**Agent B and the Missing Boy**

**By Elfy**

Billy’s eyes slowly drooped before shooting back open again. He slumped forward on his desk as he did all he could to remain awake, the heat combined with the endless droning from the front of the room made this a difficult task.

“Perhaps you could answer the question Mr. Adams.” Billy jolted awake when he heard Mr. Jones, his History teacher, call out his name.

“Question?” Billy repeated as he looked around him. He was happy to see that the rest of his class were struggling to remain conscious as well.

“Yes Mr. Adams. The question.” Mr. Jones repeated, a small smirk appeared across his face as he knew he had caught a student not paying attention. Mr. Jones was an “old school” teacher. A teacher with no qualms about putting his students on the spot if he knew they weren’t listening.

Billy had no idea what the question was, he barely even knew what the subject of the lesson was. He scanned the whiteboard at the front of the room for a clue as to the question. It seemed the lesson of the day was on the American revolution. A topic that Billy knew very little about.

“Could you repeat the question?” Billy asked his teacher.

“Billy, if you aren’t goi-” Mr. Jones started.

“1776.” Billy suddenly said, “You asked when the Declaration of Independence was signed. 4th July 1776.”

Mr. Jones looked taken aback that Billy suddenly knew not only the question but also the answer. He could have sworn Billy wasn’t paying any attention.

“A lucky guess I suppose…” Mr. Jones mumbled and he started returning to his lecturing on the beginning of the revolutionary war.

Fortunately for Billy, everyone else around had remained in their own stupors as they watched the clock tick down towards morning recess. None of them noticed when Billy quietly slipped his thumb into his mouth.

Billy had been told repeatedly that he shouldn’t use his powers if he could help it. That he should only use it when absolutely necessary, but sometimes it was hard to avoid using his power in these kinds of situations. He hadn’t even meant to do it, he really just wanted to hear the question again!

Billy found himself falling back into a drowsy state as Mr. Jones began droning on and on again. Billy watched the clock as he continued to suck on his thumb. Just like in the cartoons that Billy watched it seemed like the clock was getting slower and slower, he could swear it even started going backwards at times.

Just as Billy was on the verge of drifting off there was a loud, sudden knock at the door. Billy wasn’t the only one startled by the noise as it sounded like someone at the back of the room fell out of his chair much to the amusement of the rest of the class.

As the class broke out in laughter and the boy at the back of the room sheepishly sat back down Mr. Jones answered the door. The secretary came in and whispered something in the teacher’s ear before handing him a note. Mr. Jones pushed his thick glasses up his nose a bit as he read the note.

The teacher rolled his eyes at the interruption to his lesson and the secretary shrugged before turning and leaving the room herself.

“Alright, alright… Settle down.” Mr. Jones called out to the suddenly rowdy class.

Gradually everyone calmed down and the noise levels dropped back to normal.

“Billy you’re wanted in the office.” Mr. Jones said sternly from the front of the room.

The whole class let out that collective “oooohhh” noise that kids make when they think someone is about to get into trouble. Billy wrenched his thumb out of his mouth when he found the rest of the class now looking at him. It was hard work, for some reason his thumb just wanted to be in his mouth.

“Excuse me Sir but does it say “wanted” or “needed”?” Billy asked hesitantly as he put his things in his backpack.

“Does it matter?” Mr. Jones asked tersely. His eyes narrowed dangerously.

The rest of the class were totally silent. It was virtually unheard of for a student to talk back to Mr. Jones!

“It kinda does.” Billy replied as he stood up at his desk. There was a very important distinction between the two phrases for Billy.

Mr. Jones let out a long sigh and looked back down at the note.

“Billy is needed in the office.” Mr. Jones stated putting emphasis on the word “needed”. He crumpled up the note after reading it, he was obviously agitated at being talked back to by a child.

“Thank you Sir.” Billy said and he practically ran out of the classroom. The rest of the class looked on confused. It wasn’t normal for a kid to be so enthusiastic about what they assumed was a punishment.

To make matters worse, in his hurry to pack up and leave, Billy hadn’t noticed that his backpack had caused his shirt to ride up a little bit and show the waistband at the top of a pull up. A few of the students who noticed giggled loudly but Billy didn’t notice them.

The last thing Billy heard as the door closed was Mr. Jones returning to his lecture and a collective groan from his students as they slumped back down in their seats.

The school office was to the left of the classroom but Billy turned to the right and headed away from where the note told him to go.

Billy hurried through the mostly empty corridors of the school. He passed a bunch of different classrooms and he heard the muffled voices from inside each room as he jogged by.

As Billy rounded a corner he approached a door which didn’t look like any other. This door was solid wood from the floor to the top of the frame and there was no window or plaque saying what was the other side of the door unlike every other door that Billy had passed.

Billy slowed down and stopped in front of the door. He looked left and right conspiratorially to make sure no one was watching him as he approached the door.

The large door looked heavy and was painted solidly in black. It looked imposing and Billy had sometimes heard other children telling stories of what was on the other side. Some said that it was locked because it was an old bomb shelter, some said it was where a crazy janitor lived and he came out at night and chased anyone trespassing off of school grounds. The younger kids thought there was a monster in there and Billy found himself laughing once when one young student hesitantly put his ear to the door and then jumped back swearing he heard something growling. But for all their guesses Billy had never heard any student or teacher correctly guess what was behind the mysterious door.

Billy grabbed the door knob and pushed it three times. He looked around the halls again to make sure they were still empty and then turned the door knob once to the right, twice to the left and then four times to the right. Billy heard a loud clicking sound and the door was released from its lock. Billy pushed against the door as hard as he could and slowly he managed to push the heavy door open. It took a lot of effort for the 11-year-old boy to get the thick door to move but when it opened enough for Billy to squeeze through he did so and the door closed behind him rather quickly.

As Billy got his bearings he heard the internal mechanism of the doors complicated lock resetting with a series of click and clanks.

