



# Content warnings

**This is a zine for the ABDL (Adult Baby/  
Diaper Lover) community, so expect the  
works herein to involve diapers & ageplay!**

**Violence**

**Dubious consent**

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# A Sagaris's Punishment

## An Immortal Galaxy Story

Taking a long drag on his cigarette, Lucian Conti Immortalem bathed in the smoky twilight of the Neon Angel, a dive bar nestled in the pulsating heart of Karaj. His outline cut a menacing silhouette against the glowing underbelly of New Tehran. By his side, his cane—an elegant ebony rod capped with a sterling silver panther—tapped against the sticky floor.

This was a place where palettes of neon light shimmered on polished chrome, archaic vinyl tracks harmonizing with synthetic melodies to twirl intoxicated patrons across the dance floor with uncanny ease. A Parov Stelar electro swing tune blended with a thumping beat to form an inescapable siren call for those looking for a night of no-strings-attached fun. Mirrored glass formed the bar's backsplash, drawing Lucian's sapphire eyes to the promise of an orgasmic future held within bottles of spiked liquor.

But the Immortal wasn't here for a pleasant evening. He was here to discipline one of his errant subordinates. His gaze settled on a questionable human drawing his tongue across the neck of an intoxicated coyote, her pupils turned deep black from a dose of Mutanazir. The eerie bar lights cast an ethereal glow on the snow leopard's sharp features as his grip tightened around the cane and his eyes narrowed.

"Dawn Cruz- *néh*-Conti Sagaris!" Lucian shouted, rapping his cane against the floor like a Catholic nun's ruler across the knuckles of a misbehaving pupil. The coyote only half-tilted her head toward the imposing snow leopard. "*Lockjaw!* What the fuck are you doing down here? You were supposed to escort me to a state dinner three hours ago!"

The coyote suddenly froze, her eyes shooting open. Dawn was halfway to her feet before the human brusquely grasped her wrist and tugged her back onto the cracked leather barstool. "Where are you going, babe? This is just the beginning of an exciting journey. Just me and you, *cielito*. Don't let that *maricón* drag you down."

"No journey is worth taking without proper companionship." Lucian casually adjusted his John Hardy cufflinks, the tiger's eye inlay gleaming even in dim light. The human's head snapped around, his predatory grin morphing into a threatening scowl. Dawn, too intoxicated to fully grasp the gravity of the situation, teetered on the stool, hazy gaze oscillating between the two figures. "You're behaving like a naughty toddler. You're too old and too valuable for this shit."

"Why don't you fuck off, eh? I ain't scared of some *concha* with a Willy Wonka-ass cane." Lifting his shirt slightly, the human exposed a CSEC Hungry Ghost pistol, a menacing titanium-bodied weapon with an extended magazine. Lucian snorted, tightening his grip around the panther. "Now go away before I have to whoop your ass, *zaraqí*."

It took a fraction of a second for Lucian's auditory cortex to light up as his nerves relayed the human's words to his brain. His Wernicke's Area processed the language at the same time his prefrontal cortex backed off and allowed his amygdala to climb into the

driver's seat. In a fraction of a second—barely enough time for the human to brush his fingertips against the slide of his handgun—Lucian smashed the business end of the cane against his temple.

"Time to go," Lucian muttered, hooking an arm around Dawn's waist as the human toppled over with a wet *thud*. At this range, he could smell the acrid scent of her soaked Dkham Materials Corporation diaper beneath her cheap perfume; the coyote was in desperate need of a change. With a final look around the neon chaos that was the bar, he hoisted his drunken charge onto her feet. "While I do have sovereign immunity, I'd rather not flash my papers down here."

Dawn responded with a slurred laugh, her legs refusing to cooperate through the haze of inebriation. *Pssp...pssssshhh*. Strained beyond capacity, the cheap, standard-issue diaper gave way. Deep yellow rivulets rolled off her fur, coagulating into a sharply-scented puddle between her Louboutin heels. "Gah...fuck," Dawn murmured.

"*Allah yil'an ibleesik*," Lucian muttered. With a sigh, the snow leopard swept the unruly coyote off her feet and tossed her over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. While this flashed her well-padded rear—now sagging and visibly discolored—to the entire bar, Lucian figured it was the least of her problems. "If this is how one of my Sagaris is going to behave, I'm going to have to take corrective action..."

#

Upon awakening, Dawn quickly realized she wasn't cozily nestled in her suite at the Four Seasons. Blinking a few times, her eyes were drawn to the revolving mobile of iridescent stars spinning gently above her. Sitting up, the coyote noted she was inside an opulent crib with sides formed of smart glass with enough opacity to filter out any errant light. "Where...where the fuck am I?"

"You're up early today. Good morning, Dawn." A plump badger stood in the doorway, dressed in the distinctive uniform of a Tabriz Nanny. The high collar and a button-fastened front reminded Dawn of an Imperial Army dress uniform, though the tan fabric was imbued with a subtle sheen like a string of Akoya pearls. Gleaming chevron accents on her sleeves drew the coyote's gaze through primal instinct. "My name is Marin Alsaud- *néh*-Vaux Sagaris...and I'll be your nanny for the next three months."

"Three *months*!?" Dawn's bleary eyes shot open. As she unsteadily tried to rise to her feet, she was leveled by a pulsating headache that felt as though her eyes were being crucified. "I know that you're a fellow Sagaris," Dawn managed to squeak out in a trembling voice. "Sister-to-sister...please tell me what the *fuck* is going on."

"A...mutually beneficial arrangement." Marin tapped the side of the crib to retract it seamlessly into the floor. "Just as a seed needs the right environment to grow into a tree, certain Created need a safe space to decompress from the demands of the Immortal Hierarchy. This is a center where you can be properly nurtured and I can be certified as a Tabriz Nanny."

"I don't need that shit. And where is my stuff?" Dawn asked, her neck bereft of the familiar heft of her gold pendant.

"You'll have everything returned to you, don't worry about that," Marin replied, turning enough for Dawn to catch a glimpse of the *shamshir* Sitaray strapped to her thigh. Along the length of the scabbard, intricate inlays of silver and gold depicted scenes from



the Second Interstellar War. "What do you think of the outfit?"

"It's not horrible." Looking down, Dawn noted she was clad in a flexible fitted tunic, designed with iridescent fabric that shimmered as it caught the soft lighting of the nursery. A pair of leggings, formed from shockingly light and flexible material, hugged her curves without pinching or pulling. However, they did nothing to conceal the tell-tale bulge of a puffy diaper evident around her crotch. "Where am I?"

"Sarvabad Tower in the Imperial War & Diplomacy University. They teach a comprehensive course on the early rebellions of the Arrow Colonies one floor down." Marin demurely chuckled as she moved toward Dawn with otherworldly grace. "Is it coming back to you now?"

"I was here maybe fifteen years ago. Shit, I was young back then." Dawn groaned as Marin clicked her claws, depolarizing the bank of windows that ran along the far side of the nursery. Just beyond the transparent aluminum was a stunning view of the Birjand Greenbelt, lush vineyards rolling along the foothills of the Damavand Mountains. "Fuck...why do I feel so out of it?"

"You were slipped Mutanazir, a black-market Mutagen inhibitor. You're lucky whoever drugged you didn't deliver a full dose, or you'd be in the ICU right now." Without warning, Marin brusquely tugged the coyote's leggings down to reveal her diaper. "Hrm...someone looks like they're in need of a change, huh?" Marin noted, eyeing the emerald wetness indicator.

Dawn rolled her eyes at the sight of Bambi, the young prince of the forest, adorning the tape panel of her Huggies Little Movers. The soft, cloth-backed diaper rustled as Marin wriggled an inquisitive finger into the leg cuff tightly hugging her inner thigh. "Could I at the very least get something from Câlin or JaguarSoft? Huggies are ridiculous, even if they do come in my size."

"No," Marin replied, maintaining a firm but gentle hold on the squirming coyote while wriggling her leggings off. "Toddlers wear what their caretakers choose to put them in. You don't get to tender an objection to your underwear just because Thumper is adorning your seat."

"Ugh, fine." Dawn snorted, squeezing the substantial bulk of the swollen diaper between her muscular thighs. Fortunately, she barely noticed the wetness, the superabsorbent core ensuring that her sensitive skin remained dry. Marin gestured towards a sleek, curvaceous platform nearby, which rose and flattened to form an Eero Saarinen-inspired changing table.

"That's more like it. Can you lie down on the changing table for me like a big 'yote, or do I have to carry you over there?" Marin asked gently. Briefly appeased by the badger's soothing demeanor, Dawn climbed to her feet and awkwardly waddled across the room. She appreciated that it was topped with a heated surface, the cushion underneath perfectly contouring to her form. "See? Was that so hard?"

"Am I being detained, or am I free to leave?" Dawn asked sarcastically while Marin gathered the necessary supplies from fabric bins artfully arranged beneath the changing table. The largest held a stack of diapers sorted by character, with Bambi, Thumper, Flower, and Faline each represented. Marin's paws set to work unfastening the four hook-and-loop tapes of her soiled Huggies.



"This is your new duty station, so leaving without permission will be considered desertion and be punished appropriately," Marin replied, playfully tousling Dawn's headfur as the soggy diaper flopped open. Unphased by the acrid scent of stale urine, the badger set to work, popping open a tub of thick PariWipes. "Your Immortal personally assigned you here until Headmistress Elektron approves your transfer back to active service."

"*Allah yil'an il-shaytan,*" Dawn murmured, crossing her arms as Marin lifted her by the ankles with a deft paw to slide the soaked padding out from underneath her bottom. The badger was quiet and focused as she attended to the task, rolling the swollen diaper into a neat ball and then dropping it into the Diaper Genie with a wet *plop*. "Lucian can nuzzle my taint."

"I think this is a little more comfortable than a hard stool in whatever disreputable bar you were hanging around in last night, wouldn't you say?" Marin asked rhetorically. The badger meticulously cleaned Dawn with a fragrant oudh-scented wipe which displayed warm, smoky notes with a tinge of dampened wood. "I've scanned your personnel file. You're lucky to have an Immortal so tolerant of your *gaucherie*."

"And he's lucky I don't report his business dealings to the Shahrz Security Directorate or SAVAK," Dawn replied with a snort. While Lucian fancied himself ever the noble gentleman, she was well-aware of the unscrupulous Created who regularly clustered around his no-limits poker table at the Grand Casino di Conti. "I suppose we'll call it even."

