

# Irís back home

(part 2 of the Irís Adventures)

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## Introduction

This story is a sequel to 'Iris helps out'. It starts at the moment that story ends, and as such it wouldn't make much sense to start reading this without having read the prequel. In the first few pages I do recap some of what went on before, but that is more meant as a reminder for those who might not remember all that happened in the first story.

As with the first story, the main character is a minor that gets subjected to diapers, clothes she can't take off, and restraints (mostly children's and special needs', like harnesses and car seat). It is all (mostly) consensual, and contains no sex, but if these things offends you, please don't read any further.

### The characters in this saga

Tomas family	Iris	Our main character. Female, 13. Lives in Eugene, Oregon, USA
	Maria	Her mother, stay-at-home, buys and sells vintage stuff from home
	Carlos	Her father, originally from the Philippines, works on oil platforms
Fletcher family	Sabine	Iris's former best friend at Edison Elementary School, until she moved away to neighboring Thurston and had to switch schools. Had meningitis 2 years ago which resulted in Acquired Brain Injury, leaving her permanently mentally disabled.
	Imogen	Sabine's mother, full-time caregiver. Iris often calls her Nanny.
	Jack	Sabine's late father, died 3 years ago in work-related accident.
Others	Anna King	Iris's friend at Crow Middle/High School, with older brother Billy
	Mindy McConnell	Iris's friend at Crow Middle/High School, second oldest of 7 children
	Miranda Ray	16-year-old girl from Iris's neighborhood, who is Iris's regular babysitter.

### 1. Tuesday Evening: Back Home

Iris was still overwhelmed with emotions when she left the Fletchers after staying with them for nine days. Her friend Sabine might have suffered brain damage since they were together in elementary school, but now their connection was stronger than ever. And Sabine's mother had made her so welcome, helped her rediscover the child in her, and took such good care of her, that she almost felt like a second mother. And now she was leaving them behind to go home with her mother, and with her father arriving the next day from the oil platform he worked on.

Her real mother guided her to the back seat of the car, where her booster seat was. "I assume you haven't grown 1.5 inch (3,5 cm) in the past week? Then I'm afraid you'll need to use the booster seat. I know you don't like it, but it is the law." Her mother had always been telling her what to do, and treating her like a child, when she was already 13, and recently became a 'real' teenager when she noticed the first signs of her breasts developing. But after their talk where Nanny guided them in working out their differences, she had been trying very hard to acknowledge Iris's feelings and involve her in decisions about her.

They had talked about Iris's fears, so that her mother would not ignore them anymore. She had had bedwetting issues and an occasional daytime accident when she was younger, and was still small for her age. In the first grade of elementary school, after such an accident, she was mercilessly teased as

the class baby, until Sabine started supporting and defending her. Middle school had until now been sort of alright, and at least she had two good friends, Anna and Mindy, but some of the popular girls there were like cats waiting to pounce on any weakness. If they would find out that Iris needed diapers at the moment for her bladder infection, and also for the food poisoning from last night, she was sure her life at middle and then high school would turn out to be disastrous. Perhaps even the booster seat would already be enough cause for them to bully her with it, but in the past week Iris had travelled in the old car seat of Sabine, with a harness she couldn't open herself, and now her worries about the booster seat seemed a relatively minor.

So she replied "Thanks Mom, but I don't really mind the booster seat that much anymore, although Sabine's old car seat was a lot more comfortable. But I found out that without any booster, the safety belt rubs in my neck, and I am just looking at the back of the front seat instead of over it. I'm just afraid to be seen in it. Really, if I could be certain that no one would see me, I'd even prefer Sabine's old car seat. But that would be impossible: even if no one saw me actually sitting in it, anyone who knows us and our car, and suddenly sees a car seat in the back, could guess who that must be for, since I'm the only underage person who regularly rides with you."

Iris was glad that she wore her denim jacket though: if anyone would see her in the booster seat, that wouldn't be good, but at least she could defend herself that it was illegal not to. But if someone would also see her overalls with the Pooh characters on them, that would be a lot harder to explain, let alone that they were constructed in such a way that she couldn't take them off herself. At least they hid her diaper quite well. In the past week she had found out that being restrained made her feel relaxed, carefree and protected, at least when someone she really trusted did that to her. Of course no one but her family and the Fletchers could ever find out about that! Now it looked like her mother was taking over that role from Nanny, and Iris wasn't sure about how she felt about that yet. Her mother was trying very hard to be more respectful towards Iris, made several promises, and they had agreed on a safeword now, a sort of emergency break if something was happening that made Iris feel too uncomfortable or even panicky. But it was hard to just suddenly trust her after how she had been before, so often embarrassing Iris with over-the-top protective measures, trying too hard keeping her safe, warm, and whatever else might threaten her, without listening to her, and ignoring her fears to be spotted being treated so childishly.

How the coming days would look like, she had no idea of yet. She was stuck with wearing diapers for now, perhaps even for weeks, until the bladder infection and food poisoning were cured. That would probably limit what she could wear, and the fear of being discovered might make going out in public hard. While she had the diarrhea, she needed real diapers, and probably her mother to diaper her. At least she didn't see how she could do that herself, cleaning poo from all over the diaper area, and she had never learned how to diaper herself anyway. But once that was over, she could start using the pull-ups, and she was sure she could handle those herself. They would also be a lot harder to spot under most clothes.

And then of course there was her father coming home tomorrow to consider. She was really looking forward to it, because they always had a lot of fun, and often went into nature, especially to watch birds. How would he react to his daughter back in diapers and liking to be treated like a little girl sometimes? He often referred to her as his little girl, or Nenita, which meant the same, she learned in Spanish 1. Spoiling her, helping her with things she could do on her own for a long time, and being as strict with safety as her mother. Now that she thought about it, he might not have to change much to treat her like a little girl. He always seemed to avoid serious discussions with her, and often asked her to wear her cuter clothes for him. It seemed pretty likely that he would welcome little Iris. Perhaps even more than mature Iris, who had just entered puberty, and wanted to be taken serious.

Her mother was pretty quiet, and hadn't responded much about the car seat, except for an acknowledging grunt or two. She was always that way while driving, saying she should focus fully on the traffic and not be distracted. On the highway they sometimes talked, but not in town, and especially not during rush hour. But even now the drive didn't take more than 15 minutes, and soon they arrived at their home and drove into their garage. Iris was still in thought, and waited to be released from her seat. "Iris, are you coming?" This made her realize that she could release herself again, so she did and got out of the car. Together they took all the boxes and bags out of the car. Then her mother asked "Did you have a say in what to wear at the Fletchers?" "No, Mrs. Fletcher decided, and since she liked to see all those old clothes again, she had something new each day." "And did you ever look at the selection of clothes beforehand?" "No, it was always a surprise what she put me in." "OK, then why don't we do the same, and move the clothes to my office. Then when we decide that you will wear something of Sabine's, I'll select something suitable, and you won't know until I put it on you." Iris replied, still with half her mind on other matters "OK, that might be fun. As long as I can veto anything when we are going outside, get visitors, or something." "Yes, you can. So let's move the boxes up to the office then."

So they carried everything to the room where Mrs. Tomas had her computer, the administration, and ran her buying and selling from. It was opposite the parent bedroom on the ground floor, so they didn't have to carry the boxes very far. Iris kept the overnight bag with her own stuff, that her mother had brought over when she unexpectedly stayed with the Fletchers, separate, and put the canister of cranberry juice that was in it in the fridge. "Now we need to find a place where we can change you. Your bed would be too low, and might get dirty. The dining table doesn't seem right either. But I think we can make the table in the laundry area upstairs work. It has a nice height for me, and is large enough that you fit on it. It might not be constructed to carry the weight of an adult, but it is pretty sturdy, and for this little girl it should be good enough." With that last remark, she put one arm around Iris, hugging her and showing she didn't mean to tease her about her height. "Come, let's take the diapers upstairs and see how we can make that work. It wouldn't be nice for you to lie directly on the table. But we should have a mattress topper on the single bed in the spare bedroom that we can use. We just have to cover it with something that is waterproof. I should have a coated tablecloth that should do."

The laundry table was in a large open area at the end of the landing, past Iris's room, where her mother also stored the things she bought and sold, so there were a number of storage racks and cabinets in which her mother created space for the diapering supplies. They got the mattress topper and the tablecloth, and put them on the laundry table. "I assume you don't need a diaper change yet?" "No, it is definitely not soiled, and I don't think much pee either. It helps that I went to the toilet right before the last change." "OK, then just hop on in your clothes, so we can see if it works. No wait, let me help you. I don't want you falling." Iris pulled a disapproving face for a moment at her mother's protectiveness, but Nanny always helped her on the changing table too, and with the topper and perhaps slippery tablecloth not firmly fixed, she thought this was more good protective than over-protective, so she let herself be lifted on the table. It was really comfortable, although not as wide as the changing table, so the mattress hung over the sides. She only needed something under her head, but her mother quickly got the pillow from the spare bed, and put it under the tablecloth. Iris automatically put her hands above her head, but her mother ignored that. She just checked that she had enough room to comfortably do a diaper change. She pulled Iris a bit more towards the foot end, and then was satisfied.

"OK, that is taken care of. Now let's go down for a moment; there are a few more things to discuss." They went to the living room, Mrs. Tomas got them both a glass of cranberry juice with ice, and they

settled in their regular seats. "First, I want to ask you something. In the car you said that if you could be sure no one would see you, you'd prefer Sabine's old car seat over our booster seat. Suppose I find a way to make that happen, would you really want that? I guess Mrs. Fletcher might want to sell it to us, or we could get another one." "If you can show me how that would work, I might consider it. But you know Sabine's old car seat has those buckles I can't open myself. I'm not sure if I would want that, especially since I would need to use it every time, and not just when we feel like playing." "OK, well, I'll first look into the options, and then we will see if you would be interested. Car seats offer superior safety with a crash, so I would really like that."

Iris brought up "With all that has happened today, I would like to just be myself for today. Of course I need the diapers, and I don't mind the overalls, but let's keep it at that for now, so I can get used to being home again." "Yes, I understand. That will give me some time to think about what we could do and how. I assume you want to spend some time on your phone soon?" "There hardly has been an opportunity in these last days, so yes, I really need to catch up. Anna and Mindy will be wondering why they don't hear from me, and there will be so many unread mails and posts I have to go through." "Why don't you do that until dinner. After that I would really like to spend some time with you, I have missed you so, all alone here for nine days, and I want to hear a lot more about all your adventures with the Fletchers."

Then she continued "But first I have some disappointing news for you. Daddy called this morning: there is a storm coming, and it will not be safe for the helicopter to fly and bring him to the mainland. It might be two more days before he will be here." Now this had happened once or twice before, but Iris was still quite disappointed "Oh, that is annoying. I was really looking forward to it, and I left at the Fletchers because of him coming home." Then it dawned on her "But if he called this morning, you already knew even before coming to pick me up. Why didn't you mention it then?" She raised her voice a bit in that last sentence, because she was starting to feel upset. "But Iris, you let the Fletchers know from the beginning that you would stay until today, and it wouldn't have been right to suddenly impose on them longer. And I was also really missing you, and looking forward to working on our relationship together. Now we have some time to do that before your father enters the mix." "But Mom, I'm not saying it is the wrong decision to leave today, but I *am* saying I want to be heard when you make decisions about me. How do you know if I wouldn't have some arguments to do it differently, or if together we could have come up with a solution that worked for us both?" "But Iris..." Iris interrupted loudly "Mom, that is the respect we talked about."

Mrs. Tomas opened her mouth, and then closed it again. She sat for a while, thinking, and then said "You're right. I am sorry. This is something that I need to change. I must get used to you being smart and wise enough now to give you more say over your life. I'll try to do better, and even though I can't guarantee that I will never fall back onto my old behavior anymore, I hope I can go on improving. On the other hand, I'm still your mother, and the final decision will still be mine. But you are right in that I should at least listen to you." "Thank you, being heard is all I ask for." "Now, it doesn't seem to make sense to bring you back to the Fletchers again, also because we don't know how long the delay will be. So I guess we'll have to go on as we started. Just out of curiosity, what would you have said if I had let you know about the delay while you were still there?" "Oh, it would have been so tempting to stay longer, but I had resigned myself to leaving then, and also looking forward to my own things, and being with you. The Fletchers probably wouldn't have minded, but it would also be very disappointing for you. So I don't think I would have wanted to change the plans. And now we can also find out how we can give the diapers, the clothes and such a place, while it is just the two of us."

Iris didn't hug her mother often anymore – she considered that too childish. But with the Fletchers she did it a lot, and it felt really good, so now she got up and hugged her mother. Getting hugged back was a bit much for her stomach though, and once more her bowels emptied noisily. "Well, we might as well try out the changing table before I start to cook. Let's go upstairs." her mother concluded resigned. At the changing table Mrs. Tomas checked if she had everything she needed. It took them a while to collect everything: because of the diarrhea she needed the rubber gloves, and an apron that could be wiped clean. Then something to deposit the dirty diapers and wipes in. There was a pedal waste bin in the room that would serve for now. The diapers were already present, but they also needed to collect the wipes and the Vaseline. When they thought they had everything, Mrs. Tomas started to take off the overalls, and realized she needed the tool to undo the zipper, so she got that from her bag she had left downstairs.

Finally the overalls were off, and Iris was helped on the table. She lay down, and put her hands up again. "Would you like your hands restrained? I thought you didn't want to do anything like that today?" "Oh no, that's just routine. I'll keep them on my sides." Once her mother had put on her own protection, the bodysuit was opened and the plastic pants pulled off. They were still clean. After the diaper was removed and the area wiped clean, Iris was helped off the table and sent to the toilet. There wasn't much left, so she came back fairly quickly. Mrs. Tomas cleaned the diaper area once more, removed her gloves, and started putting Vaseline on the area, but once again it was so sensitive that Iris's hands moved towards it. "Iris, don't!" "Oops, sorry. It is sort of a reflex." She folded her hands under her head, where they could not sneak away unnoticed. "I guess we could do with a pair of straps there." "I guess so". Sometimes it might be easier if you were just prevented from making mistakes, Iris mused. Now she had to keep suppressing her urges to touch there. Once the new Tena Youth was taped closed, the plastic pants were pulled up again, and the body snapped closed. Then Iris was helped off the table, stepped into the overalls again, was zipped up with the tool, and the flap over the zipper buttoned closed.

Iris noticed that her mother had done it all sort of clinically. Not cold or remote, but no kissing the stomach, tickling or any other action that would make it more fun for a young child. And instead of dressing her in the overalls while she was still on the table, like she did at the Fletchers, she only helped Iris step into them. Her mother was obviously trying to oblige her wishes not to do the childish stuff today, so she said "Thanks for keeping it neutral today, Mom, like I asked. I sort of miss the fun bits though. I think tomorrow I would like to try it a bit more childish." "I think I would like that too. I started remembering things we used to do when you weren't potty trained yet, but I had to hold myself back. Not that I would like to change your poopy diapers daily for the coming years again, but it is an intimate moment, and we haven't had many of those lately." Iris felt the same, voluntarily took her mother's hand, and together they went downstairs.

"Before I forget, let me put the medication on the dining table, so we won't forget. And let me get the Imodium for the diarrhea. Oh, this says you take a capsule after each unformed stool. Well, you just had one, so here, take this capsule, and drink some water. The UTI medication you usually took before each meal, I believe?" "Yes, that is what Mrs. Fletcher did." "OK, I'll stick with that then. Makes it easy to remember; I'll just leave it on the dining table. And please help me remember to take the Imodium after each loose bowel movement, but not more than 4 times a day."

"Well, if that is all, I guess I'll go up to my room now and go online. I need to be alone for a while and get a bit of rest from everything that happened. I know you'd like me to stay around, but I'll be back for dinner." "Silly girl, I don't want you underfoot while I'm cooking! You go to your room, NOW" her mother joked. So Iris acted like she was very disappointed and sulkily moved away. Once out of the kitchen, she ran up the stairs two steps at the time, and in her room immediately sat on her bed

with her telephone. Not only did she have lots of messages and posts waiting, but there were still a number of pictures that Nanny took during their outings that she wanted to post; of course only those that did not contain her visibly restrained. Some of the pictures at the waterfall, where she was chained to Sabine at the wrist, were acceptable as well, since that wrist was not in the picture, and her jumpsuit wasn't particularly childish. The ones where the chain was visible she deleted, making sure no one would ever see those. The other ones that contained Sabine with her harness visible she kept, but didn't want to publish, afraid that even the association with a mentally disabled person could lead to bullying. In her head she apologized to Sabine about that.

"Iris, dinner is ready." Mrs. Tomas called from downstairs. "Iris, come on, put the phone down." And to herself "what is that girl doing?" when there was no reaction. She went up the stairs, and found Iris asleep, still sitting on the bed, with the phone on the bed next to her, probably slipped from her hand. She realized it had been an intense day for her girl, and she looked so cute and peaceful, but she couldn't let her sleep, so she shook her awake. She even allowed Iris to finish the message she had been typing, and then went down with her. "I have made one of our favorites, the fish stew." Actually her mother didn't need to mention that; the smell already announced it to Iris. "Yes, it smells great again. I'm quite hungry, especially after the bland food we ate for breakfast and lunch today, because of the food poisoning. Do you think it is OK to eat normally again now?" "You're using a proper drug now for the diarrhea, so I'm sure that will get you better quickly. So dig in before it gets cold."

Her mother definitely could cook, and Iris ate a lot. This was an advantage of being home again, although of course it was not a very fair comparison, with Mrs. Fletcher hardly having time to prepare nice food while taking care of two girls. When she had enough, her stomach started rumbling and bubbling though, and she passed some wind. If any diarrhea came with it, it was too little to feel though, so the medication seemed to help. While they were talking, and drinking tea her mother made for them, she toyed with her bracelet. (see Figure 1) Of course her mother had to ask if she got that from the Fletchers as well, and then she suddenly realized that it was still locked around her right wrist. She told her mother it was originally used in combination with a short chain to keep Sabine and her together, holding hands. When that was no longer necessary Sabine asked if they could keep wearing the bracelets, and so they were locked back on their wrists. Iris assumed Sabine liked that they wore something matching. But after having worn it for 2 days, she had forgotten all about it, and left the Fletchers without having it removed from her.

"Mom, did you get the key for it? I don't mind wearing it at home, but it might be a bit hard to explain to my friends and others why it is locked on me, so I want to be able to take it off." Her mother got the set of keys and tools she received from Mrs. Fletcher, but there didn't seem to be anything that fit. "I'll keep an eye out if there is anything in the boxes and bags that we brought. Luckily there is no urgent need to take it off, but if we can't find anything I guess you'll be wearing it until you see them again. I assume you don't want to wait too long with that anyway." Iris wasn't happy about that, because she had no idea yet when she would see the Fletchers again, and she tried to pull it off, but it was too tight, and too sturdy for her to achieve anything.



Figure 1 Iris's Locking Bracelet

In an attempt to distract her daughter, she voiced an idea she had while she was cooking "Iris, I think we still have a box with some old baby things from you that I never threw out. Would you like to



take a look at it?" "Oh, that would be interesting! Where is it?" "I have to look around a bit, but I think it should be on the attic. Why don't you go sit in the living room, and I'll return when I have found it." Iris thought it might take a while, so she turned on the TV. She had hardly watched any TV while at the Fletchers – most evenings she had interesting and intimate conversations with Nanny, and the last few nights she followed Sabine's bed time, since they had a 'sleep over' in Sabine's bed, and that was shortly after dinner. But zapping she hadn't even found something she wanted to watch when her mother already came back, so she turned the TV off again.

They went back to the dining table to spread out its contents. Iris didn't recognize anything, except for some things that she only knew from her baby pictures. The clothes were cute, but of course not useful. There was a raggedy Ann doll though that she put aside. She didn't feel an immediate attraction, but perhaps when she was more in the mood it might be fun. There also was a baby bottle and a sippy cup, and although both were quite small for her, they thought they could be useful, at least for a start. A bunch of rainbow colored straps turned out to be a harness, complete with reins and attachment straps for stroller or chair. (see Figure 2) Iris thought that if she used it as a toddler, it must be way too small for her, but her mother lengthened the straps and tried it on her. It actually fit, and the straps could even be tightened a little, just like the harness that was used on her at the Fletchers. Her mother made sure it was a close fit. It had a single snap buckle at the back, and fixed size reins that clipped to both sides of the chest strap. Her mother showed how the two little straps could be wrapped around the sides of the chair, and clipped to the same buckles as the reins. And then suddenly Iris was tied to her chair, and the short straps kept her firmly seated. The buckles were not locking, so she could easily release herself, but the feeling of being held in her chair felt very nice, nonetheless. At the moment she was glad it was not locking, so she didn't need to fully trust her mother to not misuse it, but of course it made the feeling of being treated as a little girl less intense too.