As he entered the darkness behind the door the old lights that lined the roof flicked on revealing a staircase heading down under the ground. The corridor was full of cobwebs and the flickering lights caused a lot of shadows to dance on the walls. It was a really creepy scene and Billy shivered slightly as he took a few timid steps towards the newly illuminated stairs.

Billy hurried down the stairs with the aid of the handrail against the wall. The stairs seemed to go on for a long time but when Billy finally neared the bottom he saw a familiar face and smiled a wide smile.

“Hello Billy!” Nurse Alice Clearwater said with a wide smile of her own as she stepped forward and took Billy’s hand.

Billy wrapped his arms around the nurse’s waist and hugged her tightly. Alice, who towered over the boy, knelt down and returned the hug.

The bottom of the stairs led to a tunnel that ran underneath the school in both directions. On the wall opposite the stairs was a door that looked a lot more modern than anything else in the tunnel. It was through this door that Nurse Alice took Billy now into a room built by The Agency when Billy started to get used more often.

The room was rather plain but it was much better insulated than the chilly tunnel outside. In the room were some basic amenities like a sink and a toilet but there was also a closet with clothes inside. It was this closet that Alice opened as they walked in and she pulled out a small suit. She was in a little bit of a hurry because she knew that the others would be waiting for her.

“How is school going?” Alice asked Billy. She started pulling off Billy’s shirt as she asked the question. Billy, also aware that people were waiting for him didn’t complain and allowed Alice to do her thing.

“It’s OK.” Billy answered simply as his shirt came off.

Alice got the shirt from the suit and after slipping Billy’s small arms into the holes she started buttoning it up.

Next Alice pulled down Billy’s pants to replace them with the suit pants. As she pulled down Billy’s pants she paused when she saw that Billy was wearing one of his Goodnites pull ups. She pursed her lips at the unexpected underwear.

“You are wearing a pull up. Been having some problems?” Alice asked as casually as she could. She started helping Billy step into the suit pants as she asked. She carefully poked the pull up to make sure it was still dry, which it was.

Billy nodded shyly as his pants were pulled up. Ever since he had started working for The Agency his control had seemed to slip a bit. Especially more recently when they had been using him a bit more often. For a while he barely had any accidents, then he started having the occasional night time accident which became a problem for him most nights and it was rarer for him to wake up dry than wet. In the very recent past, since the last time The Agency had used him when he was interrogating Viktor Dragonov, Billy had started having issues in the day time too. He was finding that if he couldn’t get to a bathroom very quickly that he would end up with wet pants. This is why he was now in pull ups during the day.

Alice almost imperceptibly shook her head. She couldn’t believe that Billy’s gift seemed to be clearly aggravating his condition and yet the bosses kept calling him in. She made a note to speak to Agent J and Supervisor Daniels, she wanted a proper meeting with the heads of department where she could share her concerns and everyone could talk about it. The Agency bosses were good people, they were the best at what they did, but sometimes they had to be reminded that the names they see on pieces of paper were real people and that what they asked these people to do could have real world consequences.

Alice quickly pulled up the suit pants and tucked in Billy’s shirt. She carefully fixed the black tie around his neck and took a step back to examine him. Everything looked correct and Billy looked adorable as he always did when in his little suit but Alice knew Billy didn’t like anyone saying that.

Alice reached out her hand to take Billy’s and the two of them left the little side room to head back into the main tunnel. They started walking away from the school in the dark, dripping passage. The lights were quite dim and only barely lit the way, it was a very spooky walk and Billy was glad to be doing it with Alice. He would have been very scared if he was alone down here.

They walked for a few minutes in silence before stopping at a seemingly random ladder with a hatch at the top of it. It was just one ladder of many that looked identical but it was this ladder that Billy started climbing whilst Alice stood at the bottom to make sure he didn’t slip and fall. Alice couldn’t wait to be out of this tunnel, it always made her jittery to be down here. Alice often wondered why they couldn’t just walk out the school entrance and get picked up. She had brought it up to the others who worked with Billy several times but they always said they had to keep things as quiet and secret as possible.

That is why The Agency had found this old sewer that had been taken out of service long ago and put some basic facilities in it. The school had been notified of what The Agency was doing and why they were doing it, they were also instructed to not ask questions and if Billy was called out of school for any reason they were not to stand in the way. Obviously the school hadn’t been too happy about it but when they got some phone calls from some very, very important people they quickly backed down from challenging it.

As Billy reached the top of the ladder he knocked on the underside of a metal trap door in the ceiling. He heard some shuffling above him than a lock turning before the door was opened and the dank tunnel was suddenly bathed in bright sunlight. Billy shielded his eyes from the sudden light and felt a pair of arms grab him by the arms and lift him out of the tunnel and up into the back of an alleyway.

“J!” Billy shouted excitedly and quickly wrapped his arms around the tall agent.

“Hello Billy! How have you been?” Agent James asked his young partner.

“I’m OK. School is boring, I’m glad you guys came for me.” Billy said as he looked around at the scene he had been lifted in to.

The alleyway was very non-descript. Just round the back of some warehouses and very effectively hidden from view of the main road that was the other side of the buildings. It was oddly peaceful although the sound of traffic could clearly be heard. There were security guards and agents stationed at the entrance to the alleyway, they were very distinctive by their earpieces and their general demeanour.

The usual parade of vehicles that usually picked Billy up were in front of him. The big black cars protected at either end by a couple of people on motorcycles. The Agency spared no expense and thanks to its success was often given funds for anything it asked for by the government.

“Hello Billy.” Said a slightly sterner and female voice.

“Hello.” Billy said to Agent Chloe. She got a much colder reception than the others that Billy recognised.

“Shall we get going?” Chloe asked James. She was anxious to get moving, she didn’t like being out in the open like this even though the other agents seemed much more relaxed.

“A little help?” Alice’s voice suddenly appeared behind them as she struggled to lift herself out of the trap door.

