

The Tipping Point

October 2021 – Commission

Glasses clinked. Silverware scraped. The voice of the sportscaster on the living room TV rose and fell. Conversation ebbed and flowed. And still somehow, cutting through all the companionable sounds of three people having a nice Saturday lunch together, Amy could distinctly hear another blush-inducing sound... the sound of soft crinkling beneath her bottom.

"Here, Amy. Why don't you have some more lemonade? We made it just for you, you know!"

Corinne, blonde and sweet and helpful as ever, was smiling over at her, proffering a nearly-empty decanter of yellow, bubbly liquid. "Come on, no wasting stuff now! You know about the starving folks in Africa, right?" And without further ado, the decanter tipped up in her neatly manicured hand and spilled its contents down into Amy's waiting glass. "There! Now Henry, Amy was saying something about a party tonight, right?"

Henry, jerked back to reality from his momentary, over-the-shoulder glance in the direction of the TV, sighed and nodded. "Yeah, it's- it's a whole thing. Basically my boss and my boss's boss and *that* boss's boss are all going to be there. It's a big yearly thing, apparently..." He took a last bite of his cookie and shrugged. "They're really talking it up as... well, I dunno. As this chance to meet the big cheeses and see that they're just ordinary folks..."

"Yeah, makes sense. But Amy was saying she's supposed to come along, huh? Is there any sort of dress code?" Corinne rose and began clearing the plates as she waited for Henry's reply. "Oh, clothes? Yeah, they're saying formal wear – so suits and ties and everything. Kinda dumb, but, y'know... what are you gonna do?"

"Well, that's good to know!" Corinne observed, casting a wry glance at Amy, who was still busy draining the last drops of lemonade from her glass. "Amy, I wish you'd have told me! We should have been figuring out an outfit for you all this time. You think you'll manage to find something?" And here she rested one hand on Amy's shoulder and bent low in a confidential whisper. "Something... you know... appropriate? Something nice and discreet? Sure you don't want any help managing your- you know...?"

Amy's cheeks reddened, but fortunately Henry was gazing distractedly away once again in the direction of the football game. "Um, yeah. Yeah, I'll be okay. I can find something..." If only the noise of the rustling – and yes, slightly damp – padding between her legs wasn't so incredibly,

embarrassingly loud in her ears! But there was nothing for it but to rise... to help Corinne clear the table... to hope and pray that Henry wasn't paying enough attention either to witness Corinne's knowing smiles or to hear that quietly incriminating sound of the pull-up hidden beneath her jeans...

"Oh, dear, is that the time? I really need to run!" Corinne exclaimed, with a startled glance at the clock on the kitchen wall. "So sorry I won't be able to help with tonight's outfit, dear. But I'm sure you understand. Got more training this afternoon – big session on special needs and stuff." She chuckled and reached over to gather her bulky purse from the counter. "Just the life of a nurse, you know?"

And then she was gone: leaving Henry and Amy, husband and wife, alone with their football and their dirty dishes.

Not that Amy was a fan of housework, of course. Ordinarily she did anything she could to procrastinate and shove those mounds of dishes – or laundry, or bills – ever higher, hoping that someone else would magic them away for her. And sometimes it worked, too. Since her old college friend and newly minted RN Corinne had moved back into the neighborhood six months before, she and her seemingly boundless energy had been coming over with increasing frequency. More to the point, somehow Corinne just seemed to love taking charge of these wifely sorts of tasks – and that being the case, Amy certainly wasn't disposed to stand in her way.

But this afternoon... well, now that they were alone again, Amy needed some space. Some room to think. And some noise to cover up the sound of that dang pull-up Corinne had told her to wear this morning. So much as she loathed dish-washing, right now it was just what she needed.

Corinne was clearly overreacting, Amy mused, rummaging through the suds for another spoon. Sure, she'd been a lifesaver: so sweet and supportive, recommending that Amy wear adult diapers for those strange nightly accidents she'd begun to experience a few months back. And yeah, just last week Amy *had* begun having a few dribbly accidents during the day – mainly, of course, when she was distracted or focused on other things. But it wasn't like she actually *needed* to wear this dumb pull-up in the day, right? It might be a bit wet right now, but that was just because of those sneezes she'd had at lunch. She just needed to be responsible, use the bathroom often enough...

Speaking of which-

No, she'd be fine. That sudden cramp in her tummy was just gas. She had to get these dishes

washed, right? If she did, maybe she could show everyone that she wasn't completely incapable...