*Figure 2 Iris's Baby Harness*

Iris wanted to play a bit with the buckles of the chair straps, but her mother intervened "Let's say you are not allowed to touch the buckles when me, or your father, straps you to the chair." "OK, that sounds fair." That actually made it a bit more exciting, while still allowing her an emergency way out. "But today we wouldn't play, and we were just exploring, so for now you have my permission." Now Iris actually felt a bit disappointed, to her own surprise. Her mother saw it too, and asked "Have I said something wrong? I thought you wanted to keep it free of restrictions today?" "I did. But now I'm sort of missing the relaxation I feel when I am restrained. I guess it has been an emotional and stressful day, and I could use something comforting." "OK, I think I can do that. What about you stay buckled, I fill the baby bottle, and then give it to you on the couch?" Iris looked at the mother gratefully, and so she looked in the fridge for milk. "Mommy, my stomach is still a bit upset. Could you use sugar water instead of milk?" "How do I make that?" "I don't know exactly, but Nanny said she took warm water and put a pinch of salt and a few spoonfuls of sugar in it. So I don't dry out from the diarrhea." "Salt? Well OK, if that is what you like I'll do that."

When the bottle was ready, Mrs. Tomas released the clips holding her to the chair, and then the buckle at the back. "Oh, can I keep it on, and you hold the reins?" So the buckle was closed again, and the reins snapped to both sides. These buckles made a pretty loud noise, which was fun. The

reins strap was fairly long, but because it doubled up she couldn't get more than about 3 feet (0.9m) away from her mother, who kept a strong hold on her. They sat on the couch, with Iris leaning into her mother, who wound the reins around her wrist several times to keep her really close. Then she got the bottle to her lips and started suckling. But it was hard work to get anything out, so she twisted her face away from the bottle and said "Mommy, I think the nipple is clogged or something. It's really hard to get much out." "Hmm, let me see. It seems OK. But of course this nipple is meant for much smaller babies. Just try what you can for now; tomorrow we'll have a look if we can make it better." Not waiting for an answer, Iris got the nipple pressed to her lips again, and automatically opened. It didn't go very fast, but she managed to finish the small bottle after a while. The flask she used at the Fletchers definitely had a bigger nipple and more content, so it probably was meant for special needs kids and not babies.

Her mother took her over the shoulder and patted on her back, like you would burp a baby. And Iris actually produced several burps because she swallowed a fair bit of air with the small amounts of fluid she got out of the bottle. Then she yawned. "I think this little girl is getting sleepy! How late did you go to bed in the past week?" "I didn't really know most of the time, but I assume it was around nine o'clock. And the last two days it was probably closer to seven, because that was when Sabine went to bed." "It is ten past eight now, so perhaps it is best if you go get ready in the bathroom, do your hair and brush your teeth. Then I will come up and put a night diaper on you. Let me take the harness off now." Iris had felt really good with the harness and the bottle, also because she had been so doubtful if this would work with her mother, but now it was also nice to be free again. For this night it would be best to sleep like she always did, and not bother with the inflatable sleeping bag they took home with them, or perhaps with some other pajama suit that she hadn't seen yet. They had just taken the whole bunch of clothes that no longer fit Sabine, so they still were a lot of clothes she hadn't worn. She was sure tomorrow she would want to go through all of them and try them on, but her mother probably wouldn't let her, now that they agreed she would let herself be surprised. Not tonight though. Now she just wanted to be left alone and settle down.

When she was ready in the bathroom she called her mother, who took her overalls off, and the bodysuit as well, and lifted her on the table again. She seemed to sense that Iris didn't want to play anymore, so she acted businesslike again. When she had put on apron and gloves, she removed the diaper and cleaned the area. Then Iris was off to the bathroom once more. Once she was back her mother asked her which diaper she wanted. Because of her loose bowels she decided it would need to be the best protection for now, which was the thick ones from Sabine. Even though the plastic panties were not dirty, her mother wiped them down and then put them on her again. "You pick what you want to wear for the night yourself?" "Yes, I'm too tired for trying any more stuff." "OK, have a good night then, and I'll see you in the morning. Sleep well."

And so her mother went downstairs, and Iris went into her room. She noticed her mother had put the sippy cup on her nightstand, and took a little sip. It was plain water. Obviously her mother decided she should not be getting sugar after brushing her teeth. She was used to drinking very little in the evening and at night, to prevent nighttime accidents, but now she had to get used to keeping her fluids up. She looked in her closet to see what she would wear for the night. The very thick diaper ruled out most of her bottoms, and she finally decided on just an oversized t-shirt. The diaper and panties would do for bottoms tonight. Her mother had changed the bedding while she was away, so it was all crispy and fresh. She snuggled under the light summer duvet, and expected to drift away quickly. But thoughts about the past day kept whirling through her head, and she kept thinking of all the ways she had been restrained. The area between her legs kept demanding attention, and since her diaper was still clean, she decided that she might as well play with herself a

bit. She hadn't had much chance lately, and she came very quickly. Only a few minutes later she felt the urge again, and satisfied herself once more. That apparently was what her body needed, because after that she almost immediately fell asleep.

Somewhere during the night she noticed she was strapped on a changing table, but there was no one coming to actually change her. She called out, but there was no reaction. She started wiggling on the table, and trying to free herself, and then suddenly the waist strap came loose and she dropped to the floor. She tried to catch herself by extending her arms, but landed on her left arm and suddenly her wrist started to really hurt and she shouted out in pain. Then she realized she was not dreaming anymore, but actually lying on the floor next to her bed, with her wrist seriously aching. Shocked, she called for her mother, who must have heard the fall or the initial shout, because she almost immediately opened her bedroom door and came up the stairs. Seeing her daughter on the floor, cradling her arm, she squatted next to her and asked if she was alright, and what happened. Iris was still trying to get a grip, but started crying. Between her tears she told about her dream, and waking up on the floor, and how her left wrist hurt.

"Iris, I like you to try to get up now, and sit on the bed. Can you do that?" Iris did, with her mother supporting her. "Does it hurt anywhere else?" "Not really, I guess my hip on my left side a bit." "OK, let me look at your wrist then", she said sitting down next to her. "Try to move it, and tell me what hurts." It was mostly moving her hand backward that was painful, but the hand seemed to be able to move normally, so it didn't immediately seem like anything was broken or torn. She also felt the wrist and checked if any places were particularly painful, but she drew the conclusion "It doesn't look like there is anything seriously wrong, and it is just sprained. Which doesn't mean it cannot be seriously painful, but I don't see a reason to rush you off to the ER right now. Let's see tomorrow morning how it is." Being nearsighted without her contact lenses, she had put her head fairly close to Iris's wrist, noticed a smell on her hand and sniffed a bit, but didn't say anything. "Let me get another Ibuprofen against the pain." When she swallowed that and drank the rest of the water from the cup, her mother continued "Now, what shall we do? I am tempted to put you into the sleeping bag. That way you are protected if you fall out again, and your wrist will be cushioned and protected against bending too much." Iris was still crying, so her mother hugged her, and said "Oh my dear, I'm sorry, I had hoped for a nicer homecoming for you, but instead you get diarrhea, Daddy is delayed, and now you're hurt too. But don't worry, we'll get through it, and have some fun along the way. I'm sure tomorrow will be better." "I'm sorry too, for waking you up in the middle of the night." Gradually Iris calmed down, and after a while her mother got up and went downstairs, saying she'd be right back.

She came back with the sleeping bag and the pump, and Iris didn't protest, but put her arms up so that her mother could pull it on over her head. Her mother had seen her in it at the Fletchers, and Iris demonstrated the features briefly, but it was still unfamiliar for her, and she put it on the wrong way around at first. Now the hood covered Iris's whole face, and she exclaimed 'Mom!' It came out muffled, but her mother quickly realized her mistake anyway, pulled it off again, and then put it on the right way. Iris only had to keep her wrists straight, so it didn't hurt much. At the end she had to bend her fingers a bit since the sleeping bag was a bit small for her, but she didn't mind. When it was closed she couldn't fully stretch her legs either, but sleeping on her side that didn't bother her either. When it was on all the way, she sat and then lay on the bed, and told her mother that she could close the zipper at her feet now, and button the flap under her chin that made sure the hood stayed on.

Then the pump was connected to the valve near her feet, at the underside of the bag. Her mother started pumping, and Iris coached her mother on how hard it should be inflated. Hard enough so

that the air cushioned and hugged her everywhere, but soft enough that she could still bend her arms and legs a bit. If it was too hard, she could only lie on her back with her arms and legs straight (for as far as she could straighten them), and she couldn't sleep that way. She even demonstrated to her mother that when it was hard enough, she couldn't bend forward far enough to reach the zipper or the valve. When she was satisfied her mother disconnected the pump and capped the valve. Iris lay on her side and snuggled into a comfortable position, with the sleeping bag giving her a feeling like she was floating on air, which was actually the case, and of being hugged and very safe and secure. This calmed her down a lot, and quickly she started drifting off. She still heard her mother mentioning that she had also seen a baby monitor in the box with her old baby gear, so she would try if she could get those to work, or otherwise at least leave both bedroom doors open. But then she drifted off into a deep and calm sleep.

## 2. Wednesday: Rise and Shine

When Iris woke again, it took her a moment to figure out where she was. In her sleeping bag, but not in a crib bed or Sabine's, with the Perspex walls. Then she realized she wasn't at the Fletchers anymore, but back home, in her own bed. With the sleeping bag it didn't really feel like her own bed, but the light coming into her room made it easy to recognize it. Her room had normal curtains, instead of the blinds in the Fletcher's bedrooms, so it was much easier to estimate the time. But what was she thinking; she didn't need to estimate the time with the alarm clock next to her bed. It was 7:46. Probably later than she had risen the last week, but at home she was used to sleeping a lot later, and her mother was unlikely to be awake yet. Especially after what happened in the night. That reminded Iris of her wrist hurting so badly, but it hadn't drawn her attention yet, so it couldn't be so bad. She did get another painkiller pill, but she assumed that would not be enough to stop really serious pain. She started moving it around a bit, somewhat hindered by the inflated arm and mitten. Most movements were quite OK, but as soon as she tried to move it backward, it gave a sharp pain. She quickly stopped, but she was reassured that it indeed didn't seem serious, as her mother had concluded in the night.

It didn't feel like she would easily fall asleep again. Even with the interruption in the night, she probably already slept for about 10 hours. Should she call for her mother to get her out? No, it would be pretty unkind to make her get up early after having woken her up in the middle of the night. Couldn't she really get out by herself? She was not in the sleeping bag this time because she 'needed' to be restrained, but just to protect her from another possible fall, so her mother probably wouldn't get mad if she released herself. She really tried to reach the zipper and the valve, but she managed no more than touch the zipper for half a second before she was forced back, and with the mittens she definitely couldn't get a grasp. Now why did she instruct her mother so truthfully about the restrictive properties of it? How about the chin strap keeping her hood firmly in place? Again, touching the button was possible, but no way she could get it through the buttonhole. The bag really did what it was supposed to. Bummer!

All that effort made her hot, and the bag of course didn't have optimal ventilation. She lay back for a bit, and let her breathing stabilize. "Is everything alright with my little girl?" Iris suddenly heard her mother ask. Startled, Iris looked at the door, but it was closed. But hadn't her mother mentioned something about a baby monitor just before she dropped off again? She looked around, for as far as her hood allowed and did indeed see some new thing standing on her nightstand behind the clock, that could very well be one. It had a little led burning green, which she hadn't seen before because she needed to twist a bit to be able to see it. That hood could be a bit troublesome. The voice had

sounded rather mechanical, so she concluded the sound came from the baby monitor. Her mother must have heard Iris struggling and panting, and wondered what was happening. "Yes Mommy, I'm fine. I didn't want to wake you, so I tried if I really couldn't get out by myself. But I guess I have to wait until you are ready to get up." Iris put just enough disappointment in her voice to tempt her mother to come and get her now. "Yes, just take it easy. I'll be up in a little while. How is your wrist doing?" "It seems OK, just hurts when I bend it backward." "Glad to hear. Now try and get a bit more rest." It seemed like her mother would like to lie in for a little longer. Iris couldn't blame her, but was a bit disappointed anyway that she needed to wait for however long her mother would take.

Knowing her mother could hear anything she did in her room felt like an invasion of privacy, so she thought she needed to make sure that it was only used when she was restricted. Of course then it was needed for her safety. But it also made her feel quite little and safe, being helpless but closely watched. Even if it was a bit warm in the bag, it was so comfortable that she didn't mind staying in bed for a while longer than that, though she was also impatient to explore what this new day was going to bring. She turned on her side, facing away from the window, because she had gotten used to a very dark bedroom, and the light tended to make her feel awake. She thought she would probably be treated like a little girl today, considering how her mother spoke to her just now, and she would be fine with that, for as long as they stayed indoors. She started wondering what her mother would make her wear, and tried to remember all the clothes she had worn at the Fletchers. There were several, like a nice vegan leather dress and the carebear onesie, that were only borrowed from Sabine's current wardrobe, so those would not be available. But there were probably at least five outfits in one of those boxes below that she already knew, and who knows what else. Plus that secret extra bag they got at the end.

She thought she heard the door from her parent's bedroom, so hopefully her mother had gotten up and would soon come to release her. Footsteps on the stairs, and her door opened. Her mother came in, still in nightwear, and squatted next to her bed. "Good morning, Iris. Did you sleep well?" "Yeah, after my fall I slept straight through to a quarter to eight. Can you get me out now?" "Not so fast. You want to be little today?" "Yes, I would like that, Mommy" "In that case I will need to get myself ready for the day first, and then make sure everything is prepared for you as well. I can't have you running all around the house in the meantime. I'm sure it will get quicker, but this first time I'm afraid everything will take a little more time. Would you like to listen to the radio while you're waiting?" "I guess so." So her mother turned on the internet radio on her alarm clock, and selected a children's station. Then she left again and went into the bathroom.

A children's station wasn't what Iris had in mind! Now it blasted the voices of some super-enthusiastic young adults and the silly and repetitive songs for toddlers. She tried to change the channel or turn it off, but with her inflated mittens she had no chance to operate it. Well, she should probably try and pick up some more songs that she could sing with Sabine. So to remember them better, she started to sing along. After a while she sort of forgot her original motivation, and started to enjoy herself, let go of any shame that might be involved, and just drifted along in the happy fantasy worlds created by the station. But when she heard her mother's footsteps on the stairs, she quickly stopped, not wanting to admit she had enjoyed herself.

"Sounded like you enjoy the station. Why did you stop?" Bummer. The baby monitor had probably betrayed her. "I was just practicing the songs to sing them with Sabine, and I didn't want you to think I enjoyed them for myself." "So you didn't?" "Hmm, maybe a little bit" Iris answered tentatively. "Anyway, it is time for you to get your lazy behind out of bed now." "Lazy?? You forced me to wait for you for a long time!" Iris started to defend herself, and then realized her mother was teasing her, and was grinning at her with a tender gaze. Her mother opened the zip at the bottom of

the sleeping bag, took a hold of her under her arms and lifted her out of bed and into a hug. While lifting she pulled a face, and said "Ouch, I guess I need to be a bit more careful with my body. You are not quite so light anymore as you used to be." She tried to pull the bag over Iris's head, but that didn't work. "Mom, you forgot to deflate it first, this way it is too tight." She let herself drop back on the bed, and explained "I don't think we can get enough air out while standing up." "I could use the foot pump to extract the air" her mother countered. "If that takes as much time as filling it, this is quicker." So her mother opened the valve, and Iris helped the flow by rolling around and by curling up. Soon it was deflated enough to be able to take it off. Her t-shirt followed, and then her right wrist was grabbed and she was led into the bathroom.

There her mother donned her apron and rubber gloves again, and removed plastic pants and diapers while Iris was standing. It was soiled again, so Iris got another Imodium tablet. Then she was put on the toilet. "Well, I can't strap you to the toilet, and I'm not going to get into the shower with you while it is running. So I guess you need to be a responsible little girl for now, use the toilet if you can, and then get yourself wet thoroughly. Call me when you are ready to be sponged." "Why would I suddenly need help with that? I have done it by myself every day for years!" "Yes, but have you also tried to wash yourself with a sprained wrist? You need to prevent aggravating it, especially in the first few days." "I guess so. Perhaps I will see how far I get with one hand, and then call you for the rest. I'll be careful. With the Fletchers we did baths the last few evenings before bed, and that was quite enjoyable too. Perhaps we could also do that sometime." "I think a bath could be fun, but not today. Let's see how things develop; perhaps tomorrow. OK, I'll be in the office, call me when you are ready."

So Iris sat down on the toilet with her diaper area not yet wiped, which felt strange. She had managed to evacuate her bowels, and it actually started to feel she was gaining more control, although the poo was not as much as normal, and still not 'formed', as the medication instructions called it. Automatically her hand got a bit of toilet paper, but she realized that it wasn't so easy to not bend her wrist backward, being left-handed. And then concluded that there was no need to wipe anyway, when the area was still dirty from the diaper, and she was going directly into the shower anyway. Getting up without wiping felt a bit naughty, but the smell was also getting to her a bit, so she quickly flushed and started showering. Trying to use the shower head with her right hand was harder, but she managed to spray the diaper area enough to get most of the junk flushed away.

She soon realized that using only one hand, and her off-hand at that, was clumsy and quite a bit harder, and she concluded it would be a lot more convenient to be washed instead. She felt some reluctance to have her mother touch her all over, but told herself not to be silly: she had already done several diaper changes, and have her lower body exposed, so what else was there to hide? So she called her mother, but when she entered couldn't suppress the reflex of shielding her private parts with her hands anyway. "Aw, look at my little girl all self-conscious! Silly bunny, ashamed of being naked in front of her own mother." Irish blushed and moved her hands to her sides. "Let me get my apron, and we'll get you all spick-and-span." While her mother was away, Iris felt a bit tense, but the warm water soon helped her relax.

When her mother returned, she was wearing the apron she also used for the diaper changes, but she also had a cord in her hand, which looked like the belt of a bathrobe. "Iris, please turn off the water now, so I can sponge you. Now, let me help you to keep your little hands out of the way." And she knotted one end of the belt around Iris's left wrist. Then she pulled it up and weaved it through the rail that you could adjust the height of the shower head with. Then Iris had to lift her right hand too, and the other end of the belt was knotted around that wrist, right next to the bracelet. Now her hands were around the height of her neck, although she could move one up and then the other

could get to around chest level. "Just hold the belt with your hands, then you won't accidentally bend your left wrist. And don't let me see you trying to undo the knots! I guess we need something a bit safer and better suited for water, but for now this will have to do."

In the last week or so, Iris had gotten so used to letting herself be restrained that she automatically cooperated, but then she started wondering how she felt about it. Obviously she wasn't panicking; perhaps knowing she could likely untie herself, like with the harness yesterday evening, made her feel like she was still somewhat in control. She had not quite expected her mother to take such quick action to restrain her, but she wasn't totally surprised either. There were definite similarities with the changing table, where she fully expected to have her hands disabled as well. She concluded that she didn't feel bad about it; perhaps just a tinge of anxiousness about what her mother would do, but on the whole it felt right, and fitting for little Iris. So she pulled a bit on the belt to feel she was really stuck, and relaxed and let her mother take over. Then she saw her mother had been watching her closely, and a small smile appeared when she saw Iris pulling and then relaxing.

"Now, let's make this quick, so you don't cool off too much." Her mother didn't bother to check which parts Iris might already have washed herself, but just took the sponge and the shower gel, and rubbed the top half clean. She stopped above the diaper area though, and rinsed her clean with the shower head. "It looks like you already removed most of the filth away from your bum, but I'd better be safe and wipe it clean, so that there will be no poo on the sponge." She put the shower head back in the holder, turned it on at about half capacity, and went back to the diaper area to get the wipes. The water flow was enough to warm Iris again: even though it was summer, you quickly cooled down when wet. She would have preferred the full flow though, but didn't manage to reach the taps with her hands. She decided against trying to untie them: her mother would probably be back very quickly, and might punish her or use something more inescapable, and probably less comfortable, next time.

