

Car Seat Safety Solution

Created May 2025, main storyline supplied by Carg, text and pictures by ChatGPT 4o.

“Secure”

After the accident, Elise couldn't bring herself to sit in a car without her heart racing, her palms sweating, and the world outside the window blurring into a disorienting smear. Even short drives made her panic. She'd once been independent and fearless, a petite 27-year-old who used to drive winding mountain roads just for the thrill of the view. Now she sat rigid, strapped in but feeling anything but safe.

Marcus, her boyfriend of three years, watched helplessly at first. He knew that Elise didn't just need comfort; she needed something to *believe* in again—some tangible feeling that she wouldn't fly through a windshield or be thrown sideways in a collision.

After some research and more than a few strange phone calls, Marcus unveiled his solution.

Elise stared at the contraption bolted into the back seat of his car. It was—there was no other word for it—**huge**. A towering, deeply padded car seat with a 5-point harness, wraparound head support, impact-resistant wings, and a leg separator. It looked like it belonged in a medical transport van.

“You got me a... disabled passenger seat?” she asked, her voice teetering between confusion and amusement.

“Technically, yes,” Marcus admitted, scratching the back of his neck. “It's meant for small adults who need full-body support. But it meets all the safety ratings. And more. There's even a crash-activated restraint-lock override. It won't unlatch unless the car is at a full stop and the engine's off.”

Her eyes widened. “So it traps me in.”

He nodded. “But in a good way?”

It took some convincing. And trial and error. The first time she sat in it, the security system locked her in for five minutes because the engine thought the car was “on an incline.” The second time, the seat's built-in headrest speaker started playing soothing white noise without warning—an optional feature Marcus had forgotten to disable.

But by the third attempt, Elise noticed something strange.

She felt **safe**.

The deep padding muffled outside noise. The harness kept her from tensing with every turn. The seat's firmness grounded her in place. For the first time in months, she didn't feel like a victim of momentum or speed. She wasn't vulnerable anymore; she was contained, protected—even a little powerful.

Over time, Elise began to joke about her “throne.” She decorated it with a small patch of embroidered flowers and kept a soft travel blanket tucked into the side pocket. Her friends thought it was absurd. But they didn't understand.

Sometimes, healing doesn't look like standing tall and walking away. Sometimes it looks like sitting still, fully strapped in, in the most secure place in the world—close to someone who went out of their way to understand what you needed, no matter how odd it seemed.

And when Elise finally drove again, it was in that same car—with Marcus in the "throne," cheering her on.

Title: "Secure" (Part 2)

It became a sort of quiet ritual between them. Each weekend, Marcus would read the chair's manual—a thick, spiral-bound tome full of diagrams and clinical phrasing—and they would try one new feature.

They started with the adjustable harness tension. With a small dial under the left armrest, Marcus could increase the snugness of the shoulder and lap belts until Elise felt like she was being hugged by the chair itself. Her breathing slowed when she was held like that—firm, consistent pressure across her chest.

"This is weirdly calming," she said once, eyes closed as the harness gently hugged her ribs.

"That's because it's designed to simulate proprioceptive input," Marcus said, quoting the manual. "It grounds people who get disoriented or anxious."

She smirked. "So I'm basically a human burrito."

"Exactly. A very safe burrito."

Another weekend, they activated the seat's integrated recline lock. It only allowed the seat to recline or adjust when the car was off and a separate key was used—meaning no sudden movements, no mechanical whirring, no surprises.

Then came the head support.

The wings of the seat—thick, curved cushions—could be extended inward to cradle the sides of her head. When Marcus adjusted them and stood back, Elise blinked slowly, like someone in a sensory cocoon. Her voice was quiet. "I can't see to the sides anymore."

"Do you want me to change it back?"

She shook her head. "No. It's like... I don't *have* to look. I only have to *be*."

After that, they got more experimental. The seat had an optional lap-shield—usually used for passengers with motor control issues—which clipped down over the harness. It was padded, curved like a butterfly's wings, and covered her stomach and part of her chest like armor.

Elise hesitated when Marcus brought it out.

"This might be overdoing it," she said, half-laughing.

