

SIBLING RIVALRY

A SIZE STORY
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Sibling Rivalry
or,
The Judgment of Troy

Troy tapped his legs nervously in time with the patter of light rain on the window. This was not misplaced, nor neurotic anxiety, but an expression of realistic concern. The weather would both annoy his sisters and keep them from leaving the house, both conditions which spelled out a possibly fatal situation in the very near future.

His family lived in the shrinking nation, a country wherein it was possible, by some means, for people to be made tiny. For unknown reasons, some people in this land were immune from being miniaturized, and as luck or fate would have it, Troy was the only member of his family who did not carry this invulnerability. Days like this were dangerous for the susceptible, a truth that was intimately familiar to Troy, especially once he heard sudden, stampede-like stomps approaching.

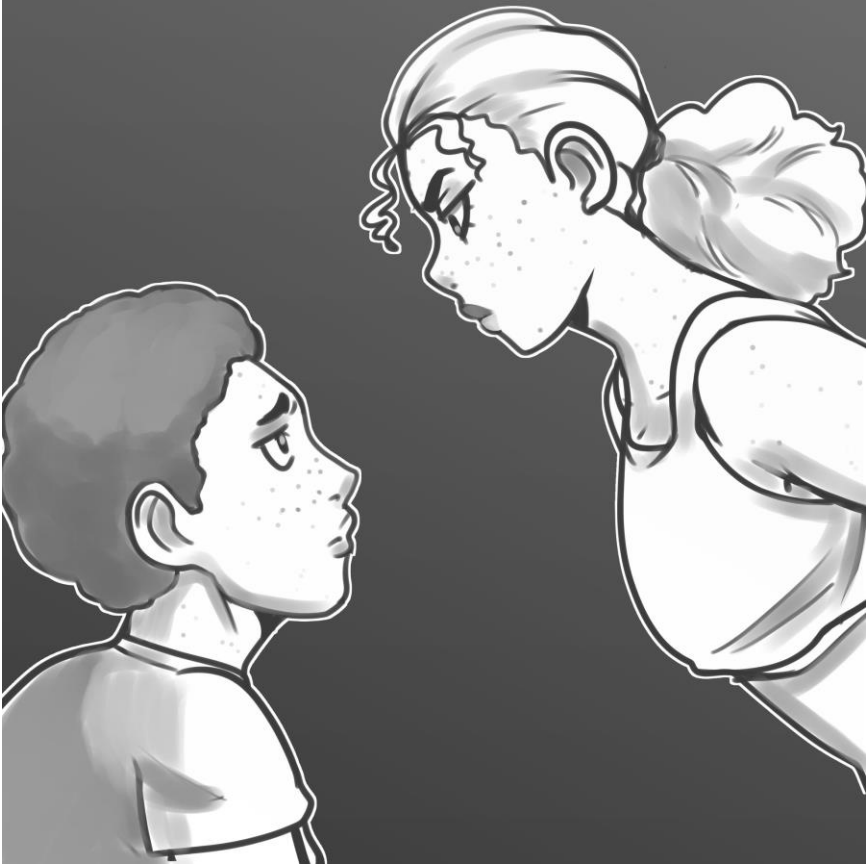
“Well, what should we do now? Our plans are ruined.” Penelope said, bursting into the living room, her straight, chocolate hair whirling with her gesticulations. She was wearing a flowery sundress and flip-flops, clearly having planned for a day outside.

“I don't know, like, it wasn't even supposed to rain today. This sucks.” Roma replied, her short, highlighted curls bouncing with her steps. Her crop top, shorts, and sneakers also implied an outdoor adventure.

“Uh, hey Penny, hey Roma...” Troy peeped, looking carefully at his sisters. They were fraternal twins, both a year older than him.

“What is it, runt?” Roma peered over her shoulder.

“N-nothing!” Troy quickly replied.



“Perhaps we can play something inside.” Penelope said, glancing around the living room, “Do we have cards? We could play durak.”

