

55 - Prep Night

The first thing Emily did when she walked inside the main house was stop right on the doorframe leading into it.

“What?” Joyce turned her head, and Emily’s foot was tugging at the heel of the other one.

“I don’t wanna get the floor dirty...” she mumbled with her mind elsewhere.

Joyce made a loud and solid tap with her shoe-wearing foot against the wood floor.

“You’re fine. They don’t really care about that stuff here,” but just a second of still being unconvinced had Joyce cracking a smile.

“Care about what?” Mary turned the corner. Collectively, the couple shifted looks at the intruder.

“Shoes in the house?” Joyce reiterated. “We don’t have a shoe space here like we do at our house.”

“What do you mean? Of course we do!” Mary shook her head and shuffled past Joyce. “See right down there, Emily?” Mary’s finger traveled to the end of the hall where daylight bled through the glass on their front door. “Just toss those to the side of the door.”

“Oh,” Joyce rolled her eyes, “in that case, yes, I guess we do have something like that here.”

“It’s not like a rug didn’t stop working the moment you and your brother moved out!” Mary chuckled while Emily holding her shoes by their scruffs shuffled in her socks down the hall.

“Is here okay?” Emily asked over a burial site of different pairs of footwear, and both of the Summers women waved their hands dismissively.

“Anywhere is fine,” Joyce answered for both. She looked at her mom and asked, “Is Dad looking to start soon?”

“He’ll start whenever you’re ready. I don’t think there’s a whole lot left that can’t be put off until tomorrow. But you two are the chefs, not me,” Mary shrugged, then came off a tad bit more serious as she lowered her voice. “But you two go take all the time you need up there, okay?” Joyce had the displeasure of seeing her mom’s eyes glance over Joyce’s shoulder. “Make sure Emily’s comfy, too.”

And even Mary's idea of being subtle was just far too strong for Joyce's liking. Her look wasn't thrilling, but she nodded nonetheless and turned away to face the much nicer end of the hallway. "Emily? See the stairs right next to you? Up there and last door on the right."

The girl perked up immediately.

"Your room?" Emily asked. The excitement was oddly teeming, from Joyce's perspective.

"*Our* room for this weekend," Joyce corrected, then started walking over. And pointed the way up again. "Ready to go up?" She had her partner by the shoulder.

"Mhm," Emily nodded.

"Oh! And once you two finish, maybe you could help me with just a few last-minute decorations?" Mary asked from the bottom of the stairs.

"We can do that~" Joyce answered without looking back. After all, had she not there wouldn't have been any witness to Emily's excited spring and hop down the hallway.

"This is *really* your room you had as a kid?!" Emily laughed as she asked. Her hand was firmly gripped on the handle and just holding herself there for dramatic effect.

"I still can't quite understand just *why* this is so exciting to you?" Joyce gave her a funny sideways look as she crossed her arms.

"Because you're always 'boring adult and mature' Joyce," Emily rolled her eyes, but caught herself fast enough to see the arch in Joyce's brow. "Which I like," she quickly corrected. "*However,*" the smile came back, "It's not everyday I get to see what you were like as a kid!" And without further ado, she swung the door wide open.

And all Emily could see was pink.

Pink and pretty, as far as the eye could see. Ruffled pillows plastered in polka-dots and stripes. Fluffy pastel covers covered in a family of stuffed dolls like new tenants in a vacant space. White, translucent curtains to go with bright red trims, cartoon posters on the walls and of course the best dollhouse mansion that money could buy. A white and rounded dresser like it was out of a fantasy, including all of the best fictitious hits ranging from first-grade best sellers to fourth-grade classics. So cute! So pretty! So pink!

But alas, Emily actually opened her eyes this time.

Blegh.

Muted purples. Calming blacks. Tasteful wood bookshelves. A functional and nice-looking desk. Blackout curtains hanging just off the floor. Simple, yet comfy-looking pillows neatly stuffed at the end of a bed set of black, caramel, and cream.

It all made sense. It was coordinated. Well-designed. As if...as if it wasn't a kid's room!

If anything else, Emily could see where the inspirations for design in their current house came from.

“Clearly something you don't like,” Joyce laughed a little at the forced upset expression on the girl's face. “Is this your way of telling me that you don't like my room?”