"We can take it off any time," Marcus replied. "But... what if it's not?"

They clicked it into place. The moment it latched, Elise let out a breath she didn't know she was holding. Her muscles slackened, her forehead rested against the side padding. She wasn't just seated

anymore—she was enclosed. Shielded. Every direction had a soft wall. Every limb had a designated place.

There was nowhere to go. And nothing could get to her.

Later, on a long drive to visit her sister, Elise fell asleep in the seat for the first time. When she woke up, still swaddled in safety, she whispered, “I’ve never felt this okay in a car. Not ever.”

And Marcus, watching her with quiet wonder, said, “Then we keep going. Whatever it takes.”

They discovered features that bordered on comical: a locking boot for her feet that kept her from bracing against the floor (she loved it); noise-canceling side panels that slid out like shutters (those made her giggle); a vibration warning system for when the car changed lanes (which, oddly, soothed her). There was even a biometric monitor that tracked her breathing and pulse and could trigger a voice alert if her stress spiked too fast.

It sounded like a prison to most people.

But to Elise, it was sanctuary.

The chair didn’t just protect her. It gave her back control. Every restriction, paradoxically, meant one less thing to worry about—one less decision, one less threat. The world could be chaotic and fast and loud, but inside her chair, inside her pod of restraint and silence, she was untouched.

Sometimes, at stoplights, Marcus would look over at her. And Elise would be there, small and calm in her oversized seat, hands folded under the butterfly shield, eyes closed and a soft smile on her face.

“I think this thing might actually love me,” she said once.

“It’s just jealous I didn’t think of hugging you like that first,” Marcus said.

They both laughed. But they both knew something deeper had happened—something gentle and strange and true.

Because healing isn’t about returning to what was. Sometimes it’s about building something new, something that fits who you are *now*. Even if it has too many buckles.

Title: “Secure” (Part 3)

By autumn, Elise and Marcus were planning longer trips—weekend getaways, scenic routes through the countryside, even an overnight at a coastal inn. The seat, now affectionately nicknamed “the cocoon,” was a non-negotiable part of their life. Elise couldn’t imagine car travel without it.

But one thing kept cropping up.

“I can’t do jeans anymore,” she grumbled one morning, shifting inside the harness. The thick seams pressed into her hips, and the waistband folded uncomfortably under the lap shield.

“What about leggings?” Marcus offered.

“Tried that. Still bunches up.” She tugged at the fabric irritably. “The cocoon’s great, but it’s *too* good. Every wrinkle feels like a pebble under my skin.”

That night, she scrolled forums and niche clothing sites, and finally stumbled on a solution: *adaptive onesies*. Soft, seamless, all-in-one garments designed for long-term wear—used by people with sensory sensitivities, mobility issues, or hospital stays.

She ordered two.

When they arrived, Elise stepped out of the bedroom wearing one—a deep navy-blue suit, zippered in the back, fitted but loose in all the right places.

Marcus looked up from the couch and blinked. “You look... like a sleep ninja.”

“It’s *so* comfortable,” she breathed, doing a little twirl. “No pressure points. No bunching. It’s like I’m made of one smooth piece of fabric.”

“I love it,” he said. “But you know what’s next, right?”

Elise froze. “You mean—”

“Visiting your parents. In *that*.”

She swallowed. The trip had been planned for weeks. A family dinner, her first time back since the accident. She’d been dreading the conversation already: the seat, the straps, the strange accommodations that had slowly become her norm.

And now... the onesie.

“It’s not that I’m ashamed,” she said softly, sitting next to him, legs folded. “It’s just—this all started because I was scared. What if they see this and think I’m *more* broken now? Or that I’m hiding in something instead of healing?”

Marcus reached for her hand. “You’re not hiding. You’re surviving on your own terms. There’s strength in that.”

She gave a half-smile. “I know. It’s just easier when it’s *us*.”

The day of the visit, she dressed with care. A soft grey onesie, over which she layered a cardigan and a scarf. She kept her hair down, tucked behind her ears. Subtle makeup. Presentable. But underneath it all, the same Elise, cocooned.

