

5 - Back to it

“Hello!”

What? What was she saying? Was she speaking in tongues? It could've been anything. Any word, sentence, speech, speak, vernacular, dialect, accent, language or mannerism. It would've gone over Dawn's head regardless.

She was at her wit's end. She didn't know what to expect anymore, especially because her thoughts were starting to become immediate realities, hence the Amazon looming over her.

“Honey? Are you okay?” Her voice was soft, gentle, but none of that translated. None of her words, emotion, or body language were acknowledged. All that Dawn could see or listen to was the absolute size reigning over her, and she quaked.

“P-please,” Dawn started to violently shake her head as the expression on her face worsened. “D-don't come any-any closer...!” Her legs were practically jelly, as when she tried to stand she was almost immediately back on her bottom. All she could do was slide herself to the other end of the clothes rack, which unfortunately wasn't very far. She had no options left. This was the end. Of course she started crying.

“Sweetie, what's wrong?” the Amazon cooed, already reaching her hands in further. Just as she was moving her arms in, Dawn was falling deeper into her nervous breakdown.

“N-n-n-no! Stop! I SAID STOP!” She screamed and shouted, flailing herself every which way just to keep herself from being captured. She didn't expect it to work, but surprisingly, it did. The woman had stopped getting closer. What Dawn didn't see though was the expression of concern.

But now that Dawn's last resort had worked, seeing as she didn't expect to get that far, all she could do now was reel herself back into the waterworks.

“I...I just want to go home...” she sniffled and hiccuped, leaning against the metal frame of the clothes display. “So why...? Why won't you l-let me!?” And back to wailing she went.

She wasn't even looking at the Amazon anymore. She didn't care, or at least didn't have the energy to. Even amidst all the confusion and chaos, Dawn knew they wouldn't be leaving. The jig was up, so if they weren't going to leave, maybe Dawn could at least mentally check herself out. Just to spare herself from the suffering.

But then she could feel something touch her arm, and in immediate retaliation Dawn swung that same arm outwards to the thing that touched it. She made contact. Well, no contact with the Amazon that touched her, but instead one of the metal bars to the frame, and lord did it hurt. The slam rang with a resounding clang. She'd been using so much force, it was enough to shock her out of her mood as her voice left her and she winced with a terrible pain flooding her arm.

It felt like she'd just dipped her wrist in acid; feeling a terrible pins and needles sensation prickle all over her right arm. Now with a new reason to cry, she made it known. Somewhere amongst it all, she could've sworn a gasp came from the Amazon. Well good. It was her fault that Dawn did this to herself. If only she could just forget about her and go!

It was starting to feel warm and clammy in her underwear. It was making her feel hot all over. She'd certainly been sweating a lot...

Then, the unthinkable happened. The light, where the Amazon kept peering through, it suddenly disappeared, and so did the Amazon. The clothes were slipped back together and once again Dawn was in the company of herself.

"...Thank you..." she whimpered in a faint whisper. She was in pain, physical and emotional, lost, alone, without a single lifeline, but at least there was this. Solitude. This small, uninterrupted space seemed to be the one saving grace of the Amazon dimension. She couldn't even remember how things had escalated to this point. It was something someone did to make her feel this way...

The large hands were quick when they shot through the wall of clothes. One appearing on each side of Dawn, faster than she could react. Time seemed to slow down as the gravity began to kick in. Just as Dawn could realize what was going to happen, it already did. With arms around her waist she was quickly whisked out from her fortress and into the enemy's arms. She was bathed in the light once again, almost blindingly so, and was in the arms of yet another stranger. The same one who'd approached her from the front.

Dawn could only pace the list of possible reactions in her head. Scream? Retaliate? Kick? Punch? Plausible ideas, all of them, but it felt like no matter which one she'd pick, it'd all be a short-term show leading only to the bottomless despair waiting for her by the end of it. She grimaced, biting her quivering lip, doing little as her head was pressed against the Amazon's shoulder.

She was an animal driven into a corner, but she truly had no energy left to fight back. She was drained.

“There, there...” the woman shushed and cooed. “It’s alright...you’re okay...”

But how could it be? What had changed? Had she gotten any closer to home? Was she with her tour group yet? Was she in panties now? Did she have her luggage? Nothing about her was okay, and the minute these self-righteous Amazons could realize that, maybe then they could cover some ground together. But it would likely never come to pass.

“I’m sorry for scaring you like that; reaching in from behind. You scared me a whole lot too, though. Is your arm okay? It didn’t sound very good when you hit it...” At the same time she went to feel it herself, and as soon as she did Dawn could feel the same sharp pain that sent shockwaves in her body. She quickly tugged it away.

To her credit, she did look sorry. “It does hurt? I’m so sorry sweetie... We’ll make it all better, I promise.”

“...ake me home...” a quiet voice whispered.

“What’s that?” She leaned her head a little closer.

“T-take me...h-home...” Dawn continued to speak low with teary eyes. By now her eyes were starting to get a little puffy around the edges, what with how much crying she’d been doing.

“We will...we will...” She continued to shush and bounce. The comfort and kindness, all reserved for a toddler only made it so much worse.

