucy in the room of the oldest sisters, so she slid through the ventilation into the room of Lana and Lola. But she didn't find anything there except a few angry pets she had awoken from their slumber.

Thankfully she managed to escape through the door before El Diablo, the snake of Lana, was able to entwine her.

Deciding to skip Lisa and Lily's room to avoid accidentally waking the baby, she took course for Lincoln's room.

She opened the door mid-roll again and stumbled over the entrance, which woke Lincoln up.

"Wha....?" Lincoln mumbled and rubbed his eyes. He was perplexed with Lynn lying on the ground, Lana's frog Hops on her head. But he was even more perplexed by what Lucy was doing.

He wasn't sure if Lucy was already awake or not, but she was definitively sucking or nibbling at his neck like one of the vampires from those novels she had been reading. Lincoln was so perplexed, horrified and shocked by the entire situation, he didn't know how to react.

"Morning, dude," Lynn said, rising up and taking her helmet off. "Have you seen..."

Only now did she become aware of a still sleeping Lucy holding onto Lincoln, sucking on his neck. But unlike her brother, she didn't react in shock.

"Aww, how cute!"

That finally managed to snap Lincoln out of it.

"Cute?" he stated in fright about Lynn's statement. "She is giving me a hickey!"

"Nah, bro!"

She carefully leant in closer and removed Lucy's hands around her brother's waist.

"She is just sleep sucking."

Lincoln blinked in confusion.

"It's something she does from time to time ever since she got her hands on those "Skypechat with a Nosferatu" novels," Lynn elaborated. "She did it to me too quite a few times."

"And why is she doing it?" Lincoln asked, slightly rising up so that Lynn had easier access to Lucy's arms, while still being bewildered about the situation.

"Well, she told me that it may be because she subconsciously desires to give those she deeply cares about the gift of eternal life," Lynn replied nonchalantly, gently moving her sister's head in a manner that her mouth let go of Lincoln's jugular.

Lincoln himself felt a slight trail of saliva flow down his neck and shuddered.

"Wakey, wakey, Lucy," said Lynn, poking her little sis teasingly on the forehead.

Lucy hissed something about "You must die to live forever," and "I will give you eternal life." Then she finally awoke, not looking as perplexed as anyone else. In fact, she changed automatically into her usual bleak expression.

"Another day on this miserable planet, just to wait for the sweet kiss of death."

"Does she do that every morning?" Lincoln asked Lynn.

"Not when you threaten her with a tickle assault."

"Don't you dare," Lucy grumbled. "I will scale it back for now." She sighed. "I'm sorry Lincoln, I shouldn't start the morning with such a sentence after you watched over me last night."

"Nightmares about the girl from the well again?" Lynn teased.

Lucy and Lincoln got into a sitting position. The night had brought them a pleasant sleep and they felt rather fit, especially Lincoln.

"I just wasn't prepared for Japanese Horror," said Lucy, defending herself.

"LYNN!" somebody shouted from down the hall. "You shocked us half to death with your little skating-gymnastic-stunt!"

"Gotta go fast!" Lynn stated with slight panic. "See you down for breakfast!"

Lynn dashed away, down the stairs with Luan and Luna in hot pursuit.

"Come back!"

"We will not do much to you!" Luan's voice shouted. "Just a skate-lesson with a little break-lesson."

"They have interesting mornings," Lincoln said nonchalantly. "Like usual..."

He was secretly happy about this development. This was more normal for the Loud House and it seemed his little speech from yesterday made an impression on his sisters.

"Lincoln?"

"Yes, Lucy?"

Lucy gave Lincoln a kiss on the cheek. "Thank you for watching over me. You are the best of us."

Lucy left the bedroom and a perplexed Lincoln behind. He started to massage his temples.

"This was just a normal way of Lucy thanking me for letting her sleep in my bed."

Lincoln stood up and took a look in his mirror to check his neck. Nothing indicated that she had bitten into the soft flesh or that he was going to have a hickey.

"Wouldn't want to explain that to Ronnie Anne," he muttered.

