

## 14 - Every Minute Matters

Although it was cold, Emily's face was at least much cleaner now. The chill wasn't pleasant, but given that she was confined to a chair, it's not like she could have done much to protest. The lingers of syrup from repeated near-misses and the much more blatant one from Joyce's phone call had been done away with; from the waist up she was as good as new.

It was unfortunate the day had to come to an end so soon, though. Just when things were getting started, that unexpected surprise was announced over the phone...Joyce undid the strap between Emily's legs, then unlocked the tray after clearing its top and finally released the girl from her confines.

Before Emily could slide forward and find her footing on the crossbar however, Joyce's hands slipped underneath her armpits, and she was hoisted slightly higher than she already was, and then lowered onto the ground.

"I could have done that part myself, you know." Almost poutily, Emily mumbled, despite appreciating the gesture.

"And risk having you fall? They call them high chairs for a reason," She happily poked Emily's stomach, causing her to jump a little, and in turn earning a crinkle from her diaper. "We're not taking chances on boo-boos, got it?"

Giggling, Emily conceded while she patiently waited for Joyce to finish the remainder of the cleanup.

"Looks like I forgot one last thing, though," Joyce speaking to no one in particular, came back to Emily with such mild momentum, Emily thought she was going to be smothered by her lips like before. Instead, while she was getting herself so worked up Joyce leaned her head past Emily's shoulder, and she could feel the sliding of fabric beneath her nape and a knot quickly undo itself. Leaning back, Joyce in her hands held the bib Emily forgot was hanging around her neck. With an amused smile, Joyce flashed it back to Emily, showcasing the few stains brandished on the kiddy slogan.

"It's a good thing we used one of these, huh?" Folding it, she set it by the sink. "Maybe you should use them when you're a big girl too?" Snickering, she also slipped off the band holding Emily's hair together.

“If I remember correctly, *you’re* the one who got it all over my face!” Defiant, Emily planted her feet firm, and balled her fists at her sides; the kind of defense equivalent to a toddler’s stubbornness. Joyce wasn’t 100% if she knew what she was doing completely, but Emily unknowingly or not was hitting all the right buttons, and she was slowly approaching an all time high.

“Maybe for *some* of the syrup,” Joyce explained in a motherly tone, obviously trying to downplay the biggest mishap of the morning. “But that doesn’t explain all of it,” She poked her soft cheek. “And I gave you the last strawberry, too! But I know what Mommy did wasn’t very nice...I’m very sorry for making you icky, Emmy.”

Almost in a giggle fit, Emily couldn’t find it in herself to put up the front for much longer. She was too preoccupied with extracting as much sweetness from this as possible. It’d be fading fast as soon as they got to the nursery, and attended to the much more adult issues that were suddenly pressing against the glass; expectantly ogling their most private and sacred moments. Selfishly, Emily felt the smallest seed of wanting bloom within her. She felt cheated.

“To make it up to you, how about we finish getting you changed?”

“That’s fine, I guess...” The act was gone now, and she was back to her complacent self. As she started to walk, she became acutely mindful of the added bulk to her diaper, still warm from recent occurrences...It definitely was a weird feeling, but the cushiness was an enigma, at worst...And thankfully the absorbency had been doing its job, because ‘wet’ wasn’t the right way to describe how she felt below.

Along the way to the nursery, Emily could feel her bunches of hair be played with in the back, methodically brushed by a set of fingers and stroked in a gentle manner. Unconsciously, she must have adjusted her pace just to let the moment last even longer. Even with that, it didn’t take much time until her bare feet were soaking up the thick carpet to her much more age-appropriate room. One sensation was exchanged for the other, because the hands left her head of hair and the dominant figure took the lead yet again.

“So how about a new diaper first, then we figure out an outfit for you?”

“Diaper?” Emily’s state of pensive thought was suddenly broken, as she stared at the neutral woman with a puzzled expression.

“You *do* want to be changed, right?” *Was she...was she really adapting that fast?* Quietly, Joyce tried to decipher the girl’s reaction. Getting these diapers regularly was no issue, but even she

was a little disappointed at the thought of wasting them over a single wetting...When weighing the facts more heavily than the feelings, they *could* hold a substantially larger amount of fluid...But again, Emily's opinion mattered the most, so was she hallucinating? Hearing Emily suggest that so soon?

"I thought we were done with the babying?"

"What?" Joyce looked like she'd just been told firetrucks were blue; her nearing conclusions had been totally swept away. "W...why'd you think that? Do you...do you want to stop?" The thought was unexpected, and unpleasant to consider. It was completely out of left field, and their time for this was already strained.

"N-no," Emily averted her gaze the slightest bit. "I just thought that because your parents are coming..."

"And? They'll be here tomorrow."

"But don't we, you know, need to clean up some of the stuff?" The only things Emily had seen visibly outside the nursery were the high chair, bib, and bottle, but she suspected there was much more to be discovered. Stuff that needed to be put on hold.

"You let me worry about that stuff," Casually, she lifted Emily's pajama shirt and stripped her of it, leaving her in just a bra and diaper. Instinctively Emily almost went to cover herself, but gradually eased her arms back at her sides. "And like I said, they're coming *tomorrow*. Why should that have to interfere with today? It's your birthday, and I'll be damned if anything's going to put a damper on that."

"Are you sure?" Respectfully, Emily tried to leave room for doubt. Deep down though, how protective Joyce seemed to be of her had the sensitive feelings inside of her igniting to euphoric levels. "I...I don't mind if we need to postpone..." She somewhat did, but not being disrespectful toward Joyce's parents was important too.

"Well I do," Joyce folded the shirt, setting it on the dresser. "I worked too hard to see you this happy, and the chances of doing anything to ruin that are slim to none. Today is *your* day. Nobody else but you gets a say in that. That being said," She raised a brow, as if she could see right through Emily, straight to her core, where her undying selflessness resided. "I better not catch you ignoring your own wants. Anything that's done today is for your sake, and no one else. Got it?"

