

***Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World* by Mildred Pitts Walter**

“So it’s about time you got home,” Evelyn said. She took charge while their mama worked each day.

Justin spread his legs as if to take a firm stand. He hated Evelyn being the boss. He stared ahead and said nothing.

“See how he acts, Mama,” Evelyn said. “He’s that way all the time.”

“Aw, Evelyn,” Hadiya said, to protect Justin.

He liked Hadiya. Everyone said they looked alike: both dark, tall, and thin. Hadiya, two years older than Justin and three years younger than Evelyn, was the tallest. At ten years old, Justin was already almost as tall as Evelyn.

Evelyn went on, “He gets in here just before you every day, Mama. And he does nothing around here.”

Justin lowered his eyes but still said nothing.

“And you ought to see his room. Like Grandpa’s pig pen,” Evelyn said.

Hadiya giggled. Justin cut his eyes on her. She retreated to set the table.

Finally Mama said, “Justin, where have you been?”

“At the playground,” he answered.

“Every day, Mama. That’s all he does.”

“All right, Evelyn, I’ll handle it,” Mama said.

“But you always say you’ll handle it and Justin gets away with murder,” Evelyn said.

“That’s enough, Evelyn.” Mama increased her firmness.

Justin smiled inside, glad his mother had rescued him as she always did. He looked at Evelyn as if to say, *You know I’m her favorite*. Then he felt put out with himself for getting home too late to help with the groceries. He had let his mother down. He waited for her to say something about his being late.

His mama said nothing as she took lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and sprouts from the refrigerator to make a salad for dinner. Justin still waited. Finally she said, “Go wash up.”