They started walking, yet Dawn was so tuned out, she stopped processing their surroundings. It was a new low, considering she could only seem to react rather than receive. She wasn’t even tired. At least she thought she wasn’t. She didn’t feel sleepy, nor did she feel alert. She simply felt sluggish.

“You can’t go running around like that by yourself, you know.” The Amazon started to chide; ignorantly rambling off her teachings, as if she knew everything there was to know about Dawn. About her supposed archetype. “This store’s so big, I can’t even begin to imagine how your Mommy or Daddy might be feeling right now. They must be worried sick!”

“Does...” what was the point? Why did she even bother? “Does it not matter how I feel? What I think?” In a low voice, Dawn croaked.

“Of course it matters! It matters that you’re safe, happy and content, and being away from your guardian is the farthest thing from that, sweetheart. It’s not fun when you’re by yourself, huh? It must’ve been scary hiding in there...” She stroked Dawn’s back, drowning more and more in her selfish conclusions.

Dawn gave a slight, sad laugh. The kind of laugh that wasn’t derived from pure humor. Something more sickly. Never before had the light seemed so terrifying.

“Do you wanna talk about it? How you got lost?”

“I wasn’t lost... I didn’t want to be found...” The slight motion of her hand made her wince. Maybe she really did hurt it...

“What?” She replied with an exaggerated surprise. “Not found? Were you playing hide and seek? This isn’t the place to do that, sweetie! You’re going to make the grownups worried like that!”

Conversation seemed all in all to be pointless. Not like Dawn should expect any less. Still, it didn’t feel any less frustrating to be totally disregarded as an adult. It was further insight into just how ignorant these people could be.

“Now you’ll need to be *extra* sure to apologize when we get there, understood? Truthfully, I think you’re going to need a spanking, but hopefully that’s where they’ll let you off.” Dawn felt a strange squeeze on the front of her underwear. A squishy, warm squeeze.

“And I definitely think you’ll need some diapers if you’re going to be so adventurous.” She lightly chuckled to herself.

So that warmth leaving her apparently wasn’t so figurative as she’d thought... In the midst of shock and panic she’d forgotten to leave some control for her most basic needs. She’d done exactly what she was so steadfast to avoid, it felt like a ball of lead in her stomach. Everything was already wrong on oh-so many levels, but something like this was far too direct to simply grit her teeth through.

“Shh, shh...you’re okay now...”

“We should be out there searching for her!” Katherine spoke in a panic, tears in her eyes. “What if someone takes her? What if she gets stolen?!” Each suggestion seemed to inflict more self-harm as she sobbed harder.

James was by her side, taking both of her arms. “Kath, hon, listen, you need to stay calm, okay? No one is going to adopt her.”

Though, there was a look of surprise when she fired back. “Do *not* tell me to stay calm! How can you be, James? The...the look on her face right before she ran... She was terrified!” She sniffled. “...Terrified of me...”

“Katherine, I’m worried too, but we need to stay here where someone else is going to bring her. You heard the intercom, right? No one can leave the store until she’s safe and sound. And that couldn’t be why she ran away. You didn’t do anything wrong. You’ve been doing the exact opposite. This is all going to be resolved, okay? We’ll figure out what happened when Dawn comes back. We can figure things out then.”

She looked no less convinced whilst she continued to sob.

There was a knock on the door.

“Yes?” James called in reply.

The door handle turned and in came a familiar face and a stranger along with them. One held in the other’s arms, in fact. Then a third, a security guard.

“I assume this little troublemaker belongs to you guys?” It was the same Amazon who’d found Dawn; the one who had dragged her back into a world of chaos. Partly slumped over her shoulder was the missing Little in question, looking less than spectacular.

It was an open sigh from James as he smiled in relief. Katherine was even less composed, seemingly hit with a whole new wave of emotion. She rushed over to the woman, taking Dawn into her arms, clutching her tightly.

“Thank you! Thank you so much!” Katherine sobbed between her moments of gratitude. Even James got closer to look her over, similarly just as pleased with her well-being.

Were they really this worried? Dawn didn't hug her back, but she was careful to keep her arm out of any point of pressure. Maybe there was a tinge of remorse, but this still didn't feel like an ideal outcome...

"Where did you find her?" James asked.

"I was searching for some outfits at one of those circular racks and I happened to see her in the center of it. I bet she's glad to be back with you guys; she seemed to be pretty panicked when I found her."

James didn't respond as he looked back over to his wife and Dawn.

"Excuse me, Mr. Matthews?" The guard finally stepped in. "Can I assume we're all set now?"

"Yes, we are. Thank you for your help. We're glad she's safe and sound."

"Oh, and also," the woman spoke again. "You might want to have her arm looked at, just to be safe... I think she hurt her wrist while she was in the rack."

"What?" Katherine sniffed, wiping her eye. "How? What happened?" Almost immediately she was looking for the spot in question, carefully examining Dawn, who looked even more resigned than she'd been in the arms of the other woman.

"When I tried to pull her out she started to get a bit fussy, so much that she tried to hit me and hit the bar instead."

