Logan's Answers

By C. Jade Wyton

Logan is not happy that his mother has been keeping things from him and his brother. She's been acting weird, and upset, and she won't tell him why. And now that she's suddenly acting happy again he's extra suspicious. So that night, when his mother's on the phone to her own parents, he eavesdrops in hopes of having his questions answered— Though, the answers he receives are far from what he was expecting.

Contains mentions of abuse, stalking, and murder.

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Logan wasn't happy with his mother.

She'd been fluffing about all month with excuse after excuse (something she *never* did!) instead of just being honest and telling him and Trent what was going on.

All she would say is that it was *adult* business.

Adult business….

It made him mad!

It was *his* business too!

It became his business the moment that it affected him!

Whatever had been upsetting his mother had stopped them going out and having fun. And they had to move apartments! They had changed their entire life! How was it fair he wasn't allowed to know *why?!*

And then today— *Today* she had left then at her friend Maria's house with a grumpy old elf woman and a dog that could apparently read the newspaper.

It wasn't fair.

His mother'd *never* kept secrets from him, before. She always talked about how she tried to be open with them and tell them the truth!

So why not *this time?*

The last words she'd said before hurrying out the door were still rattling around in his head:

Sometimes, you just need a girl's night out in the desert.

What did that mean?

What did that *mean?!*

At first he'd thought it was a metaphor— Until she'd come to pick them up, and she and her friends had been *covered* in dust and dirt and what looked like gold flakes and it had become clear that she had *literally been out doing something weird in the desert.*

He hadn't even been able to be excited about seeing Johanna Magnolia again; not when his mother had pulled a live scorpion out of her pocket with a gasp and announced, perhaps a little too loudly "oh shoot, I missed one!"

What did that mean?! She *missed* one?!

How many live scorpions had she been handling?!
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What had she been *doing?!*

What had she been—

Trent's foot met Logan's side, and Logan couldn't catch himself as he was shoved forcefully down the McDonalds slide.

He tumbled out of the bottom with a loud grunt and immediately felt his mother at his side.

'Honey? Are you alright?' she asked, hooking her hands under his arms and hefting him out of the way just in time to avoid his brother landing on him. 'Trent! Did you push him again?!'

'Yeah,' Trent beamed. 'He was being all weird and thinking too hard, so I pushed him!'

'Trent!' Tiffany scolded, and Trent's smile half-fell as he bit his lip sheepishly. 'You don't push people. Especially not your brother!'

'Yeah, I know, but I couldn't help it!' Trent's grin broke through again and he started to back away, back towards the playground's ladder. 'He was just *sitting* there! Right at the top of the slide! How could I *not* push him?'

'Trent—' Tiffany cut off.

The boy was gone, vanished back into the playground before his mother could finish scolding him, and Logan gave a huff and pushed himself up.

'You okay, honey?' Tiffany asked.

'Yeah,' Logan answered, brushing himself down. 'Trent's been a jerk all day.'

'Oh, hon....'

'It's okay, though,' Logan shrugged. 'He's just excited to be out again. Cos you haven't been letting us out....'

He cut his eyes at his mother as he said it, and saw her lips tighten and her brow furrow slightly— Though she didn't look as upset as she'd been looking all week.

It was a more familiar kind of frustrated; like how she used to look when Ruby would show up in the rain and track mud all through the apartment.

It was a normal kind of face.

It was a *weirdly normal* kind of face.

Logan didn't trust it.

'I'm going to go play more,' he said, not giving his mother time to stop him as he followed his brother onto the play equipment.

He didn't like that she was suddenly taking them to McDonalds for dinner. It had been the first time she'd let them eat out since Constance had shown up in their apartment. And on top of that she'd let them stay for a long time to mess around on the play equipment, instead of hurrying them home like she had been every day after school (or more, what days she had actually taken them to school— it wasn't lost on Logan that his mother had tried to keep them at home for several days before receiving a call from their teacher).

Logan caught up to his brother in one of the tunnels and poked him in the leg to get his attention.

'Trent! Trent!'

'What?'

'Trent, don't you think it's weird that Mum's suddenly so happy again?' Logan asked.