And indeed she was gone for less than a minute, with rubber gloves on and the box of wipes. She turned the tap off again, and thoroughly wiped the diaper area. The wipes didn't work so well when they got too wet, and Iris heard her mother grumble a bit, but she persevered and soon collected the used wipes and turned the taps on halfway again. Then she disappeared once more, before coming back without the wipes and gloves. Water off again, and then the lower half was sponged as well. "Hold on to the rail, so I can clean the undersides of your feet as well." One by one Iris's feet were lifted up, like with a horse, and scrubbed as well. One more rinse cycle, and then it was her hair's turn. "You have such beautiful hair, let's make it all shiny again. Now keep your eyes closed!" Of course Iris knew that, but it was something you typically said to a small child, and it felt quite appropriate. So for a joke she squeezed her eyes closed quite exaggerated, and that earned her a brief laugh from her mother.

Iris didn't know why, but it was always so pleasant to have someone else do your hair. Being taken care of so lovingly, and her mother laughing at her little joke, made her feel great, and she wanted to hug her mother. But of course that didn't work with her hands still tied. She did feel that the belt seemed somewhat looser, and she might have managed to pull her hands out, but she didn't want to spoil this moment, so she kept them where they were. Her mother didn't quite understand what her daughter was doing, but she seemed happy and relaxed, so she just continued washing her hair. Once that was done, Iris was rinsed off fully one more time, and then the taps were turned off and her hands released. Her mother noticed too that the ties seemed to have loosened, and remarked "I guess such fabric is not ideal; it gets looser when wet. Let's keep our eyes open for a better solution." Iris didn't see the need for a better solution, so she decided not to mention the bath cuffs

that Nanny used in the bathtub. They were comfortable but still effective, so she had no objections to them, but for now she felt more relaxed knowing she had an emergency escape.

Since her hands were free again, she now had the chance to hug her mother, and she said "Thank you, that was wonderful." "Iris, you get me all wet!" Of course that was a bit of an exaggeration, because the apron was waterproof, but Iris let go and said sorry anyway. "It's OK, I really appreciate the gesture. And I enjoyed it as well." Then she got a big towel, wrapped it around her daughter, and started rubbing her dry. She paid extra attention to Iris's chest, examining the area around her nipples closely. "Mom!" Iris exclaimed, embarrassed. "But Iris, I thought you were so happy that your breasts are finally developing. I want to see that for myself and share in your happiness." "It just feels weird that you are looking at them and touching. They are very sensitive you know! Can't you just ask about them?" "And that wouldn't make you feel weird?" "Well yes, it's all weird! I don't know, this is all so confusing." "Oh darling, I understand. Puberty is a very confusing time, and I'm afraid it won't get any easier for a while. But we'll get through it together." Iris got a firm hug from her mother, with the towel wrapped around her, and suddenly Iris felt small again, and the confusion was gone. She let her head rest against her mother, and then realized that soft cushion she was leaning to was her mother's breast. She quickly drew back and apologized, but her mother was OK with it and explained that she was more used to things or people accidentally touching her breasts, and that she was especially used to little Iris coming into contact with it. That made it a bit weird again for Iris, imagining suckling on her mother's boobs. Baby bottles were kind of fun, but that was not something she would ever be comfortable with again.

When she was dried off, her mother wrapped a towel around her hair, and said that she was first going to get Iris diapered and dressed, and then do her hair downstairs, where they could sit and have more space. Then she took her daughter's hand and took her to the laundry area, or diaper area as she had just called it. On the table was a bundle of straps that Iris didn't recognize, but it didn't look like a harness. Her mother picked it up and showed it to her. It was one longer strap of about 3 feet (90cm), and at either side of the middle a smaller strap was attached, each probably a bit less than a foot long. All straps were about 2 inches (5cm) wide, and had Velcro at both ends. "I found this in the plastic bag Mrs. Fletcher gave us at the end. I'm not sure about its purpose, but the smaller straps would probably fit around your wrists, and if I put the large strap around the table legs, it might serve to keep your hands above your head. Have you seen it before, and know what it is for?" "No, I haven't. But if the smaller straps are for wrists, perhaps the wider strap goes around the waist to keep the hands on either side of the body. Mrs. Fletcher once mentioned that she had something to keep Sabine's hands at her sides in the car seat."

"OK, let me try that. She turned Iris away from her, wrapped the strap around her stomach, and connected the Velcro at the back. Now the other straps were indeed at the sides, and Mrs. Tomas put Iris's wrists in them. (see Figure 3) "That seems to work. How does it feel?" "I think this is what it is made for, and it is not uncomfortable. But of course I can hardly do anything this way" Iris responded. She tried to see what she still could reach, and if she could pull her hands out or reach the Velcro, but it seemed pretty secure. Her mother concluded "Hmm, that seems useful. There is not that much room though around your waist for the Velcro to connect, could you pull it loose?" Iris started pulling, but couldn't pull it apart, nor reach it with her hands. "Ouch" "Oh dear, did you feel your wrist? I'm sorry, I probably shouldn't have asked you to do that." "It's OK. I stopped before it got bad." Then Mrs. Tomas opened the Velcro in the back, and helped her daughter on the table, with her wrists still connected by the strap. Then she tried to connect it to the table, but the long strap was above the wrists now, and then it wasn't long enough.





*Figure 3 Velcro Wrist-to-waist Restraint*

“OK, I guess I need to redo that. But first let me make sure my little girl stays nice and warm.” She took the towel and wrapped it around Iris like a blanket. Then she undid the wrist straps, redid them with the large strap below the wrists, and then managed to wrap it around both legs of the table. It wasn’t exactly tight, but Iris had very little room left to move her arms. “How is that.” Iris pulled a bit, but she wasn’t going anywhere. “It’s OK, I guess. But I can hardly move my arms at all. It would be more comfortable if I could move them around a bit, and change position.” Her mother tried to redo the long strap a little looser, but when she gave a pull the Velcro came apart, so she redid it a bit tighter again. “Sorry, I think we need to come up with a better solution, but let’s do it like this for now.”

When Iris didn’t protest, she went to the business end, and turned to their diaper supply. “I guess those Tena Youth worked well with the diarrhea, so let’s do those again. They haven’t leaked, but I think we’ll use the plastic pants again to be sure. And they will probably help with the smell.” Of course wiping was not necessary, so she started with the Vaseline, and then the diaper and the pants. In the meanwhile she talked baby talk to her, kissed her stomach, and played with her toes. Iris saw her mother trying hard, but somehow it just felt too babyish or something, and she couldn’t really get into it. She tried, but her mother noticed, and asked if she didn’t like it, not quite hiding some disappointment in her voice. “I’m sorry Mom, thanks for trying, but somehow it wasn’t quite working. I don’t know, perhaps I’m not feeling so little yet, or it is too babyish even for little me.” “I guess I shouldn’t expect that we get everything right the first time. Don’t worry, we’ll figure out something else.” Then Iris’s hands were released, and she was helped off the table.

There was already a pile of clothes lying ready, and first Iris got on a bodysuit that she didn’t know yet. It was knitted material, with a turtleneck collar, and snapped between the legs. That wasn’t as obvious as it sounded, since Iris had already worn several ones that were different, like one with short legs and a zipper through the crotch, and at least one that didn’t open in the crotch and had little buttons at the back. But with the amount of diaper changes she needed at the moment, this was the easiest, so in that aspect she agreed with her mother’s choice. But not with everything “Mom, isn’t this more suitable for winter, with the thick material and the collar?” “Maybe, but the weather forecast says it will overcast today, with some rain, and temperatures only around sixty (15.5C). We need to keep your body warm to recover quicker from your UTI and diarrhea.” Iris knew her mother wouldn’t compromise on things she felt were good for Iris’s health, and now that she let her mother dress her, she would just have to get used to that, she supposed.

Next were the red corduroy overalls with the Hello Kitty applique on the bib, that she had worn once at the Fletchers. (see Figure 4 for the Hello Kitty applique) “Aren’t these cute?” her mother asked, and Iris explained that she had worn them before. “Oh good, then we know they’ll fit.” Iris stepped into the legs, and her mother pulled them up and put the straps over her shoulders. Then she pushed the bib up and snapped the black side release buckles closed. Next her mother zipped up the left side, and closed another of those buckles over the zipper. Then she took the little plastic key on

the keyring she got from Mrs. Fletcher, and locked all three buckles: they had a little keyhole in the middle, and after twisting the key 90 degrees, the buckles wouldn't open anymore. (see Figure 6) These buckles were common on the Sabine's clothes, and her mother had already seen them before on a yellow rain jacket, and had even used her car key to lock them the time they went to the doctor for her bladder infection.

While her mother locked the buckles she said "Let's make sure this little girl keeps her nice and warm clothes on." Now Iris started to feel more little: with a thick diaper on, and locked in her clothes, she started to feel how little-by-little her responsibilities were taken away, and she had nothing to worry about anymore. But her mother wasn't done yet, and immediately also put the rainbow harness on her. "I have one more thing for you. It is the wrist brace that I used some years ago when my wrist was hurting from all the work I did on the computer. I think this will help you not bend your wrist backward, and so giving the sprain time to heal. Just try it, and we'll take it off if you don't like it." She put it on Iris's left wrist, and closed the Velcro to make a close fit. It was a sort of spongy material that felt comfortable, and there probably was some metal in it, because it didn't allow her to bend her wrist. (see Figure 5) "Thanks Mom, that seems like it could help."



*Figure 4 Hello Kitty Bib*



*Figure 5 Wrist Brace*



*Figure 6 Key-locking Buckle*

"Now we go down, make your hair all nice, and put some food into that belly of yours." She flicked the reins, and Iris eagerly moved down the stairs and into the kitchen area. There she was put onto the chair that still had the anchor straps attached from yesterday, the reins were disconnected, and the anchor straps snapped in their place. Iris felt she was firmly kept in place, and she sank into the chair, preparing to really enjoy having her hair done. Her mother took a chair too and sat right behind her, unwrapped the towel, roughly rubbed her hair dry, and draped it around her shoulders. Then she got a brush and started with the blow-dryer. It was hypnotic, and Iris drifted away into a

half sleeplike state. Until her mother started to put her hair into unbraided pigtails. She *never* wore her hair like that, and almost started to protest. But she decided to let her mother have her way today, and see if she could get used to such a childish hairstyle. To finish them off, her mother clipped something on them that Iris couldn't quite see. She wanted to see how she looked, but of course the harness stopped her from getting up. "Iris, stay in your chair" her mother warned her. "But I want to see what you did to my hair." "I assume you mean 'what I did *with* your hair'. You can go look in a mirror after breakfast." Iris supposed her mother was right, and she should be grateful for all the effort she put into it, but she didn't feel like admitting that, and thought it was stupid that she couldn't have a quick look at a mirror now. So she just pouted, and tried to shift her chair so that she sat straight at the table for breakfast. "Let me help you with that" her mother said and shifted her right to the table.

For breakfast Iris chose yogurt with muesli, which hadn't been available at the Fletchers. Her mother even added a splash of concentrated fruit juice to add more flavor. First Iris got her medication, with two painkiller tablets, because of her wrist, and a glass of water. Iris had gotten quite hungry by now, and attacked her bowl vigorously. But that made her less careful, and soon she had spilled a little on her clothes. "Iris, you need to be more careful. Here, let me wipe that off before it becomes a stain. I guess we need a bib for you. For now this one from the baby box will have to do, but I'm afraid it is way too small to be very effective." She tied a baby bib around Iris neck with a picture of Holly Hobby on it, and only just managed to knot the short ties together. It only covered a small part of Iris's chest, but at least the part where she spilled was covered now. "That bib that Sabine had seemed very useful, with sleeves and all, and wipeable. Did they have something like that for you too?" "No, they only had one. First I got a sort of hard plastic bib with a gusset, but then I got some food from the tray onto my sleeves, and Nanny started putting that pink rain jacket on backwards. That worked well enough for those last few days, although it wasn't perfect." "OK, I guess we can do that for the next few meals as well, until we maybe find a real one for you." Iris nodded hesitantly. She was still uncertain if this would all work out, and if she could keep trusting her mother, and now she was already talking about getting Iris even more stuff. But she really liked eating messily, and not needing to pay constant attention to keeping her clothes clean, so a real bib might be nice, especially if it was leather-like material like Sabine's.

"You say that you spilled food on your *tray*. What do you mean by that?" Iris remembered that Nanny had moved the highchair, which she was put in at the Fletchers for the last few days, out of sight before her mother arrived to pick her up, so she didn't yet know about that. She wondered for a moment if it would be wise to tell her about that as well, but now that she had let the word 'tray' slip, she'd have to right-out lie, and that usually wasn't a good idea with her mother. So she explained about the highchair that could be adjusted to all sorts of heights, with a board for her feet, and a tray that clicked to the chair in such a way that she couldn't open it herself, and a harness that kept her up straight and against the back rest. "Hmm, that sounds very useful. Perhaps we should see if we could borrow that one as well. You're not sitting up very straight this morning, that is for sure."

Iris tried, but the anchor straps weren't quite long enough to totally sit straight, and the resulting position was a bit hard to keep, so soon her posterior moved forward again. Then her mother went behind her, placed her hands on either side of Iris's hips, and pulled them back into the back rest. Then she felt herself that the harness didn't quite allow that, and she concluded "This is not quite working. Let me try something else." She opened the anchor strap buckles, moved them near the top of the back rest, and clicked them to the harness again. Now Iris was no longer pulled down, but was actually prevented from sinking too low. And her shoulders were kept close to the chair,

preventing her from leaning forward over her bowl. She remembered from the highchair at the Fletchers that this made it harder not to spill her food, but she decided that would be her mother's fault then.

When they had eaten their fill, and her mother had cleared the table, she was released from the chair, but immediately the reins were reconnected, and Iris was directed to the bathroom upstairs. There she had to wash her hands and face from the remains of food left there, and brush her teeth. Her mother kept a close eye on her and made sure she cleaned thoroughly everywhere. This irritated Iris, who thought she was brushing well enough on her own. She wondered why this didn't just make her feel small and irresponsible, like when Nanny had done something similar once when she was there. Perhaps it was because with Nanny it was less serious, while her mother would love to do this even when she was being mature, and now grabbed her chance. Still, even apart from the brush and foam making talking impossible, she didn't know how to address this. In the end her mother was doing this for her, making sure her teeth stayed healthy. It was probably just the intensity with which she did it that made it annoying.

"Now let's go down again. There are a few things I want to talk to you about." Her mother put her back in her seat at the kitchen table, and snapped the anchor straps to her harness again. Then she sat down opposite her, and asked her straight "Iris, please explain to me why I smelled pee and other discharge on your hands last night?" Oh no, with all that happened Iris had forgotten all about noticing her mother sniffing, but her mother hadn't. She saw no way out, so she had to confess, however awkward. "I was so sensitive, and with the diaper changes and everything, which was sort of like teasing, it kept me from sleeping, and I just had to rub there. And I just got a fresh diaper, so it was still clean." "But I still smelled pee!" "I don't know, perhaps I leaked a bit before the second time." "Twice!? Well, I guess it is natural, but putting your hands in your diaper is really not OK. And you didn't even wash your hands afterwards! I thought Imogen was exaggerating a bit when she warned me about it, but it seems she was right in making sure you never had access to your diaper. I guess I will need to do the same." "I'm sorry Mommy, I won't do it again." "No, you won't."

### 3. Supplies

"OK, now that is over, let's turn to a nicer subject. Apart from the box with the baby stuff, I also saw your old stroller and playpen there. Why don't I bring those down, and we will take a look. Who knows, we might still put them to use, like your harness." "I guess. As long as we won't use the stroller outside!" Her mother didn't answer, and disappeared upstairs, leaving Iris harnessed on her chair. She took another sip of her water, and then realized that she was promised she could take a look in the mirror after breakfast, but now her mother had gone again. She reasoned that since her mother had promised it, it wouldn't be bad if she went to take a look herself, while her mother was upstairs anyway. And she should be able to hear her come and get back to her chair in time. So she reached for the buckles connecting her harness to the anchor straps, and realized they were much harder to reach now, about in the middle of her shoulder blades. Normally she would be able to reach there, but her back was held close to the backrest now, hindering her access. The same was true for the buckle holding her harness closed, and she wasn't even sure that opening that would do her much good. She decided that if she really needed, she might be able to get out, but she seriously doubted she would be able to redo the buckles so that her mother wouldn't realize she had temporarily escaped.

She actually already heard her mother at the landing, so she gave up her plan and just waited. Pulling a bit more on the harness, she enjoyed the feeling of security that was enhanced by her

discovery on the effectiveness of the current setup. She finished her glass of water, and managed to turn the chair enough to be able to see her mother when she came down. The first thing brought down was a stroller. It was still folded, so Iris couldn't make out much detail, nor whether it would be anywhere close to her fitting in it. In Sabine's stroller she had fit easily, but that was no wonder since it was for her much larger friend. It was really comfortable, and she had enjoyed being strapped in and pushed around when she was getting tired, and she also had a lot of fun when Sabine pushed it around at maximum speed. But this was a regular baby stroller, and it didn't look anywhere as big as that one.

But first things first. "Mommy, you promised me I could look in a mirror after breakfast." "Yes honey, I did. Are you telling me it is not 'after breakfast' anymore?" That wasn't fair! "But seriously, it just seemed easier to keep you in the chair until I got the stuff from the attic, and then go see the mirror and try them out. Let me bring back down the parts of the playpen, and then we go and explore everything. It won't be long now." Once more her mother went up the stairs, and returned with a stack of barred panels of around 3ft x 3ft (0.9m x 0.9m) that seemed to be connected with hinges. There was also a hexagonal mat. "OK, that should be all. Now, I guess someone is impatient to do the mirror first." Iris nodded, was released from the chair, and the reins were immediately attached again. Then they went to the mirror near the front door, and Iris could see her full ensemble. The petrol colored body matched well with the fire-engine red of her overalls, but of course she mostly focused on her hair. Her mother had made pigtails on either side of her head, and fixed them with red plastic flower barrettes. (see Figure 7)



Figure 7 Red Flower Barrettes

"Aren't those clips adorable? I found them in the baby box, and they happen to match your overalls so well!" Iris had to admit that she looked very cute, for a three-year-old. But of course that was the whole idea, and as long as no one else saw her, it felt somehow right. At the same time it convinced her that this was not a hairstyle she would ever try for instance at school. "Thanks Mommy, for making me look so nice." "You're very welcome. You're a lot of work at the moment, but that is also because we have to figure so much out. But I am enjoying myself, so I don't mind. I have worked ahead before you came home, and put only a few new things up for auction, so I don't have to do a lot of work, but I will need half an hour or so soon to check the status of the running auctions and answer questions. But first let's take a look at the stroller."

When she unfolded it, it quickly became apparent that even a four-year-old would probably be big for it. Iris tried if she could somehow fit in, but her hips were too wide to even fit through the frame. "Oh, my little girl is starting to get some hips on her" "That's just because you put me in a diaper, plastic pants, body and thick overalls!" Iris defended herself, until she realized her mother was just teasing. She wasn't really used to her mother doing that, but that might be because their conversations were often a bit strained, and their conflicts often offered little room for joking. "Anyway, it is clear that the stroller will not be useful. Oh well, if we were not going to use it outside, it wouldn't have been so useful anyway" her mother concluded.

And she continued "But what about the playpen? I think that could work." She put Iris in a chair in the living room area, and quickly put the reins through one armrest to keep her there." "Mommy, can I have some juice? I should still be drinking a lot." "Oh, good you remind me. You haven't had much today yet, so let me get you some." She came back with the little sippy cup from the baby

box, and handed it to Iris. She took a sip, and concluded she got the cranberry juice she asked for. It was a bit easier to get fluid out than with the baby bottle, but it still didn't go very fast. That gave her something to occupy her while her mother assembled the playpen. She moved a chair so that there was room next to the couch, unfolded the panels, and put them in a hexagon shape. Both ends were connected to close the shape. With an Allen key she connected the ends, and fixed the hinges between the panels. Then she put the mat in it, and connected it at every corner. She checked one last time that everything was firmly in place, and then opened the gate. She released Iris from the chair and invited her in. Then she closed the gate behind her.



*Figure 8 Iris's Baby Playpen*

Iris looked it over. It was made of metal bars and plastic connectors, less than 3 foot (90cm) high, and perhaps 4 foot (1.2m) wide from corner to corner. Standing it came to her hips, meaning she couldn't just step over, but of course it wouldn't pose a serious challenge to escape from, even if she couldn't just open the door. She sat down, and then was suddenly looking through the bars as a toddler would. That was kind of fun, and she grabbed the bars with both hands and pressed her face against them. "When are you going to let me out again?" she playfully asked in a little high voice. "Mommy is first going to put the stroller back, and then we need to do a few other things. But don't worry, I'm sure you'll spend all the time you want in it." For a little extra safety Iris's reins were woven through the bars, and then her mother disappeared upstairs with the stroller.

