

29 - Like Everyone Else

There are seven colors in a rainbow, and Dawn was looking at each and every one of them in the form of high chairs. Identical in style and design, save for the tone and shade of plastic, wood and cushioning that each one used.

“I’m *hungry!*!” a Little moaned from his chair, sagging his limply hanging head just above his tray.

“Nanny...!” another groaned impatiently just as well.

“And then when he bumped into it the whole thing came down and went boom! And then I got super mad so I shoved him and...” a diapered woman rambled fast and quick, letting her words flow like water at another patron who seemed to nod at every syllable.

All seven chairs were against the back kitchen wall, just in front of the windows that reached the high ceiling with chocolate brown curtains to match the blackened ceilings. Seven chairs, but only six Littles, not a one without a bib around their necks. Sitting right where it would in the rainbow was color number four, green, and currently unoccupied.

“Oh, hey,” red chair Little reached out to nudge orange chair Little, but the gap kept his arm from reaching by a wide margin. Nevertheless he had his attention. “Told you we were getting someone new.” And the obvious set of eyes wasn’t lost on Dawn, who immediately tried turning the other way.

But Veronica stretching the waistband of her diaper just to see inside made her forget about the onlookers. “H-hey!” she cried.

“Just wanted to double-checkies!” Veronica sang with a smile, then Dawn felt the embarrassing pat on her disposable bottom. “Definitely an after-dinner kinda diaper, though,” Veronica decided for the Little, then lifted her head. “Gina, guess who’s joining everyone for dinner~!”

Gina, busy with her back to the kitchen and her front facing the stove, briefly extended her arm and hand holding a wooden spoon at the line of high chairs. “She’s in green.”

“Oou! Green, huh?” Veronica was already walking over. “Do you like green, Dawn?”

“I-I guess...?” Dawn shrugged, unsure whether there was a right answer or not.

“I like Blue!” the fast-talker from before fired with their hand in the air. It looked like they had just been mid conversation, yet dropped it all entirely just to make a three word statement.

“Oh I know, Lucy!” Veronica giggled, and the Little laughed right back before a switch was flipped and her routine was back to neighborly conversation.

Every white plastic tray to each chair had two nubs on the end, of which thick string was tied around and allowing a whiteboard to hang beneath each Little. The thematics were maintained as the blue chair was written in blue marker, red in red, yellow in yellow (which some assisting orange accents), and so on. Each one though had its own creative flare, like dots for one, smiles for another, hearts, flowers, butterflies; anything to make the white borders seem less bor(der)ing.

“Okay, astronaut, let’s get you buckled in!” Veronica’s enthusiasm didn’t wane when Dawn was deposited into her seat. It was similar to the one at home— To the one from where she previously stayed, which was her slight bucket seat and strap between her legs. But now she wasn’t a participant at a grown-up table, and instead with her own sandbox to eat as cleanly or messily as her lack of resources would allow.

But it became even more different from there.

“And then we put these on...!”

Amazon hands worked around her, pulling at things that protruded from slits in the back cushioning, ultimately pulling straps over her shoulders and around her waist, clicking it altogether into a master buckle resting on her stomach.

“What’s this for?” Dawn asked as she tried to lean forward, but the thick foamy shoulder straps kept her within a couple centimeters of the back.

“We wouldn’t want you to accidentally fall out!” Veronica said as she held the high chair’s whiteboard in her hand. She was already scribbling with a green-tipped marker. The noise of chatty Littles and clanging potware played in the background as Dawn bathed in the shadow of the Amazon, humming as she made her finishing touches.

“Hey, uh, when can I get some pants?” Dawn tried asking Veronica, who ignored her for another few seconds until she put down the marker and dropped the sign.

“Sorry? What was that, honey?”

“Pants? Can I have some to replace the other ones?”

“Pants?” Veronica repeated, like her ears may have been deceiving, and Dawn awkwardly nodded. “Oh, well...” she turned her head, looking at something the chair-strapped Little couldn’t see. “Bedtime for you kiddos is in just another hour, so we’ll see what there’s for you to wear then.”

And there were many things wrong with what she just said, but Dawn pincered one of the most important.

“Did you say bedtime? In an hour? Aren’t we just getting ready to eat?”

“Yup!” Veronica chipperly nodded. “After dinner then we’ve gotta get you all out of your highchairs, clean you up, change your diapers, put on your PJs, then get you in your cribs. It’s gonna fly by before you know it!” And Veronica was already flying away, starting to flock toward her coworker.

“W-wait! Veronica?” Dawn reflexively leaned forward to call, but her oppressive straps kept her down and subdued. Thankfully the woman did hear, because she briefly came back over.

“Yah-huh?”

“W-well...” for a second, Dawn checked her surrounding inferiors just to make sure they were busy talking to someone else. In a lower voice she said, “Well...since my situation’s a little different...maybe we could uh...talk after you guys put them all to bed?”

And either as a cue for Dawn or just to check herself, looking innocent and clueless, Veronica waved to their surroundings with a tiny finger. “After you *all* go to bed?”

“Uh, yeah, after everyone else does,” Dawn repeated, trying to emphasize the important difference in their words.

“Sorry sweetie, crib time is for sleepies, not chit-chat,” Veronica’s fingers dug between the shoulder straps and Dawn, tugging them a small bit. There was no actual conversation, just noise from their mouths while Veronica did the job of a nanny.

So again, without as many pleasantries, Dawn put a bit more bluntly, “I...okay, I get that, but I’m just asking if I can go to bed later than everyone else.”

“And that’s how we get a cranky pants in the morning,” Veronica gave her a knowing grin, like there was somehow a joke Dawn was supposed to get, who still looked clueless, and trying not to come off as offended. “We can talk lots in the morning, okay? Okay.”

And Dawn was alone, but not far away enough to not hear.

“I told Wanda you were gonna take over for her for dinner,” Gina said with two steaming bowls of different colors. She politely shoved them into Veronica’s grip.

“Okie-dokie!” Veronica nodded, and Dawn watched her go from chair to stove, getting bowl after bowl from Gina, slowly fitting out everyone with a dish of steaming food. “And green goes to our newest jelly bean!” Veronica cooed as a green bowl of...food? As a bowl of something was placed in front of Dawn.