The drive was uneventful—comforting, even. Her seat cradled her just right, the harness snug, the lap shield lowered for ease. She dozed most of the way.

When they pulled into her parents’ driveway, she hesitated.

Marcus unlatched the restraint. “I’ll carry the manual if they have questions.”

“That’s not helping,” she laughed, nervously.

Her mother opened the door before they could knock. “Elise!” she said, pulling her into a warm, long hug. “You look so—soft!”

Elise blinked. “Soft?”

Her mom stepped back, taking her in. “I love the outfit. It’s very... cozy-modern. Are those adaptive clothes?”

“Yeah,” Elise admitted cautiously. “They work better with the seat. I can’t do seams much anymore.”

Her mom nodded, then turned to Marcus. “Did you show her the photos I sent of the kitchen remodel? Come in, come in.”

Inside, her dad was at the table with a book. He stood, gave her a hug—gentle, but solid.

“You seem better,” he said. “I can see it in your eyes. The old spark’s back.”

She tilted her head. “Even in this?” She tugged the edge of her sleeve. “You don’t think it’s weird?”

He chuckled. “Kid, your great-aunt wore housecoats for thirty years and nobody blinked. Clothes don’t matter. *You* do.”

At dinner, her parents asked about the seat, about the features. Her dad was especially curious about the harness system, asking to see the brochure. Her mom wanted to feel the fabric of the onesie, nodding approvingly. “We spend so much time being uncomfortable in our own skin,” she said. “Why not fix what we *can* fix?”

Elise excused herself midway through the meal to wipe away tears in the bathroom—tears of relief.

Not one judgment. Not one flinch.

Just quiet understanding.

That night, curled in her cocoon on the ride home, she looked over at Marcus and whispered, “They saw me. Not the chair. Not the clothes. *Me*.”

He reached over and took her hand, threading their fingers together between the molded armrests.

“You’re easy to see,” he said.

Title: “Secure” (Part 4)

A week after the visit, a large box arrived at their apartment. It was wrapped in brown paper and covered in her mother’s looping handwriting. Elise pulled it into the living room and opened it on the floor.

Inside were **five onesies**, each carefully folded and tied with pale ribbon.

“Oh wow,” she breathed, lifting one out.

They were handmade. The fabric was soft and breathable, clearly chosen with love—but what caught Elise’s breath were the **patterns**. One was printed with tiny yellow ducks, the same design her old childhood pajamas had. Another was sky blue with little kites and puffy clouds. A third had vintage rockets, identical to a bedsheet set she hadn’t seen since she was five.

Each one was a time capsule stitched in memory.

Marcus looked over her shoulder. “Your mom made these?”

“Looks like it.” She turned one over to check the zipper.

That’s when she noticed.

Every single onesie had a **back zipper**. And not just that—they all had an **extra flap of fabric** at the top, fastened with sturdy plastic snaps that made the zipper impossible to reach or undo without help.

Elise blinked.

“Oh.”

Marcus frowned slightly. “That’s... deliberate.”

“Yeah. She probably thought that’s just how they’re *supposed* to be.” Elise laughed, a little nervously. “It’s how mine were when I was little. Back zips, snap flaps, the whole thing. I guess she assumed that was part of the design.”

He picked one up and examined the stitching. “These are really well made. But... do you want help getting into one?”

She hesitated.

This felt different.

Up until now, everything she wore had been **functional**—chosen by her, practical, adjustable. This? This was something else. It was thoughtful, yes. Loving, yes. But also... **controlling**, in a quiet, unintentional way. The onesies weren’t just hard to take off. They were *meant* to be that way.

She sat back on the carpet, the duck-print one in her lap.

“I think,” she said slowly, “this was her way of saying: ‘Let me protect you like I used to. Let me hold you like I did when you didn’t have to be in control.’”

Marcus sat beside her. “And how do you feel about that?”

She ran her fingers over the snaps. “A little conflicted. It’s sweet, but... if I wear it, I’m giving up something. Even if it’s just the ability to unzip myself.”

“Do you want to try it? Just once?”

She nodded, quietly. “Yeah. But only if you help me. And only if I can tell you to get me out of it whenever I want.”