When she returned shortly after, she sat down on the couch next to Iris, and said "As you know, Imogen was kind enough to give us some diapering supplies to get started with, but those are quickly running out, so we need to make sure we get our own things today. So I guess we need to go to Fred Meyer<sup>1</sup> again. Iris remembered their first visit there, just after they went to the doctor, and how she had to select diapers in the aisle right between the other shoppers, and how they were visible for everybody in the shopping cart. It hadn't been only humiliating, but she was also very scared of being seen. So she was not exactly thrilled to hear they needed to go again. "But Mom, I really don't want to have everybody see I'm buying diapers. Can't we go buy them online? That special needs store in Roseburg that we went to seems to have a big website where you can buy all their stuff." "Yes, I understand that it is not easy for you. We can certainly take a look at that website, but I'm not sure if their delivery would be quick enough, so we might still need to buy a few

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<sup>1</sup> multi-department store with an incorporated pharmacy, found in some western USA states.



things first. And apart from that I don't know how it would work with the doctor's prescription. I am not going to pay for diapers if I can get them for free."

So Iris was helped out of the playpen, and together they went into the office and sat behind Mrs. Tomas's computer. The boxes with the things they borrowed from the Fletchers were still there, and Iris looked at them curiously, but of course her mother made sure she couldn't leave her chair. Searching for Special Needs Store in Roseburg they quickly found the website. In the FAQ they found an answer about the prescription and their insurance. Unluckily it said that they needed to be there physically to couple their insurance data to their account, and that the store also needed the prescription on paper to be able to process it. Iris slumped in her chair, rather disappointed. Her mother noticed, and said they would see what they could do to make it as easy for her as possible.

"But this site is very interesting, and I think we could use it for a number of other things that we could use, like a bib, some more plastic pants, and perhaps a bigger baby bottle? Here's what we can do: I made this big profit on the vase I sold just before I came to pick you up. Remember? That was the reason why I was so early. Why don't we split the profit, and we can buy fun stuff for you for that \$250?" "Really, oh that would be wonderful!" Iris jumped up to hug her mother, but the reins held her back, and she dropped back into the chair. "Be careful, honey!" Iris held out her hands because she still wanted to hug her mother, who bent over, but hugging her daughter sitting didn't really work, so they quickly let go again. Iris was determined to remember that she would give a proper hug once she was on her feet once more.

"So, let's plan the shopping trip then. I think we'd best go before lunch; then it is usually quieter in the store than in the afternoon. And we'll take some big bags with us to put the diapers in, so no one will recognize them in our cart. What else can we do? You could wear a jacket with a hood, and put the hood up in the store to hide your face, but I'm not sure if that would help or only draw extra attention to you." "I can put on my cap, that would not be very conspicuous I think, and will hide my face a bit too. Oh, I know I need the diapers, and sometimes even enjoy them, but I don't think we should let the assistant know that, so I should probably protest a bit like a proper teenager, but without making a scene." "OK, the cap seems like a good idea. And I don't think you'll need too much acting to behave unwilling in the store. You did a wonderful job with that last time too!"

"Let me see what we need. In the meantime we will keep thinking about how to prevent embarrassing you more than necessary. Obviously we need better night diapers, and if the prescription allows we might just as well get some more pull-ups too. Would you like more of the ones you already have?" "I guess I would like ones with some nice print on them this time." "OK, we'll see what is available. How about diaper cream. Do you like the Vaseline, or would you prefer that stuff Mrs. Fletcher used? I think I also saw some baby powder in the box that we could try." "I guess the Vaseline is not bad, but the cream smelled better, and was less sticky. I don't know about the powder." "OK. We'll also need wet wipes and rubber gloves. I would also like to get a diaper pail, to prevent bad smells from the discarded diapers and wipes. And some change pads; I think the tablecloth is too slippery. We'll see how it goes in the store. If it gets too uncomfortable we could probably get those online too. At least we still have the waterproof cover on your mattress, even if you haven't had an accident in quite a while." "Thanks for trying to make this work for me, Mom. I still wish we didn't have to, but it helps a lot that I feel you are on my side now and we can figure out together how we can do it best."

Then Iris continued "Shall we go upstairs now to find some suitable clothes?" But her mother answered "What is wrong with what you are wearing now? Yes, I know the overalls are childish, and you don't want to be seen in them. But if we put a jacket on top, they are just red pants." Iris felt

hesitant about the idea, but had to admit that her mother might be right; since there would be no reason to remove her jacket in the store, her secret would be safe. She actually had to smile a little about the idea of walking around dressed like a toddler and in diapers, and no one would notice. It made her think of the time she saw two classmates at the aquarium and they walked right past without recognizing her. "But I think I need to go do a dump. May I go to the toilet?" "That sounds like a very good idea. Those poopy diapers are really not my thing, and I guess not yours either. Perhaps we can now soon go back to pull-ups during the day. Let's go upstairs."

She released Iris from her chair, who immediately jumped up and grabbed her mother in a firm hug. "Thank you for being on my side, and for wanting to spend your money on fun things for me!" "That's quite alright. Now let's make sure you don't get a messy bum." They went upstairs, and Mrs. Tomas said "If you are convinced there is no poo in your diaper, I can take it off in the bathroom, and we don't have to put you on the changing table yet." Iris nodded, so her harness and overalls were taken off and the body unsnapped. The plastic pants were clean again, and the diaper indeed contained only pee. So without cleaning Iris was put on the toilet, while her mother brought the overalls and plastic pants to the changing table. Iris realized she had a rare opportunity in which she was not restrained, but she needed to empty her bowels and bladder, so she couldn't leave the toilet anyway. Her mother seemed to stay outside, giving her some privacy, which on one hand seemed a bit strange to Iris, when she was directly after going to diaper her, but nice nonetheless; it felt a bit rude and shameful to let others hear your evacuation.

"Iris, please don't flush, I want to see how the diarrhea is coming along." "I won't." She felt her stool definitely was improving, although it was still not quite solid. With the whole diarrhea, she hadn't really focused much on how much control she had gained over her bladder. She had been constantly in diapers for about a week now, and had needed to let go as soon as she felt any urge. She hadn't felt much burning for the last few days, but she was still using painkillers, and this morning even two. She feared she was starting to lose control, and decided to try and be more aware at least when she was letting go, even though she probably still needed to wet as soon as she felt any urge. Luckily the start of the next schoolyear was still far away, so she would have time to make sure she was fully back in control before that. She would miss sleeping through the night though, if she had to get up for the toilet again about twice per night, like she had needed to do before.

When she was ready, she started to wipe, and, still in thought reached for the plunger to flush. "Iris, Stop!" Apparently her mother had heard she was ready, and stepped in just in time to stop Iris. "Don't tell me I am going to need to restrain your hands on the toilet to stop you from flushing!" "I'm sorry, I was thinking about that I feel I don't have so much control over my bladder at the moment, and might need training to become fully continent once more, definitely before school starts again." "Oh. Yes, I can imagine that is a worry. But I'm sure it will be alright. When the bladder infection is all cured, we'll start working on that. Maybe I can find you a nice potty to practice on." Suddenly that idea seemed hilarious to Iris, and she started laughing uncontrollably. That made her mother join in, and it took a while before they could stop. Iris was glad she was still on the toilet, because suddenly it started clattering again. That sobered her up. "You see?"

"Yes dear, I see. Perhaps I shouldn't make you laugh anymore, especially not on the changing table." Now the thought of her peeing in the direction of her mother who had just removed her diaper was enough to set her laughing all over again. Her mother was less thrilled about it, but had to laugh along anyway. Then she said "Come on, we need the time if we want to be back for lunch. Let me see what you produced. OK, that seems to be improving. But it is not yet normal, so I think you have earned another Imodium. Here you go." Then it was off to the changing table, where Iris got her



hands restrained again in the tight straps. Her mother used a Tena Youth again, and said to her that if the diapers stayed free of excrement today they would try pull-ups tomorrow. After the plastic pants were pulled up again, and the body snapped closed, Iris was not yet helped off the table, but her mother put her in the overalls again while she was lying, like a parent would with a baby. She had also done that when she practiced changing Iris at the Fletchers, and Iris sort of liked it because she could stay passive and just let it happen to her. Only this time the back and shoulder straps were a problem, because her hands were still in the straps, and she could hardly lift her shoulders from the table. So her mother released them, and finished dressing her. Of course all three buckles were securely locked again. Only then she was allowed off the table.

Iris thought her mother had forgotten about the harness, but she took Iris's hand, got the harness with the other, let Iris retrieve her cap from her room, and took her down again. "I assume that you don't want me to use the harness in the store, so it will stay off until we are back. That means that I expect you to behave responsibly during the trip." "Yes Mom, I will. Anything not to draw extra attention to me, and make the store visit as brief as possible." Her mother nodded, realizing that good behavior was in her daughter's interest as well. When Mrs. Tomas had collected the empty bags and her purse, she held up the yellow rain jacket from Sabine for Iris. "Mom, I'd rather put on my denim jacket." "But Iris, it is raining." "I'll take an umbrella." "OK, I guess that will do." But when Iris put on her jacket and looked in the mirror, she realized again what she already noticed at the Fletchers: the tight fit of the short jacket made the bulge of the diaper at her back very obvious. Her mother asked "The last time we went to the store, you already wore the yellow jacket. Do you feel it drew much attention then?" "I guess not. At least that one is long enough to hide my behind." So she switched, and her mother locked the three buckles in the front; the same ones as were on her overalls. (see Figure 6 Key-locking Buckle)



*Figure 9 Sabine's old Yellow Rain Jacket*

Iris looked in the mirror again, and saw the diaper was well-hidden now, and because the buckles were black, the keyholes were hardly visible. Still, she didn't plan on letting anyone get so close that they could spot them. Since she wasn't going to open the jacket anyway, to keep the overalls hidden, she didn't complain about her mother locking the buckles, even though 'officially' she was not in little mode now. "Mom, I'm going to remove the pigtails now." Her mother looked a bit disappointed, but nodded. Then she put on her cap. They went through the kitchen into the garage, where Iris sat in her booster seat again, and they went on their way. Her mother remarked "We first need to go to the doctor's office to pick up the recipe, but that shouldn't take long." Iris thought for a moment if she would prefer to stay in the car when her mother went in, but decided against it: then everyone could see her sitting in the booster seat. Inside her mother went to the desk, and quickly got the prescription printout they needed for the diapers. But then her mother said to the assistant as an afterthought "Oh, my daughter fell out of her bed last night, and she hurt her wrist. I

think it is only sprained, and I didn't make an appointment, but since we are here anyway, would you happen to have anyone available who could take a quick look at it, to be sure?"

Iris felt a bit angry, because once again her mother didn't talk it over with her before deciding something about her, but this time it seemed like she only just thought of it, and she had to admit that it was probably a good idea. The assistant answered "Just a minute, let me check", and disappeared in the back. Iris looked around the reception area, and even though there were a few other patients, no one seemed to be paying attention to her. And luckily neither her mother, nor the assistant mentioned what the recipe was for. Shortly after she came back, followed by a young man in a white coat. "This is dr. Richards. He is an MD, and now in residency here to become a general practitioner. He has agreed to take a look at the wrist. Your regular doctor is fully booked for the coming hours." Iris saw her mother nodding, but also looking at her. That helped dissipating her anger, and she nodded as well. Then dr. Richards took them to an office, and invited them to sit down opposite him. After the introductions he said to Iris "Let me guess, it is your left wrist. I'll take a look at it in a moment, but first tell me what happened." That didn't take very long, and Iris also explained that it only hurt when bending her hand backwards.

Then he asked her to remove her jacket and the wrist brace, so that he could examine the damage. This was something that Iris hadn't realized, although it was so obvious now. But her jacket was locked and taking it off would show her childish overalls! Now there was no way back, but her mother quickly took the initiative, stood up, turned to her, and said "Let me help you." She managed to turn her body in such a way that she was in between Iris and the doctor, and managed to quickly unlock the buckles and open them without the doctor realizing anything. After the jacket was off she removed the brace as well, and explained "I happened to have this for RSI complaints a while back, and thought it might help not aggravating the sprain, if that is what it is." If the doctor noticed Iris's overalls, he didn't say anything, but focused on her wrist. After the examination they sat down again, and the doctor confirmed that it was very likely just a sprain., and even if there was a hair fracture, that should heal on its own as long as she was careful with it. He advised them to use the brace on and off for the coming days: the protection was useful, but she should also keep her wrist mobile. That concluded the consult, but when Iris was helped into the brace and the jacket again, he said "I like your overalls. Such designs are really becoming fashionable at the moment for teenagers and adults, with Hello Kitty, Betty Boop, and such. Add some pigtails and colorful shoes, and you are all the rage!" He pulled up his pant legs, and showed them Spongebob Squarepants socks. Then he dropped the legs again, put his finger on his mouth and winked. "Not quite accepted yet for doctors" he explained.

When they were back in the car, Iris said dreamily "What a handsome doctor." Her mother, poised to have another discussion about not having discussed the doctor visit in advance, and perhaps about Iris having to show her overalls anyway, decided to leave her to her thoughts, and silently drove to the store. When she had parked, Iris once more waited to be released from the booster seat. "Iris, are you coming? Or do you want me to help you with the seat belt? I could forbid you to open it yourself, if you'd like that." That sounded interesting to Iris, but when she thought more about it she replied "I don't think that would be a good idea. I kind of like the idea, but suppose there is anyone we know who saw I had to wait for you to release me?" "How about this then: you are not allowed to release yourself unless I give you permission. And you can ask for permission if you think there is a risk to be recognized." "OK, let's do that. But I can release myself without permission if there is anyone else in the car with us." "Yes, of course." "By the way, you didn't lock my jacket this time." "That's right, I wanted you to have the opportunity to open it and show off your fashionable overalls. Too bad you removed the pigtails" "Very funny." Iris replied, but her

mother thought she heard some doubt in her voice. Apparently the doctor's compliment had made quite an impression.

So Iris and her mother looked around, but there was no one near, so her mother released the safety belt and helped her out. She got the empty bags and put them in a shopping trolley. "Iris, of course we're not using the harness in the store, but instead I want you to always touch the shopping cart unless we are talking to someone or I ask you to get a product from the shelf. That way I can be sure you are near, and we can make this as quick as possible." Again a restriction that her mother would love to use all the time; Iris remembered that last time at the flea market, when they ran into the Fletchers, and her mother chewed her out publicly when she went to look at some clothes just a bit further away from her. Thinking of that caused Iris to feel irritated, but at the same time this sounded more like a proposal, and like with the seat belt it felt like she could suggest alterations or perhaps even refuse. And the idea of such a virtual leash, where she was restricted in a public place without anyone noticing, sounded thrilling. Her mother was looking at her questioningly, confirming that Iris had a say in this, so she nodded, but added "OK, I have mixed feelings about it, but I want to give it a try, this one time."

So she grabbed the front of the shopping cart, and helped steering it. That actually was helpful, because it had one wheel that kept spinning around, making it harder to steer the cart in a straight line. They decided to go to the pharmacy first, so after that they could decide if Iris was up to more shopping. There her mother took the initiative again, provided the prescription and insurance data, and once more an assistant took them to the diaper aisle. It was a different assistant this time. Iris had to do very little acting to show she would rather be anywhere else, and rejected the idea of needing diapers. When she was asked if she wanted prints or plain diapers, she chose prints this time, reluctantly. The assistant advised Goodnites girls size Large for pull-ups. One pack of 58 should be enough for 2 weeks, even with regular changes for the UTI. For nighttime diapers with large capacity, there was not much choice in diapers with print in her size, but they had Crinklz Original size Adult Small that should fit. Those had really high capacity, and teddy bear and stars print. (see Figure 10) They were quite expensive, but that was no worry for them. One should easily last the whole night, so a bag of 15 should do for 2 weeks. Iris quickly put both packs into the bags they brought along so they were not visible anymore to other shoppers.



*Figure 10 Crinklz Original Diaper*

There were some shoppers passing the aisle, but they didn't pay any attention to them, and Iris started to relax a little more. Her cap protected her face somewhat, and the others seemed to focus only on their own business. Then the assistant mentioned that their insurance had just made a deal with the store that they could provide 30% discount on other diapering necessities. That of course Mrs. Tomas found very useful, and she pulled out her shopping list. They decided on Burt's Bees Baby Diaper Rash Ointment, Comforts diaper wipes, and a box of disposable rubber gloves. The store had no diaper pails or underpads. But then the assistant asked Mrs. Tomas if she expected her daughter would always cooperate, and never take her diaper off. Iris's mother confessed she was not so sure about that, and the assistant said this was such a common problem with teenagers that they had started stocking locking plastic pants and back zip pajamas. Would she be interested? When it was confirmed that those would also be available with the discount, she definitely wanted

to take a look. “Mom, please don’t!” Iris said with emphasis while still keeping her voice down. Even though they might be interesting, she definitely didn’t want to buy those with other people around, and would much rather order those from the Special Needs Store website, where no one would know about it, and there likely would be more choice. But the assistant was already showing her a pair of plain clear plastic pants with a chain around the waist, not that different from what she had worn at the Fletchers. The assistant explained they were pretty basic, because usually they only needed to be used a few times before the teenagers realized they’d better cooperate, but they were only \$29, or just over \$20 with the discount. Her mother quickly decided to take them.

“Shall we also take a look at the pajama’s?” “Why not. Iris, come on, please help me keep the cart straight.” Iris got the hidden message that she was supposed to keep one hand on the cart, and she did so reluctantly, and then pulled the cart along after the pharmacy assistant. They went a long way through the store, to the clothing section, and the pharmacy assistant showed them a pair of one-piece pajamas in white and green stripes, with a zipper that ran from the neck all the way down the back and down one leg. “We have these Little Keeper Sleepers that are pretty escape-proof, with this flap over the zipper. They are close-fitting, and have a non-elastic neckline. Of course they have enough room for incontinence materials. How old are you? 11? I guess this 11/12 size should fit you.” Iris said insulted “I’m 13!”, and when the assistant wanted to hold the pajama’s up to her, she moved away, anxiously looking around. (see Figure 11) Her mother took a closer look though, and then looked at Iris. She shook her head: if she needed pajama’s she couldn’t take off, there were a lot cuter ones than these weird prison striped ones, like she had seen Sabine wear. The assistant still gave it a try “These are \$49, which would come to something close to \$35 with the discount. Of course that discount is only available now, in combination with the diaper prescription.” Mrs. Tomas didn’t seem convinced even with the discount, and said she could always use locking plastic pants during the night as well. The assistant could only confirm that.



*Figure 11 Little Keeper Sleeper*

So they went back to the pharmacy, where they got a bill for all the supplies, which they could pay at the checkout. Then they moved on, and once they found a place where they could talk freely, her mother asked Iris what she thought of their purchases. “Those night time diapers seem cute. I wonder if they are as thick as Sabine’s. And I think the diaper cream is the same as the Fletchers use. I would have preferred to pick nice plastic pants from that website; I’m sure they’ll have more choice and interesting designs. But I really didn’t like how those pajama’s looked. Sabine has much nicer ones. I wore one once with fish on them, from the movie ‘Finding Dory’; perhaps that one is in one of the boxes at home?” “Who knows.” Apparently her mother didn’t want to give anything away, and then remarked “I am glad we got the plastic pants though, with a nice discount. I have a feeling we’re going to need them soon, considering what you did last evening. Before Iris could react she changed the subject “And how are you feeling? Can we do some regular grocery shopping now, or do we need to come back for that another time?” “I guess I’m OK. The clothes don’t seem to draw attention, and the supplies are hidden in the bags, so I’m not too scared of being spotted. The jacket is rather warm though, with the lining.” Since the buckles were not locked this time, she opened the top one and lowered the zipper to just above the top of the overalls.