Quietly, Emily replied. “Okay...”

It was the one word that put Joyce into a splendid mood, and she was all sunshine and rainbows again.

“Perfect. Now, let’s forget about what’s going to happen tomorrow and focus on what we’re doing today!” She ran her hands up and down Emily’s arms. “Now up on the changing table, missy. The last thing we need is you getting chilly because I didn’t put you in something nice and warm!”

Her words reached Emily, yet despite turning to the table partway, she hardly moved. Strangely, Emily could feel herself voicing thoughts that’d been considered long ago, and even now. It was enough to even surprise herself.

“...Don’t these hold a lot more?”

A silent pause was Joyce’s first reaction. It was another one of those moments that had her completely blindsighted. The times when Emily would throw her for a loop were so far and between, which is exactly why it was always so pleasantly jarring. But by now, her flustered posture, hesitation in her words, the tinge of red on her face, the signs were all too obvious, and Joyce knew what she was seeing; a breakthrough.

“Well...” Trying to level her own emotions, Joyce started. “They can, but don’t you want a new one?” She tried to play the devil’s advocate; playing to Emily’s initial tendencies so not to seem like she was biased. Deep down she was, and Emily was willingly trying to walk right into it. For the sake of fairness though, she wouldn’t influence the outcome. None of it would matter if it was forced. She needed to know that this was mutual.

“Maybe...but aren’t these expensive?” Awkwardly, Emily looked at the diaper around her hips; decorated in the happy Sesame Street themes, containing her bodily fluids and allowing her the excuse to skip out on the much more traditional toilet...It was one less thing for her to focus on, and one more task for her caretaker to manage...”W...wouldn’t it be better if I used it more?” The idea was beyond strange; suggesting she pee in a diaper even more, but objectively...wasn’t that what she was supposed to do? Looking at it objectively, how spoiled could she have been? Wetting a diaper only once, then moving right onto the next?

“Emmy, you know you’re not supposed to worry about the numbers,” Lightly scolding, Joyce parted a stray hair from her face. “And you should be making choices based on what *you* want, not me. But if we’re talking about diapers in general, then yes, they typically are used more than

once...Regardless, that standard doesn't need to apply to you. It's about what makes you comfortable. I don't mind either way." It was a half-lie. She did want Emily to use a diaper more than once, because it was more practical, and it did cut down on diaper consumption...and the thought of finding her in a used diaper stimulated the mommy in her...The most of all though, she wanted Emily to be happy.

"I..." The disconnect from her mouth and mind was large, and the request she was trying to process defied who she was entirely. Her idea was akin to taking a hammer to a load-bearing wall. She was obviously taking herself down by a peg, but she was okay with it? Or at least she wanted to be. The demand to please Joyce was even greater than to do so for herself. The thought was surreal; wanting more for someone else than yourself. And even if she framed it as that, she knew a growing part of her would derive a strange kind of satisfaction from it too..."I want you to change me when I need to be..." The words when put together as a coherent sentence was as foreign as a Polar bear in the Sahara.

"When you need to be?" They both knew fully well what she meant by "needed," and a single wetting certainly didn't classify as that. "Are you sure?"

Mutely, Emily nodded her head, still not fully onboard with herself. She was willingly throwing herself deeper down the rabbit hole, yet the whole reason she kept pressing on was because she knew who she'd find at the bottom...

"Besides...di-didn't you say I'm supposed to use them?" The justification was outright strange, considering how she was trying to shift the blame, or cause of the situation. Each word came out shakier than the last. She didn't know why she was trying to deflect the credit for her own bathroom habits, but it came off as easier to let someone much more capable shoulder the responsibility. "I want you to have more control..."

"More...?"

"W-well, you know..." Having to be the one who pushed the envelope for these sorts of things was usually Joyce's job, so of course it made Emily uncomfortable. Given her lack of clothes and the role she was acting, it didn't exactly seem to make much sense for her to be the one making demands. Then again, the demand was to lose to right to make such. "You're in charge...right?"

The silence went on for a few moments, but what was first to disturb it was Joyce's small laugh over the blatant irony.

“Hey...!” Almost offended, Emily whined as Joyce couldn’t help but laugh over what she was hearing.

“No...no, that’s not it. I’m not laughing at you, sweetie.” She wrapped her arms around Emily’s waist and pulled her close; the diaper being squished between the two of them. Obviously Joyce didn’t mind, though. She was far too giddy to mind, and even if she wasn’t already happy, the feeling of her baby girl’s soft, warm diaper was just another sign of a job well done. “I’m laughing at myself! Sometimes I lower my guard around you a bit *too* much.”

“Wh-what? What do you mean?” Emily tried her best to keep cool, but the affection was almost mind-numbing with the way she was dressed, or how she wasn’t.

“You’ve just done some stuff before I never expected, that’s all.” Finally, she let Emily go. “Even when it feels like I’m the one in charge, you always seem to be upsetting the pace in such...*amazing* ways!” Her eyes practically sparkled at the sound. “But, I won’t force you to speak on it, my little strawberry.” This time the laughs were fired in Emily’s direction, but they only added fuel to the fire which warmed Emily all over, more than her diaper, thankfully.

*More control?* A few ideas came to Joyce’s mind, but more importantly the gesture itself had her feeling fuzzy tenfold! The day was just getting started, but the fruits it had borne already were so rich in their senses of positivity, essence, and joy. She felt like they were progressing at such a rapid speed even she might need to hold onto something...

“But *anyways*~!” Finally clearing the fog, Joyce with her hands on her hips, looked down on Emily in a wonderfully condescending way. “I think we’ve kept you in just a diaper for long enough. No more stalling, baby girl.”

“Not *just* a diaper...” Emily tried to correct her teasingly, but with the bra or not, it did little for how she looked. If anything, it was an awkward contrast to the attire of an infant...

“Oh? Is somebody suggesting I take the bra, too?” Mimicking crab claws, Joyce rapidly pinched her hands, slowly motioning to Emily’s shoulder straps.

