

44 - Business As Usual

Self-built success and self-made achievements always felt fulfilling. Hard work and luck that put you so high off the ground in such a lavish and spacious place was always something that could make a person grin. Similarly, being at the peak of performance and power also meant getting to dictate yourself and everything below, hence why Joyce wasn't in the office today.

Given recent... events and developments, the start of the week today was a pseudo-prolonged weekend with most of her work getting done from home. A work from home day was perfect in avoiding some of the personal politics, ironically. Maybe it was bad to say, but admittedly, Joyce may have been avoiding certain people that would remain anonymous... Coincidentally, she hadn't been speaking with her secretary very much that day. But that was naturally a coincidence, of course.

Success wasn't without its trials and tribulations, however. While the work in the grand scheme was fun, and of course the expensive treatments and influx of wealth did make it all worthwhile, it didn't change the struggles that came with being so intimate with her work.

Sheila may have managed and framed her day, but setting the groundwork was only half the battle. Reports, writings and documents were always going by Joyce like a revolving door. There was always the option of deferring it to someone else, yet that meant surrendering the responsibility and control her position was supposed to have.

In other words, the work could be stressful, but it was *her* work and no one else's. Like many things, lately, there were just things she wouldn't let anyone else have. Pleasantly selfish by her nature, Joyce exhaled as the home office chair rolled back against the shelf.

"Just a minute past noon o' clock..." Joyce muttered to herself, glancing at the clock. And like that, a minute more her break would be extending by. And with that it was time for lunch, and time for checking in on things...! Watering the plants, dusting the shelves...checking the diapers...

She made sure to put on a dramatic reveal when she bobbed her head out from the corner, just to surprise Emily laying on the couch. But a slight problem with that, being that Emily wasn't there.

Tucking her mouth behind her cheek, Joyce puffed as she walked around, trying to pin down the whereabouts of her charge.

“Where did she toddle off to?” Mommy muttered under her breath, peeking at the empty kitchen, then double backing to the nursery. The guest room? Just before she was about to start using her words, only on the third trip around the apartment did something seem out of place. A particular door was closed. One that usually stayed open, because there was enough trust by now to keep it that way when diapers were in use...

She didn't knock, nor did she call. After all, what was there to hide? Twisting the unlocked knob, Joyce walked into the bathroom, immediately noticing that the light was on.

And before she could notice—

“J-Joyce?! Why didn't you knock?” a frightened little girl cried from the corner.

And rather than answer a silly question like that, Joyce turned her head to face her and said, “Emmy? What are you doing in here?”

Poor Emily, clearly having thought she had all the time in the world to do what needed to be done, was somewhat stealthily squatting beside the toilet, hanging on to the closed lid with her other arm hooked around Pip.

“J-just...” her gaze dropped to the surface of the toilet. “Ch...checking on stuff...”

Checking on things.

Emily, Joyce's sweet, cute, dependent little girl, snug in a damp diaper, had miraculously decided she wanted to play pretend and be the plumber that was messing with their toilet. Well, from the heated look on her face, Joyce tried to hide her bemused smile, barely standing from cuteness overload. Poor Emily. She could sneeze and Joyce would be squealing.

“Uh-huh...?” Joyce nodded, and it was a silent understanding that the little girl had been found out, but it didn't stop her from trying. “Sweetie, you *know* you shouldn't be playing around the grownup potty?”

Urgh. *Grownup potty.* It hit Emily like a truck and blossomed butterflies in her stomach. The way she said it so sweetly and syrupy, as if the girl couldn't put mature thoughts together whatsoever...!

Her knees were shaking from trying to support herself physically, mentally, and emotionally. The regret felt instant from being caught like a deer in headlights. What gives? She planned for this!

Joyce was supposed to be working now, wasn't she? Or...shoot! How much time had gone by? Wasn't she in the clear? Crap!

"Come on," Joyce softly beckoned, holding out a hand, and weakly, Emily took it without much explanation. And on the way out Joyce scolded, "Emmy, sweetheart, you're only allowed in the bathroom when Mommy is too, understood?"

"...Yes..."

"That's when we brush your teeth or it's bath time," she continued, just because she loved to hear the sound of her own authority. Correction, she loved to see Emily squirm from the pressure.

