

2 - Groggy Start

When Dawn finally came to, it was a groggy and sluggish awakening. It was an exercise in itself just to try and open her eyes. She was still leaning on something, and from the way her hands were situated, she was guessing that she was still being carried.

Then it finally struck her. Nothing had changed. She was still claimed and kidnapped; whisked off to a land of eternal infancy, dealt by one of the most sadistic giants she'd ever encountered. Did she really have to wake up? She was starting to get mixed messages, what with the hand stroking her back right then. She'd almost call it soothing, had she not known who was behind it.

She was approaching an inevitable, whenever they would reach this woman's car, and Dawn by this point knew she was powerless to change that. If she needed any reminding, there was the inflated silicon bulb in her mouth. Her next observation was a double-edged sword; her jaw didn't hurt as much. It was good in the sense she felt less pain, but it also meant she was acclimating. The last thing she ever wanted to do was physically accept a lifestyle like this! A silent tear was wept as she clutched the Amazon's fabric tighter.

A lowered voice spoke close to her ear, catching the girl by surprise.

"Dawn? Are you awake?" Her first instinct was to play dead- rather, pretend to be asleep. But giving it just a few more seconds in her fatigued state, that didn't sound like the woman from earlier? And to the same degree of strangeness, she didn't hear that sickening name, Abigail, nor its just as dreadful counterpart Abby. For once it was her *real* name.

Their surroundings weren't loud either. It didn't sound like they were outside. No white noise of populous, cars, and buildings. None of it. The best she could hear were maybe ringing phones somewhere afar, but even then it was speculation. The most important question though, dare she reveal herself?

Her answer didn't seem to matter, because the voice kept on speaking.

"I know you're probably exhausted and very confused right now, but I want you to know that you're safe." Words could only mean so much, especially from an Amazon. In short, talk is cheap.

The voice was familiar, but why couldn't she place it? It was right on the tip of her tongue. Her metaphorical one, since her real one was locked up nice and tight...

Since Dawn hadn't given any more signs, the mysterious woman went on to seem puzzled. "...Are you awake?" She must've been putting on a believable act, because it sounded as if she were talking to herself. "Hmm... Did you go in your sleep, maybe...?" Dawn didn't have time to figure out what that meant on her own before the Amazon could translate through action. Petrified, she realized she was still wearing the dastardly pullup when a cool finger happened to brush her tailbone, as it slipped into the waistband of her underwear to pull it back some, bringing along the same crinkle as always.

"Nope, all good there..." she spoke to herself in a lowered voice. Dawn managed to keep still, but her cheeks were probably red hot by now, if the warm feeling in her face were any indication of that.

The woman chuckled, and Dawn didn't know what that meant.

"How about the front yard, then?"

While she still had a grip on the woman's shoulders, she was eased back the slightest bit, just to form a gap that'd let the same probing hand from before back in. Dawn couldn't hold it in anymore. She wasn't trained to have her most sensitive parts be touched. The woman boldly stuck her finger into the legband of her pullup, making its way right between her thigh and crotch.

Too sensitive of a place, Dawn yelped as the cold feeling sent chills to a place that had never been touched that way! Well, at least not by a complete and total stranger...

She was going to bite back; moan, whine, kick and struggle, but what good would it do her? Pain was still a fresh memory in her mind, and no Amazon was ever in short supply of it. Instead, all she could do was look bitterly to the culprit. That same gorging beast which had turned her into a babified slave. At least she didn't have to hear the ring-ting tingle of her bangles anymore. Why was that, Dawn didn't know, but it was a blessing nonetheless.

"Oh, thank goodness, you're awake!" It was a gentle yet firm squeeze, which fed only further into Dawn's skepticism. Did this woman really think she could get on Dawn's good side? A grand ensemble of slapping her, ruining her clothes and putting her in pull-ups, and she has the audacity to *hug* her? Willful ignorance could only go so far.

When she did open her eyes, just to see her again, it was weird. Somehow, the woman had lost quite a few pounds since Dawn last saw her. Something in the high double digits, if not over triple. That, and her hair wasn't a mess of hideous curls anymore, and instead ended on a single

wavey upturn on the edge. Her hair was a washed out red; likely the bloodstains of the countless calories she had killed just to achieve that slim face in such a short amount of time. And she had a name now too? That was a strange observation, considering a name is invisible information rather than a physical characteristic. Somehow, Dawn knew it. It was Katherine.

Then, despite the lingering drug slowing her mind to a tricycle's pace, she realized how much of an idiot she was to not recognize that someone totally different than her kidnapper was now holding her. And it wasn't just anyone, considering she just named the supposed stranger. It was Katherine. The woman married to James; the ones she met on the sidewalk.

Dawn blinked.