Trent shrugged, looking uncomfortable with the question.

'Mum was *so* upset and weird! And now she's suddenly all happy and normal again! Don't you think that's weird?'

'I mean yeah, kinda,' Trent agreed, shuffling. 'But also. Grandma always says not to look a gift horse in the mouth. So, you know….'

'Trent!'

'Look— Mum's happy again!' Trent shrugged widely. 'That's a *good* thing! Whatever was bothering her with that Constance guy must have gotten fixed!'

Logan frowned at his brother. 'Yeah but *how?* What *was* it? Don't you want to *know* why a *demon* was bothering Mum?'

Trent sighed, and shook his head slowly. 'I'm just happy Mum's normal again today. I don't wanna try and find out why and mess it up…. I just want normal Mum back, okay? I *love* normal Mum! Weird Mum made me scared and I don't want to make her weird again.'

'*You're no help,*' Logan grumbled, pushing past his brother and slipping back down the slide.

He met eyes with his mother as he landed on the ground, frowning at her when she offered him a smile.

She didn't seem bothered by his clear frustration; instead she looked at him with so much love and affection that Logan wasn't sure he'd be able to hold his frown at her.

She still looked really tired, Logan noted as he approached her.

He reached where she sat, feeling his face soften as she pressed a long, loving kiss into his cheek and ruffled his headfin.

'I love you,' Tiffany told him. 'You know I would do anything for you, hon? You know that, right?'

'Except answer my *questions,*' Logan whined, sitting the seat beside his mother and taking some of her cold fries for himself. 'What *happened?* Why are you suddenly so happy when you were so upset before? Explain yourself!'

Another tired look in her eyes; though her smile didn't falter. 'I'll tell you when you're older,' she promised. 'For now, all you have to know is that everything is going to be okay.'

'What does that mean?'

'It means I'll always make things work out in the end, no matter what.'

'What does that *mean?!*' Logan repeated, forcefully.

'It means I love you,' Tiffany answered, placing a loving hand on her son's cheek.

Logan tried to be mad about his mother's vagueness, but the exhaustion behind her loving look told him that she thought she was giving him a real answer (even though she clearly *wasn't!*) and so instead he sighed heavily and leant against her so she could hug him tight.

It was another hug that went on too long— Like the one she'd given him and his brother when Constance had been in their apartment. But this one didn't feel so suffocating; she wasn't trying to hide him from whatever had been scaring her, anymore. Instead, she was breathing a sigh of relief and holding him like she did when she was proud of him.

But he hadn't done anything amazing— So it was like she was proud of him

for just *being here with her*.

And he didn't like that.

He didn't like that she was hugging him in a way that made him feel like, at one point, she'd thought this hug had never been going to happen.

A kiss pressed into Logan's temple and he closed his eyes as his mother whispered gently to him.

'*You two are the most important things in my whole life,*' she said, softly. '*I will always,* always *do my best for you. Okay? I promise.*'

'I know,' Logan sighed back. 'I know, Mum….'

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It was almost one in the morning, and Logan had made himself stay awake for as long as possible as he heard his mother wandering the house; her favourite music playlist sounding softly through her headphones as she was suddenly gripped with the motivation to unpack all of the boxes she'd seemed to have such a problem with before.

Logan had been impatiently waiting for her to go to bed so that he could use the phone to call Scarecrow.

He fiddled with the business card she'd given him, running his fingers over the cheap printer paper.

It wasn't very professional, for someone who apparently worked with the police…. But she was all Logan had to go by.

He knew she'd been there in the desert today with his mother. And he knew that she had gotten hurt somehow— She had been breathing heavily on the drive to drop her home, and though Logan hadn't been able to get a good look at her he thought it looked like she had been bleeding.

With what she'd said the other day about shooting people, Logan *sure* that something had happened out there.

He was trying to put it all together in his mind and knew he had to call her to ask some questions.

She'd made him promise to tell her if his mother was being weird, after all. Maybe if he kept his promise she'd tell him *why*.

So, about ten minutes after he heard his mother's quiet-but-cheerful singing retreat to her room, he crept out of his own and made for the phone that hung on the wall.