Emily nodded, trying to reconsider her plans as well as maybe realize she was in the clear? Sure, her plan was foiled and she'd been "caught," but apparently Joyce hadn't *actually* figured out what she was trying to do, thank God... That would've been definitely embarrassing. She dared not smirk, not even when standing directly behind Joyce. Somehow she had eyes in the back of her head. Weird, but Mommy was omnipotent in the strangest of ways. Enough to make Emily fearful of challenging her strength. Better to be right alongside it than on the receiving end...

So cutting her losses, Emily sighed as she resigned to live with the discomfort in her tummy for a little longer. After Joyce went back to work she'd try again...

"Sorry, Mommy..." Emily muttered an apology, and a pleasant smile grew on her partner.

"It's okay, honey, but no more playing in the bathroom, alright?" Maybe locking it again could be a good measure... Or even better, what about just a lock for the toilet? Did they make that sort of thing? Oh, the ideas...!

"Uh huh..."

"Good. Now, is somebody ready for lunch?"

The perks to having your master chef girlfriend working from home.

"Yep!"

"That's what I like to hear!" Joyce beamed on their way to the kitchen. A gushy, squirmy Emily was always nice, but maybe a giggly happy one was just a *teensy* bit better? Another perk to working from home was the perfect excuse to keep Emily in diapers all day. After all, if her caretaker was going to be around, what reason was there not to?

At first Emily was hesitant, primarily out of selflessness for interfering with Joyce's work. Though, all it took was a little bit of insistence, reasoning and *possibly* sending her to bed in a diaper already to get the ball rolling.

Having a big baby in the house was hardly an inconvenience to her work, come to find out. Emily was independent and (usually) responsible enough to be far from anything high maintenance, unless Joyce wanted her to be, and it always made for the perfect excuse to drift from her work just to peek inside her girlfriend's cute pampers. Though, maybe the lack of constant supervision was getting Emily in places she shouldn't be...

"What were we thinking for food, huh?" Joyce asked while she looked for plates. "We can do...salad? Fruit? Sandwiches?" At least from the office ordering food was more her speed, but it felt a bit unfair to expect her imaginary toddler to read from a long and complicated lunch menu...

"Do we have peanut butter?" Emily asked, and Joyce chuckled.

"Yes, we do. And jelly," she connected the dots. "How about that and some bananas?"

"Yeah!" Emily readily agreed. PB&J paired with bananas? What a wonderful combination that sounded like...!

"Then that is exactly what my little princess shall get~!" Joyce intoned right before smothering her girlfriend's lips. "I think I may just want *you* for lunch!" she teased and Emily tugged away with a bashful grin. And Emily didn't need to ask, but it went without saying that her meal would be going with the finest sippy cup of juice, curated and aged within the perfect window of four days since being purchased at the local grocery store. And Joyce thought her wine was good...

"Oh, baby," Joyce called like it was an afterthought, but it wasn't. It was something she'd been dying to say since she spotted her little deviant misbehaving by the toilet. "Go poopy now so I can change you before I put you in your high chair, okay?"

From Emily's perspective, it was just another moment of abrupt and horrible timing that her mommy girlfriend always seemed to nail. No precursor or sign that she was going to talk about anything so personal so openly and unashamedly.

"H-huh...?"

And Joyce, without skipping a beat, plainly repeated, “Go potty so I can change you? You don’t wanna sit down in a messy diaper, honey.” There would certainly be some waterworks to go with the telltale smell.

She knew?! Emily’s worried expression was starting to show, and it became clear she knew exactly what she was seeing from the start. Emily wasn’t actually playing in the bathroom, would you believe it. Instead, she was doing the best she could to abide Joyce’s very demanding diaper rules...

A small reason she never voiced openly about today being a baby day was the fact that she had yet to make a...movement since early yesterday. If she was stuck in diapers all day, there was hardly a chance in hell she’d actually get to use the toilet...! But when Joyce caught her, she figured it out in seconds. Holding Pip, just like she was trained to, Emily was trying to give herself all the stimulus she needed to mess herself. And it would’ve worked too, had it not been for that meddling Mommy...!

So Emily’s muscles tightened as she didn’t know how to look or respond. She’d been found out and was hardly prepared for the brunt of it. And the entire time her mommy was watching her. Calmly and expectant.

And quivering from Emily’s mouth, she mumbled, “I...I don’t need to—”

“--Yes, you do need to go potty,” Joyce finished for her, “and I don’t like you worrying about that stuff, baby. Is that what you were trying to do in the bathroom earlier?” Everyone knew it, Joyce just wanted a confession.

Out came the silence of Emily’s embarrassment. So yes, she was answering ‘yes’ to that question.

