

## 27 - Good Eats

“Could I do the chicken marsala, please?” Katherine smiled patiently up at the waitress, the same one that Dawn wanted nothing to do with.

“Of course! Did you see that we offer different marinades?” she asked with a notepad to her chest.

“Oh, right,” Katherine chuckled. “Can I do... Bosei style?”

“Certainly!” Zoey scribbled a note. “And for Daddy?”

*Daddy.* Even when it wasn't about her it was always about her.

“Um...” James blinked before glancing down at his menu. “Could I do the house burger?”

“Of course!” Zoey was just as enthusiastic. *Probably kissing up for a tip. Ass.* “And how would you like that done?”

“Rare, please,” and Dawn tried not to visibly cringe. Why didn't he just ask for it raw then? Why rev up the grill if it's only going to get two minutes of action? “And could I get some pepper fries to go with that, please?”

“What are pepper fries...?” Dawn muttered, but the sound of a busy restaurant masked her sound.

“Perfect,” Zoey didn't drop an ounce of joy with her next personal note. “And last but not least?”

*Great, my turn.*

It all looked demeaning, particularly because they didn't offer her spaghetti in different types of noodles or the grilled cheese was just a singular kind of cheese. The lack of depth and variety was a testament to how she was far from the main audience. It was a restaurant for Amazons who just might happen to have pint-sized baggage with them. She didn't need to be amazed or satisfied because she didn't have a choice whether they ate here or not. Feeding the Little was just an obligation.

To think she was getting anything special was just a pitiful farce.

She tried not to sigh as she glanced down at the menu again, but it wasn't long before Katherine's warmth was scooched right next to her.

"Did we think about what we might wanna do?" she asked quietly and patiently.

"Share your food," Dawn made one last hail mary, but it was like dropping a match in an ocean.

All she got was an Amazon hand patting her head. "Let's see if we can get something on your plate, too."

"Would you like another minute?" Zoey smiled. "It's no trouble— Little food is usually faster to prepare, so it won't affect everything coming at the same time. Or if you prefer to feed her firs—"

"That's okay," James politely interrupted. "We're all eating together. Dawn? I'm sure something looked good?"

Her Amazon was yet again up to bat for her, but at the same time belittling her all the same. It was never a win, nor a loss. Nothing. A big fat net-nothing.

It was probably all great, but how could you ask for something like "Paulie's Potato Poppers" and try to sound dignified? A fine dining experience for her probably ended in having her mouth wiped by someone else right before it was time for a diaper change.

But in a ceremonious flop, she dropped her hands, palms out on the placemat.

"Okay, fine. I've decided," Dawn sighed, then raised her head for her most demeaning announcement. "I'll have the—"

"What did you want?" Katherine calmly stopped her by speaking over her words.

Dawn blinked as her face sunk into more of a confused frown. "I...was just about to say that...?"

"Dawn?" James poked the tiny bear, indicating in his own tone of voice that there was an awful bit of attitude he was just hearing.

"W-well, I was!" Dawn's hands visibly trembled just to shake out the sheer disbelief. She went to order her food and was being scolded for it?

“Which one did you want?” Katherine looked down at the menu with her, and completely unbeknownst to the Little just why she had to point before she spoke, she unfortunately fell in line anyway.

“Th—...this one?” she dropped a finger right on the print. Right beside the toothy-grinned gecko wearing an apron and mushroom cloud chef’s hat.

“Oou, that looks like a good choice!” Katherine audibly approved, and Dawn felt even less impressed with herself. But she appeased her overlords, so she now went on to order her food.

“Sorry, can I get the—” Dawn tried again, but was stepped over once more.

“She’ll do the Sweet ‘n Sour Sidewalk Sandwich, please!” Katherine couldn’t have sounded any happier to trample over the Little’s own agency. “Oh, and,” she glanced back down at the menu. “Not too many french fries, please?”

“Sweet ‘n Sour,” Zoey repeated, then said, “and we’ll reduce the portion size on her side. All the Littles *love* that sandwich. Good choice, Mommy!”

And Katherine looked like she was in high school all over again with her first love confession.

*Gross.* And particularly shitty that in yet another one-two Dawn was completely ignored.

“I chose it,” Dawn spoke up with a particular bit of bitterness.

“That’s right, you did!” Katherine agreed, but missed the point entirely. She didn’t care how it looked to the waitress and she wasn’t seeing the issue through Dawn’s eyes. Did she really think it was actually Dawn’s choice?

Every tiny little thing now was a desperate attempt to hold on to whatever Dawn had that made her an independent person, yet James and Katherine plucked away at those few liberties day-by-day without a second thought. And yet they were just as willing to fluff her empty demands and words like they could trick her into thinking she was being believed. Like agreeing to whatever she stated whether they’d really humor her or not was enough to trick her one-track mind into thinking that she really got her way.