Dawn couldn't wholly agree with her statement, but she figured it wasn't worth the energy to argue. Among a jury of Amazons, who would believe her?

Then, what finally shocked her out of a passive state was Katherine just like the woman finding her sweet-spot, or pain-spot, to be blunt. Katherine brushed Dawn's wrist and she yelped, remembering fast just what the sensation felt like. Did she sprain it? Bruise it?

"I'm so sorry, sweetie! It's okay, you're okay..." Katherine, obviously apologetic, was much more careful around the area in question. The injury was starting to become concerning.

"I think it'd be best to have that looked at," the guard chimed in. James and Katherine mutually nodded.

“Is there anything we can do to thank you?” James still maintained discussions, seeing as his wife was a little preoccupied.

“Seeing her back with you guys is plenty for me.” She smiled. “But if anything, don’t be too hard on her? I take it you two are new parents?” The responses were indirect.

“Well, if anything, let’s call it a teaching moment. I never let my Little out of sight, especially in a place like this. Maybe you should put her in a Little harness though; that way you’ll know where she is?”

“We’ll...keep that in mind.”

“And also, best of luck with the potty training! Unfortunately, she wasn’t so lucky this time...” She looked jokingly somber, then bid her farewell. The guard soon did as well. Dawn though, her cheeks were burning the entire time. Now all that remained were the original three.

“Dawn?” James spoke up. “You okay?”

Laid against Katherine’s chest, she shook her head. Nothing was okay.

“What’s wrong, sweetie? Please talk to us, baby...” Katherine seemed to be a bit more composed, now that Dawn was in her arms. She looked a little emotionally tried as well.

“Please...”

The room fell silent.

“Please...” Dawn sniffled. “Please don’t call me that...”

“Don’t call you what? What’s wrong?”

“Don’t...don’t call me ‘baby’. I’m...I’m not a baby, so please don’t call me that...” she hiccuped, letting the tears silently roll down her cheeks.

“...Honey, please, we only want to make it all better. What happened? Why did you run away?”

“I don’t know.” Dawn blinked; her eyes looked to be scarred, as if she’d seen horrendous things. Things that couldn’t heal. “I...I don’t remember. I was scared...”

“Did it feel like last time? When you woke up at the police station?” James asked. He seemed to be much more pensive.

Like last time?

The panic attack. The short breaths, rapid breathing, hammer-pounding heart, and the plethora of anxiety, gushing in troves from all her orifices.

“...Yeah, similar...”

“Twice in a day...” James spoke lowly... He watched the pair for a moment.

“Were...were you scared of us?” Katherine cautiously asked. She seemed to be afraid of the answer.

Looking back on it, digging to the deeper recesses of her mind, maybe she was. There was a lingering feeling of anxiety and fear associated with who they were, but their actual character seemed to dissuade it somewhat. But not enough to overpower the situation they’d put her into.

“I felt like I was being kidnapped again...” It only came as an afterthought that saying it might hurt their feelings. She did feel bad this time.

“Kidnapped...? But we’d never take you forcefully, sweetheart...”

“It...it felt like it did the first time. The first time someone tried to take me here...” Lord, did she hate thinking about it. Need she say it’d still been less than 24 hours since it had happened? Maybe that’s why she felt such an urgent response; the coals were still hot.

“But you’re safe with us,” Katherine rubbed her back. “You know that, right?”

“...Right.” It was a neutral response.

“When you ran away like that, I saw the look on your face and it broke my heart, Dawn. I was afraid I did something personally to upset you... I suppose I did.”

“It’s...it’s okay. I know you meant well, but I still couldn’t shake this...this *feeling*. I’m not upset with you, Katherine. It’s just, what you did was what scared me.” Dawn was hoping the clarity would make her feel better, but the woman still seemed to be taking it personally. “And I know you two brought me out here like this, so...” she didn’t like to admit it, but facts are facts. “...so I

was your responsibility. I-I never stopped to think what you two might be feeling if I ran.” That said, they were the very object of her fears, even if only for an irrational and short moment.

“We shouldn’t have rushed you into such a compromising situation,” James said before Katherine could. “We were the ones who got the police involved to get you out of harm’s way in the first place. Other than yourself, seeing what you’ve been through, we should have known that the most.”

Katherine’s eyes looked watery again. “I am *so* sorry for putting you through something like that... I’m sorry for making you feel like you couldn’t trust us.” Her perspective wasn’t totally off. In truth, Dawn had abandoned the sole pair of Amazons she considered herself even remotely acquainted with. Without her tour group or these two, what did she have left?

“So...you two aren’t mad?” Similar to how the mantra goes, being easier to ask for forgiveness, Dawn weakly asked. The pair seemed to share troubled looks.

“No, of course not, Dawn.” James finally walked over, patting her on the head. “I’m sure we’ve said it plenty enough already, but it’s our job to watch over you. It’s solely our fault if we gave you a reason to feel like you couldn’t trust us. It’s water under the bridge.”

“But, please don’t do that again,” Katherine smiled. “I don’t think my heart could take it a second time...”

“Right... I’m sorry about that.”

“Don’t be.”