“Sweetie,” Joyce came over, grabbing her shoulders. “It’s *nothing* to be embarrassed about, okay?”

“C...can I at least do it in the—”

“--No,” Joyce jumped in yet again. “It’s perfectly fine, Emily,” she soothed with a hand through her hair. “I’m not gonna watch and I’m not gonna make a big deal out of it, because it’s nothing special? This is *normal*, okay?” No different from when she wet her diaper. Maybe it was a little cruel to admit, but Joyce was sort of waiting to force another moment like this... Being the one responsible for changing her diapers, of course it didn’t go unnoticed that they had a grand total of about one, maybe two number two’s they’ve had to deal with in a fast-growing portfolio of

many changes. From a purely professional standpoint, it was a detriment to her diaper training and all the work they'd put into her bringing pip to the potty...

So to capitalize and exploit those efforts, Joyce forced her down into a squat, crouching with her the whole way as gravity itself pushed the flustered girl to the floor.

"You just do what you need to do and we'll change you right after, okay?" Joyce rubbed her head before standing back up. "Do you want your paci?"

Maybe a little...wait--! "N-no..." and while she said it, what had to be done still wasn't feeling quite real.

It was more a situation of respecting Emily's outward wishes than reaching deeper for what she *knew* her little girl was feeling on the inside. Sometimes, and only in extremely controlled amounts of moderation, it was deemed necessary to leave Emmy to her devices.

Even little girls sometimes need to be a little stubborn...

"Okay," Joyce smiled like nothing was amiss and no diaper was about to be filled. "Once you're done you can have changeies," and with not another word spoken, she pivoted over to the counter and started preparing lunch.

Emily quietly watched, still in her squatting position, trying to catch even a glimpse of Joyce watching her. She was, but she wasn't. In her peripherals? Probably. But staring directly at her? None whatsoever. She was busy doing her motherly duties, minding her own business as much as she needed to. Emily was a background decoration, one about to make quite the disruption that was "normal." It was expected of her. Things got easier with time, but this hardly felt like one of those things that really got broken in.

There simply wasn't getting any used to this sort of thing...!

And maybe it was Joyce's primal parts, but her ear may have twitched once she heard the gentle grunt. She dared not to look, though. Not after her little speech. Problems only got as big as they did or were even considered one purely based on perception. Problems were a construct born from inconvenience. But who decided what was and wasn't an inconvenience? Messing a diaper surely wasn't one of those things, and Joyce would be sure to hammer that point home quite hard.

It was normal. The day-to-day. Dirty diapers came and went just like the wet ones; just like the tantrums, the timeouts, the misbehavior, the cuddles, the coos, and so much more.

Embarrassment was a trained emotion, and just like her bathroom habits, all her little girl needed was an extensive course in undoing all those yucky things that kept her chained down. So while Joyce didn't watch, she certainly listened as her little treasure grunted like the booming drums of liberation. The boom-booms that'd be liberated from her... Good thing she was fully turned away to grin at herself for thinking of that one.

And Emily teared up as her hands found the floor, pushing uncomfortably as Pip sat on her hands. It felt just as hard the first time, but maybe because it's been so long since then. Christ, did it *actually* get easier if she kept doing this? W-wait, why would she even *want* to do it? She didn't, but it was a two-way crash both parties were speeding to each other. If Emily didn't make the decision to do it herself, Joyce certainly would like she had just now.

It was ironic, thinking that Emily was allowed to do her bathroom business now anywhere *but* the bathroom. As Joyce liked to ever so eloquently put it, "You always have your bathroom!" and she'd chuckle like it was the cutest thing for Emily to ever disillusion herself into thinking otherwise. Maybe it was a little condescending, but it was a complement for the genuine and tender affection she did always get. Making a mess like this was certainly one of the biggest lows of being a baby, but if this was as bad as it got...? In exchange for all the cuddles, the gifts, the affection and love...?After all, if it was something bad or un-fun, Joyce did always seem to be the one cleaning it up...

Just like the last time, her muscles finally gave and the stress and tension slipped the moment her bowels did. It was another all to once performance that left her panting, tired and weary. The same self-disgust, the same fear from sitting on her bottom. Anything but that. And the smell...!

But no words needed to be said when Joyce already had her on her feet, humming and shushing her all the way to the nursery. After a tender rub on the far shoulder Emily earned her slow, waddling self a kiss on the cheek.

"So proud of you...!"

That made one of them.

