

Miles

Miles walked into his father's house, his heart heavy with the uncertainty of what lay ahead. The house felt strangely familiar, yet distant, and the air was thick with tension. His father, a towering figure in his life, sat on the familiar yellow couch with Sandro, the family dog, at his side. It was as if his father had been waiting for this very moment—waiting for Miles to arrive. The soft sound of jazz music played in the background, creating an almost nostalgic ambiance, but the silence between them felt suffocating. His father, typically so imposing, appeared softer than Miles had remembered, a sign of some unspoken emotional battle within. Though Miles had been hurt and angry during their last encounter, he couldn't bring himself to apologize. The memories of past conflicts weighed heavily on him, but he remained resolute, unwilling to admit his mistakes. Even if it made him feel small, he refused to give in.

Miles couldn't help but be struck by his father's appearance. His father's face, now weathered with age and experience, carried the scars of a lifetime of mistakes and regrets. Miles's thoughts were a whirlwind of emotions as he struggled to reconcile the idealized image he once had of his father with the reality sitting before him. In a voice tinged with both anger and vulnerability, Miles confronted his father about the pain his actions had caused, particularly how it had affected his younger half-sister, Dizzy. He could feel the weight of his words as they hung in the air. When his father's soft acknowledgment of Dizzy's pain hit home, it was as if the truth had finally been laid bare for Miles to see. He realized, in that moment, that the hurt his father had caused wasn't limited to Dizzy alone—it had also deeply scarred him.

The conversation took a more personal turn as Miles recalled the many times his mother had stepped in to fill the emotional gaps left by his father. He reflected on the countless meals she had prepared for him, her unwavering commitment despite his father's absence. Miles found himself confessing to his father about the desperate

emails he had sent in his youth, the ones titled “HELP ME!” where he had begged for a connection that never came. It was a cry for help that had gone unanswered, and Miles was left to navigate his milestones—his track meets, his achievements—without his father’s support. As he spoke, he began to see the bigger picture of their fractured family, how his brother Wynton too had been left longing for their father’s presence. Miles’s pain mirrored his siblings’ experiences, and his words painted a picture of a family united in its grief over their father’s absence.

The conversation shifted, and Miles opened up about the toll this absence had taken on him emotionally. He spoke about how, every day, the weight of his father’s absence had been felt in their home, in their lives. As the conversation continued, his father surprised him by revealing that, despite the distance, he had kept track of Miles’s life. He admitted to watching his son’s videos and reading his poetry, a gesture that was both unexpected and deeply moving for Miles. It was the first time he felt that his father had truly seen him—not just as a son, but as an individual with his own experiences and accomplishments. This revelation stirred emotions within Miles that he hadn’t anticipated. For the first time in a long while, he felt a spark of connection, a flicker of hope that maybe their broken bond could be repaired.

With this new understanding, Miles found the courage to ask his father to reconsider his decision to remain absent from their lives. He poured his heart out, urging his father to try to rebuild what had been broken between them. In a moment of raw vulnerability, Miles expressed his longing for a father who would show up, not just for him, but for the entire family. His father, visibly moved by Miles’s words, reached out to him in an attempt to bridge the gap that had been widening for years. As his father embraced him, a flood of emotions came crashing down on Miles. The years of hurt, of unanswered questions, of emotional distance, all seemed to unravel in that single moment. Miles’s tears flowed freely, a mix of relief and sorrow, as he finally felt the warmth of his father’s love—something he had been yearning for his whole life. In that embrace, something shifted. Their relationship, though far from perfect, was now on the path toward healing. Miles could finally see the possibility of a future where their bond could be restored, one step at a time.