He took a glance at his clock and realized it wasn't even eight yet. So he decided to go back to bed, to sleep for at least a couple more minutes. Only to discover Hops on his pillow, so that he had to open the door and let him out first.

Around 40 minutes later, Lincoln decided to get up for real and hit the shower. He assumed that by now, his siblings must have finished their morning routine, meaning he had the bathroom all for himself. He was already halfway through the living hall, when he suddenly got tackled by a ball of blond and pink colors.

"Morning!" the little thing said.

It took Lincoln a few seconds to realize, that the "thing" was actually none other than Lola. Only that she barely looked like the beauty pageant obsessed little girl he knew her as. Primarily because she did not only look way chipper than he was accustomed to, her eyes almost sparkling in adoration for him, but also because she did not wear her signature tiara or gown. Instead she wore a cute pink little girl dress with a skirt. Additionally her hair was arranged in a way that she had two barely braided pigtails. As a fan of manga, the often regretted word "moe" came to Lincoln's mind at the sight of it.

"Did you have a good sleep, BBBFF?"

"BBBFF?"

"Duh," Lola said. "Big brother, best friend forever"

Okay, Lincoln thought worried. *Things got definitively worse for her.*

"I had an excellent sleep," he answered her initial question. "Now I want to take a bath, BLSFF."

"Wait here!"

His little sister was delighted about him calling her BLSFF (Best little sister, friend forever) but she hadn't registered the sarcastic undertone in his voice. He watched Lola run to the bathroom door, but it was locked.

"Who's there?!" she demanded to know in an angry and shrill tone.

She didn't get an answer. The shower was running and whoever was using it couldn't hear her so easily.

"Lola, I can wait," began Lincoln but Lola just got into Luan's and Luna's room.

He heard some climbing, some rumbling and the opening of the vent shaft door on the other side.

"What the?! Lola, what are you doing?! Let me go, what... AH!"

The door swung open and Luna was kicked out, landing on her back, her body only covered by a towel and the door was closed again.

"Lola, you are in so much- Oh, hi Lincoln!"

"Sorry, Luna!" the young boy apologized profusely while helping his sister get up. "It was my fault, I..."

"Wanted to use the bathroom?" Luna finished the sentence. She ruffled Lincoln's hair.

"It's okay bro, I was finished anyway." With that said, she walked into her room and closed the door behind her.

Before Lincoln could comprehend the reaction Luna just had to being thrown out of her shower, the bathroom door swung open.

"Your bath is ready!"

Lincoln entered the bathroom and his mouth was wide agape. The entire bathroom had never looked so clean, shining and beautiful before. The bathtub was filled with a

bubble bath, Lola had placed aromatic candles with his favorite aroma at several strategic places, a vase with beautiful bouquet was placed on the window bench and a radio played relaxing songs.

"What do you think, Linki?" Lola asked with a very exorbitant but sincere smile "Do you like it?"

He didn't quite know what to say. He experienced an emotional mixture of surprise, genuine gratitude and bewilderment. The latter one not just for the fact that his little sister acted the way she did, but that she somehow managed to pull all the necessary supplies for what she did out of nowhere. "I... like it?" he stated and tried his best to sound as grateful as he could, fearing if he didn't, Lola would most likely turn the room into a turkish bath just to appease him.

Lola's smile brightened at these words.

"I especially like that one candle on the left," her brother added just to be sure. "Really ties the room together."

"Oh Linki!" Lola said and hugged him again. "I'm so glad you like it!"

Lincoln decided to just surrender to the bizarreness of the situation and patted her head benevolently.

"Would you do me a favor later on?" Lola asked suddenly, though with a slight blush on her face. "That is, if you don't have something better to do."

"Sure," Lincoln sighed. "What is it?"

"Will you play with me later?"

Lincoln thought about the request and concluded, that it was the least he could do for turning the bath into a wellness oasis. Beside, aside of her acting like every sugar coated little sister stereotype he had ever been exposed to in the media, she didn't seem to act too weird. By comparison.