Soon after, a message had been broadcasted across the store yet again, calling off the alert.

“So...now what?”

“Well, if you’re okay with it, did you still want to get a pair of pants?” Katherine asked. She didn’t seem jokey. She was probably being cautious.

So that’s what it’d been. Dawn suddenly remembered what set this all into motion from the start.

“If that’s alright, then yeah...” Dawn came off as a bit distant. It felt too awkward, easing back into things after she’d just caused them so much trouble. “But, can I please use a changing room?”

I'd feel better if I could put them on myself. In a private space." A repeat of last time didn't sound appealing.

"Of course."

And so the situation repeated itself, only under much more calm circumstances. They'd found the same pair and took it somewhere much more discreet, thankfully.

The whole way however, thankfully to no one's mention, Dawn could still feel the squishy padding between her legs. The deed had never left the back of her mind, considering the stranger who dragged her back here happily announced what she'd done.

"How about I stroll around while you two get what you need done here?" James suggested. "I'll go take a look at a few other things." Other things?

"I think that's a good idea. Are you okay with that, Dawn?"

Dawn nodded her head, noting how she was asked to begin with. Was Katherine making a point to get her input? Truthfully, the effort was appreciated.

The dressing stalls in the back were all seamless panels of wood, all the unattended ones being part way open. They didn't seem to have handles on the front, meaning they were probably locked from the inside.

"Wou...would you rather I didn't go in?" Katherine asked. She looked as if she was afraid of what the answer might be. Dawn had a sneaking suspicion as to what kind of answer she was looking for. To her dismay and Dawn's content, she said no.

"I'd...rather if I went in by myself."

"Alright..." Her reaction wasn't unexpected, though she seemed to be trying to stay upbeat. "Just let me know if you need help with anything, okay?"

"Uh-huh, I will." Dawn walked in then closed the door behind her. Well, tried. It seems it really did close only with a lock, which usually wouldn't be a problem, though Dawn was dealt the cruel reminder of being a Little in an Amazon's world.

"Uhm, Katherine?"

Almost immediately she stuck her head in. Dawn was a little surprised, quickly holding the pants over her front to shield herself.

“Is something wrong?” Despite everything, at the drop of a hat she could be as doting as ever. “Did you need help getting dressed? I don’t mind?”

“Uh...no.” Dawn awkwardly replied. “I just needed help with the lock... I...” she looked a little embarrassed to admit the truth. “I can’t reach it...”

“Is it okay if I come in for a minute?”

Dawn nodded.

“...Well, it is a little high... How about I lock it from the inside and face the other way?”

Dawn still looked hesitant. Amazon design truly was a nuisance. Even the most subtle features of their technology seemed to intentionally overlook Littles both figuratively and literally...

“Could you maybe stand in front of the door then? Just so no one comes in?”

Katherine didn’t seem so happy with that solution either, not that the original plan looked to be up her alley either. “Okay, I’ll stand right in front of the door. If you need any more help, just let me know, okay?”

So with their new plan of action Katherine was back out in the hall. Only for about half a minute did that go swimmingly, though.

“Excuse me?” Dawn could hear someone’s voice from the other side. What was it now?

“Hm? Yes?” They were talking to Katherine, from the sound of it.

“Are you looking for an empty dressing room to use? There’s one already open behind you...”

“Oh? Oh! No, don’t worry,” Katherine chuckled. “I’m just standing in front while they use it.”

“Oh, alright. They have a lock, you know?”

“Well, right, but...” Katherine lowered her voice, but of course Dawn could still hear. “She’s not tall enough to reach it...”

“So...is your Little in there?”

“Ah...yes, she is.”

“By herself?”

“...Yes.”

“Ma’am, I’m sorry, but it’s store policy that Littles do not go unattended in the store. If you weren’t here earlier, we just had to deal with a lost Little.” She didn’t seem terribly apologetic.

“Is it not alright even if I’m right outside the room?”

“Even then. It’s a safety risk to leave them alone in a dressing room by themselves, especially if they manage to lock it from the inside.” Meanwhile, Dawn stood there silently, dumbfounded listening as not only her intelligence and capability is questioned, but also how locking herself in a room with a lock too high for her to reach was of concern. Yet another aggravating mystery.

“Right...I’m sorry about that. We didn’t know.”

“It’s alright, but please follow the rules. And please make sure their diaper isn’t used either. If she gets the clothes wet or messy in any way, you have to buy it.” Dawn twitched a little. Pissing herself? Shitting on the clothes? She had half a mind to give this woman a ‘fuck you’ and ‘have a nice day’!

Dawn turned from the side and looked to the door, looking underneath it to see the pair of legs standing there. The...massive, Amazon legs. Iron poles with feet of concrete...stretching so far above her. So, so far... And, the more she thought about it, didn’t their voices sound so high off the ground, too? They had so much volume, such girth in their shockwaves...

Dawn looked back at the mirror, a little surprised to see her legs looking a little less than steady. Her chest was feeling a bit uneasy too. Did...did confrontation really scare her that much? It never did...never until now. Never until she had to put herself at odds with someone multiple times her size. At odds with someone who already considered her inferior...