“Oh, of course!” James rushed over and taking her by the arm he pulled her out of the hole before shutting the door, “Sorry Alice, kind of forgot you were still down there.”

Alice dusted herself down and chuckled.

“Right then.” Agent J said to the assembled crowd, “Nurse, your work here is done. If you get in the last car it will take you back to Agency headquarters.”

Alice nodded and before heading to the car she quickly got down and gave Billy a hug.

“Stay safe.” She whispered into Billy’s ear before standing back up and heading to her assigned car.

“Me, Billy and Chloe are in the other car.” James said pointing at the car ahead of Alice’s that had tinted windows.

Agent C got in first. Billy followed her and then, after speaking into his cufflink to give the guards the all clear, Agent J got in the car meaning Billy was in the middle of the other two agents.

After a few seconds the cars started rolling off and heading for their task for the day. For a little while there was just silence in the car as they pulled on to the main road and started heading towards the edge of the city. After about five minutes of driving Alice’s vehicle turned off the main road to head back to The Agency where she was to oversee the other patients and await the arrival of Billy if he required her services after the mission.

“So how have you been?” Chloe asked the young boy. She smiled but something about her smile seemed forced, it was as if she were nervous.

“I’m OK Agent C. How are you?” Billy replied as he swung his legs in the back of the car.

“Good.” Chloe said in that same odd tone of voice that seemed to suggest she was forced to say it.

Chloe had seen Agent B’s powers in action now and very much wanted to make up for the bad start she and Billy had in the car on the way to the last mission. She was doing her best to take an interest in her young colleague and to be friendly but friendliness was never her strong suit.

After the interrogation with the bomb maker the previous week Chloe had sat down to watch the video tapes of the interrogation and been amazed at what she saw. The way Billy just instantly picked up the answers to the questions, the way it had affected him, it had been fascinating for Chloe to watch and she had suddenly gained a new understanding for why The Agency valued this boy and why his powers could be so useful to them.

She had gone into the viewing room and seen Billy in recovery after the interrogation, she had seen him playing on the floor in a thick diaper and she understood the sacrifice Billy made. She gained a lot of respect for Billy after seeing everything that had happened at the interrogation.

“Are you going to brief me?” Billy asked Agent C innocently looking at her with a devilish smile that seemed to suggest he was thinking about the last time she tried.

“I think I’ll let Agent J do that.” Agent C said with a smirk as she and Agent J looked at each other.

Chloe had told James what had happened in the car before they picked Billy up today and Agent J had found it very funny to hear how flustered little Billy had got her. With the passage of time Agent C was able to see the funny side too.

Billy giggled. He knew that their first journey together had been an awkward one. He was very perceptive of emotions, whether it was part of his gift or not couldn’t be known for sure.

“OK Billy…” Agent J said, “We have a special assignment. A missing teenager. Reported as missing since yesterday morning when he failed to show up to school. Police were notified but haven’t found anything.”

Billy listened quietly whilst playing with his fingers. When Agent J stopped talking Billy looked up at both Agents in confusion. The other Agents just looked back down at him.

“And?” Billy asked.

“That’s it.” Chloe said flatly.

“We normally deal with really bad guys.” Billy stated, “Isn’t this something the police can do?”

The two adult agents looked at each other. Billy really was smarter than his years suggested. Truth was Billy was wondering the same thing they were when they were first briefed that morning. It had all become clear after they had asked Supervisor Daniels why they were being given what seemed to be a rather mundane case of a missing child.

“Well Billy…” Agent J began carefully, “The boy’s father is a friend of the Director. The man in charge of everything. The boy’s father contacted the director and the director promised to put his best agents on it.”

If he was to tell the truth Agent J absolutely hated that Billy was being called out on this assignment. At a time when they weren’t sure how much of an effect all this was having on Billy they were using him to do favours for the boss’s friends like this. It made Agent J sick and he was definitely going to be requesting a meeting with his supervisor after this. Agent J just wanted to get this assignment over with and hope that Billy didn’t need to use his power.

Billy just sat quietly. It was unusual for him to be this quiet, he was normally a lot more boisterous. Agent J worried about him but he knew that the best he could do was to just make sure Billy stayed safe.

Eventually they arrived at a large house. House was a bit of an understatement as the building looked huge and it was in the middle of some very beautiful gardens.

The car with Billy and the other agents stopped outside the front door and one by one they stepped out.

“Hello there, you must be The Agency guys.” The front door opened and out stepped an older man with a very thick, posh English accent. A lit pipe hung from his mouth and he was dressed in what could only be considered a very expensive suit complete with bowler hat. He looked like he had stepped right out of 1930’s London, Billy thought.

“And girls.” The man added as he spotted Agent C. He tipped his hat at Chloe and smiled.

“Yes. We are from The Age-.” Agent J stepped forward putting out his hand for a handshake but he was cut off when the man spotted Billy.

“You must be Agent B. Cedric has told me all about you my dear chap.” The man said stepping towards Billy and holding out his hand. Billy took the man’s hand confused and felt his whole arm move as the man enthusiastically shook it.

“I am Cecil. Please come inside and you can start your investigation post haste.” Cecil walked back through the door and into the living room.

The three agents exchanged looks of bewilderment at the eccentric man before heading inside.

As they started to make their way inside Billy asked Agent J if he could talk to him quickly before they went in.

“What’s up B?” Agent J asked as he hunched over to speak to Billy.

“Um… I kinda… I kinda had a little accident…” Billy stuttered slowly feeling embarrassed.

“Oh…” Agent J said taken aback, “Do you need a change or are you good to go?”

“I should be OK. Nurse Alice just said I should tell you if it happens.” Billy said looking at the ground still. Billy was recalling what the nurse had said to him after one of his first missions with The Agency.

“OK, no problem. Just let me know if it gets worse. We can sort something out.” Agent J said awkwardly. He had never had to take care of Billy that way before and he hoped Billy wouldn’t need him for that today.