It reminded her of pudding, although the texture seemed a bit off, had far too much orange tinge to make her think of chocolate, was steaming, and had...peas?

“She doesn’t like it!” yellow chair Little accused her with an open finger, giggling as she hid her mouth with the other hand. And just to make her soon-to-be literal shit-eating grin even more tacky, toes kept flashing in and out of view from where she was swinging her feet.

But an Amazon’s hand intervened and gently wrapped itself around the girl’s hand, curling the finger back in and keeping her arm to herself.

“Amelia, remember what we said about pointing?” Gina scolded as she dropped spoons on everyone’s trays. Dawn’s included. And to her almost wide-eyed surprise, the spoon was small. Little-sized. Though...the material itself didn’t look metal. Rubber? A hard rubber, but a spoon nonetheless.

More than what James and Katherine could do for her.

Yet far less than what they could cook, hence the Little’s adversity to the questionable substance before her. But the roller coaster still had some ups, since her expectations for a bottle were thankfully beaten by Veronica setting a sippy cup in the tray’s holder with a smile.

“Ah– wait, Veronica?” Dawn called and the Amazon hit the breaks like she had whiplash.

“You’re one needy little Little!” Veronica teased, and Dawn chose to ignore the comment.

“Do you think you could unscrew the top for me?” She held the toddler cup in her hands just to make it easier for the woman to grab.

“Oh!” Veronica gasped and took it without question. Dawn watched her arms work hard as her grip turned the cup one way and the plastic top the other, but ultimately nothing budged. Yet somehow Veronica smiled at the task failed successfully, putting it back in the tray. “There we go! Nice and tight!”

“W-wait, no, I meant like could you take it off for me?” Dawn reiterated, holding out the sippy cup again.

“*Un-screw?*” Veronica blinked with surprise, finally clarifying what she apparently misheard. More so, her repetition sounded like she was just playing with a kid just acting silly. “I can’t do that!” she chuckled, “that’s how we make messes, silly!”

“No, it’ll be fine, I promise,” Dawn insisted with a level head. “The other people I was with let me have it open.” Specifically only at the dinner table, but who needed semantics like that?

“Well in this house we keep our sippy’s closed,” Veronica said with finality, leaving the Little behind before she could respond.

So as a small correction, it wasn’t even the status quo compared to James and Katherine.

Slightly worse.

But then she glanced at both her sides, seeing similar Littles all with their own identical cups, then remembering Urna’s words to keep her head down. And just maybe that was Veronica’s way of making her seem like “everyone else” too. Not exactly pleasant, but at least for once it was legitimately from a place that Dawn could understand.

“Okay, everyone,” Veronica stood before all the Little guests in their thrones, side by side with Gina seeming far less enthusiastic, “what do we all say to Nanny Gina?”

And everyone but Dawn rang out in unison,

“Thank you Nanny Gina!!” The levels of emotion were mixed, but the highs and lows averaged out into something that felt like gratitude.

A brief smile flashed back from the woman. “You’re welcome. Now eat up.”

Like dogs trained on whistles, rubber spoons and sippy cups clamored the moment they were told so. Dawn watched in silent amazement as no one but her seemed to stare at the vomit-worthy slop with any hesitation whatsoever. She could already see dribbles reach some of their bibs, others moved like plows through their bowls, and mouthfuls of chatting continued between the regulars.

Two shadows blocked the kitchen light from the Little.

“Daawn?” Veronica cooed, like a tinge of talking-to lingered in her voice. Gina was right beside her.

“It’s not that important, Veronica...” Gina mumbled.

“And if we don’t start with manners now, when will she learn?” Veronica retorted in a friendly smile. She looked back down at the Little. “Sweetheart, every night one of the nannies makes dinner for you and they work so hard to do it!”

Dawn watched her, but her pupils sank just to glance at her meal, and by standards of love she was looking at a piping pile of domestic abuse followed by a divorced glaze.

“What’s going on...?” Dawn asked, still unsure of the point she was trying to make; one that even Gina herself seemed to care less that Veronica was trying to make.

“When others do things for us, it’s polite to say ‘thank you’,” Veronica slowly enunciated, marking each word with a finger scribbling her invisible sentence. “Do you think we could try thanking Nanny Gina for dinner?”

Hearing such a condescending request almost tasted better than huffing the fumes of her dinner, to which she was being told to be thankful for.

“Thank you,” she put on her best ‘Totally Thankful’ face; expressing gratitude for something she had no intention of eating.

“Thank you...?” Veronica stretched her voice, omitting an obvious “who” that she was implying. A name Dawn forgot to mention.

She took a sharp breath, but acquiesced. “Thank you, Gina.” Back to looking at her mystery stew.

“Dawn?” Veronica’s cheery demeanor, but no-nonsense attitude was honing back in on her, catching a little kid trying to weasel out of a promise.

“What?” She raised her brows.

“We say something first before a grownup’s name,” she said in a dumbed-down voice.

“Something I’d like you to start using with me now, please.”

“Say what? Veronica, is this really necessary?”

“Nanny Veronica,” she corrected. “It’s okay, you’re still learning, but that’s why we gotta get in good habits sooner rather than later! That’s kinda long though, so if you want Nanny V is okay too!”

Again, Gina seemed far from concerned, but she wasn’t betraying her coworker’s attitude. So skeptically, and reluctantly, Dawn said aloud, “Thank you Nanny Gina.” Ugh. Just saying it made her feel gross.

“Good job!” Veronica cheered with a small round of applause, making the Little feel even more belittled than she already did.

“You’re welcome, Dawn,” Gina responded, then looked at Veronica. “Time for us to eat now?”

And it was like her personality made a complete and total shift. Like all the sugar and syrup was stripped from her voice and a true and honest peppy, cheery Amazon bubbled to the surface.

“Yeah, definitely,” she nodded, and the women walked to the far end of the kitchen, leaving Dawn alone, among her supposed peers, strapped in a high chair with a sippy cup of juice and bowl of baby food.

In a wet diaper, no less.

Soon she held her rubber spoon, grimacing at the muck in her spoon. The smell reminded her of marinated beef and carrots, but she saw nothing close to resembling either. Porridge, was it? Or maybe back to the pudding analogy– or like an orange custard. Some sort of slime with an outer, runny and liquidy.

