

Diapers and Kids of All Ages, Chapter 01

“Jessica’s Story”

Fiction by Angela Bauer

Procter and Gambles traces the origin of their first disposable diaper brand, Pampers, to the late 1950s. One of their R&D supervisors was frustrated by the diapering of his granddaughter at an amusement park, so he started inventing a diaper which could be thrown away after use.

Pampers were first advertised in 1962, but were hardly a commercial success until late 1972 when sticky tapes were added to the product.

History tells us that diapers made of paper which could be disposed-off were first marketed for travel convenience in the 1940s.

For most of history diapers (USA term) and nappies (British term) were made from scraps of any sort of cloth. In the USA a factory started making cotton diapers circa 1890. Kendall Mills, which was making gauze for bandages circa 1850, got into the diaper business circa 1896 when they converted part of a mill to weaving wider gauze especially for diapers.

Gum rubber pants were being sold before 1900. The International Latex Corporation began test marketing their latex “PlayTex Stretchy Baby Pants” in 1932 and by 1938 were selling those through thousands of retail stores.

In 1952 only a tiny percentage of parents in the USA had ever even read about disposable diapers. State of the art then was Curity 21x40” gauze diapers combined with PlayTex Baby Pants.

That was the year Jessica Pollard turned 7. One of her favorite toys was her Betsy Wetsy doll. They came in various sizes. Jessica’s was the size of a healthy one year-old.

It was sold with a miniature gauze diaper fastened with safety pins. When fed a tiny baby bottle the fluid ran in a tube so it would wet the diaper realistically. Selling additional Betsy Wetsy diapers was very profitable.

For Christmas 1951 Jessica received a doll the size of a two year-old. It came with clothing appropriate for an older child. Stores sold lots of outfits for that doll. Perhaps that was the origin of the Barbie dolls.

Jessica told her grandmother that she wanted to think of her larger doll as a toddler. So Granny Ruby Williams bought some infant patterns and made toddler outfits for the doll.

Where the doll’s manufacturer missed a profit center was that people could buy actual baby clothing if they did not know how to sew. The doll was large enough an ordinary 21x40” Curity gauze diaper could be folded

to fit it. Over such a diaper the medium size of PlayTex Baby Pants would fit.

Although the larger doll's diapers did not get wet, Jessica delighted in changing them. The PlayTex pants fascinated her.

Jessica had been toilet trained before her memory started. She just assumed at some point she had worn PlayTex Baby Pants.

After a month changing her dolls diapers and baby pants, the original pair of pants tore. Jessica was heartbroken. That afternoon, her mother, Jennifer, took her to a store to buy two pair of baby panties for the doll. PlayTex Baby Pants were sold in cardboard tubes.

What was not noticed at the store was that in the PlayTex display some of the tubes were mixed. Back in Jessica's room the first new pair of baby pants was "XL" and far too large for the doll. Fortunately the other tube held the correct size.

Jennifer put the larger pants back in its tube. The following day she went back to the store. Jessica said what happened. However, the store manager explained that under the law they could not accept the return of PlayTex panties which had been opened. However, because the manager felt it was the store's fault (and Jennifer was a good customer), he gave Jessica a pair of the correct size while telling her to keep the larger pair "for when your doll grows".

A couple of weeks later Granny Ruby was babysitting Jessica. She had been in bed less than an hour when she woke up crying. For the first time since she was toilet trained Jessica had wet her bed.

While this embarrassed Jessica, it was not a tragedy because her bed still had a rubber sheet. Granny cleaned up Jessica and changed her sheets.

Then Granny decided to use a couple of the Curity gauze diapers and the large pair of PlayTex pants to dress Jessica for a return to bed. Jessica did not protest.

When Jessica's mom and dad, John, got home from dancing at The Hotel Pennsylvania, Granny explained why she had diapered her daughter's daughter. Jennifer felt that the worst that could happen was that Jessica might need to be changed again before she got up. There were just enough remaining Curity diapers. The worn PlayTex pants could be used without washing in an emergency.

Jessica did not cry again that night, but she did wake up in a wet diaper. It was not soaked, but it was far more than just damp. The PlayTex Baby Pants did not leak.