Katherine blinked, only she was backing her silence with a smile. "Good morning, sunshine." As bewildered as Dawn was, thankfully the woman wasn't as upbeat as last time. Had she been speaking any louder it may have very well split her head in two. Her sensitivity to noise was directly related to a mild headache, one she thought had been chased away right before she passed out.

"Youh...youh fwom befoah?" Something came to her attention when she tried to speak. The first was that she could to begin with, despite the pacifier in her mouth. Realizing it now, the bulb inside her mouth wasn't nearly as gargantuan as before. Dare she even call it appropriately-sized. There was a wonderful relief in being able to speak her mind again. Let it be a promise that she would never lose her speech again. Even temporarily was too terrifying. With little hesitation she swiped at the ring hanging from its shield and tossed it without a second glance.

"Kath...Katherine?"

Katherine's face seemed troubled when she watched the pacifier fly away, but quickly turned back to Dawn. She chuckled, going on to speak in a soothing voice. "That's right! Thank you for remembering my name, Dawn. I made sure to remember yours too!" This was normally Dawn's cue to be creeped out, but overcoming her disoriented state took precedence.

She paused to rub her eyes. "Where are we?" Giving her head a few lazy turns, it was all glossy walls in extremely close proximity. The floor was an array of white tiles, and whatever they were sitting on, Katherine's double-layered skirt which flowed to her ankles just about covered any visible bit of it.

"We're in the potty, right now. Are you feeling alright? You've been sleeping for quite a bit..." She drew her hand closer to straighten one of Dawn's hairs, but the restrained woman waved it away as best as she could.

The potty? It technically was what Dawn had asked, but she was hoping for something more traceable than such a generic location. And also, she tried not to mind the childish terminology.

“Okay, but where is this place? A hotel? A house?”

“We’re in a police station right now.”

A police station? Why would they be there? Just as important, *why* was Katherine even holding Dawn? Wasn’t she being kidnapped by a totally different Amazon? Not that she was complaining. It was a godsend to be separated from that demon. Still, it only added to the confusion. Then, a sinking feeling reached her stomach. What was to say Katherine had similar motives...?

Thousands of questions could be asked; all limitless in the angles of approach in which they could be taken. So many questions that Dawn could barely sit herself through the simplest of them all.

“Why?”

Katherine looked to be staring at a task equally as daunting as Dawn’s confusion.

“Wait,” Dawn cut off the silence before her own question could be answered. “I wanna be put down.” She’d been held for so long that it was starting to get to her, just like the pacifier. She was starving for agency; independence, something that helped force the notion she was a fully functioning adult. Already shuffling to get out, the crinkling reminded her of what she was wearing. That was unfortunately an issue that couldn’t be addressed right this minute...

“You want to be put down? Are you sure?” Katherine looked skeptically to the floor. “Public bathrooms are yucky for bare feet, honey...” Dawn happened to move her feet, brushing against the cool, smooth fabric of Katherine’s clothes. Just being able to feel them said enough about the shoes she was wearing, which were none, including socks.

But she didn’t care. If a small hygiene concern was the biggest of her worries when it came to reclaiming adulthood, that was a price she was willing to pay.

“Set me down.” She wasn’t in the mood for ‘pleases,’ given how she didn’t concern personal space as a privilege more than a right.

Even then with an adamant answer, Katherine seemed hesitant, but thankfully she caved before Dawn had to get more verbal. Slowly, Dawn was set onto the ground, though touchdown was wobbly, at best. At first, she was more or less steady, then it felt as if the floor were tilting in random and awkward directions.

Dawn kept making worried noises as she swayed from one tile to another, struggling to maintain her balance. Just as she was going for her final tumble and waving arms, something caught them which had her standing upright.

“Whoa, someone’s still trying to get their land legs back, huh?”

It didn’t make any sense! Why couldn’t she stand properly? Slightly panicked, she did her best to recount her last waking moments, but nothing seemed to tip her off. If anything, it corroborated the exact opposite, considering the last bathroom she was in she was able to stand and walk just fine!

“What...why can’t I stand properly?” Come to find out it was Katherine that’d saved her from a fall, currently holding Dawn’s hands above her shoulders.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t stop it any sooner...” Somberly and from a seemingly unexpected place, Katherine spoke.

Despite being supported by her from behind, she still tried to turn to her with an even more puzzled expression “Stop it? Stop what?” Everytime she had to seek further clarification, it was further stress on her exhausted mind that only strung her along through pointless obstacles. She was starting to sound annoyed.

“That woman that tried to take you...” A crease in her brow formed, and she started to look displeased at the sound of her own words. “She likely gave you something that would make you pass out.” After a small sigh she seemed to be back to her calming self.

“She...what? I was drugged?” When?

She could hardly remember a moment where she could’ve even been given something without noticing! She then thought about those few slaps on the thigh she got... You couldn’t transmit it by a mere slap, could you? Even still, that was only a partway explanation for Dawn’s momentary lack of balance. It didn’t illuminate a smidgen of how Katherine came to be involved.