“You're telling me this has been your room since you were a kid?” Emily frowned at the neatly made bedding.

“So you *wanted* something more immature? And yes, while this may have been my room, it's not like I didn't redecorate it a few times. Did you really think it'd look the same from when I was seven, or something?” While she didn't sound mocking, there was a certain amount of disbelief in her voice. Joyce ran her hand through Emily's hair on her way to their idle suitcases by the bed. “Unfortunately the bed's a little bit smaller, but it'll work,” Joyce sufficed. She dropped their luggage on the bed and opened their tops hiding away piles of clothes and other trinkets.

“Did we really need to bring so much...?” Emily, a skeptic for packing as always, hovered nearby.

“Of course we did,” Joyce didn't skip a beat, and her smile widened as she peeled back a few layers of folded shirts. “After all, if I didn't make it soft in here, poor Pip woulda bumped their head!”

And Emily pursed her lips at the deliberately innocent smile on her girlfriend's face, squishing stuffed mochi between her hands like it wasn't a stowaway fighting against her fingers.

“Why did you even bring him...?” Emily complained, but swiped the stuffed friend from her nonetheless.

“Because I don't think I'd be wanting a restless little girl who'd be up all night because she can't sleep without her bedtime buddy,” Joyce giggled as the blush grew on Emily's face. Emily

probably slept just fine without him, yet treating it like an actual dependency until just maybe one day it actually is, was another fun idea.

“And he’ll stay up here,” Joyce assured, as well as insisted. “I think bringing him downstairs is just going to risk it getting dirty.”

“Not to worry,” Emily chucked him to the side without a second thought. “Wasn’t planning on it.”

Part of the unpacking wasn’t without its slight discomfort and jealousy from Emily, however. It was hard to ignore all the folded pairs of panties that weren’t for her. Her underwear wasn’t thin and didn’t pack nearly as easily. With a small sense of longing, she watched Joyce make the most of the underwear drawer in the dresser.

“Hey, think we can chat for a second?” Joyce’s quiet, patient voice, and suddenly Emily was wishing that she hadn’t thrown away her emotional support.

“Yeah...?” Emily answered cautiously.

Opting for the faster option, Joyce ripped off the bandage completely.

“So you know that my mom knows about your diapers, right?”

And it stung. Emily flinched like it was a gunshot wound. But she persevered, grit her teeth, and slowly nodded.

“I promise, there’s no real surprises,” Joyce held out her hands defensively, but eventually guided Emily over to a sliding closet door. “But,” and oh, in this context did Emily hate ‘buts’, “Whether we could have prepared on our own or not... My mom did insist on at least one thing.”

With the not-so-anonymous tip Joyce had been given, she already had expectations for what they were about to see. She flipped the nearby switch and opened up the closet. And sure enough...

Like a present from Santa himself, sitting before them on the floor, yet reaching up to Emily’s knees was a parcel she wasn’t very pleased to see. If Joyce had drawers for her underwear, Emily got plastic packaging instead.

“Wh...when did we bring these...?” Emily’s tone was far from cheery as she looked down at the sight. Two freshly sealed and unopened packs of her signature diapers were stacked on top of one another, just waiting to be opened.

With a hesitant hand over her mouth, Joyce finally answered, "...We didn't."

"You let her?" Emily looked up at Joyce, who couldn't hide the guilt, as inevitable as her mother was.

"She...insisted. It wasn't anything she wasn't going to know, and— it was either this or risk bringing more of them in the airport. I...I figured shipping some may have made more sense."

"But so many?!" Emily held a pack up in her arms, still bashful over the fact she was only holding half her supply. "W-wait—" and the severity only heightened, "does Frank know?!"

"No, absolutely not," Joyce was concise and clear. "It's just between us...and my mom," a slight addition that never sounded good, context or not. "As for why so many... My mom insisted. I figured it wouldn't matter. We'll just ship home whatever's left or throw it all out."

Precautions. That's all Emily could think of. Twenty-something diapers just to get her through a short weekend. What was her record on diaper changes in a single day? Three? And that's only because Joyce decided when to change her. Maybe things just had yet to be more frequent... Maybe because she wasn't "regular" enough yet. Yet.

Yet.