Carefully, he took it off the receiver and reached for the buttons… only to hear familiar voices coming out of it.

Mum's on the phone! Logan released with a frustrated grimace. *With Grandma….*

'*It was terrifying,*' Tiffany's voice crackled, and Logan felt himself swallowing as he listened to his mother stammering. '*I was just— I was trembling. Head to toe the entire time. I could barely make the call—*'

Slowly, covering the mouthpiece so his breathing wouldn't catch in it, Logan brought the phone to his ear.

'I'd barely gotten the words out when he hung up on me,' Tiffany continued, her voice much clearer in Logan's ear as he began to eavesdrop. 'And then he just
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appeared in front of me, out of thin air! Oh, Mum, if you could have *heard* what he said about the boys— If you could have *heard!*'

'I know, hon, I know,' Tiffany's own mother, Grandma Ripley, comforted gently. 'But it's over now. You're all alright.'

'I have never been so scared— So *angry*—'

'I know, love, I know—'

'Joey made the first strike,' Tiffany said, and Logan's brow furrowed.

Joey? The first strike?

'I froze,' Tiffany managed. 'Constance was— He was standing over me like he was going to— I think if Joey didn't bite him when she did, he would have.... I think he was going to hurt me, Ma. Really hurt me. Maybe even kill me.'

Logan bit back his inhale.

'Love....'

'He looked and me and I— And I froze for just— Just a little too long,' Tiffany let out a heavy sigh. 'I mean, as soon as Joey struck him I was back but— *I was* so *scared, Mum!* But then it all just *happened*. Joey struck the first blow, and I let out a surge of magic, and the other girls just started *wailing* on him! It was.... I'm glad that they were there for me. I never could have done that on my own.'

'Gods. I wish you'd told us what you were doing, hon,' Grandma Ripley sighed. 'We could have helped—'

'No, you couldn't have,' Tiffany said, firmly. 'Because if something went wrong where would the boys have ended up? I needed you to be away from it, so that if I didn't come back....'

Logan held his breath as his mother paused.

For a long moment nobody said anything. Logan could feel his heart beating hard in his throat as the quiet yawned between through the phone-line.

Then, finally, Grandma Ripley broke the silence with a heavy sigh, 'Tiffany hon, I love you, but you're a *fucking idiot*.'

'Mm.'

'You can't just run off on your own to take on a man twice your size—'

'I wasn't alone, I already *said* I had people with me!' Tiffany defended, and Logan thought he knew who she meant.

Johanna, Scarecrow, and Maria; they had all left with his mother that day....

'You could have had *more* people there to help, if you'd just told us what you were planning,' Grandma Ripley pointed out. 'And you didn't even take *Ruby* with you! And the girls! Have you even told them about what's going on? I would have thought your friends would have—'

'No, Mum. They wouldn't understand,' Tiffany said, firmly. 'I mean.... I love them. I do. But there are things they just don't *get*. There are different types of friends, Mum. And Andi, Cleo, Steph— They're— They're *good time* friends. We laugh. We have fun. We help each other out where we can but— But I can't ask them to risk their lives for me.... And let's be honest, Mum. I can't *trust* them to risk their lives for me. Not when they can't even seem to make time to see me outside of a bar.'

The last sentence was followed by another long, long silence that was, again, broken by Ripley sighing.

'And what about Ruby? Is she a "good time" friend?'

‘Ruby would blow up the whole fucking city for me,’ Tiffany said with a chuckle. ‘Which is exactly why I didn’t tell her what I was doing; she wouldn’t have had the patience to make a plan. She would have marched right out into the street and picked a fight without thinking and gotten herself put in the hospital.’

Grandma Ripley echoed Tiffany’s chuckle, and Logan bit his lip to try and quiet his nervous breathing.

‘She would have, she would have,’ Ripley agreed. ‘She’d have walked all the way down into hell to fight him, if she thought it would help.’

‘Yeah, but it would have just made more problems,’ said Tiffany. ‘We needed the element of surprise.’