The rest of the shopping was uneventful, and after a while Iris got more brave, and lowered the jacket zipper even a bit lower, so that the red of the overalls bib was just visible. But still nobody paid any attention. With the bill from the pharmacy, the diapers and other supplies didn't even have to be taken out of their bags, and so they left the store without any further embarrassment. Back at the car her mother checked that no one was near or watching, and then helped Iris into the booster seat, zipped up the jacket and locked the buckles, and closed the seat belt. "What did you do that for?" Iris asked. "Little girls need to wear their clothing as intended. We still need to be careful with your health." Obviously the extra freedom she got in the store had been revoked, and she was treated fully as an irresponsible toddler again. Although she was still hot, she had gotten used to that, because Nanny had tried to stick with her mother's ideas, and had often dressed her warmer than Sabine. Iris still felt a little anxious about being spotted in the booster seat, but could relax more now that the shopping was done. She actually missed being in the car seat where the 5-point harness kept her a lot firmer in her seat than this regular seat belt. She realized that this time her mother had found the right way to talk to her, and made her feel little without annoying her. To let her know, she said in a little girl's voice "Thank you Mommy, for all those nice things you bought for me." She saw her mother looking at her in the rear view mirror and smile, but then concentrate on the road again.

Back home they unloaded everything in the garage, so no chance for others to see their purchases. After the groceries were deposited in the kitchen and the fridge, the rest needed to be brought upstairs, and Iris was hot already, so she asked "Mommy, will you take off my coat now we're inside?" She did, but immediately the harness came on again, although the reins were not connected until everything was brought up. While they were in the changing area, her mother suddenly felt between her legs for the state of her diaper. Iris was startled, and stepped backward. "Iris, let me check your diaper." "Mom, couldn't you just ask, or at least announce if you are suddenly groping me between the legs?" "Well, that was what I did the last time you were in diapers, but I guess I can't expect you to drop all of your inhibitions at once. So I'll try to remember to announce it, at least for now." "OK. But there is no poo, and I don't think much pee either; I emptied everything just before we went to the store." Now that she knew what was going on, she allowed her mother to check it for herself as well, and she concluded that a fresh diaper could wait until after the nap.

Then she connected the reins, and steered Iris downstairs. It was high time for lunch, so Iris was put on her chair and the anchor straps were attached once more. Then her mother went into the office and retrieved the pink rain jacket with the hearts. "You say you used this as a bib?" "Yes, Nanny put it on me the wrong way around, before putting me in the highchair." "OK, let's see if it works over the harness. Put your arms out." And so her mother pulled it on the same way. She couldn't close it at the back, because the anchor straps were in the way, but decided that it was no problem that the back was open. But it tended to slide a bit off Iris's shoulders. Her mother noted that there were some D-rings on either side of the zipper near the top, and Iris told her that Nanny often put a little heart-shaped padlock through those to make sure it stayed on. "That sounds like a good idea, and will also keep it in place better. Let me see what I can find." She came back with a rather large lock that looked quite different than any padlock Iris had ever seen, and tanned with age. "I once got this at a garage sale, and it looks old. But I have trouble finding out its value, so I haven't put it up for sale just yet. It is not very subtle, but it will do for now. I guess we should look around for some nice small ones." She put it through the D-rings, and it closed with a loud click, that sent a small shiver down Iris's spine. She could feel the weight of the lock. "This one is sort of impressive, but the Special Needs Store sells sets of cute heart-shaped padlocks in all sorts of colors. The Fletchers got a



set of 10 when we were there, and I like them, so perhaps we can look for them at their website.”  
“OK, we will.”

After lunch Iris was relieved of bib and anchor straps, and taken to bed for her nap, after she brushed her teeth under supervision. Her mother remarked “I think I would prefer not to use the sleeping bag for the nap. It takes a fair amount of time to inflate and deflate, so I would prefer to just put you in a nice blanket sleeper. But I don’t see at the moment how I can protect you from falling out of bed again, or go play with your dolls when you should be sleeping. I don’t really want to strap you down.” “I wouldn’t want that either. A onesie I can’t take off is fine, and the crib was sort of fun too, but I want be able to move around in my bed.” “OK, we’ll do the sleeping bag for now, and put yet another thing on the list to find a solution for. Daddy might also come up with some ideas, or build something for you.” So Iris was undressed, the wrist brace was removed, and she was put in a thinner body and her sleeping bag. “I hope I can sleep; it is so light in here. The Fletchers had blinds that made the room all dark even in the afternoon.” “I think I can improvise something. Just wait here.” That joke was already getting a bit stale, but Iris didn’t mind, because it reminded her she was secured. Her mother came back with an extra curtain that she draped over the rail from which the normal ones were hanging. It didn’t cover everything, but on the whole the room had gotten noticeably darker. “Thanks Mommy.” “Sleep well, my kitten. I’ll keep watch with the monitor, so let me know if anything is wrong.” “Oh, Mommy, may I have my pacifier?” She referred to the pacifier that she got from the Fletchers as a farewell present, which had her name on it. (See Figure 12) Her mother put it in her mouth, since she could not do such things with the inflated mittens. Iris lay awake for a little while, thinking about all that happened today, and all the plans her mother seemed to have to keep her safe and under control. Then she thought of that nice doctor and his socks, and had to smile. He liked the way she dressed! Fantasizing that he might be there again when she visited next, she slipped straight into a lovely dream, in which he took great care of her.



Figure 12 Iris's Personalized Pacifier

#### 4. Even More Supplies

When Iris woke again, she knew her mother would be listening to the baby monitor, and she assumed she could ask to be let out. “Mommy, I’m awake. Will you come and get me?” “Just a moment, I’ll be right there.” And indeed it wasn’t long before her mother appeared, and asked “Did my little girl sleep well? Are you sure you can’t sleep anymore?” “Yes Mommy, fully rested to play all afternoon. But can I go potty now?” “OK, let’s get you going.” Both tried to get her out of the sleeping bag quickly, but getting enough air out always took some time. When it was finally pulled over her head, they rushed to the bathroom. “No poop?” “No” Then her mother knew it was safe to open the diaper without needing gloves, so she unsnapped the body, pulled the plastic pants down, and opened the diaper tapes. Iris immediately sat down and let go. She had also managed to hold up her pee, so it evacuated from both sides. First there was some diarrhea, but then there was also a little turd.

In the meantime her mother had put on apron and gloves, and cleaned her afterward. She got one more Imodium, and but both hoped that would be the last one. But it was the third of the day, so she would still be allowed one more if needed. Then Iris was taken to the changing table, secured, wiped once more, and creamed. “Mommy, can I have one of those new diapers with the teddy bears

on it?" "You mean the Crinklz? But those are for the night." "I know, but at night I'm not really noticing them. And we can try out better if they don't leak during the day." "OK then, but only this once! There you go. Now let's give our new plastic panties a go as well. Hmm, look at this toy padlock that came with it. I might even be able to force that open with my hands. We'll need to replace that, but for now it will do." Click. It might not be very secure, but for Iris it still added a bit to her feeling little and untrusted. She giggled a bit, and wanted to feel the panties with her hands, but of course those were kept safely out of the way. Then her mother released her from the table, and took the body off that she wore for the nap. Now Iris had the opportunity to feel the plastic panties, and she noticed they were pretty thin, but the chain around her waist kept them firmly in place anyway. "Uh, hands away young lady! You know you are not supposed to touch such things!" "Sorry, I just wanted to feel the new panties." And to divert the attention away from her naughty action, she added "I think that the ones we borrowed from Nanny are better." "Yes, I think so too. We'll look for some better ones at the website of the store this afternoon, since we'll need to return those." Then she put her back in the warm body and the red corduroy overalls. Three more clicks from the overalls buckles closing, and of course all were locked again as well. Then the harness followed, and Iris was directed downstairs, while her mother kept a firm grip on the reins.

Iris noticed the diaper was almost as thick as those Sabine used, but those were big on her, while these seemed to fit better. The plastic pants were tight around her waist because of the chain but not too uncomfortable. They were also a bit audible when she moved. "Mommy, don't I get the wrist brace?" "No my pet, the doctor said you should not wear it all the time, and I think you will not really need it for now. I first want to talk a bit, and then visit the Special Needs website with you. So you don't really need your hands and wrists at the moment. Let's go to the couch first." Mrs. Tomas sat down first, and then used the reins to pull Iris onto her lap. She put her arms around her daughter in a hug that included the arms, which made Iris feel loved but also held quite secure. She snuggled a bit into her mother and put her head on her shoulder, and gave a little kiss in her neck.

"Now, I think we need to look a bit ahead into the near future. I really enjoyed our close connection today, and I get the impression you have mostly enjoyed it as well. But I don't want to go and spend a lot of money on your new interest, only to find out in a few days that you no longer enjoy it, or that it doesn't work that well between us, and you prefer only to be little when you are at the Fletchers. On the other hand I also don't want to spend all of my days taking care of a big naughty toddler that I constantly have to watch. I know this is all new to both of us, and neither can look into the future, but we'll just see how we feel now and do the best we can."

This was definitely a conversation for mature Iris, so she sat up straight and thought for a moment before responding. "Yes, that is hard. I'm sure I don't want to be little all the time either, of course especially not at school and when we have visitors. It was a bit different at the Fletchers, because Nanny had a lot of experience, so it was sort of natural, but mostly because I could be together with Sabine, and we could be little together. When we were both restrained, we had each other for entertainment. I don't know how that will work when I am the only little one. But it makes me feel so relaxed and happy that I definitely don't want to give it up. Today sometimes you said or did things that reminded me of what annoyed me in the past, and then I wonder if this can work, but other times, like when you held me just now, it just feels great. And I don't know how this is going to work out with Daddy."

"Yes, neither of us knows how it is going to work out, but if you say you are definitely not wanting to give it up, I guess that is as good as I can expect at the moment. Still we might not go overboard yet with expensive things, so let's just see what the most important things are, what we can postpone, and what we might be able to make ourselves." Iris nodded; on the one hand she wanted a lot of

interesting things, but many things could also be used against her, so it might be safer to go slow, until she was more sure both her parents respected her limits all the time, and didn't force things. But her mother was not done yet "We also need to work out when you will be little and when mature. Of course we can't just switch anytime you feel like; I need to be able to plan ahead for my auctions, and apart from that I don't think you should be able to step out anytime you don't want to play anymore, like when you are punished or bored." "I guess I understand. As long as I have a way out, I might not fully surrender and go little all the way. But of course if it gets too much for me, I always have 'Jabberwocky'." "Yes, of course. If our play ever goes too far for you, you can always pull the emergency break."

Her mother continued "So, when and how are we going to decide when you are little? I guess if we have appointments with other people, those would be good days for you to be mature. But if I only have a customer that comes around to pick up something, we can just make sure you stay out of sight. And if I need to go out for some quick shopping, you could be little during the day, with a little break when I need you to be mature. And I am even willing to do a trial period where I leave you home alone for a short while. Of course I need you to be fully responsible then, even if we would decide not to change your clothes." "You will? I promise I will be responsible!" "Well, since Mrs. Fletcher left you alone with Sabine, and you did well, I assume you can take care of yourself for a while too. But this is only a trial, so we'll see how you are doing. If it is not working, it will be back to either coming along every time, or it will be a *babysitter* again. Then I guess I should tell her, or him, to keep a firm grip on your reins." Her mother gave a quick pull on the reins to illustrate her point, and Iris started indignantly "You can't do that!" until she saw her mother could hardly hold her laughter in. "Ha ha, very funny." "Yes it was. You should have seen your face! Priceless."

Iris had been worried that being treated as a toddler would only reinforce her mother's protective tendencies, but it seemed like she had underestimated her, and she also seemed to be serious in building more trust between her and mature Iris. Actually she had been lucky with the babysitting anyway; when her mother went away during the day, she would most often go to the neighbor: a woman with 2 younger boys, who was not very strict, and allowed Iris things like being on her phone or watch TV, as long as she was near enough to keep an eye on. And Iris often didn't mind playing with the boys either. In the evenings, when her parents wanted to go out together or visit relatives or friends that were boring, Miranda usually came over. She was a cool 16 year old girl living nearby, and felt a bit like an older sister. She was responsible, and stuck to Mrs. Tomas rules, but only when she had to, and apart from that she was fun and Iris could really talk to her in a way she couldn't with her mother. Iris definitely didn't want to share her secret with anyone else, but if she had to pick someone, it would probably be Miranda. Still, nothing beat being allowed to stay home alone.

"No, but seriously Mom, I am really happy that you want to give it a try. I was sort of worried that with the little stuff we wouldn't get around to practicing what we talked about with Mrs. Fletcher, about you listening to my ideas and fears, and trying to find compromises." "Oh no, I haven't forgotten about that, and the last week has given me a lot of opportunity to realize you are not a little girl anymore – well, most of the time anyway – and I should adapt to that. It is not going to be easy to allow you the freedom to make your own mistakes, but we'll take it slow, and I'll just have to get used to it, and hope those mistakes won't turn out to be too serious. But don't forget, you also need to take my opinion and fears seriously, and in the end I make the final decision." "Yes, I know. I'm sure that I can live with that, after you have listened to my possible objections, and we tried to find a way to make it work for both of us. But I guess you want to know now when I would want to be little and when not. I was sort of thinking that I wanted to be mature tomorrow, so we can practice our resolutions. And since Anna and Mindy are back home now too, I think we might want



to meet up. And when Daddy comes home, I'd like to be mature too." "Yes, I also think it would be better to introduce Daddy at our ease, instead of springing little Iris on him. Although I think he would also welcome her. So I will plan some things for tomorrow afternoon – you'll probably be gone then, but if not we can try you being home alone. But then you can't have Anna and Mindy here as well; let's first try you being alone." "Yes, OK." That was an easy promise, since she was not planning on inviting her friends over anyway, with the playpen in the living room, the changing table, and such things that they might notice.

They talked on for a bit more, but then her mother decided it was high time that they sat down behind her computer and figured out what to buy from the website. But first she put Iris' hair in the pigtails again, with the flower barrettes (see Figure 7 Red Flower Barrettes). Then she took her to the office and installed her in the same chair she sat in yesterday, of course with the reins around the chair again. While her mother got them something to drink, Iris was curious what her mother had been looking at, so she tried to reach the mouse or keyboard to deactivate the screensaver, but she couldn't reach them, and she didn't think she had enough time to undo the harness and do it up again before her mother came back. So she just sat back, and soon her mother gave her the sippy cup, and then she took place behind the computer. She explained "Let me first show you what I was thinking of with the car and the car seat. This is sun film for car windows, which blocks a lot of the harmful UV radiation, and the car doesn't warm up as much either. But the reason I am thinking about it, is that it also makes the windows reflective, so people can't look into the car. To make sure the driver's view is not hampered, the windshield and front windows should not be too dark, but the side windows at the back can be pretty dark. That way no one will see the car seat, or you inside it. It is not cheap, but with the lower temperature, the better UV protection for us and the interior, and improved safety for you, I'm willing to pay for it. What do you think?"

"Well, it would also be a great improvement with the booster seat, but of course you want to know if I would be willing to ride in Sabine's car seat if we get the sun film. I guess I already said that I would if no one would see me. But then I'll also be locked in it when I am not little? The chest clip might be left unlocked, but the buckle I just can't reach. What if we are parked in a place where people would see you need to release me? If you open the door the sun film is not going to protect me anymore." "We could ask Imogen if that thing over the buckle can easily be removed, so we can only put it on when we want it." "We can ask, but I don't think it can, because why would she have bought new ones with Sabine's new seat if the old ones could easily be transferred?" "OK, let's find that out first. And I might also be able to release the buckle from inside the car, so that no one would see." "Oh, if that works it would not be so bad. And the car seat is very comfortable. OK, I agree if you can do that." "Great, we'll inquire with Imogen then. By the way, if anyone would see the car seat anyway, we can always say it is because we want to be able to take Sabine along with us on a trip or such." "Oh yes, that is a good idea. And perhaps we can actually even do that!" "We'll see. I'm not sure if I can provide the care she needs, but Imogen might be glad to have a day off every now and then, so perhaps we could make that work."

Then her mother switched to the website of the special needs store, and explained she already looked around a bit and preselected some things, while Iris taking her nap. "I have already selected a diaper pail – I expect you'll no longer produce poopy diapers by the time it gets here, so I chose a simple one. I found some supplies with which we can make our own straps, like for the changing table. I already added some cotton webbing straps, Velcro that is not prickly, a selection of D-rings, and some rivets. For the buckles I was not sure. They have the key-locking ones like on your overalls, but they also have 2 variants of magnetic locking buckles. Do you have any experience with the different types?" (See Figure 6 Key-locking Buckle, Figure 13 Magnetic Side-release Buckle, and

Figure 14 Magnetic Solid Buckle) “With the key-locking buckles you also need the key to lock them, while the magnetic buckles lock automatically. And because they don’t have a keyhole, people won’t see it is locking, which could be nice on clothes. That solid buckle looks like the one that is on the wrist leash the store gave me.” (see Figure 15) “Oh, that is interesting. Let me take a look.” Mrs. Tomas retrieved the wrist leash from the stack of things they got from the Fletchers, and looked at it. “Now how does this work? Give me your wrist, so I can try it.” Iris had only seen it once, and then Mark from the Special Needs store had surprised her, and it was on before she realized what was happening, so they had to figure it out together. But it was not super complicated: the strap went around the wrist, through the metal opening, folded back so that the Velcro attached, and finally the buckle closed over the strap so it couldn’t be opened anymore. They noticed that once they put both parts of the buckle near to each other, they sort of snapped together automatically, and you couldn’t get them open again unless you held the magnet that was integrated in the parent wrist band directly over the buckle. Iris concluded “It doesn’t even look like a buckle, so it might draw least attention. The side-release buckles make a nice noise when you close them though. And of course with the key-locking buckles you have the option not to lock it.” “OK, I guess we’ll take several of each type then; they are not that expensive, and they might prove useful for all sorts of things.”



Figure 13 Magnetic Side-release Buckle



Figure 14 Magnetic Solid Buckle



Figure 15 Iris's Wrist Leash

Instead of releasing Iris from the wrist leash, she put the parent band around the belt of her pants. That didn’t restrict Iris, but while she could have opened the buckles of the reins keeping her harness to the chair, now she was actually locked to her mother, who continued “Now a number of the other things come in different colors and designs. Would you like to pick whichever you like best for each article separately, or would you like a theme, so that it will look more like a matching set?” “Oh, I don’t know. A set might be nice, but perhaps I’d like some variation as well – it might get boring after a while?” “What about picking the first item in a theme, and of things we need more than one of, like plastic pants, the others can be different? Like I said we won’t buy too much at once though, and perhaps I can sometimes find stuff at garage sales that we can use, too. And those will very likely not match the theme anyway.” Iris thought for a moment, and then replied “OK, then I choose yellow as the color, and birds or other animals as the theme.” Soon they had selected an underpad for the changing table with teddy bears, a baby bottle with butterflies and a pair of plastic pants with bath ducks. “We need one more pair of locking diaper pants as well; you have shown I can’t trust you not to put your hands in your diaper.” Iris bowed her head – there was no use denying. But it also made her feel small, so she answered “Yes, Mommy. Can I have that pink one then with the blue elephants, and that belt around the waist and legs?” Most plastic pants had a chain in the same tunnel as the elastic around the waist, but this one had belt loops, and a belt with a number of holes that pulled over a post, which could take a padlock. Similar straps went around the legs. (see Figure 16 for how the belts look) “Well, those are not cheap, but they look sturdy and safe, so alright.”

Iris realized “Oh, then we need those cute heart-shaped locks as well. They should have a set of 10 in different colors.” They found those as well. “Hmm, what is next. Oh, I forgot all about your pacifier when I came to get you, but you didn’t have it in your mouth. Did you spit it out?” “No, it must have fallen out again while I slept. So perhaps we should get a strap like I wore at the Fletchers.” They found the same one, and selected it because it had worked well. In soft pink, because that matched with the sleeping bag and the pacifier. (see Figure 17) Her mother had seen the strap when she came to collect Iris, but only now saw that it could also be locked, and she thought that might come in handy.



*Figure 16 Locking Diaper Pants*



*Figure 17 Locking Pacifier Strap*

“Mommy, I need to pee.” “OK, go ahead.” “But Mommy, I want to work on my control, and not go in the diaper all the time.” “I understand, and when you will wear pull-ups, we can put you on the toilet easier, but now it is a lot of work, and we might need to do a new diaper every time, because the tapes often don’t stick well again after you have opened them. You wanted the nice new diaper, and I am not going to throw it away unused. Besides, you can also train your control by only letting go deliberately into the diaper instead of into the toilet, can’t you?” “I guess so.” So Iris relaxed and let go. It was still very easy, and she wondered that if she could have kept it in long enough anyway if they would have tried for the toilet, because the locking overalls, body, locking panties and taped diaper all needed to be removed first.