Nevertheless, Emily was calming down, and by extension so was Joyce. Calm enough to even notice the small note that was slipped between the two packages. Grabbing it by the corner, she quietly read the scribbles.

Joyce,

I made sure to leave these and some other things in your closet. Don't worry, Dad did not see anything!! I know you didn't ask, but I made sure just to grab a few extra things Emily might need! I got some wipes, powder, a mat, a pa—

A sudden crumpling noise made Emily turn her head. "What's that?"

"Hm?" Joyce blinked, feeling some sort of paper balled up in her hand. She opened her fingers and looked at the mutilated note. "Oh. Nothing."

And sure enough, in the corner of the closet was a white trash can Joyce didn't ever remember having. One with a lid and everything. Emily wasn't pleased to see what else Joyce had found.

Beside the diaper bin was a stand, and atop it was a bottle of powder, a package of wipes, and a folded picnic blanket of sorts. But speaking less cryptically, a changing mat, of course.

“Maybe we should do a hotel,” Joyce didn’t sound one bit remorseful in her words.

“Mary does way too much...” Emily sighed, finally finding a foothold to at least be vocally opposed. “Can we just not use this stuff, please?”

“I promise, I packed all of our own stuff for a reason. Heck, we might be able to squeak by with what we’ve got in our own luggage”

“...Did we pack enough?” Emily sheepishly asked.

Joyce backed them out of the closet then shut the door. “I wouldn’t not prepare for ourselves, you know? A little lesson from me to you: *always* prepare a backup.” There being a small pile of diapers Joyce did smuggle in her own suitcase.

“Well, thank you for preparing...” Emily sighed as her bottom slumped onto the bed. She didn’t like the sound of herself crinkling.

After stowing away a few more pairs of clothes, Joyce came beside her. “Feeling okay?”

“As okay as I can be. As long as I don’t have to hear your mom talk about this stuff...”

“You won’t. And she hasn’t said anything, right?”

“No,” Emily shook her head, “she hasn’t.” But maybe, just deep down, she wouldn’t mind Mary overstepping just a tiny bit... At least that way Joyce could bite back and push her even farther from the boundary.

“Good...” Joyce sighed, then sat down right beside Emily. She didn’t like hearing her own bottom crinkle either. Wait– her own...?

Collectively, Emily and Joyce shared a weird look. At the same time they stood from the bed and Joyce dropped to her knees, lifting the covers and checking underneath the sheets. Joyce’s hand ran into something smooth and slippery, but before speaking the look on her face said enough.

“What is it...?” Emily asked from behind. Joyce’s lack of a smile as she stood implied the worst.

“A...plastic sheet,” Joyce sighed. “Nope. No, we’re not sleeping on that.” Only then she looked at Emily. “I promise. I’m taking care of that first thing we’re done cooking tonight.”

“...Sorry...” Emily rubbed her arm, but Joyce dropped a hand on her shoulder.

“What? Hey— why are you apologizing?”

“Well...your mom did a lot, I guess...because, you know...”

“Because you did what I got you started in,” Joyce countered. Then she clicked her tongue and scolded in a sing-song voice, “I thought we moved ourselves past this whole apologizing phase? Not. Another. Word! It’s not your fault, it’s mostly mine, but either way, my mom’s the villain, albeit unintentionally, and that’s just the way things are right now. But again, we are *not* going to let this affect us, understood?”

“Mm,” Emily nodded. “Okay. So—” she started, but the look on her girlfriend’s face made her feel dumb and giggly. “*My bad*,” she self-corrected with a cheeky grin.

“Good. And besides, I won’t complain about having a diaper pail here...” Joyce glanced again at the closet. “*However*,” Joyce snatched the backpack beside the suitcases and sifted through the pouch. She pulled out a tall bottle and proudly placed it on the nightstand. “I like our powder a lot better.”

And all thanks to baby powder, and Pip, things were happy again.

“Isn’t most of this done the same time you decorate for Halloween?” Joyce asked in the same breath she lifted a vase for Emily to spread a decorated cloth underneath it.

“Things got busy this year,” Mary said factually, flashing a thumbs up at their handiwork while she set down a porcelain turkey Tom on the couch end table. “We threw that Halloween party, so we decorated a bit too much for one holiday over the other...”