"The Imperial Hierarchy rests on just that...*hierarchy*." Marin unfurled a fresh Huggies Little Movers, lightly fluffing it up as she ran her fingers along the inner padding to activate the standing leak guards. She slid it beneath Dawn with practiced ease, fastening it securely but not too tightly around the coyote's waist. "Need I remind you what happened the last time the Sagaris Corps decided to stop taking orders from those above us?"

"I used to walk by the memorial every morning to get coffee when I was stationed on Faradis Prime," Dawn replied. Cast in solid bronze, it depicted the Third Hierarch breaking a sagaris over her knee while perched victoriously upon the crumpled armor of dozens of rebellious Sagaris. It was her least favorite element of the headquarters building. "I don't need a lecture with each lesson etched in tombstone slate."

"Well then, you best remember your place, little one," Marin said. The badger straightened her back before sliding the leggings back onto Dawn. The garment obediently reshaped itself to accommodate the ample bulk around her tawny bottom. "Now how about some breakfast, hrm?"

Bracing Dawn's well-padded bottom against the meat of her thigh, Marin carried her down an unadorned hallway and into the communal dining room. In sharp contrast to the nursery, from the floors to the countertops, various shades of polished wood reigned supreme, reflecting a sleek mid-century modern aesthetic. Walnut shelving floated organically, storing Le Creuset utensils, menu cards, and recipe books suspended like pieces of space-age art. "Who designed this place, Ray Eames?" Dawn remarked.

"Headmistress Elektra, actually," replied a red fox in the middle of feeding a doe. Her lush orange fur was periodically speckled with pronounced cream accents, the lustrous tail sweeping behind her calling attention to an intricate fur pattern like fiery autumn leaves against October's first snow. High cheekbones lent her an air of noble grace. "She's

a big fan.”

“So, I’m not the only one here, then?” Dawn asked while Marin settled her into an immaculately constructed highchair. The base and backrest stayed true to the best of mid-century modern design, formed of teak meticulously sanded and oiled to bring out a golden hue from the wood. The inner padding was upholstered with a smart fabric that seamlessly adapted to the coyote’s comfort.

“No, you’re not. There are usually between four and eight Tabriz Nannies training at any given time,” the fox replied, sticking a cone-shaped spoon loaded with off-putting green mush into the doe’s muzzle. Despite this, she responded with an enthusiastic ‘ahhh’ as her lips closed around the sterling silver. “I’m Florence and this little fawn is Penny. There’s no need for all the four-name bullshit around here.”

“Um...I’m Dawn,” the coyote replied. Her curious eyes were fixed on Marin as she prepared a bowl of mashed bananas and oatmeal. The badger also grabbed a sippy-cup of milk from a daisy-yellow fridge adorned with a prominent magnet reading ‘Defrost in Space.’ “What’s your deal, Penny?”

“I’m another Sagaris here on probation. Turns out taking enough Dardaril and Panelim to knock a bull elephant flat every morning doesn’t lead to great life choices,” Penny said with a self-effacing grin. Her semi-sheer leggings snugly fit her otherwise lean and muscular form, leaving several inches of diaper waistband peeking out. While Florence presented her another spoonful, Penny’s grip held onto the highchair tray tightened as a distracted frown tugged at her lips. “M-mrmph...hnnng...”

Dawn spotted a telltale flush starting from Penny’s neck, spreading upward until the artificial fawn spots on her cheeks were subsumed by a wave of rosy red. Penny’s tail started to twitch and flag unconsciously, a soft wisp of caramel and cream frisking the air. “Are you always this brash?” the coyote asked, knowing exactly what she was about to do in her pants.

“You...get used to it,” A strained grunt escaped from the doe’s dainty muzzle. *Prrrt. Pbbblrt! Pppbbllortch!* The tape panel’s blushing image of Thumper seemed to be in silent encouragement of the doe’s effort, while the squatting Thumper on the seat seemed to brace for the imminent. A bulge formed beneath her tail as the clothlike cover stretched to accommodate the hefty load. Penny let out a final, strained grunt, her tiny ears drooping slightly as a half-apologetic expression was sketched out her face. “Guh!”

Florence chuckled softly, watching as Penny slumped with relief, her tail winding down and her muzzle slowly regaining its creamy hue. A soft and mushy mound in the back of her diaper signaled the completion of her fawn business. Dawn wrinkled her nose as a pungent, sickly-sweet scent added itself to the air. “You couldn’t have done that somewhere more private?”

“Mrmph...you’re not supposed to hold it,” Penny replied. “If you get backed up—”

“I’ll personally make sure that you are force-fed an entire bottle of magnesium citrate,” Florence said with a devious smirk. Despite the pungent aroma wafting from Penny’s freshly-filled diaper, the fox’s sparkling eyes held nothing but affection for her charge. “I think Penny would make a lovely mentor for you, Dawn. She might be a stinky little fawn, but she is undoubtedly the cutest, even with a bulging diaper. Isn’t that right, darling?”

Penny nodded, her drooping ears perking up a bit. On the kitchen countertop, Florence strategically laid out a clean, soft blanket, a fresh diaper, a bottle of myrrh-scented cornstarch powder, and a tub of PariWipes. "Now open wide for Marin, little 'yote. Your breakfast is ready."

"Now say 'ahh.'" Marin held a gleaming spoon laden with oatmeal-banana mush and garnished with a swirl of Manuka honey. Hovering the spoon in front of Dawn's muzzle, the badger waited until she took a bite before tenderly scritchng behind her floppy ears. With a contented sigh, Dawn's vermilion lips curved into a soft smile. "See? Was that so bad?"

"No...but I'd prefer not to get *that* treatment." Dawn grimaced as she watched Florence tug Penny's forest-green leggings down to reveal her puffy diaper, a prominent dark stain distorting the image of Thumper on her seat. Florence peeled away the offending diaper with a swift movement before setting to work with the wipes. "Is that really demonstrating appropriate respect for a commissioned officer of the Hierarch?"

"What does that have to do with anything?" Florence replied, deftly cleaning up the doe's mucky bottom while maintaining a playful demeanor. "Tickle tickle," she flirted, using a clean wipe to tease along Penny's sensitive inner thighs until laughter rumbled from the doe's throat. "A Tabriz Nanny trains to take care of little ones of all shapes, sizes, and ranks."

"Hrmph," Dawn replied, rolling her eyes while Marin offered her another bite. Dawn slowly worked her way through her mushy breakfast while Florence changed Penny into a fresh diaper, her paws expertly securing it snugly around the doe's midriff.

"We'll be in the living room watching cartoons if you two need anything," Florence said. Tugging up Penny's leggings, Florence swiftly hoisted her onto her hip, trying to contain her laughter as the doe's tail wagged with pleasure at being in a fresh Huggies. "And don't worry...you'll get used to this faster than you think."

"I think we're about done here too," Marin replied. Dawn sighed, looking down at the empty bowl and then at the prominent bulge beneath her leggings. If changing Penny's dirty diaper on the kitchen counter was any indication of the treatment she'd be receiving, this was going to be a long three months...

#

The day was growing old, the fading light of Karaj's binary suns radiating through the half-drawn living room blinds to drench the room in comforting amber light. Shirazi Solarblade training starfighters streaked across the horizon, piloted by cadets training in low-light flying. Florence was nestled comfortably in the center of an elegant mid-century sofa, flanked by her two charges, each of whom was dressed in a footed sleeper with a prominent diaper bulge.

"It's nice that you at least get some time to yourselves," Dawn said, the flickering television casting a merry parade of vibrant colors onto her tawny fur. Marin had taken off to attend a Roya-e Sangar concert, leaving her in Florence's tender care. One of her favorite episodes of *Heroes of the Empire* was playing, a colorful retelling of the Battle of Zephyr Gate. "Do we get to go ho—"

"No, little one," Florence replied, wrapping a strong arm around Dawn's shoulder. The coyote was completely swaddled by the cashmere-blend sleeper, the toasty fabric covering her from the neck down. On the other side of the fox, Penny hugged a plush ferret

and lightly sucked on the pacifier firmly-planted in her muzzle. "Though if you'd like to go to the park tomorrow, that can be arranged."

Dawn frowned, rolling her eyes. Her keen coyote ears detected the distinct change in the air as a muffled fart radiated from her right. Glancing over at Penny, she saw the fawn squished up against Florence's uniform jacket in total equipoise except for the telltale blush creeping up her cheeks. "Mrmph...Pen-Pen poopy soon," she grunted in toddler-speak.

"Why don't you play along? Let yourself get deep into the toddler headspace," Florence cooed, gently caressing the base of Dawn's half-folded ears. There was something intoxicating about her sharp, vulpine musk, a subtle medley of earthy undertones, hints of moss-covered stones, and the soft whisper of fallen leaves. "If you're cooperative, I have permission to grant you certain indulgences. Perhaps an alcoholic beverage of your choice?"

"I'll do it for a chilled glass of Louis XIII cognac," Dawn said confidently.

"Done," Florence replied. With a snap of her fingers, she summoned a Baccarat vessel, cradling liquid gold within, and had it placed on the coffee table by an AI servant. The decanter was a work of art itself, regal fleur-de-lis motifs etched delicately into the crystal below a 20-karat gold neck. Reaching into a bioceramic hardcase on her thigh, she pulled out a pacifier and stuck it into the coyote's muzzle. "Now, uphold your end of the bargain and play along with Pen-Pen."

"Ugh...fine," she grunted through the oversized mouthguard. Dawn took a deep breath, holding the air in her lungs until every fiber of her being screamed for release. Exhaling, she repeated the phrase she had used to put on a neo-Irish accent during her University days to get into character during espionage role-plays. "I go over the hill and down again...Dawny poopy too," she replied, wrinkling her nose.

Penny reached across Florence's lap to gently grip the coyote's paw. Dawn's heart thundered in her chest at the doe's touch, the Mutagen flowing in their veins sensing the ancestry all Sagaris shared. It evoked the familiarity of a well-worn path to the backyard treehouse she'd walked a hundred times before, her mind suddenly young again. "Pen-Pen and Dawny poopy together?" Penny asked, eyes bright as stars.

"Dawny and Pen-Pen poopy together," Dawn replied in a whisper that carried only to Penny. A moment later, despite the low rumbling in her tummy and the mounting pressure in her core, the coyote couldn't help but fall into a fit of giggles at the sheer absurdity of the situation. "Dawny and Pen-Pen poopy together!" she announced, loudly enough for Florence to hear.

"Good girls. Let me know when you're all done and I'll get you cleaned up," Florence cooed, lightly groping their padded bottoms. "Go on, push."