None of this was getting her anywhere. She didn't have the mental stamina to piece together bits and pieces of information from every direction.

"Please," Dawn took a deep breath. "I'm tired, confused..." and as she looked around, realizing just how tight a bathroom stall could feel when with an Amazon, she decided to lay all her cards out on the table. "I'm scared...so please talk me through this."

Katherine only looked on with sympathy, and she did go on to speak. "Okay, I can tell you how we got here, but first wouldn't you--"

"*Please*," Dawn sounded to be emotionally tearing at the seams. "I don't know where I am, who I'm with, what time it is, how long I've been out, why I'm still in a pull-up, why I'm not strapped in some psycho's car seat--!" She couldn't stop taking rapid breaths, nearly starting to wheeze. Whatever drug she was supposedly on, it had afforded her the mental numbness to ignore the rapid shifts in pace as her very life was turned on its head. Now she'd become conscious to a midway project on the verge to total ruin, and she was terrified.

In the midst of her breathing fit, she was back off the ground and sitting in Katherine's lap again, leaning into her as she was embraced.

"No, no! Let me go!" Her words trembled as she struggled to push off of the Amazon, but she was caught in her iron shackles otherwise known as Amazonian strength, and she could barely push off of the woman's stomach, as the human skin had far too much give to be considered solid ground. She could hear her heart beating loudly and hitting her chest with a heavy thump. Her breathing was all out of sorts and a lightheaded feeling was starting to take over.

"Dawn, sweetie, please, I'll talk to you, but I need you to do one thing for me, okay?"

One thing. That's how it all started. Nothing had changed. It was just another bathroom with another Amazon. They gave you the illusion of freedom, as if you actually had control. And in exchange for that fabricated liberty, they expected you to return their cheap generosity with the very ownership of your entire being.

"Is that all I am to you? Just some husk of a person that can be repurposed into your *baby*?" The words didn't come as strong as she'd have liked, but her lungs were too busy in overdrive for her to speak normally.

"Dawn, you're starting to hyperventilate, please calm down and listen!" Katherine sounded panicked. She wasn't making demands, but pleading requests.

Hyperventilate? In her frantic state, Dawn supposed that made sense...but that didn't change her unyielding desire to be freed. If this woman cared so much about her, she was going to let her go. Even still, Dawn didn't want to stake her life on her own stubbornness. Was it because of the anxiety? The drugs? How was she even supposed to stop? Just as quickly as she boarded the train, it was fast heading for a deadend cliff.

There was a slight bang as Katherine was off her feet and opened the stall door in quite a rush.

"It's okay...you're going to be okay..." She was stroking the back of Dawn's head while she quickly made for the bathroom door.

"James? James!?" Now it was Katherine's turn to sound panicked as her eyes rapidly paced the hall.

James, the husband in question, had been sitting on a padded bench along the wall, resting his chin on his knuckles, looking to be trapped in pensive thought. The first call of his name had shocked him from his concentration, casually looking for where the noise came from. The second call came with much more volume and he could tell who it was, his wife, which is why he was off his stool and rushing immediately over.

"Katherine? What's wrong? Why are you shouting? And why are you crying?" With his own concern he hurriedly came to her aid.

"Dawn! It's Dawn, she's starting to hyperventilate. She just woke up and we started talking, but she kept getting more and more anxious..." She looked to be on the verge of tears herself, and Dawn was feeling a tight strain in her chest.

Even though it was a state of urgency, James did his best to coax his wife into letting go of Dawn and swapping over to him. Dawn didn't even try to struggle. She was fading in a dangerous way that left her little room for physical activity.

"Dawn? Hey Dawn? Are you with me?" James was trying to force eye contact; a reaction that could at least give him some information. He took back to the bench where his wife followed close behind. "Dawn, hon? I need you to listen to me, okay?"

"What if, what if she doesn't trust us?" The worry was heartbreaking, to think that they were the cause of Dawn's pain. After all, this was all a ploy to *help* her, not drive her further into panic.

James turned his ear a little bit to listen, but he was too focused with Dawn, currently stroking her back. “If that’s the case, she does need to calm down, but we also need her breathing back in order, too... Dawn, I promise I’m not going to do anything to you. Just please listen to what I have to say, okay?”

Weakly, and to Katherine’s surprise, Dawn nodded her head.

“Okay, tight lips. Leave a small gap. You’re breathing out more than you’re breathing in.”

With shaky lips Dawn did her best to comply. She didn’t know why she was listening now as opposed to before. Maybe because this was a moment where it truly did feel lethal.

For every exhale she tried to maintain a small slit between her lips, but for every intake she’d take exasperated breaths; anything to upset the wild proportions surging through her lungs.

“Is it working?” Katherine still looked visibly distraught, trying her best to keep in one piece as she watched.