Hell, if she said she didn’t need diapers, they might just start agreeing with her just to shut her up. It’d be patronizing and empty. Cute and amused over the silly fact that she thought she really had any control whatsoever. The illusion of capability.

“I’ll be back with your food shortly!” the waitress waved and dismissed herself with all their menus in her arms, leaving the familial trio back amongst themselves.

“Why did you order for me?” Dawn asked, annoyed and confused. “I was gonna say what I wanted, but then you interrupted me!”

Katherine looked a tad bit surprised, but her considerate smile was unwavering. “Oh, well, Dawn, sometimes there can be a lot of different options, so it might be a little confusing?”

“Confusing?” Dawn repeated. “Y-you mean like the *five* different options I had? To your twenty? Thirty?”

“There’s sometimes things that we might know to ask about that you wouldn’t,” James included, and Dawn reached even rock-bottom-er with her patience for bullshit excuses.

The wait for the food went on with James and Katherine supporting themselves with conversation, meanwhile on the few times they’d make an effort to include Dawn, not for a lack of trying, the Little was quick to give fast and terminating answers; ones that heavily implied she did not want to let on or elaborate.

“What are we doing after this?” Dawn finally spoke up with her own conversation topic, and only when it wasn’t an effort to make herself sound mature or any more grown up than what the world wanted to portray her as, both Amazons dropped everything to listen to her.

“After this?” Katherine repeated, and her mouth started a jovial hum. “That’s a very good question! We’ve got quite a few things we could do today, huh?” she looked over at James.

“That’s very true,” he agreed, then kicked the ball along. “I think that a whole lot of it’s gonna come down to you, Dawn.”

*Yes, tell me more sweet lies.* She didn’t look impressed.

“Yeah? What are our options?” Because going straight home certainly wasn’t one of them.

“Well after this, we could go to the park, a bookstore, or a toy store?” a growing smile crept on Katherine’s face.

Even if they weren’t intentionally trying to hide the reality of things, Dawn was starting to read between the lines. Particularly the park; rolling green hills, fluffy leafy trees and beautiful scenery likely wasn’t what they had in mind for her. Sure, maybe as a byproduct, but park was

likely synonymous with playground. While they got to enjoy a park bench Dawn would be stuck sitting in the sandbox.

Park sounded like a horrible idea.

However...

“Bookstore?” Dawn asked, sounding unsure if such a mythical place even existed. Did they share the same meaning? Katherine liked books, and so did Dawn, but did she really understand the mutual enjoyment? Christ, they had yet to even start that stupid story they got from the library a millennia ago.

“Hey,” James nudged his wife with a grin, “save your personal errands for a different day?”

“Oh,” Dawn’s curiosity was gone and replaced by its corpse. So much for getting her hopes up.

How typical.

But her dying spark of joy didn’t go unnoticed by the wife who seemed outright mortified by James’ misdirection. “Hey! *No*, I mean for *both* of us,” she playfully reprimanded her husband, unlike the very real talking-to’s that Dawn had been getting. “And we are absolutely making a stop at the toy store too,” she insisted like it was law. “Today we’re gonna take *all* the time we want looking at them, okay?”

“Mhm.” *Sounds like torture.*

“That’s right, you guys didn’t really get much of a chance the other day...” James sounded a tad bit guilty.

“It’s okay, we did end up getting something,” Katherine put his worries to rest, even if she didn’t sound quite pleased with herself. “But we’re gonna do better today.”

Dawn’s eyes were lost on the placemat of problems that seemed annoyingly daunting despite their babyish caricatures and crayons to go with them.

“Hey,” the Little spoke up. “Are Littles even allowed to go to school here?”

“School? Of course they are,” James answered without a second thought. His wife glanced over at him for a moment.

“Littles absolutely go to school, sweetheart,” Katherine bolstered her husband’s words. “In fact, *I* think that Littles are some of the hardest working students I’ve ever seen!”

*Ah. More patronizing.*

“For higher education, like college, Littles have to take a special exam for accurate placement and to see if college is a good fit for them,” James explained.

Entrance exams weren’t unheard of back home, but only for a targeted species, if that was the correct terminology, was. “Why just Littles...?” Dawn raised an eyebrow.

“Well...” James started out fast, but his momentum dried up quickly. Clearly his words that had yet to come were being chosen carefully. “Amazons and Littles are really good at all sorts of different stuff, but it just so happens that Amazons might have an easier time when it comes to learning in a classroom.”

In James’ nonexistent defense, he could have just about spun that in any way and Dawn would have found it in herself to be just as offended. “So you’re saying Littles, like me, are dumber than Amazons?”