“No! No, no, no!” Giggling, Emily backpedaled into the corner, unknowingly crashing into the giant teddy bear behind her. Slouching on her feet, she crouched and leaned back into the fluffy bear, taking his puffy arms and using them as a shield. “The bra stays on!” Laughing through her pleas the whole way, she watched as Joyce closed in on her final stand.

“Well, last time I checked, someone told me to be *much* more watchful of my charge! Apparently I wasn’t taking enough control?” Her obvious allusions already had Emily feeling silly, and she could feel her toes curling into the carpet as Joyce knelt down in front of her; her eyes never losing the high ground.

“He might protect you from the mean monsters, but...” Joyce paused for a second, realizing the furry friend had no name. “Mr.Bear,” She quickly inserted a temporary one. “Knows better than to disobey Mommy.” She pretended to look worried. “I hope my little girl isn’t being a bad influence on him?”

“No, I’m good! You’re the one that’s bad!” Emily eagerly retorted, as Joyce wrapped her hands around her ankles.

“Oh?” She gave an unconvinced smirk. “And how’s Mommy being a meanie?” She dragged the helpless girl away from the clutches of her furry guardian, and now had her sprawled on the floor, with one of her feet in hand, raised in the air. Emily could only giggle nervously as she’d just been locked into a deathly torture device. “You’re saying ‘no’ an awful lot today...What’s got you so cranky?”

“B-because you got syrup on me...?” The facade was waning fast in the face of a genuine threat, and her trapped foot wiggled its toes with uncertainty packed into each and every little appendage. “A-and,” She tried to keep the explanation going, disillusioned that the argument would actually save her from certain demise. “And you were gonna eat my strawberry, so--!” As soon as the tickling started, Emily erupted into a shower of giggles, fighting desperately to wrench her foot from Joyce’s hold.

Speaking over her laughs and shouts, Joyce continued on, her fingers scurrying across the delicate skin no less. “I think it’s because someone didn’t get enough sleep last night. We’ll have to make sure your nap is extra long today!”

“N-no!” Emily managed the same word with un-failed repetition, as her grounds for negotiation had been totally lost. She would have liked to have slept longer, but now that she was up, the impending arrival of Joyce’s parents meant they had to soak up every ounce of time that was at their disposal.

“Are you gonna let me get you dressed now?” Her heart melted, watching Emily squeal with glee as she further and further resigned into her role; defenseless in just a diaper and bra in her very own nursery. It was yet again another perfect concoction which led to an indescribable

pleasure! It was like living a dream that had been so distant for so long, and Joyce never wanted to wake up.

“Yes! Yes!” Emily would have kept shouting it a thousand times over, but her lungs had grown too restless from all the laughing that was being forced out of her.

With her magic fingers, through her foot alone could Joyce command and expend troves of energy from Emily’s entire being. Trying her hardest to wipe her involuntary tears from her eyes, she’d keep pounding her fists into the carpet; doing anything she could to express her body’s frustration from the tingling. As much as she was suffering, being at Joyce’s mercy was intoxicating. And finally, the tickle monster yet again returned from whence it came. She could only hope she was starting to build a resistance...

“Okay, no more games!” Joyce spoke with mild authority, partly directing the words to herself. “Off your tush, missy!” Like a lazy soldier reporting to their commander, Emily found her shaky footing; still working the tickles out of her.

“Now comes the most important question,” Guiding her over to the closed door, Joyce finally opened it, the one that had Emily theorizing since this whole adventure began. Half-expected, it was a small walk-in closet, lined with an array of shelves and two bars opposite of each other for hangers. Emily could already recognize the few things she’d worn before, and maybe a few new tidbits, but it was overall pretty empty. Joyce was painfully aware of this too, but she of course had plans to change that over time... “Are we feeling like today’s a lazy day, or do you want to have a play day?”

Her perplexing riddle was mostly lost on Emily, as she couldn’t even begin to imagine what either answer would lead to; how it would affect her appearance. Joyce guarded the entrance to the closet as well, so it wasn’t like she could have gone snooping on her own...

“Uhm...” The more she thought, a small warning in the back of her head signed that if she didn’t choose soon, Joyce might for her. Not that she minded, of course. In a way it was preferable, but for once Emily knew how she wanted the day to go.

“Play.” She spoke adamantly, earning a warm smile from Joyce.

“Okay, then close your eyes for me. Nice and tight!” Shrouding Emily’s eyes with her hand, Joyce held it there for a second until peeking through her fingers to see they were in fact sealed shut. “No peeking, got it? Otherwise I might need to give your tummy a few tickles next...”



Anything but that. Emily could feel the muscles in her eyes tighten. This mission had suddenly become do or die, and failure was *not* an option. Joyce choked down a giggle, watching her visibly stiffen at the sound of the playful warning. Satisfied, she turned back into the closet to collect the piece.

“You’re still not allowed to look!” Joyce warned, as Emily could suddenly feel herself being handled by Joyce’s soft, loving hands.

“I’m not gonna, but when can I look?” A sudden wave of surprise overcame her when she could feel Joyce work a small bunch of fabric over her head. Despite her most valuable sense being locked away, she could’ve sworn she felt the slightest sway around her hips. Almost like a skirt...? Either way, the shirt she’d been put in was a soft, short-sleeve just from the feel, but what struck her as a heart-racing afterthought was the snug feeling she was starting to feel around her crotch. With the sound of a few snaps, the diaper she was wearing suddenly felt pressed a slight bit tighter to her now; consciously aware of it being encased by something. But her thighs still felt bare? Clearly she wasn’t wearing pants...so then what? Once she lowered her arms, her hands accidentally came into contact with the exterior, which confirmed the skirt theory. It felt like...denim? She became aware of the extra shoulder straps over her shoulders too when Joyce lifted them for a quick adjustment, then set them back in place.