Politely, he ignored his wife as he continued to speak. “Hey Dawn, I know things are a little crazy right now, but talk with me a little bit, okay?”

Her breathing was better enough to look all around them, which were two long stretches of hallway, supporting ceilings that hung far too far above her head.

“Hey, Dawn, Dawn?” Finally she turned to face him, but with how high-strung she was, the attention she was giving him was likely only going to last for a few more seconds.

“Color. What’s your favorite color? Can you tell me?”

“Co...color...why?” Dawn didn’t know whether she was to be distrusting or stupefied.

“Mine is orange,” he chuckled, going on to pinch his light-blue button-up. “But it’s too bad, because I don’t really look great in orange... Have you ever seen someone in orange underwear?” He made an exaggerated ‘grossed out’ look. “I can tell you, it’s not that pretty...”

A bright, ugly construction zone orange came to mind, hence why Dawn suddenly shared in his acknowledged absurdity. Green was certainly better, which happened to be her favorite.

“Mine...” she paused for a breath or two. “Mine is green.”

“Green, huh? What kind of green?” He was about to place his hand on her shoulder, but a wild and panicked pair of eyes attached to Dawn watched it. He slowly pulled it away.

“...Forest green...I like the woods.”

“Really? Me too. I always used to go on nature walks with a few friends of mine. Katherine doesn’t like to go so much...” Normally his wife probably would have jabbed back, but she kept silent as she watched, trying to keep her cheeks dry.

What caught Katherine by surprise was when Dawn turned her head to her.

“Why not?”

Suddenly in the spotlight, Katherine looked a tad bit on the spot, then quickly made herself composed. Now she was starting to understand her husband’s approach. “Oh...well remember the garden I mentioned? That’s more than enough nature for me. James always likes to go hiking, though.” She still seemed a bit worried for purely selfless reasons, but she eased herself into a smile. “Do you like hiking?”

James and Katherine continued to bounce a conversation ball off of Dawn, pivoting each and every time it was another person’s turn. The whole point was to keep Dawn involved the whole way. Feeding her comprehensible bits of information and dialogue, she finally had something to latch onto.

“Are you feeling better now?” Katherine looked physically reserved, given her hands were sandwiched partly between her thighs. James didn’t need as much insurance to hold himself back.

Dawn nodded her head, taking a refreshing breath. She couldn’t remember the last time she’d had a panic attack like that... To be quite truthful, she was still skittish even now. These strangers still put her in an awkward spot, but maybe spending some uninterrupted time with them had mostly dampened her initial fears. Not to Amazons, but to these two individuals in particular.

“I’m...I’m sorry for panicking in front of you two. It’s only because I--”

“We’d never be mad over something like that!” It was the first time in a bit since Katherine spoke so abrasively, obviously making a move to curb Dawn’s guilt. For the Portal Little

however, she found it startling more than anything else. If she couldn't be on the floor, James' lap was the next best thing...

She seemed to realize the effect she had on Dawn, hence why she toned it down a few notches. "I'm sorry...I just don't want you to feel sad about something you can't help. It's okay if you need to lean on us. That's what we're for."

Her words were kind, but Dawn also didn't like the potential implications of "we" in that statement. It could mean too many things, and the vast majority of them were not favorable.

"Could you please set me down?"

Her request seemed to bother Katherine, which Dawn could admittedly understand. After having the 'bathroom' scene repeat twice today and also end in a similar fashion, she was probably getting the same sense of dejavu from her.

"On the bench," Dawn went on to elaborate.

James complied, and although it wouldn't have been Dawn's first choice, she was sitting right between the two Amazons.

"Now, can you two please tell me what has happened? I promise not to panic...just please answer my questions as I ask them."

Above the girl's head, James silently gestured to his wife to carry out their story.

"Well...after we talked to you on the sidewalk, my husband and I needed to make a quick stop at a store right along the same direction you were walking. When I was near the window inside I saw a... 'larger' Amazon walking in the opposite direction you went. It looked like she was carrying a Little, and I suppose I got a little scared because I thought it was you..."

"So you called the police on my behalf?" Truthfully, it was surprising. In a dimension like this, kindness from an Amazon was the last thing she'd expect. Especially in a situation like that. There had to be a motive. "Why?"

"...Because after I met you..." Her words started to taper off, like she was struggling to say something.

"What? What is it?"

“I...I wanted to adopt...”

Her heart sank. “A...adopt...?” A cold, cold, frigid feeling was festering in her chest. She was about to shuffle to her right, but she then remembered Katherine’s partner in crime was sitting right there. It wasn’t out of the kindness of her heart. She just wanted to stop that other woman from getting what she figured was rightfully hers. Dawn.

It was a good question why Dawn didn’t run right then. Maybe for the sake of morbid curiosity she waited for the woman to say it with diction.

“I...I wanted to adopt your friend.” Then the real twist came.

Dawn, incredulous, blinked. “My-my friend?” She hadn’t expected that to follow.

