**Danny’s Friend Alex**

**By Elfy**

“Why are we even doing this?” DJ asked as the four friends walked along the pavement.

“Because he’s our friend.” Alex replied.

“Come on, DJ…” Luke said as he kicked a rock along the path, “You’ve got to admit it’s funny.”

“It’s freaking hilarious.” Owen laughed.

“Guys…” Alex sighed.

The lack of confidence was seeping through his voice. Alex was feebly attempting to rally the small group behind his long time school friend Danny. This was more than simply trying to get behind one of his friends. This was about not letting this precedent be set for others as well. Alex knew this deep inside and had heard that this could happen to the weakest of individuals, but only if they let it.

Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea after all. It had taken a lot of convincing from Alex to get the group to give Danny a chance but he was having second thoughts and they hadn’t even reached the house yet.

It had been only a couple of days ago that Alex and his friends had suddenly seen Danny in, well, there was no other way to describe it but a baby seat. He had been clearly diapered and looked more like a baby than the eighteen-year-old man he was supposed to be. The first reactions had been of shock, the friends asking each other if they had truly seen what they thought they’d seen.

The guys had already been on a high since school was finishing and they had the weekend stretching out before them. That evening and the next day Alex, DJ, Luke and Owen had met up at the park to talk about everything. Alex had expected more compassion from his friends but they found Danny’s situation funny more than anything.

This all did not seem to come at a surprise to anybody. Everyone seemed to have an entirely different opinion of Danny now. These were shared amongst the teenagers without any consideration for Danny, or the chance for him to defend himself. Alex was the one voice suggesting they give Danny a chance much to the mockery of his friends.

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In truth Alex had suspected something had been up for quite a while. Danny had changed quite a bit. He used to be a major part of their group, he would stay over with the others, hang out, play games and generally be normal. Then something changed. All of a sudden Danny became quieter, he started avoiding his friends. A couple of times Alex had found him practically hiding in one of the bathrooms or in the library. Danny became evasive and wouldn’t answer any questions, he started making up excuses as to why he couldn’t hang out. To Alex’s sorrow he watched his best friend basically push everyone else away.

There was no way Alex or anyone else could’ve possibly predicted what the reason for all this strange behaviour was. He still didn’t really understand what was going on. Sure they had seen Danny dressed up in such a peculiar fashion but they had no idea why he was like that. As usual recently Danny was completely ignoring any attempts to communicate. That was why the four of them were now headed towards Danny’s house.

“You know we could just go and play basketball, right?” DJ said, “Or baseball… Or football… Or literally anything.”

“No way. I’m with Alex.” Owen responded to Alex’s surprise, “I want to see Danny and make sure we didn’t have some weird group hallucination.”

“He’s our friend.” Alex said again, “We don’t know what’s going on. Maybe he needs our help or support.”

“Yeah, well, I’m not changing him.” Luke laughed.

“Gross…” DJ scowled and then fake retched, “How could you even think about that?”

Alex tried to stop himself being visibly alarmed by the lack of restraint offered by the boys’ comments. It felt like a sensitive situation but his friends weren’t troubling to keep their voices down or really consider Danny at all.

Out of the group of friends Alex had known Danny the longest. They had originally met in kindergarten and for whatever reason had gravitated to each other. They were best friends through elementary school, middle school and high school. They’d even discussed going to the same college together before Danny had become distant.

Alex just didn’t understand why Danny looked the way he did when they had seen him in the car. There had been an incident a long time ago that Alex had practically forgotten about but since last seeing Danny he couldn’t stop thinking about it.

Alex couldn’t remember how old they’d been but they were definitely still in elementary school. Danny was sleeping over that night and they had been playing some board game. Even as a kid Alex could tell Danny was acting a little strangely. It all became clear when Danny finally spoke up.

“You… You know your little brother?” The young Danny had asked.

“Yeah?” Alex replied.

“Does he still wear diapers?” Danny had practically whispered his question.

“He’s potty training.” Alex answered, “He wears them at night and sometimes during the day if he has an accident.”

Danny had fallen silent after those questions though it still seemed like he was wrestling with something. Alex had left the room to go to the bathroom shortly afterwards. It was the late evening and winter time so it was pretty dark. Downstairs he could hear the faint noise of the television his parents were watching whilst his younger brother was already in bed. When he came back into the bedroom he found Danny red-faced and rapidly tapping his foot.

“Maybe we should try wearing diapers.” Danny’s words were said so quickly it was almost as if each syllable was chasing the previous one past his lips.

“Huh? Why?” Alex had asked.

“It might be fun…” Danny muttered as he shrugged his shoulders.

“My mom might get cross if she found out.” Alex replied.

“OK.” Danny was looking down at the floor. His disappointment had been obvious.

Alex didn’t remember a lot about what happened for the rest of that evening. Eventually they went to bed. Alex was fast asleep when he heard movement from the camp bed set up in the middle of the room for Danny. He opened his eyes a little to see his guest creeping towards the door. The landing light was still on and as Danny left the bedroom Alex sat up.

With a frown Alex quietly walked to his door and peered around the frame. To his surprise he saw Danny going down the landing to his brother’s bedroom. Danny seemed to hesitate at the door before finally opening it and walking inside.

Alex waited with baited breath to see what was going to happen. Just as he was considering going to his brother’s room himself to make sure everything was alright Danny walked back out and closed the door behind him. Alex quickly got back into bed and pretended to be asleep as Danny came back in. It was difficult to see what he was holding thanks to the low light but when Danny turned towards the light Alex could see he had three diapers and was hurriedly stuffing them in his bag.

“I don’t know why you insist we don’t tell anyone what we saw either.” Luke said to Alex.

Alex snapped back out of his memories and looked around. He had been so lost in thought he hadn’t been paying any attention to what was going on around him. They were getting near to Danny’s house now and he found himself feeling nervous, he wasn’t sure why he felt that way.

“Because Danny’s our friend.” Alex said simply, “How would you like it if people spread rumours about you?”

“Rumours!?” Luke responded with a harsh bark of a laugh, “We SAW him in diapers!”

“Yeah, not to mention half the school is already talking about it.” Owen added.

The tone in their voice was so firm and undeniable, like they were informing to a grown up about the behaviour of a younger sibling, or better yet, a baby. Alex could not deny the fact they were right, and seeing Danny in diapers was very self-explanatory.

“We owe it to Danny to give him a chance.” Alex sighed, “There could be a rational explanation for everything.” His voice sounding like weak optimism.

Alex wasn’t sure he believed what he was saying but it was enough to stop his friends from actively turning around and going home so that felt like a victory. He didn’t know what they would find at Danny’s house but could only pray it would be some sense of normalcy, that there was some way for everything to go back to how it had been before Danny had become distant.