Penny started first, angling her soft eyes slightly upward. Her dappled cheeks began to flush with the rosy glow of exertion. *Pbblt. Prrt. Prrrrrsh*. Muffled farts escaped from the doe, perfectly timed with the tiny pulses Dawn felt against her paw. With each strain, there was a slight outpuff of effortful breath, her twitchy nose scrunching as she focused on the task.

Driven by a mixture of the desperate need for relief and the incentive of the gleaming cognac, Dawn started squirming on Florence's other flank, a crease forming



beneath the sandy fur on her forehead. Her fluffy ears, usually standing upright, curled while her eyes squinted with concentration. Matching Penny, she too let out a soft, strained grunt, the sound almost lost beneath the blare of the television.

The backside of Penny's sleeper began to expand outward to accommodate the burgeoning load. *Pbbbblt! Prrrrsh! Pppbblort!* Each muddy fart further strained her padding, the flexible backsheet stretching until it was near its breaking point. Previously smooth and flawless, the rear of Penny's diaper transformed into an uneven mountain range as it yielded to the pungent deluge. "Nrmph..."

Dawn put her heart into the endeavor of filling her Huggies, growing red-in-the-face as Florence lovingly stroked her back. Strain painted her delicate features, her muzzle scrunching up as her tail flagged. *Pbbblrt!* The coyote sensed the pressure in her belly starting to subside as a bulge formed in her seat. "Grmph..."

"Phew! You two are going to smell just like Flower after you're done," Florence cooed, the initially faint sickly-sweet odor morphing into a strong scent as the minutes passed. Drawing Dawn and Penny in closer, she brought their bulging sleepers up against her thigh. "C'mon, one more big push, little ones."

*Pbbbbbbloooortch!* There was a simultaneous explosion in their Huggies before the grunting faded to a victorious silence. Seats bloating until they appeared like a pair of overstuffed marshmallows, their taut bodies relaxed. The doe and coyote let out contented sighs of relief, their soft breaths forming an alluring lullaby to Florence's ears despite the intense odor of two very full diapers in the air.

Penny, despite the noticeably swollen diaper beneath her sleeper, turned her head toward Dawn and playfully stuck her tongue out. "Dawny stinky," she giggled, pinching her nose while slightly narrowing her eyes in mock disgust.

Dawn, now deep in headspace, merely responded with a toothy grin and an unashamed giggle. "Pen-Pen stinky too!"

"Now little ones," Florence said, chuckling at their toddlerish banter. "There's no need for the pot to call the kettle black. You're both stinky, how about that?" Wrapping an arm around each Sagaris, Florence drew them close while pouring several fingers of cognac into a bottle for Dawn.

Dawn started to tender an objection, but the moment the near perfect blend of heat, oak, spice, and sweet touched her tongue, she thought better of it. Nursing from the bottle in a bulging diaper, it was almost impossible to see her as anything else but an adult-sized toddler 'yote...

#

On a beautiful moon-lit evening, the playground at the heart of the Imperial War & Diplomacy University was echoing with childish laughter. Slides, swings, teeter-totters, and sandboxes were all meticulously scaled-up to ensure a toddleresque experience for the users. It was a temperate Karajian winter's day, with temperatures hovering around fifteen degrees centigrade.

Dressed appropriately, Penny wore a flowing sundress and a string of plastic pearls around her neck, while Dawn sported blue denim shorts paired with a bubblegum-pink tee. Their tails wagged enthusiastically as they wandered into the colorful wonderland. "So, what do you want to do first?" Penny asked.

"Hrm...I'm gonna go explore the sandbox!" Having adjusted to the bulky diaper constantly sitting between her thighs, the coyote gracefully entered the sandbox and plopped down with a muted *squelch*. Already soaked, she knew that it wouldn't be long before her next diaper change. Behind her, Penny immersed herself in a puzzle game that required her to slide beads around on colorful metal wires.

Dawn delved her paws into the soft grains, letting them cascade between her lithe fingers like golden rivers. While not ideal for building, she found that when sufficiently compacted, the sand was cohesive enough to sculpt with a delicate touch. Working with a plastic bucket and a diminutive shovel, Dawn worked to create a masterpiece of toddler architecture, a castle adorned with seashell turrets and pebble towers.

Suddenly, just as she finished adorning the highest turret with a maple leaf 'flag,' Dawn's face turned serious. She shifted uneasily on her bottom, a small grunt escaping from her as her paw darted toward her tummy. *Pbbbt*. A muffled fart escaped from her rear as she realized she needed to fill her Huggies with the inevitable outcome of her lunch.

Shifting from an on-the-knees position to more of a squat, Dawn stuck her butt out a bit. Her face reddened as she dug deep for a monumental push, her eyes tightly shut as she dropped a weighty mess into her seat. *Pbbblrt...crackle...squelch*. The back of her shortalls began to puff out, the denim straining beneath her flagged tail.

"Someone's not taking it easy on Bambi, huh?" Marin called, casually looking up from her dog-eared copy of *Hyperion*. Dawn's diaper bulged, the soft padding swelling up to handle a coyote-sized 'accident' as she flooded the front. *Psshhhhh*. Warmth spread across her crotch as her lithe frame pushed out an impressive load against the Bambi print on her diaper seat.

"N-nuh...hnnng," Dawn replied, finishing with a final, effortful grunt. Diaper noticeably bulkier, the coyote waddled up to Marin with a satisfied smile on her muzzle. Her plump shortalls swayed with the gait of a loaded diaper, her paws holding the edge of her pockets. "Done, Nanny," she bashfully said, biting her shirt collar before turning to let the badger inspect the damage.

"My my, we did have to make mess, didn't we?" Marin cooed, her paw tenderly cupping the bulge in the coyote's shortalls to assess the scale of the mudslide. Reaching over the handgun holstered at her side, the badger grabbed the diaper bag and flipped the top open. "Now, let me see here..."

Giggling, Dawn flopped down on her bottom with a wet *squelch*, further spreading warm muck across every inch of her Huggies. "Dawny stinky, Nanny!"

Just as Marin's paw wrapped around a fresh Bambi-print Huggies, there was a *crack* like the toppling of an ancient redwood. A black Mercedes G-Class, V-8 engine growling menacingly, plowed through the park gate, sending splinters and debris in all directions. Skidding to a dramatic halt, the ominous hum of the engine lingered as the dust settled. "What the fuck?" Dawn asked, suddenly snapped out of headspace.

"Hop onto my back, little one," Marin said, voice stern and reassuring. She activated the security protocol on her Sagaris wrist-bracer, emitting a protective hardlight shield that glowed like molten lava just inches from her palm. The SUV's doors slammed shut and three beefy Created climbed out, dressed in nondescript suits. "Let's go grab Penny, 'kay? This is all part of a training exercise...I think."

"If you insist!" Dawn shouted, clinging tight to Marin's shoulder pads as the men drew security-spec plasma carbines from beneath their jackets and opened fire. The hardlight shield absorbed the stun bolts like summer rain, the world beyond shifting to a wash of vibrant, oscillating colors. The sight drew an awed gasp from Dawn. "Wow...so that's what portable modules look like under fire. Just like the Northern Lights."

"A little prettier than what your Parvaaz Aegis armor can manage, eh?" Marin's eyes tracked over to the playground where a startled Penny sat perched on the swing, thumb stuck firmly in her muzzle. She was watching the scene play out with wide-eyed shock, frozen as a baby fawn curled up on the forest floor. "Now hold on!"

In the span of an instant, Marin used the M.A.R.S. capsule on her right thigh to prepare a tactical round. Slotting it into the secondary barrel of her weapon, she sent it straight into the grille of the G-Class. It immediately began radiating thick, eye-watering smoke, giving the badger cover while she charged toward the playground like the steam locomotive *Mallard*.

Sliding to a halt beside the swing, Marin scooped Penny up with her free arm. Using her Zahra Techwatch, she summoned an armored BMW 7-Series from the parking lot. With a magisterial presence, the sleek sedan roared as it tore across the grass, its rear suicide doors flinging open as it pulled in front of them and deployed a protective shield canopy.

"Alright, let's roll out!" Marin quickly strapped them into Ultrasuede-lined Recaro carseats, the aggressive thigh bolsters smushing Dawn's full seat against her bottom. The front door slammed shut as Marin took the wheel, shifting into reverse and smashing through a wrought iron fence to get onto the parkway. A thumping Cirrus track pumped through the Bowers & Wilkins sound system as Marin slid into the passing lane and unleashed the hybridized V-12.

"Nanny, Dawn made a mess on Flower!" Penny, brimming with playful mischief, pointed an accusatory finger at the coyote. The sharp scent of her full diaper was too powerful for the Ambient Air perfume system to entirely mask. Dawn's rosy cheeks puffed up in indignation as she clutched a stuffed rabbit against her chest. "She's got a stinky booty!"

"Penny!" Dawn's voice rang out, a symphony of childhood annoyance. "You're one to talk!"

Marin stifled a chuckle while keeping her eyes fixed on the road. "Alright Penny," she called back, trying to infuse a semblance of acerbity into her bubbly tone. "Let's not tease Dawn, okay? She's just doing what she must, little fawn."

Penny's gleeful laughter abruptly ebbed into a noticeable silence. Dawn watched with a smirk as Penny's grin slowly transformed contorted into a contorted frown of exertion. Her features scrunched up in a mixture of concentration and effort, fists clenching as she let out a muffled fart. *Pbbblrt!* Lifting her bottom up in her carseat, Penny shifted into the telltale pose of a little fawn filling her diaper. "Hnng..."

"Oh, Penny! Don't pop a vein, okay?" Marin chuckled lightly at the sight of the red-faced fawn. Penny's diaper, at first form-fitting and inconspicuous, slowly started to bulge in the back. *Pbbbbrrrrtttt!* The swelling diaper pressed against the soft cotton of the sundress, creating a visible roundness that was impossible to conceal. "Phew! How did you turn cinnamon applesauce into that?"



"Uh ohs," Penny said, letting out a relieved sigh before sinking back into the carseat with a wet *squelch*. Her mucky diaper had ballooned outward, the Bambi pattern stretching out on her brown-tinged seat. While a triumphant smile danced on her muzzle, an unmistakable earthy musk began wafting through the cabin. "Pen-Pen is stinky too," she admitted sheepishly.