"Okay...I'm gonna be a bit longer, but I'll be out regularly to check on you, okay?" Joyce hung a hand on the doorway to her office, unfortunately having to return at the fast approaching end of her break. "If you need anything, just come in and ask." Imagine that; asking to be excused from a meeting because her daughter needed some juice or a diaper change? Agh...! If only Emily were selfish enough!

“Okay...uhm...I’m all set, I think...” Emily thought to herself, now of a much more stable mind, what with a dry diaper on her hips. She’d been prepped for the long haul. Her tummy was content with peanut butter, jelly, juice, bread and bananas, and she was armed to the teeth with her mochi friend and a sippy cup full of juice. The warfront was harsh, but she was built to survive.

“Good,” Joyce nodded, rubbing her head. “Don’t forget you have all those toys in your nursery, by the way? Go play with those if you get bored.” After all, being a baby for the day and having Joyce home meant her weekday chore privileges had been revoked. What little girl would be trusted with the vacuum cleaner?

“I know...” Emily nodded simply, squeezing Pip. It was sort of a bad look to be caught with other stuffed animals... In the time she had gotten to know her friend, Pip was sort of like Joyce; he didn’t like Emily cheating on him with other stuffed friends. How did she know? Intuition, or feeling. Probably. Joyce got him for her, after all, so clearly he must take after her girlfriend? At least Mr. Bear was an exception.

“Oh, but that reminds me!” she said as she glanced at her phone. “You’re getting one of your big girl privileges today.”

Come again? Emily blinked, clearly taken aback by the B-G word, especially in the same sentence as anything to imply it was being reinstated...! No more parental lock on the computer? Being allowed to climb on chairs to reach the high cabinets? Ice cream?!

“Use your phone to give Amy a call about that offer, okay?”

Instant disappointment. Her expectations weren’t very high, considering she wasn’t allowed to climb things, still, but somehow Joyce managed to go even lower than that.

“Blegh,” Joyce mimicked the expression on Emily’s face, “Yup, I know, Mommy’s a meanie, but you need to call her. Just a little chat, okay?”

“But...what if...?” Emily tried to excuse herself, then shrugged her shoulders, like that all somehow made up a justified reason. “I dunno...?”

“Mm,” Joyce pressed her lips, as if to digest the nonexistent thought. “Emily, you can call her now, or we’ll do it together once I’m done with work.” Was that an ultimatum? Aside from her tone, that didn’t sound so bad, actually? “And if I have to do it...” Wait, maybe not. “I’m going

to start by apologizing for how long it took to call her,” she warned. “I’ll let her know that you were too busy napping in your crib, playing in the bathroom and eating your lunch to call?”

“Don’t!” Emily commanded in the best big girl voice she could muster, but her diaper crinkled at just the wrong time.

“And I won’t,” Joyce booped her on the nose, “*If* I hear that you did it yourself?” And just in case if Emily’s feelings were convincing her to misbehave and possibly “pretend” that she did what she most certainly did not, there was always texting Amy herself to confirm. “You’re my good girl, Emily,” she kissed her one final time on the forehead, “so go and show me how good you can be.”

With a lackluster response from Emily, Joyce left it at that as she disappeared into her office. And now with a sucky feeling that didn’t involve a pacifier, Emily sulked back into the living room. She found her phone on the stupid coffee table in front of the stupid couch, watching the stupid TV play some stupid show.

Why was she even anxious, or dragging her feet? What was stopping her? Was it the lack of officiality? Was it because Amy knew what they were like now, or that diapers were a permanent association for her now? So many layers and so many possible reasons; so many things that Emily was just assuming. She didn’t know what Amy thought and she didn’t know what this offer even was...

But the worst of it? Sitting on the couch, just in a diaper and T-shirt, told to go play pretend by Mommy and make a big and important business call. She sighed, sinking her chin into her hands. Playing make believe was hardly a pastime in itself, and she was being told to get in the mood for it?

Stupid. So stupid. She rose from the couch, fingering the screen on her phone as she scanned the contacts. Sure enough, at the top there she was. Amy. Though it wasn’t Emily who put her there. She sighed again.

What’s the point in having a stupid password on your phone if your girlfriend knows it?

Joyce got to know all the passwords... Emily didn’t.

After a swig of her afternoon juice, a small thought occurred to Emily; some way to at least make the pain go down a bit easier. Ceremoniously dropping her phone on the couch, she half-vaulted over the back of the couch and padded her feet down the hall for the nursery.

