

# The Padded Palace Act I: Chapter 1

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Connie had always dreamed of this day, though it was far different than she would've imagined. She stared down the aisle, her eyes locked on Latasha, who looked very dapper in her white suit. But Connie wasn't focused on how Latasha was dressed. No, her focus was on something much more important, and that was Latasha's smile. No matter what anyone thought, no matter what anyone said, she was absolutely in love with her.

The music rose and everyone stood at attention, looking Connie's way. With her father's arm wrapped around hers, she marched down the aisle towards the only future she ever wanted, dressed in a magnificent wedding dress that stuck out a full three feet in all directions.

It's weird to think that just a year ago, she was just graduating from college as a track star named Connor. Lots of changes had happened since then, but there was one change that started it all, and that was what she was hiding under her dress.

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With a degree in his back pocket, Connor was ready to join the working world...sort of. After four years of college, he'd racked up quite a bit in debt and was striking out on job searches left and right. He'd been staying with his friend, Mike, but he could tell his friend's patience was starting to run out on having a roommate who didn't contribute.

Connor needed to think fast, or else he'd end up back at home with his parents. At this point, Connor didn't even care if it was a job in his field or not. He just needed something to pay the bills. That's when he saw the help-wanted sign that would change everything.

"The Padded Palace: Looking for someone who's good with littles and comfortable with odd hours. Must be over 18. No experience necessary but previous work history with Littles or a background in childcare helps. Room and board offered upon request. Starting at \$25 an hour."

Connor's eyes lit up. The listing didn't specify the job, but he figured he could handle some kids. It was the free room and board that caught his eye. If he nabbed this job, he'd be able to save up quickly.

Without another thought, Connor sent in his application online, perhaps spicing up his resumé a bit to make him look more appealing. He did look after his younger brother a lot when he was in high school, so he wasn't too worried.

It wasn't more than a day later when he got an email back asking for an interview. Connor dug through his closet, put on his best outfit that didn't have a stain somewhere on it, and left for the interview.

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When Connor arrived at the address, he was absolutely floored. Before him was a pristine Victorian house, its walls painted pink with multicolored pastel shutters. It looked like a castle

straight out of a fairy tale. He grew a bit more anxious, but he discarded his nerves quickly. He needed this.

Connor stepped up to the door and rang the doorbell, which was shaped a lot like a pacifier. It wasn't more than a few seconds before the door opened. Standing before him was Latasha, a slightly overweight woman, who looked like she was just entering her 30s. She towered over him by at least a foot. He swore that love at first sight had to be a myth, yet here he was, practically swooning.

"Hello sweetie, you must be Connor. It's nice to meet you." Latasha ushered Connor into the house.

The inside of the house was just as immaculate and colorful as the outside was. The amount of bright pinks and pastel yellows were almost overpowering to the senses. Latasha chuckled at Connor's awe, leading him into the tea room.

"Please be careful to keep your voice down. I just put the kiddies down for a nap," said Latasha in a hushed voice. Connor nodded in acknowledgment of Latasha's request.

They soon sat down in two plush antique chairs and Latasha wasted no time getting to business. "Well Connor, I have to say that your resumé certainly stood out from the pack. A lot of the resúmes I receive are from people who clearly want to be guests here more than employees."

Connor smiled, happy to receive the compliment, though not happy enough that he didn't find her comment a bit odd. He decided to brush it off as some awkward humor.

"So, looking at your resumé, I see you have some experience with childcare. Would you mind telling me a bit more about that?" said Latasha with a big smile.

Connor was prepared, as he dove into a story about caring for his autistic little brother after school and full-time during the summer. A lot of it was true, some of it was embellished. Whatever he said must've been working, because Latasha was hanging on his every word with a glint of excitement in her eyes.

"Sounds like you had your hands full," Latasha stated, chuckling lightly. "Do you have any experience changing diapers?"

Connor's face dropped. Of course, he didn't have any experience. He should've assumed that a daycare facility would probably have children young enough to wear diapers still. Thinking on his feet, Connor had the perfect solution, "I do! I...can't believe I didn't mention that my brother was incontinent for much of his early childhood."

Connor was pleased with his lie. It wasn't even fully untrue. Connor's brother did wear diapers, but only for nighttime accidents. And his brother was able to change himself, so it's not like Connor ever had to.

Still, it was more than enough to convince Latasha, "Fantastic! Well, you'll certainly have your hands full here."

Connor started to grow a bit nervous. He should probably practice his diapering skills tonight so it's not a total giveaway.

"So, what brought on your interest in working with littles?" asked Latasha, further putting the heat on Connor. He couldn't let this diaper thing throw him off. He needed this job.

"I think it's because I've always wanted a little of my own to look after, to care for and love with all my heart," Connor warmly smiled at his false statement, causing Latasha's heart to melt. He had this in the bag. He just needed one final knockout hit, "And since I've never found my perfect match, this feels like the next best thing."

Connor had no idea how Latasha was reading into his response. She reached out and touched his shoulder tenderly, "I'm sure the right little will come along someday and make you the happiest daddy ever."

Connor's confusion returned, as he was once again thrown off by Latasha's phrasing, but he was so close to the finish line that he didn't really care. "Thank you," was all Connor could respond with.

"I knew I wouldn't need to follow up with the others. You are perfect and I'd love to have you working here," Latasha said with quiet enthusiasm. "Will you be wanting a room here to stay in?"

Connor nodded, happy that this was all working out so well. He'd just need to up his diapering game and he'd blend right in with no problem.

"Perfect, and will you be needing a crib or a bed?" Latasha nudged him playfully.

Connor laughed innocently at what he assumed was an obvious joke, "A bed will be fine."

Latasha grinned and took Connor by the arm. Connor was lost in just how soft Latasha's hands were as they clasped around him. A cheeky smile crossed his face, as he fantasized about those same hands grasping something much more sensitive.

"Let me show you around and introduce you to the littles. Naptime is nearly over, so I'll need to be getting back soon," Connor paid little attention to Latasha, offering only a feeble "yes" in response.

Latasha ferried Connor all throughout the house, showing him the kitchen, the art room, the backyard, and the TV room, which had all of the newest consoles. Connor truly felt like he was walking through a mansion. However, he did notice something a bit odd during the tour. All of the rooms were definitely made with little kids in mind, and yet, all of the furniture looked as though it were made for someone his size.

As Connor was trying to rationalize the oversized furnishings in his head, Latasha and he arrived at their final stop: the Nursery.

Latasha held a finger up to her lips as she placed her hand on the doorknob, “Be extra quiet. Don’t want to startle anyone awake.”

With that warning, Latasha twisted the door handle and they both entered the room.

That’s when Connor saw them. The “littles” that Latasha had been referring to were not little at all! Everything from the odd statements during the interview, to the wealth of oversized furniture suddenly all made sense.

Fast asleep were four adult women all dressed up like infants, and everything in the room was perfectly sized for them, from the cribs and the changing table to the diapers stacked neatly on shelves that lined the walls.

Latasha walked up to the first baby, who was wearing a light pink nighty and had her hair done up in pigtails. The “little” girl sucked away on the large pacifier hanging out of her mouth as her caregiver placed a gentle hand on her face to wake her up, “It’s time to wake up sweetie. There’s a special someone here who wants to meet you.”

A cool sweat dripped down Connor’s forehead. “What the hell have I gotten myself into?”

TO BE CONTINUED...