With the four friends walking on to Danny’s street Alex was thinking heavily about the other reason he had been so against Danny’s suggestion of trying out diapers. There was indeed more to his plan and he had a grand objective, even as selfish as it was. Alex had a deep secret, similar to Danny's, although one he could not help and he hadn’t talked about with anyone. Something only his parents knew about.

It was true that Alex’s brother had been potty training during that time but what Alex had left out was that those weren’t the only diapers in the house. The whole time Danny had this clear interest in diapers he didn’t realise there was a pile of them hidden in a corner of Alex’s closet.

Alex had always had a problem with bed wetting. Thankfully it had never been a continuous thing but sometimes he would go through little periods where he needed to wear protection to bed. He had always kept that as secret as possible and was grateful that no one had ever found out. The occasional bed wetting was deeply embarrassing but at least he was now at an age where his parents trusted him to look after it himself when he went through those periods. He always thought it was stress that brought it on so when he was feeling tense he would often wear protection as a precaution, often it was proven to be a good decision on his part.

As much as Alex’s parents trusted him to handle his bed wetting they were also quite the disciplinarians. His mother especially took no nonsense from either of her children. It was made clear to him often that although Alex could diaper himself if he ended up wetting the bed sheets things could change quickly. It was enough to make sure Alex padded up whenever he felt the slightest bit more stressed than usual.

Alex had read that there were indeed young adults, delinquents, wayward youths and immature undeveloped boys who had their independence completely stripped from them and were well under the control of their nominated carers, mostly their mother or aunty.

Once Alex knew this was happening to Danny, instead of displaying sympathy for his friend’s status and situation, he immediately and selfishly cared more about his potential problems in the future. If this could happen to someone he knew, then it could certainly happen to him. He shuddered as he imagined ending up like his friend. Although he was the only one of the friends wanting to give Danny a chance he was also the one with the most at stake.

The previous evening Alex had laid in bed staring at the ceiling for hours. Tentative plans to visit Danny had been made but they were flimsy and Alex knew if he wavered the whole plan would fall apart.

“NO.” Alex had said to himself in his own bed that night, whilst feeling the pull-up style night-time diaper between his legs, “I am going to go over there and try and put a stop to this nonsense.”

“Who’s going to knock?” DJ asked, “And can I wait outside?”

Alex was looking at Danny’s house and feeling nervousness coursing through him. He could feel adrenaline pumping and the urge to run was getting stronger. His fight or flight response was leaning dangerously towards flight.

“If I have to go in, you have to go in.” Luke said.

“We’re all going in.” Alex said authoritatively.

Alex opened the gate and started walking down the garden path to the front door. He looked back twice to make sure everyone was with him. They hadn’t been able to get in contact with Danny and so were turning up unannounced. There was every chance they would just be turned around. Maybe that would be for the best after all.

Alex hesitated for a second before pressing on the doorbell. He heard it chiming inside the house. He was nervous that after all of this they would be turned away at the door. It had taken a lot to get the rest of the group to give Danny a chance, if they were turned away he doubted they would come again. Yet he was just as nervous that they would be allowed in. When he heard footsteps inside he felt his pulse quicken.

The door opened to the house opened and Alex instantly recognised his best friend’s mother, Sarah. She broke into a wide smile when she saw her son’s friends standing on her porch.

“Hello boys.” Sarah said happily, “This is a pleasant surprise.”

“Hello.” The boys all responded.

Alex was always a bit mesmerised by the attractiveness of Danny's stepmother. She was wearing a snug pencil skirt that helped accent her curvy hips and narrow waist. Sarah had an hourglass figure with long silky black hair pulled back, clearly to help prevent it from getting in front of her eyes whilst she was busy. Her face was very pretty, but her eyes and lips had a commanding gaze about them. Her presence demanded respect.

There was an almost instantaneously awkward silence. It was obvious Sarah was waiting for someone to say why they were there and no one seemed to want to say anything. Alex knew this was his idea and he should grab the initiative it was just very embarrassing. He felt like what he really should be doing was demanding answers for any of the huge amount of questions they all had.

“We were just wondering if we could see Danny…” Alex asked. His voice kind of trailed off at the end.

“Of course.” Sarah replied enthusiastically, “It’s been too long since he had a play date!”

“A… play date?” DJ scowled, “Alright, I’m out-…”

Alex turned around and DJ stopped mid-sentence. He rolled his eyes and leaned against the wall but he wasn’t walking away so that seemed like a win. Sarah stepped aside and Alex was the first of the friends to step inside the house.

The fact that something was different was immediately obvious to Alex. The air smelled different than it did in his own house, it unlocked forgotten memories from his past. He flashed back to when his younger sibling had been a baby and the house always had a slight scent of baby powder and wipes. Probably quite hard to notice to those that didn’t have younger siblings.

“He’s in the living room.” Sarah said, “You’ll have to excuse me. I’m just getting lunch ready.”

Sarah walked away leaving Alex at the head of the friend group in front of the living room door. Alex looked at the others and received only shrugs in response. Owen had his phone out like he was ready to take pictures, when he saw Alex looking he mouthed “What?”

Alex put his hand on the handle and felt like his palm was sweaty. He was losing confidence with each step and felt responsible for making sure this went well. He had dreams of bringing all the friends back together regardless of the situation Danny found himself in. He had no idea how he would accomplish that.

With a deep breath Alex pushed the handle down and let the door swing open. The scene that met his eyes took a second to process. The first thing he realised was that his nose tweaked when hit with the aroma of the infantile environment that lay ahead. It was undeniable and made him feel smaller just from being inside the space. He could smell the powder, he could recognise the scent of freshly wiped plastic in odd places. This was a room for a baby.

The living room was now dominated by a large playpen that was filled with toys. Alex walked into the room like a zombie and looked around at a picture half-coloured in and a pile of blocks half-built into a tower. It was clear that not only were there toys in the playpen but they had all been played with.

The largest thing in the playpen was a young man lying on his front and facing away from the door. He was wearing a dark green t-shirt and below that was a big, bulky diaper. The padding at the bottom was discoloured slightly. Alex’s mouth dropped open as he stepped forwards and his friends fanned out around him.

Time seemed to hold for about half a minute. The boys felt slightly out of place in what was clearly the adult baby's natural habitat. The pastel colours and soft edged toys displayed everywhere made everyone who entered the room immediately look down on Danny and see him for nothing more than the baby who belonged within. That is everyone except Alex.

“Hey, Freak…” Alex recognised the girl sitting on the couch. She had been in the car when they had seen Danny dressed as a baby. She was new at school.

“Rebecca… I’ve told you not to call him that.” A woman closer to Sarah’s age said from the armchair at the back of the room.