“You’re...!” she grunted, grabbing, tugging and dragging, “Coming with...me!” She would never be so rude as to call *anyone* fat...but...some could certainly be fluffy... For example, if your hips were wide enough to stop you from getting through a doorway, at least for her furry friend, it was probably a cause for concern.

Once she made the swap from carpet to hardwood floor, things were a bit easier. Joyce was busy doing adult stuff, so that meant Emily had free reign (not really) of the house. She situated her newest staff member right by the corner where her view of the TV was unobstructed and next to the terrace doors.

She crinkled over to the couch, retrieving all her office supplies (sippy cup and phone) and made a daring trust fall into the corner, being caught by her very own personal secretary. One that probably wouldn’t go gabbing to others about her diapers...

Now she was starting to understand the appeal of being her own boss. No wonder Joyce liked this stuff. Big office? Pampered by a secretary? Heck, Joyce probably didn’t even do anything important! She probably just signed her name in places and told other people to do other stuff. If she didn’t know any better, Joyce probably had her own giant stuffed bear in her office...! Though, she *probably* didn’t sit in Sheila’s lap, which occurred to Emily as she sat in her bear’s.

“Mmm... Mr. Bear?” she asked aloud, squeezing his soft, plump and stubby leg. “Hold my calls. I have an errand to run!” she leapt from her secretary’s cushy body and scampered off back down the hall. And right as she was about to get into the bedroom, a voice called from the nearby office,

“Emily? Are we behaving?”

“Yes...!” she droned back. Her hands hung on the doorframe, waiting for an answer, but nothing came. Good enough.

Goodness, who’s idea was it to let a competing company stay in the same building? A very fair point that a fanatical Emily wondered as she rummaged through the closet, smuggling assets from her enemy.

Joyce told her to make a big girl call about work, so obviously that meant dressing the part, didn’t it? Well, unfortunately due to recent wardrobe changes, Emily’s other set of attire didn’t exactly accommodate her newly instated bathroom needs, hence why she simply needed bigger clothes.

It was always easy to run away with the fun and carefree thoughts the moment they piqued in her mind. Don't think too hard and just go with the flow. That's what Joyce always told her to do, right?

So, it only felt right as she went back and forth from closet to dresser, grabbing what suited her fine business tastes, especially when it came to ogling Joyce's underwear.

It was really impressive, actually!

"Whoa..." Emily giggled, pulling the loose panties up over her diaper. Not even the slight bulk on her front or behind could make up the difference in the width of Joyce's hips. Her body was too good, it simply wasn't fair. Thankfully there was the compromise though of Emily tucking the underwear partially into her diaper, just to get it to stay.

What came next? Oversized pantyhose, of course. She had to roll them up a little bit and continue using her diaper like a pocket, but it worked and that's what mattered.

Next she ditched her boring shirt and went for the bright and white work blouse that'd really make her look good! Though...while it did run well down over her diaper, she really did look great from the waist up! As...long as she slightly rolled up the sleeves and held the cuffs.

Joyce was pretty by default, but obviously she put work into looking good on top of that? It only made sense that Emily had to put in the same effort, too. And the perfect concealer for her *slight* chaos hiding underneath her shirt now was a wonderful black business skirt Emily found. The delight when it didn't have much trouble going over her diaper was immense, though all her clothes were starting to move around a bit with all this shifting...

After tucking it all back into place, the last thing she needed came from a less professional end, but it certainly could work? A wide black leather belt with some minimalistic double metal circle on it came out, and Emily made full use of it, tying all her loose clothing together.

And also, need it be mentioned how comfy all her clothes were? Joyce really did never disappoint when it came to buying the nice stuff! While it was all good and fun getting ready for work, she certainly wasn't enough of a savage to walk around barefoot. After peeking inside a few different shoe boxes with brand names she'd never heard of, Emily pulled out a pair of tall black heels. Good enough. Black was black and that meant work appropriate.

With her ensemble complete and perfected, Emily stumbled and nearly tripped multiple times with pride back into the hallway, taking carefully coordinated and noisy steps all the way.

“Apologies, Mr. Bear,” Emily said as she fell forward since her feet were too small in her big heels to fall back, “I needed a change of clothes,” she enunciated in an exaggerated posh form of tone. Somehow though her charade had become inspiring, enough to convince herself to finally pull the trigger and make the call on her company issued phone. Holding it up to her ear, thankfully there was enough time to sneak a swig of juice before the other end picked up.