“You’ll need to be in there with her, or you both need to be out here.”

“Alright, thank you.” And so whether Dawn liked it or not, in came Katherine, though she slid the lock shut this time.

While she may not have been willing to acknowledge it, her body certainly did, as Dawn could feel herself begin to distress as she saw the other pair of shoes walk away. Less Amazons was always a blessing.

“Sorry about that,” Katherine halfway shrugged. “It’s better than being kicked out of the store?”

Questionable, but Dawn wasn’t here to argue. Regardless, she knew Katherine had tried her best. Dawn had no reason to complain. Not until...

“And actually,” Katherine interrupted Dawn by garnering her attention. “She...mentioned one other small bit.”

Dawn raised her brow.

“Since we haven’t bought the pants yet, it’d be difficult for them if we got them dirty in any way...” Was she suggesting what Dawn thought she was?

“Which is why it’s important to be wearing...dry undies.”

Quite figuratively, Dawn had been hit by a bombshell. Her eyes couldn’t help but drift to the mirror, eyeing the slight discoloration in her pull-up. The same squishy one she’d accidentally wet earlier... Her cheeks were starting to turn crimson as she looked to the floor.

“Y-you knew?”

Katherine leaned over, patting her on the shoulder. “You were sitting in my lap, sweetheart. The lady who found you said something too...” She knew the entire time?

“Th-then why didn’t you say something earlier?” She kept shuffling her feet awkwardly. She was ready to jump out of her own skin. It was one thing to wet herself, but for it to go entirely unnoticed by the people she was trying to prove the exact opposite about herself? Did that mean James knew too? Of course he did. The only fool was Dawn in thinking that someone telling you that a person wet themselves was going to go over your head.

“Because I wanted you to know that we don’t think any differently about you, Dawn.” Feeling overly self-conscious now, Dawn kept both hands on the front of her padded crotch. She grimaced at the lukewarm feeling to it. “It’s okay if you had a small acci--”

“It wasn’t an accident!” Dawn interrupted with a shout. Her voice had trembled. “I-I, no, that’s not what I mean! I mean, I don’t have accidents! I don’t wet myself! This...this was because...” A pair of arms wrapped around her.

“It’s okay. You don’t have to explain yourself.” Yes! She did! Otherwise, what else would Katherine think this looks like?! “I know it happened between now and earlier, so you must’ve been pretty scary, right? I’m not here to make you feel embarrassed, Dawn. I’m here to make you feel better.” She squeezed the troubled girl a bit tighter.

“But it’s not...” Every step of the way she could feel her grip loosening. Her resolve, her conviction; her image. While Katherine might not care what she looked like, Dawn most certainly did. That said, she was feeling even less capable to prove herself.

“But...can’t I just try the pants on real quick? It’s not like I’m going to...” what was she saying? It wasn’t even a likelihood, it was a certainty she wouldn’t! “I mean, I’m not going to...wet myself...” the last part came in a very low voice. “I’m not going to do that again...”

“Well, regardless, I can’t imagine you want to stay in a wet pull-up?” It felt like she was dodging Dawn’s proclaimed maturity, but that was a losing battle Dawn didn’t want to fight, especially when her opponent was giving her a way out. Somberly, she shook her head no.

“I figured,” Katherine slightly smiled. “So how about we go find some pull-ups too? Then we can try the pants on?”

“P-pull-ups?” slowly, Dawn had asked. “What, what about panties?” She had a double-take. Did she really not trust her?

“I know, it probably isn’t the solution you want to hear, but this store doesn’t carry panties and briefs. A lot don’t, actually... But that’s okay. After all, pull-ups are like panties with just a little more protection, right?”

Dawn seemed less than enthusiastic. Another crushing reality. All she could hold onto was the dream of being reunited with her luggage which contained her much more adult belongings.

“So how about that? Wanna take a quick trip over there?”

“...I guess.”

“That’s the spirit. And don’t worry, there’s lots of designs to choose from! A lot more cute designs than they make for Amazon-sized panties, that’s for sure... If anything, I’m jealous of you!” She laughed, seeming genuine in trying to cheer Dawn up, but of course it didn’t work very well on Dawn. The best she could do to not feel terrible was hinge on the woman’s efforts rather than the delivery. Adulthood was starting to feel more distant by the minute...

“Is...is this all of them?” It was a lot to take it...

“Mhm, it is.” Katherine somewhat sighed, however. “I know, though, it’s a little boring. The diaper aisle has at least twice as many to choose from...” No comment.

An entire aisle was occupied. Each shelf was nearly filled to the brim in all different assortments of flashy plastic packaging, bubble text, maximum absorbency, extra pull-up included, fading designs. Dawn had truly begun to enter the thick of the classic Amazon's guilty pleasure. The worst packages were the ones with models on them; grown adults with some smirk, smile or content look on their faces as they wear a pair of disposable underwear meant for toddlers. But the harsh truth was that it wasn’t meant for toddlers. It was meant for Littles.

“And...they really don’t have panties here?” This wasn’t something she wanted to shop for.