Five minutes later, a sudden splashing followed by a frantic thud of footsteps drew Henry's attention from the TV. "Um, honey?" he called out tentatively, scanning the now-empty kitchen in surprise. "Everything okay? Where are you, anyway?"

And then a soft thud in the hallway. Which appeared to be, as Henry turned the corner in rising alarm, the result of his visibly distressed wife sinking down to her knees, a look of mute horror and pain fixed on her face.

"Honey, what is it?! Are you okay? Does something hurt-?" But before he could complete his anxious questions, a gurgling, gassy sound emanated from Amy's jeans... and as she stared, frozen with bulging eyes and petrified limbs, into her husband's concerned eyes, it became all too apparent what was happening. No- no she couldn't be! It was crazy to think that she, a grown adult, was about to- to-

"I- I- *uubbbb!!*- I can make- *it...*" she wailed, and then the tears were falling as the hiss of her loosened bladder was drowned out by her broken sobs. "My tum- stomach- it's so-" "Jesus Christ, are you-? No, no, don't shit in your pants!" Henry yelled, scrabbling ineptly at his wife's waistband. "Here, off with your jeans! Come on, get to the toi- Wait, what the-"

For as he jerked down her jeans in a well-meaning attempt to assist, he found himself staring not merely at the unexpected sight of a flowered pull-up... but at a flowered pull-up that was rapidly filling with the contents of Amy's swollen bladder *and* distressed bowels.

Yes, Amy was lost: face crumpling into ugly sobs, her panic and shame redoubling with every fresh cramp and messy spurt into her pants. Here she was, kneeling before her handsome husband, wearing a freaking pull-up and completely soiling herself like an absolute infant. But even more distressing than the horrific sensation of the smelly, leaky mess now pressing against her most sensitive parts was another and truly terrifying thought...

What on earth would Henry think of her now?

Oh, she was keenly aware of their recent lackluster attempts at sex. Clearly, Henry had been put off not just by her nighttime accidents, but also by the shameful padding she'd been forced to wear. But now? Well, who on earth would ever want to have sex with a dirty, smelly, leaky excuse of a wife who even in broad daylight was more accident-prone than a literal preschooler?

And so it was that with every one of Henry's well-meaning attempts to console her, poor Amy only found herself sobbing louder, hysterically spiraling further and further down into a black pit of self-loathing and despair...

"I'm *so* glad you called, Henry! Here, let's see what's going on, shall we? Yes, thanks – I brought a bit of extra gear just in case we need it..."

It hadn't taken more than ten minutes for Corinne, seemingly startled by Henry's frantic and incoherent call, to appear once more at her friends' home. "No, no. Training can wait," she repeated now in reply to Henry's apologetic protests. "Now, then. Aww, honey, what's going on here?"

"She's- I honestly don't know," Henry faltered, following her gaze down to the still-wailing, red-faced, snot-nosed figure of his inconsolable wife. "She was just in the kitchen, and, like, next thing I know, she's like, *there*-" "I see. Oh- oh dear, me!" Corinne clucked, dropping to her knees and taking the quivering Amy by the shoulders. "Here, come on, baby! Sit all the way down on the floor for me. Let me see the damage..."

As she guided Amy firmly down onto her messy rear, a fresh wave of tears and sobs burst from her snot-covered lips. "No- no- Not dirty!" were the only coherent words the bemused duo could decipher – but for Corinne, it was enough. "Oh, dear! I see what's going on," she sighed with a wry sniff of the air and a pat to the clearly soiled pull-up between Amy's legs. "She's regressing, Henry. She's going backward... fast. We're going to need to take charge, okay? Can you help me with that?"

"Um- Sure, anything you say," Henry assented, confusedly eyeing the shuddering form of his wife as Corinne began to unbutton her patient's clothes. "But you say... regressing? Like, what does that mean?" "It's a mental and physical condition," Corinne explained, as Amy's top and bra came free. "And honestly, I should have seen it coming. It all makes so much sense now..."

"Uh, okay?" Henry was clearly not tracking, and Corinne flashed a brisk smile even as she tugged Amy's jeans free. "Here, that's better! Now let's get her into the bathroom..." Once there, Corinne deftly tore off the sagging, filthy pull-up and herded the quivering and blubbering Amy into the shower. "Listen," she called over the noise of the rushing water. "She's been having those nighttime accidents for months now, right?"