“Of course.”

That night, she chose the kite-print one. Marcus helped her into it gently, pulling the zipper up the back and fastening the flap. She felt the same softness as always—the soothing pressure of good fabric, the complete absence of pinches or seams.

But she also felt something else.

Vulnerability.

When she sat in her chair, harnessed in, wrapped in fabric she couldn’t escape alone, there was a moment of stillness that went deeper than usual.

She was okay with needing help. Just for tonight.

“You good?” Marcus asked.

Elise looked up at him, the faintest smile on her lips. “Yeah. It’s like... she remembered who I was before all of this. And instead of mourning it, she made space for that version of me to be here too.”

He leaned down and kissed her forehead. “It’s not regression,” he whispered. “It’s remembering.”

Later, when she was ready, Marcus unsnapped the flap, unzipped her carefully, and helped her step free. No teasing. No fuss. Just quiet presence.

And she realized: it wasn't about whether she could unzip herself.

It was about **trusting someone else to help** when she couldn't.

The onesies became a new part of her collection—not everyday wear, but something reserved for those particularly hard days, when the world pressed in and she needed to press back with softness. Each time, she chose one that made her feel safe, not smaller.

And sometimes, when she wore the duck-print one, she'd call her mom, thank her again, and talk about everything *but* the accident—books, recipes, memories of a time when safety came from bedtime stories and hands on her shoulders.



Title: “Secure” (Part 5 – Finale)

It happened on the way back from a weekend retreat in the mountains.

They were on a winding highway at dusk, just the two of them and the quiet rhythm of the road. Elise was nestled in her seat, bundled in the soft green onesie her mother had made, the one with the tiny pine trees stitched into the cuffs. The hum of the tires, the soft tension of the harness around her body—it was all familiar now. Not just comfort, but *normalcy*.

They were halfway down a steep grade when it happened.

A deer bolted from the trees.

Marcus slammed the brakes. The tires screeched. The car veered slightly—but he kept control. The deer vanished into the brush.

Elise didn't scream. Her hands clenched, her breath caught, her body braced. But she didn't unravel.

The car came to a stop on the gravel shoulder.

For a long moment, neither of them spoke. The only sound was the ticking of the engine and Elise's breath—shallow, then steady.

Marcus looked over. “Are you okay?”

She was shaking. But she nodded. “Yeah. I think... I think I am.”

He reached out and gently touched her shoulder, over the strap. “You didn't panic.”

“No.” She closed her eyes. “I was terrified. But... it didn’t *take me*. I didn’t lose myself.”

And it was true. Her heart still raced, her throat still tight—but something was different. The terror hadn’t drowned her this time. It had surged... and passed. And underneath, there had been **foundation**. The seat, the harness, the cocoon—everything she’d built around herself hadn’t made her weaker. It had helped her **survive** long enough to grow strong again.

They waited a few minutes until her shaking stopped, then continued the drive.

Back at the apartment, Marcus helped her out of the seat like always. He unzipped the back of her onesie, carefully unfastened the flap, and helped her step free. She changed into regular clothes. She walked around barefoot. She made tea.

The next morning, she stood in the garage, looking at the cocoon.

For the first time, she *knew* she didn’t need it anymore.

But she still wanted it.

Not as a crutch. As a choice.

The fear had receded, like a storm that had finally blown past the shore. But the comfort she’d built for herself? The systems, the softness, the care? They had become **hers**—part of how she existed in the world, unapologetically.

She climbed in, fastened the harness, pulled the lap shield into place. The chair clicked and whirred softly around her.

Marcus got in the driver’s seat.

“Still want the cocoon?” he asked.

She smiled.

“I’m not afraid anymore,” she said. “But I’m still allowed to be *safe*.”

He started the engine. They pulled out into the morning sun.

And Elise, secure in every sense of the word, let herself enjoy the ride.

The End.

Secure

After a car accident, Elise doesn't feel safe in a car anymore



Her boyfriend comes up with a solution: a very large seat with a 5-point harness, good head support, etc.



Surprisingly, the more restrictive it got, the safer Elise felt



Her mother sews onesies for her to wear under it on longer trips