“That is absolutely not what we’re saying,” Katherine was quick to kill that very obvious thought entirely. “Littles are very smart, just like Amazons. We all just have different ways of learning things. Higher education just tends to be much more friendly to Amazons. That absolutely doesn’t mean Littles can’t do just as well, but it might be a little bit harder. And hey, let’s not use ‘dumb’ anymore, okay?”

“I...what?” Dawn shook her head. “Okay, fine. Walk me through a college class for an Amazon. What’s so hard about it?”

“Amazon classes can be pretty long,” James warned, and Katherine nodded in agreement. “Classes can be as long as two to three hours,” he went on to explain.

*That long?* Dawn didn’t voice her reaction, lest she make herself look even more inferior. Knowing them, two, three hours probably made no difference. It was all just scare tactics to a Little. “Okay, I mean, that makes sense. Yeah, my classes are like that too, only scaled for 24 hour days.”

“It’s a long time to be sitting in a chair though, isn’t it?” Katherine tried to appeal to the kid in her. “We don’t do breaks in college classes. There’s no snacktime, and teachers don’t let you leave to go potty. They expect you to hold it in,” she added with a slight bit of a daunting tone,

like Dawn, a Little far too used to being coddled by all the crutches a diaper-dependent, snack-loving girl would need, should heed her words like a horror story.

“My college courses don’t do breaks, snacks, and I can hold it in between classes,” Dawn was quick to dissuade her misconceptions, despite being the one shuffling in a warm diaper.

“And—” Katherine started like she was about to hit her with a mind-bending surprise, “There’s no playground at our colleges.”

Dawn blinked.

“Yeah, mine don’t either.”

“You can’t bring any toys from home,” Katherine included.

“I don’t have any toys.”

“You have to live in a dorm, so you can’t sleep in the same house as Mommy and Daddy...” Katherine added, albeit with a much more somber-sounding voice.

“I haven’t lived with my parents for over three years,” Dawn still had yet to sound impressed. “It sounds like to me our schools are exactly the same.” However, she did glance down at her strangely designed piece of paper again. *With some slightly different priorities in subject material.*

“Either way,” James jumped in as a mediator of sorts, “No matter who you are, college is definitely a new and tough experience. I know it was for me, at least.”

“Definitely,” Katherine nodded. “Adjusting to a new schedule is tough!”

And Dawn suddenly felt compelled to agree. After all, there wasn’t a snowball’s chance in hell that they’d ever believe her having an easier time than themselves. A Little adjusting better than an *Amazon*? Inconceivable!

“Yeah, it was different at first,” Dawn kept it brief. “Did you two ever do any partying?”

“Oh, parties? Dawn, honey, in Amazon colleges we don’t really do birthday parties...”

“N-no...” Dawn answered the woman’s dead-serious look. “I mean like party-parties,” she emphasized. “Where people just get together to hang out? Vent? Drink?”

“Drink?” Katherine raised an eyebrow. “Like what?” she tilted her head. “Is there a special juice someone’s mommy would get you all to have?”

While James wasn’t saying much, the look on his face seemed to at least hint he may have known better than his rose-tinted wife.

“Uhm, no,” Dawn tried to clear up the fantasy in her head. “Like, alcohol drinking—”

“Ahp!” Katherine bit down hard and quick. “Let’s not talk about adult soda, okay?”

“Well that’s what I drank. And *still* drink,” but even her indirect references still seemed to put a less than pleased look on Katherine’s face.

“We did do get-togethers, yeah,” James moved things slightly along. “And actually, we still do stuff at our house with friends.”

“Yeah?”

“It’s not all day and every night, but every once in a bit. We go to friend’s houses, too,” James explained, then looked at Katherine. “Actually, Grace has something coming up this week, doesn’t she?”

“Well, she does...but I don’t know if we’re gonna do that”

“Because of me?” Dawn didn’t spare much thought in coming to that conclusion.

But in a continuous effort to make her never seem like a bother, “No, not at all because of you!” Katherine was insistent. “James and I have just been so busy lately that we might wanna stay home or do something else that day.” Yet her lukewarm excuse that may have worked on a real child didn’t even stand long enough before it was betrayed by her own excitement. “Maybe you’d wanna do something fun, huh?” She smiled enthusiastically, but the thin veil of redirection hardly had an effect.

“Busy...because of me,” Dawn repeated.

Frankly, if she was stuck with them, she sure as hell wanted them to be stuck like her. If her life was over and she couldn’t go where she wanted to go and do the things she wanted to do, why should James and Katherine, her keepers and capturers be allowed any different? If they wanted



to entertain the insane fantasy of somehow being her guardians, they deserved all the chains and shackles that came with it.