"Sure thing, Lola," he said and pushed her away gently. "Is after breakfast okay for you?"

She nodded happily.

"Okay. Enjoy the rest of your day till then."

"Enjoy your bath, BBBFF!" she shouted after him, waving her hand. He didn't even listen, closing the bathroom door behind him.

"Well... that happened," Lincoln stated, leaning against the bathroom door. He tried to comprehend the situation with Lola and how it was possible, that her acting like she did now was somehow more unsettling than the norm. Even if said norm involved an interest in the works of Mario Puzo, normally seen in young movie students who just had the privilege of watching the Godfather Part 1 and 2 for the first time.

*I think I will have to talk some of the old Lola back into her,* he thought. He then glanced over the bathroom and had to admit, that it was quite relaxing in here. And although he knew that his sisters should properly go first... Well, he still had to use the bathroom. And Lola had put so much effort into what she did, it would have been a crime to waste it.

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"Okay, I will admit it," Lincoln said dreamily. He was laying in the tub, the warm water relaxing his muscles. "This is actually pretty dang good."

He sighed happily closing his eyes and concentrating only on the feeling of soapy bubbles against his neck, the sound of singing wales coming out of the radio and the smell of vanilla filling his nostrils.

In such a relaxing atmosphere, he couldn't do anything else but forget all about his worries.

"Hi Lincoln."

"Hi Lori."

And then they came crashing down on him again.

"Lori!" Lincoln shouted in wide eyed shock, almost leaping out the tub. His sister had just waltzed into the bath, covered partly in what seemed to be syrup, splattered grape and strawberry jam on her top and hair.

"What are you doing here?"

"Sorry," she said with a hint of annoyance in her voice and went directly for the sink.

"Lana and Leni made a mess downstairs and I ended up in the middle of it," she explained, while putting on the water. Then, to make the situation even more embarrassing for the boy, she took off her sticky top. Thankfully, unlike Luna sometimes, she always had the decency of wearing a bra.

"They wanted to make you breakfast, but let's just say that Leni learnt today that you don't put grapes in the microwave. Again."

She grabbed after a bottle of shampoo and put some in her hands.

Lincoln couldn't believe it. His sister, who couldn't even stand the sight of him entering her room without permission, was just nonchalantly taking of her sticky top and washing her hair all while he was taking a bath.

Had he forgotten to close the door? Lincoln was sure he had closed the door before he entered the bathtub.

"Lori, do you remember the rules about...."

"Relax, I literary just need to get clean."

"You could use a hose," Lincoln suggested sheepishly.

"I will NOT clean myself with the hose in the garden where everyone can see me," Lori made it clear and that was it.

"Okay, but please make it quick."

"Whatever."

While his oldest sister was rinsing her hair out and trying to get the stains out of her favorite top, Lincoln looked hard at the wall, enjoying the bathroom tiles. While thinking about the tiles he registered that Lori's behavior was, well, Lori. Coming into the bathroom somebody else was using for more private activities was one thing but her behavior, the way she was talking, those were more like her usual demeanor.

"I will help you clean the mess downstairs later," Lincoln promised.

"Leni and Lana are already doing that," Lori told him. "I'm happy that Lana wasn't able to microwave what she wanted to make for you."

"Mud?"

"No," Lori said and wrung out her top. "It was a dog biscuit spiced with oregano."

"That was my second guess," Lincoln expressed sarcastically.

As Lori was unable to clean her top, she threw it the laundry basket and looked into the mirror. She examined her hair and face, before frowning.

"That stuff isn't going out so easily. Microwaved grapes are a pain."

"Letting Leni make breakfast without supervision was a bad idea," Lincoln commented. "But to be honest, I thought she could manage it now."

"She can," Lori said in defense of her sister. "But she had funny ideas when it came to make you something special. Now I have to put on new clothes and get myself clean."

"I'm finished," Lincoln exclaimed and got up a little. "You can have the bath."

"You don't have to, twerp, I will just join you," Lori sighed. "No reason to stop your bath."