“And just to keep your feet nice and warm...” Emily still blind, was much more accepting of Joyce’s hold once she obviously slipped a pair of socks on her feet. Then, for a few uninterrupted moments, nothing happened. The only thing Emily could feel, or think she felt, was her sixth sense picking up on Joyce’s quiet presence.

“Come on, can I open my eyes now?” Slowly becoming impatient, Emily’s irrational side considered tapping its foot.

“M..mhmm..!” Joyce’s response was odd. As if she were holding something back...Emily didn’t know how to feel about that. Suddenly nervous, she cracked open an eye, starting with her gaze at her feet.

Certainly she was wearing a skirt...but it was connected to what was on her torso, and very short. It was a denim dress, and the large pocket sewn on its torso almost had Emily sweating. Oddly, she counted each and every thick stitch she could see around its lining, and where the dress ended up top she could see the pale yellow fabric, encased by the denim shoulder straps, connected to the front of the dress by fat, white buttons. Her cheeks slowly heated as she came to terms with what she was wearing. Before she even looked at Joyce’s reaction, she looked into the full-length mirror.

She blinked. For a moment, Emily almost side-stepped, because the reflection that was occupying the mirror clearly wasn't her. A toddler was blocking it, and as cute as she was, Emily was a little bit more focused on seeing herself, as well as confused by the sudden stranger in the room...But that's when she froze, letting a small sound of realization escape her, staring into the reflected image. Her own, reflected image...What she saw was something she couldn't recognize; someone that she couldn't say with confidence was Emily Sen, of 26--no, 27 years of age. Yet still, the mistake she'd made in her age was almost preferable, given the sight she was suddenly treated to reminded her of someone that was 2 rather than 27...From a mild blush, Emily watched her face rapidly shift in pigment from a pale pink to a mild red, just from seeing herself in the...the strangely alluring, and otherworldly adorable outfit...!

But, but who was she looking at right now? From a sliver of the mirror's view, she could see a taller figure beside who she still had a hard time believe was herself. She looked so familiar, though. She was a lot like Emily; black hair, green eyes, small stature, same outfit, well-acquainted with Joyce...The biggest differences with this person though, was the denim dress they were wearing, and if Emily didn't know any better, the slight spread in her legs suggested there might be a diaper underneath...Internally, she giggled just from watching the bashful girl trapped in the mirror. Yet, in unmistakable unison the person in the mirror giggled back? The fascination and mild confusion dissipated as quickly as it came, because her memory started to jog, and the person she was looking at became perfectly clear.

It was Emily. *Emmy. Emmy Summers.*

She could have likely stood there for a thousand years, trying to come to terms with the transformation she was doing her best to comprehend. How she could have become something she couldn't even recognize was baffling. She didn't feel like Emily anymore...she felt like...Emmy. Joyce's baby girl, and there wasn't a shred of physical evidence left to prove otherwise. Her body didn't feel so synced with her thoughts anymore, because as embarrassed as she looked, her mind was busy making complacent observations. As if it were a delicate artifact, she lightly traced her finger along the denim hem, trying to make the distinction between fantasy and fiction.

"Do you like it?" After enough emotional overflows, Joyce finally found it in her to keep herself in check. On the surface she was the calm, collected mommy that she needed to be, but underneath was a raging typhoon of ecstasy and pleasure; overwhelmed with the limitless marvel from what Emily looked like right now. What almost had her squeal was when Emily leaned the slightest bit forward, likely inspecting the outfit further, and unbeknownst to the girl a small patch of yellow onesie on her backside peeked from the covers of the skirt.

“It’s...cute...” Gradually coming to her senses, Emily spoke as objectively as she could. What probably allowed her to be so honest was the silly truth that she hadn’t even recognized herself for a few moments, and admittedly felt like she was speaking about someone else altogether. She was a totally different person. “H...how did you get this?” Turning from the mirror to Joyce, her skirt swayed the slightest bit, causing the tiniest breeze to brush past her bare thighs.

Should she tell her? Joyce in the span of a few moments caught herself in an endless debate; reasoning whether or not it would be the best time to tell her...There was no way she could say it was Amy without Emily being able to put two and two together and realize she knew about the diapers...and likely what they were doing right now. Honestly, it was a mystery why she hadn’t already guessed Amy. Maybe it was something testing Joyce’s truthfulness?

Though, who was to say Emily wouldn’t be okay with it? Maybe after seeing just how hard Amy worked to make such exquisite clothes, realize the countless hours of well-intentioned effort each thread was infused with, maybe she could understand? More than anything, Joyce didn’t like the idea of keeping secrets. The sooner these sorts of things were rooted out, the better.

Trying to restrain herself from hugging Emily all over, Joyce carefully spun Emily back around to the mirror, holding her wrists, hanging the girl’s arms in front of her skirt. She set her head on top of Emily’s while they both looked into the mirror.

“Remember when we went to go see my seamstress? Our seamstress? Amy?” It didn’t take any more than that, as Emily suddenly tilted her head upwards, trying to face Joyce with a panicked expression.

“Wh-what?! You told-!” A finger was pressed to her lips.

“You have every right to be concerned, Emmy, but do me a favor a look back into the mirror.” Reluctantly, but trying her best to be convinced, Emily turned her head back to their reflection, obviously looking much more troubled.

“I can’t even begin to tell you how excited Amy was to make these clothes for you!” Joyce explained in an upbeat tone; encouraging and positive; chasing the negative emotions away. “She wanted more than anything to make you look as adorable as possible,” Joyce deposited both of her hands in Emily’s paw print pocket, minus the thumbs. “She worked very hard to make these outfits for you, and you’ve only seen one!”