“Chicken marsala?” The waitress was back with trays of savory-smelling, and oddly nostril-twitching food.

A hot plate went down in front of Katherine, and a tall, commercial-grade burger went in front of James. The bun was a golden brown and looked wonderfully crisp. A fair-sized patty far from dry and devoid of disgusting grease sat between two buns and beds of lettuce, onion and fresh tomato. A sea of fries caked in some kind of seasoning were with it as well, and just seeing it made Dawn’s mouth water.

“And sweet ‘n sour!” Dawn’s plate was last, which wasn’t even a plate. She got a plastic lattice bowl padded out with wax paper. A small toasted sandwich cut into halves had some kind of orange sauce dripping from its sides, paired with a small handful of fries and a thimble of yellow substance to dip them in. “Is there anything else I can get you folks?”

“Other than a refill,” James offered up Dawn’s empty sippy cup, “I think we’re all set, thank you.”

Meanwhile, Dawn’s eyes couldn’t help but wander. Even if James only got a burger, it still seemed...better than what she had. Katherine’s chicken looked seasoned and spiced. Whatever sauce she had, from looks alone it seemed savory, and James’ fries had a unique kind of charm that obviously plain golden ones didn’t.

The scents were strong, and while it slightly bothered Dawn’s nose, naturally she was curious about anything that wasn’t put in front of her, or in other words, all the things she wasn’t allowed.

“Oh wow, doesn’t that look yummy?” Katherine gave Dawn the emotions she couldn’t make herself by fawning over the Little’s meal.

“Uhm, yeah, it does,” Dawn agreed, albeit having eyes for other dishes. After all, being designed for Littles made it automatically worse in her very valid opinion. “Can I try yours though?” she asked as Katherine cut her first bite.

“No-no,” Katherine promptly shook her head, and the split-second rejection irked the Little. “I got this really spicy, sweetheart. You wouldn’t like it and it’s gonna give you an upset tummy.”

Again, more touting about how they knew Dawn's body better than herself. "What? No it won't. I didn't have a stomach ache from that pizza, didn't I?" She was already trying to stand and lean out of her high chair, yet the cross bar had frozen her to a squat.

"Then let's listen to what Dr. Wexler told us, okay?" James tapped Dawn on the shoulder and hovered his hand just to force her back down. Right on her warm bottom with a muted squish. "Have some of your sandwich. You're gonna like that a whole lot more."

And on the other side of the aisle, James' plate had plenty of its own curiosities as well.

Giving up on one front, she tried for the other. "Let me try one of your french fries," Dawn commanded.

"Nuh-uh," James did the same, "they have a lot of pepper in them. You're not gonna like it."

"How would you know if you're not gonna let me try it?" Dawn frowned.

"Dawn..." James started to warn, and Dawn scoffed.

"Is it not a fair question? You won't give me a chance!" but before she could continue, Katherine was stroking her other shoulder. Her lips twisted and regrettable decisions were on her mind, but finally she looked over at her husband.

"James, hon, just this once, okay? *Half* a french fry."

But even now Katherine didn't have him fully convinced, if his expression was anything to go by. But ultimately, he shrugged, then tore off a tiny morsel for Dawn to try. Before there could be any second-guesses Dawn downed the pepper fry completely. And enjoy it she did.

Until she didn't.

She tried to keep it down, especially when both Amazons were watching her expectantly. While it was good for the first quarter of a second, immediately it was like a dust cloud exploding inside her throat. She reeled back before lurching forward again with a cough. The pepper stung her throat like pins and needles, and Katherine already had her glass of water against Dawn's lips to wash the bitter feeling down.

"See? We don't say that stuff to be mean, you know..." Katherine rubbed the coughing Little's back.

It was stupid. Frustrating. So fucking frustrating. The looks they gave her; a concoction of sympathy and a heaping helping of “I told you so” just to feed their stupid confirmation biases that’d be the exact reason why she would be afforded less and less chances at trying things in the future. The fact that everything they had was so crudely seasoned and filled with spices that turned you into a smoking engine was inconceivable. There *was* something good to it at the end of the tunnel, right?

She wasn’t a smoker, but did it work the same way? An acquired taste?

“I-I...” She settled down her coughing. “I wanna try another.”

And collectively, husband and wife let out a small laugh.

“No way, don’t push your luck,” James grinned. “You got to try some, but that’s it. Now eat what was put on your plate.”

Yet no matter how good the sandwich was or wasn’t, being deferred to it had her looking far more frustrated. Her hands didn’t make much of an effort to touch her food.

Despite that, her sandwich was lifted.

“Open,” Katherine cooed at Dawn, who dreadfully knew how this’d go. Slowly, reluctantly, and quite bitterly, she did open her mouth, to which Katherine fed her a bite of her own sandwich.