‘Mm… but still. That’s a lot, hon,’ Grandma Ripley said, her voice laced with a sympathetic note. ‘To have *killed* a man….’

Logan’s breath caught in his throat.

Did Grandma mean what he thought she did…?

‘*Nobody* threatens my boys,’ Tiffany growled, a furious hiss on her breath that Logan had never heard from her before. ‘He got exactly what was coming to him. From people who deserved to deal it to him— Scarecrow, for example! He bought her at an auction, Mum! *Bought* her like you’d buy a used car! And poor Creedence— That’s why Maria was there, you know. Because of what he did to Creedence.’

‘Yes, you told me about that,’ Grandma Ripley acknowledged. ‘Poor man….’

‘I’m glad Constance is dead,’ Tiffany said, simply. ‘And I wouldn’t hesitate to kill him all over again to keep the boys safe. I don’t care that he might be their father! He crossed a fucking line—‘

The phone slipped from Logan’s hand and he fumbled to catch it; accidentally smacking it as he did so it swung from its cable into the wall with a loud *CLACK!*

Logan had barely managed to get the phone back onto the receiver when his mother’s bedroom door opened and she stepped out; meeting his eye with an unimpressed look.

‘It’s Logan…. I’ll call you back,’ she mumbled, before hanging up the wireless handset.

Silently, she made her way over to her son. Then, after gently placing the phone on its charger, she looked to him and gave him a hard, severe look—

He was in trouble.

He was in *so* much trouble!

Tiffany took a deep breath, opening her mouth to scold her son— And Logan yanked a piece of paper from his pyjama pocket and thrust it at his mother.

‘I want to use this!’ he blurted a little too loudly.

He didn’t think she’d actually let him use it; the stupid “get out of trouble voucher” she’d made for him before all of this had started… but with the way she was looking at him he was *desperate!*

Slowly, Tiffany closed her mouth and took the paper, glancing it over before looking back to Logan with sharp eyes. ‘What do you want to use this for?’ she asked, curtly. ‘For being up at one in the morning, or for eavesdropping?’

‘Eavesdropping!’ Logan answered, quickly. ‘The eavesdropping one!’

Tiffany nodded— And then tore the paper in half. Then in half again.

He should have expected that.

Tiffany scooped an arm around her son and wordlessly led him towards the kitchen, and Logan didn't dare say anything as his mother sat him down at the dining table. All he could do was fidget in place as she disappeared into the kitchen.

He was in so, so much trouble….

So much trouble he wasn't even sure how she could possibly *begin* to punish him….

She would probably ground him. And ban him from doing anything but school— Maybe she'd even ban him from school, too!

She'd looked so mad…. He was really in for it….

But then suddenly, to Logan's surprise, a hot chocolate was placed by his side; and he looked up at his mother with wide, anxious eyes as she sat opposite him and sipped her own drink.

'Aren't I— Aren't I in trouble?'

'No. You had a voucher,' she said, simply. 'I promised you could get out of trouble if you kept that secret for me, didn't I?'

'Y-Yeah.'

'And you didn't tell anyone, did you?'

'N-No.'

'So I have to keep my promise,' Tiffany sighed, leaning forward to look at her boy with sharp eyes. 'No matter how much I *really* don't want to, right now.'

Logan swallowed.

'You can't tell anybody what you heard, okay?' she said. '*Nobody* can *ever* know. If they find out they…. I could get in a lot of trouble, hon.'

Logan shifted uncomfortably, and that. A thousand thoughts buzzing in his head, all of them fighting so hard to be at the front of his mind he could barely focus on them at all.

'I could go to jail,' she pressed.

Logan swallowed.

He didn't want his mother to be taken away.

'Mm. And then it would…' Logan paused to take a breath as tears formed in his eyes. 'Then it would have all been pointless anyway, right? Because we'd be separated anyway?'

'No. Not pointless. It would still have been worth it,' Tiffany corrected, gently lifting Logan's chin until he looked at her. 'Because even if something happens to me now, I know you'll be safe with your grandmothers. And knowing that you're safe? That makes it worth it. That makes *everything* worth it.'

Logan swallowed, looking to his feet as he rubbed them together anxiously.