When her mother saw she had finished, she continued “We need a good bib for you as well. You said you liked the one Sabine had?” Iris agreed, and was excited that she might at last get a vegan leather jacket, even though of course this type was not quite the model she had in mind before. They couldn’t find that model in the store though, but found a green one with a monkey on it, that had a magnetic locking buckle in the neck, and was made of a shiny material that looked like PVC, but seemed to be called PUL. (see Figure 18)

“What next? Oh yes, something for the shower. That bathrobe belt didn’t work well to secure your hands, and I am not sure that those locking buckles are waterproof, if I make something myself.”

“Nanny used some sort of Velcro cuffs that had suction cups attached to them in the bath. That way our hands were held at the sides of the bathtub.” They soon found those on the website, and there were 2 models; the one that the Fletchers had, and one with a somewhat longer strap between cuff and suction cup. They decided for that one, because it should work better in the shower: otherwise Iris would have to stay right against the wall. (see Figure 19) “I guess the only thing I still have on my list is an alternative to your sleeping bag. Do you have anything else you think we need?” “Well, I’m not sure what we got from Nanny, like the harness I used there? Or were you planning to keep using this one?” “I don’t think I have seen any harness, but I believe there are no locking restraints there at all, only the wrist-to-waist strap that we use on the changing table. Perhaps you could ask about those items when you call them.” “OK, I’ll ask. So we want to know about the car seat, the harness and other restraints, and perhaps the highchair as well?” “If you want that, it is fine with me. But remember that if you don’t want visitors to see it, you’ll have to make sure that we move it out of sight.” “Yes, of course. But the combination of this harness with the normal chair just isn’t that comfortable.”



Figure 18 Sleeved Bib

“OK, then about the sleeping arrangement. Look what I found here: it is a sort of mosquito tent that goes on top of your bed and is closed all around. It has a zippered door on one side, so it is a bit like Sabine’s playpen tent. If we remove the zipper pulls on the inside, or use a little padlock to lock the two pulls together, you wouldn’t be able to get out. And of course it will prevent you from falling out of your bed. If we don’t use it, we can collapse it to a small, flat package.” (See Figure 20) “That looks really nice, and quite cheap too. And no more mosquito bites either. Yes, let’s do that.”

“And for your afternoon naps I was thinking about how we could make it darker for you. Of course we could make the whole room darker, but we could also use something like a blindfold to make it all dark for you and remove any distractions. I found this hood that covers the whole head, with holes for the nose to breathe through, and optionally a slit for a pacifier. But that seems a bit much, and you might not be able to remove the pacifier to call for help.” “Yes, that doesn’t look like fun.” “But then I found they also sell a few onesies where the hood comes down over the eyes, like an incorporated blindfold. How would you feel about that?” “Well, it makes me think of the new rain suit Sabine chose. It’s jacket has a hood that comes down over the eyes as well, but in that case with clear plastic. At first I found the suit quite scary, but then Sabine offered that I could wear it, and I couldn’t really say no. And once I was in the rain I had the time of my life in it. It felt like an armor that would protect me not only from the rain, but from everything bad in the outside world. I think that a onesie with a hood that covers my eyes might also make me feel like I’m in a world of my own and the outside doesn’t matter.” “With the clothes from Sabine there wasn’t really a onesie for summer, so why don’t we chose one of thinner material, that you can use with a thin duvet, or nothing if it is really hot? It should still have long legs and arms, but no feet or mittens, unless you really want those.” So they selected a green one with butterflies.

When they checked their shopping cart, the total still came up to \$175, which was more than Mrs. Tomas had planned to spend, but they did get a lot of nice things, and when she created the account she got a coupon that resulted in a \$10 discount. They went over the list one more time, but felt no need to change anything, nor anything missing they couldn't do without, so they completed the order. That sent a small shiver down Iris's spine: they got a lot of things to restrict her, which was exciting but also scary. The estimated delivery was on Friday, so in 2 more days. Of course Iris wanted everything right now, but realistically they had expected it to take longer. She finished her drink, and her mother told her she now needed to spend some time on her auctions. She freed the reins and asked Iris to get up and go with her to the living room. Iris put her hands on the arms rests to push herself out of the chair, but that was a mistake. "Ouch!" bending her left wrist backward and pushing on it gave her a sharp stinging pain, and she got tears in her eyes. Wanting comfort from her mother, she decided to start crying. "Oh dearie, what is the matter?" Iris held her left hand up and said "Owie". "Did you hurt your wrist when you stood up?" Iris nodded through her tears. Her mother picked her up and Iris put her legs around her waist. That way she was carried to the couch, where her mother sat down with her on her lap. She removed the wrist leash and laid it aside, gave a kiss on the wrist, and told her little child that she would get the brace again to protect her wrist. Iris really enjoyed being held and comforted like this, and her mother rocked her a bit, and whispered sweet nothings.



Figure 19 Longer Bath Cuffs



Figure 20 Mosquito Tent

## 5. Secured

After a few minutes Iris stopped crying; she hardly felt her wrist anymore, and it was hard to keep feeling sad with such loving treatment. "Come sit here in the playpen, and I'll get the brace and a few other things." She wrapped the reins of the harness around one of the bars, and went upstairs. After so much love and care Iris wanted to be a good girl, so she quietly waited in the pen for her mother to return. When she did she had several things in her hands, and put them on the couch next to the playpen. First she got the brace on again. "Now, like I said I need to do some work, so I'll leave you in the playpen, and let you call Nanny and Sabine, OK?" "Yes Mommy, I'd like that." "To keep you safe and well-behaved, you're going to wear these mittens." She showed Iris the pink rain mittens that she had worn in combination with the pink hearts rain suit, and when cleaning. She didn't mind them, so she obediently stuck out her hands, and her mother buttoned the straps around her wrists so that she couldn't take them off by herself anymore. "Now of course you



shouldn't leave the playpen, so I'll wrap both bands of the wrist leash around your ankles like this." She put the child band around one ankle and closed the magnetic buckle. Then she put the leash through some of the bars of the playpen, before wrapping the parent band around the other ankle. Iris let it happen and was confident that even with the mittens on she would still be able to open it if she wanted out. But then her mother took a tie wrap and put it around the band and the connection to the strap, in such a way that even if the strap was opened, the ankle was still connected to the leash. This was getting more serious, and Iris started to doubt if she could get out by herself anymore.

Next her mother took a second tie wrap and used it to secure the playpen gate as well. "So, that should keep you safe. Now I will be at my computer in the office, and I will close the door to give you some privacy. But I need to make sure that I will still hear you if you need me, so I will go into the office, close the door, and then you call me loudly." So she went into the office and closed the door. But Iris felt a little naughty after her mother had secured her like that, and didn't call. After a few moments she heard her mother call "Iris, have you called yet?" That made her giggle, but she pressed her lips together and kept quiet. Then her mother came out again, and asked if she called. Iris kept pressing her lips together and shook her head. "Iris, I'm doing this to give you some privacy when you talk to Nanny, but if you don't want to cooperate, I'll need to leave the door open." Now mature Iris intervened, and said "I'm sorry, I was just a bit naughty. I'll call now when you want me to." So her mother went into the office again, and Iris loudly called "Mommy", without actually shouting. The door opened again, her mother came back to her, and said "OK, I can definitely hear that." Then she took Iris's phone that she brought down with her as well, selected the phone number of the Fletchers and dialed it. Then she gave the phone to Iris, who first took it with her left hand, but that was a bit inconvenient with the brace, so she took it over in her right. It was a bit clumsy with the mittens, but not too challenging. Her mother disappeared again into the office and closed the door.

Iris wanted to explore how well she was confined to the playpen, but had no opportunity since the phone was already ringing, so she had to wait until after the call. "Hello, this is Imogen Fletcher" "Hi Nanny, it is me!" Mrs. Fletcher heard Iris was in little mode, and so played along "Me? I'm not sure I know a 'Me'" "Nooo, it is I" "Now I am confused, are you 'Me I' or 'I Me'?" "Nanny, it is Iris!" "Oh, then why didn't you say so?? Hello Iris, how are you doing?" "I'm doing fine, and we are having fun. But I have an owie on my wrist because I fell out of the bed because I dreamed and then I wanted to get off the changing table and then I was rolling side to side and then I got loose and fell off but it wasn't the changing table it was my bed and then I landed on my wrist and now it hurts." Iris rattled off in one breath. Nanny had a bit of trouble following all that, but she got the important parts, so she replied "Oh, I'm very sorry to hear that. Did the doctor take a look?" "Yes, there was this very cute young doctor who looked at it, but it wasn't bad, and now I just have to be careful. And he liked my red overalls with the Hello Kitty!" That was a lot of information for Mrs. Fletcher, but she concluded that Iris was probably doing well with her mother, or she would not be in little mode. And the wrist was probably just sprained. That Iris wore the locking and quite childish overalls to the doctor was a surprise for her though "Oh, you didn't mind that others saw you in those nice overalls then?" "Well, Mommy wanted me to wear them and with a jacket on top they were just like red pants but then we went to the doctor to get the recipe for the new diapers and then my mother asked if they could look at my owie and then this cute doctor needed me to take off my yellow rain jacket. But he was the only one who saw them, and that was alright I guess."

"Wow, you have had a busy day. Did you find nice new diapers for the night?" "Yes, we got cute ones with teddy bears on them, and pull-ups with cute violet print too. And the nice diaper cream

you use too. But then Mommy also bought diaper pants with a lock so that I would not put my hands in my diaper again. They are not very good, but we just got better ones from the Special Needs Store website, and a whole lot of other stuff too.” “You already ordered things from there as well? You certainly have been busy! And you trust your mother to respect your limits and the safeword?” “Yes, Mommy has been very nice, and kept me very safe, too. And she listens and find ways that are OK for me too.” This was getting a bit more serious, and little Iris had trouble expressing what she wanted Nanny to know, so she continued “Actually she seems to be trying really hard to make it work, although there are still a few things that remind me of how protective she can be, but with little Iris that is not much of a problem. And tomorrow I’ll be a big girl again, and Mom has said she will even allow me to be alone in the house if she has to go out for a while. So it goes really well, and I am not scared anymore when she secures me. Like now I am in my old baby playpen, with my legs connected to the bars and a tie wrap on the gate, so I probably can’t get out, also because I wear the rain mittens. She just put me in here so that she can do some work with her auctions, and she closed the door so that I can talk freely. Oh, and I sleep in the sleeping bag now, after I fell out of my bed, but we ordered a mosquito tent that should also keep me safe in my bed.”

“I’m very glad to hear that things are going so well, but be careful and don’t go too fast. I deliberately didn’t give any of the locking restraints yet, like the harness and the patient mittens, in case things were not going so well.” “Well, these rain mittens are a bit limiting too, and we found my old baby harness that I still fit into. But it is not locking, so I can just unclip the reins or anchor straps. That was really nice at first, so I could be restrained and still feel like I hadn’t totally lost control, but now I guess your harness would be fine too. Actually there are a few more things we might be interested in, if you want to let us borrow them. Mom figured out that if we put sun film on the car windows, people can’t look into the car anymore. Then I can be in Sabine’s old car seat without worrying that I will be recognized. We are wondering about one thing though: if Mom has to open the harness from standing outside my door, then I might be spotted. So we were wondering if it would be possible for her to open the harness from the inside, in case there are people around.” “Hmm, we might need to try that out in your car; I guess it depends on how roomy it is. But the buckle guard has a small hole in it too and you could stick something like a pen or a car key in that to open the buckle. If it proves to be hard for your mother to reach the buckle, she might even give you a pen or something to open it yourself. Of course you would need to give it back immediately after. So I think it is likely that you could make that work.”

“When we talked about this, Mom had the idea that if someone did see the car seat in the car, we could always say that it is there because we are planning a trip with Sabine. And then I thought that that could actually be nice, that Sabine comes with us on a trip, and you can have a longer period to yourself. But Mom isn’t sure that we can handle Sabine and give her the care and security she needs, so I guess she’ll need to talk that over with you, if you like the idea.” “Oh, I think that would be wonderful, especially for Sabine to be around other people too. But I agree that I will have to talk to your mother about that. Let her call me when you have more concrete plans.” “I will. The other thing we are thinking about is the highchair. Now Mommy uses anchor straps with the harness to keep me in my chair during meals, but that is not so comfortable, and I could probably get out. But of course the highchair would draw immediate attention from visitors, so we would need to hide it every time. But it makes me feel really little, and I can be naughty without worrying that the chair might topple or that I break things, so I think I would like it anyway.” “Well, you can certainly borrow it if you want to, but like I said in the beginning, don’t go too fast. It has not yet been 24 hours that you are home, so can you be sure that your mother will keep this up and not push your boundaries? And what about your father?”

"Oh, Daddy got delayed; because of a storm the helicopter couldn't fly. We are not sure yet if he will be here tomorrow, or the day after. I guess you are right that I don't know for sure how he will react. But you can always ask the chair back if I feel it is used against my will, can't you?" "Yes, I guess so. Of course that might not stop them from getting another one for you if they really wanted. But that sounds a bit farfetched, and not like I know your mother. So I guess if you want, you can come and get it." "Oh wonderful. And we already ordered a bib with sleeves for me too, with a cute monkey on it. But how are you doing? My diarrhea seems almost over, after a number of pills of that Immo-something that Mom gave me. Are you out of diapers again?" "Yes, since this morning I trust I can make it to the toilet again, although it is not quite normal yet. But Sabine is not herself at the moment. She already had a tantrum this morning, and it seems she is a bit depressed. I guess she is really missing you. But I am sure that is just temporary, and we'll soon be back to our normal routine." "Oh, I'm sorry. Can I speak to her for a while? Perhaps I can cheer her up." "OK, I'll ask her." After a few moments it was Nanny's voice again "She doesn't want to speak to you at the moment. I'm so sorry, but please don't take it personal. She just can't handle the negative feelings of you not being here anymore, and even when she might understand why, you caused her to feel bad, and that has to come out one way or another. Tomorrow she might feel totally different again." "Oh, that makes me sad. I really don't want her to be angry with me, but if she won't speak to me there is not much I can do now, I guess. Please tell her I love her and hope to see her again very soon."

"I will, and please don't worry about it, it is just her brain injury that makes it hard at the moment, but that will soon pass. Earlier today she did want to play outside in the rain, with her giraffe suit, and she had fun, even though I noticed she missed you there too. And I do too; it was strange that I didn't have to get you from the storage room this morning." "Oh, yes, I understand. My day has been so busy that I hardly had time to miss you both, but now I do. I hope we can soon come over for the car seat and the highchair, and then we'll be together again for a while." "That would be really nice. Iris, would you mind if I sometimes call your mother as well? Exchange some ideas on how to keep it fun with little Iris, or compromise with big Iris? Or share experiences about some of the Special Needs products?" "Yeah, I guess so. You've already been very helpful in how we communicate now, and of course I'm so very grateful about all the stuff we can borrow. Mom suggested that she keeps the boxes away from me, so I'll be surprised about what she gets me to wear, and that seemed like a fun idea, although of course I'm quite curious. I know I saw a number of clothes I didn't recognize when we packed the boxes." "Yes, there is more than you have worn yet, but be aware that some things might not fit you anymore; even those overalls you wear now are already a bit small on you. And some things are more suitable for winter." "Well, Mom already made me wear a petrol-colored body under the overalls that is quite warm. She said it is a cold day, and I still need to recover from the bladder infection and the diarrhea. But I hope she is not going to overdo it." "Yes, keep an eye on it, and if you think it is really too much, and your mother keeps doing it, let me know and perhaps I can talk to her about it."

Then Nanny concluded "Well, I guess I should start paying attention again to Sabine, so if you don't have more questions about things you want to borrow I think we need to say goodbye for now. We'll call again tomorrow." "Oh, I hope we are not asking to borrow too much? I'm sorry, I just get so excited." "Oh no, I was not implying that at all. You are really doing me a favor by reducing the clutter around here, and giving all that stuff a second life. So please, come and take anything you want that I can't use with Sabine anymore." "OK, thanks. I'll let Mom know, and I hope we can soon make an appointment to see each other again. Please tell Sabine I love her. Goodbye" "Goodbye Iris, and have fun." "Thanks, I will." And then the connection was terminated.



During the conversation Iris heard that she got a new personal message, so she wanted to see what it was – probably Anna or Mindy with a suggestion to meet up. But with the mittens she couldn't operate the touchscreen. She tried it a few times, but the screen didn't react at all. Frustrated she called "Mommy, I have finished talking to Nanny. But can you take the mittens off now? I can't see my new message." The office door opened and her mother came to her. "Now what is all that? I couldn't understand everything through the closed door." So Iris repeated the question impatiently. "Oh, but that is exactly why you are wearing the mittens. Little girls shouldn't play with mobile phones. You stay nicely in the playpen and give the phone back to me. You can check the messages later." Her mother held her hand out, but Iris was frustrated and didn't want to give it to her, even though she couldn't use it. "Iris, give me the phone!" Iris shook her head, clutched the phone to her chest and wouldn't look at her mother. "OK, suit yourself." Her mother disappeared into her office again. Iris was surprised that she just gave up, and felt that she had won, even though she hadn't really gained anything. She held the phone close to her, but realized that there was no need since her mother had gone and it was about as useful to her as a brick.

So she decided to put it aside, and explore if she couldn't get the mittens off, or out of the playpen. She put it on the couch next to the playpen, which she could reach through the bars, to keep it safe while she explored. The mittens prevented her from using her phone, so she attacked those first. But she had already tried that and failed, and the buttoned straps defeated her efforts again, because they were too tight around the wrist to pull her hands out, and she couldn't operate the buttons through the sturdy mitten fabric. Then she checked the harness. She first undid the reins, which was not challenging, but she also wondered if she could get the whole harness off, now that the chair back wasn't in the way. That was actually harder than she thought: coming from either below or above she could touch the side of the buckle, but not exert force on the middle to open it. She thought that without mittens she might be able to pull it up a bit on one shoulder strap, so that her other hand could, but she would need the full dexterity of her hands for that. So for now that stayed where it was. It wasn't restricting her anyway. Then she tried out how much the wrist leash around her ankles hampered her. By pulling on the springy cable she could get her feet almost everywhere within the playpen, but that meant fighting the pull. When she just relaxed them her feet were kept in the half of the pen furthest from the wall. She got up and tested if she could just step over the side of the playpen. But the sides of the barrier were higher than her crotch, so she would have to lean on it to swing her legs over. But the leash limited that, and she was afraid that she might fall, which she wasn't prepared to do with her injured wrist. And even if she got to the other side of the fence, her legs were still connected to it, so she wouldn't be able to get far.

Opening the gate would have the same problem, but she took a look anyway. It was a mechanism where you had to push from above and below the grip at the same time, but even with the mittens she could do that. And where it might be too hard for a toddler, she had enough strength for it. But there was no way around the tie wrap keeping the gate closed. Finally she took a look at the wrist leash bands around her ankles. The child band on her left ankle had that magnetic buckle that she couldn't open without a magnet, and the buckle was in the way of pulling the Velcro apart. On the band around her right ankle she could open the Velcro, but her mother had anticipated that, and the tie wrap kept her ankle connected to the leash even without the band. Then she realized that the magnet to open the buckle was in that band, and especially now that it was loose, she managed to hold the magnet to the buckle, and it popped open. Success! Now she could open the Velcro and remove that band from her ankle. She pulled it through the bars, and her legs were free, apart from the leash still dangling on her right ankle. Now she could lean on the fence with her belly, swing her legs over one at the time, and she was free of the playpen.

What now? Go into the office and tell Mommy she was bored? That would surprise her. But she would probably just be restrained again in a different way, that she may not get out of. She could go into the kitchen and see if she could get a knife or scissors to get her mittens off her, but she didn't really want to damage them. Not only because they borrowed them from Nanny, but also because it was a game that she chose herself. So she decided just to go sit on the couch and watch TV, and let her mother find out about her escape when she came out of her office on her own behalf. To make it harder for her to find out how Iris escaped, she put both straps back around her ankles once she was sitting on the couch with the remote control, and reattached the harness reins. She had to giggle when she thought of the surprise for her mother when she was sitting outside the playpen as if nothing had happened, with the restraints still in place. Then she turned on the TV, loud enough for her to hear, but hopefully soft enough to not alert her mother, and made herself comfortable. She selected a cartoon channel and soon was fully focused on watching it.