There was sauce. Toasted bread. Avocado? Maybe. Bacon? Or was it chicken? The crunch of the bread, the chilled vegetable, delicious meat and bed of sauce had her toes hidden inside her sneakers involuntarily curling. The taste and texture made her taste buds sing and the euphoria in her brain flowed like a river.

Fuck, it was good. Tasty. Delicious. Fucking amazing. It was a thousand times better than what she just sampled from James. As simple as it was, the flavor was rich, and while there wasn’t depth, quantity truly trumped quality in a case like this. What was the secret? The sauce? The meat? The bread? Whether it was her or the food invading her brain, a small smile nonetheless was plastered on the girl’s face.

“She usually does better when someone feeds her,” Katherine softly explained to James, and Dawn only half-cared to correct, much like she turned the other cheek with indifference as Katherine suddenly wiped the corner of her mouth. Curiosity was a dangerous thing, because now she was grabbing one of her own french fries. Suddenly she didn’t care that it wasn’t

looking like James'. Simple was good. Simple was great. And what did she have to go with it? Honey mustard? Who cares? All she wanted to do was try it now.

So she did.

Without Katherine's help this time she swabbed the potato stick through the cup of golden glory and bit down. Then all the same she was ecstatic at the taste.

*Good...so good... Christ, what's in this stuff...?!*

Soon she was eating all on her own. Quiet, uninterrupted and with an unending mouthful of food that was soon being washed down by her fresh sippy cup of water. She didn't bother to talk, because chatting meant less time for eating. Less time to enjoy what she had in the freshest state possible.

"I think somebody likes what they got?" It was the voice that finally broke Dawn from her food-crazed trance. She blinked like an addict coming out of a frenzy. Her fingers were coated in crumbs, and without a mirror she could only speculate just how much of a mess was on her face as well.

"I haven't seen you eat something so eagerly before," Katherine's tone was pure delight, and Dawn holding up her hands against the napkin in her hand did little for defense.

"The sandwich was fine..." she lied through her teeth. Her supposed peers had a bit more to go with their food, but Dawn was certainly full from her own binge. There was hardly much left, and she exhaled while she washed it all down with a swig of water.

"Nice and full?" James asked between bites of his burger.

"Yeah," she answered simply, then looked around. "Hey," she slightly grunted as she tried to stretch out of her chair, "can you hand me that napkin?"

But both hands around her waist gently forced her back into the chair. "Please don't play that game. It's not safe," Katherine warned. "And yes, let's wipe those cute little hands of yours!"

"I'm not playing a game," Dawn couldn't hide some of the annoyance in her voice, particularly perturbed by the feeling of each and every one of her fingers being cleaned individually. "I don't even need a high chair; just let me sit in the booth with you two!"

“Then you might slip and fall off the seat and under the table. It’s dirty down there,” James didn’t entertain the request, but he did pull back her plastic plate-bowl and put the handful of crayons back in front. “You still have this to play with while Kat and I finish.”

“I…” There were a lot of reasons for why she didn’t dare touch the kid’s mat, one particularly being that the subjects were completely outside her sphere of knowledge. But again, she would never admit to that. “It’s for kids. I am not a kid,” she insisted and crossed her arms.

And then her timing only got worse.

“Wait… I. I need to go use the bathroom,” she announced, but the audience’s reaction was like declaring that the sky is blue.

“We’re gonna change you after we finish eating,” Katherine patted her head while she took another bite of chicken.

And as much as it peeved her to be put off like that, she was fighting a different level of embarrassment for the sake of hopefully a mutually understood inconvenience.

“No, I mean…” she groaned, looking from side to side. Couples and groups, unfortunate Littles like herself, including even a stroller facing the table that were all in just of an unfortunate circumstance as herself. She dropped her voice to a whisper as she mumbled, “It’s not to pee…!”

Thankfully that did garner some more reaction.

“Want me to take her just in case?” James offered to his wife.

“If she does need to, it might be smarter to have her do it in the bathroom so we can change her right away… Dawn? Does it feel like you need to go potty?”

The mere fact she was being questioned about what she was already certain of put a sour look on her face.

“Yes, I feel like I need to. I know when I need to go!”

“Actually, I’ll take her,” Katherine volunteered as she stood from her seat, but the diaper bag right next to her was also coming too. “Ready to go? One-two-three!” she whooshed Dawn out of her high chair and into her arms. “Could you just take care of the bill, please?” she asked her husband who nodded without a word. Then off the two women went to the bathroom.

“Now Dawn,” Katherine started, and Dawn was already dreading the soft-handed talking-to she was about to get. “I know your body is just a little anxious right now, but these feelings about maybe needing to use the potty are gonna go away, okay?”