Billy nodded his head and indicated that they should head inside. Billy walked in front of Agent J as they headed through the large doors and walked through to the living room.

“Tally ho.” Agent J muttered under his breath causing Billy to laugh.

The two male agents joined Agent C and Cecil in the living room. The room was very old fashioned with a big fireplace dominating the room. There were mounted animal heads on the walls which immediately took Billy’s attention, especially the large moose head mounted above an old fashioned blunderbuss. On the floor in between the fireplace and the couch was a large rug made from a tiger. Billy didn’t know if it was real and he wasn’t sure he wanted to know.

Billy looked at Agent C and could see her wrinkle up her face as she looked around the room. It certainly wasn’t to her taste; you didn’t need any special gifts to work that one out.

“So Mr…” Agent J said to the man who was preparing himself what seemed like a glass of whiskey.

“Mr. Reginalds.” Cecil said, “But please, call me Cecil.”

“OK… Cecil, could you explain the circumstances of the disappearance?” Agent J asked as he pulled out his notebook and pen. Billy sat on the couch and watched Cecil intently.

“Not much out of the ordinary really. He went to bed last night after supper and when I woke up this morning Daniel was gone. No note, no ransom, nothing.” Cecil said forlornly taking a sip of the whiskey.

“You think he was kidnapped?” Agent C asked picking up on Cecil talking about a ransom note.

“I think there is no doubt about it! Why else would he be missing?” Cecil countered

Billy twitched slightly. He felt that Cecil wasn’t lying about anything but that there was more to the story than he was letting on.

“Could I see Daniel’s room?” Billy asked.

“My dear boy, of course! It is up the main stairs and last door on the left.” Cecil said jovially.

Billy got up to leave the room as Agent J continued to question Cecil on his son’s disappearance. Agent C made a motion as if to go with Billy but Agent J shook his head at Chloe to indicate to her to stay in the room. Billy climbed the long staircase and followed the instruction and headed into Daniel’s bedroom.

It looked like a typical teenage boy’s bedroom with posters on the wall of bands and cars. It was slightly messy but not too bad, the computer and TV hooked up to one of the latest game consoles were clearly Daniel’s favourite things since they were the two areas of the room that wasn’t overly messy. The shelves along one of the walls was filled with random trinkets as well as books and video games.

Billy looked at a photograph in a frame resting on the desk near the door. It showed Daniel with his father. Daniel looked to be about a foot shorter than his dad. He had long brown hair to his shoulders and was wearing a black t-shirt with a heavy metal band’s logo on the front. Daniel’s ear appeared to be pieced and he was wearing wrist cuffs with metal symbols on them. Despite it being a sunny day in the photo, Daniel was wearing a very distinctive long leather coat.

What interested Billy the most about this picture though was that the glass in the frame was cracked. It looked like the picture had been thrown and it caused the glass to break.

Billy stepped into the room and looked around. He was looking for anything that seemed out of place or unusual. He flicked through the books on the shelf but they all seemed to be in order. Billy continued looking at all the objects on the shelf, using a chair to stand on to get a better look, and his gaze fell upon an almost empty jar.

The jar had a note taped to it that read “Savings – Hand’s off!” Billy saw that the jar was empty except for a few pennies at the bottom. Billy turned his attention to the notepad beside the jar and found it open to a page that said “Super Fight Club 3”. Next to it was the price of the game and then next to that, written in pencil was how much Daniel had saved.

Billy furrowed his eyebrows. The notebook showed Billy as having saved $30 and yet the jar was virtually empty.

Billy climbed down from the shelf and headed over to the bed. He searched under the bed and rummaged through the bedclothes but found very little that helped the investigation. Similarly, he found little of help in the closet where it didn’t seem like much was missing. However, Billy couldn’t find the leather coat that Daniel was wearing in the picture.

Billy found this odd as well. If Billy had been kidnapped they wouldn’t have taken the leather jacket or the small amount of money in the jar. If they wanted a ransom, then that tiny amount of money wouldn’t have been worth the kidnapper’s time There was more to this story than met the eye.

Moving back across the room, Billy walked over to the computer. He pressed the power button and found that the computer came to life almost immediately. Billy recognised that it had been set to stand-by rather than turned off and he sat in the chair in front of the computer. He opened the default browser on the desktop and was taken to Daniel’s home page. Billy clicked on the search bar at the top of the page and when he did so a list of the previous searches dropped down.

“How to come out.”

“Telling family I’m gay.”

“Coming out to family.”

“What to do if coming out goes bad.”

On and on it went. Search after search for the last week or so seemed to all be the same thing and Billy started getting a sense of what had happened. He didn’t need to use his gift to put all the pieces of this jigsaw together and the full picture of what had happened started to appear in front of Billy.

Billy set the computer to standby before standing up and scanning the room one last time. Confident that he hadn’t missed anything he turned to the door and left the room.

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“I’m telling you I don’t know why anyone would kidnap my lad, dear boy.” Cecil said as he puffed on his pipe and gesticulated at the other two agents, “Must be for the ransom.”

As Billy rounded the bottom of the stairs and walked into the living room he noticed that both his fellow agents were looking quite exasperated by the third person in the room. Agent C had a face like thunder and Agent J’s fists were balled up as if he was having to hold back from lunging at Cecil.

When Billy walked into the room he could sense the hostility from the two agents as they both turned to look at him. Cecil seemed totally unaware of the frustration that the agents were feeling and was sitting on his couch with his smoking pipe in his mouth and a drink in his hand.

“Agent B, did you-” Agent J started as Billy walked up next to him.

“Ah, the little scamp is back!” Cecil blurted out, interrupting Agent J, as he quickly jumped to his feet. Cecil walked over to the agents and ruffled Billy’s hair, “Find a ransom note? Signs of break in?”

“Not quite.” Billy replied wincing from Cecil’s rubbing of his hair.