“Frank helps decorate?” Emily innocently asked, and Joyce rolled her eyes with a smirk.

“We’ in spirit,” Mary laughed to herself, and Emily quietly understood.

“Dad belongs in the kitchen,” Joyce patted Emily’s shoulder then grabbed a garland of artificial leaves.

“And if only he’d let me decorate in there,” Joyce’s mother groaned.

“He lets you do the table, though?” Joyce reasoned.

“Only after I did it without asking, which I still stand by doing,” Mary emphasized.

“Dad is very uptight about unnecessary stuff in the kitchen,” Joyce explained to Emily. “So don’t be unnecessary, or he’s gonna give you the boot.”

“O...okay,” Emily nodded, and Joyce laughed apologetically.

“You’re far from unnecessary, and I’m sure he’s gonna love having another set of hands to help.”

The living room here, unlike theirs, was all carpet. The couch to go with it was still a tad bit bigger than what Emily had become accustomed to. Where Joyce likely shopped for size as a means of comfort, the sense of family activity here made size seem as more of a necessity.

“Oh, and uhm,” Emily started, but the attention of the fearsome mother of her mommy made her freeze for a moment. “Your home is really nice, by the way.”

But before her compliment could even take flight, a literal looming shadow from behind swatted it down. “No you don’t. You thought my room looked hideous!”

Mary’s mouth was gaping, Emily was mortified, and Joyce was smirking from finishing her sentence.

“Emily!” Mary sounded in shock. It was quite playful-sounding, but that note didn’t hit the mortified girl nearly as much.

“Wh-what? No I didn’t!” Emily stuttered back at Joyce. “I thought it looked fine! It’s just like our room back home!”

“Emily was hoping to see my childhood room,” Joyce laughed as she busied Emily’s hands with more decorations. “She didn’t know that my room’s gone through a couple of revisions.”

“Oh,” Mary put on an exaggerated sigh, “Emily, if only you knew. This daughter of mine had the look of her room down to a science; I had to compromise with my own 12-year old on which curtains to get her!”

“Wait– really?” Emily looked at Joyce for answers, and now with the shoe on the other foot she had a slightly perturbed smile.

“Sort of,” Joyce admitted, “but I think that comes more from just being stubborn...”

“Very stubborn,” Mary didn’t spare a second doubling down. “In all honesty, I think you get it from your fath–”

“Definitely not!” A loud and attentive voice called from the kitchen, and everyone, Mary included, was smiling.

“It’s not polite to eavesdrop, you know?!” Mary challenged the voice without a face.

Feeling a little up for adding her own two cents, Emily started to add, “Well, it’s not nice to–”

“And talking behind your husband’s back isn’t?” Frank, unintentionally interrupted.

“I think that’s your dad’s way of saying he wants you two back now,” Mary laughed.

“Are you sure?” Joyce spoke for both.

“I can wrap up here,” Mary shooed them with her hand. “You should go help Dad. Heavens that people might care more about our decorations than the actual food.”

“Yeah,” Joyce shared a similar sentiment, “don’t think people’ll care. As much as you.”

“Scoot,” Mary commanded, and Joyce was already guiding Emily over to the kitchen.

Though on their way a strip of photos happened to catch Emily’s peripheral eye, leading her astray just to get a better look. It was certainly from a pre-2000 era, the frame Emily was staring at. It was a family of four standing in front of a large banner of carved wood and painted lettering. Woodland Splash? Goodland Sploosh? Unfortunately, the whole sign didn’t fit in the picture.

But it was a familiar Mom and Dad with far fewer wrinkles and even naked, save for their bikini and swim trunks. Two kids, maybe as old as ten, were forced shoulder to shoulder by their guardians. The daughter, albeit just a kid, still triggered knee-jerk chemicals in Emily’s brain that came as instant recognition.

“Is this you?” Emily asked Joyce. She tilted her head and came over.

“Is this...oh!” Joyce blinked, and suddenly nostalgia kicked it and turned the key to a vault filled with distant memories. “Yeah! This was...Woodland Splash Park, I think? Mom,” Joyce turned her head, “do you remember that? The waterpark?”