"But... We both... Naked..." Lincoln stammered, trying to deviate Lori from her plan.

"I will keep my underwear on, okay?" Lori promised. "Besides, we swam together before."

"With BOTH of us in swimsuits!"

"I saw all of you naked as babies," Lori said in a nonchalant manner. "I know what is down there."

"But..." Lincoln replied weakly.

"Also, since when are you shy around me?" Lori asked irritated while slipping out of her shorts. "You sit around in your underwear with us all in the living room reading comics on rainy days."

Lincoln gave up. At least Lori had called him "Twerp" again, which wasn't much but it was something, plus there was the fact that Lori sounded more like herself again.

He made some room so his sister could sit down in the bathtub.

"It smells here like in that Massage Parlor I visited with Bobby once to get some relaxation," Lori told more to herself than to her brother. "I hope this doesn't end with a police raid too."

"Why..."

"Forget what I said!" Lori exclaimed nervously, trying to enjoy the hot water. "Just... Was this Lola was doing?"

"Yes."

"She knows how to make something or somebody look good," Lori praised, leaning against the counter of the tub. "Did you thank her for this?"

"Of course I did. But she threw out Luna to do this."

Lori was getting very inquisitive, from Lincoln's perspective. Was she becoming normal again? Lincoln thought about getting her to Lisa, so that the resident genius could let Lori in on the situation.

"Lori, I..."

Lori got besides Lincoln, pulled out her Smartphone from who-knows-where, hugged him and took a Selfie of herself and him.

"Lori, what the...?" Lincoln cried in shock. "This isn't the right moment for a Selfie!"

"But Lincoln," Lori started to counter. "We need a physical remembrance of our first bath together."

Before he could say anything about this, she got behind him and started to rub his shoulders. "I come into the bathroom, interrupting your relaxing time. Giving you a massage is the minimum I can do to compensate for this inconvenience."

She started to hum a melody while massaging him and he thought for a moment that

her nose was touching his snow-white hair.

"You know," she said all of sudden. "That soap really smells good on you."

*Awkward...*

"Lori, I think I forgot something in the Laundry Basket," he said in a sober tone. "Can you look if something is in the basket?"

"Of course Lincoln."

Lori got out of the bath and went over to the laundry basket, rummaging through it.

"I can't find anything here- Lincoln?"

By the time she turned around, Lincoln was gone and only a few drops from the ventilation shaft opening remained.

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The boy was in Lisa's room in no time. Walt, the family's pet bird, was there too, sitting on one of the posts of Lisa's bed and looking at Lincoln with a critical look.

"Lisa, I... Walt? What is your problem?"

He then noticed where exactly the bird was starring at.

Lincoln returned soon, dry and with a new set of clothing on his body. Walt gave an approving nod.

"Okay, now that this is done... Lisa, I need your help," he said. The addressed girl was leaning over her table, seemingly deep in thought over her notes. "Our sisters are acting even weirder than yesterday."

"Aha," could be heard from the table.

"Like, on one hand they act more like themselves again, but..."

Lincoln was now walking around the room, trying to sort his thoughts and find the best way to explain the situation.

"Lucy acts like I am a knight in shining armor, Lola has dressed up like a super moe and generic loli..."

Lincoln shuddered as he realized what he had just said, even if it was unfortunately quite fitting.

"...While still acting bossy around the others and Luna seems to have no problem being thrown half naked out of the shower for my own sake."

"Yes," Lisa mumbled. "That is quite a situation..."

"I know, right? And that doesn't even cover Lori, who just..."

"I think we need to resolve it by cheese."

Lincoln came to a halt.

"What?"

"It's ridiculous that Pluto is no longer a planet, yet we have one named Uranus in our solar system," he heard his little sister stammer.

He came closer to the table and only now realized, that his sister was actually not deep in thought, but sacked onto the table half asleep. Her head was resting on her notes and a trail of saliva was slowly dripping from the corner of her mouth. Her hair was a mess and she was mumbling nonsense inbetween taking snores.

He touched her shoulder.

"Lisa?"

