

A change of heart for Christmas



A few years ago, when Melise was just 15 months old, we had a big family Christmas. It was an adventurous and slightly wild time, especially with six cousins under the age of 7! The cousin that I was most excited for Melise to meet was 1-year-old Matias. Being so close in age, I thought they would hit it off big! I was half right.

Matias wanted to be Melise's friend as soon as he saw her! Melise was not so sure. Matias reached out for Melise, but Melise just pulled away. He tried to say hi, but she ignored him. He even crawled over to give Melise a hug and it looked like she might accept it, but he leaned into it a little too much. Melise fell over backwards, bumping her head on the floor! The wailing that followed made it clear that Melise wasn't ready to be friends. Poor Matias just couldn't do anything to please Melise!

Many times Melise would be playing with a toy and Matias would crawl over to check it out. He didn't even need to touch the toy before Melise would sense his interest and start crying. She really threw a fit when I tried to play with him. She would give me a look as if to say, "Whose side are you on?"

Melise found one activity with Matias that she enjoyed. I gave her a whisk from the kitchen to play with. Melise soon realized that she could easily outrun Matias because he couldn't fully walk yet. He would reach out for the whisk while holding himself up using a chair. Melise would let him get very close before turning and running away—giggling as she went. Matias, being a sweet boy, just looked puzzled by the turn of events.

Needless to say, I was unimpressed by my daughter's game. Since lecturing didn't have any effect on a toddler, I settled with giving Matias his own whisk in order to put a halt to the teasing. Matias took the whisk happily and waved it around.

Melise, spotting his new toy, was obviously annoyed. She marched right over to him and held

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out her hand. To my surprise, Matias handed her his whisk with a smile. As she took one whisk, she dropped the other. I snatched it up and handed it to Matias. He seemed to love this new game as much as it irked Melise! The whisks circled a few times before Melise realized she'd never win and left in a huff!

Eventually, the party started winding down and it was time for cleanup. Both Matias' parents were busy cleaning, so I took on toddler duty.

I sat on the ground with them both and tried to keep peace. Suddenly, Matias wanted to be picked up. I did as he requested, but was dreading Melise's reaction. Standing above her with Matias on my hip, I let her ponder this new situation. She looked me up and down. Then she reached her hand up to take mine. Holding hands, we walked together to a new play area. Melise played contentedly on the floor while I held Matias. She didn't give me any more problems!

I still wonder what she was thinking. Maybe she realized that she didn't have to worry about him as long as he was being held. Maybe she thought I was doing her a favor. Whatever went on in her head, it made all the difference because the next time they were on the same level, Melise gave him a toy! You can't imagine my relief seeing that my daughter could have a change of heart!

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