“DONE!” A Little shouted down the line, and Dawn paused at her own meal with a bewildered look. *Done?* She couldn’t even will herself to take a single fucking bite!

“Wait like a good boy until Nanny V and Gina eat their dinner~!” Veronica sang as Dawn looked up and watched their haul from the fridge.

“Wanna do sandwiches?” Veronica asked with an armful of ingredients. Immediately Dawn could make things out. Some kind of sourdough, tightly wrapped deli cheeses, a juicy ripe tomato, spreads, leafy green lettuce, and more.

“Yeah sure, let’s do that,” Gina closed the fridge and joined her at the island in the center, set up like a cooking show for any Little curious enough to watch. The meats they took out looked cured, seasoned and came in fine slices. Cheese that looked like provolone, and something like a mozzarella?

So simple, but when with the finest ingredients, absolutely mouth-watering.

After days of things too spicy and too sweet, being forced to use her hands with things she wasn’t supposed to, and being force-fed fucking *eggs*, there was nothing like a sandwich that made her stomach grumble so desperately. The closest thing that could compare was that Little’s meal, but store-bought ingredients didn’t make you piss yourself involuntarily.

“Veronica?” Dawn raised her voice over the kitchen, well enough that she should’ve been able to hear her, even over the giggles, laughs and conversations among the other Littles. But she was promptly ignored. “Veronica?” she tried again, sounding a bit more impatient.

Fucking hell...! “Nn...Nanny?”

The Amazon’s face lit up, and not more than a second later she was in front of her high chair.

“What’s wrong, jellybean?”

Jellybean?

“Hey, uh...” she glanced down at her bowl. The steam was gone and the initial heat was starting to cool off, only touched once by the spoon Dawn proceeded to insert back into the bowl. “What are you guys making over there?”

“Just dinner! Nothing as yummy as what Nanny Gina made you, though! How do you like it?” Yet her question almost sounded like a trap. Like a mother that already had her kid figured out, simply wanting to hear them come clean themselves.

“Well...I can’t say it’s really my thing...”

“Not your thing?” Veronica tilted her head. “It’s *good* for you, silly! Are you saying you don’t like healthy things?”

Would it get her out of eating this food? “...Yes?”

“Mmm...!” Veronica hummed a playful tune of disapproval. “Sounds like we got something to work on, then!”

“Look,” Dawn dropped her meager manners, sounding almost desperate. She proceeded to whisper nervously. “I get that I’m supposed to be treated like all the other Littles, but I can’t actually eat this stuff...! Just look at it!” And to her credit, Veronica did, but her expression didn’t change. All she saw was a picky eater. “Can’t I just sit here until everyone else is done, and maybe I could have a sandwich too? Please?”

“And then all this food would go to waste~!” Veronica said in a sad, exaggerated voice. “Here, let’s have a bite before it gets cold. Come on, let’s try and be brave, okay?”

The spoon was no longer Dawn’s, and there wasn’t even a coaxing tactic. Veronica didn’t try to get the girl to open for anything. She didn’t need to when she could just force the spoon right in.

A muffled gasp left Dawn the same moment a spoonful of murky stew went in. Then it was pulled right out, scraping off and leaving behind the food it brought inside with it.

And eventually, Dawn swallowed. Its taste gave way to texture, save for a few specks of something that resembled herbs and spices. Maybe some part of it was sweet, even? Her legs uncomfortably kicked though as the mouthfeel was downright awful. She was eating slime. It wasn’t food. Some parts were chunkier than others, but it all flattened into soft mush at the end of the day.

“Mmm!” Veronica cooed, happy as could be while the Little grimaced and looked ready to vomit. “See, that wasn’t so bad, right?”

“G-gross...” she muttered, swiping for her sippy cup of juice. And to her panicked dismay, it wasn’t the same melon juice from before. Apple juice? Something far more tart and hardly as refreshing. It was the exact wrong contrast to her meal. The flavors clashed and only made her squirm more.

“Now show me what a big girl you are and finish that for me, okay?” She dropped the spoon and went back to the counter. Where real food was being made.

Eventually, Dawn did take meager spoonful after spoonful, trying to wash it away with one heavy swig of juice after another. She grimaced and her stomach churned, all the while watching Veronica and Gina chat over food with discernable ingredients. It was pathetic, but just to cope she played a game of pretend; like every bite of sandwich she saw them make was the same exact thing going in her mouth.

But mozzarella didn't melt like mush. Sourdough didn't remind her of expired pudding. Lettuce was green, not orange-brown.

Needless to say, it was a conversation topic to address with Urna.

But she finally finished, left with a thin layer on the bottom of the bowl that she refused to touch. It was good enough. It had to be. She wasn't sure if she was as full as her stomach was just tired of taking in questionable things.

What could debatably be called dinner ensued.

"We had so many piggies tonight!" Veronica giggled as she collected their bowls one by one as she walked down the line, glancing at Dawn's, then wordlessly skipping hers.

Something was obviously wrong, but the Little didn't want to call her out on it.

"Gina? I'm gonna get them started on diaper duty. Could you please help Dawn finish her food, please~?"

"B-but I'm done?" Dawn called out at Veronica, but she was already cooing at an unbuckled Little in her arms.

"I *knew* I smelled someone stinky!" she giggled at the blushing man in her arms. And they were gone.

Now Gina was upon Dawn, picking up her bowl and scraping around with the spoon.

"W-wait, I'm done eating- I'm finished," Dawn tried to explain, but the woman's hands didn't stop moving.

"When Veronica's on dinner duty, she's very specific about everyone finishing their food," Gina explained, then held out the spoonful, but she didn't assault the girl's mouth.

“P...please...?” Dawn begged. “O...okay, I’ll have one...”

And she grimaced, but ate and swallowed the food past the point of lukewarm.

“That’s why you have to eat it when it’s warm,” Gina said again, almost like she was scolding.

Dawn cringed as she listened to the spoon scraping more contents from the bowl.

“W-wait! I had one bite, isn’t that enough?” Couldn’t they cut her some slack? “Please! Just let me stop there!”

“Two more,” Gina softly said, offering no compromises like a certain somebody might have.

“The more you make faces, the longer it takes, you know.”