Emily still shuffled uncomfortably; imagining just how exposed she was to the outside world. They had one golden rule, and it'd been shattered. Joyce had betrayed her! She'd been crossed, and she wanted to be mad, angry, and sad...so why didn't she? She didn't feel happy or comfortable (emotionally, at least), but that didn't extend into any resentment for Joyce. Her mind could only think of the countless, terrible futures where Amy might use this dark secret against both her and Joyce. They were now pawns in any masterful scheme she might wish to exact in the future...Even with that in mind though...being forced to look at her own reflection, the denim dress and yellow onesie she figured it to be all looked splendid...This clearly wasn't run-of-the-mill, and the effort in it was genuine; evidence that would suggest the opposite of ill-intentions. If there was care, how could it be malicious?

"And nothing's changed," Joyce explained while she briefly toyed with the onesie's collar next. "Our secret is still safe, and no one else other than you, me, and Amy to a *very* limited degree I'll add, knows. The only thing she knows is that I might like to dress you up a little bit."

"But what about the-!" Emily couldn't help herself but interrupt, dying with the questions which dictated life or death.

"Yes, she knows about those too," Joyce asserted her verbal dominance yet again. "But so what? Joyce nonchalantly continued. What else is my little Emmy supposed to be wearing? If she didn't know about the diapers, how else would she be able to make you such cute, fitting clothes?"

"You promised, though..." Emily quietly pouted. The sense of betrayal was beyond evident, and to Joyce the disappointment in her voice was like a spear run through her own heart. It's not like she deserved any less, though.

"I did," Joyce remorsefully spoke. "But, didn't you say that you wanted to trust me more?" With almost every fiber of her being, Joyce *hated* using Emily's own words against her like this, but the only thing that kept her pressing forward was the mutual net gain that'd be on the other side. She'd have to keep reminding herself that this was for *them*, not just her.

"There's no way Amy will *ever* tell anyone *anything*," She made a point to put heavy emphasis on the two most important words. "Not only does she have non-disclosure agreements with all her clients, but I can tell you something like this is a tiny blip on her map. From the sound of it, she's handled much more off the wall stuff. Your wardrobe is something she really likes making!"

Joyce's words were reassuring, but Emily knew she was really tripping over herself when it was clear her right to total protest was lost, considering she *did* surrender more control to Joyce. But didn't it not count, seeing as this had to have been orchestrated before? Only recently did she start giving Joyce the verbal 'okay' on these things...The technicalities were too annoying to consider. Despite the turmoil, her instincts were still unashamedly telling her to be strut along by Joyce. But was there any sense of recourse to this? Did there need to be? All Joyce was telling her about were the positives, and the only negative Emily could find in the room was herself, which she had the power to change. The longer she looked into the mirror, Joyce hanging over her, while she was in a onesie, denim dress, all covering her wet diaper, a small, sudden smirk escaped her.

"Oh? Did something about that make you happy?" Joyce nudged, taking advantage of whatever giddy feelings she could spur within Emily. "I know what I did made you feel uncomfortable, but I want you to know nothing bad will come of it. Only good things," Joyce squeezed a little tighter. "I'm willing to hear anything you want to tell me, though."

"Going to Amy like that without my permission...it wasn't nice." Trying to sound glum, Emily spoke truthfully. The thick stitches in her front pocket almost looked like a toothy smirk to her, adjoined by the fat, white shoulder strap buttons like eyes.

"No...it wasn't." Joyce somberly agreed. "I knew our secret would still be safe, but that doesn't mean you'd feel the same; regardless of the outcome."

"...Right..." Emily nodded, thinking of how else she could do the proper thing and scold Joyce. She wiggled her hips slightly, watching the skirt move to and fro...She did her utmost to silence an oncoming giggle. She wanted more than anything to be mad, but how was it her place to chastise her own caregiver? "I want you to tell me when you do stuff as risky as that...I want to know what to expect."

"Tell?" Not ask? "You mean you want me to *ask* before I do stuff like this, right?" Joyce fished for clarification, and Emily could only nervously watch her toes wiggle in their polka dot socks, squirming in the carpet.

"N...no. I want you to tell me," All jitters, Emily confirmed her earlier words. "I...I can trust you, right? You said so?" Through the mirror, she stared into Joyce's eyes with sincere purity, innocence and complete dependence. She was a frail and delicate little girl opening herself up to the one person who would do anything and everything to protect her. For once it hurt Joyce now to receive kindness in response to her own wrongdoings. She didn't deserve it, which is why she cherished it all the more.

“Of course!” Forcing herself out of such a melancholic state, Joyce by Emily’s waist hoisted her into the air for a few moments before setting her back down. From the angle she lifted her, Emily too could catch the white snaps enclosing the round and padded crotch to her onesie from the mirror. The way the entire outfit hugged her and made her feel was a strange and unapologetic wave of childishness that was already taking root. Emily wasn’t sure how to feel. But Emmy? Emmy was right at home.

“But you still want me to take the lead, right?” Admittedly, the dynamic was a bit unorthodox. Emily wanted to surrender her freedoms, but she wanted the right to be aware of what was happening? She relinquished her power to do anything about it (within reason), yet she still wanted to be an attentive spectator...

“Yeah, I guess.” From the sound of it, even Emily was aware of her selfish requests; having her cake and eating it too. “If...if that’s okay?”

Snickering, Joyce embraced Emily with a small Eskimo kiss, and finally took her away from the mirror. Her laughter was enough of an answer, and Emily didn’t feel the need to press any further.

“And there’s one last thing to add...” Joyce rambled on as she turned her back to Emily and moved to the dresser. She opened the top drawer, clearly looking for something among a sea of many things, evident by the sliding of foreign objects. Emily could only watch with curiosity as Joyce’s audible searching came to an end and she came back with two small accessories in hand.

Emily stared at it for a moment, unsure of what to think at all. She really hadn’t been thinking of it...but it’s not like this was unexpected. “Is that a...”

“Pacifier? Yes, it is!” Joyce resounded in singsong praise, displaying the silicon teat attached to a plastic shield and ring, all proportionate for someone Emily’s size. As Joyce held it in front of her, it was easy to read the girl’s hesitation, but like always she did her utmost to ease her into it. “You don’t have to use it if you don’t want to, you know,” Joyce reminded as she dangled the childish item from her finger. “But I think you might be pleasantly surprised if you do~!” The aftertaste of suspense lingered in her words, and Emily the willing sucker she was felt herself being tempted by the bait.

