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## Mixing Colors

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## **ChapterOne**

### Mixing Colors

Ethan adjusted the fork on the table, the sunshine gleamed off the impeccable silver fork. He grabbed the cloth napkin and tucked it into his lap. Hearing a whoosh of the balcony door, he looked up to see a thin woman, well kept with flowing brown hair, wearing giant sunglasses, sit down across from him at the table.

"Well look who's up early. Hoping to impress with punctuality?" the woman said with a sneer.

"Better to be early than stumbling in looking like you just fell out of a dumpster Austin," Ethan said, tapping his fingers on the glass table.

"Oh please. These breakfasts on our balcony are nothing more than a daily reminder of how short of leash we are on," Austin said, making a choking noise from an invisible leash she held in her hands.

Ethan shook his head. Mixing Colors "How we are related I will never know."

"Oh I know," Austin said, leaning forward and placing her hands on her chin, "It's perfect actually. You got all the terrible traits from Mom and Dad, such as being a pain in the ass, while I got all the fabulous traits, like being awesome."

Ethan scrunched his face and shook his head. The slight breeze from around them picked up,

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blowing his brown hair. He rolled his eyes and leaned back in his chair. He heard Austin scoff and fold her arms. Ethan closed his eyes and let the sunshine hit him. He enjoyed the peace, letting the warmth touch him from head to Mixing Colors toe.

"Is someone falling asleep?"

He opened his eyes Mixing Colors to see his Mother trudging onto the balcony, holding Mixing Colors a large plate. Ethan leapt to his feet and took the plate from his Mother, placing it on the table.

"Your Father has Mixing Colors the rest. Sit, sit," she Mixing Colors said, motioning back to his seat.

Ethan took his seat, noticing down far below their penthouse suite the traffic of the day starting to fill the streets. He sighed, happy to be so far above all the noise.

"Austin, you know the rules, no sunglasses at the table," Mother said, wagging a finger at Austin. Mixing Colors She sighed, but complied.

"Yes, we can't forget the precious rules now can we?" Austin said, tapping the sunglasses on the table.

"Rules build discipline. And with discipline you can accomplish anything," a deep voice said, making all three heads turn.

Their Father, a tall, imposing man, walked onto the balcony, pushing a small cart filled with trays of food and pitchers of juice. Ethan was at his side in a Mixing Colors second, Mixing Colors helping him lay out the plates without being asked. He caught Austin out of the corner of his eyes sticking her tongue out at him.

"You should take after your brother a little more Austin," Father said, sitting down and putting a napkin over his shirt, "A little discipline would go a long way to straighten you out."

"Please Dad," Austin said, rolling her eyes, "The last thing I need to end up being a asskisser like Ethan."

"Austin!" Mixing Colors Mother said.

"Right, sorry Mom. I meant I don't want to end up a emotionless fun-sucking robot like Ethan."

Ethan took a deep breath through his nose, filling his glass with orange juice.

"Your brother worked very Mixing Colors hard to get where he is today," Father said, placing his hands together, "Which is more than I can say for you."

"Oh my, is it Tuesday? Or Wednesday? I can't tell, because we have this conversation every

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day," Austin Mixing Colors said, widening her eyes and flaying her Mixing Colors arms in mock confusion.

Mother shook Mixing Colors her Mixing Colors head and started to pass the plates of food. The conversation died as each family member filled their plate with hot, delicious food. Ethan's stomach growled.

"As always, before we start it is time for reflection," Father said, leaning forward. He turned his attention to Ethan. "Ethan, who are you planning to be today?"

"I plan on being someone who makes an impact, who rises above expectations," Ethan said, concentrating Mixing Colors on a mental image of him succeeding.

Father nodded and turned to Austin. "And Austin, who are you planning to be today?"

"Drunk," She replied with a giggle.

Father bowed his head and shook it. His head rose and he looked at Mother. "And my dear Darla, who do you plan on being today?"

"As always, a wonderful wife and mother. But today is also the day the new African exhibit arrives so I will be busy. But I will be someone who gets the job done and leaves it at work."

Father smiled. "Wonderful, wonderful. Well as you all know today is the day the McMillan group is purchasing the small gallery of Henriksen's work. I will be tied up in paperwork and legal wrangling all day. But as always I will be a fair and honest man."

Austin shot Ethan a look, who pretended not to see it.

Father dug his fork into the food, and the family followed. Ethan tried to contain his hunger, as he was eating far faster than the rest of his family.

"So Father," Ethan said, wiping his lips with a napkin, "the McMillan deal. Were they that impressed with the showing?"

Austin scoffed and Ethan shot her a glare.

"I am not sure," Father said, not lifting his eyes from the food as he ate, "all I know is they enjoyed the paintings."

Ethan sat back in his chair. "I think Greg and I did a good job setting the gallery for that exhibit."

"You sure did dear," Mother said, sending him a glowing smile.

"The point is, the deal went through. I told you son, you need to start Mixing Colors using those

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contacts I gave you. Those are artists that will sell, and your little gallery needs the boost. You need to stop going in with your heart and picking up those street artists."

"But Father, some of those artists--"

Father looked up from his food and stopped Ethan's words in his throat. "Those artists never brought you a dime. Now, as I told you many times Mixing Colors before, I do not mind helping you out with the gallery. But the expectation is that one day you will be able to pay back the loan I gave you and run it by yourself. The way you will accomplish this if you start bringing in caliber artists and not first year University students."

Ethan caught Austin miming their Mixing Colors Father out of the corner of his eye. His mouth twitched, wanting to smile. Ethan heard Mixing Colors his Mother "tsk" Austin and Mixing Colors she stopped.

"I know Dad I just, I guess I feel it would be nice to give back to some of the less fortunate, those artists that may not get the big break," Ethan said, stabbing his food with his fork.

Father stopped eating and put down his fork. With a smile, he placed his elbows on the table, putting his hands together and leaned towards Ethan. "My son, I am not saying you must become cold-hearted to survive in the world. But you are also like your Mother, bless her, which means you have a soft and warm heart. You must learn to harness that for good, but also realize it can lead you down a bad path."

After a pause, he straightened up and grabbed his fork. "Darla, you remember that man from years ago with the masks?"

Mother chuckled.

## Mixing Colors

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