“Then it really is a mystery!” Cecil said taking a step back, “Maybe it is time to involve th-”

“I don’t think you have been telling us everything.” Billy said as he turned to face the older man.

“Whatever do you mean?” Cecil asked suddenly looking a little defensive.

“You said nothing out of the ordinary had happened recently but I think something did happen.” Billy responded as he looked at Cecil. The other agents were watching interestedly as their junior partner explained what he was thinking.

Cecil didn’t answer but instead fidgeted nervously with his pipe.

“When I went into that room the first thing I noticed was a cracked photo of you and your son. It kind of looked like it had been slammed on the desk, I think someone was upset.”

“Oh er, well…” Cecil stuttered.

“Then I noticed an empty jar that seemed to be for collecting money to buy a game. The notebook next to the jar said Daniel had saved $30 for a game but the jar was almost empty.” Billy said explaining his reasons for suspicion that there hadn’t been a kidnapping, “I also noticed Billy’s leather coat was missing. Kidnappers wouldn’t pause to take that.”

“So it was a theft?” Cecil suggested. His air of confidence had evaporated.

The other two agents in the room looked at each other impressed at Billy’s investigation and starting to latch on to where Billy was going with this.

“Finally, I went to the computer and looked at his previous searches.” Billy said before pausing for a second because he knew this would be a delicate matter, “Cecil… Is your son gay?”

Cecil looked very flustered now and he looked nervously at the three agents. All three of the agents were looking back at him with raised eyebrows.

“I… He… Well…” Cecil stuttered and Billy could see beads of sweat appear on Cecil’s head. Billy also knew from Cecil’s reaction that he was on the right track.

“He told you he was gay and you didn’t react well did you?” Billy pressed on, “You were angry with him. When you woke up the next day he was gone… Cecil, your son ran away because of you didn’t he.”

Cecil bit his lip and his confident exterior melted away. Billy saw him trembling before tears started falling from his eyes. Cecil raised his hands to his face and wept.

“He… He told me he was… That he liked…” Cecil tried to speak in between sobs.

“That he was gay.” Agent J finished for him.

Cecil nodded silently and blew his nose on a handkerchief he had pulled out of his pocket.

“I was in shock and I shouted at him. I said some nasty things… I went in the next morning to apologise and he wasn’t there.” Cecil sobbed, “I don’t care if he is gay… I just want my son home.”

“Why didn’t you tell us this from the start?” Agent C asked rather exasperatedly.

“I was ashamed… I am ashamed. He ran away because of me.” Cecil admitted and blew his nose again, “Please get him back, chaps. I’m worried sick about the lad.”

There was a moment of silence as everyone digested what they had heard. Agent C went to sit next to Cecil and started asking him some questions and trying to get more information. Billy and Agent J meanwhile left the room.

“I want to speak to Daniel’s friends.” Billy said to J as they left the room, “I want to go to his school. If anyone knows where he is it is probably them.”

“I was going to suggest the same thing.” Agent J replied before crouching down in front of Billy and saying quietly, “Are you still OK with… You know…”

“I’m fine.” Billy replied going a little bit red. He knew Agent J was enquiring about the state of his pull up and if he needed a change. It was hard to tell who was more uncomfortable about it as they both avoided eye contact and quickly moved on.

After a few more minutes Agent C came out of the house as well, her previously immaculate hair was looking a little frazzled since she had run her fingers through her hair so many times in frustration about the questioning.

The three agents got in their car and the driver quickly whisked them off towards Daniel’s school. Daniel went to a school in a very different area from Billy, it was a private school that Billy knew was mostly only for the very wealthy.

Most of the journey was taken up with Agents Chloe and James talking about the rather odd man and the case. Billy sat mostly in silence, he hadn’t used his power a lot that day but he still felt a little out of it. He was concentrating on just keeping himself to himself and not accidentally pick up on anything he shouldn’t, he knew he was no use to anyone if his power was used too much.

Eventually they reached the school and after parking they emerged from the vehicles to find a lot of kids walking around. When the three Agents stepped out in their suits it caused a lot of people to turn their heads to see what was going on. There were more than a few people giggling to their friends about the young boy in the suit.

“We called ahead.” Agent J said, “Daniel’s five closest friends should be waiting for us in an empty classroom.”

The three of them walked to the school office past hordes of boisterous teenagers who seemed to all be curious about the unusual people in suits that were in the school. Billy was, of course, attracting the most attention and that made Billy very self-conscious. He wasn’t very good in crowds, especially when he was the centre of attention.

The office told the trio where to go and eventually the three agents ended up outside of the room containing Daniel’s friends.

Agent J pushed open the door and walked inside with Agent C whilst Billy waited outside. The two Agents patted down the people in the room and checked around to make sure it was safe for Billy. They remained silent and didn’t say a word to each other nor the five friends.

Daniel’s friends were sitting in the five seats in the front row right in front of the teacher’s desk. They looked at each other nervously as the two Agents continued looking around, they didn’t dear speak a word to each other, instead they just watched the Agent’s wondering what they did to be called in by these people.

Agent J and Agent C nodded at each other and then left the room without a word.

“Ready Billy?” Agent J said to his young colleague.

Billy nodded and smiled. He was a little nervous but he knew what he had to do.

Agent J pushed the door to the classroom open again and, after a deep breath, Billy walked into the room. Agent J then closed the door behind him.

“Shouldn’t we go in there with him?” Agent C asked. She looked a little confused at why Billy would go in there by himself.

“Nope, it is best that he goes in by himself. He does interrogations by himself if we don’t think he is in any physical danger.” Agent J said, “If others are in there it can mess with him a bit when he uses his gift. Being in there by himself means he won’t accidentally pick up on what we are thinking.”

Agent C nodded but still looked worried.

“Don’t worry Chloe.” Agent J told the newer Agent, “Billy has been in the room and interrogated some really bad people. These kids will be fine and if Billy needs us all he has to do is shout and we can burst in.”