“E-excuse me?”

“Just in case I’m taking you to the potty, only because it’s not polite to everyone else.”

“I *know* when I need to go,” Dawn frowned. “You really believe what that Doctor said? Katherine, I *am* potty trained!”

“I know you are, honey,” Katherine agreed soothingly, “but remember what Dr. W also said about that? The way you were potty trained can be a whole lot different from how me, James, or any other grownup Amazon was potty trained as a kid, You know nobody is mad or upset with you, right?”

And now even saying she was potty trained had lost all its meaning. Katherine didn’t disagree, but her interpretation was warped, and walking back a misunderstanding just to start all over again was so much harder than trying to prove she was simply potty trained to begin with.

Her soothing, unjudging voice went on and on as pure kindness killed the girl squished between her arm and bosom.

“Right now it might feel like you have to go potty, and maybe that’s true; that’s maybe just your internal clock saying ‘hey! Maybe now’s the time to go potty!’ And maybe it is, maybe it isn’t.”

Was there even a point in arguing? “Then why are you even taking me if this to you is just one big fat ‘maybe’?”

“Because I think you might still be pretty good at telling when you might need to go?” She smiled.

Smiled. Like it was their own little secret, or like Dawn should be enamored by the fading fact that Katherine at least somewhat believed in her ability to tell her own bodily functions. But it was a ticking time bomb. She didn’t believe in *actual* control. Dawn wasn’t really potty trained. She was just a trained timer set to go off at fixed intervals, and it was only by sheer coincidence at this point her needs to pee and poo were lining up with her regular tells. So many holes and so many arguments, but all she had to stand on were pure anecdotes. Meanwhile, Katherine has had the privilege of witnessing many of her most embarrassing and forced accidents.

“Come on, wash your hands really good,” an Amazon cooed over her toddler son’s shoulder. She was holding him up against the sink while his hands slipped and slid against his soap-covered palms under a gushing faucet.

Of course, opening the entrance got at least a glance from the Amazon woman and her child. She smiled, probably because Katherine did, but Dawn turned away with a blush.

“Uh-oh!” and of course, the stranger had to make a comment. Her eyes followed them through the mirror stretching from one end of the array of sinks to the other. “Changing time?”

“Not quite yet,” Katherine with the gaul to engage in banter, chatted right back. “She said she had to go potty, so I wanted to have it start and end here, if possible.”

“Oh wow!” the Amazon’s eyes went wide. “So you’re potty training her? I can’t say many friends in my circle with Littles have had much success with that, assuming they even tried. But best of luck! However, my little guy right here!” she nuzzled her cheek with her son who couldn’t help but giggle. “We’ve made leaps and bounds with him!”

“Oh, that’s great!” Katherine commented, and Dawn couldn’t care less. Hell, she was pissed that they stopped moving just to talk with this person. “And actually, we’re not potty training, exactly. I think she just might have an easier time going potty in a familiar spot...”

Finally, the mother turned with a curious look. “So you took her here to mess her diaper?”

Dawn didn’t like the sound of that.

“Only because she’s not used to going out as much,” Katherine explained, but the woman pursed her lips and simply shook her head.

“Ah-ah. I’d try not to do that, if I were you!”

Dawn impatiently tugged Katherine’s sleeve. “Hey, can we just go now?” But of course she was ignored and they didn’t budge.

“Why not?” and Katherine was far from offended. She sounded earnest. Curious.

The woman was setting her son down to the floor, then instructed, “hold Mommy’s hand, okay?” Then she stood back up. “Just remember that it’s Mommy who makes the rules, not her Little,” she made a disapproving grin at Dawn, who was now ready to scream obscenities. Yet somehow Katherine’s solid grip on her communicated in its own way not to act out.

“Ad... admittedly, I’m kind of new to this,” Katherine explained a bit sheepishly. “Should I not be doing this?”

“Oh– wait, no,” the woman backed up her words. “Everyone parents differently– I don’t want you to think I was criticizing you or anything! I just know from friends that Littles can be a little tricky with their words. They’ll try to play games and make up excuses. Whatever your Little *thinks* she’s feeling down there,” she waved her hand dismissively. “It’ll sort itself out, I promise. Also, do her a favor and look into something called Little Load Shakes! Sorry to bother you like this!”

“No, not at all! Thank you for the advice!” Katherine smiled at them on their way out. Once the door finally closed, Dawn spoke up.

“Can you *not* talk to people like that?”

“What?” Katherine frowned. “She was being very nice.”

“And very opinionated. Did you not hear her? She was giving you terrible advice! And whatever stupid shakes she mentioned. *No*. Absolutely not.” She hadn’t a clue what they were for, but she didn’t like any possible implication whatsoever. Anything designed for Littles in this dimension assuredly ended in disaster.