As if she weren’t happy about it, looking at anything but the amused Joyce, Emily quietly opened her mouth the slightest bit, her arms crossed like she was in total protest, yet how bad of a liar she could be in times like this...

Joyce didn't give her a chance for second thoughts, and no sooner than it took for Emily to open her mouth, it was filled by the firm, yet squishy material just as fast. Letting the foreign invader sit still for a few moments, Emily ceased all activity as if she were awaiting the big reveal; the surprise Joyce had been dangling over her head. But it was just a normal pacifier? She squeezed her teeth on it curiously. Just as she was about to call her out on her lies though, Emily's tongue brushed across the nipple, and along the way picked up a sweet, fruity taste...*Banana?*

Her eyes focusing on the pacifier in her mouth, Emily inspected the sensation further; dancing her tongue all around the flavored bulb and receiving equally as pleasant banana-y responses. And the more she worked at it, the more she felt as if it were teetering on the line between not enough, and just satisfying. She loved the taste of banana, and wanted to feel that wave of flavor in full. Suddenly licking the pacifier wasn't enough, and in a desperate attempt to try and stir a greater yield, the pacifier rhythmically gyrated the slightest bit, shifting to the front and back of her mouth; sucking on it.

"I take it that one's a winner?" Happy to see it working as intended, Emily finally looked from the pacifier and back to Joyce. Blushing heavily over her distractions, she quickly yanked the item from her mouth (Demanded by circumstance, despite her tastebuds crying in protest), and without any real sensible place to put it, she shoved it in the torso pocket of her denim dress.

"Why did you stop?" Joyce looked the slightest bit disappointed, mourning for the sweet scene she had just been treated to. "Didn't it taste good? If I remember correctly, someone can't get enough of bananas, my little kitty-monkey."

"I don't know..." Emily aimlessly spoke, knowing exactly why she did stop, as well as why she should know better than to feel so ashamed...

"No embarrassment," Joyce magically pulled the words from Emily's mind, as she reached into Emily's pocket and pulled the pacifier back out. "Remember?" Curiously, she gave it a suck herself, taking note of the pleasant taste herself. Needing to repeat herself less and less each time though, the first two words were enough to let the pacifier back into Emily's mouth. She didn't seem to suck it as eagerly this time, though.

"Enjoy it all you can for now," Joyce passively warned. "Because if we don't throttle that thing, you might become *too* attached." Laughing at the thought, while Emily only shivered from imagining such a terrible fate. It didn't seem to stop her sucking, however. "Either that, or it'll completely ruin your craving for bananas." Ushering her along, the two went back into the hallway.

“You take the lead, missy. Off to the living room we go!” Joyce cheered as their feet stepped over the polished, hardwood floors. Silently, she bit her lower lip, watching Emily’s skirt swish from side to side, and a small crinkle from underneath too. Everything right now was beyond perfect, and it would only get better!

Onto the next room, the floor beside the couch had been sanctioned off by a large, decorated mat, sending waves of old, distant memories back to Emily. Almost like a living memory, images of them, sitting on that old blanket, messing with logic puzzles echoed through her mind.

Motifs of suns and moons decorated the purple, plush mat, and checkered across it were the many toys and trinkets that would serve as the morning’s entertainment. She recognized a few things from last time, but what had her interested more than she’d like to admit was the return of those logic puzzles, the ones that had her sitting in Joyce’s lap...! More seemed to have joined the scene, and they brought along with them their stuffed animal friends, and didn’t skip out on the thick, picture books. A box of fat crayons freshly unwrapped from their packaging sat on a coloring book as well. Seeing the rainbow gradient illustrated on the front almost had her itching to give it a try...

For a brief moment, Emily removed the pacifier from her mouth. “You really didn’t hold back on the stuffed animals, did you?” She giggled, aimlessly nudging a furry dog with her foot onto its side. Between what was here and in the nursery, she couldn’t put it past herself as being the commander of an army of fluffy cuteness. She couldn’t help but snicker thinking about it.

“It’s *very* important my little girl knows that she’s loved very much!” Taking one of the stuffed toys, Joyce like a puppet master animated its movements over Emily’s shoulders. “You have a loving mommy,” She paused just to kiss her cheek. “And on top of that, you have lots of stuffies to make you feel comfy!”

The countless inanimate faces all pointed in random directions; mute and lifeless, yet reverberating a sense of warmth, as each and every toy was imbued with a sense of serenity which was tethered back to Joyce. Everything here was an extension of Joyce’s love, and Emily felt herself wanting to be smothered in it. More than she already was. It was all through a childish medium, infantile at that, but beneath the surface layer was the plentiful emotion; honey to a bee; irresistible, intoxicating, loving, and heartwarming sweetness.

“I gotta say though, I was almost expecting you to somehow get a playpen...” What an imagination it took to picture something like that. With fences almost as tall as herself, by no means would it have been practical, and it probably would have been jarring considering the size it’d be...It was strange to think about, but how Emily’s undeniable size was an important factor



welled within her a strange feeling of sadness. She was small, especially compared to Joyce, but she wasn't a toddler; far from it. Her words were meant as a fun joke, but suddenly it felt like she was hurting herself more than anything else.

"Maybe in the future..." Joyce spoke passively, giving it an actual thought. Turned away, Emily could only sit there in disbelief for it to actually be considered. She couldn't be serious, could she? Get a playpen for a grown woman? Further and further the line which divided reality and fantasy was becoming an even greater, blurry mess. From Joyce's perspective though, it was a perfectly viable avenue. It certainly wasn't usual, but it wasn't impossible. Well, maybe not for an apartment in the city, at least...Regardless, it'd need to be something she logged away for the books.

"That's something for later, though," Joyce continued with polite dismissiveness. "Until then, focus on what we have right now, my spoiled little girl!" Joyce sarcastically chided.