Billy strode to the front of the room. Daniel’s friends who hadn’t even realised someone had entered all suddenly looked round as Billy stepped in front of them. Again there was a quietness before one of the kids giggled slightly. Then another of the kids giggled and before they knew all of the kids were laughing heartily at the little kid in a suit.

“Oh man.” Said the kid in a black band shirt and with dyed black hair, “We thought we were in trouble!”

The kids all continued to laugh as Billy just stood in front of them waiting for them to calm down. He was mildly annoyed that they were making fun of him but this was nothing new, Billy was used to the people he spoke to making fun of him until they saw what he could do.

“Oh stop!” Said the only girl in the group, “He’s adorable!”

Billy rolled his eyes and stepped forward and stood in front of the first kid, the one who had spoken just now. The teenager looked at Billy and smirked, he clearly felt himself superior to the young boy.

“I think you are in the wrong school. The elementary school is down the road.” The sneering teenager said to Billy.

“Then how come you are here?” Billy shot back.

The other teenagers collectively and audibly breathed in. One of the other teens started to laugh but turned it into a pretend cough when the others looked at him.

“What do you want, kid?” The teenager in front of Billy asked. He had gone slightly red in the face having not expected the child to stand up for himself.

“I want to know where Daniel is?” Billy asked.

“How do I know?” The teen answered shrugging his shoulders.

Billy just nodded and moved on to the next person in the line. This person had very short hair and glasses. They were wearing a plain shirt and hadn’t laughed quite as much as the others.

“I don’t know either.” He said quickly before Billy had the chance to ask him the question.

“I need to ask you anyway… Do you know where Daniel is?” Billy asked the boy and watching his face for an answer.

“Geez, I just said I don’t know!” The boy almost shouted back as he threw his arms in the air.

Billy felt himself get a little light headed when he heard the answer but quickly recovered himself.

Next in line was a girl. She was wearing a lot of make-up and had great big dangling ear rings in. She was chewing gum quite loudly and looking at Billy with a huge smile.

“O. M. G… You are just, like, so adorable!” The girl said in that voice that so many teenage girls seem to pick up.

“Do you know where Daniel is?” Billy said as he rolled his eyes at her comment. He didn’t want to be told he was adorable. He was 11-years-old; he wasn’t some little kid!

“No, but I heard him saying to a friend that he had, like, a major argument with his dad and his dad was just, like, super rude and…” The girl started talking and wouldn’t stop. It was like a stream of consciousness and she moved from topic to topic with seemingly no point.

“Thank you.” Billy said cutting her off midsentence. She seemed quite annoyed at having been cut off and pouted whilst staring at Billy.

Billy asked the remaining two teenagers the same question and just like the first three they responded that they didn’t know. When Billy had finished asking them all the same question the question he paused for a second with his eyes closed.

“You.” Billy suddenly turned around and was pointing at the second person in the line-up. The boy who was slumped over in his chair suddenly jumped and sat up straight making the other teenagers snicker at him.

“Me?” The boy asked Billy.

Billy walked around and stood behind the teacher’s desk. He was aware of what might happen next and so was taking steps to lessen the problem.

“Where exactly is Daniel?” Billy asked again as he stared at the teenager.

There was silence for a few seconds. The teenager looked at those around him incredulously.

“I told you… I. Don’t. Know.” The teenager said before muttering under his breath, “Little brat.”

As soon as the teenager said he didn’t know Billy saw, in his mind, a scene with this teenager and Daniel together at an apartment in the middle of the city. Like a series of freeze frames he saw a door with the number eight, an older woman opening the door, he saw the words appear above Daniel’s head in a speech bubble “Hello, Aunt Cathy.” It was like a scene out of a comic book and was clear as day inside Billy’s head.

Billy felt his knees weaken a little and he put his hands down on the desk to steady himself.

In Billy’s mind he saw a picture of another scene inside the apartment of Daniel in tears on the couch with his aunt next to him. There was a speech bubble above the aunt that read “Of course you can stay here.”

Billy’s knees weakened further and he fell into the chair behind the desk. He felt his bladder muscles weaken and his pull up became soaked. The room in front of Billy seemed to be in a haze.

The scene shifted to outside the building and Billy saw a sign post that read Henderson Street.

“No more questions.” Billy just about managed to say, “Pwease leave.”

The teenagers were looking at Billy oddly; they were clearly wondering what was going on. Nevertheless, they stood up and went to leave the room. They joked with each other on the way out, they were very jovial for getting off the hook. They made jokes about the “kid playing dress-up” and glanced back at Billy with a mixture of contempt and laughter.

As soon as the teenagers left the room Agent C and Agent J rushed in. They knew that if the questioning was successful that Billy would likely need their assistance very quickly. As expected Billy was hunched over the desk and was clearly struggling to stay upright.

“Billy!” Agent J shouted as he hurried over to Billy.

Billy slumped back into the chair behind the teacher’s desk. He felt his butt hit the chair with a squish and could feel his pull up leak out of the sides. He desperately tried to stay in control of his mental faculties even as things became harder and harder for Billy to comprehend.

“Henderson Street… Number eight… Aunty Cathy.” Billy just about managed to mumble out. He could feel his motor functions and speech abilities slowly slipping away and he was having a real difficulty remembering things that happened just minutes ago.

Agent C wrote the address down and, with a nod, headed out to one of waiting cars that were ready to whisk her off to wherever she needed to go.

“Do you want to go to make sure you are right?” Agent J asked as he looked at Billy.

“Don’t think I can walk.” Billy said as he shook his head and pointed at his legs. He was indicating both that he couldn’t walk and that he was very wet.

Agent J nodded his head in understanding. This was always a hard part of his job, watching his partner and friend regress in front of his eyes. No matter how many times he saw this happen, it never became easier.