“I know...” Katherine rubbed her shoulder, cooing sympathetically. “But don’t worry, it won’t be as bad as you think. We’ll find some that are even softer and look cuter than any panties you can find here! Sound good?” Dawn continued to sulk.

But, taking a moment to process things and truly swallow this gargantuan pill, thinking about it rationally, she only had to put up with this for maybe a handful of hours at most. Her tour group would be going back at some point. Then she could rid herself of this. So, why not at least be somewhat cooperative? After all, there was a light at the end of the tunnel...

Dawn sighed as she scanned over the packages once more.

“Okay. I’ll look for some. Can you put me down?”

“Mmm...don’t you think it’s better if I carry you?”

“Huh? Why?”

“Well, from this height you can see a lot more, don’t you think?”

“Maybe...but that means I can’t see the bottom ones so well...”

Katherine responded by lowering her knees.

“See? Problem solved!”

“I’d rather I walk on my own, please.”

Katherine still seemed hesitant.

Then it started to make a little sense.

“I’m...I’m not going to run away again. I promise...”

“I know, it’s just...I’d feel better if I’m holding on to you. At least while we’re somewhere like this, I’d rather keep you close.”

“And I will be? I’m not gonna leave the aisle.” Really, she had no other place to be.

“I’m sorry, Dawn, but I’m not going to put you down.” Katherine said, somewhat surprising Dawn. “I want you to know that you’re safe with me. I feel a lot more comfortable holding you than letting you run around on your own.” Was she being scolded?

“But I’m not going to run around...?”

“Think of it as a compromise? After what happened earlier...” she already looked pained just from thinking about it. “I don’t want to go through that again or watch you go through that. Trust is something you have to earn back, sweetheart. I’m not mad at you, but for now I think this is for the best.”

And like that, Dawn’s soft punishment was being carried. She was trying to think of something to say in retaliation, but Katherine had an odd air about her. She seemed...strangely steadfast in her decision. Dawn was perplexed, and was trying to stay that way, otherwise she’d be annoyed over Katherine’s indirect way of saying she couldn’t be trusted.

“How about these?” Katherine suggested, already with a hand on the corner of a package. The hip portion was a hot pick, then the front crotch mellowed out into a much paler shade. On it were an array of flowers and butterflies. Then Dawn saw the ‘fades when wet’ label.

“Let’s keep looking...”

Princess-themed, fish-themed, space-themed, animal-themed, abstract, infantile and blunt. There was a lot to choose from, but by relative standards they were all terrible. Nothing beat actual panties.

“Oh! Dawn! Look!” Katherine grabbed a package.

Dawn’s heart cracked a little.

They were just like the diapers they saw the Amazon holding when they were in the parking lot, only in pull-up form. Designed to look like panties, but with all the same absorbent functionality, they were pull-ups in disguise. Though, it only worked so well. You could tell something was amiss if you had two eyes and 20/20 vision. The waist guards around the hips were too high, and the crotch on panties wasn’t supposed to puff out that much. That said, Dawn hated to admit it, but the design was at least a faint echo of something she might wear...

“I think we should get these,” Katherine said with a tad of excitement. Of all the garments, Dawn just about hated them all equally. If anything though, maybe these scored a fraction of a fraction of a point higher than everything else. She also had to remind herself that she’d need to choose something eventually. Her current pull-up was starting to feel cold...

“Okay, let’s do that.” And so they did.

Back in the dressing room with both Dawn and Katherine inside, they were now joined by a package of pull-ups. Without asking, Katherine already tore the package open for her, watching as the pull-ups began to expand a little, filled with life by the atmosphere.

“Uh, what can we do about my...you know?”

“Your old pull-up?” She didn’t seem to mind saying it so much. Probably because she wasn’t the one wearing them. Maybe she meant well by it too. Maybe she was trying to make Dawn comfortable by being casual about the terms... That was a mighty stretch, though.

“There should be a garbage can we can use out there, so we’ll take care of it after.”

Dawn was about to ask Katherine for some space, but then she remembered the ‘rules’ this store had. There was no way of getting Katherine out of this stall.

“Uh, Katherine? Could you um...look the other way?”

“Oh! Right, sorry.” She laughed at herself a little, turning her head a slight bit more than ninety degrees to the left. “But don’t be afraid to ask for help if you need it, okay?”

“Yep...” If anything, Dawn could pull up and down a piece of underwear. She was at least certain of that much.

Grabbing her pull-up by the waist, she slipped it down to her ankles, and as she did, she felt a slight pain from her wrist... Other than that, it went as smoothly as she expected. Stepping out of them, there was an odd sense of serenity without them; as if a weight had been lifted off her shoulders. Or...slipped off her waist...

She was already looking for the new pull-up, turning her head left and right, seeing no undergarment to be found. She would have grabbed one herself, but that’d require at least an extra foot and a half to be considered doable, seeing as Katherine had the package right by her side, tucked away nice and securely.

“Uhm, Katherine?” At the sound of her name she seemed to take it as a cue to be much more abrasive. Almost immediately she turned her head to Dawn who truly was this time naked from the waist down.