Troy stayed silent. He knew that if he ended up as the 'fool' after a hand he'd be punished with shrinking, and he knew twice as well that if he expressed his concern he'd be forced to play out of spite.

“And then what, Penny? You know we'd just gang up on Troy if we did that.” Roma said.

“That sounds fun.” Penelope smirked.

“Yeah, but, today was supposed to just be us competing against

each other, you know? Sister versus sister. It'll be boring if we just wail on the shrimp, we already *know* he can't beat us at anything." Roma said.

"Er..." Troy couldn't help but try to interject.

"Shut up." Roma snapped.

"So, you just want to play one-on-one, huh?" Penelope asked.

"Duh." Roma replied.

"A board game?" Penelope suggested.

"Oh, hell yeah. I'm gonna kick your butt." Roma opened the hall closet and began to dig through the stack of boxes.

"We'll see." Penelope rolled her eyes.

"Oh, Candy Land!" Roma cried, "Do you remember when we used to play and make Troy one of the pieces?"

"Of course I do." Penelope said, "You got so mad when you got the Plumpy card you threw Troy across the room, only to chase after him and smear him into the carpet."

"It's better than when you lost at Fireball Island," Roma laughed, "You rolled him under a marble so hard he popped like a ketchup packet!"

"What about when you lost after pulling the repairs card in Monopoly? You kept him in your shoe for so long we thought he'd starved to death." Penelope said.

"The Game of Life was probably worse for him." Roma chuckled, "I never knew you could be that cruel."

"*Life* is cruel." Penelope said without a hint of irony, before asking "And what about the Trouble incident?"

"Trouble!" Roma exclaimed, "I forgot about that!"

"I don't see how. You spent like three hours cramming him into the pop-o-matic bubble." Penelope shrugged, "And another three hours just popping it."

“I would have done it to you, if I could.” Roma said, “I still think you cheated, who rolls a six that many times in a row?”

“Hmph.” Penelope puffed her cheeks in protest.

“Speaking of bubbles though, do you remember that gum game?” Roma asked, “What was it called? Chiclets Village?”

“Of course I remember that one!” Penelope said, “How could I possibly forget the sight of Troy's broken little body in the bubble you blew?”



“How about checkers?” Roma held up the dusty box.

“That sounds like a good choice.” Penelope said.

“Thank God.” Troy sighed to himself, having just relived a lifetime of cardboard and plastic based trauma. Checkers was at least a game he couldn't reasonably be a piece for.

Penelope dragged the coffee table into a convenient spot, while Roma pulled over chairs from the kitchen. They worked together getting the board set up, while Troy watched warily. Just because he wasn't on the game surface didn't mean he was out of the woods yet. Trying to sneak away would probably just raise their ire even more, so better to stay put, keep quiet, and hope for the best, he figured.

“Who goes first?” Roma asked.

“We can do a coin toss.” Penelope said.

“Uh, I don't have one.” Roma replied, patting her shorts.

“Me either.” Penelope said.

“What about a bug toss?” Roma narrowed her eyes at Troy.

“I have one, I have one!” He shouted, frantically pulling a stack of coins from his pocket. This was not the first time the threat of a bug toss had been levied, and Troy had begun keeping a pocket full of change to avoid such punishments.



“Hm, not as fun.” Penelope snatched a quarter and readied it on her thumb, “Call it, Roma.”

“Heads!” Roma cried, watching the coin spiral through the air, landing with a metallic clink on the table, bouncing twice, and finally rattling to a stop.

“Tails.” Penelope said with a smile.

“Whatever, I’ll beat you anyway.” Roma said, “Best of three, switching sides?”

“Fine.” Penelope said, sliding a checker forward.

“Great.” Roma said, picking one up and loudly clacking it to a new space.

“Do you know what they call checkers in Greece?” Penelope asked.

“Is this a joke or something?” Roma asked, “Because your jokes are awful.”