“I’m just calling them as I see them.” Rebecca replied with a shrug. She rolled her eyes exaggeratedly when her mom continued to look at her, “Danny, I think you have visitors.”

Throughout the little back and forth Danny hadn’t looked up from whatever he was doing on the floor. Alex couldn’t take his eyes off the prone form of his best friend and judging from the silence around him his friends were similarly speechless.

Alex watched as Danny looked over his shoulder. The colour seem to literally drain from his face as he saw all his friends staring at him. He spun around and sat up, his desperate attempts to pull his shirt down to cover his padded state was as hopeless as it was late.

“Holy crap…” DJ muttered.

“I’ll leave you boys to it.” The older woman said as she stood up with a smile, “I’m sure Sarah could use my help in the kitchen.”

The older woman left the room but Rebecca remained in her seat. She seemed keen to watch what happened next. Alex found it kind of tasteless, as if she was waiting for fireworks. There was a long silence.

“Hey…” Alex said to Danny. He nodded his head to where the woman had been standing, “Who was that?”

“My… My Nanny.” Danny practically whispered.

Beside him Alex heard Luke snort which seemed to set Owen off as well. Neither of them did a very good job of holding in their laughter. Alex kept his eyes on his obviously humiliated friend. It looked like Danny was on the verge of tears, he couldn’t look anyone in the eye and he was blushing furiously. Alex wasn’t sure what to do or say, he hadn’t thought this far ahead.

“You’re the freak’s friends?” Rebecca asked.

“Yeah.” Owen replied before anyone else.

“Surprised he has any.” Rebecca said.

“Oh, we didn’t know about this!” DJ was quick to point out.

Alex didn’t like the way this conversation was going but he wasn’t sure how to change it. They were talking about Danny as if he couldn’t understand them, as if he hadn’t been their friend for years. As he looked at Danny he felt a complex mix of emotions but chief among them was compassion. Whatever was going on he didn’t think it was right to talk to or about him like this.

There was an awkward silence and Alex felt a lot of pressure to end it. He just wasn’t sure how to go about doing that. He had no idea what he could say that would defuse a potentially explosive situation. The second-hand embarrassment was very strong.

“If you hang around you’ll see his feeding soon.” Rebecca smirked.

“His feeding?” Luke repeated.

“Just wait until you see his highchair.” Rebecca replied.

As Luke, DJ and Owen burst into laughter Alex saw his best friend going even redder in the face. He was looking around as if there was a safe place to run to, it was very obvious there simply wasn’t. Like an animal in the zoo Danny was trapped with nowhere to escape the people gawking at him.

“Well it would be a shame to miss that.” Owen said.

Alex watched as the other three visitors walked in and sat down on the seats around the room. They were seemingly committed to watching the humiliation, even DJ seemed keen not to miss out. In contrast Alex wished he had never suggested coming here, or at least that he had simply come here alone.

“C-Can I go in there?” Alex asked Rebecca.

“In there?” Rebecca frowned, “In the playpen? Sure, I mean, he isn’t a wild animal.”

Alex tried to ignore the strange looks he was getting as he unhooked the latch on the playpen’s gate and opened it up. He could tell Daniel had the urge to take the time to run away. He stepped inside and closed the gate behind him. He walked over and then sat down opposite his friend.

“Hello.” Alex said. He tried a smile but it was a struggle.

“Hi…” Danny’s reply was little more than a whisper.

“Are you going to play with his toys too?” DJ laughed.

“Of course not!” Alex retorted in annoyance. He started thinking this wasn’t a good idea but he wanted to be closer to his friend.

Rebecca started telling the others some stories of what Danny had been up to as Alex looked his friend up and down. He had never seen such a bizarre sight. The man he had known for so long looked totally different like this. Alex’s gaze stopped on the diaper Danny was wearing, the wetness indicator had very clearly changed colour.

Alex obviously recognised what that meant from his own encounters with diapers. His bed wetting produced similar results. He wanted to talk to Danny but that was next to impossible with everyone else around, there was no way to have a normal conversation like this. He wasn’t even sure he should talk to Danny like he normally did, you don’t ask the baby about the weather or sport after all.

For the next few minutes Alex could do little but listen to his friends laughing at Rebecca’s stories and try not to stare at his friend so openly. With the others all chatting rather animatedly Alex decided to risk talking to Danny.

“How are you?” Alex asked quietly.

Danny didn’t reply. His face was as red as a tomato. He didn’t need to say anything, this was clearly one of the most humiliating moments of his life and judging by the way he was living that was quite a high bar to pass.

Danny was saved from replying by the door opening. Alex turned around to see Danny’s mom standing in the doorway. She looked around smiling before she saw Alex in the playpen.

“Alex, having fun with my baby?” Sarah asked with a big smile.

“N-No… I mean, yes… I…” Alex was left very flustered. He wanted to support his friend but he didn’t want his friends to think he was weird as well.

“You look like you’d fit Danny’s diapers, maybe it would be a good time for a proper play date!” Sarah joked.

What Sarah had said was obviously intended as a joke but Alex found himself flushing with heat regardless. There was no way she could possibly no about Alex’s occasional problem… Was there? Alex forced himself to laugh as well just to deflect unwanted attention.

“Well, it’s Danny’s lunch time.” Sarah finally continued, “The rest of you are welcome to stay for sandwiches.”

“Mommy, please…” Danny spoke up.

“It’s alright baby. You’ll get your num-nums soon.” Sarah interrupted.

Hearing such childish words coming from Danny and his Mom took Alex aback. He stood up as Sarah unhooked the gate to the pen. Everyone started to make their way towards the kitchen which would surely be very busy. Alex looked back at Danny and saw him slowly climb to his feet, he was trying to pull his shirt down to hide the diaper but it was impossible.

“Ooh, you’re wet already.” Sarah said as she looked at the exposed disposable, “And I just changed you an hour ago.”

Owen and Luke couldn’t stop their laughter but Sarah either didn’t notice or was ignoring them. She walked past Alex and over to her son. To Danny’s obvious horror she placed her hand on the plastic shell of the diaper. It was a very obvious diaper check. It reminded Alex of his younger brother when he had been pre-potty training, in fact this check seemed to be no different at all. It even included Danny’s mom pulling the back of the diaper away from Danny’s skin and looking down.

“Mommy!” Danny cringed, “I’m not poopy!”

“Well I have to check!” Sarah replied. As she let go of the diaper she gave Danny two swift pats on the butt.

Every time Alex thought he couldn’t be more shocked he was swiftly proven wrong. He was mortified for his friend but not a little disgusted himself. Danny pooped himself? That was something he barely allowed himself to believe. It seemed DJ was thinking similarly as he looked like he might actually throw up.