“...Let’s not worry about that, okay? Do you think you still need to go potty?”

“Yes, I am pretty damn sure I need to shit myself.”

“*Dawn.*”

“What? You can talk about me and my personal issues with strangers like it’s the weather, and I’m not allowed some kind of relief in return? That doesn’t sound very fair, does it, *Katherine?*”

And despite being only amongst themselves, the K-word in public apparently managed to put some level of discomfort on the Amazon’s face.

She blushed as she asked, “Sweetheart, please don’t use my name in public? And please, no more bad words?”

“How about please don’t talk about me to strangers?” Dawn continued to challenge.



Even Dawn knew she was getting incredibly close to a line, assuming she hadn't crossed it already. But maybe for once it was a point where Katherine didn't have some kind of roundabout justification ready for why she had all rights to violate her privacy in every sense. She could only imagine that it was a temporary blockage she'd achieve from this.

"I'm sorry for embarrassing you like that," Katherine apologized in a somber voice, "but can I please have an apology too? When you behave like this, it upsets me and makes me embarrassed too..."

In other words, even Dawn's victories couldn't be victories. Truces were as good as they got.

"*Sorry.*" It sounded far from genuine, but the word certainly left her mouth.

"Thank you," Katherine was glowing again, then squeezed her all over again, and even as bold as kissing her on the forehead. "I'm sorry too. Now wanna try going potty?"

"I-..." Dawn choked down a groan. "Yes."

They stepped inside a stall; a place Dawn never could have even imagined treading in this dimension. It was just like she imagined, or more appropriately, remembered. White and porcelain. A curved toilet seat with a hands-free flushing mechanism. A roll of toilet paper hanging from the wall on the stall and everything. But especially nice was the perfectly clean bowl.

And then it hit her. She was looking at it. The toilet. The actual toilet. A bathroom. And she was getting to use it. Wait, seriously? She was being allowed to use the bathroom? Katherine was letting her?

Her heart was suddenly fluttering. Her eyes wouldn't leave the sight, even as Katherine turned to hang the diaper bag on the stall door hook.

"Is it okay if I take these off for you?" Katherine asked as Dawn felt her finger hooked on the inside of her pants.

"Uh-uhm...yeah. Yeah, please," she answered as her mind moved five times faster than her actual body. She didn't even want to ask if this was reality, because she was afraid she'd wake up. Did she doze off at some point? Was she sleeping in her high chair at the table right this very minute? Was this a dream? Was she that depraved? Imagining to use the toilet? Were these her wishful fantasies now?

But her bare legs feeling the room temperature said differently. This was real. She was getting it. The toilet. A toilet. She was getting to use the bathroom!

“I’m gonna hold you on the edge of the seat, okay?” Katherine asked as she lowered the girl, who couldn’t be giddy enough. She slowly nodded her head.

“Uh-uhm, Katherine?”

Her brows suddenly furrowed.

“I-I mean Mom!” Dawn quickly corrected, “I...I– sorry, I got ahead of myself. I-I just uhm wanted to say...uh...thank you.”

“Of course, sweetheart,” Katherine smiled, and finally Dawn’s bare thighs touched the cold seat. “Just let me know if it feels like you’re done, okay?”

“Yeah, okay, sure,” Dawn nodded. She hardly wanted to be watched using the toilet, but it definitely beat messing her diaper. Her sense of privilege and opportunity was certainly warped to consider this a pipedream kind of victory, but euphoria was euphoria and the fact she was getting it meant she was relishing the chance at some semblance of maturity.

Sure, Katherine’s patient smile made her blush, but a small part of herself almost made this feel like the beginning of something great. Something important. Like *real* progress was being made here! Had...had last night left an impression on her?

Now she was feeling tinges of guilt for being so hostile. She was finally coming around and Dawn was still heavy-handedly giving her the cold shoulder. A lot of it was deserved, of course, but just the fact that Katherine was so willing to stick her neck out for her like this... Maybe she was slightly wrong. Maybe there was a chance? Maybe like this, using the toilet could prove something, or at least get her foot in the door on forcing some kind of paradigm shift within the woman.

Enough to combat what this society has taught her. What Dr. W poisoned her mind with. What LPS is enforcing. What random strangers in bathrooms seem to spout like just another propaganda mouthpiece.

Right now it was just Dawn, Katherine, and the toilet. Ironically, a match made in heaven, if there was ever a chance at climbing out of a pit of diapers, bottles, high chairs and cribs.

And as she held onto the pressure in her bowels like an invaluable treasure, she needed only wait for the final barrier to be dropped to prove herself.

So she waited patiently.