“Oh, I remember,” Mary recounted like it was a horror story. She arched her eyebrows as emotions came to her. “That was the one your dad promised you clothes if you went down that waterslide, right?”

“Yep!” Joyce laughed, and Emily’s eyes widened.

“Wait!” Emily blurted aloud, “that’s the story you told me forever ago!”

“Did I?” Joyce paused, then quietly remembered the context. “Oh yeah, I did, didn’t I?” And that was as far as the story would go, given Mary needed no fill-in on why Joyce told it in the first place. For the uninformed from a millennia ago, it was used as fuel to motivate Emily in going out in public wearing diapers for the first time. Thinking back on it now, how the situations were even remotely comparable, much less actually motivational, was a complete mystery. Thank goodness it worked, regardless...

“You look so cute as a kid!” Emily giggled the more she looked, getting the exact sense of satisfaction she was hoping to find in a younger-looking bedroom.

As eye-candy as adult Joyce could be in a two-piece, seeing Joyce in a different era was just as exciting. Her hair looked heavy and wet to go with a tired smile; likely from knowing she scored on some clothes she was promised, wearing a loose plastic wristband, pink flip-flops, a matching one-piece and a towel hanging over her shoulder. Obviously she was younger and more childlike, but her nose didn’t change, and neither did the eyes.

“We need more pictures of you at home,” Emily decided.

“What? No we don’t,” Joyce argued. “In fact, I’d rather we get a couple of you in a few frames.” Whether they’d be of the diapered variety, however, was a question even Joyce hadn’t decided on yet.

“We have so many on our computer!” Mary, sounding quite elated, happily shared. “Oh! How about we get some copies for you two to take home!”

Just as Emily’s cheery mouth opened, an open palm smothered it.

“Ah— *no*,” Joyce said, “We do not need any childhood photos of me. Besides, I like the art we have on the walls at home.” And even when she put her foot down, Mary still slithered her sentences like Joyce wasn’t the final authority. Then again, given the roof that they were currently under, she wasn’t.

“Don’t worry about her,” Mary whispered to Emily, still dealing with a gag order, “I can at least show you some of our albums at some point!”

Had Joyce thought to clamp Emily’s mouth shut by the chin, she could’ve stopped her from nodding back.

“Okay, fine,” Joyce released her for a loud breath of fresh air, “but I don’t wanna be in the same room when you do it. Now move it,” In a careless moment, she swatted Emily on the backside. For many reasons, Emily didn’t hesitate in crinkling (as quietly as possible) onwards.

The kitchen was clearly a battlestation to be held in high regard. Cabinets filled with glassware, intricate tiled backsplash, large, hefty square slabs that looked like cutting boards, Caesar the knife-holder; also described as a block of wood holding ten different knives. The apple clearly didn’t fall far from the tree, what with an island just like Joyce’s.

“There’s my recruits!” Frank chuckled with two aprons in hand.

“Recruits?” Joyce did not approve. “I have you know that we’re a bit more experienced than that.”

And quietly panicking, trying to pretend like she belonged, Emily kept a straight face.

We...we are? Or more specifically, Emily herself...

“What needs doing?” Joyce asked as she took their aprons, and Emily didn’t question so much hers being done for her.

“Stuffing and the turkey, mainly,” and just as he answered, like a rabbit from a magic hat he lifted a raw turkey out of a sink. The next place it landed was a large and deep metal tray waiting in the center of the kitchen.

“Oh wow, this looks like a good one,” Joyce admired the raw bird, meanwhile Emily tried not to make a face. She didn’t quite like looking at raw things if they were meant to be cooked. She was a consumer, not a preparer...

“Right?” Frank couldn’t have sounded any more proud. “And I’m gonna need your help getting it together. Emily, would you be able to get started on the stuffing?”

The moment his question was asked and there wasn’t anything else to follow, an immediate misunderstanding felt as if it were about to ensue. “I…”

“I am going to show you what you need to do,” Joyce cut out the confusion, and only then did Frank realize what he may have just implied.

“Oh! Of course! Sorry, Em. Don’t worry, we’ll show you the ropes!”

“Do you already know the recipe?” Emily quietly asked her girlfriend.

“Assuming my dad isn’t throwing a curveball this year, yeah,” Joyce grabbed a glass bowl filled with all sorts of things, but in particular she grabbed an onion. “Dad, can she use this cutting board?”