Like a jack in the box, her head shot up. She was wide awake, staring with red eyes at the window in front of her.



"THERE'S ANTIMONY, ARSENIC, ALUMINUM, SELENIUM, AND HYDROGEN AND OXYGEN AND NITROGEN AND RHE-" she shouted. Only when she became aware of her brother's presence did she stop. "Oh, hello Lincoln. How did you sleep?"

"I..."

"Say, did you know that the smell of acetic acid has the color purple?"

Lincoln did not know how to answer that and as such decided to rather ask the most obvious question at hand right now.

"Liz, are you okay?"

"I have never felt better!" the little girl declared. She grabbed after a crayon pen and started to write something on a piece of paper. "Those biochemists stating that little kids need at least 8 hours of sleep? Hacks! I haven't slept since Saturday morning and my brain is running like a train at the speed of light!"

"You haven't what now?"

Lisa either didn't hear her brother or was too caught up in her ramblings to address him.

"I can feel the lack of Adenosin expression stimulating my brain in ways I never experienced before," she stated. "The entire universe has opened up to me. I can see time and space in all their beautiful glory. I see the stars dancing before my eyes!"

"I think you have just looked too long at the new mobile over Lily's bed."

Lisa suddenly stood up on her chair and shoved Lincoln her notes in the face.

"Just look at it, Lincoln. Gaze upon my latest conclusions regarding the behavior of our fellow siblings."

Lincoln looked over what she had written. After a while, he raised an eyebrow.

"42?"

"...I will admit, my statement is not quite formulated out in the way I intended it to be."

She suddenly pulled a can of her favorite soft drink from behind.

"But one sip of that beautiful, high in glucose drink, enriched with citrus based artificial flavors, will certainly raise my intellect on the levels needed to solve the mystery regarding our family developing quite an obsession for your low pigmented little scalp," she declared, opened the can and took a deep sip. By which we mean, she drank the entire thing in one go.

Then, in a display of awesomeness that was normally reserved for bar fights, Lisa gave a rather uncharacteristic burp, shouted the phrase "FUDGE YEEEEAAAAH!" and pushed the empty can against her forehead, not even flinching as the once full soda container was pressed into a tiny disk, which then landed on the floor.

Lincoln was too baffled about that equally awesome and ridiculous display of misplaced "manliness" his sister showcased, as that he could say something immediately.

Eventually though, he carefully put one of his hands on her shoulder.

"Lisa," he started, with a stern and worried undertone in his voice. "How many cans did you have since yesterday?"

The resident genius blinked a couple of times, having to think hard about such a

simple question. Which in itself was already alarming for Lincoln.

Eventually, she opened her mouth and answered "Six...," followed by a rather ashamed second and stretched out syllable, making her answer end on "...teen."

Lincoln was not amused by that.

"Okay, Lisa," he said in the same tone he used the previous night on his other sisters.

"I think it's time for you to go to bed."

"Never!" Lisa declared, slapping Lincoln's hand off her shoulder. "Do you really expect me to sleep in a time of crisis involving our fellow filial generational relatives?"

"What?"

"It is just a fancy way of saying "siblings"."

Lincoln concluded that it was pointless to come to a compromise with his little sister. While she was starting to ramble about the importance of her work and how her not getting any sleep was a necessary sacrifice for the greater good, he just went over to her bed and grabbed her blanket. Then, while she was proudly, and quite delusionally, declaring that there was no way on earth she was going to surrender to Hypnos and his army of sandmen, he just threw the blanket over her head.

"One... two..."

"Hey, who turned off the lights?"

"three...four..."

"Lincoln, I am not a parrot. If you think that I am..."

"Five..."

Before he reached six, Lisa suddenly went quiet. Her body turned over, the blanket still over her head. Luckily for her, Lincoln was there for the catch, before she would have hit the floor. Carefully holding the little bundle in his arms, he moved the blanket till it revealed the face of his now sleeping sister.

"Oh Lisa," Lincoln sighed. "You always do that when you have too much soda."