Katherine slightly twiddled her thumbs, nodding. “Please don’t think I was using you to get to her! I promise that wasn’t my intention.”

“What friend?” No one came to mind. She was a total loner on this trip. Her lack of knowing anyone’s name in her tour group was a testament to that. Except for Stacy, but Dawn figured adopting other Amazons wasn’t as hot of a commodity.

“When we were walking behind your tour group we saw her. She was the one with brown hair and jeans?”

Oh.

That one.

Heather.

She probably wasn’t cutting her a fair break, considering that a Little in the face of Amazonian adversity is equated to shooting a water gun at the sun. Still, she without a single word spoken, ran. Of all people now that she thought about it, wouldn’t Heather have been the one to alert the police? Then again, she probably did tell Stacy, their tour guide, but she waved it off as another ‘adoption’. There were too many unknown variables, but to say Dawn was annoyed with Heather was somewhat of an understatement. And to add insult to injury, she was rescued by an Amazon because she was an *accessory* to her? A middleman to her schemes? Regardless, there was some solace in knowing she wasn’t on this woman’s radar. Not directly, at least.

“If it’s who I think you’re talking about, it’s Heather...” Part of her figured information such as a name was too valuable to reveal, but the simplicity in just a name and current animosity harbored towards the woman swayed her differently...

“Heather? Is that her name?” Katherine smiled. “I was hoping we could go and see her?”

“Wait.” Dawn dodged the question. “You still haven’t told me the full story. How did the police take me from her? What did you tell them? No offense, but doesn’t everyone here turn a blind eye to kidnappings like that?”

“Well...adoptions like that aren’t terribly uncommon...” And as she pondered, Dawn cringed at her substitution for the word *Adoption*. She was starting to remind her of Stacy. “I told them that you were already my Little.”

“You told them I was your Little?” It took her a second to piece things together. “As in, you’d already kidnapped me?”

“...I told them you’d already been adopted by us.” Maybe on some level Dawn’s use of the word ‘kidnapping’ bothered her too. They both figured the other’s terminology inappropriate.

“And they believed you? Just like that?” How fickle was the law here?

“Well, it took a little more convincing than just that,” she chuckled, as if Dawn were the silly one. In her defense, this was her first time dealing with an Amazon kidnapping a Little. Firsthand. “We explained that you were recently adopted,” Dawn didn’t have the energy to keep correcting her. She was likely going to keep saying it, so she saw little point in dulling the mood every time she’d interrupt to set things her way.

Then ever so nonchalantly, she added, “I said you fell asleep after I had breastfed you at one of the nearby parks, then all that milk had made you sleepy, so I let you take a nap on the grass.” She looked like the fabricated story tickled her more than it should have, as she smiled. “I turned away for a few minutes because James had called me, and when I turned back...” She let her silence finish it off with a slight frown, as if it’d actually happened.

Dawn, meanwhile was dumbfounded. She didn’t know whether to compliment the woman’s craftiness or question if that breastfeeding tidbit was an actual thing here. Breastfeeding Littles? Dawn knew there was a lot of strange things in this dimension, but surely that wasn’t one of them...

“Any...anything else?”

“When we did catch up to her, the woman tried to run, so that only looked better for us, I suppose. They checked her diaper bag and found your old pair of undies.” It was a reminder that left Dawn blushing, suddenly now trying to cover her white and decorated pull-up with her hands. She’d almost forgotten what with everything happening around her. Now she was sure she’d never forget... She wanted panties back badly.

“I knew you weren’t wearing pull-ups when we first met, so I guessed it was something a little thinner,” she chuckled. “We were lucky when they found those torn panties!” Luck was an awfully strange way of putting it, considering they were one of Dawn’s extremely limited stocks of underwear. You only packed so much underwear for a week’s trip, and by the last day of it, of course you’d be on short supply. And that was another urgent reminder. *Home*. She needed to get back to the group. Where they were right now was total and helpless guesswork. The best she could do was meet them at the hotel.

“But why didn’t you accuse her of drugging me if you knew she did?” What leverage was there in not doing it?

“We couldn’t be positive, so we went with what’d make us seem the most like genuine parents. That, and if we did and they found out you were given naughty medicine,” naughty medicine? Was that her ‘age-appropriate’ slang for drugs? “This could have turned into something much more...messy.” For once Dawn didn’t need any elaboration.

Even if the laws here were quite twisted, it didn’t change that they were likely white-collared enough to take issue with illegal drug usage, And if Littles truly were equated to children here, that’d be a case of downright abuse. It’d become a full-blown case that’d take more than just a single day to solve, and a single day was all Dawn had left here. Any more than that, then there would be... Stacy’s voice echoed in her head. *Complications*.

So the more Dawn was spoon-fed information, it was all finally starting to come together. Under the guise of another Amazon’s Little, she’d somehow narrowly escaped the clutches of a very real adoption...