“She can use whatever she’s comfortable with,” Frank answered while he whisked.

“Are you sure it’s okay for me to help…?” Emily nervously asked while Joyce peeled. “I don’t want to mess anything up; I really don’t mind doing something else…”

“But you’re so good at chopping?” Joyce said it earnestly and encouragingly, though the praise for something so simple couldn’t help but sound patronizing. “And also, my dad wouldn’t have you do something if he thought that there was much room for error.” Then she whispered, “and be careful when you chop, please?” Like a passing of the torch, Joyce carefully put a knife in Emily’s hands. “Try to make them cube-sized.”

“What else is going in the stuffing?” Emily asked as she carefully halved the vegetable.

“Mmm…garlic, celery, bread, lots of spices, butter… Lots of stuff. But don’t worry, we’ll keep you on track. Oh, and also,” Joyce paused, and Emily watched her. She grabbed a glass from the higher cabinet (without needing a chair to stand on, no less), then swung by the fridge and pressed it against a dispenser. After a long trickle, she dropped a cold cup of water next to Emily’s workstation. “Stay hydrated.”

Quietly, she nodded, then sipped. Happy to see it, Joyce drifted to her own work, but she never went far.

“So are plans for John and Hannah’s wedding good?”

“Mmm...coming along, I think,” Frank stopped just to ponder. “Your mother would know a heck of a lot better than me.”

“Oh, wait, she’s helping plan it, isn’t she? I’m a little surprised they let her.”

The audible silence from stopping their work just to share a collective look said enough.

For once Frank lowered his voice, and double for once it didn’t quite seem like he was joking this time. “The advice I gave your brother and his fiance was not to feel afraid to push back... Conflict with her can be a road paved in a whole lot of good intentions...”

Hence why there was a healthy bulk of padding between Emily’s legs right then.

“More importantly,” Frank brought his voice up again, “I hope you’ve done a good job of preparing Emily for tomorrow.”

“Preparing for what?” Emily turned her head, and even if she stopped chopping, just her hand on the knife was enough to have Joyce’s hand over hers.

“Just that it’ll be a lot of new people to meet,” Joyce shrugged. “Don’t worry, there’s nothing you need to be prepared for. You’ve seen how lively my mom and dad can get. Imagine that sort of energy level...times a few.”

Multiple Mary’s. Maybe she dreamed of a nightmare once-upon-a-time, but thinking of it now didn’t make her feel any better... She only liked getting her diaper checked by one particular person...

“Did the decorating go well?” Frank asked them both.

“More or less,” Joyce did have many emotions for it. She said you guys over decorated for Halloween.

“Yep, I would not disagree,” Frank didn’t sound as enthusiastic.

“Do you not like decorations?” Emily dropped her knife just to ask.

“Oh no, I do!” Frank insisted, “but I don’t like it when it feels like I’m living in a haunted mansion.”

“Do you feel the same about Christmas though?” Joyce giggled.

“I think I can deal with Christmas a bit better. At least outside I like seeing the lights once they’re all done. Can’t say it’s fun shimmying around on a ladder the whole afternoon, though.”

Joyce playfully slapped her dad on the shoulder. “Didn’t Mom and I say you should be doing that with John? He *said* he would help you!”

“Your brother has his own house he needs to decorate. Don’t mind me,” Frank dismissed the complaint. “Besides, I can imagine how easy it is for my daughter to say when she probably doesn’t have to do a single spec of decorating?”

“Very true,” Joyce didn’t waste a second in conceding. Then her smile felt soft and squishy when she imagined a certain somebody in squishy underpants. “However, I think I’m gonna have to start changing my tune a little for Christmas this year.”

“Wait, we’re gonna decorate?” Emily asked.

“*Oh*,” Joyce packed some emphasis in her sure-as-shit tone, “We are absolutely decorating. This’ll be the first year I get a christmas tree!”

“Don’t get a real one if your place gets dry,” Frank warned.

“We’d probably do a fake one,” Joyce smiled at the thought. A snow-covered city late at night, early in the morning. A cute little girl stuffed in her sleeper and properly padded. A diaper under explicit orders not to be opened until Christmas...! “Either way, we definitely need to go shopping once we go home. Does that sound like a good time?” she patiently waited for Emily’s answer.