“You know what, I’ve seen enough… I’m out of here.” DJ said, “I’m going to the mall or something… anywhere but here.”

“Oh, can I tag along?” Rebecca asked, “I think some of my friends are shopping.”

“Sure, I guess.” DJ replied, “Do you need to ask your mom first?”

“Ha!” Rebecca barked out a laugh, “I’m not a baby.”

Alex saw that Danny almost physically winced at Rebecca’s harsh words. He wondered if he should try to convince DJ to stay but he had no idea what those words might be and as Rebecca walked out into the hall to get her shoes he remained silent. It wasn’t long until DJ and Rebecca had left the house. Sarah led the way out of the living room, Luke and Owen were behind her followed by Alex and then Danny brought up the rear. Alex was looking back at his friend when he heard both his fellow visitors start laughing and exclaiming. He saw why immediately.

“Excuse me.” Danny said quietly as he squeezed past Alex.

Alex heard Danny crinkling very loudly as he waddled out across the kitchen floor and around to the far side of the table. Instead of a normal seat there was a large highchair. Painted immaculately white but with a baby blue padded seat the highchair was very obviously meant for babies but had been somehow adapted for an eighteen-year-old to use.

“This is too much.” Luke was shaking his head.

“This is surely some sort of prank, right?” Owen added, “You’re fucking around with us?”

“Language!” Sarah exclaimed from the kitchen counter.

“Sorry…” Owen muttered, “I forgot that there are babies present.”

Alex didn’t take his eyes off Danny. The diapered boy clambered on to the baby chair and turned around to sit down. He looked humiliated beyond belief as his clearly wet diaper stuck out, it was impossible for him to cover himself up no matter how much he tried. Alex couldn’t take his eyes off the wetness indicator, most of which had changed from yellow to blue.

“Sit down, everyone.” Sarah said cheerily, “I’ll have sandwiches whipped up in a minute.”

Alex was still staring at Danny’s crotch as the others sat down. He couldn’t believe he was really seeing what was in front of him. Even on the walk here he half-expected to find that they had all made a mistake in think their friend was in diapers. There was no way Danny could really be in diapers after all. It was ludicrous. Yet Danny was not only in diapers but it appeared he was treated as a complete baby. Everything from his red cheeks to the little socks on his feet screamed overgrown toddler.

“It’s rude to stare.” Owen smirked.

Alex looked to the side where his friend was sitting and looking at him with confusion. He forced a smile on to his face and sat down in the seat opposite Danny. He could see that Danny was looking at him but every time he looked back the diapered man was quick to avert his eyes.

“Here you all go.” Sarah said as she carried a tray full of sandwiches and orange juice over to the table, “Help yourselves everyone.”

Owen and Luke needed no encouragement as they reached for the sandwiches. Alex, on the other hand was looking at Sarah who had gone back to the counter. When she turned around it was with a small bowl in one hand and a baby bottle in the other. She walked over and placed the food on the tray of Danny’s highchair and then sat down next to him.

It looked like Danny was on the verge of tears as his mom took the spoon and stirred the steaming contents of the bowl. Just as it looked like Sarah was about to lift the spoon towards Danny’s face she paused and held up a finger indicating for Danny to wait a moment. She went back to the counter and this time opened a drawer underneath. When she returned it was to behind Danny.

“Danny can be a messy eater.” Sarah explained.

A bib fluttered down on to Danny’s chest. It was white and had a picture of a colourful steam train at the bottom, the tracks were doing a lap around the large chest-sized cloth. Above the train, written in childish letters were the words “Open Up For The Choo-Choo.” Needless to say Owen and Luke both found it very funny. Alex shook his head from disbelief.

Alex reached for his sandwiches and started eating them. They were indeed delicious just like every other time Danny’s mom had prepared him something. He looked up from his food and across the table just in time to see Sarah holding up a spoonful of food for Danny to eat. Danny opened his mouth hesitantly and accepted the food. He scrunched his face up as he quickly swallowed whatever it was he was being fed.

“Does… Does he always eat like that?” Luke asked.

“Usually.” Sarah replied without pausing from feeling Danny another spoonful, “Sometimes I let him feed himself but I know he likes it when Mommy helps him.”

In Alex’s opinion it seemed like Danny wanted nothing LESS than being fed like this. He looked humiliated and disgusted. Alex guessed that whatever was in that bowl it didn’t taste particularly nice.

The sandwiches were nice but gone quite quickly as Owen and Luke reached for seconds before Alex was even halfway through his own food. Unfortunately for Danny it meant that the other boys had little to do but watch as he slowly made his way through his own lunch. It felt like an age before Sarah was scraping up the last spoonful of food. True to her prediction Danny’s mouth and bib were smeared with bits of lunch that didn’t make it into his mouth.

“Can I get down now Mommy?” Danny asked quietly.

“Once you finish your bottle, baby.” Sarah replied.

“Please, Mommy. I-…” Danny started.

It was too late to argue, not that Alex thought arguing would do any good. Sarah was already standing up and picking up the tray to take to the sink. Danny eyed the bottle and looked like he didn’t want to touch it, as if drinking from the bottle would take this whole situation from acceptable to crazy.

“Go on, Danny.” Owen egged his friend on. He seemingly relished the humiliation being heaped on to Danny.

Danny picked the bottle up and Alex noticed it shook slightly in his hands. He put the nipple between his lips and started sucking. He closed his eyes as he drank as quickly as he could. Alex felt bad for his friend, he was being treated like an animal in the zoo. As he watched the scene himself he saw Luke take his phone out.

“Luke…” Alex said. His voice was imploring his friend not to make the situation worse.

“I just want to capture this for posterity.” Luke replied with a wicked smile.

A second later the phone mimicked the sound of an old camera taking a picture. Danny was startled and lowered his bottle to see Luke looking at the photo and smirking. He tried to reach out from his highchair but he was helplessly trapped by the tray.

“Send me that, would you?” Owen asked as Luke held up the screen showing the photo he took.

“No!” Danny’s voice whined, “Please…”

“With that, I’m leaving.” Luke said as he tapped the screen a few times and then stood up. His phone went into his back pocket.

“Leaving?” Alex repeated.

“You don’t think I want to sit around with a baby all day, do you?” Luke snorted.

“Mummy!” Danny cried desperately, “Make him delete the photo!”

“Don’t get fussy, baby.” Sarah replied without turning around, “It’s your nap time soon.”

Alex felt bad for Danny but he couldn’t help but notice just how pathetic he was. Sat in his wet diaper with food all over him he was reaching out still but the tray made it impossible to reach anything. The highchair was doing its job in restraining the occupant, it didn’t matter if the baby was eighteen-months-old or eighteen-years-old they were rendered effectively helpless. Danny looked at Alex with despairing eyes.