“They brought us all into the station, but they mainly wanted us to stay until you woke up. Just so they knew you were okay. Which you are!” she chipperly added.

“Katherine has been keeping you safe ever since they took you from that woman, you know.” James finally spoke, adding to his wife’s credit.

“...You did?” Dawn looked back to her. Words came in many forms and different interpretations, if their conversations thus far were proof of that, but hopefully ‘safe’ was one of the more universal ones.

“I was relieved to find you were okay, but I *was* scared that you were passed out... There was no doubt in my mind that you’d be alright, but that still doesn’t mean I felt good about it.” For a brief moment she looked to be reliving her past fears, then was overcome with relief to remember that it was only the past.

Dawn maneuvered her bottom a little bit, though a sore feeling came from her butt.

“Ow...” quietly, Dawn remarked as she rubbed her side.

“What’s wrong? Are you okay?” Forgetting the boundaries they’d previously established, Katherine’s hand was right by Dawn’s to inspect the area.

“It’s nothing,” Dawn was quick to hold her off. “I just feel a little sore, I guess.”

“Are you sure?” James spoke with some concern as well. “I’m sure Katherine has made it clear, but don’t hesitate to let us know if something’s wrong. You were just taken by a stranger, after all...” Need she be reminded.

“James,” Katherine curtly interjected herself. “Could we please stick to something more appropriate?”

It wouldn’t have been Dawn’s way of dismissing it, but she wasn’t keen on reliving her recent trauma either. Maybe Katherine’s mindfulness wasn’t totally terrible...

Though, both of her bum cheeks were sore. She could feel it. A lightbulb finally buzzed inside her head. That must’ve been where the drug had been injected. She did recall a pinch on her butt right before she fell asleep... Looking to keep the attention off her ass though, she didn’t speak on it. Considering it had received more than enough treatment from strangers for one lifetime, Dawn was willing to endure the pain.

“So...now what?” Dawn knew what she wanted to happen, but she was also trying to probe them for what they think might come next. It couldn’t be this easy, right? Were they just going to let her go? Like that?

“Katherine and I had talked it over earlier, and we planned to take you back to wherever you were staying from the start.”

“Re...really?” Dawn looked at James, obviously skeptically. Not that she didn’t recognize their kindness, but finding a distinction between evil Amazons and good ones was something fairly new to her. She wanted to say there was something she couldn’t put her finger on; something fishy about the two, but she couldn’t. At best she might find fault in the condescending way Katherine spoke to her, but Dawn couldn’t help but feel the Amazonian stereotype excused her behavior, though it was no less unacceptable in her book.

“Unless you had anywhere else in mind? Though, I think Kath and I would prefer you went somewhere safe from Amazons...”

“N-no!” Dawn quickly stammered. “The hotel is fine, really. Quite frankly, I already want to go home. This wasn’t how I planned to spend my last day... And I think I’m ready to get out of this stupid pull-up...” She was definitely embarrassed, that hadn’t changed. She hoped that by joking about it some of the goosebumps and shyness might fade away, but Katherine’s varying reaction upset that plan altogether.

“Why?” Katherine tilted her head a little, being as bold enough as to cup the front of Dawn’s underwear. “Are they not comfy?”

“H-hey!” Dawn spat in a flustered voice, chasing her hand off. She had just pressed it enough for Dawn to feel the internal padding press closer to her skin. It was soft, yes, but the whole package was mortifying. It was an absolute given that they would be changed.

“I’m looking to get back into normal panties. I don’t exactly wear these things on the regular...” She didn’t even know if she was trying to make jokes or genuine complaints anymore. Regardless of what they were, they often tended to go right over Jame’s and Katherine’s heads, or even under them, considering how short Dawn was in comparison. Again, the Common Little’s plight...

“They’re not so bad, are they?” Katherine kept her hands to herself this time, but once again she just seemed not to get it. She was clearly a lost cause, though, just like on the sidewalk. One to choose her battles, Dawn looked over to James.

“Do you think the same thing? What’s wrong with me wanting to wear panties?” Maybe this would treat her to some invaluable insight on the Amazon psyche...

“Huh?” James raised a brow. “Well...maybe, as long as you can handle it.”

Invaluable was a stretch.

How he didn’t outright support her was the worst part. He merely dove for the hypothetical that may or may not apply to Dawn.

“All we mean is that this way you have some extra protection incase you don’t make it!” Katherine spoke encouragingly, but she was unknowingly preaching to the wrong choir. Didn’t she say that they *saw* her torn up panties? She wasn’t crazy, right? They *did* see that she wore adult underwear at some point?

“Can...” she wiped her face with her hand, maybe hoping some of that disbelief of hers would come off of it. “Can you take me to my hotel now?”

“That sounds like something we can do.” James confidently spoke. “We’re off the hook, but we should at least see the front desk to let them know we’re leaving. They were concerned about you, after all.”