As the banter amongst the Sagaris calmed, Marin's voice cut through. "Alright, my brave girls. You did great back there," she praised, setting a GPS destination for the nearest Shahin Fuels, an upscale gas station chain with private changing rooms. "Let's get you two cleaned up, hrm? If you behave while you're on the changing table, I'll buy you both a Choco Taco."

Dawn knitted her eyebrows, her fingers stroking up and down a Fisher-Price fidget toy. "That was scary," she murmured.

"It was scary, yes—" Marin sympathized—"but remember girls, that was just a training exercise. A Tabriz Nanny always needs to be prepared to defend the charges entrusted to her care." Just before Marin could tease Dawn further, a sudden and distinctive roar of Italian-made engines cut through the still night air. Two blacked-out Maserati Quattroporte sedans chirped their tires as they tore off the shoulder.

"Is...is this still part of the training exercise?" Penny asked, looking out the window as masked gunmen leaned out the windows. A moment later, a bullet slammed into the rear windscreen. The impact was like a symphony of fractures on a frozen lake, creating delicate spiderwebs of cracks that danced across its surface. "Holy shit! That was not a paintball!"

"Does that answer your question?" Marin jerked the wheel to the right, making an abrupt turn onto a less traveled route. KONI shocks creaked in protest as she pitched the car down a concrete stairwell, the sensation like a jackhammer against Dawn's diapered bottom. If there wasn't a disaster in her diaper before, by the time Marin tore down a side street, there was a Superfund site in her Huggies waiting for the badger.

The BMW picked up speed, weaving in and out of narrow alleyways and construction sites in the rapidly-gentrifying Arya Heights district. The Maseratis followed like hounds chasing a wounded fox, keeping close enough to allow the gunmen to spray a continuous stream of bullets at the armored glass behind Dawn's head. "You're trained for this, right?" Dawn asked.

"This isn't my first high-speed chase," Marin replied. The badger scowled, her adrenaline-fueled maneuvering through the alleyways failing to shake them off. Clipping the front end of a compact pickup as she gunned it through a red light, Marin surged onto the Shiraz Expressway. Dawn's chest slammed against the four-point harness with enough force to leave her winded.

"Are you two okay back there?" Marin asked, wincing as a piece of the BMW's front bumper sheared off and smacked the lead Maserati square in the windshield. Swerving onto the shoulder, it detonated in a shower of glass, carbon fiber, and aluminum as it traveled headfirst into a Jersey barrier.

"I think my diaper's about to leak from peeing myself in fear, but other than that, I'm okay," Dawn replied with a cough, heart pounding in her chest. Just before she went for the combat shotgun concealed in the rear console, Marin tapped an unmarked button on the steering wheel. Glancing over her shoulder, Dawn saw a nasty rack of spikes hit the

asphalt.

"Boom goes the dynamite!" Marin shouted, the remaining Maserati plowing straight through the razor-sharp spike strip. With tires completely shredded and robbed of all control, the pursuing vehicle vanished in a cloud of burning tire smoke before reappearing in a ditch beyond the right shoulder. "You two think this is worth extra credit?"

Dawn, glancing down at the dark stain spreading across her shortalls, could only manage a bashful squeak. "U-uhm...Marin? I leaked," the coyote said with a whimper, tears beading in her eyes.

"It's okay, Dawn. Accidents happen." Marin pulled off the expressway and passed seamlessly through a pair of gates guarded by red-cloaked Khanjar to reenter Central Grounds. Once safely within the well-patrolled compound, she relinquished the wheel to Dascha, the Academy's AI. "Let's get you taken care of, sweetheart."

Marin flipped her seat around to face the rear passenger seats. The armored BMW was spacious, designed to allow passengers to recline with their legs fully extended. Pulling a travel-sized diapering kit from a compartment in the center console, Marin unfurled a waterproof mat as she reclined the rear seat to create a level surface.

Dawn's eyes were huge in her vulnerable face, fluffy cheeks burning with embarrassment. She shifted uncomfortably in her saturated Huggies, frowning at the still-growing wet patch on her denim shortalls. "It's alright, Dawn," Marin reassured, swiftly unbuckling the straps of her carseat. "These clothes are designed to be leaked on."

"I've leaked plenty of times," Penny added, giving her diaper a pat. "It'll be okay."

Marin's experienced paws extracted a fresh Bambi-print Huggies from the changing kit. Dawn, usually independent and headstrong, seemed small and fragile as the badger towered over her. Marin gently undid the buckles of her shortalls before sliding the straps down her shoulders. A quick tuck and pull on the cuffs and all her clothing was off, Marin neatly tucking everything away in a vinyl wet bag.

There was a tender, maternal aura around Marin now. Lifting Dawn by her ankles, she rolled up the soiled Huggies, sealing it with its own adhesive tapes into a tight bundle. Marin set to work quickly with PariWipes, taking care to thoroughly clean Dawn's shaved diaper area. Dawn held her breath, trembling paws tightly clutching her stuffed rabbit, as a mountain of brown-stained wipes accumulated in the disposal sack.

After applying a puff of sweet-smelling powder, Marin brought the fresh Huggies up, ensuring the ruffled cuffs were not tucked in to prevent leaks. The muted rustling of the dry diaper filled the otherwise tense silence of the car. The colorful Bambi prints now sat snugly around Dawn's waist, secured and ready to handle the next inevitable 'accident.' "There, all done," Marin declared, leaving Dawn in just her diaper for the moment.

The fresh diaper was a welcome contrast for the coyote. Dawn murmured a relieved, "Thank you," nuzzling her face against Marin while the badger engulfed her in a comforting embrace. "You know...this isn't such a bad punishment with you and Florence taking care of me like you do."

"Who ever said this punishment *had* to actually be a punishment?" Marin asked with a sly smile, performing an identical routine on Florence to ensure both Sagaris were freshened up before they were strapped back into their carseats. "Now let's get you girls home. There's a pint of Ben & Jerry's rum raisin in the fridge for anyone who promises to

give a glowing evaluation to my instructors tomorrow.”

Penny, spent from the day’s excitement, almost instantly conked out. Thumb lodged in her muzzle, the doe was completely oblivious to all but her peaceful dreams. Dawn, however, remained sitting upright in her seat, stubbornly fighting the riptide pull of sleep.

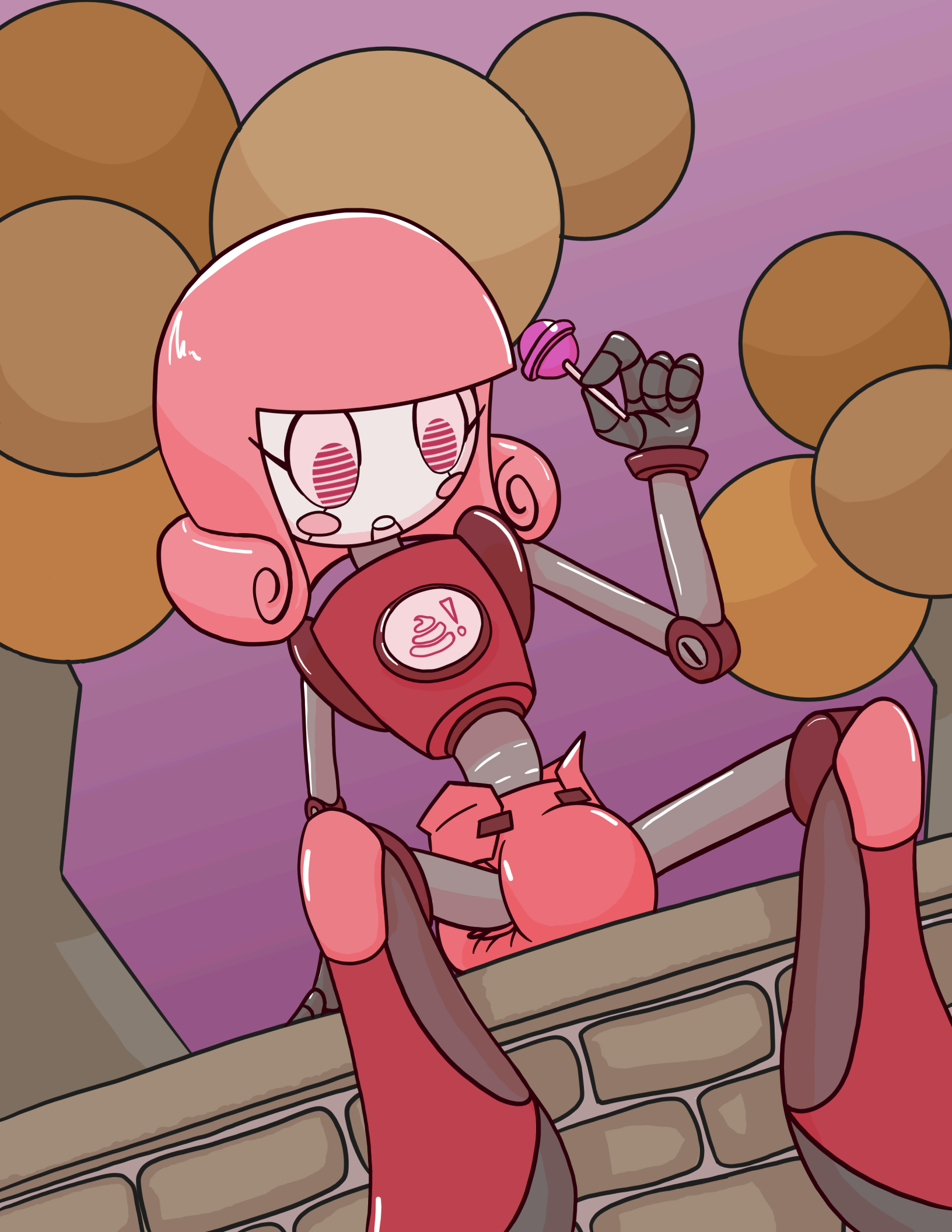
“Dawn, love,” Marin cooed, her gaze softening at the sight of her sleepy charge. “It’s been a long day. You should rest.”

Dawn blinked sleepily, her paws clenching and unclenching on the strap of her car seat. “I’m not...tired,” she mumbled, a wide yawn betraying her somnolence.

Marin chuckled, using the 1,375-watt sound system to put on an electronica lullaby—a collection of soothing rhythms Dawn was particularly fond of. The pacifying melodies gradually unraveled Dawn’s last vestiges of resistance, luring her into a warm blanket of much-needed sleep.