Not wanting to risk Jessica suffering diaper rash, Jennifer removed the wet diaper, gave the girl a bath and dried her very carefully. Then she left Jessica bare bottom for a half hour. After that she told Jessica to put on a pair of panties.

The Pollards were one of the first families living in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan to have their own washing machine and gas

dryer. While Jessica was airing her diaper region, Jennifer loaded the damp sheets and the diaper into the washer and ran them.

By the time the wash cycle was done, Jessica was wearing her normal panties and was dressed to go out. As soon as the load of wash was put into the dryer, Jennifer and her daughter went shopping again.

At the store Jennifer looked for the manager. She explained she wanted to pay for the XL PlayTex panties because they had been put to use: “Last night while my mother was babysitting Jessica, my girl wet her bed. My mom diapered her and used the XL pants. Just as well because this morning Jessica had wet again. So, it is only fair I pay you.”

The manager would not accept the money for the first pair of XL, but he did sell Jennifer two more pair, plus a dozen more Curity gauze diapers and a card of diaper pins. She also bought a quilted plastic changing pad and a container each of baby powder and baby lotion.

Back at the house Jennifer phoned the pediatrician. It was a Saturday morning and she only reached the answering service. That operator said another pediatrician was covering the calls and he would phone back as soon as possible. Meanwhile Jennifer phoned her mom.

The contents of the dryer were emptied and folded. The brand new Curity diapers were run with some Ivory Snow to remove the sizing. All of the XL PlayTex Panties were hand washed and hung to air dry on a wooden lingerie rack.

The covering pediatrician did not think the one night of bedwetting indicated a serious medical emergency. He said he doubted that being diapered Saturday and Sunday nights would harm Jessica, but if she resisted it would be better to let her wet the bed. Then after cleaning her she should be asked to wear a diaper.

Ruby reminded Jennifer, “Darling, that was how I handled your bedwetting. Of course we didn’t have PlayTex then. If I recall you were 14 the last time I had to diaper you.”

“Thanks, Mommy, I have tried to forget all that,” blushing red, Jennifer responded with a giggle.

Ruby stayed for Saturday supper with Jessica, John and Jennifer. After the meal was over, Jennifer bathed her daughter and dried her.

“Precious, the doctor recommends that I ask you to wear a diaper tonight and tomorrow until your own doctor can see you on Monday,” Jennifer said sweetly. “Of course if you don’t want to wear a diaper that is fine. Maybe you won’t wet, but if you do we can deal with it.”

“Mommy, I am a big girl, but I did wet like a baby,” Jessica said hanging her head. “I should wear a diaper. Do you and Daddy still love me?”

“Of course we love you. I know a girl who sometimes wet her bed and needed diapers occasionally until she was a teenager,” Jessica said with a nervous laugh.

Granny Ruby was standing in the doorway and heard that remark. “Yes, My Daughter, as I recall that girl soon learned to pin on her own diapers!”

When her Mommy and Granny started to giggle, Jessica guessed that teenager was in fact her Mommy.

Jessica actively cooperated as she reclined on the changing pad. A double set of Curity diapers was slid under Jessica after she had been massaged with the lotion. Once the diaper was pinned, a pair of the XL PlayTex pants was worked up her legs and into position. Finally she was dressed in a long nightgown.

When she was led to say good night to her Daddy, he hugged Jessica and assured her she was loved.

Sunday morning Jessica’s diapers were virtually soaked, but still there was no leak. Jennifer removed the diaper and panties. She bathed and dried Jessica. Then she decided to put her back into a diaper and panties for the morning. Jessica did not protest.

After breakfast Jessica did say she needed to use the toilet. Of course Jennifer removed the diaper and pants. Jessica responsibly wiped herself clean.

What surprised Jennifer was that Jessica returned to her room and asked, “Mommy, aren’t you going to diaper me for Church? I would feel so embarrassed if I wet my dress during Sunday school.”

Jennifer had not considered the need for diapers at Church, but she did remember even when she was older than Jessica asking for a diaper before Church.

There was no time to start a search for the old diaper bag. Instead Jennifer put a few clean Curity diapers and a pair of the PlayTex panties into a paper bag. Jessica's frilly church dress did not entirely hide the crotch of her PlayTex panties. Otherwise she looked as she always did for Sunday school.