“Luke, maybe you should delete it…” Alex suggested. To his shame he found himself embarrassed to stick up for Danny, he was worried his other friends would judge him for it.

“Everyone knows already.” Luke casually tossed out making Danny whine again, “Nothing wrong with a bit of evidence.”

Alex knew Luke was right. The news of Danny’s diapered state was spreading like wildfire at the school and within the town. People knew Alex was Danny’s best friend as well which meant he was being inundated with questions on social media. Every time he checked he had people asking him if it was true, people he had never met were asking him for gossip.

“I’ll see you guys later.” Luke finally said.

As Luke left the kitchen Danny let out a long whine. It sounded a little different from the others though, this one seemed slightly pained and Alex noticed his friend was wincing. As the door closed behind Luke all eyes turned back towards Danny. His Mommy came back over from the counter just as Danny finished the bottle. She had a wet cloth in hand and started roughly cleaning Danny’s face much to his chagrin.

Alex found himself marvelling at just how babyish Danny really was. His mom was really going the full distance and it seemed even the most basic tasks had to be performed by someone else. Something like washing his face, a skill he would’ve developed at a young age was now beyond him, something he required adult help with.

Finally Danny was let out of the highchair. Weirdly despite all his complaining previously he didn’t seem all that keen to get down now. He was looking back and forth from Alex to Owen and wincing still.

“Down you get.” Sarah said as she lifted the tray out of the way, “You can play with your friends for a little bit before nap time.”

“Mummy… C-Can you make them leave?” Danny asked quietly.

“Danny!” Sarah shook her head and frowned, “That’s not way to talk to your friends. That’s very rude.”

“But they…” Danny started. It looked like he had tears in his eyes.

“I’m very sorry.” Sarah said to the other two eighteen-year-olds, “You’re both quite welcome to stay.”

“But I need to…” Danny started. It seemed like his whole face was going red.

“Are you really going to have a tantrum?” Sarah asked, “Do you need some quiet time in the corner?”

Danny looked utterly lost. He petulantly hit the sides of the highchair when his mom completely failed to listen to him. The second-hand embarrassment was very strong and Alex felt bad for watching but at the same time he found it impossible to turn away.

Alex watched as Danny reluctantly slid forwards and dropped to his feet on the floor. He immediately doubled over slightly. He let out a whine and Alex saw one of his hands go to the back of his diaper whilst the other covered his tummy. He saw Danny looking around desperately until he suddenly went very still.

“No…” Danny whined as his bottom lip trembled.

“Danny? Are… Are you OK?” Alex asked as Danny seemed to freeze in place.

Danny was staring into the middle-distance right next to where Owen was sitting. He seemed to be tensing up. After a few seconds he let out a tortured noise like a puppy when someone stepped on their tail. He sank down and bent his knees as his face went red and he whimpered. Alex stood up and walked to the side of the table, he wanted to see if his friend was alright.

“Danny?” Alex asked.

Danny’s whimpering stopped as he took a deep breath and held it. Alex saw his friend’s eyes flicker up to look at him before he closed them. He went very still and grunted. As Alex watched he was suddenly struck by how similar Danny was to his little brother when he was young. He remembered seeing his brother run out of the room or hide behind something and when Alex found him he was usually in this exact position… filling his diaper.

“What’s he doing?” Owen asked with a frown as he turned around in his chair.

Alex was mesmerised by the infantile sight in front of him. He couldn’t believe he was watching someone he had known for well over a decade pooping their diaper like a baby. He found himself walking closer to Danny as the diapered man remained crouched on the floor.

“What’s that smell…? Oh my god!” Owen suddenly exclaimed. He practically fell over in his rush to get out of his seat, “Nope! Nope! Nope! I’m out!”

Owen pushed past Alex in his rush to get away from the kitchen. Alex watched him go for just a second before turning back to Danny who was still squatting on the floor. It almost seemed like he believed that if he didn’t move no one would be able to see him. From somewhere back down the hallway behind Alex the front door opened and then closed, the banging made Danny open his eyes. He looked up at Alex who was now just a step away. Alex noticed his eyes were full of tears again and he seemed to be mumbling something incomprehensible.

It felt like there was an irresistible gravitational pull and Alex just kept edging closer and closer. When he was right next to Danny he could smell what had driven Owen to practically run from the house. Alex knelt down and lifted a hand towards the padded butt in front of him. As soon as he made contact with the plastic of the diaper he could feel heat radiating through, Danny gasped and let out a whine.

Alex pressed his hand against the diaper could feel the lumpy mess inside. With his suspicions confirmed he pulled his hand away and took a step back. Danny looked more pathetic than ever as he looked up at Alex from his low position. He pouted like a toddler and his bottom lip trembled. Alex felt a mixture of contempt and pity for what he was seeing.

“Erm, I think Danny needs some attention.” Alex said as he looked up. He turned to look at Sarah.

Sarah was still at the kitchen counters and putting some dishes away. She turned around just as Danny started to lift himself up. She sighed and shook her head.

“I tell you, Alex, little Danny is an absolute stinker.” Sarah chuckled, “If you only knew how many diapers I have to change on a daily basis!”

This seemed like one embarrassment too far for Danny. Alex saw him frown and open his mouth but he didn’t seem able to speak. After a second of silence he let out a loud wail and burst into tears. Alex took a step back as he heard his friend cry. It didn’t sound like an upset adult, it sounded like a toddler that desperately needed attention. Sarah came around the table and took his hand.

“Alex, you’re welcome to stay. I’ll just get Mr. Poopy Pants into a fresh diaper and he’ll be happy to play with you.” Sarah said, “Come on, baby.”

Alex was still in slack-jawed shock as Danny was taken out of the kitchen. As he waddled heavily away Alex could see the bulge coming from the rear of his underwear. He was still sobbing as he was taken up the stairs leaving Alex alone and in shock.

After a few seconds where Alex looked around and wondered if he wasn’t having some kind of crazy fever dream he started making his way back down the hallway. The front door was right in front of him. If he wanted to leave he could do so, his friends had all abandoned Danny and after what he had seen could he blame them?

A large part of Alex was indeed telling him to go. Staying here with the big baby could only reflect badly on himself. At the same time he didn’t think he could just abandon Danny. He didn’t WANT to just leave. Danny hadn’t had a chance to explain what was going on still, Alex felt like he owed it to his best friend to at least give him a fair hearing.

Alex turned and walked into the living room. He opened the playpen’s gate and walked inside, after a last minute hesitation where Alex almost changed his mind he sat down right where he had initially sat with Danny and he waited.

