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## Run to the Father

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# Run to the Father

The pitter-patter of little feet slapping against the marble floor echoed down the hall of the palace. Had it been any other person in the kingdom, the guards would have stopped them immediately. But this was a regular occurrence, and the palace staff watched her sprint past them with smiles on their faces, not daring to stop the little girl who was clearly on a mission. Pushing the large door open with both hands, Kaitlyn kept her focus and direction to the purpose she had and the mission at hand.

“Daddy!” she exclaimed, running straight to the throne and climbing up into the King’s lap. “Guess what I learned today!”

What did you learn, Princess?” the good, kind king asked, chuckling, absent-mindedly waving away His previous audience to focus solely on His daughter. Though she was adopted, He loved her and treated her with honor like she was His own flesh and blood.

She then went on to tell her Daddy all about the heroic stories she had learned from history class, the beautiful masterpiece she had created in art class, and the “trifficult” problems that she had solved in math class. He listened patiently, smiling when she got excited and sympathizing when she got upset. His work could wait because His first responsibility was to be an available and loving father to Kaitlyn.

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Kaitlyn ran into the throne room crying. “Daddy,” she sniffled, clinging onto His leg. “Daddy, I got hurt.”

“I’m so sorry to hear that, Princess,” His loving arms encircled her waist, picked her up, and carried her out, dismissing the council He was holding with the wave of His hand. Taking her to the infirmary, He dismissed the nurses so that He and His daughter could be alone together. “Kate, darling, what happened?” Pulling up her dress, she exposed her bloodied knees and scrapped up elbows.

“I was playing with the butterflies in the garden and then tripped over a branch. It really hurts, Daddy,” her eyes were puffy and red from crying and tears continued to run down her soft cheeks.

His face softened as He studied her eyes. "It's going to be okay, baby. Daddy will make it feel better." He smiled and gave her a hug.

"Thank you, Daddy," she sniffled into His shoulder, smiling slightly. "I knew you would fix everything like you always do." He beamed, pulling back and beginning to clean her boo-boos. When He finished tending to her scrapes and bruises, He held her again and brought her to the kitchen and hand-made her favorite snack. He took this time to not only tend to her physical hurt, but also her emotional hurt. He was a good, kind, and loving King who cared for His children.

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The King watched his guests with vigilant eyes scanning for any concerning behaviors, any little thing that could possibly throw the balance of the gathering. The guards were doing their jobs and scanning for the same, but He had always felt that it was His duty to keep each of His citizens and guests safe from harm. Especially one certain little girl.

Kaitlyn walked in with her bodyguard right on time, and her entire being lit up when she locked eyes with her father, her *Daddy*. Breaking away from her bodyguard, much to his protests, she sprinted (in a very lady-like manner) to her father's side.

The King's stern countenance softened into a warm smile as his daughter approached. Kaitlyn's radiant presence illuminated the grand hall, her eyes sparkling with excitement. With each graceful step, her determination to reach her father was palpable, her joy infectious. Despite the protests of her vigilant bodyguard, she moved swiftly, her delicate form moving with a surprising agility. As she finally reached her father's side, a sense of relief washed over him, reassured by her presence. With a tender embrace, he enveloped her in his arms, cherishing this precious moment amidst the watchful eyes of the court.

The King couldn't help but be swept away by her infectious energy, momentarily forgetting the weight of his responsibilities. With a gentle touch, he brushed a stray lock of hair from her face, marveling at the innocence and vitality she brought to his world. In that fleeting moment, surrounded by the splendor of the palace, father and daughter shared a timeless connection that transcended the confines of royalty.

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Kaitlyn was scared. She had never been so scared in her life. The catch was that she was scared of her father. She had no idea what would happen if she told Him the horrible atrocities that had happened to her just last night, and she was terrified that He would be disappointed in her despite her innocence and lack of consent.

He had never been upset at her for something like this before, but then again... nothing like this had ever happened before. It wasn't like she had facts or previous experiences to base her nervous and fearful feelings off of. He was always a good and just King. But she was scared that He would hate her after learning how she had been broken. How she had been misled, mistreated, mishandled. She knew He loved her and that she could always go to Him if she had a problem, but this seemed too big to ask for help with. She didn't want to bother Him. He was probably too busy for her anyway. He was the King, after all.

Weeks went by, and vivid memories continued to wake her up in the middle of the night. She would wake up crying, forcing herself to bite her tongue when she wanted to call out to her father for comfort. Kaitlyn had no idea why she felt such a strong feeling of shame and terror whenever she thought about telling her father about the things that had happened to her that were out of her control... but she did. And so, she would sob as silently as she could until dawn.

