

Wide Open

March 2022

"Wai- no- no, no, no, this is all wrong! You- you can't do this! Wait, why's that thing coming closer?! No, please- stop! STOP! Get it away from me! Plea-*bbmmmmpphh!* Hub-*bbmmpphh!*"

As her eyes dilated in horror and the diabolical rubber device began inexorably to inflate within her mouth, the petite blonde realized that she might have made a mistake in coming here. A horrible, horrible mistake.

Joanne Turner was quite the capable young reporter: blonde, attractive, petite, with a winning smile and a spunky, can-do attitude that had served her well in landing her latest position. "Eyes Wide Open", the web-based news site was called, and as its name implied, it was all about investigative journalism. Want to know what it was really like in that creepy cult out in Nevada? They'd find out. Ever wonder where your recycling went after it left your house? Their reporters would trace it start to finish – and document it all for their avid readers.

Today, Joanne's latest news assignment was to visit a new correctional facility: a private installation, and part of the latest trend toward privatizing the penal system in her state. There wasn't a whole lot of information to go on, beyond simply being told to go and see what it was like inside. And so she'd brainstormed a list of questions beforehand: What sort of life would inmates have? Would they be allowed community service opportunities? How was the food? And was there anything scandalous in how they dealt with insubordinate inmates?

She was about to find out.

"Of course. If you insist," her guide Liv – a tall, uniformed, and well-built woman – had assented upon hearing the more tactfully worded version of her last question. "Now, we've only just finished with installing a state-of-the-art corrective ward. It's not even done going through inspections yet. But if you're absolutely sure..."

Of course she was sure! She was Joanne Turner, investigative reporter. She wouldn't let a little thing like inspections get in her way!

And so she found herself stepping into the gleaming white of a pristine, clinically sterile room that

resembled nothing so much as a dentist's office. In the center rested what looked like an examination chair, surrounded on all sides by odd and frankly incomprehensible tools: wires, tubes, hinging arms, screens... *And wait*, she pondered with a sudden surge of apprehensive curiosity. *Was that a harness installed in that chair? Why would there need to be so many... straps?*

"It's completely new and revolutionary," Liv reiterated with a polite smile upon seeing Joanne's quizzical expression. "Now, of course I can't go into all the details. But essentially, I'm told it works through a novel biofeedback mechanism linked with the inmate's diet, mental state, and other important factors to result in the most positive and useful corrective outcomes. After all, it makes so little sense to correct an inmate without even knowing whether it will benefit them..."

Joanne found herself nodding along, though the sight before her still seemed more than a little intimidating. Adapting corrective measures to fit the individual's needs – that only made sense. It seemed logical – humane, even. So modern and sensible.

"Now I know it's hard to explain all that without a good deal of jargon," Liv continued with an apologetic smile. "And like I said, it hasn't gone through all the certifications just yet. But my boss says you're more than welcome to try it out, if you like..."

Why was it that Joanne found herself agreeing? "Um, okay!" she heard herself say brightly. "I mean, I investigate things for a living! I wouldn't be a very good reporter if I didn't dare try it... right?" Her guide laughed – and before she quite knew what was happening, Joanne found herself being escorted forward and gingerly taking a seat on the plastic-covered steel chair, which she now saw hinged and seemed capable of folding in the most unusual ways. "Now, then!" Liv admonished, reaching forward with deft hands. "Just for safety, of course... here, let me get those buckles for you..."

Five minutes later, Joanne was securely seated: heart thumping, casting anxious glances down at her now snugly fastened limbs and torso, and twisting her head carefully as she felt the rat's-nest of electrodes now twined into her hair tugging softly with her every movement. What she'd thought was a harness had turned out to be "optional", per her guide; what was most important was to keep her hands and feet still, and to connect those electrodes firmly to catch her brainwaves. Oh, and then there was the augmented reality headset, really nothing more than a heavy pair of glasses with conductive audio capabilities...

All those tech specs didn't matter at all now. Not anymore. Not now that the machine was running.