Alex was alone for a few minutes before he heard footsteps on the stairs. He looked up and through the open door to the bottom of the stairs. Sarah came down first and Danny was right behind her. When Alex didn’t think he could be shocked anymore he saw Danny in a black and white onesie with a pacifier bobbing in his mouth. When Danny looked up and saw Alex was still there he seemed surprised.

“Look at that, your playmate waited for you.” Sarah said as she opened the gate of the pen for her adult son, “Isn’t that nice? Make sure you say thank you.”

“Fank oo.” Danny’s speech was clearly hindered by the soother that filled his mouth. He looked at the ground in embarrassment.

“Good boy.” Sarah said with a big smile, “You two play nice. Your nap is in half an hour.”

Alex looked at Danny. For the first time they were truly alone. He had a million questions but at the same time every time he opened his mouth no words came out. Danny was clearly feeling very embarrassed. The emotion was so powerful that Alex was feeling second-hand embarrassment for him.

“So, um, how’s it going?” Alex asked conversationally. It was impossible to hide how awkward the whole situation was.

“I’m OK.” Danny replied. His voice was still muffled by his pacifier.

“Cool.” Alex nodded and looked away. This was hard work.

Alex couldn’t get over how different Danny was acting. The Danny that Alex remembered was always smiling and playing around, he was very much the joker of their little group and yet now he was very withdrawn and shy. Alex couldn’t really blame him after everything he had seen that day. Was this really how his best friend was living? He really had to know more no matter how embarrassing it was to talk about.

“So…” Alex let the word trail off into the air, “How did all this get started?”

Alex saw Danny freeze up for a second. It seemed like he wasn’t sure what to say or maybe he was surprised that Alex wanted to know. He still seemed unable to meet Alex’s eyes, the shame of his situation forcing him into a submissive pose. Danny opened his mouth and the pacifier tumbled from his lips and bounced on his chest.

“Well… You see I…” Danny stuttered and faltered to a stop several times, “It started ages ago when…”

Alex listened to Danny tell his tale. After starting slowly and quietly Danny seemed to get more animated. He told Alex everything and once the words started tumbling out of his mouth they wouldn’t stop. Alex could only sit there as he heard his best friend relay a story that seemed equal parts unbelievable and humiliating. If he hadn’t seen how Danny was that morning he wouldn’t have believed it was possible. Danny had asked for this and then it had got entirely out of control.

“Wow.” Was all Alex could say after hearing the whole story.

Alex wasn’t sure what else he could say. He didn’t expect Danny to suddenly be so open about everything. He suspected that Danny had been bottling things up a lot and was very welcoming of a chance to get things off his chest. Alex hadn’t said a word since Danny started, he simply drank the soda he had been given with lunch.

“I don’t know what to say.” Alex said honestly.

“It sucks!” Danny whined. Alex could see his bottom lip poking out in a childish pout.

“Be careful what you wish for, I guess.” Alex shrugged. He wasn’t a bad conversationalist but what the heck are you supposed to say to someone in Danny’s position? He couldn’t exactly say things would get better because there was no guarantee it would.

Another awkward silence fell between them. Alex was looking at the floor but kept sneaking glances at his friend whilst Danny was fiddling with the pacifier and pouting still. He was still very clearly embarrassed but it didn’t seem as mortifying as it was when Alex first walked in.

“What do you do all day?” Alex eventually asked just to fill the silence.

“Play.” Danny said with a shrug, “Sometimes Mommy has stuff for me to do but usually I play with my toys.”

Alex couldn’t believe how mind-numbing that sounded. It was one thing spending all your days playing video games but he couldn’t imagine having only baby toys to entertain you, he was surprised Danny’s brain hadn’t turned to mush.

“Do you want to play?” Danny asked hesitantly.

“Not really.” Alex replied honestly. The toys lying scattered throughout the playpen held no interested for a young man.

The gulf between the two young men had never felt wider. As Alex became used to the situation his friend in he found himself starting to understand why he was there. Since Alex had arrived he had seen Danny humiliate himself in several different ways, he started to think it was a miracle Danny had managed to keep his secret for so long when he was so obviously nothing more than an overgrown baby. Even as Alex pondered his friend he could see Danny looking disappointed. Danny could claim that he didn’t really want to be like this but Alex wasn’t sure he believed the big baby.

For half an hour there was stilted conversation. Alex asked questions and Danny answered them. At times it felt more like an interview but that was the only way they could really talk, it wasn’t like Danny had much to say since all of his days were so routine.

“Time for your nap, Danny.” Sarah said as she walked into the living room.

Alex jumped and noticed he had picked up one of Danny’s teddy bears. He wasn’t playing with it but he was fiddling with it just so his hands had something to do. He dropped it quickly and pushed it away with his foot.

“But Mommy… Alex is here and…” Danny whined. Alex was reminded of his younger brother when he was over-tired and needed a nap himself.

“And he is welcome to stay.” Sarah said, “I’m sure he can occupy himself for an hour whilst you recharge your batteries. Then you can play with your little friend all afternoon.”

Alex saw Danny turn to look at him expectantly. He hoped Danny’s mom didn’t see him as “little” and that it was just a turn of phrase. He didn’t want to be thought of as the same as Danny, he was an eighteen-year-old man after all, not some hopeless baby. Alex saw that Danny was waiting hopefully so he finally nodded his head to say he would be there. In truth he would much rather have left but he couldn’t say no when Danny was looking at him with such hope.

“Excellent.” Sarah said as she opened the side of the playpen. She turned to Alex, “You can come with us if you like.”

Alex heard crinkling from beside him and when he turned it was to see Danny rising to his feet. He was shocked to see that Danny’s diaper that he had only been so recently put into was already wet. Alex couldn’t remember a break in the conversation or any obvious signs that Danny was wetting his pants. He got to his feet and started walking behind Danny. He couldn’t take his eyes off the swaying butt in front of him. The wetness indicator had changed colour and the padding itself was darker, these were things that Alex had experienced himself with his little problem but he had never spent too long looking at his diaper before taking it off.

“It really is very nice of you to visit Danny.” Sarah said as she led the way upstairs, “You’re welcome to visit any time, of course.”

Alex wasn’t sure what to say to that. He didn’t much want to come back at all and after leaving today he would have some soul searching to do. He had wanted to support his friend and give him the chance to explain what was going on but nothing Danny had said had made any of this any better. It felt like Danny was an entirely different person, not because his personality had changed but because it was impossible to look at him and see anything other than a tiny little baby.

Alex was the last to step into the nursery and his jaw dropped as he looked around. He had heard from Rebecca that Danny had a nursery but he hadn’t expected it to be like this. In his mind he had envisioned Danny’s bedroom, a room he had played video games in many times, with a few small changes. What he actually saw was a complete conversion, nothing of the old bedroom remained.