As the armored car glided through the calm suburban neighborhood, Dawn’s eyes finally closed, her head drooping against her chest ruffs. With a freshly-changed diaper swaddling her bottom and a protective Tabriz Nanny dotting on her, the Sagaris was at peace. This new life was all the future punishment she deserved for her past transgressions.

~ END ~



# Butterfly Effects

*Inspired by a scene in the movie "Looper"*

Eleanor pried the door open, making sure there was nobody around before she exited the room. She picked a clip out of her neatly kept hair, striding over to a door several metres down the hall. "Simple my ass... Why the fuck would you think it'd be *simple* to break into a government facility?" she muttered to herself. It had taken her the better part of 7 hours to get this far and her patience was wearing thin. She snuck in the door, jamming her hair clip in the handle as she opened it. A short static burst came from it.

"Fuck!" She whispered, sucking the finger that got shocked. "Least you worked..." She said, closing the door behind her. "Guess time travel is useful after all"

She snorted with a smirk. It really wasn't fair if she was being honest. She had knowledge of the entire building. Even rooms that weren't built yet, she knew what they were used for, where they would be, everything. If it would happen within the next 20 years, she knew about it.

She silently strode over to a seemingly inconspicuous wall and pushed in on it gently. The seam appeared, and the wall beside her opened up. "Come to Mama" She whispered, watching with bated breath as it opened out. A safe about as tall as Eleanor herself stood in front of her.

She frowned, seeing a sticky note on it. She pulled it off, and her heartbeat picked up. It read: *Eleanor Veronica Landers, welcome. If you know what's good for you, you'll go to the examination room. We won't repeat our warning*

She dropped the note, her hands shaking. It wasn't possible. Eleanor was a time traveller! She was from **20 years** in the future! She'd barely be a scruffy 18-year-old this year! She gulped, glancing around the room. "Fuck it" She spat, starting to do the combination for the safe. Her mission here was far more important. She just opened the safe door, when her eyes widened. The SSD she came for was there. Decades of counterintelligence that would be useful to help overthrow her tyrannical government.

But she also saw her painted nails. And she watched as the paint simply... vanished off them. "What?..." She whispered, examining her hand thoroughly. She picked up the SSD and froze when she felt another sticky note under it. She flipped it over.

*We warned you.*

Eleanor's heart rate was well over 100 bpm. She felt something foreign in her mouth suddenly. She reached up and pulled it out. A pacifier. Her hands shook as her brain connected the dots. "They have me..." she whispered. They had her 18-year-old self. And they were doing... something to her. She glanced down at her body. Nothing seemed to have changed. Then she blinked, and she saw her sneakers had lights on them.



Eleanor broke into a sprint, crashing through the door and out of the room. *That damn room is so far away!* She thought, panting as she tried to keep herself calm. She grunted and held her head as she turned the corner. It was like a second set of memories invading her mind. *I.. I never gave up pacifiers* she thought, glancing down at the one in her hand.

She could clearly remember the life she had actually lived. But she could also clearly remember being in her high school class with a pink pacifier bobbing away in her mouth. Her teachers and the other students had long since stopped bringing it up. The teachers because they simply stopped caring, and the students because she proved to be unfazed by their bullying. *I was never bullied* she thought, if only to remind herself.

She gulped, sliding the rubber teat between her lips. Suckling it was like second nature. She shook her head. *I don't have time for this!* She thought, sprinting down the hallway. She had barely made it halfway down this hallway before her bladder started to ache. She stopped, groaning and crossing her legs.

Memories of never *quite* finishing potty training came to the forefront of her mind. She could hold it, sure. But never reliably. Eleanor clenched her fists and started running again. Her bladder quickly gave up. She wasn't sure if she was wearing panties, pull-ups, or training panties, but it was nowhere near thick enough to hold her pee. The stream went down her legs, making each step squelch beneath her.

Her embarrassment at having wet herself would have to wait. She HAD to get to the examination room. Eleanor stopped in the middle of one of the many waiting areas in the building, panting harshly. Her legs were feeling weaker. She looked down at her clothes. She hadn't noticed, but her light-up sneakers had turned into Mary Janes. Her socks had climbed up her legs, her jeans had turned into a pleated skirt, and her jacket was now a soft pink with Hello Kitty on it.

She could clearly see herself in college, happily being walked to her class by her Mom. Her sense of fashion had never left childhood. *Fuck* she thought, cringing as she remembered her Mom not even letting her walk most of the time. Eleanor had spent most of her time outside in a stroller rather than running around. *Explains the weak legs...*

She winced, feeling the cool air around her wet legs. She took deep breaths as she tried running again. But whatever was being done to her past self was making her weaker. It was like she hadn't run properly in decades. She bit down on her pacifier, feeling her new diaper puff out and forcing her into a half run, half waddle. *Too bad you weren't here before I pissed myself* she thought.

The few memories she had of potty training in this false life disappeared. Eleanor had clear memories of going to the school nurse for diaper changes. Her Mom insisted that she wouldn't need to know how to do it. She gasped, feeling something brush against her leg. Looking down, she saw she was dragging a giant teddy bear almost as big as she was behind her. "Mr Fluffles..." she muttered.

She brought him closer to her, wrapping her arms around him. She knew it was just a teddy bear. But part of her couldn't help but want the comfort that hugging him provided. She wanted to tell him all of her secrets, and what she did at daycare that day, and...

Eleanor cringed. It was getting worse. New memories surfaced. In her old life, she had been a rather smart student. Not valedictorian material, but high B's were the norm for her. With her past self's new memories, she couldn't even remember how to spell her name. She started waddling down the hallway again, keenly aware of how sluggish she felt now.

She suckled her pacifier, making sure her new memories didn't distract her to the point of getting lost. She could feel her clothes shifting on her body, but she dared not look down again. She suddenly stopped dead in her tracks. There was an open door to her right. And it was pitch black inside. One set of memories knew there was nothing to be afraid of. It was just a dark room.

But the other screamed that she should run away because the monster in there would be after her if she turned her back to the room. Her legs trembled as she took a few steps forward. *Am I seriously fucking afraid of the dark?!* She thought, not taking her eyes off the open door. The images of potential monsters lurking in the room said exactly that.

Eleanor crept past the room, taking her sweet time in case any monsters popped out of the room. She stopped as soon as she turned the next corner, peeking around to make sure it wasn't coming after her. She sighed. "Come on Ellie... you've a big giwl..." she muttered to herself, cringing at the lisp the pacifier gave her.

The light in the hallway she'd just come from flickered. Her heart skipped a beat as she looked back again. It flickered for a few seconds, then went out completely. "Noooo!" she whined, turning to waddle away. Tears started to form in her eyes as she did her best to get away from the dark hall. The lights behind her started going out one by one as if people were watching her and doing it on purpose.

"Ahhhh! Staahhaap iiiit!" she cried, tears now streaming down her face. In her mind, there was no good reason for her to feel so afraid of the dark behind her. If anything, she should be more worried about the fact her past self was being screwed over like this. Who knew how permanent the effects might be. The lights ahead of her started to turn off, making Eleanor chase after them to escape the evil monsters.

"STAAAHHP! I WAN MY MOMMY! WAAAAAH!" she bawled, crying as loudly as she could. She swore she could feel her diaper getting warmer, but it seemed like a minor concern now. Her whole life was being changed right before her eyes. Anything adult about her was being snatched from her past self. *How long till...* she wasn't willing to finish that thought. The idea that she might just... forget her adult self wasn't one she wanted to entertain.

Though, deep down a part of her knew it was almost inevitable. Eleanor collapsed to her knees, out of breath and needing to rest her sore legs. She sobbed as her memories of only ever crawling came through. She could still see her adult self walking. But this new Eleanor had never even *tried* to stand up, let alone walk. She grunted, feeling her diaper start to sag. She glanced back, before quickly looking forward again. Her diaper was snug around her waist with a onesie at least. But she was certain she had just pooped herself.

She shut her eyes as hard as she could and started her half crawl, half shuffle towards the light. Mr Fluffles size made crawling very difficult. She took a deep breath, realising she still had the SSD in her other hand. She glanced at Mr Fluffles again. *Fuck you* she thought.



She searched around for the zipper on him and pulled it down a bit. She then pushed the SSD deep inside his stuffing, so nobody would feel it if they thought to check it but weren't being thorough.

*If I can't destroy the data, I'll make sure you never find it...* she thought. She cringed again. Her younger side couldn't comprehend that someone would *possibly* take Mr Fluffles off her to get the SSD. But it was the best option she had outside of putting it in a random place she would pass on her way to the examination room.

With one hand free now, she started crawling towards the light, her crying reduced to the odd sob or snuffle. Still, she dared not look behind her and prove her younger side right. She could feel the drool start to dribble off her chin just as she rounded the last corner. There at the end of the hall was the examination room.

She jumped when a loud bang came from behind her, and the waterworks started again. "Stahp! No mowe!" she cried, crawling as fast as she could towards the door. Even crawling was starting to feel sluggish and unnatural. Like she was only just learning how to do it. With tears freely flowing down her face and drool dribbling off her chin, Eleanor finally got to the door. She stared at the doorknob.

She could imagine her adult self using it, but it was like the muscle memory just vanished. Her brain couldn't process how to turn it. She whined loudly and started smacking her fist against the door. After a few seconds, the door opened.

She glared up at the woman standing above her. Her smirk was nothing short of infuriating. Eleanor glanced past the woman, and her eyes widened. She saw her 18-year-old self sitting in a chair, a dopey smile on her face as she vacantly stared at a screen.

She managed one last gasp before her eyes glazed over. Ellie suckled her pacifier, tilting her head as she looked up at the woman. "Mommy?" she muttered, sitting back in her diaper. She hardly noticed the squish sound her poop made against her butt. Any traces of Ellie's adult self were gone. After all, with her 18-year-old self having been hypnotised to forget ever growing past the age of 2, it stood to reason that 38-year-old Ellie wouldn't remember anything of her previous life anymore either.

The woman chuckled. "Come on sweetie, let's get that diapie changed" she said. Ellie sniffled, nodding as she crawled into the room. She laid on her back, letting the woman change her diapie.

*Wan Mommy... where Mommy?...* she thought to herself, blankly staring at the ceiling. She glanced to the side, seeing a girl who looked like her lying beside her to get her own diapie changed. *Sister?* She thought. Ellie didn't know she had a Sister...

"What the hell do you mean she **doesn't have it?!'**" a man yelled over the phone.

"I-I can't- she doesn't- I mean-" the woman changing Ellie's diaper stuttered.