“Hello?” Yep, sounded like Amy.

“Amy?” Emily asked, putting on her best big girl voice (or just being herself, really). “Sorry, is this a bad time?”

“No! Now’s perfect, actually! Joyce said you were gonna be calling today, actually.”

“Yeah...” Imagining scheduling an appointment when it was Mr. Bear’s job to do that... Apparently no one had job security these days. “Sorry about the delay... It’s just been sort of...busy.” A fair excuse that could only work if she actually came off as such. Spending her days doing either a brief set of chores or wearing diapers didn’t really fit as busy. The regret for saying that was hitting as fast as the smell of a messy diaper. The back of her head sunk deeper into her stuffed secretary.

“Trust me, I totally get it,” Amy assured, or at least pretended like she believed her. “Joyce didn’t pressure you or anything to call me, did she?” A slight laugh came from the other end of the line, “she did, didn’t she?”

“Uhm...” and just for insurance’s sake, Emily dangling her girlfriend’s heel from her outstretched foot finally let it drop to the floor. “No?”

Another laugh from Amy, but she said, “Okay, well good. I don’t want you to feel like you *have* to do any of this! So, it’s a couple things I could actually use a hand with. Oh, and there’s no need for experience with sewing or anything like that! I have a client that’s looking to get a few outfits done, but they’re mainly out of state, so all I have are her sizes on paper. Usually I don’t take on work like this if they aren’t available, but since she’s longstanding, I took her up on it. So here’s where you come in: having a model would help me a little bit? She’s a little bit bigger than you, but you’d make a great stand-in reference and all I’d need to do is upscale from there.”

“So you want me to be like your mannequin?”

“When you put it like that you make it sound like I just want your body...” Amy groaned back playfully, “Well, guess I do, actually. It’s not a deal-breaker for whether I can get it done for her or not, but having a live reference could speed things up. And of course, I’ll pay you! I’m only

asking because I had to check your numbers for a different project and happened to notice the sizes were sorta close.”

“A different project?” A project for her?

“A-anyway!” Amy rushed her voice and implied a certain matter wasn’t to be explored, “I can keep you busy with helping organize some fabrics, too. Buttons, zippers, and stuff, but to be honest I don’t think I can fit out a whole work week for you... I’m balancing a couple different commissions right now, so it’d be a sort of on and off thing. When I’m ready and you’re ready, you know?”

Far from fully employed and official work. It sounded like she would be paid under the table, too. It wasn’t an actual job, but it was gonna give her something...

“That works...but, I guess I don’t really have any experience with that sort of stuff...”

“That’s fine, don’t worry about it! It’s just standing in front of the mirror, really. It’s super relaxed, promise. We can chat, have lunch, all that fun stuff. You can play with Ashes too, if you want?” Bribing her with a pet? This was sounding more like a favor than a regular job...

“I mean...yeah, I guess I can do that then,” Emily agreed, albeit meekly. “I guess we just need to coordinate when I come?”

“And we’ll do that well in advance, promise. No day-of kinda stuff. Promise! Ugh, you’re a lifesaver! I don’t really doubt my skills, but if I don’t get an actual body to play with, it kinda throws me off a little, you know?”

No, actually. Not at all. “Yeah...”

“Awesome! Give me a couple days and we’ll set something up, okay? I’ll keep it at a reasonable time, and just let me know if we need to reschedule. Thanks so much, Em, and if ya have any questions, just shoot me a text or give me a call, okay?”

“Mm. Okay, will do.”

“Take care! Ciao!”

And like that the bandage had been ripped and Emily was employed. Sort of. Not really. Not at all? Kind of employed. But she sighed nonetheless when she could drop the phone. Good thing she was wearing all that big girl armor. The baseless worry of making that call had been eating

away at her for some stupid reason, but it was done now. Reality sunk far lower than her excited expectations, which in this case was a good thing. Could she count that as an “interview,” even? Was this going to be something that she could put on a resume?

Seamstress Assistant - Stood in front of mirror and looked pretty
Skills - Patience

Something like that. But since the office was busy being used right now, Emily didn't have to entertain the thought of doing any computer work. Instead she rolled onto her side against Mr. Bear, suckling down a stream of juice, watching the sky and city beyond the heavy wood and glass doors past the terrace.

It was such a small thing to have done in retrospect, but now with her one big thing she'd been trying to avoid out of the way, all that was left was to enjoy the rest of her day. A weight was off her shoulders and she had nothing else to worry about. Everything was quiet again and her cheek rested against her giant stuffed bear, listening to the faint typing from down the hall in Joyce's office.