“J-just give me a second!” Dawn whined. She had to keep amping herself up for a challenge she didn’t want to take on. One she was being forced to. But she bit down, grimacing at the worsening taste.

“Last one~” Gina sighed, like it was her burden to bear.

And reluctantly, Dawn swallowed, trying to go for her juice that had run dry.

“P-please,” she quickly stuck out her sippy cup. “Give me something to drink!”

“Everyone gets a bottle for bed,” Gina explained without an ounce of urgency. She did take the sippy cup, only it was straight to the sink with her bowl. “Go pee if you have to; Veronica’s getting you all into your PJs for bed.”

And Dawn connected the dots that it meant her last diaper change for the night.

But with it sprung on her so soon, already the next Little in line, she didn’t have time to think as she was already bearing down, hopefully earning herself something dry to sleep in that night.

“Okay~, Dawn’s turn!” Veronica was back and unbuckled her from her seat. “Whoosh!” she raised the girl high above the Amazon’s head, or rather right where she could look at the front of her diaper head-on. “Mmm...?” She started tilting the girl with her whimsical hums as if it were a game. “Just this once.” she vaguely decided, carrying Dawn off to the stairs.

“Wh...what?” Dawn asked as they climbed the stairs.

“Usually we’d like to see a little more,” and Dawn blushed at the hand squeezing the front of her diaper. “Buuut, I also don’t want you to be uncomfortable on your first night here!”

Awkward as could be, Dawn said in an off-standish voice, “Yeah, well...I don’t really use diapers, so...”

“That’s okay!” Veronica giggled. “Nothing to worry about. Ready to see your room?”

It being a nursery was no surprise. It was smaller than her old, *temporary* room James and Katherine had done for her. Far less floor space and generally a little more claustrophobic-looking. A crib with a mobile nearly reached from one end of the room to the other. The only thing that fit between the spacing was a tall cubby.

A changing table was opposite to it, paired with a diaper pail and beside all the changing necessities. A smaller dresser, a colorful rug with painted roads and cartoon trucks and cars driving across it. Pastel pillows and blankets filled the bed, hitting all the highs for either end on the spectrum as far as a gendered nursery went, ending somewhere on unisex right in the middle.

“Hey, so, since it’s just us, you don’t have to put me in a diaper for bed, you know?”

“Do you not wanna be changed?” Veronica asked, missing the point, and tearing off her tapes.

“No, I do, but I don’t want to be changed into another diaper!”

“What else would I change you into?” The caretaker turned her head, but her work did not stop.

“*I* would change myself into panties,” Dawn frowned, even more annoyed by how she could only speak in hypotheticals. Would-be’s in a perfect world, which this one was too far from.

“*You* would?” Veronica asked back with feigned parental enthusiasm. “Well that’s no good; then what am I supposed to do?”

“...Nothing?” the Little answered back. Who said she needed a role?

“Nanny’s have jobs too, Dawn,” she explained like it was a teacher’s mantra, just as Dawn was being powdered and wiped. “Ms. Urna doesn’t pay nannies just to let Littles take care of themselves,” the new diaper was already being pulled up between the girl’s legs. “*My* job is to keep you munchkins fed, clothed, happy, and clean!” But only as clean as their diapers needed to be, apparently. “*Yours* is playing, having fun, behaving, and getting lots of sleep.” She finished by smoothing out the new tapes atop Dawn’s fresh diaper.

“...That might be every other person’s ‘job’ here, but Urna’s just letting me stay until she helps me get back to my dimension,” Dawn said with an attitude trying not to sound combative or disagreeing.

There wasn’t time to complain with how quickly Veronica could strip her shirt and drop a black and white striped onesie over her head, then snap her in at the crotch.

“But while you’re here, you’re just as special and important as everyone else,” Veronica lifted the Little against her hip. “So you’re gonna get the *exact* same amount of care and attention!”

Without much to argue, not trying to set off any landmines either, Dawn carefully sidestepped into a different topic as she was deposited into the crib.

“So can we talk about doing something different for dinner next time?”

“Oops, sorry, Dawn!” Veronica pouted as she forcefully eased Dawn onto the mattress. “It’s already bedtime and you’re not the only one that needs a diaper change!”

“I-I...I didn’t need a...” Dawn started to stammer back, but Veronica was already on her way out. And Dawn, now trapped in a crib similar to the one she was in before, was just as powerless in getting out of it. So she watched the Amazon depart through her prison cell bars.

“Nanny Gina’s gonna be in with a bottle for you in just a couple minutes!”

“I don’t need a bottle!” Dawn shouted.

“*Goodnight!*” Veronica cooed back, nothing more than a disembodied voice at this point. She was gone, and Dawn was alone. Only for a short while.

“I don’t need one,” Dawn said to the warden as she clung to her bars. She wasn’t giving a mean mug, but the thing in Gina’s hand made it hard for pleasantries.

“No, you don’t,” Gina agreed, yet Dawn watched her arm reach inside the crib just to drop the bottle of milk beside the diapered Little. “But me, Veronica, Ms. Urna, and all the other nannies here *do* want you to have one. You *do* need to finish it all, though.”

“Finish what? The bottle?” Dawn glanced down at the drink, reminding her of a tall glass of something back in her bar-going days, of which there were so seldom few, only to have gone non-existent nowadays.

“Mhm,” Gina nodded. “Whatever’s left is what you’re starting with in the morning. Most importantly, however, you’ll be putting at least one thing you think is yummy in your tummy, tonight,” the Amazon lightly smiled, bemused by her own sense of rhyme. “Now sleep wel– Oh, wait,” Gina muttered, and Dawn’s eyes followed the nanny’s hand over to a small plastic-shelled box hooked around the railing of the crib. Over it was a caricature of a smiling cartoon sun, and after an audible click from Gina’s finger, a momentary red light emanated from the sun, yet slowly faded into nothing once again.

“What was...?” Dawn started to ask, but the moment she made noise the sun’s red light started to pick up again. “Is that...” she looked at the Amazon in disbelief. “Is that a *baby* monitor?”

“So we can catch the nightmares before they sneak into your dreams~” Gina teased in a dull voice, waving magic signs with her wiggling fingers. “Okay, bedtime,” she clapped, then disappeared.