The yelling made Ellie and her lookalike whine. Ellie hid behind Mr Fluffles, trying to make the shouting go away. "She has literally not left the facility! It's not in the safe, so she must have fucking hidden it! Go find it, or you'll be joining her in diapers!"

"Yes sir!" the woman said. She glared at Ellie and gritted her teeth. "You fucking brat!" she spat, being sure to not raise her voice. She didn't need 2 crying babies on her hands in addition to the looming threat of being a third.

Ellie sniffled, burying her face into Mr Fluffles. She hoped her Mommy would come for her soon... she wanted to be cuddled...

# Work Insecurity

Voia'Claire was not having a good time to say the least. The atmosphere of the banquet hall was jovial, sure, but she couldn't count herself amongst the celebrants. Perhaps her sour disposition was merely a reflection of Princess Elphia's own mood like the moon's imitative reflection of the brilliant sun. Elphia was never one for her fathers frivolous feasts. She was a sensitive soul who sought her comforts in quiet moments and the company of an intimate few.

Voia'Claire was happy to count herself among those few despite lacking in noble blood. She was a fortune teller by birth, a good one at that. Good enough for the fates to allow her a position as the crown's grand vizier. But that was the closest she could hope to get to the princess. But no, Elphia's delicate visage read more as bored, Vaiclara was definitely miffed. And the lady could only distract her from what really bothered her for so long. Surrounded on all sides by an enraptured court was a grandstanding young man brandishing a golden wireframe globe telling tales of the stars and their legends by the flaring torchlight braziers. He came from distant lands calling himself an astrologist. He claimed to read fate and destiny in the heavenly bodies or something. He had them all wrapped around his finger, and frankly it made Clara sick.

Fortune-telling was a gift few were blessed with and fewer could master. Not some hokey parlor trick where a charlatan pretends to read giant blobs in the sky that may or may not exist before telling people what they want to hear. He was clearly a phony but what disturbed her was that she seemed to be the only one who saw it.

His stupid spiel seemed to finally end as the crowd clapped and some lords and ladies moved in to shake hands and encourage his nonsense. When she saw her moment Vaicclair broke away from the princess for the first time that night, plastering on her most convincing congenial look. He looked even less impressive up close "quite the tall tales" she greeted with a fake smile, her hand extended for a kiss. Classic power move.

"That's one way to think of them" he graciously accepted her hand "but even the tallest tales can hold vast wisdom for our daily lives. Orthis, at your service"

"Oh, too true!" she nodded. It was official, she hated this guy. "Voia'Claire, a pleasure."

"Ah, yes, the advisor"

"Oh?" Clara felt her mask tense but refused to give this man the satisfaction of thinking he'd surprised her "and who told you that?"

"You're not the only one who communes with spirits" he smiled before laughing, and a few groupies Voia'Claire had tuned out until now laughed with him. "I jest, Your reputation precedes you. This court holds you in high regard"

"I see! Yet still they talk behind my back" she pretended to joke. "All good things, I hope."

"Fantastic things! But the way they describe you I was expecting a sagely old woman. You're quite a bit younger than I expected, by a good margin"

"Ha ha ha, well not all fortune tellers are old crones pondering an orb."

"So I'm learning, old perceptions are so hard to shake. In my homeland many see your form of divination as an antiquated science."

Voia'Claire had a lot she wanted to say to this guy. She had a lot she wanted to scream at him. But a vizier losing their temper on a guest would reflect poorly on her king and his family. And she could never allow that. "And what are you doing here, exactly?"

"I've been traveling for a while, following the stars, telling people their fortunes until a friend told me you're king had heard of me and wanted me to come visit. All the royals in

this land are fascinated with the art of astrology. I may have my own spot in a court like this one soon."

"Hmm, well that may be harder than you think. Any established court worth its salt will already have such a roll fulfilled. And despite any old perceptions you'll be hard pressed to find any doddering old women ready to leave an open position for you."

"You really think so?" If she didn't know better, Clara might say he was being sarcastic "Call it a free prediction."

"Oh? And here I understood your 'art' required a dedicated ritual. Whereas my tall tales can be recalled and interpreted at any time. The royals of my homeland find it most convenient. And heavens willing, they're starting to see that here too."

"Hmm, we shall see. I suppose I'll make my leave now" she offered her hand once more. This guy was really rubbing Clara the wrong way now. Time to spend the rest of the night trying to forget him."

"Yes, we will" he smiled like a grifter who traded in souls. "And if I may return the predictious favor with a prediction of my own." Before she could respond Orthis pulled her in and whispered in her ear "by this time next season, I will have your job" and just like that, he was back to the face of amenability. "It's been a pleasure to meet you!" And then he was gone, retracted into the crowd of gullible sheep.

Voia'Claire was left a bit stunned, standing in the same spot until Elphia found her frozen there. "Vee? Vee where did you go, I lost sight of you. Are you ok?"

That was so Elphia, the care and compassion for a saint, even for one so beneath her as Voia'Claire. She wanted to put her lady at ease but her words stumbled as they left her lips as she nodded profusely "y-yes, I... I am quite alright."

But the ever perceptive princess wasn't convinced. "You look flushed, come with me, you should sit down"

Usually the fortune teller would smile despite herself at all this attention but what that hack said had successfully stuck with her, and taken root like an insidious weed.

•••••

Voia'Claire couldn't say for certain she couldn't sleep that night. Perhaps between restless fits of staring at the roof the royal family had put over her head and overthinking everything she'd ever said or done to make people want her around or not she may have slipped into unconsciousness. But if she did they never lasted long and the same swirling thoughts haunted her when she awoke, so she might well have stayed up all night just doing that.

By the time this vicious, self pitying cycle reached its zenith all she could think was "You're pathetic. Who would ever take counsel from a fortune teller so afraid of the unknown." but that was when it hit her. An idea as inspiring and sudden as a lantern flaring to life. She just needed to "know" the future.

She leapt from her bed without fully understanding her epiphany. The plan was forming within her mind as she enacted it. With nothing but a nightshirt, bonnet and candle to light her way she marched to the castle library. She was afforded her own personal collection in her study but this was something she'd never bothered to learn before. Something she never needed to learn before. The library was quiet and dead but she was quick to find what all she'd need and abscond back to her room.

The future was no line from its beginning to a fixed end. What was yet to be was in constant flux, shifting and folding and stretching. The best a common seer could do was catch a glimpse of the most likely and hope it would truly come to pass before it next twisted itself inside out into a whole new future. A full fledged fortune teller like

Voia'Claire could experience the most likely future as well as those surrounding it, linked by a web of decisions and circumstance between the then and later. Then it was up to her to formulate the advice that would lead to the most favored future. And that had been the craft for the last hundred hundred years with exception for the exceptional. But now? With charlatans moving in and breathing down her livelihood like hungry wolves? She needed an edge. Something ancient and rare. She needed... oracleship.

An oracle was a supremely powerful form of seer. Their minds were said to exist in potential futures as much as they did in the present, their thoughts a constant stream of visions weather in ritual or not. That Orthis was an ass of a man, but his little dig of his had a kernel of truth to it. The biggest hurdle she and other practitioners faced was just how much things could change between the vision and the events foreseen. But as an oracle she could maintain that vision until it came to pass, allowing her to deftly navigate fate to its desired course with a success rate hitherto unheard of, no matter what stray future may come into the equation. She'd be more useful than ever! According to all surviving historical records oracles were only ever naturally born and becoming one later in life seemed unheard of. But she saw no reason to believe it impossible, if she read this right all she'd need was a sufficient source.

Standard fortune telling required only the energy under the tellers own power. But one could enhance a ritual with a boost from performing rights at a place of great power or significance or calling upon something otherworldly to act as a patron. But this had to be done here at the castle and for what she had in mind she'd need far more than some poultry spirit. She'd need a god.

After thumbing through the first book she quickly found just the deity she was looking for. Folklores called him The Chaos Spinner, The Grinning Stringmaster or Trickster of Fate. But they were all the same being recognizable by the same symbol throughout history, Kismet. Accounts described him as a prankster of a god who toyed with mortals and the divine alike, toying with their concerns for the future. And if the last passage was to be believed those who invoked him may find their challenges, bending and bowing to form an ultimately happy ending. That was just the kind of fuel this fire Voia'Claire was stoking needed.

Hours later the eastern sky began to grow ever lighter as the sun's inevitable cresting drew near and the royal fortune teller resisted collapse as she finished her notes. She'd double checked, triple checked and then double checked again until she properly modeled a ritual circle. For something that had apparently never been done before Voia'Claire had done this perfectly if she did say so herself. She'd perform it then and there if her bed wasn't so collapse-in-able.

She woke when the first rays of light from the window shone on her face and snapped upright. It was already dawn!? She'd wasted so much time! Clara needed this ritual as soon as possible. But her brow was damp with sweat from her feverish bout of academia the night prior. And the rest of her wasn't much cleaner. Groundbreaking acts of desperation were one thing but she needed to look presentable. How could she expect anyone to pay her any mind otherwise.

She was to the washroom before any other, the sun hadn't even left the horizon's embrace yet. The upper crust typically slept a little longer and of course the servants were often bustling about before dawn but they were never allowed the luxury of the upper floor baths. And if Voia'Claire failed, neither would she. She may have rushed the process but she was in and out before another soul even arrived, she was making great time. But just when she sprinted around the last corner, as fast as the towel she'd wrapped herself in would allow, she skid to a stop when she saw the sleepy princess standing at her door. "Vee? Oh!" Elphia practically caught the advisor as she came to such a short stop, faintly



blushing at the proximity.

"Princess, I am so sorry. Please forgive me!" Voia'Claire stepped back and bowed, but her liege seemed a bit uncomfortable with her reverence.

"No. You're quite fine- I-I am fine," she stammered, her blush persisting "you just seemed so distraught last night. I just wanted to check in, as it were. See if something was bothering you and perhaps we could discuss it at the baths." If her Complexion was fair like the princesses Elphia would see a blush on the fortune teller's face as well. "But I can see you've already beat me to it." Then she took a closer look at her friend. "Did you sleep ok?"

Clara lied with a nod and half-truth. "I had a more productive night than I may ever have had, M'lady. In fact, I'll have something special to show you later today."

"Oh, ok. I'll look forward to it, then." She didn't seem convinced but Elphia stepped away from the door and let Her by. When Voia'Claire walked past the princess added "Please just be sure you're taking care of yourself, Vee vee. I really do care about you."