Where Danny’s bed had once been there now stood a giant crib that was obviously well-used. He could see a slight stiffness in the sheets guiltily informing him that there was a waterproof plastic sheet underneath. The eighteen-year-old’s television, computer and video games had all been taken away. The toys that had taken their place were much more “age appropriate.” The room even smelled like a nursery. Alex could’ve seen this nursery and the one his younger brother used to have years ago and struggled to tell the difference.

The walls had once been papered white with video game posters all over it, Alex had been jealous of it. Now the walls were baby blue and instead of the old posters there were new ones. An unused potty training chart, a child’s height chart, educational posters teaching numbers and letters. There were even some posters for popular children’s television shows. As Alex looked around the room with his back to the changing table he heard the sound of ripping.

“Alex, how is your mother?” Sarah said from the changing table, “It really has been too long since I last saw her.”

“She’s fine, Mrs…” Alex had turned around and nearly choked no his words.

Alex had not been prepared for what he was now looking at. Danny was on the changing table with his hands covering his face. It wasn’t Danny’s face that Alex was looking at though, his eyes were fixed on his friend’s diaper area. At least it would be where his diaper usually was. Instead the diaper was laying open and Danny’s most private areas were open to the air and fully in view.

“Yes, I don’t think I’ve seen her since… Oh, I think it was her birthday last year?” Sarah was in no rush to change her adult son’s diaper.

Alex couldn’t stop staring. He watched as Danny’s diminutive genitals were wiped clean, he watched as baby powder was liberally sprinkled on top and then he watched as it was rubbed in. It was at this point that Sarah seemed to notice that Alex was staring. She chuckled.

“Need to use lots of powder on this big baby.” Sarah said, “Otherwise he gets a rash. Which reminds me…”

Alex looked on as Sarah leaned down and pulled a small tub off a shelf under the padded table. For just a second Danny moved his hands and looked towards the middle of the room. Alex locked eyes with his friend for just half a second before Danny turned his face away and whined.

“I’ve got cream for my baby’s little butt.” Sarah said as she stood up again and unscrewed the lid of the tub, “He had a little rash but I think it’s clearing up. Still, better safe than sorry.”

Alex was mesmerised as his infantilised best friend had strong smelling cream rubbed into his skin. Danny’s legs were lifted and he was twisted as if he was a useless baby. Sarah didn’t bother explaining what she was doing to Danny, she simply talked in honeyed tones and praised him for being a good boy. Alex was feeling very uncomfortable, he’d seen more of Danny than he had ever wanted to and he wondered if he shouldn’t just head home.

“You know what…” Alex started. He was about to make his excuses and leave.

“Don’t worry, Alex.” Sarah cut him off, “We have a little fold out bed. I’ll set it up in here for you.”

“T-That’s really not necessary.” Alex muttered.

“It’s no trouble at all.” Sarah smiled then indicated Danny, “A lot easier than putting this little one down for a nap at least. Unless you want a diaper as well!”

Alex knew Sarah was joking from the way she laughed but that remark hit scarily close to home for him. He really hoped his mother had been more discreet than Danny’s was. He only sometimes needed diapers at night, he didn’t want anyone thinking he was a big baby like Danny. Alex scanned Sarah’s face to see if there was anything in her expression that indicated her comment had been anything but a joke. She was unreadable.

Everyone was soon distracted as the final part of the diaper change took place. Alex watched as Danny’s legs were folded back and he got a brief look at where the sun didn’t shine. When Danny’s legs were lowered it was with a fresh diaper underneath him. Alex watched the front of the padding get pulled up and taped closed.

“Right, give me a second to sort your bed out.” Sarah said to Alex.

Alex was being swept away by what was happening. Danny’s Mommy had taken complete control and he felt like he was left trailing in her wake. A minute later a folding bed that had been under the crib was slid out and opened. Sarah was so quick with it Alex wondered if she hadn’t practiced this before.

“There are sheets and pillows in the closet.” Sarah said as she nodded towards the far side of the room, “Help yourself whilst I put the baby down.”

Alex walked over to the closet as if in a daze and pulled the door open. He knew Danny was dressed like a baby but he hadn’t been prepared for the sheer volume of clothing. The rail going across the closet was filled with hangers that had various childish shirts and onesies hanging from them in a variety of bright colours.

Brushing the clothes to the side he saw a pillow leaning against the wall and picked it up along with a blanket. He couldn’t believe he was really about to take a nap, it was something he hadn’t done since he had been a small child.

As Alex returned to the bed he saw Danny clambering up into the crib with his large diaper sticking out behind him. Sarah gave him a helping hand, her palm pressing into the soft padding and when Danny was safely up she gave him a couple of pats on his diapered butt before pulling up the large rails. Alex was reminded of a hamster cage as he looked through the bars at his friend. It was shocking that someone out there actually made cribs in this size.

“Have good naps.” Sarah said as she left the room, “I’ll wake you both in a couple of hours.”

The bedroom door closed and Alex was left alone with Danny yet again. He walked over to his bed and dropped the pillow at the head of it. He heard crinkling from the crib and when he looked over he saw Danny peering out at him.

“I’m… I’m sorry about all this.” Danny muttered quietly, “I know you’d rather not be here.”

“I never said that.” Alex replied as he sat down on the edge of his bed.

“You don’t have to.” Danny shrugged, “Unlike Mommy I can see how much you want to leave. Who would want to hang around with a dumb baby like me?”

“Danny…” Alex looked down.

Alex felt terrible. He had wanted to leave and he was worried about what people would say if they saw him still associating with the big baby. He felt ashamed of himself. Danny was clearly a friend in need, spending some time with him was the least Alex could do. He had to put his selfish desires to one side and help Danny in what little way he could. He had to be a friend.

“I’m glad to be here.” Alex looked back up at Danny and smiled, “I’m not going to say it isn’t awkward. But you’re my friend and I’m glad to spend time with you no matter how… strange things are.”

“Really?” Danny asked. For the first time since he had arrived Alex thought he saw a spark of the Danny he used to know in his friend’s eyes.

“Of course!” Alex swung his legs up on to the fold-out bed and laid back. He looked at Danny and smiled again.

Alex was glad that Danny was so ready to accept what he was saying. The big baby laid back and nothing broke the still air. After a couple of minutes a deep breathing came from the crib and Alex assumed his friend had fallen asleep. Sleep didn’t come as easily to him though. He laid on the bed looking up at the ceiling and tried to process everything he had seen, heard and experienced. It was a lot to say the least. Eventually, through boredom as much as anything else, Alex drifted into slumber himself.