One day, she was outside the throne room yet again, debating whether or not to go in and talk to her dad. Everything inside her told her to run away and hide under the blankets some more. She was sick and tired of feeling helpless, but she had no idea how to fix it either. As she was debating in her head what to do, the grand doors swung open, and her father stood before her. The good, kind, loving, just, and caring King. There, in front of her. All she had to do was ask Him. Just open her mouth and speak words. And He would quickly fix it like He always did. But... she realized in the back of her mind that maybe she didn't want to be fixed. She wanted justice and abolition of her problem, not just a bandage on top of her hurt. Maybe He couldn't fix this big of a problem.

So, instead of telling her all-powerful Daddy what had been bothering her for weeks and months, fear filled her eyes and she fled down the hall. The clip-clop of her shoes echoed on the walls around her, filling her ears. It almost sounded like a heartbeat, her heartbeat, haunting her thoughts. Why hadn't she just opened up to her dad and told Him what was going on? He was even calling after her and yet she refused to turn around, having a hard time admitting that she needed help.

She could fix this by herself, right? It shouldn't be too hard... It was just a bad memory, a bad experience. She could just forget it... right?

But she had been trying to do that for nearly a month. And nothing she did worked. She had the scars on her wrist to prove it. Hence the long sleeves that she constantly wore despite the summer heat. It wasn't like she had wanted to do it, but it seemed to become a decent distraction to her racing thoughts if she could focus on the physical pain instead of the psychological pain. Besides, she deserved all the physical agony she received. She was already broken. At this point, she was just a worthless piece of flesh taking up space. All she did was bring dishonor to her father and family because she couldn't do anything right.

Turning down the hall again, she pushed through the doors without thinking and ended up tripping into the garden. Falling to her knees, she ignored the blood now running down her legs from her now busted up knees and draped herself over the cool stone bench surrounded by the flowering bushes. The unsummoned tears streamed down her face as she struggled to catch her breath again. She had no idea what she was even feeling at that moment. Everything from the past few months had hit her all at once the moment she had seen her father's concerned face and she just felt so alone and empty.

She missed her Daddy. There, she said it. She couldn't fix this alone... but it filled her with fear to even think about asking her father for help.

"Kaitlyn." That one word, just her name, coming from the lips of the safest person on earth filled her with relief. In that instant, she couldn't breathe at all. It was all drawn out of her lungs by some invisible force. Somehow, she found a shred of air to respond.

"Daddy!!" she gasped between sobs.

The next moment, He was on the grass next to her, holding her close to His chest, not caring that her tears were soaking His expensive royal outfit. He held her as she sobbed and as she struggled to breathe and as she stuttered with her words to try to give some sort of explanation.

"Shhh, just try to focus on breathing," His kind, loving, deep, honey voice washed over her and subconsciously relaxed her entire body. She hiccupped a few more times but had mostly regained her breathing. Her heart was still racing, but she wasn't suffocating.

“Daddy,” she glanced up into His concerned eyes, then became ashamed and looked back down at the ground. “I- I have some things to talk to you about.”

“What is it, Princess?” He waited for her patiently, not wanting to rush her.

“I... um... T-there was something that happened a few months ago that I need you to make better.” She proceeded to explain what had happened, what mental state she was left in, and the ways in which she had tried to fix it by herself. As she talked, the King’s face became more and more conflicted. His eyes held both concern and pure wrath. She was still looking towards the ground so she could not see the shift in His facial features. But as soon as she finished, He lovingly lifted her into His arms and walked her to the infirmary. “W-where are we going?” she asked, startled. She looked up into His face as He walked her down the halls and drew back when she saw the lingering anger, scared that it was for her.

“Your knees need to be tended too, darling,” He said, holding her close to Him in His strong embrace.

“Oh.”

After He had bandaged up her knees as He had always done when she was younger, He moved the fabric surrounding her wrist and rubbed a gentle finger over the scars. “I’m so sorry that you got hurt. Why did you not come to me? I could have taken care of it for you.”

“I was scared. I didn’t want to bother you with something so trivial,” she looked away again, shame making her cheeks flush.

“I am never too busy for you, Princess,” He lifted her chin slowly to meet His love-filled eyes. “I will never be too busy to listen to you and take care of things for you. Anything or anyone who hurts my child will sorely regret it later. You know this.” He placed a delicate kiss to her forehead, pulling her into His arms. “I promise that I will always listen and keep you from harm. Just come talk to me. Okay?”

She smiled against His shoulder. This was her Daddy, the most powerful person in the universe. Why had she thought even for a second that He wouldn’t be able to help her? Her Daddy loved her, and that would never change. “Okay.”

The good, kind, loving, just, caring, all-powerful King held His daughter close to His chest. He would always be there for her when she needed Him or wanted to talk to Him. Always.

1 John 3:1 – *“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.”*