"I wasn't asking for one!" Emily countered, slightly grimacing at the idea of becoming rotten from so much glimmer and glam. "It was a joke!"

"I know, I know," Joyce consoled, giving her hand a squeeze. "If my Emmy's ever spoiled, it'll be mommy's fault, and even at that I know you'll be my good little girl!" She beamed with genuine pride, overflowing with joy at the thought; being able to claim someone else as your own, and have the other party be just as excited.

Flustered, Emily started to mumble in embarrassment, in a low, troubled whisper, "Of...of course I will..." Suddenly a convenient excuse to plug her murmurs and nervousness, the banana-flavored pacifier found its way back in between her lips, and the fictitious verbal strain which weighed over her shoulders seemed to have been erased completely.

Gently setting her hands on Emily's shoulders, with a small bit of force she physically commanded Emily to take a seat on the playmat, and Joyce still remained standing. Unfortunately the diaper between her legs didn't make sitting on her knees the most comfortable. For modesty's sake, she wished she could have assumed such a position, but it was pretty clear that wasn't in the cards. Reluctantly, she sat on her bottom (Certainly feeling awkward after the slight squish of the diaper), and with a white and crinkly mass between her legs, they spread the slightest bit outwards. The hem of her dress while standing was enough to cover the onesie's crotch, but now that her own thighs prevented it from sinking any lower, a small window of visibility was now there.

“Okay missy, I have a very important job for you now,” Joyce’s face started to look serious, which started to restrain Emily’s flowery expressions. It took everything Joyce could not to break character however, when Emily gave a small nod and the ring of her pacifier dangled just slightly. “...I need you to find something extra fun to play with, okay?” She gestured her hand to the countless items scattered across the playmat. “I’m gonna go fill your bottle, so until I’m back I need you to be feeling extra happy and funny.”

For some reason Emily forgot the pacifier was in her mouth when she spoke. “Ohkahy.” In a muffled, drawn-out answer she spoke, and suddenly blushed just as hard as her speech was impaired.

Once Joyce walked into the kitchen, the idea of drinking from a bottle suddenly rung through Emily’s head yet again. She had already been using a sippy cup, but on the maturity meter this was a new low. It was another point of access to Emily’s already limited freedoms she had lost. Emmy’s freedoms, that is. Then again, Joyce regardless of the time or circumstances was often serving them both...In times like this though, the countless things which surrounded her and interacted with in various ways were all designed to service her as well as defer the sense of independence to someone else. The most glaring one was the portable bathroom hugging her hips, and now, there was a highchair to allow someone else to easily feed her, a bottle to prevent her from making spills, pacifiers to keep her soothed and silent, and a crib to keep her where she needed to be for sleepy time...Digesting it all was a little overwhelming, and as if to feel the demand of dependence personified, Emily lightly pressed a finger to the shield of her pacifier.

The pace things were moving at was rapid, and at times these situations could feel like Emily was being hit by a truck. That being said, what made it all so comprehensible and possible to digest was because this micromanaged baby lifestyle was all controlled by her most favorite person in the world: Joyce. The woman had proven she didn’t mind seeing Emily naked (Rather, encouraged it), wet herself, use the toilet, and do so many other countless, embarrassing things. She received it all with such happiness and gratitude, and returned an everlasting shower of love and affection for the girl. In some ways being small was nice, and Joyce only made it feel even more special. With a creeping happiness, she licked the banana-flavored silicon in her mouth.

A popping noise filled the room when a finger hooked around the ring of Emily’s pacifier gave it a small tug and the teat left her mouth. Clearly she’d been too focused on her own thoughts, because Joyce had re-entered the room with a filled bottle in hand.

“You can have it back later, but for now I want you on this.”

In exchange for the pacifier, Emily now held an adult-sized baby bottle in her hands, observing the light brown tint to it. It was her coffee drink!

“Coffee? But I thought I wasn’t supposed to...” She spoke hesitantly, questioning the rules she could recall from their very first breakfast. Right after the first morning meal, it was straight to milk and juice.

“Oh? Does that mean you’d like some juice instead?” Joyce asked, cocking a brow with a smirk. “Well, I suppose since that’s what you want...” As if she were reluctant, Joyce reached for the bottle which Emily promptly turned away with in order to protect her most prized possession. Playfully desperate, she did everything she could to deter her caretaker.

“No, no! I was just wondering! This is fine, really!” Following right after she stuck the bottle into her mouth and started to suck. Of course it tasted delicious, and it made her feel even more foolish for even questioning its second coming. Miracles were meant to be experienced, not analyzed. She stole a glance at Joyce who had ceased her advances, and seeing the smile on her face only made Emily grumpy because she knew that she’d given the exact reaction Joyce was looking for.

From Emily’s mild annoyance, it only made Joyce laugh as her intentions became quite obvious. Patting her on the head, taking advantage of the much thinner underwear between her legs she sat on her knees. “I think you keep forgetting that today’s your birthday, silly. I always want to make you feel nice and happy, but today I think I can make a few exceptions to our routine...”

As she continued to nurse, a small smile escaped Emily as the rhythmic petting continued.

“So?” Joyce broke the peaceful silence, rearing her face into Emily’s vision. “Did you find anything here you might wanna play with?”

Sheepishly, she shook her head no. She’d been so busy thinking that the time really flew by.

In a laughing fit, Joyce pulled Emily in for a hug while her hand scanned the playmat. “Do I really need to do *everything* for you? I don’t mind, but I’d really like some input here!” It was all in good fun, and both of them knew it. Still, even Emily knew her incompetence over the most minor tasks was pretty laughable.