Ignoring her hearty snoring, he slowly carried her over to her bed. "At least this time you did not believe you were a hummingbird."

The older sibling laid Lisa down on her bed, removed her eyeglasses, shoes and socks before he tucked her in.

"Sleep well Lisa. And thank you for all your hard work."

He gave her an affectionate kiss on the forehead. It was sometimes easy to forget that she was the second youngest in this household because of her doctor title and the complicated words she used, making her come across as more mature and adult than even their parents sometimes. Nevertheless, her body was still the one of a 4 year old kid.

Right now, he felt like a big brother, as somebody to watch over his younger siblings and sometimes even the older ones.

Simultaneously Lincoln faced a new problem: For the next several hours he would have to rely on himself with no help of the little genius. He knew how to handle certain things, but after he had to flee a massage by Lori in the bathtub, he knew that he couldn't do this alone.

He played with the thought of contacting Clyde as somebody knocked on Lisa's door. *Please don't be Lori, please don't be Lori, please don't be Lori, please don't be Lori!* he thought in panic, holding his breath and begging.

"Lisa?" asked Leni's voice.

Lincoln exhaled, eased by the revelation.

"Come in," Lincoln said. "But be quiet and close the door behind you."

Leni entered the room and did as Lincoln said while looking concerned and sad.

"Lincoln, how is Lily?"

Before receiving an answer, the ditz went over to Lily's crib and saw that she was sleeping, looking healthy and peaceful. She herself looked relieved now too and smiled down towards her baby sister.

"I'm, like, sorry that I totes forgot to look after you. I hope you can forgive me."

Leni's remorse sounded genuine and heartfelt to Lincoln, more like the ditzzy but lovable sister he knew. But as Leni looked up and around the room he also remembered how Lori had reacted a few minutes ago. He tried to reach for the door as...

"Lisa?"

Instead of looking for Lincoln, she walked over to Lisa's bed and got on her knees to have a better look at the girl in the turtleneck.

"Why is Lisa still sleeping?" Leni asked Lincoln in a worried tone and looked to him.

"Like, she doesn't look very good."

Lincoln decided to answer the question with a half-truth. "She was preoccupied with her work and research the entire night," Lincoln told Leni. "She just got to bed a few minutes ago."

The answer shocked the blonde and she held both hands to her mouth.

"And she had to take care of Lily too."

Leni caressed Lisa's face and looked down in shame. "I'm sorry Lisa. Like, I shouldn't have neglected my duties."

The sorrow, the regret, the sadness, all of this sounded even more genuine than before to Lincoln.

"Leni?"

"Yes, Linki?"

"How do you feel?"

"Like, really bad. I hope Lisa will be okay after her sleep."

"Don't worry about her," Lincoln tried to cheer her up. "She survived more than one explosion to the face, only to be up after a few seconds. If that doesn't harm her then a case of being overtired shouldn't harm her either."

"Thank you Lincoln, but I made a mistake," Leni made it clear. "Like, I have to make this up to both of them."

If it came to caring for others, Leni could be incredible serious.

"Don't worry, Mistress Leni," Alfred's electronic voice suddenly stated. "Her research may have her overtired, but I took care of Lily."

Alfred transformed into his mobile form, but he looked slightly different. His treads were now able to transform into legs and he looked more polished.

"Hi, my name is Leni," she greeted the robot in her normal friendly way, like she would greet anyone. "Did Lisa build you?"

"Yes, I was taking care of Mistress Lily yesterday."

"Thank you," said Leni in a sincere tone. "Like, you did a great job, she looks very fine."

"Mistress Leni, I accept your praise."

"Call me Aunt or Auntie," Leni requested. "You don't have to be so formal to me."

Lincoln raised an eyebrow. "Aunt? Why Aunt?"

"Well, like, Lisa created him, so she is his mother and this makes him my nephew," Leni explained like it was the most normal thing in the world. "This totes makes him also your nephew and the nephew of our other sisters."

"Why do you think so?" Lincoln asked curiously.

