

## H E L P I N G   M E   U P



“Are you going to be my new daddy?” she asked directly.

“I don’t know,” he said, looking down at the flowery dress squirming beside him on the edge of the living room couch. “I like your mom, but to get married you have to really, really like each other.”

“You mean love each other” the little girl corrected.

“Yes,” he laughed nervously. “You have to love each other.”

“Do you love my mommy?”

“Uhh...I don’t know, honey,” he stammered. “It takes time for two people to figure out if they love each other.”

“Why?”

“Well, I don’t know exactly. It’s very easy for you kids to love someone. You either do or you don’t. But adults have a way of complicating it. Sometimes they make it difficult to love each other.”

“Why?”

“Welllllll...I’m not sure,” he dodged, his eyes meeting the inquisitive brown ones that looked up at him. “Maybe it’s because they are mean to each other sometimes.”

“Why?”

“Well, I don’t know, really. They just get mad or scared, or both, and wind up hurting each other.”

“You mean like when someone pushes you down?”

“Yes,” he said, quickly moving his eyes away from her gaze. “Yes, honey, like when someone pushes you down,” he said quietly.

“Did my mommy push you down?” she persisted.

“No, no, of course not” he clarified. “I think if your mommy saw someone push me down she would come over and help me get up. Your mommy is very nice that way.”

“Did anyone ever push you down?”

“Well, everyone at some time...,” he started to say, then stopped. “Yes, honey. Someone pushed me down” he said quietly.

“If I saw you pushed down I would help you get up.”

He looked down at the child straining her neck to look back up at him.

“Yes,” he whispered. “I know you would,” he said, and reached out to stroke back the hair from her forehead.

“I know you would” he repeated.

She rewarded him with a grin of total contentment, then scooted back in the couch and asked, “Can you read me a story?”

“Yes,” he said under his breath. “Yes, I can read you a story.”

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