The captive Joanne gulped and panted, willing herself not to vomit with terror as the devices around her continued their horrific and sinuous dance. The thing that had just affixed itself in her mouth was truly revolting: a sort of elephant-like grey trunk, muscular and autonomous and veined with wires and tubes, snaking their way up and disappearing out of sight above her. Its end – the rubbery tip of which had just slipped past her pursed lips and blossomed within – seemed to have taken an irrevocable hold of her and sealed itself into her mouth like a giant parasite. For inside her bulging mouth, behind her lips but resting in front of her trembling teeth and gums, was what felt like a flat, rubbery disc – and against it, sealed tightly against her cheeks and lips, was a matching rubbery plate. Her lips had been pinched securely between... and now she sat there, mouth clamped tightly shut and sealed fast to the parasitic trunk before her.

Silenced. Silenced and ready to be fed... anything.

"Mmmmm-bbbmmm!" she moaned again, straining now against the cuffs that had been secured to her wrists and ankles – "just for security purposes." But it was no use. She was stuck here – trapped – a prisoner of this hideous contraption. And worst of all, that bitch Liv had silently disappeared, leaving her here to whatever horrible punishment this thing was set to inflict on her.

No, no, she told herself, fighting back the panic. They wouldn't hurt her, surely. This was a humane invention. Liv had probably just gone to pull the kill switch or whatever. Worst case scenario, she'd probably just be stuck here for a bit while they figured out what had gone wrong.

Oh, but how long would that be? At this rate, she'd be stuck here for hours... trapped... forced to sit there... She'd get thirsty first... she'd need to pee... she'd have to hold it until- until- God, she hoped it wouldn't come to that! No way in hell she'd end up peeing herself- Not like that time last summer when she'd been stuck in that stupid escape room-

"Sweetheart, it seems you're... *afraid* of something," came a voice, smooth and feminine and so unexpected that she nearly pissed herself right then and there. It was the voice in her conductive VR set, its glasses ordinarily transparent but beginning to fog over and grow dark before her wide eyes. "You're afraid... of something in particular right now. I see it in your thoughts. I know what you're afraid of."

Holy fuck, this is messed up! How- how can it- No, surely it can't-

"My job is to bring you face to face with those fears," the voice echoed now, and she shuddered as the tube in her mouth began pulsing rhythmically. "You're in corrective treatment, after all. And there's nothing that will correct you better than bringing you face to face with your fears..."

The VR headset was fading to black now, and Joanne whimpered softly into the darkness as the first sudden spurt of liquid entered her mouth. This tube- oh, god. It was a feeding tube: a tube sealed firmly into her poor mouth, and from which she would have no choice but to gulp and choke and swallow whatever it chose to feed her.

Calm down, she told herself fiercely. At least the stuff didn't taste too bad. And she was a bit thirsty, right? So nothing better than a hefty dose of apple juice to quench her thirst...

But then, as the liquid kept streaming and the seconds ticked agonizingly by into minutes, Joanne began to whimper and squirm once more in her bonds, her brain filling with truly terrifying thoughts. What if- what if it didn't shut off? What if she'd be stuck here? What if she really did end up pissing herself, despite her best efforts? God, that would be horrific! Her coworker Jared already teased her about being so small... called her little sis sometimes... asked if she didn't need a car seat. The last thing she needed to do was show up back at the office with soaked pants! He'd be sure to laugh at her, maybe even call her a baby...

"Oh, what's this?" And she could have sworn the robotic voice was smiling. "You're drinking quite a lot, aren't you? So I suppose it's only natural that you're afraid again. Afraid not only of losing control and wetting yourself... but of being thought a baby? How... amusing."

A whirring and clicking filled the room, and more whirring and pulsing as gears hummed and the apparatus in which the now-blinded Joanne was seated began to shift and morph. Cuffed as she was, she could only hang there, mute and gulping still as the chair beneath her stretched upward, pulling her gently into a half-standing, half-squatting position. Her legs, captive in their cuffs, spread quietly away from one another. The seat beneath her disappeared, hinging down and away, and soon there she hung: squatting inelegantly in space, still gulping and shuddering as the flow of liquid continued relentlessly into her mouth and down to her uncomfortably full belly.