“Now come on, we have a nice big variety of things we can do,” Still in Joyce’s embrace, Emily was turned to face the greater portion of toys decorating the floor. “We can read a story,” Joyce lifted one of the thick picture books, printed with a happy-faced caterpillar on the front. “Maybe

play with a few of those puzzles?” She lifted a logic puzzle Emily hadn’t recognized from last time. It was another mass of pieces that had yet to be taken apart. “Coloring?” She pointed to the box of crayons. “Stuffies?” She lifted countless different soft animals, all looking happy as could be with simple existence, just as Emily was feeling with Joyce. Gently rocking her shoulders, Joyce cooed and urged her to make a decision.

“Uhhh...stuffed animals, then!” Finally deciding, Emily threw herself at something blindly just to push them in some direction. It mattered little to her what they did, because she’d likely derive just as much pleasure from it compared to anything else.

“And we have a winner!” Joyce cheered as she corralled a handful within reach. Despite the excitement Joyce had spurred in her voice and leaving the iron hot to strike, a pile now lay before Emily and she somewhat watched them awkwardly...

Dumbly, Emily asked, “Well...what am I supposed to do with them?”

Joyce couldn’t help but snicker at the question, as her cluelessness made her all the more adorable. “What do you mean, ‘do with them’? You’re supposed to play! Haven’t you ever played with stuffed animals before? Dolls? Action figures?”

“Well...yeah...” Emily still spoke confusingly, recounting her genuine childhood which felt like light years ago. But now what? Quite frankly she was out of touch with her inner child...Joyce had aroused remnants of it, but this was still very much glued together by the love they had for each other. Finding direct substitutes for that was still very much a learning process.

“Let’s do it together then,” Joyce spoke as she’d already grabbed an ovular-looking one. Clearly it wasn’t an animal Emily had ever seen. Nevertheless the smile and two small black circles for eyes was cute in a simple way. It didn’t answer the question as to what Emily was looking at though. There were no distinguishable features on it other than it being white and incredibly soft-looking. Honestly, she could have mistaken it for a small pillow.

“This...” Emily tried her best to suppress a giggle, as she pressed her palm on the happy, soft ball. “Is a stuffed animal?” Taking it from Joyce’s hand and feeling a bit carefree at the moment she pressed her cheek into it and was rewarded by a soft and cushy response.

“Okay, okay, maybe they’re not *all* animals...” Joyce admitted as she sat on her own bottom and scooted Emily right into her lap. In Joyce’s arms, Emily seemed like a tiny package of giddiness and pleasant smells. With hair like silk and skin so smooth, Joyce wanted to hug her little girl

tight and never let go. “They’re *mostly* animals,” She corrected herself. “But I thought that one looked cute too...” Joyce explained, trying to excuse her own blunder.

“I think it’s cute too, but what is it?” Inspecting, Emily kept turning it all over, looking for some distinguishable feature. Maybe that was its charm? That it wasn’t anything at all?

“It’s mochi, if I remember...Haven’t you ever seen them before?”

“Mochi? Really?” Emily looked at Joyce as if she hadn’t believed her for a moment, then back to the friendly face in question. Squinting her eyes as if it’d help, she restored her normal vision once it finally clicked. “I guess I see it,” Childhood memories started to return to her head in waves, and her teeth plunging into the squishy outer exterior just to snatch away some of the ice cream hidden inside was coming back to her. Although she was raised in America, her mom brought a good deal of her own culture too. “No, I definitely do.” A toothy smile formed across her face as she continued to poke and prod the squishy figure with her finger.

“Well, it can’t just stay as mochi forever, you need to name it, you know!”

“Name it? Why do I need to do that?”

“Wouldn’t it be hard not to call people by their names? What would I do if I couldn’t call my little girl Emmy?” She pointed her finger to herself, which was right where Emily was sitting. “What would you call me if I wasn’t named Joyce, or Mommy?” Her point was obvious, and factually sound, yet when used as the basis for naming a stuffed piece of dessert it was clear just how much a silly notion was being overcompensated for...“All important things need names, because that’s how we recognize them! Mr.Bear is gonna need one too, ya know.”

It’s funny how creativity always seems to be there when you need it the least, and as scarce as fire in an ocean when you need it the most. As Emily stared back at the fake piece of mochi, absolutely nothing dawned upon her. Every name she could think of wasn’t fitting for a squishy and soft piece of sweetness.

*Sarah, Carol, Alex, Carly, Anna, Amy, Natalie*, they were all incredibly basic, which is why she tried toning down the syllables.

As countless sounds rambled through her head, one along the conveyor headed straight to the bin suddenly slipped off its track and fell down the hole from her brain to her mouth, which stumbled out into the open.

“Pip...?” Even she didn’t sound sure of the name itself, if you could even call it that. But wasn’t that the point of names? Words only had meaning if you gave it to them...Without that, everything anyone ever said was all just senseless babble. As if for confirmation she looked back to Joyce. “How’s that?”

“Don’t look at me, silly! They’re your stuffie! It’s not about what I think, it’s only about what you want. But if my opinion *did* matter...I think it’s a perfect name.”

“Pip it is, then.” Almost serious, Emily gave her head a small nod to her new inanimate friend, as if a contract had then been formed. Then with an exaggerated sigh Emily leaned her entire body back into Joyce, who could easily handle the smaller girl’s weight. Doing her best to stare up at Joyce while holding Pip to complete the trio, jokingly she whined, “Playing with stuffed animals is hard. Can we do something else?”

“Such a lazy baby...” Fawning over her significant other who had managed to incite such pleasing emotions, Emily’s ability to lose herself to the process was beyond gratifying as was the extent it was being taken to was ridiculously funny.

“How about you color a pretty picture for mommy, then? Sound a bit more fun?”

“Is there gonna be time for other stuff, though?”

“I don’t want to see you looking at the clock, missy.” The countless windows in the house would be a dead giveaway, but it’s not like they’d say much until the later hours...It was obvious this morning’s incident was still having its ramifications, and it annoyed Joyce that Emily was feeling forced to choose her actions based on this. She wanted Emily to feel unrestrained, and unfortunately that total feeling couldn’t be realized. “Now march your butt over to the couch. I’ll get the crayons and coloring book.”