"Yeah," Henry admitted, wincing as he watched his wife's soiled rear being rinsed clean under the shower head. "You were the one who told us about the- the-" "Diapers, yes," Corinne smiled – and pushed Amy firmly down into the tub. "Best way to keep messes contained, of course. And then with her daytime dribbles, well – pull-ups seemed in order. Honestly, I have a hunch she was already wet during lunch..."

"So that- that- pull-up? Wait, she's been wearing those? In the day?" Henry was clearly nonplussed. "But *why*?" Corinne shrugged and began soaping up a washcloth in preparation for washing her hiccuping friend. "That's what I'm saying, Henry! She's regressing, clearly; her mind and her body are going back in time to infancy. It's nothing life-threatening, of course. It's simply a powerful coping mechanism, and I'm afraid there's very little to do but deal with it as best we can..."

By the time Amy had been thoroughly scrubbed, Henry and Corinne were finally on the same page. "Geez, we're so lucky to have you here!" Henry exclaimed, watching as Corinne lowered the towel-wrapped Amy down to the bathroom floor. "I wouldn't have had the foggiest idea of what to do. Hell, I'd probably still be flipping out in some emergency room..."

"And even they likely wouldn't know what to do with her," Corinne finished with a cheeky smile, then gestured over her shoulder. "Henry, would you be a dear and fetch me that bag I brought in? There's a bunch of things in there we're going to need..."

Oh, there were. Before Henry's eyes, Corinne set out to demonstrate the intricacies of wrapping a young adult woman – his very own wife, no less – in a disposable diaper. However, by this time Amy's sobs had run their course, and she struggled and protested frantically at the sight of the bulky garment unfolding in Corinne's hands. "No- no, please, I don't- no diaper!" she begged, her voice broken and plaintive as her friend easily lifted her bare bottom and began to slip it underneath. "I'm not- not a baby, Corinne! Please-!"

And before Corinne could stop her, she'd twisted off the hateful thing and rolled away, stark naked and red-faced with mortification. "Get away from me!" she wailed – but even as she scabbled to get to her feet, Corinne's firm hands, made strong by years of training and experience with difficult patients, closed tightly around her. "NO," she said in a stern voice that made Amy quail, even as she found herself being propelled irresistibly back onto the crinkling diaper. "You *are* going to behave, Amy. I suggest you quit acting like a spoiled little brat and let me do my job so I don't need to get serious with you. Listen: I'm a nurse, and I'm just doing what I know is best for you..."

"Yeah, calm down, babe," Henry piped up, clearly troubled but willing to do anything to help Corinne restore order. "I'm sure she knows what she's doing. You're not well, you know. I think you should just hush and, uh, let her take care of you..." And so – outmaneuvered, overpowered, and seemingly betrayed by her own husband – Amy shrank down with a shudder and a beet-red face while Corinne finally drew the bulky garment closed around her. "There!" she exclaimed with the bright, reassuring smile of a nurse consoling an unruly and unreasonable patient. "That should keep our Amy snug and clean for the rest of today... and probably tonight as well."

"Tonight..." Henry paused, suddenly struck by an entirely unwelcome realization. "Oh, shit! Corinne, I'm- I almost forgot. I've got that supper thing to go to..." He cast a rueful glance down at his diaper-clad wife, who was now struggling into a sitting position on her loudly crinkling rear. "She's not in any shape to go, I guess..."

"Unless you're ready to introduce her as your baby girl?" Corinne chuckled, pulling a thick, white cotton garment from her bag and beginning to tug it over Amy's struggling head. "No, really. She's going to need to be in baby mode for a good while, Henry – not wife mode. You don't need to have her sitting there crying and filling her diaper right in front of everyone, I'm sure..."

"Not- no, Corinne, I'm- I wouldn't! It was just an accident- It- it was the lemo-" Amy protested in indignant and quavering tones – but Corinne merely clucked and laid a shushing finger on her friend's lips as she pulled her upright and finished zipping the bodysuit u. "Hush, dearie. You're in no state to do much of anything right now, okay? Just be quiet and let us figure this out..." And then, as if a sudden flash of inspiration had struck, she brightened up.

"I know! Henry, what if I'd throw on a gown and go along with you instead? I just so happen to have a spare dress in my trunk – just got it back from the cleaners..."