'And we wouldn't have been safe with Constance around?'

Tiffany shook her head. 'Do you remember…. Do you remember when we got on the wrong train, and that man Creedence got very, very hurt?'

Slowly, Logan nodded. 'Yeah?'

'It was Constance who did that to him,' Tiffany said, and Logan saw her wince. 'Because he did *one thing* wrong…. I can't even imagine how he would have treated you. Thinking about it makes me— It makes me….'

Logan couldn't bare to look at the pain in his mother's eyes as she trailed off, so instead he averted his gaze to the floor.

He didn't know what to say, anymore.

He'd wanted answers, but he could never have imagined they'd be *this*….

A hand was placed over his and he looked back to his mother, though he focused on her shoulder instead of her eyes.

'Do you understand why I couldn't explain it to you before, hon?' Tiffany asked, softly.

'I think so,' Logan sighed. 'Is it… is Constance really our dad?'

'Mm,' Tiffany hummed. 'I mean… *he* thought he was.'

Logan felt himself frown. 'Don't be vague again—'

'I'm not. I promise I'm not,' Tiffany comforted. 'I don't *know* if he's your father or not. He thought he was, but… again. There's also Creedence.'

'*Creedence* is our dad?'

'Maybe,' Tiffany sighed. 'It was one of them. I don't know which one.'

'How can you not *know?*' Logan asked; growing more frustrated as his mother gave him a sheepish look and sipped at her drink instead of answering. '*Mum!* Tell me!'

'Now *that* really *is* adult business,' she mumbled into her drink.

'What does that even *mean!*' Logan exclaimed, throwing his hands up just so he could slam them down angrily at his sides. 'How I was made is *my* business! I have a *right* to know! Tell me! Tell me how you made me *right now!*'

To Logan's surprise, his mother laughed at his outburst— Into her drink, sending a short spray of coffee droplets into the air around her snout.

'*Mum!*'

'Okay! Okay,' Tiffany put her cup down, taking a deep breath as she sat up straight. 'Just…. Give me a minute to think of how to word it….'

Logan frowned deeply at that. 'Why do you have to think about it?'

'Well it's— It's a bit complex,' Tiffany rubbed the back of her neck and pursed her lips tight.

At least it seemed like she was going to actually answer him, this time.

'Adults play… a game together,' she finally said.

'A game?'

'Yeah. An… adult game.'

'Mum that *doesn't help!*' Logan pressed. 'What game? How is it played? How does a *game* make a baby?!'

Tiffany took out her phone, then, and quickly began typing.

'What are you *doing?*' Logan demanded.

'I'm getting up someone who's already worded it better than I possibly could,' Tiffany said, before turning her phone around and holding it out to her son. 'Here. This.'

Logan's eyes trailed over his mother's phone, scanning the webpage with a frown.

Okay….

Slowly, he felt his frown turning into a appalled scowl as he— *EUGH?!*

'That's disgusting!' he exclaimed, leaping to his feet. 'That's *disgusting!*'

'Mhm,' Tiffany gave a hum, and it was clear that she was trying not to laugh.

'And you did that *twice?!*'

'I did it more than twice, hon,' Tiffany answered.

Logan scrunched up his snout, trying to make his displeasure as clear as he possibly could. ‘How *many* times?’

‘You don’t want that answer,’ she told him.

‘*Eugh!*’ Logan made a fake-gagging sound. ‘That’s gross, Mum! That’s *so* gross!’

‘You wanted to know,’ Tiffany shrugged, a familiar, cheeky humour on her face.

Logan thought it the sort of expression she used to make when he and his brother would make a “compromise” with her that was really just her getting her way.

‘I’m going to *bed!*’ Logan declared, stomping his foot and marching away.

The smug look on his mother’s face just grew, then, and she rested her head on a hand as she grinned. ‘Alright, hon. You sleep well.’

Logan didn’t reply as he stormed to his room and shut the door a little too hard.

Furiously, he tugged off his jumper and climbed into bed.

‘*Disgusting…*’ he grumbled, before submerging himself and closing his eyes. *Absolutely disgusting…!*

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