“Dawn?” Katherine’s smile was still there. She tilted her head. “Still need to go?”

Dawn blinked. “What? Yeah, I do.”

“Okay,” the Amazon nodded. “Just checking.”

And she kept on holding Dawn there. Sitting on the edge of the toilet, pants at her ankles, and still taped in a wet diaper.

“...K-...Mom?”

“Yeah?” she perked up, “Don’t need to go?”

“N-no, I do, but...uhm, my diaper? You still need to take it off?”

“Don’t worry, I’ll remember to change you after you go poopy. It might be a little tough, but remember to push, okay?”

And so quickly the fantasy was crumbling. Mutual understanding was just a fallacy.

“N-no...I want to poop in the toilet. Not my diaper.”

“How about we close our eyes and pretend like you are, okay?” Katherine suggested, and the morbidly embarrassing idea was twisting the Little’s heart.

“W-wait,” Dawn started to sound genuinely upset. “Why did you even take me in here if you were just gonna make me use my diaper...?!”

“Well...sitting on the potty might feel more comfortable at first, right?” Katherine frowned, then Dawn’s stomach sank as she started to feel herself rising. “Maybe this wasn’t a good idea...”

“Wait! Wait!” Dawn genuinely cried, and Katherine’s arms froze. It was happening far too fast to realize that what Dawn was getting was the farthest cry possible from what she expected. It was a sick joke. Pooping her diaper while getting to sit on the toilet? So close, yet so far away. But lord, it made her sick with how desperately she was suddenly even wanting this. She didn’t have

the time to process her grief or anger from misunderstanding, and arguing the point would likely make her lose this pitiful chance altogether.

So she audibly grunted as she tried to push. She tried not to cry as she did her utmost to take full advantage of whatever sad opportunity she had right then. The warm touch of another person held her safe and secure while she voided her bowels right in front of them. If only that was all there was to it, though. It was at least a good foot of drop for Dawn's bodily waste to go. As she gasped for air when it started to leave her, she waited for the sound of splashing from her mess hitting the water. The cold droplets splashing back up to her bottom.

But it was warm. Hot. No toilet water was splashed. Her mess was stuck between a bum and a soft place, crinkling as her mess never made it beyond her own diaper she couldn't escape. All her mess hung right above where it was supposed to go. Where only adults had the privilege of putting it. And she no longer had that right. Tears rolled down her cheeks as the warm mess was well-acquainted with her now, smelling foul and unfortunate as padding and plastic kept her from dealing with it in any dignified way.

"All done?" Katherine was calm and soothing, and just for the sake of avoiding argument, Dawn sadly nodded. Despite being so easily avoidable, Dawn sadly nodded at the sensation and feeling of yet another full and bad-smelling diaper.

"I-if you just let me use the toi-!" Dawn started to pout, but a loud, ear-deafening flush beneath her drowned out her words. The toilet roared as water swirled and drained, replacing a once clean toilet bowl of water with a just as fresh batch.

"And we flushed it all down!" Katherine cheered. "Bye-bye!" she cooed again, and only now Dawn was realizing how serious she was about the whole pretending thing. Pretending like her diaper still wasn't filled with poop and pee, and like she was just as successful as the genuine toddler who had just needed help getting his hands washed a few minutes prior.

"Good job!" Katherine complimented again, and before she knew it Dawn was back on her feet again, feeling the full weight of her own mess dragging her down to a far more cruel reality. Literally grounding her. "Oop- step out of these, honey?" Katherine tugged on her pants, until the stunned girl was just in a shirt, messy diaper, and shoes. She watched the giantess work above her as her pants were stuffed in the diaper back hanging so high from the door.

Trying to control her breath, Dawn asked in a thick voice, "S-so...a-are you gonna change me now...?"

“In just one super quick second!” Katherine’s enthusiasm couldn’t be deterred, maybe especially because of how sore and beaten up Dawn was feeling. Maybe it was the worst misunderstanding imaginable, given how peppy the Amazon was. Surely she didn’t do it for fun, right? Getting Dawn’s hopes up just to knock them all back down? Time and time again... Were they even on the same book, let alone page?

But that had to be it. Not the same page. Not the same book. Fuck. Fucking fuck, not even the same fucking universe.

Her back was turned only for a second, but she could hear the tiny metal latch and belt come undone while a tiny zipper came down.

Dawn turned in place, and watched without a word. With both hands she dropped her pants and panties to her knees as she sat down where Dawn once needed help sitting in what felt like eons ago. An apologetic smile was written all over Katherine’s face, and she even reached out to fix a tuft of hair around Dawn’s ear.

“Sorry, we’ll get you changed right after this, I promise,” she gently assured. “I had to go potty too,” she smiled.