Quickly she put a hand on her crotch and spun around. “Wh-whoa! Hey! Don’t look!” It only came as an afterthought to put a hand over her butt too. “Calling your name wasn’t an invitation to look!”

“Sorry about that...” Katherine chuckled a little. She didn’t look so apologetic, or at least didn’t share in the same urgency Dawn was feeling. She could only imagine how trivial this must have seemed to an Amazon. “I figured you might’ve needed help...”

“W-well, yes, but not like that...” Dawn sighed. Well-placed intentions were the worst to deal with. “I was wondering if you could hand me one of those things.”

“You mean a pull-up?” Never one to beat around the baby bush.

“...Yes.”

“Oh, sorry. I guess these are a little high up...” Another subtle jab to Dawn’s blatant disadvantages. Thankfully Dawn knew she was only trying to help, otherwise she might call bull on her supposed ignorance.

The padded underwear exchanged hands, and Dawn gave her one last glance in the mirror before fully turning back around, convinced she was looking away again. Her heart skipped a beat once she squeezed the plastic-y pull-up, and not in a good way. It had the tiny and small intricate designs of a relatively expensive piece of underwear, but of course that’s where the similarities ended. Feeling it in her own two hands, it was easy to see what a cheap imitation it was. In the end, it was a single printed image. You couldn’t feel the threads and layers of fabric, largely because there was none. It was a thin and flimsy print smoothed over toddler-wear. Something Dawn would have to be wearing in just a few seconds. Yet the silver lining in it all however was the small victory of being able to put them on herself. It finally felt like she had agency again.

“How about we go get some wipes first?” Katherine suggested, still looking away. “That way we can be extra sure you don’t feel so yucky anymore.”

Normally, Dawn would have agreed, but she wasn’t looking to prolong this anymore and she suspected Katherine might try to offer wiping her down as well. Needless to say, she didn’t want to deal with that.

“That’s true, but I think I’ll manage for now...” Objectively speaking, the pull-up was definitely a sponge. She could feel the warmth from the inside, but thankfully there was no splashback.

Suddenly, Katherine spoke up again. “Are you sure you don’t need anything, by the way? It doesn’t hurt to have a second set of hands when getting dressed...”

“Ah, thanks, but, I’m fine. Don’t you get dressed by yourself, too?” She was starting to come off as a tad bit pushy... Was she projecting? Dawn paused to look up at her.

Sure enough, Katherine’s eyes did glance at Dawn for a short moment. It wasn’t worth the argument to call out, though.

And just as Dawn was about to open the pull-up Katherine spoke again from her idle seat, “And don’t forget to fan it out, okay? That way it’ll fit better.”

“I...I know.” She wasn’t planning to do it, but now she felt like she had to make a point of it, otherwise Katherine might use that against her. She felt like a chickling being carefully overseen by its mother hen.

And so she fanned it, sending shockwaves through her arms and to the pull-up, airing it out as it crinkled in the slightest. Not the sound Dawn would like to hear. Along the way though, her wrist throbbed from the motions even more. It actually kind of hurt...

Just as she was about to step in, she paused again. There was no interruption this time; a direct one at least. She for some reason just expected the universe to interfere once more. Apparently this really was the climax.

Dawn’s foot rose and fell through the leg hole of the pull-up quite ceremoniously, though the process of putting on underwear could only be so grand, especially when they were something less than mature. The second foot came next and it was done. She was locked in.

Looking in the mirror, she was treated to an embarrassing sight. It really did look like she was trying to play grownup. You could tell her underwear was most certainly not panties; at best you might second guess yourself at a glance. The only thing it might manage to trick is the imagination of the person wearing them, assuming they’d been mentally reduced by a peg or two. Thankfully something like that wasn’t possible...

Still, she was glad to be in something dry again, even if it meant wearing something like this.

“Okay, I’m done.” Dawn said as she went for the pants. All that was left was to get these on and that’d be--

“Would it be alright if I gave it a quick look?” Katherine said, who didn’t seem too shy to ask.

“Give it a look...? Give what?” Dawn, genuinely confused, need only look at herself in the mirror again by chance.

Oh.

“Katherine, they’re just like normal underwear...” they most certainly were not, and the designs didn’t help, but at least putting them on worked the same way. “I know for sure I can handle putting them on.” If nothing was going to get through to her today, at least make an exception for this?

“I just want to make sure they fit nicely,” Katherine went on to explain, though Dawn couldn’t help but think there was a different reason. A more maternal reason... “If they don’t we’ll need to find some new ones.”

“Well, that’s okay. Trust me, they fit.” It was true. The fit was snug, and not snug in the almost too-tight kind of way. Snug in the they fit just right kind of way.

“Dawn...please? If I’m paying for them, I want to be 100% sure they fit you.” It came off as if her words were chosen carefully. As if she were trying to find the correct way to negotiate. While it made sense, Dawn kept falling back to her own insecurities... But were they really insecurities if she really was being looked down on?

“Dawn?” She was thinking to herself for a little too long.

“Fine...” she mumbled. The last thing she wanted was to let an Amazon anywhere near her underwear, yet she felt obligated once Katherine mentioned that she was the one paying for it, meaning Dawn had no right to complain. Using a reason like that was a low blow, considering she was told not to worry about it to begin with...