"Iris, what are you doing there?" Her mother had come out of the office, and looked surprised at Iris, who acted like if things were all normal "I'm watching TV." But she couldn't really contain herself, and a big grin appeared on her face and she put her feet up and wiggled them to show she was still wearing the wrist leash on her ankles. "But what... How ...?" "Oh it was a bit boring in the playpen, so I just got out and decided to sit here instead." "My, Imogen wasn't exaggerating when she proclaimed you a little escape artist! How did you do that?" "An escape artist never reveals her tricks!" "Well, OK. I thought I might have gone a little far with restraining you in the playpen, but I suppose next time I'll have to be even more careful. I was actually coming out to see if you want to surrender your phone now, so I could relieve your boredom, but apparently you took matters in your own hands. Or feet." "I'm sorry about the phone. Nanny had just told me that Sabine didn't want to talk to me, and I was upset about that. And then I couldn't see the new message." This sounded serious, so Mrs. Tomas sat down next to Iris, and asked what the matter with Sabine was. "I don't know. When I left she seemed to understand that I had to go, and she wanted me to be with my father too. But Nanny said it is because of the brain injury, that she feels sad and abandoned, and can't process those feelings normally and rationally, so it comes out as anger. She expects that it will soon pass, but now I feel doubly bad about leaving them. I hope we can soon go there and get the stuff we talked about." Her mother had in the meanwhile seen the phone on the couch and confiscated it, but now took Iris in her arms and comforted her.

"You'll still get punished for the phone, but we'll do that later. First tell me about what Imogen said." "I told her what had happened in the past day, and that was quite a lot. Then I asked about the car seat, and she was pretty sure that we could open the buckle from inside the car." She explained about the hole for something like a car key. "We can also borrow the harness and some patient mittens, and the highchair if we want. She had just been careful not to give too many restraints in case things hadn't worked out so well. Is there still time for us to go over there today and collect them?" "I don't think so, but I don't think it is wise either. Do you really want to have the car seat before we get the sun film? And apart from that, I think Sabine probably needs a bit of time to process her feelings. If you go there now, and then leave again, that might only make it worse." "Oh. OK, I guess that makes sense. So when will you get the sun film?" "I don't know yet. I'll probably have to leave the car there for a day, so it has to be a day where we don't need it. And since we can't be sure when exactly Daddy comes home, if I have to pick him up somewhere, and what he wants to do when he is home, I'm afraid we'll have to wait to make an appointment until he is here. Are you so anxious to get the car seat then?" "Oh, I don't know, I guess I like our little play, and I want as many toys for it as I can. Perhaps it is greedy, because there is still a lot in the boxes that we already have that I don't even know about yet, and in two days we get the Special Needs delivery. But I just feel bad about Sabine, and I don't know what to do about it." "Yes, I understand, and I

recognize the feeling. It is a difficult lesson to learn that sometimes the best thing you can do is nothing, because everything you could do would make it worse. Luckily for you I am not bringing you, and she won't come to the phone, so you can't do anything. That should make it easier to let it go and be patient. You can call them again tomorrow, and we'll see how she is by then."

"But first we need to figure out how to make sure you stay where I put you. I'll be right back." She left Iris on the couch, with the TV still on, and went into her office. Iris thought about hiding, because she wasn't restrained, apart from the leash between her legs, but thought she was probably in enough trouble, and her mother had been kind about her issue with Sabine. So she just watched the cartoon again. It didn't take her mother long to come back, and she had a small box in her hand. "Now I didn't really want to use this, because it is not something I would use on a toddler, but I can't think of anything better at the moment." But instead of showing what she was talking about, she first turned off the TV and put the remote in the box. Then she removed the wrist leash from Iris's legs, cutting the tie wrap. She grabbed the box in one hand, and Iris's harness in the other, and steered her to a corner of the room where a vertical pipe ran along the wall. Then she took out of a box a decorative chain (see Figure 21), that she wound around Iris's waist, then around the pipe, and then locked it all together with the large padlock that she had used before on the rain jacket that was used as a bib. "This chain is meant for hanging lamps and such from, but I guess it will do for naughty little girls too."



*Figure 21 Decorative Chain*

"Now you will nicely stay there in the corner for a while, and think about why you should obey your mother." Iris could hear that she was not angry, and this was still part of the play, but nonetheless this was getting a bit more serious, and she looked doubtful at the chain and lock. In the meantime her mother had gotten the rag doll, gave it to her and said "Because you apologized you can have the company of Annie." And when she saw Iris looking doubtful, she added "Don't worry, I'll be getting you in a little while, and then we'll do nicer things again." Then she went back into the office, but left the door open this time. For a moment Iris was not sure what had happened, and how she felt about it. But she had been on a chain in the garden with Sabine too, and later in the house, and it wasn't freaking her out. She started to see if there was a way out, but it was tight enough around her waist that there was no way she could push it down passed her hips or pull it up. The other end of the chain went around a pipe that ran from floor to ceiling. And the lock might be old-fashioned, but was still more than effective enough to stop anything she could do to it. She could rotate the chain around her waist so that the lock was in the back, so she could at least look into the living room instead of against the wall. The chain allowed her about 2 feet (60cm) from the pipe, so she had enough room to sit down.

She pulled a few times on the chain, just for the feeling of really being stuck, but it got boring quite soon. The doll didn't really mean anything to her, and had nothing to say to her anyway. But having nothing better to do, she inspected it somewhat closer. And then suddenly its smell triggered her memory, and she realized she had indeed named it Annie. No prize for originality perhaps, but of course easy to remember for a Raggedy Ann doll. Iris felt a little uncomfortable about her current situation, and some anger about not being allowed to read her messages, and she didn't even know what she was feeling about Sabine. Suddenly it seemed like the most natural thing in the world to tell Annie how she was feeling, now that they were reacquainted. It was actually so easy to tell

exactly how she was feeling, because she knew Annie would never judge her or get angry with her, like Sabine. That girl had no right to be angry with her, after all Iris did for her, and now she made Iris feel bad too. Saying that out loud suddenly made her realize that she was doing exactly the same as Sabine: having no way to resolve her negative feelings, they turned to anger. The realization immediately made the anger evaporate, and she just felt sorry that Sabine had to go through this. But her mother was right; her friend needed time to process her feelings in her own way.

A few tears fell on the face of Annie, as if she was the one crying, and so Iris held her doll close to her and comforted her the same way her mother did earlier, when her wrist hurt again. "Are you OK, Iris?" Looking up, she saw that her mother had come out of the office again, and looked at her concerned. "Yes Mommy, I was just sad about Sabine." "OK, punishment is over." She unlocked the chain and gave Iris a firm hug to show that everything was good again. "Now, it is time for me to start cooking. If I take off the mittens and give you your phone back, will you stay in the playpen without me needing to use the chain again?" But when she saw a twinkle in Iris's eyes she didn't wait for the answer, and concluded "I guess not. OK, let's get you installed then." Without letting go of the harness she put a pillow from the couch in the playpen for Iris to lean against, and lifted her in, because there was still a tie wrap on the gate. When Iris sat there, her mother had another idea, and instead of using the chain again, she took a long tie wrap, put it around one of the bars of the playpen, and then around the back straps of Iris's overalls. She didn't pull it so tight that Iris's back was directly against the bars, but it kept her in the position she was in. Then her mittens were finally taken off, and she got her phone back. To show her appreciation, she gave her mother a very sweet smile.

After her mother went into the kitchen, Iris of course first explored her new restraint. There was nothing around her body, like the chain around her waist or the wrist leash around her ankles, and still she was kept firmly where she sat by her overalls. She couldn't even sink to a more lying position because the tie wrap was only just above the pillow, which stopped it from going down further. She knew she wouldn't be able to open the tie wrap without tools, and apart from that she could hardly reach it. Normally she would have just opened the buckles of her overalls, but of course those were locked as well. Now she knew that with some effort, she had managed to twist these locking buckles partly with her nail and hand, so she might manage to get them open all the way, but that was a lot of work and might cost her a nail. She was too curious about her messages to bother with that, so she decided to keep that in reserve, to surprise her mother with another time. Apart from that she was sitting kind of comfortable and she enjoyed the feeling of security. And she definitely didn't want her mother to catch her doing something naughty now that she finally had her phone.

The message that had come in during her talk with Nanny was indeed from Anna, inviting her and Mindy over to watch the photos from her vacation to Mexico tomorrow at 1PM. Iris knew Anna's family had a big TV and she could connect her laptop to it to show the pictures in huge size. "Mom, Anna King invites me over tomorrow at 1." "Wait a moment, I'll be right there." After a minute or so her mother arrived, and saw Iris sitting where she left her. "Are you sitting comfy there?" "Yes Mommy, this is nice. Can I go tomorrow?" "Of course you can go to your friends, but what are we going to do with your nap then?" "Mom, tomorrow I'll be grown up again, and grown-ups don't need naps." "They do if they are not well. You still have the UTI, we don't know yet if your diarrhea has fully cleared up, and your wrist needs rest to heal." Iris face clouded over, and she opened her mouth to protest, but her mother was quicker "You can go, but you need to catch up, and go to bed an hour early the night after. At what time will you be back?" Both of them knew Mrs. King often invited visitors to stay for dinner, and Mindy usually accepted: she liked to be away from her six brothers and sisters when she had the opportunity. "It doesn't say. I'll ask." "You do that, and let me

know. You can't bike alone through town in the evening, so if you stay I'll need to bring and collect you."

Iris sent a return message that she would be there, and asked if she was supposed to stay for dinner – with Anna it usually was better ask directly, because she didn't always pick up more subtle inquiries. A while later she got the confirmation, and let her mother know she wouldn't eat at home the next day, and needed a ride. Her mother acknowledged, and since she said nothing else, Iris assumed it was OK to continue with her phone until dinner was ready. So she could catch up on a lot of posts, and also managed to post a few more pictures she got from Mrs. Fletcher on their outings, of course being careful not to show anything particularly childish like the clothes or harness. When her mother came to get her for dinner, there were still some unread posts in one or two forums she followed, but she felt that she at least was up-to-date with the important stuff. She almost felt sorry when her mother cut her loose and opened the gate for her. "Thanks Mommy, that was really nice."

"How is your diaper doing?" "Hmm, I don't really know. I believe it has been a while since I let go on purpose, but I don't feel an urge at the moment." "Perhaps you were distracted too much, with your escape from the playpen, then the corner time, and then your messages, and you missed the urge and it came out. Don't worry too much; we still have a few days of antibiotics left, so it will probably still improve. Let me feel how full it is." Iris allowed her to feel between her legs, and her mother concluded that the big night diaper should be able to take a lot more, so they'd just change before Iris went to bed. "But Mom, shouldn't I be changed regularly because of the bacteria?" "Well, I'm pretty sure those should already be weakened by the antibiotics, so I think it should be OK for this once. Tomorrow we'll use the pull-ups and then we can do it more often again."

"Come, let's have dinner now." At her chair at the dinner table Iris first had to sit down on her chair, and then her mother connected the anchor straps. Iris wondered why she didn't first get the bib on, but her mother seemed to have a plan, so she just let it happen. Then the rain jacket was held up backwards for her, and she put her arms in. Next her mother put the jacket around the back of the chair, zipped it up and added the large padlock at the top. Iris immediately realized how effective this was: she was kept firmly against the back rest by the jacket, which she might not be able to unzip because of the back rest, even without the padlock. She might have been able to get up and slide the jacket over the top of the back rest to free herself, but with the anchor straps even that escape was blocked. And the jacket blocked access to the harness and anchor strap buckles. Her mother seemed to be learning fast how to keep her secure, and again there was nothing limiting her limbs or tight around her torso, and still she was kept very safe. After trying her limits for a few moments, she gave her mother a big smile.

She first got her antibiotics and painkillers with a glass of water. But her smile quickly disappeared when the food appeared on the table. There were beets, and she hated those. But her mother always insisted she ate them anyway, because they were good for her, and she needed to learn to eat everything. "No Mommy, not beets!" "Yes kitten, beets. We haven't eaten them in quite a while, and I expect Imogen didn't always have time to cook healthy meals, so you really need your vitamins and minerals. I need you to eat them like a big girl. My advice is to eat them first, so that it is over soon, and you can get the taste out of your mouth with the rest of the food." But the rest of the food was not that appetizing either. Apart from the beets there was also broccoli, which was kind of OK, but still a vegetable, mashed potatoes, and some sort of beef steak, which was always quite chewy. "Mommy, are you punishing me?" "Oh no honey, I'm just trying to make sure your body has everything it needs to get healthy again. I can't cook your favorites every day! Now, would you like some cranberry juice to go with that?" Normally Iris was only allowed water during the

meals, so that made it clear that her mother was trying, but Iris was still convinced there had to be a better way to get the right vitamins and minerals.

She had no choice about what to eat though, so she bravely took a spoonful of beets, but it was just as yucky as she remembered. She managed to get it down, and quickly took a sip of juice. But the taste of the beets mixed with the cranberry, and that totally spoiled the taste of the juice. The mashed potatoes worked better to get rid of the taste. She took a bite of beef next, because she could chew on that for a long time before she had to take another bite of the beets. But when it was gone she took a piece of broccoli instead, and with every bite she couldn't quite make herself take the beets. After her first hunger was stilled, the tempo dropped, and after a while she was mostly just pushing the food around her plate. "Iris, if you don't eat yourself, I will feed you." She took a few more bites, and even one with beets, but soon slowed down again. When her mother had finished eating herself, she sat next to Iris, took the cutlery, and started feeding her, saying "I guess my little girl needs a bit of help with her yum yum." Iris cooperated with the first few bites, but when it was beets on the spoon, Iris tried to push the spoon away with her hand. It didn't work out quite how she planned, and she ended up hitting the spoon out of her mother's hands, with the beets flying over the table. "Iris, NO" Her mother was quite angry now "And beets give such horrible stains too! This isn't working." She retrieved the spoon, and luckily the beets had all landed on the table, and could be wiped off.

Then to Iris's surprise she unlocked the rain jacket and took it off. But she immediately put it back on her, this time without allowing her to put her arms in the sleeves. When it was zipped up and locked once more, Iris's arms were firmly kept next to her body, and she couldn't reach the table anymore. Then her chair was put close to the table again, and the feeding continued. She tried to turn her head away, to avoid the next spoonful of beets, but her mother got hold of one pigtail and used it to hold her head in position. It was effective, and it didn't hurt unless Iris really tried to pull away. But then she just kept her mouth closed. Her mother told her they were going to sit there until her plate was empty, and with the spoon right under her nose, the smell was almost as bad as the taste. This was no fun anymore, and Iris thought for a second to use the safeword. But she was sure that even if she was released, mature Iris would still need to finish her plate, so that wouldn't really help. She finally surrendered and opened her mouth. After a few more bites of the other food, her mother tried to fill the spoon partly with beets, and partly with potatoes. That weakened the bad taste, and made it easier to swallow. The taste actually wasn't that horrible this way. There were only a few more pieces of beet left, and the rest was OK.

When her plate was empty her mother wiped her face, and then got something from the fridge: 2 portions of tiramisu. Iris eyes got wide: her mother often didn't bother with desserts, claiming you only got fat from those. Or it was just a piece of fruit. "I guess my little girl is so full, after all that effort to empty her plate, that I'll have to eat both of these!" "Nooo!" Iris exclaimed and wildly shook her head. "Oh, let me free your arms then, so you can eat it yourself." Iris exclaimed "Nooo!" once again. "You want me to feed you?" "Yes Mommy, will you please?" "Well, aren't you a silly girl. I thought I was punishing you for slapping at the spoon, and you're just enjoying it!" "I'm sorry about the spoon, Mommy. I didn't want to hit it, just push it away. And I really didn't want to eat the beets. But they were not quite so yucky combined with the potatoes." And she continued "But I just like being helpless and lovingly taken care of; it makes me feel so secure and safe. And I don't think I would be able to escape this, even if I tried really, really hard." "Well, I'm glad I found a few ways to keep you in place, after your miraculous escape from the playpen earlier." That produced a wide grin on Iris's face again, and her mother hugged her. Iris could only wiggle with her hands and not hug back.

After the whole dessert was spoon-fed to Iris, her mother cleaned her face and improvised bib again, and started to release her. She patted her head, and said they would move to the couch now for tea. "That's OK Mommy, this is not too comfortable for long anyway, but it was fun. The highchair would be even better though, because the anchor strap buckles poke a bit in my back this way. And it is really secure by itself." When the jacket was off, her mother unsnapped the anchor straps and immediately reattached the reins. When they arrived at the couch, her mother looked around for a bit, but couldn't really find a way to secure Iris there. "Hmm, I think when we get the supplies from the Special Needs store, we should make something like a lap belt to make sure you stay on the couch. But will you be a good girl for now and just stay here by yourself while I clean up the dinner and make tea?" "OK, Mommy, after the chair I think it would be nice to be able to stretch a bit and find a comfortable position." Her mother selected a junior channel and disappeared into the kitchen with the remote control.

Iris would have preferred a cartoon channel, but the toddler programs were simple and didn't require any mental effort, so Iris found a nice position, half-lying, and let herself be taken along. Soon her thumb found her way into her mouth, and after the big dinner she sort of half drifted away. "Iris, don't suck your thumb! I thought we had cured you of that years ago. Let me get an alternative." Mrs. Tomas went upstairs, quickly came back with her pacifier and put it in her mouth. Iris murmured a 'thank you' from behind it, and watched the TV again when her mother went back into the kitchen. Soon she was ready and returned with a tray with a teapot and two glasses. She poured it, and warned Iris it was still hot when her daughter immediately reached for her glass. Then she sat down right next to Iris and put her arm around her. "What a day. I can't believe it was only last night that you fell out of bed and we put you in the sleeping bag. Do you still feel your wrist?" "No, with the brace it doesn't bother me. But perhaps tomorrow we could try to do without painkillers? I want to know if peeing is still a bit sensitive, and when I go without a brace for a while, I think I get warned quicker if I do something wrong with it." "If you want we can try. But remember that pain tires you out, so if your bladder or wrist bother you, let me know and I'll give you some again."

Her mother switched the TV to the news, and Iris knew she was supposed to stay silent for that. When it was over, Iris had a question she had wondered about for a while, and this seemed like a good moment to ask. "Mom, I don't want to start an argument, but I just wonder why you don't want me to wear anything like vegan leather. Even the lady of the news wore such a jacket, so I just don't get why it would be unsuitable." Her mother turned off the TV before she replied "Oh dear, that is a rather serious question, and I'm afraid you might not like the answer that much. But I guess you have a right to know. It is your father's wish." The first thought that entered Iris's mind when she heard that was that her mother was trying to shift the blame to her adoring father, but then she decided to first hear her mother out. "You have to see it from his position. He loves you very much, and wants to keep you safe. But he is far away for so much of the time, where he can't protect you. So he relies on me to do what he would like to do himself. And one of the things that he worries about is boys and sex. So he doesn't want you to wear anything sexy, including things that look like leather." Iris was glad she had kept silent after that first 'accusation'. This really sounded like her father, and her mother sounded sincere.

That didn't mean she agreed "But why would a fake leather jacket be especially sexy? I'm sure that news reader wasn't trying to get noticed for a porn movie!" "Yes, I don't fully agree with him there, but it didn't seem like a big thing, and because it is important to him, I accepted the restriction. But consider that on such an oil platform, it are almost exclusively men, and of course they have all sorts of pictures hanging around of scarcely clad ladies, but also of ladies in tight and shiny clothes. And he

doesn't want to think his daughter might go around dressed like that while he is away, and getting the hormones of those teenage boys in overdrive. It is not really realistic, because like you say such jackets are so common that they are not really considered evocative anymore, but he doesn't realize that because he is so isolated there, and when he is here he often goes into nature. So he hasn't noticed how common they are at the moment." This was a lot of new information for Iris. She didn't really doubt that her mother was telling the truth, but her father always was so nice to her, her perfect hero, that it was hard for her to realize he was only a man with his own doubts and shortcomings.

Her mother must have seen the sad look on her face, and realized what she was thinking, because she continued "I'm sorry, sometimes the truth is not so easy to hear. But you know I love him, and I don't want to make him the bad guy. He does it out of love for you. You know what, if it is so important to you, I will speak about it with him again." "I don't know, Mom. I don't want to make him worry about me all the time when he is away. Perhaps it is not *that* important to me." "OK, you think about it, and let me know if you want me to talk to him about it. But I guess there are enough new clothes for you at the moment anyway, and other things for him to get used to." "Thanks Mom, for explaining. So if you are strict with me, like with the booster seat or with warm clothing, you are actually doing what Dad wants you to?" "Oh no, it is not all him. He also doesn't want you to use make-up, but we both are about equally careful about traffic, and being warmly dressed is more my concern. I know how easily children get sick when they cool down too much, and especially teenagers are often more concerned about their clothes looking good than them being warm enough. And when you were younger you always seemed to get the flu when it was going around." "OK, I understand. But we talked about that at the Fletchers, and I thought we agreed that it was going better now, and that you might have gotten a bit overprotective. But then today you dressed me like it is winter, with a warm body with a collar, corduroy overalls, and outside with a fleece-lined rain jacket. And I can't take anything off if I'm too hot." To illustrate she pulled the collar of the body away from her neck.