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Alex slowly came back to consciousness. He blinked his eyes a few times, he wasn’t even sure he’d been asleep nor for how long. Danny’s mom hadn’t come to wake them up yet so he supposed it couldn’t have been too long. Alex froze. He could feel an unmistakable feeling around his crotch, not just there but on the mattress around him.

Danny was still asleep so Alex slowly peeled back the covers to see that his worst nightmare had come true. He had wet the bed!

This had to have been the worst luck. It happened so rarely that Alex didn’t think it would be an issue if he closed his eyes, the odds that he would have an accident like this were miniscule. Alex had laid down in his clothes so not only was the bed wet but so were his pants, the legs seemed OK but the crotch was unmistakably soaked.

“Stay calm, stay calm…” Alex repeated to himself quietly as he tried to work out what to do.

Alex thought he really only had two options. He either went and found Sarah and owned up to what he had done or he would sneak out of the house and run home before anyone found out what had happened. When he thought about how Sarah had treated Danny and how she had talked to him at times he really didn’t relish having to inform her that he had done something she would expect her son to do. Escape was the only option.

Alex slowly got out of his bed. His wet pants stuck to his skin and he shivered. He would have to get home as soon as possible to change, he should be able to stick to quiet roads and hopefully no one would see him. In the crib he could see Danny sleeping like a baby and felt bad that he was leaving without saying anything, it couldn’t be helped.

Opening the door to the landing Alex stuck his head out to make sure the coast was clear. When he didn’t see anyone he stepped out and started creeping towards the stairs. If he could just get down to the front door he…

“Alex?” Sarah’s voice made Alex freeze.

Alex had been so focused on the stairs he hadn’t noticed the open doorway that he knew led to Danny’s mom’s bedroom. He slowly turned his head enough to see that Sarah was on her bed, her back propped up by the headboard, and was reading a book. Even as Alex wondered if he could still make a break for it he could see Sarah putting her bookmark in and getting up.

“I… I was just…” Alex stuttered. Sarah was coming closer and he was still rooted to the floor.

“Leaving?” Sarah finished Alex’s sentence for him, “But it’s still nap time.”

“Yeah, I…” Alex started. He was trying to turn his front away so Sarah wouldn’t see the extremely obvious accident that marked the front of pants.

“What’s going on?” Sarah asked suspiciously.

“N-Nothing…” Alex had alarm bells ringing but it was already too late and he knew that.

A hand was placed on Alex’s shoulder and a second later he was being turned around. He closed his eyes and felt his face blazing as he was made to face his friend’s mother with wet pants. All of a sudden he knew exactly how Danny must feel, Sarah wasn’t even his mother and yet she was giving off such overwhelming maternal vibes.

“What is this?” Sarah asked. Her tone was neutral as if she wasn’t shocked that an eighteen-year-old guest in her house and soaked his pants.

“I can explain…” Alex muttered.

“Have you wet your pants?” Sarah interrupted.

“S-Sometimes I…” Alex started.

“Come with me.” Sarah’s voice was so full of authority that Alex found himself walking into her room before he knew what he was doing.

Unlike Danny’s nursery Sarah’s bedroom looked exactly as Alex remembered it. Sarah closed the door and he was taken to the side of the large bed before Sarah finally took her hand off his shoulder. He felt like a naughty schoolboy as he tried to cover the large wet area over his crotch. Sarah was reaching to her nightstand and picking up her phone.

“W-What are you doing?” Alex asked as his eyes went wide.

“I’m calling your mother.” Sarah replied matter-of-factly.

“You can’t!” Alex exclaimed with panic creeping into his voice.

Alex’s mom, Helen, had always been a bit of a disciplinarian. For the most part it wasn’t a problem but the bed wetting had always been a flashpoint. Helen had seen it as a failing on Alex’s part. The uneasy truce had been that as long as Alex took care of it his mother wouldn’t get involved. If she heard that Alex had wet his pants it would be a disaster. He could see his mom grounding him until he left for college or worse…

“Please!” Alex begged, “Please don’t tell her. It was just an accident!”

“Uh huh.” Sarah sounded unconvinced as she dialled the last number and held the phone to the side of her head.

Alex covered his face with his hands. He could just about hear the phone ringing through the headset and he prayed there was no answer. Maybe if his mom didn’t answer the phone it would give him time to convince Sarah to keep this all secret. He held his breath as the phone continued to ring. It was just as he felt hope starting to blossom that the ringing was cut and he heard the voice of his mom answer.

“Hello?” Helen’s voice made Alex’s knees tremble. In desperation he considered making a dive for the phone. Sarah didn’t realise what she was doing!

“Hi, Helen? It’s Sarah, Danny’s mom.” Sarah replied.

“Oh hello!” Helen’s happy voice just made Alex feel worse, “It’s been too long. Is everything alright?”

“It really has.” Sarah agreed with a nod, “How’s the family?”

As Sarah and his mom exchanged small talk Alex could feel the wet patch on the front of his pants cooling. Somehow his accident felt even bigger now that it was no longer warm. The material of his pants were sticking to his skin and he wanted more than anything to take them off.

“If… you could just give me a pair of Danny’s old pants…” Alex suggested hesitantly interrupting the phone conversation.

“Yes that was Alex… Uh huh… No, he came to see Danny… That’s why I called you actually…” Sarah said.

Alex felt his stomach flip. He clasped his hands together in a praying motion and begged with his eyes. Sarah seemed completely unmoved. Alex didn’t know if his mom was talking more quietly or if Danny’s mom had turned the phone down but he couldn’t hear his own mother’s side of the conversation anymore. Maybe it was the impending disaster that was rendering him deaf, as if not being able to hear it happen would save him from it.

“No, no, he’s been fine.” Sarah carried on, “There’s been a bit of a problem though… Well, it was Danny’s naptime and Alex decided to have a little nap too… Uh huh… That’s where the problem came in…”

“Please… No…” Alex begged as he dropped to his knees. His eyes were tearing up thought he fought them off. The last thing he wanted to do was burst into tears like a baby.

“He wet the bed.” Sarah said before pursing her lips into a thin line.

Alex felt like his world was breaking apart. He hadn’t wanted his mother to find out what he had done but if she had to know he should’ve at least been the one to deliver the news. He let out a hiccupping sob as his composure started to crack apart.

“Yeah I know…” Sarah continued on seemingly unaware that she was ripping the young visitor to shreds.

There seemed to be a prolonged period where Helen was doing the talking as Sarah nodded her head. She made the occasional sound of assent but otherwise listened. Alex remained frozen to the spot feeling like he was in court and waiting for the verdict to be read out. Needless to say he wished he had abandoned Danny with his other friends now.

“Might I suggest something?” Sarah asked after a little bit, “It’s a little unorthodox but I have an idea…”