And warily Dawn watched her omnipotent sun, hanging from the corner of the crib, suddenly more paranoid than she already had been. *Listening?* For what? Nightmares, truly? Maybe she could use it to her advantage; call for help if she needed something, yet...

It was embarrassing, but a test was a test, which is why she intently stared at the monitor while she wiggled her hips, crinkling up a storm.

Nothing. No reaction.

“Voi-?” Voice-activated. Interesting. Smart enough to tell the difference between a diaper rustling and a Little letting off some steam. Leave it to the Amazons.

If nothing else, at least there was no one to talk to, and therefore nothing to be listened to. Was it unnerving? Yes. A violation of privacy? Absolutely. If only this had been the first time an experience would check off those two boxes for her, however. Being desensitized was a frightening thing. Not only that, but a shot at freedom made it easier to take down bitter, but temporary pills. So she pulled the fluffy polka-dot covers up to her chest, staring up at the ceiling, basking in the dark stained in the last shred of orange on its way out with the sun that had already set.

And even more begrudgingly, taking it up to her lips, her mouth quivered open and she slowly took on the silicone bulb. Starting her pre-bedtime workout.

Teasing a nipple for milk.

After enough time, she was asleep.

And after enough time, morning had come.

“Good morning...” a hushed yet jovial voice made Dawn stir beneath the covers. There were ripples of reality shaking her veil of dreams, and the vibrations only grew stronger when an Amazon was already lifting her out of the crib. As much as she was being processed like any other cog in the machine, the woman was gentle as she was efficient. A large hand rubbed the Little’s back. “Did you have a cozy sleep?”

She started as a moaning sack slumped against the giantess’ shoulder, yet, “Wha...” she mumbled before a cracking yawn made her stretch her arms. “Wh...what time is it...?”

“Time to start the day!” the Amazon answered back, and a slight bounce against the woman’s hip made Dawn even more conscious. Her world started to go sideways when the Amazon leaned into the crib and pulled out her bottle with an observant shake. “And uh-oh; looks like somebody’s gonna have something to snack on before breakfast.”

Snack...?

Then she remembered the bottle. She didn’t remember finishing it, but now there wasn’t any room left for guessing what was left. There hadn’t been anything particularly stellar about the milk. Just milk. Normal milk. Room temperature and drinkable.

“Stop...” Dawn’s social reflex triggered when a finger found its way inside her diaper, albeit a weak kick back to a horrendously invasive act.

“Dry too...?” concern consumed the woman’s voice. “Did you sleep okay, honey?”

“I slept fine...” Dawn groaned as everything started to move again. “Can we talk now...?”

“We’re talking right now, aren’t we?” the Amazon chuckled. Dawn felt herself being laid down and she slowly started to rub her eyes.

“Like I said last night...I don’t need diapers,” Dawn yawned alongside the snaps on her onesie popping open. “I’ll just go commando when I sleep... no one will know, right?”

“No diapers?” the Amazon stressed with feigned surprise. Like she was humoring a kid’s imaginative game. “What’s gonna happen when you go potty, then? You don’t wanna sleep in wet jammies and sheets!” she spoke Dawn’s mind for her.

“Veronica, please, just hear me out...” Dawn moaned, and she finally opened her eyes.

Either Veronica had dyed her hair and picked up some plastic surgery, or Dawn was staring at a completely different nanny.

“Veronica?” the Amazon giggled with a hand over her chest. “No-no, sweetie, I’m Nanny Kayla!”

And just like Dawn’s deliberate choice of words going into smithereens, the feeling was best described by peeling diaper tape adhesive scrambling the quiet ambience in the tiny nursery.

“S—...” Did she say anything bad? Anything other Amazons weren’t supposed to know about? Probably not. Hell, she probably sounded like any other delusional Little thinking they could somehow prove their own maturity. “Sorry...I thought you were someone else.” Which felt certainly awkward to say, given she’d been picked up, had her diaper checked, and was currently getting her diaper changed by the same very woman.

“Mmm-mmm!” Kayla shook her head without a care or concern. “There’s so many nannies that it can be a little tough remembering so many names and faces!” she stressed, despite the fact Dawn had met a grand total three of them as of now. “But don’t forget to call us ‘Nanny’, okay?”

“Right...” Dawn stared back up at the ceiling, listening to a bottle of something squirt somewhere. Only until the room-temperature cream was being gently massaged into her lower half. Only up until now was it dawning on the girl that she hadn’t had any chance whatsoever to groom herself down below as of late. Likely the sheer thought of her coming near a razor would’ve made Katherine faint.

“H-hey!” Dawn tried to sit up, but the clean butt of Kayla’s hand pushed her back down.

“Ah-ah!” Kayla tutted, “Almost done, sweetie! Let’s not make a mess, okay?” She swabbed a wipe from down below and cleaned off her hands, and Dawn was too drained of everything, likely growingly desensitized, even, to care much of anything, including the point of changing a dry diaper.

But her bare bottom never touched the cushioned mat underneath her. The diaper she slept in didn’t leave, and soon enough Kayla was reapplying the same tapes she tore. It was hardly

Dawn's business, given how removed she'd become from her own hygiene, unfortunately, but skepticism begged her to wonder about the practicality of taping up a diaper twice.

"Do I not need a new one?" Dawn asked, trying not to cringe. What sane person asks for *another* diaper?

"Not yet, you don't," Kayla smiled and snapped up her onesie once again. Sounding kind as could be, all the while treating Dawn peeing her pants like an inevitability. Unfortunately because it was. "Now it's time for breakfast!" and she whisked the girl off the table.

On their way down Dawn asked, "So where's...Nanny Veronica? I uhm...need to speak with her."

"Veronica has some other stuff she needs to do," Kayla explained, though it was hardly much to go off of. "You might see her later tonight. Why, what's going on?"

"Uhm...nothing, just something I wanted to say to her," Dawn shrugged. "Or actually, do you think I could go speak with Urna? I'm supposed to follow up with her today."

"Is everything okay?" Kayla frowned from concern, leaning in just a little closer. "You can talk to me, you know? I'm a grownup."

Like the only problems Dawn could have were ones any person at least 9 feet tall and out of diapers could solve. Nothing more complicated than needing a diaper change or a refill on their sippy cup.

But being specific meant forgoing Urna's request for discretion, and Dawn's desperation to be saved meant giving in to the less than stellar treatment.