Billy felt the last vestiges of his older personality slip away. The last vestiges of control over his motor functions disappeared and his memories of what had just happened faded away as if a dense fog had rolled in.

Agent J could see the moment it happened, the moment that the 11-year-old Billy became a toddler again. Billy had been looking at Agent J and all of a sudden Agent J could see his eyes just kind of cloud over. He knew that Billy had lost control of the regression and that he was now in the room with a toddler in an 11-year-old’s body.

Billy looked down at his pull up and the small puddle that had formed around him and he started frowning. Agent J could recognise that tears were coming.

“It’s OK Billy.” Agent J said consolingly to the very wet child.

Without any alternative Agent J reached into his bag that he had brought in with him and pulled out a diaper. He had started carrying the spare diaper with him for situations like this, for when Alice wasn’t available but a change was required. This was the first time that diaper would need to be used.

Agent J felt an anger inside himself. He was angry that Billy had been forced into this because the supervisor’s friend had a small problem. Billy was only supposed to be called when there was no alternative, this was definitely not one of those times.

Billy started sobbing as he felt increasingly uncomfortable in the wet pull up and really wanted a change.

Agent J pushed all of the stuff on the teacher’s desk on to the floor. He didn’t care if he was inconveniencing someone else, he was mad that Billy was made to endure this regression, with possible long term effects, just so the boss could do his friend a favour.

Billy sensed the anger and his small sobbing became a much louder crying. The big man’s anger made him scared.

Seeing the crying Agent J realised he was upsetting Billy and calmed himself down. He knew that Billy could still use his powers when regressed, he also knew that Billy had a lot less control over his powers when like this and Agent J had been trained to keep his emotions hidden and his mind as empty as possible for these situations.

“Come on little one.” Agent J said to his partner, “Let’s get you in a nice dry diaper.”

Agent J lifted the small boy up and laid him flat on the teacher’s desk. He could see that Billy had left quite a puddle in the chair and he hoped the janitors would be around to clean up when they were gone.

Agent J pulled down the zip and unfastened Billy’s pants. He had never changed Billy’s diaper before and he felt embarrassed about having to do it. He didn’t see Billy as a kid, he saw him as a work mate and a friend.

Pulling down Billy’s pants revealed that the pull up was soaked front to back. Billy had calmed down somewhat now that Agent J had hidden his anger and his slight sobbing was subsiding now that he was getting the attention he wanted.

Carefully, Agent J ripped open the sides of the used pull up and lowered the front between Billy’s legs. Agent J grabbed the wipes from his bag and used a handful to wipe Billy clean, the cold tickling sensation caused the young boy to squirm and laugh. Agent J smiled down at Billy as he put the wipes in the pull up, pulled out the pull up from under Billy and placed it in a plastic bag which he tied up and placed in his work bag.

“Sorry…” Agent J muttered as he exposed his partner. He felt very awkward doing this change and he was grateful that it was very likely that Billy wouldn’t remember it.

Agent J now unfolded the diaper that he had with him. Unlike the patterned ones that Billy liked and that Alice had stacks off, this one was just a plain medical type diaper that Agent J could find at the store.

Agent J lifted Billy’s legs and placed the new diaper underneath him. He took a moment to position the diaper properly before slowly lowering Billy back on to the diaper. Agent J quickly pulled up the front and taped it securely around Billy’s waist.

By now Billy’s crying had subsided completely and he was laying on the table sucking his thumb and watching Agent J with some curiosity. He didn’t have a thing on his mind now though he was feeling very tired.

It was only now that Agent J realised that he had no spare pants for Billy. The pair he had been wearing were thoroughly soaked and there was no way Agent J would want Billy to wear them all the way back to The Agency.

Agent J knew there was a car waiting in the parking lot which was only a minute’s walk away so he decided that with no other option available Billy would have to be transported as he was. Agent J packed away the used pull up and the wet pants into a plastic bag that were placed in Agent J’s work bag.

“Come on, kiddo.” Agent J said as he lifted Billy into his arms.

Billy wrapped his arms around Agent J’s neck and his legs around J’s midriff. He giggled as he wriggled about slightly and heard his new diaper crinkling with each movement.

“Alright, alright, settle down.” Agent J said with a smile as he leaned over and picked up his bag to sling over his shoulder. This wasn’t the sort of work he thought he would be doing when he signed up with The Agency!

The two Agents left the room and started walking through the halls back towards the parking lot. School had finished by this stage so most people had left but there were still a few stragglers hanging around. The few people who saw this odd sight stared as Billy and Agent J walked past, some whispered to friends but all conversation seemed to stop when they saw the child being carried out to the car in a diaper.

“Oh my God! So Cute!” Three girls rushed over to the two seemingly unable to contain their excitement at seeing such an adorable sight.

They got in Agent’s J’s way and tried to ask questions about what was going on, who the boy was and more. Agent J tried to sidestep around the girls so that he could carry on towards the car but he found his every move blocked by the obnoxiously excitable girls. Agent J felt Billy burying his head in J’s shoulder as he became embarrassed at all the attention.

“Ladies please.” Agent J finally said as his patience ran out again, “We have places to be.”

Agent J used the moment of silence afterwards to step past the girls on the way to the car.

“Rude!” Shouted one of the girls at Agent J’s back.

“It’s OK Billy, we’ll go to the car and straight to The Agency to your nursery.” Agent J whispered in Bill’s ear. Billy beamed in happiness, the nursery was exactly where he wanted to be right now.

Leaving the school Agent J walked over to the waiting car. It had been sent for by The Agency by Agent J whilst he was waiting outside the classroom and Billy was doing his questioning.

The guard by the car saw the Agent’s coming and opened the back door revealing a child seat. Agent J hurried over and put Billy into the seat, strapping him in tightly and securely Billy yawned widely showing just how much the day had taken out of him. It was taking everything he had to keep his eyes open.

