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Joyride III

By Keith Forrest



By KEITH FORREST

My house has turned into Roswell, New Mexico — wrought with conspiracy theories. But the perpetrators aren't aliens.

It's actually a pair of more mysterious beings — toddlers. My two-year-old twins are involved in a pint-sized silence about their older brother Kameron.

Their language skills are proliferating in the last few months, and Madeline and Elijah can identify every other person that lives in our house, except Kameron.

They will run through the list of fellow dwellers at lightning speed naming each other plus their brother Josh and "Mommy" and "Daddy." They will even say the name of the dog, "Max," with great confidence. But Kameron — no way.

At first, we thought this was some sort of benign oversight, a speed bump in their language development. Perhaps the "K" sound was too hard.

But when we paid careful attention, my wife and I would notice that the twins would look away when we asked them to say Kameron's name. But they would say the name of their other older brother, Josh, with enthusiasm.

In fact, sometimes when we asked the twins to say "Kam," they would say "Josh" instead. Madeline and Elijah were acting like government agents denying any evidence of his existence.

We thought we may need to file one of those Freedom of Information requests to find out just what the toddler's knew. Were they trying to erase any evidence of his identity?

But then one day we heard Madeline say Kameron's name. She said, "No Kam!" as he came barreling toward her before knocking her to the ground.

It wasn't an "X Files" episode at all. It was a protest. It was the silent treatment for bruises rendered.

Maybe their learning skills are developing even faster than we thought. The twins had created an ingenious little web. If Kameron wasn't going to be nice to them, than it was public ridicule for him.

Somewhere in their tiny toddler minds they seemed to be saying — "If you can't act civilized, than you are not a member of this family."

But it was deeper than that. The twins were also lauding praise on Josh for treating them well.

I don't think this bodes well for the teenaged years when even more elaborate psychological warfare will be taking place, no doubt.

But in the meantime, the twins have had decidedly smug looks on their face. What is it that they say about payback?

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