A calm, quiet lull filled the home and before Emily knew it her eyes were getting heavy.

Naps were dumb, stupid and the worst thing ever imagined by anyone. The kinds that were enforced, at least. Emily was much more of a “natural” napper, which was something Joyce unfortunately could never seem to understand. She slept when she wanted to, not when she was told. Joyce was much more of a schedule-based sort of folk. If only Emily got to waddle to the beat of her own drum. Without an oppressive system to keep her down, or crib bars to keep her confined, it was much easier to follow the whims of her sleepy self as she laid there with half a sippy cup spout in her mouth.

Constantly reminding herself to suck, her eyelids kept on drooping until they finally stopped rising, closing completely for a good stretch of uninterrupted time.

Meanwhile, sometime later, Joyce was wandering out of her office.

“Emily?” she called, “I wanna check your diaper?” The first place she went was their bedroom where the light was still on and she noticed her closet door half ajar... And her dresser drawers open...with undergarments, pants and such hanging out and askew.

Going just a step further, Joyce stepped inside her closet, first making note of the small pile of hangers laying on the floor; a couple shirts and skirts included. Wait, were her shoe boxes moved too?

Either they had been robbed or some form of mischief was afoot. Hardly believing in the former, Joyce sighed as she tried to figure out what the angle of the mess in their room was while she tidied it up.

“What did that little munchkin do...?” she muttered, flicking off the last light as she came into the hall. “Emily? Did you—” she started to say, then she saw her sleeping. Sleeping in Joyce’s clothes, wearing them like oversized bags snuggled with her feet together with small dollops of pantyhose fabric hanging off her toes.

She noticed the large stuffed bear that lived in the nursery had decided to move, and she then went on to recognize her four-figure belt imported from Italy with half its leather material hanging out and sitting so loosely on her little girl’s frame from riding up to her waist. The clasp didn’t even look to be sitting right...!

Her poor heels from last year’s trip to France were lazily sitting on their sides on the floor, far from any feet, much less ones that could actually fit them. Joyce’s business skirt was half on Emily’s hips, half beneath the panties she recognized as her own, which also fell beneath the plastic siding of her diaper...

And the cherry on top? Joyce quietly came closer, carefully removing the sippy cup that had fallen from the sleepy girl’s hand and onto her bear. Not that it mattered much, but she pinched the loose collar around Emily’s neck, fingering the wet apple juice stain now on one of her best shirts.

And Joyce sighed, right before her phone buzzed in her pocket. Slipping it out she read a message to herself.

AMY: Just heard from Emily! All set. I’ll b in touch with her!

She put the phone away, giving her little girl a dumb smile.

“So we’re playing dress-up now, are we?” she whispered with a grin. Apparently a toddler that went unchecked would become a tyrant. Clothes had been wrinkled, a shirt had been ruined, but as the saying went, t’was the cost of doing business. The cost of caring for someone you love.

“Though...” Joyce kept to a whisper, so as not to awaken the tot she was playfully chewing out, “The nerve you’ve got to play with Mommy’s expensive clothes...” At least in her state of disarray, play and slumber, a cute bum showing itself made it easy to check a diaper.

“Dry...” she muttered while she angled her phone, recording such a sweet memory. Standing back up, one quick trip to the nursery and back around the couch and she was holding two trinkets worth adding to the scene.

With her mouth still partly open from enjoying her juice, Joyce swabbed a tiny bit of drool collecting on her bear and clogged the leaky pipe with a silicone bulb and plastic shield. Carefully lifting Emily’s arm, she slipped Pip underneath and set it back down. And lastly, Joyce draped a nearby blanket over her sleeping beauty, far more satisfied with a few more pictures to go with it.

“I’ll be taking these back, though...” Joyce glared for just a second, trying not to laugh as she hooked her discarded heels by the fingers and walked them back to the bedroom. “One broken pair is enough, I’d say...”

With her brief duties being finished, Joyce slipped back into her office, feeling awfully good now with finishing the final stretch of her day. After all, how could Joyce not be leading the pack if she’d just seen her littlest employee so hard at work...!

“I don’t wanna wear this one...!” Emily moaned as the zipper traveled up her back.

“But you were so excited trying on different clothes earlier?” Joyce teased from behind, snapping a flap of fabric over the zipper, hiding it completely. “Where did you even get an idea like that?” she laughed so pleasantly, “What made you wanna play dress-up?”