It was a relief to hear that they were cutting to the chase, but it was a sigh from Dawn nevertheless, considering she had to walk around in such embarrassing clothing. Why she wasn’t curled up in a ball right now was beyond her. She hated to say it, but maybe she’d become somewhat desensitised to the look at least around James and Katherine... No, she hadn’t. Her cheeks still felt warm, now that she called attention to it.

Dawn slipped forward across the sleek cushion and was just about to hit the ground, but she was whisked into the air before that was even possible.

“Whoopsies!” Katherine chuckled, being the culprit who had snatched her. “Good catch on my part, huh?”

Dawn tried to kick her annoyance to the side just to make way for her confusion. “Why did you pick me up?”

“Because you’re still barefoot, sweetheart. If we carry you, we’ll know those little toesies won’t be touching anything sharp or dirty,” she went on to overstep her bounds by scurrying her fingers along the bottom of Dawn’s foot, forcing involuntary giggles out of her mouth as she tried to silence herself.

“S-s-hahaha! Stop! Please!” Her ticklish outbursts were at odds with her much more composed self, but she did win out in the end, mainly because Katherine had ceased the tickles.

“Dawn, we just think it’d be safer for you to be carried. That way we can keep you close, move fast, and avoid walking on the ground too much. Clean or not, the city isn’t a great place for naked feet.” James, the voice of reason, or at least someone who knew how to speak to Dawn like a person older than a toddler, explained. “Consider it our compromise for being your chauffeur? ”

Already fastened by Katherine’s arms, leaning into her admittedly soft arm and chest, she finally conceded. On some level it made sense, but she didn’t like how it objectively looked.

“Can I at least have something to cover my underwear?” Another hot-button issue, Dawn was not looking to give anyone else a view of her padded posterior. She’d already started to get used to the feeling of disposable underwear around her waist, and she wasn’t liking it.

“Sorry, hon,” James took the lead once more. “We don’t have any spare clothes on us, especially that are Little-sized.”

“Wait, but what about my jeans? You said they found my panties in the bag, right?” Didn’t the woman put her pants there, too?

“Mmm... I don’t think so.” Katherine seemed to recall. “Other than the grownup underwear, all there was was diapers, pull-ups and changing supplies. Even if we somehow missed it, the police have it all locked up behind evidence now.”

Glumly, Dawn accepted her fate.

“Besides, don’t feel so embarrassed,” Katherine hoisted Dawn once more just to solidify her hold, cupping her hands underneath her thighs, giving the outside world an unobstructed view of her padded butt. “You look cute!”

Cute, was *not* what Dawn wanted to be right now. She was shopping for some more mature terms such as dignified and independent. A word like that in tune with a pull-up was far from ideal. She shuffled uncomfortably when Katherine's finger traced the leg bands to her underwear.

"Just making sure it's nice and snug," she smiled. "I think we can both agree a nakie Little is worse than a diapered one?"

Highly debatable.

"Alrighty, you two ready to get a move on?" James checked his phone for a moment, then quickly turned his attention back to them.

Dawn was able to keep it together as they moved down the hall, though at the moment's notice of a foreign face, she would nuzzle her face into the crook of Katherine's shoulder, just to avoid the visual confrontation. She didn't have the heart for strangers to see her in pull-ups. Katherine seemed to be catching on, and in a motherly fashion she'd continue to stroke Dawn's back. Weird, awkward, and unsettling, but not totally unwelcome...

"Attention, recipient no.36, you are now being called for your adoption appointment." A synthetic human voice spoke over a speaker, and Dawn grew wide-eyed. It probably wasn't for her, but irrational fears dictated she at least feel threatened. Forgetting her embarrassment, she quickly looked around them, seeing they'd reached the lobby. And then her eyes fell on it.

A large, decorated sign hung over a countertop which occupied a corner of the room, curving from one wall to the adjacent other. It read: "ADOPTION CENTER." Two Amazonian nurses were stationed behind it, all smiles as they waited to bring misfortune unto the next struggling soul.

Dawn slowly turned to the other side where an array of seats were set up, half-filled and half-empty. It was something straight from a nightmare. Amazonian men and women, either in pairs, female singles, or even the rare individual male, all seemed to sit with an unmistakable enthusiasm plastered on their faces. The excitement was unbridled, and it only spoke to Dawn's horror as she saw the tarnished, broken and beaten Littles which in some form sat beside them or in their laps.

Puffy eyes, red faces, quivering lips, or downright blubbering, countless Littles of Dawn's equal stature all lay victim to the Amazons they sat closest to. Some had already been visually tortured, as they were dressed in bright, neon colors which accentuated the padded bulges they helplessly tried to hide behind their clothes. A few girls donned skirts that cleverly stopped just short of the

full diaper's length, meaning Dawn like many others could see a sizeable chunk of white peeking from between her legs. It was quite shocking to realize that one of those supposed girls was actually a male...