The teacher discreetly accepted the paper bag and put it in Jessica's cubby. Just before it was time for Jessica to leave, the teacher put her on a real changing table and pinned her into a dry diaper. Some of the other children noticed Jessica being led to the toddler room.

None dared tease then, because in those days children who were naughty at church were spanked by the teacher. They all knew it would be naughty to tease Jessica and none wanted to risk being spanked.

On the walk home Jennifer had to be very careful to hold the paper bag with the wet spot away from her. Immediately after arriving home John started a search of the basement store room until he found the old diaper bag. He also found the changing table.

That was set up in Jessica's room without any protest. The panties worn overnight were dry. The panties wet during church were washed and hung to dry. Jessica did not need another change until after lunch.

To speed the drying of the PlayTex panties, Jessica patted them with a towel before hanging them.

On the way to the Park Avenue pediatrician's office (John Dorsey Craig, MD, FACP) on Monday, Jessica and Granny Ruby stopped at the store to buy 6 more pair of the XL PlayTex panties and 2 dozen more Curity gauze diapers. They also carried the diaper bag, which did not upset Jessica.

The pediatrician could not find anything wrong with Jessica. After having his nurse escort Jessica to the waiting room, he led Ruby to his office.

“Mrs. Williams, Jessica is acting more like a silly boy than a girl of her age. Many of my colleagues would write as a diagnosis ‘*Idiopathic Enuresis*’ which is a polite way of saying the kid wets for his own reasons. We could waste a lot of time and money doing laboratory tests,” the doctor said.

“In the end there is no medical explanation, which is one meaning of ‘*Idiopathic*’ but the more common meaning is ‘self-originating’. I have seen this sort of behavior in boys, often when a baby sibling joins the family. In my 30 years of practice I have never seen a girl suddenly start to wet in significant quantities, not just dribbles. It is as if she can hold her urine until she deliberately voids it, which is so often the case with boys.

“My suggestion is to make the diapering as routine as possible. With boys I recommend treating deliberate wetting as any other misbehavior, which should be punished by spanking. There should be no reward for Jessica.

“Also, in theory she should be sent to school wearing her diaper, but the school staff would object and that would become part of her permanent record. Instead I would keep her at home with a tutor giving private lessons and a strict nanny dealing with diaper changes!”

Ruby thought about all that, then responded: “Doctor, I am sure you know best. The fact Jessica wets more every day and has not once objected to being diapered is suspicious.

“As for a tutor, we are in luck that even after I married and my daughter was growing up, I taught first and second grade. My time is largely my own. Of course when needed I can change the diapers and spank Jessica as soundly as I often spanked her mother.”

The pediatrician did somewhat reluctantly agree that it would be pointless to suddenly refuse to diaper Jessica because she would almost certainly wet anyway. Medically it is safer to let her wet a diaper than have her sleep in wet clothing in a wet bed.

Using the doctor’s phone, Ruby called Jennifer and relayed the news. The decision was to return the 2 dozen Curity diapers. Jennifer proposed ordering DyDee Service. That truck served several families on their block of St. Luke’s Place.

“But Mom, I do not want to be in a hurry blaming any of this on Jessica simply being naughty,” Jennifer said, “I’ll talk to her when I get home.

“Now I am going to phone her school and tell them that the pediatrician wants Jessica kept out of school for at least a week, maybe longer. I will ask them to brief you about the lessons she will miss.

“Thank, Mom, you for looking after her so well!”

Before leaving the doctor’s office Ruby decided to change Jessica’s diaper. Sure enough there was a room with a changing table and supplies. Jessica thanked her Granny for the dry diaper.

An hour after they returned home and were eating lunch, a driver from DyDee Service dropped off a diaper pail and a bundle of several dozen gauze diapers. He told Ruby to phone their office when the supply was getting low. He assured her that in a couple of weeks they would know how many diapers Jessica would need per delivery. If that exceeded the diaper pail capacity, they would provide a second pail.

Once the new PlayTex Baby pants had been given their initial wash and were drying along with the other panties, Ruby and Jessica carried the DyDee service diapers up to her room. Seeing that stack made Jessica so happy she did not want to play downstairs.