"Yes, M'lady" Voia'Claire bowed again and closed the door. Alone in her room once more she slumped her bowed head on the door. The princess was the kindest person the fortune teller had ever met. She made her feel like she could be more than what even she saw in herself. And soon she'd be something worthy of that kindness. But first things first, she should probably get dressed.

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With some difficulty, but less than she feared, Voia'Claire scrawled a suitable magic circle on her floor in chalk, double and triple checked to compensate for the magic surge. And at its center lay a stone with two circles bound by an infinity sign etched into it, the symbol of Kismet. But when all that was left was the final step she hesitated. What if it failed, what if she failed. She started to pace in an attempt to banish her doubts. Perhaps it'd be best to belay the ritual itself for the time being and bring her conceptual notes to the royals. That... might wow them enough.

Just when she was beginning to calm herself there was a knock at the door. After obscuring the rather occult looking circle behind a curtain Clara found one of the maids, Harriet, behind the door with a tray of food

"Good morning, Clairey dear!" The bubbly woman smiled

"It's just Clara if you must shorten it, thank you" she looked down at the tray of fried eggs and bread "I didn't..."

"Oh, the princess was adamant I bring you something to eat. Insisted it, she did. Such a sweet girl."

"She did?" For all the stress she was under, Voia'Claire couldn't help but smile.

Harriet smirked, "she also told me she'd be waiting for you in'er room, if you catch my meaning."

Voia'Claire didn't, of course, but it didn't change the fortune teller's response. "I've got a project to attend to before I can meet with her" she sheepishly moved a curl out of her face before taking the tray.

"Oh? Well that's a shame." Harriet seemed disheartened before something seemed to occur to her. "Maybe that nice young man from Asteious could give you a hand. Orthis, wassit?" Voia'Claire's eye twitched "I'm sure he'd be willing to take the load off your plate. Leave you some time to yourself if you know what I mean." Clara felt it, a half-formed rant threatening to bubble out of her.

"That is not remotely... the fundamentals are completely... I'll have you know..." in the end she just took a deep breath. "Thank you for the food, Harriet." And kicked the door closed."

That was it. Screw just making a report, screw caution and screw that guy. The sooner she made herself an Oracle the sooner the king would kick out that trashy charletín. She ditched the tray on her end table, threw the violet velvet curtain aside, dropped to her knees and held her palms to the circle as she began the chant she spent last night devising and memorizing.

The chalk sizzled and ignited with a purple glow. The smoke that rose from the pattern swirled and whipped the air into a whirlwind. An ethereal pressure was forming, pushing against her. But she pushed back, mounting the energy further. Glimpses of scenes yet to be peaked through the thickening swirl of smog surrounding her. But she ignored them, it wasn't what she was here for. Then something strange happened. The circle changed.

The shapes and patterns unfolded and shunted into one another. They became simple yet complex, complex yet simple, is...and isn't. Every time her eyes adjusted the pattern was different, the circle itself a shifting vision. The only constant was the carved stone at the center glowing brighter and brighter. It was too chaotic, she could barely follow.

No, not chaos. This was Kismet.

All she wanted was to siphon off some divine energy but no, she'd attracted his attention. The pressure was beginning to lift her off the floor and she scrambled to plant her feet on the ground. Now she was standing as if against a strong wind, leaning forward with her palms against the force in defiant refusal to be repulsed.

"I demand your aid!" She shouted against the pressure, trying not to think about how she was speaking to a god and how she spoke to this god. The sigil stone was rumbling now with what flowed through it "you sew chaos into fate? Well so do I!" That's it, bargaining. She'd bargain her way into the trickster's favor. "You play with peoples uncertainty until you give them what they want, right? You help me see it all and I'll do the same!" Cracks began to form across the stone. If it broke she'd lose the connection. "Do you hear me! I'll make it work!"

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When the stone exploded a piece must have struck Voia'Claire in the forehead. That would explain the shooting pain she first felt when her mind swam back to consciousness. She wasn't on the ground, no. It was soft. Very nice, nice soft. But not level, no. No, her legs were dangling over the side of something. Her bed! Yes, she was on her bed. How far back was she thrown? This far. She knew she'd been thrown back this far because she knew she was on her bed now. Yes, her bed.

Why were her thoughts so fast? What time was it? She hadn't tried to move yet but from what she could see above her the ceiling looked bright. No, dim. No, dark. No, dim. No, bright. Why was time moving so fast? No, time wasn't moving fast. Normal. Time was moving normal. She was just seeing other ones. Yes, other times. Other days, other nights, other ceilings, other skies. They were all spinning like a mobile. Wait, was that a mobile in one of them? What did this mean? Was she an oracle now?

Voia'Claire waved her hand in front of her face. A dreamlike trail of echoes behind it, but not only that. The echoes moved in all directions. Not just the ways she moved them. No, the ways she could have moved them too. For a moment her field of vision was filled with potential permutations of her own arm. If she had anything in her stomach she might hurl. She wanted it to go away. She closed her eyes and flipped her arm down. They were gone when she opened her eyes. Good, this would take some getting used to. When she sat up she could see the burnt remnants of the stone still smoking, so she mustn't have been out long. No, not long. But how long?

Her thoughts were racing so fast her body felt slow in comparison. Her head sluggishly



listed to the left. When her eyes passed over her door she caught a glimpse of something. Yes, something. In the here and now the door was closed. Yes, closed. But for that second, that flash, she saw the door open at dawn. Yes, dawn. And there was a woman standing in the door. Yes, a woman that made her feel safe and happy when Clara saw her. Elphia? Why was Elphia on the other side of bars? Was Claire on the other side of bars? The image was gone before she could fully understand it, fully analyze it. Her vision kept drifting until it landed on the tray of food she'd left untouched. She was famished. Yes, so famished. Hungry. Contacting gods really took it out of you. Without thinking she pulled herself across the bed and reached for the tray on the table. It was hard to aim with so many hands. No, one hand. One hand and a lot of potential what-if hands. She aimed for the fork but her hand landed in the eggs instead. Oh. But she was still hungry though. Yes, hungry. So she gripped the egg and brought it to her lips. It wasn't clean by any means. No, messy. But good. Yes, so good. When the food was gone and her face was a mess Voia'Claire licked her hand clean as a sort of clarity came to her.

What was she doing? She'd successfully expanded her mind to the true wheel of fate and she was eating like some mad woman. Was she going mad? Did becoming an oracle cost her her mind? What if the princess saw her like this? No, Elphia needed to see her. No, she needed to see Elphia. She promised to show her. Yes, she may look out of sorts but if anyone could see what she'd become. Yes, if anyone could see what she could do it was her. Sweet Elphia.

She rolled to the edge of the bed and tried to stand. One of her shoes came off when she was sent flying so she kicked the other one off. Yes, off. But when she stood she found a new issue. Every time she moved her leg she sensed every possible potential motion kaleidoscope out before the footfall landed. Every step was anything but certain. She felt like a fawn on new legs threatening to buckle with every step. And her dress and all its petticoats obscuring her real legs didn't help her discern a course any clearer. And that wasn't all.

Voia'Claire felt the slightest twinge in her bladder when she stood. Normally it'd be nothing but the moment she felt it she saw more flashes. Bad flashes. Dark wet spots on her dress. Puddles on the floor. Chafing skin. Washer women scolding her until she cried. They didn't make sense, they were illogical but she feared them nonetheless. What if she peed? What if people got mad at her cause she peed and made mess? Then she had an idea that would solve her problem, both problems. Double no problem!

The layers ripped surprisingly easily as she undressed her lower half. Then with a few wobbly steps she gathered up a towel or two and a spare linen. Yes, and something to fasten. Then it was simply a matter of arranging them and the scraps of her dress layers. It was strange, she'd never even considered anything of the sort. No, never cared for any children. No, never looked after anyone so infirm. So helpless. But now that she found herself sitting in the middle of her little nest. Yes, comfy. It all came so easily. Yes, so easy cause she'd seen it done so many times. No, not cause that, that wasn't true. Why did she think that? As she folded layer upon layer over herself Voia'Claire knew it was a completely new experience but found her hands guided by familiarity. Yes, a memory. No, not a memory memory, a memory of something that hadn't happened yet. Later? Was she going to have children? She certainly hoped not. No, hopefully it was just some potential future that wasn't hers. Once it was all in place she sat back up with some difficulty and wondered if perhaps she went a bit overboard with the layers. Yes, very thick. Unwieldy? Thighs don't touch. Should she have used powder? What powder? Irrelevant.

The deed was done, she was in a diaper, if she peed there'd be no mess and she had little choice but to believe it all logical. At least she could still walk normally. No, not normal, but serviceable.

As she made her final adjustments Voia'Claire realized she was muttering to herself. Murmuring strange rambles that even she couldn't follow. Three or more vocalized thought processes fumbling over her lips at once in a disjointedly singular whispering. Not babbling, per say, but about as intelligible. People might think her crazy if she went around murmuring like that. If she made an effort to vocalize, whatever sounds he made or word she said seemed to take precedence. But otherwise her voice would quietly go off on its own. That was no good. No, no good. Even she couldn't talk forever. Oh gods, was she drooling? Yes, spittle, she had to do something. But as she tried to wipe it away her less than coordinated hand caught her thumb in her mouth. As if on instinct her lips formed a seal and she began to suck her thumb like a child. No, so shameful! But it stopped the mumbling. Yes, quiet.

And there was something else to it. Yes. Another flash. A feeling as if someone were...tussling her hair? No, kinder. Petting? Yes, a caress gentle and warm and kind. A memory of an embrace yet shared. She needed her princess. Yes, she would understand. But her first. Only her first. Only Elphia would understand.

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The princesses' chambers weren't far from her own room. No, not far. Just down the corridor, up the stairs and diagonally across the upper level of the great hall. It was a route the advisor traversed a thousand times and waddling or not she should still be able to make it but could she get all the way there without being seen. Yes, she'd have to!

The hall was empty when Clara poked her head out. Yes, now empty. But even as she took that first wide-gated step out of the hidden safety of her room she could feel echoes of presences that weren't there yet crashing against her like waves on the stony shore. But they weren't now. No, later, she wouldn't be here by then. She'd be better by then. Yes, well adjusted, she couldn't see that now but she'd have to be. She quadruple checked the bundle under her arms, all the physical evidence she'd need to prove her breakthrough was no breakdown. She wished she could ignore how ridiculous she must look, how odd her movements must seem. But that was difficult not to think about when propelling herself took so much conscious effort.