"Nevermind," Dawn smiled weakly through her teeth, as barely convinced as the nanny seemed.

"Did your milk give you an upset tummy?" Kayla shifted and bounced the girl. And her self-directed mumble came without the layer of sugar and syrup meant for Littles, yet the concern was still just as potent. "Maybe we should try you on the other formula..."

"The milk was fine," Dawn quickly said, trying to put out a fire faster than it could start. "I'm okay, alright? I promise. There's no issue."

Kayla simply exhaled through her nose. "Okay, but if you feel funny, upset, sad, or angry, you can always come to me or any other nanny, okay?"

“Yep, mhm. Got it,” Dawn briskly answered, and they made it to the kitchen.

“Morning~!” Kayla sang out to the other three Amazons, but in a disjointed fashion other Littles shouted morning greetings right back at her.

“And you are...green!” Kayla paced with a Little in her arms right before finding her name. Dawn could see hers now too scribbled on one of the miniature whiteboards. Drawn in green marker in a rounded, bubbly font that teased and taunted Times New Roman by its indescribably childish look. What’s more, Veronica had given her a smiling sun to go with the name.

She was deposited and buckled, but also left with a familiar bottle of milk.

“Make sure it all goes down,” Kayla softly instructed, then pulled away and joined her peers.

“Coffee?” one of the nannies offered, and she took a steaming mug with an appreciative smile. And again, Dawn watched on with envy. True to Kayla’s word though, there was no Veronica among the Amazons. However, there was Gina. Amidst the noise of chatter and stirring spoons clinking against bowls she couldn’t hear what she was saying with another nanny, but a sudden spurt from the faucet fired a twinging signal off in the girl’s brain.

She squeezed her thighs uncomfortably, crinkling as she did so. And just as Kayla had said, the inevitability was upon Dawn’s soon not-to-be dry diaper.

Right here? Right now? She sighed as her swinging legs did all the stressing for her. The fact it was happening all over again in the same exact spot was far less than pleasant. The only spot she should be peeing repeatedly in is in a toilet, not a high chair...!

I can’t... No way. Not when everyone is...

Looking.

Looking at themselves, their friends, and their neighbors. Making food, sipping coffee; basking in whatever normalcy they had. A normalcy where diapers were standard for miniature adults, and wetting or messing one was a simple given. No muss and no fuss. Something that just was and what Dawn was about to do. Something everyone else did and would go unnoticed, at least for now.

She patted her hands on the top of her clean white tray, drumming the courage and squeezing the right muscles to make her maturity leak out of herself just by a little more. Until~

The wave of warmth crept in her diaper, matting the cream against her skin as the padding absorbed and whisked away what was trying to make a homogenous mud mess inside her diaper, which thankfully did not involve any genuine messes. There were odd after-tingles. Tickle? Weird reactions with the diaper cream, to be exact. Rash prevention, most likely, which the very thought that Dawn might be at risk of now both infuriated and mortified the grown woman.

Surely breakfast would take her mind off of the wet diaper, though, and certainly it did.

If only for positive reasons.

“Oatmeal?” Dawn’s lukewarm comment came across cooler than her own diaper as she looked at the gray sludge.

“And just a *little* honey~!” the new nanny said as she set down a small, rubber spoon.

“Something a little sweet for such a sweet Little,” she laughed at her own joke, and Dawn stared at her bowl, contemplating its taste more than the bleak future of just about every Amazon’s comedic career.

“No juice for Dawn,” a nanny advised another; someone who Dawn didn’t recognize.

“Gotcha. Still on her nighttime ba-ba?”

“Yup!” Kayla chimed in.

“Can I have milk?” Amelia, the Little from last night raised her hand.

“Later in the playroom,” another nanny told her with an affectionate head rub.

Once everyone was served an Amazon beckoned for all the Little’s attention. “What do we say, everyone?”

“*Thank youuuu!*”

Once again, Dawn did not join in.

But her new-kid status had apparently been revoked.

“You too, Dawn!” Kayla called her out, and now every Amazon had an expectant look. From zero to one hundred, suddenly the pressure felt immense; more than her own bladder trying to

keep from going in a diaper. Almost like it was instinctual, she barely thought of how to refute. She stammered before a cohesive thought could come. All that mattered was going back to being a fly on the wall.

“Th...thank you...” she muttered, Kayla among the others nodded approvingly, and quickly she was forgotten. Or rather, allowed to keep to herself. Herself and her oatmeal. And as if to pregame herself, soon a bottle of milk was in her hands, suckling down a mouthful to get her started.

Hopefully it'd taste better than dinner...

Come to find out, oatmeal did beat mystery slop. Though, by how much was debatable. Slimy toe-curling gunk lost out to thick and bland chased by a spritz of sweetness (thanks, honey).

“And now, you get to play the *whole* day!” Dawn’s newest nanny cheered as the Little’s feet wearing socks she didn’t own touched the ground. She fidgeted uncomfortably, tugging down at the hem of some clothes she was far from fond of. There was a detour between breakfast and the playroom; one that did not involve a diaper change, but instead a change of wardrobe.

“W-wait!” Dawn blurted up at the woman, and she smiled attentively, standing on the other side of the towering gate, latched to the wall so far and high above that a Little even brushing it with a finger was inconceivable. “When I came here last night I was wearing pants– Can’t I just wear those? V...Nanny Veronica would know where they are!”

“Would she?” the nanny pressed a finger to her lips, putting on a big show of supposedly contemplating the girl’s words. “Tell you what: if I see them, I’ll make sure they end up in your nursery, okay?”

Spoken earnestly, but without a shred of certainty in whether she thought the pants existed at all. Maybe she was imagining it, but an uncomfortable breeze blown by her own embarrassment fluttered between her bare legs. The crinkle was unmuffled, loud and proud, merely dampened by the dampness of her diaper.

Plush slapping sounds bounced nearby where two Littles chased each other over foam playmats, dressed in dresses and T-shirts that either only insulted the idea of covering a diaper, or didn’t even try to entertain the futility at all.

“I tagged you!” the chaser cried, continually stopping and starting with each torrent of crinkles her sprinting legs made. Her feet kept firmly planting, as if ready to run the opposite way at a moment’s notice.