“No, it's a serious question.” Penelope replied, “And no, they're not, you just hate puns.”

“What do they call checkers in Greece?” Roma asked reluctantly.

“Dama.” Penelope said, “It means lady or queen, depending on how you want to translate. The pieces are called men, but when they promote they become women.”

“Sounds like the Greeks know who should be in charge.” Roma said, flashing a snide smile at Troy.

Click, slide, click, slide, click, slide, the twins exchanged moves. Finally, however, Penelope let out a long sigh.

“This is a stalemate.” She said, “We're just making the same moves over and over.”

“Yeah.” Roma sucked air through her teeth, “Let's start over.”

The board was reset, and they went at it again, Troy struggling to keep up with the strategy behind the moves. If you asked anyone who the smarter sister was, they'd probably say Penelope, if only based on her demeanor, but the truth was that Roma was equally brilliant, just less refined. In a game like this, where the only thing that mattered was thinking ahead, they were truly evenly matched.

“Hey, Roma.” Penelope smiled.

“Yeah?” Roma replied blankly, staring at the board.

“Why didn't the tree want to play checkers?” Penelope asked.

“Penny, I swear to god...” Roma sighed.

“It was a chess-nut tree!” Penelope laughed, “Get it? Chestnut? Chess-Nut?”

“Yeah, yeah, I got it.” Roma rolled her eyes, before moving a piece, “Your move.”

“This house is so stifling. My genius goes completely unappreciated.” Penelope said in a jokingly histrionic tone.

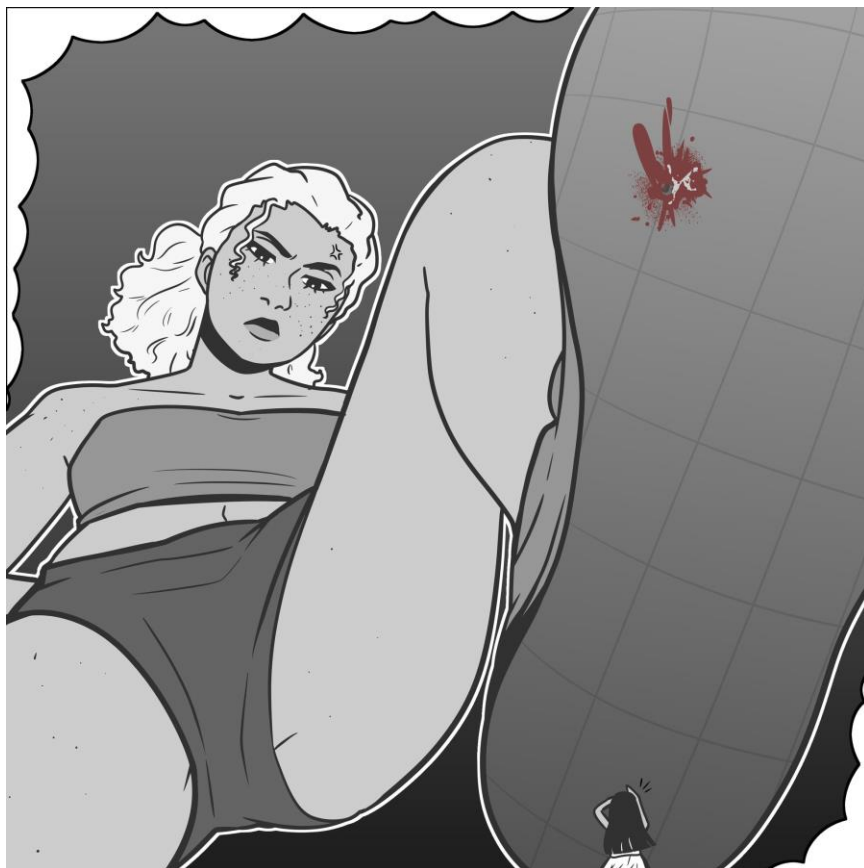
“I’ll appreciate it if you can actually beat me.” Roma said, “But, we’re playing in circles again.”