She'd made it halfway there without incident. Ducking behind pillars and rolling below table skirts whenever her expanded senses gave her warning. Perhaps she jumped the gun a time or two and stayed curled up in her hiding spots a little too early for too long but she'd prefer to be cautious rather than caught. She paused when she reached the stairs. The stone steps threatening a terrible spill that she tried to stop her mind from playing out before her. Walking was going to be a liability. Yes, too risky. She needed to crawl. So she popped her thumb out of her mouth, wondering for a sobering moment how long it'd been since it slipped back in there without her notice, and began her ascent knee over hand over knee. It might have been easier if she wasn't holding her bundle of research. No no, she couldn't afford that. Anything but that. It took some effort but eventually she reached the top of the winding stone stairs. But just when she reached the upper hall and started scanning for some sturdy furniture to pull herself up on she felt something, glimpsed something, heard something.

A laugh. Yes, but not just one. Two, yes two. The laugh was Harriets and Voia'Claire felt her skin crawl at just the presence of the other when she heard his voice. "Oh my goodness, you've such a way with words."

"Ah, simply a trick of the trade. How could I hope to speak for the stars if I don't speak half as well as they shine." He could not be allowed to see her like this. No, anyone but him. What if he laughed at her!? She'd never be able to look Harriet in the eyes either. Why

couldn't she feel them coming until it was almost too late? Had Voia'Claire wasted all her foresight on climbing the stairs?"

That didn't matter, she needed to retreat. Yes, down the stairs before they turned the corner. Crawling down was out of the question. No, fall down go boom. So with a quick about face she plopped down on her padded posterior and started butt-scooting away, one step at a time. Her plan was to descend just out of sight around the first corner and stay there till they passed her by. No muss, no fuss, no real setback But then she felt a change, like a shift in wind or current at sea. "Oh, you wanted to see the kitchens did you not?"

"I believe I did, only if you wish to show me of course."

"Oh, it'd fit quite nicely into the tour, I assure you. Right this way."

No no no, not this way! Not this way! Clara needed to keep scooching. Yes, further. Scooch scooch. Yes, faster. Scooch scooch scooch. No, too fast, too fast! She knew she'd lose control before it happened but not before it was too late to do anything about it. Her makeshift diaper softened the blows as she slipped to the bottom but that didn't mean it didn't hurt. She tried to grip the papers with both hands but the shock and motion loosed her grip and cascaded her hard work around her as she fell until she was sat in a pile of it all at the bottom of the stairs.

At first, all she could feel was shock. But she knew she was soon to feel rage, sorrow, shame, frustration and white hot regret. But did she know that because she knew herself or because of what she'd made of her mind. She came to realize, as her face grew hot, fists clenched and eyes threatened to wet, that she hadn't felt in touch with herself since the ritual. She hadn't felt safe since the ritual. She hadn't felt in control since last night. By the second second after her descent she dreaded for the first time just what she'd done to herself. Looking down she saw the book between her legs, open to the same page on the Grinning Stringmaster that secured her down this path. That's it. This wasn't her fault.

This was Kismet!

Before she could let out a single curse she heard voices from above and time sped up again.

"Did you hear something just now?"

"Hello? Is everything ok down there?"

The steps were on the stairs now. Voia'Claire had to think fast, as if she had a single thought that wasn't fast anymore. The pages were too many. Permutations, too many. The book was her only focal point. Yes, book. She grabbed it and hustle crawled behind the nearest tapestry. She curled up in a little ball with the spine of the book in her mouth to quiet her muttering as she tried not to think about how terrible of a hiding spot this was. Or her madly diapered behind sticking out for all to see. Oh gods, she hoped it was successfully covered. She could hear their voices as they found the papers at the bottom of the steps but tuned them out. She didn't want to even think about that stupid astrologist and his stupid voice. Instead she focused on physical stimulus and physical stimulus only.

Her diaper was wet. Or maybe she was going to wet it soon. Maybe she was wetting it now. The back of the tapestry was thick but rough. No, not meant to be cuddled. The stone floor was rough, leaving a lot for her poor crawling knees a lot to be desired. The air was hot. but nice? In the dim cozy folds of her hiding place the flashes came back. They struck in quick staccato beats, each before the one before could finish like a caravan lighting torches at nightfall. One at a time, in the same time. She felt her whole body tightly swaddled, laying on her back. A hand rubbing her back until the tears ended and into the night. Heard the most beautiful voice she'd ever heard hum the most beautiful song she may never hear and tell her everything was going to be ok because now I'm here. She

saw...Elphia. The images came faster than the other sensations but Elphia was a constant. Holding her. Smiling at her. Holding her hand. Sharing life. Kissing!?

Pieces Voia'Claire never dared to connect were suddenly bound. A pattern formed. A tapestry so vivid all her visions paled in comparison. Did the princess... love her?

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She sat up and brushed the shroud away. The hall was empty but Voia'Claire didn't care anymore. Orthis was gone, Harriet was gone, her notes were gone. But she didn't care about that either. She took the book out of her mouth with a pop and with nothing but a fleeting line of spittle connecting it to her left it behind the tapestry. Tears ran down her cheeks, she felt like such a fool. With a newfound determination she pushed her butt up in the air before standing on her own two feet with her arms waving for balance. Then she started to waddle. A stride as confident as a woman in such a diaper could manage. The flashes kept up, promising her a life with Elphia. Then up the stairs on all fours as the sniffles started before going right back to her toddling march through the upper hall without skipping the beat. Pre-memories of Elphia smiling at her, holding her, cooing sweet nothings. They felt so close yet... incomplete. Yes, pieces missing. Important ones. Unlike before it was a straight shot course to her destination. People could easily see her and maybe even now they were but she'd let go of her periphery, all she cared about was the door dead ahead of her that kept her from the princess. She just wanted this nightmare to be over. It's not like Phia could fix her but she knew she could comfort her and that's all Clara could ever want right now.

But when she stood at the door with her hand on the handle she felt herself pause. What if she couldn't accept her like this. What if Voia'Claire had ruined herself just in time to see that the person she most cared about loved her. How could anyone love a sniveling, crying, thumb sucking, soiled, prideful and short sighted fool like her.

But then the door swung open. Did Voia'Claire open it? The distinction was important but it was a question she did not or would ever bother with. princess Elphia turned to the sound of the door and dropped her book "Vee Vee?" She stood and approached. "What happened to you!? What happened to your eye!? What are you wearing? H- how..."

Voia'Claire didn't know what to say. Her lips twisted with regret, anxiety, and swirling possibility. What should she even say, what could she say. A long winded explanation was well beyond her emotional bandwidth. I'm sorry? I love you? I need help? But something came to her, from where or when she could not say. Butting it was on the tip of her tongue the moment she laid eyes on the princess clearer and surer than any other word. So there in the doorway, stood in a bow legged diapered stance and her face masked in drool, tears, a little food and a fair bit of snot all she could manage was "Mm...mmMm...Mama." The fortune teller's face reddened and the princesses eyes widened. But before Clara could feel the latest wave of embarrassment Phia surprised her. She closed the remaining distance with a hug. Vaclair was nearly a head taller but nonetheless she felt all encompassed in her arms. Safe, protected from the world by that warm embrace. This was it. The final piece of the future that brought these flashes into focus. Eventually Elphia, her princess, her... mama, pulled back just enough that they may lock eyes. She raised a hand to caress the face of Voia'Claire, her counsel, the closest to her heart, her...baby, and asked her "How did you know?"

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Voia'Claire was having a spectacular time, laughing and shrieking as she bounced on her



Mamas lap. Horsey rides such as these were an occasional luxury given she was bigger than Mama. But she got to have them as long as she helped support her own weight with her feet on the ground. Meanwhile Mama Phia was trying to shush her silly girl but Vee Vee was having too much fun to be polite.

A lot had changed in the past year. She wasn't the Royal vizier anymore. But she couldn't care less, maybe she never did. All she ever wanted was a sense of security and importance. And when she thought she'd lose it she feared losing Elphia the most. But their current setup rendered both issues moot. Double no problem! She and the princess were closer than ever. She even had a giant bassinet in her royal chambers. Not that she did a lot of sleeping in it whenever she spent the night. The cribs, high chairs, toys, diapers and what-not were all new too. It was a lot, to be honest, but when the future was experienced as easily as the present it wasn't hard to get used to things. Turns out Elphia had been secretly fantasizing about things like this for years so she was happy to get onboard. And whatever the princess says, goes. She even had some sketches for the royal tailor to use as reference. Clara came close with her shoddy attempt at a diaper, but there was no contest between those ramshackle dress pieces and a full fledged cloth diaper. They were perhaps the cushiest thing she'd ever worn. Tonight her ensemble was completed by a cream colored smock dress and matching booties, all custom made. She more or less smoothed things over with the chaos spinner too. When all's said and done he made all this possible. They even gave him his own little spot in the royal temple. Elphia hushed another giggly outbursts, placing Nunu between her loves lips. The Nunu was a fantastic innovation from somewhere overseas. With it she'd always have something to suck on while her hands remained completely free "I know, I know. You've got a lot of energy after that long nap but we can play after the feast. Just try to be polite during the performance, my little violet." Voia'Claire loved the sound of her whisper. So sweet and gentle.

Clara rolled her eyes as she settled. It's not like Orthis ever had anything worth listening to to say. He may have been the royal Vizier but as the former vizier that didn't mean much to her. He'd do his little dances, dole out his riddles as if they were sagely truths and leave the rest to people's imagination. But what did she care, she was an oracle now. If he ever messed up or stepped out of line she'd be there to swoop in (or waddle in. Whichever) and save his butt. Besides, what did a royal baby like her need with a job anyway, he could keep it. She was effectively retired.

After she was placed back in her high chair she propped her arm up on the tray and rested her head in her hand. All she had to do was wait for the drivel he performed to end so the great hall could move on to something important, like dessert. Ooh yes, she'd definitely been good enough for at least a pudding. Or maybe the maids were finally ready to trust her with cake again.

Then she found herself leaning forward. Not to boom boom, well... maybe a little. But mostly because she noticed something truly eye opening. Orthis was giving this particular insane nonsense his all. So much so that a necklace had slipped out from under the shirt that usually hid it. A little stone at the end of a loop of leather. As it waved with each motion it caught a glimpse of an eerie familiar purple glow.

What if it wasn't just by random chance that Orthis showed up when he did. By random chance he rubbed Voia'Claire just the wrong way like he knew just the buttons to press. By random chance she found just the page she needed in the first book she read, and the magic circle came so easily. What if none of it was random.

What if it was all... Kismet.



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