“I was dressing for *work*,” Emily stressed for the umpteenth time. “You wouldn’t get it.” Really, she wouldn’t! *Joyce* didn’t have to keep swapping from panties to diapers!

“No, I probably wouldn’t,” Joyce giggled. “Not that I need to. I like it when you do cute stuff like that.” Though it’s a little less cute when costly damages are incurred... No need to mention that part, though. “I was a little sad though when my busy little office girl was dry, though.”

“Sorry,” Emily smugly shrugged, “it’s a skill I’m working on.”

“Yeah? You and what references?” Joyce squeezed her waist, watching them both in the mirror. “Cuz if anyone calls me, they’re *definitely* gonna know that you can’t be trusted out of your diapers.”

“Yes I *can!*” Emily shot her a rude look.

“Sorry, sweetie, but I can only speak from experience? Though, I think Amy already knows, so you should be in the clear for that,” she couldn’t hide her teasing smile. “So I take it you called her?”

“Yes... She wants me to be a model, sort of.”

“A model?” Joyce raised her brows. “That could be kinda fun?”

“Uh-huh,” she nodded, tugging a little at the collar on her sleeper. It was on there real good. Not uncomfortable, but it sure didn’t stretch. She couldn’t even find the zipper on her back... “She asked because her client is a little bit bigger than me, I guess, but she’s out of state. Amy sort of said it was gonna be an irregular thing, though.”

“Well that’s okay; we’ll get you there when you need to be. Don’t worry about wondering if anyone’ll be available. I’ll make it work.”

“Thanks...” with all the effort that went into getting Emily around, sometimes she wondered if anything that she *did* make was enough to offset the expenses Joyce dropped on her. At this point, was she dropping a profit in financials or just emotion and entertainment? “So work was good?”

“Yes, it very much was,” Joyce concluded with a kiss. “You made my day getting to see you each time I stepped out of my office!” There were definitely going to be more work-from-home days in the future...

“G-good...” Emily exhaled through her nose, feeling the warmth spread through her diaper. No comments were made, but she got another affectionate rub.

“Yes, very good. But what isn’t so much is that *I* have to make a call too.” Joyce’s happy face started to droop.

“Oh! Is it with that kinky person? I... Isabelle?”

“Yes, Isabelle.” The one and only who had shell-shocked her so greatly.

“Mm. Well, don’t have too much fun with her.”

And just like that Emily won a light swat on her padded rump.

“Hey!”

“Silly comments get silly prizes,” Joyce spoke with finality.

“Can we snuggle while you call her?”

“We will do that very thing *after* I talk to her. Tell you this: how about I get you a nice bottle of milk,” no sippy cups, not after that little spill... “and you get comfy on the couch while I go make a grownup call in my office? Then we could watch a movie...?”

Her eyes lit up like the sun. “A scary one?!”

“No,” oh, buzz killed. Joyce gave her a helpless look, “Not a scary one.”

“But I’m wearing one...!”

“And what made you think that makes it a done deal?” Joyce’s eyes did circles on themselves. “Weekdays are *definitely* not scary movie nights.” What if Emily had a nightmare and she was already gone for work? “We will be watching something age appropriate, got it?”

“Fine...”

“No grumpy attitudes, either,” Joyce pinched her lips, making her cute girl look like a cute duckling. “Now can I get an ‘I love you?’”

“I love you, Mommy,” Emily put on her best ‘totally not grumping’ voice.

Joyce wow’ed with pride. “Ou, and I didn’t even need to ask for the last part!” Ignoring the tone, she kissed Emily again. “Go get cozy on the couch for me.” They made way for the living room and after dropping Emily off Joyce took a detour to the kitchen.

“Don’t fall asleep on me~!” she warned as she left Emily with her bottle.

“I won’t! I slept like twice already!”

And since when did that stop you from doing it a third? Joyce held her breath just long enough to shut her door, too overjoyed to feel anything but. Only for a second though, as the dread ate away at all of it the moment she looked down at her phone.

Now the not so fun part...

First Sheila, and now this? Hell, her business with Sheila wasn't even done yet. Why couldn't she just get the easy call with Amy like Emily did? With one can of worms already open and spewing, with great reluctance she started to dial what was scribbled on a sticky note.

And maybe in some form of retrospect that was too far in the future to consider, if only this second discussion *was* going to be just another can of worms. Much more aptly, it would be reminisced on as Pandora's Box.