Christmas with Joyce? Well, by now it felt like a given, but *really* spending it with her... What would the apartment look like? How much would they get? Where would all the decorations go in the off-season? Were they gonna get lights? A blanket for the couch? Maybe some cool knick-knacks? But most importantly...a tree. How big would it be? How many lights? Ornaments? Garland? Stockings? Presents...! *W-wait... Presents...*

The only reason Joyce didn’t chase her down for an answer was because Frank divided her attention.

“Hey, sweetheart, think you could come taste this for me?” Frank flagged her over.

“Huh? Oh, yeah, sure,” and Joyce didn’t get the chance to follow-up.

But the machine’s wheels kept on turning and the kitchen work kept on flowing. Emily chopped and mixed where she could while Frank and Joyce, a dynamic dad & daughter duo took on the lion’s share in a magnificent stride.

Hours later hands were washed and dried, and finally the aprons came off.

Though finally, while Joyce and Frank were putting away the last of the bowls, Emily quietly, albeit trying to act casual, couldn’t help but flex her toes as she tried to exhale. Her hands were bathing under the warm, gushing faucet. The water was as warm as her cheeks as she listened for the water. The flowing. The dripping. The wetting. The...

Her own faucet turned on and as quickly as it started she tried closing her mouth just to keep herself composed. She nearly jumped however when a pair of hands brushed either side of her head, right in the middle of wetting herself.

“Forgot this,” Joyce kissed her cheek right before undoing her apron. Whether she knew what Emily was really doing or not, acting in a way like the world didn’t stop when Emily needed to pee anymore made her feel a weird type of way. While a toilet afforded her the privacy to do her business alone and undisturbed, diapers encouraged the exact opposite of that. It wasn’t private, and at best, questionably discreet. When she was in diapers, she didn’t get privacy. Not from Joyce, at least. But since her bladder was something in the background now, that made moments like these all the more fuzzy-feeling.

“Good work, team!” Frank happily declared. “Especially you, Emily! Maybe if you’re up to it I’ll have Joyce train you some more in the off-season!”

“I think she’s perfectly fine where she is right now,” Joyce defended her, sort of, but mostly protected her own responsibilities... She glanced out the window then blinked in surprise. “Oh wow, it sure got late!”

“And to think we’ve still gotta do dinner for ourselves,” Frank sighed. “Hey hon!” he called for Mary, who not more than a minute later finally appeared.

“Oh wow, it looks spotless in here!” Mary admired.

“Clean-up is half the battle, after all!” Frank said with gusto, and Joyce smiled to herself.

Sort of like cleaning up Emily’s toys...

“Since we weren’t planning on dinner, does pizza work for you?”

“Sure, let’s do that,” Mary didn’t disagree. “You already checked with Emily and Joyce?”

“Oh. Well,” he looked at his daughter and potential in-law like they were a regrettable afterthought. Both of them smirked.

“I like pizza,” Emily answered, and Joyce said it similarly.

“I’ll put an order together,” Frank was already fishing in the kitchen closet.

“Hey, in the meantime, why don’t you two take the chance to shower off?” Mary suggested. “Between the airport and working here, I’m sure you two wanna get cleaned up.”

“I think that’s a great idea,” Joyce already had Emily by the hand. “We’ll use the upstairs bathroom. And also, Emily likes pepperoni. I like anything!”

“I-I’ll eat anything too!” Emily added halfway up the stairs.

“We’ll make sure one has pepperoni!” Mary insisted, and again Emily found herself embarrassed over being spoiled.

“Thank you so much for all your help today,” Joyce flicked on the light and a heater turned on with it. “It’s fun getting to do so much with you.”

“I’d hope it is,” Emily played with the handle until it clicked and locked. “I’d feel bad if you were just putting up with me this whole time...”

“Mmm...oh, well, you know...” Joyce put on a playful look, “some days with you can be tougher than others...”

“Oh yeah?” Emily laughed. “Well with you it can be a real—”

“Nuh-uh,” Joyce mumbled between her lips against Emily’s. “Only I get to be play-mean. My feelings are too fragile to hear it from you~!”