"There's nothing else to do, of course," came the voice once more, and she let out a gurgling wail of terror at the touch of cold metal against her skin. "Off with those clothes. And on with something far more suitable for a baby like you. That's what you fear, isn't it? Being thought of as just a baby girl, gulping and drinking and ready to piddle all over herself... So helpless... so infantile..."

She was panting, wild-eyed behind the headset, shuddering as the shears cut crisply and precisely through every single article of clothing on her petite frame. Shirt? Gone. Padded A-cup bra? Sheared in half. Slim-cut dress pants? Tumbling down to the floor, to be joined by her pale pink panties.

When the diaper came, she could hardly do more than hyperventilate and shiver with mute, stomach-twisting horror.

"Oh, you *are* afraid of that, aren't you?" the voice intoned, and now she could feel the chair returning to its normal position. Her skin was crawling with disgust, recoiling at the sensation of the cotton and plastic now wrapped around her, her mind filled with horrified thoughts of what she must look like now. "Afraid of being thought a baby. Afraid of being humiliated... stripped... laughed at and exposed..." And now the thing within her mouth seemed to be shifting, morphing, curiously twisting and elongating in a truly terrifying manner. "Don't worry. I know how to help with that... you pathetic, naked, helpless little diaper *baby*."

And with a quick, rubbery pulse, the tube within her mouth finished its transformation. No longer was it a simple hollow tube affixed to her trembling lips. Now there seemed to be something long... girthy... rubbery... protruding from it and penetrating deep into her mouth. Already it was oozing a strange liquid unlike the juice she'd already been forcibly gorged on. The milky substance that now filled her mouth was sweet... oily... cloying and creamy and unmistakably infantile.

It was formula, and the device within her mouth, she now realized with a fresh burst of revulsion, was nothing less than a giant, grotesquely oversized baby bottle nipple.

"Drink up, baby," the voice intoned, and with a pastel flash of light, the screen before her lit up with the unmistakable image of... her. Suckling a giant bottle. Lying in a crib, naked save for a bulging diaper between her splayed legs. Gazing blankly back into the camera... and into her own terrified gaze.

"Drink," it repeated, and Joanne gulped in terror as the creamy stream filled her mouth and almost choked her. "With every gulp – with every swallow – you show the world what a baby you are. Gulp, baby. Fill your belly... and fill your bladder. And that diaper you're so ashamed of will swell and fill... just like you fear. Your worst nightmares are going to come true now, sweetheart. You're going to lose control... fill your diaper... like a helpless little baby..."

No! Gotta stop thinking- Can't think about- No, not exactly like a baby. Babies- they do more than wet-

"Oh, yes, you're right!" came the smiling voice, echoing around her as Joanne gulped and jerked and writhed desperately in her bonds. "They do far more than wet their diapers. They poop themselves, too. Full diapers... messy diapers... babies don't care. And neither will you, Joanne. For that is another fear of yours... and another that will come true before you are allowed to leave..."

Was it her imagination, or was there a greasy taste of oil now filling her aching, gulping mouth?

And so, as the minutes ticked by and the machinery whirred and hummed in quiet efficiency, the now-naked, diaper-clad, and bloated reporter sagged in shuddering defeat down into the seat, her giant diaper bulging and crinkling beneath her. Before her eyes now swam vision after vision of the infantile world the machine wanted her to confront, and already she felt the first desperate spurts of urine dribbling from her aching, reluctant bladder. And still, now and again would come a fresh spurt of milky formula flooding into her open mouth, and she would obediently suck it down, the greasy taste of fear and humiliation coating her captive tongue...

There was no telling how long this would last – and she dared not think on it any further. For with every fresh fear, every new terrifying thought, she now understood all too well that this diabolical machine would sense it and prey upon it. She was now a prisoner of her own fears... and one who would not be set free until she collapsed, sobbing and soggy and filthy in her loaded diaper, to the sterile floor of the correction room.

Now that was the sort of investigation that one didn't make every day.