And so it was decided – by Corinne, mainly. Oh, naturally the shaken Amy kept on blubbering and wailing the entire time about how she wasn't a baby, how she just had had a tiny little accident, how she was going to be an adult from now on. She could still go to the party tonight! It wasn't fair that she had to stay home like a stupid baby. Besides, she didn't need this stupid diaper – she only needed them at night! Please, if they'd let her go to the party, she'd promise to wear a pull-up. She'd show them – she'd be such an adult...

But Henry looked skeptical, remembering the sight he'd just witnessed only a few hours before of

bulging pull-ups and messy asses and hysterical wails. And Corinne only laughed, and and shook her head with a professional smile, and pulled the special needs mitts tighter around her squirming friend's hands.

"Shh, it'll be okay!" she assured Amy with a smile, even as the Segufix locks clicked into place and Amy found herself seated on the bed: diapered, mittened, and firmly locked into a warm, back-zipping, inescapable garment more akin to a baby's sleeper than anything she'd ever worn. "I'm the nurse here, and I know what you need, okay? Listen: you're going to stay here tonight and relax in your bedroom like a sweet little girl should. And don't worry – we'll make sure to leave you a few bottles in case you get hungry while we're away. Can't have you spilling anything..."

And then, almost as if to add insult to injury, she bent down and plucked a grey stuffed rabbit from her bag. "Look, we'll even give you Mister Wiggles to keep you company, honey! Nothing like a cute little bunny to make you feel *all* better, right?" She flashed an apologetic smile at Henry, who appeared undecided on whether to laugh or cry at the sight before him. "Oh, don't worry! See, when folks like Amy start regressing, the very best thing to do is just to lean into it. Just like a baby, right now what Amy needs is a firm hand, plus lots of things to help her feel warm and safe and comfy..."

Corinne then chuckled and rose to her feet. She'd changed now into her her low-cut, emerald cocktail dress, and thanks to her feminine curves, her long blonde hair and makeup, and the heels she'd donned, she was looking more womanly and alluring than ever. Nor was the contrast between the two lost on Henry, who found himself suddenly tongue-tied by the incongruity before him. For there on the one hand was Corinne, a veritable blonde bombshell. And on the other... well, was Amy, looking for all the world like a diaper-clad, overgrown toddler clutching her favorite stuffie for comfort.

"Oh, Henry," Corinne added, with a sweet smile down at her friend blinking resentfully up at her from the bed. "I don't suppose you could make sure that this bedroom door locks from the outside instead of the inside? Just for tonight? We don't want this little dear hurting herself while the grownups are away..."

And then she bent down and, before Amy could squirm away in alarm, gave the padding between her legs an experimental squeeze. "Oh, dear – a bit wet already!" she clucked, with a good-humored glance at Henry. "Don't worry – it'll take a lot more than a few dribbles until that diaper needs changing. I've seen that brand handle three or even four messes without leaking..."

Amy, of course, was writhing in humiliation with every word – but the graphic memory of the mess she'd literally just been sitting in a few hours before prevented her from doing more than whining softly in embarrassment. And even when Corinne continued, sweetly reassuring the clearly anxious Henry that taking charge and diapering poor Amy had been the right move – that otherwise the poor dear would already have soaked her clothes and her bed even before they'd left... Well, the hapless Amy was left blushing and mute, more aware than ever of just how little she could say or do to the contrary. Of course Henry believed Corinne. She was confident, knowledgeable, and clearly cared about Amy's well-being as much as he did... so why wouldn't he?

Perhaps it was all a colossal joke on Corinne's part. Perhaps not. But when the bedroom door finally closed and the lock clicked into place and the sound of the others' voice faded away, the dazed Amy could only stare apprehensively around the room... and then down at herself, frightened by the extent to which matters – and even her own bodily autonomy – had in only a matter of hours slipped out of her hands.

How on earth had this even happened? It seemed ludicrous to suspect that Corinne – her trusted friend of six years – might have sabotaged her or slipped her something in that lemonade... So was her frightful accident – and all the months of wet nights before – truly a sign that she was... regressing, as Corinne said? By what right had she and Henry done this to her, anyway?

Perhaps she was actually going crazy?

She wasn't quite certain. But as she sank down onto her amply padded rump and stared disconsolately at Mister Wiggles still clutched between her helpless, mittened hands, she had to agree on one thing. Whatever the hell was going on, this innocent Saturday seemed to have brought her – and Corinne, and Henry – to a tipping point of sorts. And somehow, she wasn't quite sure that she wanted to see what the future held.

Because in the back of her head, a nasty little voice was whispering that it was going to be all downhill from here.