Joyce took a seat on the toilet, and Emily went right on her lap, arms around her neck.

“Can...can we shower together?” Emily murmured.

“Yes, we can,” Joyce chuckled a bit more casually. “Probably faster that way too.” Although, she looked over at the tub, obviously not even close in size compared to their fixture at home. “More importantly, however,” and Emily could feel her partner’s hands start from her knees, scraping her nails along the stocking she wore, going underneath her skirt until she was feeling the plastic padding of the diaper on her hips, and finally hooking on the waistband.

“Maybe I noticed something, maybe I didn’t,” Joyce shimmied the tights down to Emily’s thighs, “but when you were washing your hands it looked an awful lot like a thousand yard stare you had back there?”

“...You noticed?” Emily dropped into her shoulder just to hide her own expression.

A warm hand felt against her warm crotch.

“Guess I’m just that good, huh? Mommy’s cute little bougie baby...!”

“Don’t say that here...!” Emily complained, but she laughed all the same. Her skirt was feeling looser by the second as Joyce dragged down the tiny zipper.

“Don’t worry, we’ve got privacy,” and she lifted Emily back onto her feet, dropping her skirt to the floor and forcing the rest of her leggings down with it. She leaned over and pulled the knob on the shower wall, starting a pleasant hissing steam. “We’re gonna get you a bit more wet before you’ll be dry and clean,” Joyce took off her shirt next.

“Same goes for you,” Emily narrowed her eyes.

“Same does go for me,” Joyce nodded, then Emily’s wet diaper was crinkling and squishing from Joyce’s hand on her crotch. “But I’m not getting wet all over again after the fact,” she giggled. “Let me go get some towels. And our own hair stuff, too.”

“I can help?” Emily volunteered two steps behind Joyce, who very quickly had her stopping by the shoulders.

“I appreciate that,” Joyce smirked, trying not to laugh, “but remember where we are, honey?”

And so Emily remembered. She remembered where they were, but specifically where they weren’t. This wasn’t their bathroom and it wasn’t their home. It wasn’t their complete privacy amongst themselves, meaning being almost completely naked couldn’t be much of an

afterthought anymore. While a diaper did half the job, it also did none of it if Emily didn't want anyone seeing her in a diaper either...

Voicing what Joyce was already thinking, bashfully Emily muttered, "I...I'll stay in here, actually..."

"Good idea," Joyce chuckled, then briefly left Emily all on her own. She stood and stretched, rubbing her shoulder, arching her back, and even just meditating over the sound of the shower. It was nice and pleasant. The air was humid and warm, giving her goosebumps, in fact. She rocked her hips, listening for the crinkle from every deforming and folding crease she made. She squatted. She stood. She rubbed her bum, she rubbed her front. And, under no circumstances could Joyce ever know, but she even touched her tapes...!

But finally she was back, thank goodness.

Like a taunting toddler, Emily giggled. "Took you long enough! I was *this* close to taking off my own diaper, you know!" And with a diva's grace, she whipped her head at a handful of towels with a brand new diaper on top of it. All supported by a pair of hands. Hands that...

Hands that didn't belong to Joyce.

"M-mm..." Emily stuttered, bare-chested and diaper-clad, almost ready to fall over.

Mary, of course, was standing right in front of her, holding some towels, and boldly enough, diaper included. Only she was hardly as bothered.

"Ope! Sorry, did you not hear me knock? The door wasn't locked so I assumed..." Mary quickly set the towels down on the counter. Meanwhile, Emily was speechless, simultaneously trying to hide her chest and diaper. If only her arms were as wide as the crotch of her diaper. "Just let Joyce know I left her some stuff to change you with in her closet, okay?" And the woman with the boldness of a thousand bulls, had the audacity to wait patiently for an answer.

And by now, somehow privy to the madness, Emily muttered back, "O...okay..."

"Enjoy your bath!" And Mary left with closing the door.

Not more than half a minute later the door opened back up and Emily jumped out of her skin.

"Whoa, did I scare you?" Joyce, clueless, giggled, but she frowned when Emily wasn't lightening up. And by chance, she looked over at the counter beside her. Towels that she

intended to get, and...a fresh diaper included. "How..." she started, but quickly was becoming afraid to ask. "How did those get there?"