“Nuh-uh, you touched my shirt!” A guy teased back, laughing, opening and closing his mouth just to flex his adult jawline, albeit not a stubble of facial hair; clearly they were shaving him daily.

“Oliver, quit making stuff up!” the Little huffed, and Dawn finally remembered the girl— no, the woman, from last night and this morning. Amelia? Ms. Little who laughed at her for having standards for food. They made one more round around an empty playpen in the center before a nanny was observing far more closely now.

“Guys?” she hummed kindly, but warnings had a funny way of seeming like greetings, “Are we playing like we’re supposed to?”

“He’s cheating!” Amelia shouted, wasting no second in pointing the finger.

“Ah-ah!” and just like Gina, the Amazon was crouched and gently folding then packing the Little’s extended finger back into her fist. “Amelia, we said we were gonna use our big-girl words when we talk about others, right?”

“Yes...” the Little droned back, and she didn’t bother hiding the obvious roll in her eyes. “But Oliver’s not playing tag right!”

The nanny turned her head over in the direction where the opposing Little had gone, now apparently trying to blend in play with two others.

“Oliver~!” the nanny beckoned with a waving hand. The man clearly heard his name, but in the distance Dawn watched with bewildered wonder as he shuffled and turned his back, sinking into his toy ship like he’d forgotten object permanence. She turned back to Amelia, smiling, and said, “Go play.”

So she did. Or she tried to.

“Actually,” the nanny chuckled, catching the girl by the wrist. “Let’s check something first.”

And Amelia tapped her foot impatiently, like a person five minutes from being late to a meeting. She was unperturbed other than her time being taken from her. Unbothered by the back of her

dress being pinned to her back, and uncaring of the likely draft entering where the nanny was pulling out the back of her diaper.

“I had milk,” Amelia declared obtusely, like there was enough context for that to have meaning.

“I know, and that’s why I’m checking,” the nanny giggled, apparently with just that context she needed. But ultimately the dress was dropped and an encouraging pat hit the girl’s bum. “You don’t need changing yet. Now I’m gonna go talk to Oliver.”

And Amelia was already breaking for a different person, meanwhile the nanny had unfinished business with another Little.

Dawn continued to meander by the gate.

Right until a voice surprised her.

“Hey, uh...you just gonna keep standing there?”

She blinked and spun her head, dropping her hands to her too short of a dress as a woman in a romper gave her a curious look.

“...Can I help you?” Dawn’s feet tweaked themselves to look almost defensive.

“Well...” the Little started, but her gaze followed by Dawn’s caught sight of the nanny subjecting Oliver to a similar diaper check, only his involving a probing finger by his thigh. “No, not really. That’s what the nannies are for, I guess. No, like, did you wanna play?” she threw a thumb behind and over her shoulder, right where a thick circular rug of numbers and letters laid by two wooden rod shelves holding multi-colored plastic bins of toys.

“Play...?” Dawn’s mental dictionary sounded like it was at work, and her skeptical eyes went from the toys to the strange Little. Better yet, some toys were already scattered on the mat, including a bottle of something laying on its side. Like a girl already busy at play merely interrupted herself just to snatch a potential playmate. “Yeah, uhm...no, I think I’m good. Thanks.”

“Okay...” the woman said, and her elbows were held behind her back, looking awkward, and somehow it was Dawn’s attitude, not the white of her diaper stretching past the sides of her romper. “Well, like, sit down, at least?”

“...”

And what, say no? Then what? Proceed to stand there like a stranger, as much as she wanted to be one, until a nanny inevitably forced her to make *something* happen? Even if it was in the smallest, most controlled way possible, she did have a choice.

“Fine, sure.”

So the two walked, albeit slightly waddled their way to the secluded corner. Away from where toy trucks clashed, balls rolled over playmats, toy xylophones were drummed, and books— of which Dawn had no sympathy for, were flipped through and discarded carelessly. The only part that seemed to have input and interaction by an Amazon was the massive rocking chair by the corner, including the giant, impossible to ignore changing table between two tall windows.

“What’s your name?” she asked Dawn.

“...Dawn. Yours?”

“Millie,” the Little answered as she squatted, putting one hand on the ground so her crinkling rump could safely land. “Did you just get here last night?”

Dawn, with some dignity, opted to fall on her bum instead. “Yeah, I did.”

“Which nanny put you to bed last night?” Millie asked, but her eyes were among the blocks she was starting to organize. Cubes, rectangular prisms, cylinders, spheres, and all sorts of other prisms.

“Veronica, she... Uhm, she’s nice.” A poor save short of accidentally spilling the beans entirely. Urna’s polite request echoed through the Little’s head.

Don’t discuss your background.

“Nanny Veronica?” Millie raised her head just to correct the girl, who couldn’t help but feel a bit offended. But Millie quickly waved her hands “Oh no, I mean, I promise I won’t tattle— I just mean you should probably work on that. You’re gonna get in trouble if you don’t.”

“Trouble?” Did they actually punish that sort of thing?

“Usually pacifier for a day or something like no cookie for snack time,” Millie casually explained, like it was workplace gossip by the water cooler. She moved a loose tuft of hair out of

her own way, fixing it behind the bright pink hairband with a fat strawberry affixed to it. “Just figured I’d say,” she shrugged. “The cookies *are* good...”

“How...how long have you been here?” Dawn asked hesitantly, like the answer wouldn’t be good. It was reminiscent of the former Little couple, now siblings, at the Little-trician’s office. Just like that man, Millie had the same kind of vibe. Subdued. Complacent. Indoctrinated.

Broken.

“Here?” Millie looked around the playroom, full of toys and active Littles. “Two...no, one and a half weeks?”

And needless to say, the answer surprised the girl. Only for all the wrong reasons. “...That little?”

“Yup,” Millie nodded. “Two weeks is usually the max, I guess,” she made a scissor with two fingers. “Lots of Amazons wanna be mommies and daddies.”

And since it wasn’t used in a sexual sense, albeit just as much cause for her to, Dawn cringed at the casual mention.

“I’d ask where you came before this, but since we’re not supposed to and stuff,” Millie offhandedly said as her stacking began between her knees, right where the foundation was close and addressable. “But I don’t really wanna talk about my own stuff either, so...” the Little dropped into a murmur, continuing to stack as the stiffness in her posture seemed to dissipate.