“You’re right.” Penelope looked down at the board.

“One more? For all the marbles?” Roma asked.

“This is checkers, not marbles.” Penelope said.

“You are so lucky you’re immune.” Roma bit her lip, “Otherwise, every single one of those jokes would be a stomping.”



“If you weren't immune, every time you didn't laugh I'd flatten you.” Penelope retorted, “Speaking of, did you laugh at that one Troy?”



“Uh...” Troy gaped.

“He didn't.” Roma said, “Which is good, because if he did, I'd smush him.”

“Well, I'll have to take my revenge later.” Penelope grinned.

“Ah jeez.” Troy buried his face in his hands. He just couldn't win.

Neither could either of his sisters, it seemed. After another half an hour of clacks and slides, Roma and Penelope were once again without final capture or entrapment on the board.

“Another stalemate? This is such bullshit.” Roma huffed.

“Three games and no winner.” Penelope shook her head, “What are we going to do?”

“I mean, it's not like you played better than me.” Roma said.

“Sorry?” Penelope asked incredulously.

“You just got lucky in the second game. I would have beaten you easy.” Roma said.

“Oh *puh-leeze*,” Penelope spat, “Like you didn't try to switch pieces when I wasn't looking. I saw that, you know.”

“Are you saying I cheated?” Roma roared.

“I'm saying you tried, and I'm saying it wouldn't have mattered, *and* I'm saying I played better than you.” Penelope said.

“You wish!” Roma said, “If you're so sure, why don't we ask Troy? He can be the judge.”

“Uh, that's not...” Troy started.

“Fine!” Penelope crowed, “What do you think, Troy? Who played better?”

“Well, I mean...” Troy stuttered, “You both played really well, I don't know if I could say.”

“Uh huh, right.” Roma rolled her eyes, “Listen, if you don't pick me I'm going to throw you in my shoe and stomp on you until you're paste.”

“Er, well, Roma did...” Troy said.

“Not so fast.” Penelope interrupted, “If you don't pick me, I'm going to squeeze your head between my toes until it pops like a grape.”

“Ah, you see, Penelope was...” Troy began, but stopped, finally adding, “I, I just have no idea, I wasn't even really paying attention., and...”

“Don't lie, you little jerk, I saw you watching the entire time.” Roma said, “What do you think? The only winning move here is to not play?”

“This isn't War Games, you idiot.” Penelope added.

“I can't...” Troy puffed.

“Augh, you're useless.” Roma said, “Now what?”

“Hmm...” Penelope mused, before chuckling, “How about a tie breaker?”

“With what?” Roma asked.

“With our brother the bug, obviously.” Penelope flashed a cruel smile, “Let's shrink him and I'll show you my idea.”

“With pleasure.” Roma mirrored her sister's grin and turned to Troy, “Ready?”

“W-wait!” Troy shouted, but it was too late. The mysterious process was already in effect, and his sisters were stretching over him like oaks, suddenly blocking out the ceiling lamps, casting their shadows over his dwindling form. Like a cartoon depiction of an acid trip, the world whirled around him, melting and reforming into its new enormous form. Penelope's wriggling toes, hugging to the old rubber of her sandal, appeared like a mirage next to Troy, and immediately after so did the dirty, thick, rubber sole of Roma's sneaker.

“Now what?” Roma asked.

“Now, take off your shoes.” Penelope said, kicking off her flip-flops, an event which appeared to Troy like a meteorological disaster. The gargantuan, dusty figures flew over him and crashed somewhere in the distance. Roma propped her toe against her opposite heel and popped her foot free from the high-top, revealing a bare, sweaty foot, before doing the reverse and sliding both shoes away. Now, two pairs of effluvious feet surrounded little Troy, their toes wiggling in anticipation of his tiny form being trapped beneath.