Others weren't as unfortunate, but if they were there to begin with, the immediate moment didn't matter much. They were all headed for the same fate, after all. Some Littles looked to be fresh out of work; dressed in business attire or laboring clothes. Dawn could only imagine the horror, or very well relive it. They'd likely just finished clocking out and were headed home, only to be helplessly grabbed as soon as their first foot set out the door. There was one person that albeit looking quite crestfallen, was mostly normal. All except for the glaring, dark stain on the front of their pants. A quite smug female Amazon was sitting next to him. She could only imagine what had occurred between them...

"You people put a goddamn adoption center in your police station?" Dawn quietly whispered, so not one of the lingering Amazons might try and take up a second charge...

Katherine seemed a bit bothered when Dawn spoke, though. Did she really find her disbelief that strange?

"Dawn, sweetie, could you please not use that kind of language?" She nearly became wide-eyed, hearing that. Here they were, staring at an institutionalized instance of legal slavery, and Katherine was more concerned about what came out of Dawn's mouth?

Her face was mostly blank, namely because she couldn't think of anything other than a poker face to keep her emotions in check. After a deep sigh, she said it again, only with a filtered tongue this time. "Why does a police station have an adoption center in it?"

"Oh, they're not as uncommon as you think," she chuckled. Did she not understand Dawn's horror to see something like this? "They have them in a lot of public service buildings. Police stations, firehouses, hospitals, postal centers, and some are standalone, even."

Unbelievable. So all you needed to do was grab the nearest Little within five feet and walk an extra ten to your nearest adoption center? The roots ran much deeper than Dawn had anticipated, considering the tour she'd been on had oddly enough avoided sights like these. Maybe because they knew it'd scare so many people off the tour... Considering how Stacy spoke, they were much more interested in a voluntary enslavement from its victims.

Just being near the spectacle sent a whole new wave of jitters through the girl. Though, she was just about ready to hyperventilate again when they walked towards the desk.

“No, you can’t, you tricked me, didn’t you?!” She desperately clutched Katherine’s shirt, already breathing quickly.

“No, no, Dawn, sweetie, I promise, you’re okay!” Katherine kept trying to shush her, but Dawn wasn’t having any of it. How could this not be what it looked like? Rather than making for the exit, they were instead taking a detour to the adoption center? “James just needs to sign us out, okay? See?” She kept trying to coax Dawn out of her shell, who was busy testing the “out of sight, out of mind,” mantra, but the danger felt no less imminent.

“Please, sweetheart,” Katherine continued to whisper in Dawn’s ear. James looked over his shoulder, concerned, but seemed a bit more at ease as he saw his wife set out to work. “We’ve only kept your best interest at heart this whole time, and that hasn’t changed. Just trust us, okay? See? James is just signing us out!”

It took Dawn a second to realize she was being bounced the ever slightest, the kind of reassurance she wasn’t looking for. She did follow Katherine’s finger though, and her story did seem to match James’ actions, as he handled a pen and paper on the desk.

“Whenever it’s a Little related issue, you always sign out through there at the station. Whether you’ve been adopted or not.” Katherine then called over to her husband. “James, is it okay if we go wait in the car, now? I think Dawn is feeling a bit uncomfortable here...” That was an understatement, and if it didn’t delay them any further, Dawn would’ve made it explicitly clear she *was* downright uncomfortable. With each passing moment, she couldn’t wait to get back to Earth...

James and the nurse had exchanged a few words, both too far and too quiet for Dawn to pick up on. Both turned their heads to Katherine and Dawn. James gave them the typical thumbs up, whilst the nurse flashed a toothy smile, waving her hand. Dawn had a feeling who it was intended for, and she didn’t like it one bit...

“Okay, off to the car!” As if to be happy in Dawn’s stead, Katherine cheered as she continued to bounce her charge while they walked outside. The sliding doors let them through, and the pair were enveloped in a midday sunlight.

“How long has it been since I passed out?” Dawn rubbed her eyes, trying to adjust to the sunlight.

“Maybe a good two hours, I think? Was your nap good, at least?”

“I wouldn’t call it a nap...” Especially when you’re forced out of your waking state. She didn’t even dream. It was essentially a blackout. She’d lost time and had nothing to show for it. To her, the entire ordeal maybe lasted fifteen minutes at most. As soon as she fell asleep she seemingly woke up right after in Katherine’s arms. She couldn’t help but notice the world around her kept rising and falling. “Could you please stop bouncing me?”

“Did it at least help you calm down?” She wasn’t speaking mockingly. Condescending, but Dawn felt that would be a terrible habit of hers she’d likely never curb. Her concern was genuine, but Dawn didn’t want to help her curate her soothing tactics, lest she try and use them on the girl later down the line.

“Can we please get in the car now?”