Katherine was right by her side on her knees, already reaching for her.

“Please don’t be grumpy; I just want to make sure we’re getting you stuff that fits...” It took a great deal of restraint to not physically react once Dawn felt the fingernail trace itself between her waist and the pull-up’s waistband. The foreign contact was chilling...and borderline invasive.

“I’m not grumpy.” Dawn said with a grump--an annoyed voice. Why did she have to use such demeaning words? Had Dawn ever said anything or acted in any way to force her to reconsider the girl’s maturity? Then again, after considering everything else that has happened, she’d be lucky to break even.

Dawn grew wide-eyed as her body started to squirm involuntarily; Katherine checked the leg bands next, drawing her finger dangerously close to the girl’s privates. Even worse, her hands seemed to be lukewarm at best...

“So it feels good? Fits good?” Katherine asked. Unlike Dawn, she seemed to border between happy and neutral.

“Yes. It’s fine.” Didn’t she just check for herself?

“Good. I’m glad you like them.” Katherine smiled, giving her a brief pat. Though, it wasn’t a pat on the head.

Dawn lurched forward a tiny bit, as a large hand had just pushed her bottom forward. Did...did she just pat her butt? Mortified, she looked at Katherine, speechless.

“Oops!” Katherine innocently smirked. “I couldn’t resist... Your tushy looks so cute!”

With a dead stare, Dawn replied plainly, “Please do not do that again.”

Finally, and truly, this meant finally, Dawn drew the pants up her legs and into place. Because the waistline was stretchy it slipped right over her figure. The legs hugged her calves and the crotch area wasn’t too tight either. Though, it accentuated her bum, just like her normal jeans did. That...and they accentuated something else.

“Do...Doesn’t my crotch look a little puffed out?” Dawn asked with concern, watching in the mirror. She didn’t remember her pelvis being extruded by that much. It was subtle, but noticeable nonetheless.

“Hm?” Katherine looked with a curious smile. “Oh! That’s because of your...”

“Th-the pull-ups?”

“Yep! Isn’t it nice? That way even if you’re wearing-- wait, Dawn? What are you doing?” She was already taking them off.

“I’m not wearing a stupid pull-up.” This was the last straw. Not only did she want pants to hide her own bare skin, but she was hoping to hide this sorry excuse for underwear as well! What was the point if the pants were only going to accentuate her immaturity? That meant the only solution was to go commando underneath.

“Dawn, you have to wear something for underwear. What if you--”

“I’m not going to have an accident!” Dawn snapped. “I’m an adult! I don’t wet myself! I get that you’re trying to help me, but please listen to me for once!”

Katherine was quiet for a moment. She wasn’t feeding into Dawn’s anger, she wasn’t giving the kind of challenge the girl was expecting. It was the exact opposite to fanning a flame.

Then, she did speak. “Are you ready to talk?”

“Wh-what? I’ve been talking this whole time!”

“Dawn, James and I have been trying to help you this entire time. That hasn’t changed. But if this is going to work, I need you to start cooperating, sweetie.”

Why? First she’d been driven to tears and panic, but now it was all just balls of red, fiery flames. If she cared so much, why wasn’t she trying to see it through Dawn’s perspective? No, she’d been cooperating for long enough. The only thing that was going to happen was Katherine having a paradigm shift.

“Or else what? You’ll spank me?” Even she surprised herself. It was in the heat of the moment, and she knew for a fact she didn’t mean that. She wouldn’t on her life call a bluff like that. Not if she were sane. But the damage was done. She’d been so fixed on Katherine’s one-track mind, all she could consider was what the most generic Amazon would do, and lord did she hope Katherine wasn’t what she thought she was.

For once, the woman genuinely did look restrained, and that started to scare Dawn to no end. Instant regret painted her face.

Katherine looked stern. “No, I’m not going to spank you, even if some Amazons might think you deserve it. I understand things are very difficult for you right now, but a temper tantrum isn’t going to solve anything. You can get mad, but you’re going to do it here. I’ll talk to you when you’ve calmed down, but you have to wear a pull-up. That will not change.” Lecturing Dawn, her final words came like a guillotine.

There was no coming punishment, and Dawn felt an inexplicable relief for that. But the more Katherine spoke, Dawn seemed to find her gusto again. Some of her choice words were simply too belittling, too aggravating to ignore. Temper tantrum? Calm down? Having to wear a pull-up?

Dawn ‘tsked’ with her tongue. She was a more composed kind of angry now. Stepping out of her pull-up, she flung it against the wall, hitting it with a dry smack. Sitting herself on the ground cross-legged, somehow even more naked than when she first came in the store, she did her best to keep her feelings lively and energetic, just so she wouldn’t forget this rage. She couldn’t forget this feeling because it correlated with her very passion to stay as an adult.

Katherine wasn't giving in either. In a much more relaxed motion, she sat herself down on the wooden seat opposite to her. Her passive attitude only angered Dawn more. So angry that she couldn't keep her words to herself anymore.

"Fuck you."