“And then come stand here, shoulder to shoulder.” Penelope tapped her hand on her arm. Troy looked up to see both sisters lining up,

creating a united front against him, still haloed in the room's artificial light.

“Now like this...” Penelope wrapped her arm around Roma's back, and Roma mirrored the movement, “And lift up your left foot.”

Phoosh! Roma's foot lifted past Troy like a Saturn V, casting a mephitic cloud in its wake that fell over the tiny boy like a wet blanket. Penelope did the same with her right foot, lining it up so that her little toe touched the little toe of Roma, creating a wall of flesh that hung over Troy like a heavy cloud.



“I think I see where this is going.” Roma said.

“It'll be like arm wrestling, but with our feet.” Penelope explained, “We try to push each other out of the way while stomping on this little loser. Whoever splats him wins.”

“I like this game.” Roma laughed. Troy stared up at the wrinkling soles of his sisters, and then past their digits to their beaming, smirking faces.

“Ready?” Penelope asked.

“No, no...” Troy peeped.

“I wasn't asking you, bug. You already had your chance at making a choice.” Penelope spat, “Ready, Roma?”

“Duh.” Roma said.

“On 3.” Penelope said.

“3, 2, 1, Go!” They shouted in unison. Like titans clashing, like storm fronts meeting, like cyclopians locking horns and thrashing the world to pieces, the sister's game of strength began. Troy could only watch in horror as each trailer-sized foot pushed against the other, each vying to end his tiny life, the squirming forms of Roma and Penelope distant and blurred, only their soles in focus from his awful and overwhelming vantage point. Roma's sweaty foot swung low, past Penelope's, and careened towards Troy, only to be caught by its opponent and dragged, shaking, back to the starting point, and action which left the tiny man huffing humid, reeking air.

Boom! Penelope had managed to get her foot down, but it was just a bit too far off target, slamming with the power of a demolition charge inches from Troy's head, tossing him away like a ragdoll. Roma took advantage and tried to end the competition with a quick stomp, but was knocked off balance by Penelope's interference. For a moment both feet tried to crash down and flatten Troy, each missing by millimeters or less, a hailstorm of bombshells that left the miniature brother shell shocked and breathless.

Before long the sisters had reset to their original position, and were again pushing laterally against each other, causing the imagery before Troy's eyes to rapidly vacillate between two screens of dirty feet. Roma's reddened, moist sole would appear, only to be replaced by Penelope's soft, dusty one, which would in turn be pressed away by the former. Back and forth, getting closer and closer, Troy wanted to scream, to run, to do anything to avoid what was about to happen, but he was too little and it was too late. The smelly surfaces were already brushing

against his body, slowly but surely making more contact until their movements caused him to roll back and forth like lint on the carpet. Finally, however...

SPLAT!

Troy's body squished like an overripe fruit, splattering into a fine, red paste.

“I got him!” Penelope crowed.

“Yes!” Roma shouted at exactly the same time.

“What?” They both simultaneously said as they looked at each other, and then down do the stain which was previously their sibling.

“I felt him smush.” Penelope said.

“Me too!” Roma said, “Check your feet.”

The twins both lifted and rotated their legs so that they could peer down at their soles. On the left edge of Roma's foot, and the right edge of Penelope's, were matching spots of quickly drying blood. Each girl looked at her own sole, then to her opponent's, and then back.

“Unbelievable...” Roma sighed.

“We tied again...” Penelope groaned.

“Quick, revive him, we'll do it again.” Roma said.

“Yeah, I think I have a better feeling for it now, anyway. I'll definitely win this time.” Penelope said.

“You wish!” Roma said.

“We'll just have to see, won't we.” Penelope replied.

“Yes, we will.” Roma sneered, “We'll squish this bug all night, if we have to.”

“I *squ-wish* you would just give up.” Penelope said with a giggle.

“Penny, I swear to god...” Roma began.

And so, the competition continued, late into the night, the eventual winner only being exhaustion for the twins, and hours of painful, playful crushing for poor little Troy.

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