That convinced Ruby that her granddaughter not only did not mind being diapers, she was actually enjoying the experience. She would communicate that opinion to Jennifer.

In her room Jessica stood on a tuffet so she could use the changing table to diaper her dolls. She would waddle in her own increasingly wet diaper to the bathroom to re-fill the miniature baby bottle for Betsy Wetsy.

Once Jennifer arrive home, having left her office an hour early, she had Jessica sit on the couch (on a rubber sheet) for a conversation which included Ruby.

Right away Jessica admitted that she had been thinking about wearing a diaper for a couple of weeks. She insisted she had not deliberately wet the first time, but she did admit to having tried to pin on diapers since the larger doll arrived. She also admitted to having tried on the XL PlayTex panty and was thrilled it fit her so well.

Then Jessica said that she woke up on Saturday morning with her diaper not very wet while she needed to pee. Normally she would have just gone to the toilet. That morning she simply peed her diaper and went back to sleep.

Jessica also admitted several times she knew she needed to pee, but did not ask to be taken to the toilet. “Granny and Mommy, I am a bad girl. I’m not a baby but I still like wetting my diapers.

“That is naughty of me. I deserve to be punished for being bad.”

Before Jessica had a chance to change her mind, Jessica removed her wet diaper, cleaned her bottom and promptly spanked the daylight out of her, using just her hand. When Jessica was sobbing and limp, Jennifer hugged her, kissed her forehead and pinned her into a dry diaper.

That was Jessica's last spanking for many weeks. Instead all Jennifer needed to do was to threaten to not diaper Jessica. That was far more effective punishment than spanking.

While tutoring her, Ruby explained that Jessica needed to compromise between the real world and her fascination with diapers. Without threatening to deny her diapers, Ruby began to have Jessica practice being a responsible girl wearing conventional cotton panties during her lessons.

By the middle of the second week at home, Jessica admitted she was ready to only wear diapers after school and for bed. She would go to school wearing regular panties. If she needed to use a toilet before a recess, she would just ask her teacher.

What Jennifer had been telling the school was that a side-effect of Jessica's medical condition was that her bladder capacity was reduced temporarily. Therefore she would need more frequent toilet breaks.

For the rest of the school term Jessica would be diapered the second she reached home. When she asked to use a toilet her diaper would be removed. Then after using the toilet she would be pinned into a dry diaper.

When Ruby needed a vacation, the Pollards hired a nanny to take care of Jessica after school. During the Spring Break Jessica learned to pin on her own diapers. Sometimes she would wet those, but as often she would take off one diaper, use the toilet and then re-diaper herself.

During the 1952 Summer Vacation Jessica had planned to wear diapers around the clock. Jennifer even checked with DyDee Service to be sure

they had a branch covering Cape May, New Jersey where the Pollards had a beach-adjacent home they always leased for August. DyDee promised to take good care of Jessica.

However, as Greenwich Village started to get hot and humid in June, if Jessica went more than an hour in a wet diaper, she got a rash. Baby powder did not prevent the rash. Only White's A&D Ointment reduced the rash and Jessica really did not like the smell of the A&D. She would go without a diaper during the hot part of the day.

Before July ended, Jessica told her parents that she could give up diapers while they were at Cape May. Following the Labor Day Weekend, the Pollards returned to Greenwich Village. On cooler afternoons Jessica would play while diapered, but if it was hot she wore regular cotton panties as she did during school.

By the start of the 1952 Christmas Break Jessica announced she no longer needed diapers. The DyDee service was canceled, but the Curity diapers they owned were kept in Jessica's room, as was the changing table and her PlayTex Baby Pants.

By Spring Break in 1953 Jessica packed up all of her baby supplies, retaining only a few Curity diapers and small PlayTex pants for her larger doll.

All those months Jessica had been discreet playing in her diapers. Never did she embarrass her parents when they had visitors.

For the summer of 1953 Jessica dressed and acted her age. Never again did Jessica ask to play in diapers. If she was really sick, she would put on a diaper just in case.

Jennifer did not resent the money spent while Jessica was playing as a baby a waste. Her daughter grew to be a nice and well-adjusted woman. By age 8 Jessica no longer even needed to be spanked. Her teen years were so much less stressful than was the case with Jennifer, as Ruby delighted in pointing out.