"Duh, I saw it in some TV series and a few movies how the creators saw their robots, droids and androids as their children," Leni explained to Lincoln. "Like, it makes total sense. They created a being that can feel, think and live. They may have been born different and are made out of metal, electronics and the non-edible chips, but that doesn't mean that they can't be your child."

It wasn't the most eloquent explanation and one could not expect one wrapped in complicated words from Leni, but it made sense from her nonetheless. Smiling, Lincoln thought how a simple mind could make the question about human-robot relations so easy and beautiful. Not too much philosophizing, but a clear and understandable answer.

"Like, I can't wait to tell mom and dad that they are grandparents now!" Leni squealed in joy.

"Don't do that," Lincoln recommended before adding. "Explain it to them only together with Lisa."

"I guess you are right, Lincoln. Lisa should tell them the good news."

After making sure Lisa was safe and sound, Leni got up to her feet and turned to Alfred.

"I will reward you for your good work, nephew," Leni said. "But I have no idea what I can give you."

"I don't need a reward, Mistress Leni," Alfred explained professionally. "I am doing what I'm programmed to do."

"Don't be so humble, I will come up with something," Leni promised. "And don't call me Mistress, I am your aunt, remember? But how about a beer? I bet you have to recharge after so much work. Lily can be very exhausting."

"I don't need beer to recharge," Alfred explained slightly confused.

"So, you aren't that kind of robot?" Leni figured out. "What about energy in cube form. Do you like them?"

"I am not that kind of transforming robot either," Alfred explained in a slightly bemused tone. "I get my energy via an adapter I connect to an outlet in the wall."

Leni nodded in understanding. "I see. I will get you something later then. Keep an eye on my sisters and Lincoln until I return."

"Of course, Mi... Aunt Leni."

"You are a good robot," Leni said and petted Alfred.

Leni was Leni again. There was no doubt. But before the blonde left the room she gave Lincoln something from her little bag.

"For you, I hope you like it."

Before Lincoln could reply, Leni was out through the door while giggling like a young schoolgirl.

In Lincoln's hand was a colorful little bag, bound with a cute ribbon. Lincoln opened the bag slightly and looked inside it. He saw and smelled chocolate, self-made chocolate.

"Chocolate?"

"I could be wrong, Master Lincoln," Alfred began his analysis, "But I think she made you a valentine's present."

"But it isn't Valentine's Day," Lincoln countered. "Also, it doesn't work that way!"

"It does in Japan," the robot explained. "It is tradition there for girls to give chocolate to somebody they love or really like."

"Dang it!" Lincoln mumbled under his breath. Still too much affection. "At least Leni wasn't as bad as Lori had been back in the bathroom."

"What happened in the bathroom, Master Lincoln?"

"You don't want to know," Lincoln replied. Then he began to realize something. "Say, Alfred..."

"Yes, Master Lincoln?"

"Weren't you... how do I say it... clunkier last night?"

As mentioned earlier, the robot looked indeed different than when Lisa first showcased him to her brother. Aside of a distinct pair of feet, he was also, in terms of design, way more humanoid looking than before. He still had a pair of telescopic arms, but they now featured two very human like hands, with fingers for fine motorical work. His torso shimmered in black with several bulks all over the body, probably to hide some distinctive cables. Only his head was still more or less a squared reminder of his previous design.

"Yes Master Lincoln, indeed," Alfred admitted in a surprisingly good humored tone. "I thought that, in light of my duties as Mistress Lily's caretaker, in this time of familiar crisis, it would be of advantage to perform an upgrade for improvement of my performance."

"You upgraded yourself?" Lincoln was simultaneously shocked and impressed.

"Was that not to your liking?"

"No, it's okay, I am just..." Lincoln felt kind of awkward. Alfred seemed like a really nice robot so far and he didn't want to say to him, that the idea of a robot upgrading itself behind the backs of his owners sounded like something out of a comic book, where the robot revolution was just one misunderstanding away from happening.

"Nevermind," he eventually said.

