

Laura

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Chapter 19 - Caretaking

One Sunday morning at church a pending bowel movement was demanding increasing attention. It had waited until after we had left home before announcing itself. No matter the plastic pants were better at holding in that odor than just a disposable diaper, that would still not be good enough.

That morning I was busy at the church entrance helping the Head Usher hand out the bulletins with the program for the service. I was also giving and receiving lots of hugs as I welcomed people. I had discovered a saying that sounded like an admission of a personal defect when it really wasn't. "Good morning. I'm terrible with faces and names. Is this your first or second visit?"

I had stopped saying anything about having a low voice. Nobody seemed to care after I no longer felt I was out of place.

Occasionally the other person was new. Mostly the other person was a long standing member, and a strong minority of those would say they had the same difficulty.

Except that morning I had to do something, and quickly. I handed the Head Usher named Judy a hand full of bulletins. "I have a problem." I dashed away without any further explanation.

I went to Laura sitting in a pew, leaned in to her, and whispered. "I can't hold it in much longer. Where can we have a smelly change?"

She gave me an annoyed facial expression for maybe ten seconds. She quietly sighed as she tilted her head in resignation. She led the way as we went quickly to the car for a supply of alcohol wipes, but then what? "That important? Right now?"

I nodded. "It started after we left home. It's getting serious."

She scowled at me when we reached the car. Her head and eyes rotated as she watched in every direction. "Go ahead right here over the sidewalk. Then onto the back seat."

I leaned forward against the car, let go, and dribbled as the weight of that lump pulled down that pair of disposables.

I crawled onto the back seat and rolled over without sitting on that lump which would have squished it. As I rolled onto my back I raised my knees on the thought the door could be closed for a small amount of decency. Raising my knees for closing that

door also helped with not squishing that smelly mess.

Laura closed that door, opened the front passenger door, went on her knees on the front seat, and leaned over it. "Hold your ankles with your hands way up high." She threw my skirt up over my belly. She took a fresh disposable from my shoulder bag and spread it under my butt. She drew the artificial hips and plastic pants up to my ankles which released that odor in all of its strength. Those two disposables came off me and went into a plastic bag. She cleaned me with the alcohol wipes paying particular attention to certain parts down there and the area around them. "This is a rare time when I wish I hadn't tricked myself into being your faux Mommy with you as my not-so-little baby girl. What a stench, and this is awkward bending over the seat back."

She pulled that new disposable under me up between and around my legs, fastened the tapes, and slit the plastic backing. She took the second disposable from my shoulder bag and added that around the first one. She used a wipe for cleaning smears from the plastic pants before pulling those back over my fresh diapers. The artificial hips were drawn in place over my plastic pants.

"All clean, my little one. Now I feel better. Do I get the Good Mommy award?"

"Yeth, Mommy." Anxieties crawled along my back for having used that roll playing phrase in the wrong place. "Can we go back inside now?"

She sealed that plastic bag with tape, and set it on the floor in back. She opened the car windows for airing out that odor.

I ran a finger around inside the leg hems of my plastic pants adjusting everything for my comfort and walking around in public. My skirt fell naturally back in place when I stood up outside the car.

Laura shook my skirt a little making sure it appeared right. We had a quick reassuring kiss.

When we went back into the church my ears were warm ready for blushing, but no one said a thing. Laura sat in the back on a folding chair which I took to mean she didn't want any attention from anybody.

The Head Usher asked. "Everything alright?"

I nodded. "Can I help with collection?"

"Of course."

During the second hymn she touched me on the arm. I followed her out of the Sanctuary into the entrance called the Narthex. "Can I call you?"

"Sure." I dug into my shoulder bag feeling lucky there were no more diapers in there that she might see. I found the case with my business cards and handed one to her.

The rest of that service went reasonably well. I carried the collection plates as if everything in the world was perfectly OK. I secretly dribbled into my new diaper during hospitality as I sipped the delicious Deacons' Punch, and talked with people.

A few afternoons later Judy called as I was becoming drowsier and my diaper was becoming wetter. Good thing she announced her name as I only vaguely remembered her voice from my helping her that previous Sunday. "I've been asked to call you."

"OK." I wondered what I had done wrong. Or had somebody noticed that smelly diaper change.

"Would you serve on the Board of Deacons."

"Me? Moi? Surely thou jest."

"No, not jesting. The Nominating Committee has thought long and hard and asked other members just how opening and affirming do they want to be. They all know your face and name. A few don't like your hugs at the entrance on Sunday mornings, but they came in other doors as you welcome everyone else. The Committee feels you are already an active member and ready to bring more deeply into the life of the church."

I was surprised they said anything like that so openly. But, I had brought my own AA group of transsexuals to the church for their meetings. I was coordinating other groups at church of t-women and t-men. I had become the church's biggest reason for first time guests to feel welcomed, and the best lay recruiter of new members. "But aren't the Deacons supposed to keep the sinners out?" I didn't add like myself as the biggest sinner of all in the place secretly wearing age inappropriate diapers under the wrong clothes.

"No. The Deacons job is welcoming all into His House for their forgiveness and healing. Like that YouTube video said on Why People Don't Come To Church, church is the place to get one's life together. Church is where there is always room for one more hypocrite."

My eyes watered.

She made two big points of I should be a Deacon as I was already welcoming all into His House. They wanted me on the Deacons for my understanding of the spiritual needs of the cross dressers and transsexuals. Over time I discovered that was the same sense of belonging to a community and acceptance as everyone else needed.

They did insist I be baptized if I was going to be a Deacon. That felt super weird to me. But Laura thought that maybe I needed to be baptized as a big girl in my new identity as Mindy. Writing my parents was too difficult, and they had always kept a pained distance from any church. Explaining my name change to them seemed impossibly daunting. I struggled for many months about being baptized, and then all of a sudden I was ready. Towards the end of the brief ceremony the whole sanctuary reciting their love, support, and care overwhelmed me. I scrunched up, sniffled, my lips trembled, and I wept in front of every one present including God.

They didn't say, but later when baptizing came up at a Deacons meeting I reported my experiences of feeling weird before being baptized. Then I felt so much more accepted afterwards although no one said anything different to me or otherwise acted as if anything had changed. "God speaks in mysterious ways."

Just like the AA or business staff meetings, the Deacons' meetings would

occasionally go off track. At one of those a Deacon popped off with a quote he liked. "Before there were Bishops feasting at the table of power," he recited from memory. "There were ordinary fisherman who forsook a safe and ordinary life to follow an itinerant sage. That itinerant's path was not obvious, not sensible, and definitely not safe. He might as well have said 'come die with me'."

I didn't know the Pastor then as well as I would later. She grabbed the set up of that statement and ran with it. "What's that from?" It became obvious within minutes she had already known, but that wasn't the point.

"It's from a book Saving Jesus From The Church."

She went out and returned with about a dozen copies. I borrowed one. After the first few pages I could hardly put it down. It was written by an ordained Minister with a regular pulpit who had similar doubts about organized religion as I had. He gave me the words to express myself. Laura liked it too. I count my adult life, diapers and all, good and bad, and my psychological and spiritual growth as starting with that book. That wasn't entirely true as Laura and AA had launched my psychological growth, but not quite so thoroughly and effectively.

After falling in love with that book, I was surprised to hear members who didn't like it all that much. But the cross-dressers and transsexuals usually did even though as far as they ever told me most of them weren't in diapers. They surprised me with their acceptance of me and my diapers. A few had been wearing diapers, or tried wearing diapers, and a few of those took to wearing diapers full time or nearly so.