Agent J closed the door when Billy was strapped in and walked around to the other side. Opening the door, he stepped inside and sat down, instructing the driver to head back to The Agency they slowly pulled out of the parking lot and on to the road.

Billy was asleep before the car had even left the car park.

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Billy was playing in the middle of the floor with some action figures. He was recreating some daring action scenes from the films he had seen recently whilst lying in just his diaper and a onesie. Alice was in the far corner with a clipboard. She was making observations on Billy and his progress back to his regular age.

Nurse Alice sighed. It had been hours since Billy initially regressed and his return to normal was going very slowly and taking a longer time than it used to. It continued the trend of Billy’s recovery getting harder and harder. Alice had already had to change Billy’s diaper twice and his current diaper was already reaching the point of needing another change. Billy had started being able to speak again and his motor functions and cognitive abilities had improved but they were still not back to the normal level.

As Alice watched Billy she saw something that made her heart sink. Billy who was crouching down with his toys suddenly stopped and bent down lower. Alice could see his face go red as Billy scrunched up his face with apparent effort. Alice sighed again, it was very obvious to anyone who had seen children before what was happening. Billy was pooping his diaper.

When Billy straightened up he looked over at Alice with a trembling lip and reached his hands out towards her.

“OK darling, let’s get you changed.” Alice said hurrying over to the young boy.

“I’m sowwy.” Billy said as he sniffled a little bit.

Alice picked the boy up carefully, she wanted to avoid making the mess in Billy’s diaper any worse than it had to be.

“It’s no prob-” Alice was cut off midsentence.

The door to the nursery opened up and Agent J walked in.

“Pwease don’t tell him.” Billy said biting his lip.

Alice put Billy down. The hardest part of the recovery was always when Billy had recovered mentally enough to know he shouldn’t need diapers and baby things, but before he could actually control himself again.

“Hello Nurse.” Agent J said as he walked over to the pair of them, “Hi Billy.”

“Hewwo.” Billy replied nervously.

Agent J walked forward as if to hug Billy but Billy backed off. Agent J was wondering what was wrong when he was suddenly hit by a very strong and unpleasant smell.

“What’s that sm-” Agent J began saying but he stopped as soon as he looked up to see Alice with wide eyes and shaking her head pointedly whilst looking down at Billy.

“I was just coming to say that they found Daniel exactly where you said he was.” Agent J said looking at Billy as he did his best to cover up what he was about to ask.

Billy smiled despite his discomfort. He liked to help people, that is why he worked here, it was always gratifying when things went well and Billy could help people.

“Even better news. Daniel and his father both agreed to go get some family counselling so they should both be fine.” Agent J continued.

There was a moment of silence between the three of them as they looked at each other.

“Anyway… I’m going to be in the observation room, could I have a word in a minute, Alice?” Agent J asked.

“Certainly.” The nurse responded.

“Excellent.” Agent J exclaimed with a large smile, “I will see you later Billy.”

Billy waved as Agent J stood up and left the room.

Alice waited a few seconds after the door closed before lifting Billy up and laying him on the changing table. She pulled apart the poppers on Billy’s onesie and started removing the tapes from the front of the diaper.

“Did he notice?” Billy asked the nurse anxiously.

“I don’t think so, honey.” Alice said with a reassuring smile as she cleaned Billy up.

Alice wiped up the mess and pulled out the soiled diaper. Quickly balling it up and placing it in the diaper pail so as to avoid the smell getting any worse than usual. She pulled out another diaper, this one was a plain white one since she expected that she would not need to do another diaper change since Billy was on the way to recovery.

After taping the new diaper on she pulled the two halves of the onesie together again and popped them together. She lifted Billy down from the changing table and straight away he ran back to his toys.

“I am going to speak to Agent J. If you need me just shout and I will come running.” Alice said as she collected her clipboard of notes and headed towards the room’s exit.

Billy nodded his head as she walked past but was too engrossed in his games to give any more reaction.

Alice stepped out of the room and went over to the room next door. Stepping inside the room she walked over to Agent J who was standing by the window.

“How is he doing?” Agent J asked as he sipped from a cup of coffee. He was looking through the window at Billy who seemed totally preoccupied with his action figures.

“Hard to say.” Alice replied as she flipped through her notes, “If this had been his first mission he would have been up and on his way home hours ago… But here we are.”

Agent J didn’t respond.

“Every time he comes to me after a mission he takes longer and longer to recover.” Alice continued, “I am really worried about him long term.”

“He will be fine.” Agent J reassured the nurse though he had his own worries about Billy’s future, “What was going on when I came in just now?”

“Billy had an accident. He used his diaper just before you came in. He whispered to me that he didn’t want you to know.” Alice responded.

“Kind of cute really, not wanting his friends to know he used his diaper.” Agent J said as he finished his coffee.

“Kind of cute… Also kind of worrying.” Alice responded as she sat down at the table a little further back from the table.

“Why worrying?” Agent J asked turning his back to the window.

“When I picked him up from school earlier he was in a pull up, James.” Alice said, “He told me he was having trouble staying dry in the day time.”

“Yeah, he actually wet himself a little bit in the car after you left us.” Agent J said as he sat down in the seat opposite Alice.

“OK, but it shows that even when not regressed he is having more trouble controlling himself. When he dirtied his diaper just before you came in… Mentally he was recovered to the point where that shouldn’t have happened. Where he could have told me and used the toilet. But he couldn’t control it.” Alice expressed her concerns to Agent J.

Agent J understood what she was saying. As well as the recovery taking longer, Billy was also having increased difficulty with his toilet habits.

Both people in the room fell into silence as they considered these worrying signs. Neither were sure what the answer was or whether these effects were reversible but both worried about the future for their little friend.

If Billy was worried about the long term he certainly wasn’t showing it at the moment as he had a great time with his toys on the floor. He was feeling pretty tired again and it wasn’t long until he put down his toys and climbed into the crib that had the side lefty open for him. He quickly fell into a recuperative sleep.