Avoiding a strange, concerning subject, the Little moved on. “So...Amazons actually come and adopt you guys? I mean, *take* you?” Dawn asked.

“Yup,” Millie nodded, looking around for something by her side. “Ah-!” she gasped and lunged for something behind her. As she flopped on her stomach her back leg extended and knocked what little progress her questionable structure had made. Yet without a care she sat back up and held out a bottle of milk for her acquaintance. “Want some?”

“No thanks, I already had mine at breakfast...”

“Shoot yerself,” Millie mumbled already through a mouthful of silicone teat. “But yeah, mommies and daddies come over and play with us a little, but since they wanna adopt one of us they usually play favorites. That’s what that room’s there for,” and her finger traveled across the room, right where two Littles made action figures fight it out by smashing one into the other, over and over at different angles. But beyond them was another gate leading off to a different

room. “That’s sorta like the second playroom if they wanna get to know you better, or something.”

“So wait– how often do they come?”

“Mmm...most days, I think. All of them? Maybe one they don’t...” Millie muttered.

“Well, what about today?”

“Probably.” Millie shrugged, too busy starting her construction project all over again. Dawn slightly exhaled through her nose.

“Okay...then, if they *were* coming today, when would it be?” AKA, when was she not supposed to be mingling with the rest of the Littles? Ugh, even mingling felt too strong of a connection. *Existing* in the same space as them. After all, Millie was just a means of information. If the longest someone lasted here was two weeks, that was hardly time worth forging a friendship over. If nothing else, Millie seemed to understand that too. Friendly wasn’t the right word. She was just being informative; like fulfilling an obligation. Like maybe what someone else did for her.

This wasn’t making friends. It was a courtesy from one victim to another.

“Uhm...not until after snacktime, I think. Sometimes before our naps, sometimes after. Depends. Also, hey, why’d you ask that way earlier? ‘Adopt *you* guys’. Don’t worry, you’ll get adopted too, you know?”

But rather than entertain a nonexistent concern that was only the abyss staring back at her, she blurted out an ushering question. “Depends on what?”

“Dunno,” Millie shrugged again. “Depends.”

And the hair on the back of Dawn’s neck stood erect when someone took the liberty of checking her depends.

“We’ll change you before we head out,” an Amazon-sized shadow looming over the girl announced. “Millie? How do we think we’re doing?”

“Good,” she answered absent-mindedly, keeping to her blocks. Even when Dawn watched the nanny’s hand scoop down to squeeze her crotch through the fabric of her clothes.

“Nope, nuh-uh,” the nanny laughed, all at the grown woman’s wet diaper’s expense. “Not good. Hey Leja? Millie could use a fresh one!”

“Kay~” her coworker chimed back.

“Meanwhile, *we* are going on a very special trip, young lady!” The Amazon lifted Dawn and pinned her against her hip.

“Trip...?” Dawn made a sideways face. This Amazon had black hair.

“Uh-huh!”

And the gears finally started to turn. A *trip*. A special one. One that only *she* was going on. Possibly a trip to the Amazon in charge upstairs. Possibly? No, more than likely. It finally clicked; it was a front for private chat with Urna. A follow-up, just like she promised...! Despite it being so small, a smile was damn hard to keep from showing.

“Can I come?” Millie asked from the floor.

“You can come with me to the changing table, if you’d like?” Leja announced her arrival by scooping the Little up. “Don’t worry about Dawn; you two can go back to playing later today!”

“That’s right,” the nanny holding Dawn nodded. “She’ll be back for snacktime, don’t worry!”

“Kay,” Millie nodded without a second guess or care, and Dawn just tried to act neutral. No need to confuse the Littles that actually needed diapers about what the few adult ones left were up to.

“All set? Can I take her?” one Amazon asked another, starting to drift with Dawn away.

“All yours. Does Ms. Urna know?”

“Ya-huh. We’ve gotta swing by her office, actually.”

“Sounds good!” Leja nodded. “Be good, Dawn!”

And with a dumb, giddy feeling in her stomach, she accidentally nodded back in the heat of the moment.

“Let’s go then~” the Amazon sang and whisked the girl away, ascending the stairs and reaching Urna’s office.

The nanny made a one-two knock on the door, waiting for an answer, but none came.

“Is she—” Dawn started to ask, but the nanny walked in anyway.

The office was empty, but it didn’t stop them from moving.

“And it should be right...ah, yep!” the Amazon swiped a manilla folder off the table top. There were multiple small-print stickers with labels and text Dawn couldn’t read, not when it was hiding behind the Amazon’s breast and between that and her arm. It had a freshly-inked stamp with an intricate logo, but it was all secondary to the main question: where was Urna?

“Okay, got what we needed. Other than a diaper bag, I guess,” she giggled, then they turned and went for the exit.

“W-wait, wait!” Dawn kept trying to halt, but her words only had an effect by the time they were in the hallway again and Urna’s office was already being closed. “Where are we going?”

“A special trip, remember?” the nanny smiled.

“Y-yeah...to Urna’s office, right?”

“Mm, that can be special too, if you want?” Cue the disconnect.

“W-wait, no, but I—” Dawn stared back at Urna’s closed door. She was misunderstanding something, right? Was it her, or the nanny? But she leaned in and whispered, like they might be hiding more diapered littles in the walls. “I’m supposed to be following up with Urna, right?”

“Following up? If something’s wrong sweetheart you can tell me or one of the other nannies. Let’s not bother Ms. Urna, okay? She has a lot of grown-up stuff to do, and we have someplace to be too!”

She hiked the girl back up against her hip, and off they went. Down the stairs and to the front door, right by a counter where a beige duffle bag was sitting upright and bulging, like a bear that’d been overstuffed. But the nanny flipped open the top just to review the contents, letting Dawn by circumstance also see the hefty stack of folded diapers inside like a filing cabinet, squished against a package of wipes, powder, pacifiers, two different bundles of clothes, bottles of substance, and more.

“And that should be everything,” the nanny announced as she slung the bag over her shoulder.

It wasn't until Dawn was strapped in a car seat again and the car was finally in motion that she mustered the courage to ask another important question.

“Where are we going?”

And thankfully, but not so thankfully, there was no hesitation.

“We're going to the doctor's!”