"If you wish, I can easily downgrade mys-"

Lincoln interrupted him, before he could finish the sentence. "No Alfred, don't. If you want to upgrade yourself to help us, that is fine with me. But talk to Lisa about it too, okay? I get the feeling she would like to know when you are going to do something like that."

Then another realization hit Lincoln. "When did you actually have the time to upgrade yourself?"

"Sometime between last night and before I gave Mistress Lily her morning bottle," was the surprisingly snarky, yet still very polite reply from the robot.

"Is there anything else you would like to ask me, Master Lincoln?"

"No, not really"

Lincoln looked at the bag of chocolate, sighed and took one bit out. Of course it was heart shaped. "Unless you have an answer for why my sisters are acting the way they are."

"Have you considered the possibility that they are just trying to cheer you up, because they know something bad in regard of your well being?"

Lincoln frowned. "Alfred, Lisa already gave me the cancer scare last night."

"Cancer?" Alfred was shocked. "Oh my, Master Lincoln, I didn't mean that! I was thinking about something more innocent, like you going to spend a month with your Aunt Ruth!"

*Well, that is a scary thought too,* the white haired boy concluded. But then he pondered about the odds and decided that not even something like that would explain things such as Leni ignoring Lily the way she did. Or for that matter, Lori getting more affectionate towards him than to her boyfriend.

"Well, whatever it is, I am sure Mistress Lisa will soon find the answer," Alfred reassured.

"I hope so too," Lincoln said and put the piece of chocolate into his mouth. He had to admit that it was actually pretty tasty.

"Is there anything else I can do for you?" Alfred wanted to know.

"No, not really," he said, fishing for another piece of chocolate. "I will try to handle on my own for the time being."

He ate the second bit and was already fishing for the third. "But I will ask you for one thing: Take good care of my two sisters,"

He pointed his chocolate sticky fingers at Alfred. "Whatever is going on in this house right now, I want you to guarantee me their well being."

"Sir, I promise you I will follow my directive."

"Good" He ate the third bit. "And while we are at it, Lincoln is also just okay."

Alfred didn't say anything at first. And for a few seconds Lincoln thought that if the robot had been capable of doing so, he would have smiled at him.

"If you insist, Lincoln," he would eventually say though, before turning to Lisa's side, gently stroking her hair. "Do you think Mistress Lisa would like to eat something when she wakes up?"

"Well, I think she could do with some mashed potatoes," Lincoln replied, thinking about her favorite food.

"Now if you excuse me, I think I have overstayed my welcome."

With all things said, done and elaborated, Lincoln left the room. He carefully closed the door behind him, making sure the noise of the closing door disturb his sisters.

*At least someone gets a bit of peace in this house,* Lincoln thought and thanked heavens for Lisa creating the surprisingly helpful robot. At least with Alfred on his side, he wouldn't have to worry about the well being of his youngest siblings as much, meaning his nerves could calm down a bit.

And if the chocolate was anything to go by, Leni's sweet delight was going to support the calming of his mind even more.

As such, he took another bit out of the small bag and threw it into his mouth.

At this very moment, Leni came around the corner and saw him. Her eyes shone in delight about what she saw. "Do you like it?"

Lincoln was surprised, but did not want to make his sister sad, abnormal levels of

affection or not. Beside, the chocolate was really that good. "It's delicious."

"Oh, thanks Linki."

Leni watched him pick another bit, which he flipped into his mouth.

"I am going to tell Lana too. You know, she helped me make it."

Well, that explained why the last bit tasted like a dog biscuit sprinkled with fish pellets.

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#### **Authors notes:**

**Oogie: Can softdrinks really have that effect on kids?**

**Maniak: Aside of diabetes? I think. Heck, I remember when I had to study for an exam and drank only eight cans of coke to stay awake.**

**Oogie: What happened?**

**Maniak: I was so sleep depraved... I passed the exam, but I was also arrested for trying to convince the entire library to join in a spontaneous musical number.**

**Oogie: (pulls a checklist out) That takes care of Lucy, Lisa Lori and Leni. Who is next? Oh. OH! This is going to be fun!**

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