Her mother thought about that for a moment, and then admitted "Yes, I think I had forgotten about that part of our conversation, when I suddenly started taking care of you like you were still much younger. I guess it is not easy to find the right balance for me, because you want me to be protective when you are little, and so all my maternal instincts kick in again. I guess I'll have to keep trying. But you haven't complained during the day, so I didn't really know." "I told you it was more suited for winter when you dressed me!" "Oh yes, I guess you did, but then you hadn't even worn it, so I thought you should try it first. And then you didn't say anything about it anymore." "I guess I just accepted that it was part of being little, to let Mommy decide, even if it was somewhat uncomfortable. Are you saying you prefer me to keep complaining if I don't like something?" Her mother imagined a whiny toddler, and quickly answered "No, that doesn't seem like a good idea either. What would you propose then?" "What about if I can say something like 'Mom, seriously' to let you know I'm not just being a whiny little kid, but I want to let you know you might have gone a bit far." "OK, we'll try that. Now, do you have any more serious questions?" "I don't think so." "We have half an hour before we need to get you ready for bed, so why don't you choose something to watch." She passed the remote to Iris, and firmly grasped the harness and pulled Iris close. Her daughter snuggled up to her, and together they enjoyed the show Iris selected. Her mother played a bit around with her hair, and braided the two pony tails.

When the show was over, her mother said "OK, it is really time now to go upstairs." "Oh Mom, do I have to, I'm not at all sleepy yet." "Come on Iris, don't make me regret letting you watch it until the end. It is already 15 minutes later than I planned." Iris didn't want to be ungrateful, and spoil the



mood, so she said “Yes, Mommy.” “We still need to do the bathroom, the undressing, the new diaper, and the sleeping bag, so it will be a while anyway before you can go to sleep. I’m sure that once the sleeping bag inflates, you’ll feel how busy the day has been, and get sleepy in no time.” And so they went up the stairs, where in the bathroom Iris was supervised brushing her teeth, and her hair was redone into a single braid. “Now for the toilet. Still no poopy diaper?” “No Mommy, it seems like the diarrhea is over.” So she was undressed and put on the toilet. She could pee a little, and she was disappointed that she must have wet the diaper more than once without noticing, but like her mother and Nanny had said, she shouldn’t be impatient and give it time. But she was determined to do better the next day.

After that it was on to the changing table, where her hands were secured as they had already gotten used to. During the cleaning her mother tickled her a bit, and Iris was trying to twist away from her hands. That made her almost roll off the narrow table, and her mother could only just catch her. “Oops, I’m sorry. That was not a good idea. It seems like we’ll need a waist strap as well to make it safer for you.” Iris nodded, and then tried to relax while her mother touched her private area. She hadn’t been able to touch there at all since last night, and it was already quite sensitive again. Then she got a fresh new night diaper with the cute bears (see Figure 10 Crinklz Original Diaper). Her mother remarked that the one she had worn during the day had done its job very well, and that she could see they were good quality, so she was confident that it would hold during the night as well. Still she put the locking plastic pants back on for extra safety. Then it was off to bed, into the sleeping bag, and together they made sure it was inflated the right amount. Her mother put Annie next to her, put the pacifier in her mouth, checked the baby monitor, wished Iris goodnight, turned off the light and left. She had been right, and the floating feeling in the sleeping bag quickly made her sleepy, and before she knew it she was sleeping soundly.

## 6. Thursday – All Grown Up

When Iris woke she quickly realized where she was, and felt pretty good. She probably had slept deep and long, because she felt a bit fuzzy, but floating in the sleeping bag, she could slowly drift to the surface and gradually return to the world. Knowing she was going to be mature today, she wondered how she felt about it. She concluded that it was OK, but she was not quite ready yet to let little Iris go, so she tried to find the pacifier which as always wasn’t in her mouth anymore. (see Figure 12 Iris’s Personalized Pacifier) It was clearly morning, and the light coming through the curtains helped her look, but the sleepsack didn’t make it easy; especially the hood was in the way to look around. First she noticed her doll Annie, and she realized that she had laid on her. She decided to tell her mother that when she was in the sleeping bag, it was no use putting Annie with her in bed: she could not hold her, and didn’t notice when she laid on her. Then she found her pacifier. The next challenge was getting it back into her mouth, which was even harder, with the inflated arms and mittens. Finally she managed to keep it in place with one arm with the nipple towards her, and pick it up with her mouth. Then she let the sleeping bag push her back on her back, and suckling she let her mind drift to the coming day.

She was of course hoping that Daddy would arrive today, although she wanted to be there when he came home, and this afternoon she’d be at Anna’s. After spending so much time with Sabine, she might have to get used again to friends of her own intellectual age. She thought for a while on what she would tell them about the last one-and-a-half weeks, and decided she’d be open about Sabine, with her brain injury and how she was treated, and just tell them she’d be babysitting or playing with her friend. She could also tell them about the aquarium and the waterfalls without needing to go

into how she'd been treated - she might have to since she already shared pictures of those trips. Of course Anna's vacation in Mexico was way more special than her little trips, so they'd be talking about that mostly anyway. Mindy was always a bit more quiet, but they'd make sure she told all about horse camp as well. Mindy was crazy about horses, but her parents couldn't afford one, so she must have been in heaven at camp. If that wouldn't get her talking...

Her struggle with the pacifier, and the thoughts about the coming day, had gotten her thoroughly awake, and now she felt ready to get up. Calling for her mother of course worked best without the pacifier in her mouth, but after all that effort she decided to call without spitting it out. Making noise was not a problem, only the understandability of her words, but she was sure her mother would get that she was awake even if she didn't understand what she said. She didn't shout too loud, not wanting to wake her mother if she would still be sleeping. But she quickly got an answer "Good morning Iris. I'll be with you in about ten minutes." Now that Iris had decided she wanted to get up, ten minutes suddenly was a long wait, but having no alternative she tried to pick up her line of thought again. She was glad she had kept the pacifier in, because that helped her stay in a mellow mood, and not get frustrated about the wait. She wondered if she was going to miss being treated little: apart from a few hours here and there, like when she was coming home on Tuesday, she had been little for almost an entire week now: since the preparations for the visit to the aquarium, so from Friday afternoon. She was going to find out soon though, because the door opened, and her mother came in, dressed and ready for the day.

She sat down next to her on the bed, stroked her forehead, and asked if she had slept well. To help her daughter answer she took the pacifier out. Iris pulled a face for a moment for losing the pacifier, but then replied that she had slept without interruption up to 20 minutes or so ago. "And you managed to keep the pacifier in all night this time?" "No, when I woke it was gone again, but I decided to snooze for a little while longer, and managed to get it back in. It wasn't easy with these." She waved her hands around. "Ready to get up and be my teenage daughter today?" "Yes, when I called I felt ready to get up, so please help me out." Her mother opened the zipper and the valve, and together they got the sleeping bag off. The diaper was quite a bit thicker than last night, and pushed Iris's legs slightly apart, making her go wide-legged to the bathroom. There the plastic pants and diaper were removed, and Iris went on the toilet, while her mother disposed of the diaper again. She could pee a fair bit, but no excrement came. She tried to push a bit in the hope to get it going, but that didn't work. She told her mother who had come back, and they decided just to put a pull-up on, and let it come when it was ready.

Her mother suggested she'd take a shower now; they'd try the bath another time, since this evening there probably would be little time left before bed when Iris would come home, and Iris was not little today anyway. She left Iris alone and told her to call her when she was ready to be diapered. "Can't I just put on a pull-up by myself?" "We might do that later, if the pull-ups stay mostly dry, but after tonight I think it is better that I put some cream on to make sure you don't get a diaper rash." Iris nodded and her mother left. She pulled the body off over her head, and realized she hadn't undressed or dressed by herself for more than a week either. She had mixed feelings about that: she missed being taken care of so lovingly, and not being required to have to do anything herself. But it was also nice to be self-reliant again, and this was quicker. Again she felt that a mix between being little and being mature was the best way to go. In the shower she had the same feeling: especially for the harder places, like her back, it would have been nice to have someone else do them. But the big advantage now was of course that she could play with herself again, and she made good use of that opportunity.

When she was ready, and had blow-dried her hair and brushed her teeth, she called her mother, who proposed “Why don’t you go into your room to pick the clothes you want to wear today, and then come to the changing table. And keep the towel around your shoulders to prevent cooling down too much.” In her room Iris looked at her clothes, and evaluated which would be suitable in combination with a pull-up. She decided that for the morning she was going simply with sweatpants, t-shirt and sweater, and see how that worked. Then around noon she’d choose what to wear to her friends. At the changing table her mother secured her hands again, which was so natural that Iris only realized that she was restrained again after her hands were stuck. But she knew that the straps helped her not interfere with her sensitive area, so she didn’t protest. She chose the goodnites pull-ups with the violet print; she shied away from thinking about what she might need to wear in the afternoon.

Then her mother surprised her by locking the plastic pants on her again. “Mom, I’m mature today. You shouldn’t be locking things on me.” She gave a little pull on her hands to underline her point, and then continued “and apart from that, I want to work on going to the toilet, so I can get fully continent again.” “I understand dear, but I told you yesterday morning that I was not going to allow you to put your hands in your diapers again, and I meant that. This is not play with little Iris, but a precaution, or punishment if you want to call it that, for big Iris. In the end you were not little when you put your hands in, and didn’t even wash them afterward.” Iris couldn’t really find flaw in her mother’s argument, and of course she still liked being kept safe and unable to make mistakes, so she reluctantly accepted, but queried “But I want to be able to go to the toilet when I feel I might need to go. Then you have to come with me every time.” “Why don’t we do it like this: if you want to go, you come to me, I unlock you, you go potty – eh, sorry, to the toilet, come back, and I make sure your panties are secured again.” “But I might not be able to keep it up that long.” “Why don’t you look at that as part of the training: practicing those muscles again. And you’re still wearing the pull-ups, so if you don’t make it, it is not a problem. The most important thing now is that you try to control when to let go, whether it is on the toilet or into your diaper. But I’m open to a better suggestion on how we can let you go to the toilet, but still prevent you from getting into your diaper at other times.” Iris thought the locking panties were really unnecessary now: if she wanted to access the area, she could just lower the pull-ups instead of putting her hand in them. But she wouldn’t be able to convince her mother, especially not if she saw this as a punishment. And she couldn’t think of a better way, so in the end she accepted it.

Once the panties were locked on, her hands were released, and she could dress herself. “Let’s go downstairs and have breakfast now,” her mother suggested. She held up one arm for a hug and to walk down together, and after a moment’s hesitation Iris accepted. She was a bit upset about the panties, but couldn’t deny she had done something forbidden, and that she now was confronted with the consequences. And of course there were worse punishments, so she decided not to let it sour the good relationship they were building, and accepted the hug. Before breakfast Iris got the antibiotics, and her mother counted that the last one would be the next morning. And before she forgot she put one aside for Iris to take along to Anna’s, to take before dinner.

She double checked “No painkillers then this morning?” “No, let me try without. I’ll let you know if I feel pain.” “Oh, I didn’t yet check what you’d like with the wrist brace. If you want to wear it while you are away, you should do without it for a few hours in the morning. If not you can wear it all morning if you want. I think I’d advise to wear it with your friends, because you might be more easily distracted from being careful with your wrist then when you are on your own.” Iris thought that was a good argument, and the brace wasn’t childish or anything, and might even be good for some sympathy from her friends. But what if they asked how she hurt her wrist – falling out of bed didn’t

normally happen at their age, and she could hardly tell her friends about the dream, the sleeping arrangements at the Fletchers, or how she was sleeping now. Her mother was waiting for an answer, so she said "I think I agree with you, but I am wondering how I should explain falling out of bed to my friends. I guess I can say I only remember of the dream that I was somehow stuck and wanted to wrestle free, and when I did I landed on my wrist. So I'll just leave it off for now."

During breakfast Iris was fidgety, and got up to get something, only to find that it was already on the table. "Iris, will you sit still? You're making me tired just from watching you. It is almost like you're wanting to me restrain you again to get some quiet." "I don't know, I'm so used to not being able to get up that it is a bit strange, doing everything for myself again. I guess I'm just a bit nervous, wearing incontinence material to my friends, and when Daddy will come, and the shipment tomorrow. When I'm little all those worries disappear, and now I guess I have to get used to them again." "Come here, dear." Her mother took Iris on her lap, and gave her a strong hug. "We all have to deal with worries, and be glad you don't yet have to worry about finances, keeping children healthy and safe, etcetera. You still have a lot of time to get ready to deal with such things, and in the meantime you can develop your coping skills. Everybody who worries builds up nervous energy in their bodies, and has to find a way to dissipate it again. Sport often helps, and taking long walks. But talking about them with others can also help." They talked for a while about some of Iris's worries, and that helped. Then she went back to her chair and finished her meal a bit more relaxed.

After they had finished, her mother told her she could do whatever she wanted for the whole morning. She had spent so little time on her phone, behind the TV or playing on her PlayStation, that her limits were temporarily lifted. She did advise her daughter though to go outside for a bit as well, as taking a walk or a bike ride could help with tension. "Oh, and if you bend over I can see the plastic pants between your pants and the sweater." Well, that certainly wasn't a big stimulus for her to go outside! Iris wondered for a moment if she wanted to change, for example into her regular denim overalls or her sweat jumpsuit, but those were pretty inconvenient if she wanted to use the toilet again. She'd have to at least partially undress before her mother could even unlock her plastic pants. "Thanks for the warning Mom." Not going outside then this morning; perhaps she could take a walk with Anna and Mindy after they watched the vacation photos. Again she started wondering how her visit would work with a diaper, and what she should wear, but that caused stress again, and she quickly put those thoughts away. She'd figure something out with her mother when the time came.

She decided to go to her room and make sure she was totally caught up on her phone, with even the last forum messages read. She made herself comfortable, and to keep her feet warm she put them in the sleeping bag. Just a few moments later her mother came in. "Mom, can you please knock before coming in?" "Oh yes, you are right. I guess it takes me a bit to make the switch between little and mature Iris too. Let me try that again." She went back outside and knocked. Iris invited her in: she appreciated her mother trying to correct her mistake, and she didn't want to play games now. That reminded her "Oh, Mom, I would prefer if we don't use the baby monitor when I am mature, either." "That sounds fair, I guess. But how shall we do that? If we take yours out of your room, you can be sure I can't listen in, but how do we make sure then that we don't forget it for the night, when it is essential for your safety? I could also just turn off mine." "But how can you make sure then that you don't forget to turn it on again? Perhaps we can put mine on the stack of night diapers? Then when you put one on me for the night, it will be right there." "That sounds like a good idea, let's do that." So her mother took the monitor over to the changing table, and quickly returned.

Then she explained the reason for her visit, "I just checked what garage sales are being held today, and there is one only a few blocks away. I would like to go there in the morning, and will probably

not be gone for long. That means that you'll be alone for a little bit, unless you want to come too. The sooner I go, the better the chance of finding something interesting." Iris had just decided to not go out in the morning, also because the plastic pants could be visible above her sweat pants, and of course she wouldn't forego the opportunity to show she was mature enough to stay home alone. When she said so, her mother talked for a while about what she should do in case of whatever emergency she could think of. But in the end it just came down to: first save yourself, then call me. Then she continued "I don't want you to open the door to strangers, so if the doorbell goes, check through the spyhole who it is before you open the door. I don't expect a delivery, but if there is ask them to leave it at the door, and only go and pick it up after they have left." This seemed a bit exaggerated to Iris, but she agreed and decided to stick to the rule, to make sure the privilege wouldn't be taken away again. Not that it was very likely that there would be someone at the door if her mother only was gone for a short while. And she didn't want to invite someone she knew into the house anyway, since they might spot things she didn't want them to see. For instance the playpen was pretty obvious the moment you entered the living room.

When her mother was satisfied that Iris knew and agreed to all the precautions, she said, "Let me unlock your panties, so you can go to the bathroom now. Then it is unlikely you'll need to while I'm gone." That seemed like a good idea, so Iris pulled up her sweater, and the lock was opened. She managed to deposit some urine into the bowl, while her mother waited in the landing, but still no sign of number two. When she was locked up again, her mother supposed that the last Imodium might have been a bit much. She got Iris two prunes to eat, confident that those should get her stool going again. After repeating the warnings one last time, she left. Iris went back into her room and continued on her phone. When she was all caught up, she thought about her PlayStation, but she hadn't had a new game in quite a while, and was a bit bored with the ones she had, so she went downstairs to watch TV. She looked at her playpen for a moment, and felt some temptation to snuggle up in there with a few pillows, but decided she was big Iris today, and she should act like it, so she curled up on the couch and started watching.

Iris heard her mother's car on the driveway, and soon after the kitchen door to the garage opened and her mother called "I'm back". She came into the living room, carrying a few things that she generally dealt in, and saw Iris on the couch. "Everything OK?" "Yes, nothing happened. I might be down here for about 10 minutes. Did you find some good stuff?" "Well, these are probably not great, but if I put some effort in them, clean them up and do a few minor repairs, I should make some profit. Let me bring them upstairs to the workbench, and then I have a few more things in the car." The workbench was in the same area as the changing table and the storage racks, and her mother was pretty proficient with tools, and usually did the repairs around the house, except when her husband was home. She had a sewing machine as well, but did mostly upholstery, curtains and such, and the occasional clothing repair or seam. But not making her own clothes, which suited Iris fine: otherwise her mother would probably make her all sorts of things that were functional and warm, but didn't look cool, which she then would have to wear.

When her mother came back down, she told Iris she also found a few things for her. Of course this made Iris curious, so she jumped up and followed her mother to the car. There was a pack of Pampers in the boot, but since those were for babies, she said "Mom, I get that I'm not so big for my age, but those must surely be too small for me!" "Don't be so sure; these are a size 7 for 41 pounds (19kg) and above. I don't know the people, but I saw a glimpse of a girl not much smaller than you. Since the pack was already opened, but only a few were missing, I could bring it along for \$3, so I thought it was worth the gamble. Don't you think little Iris would like to have actual baby diapers that fit her? And since you said you want to continue with little Iris, and we will probably not get

more prescriptions, this is a lot cheaper than buying those Crinklz ourselves. By the way, I made sure there was no one I knew before I got them, so that your secret should be safe.” “Wow Mom, you have really thought about it. They look cute. Now I want to try one on to see if it fits!” “Well, we could hold one over your pull-ups – that should give us an idea how they fit without getting them dirty.” They took the pack into the kitchen, and Iris was asked to lower her pants. Her mother also unlocked and lowered the plastic panties, took one Pampers out of the package and wrapped it around her, without doing the tapes. Both had the impression it fit: even over the pull-up the sides overlapped. Now Iris couldn’t wait to be little again to try one out.

Her mother put the Pampers back into the package, and pulled up the plastic panties again. Then she removed the lock, replaced it with one that she got from her pocket, and clicked that one closed. “I also found 2 smaller padlocks that are a lot better than the toy padlock that came with these pants, and are also better suited for clothes than that big padlock I used before.” She gave the lock a little pull, and concluded “That one should keep you safe! They are Master locks, one of the best brands, so even when we get the heart-shaped ones, these might be useful for the highest risk situations.” Iris felt conflicted about this. The feeling of being trusted so little that her mother considered a simple padlock not safe enough made her feel small, but big Iris wasn’t so happy about the new security measures for her punishment. She hadn’t planned to try and force the lock or pick it though, so in effect nothing had changed, but it still felt a bit like the punishment was increased. Not knowing how to react or what to say, she just pulled her pants up and took the diapers upstairs.

She spent the rest of the morning by herself, until her mother called her for lunch at 11:45. When she asked why so early, her mother explained that she expected they needed a fair amount of time to get her ready for her visit at 1 PM. It seemed a bit exaggerated, and Iris wasn’t really hungry, but since she didn’t want to think about those preparations, she let her mother decide the timing. She got her antibiotics, and since her bladder and wrist were not troubling her much, she decided to forego the painkillers again. Now that the time was nearing that she had to go diapered to her friends, the nervousness was back. It was the one subject she had avoided even when she had a talk with her mother after breakfast. She did her best not to fuss around too much, but she wasn’t hungry, so she ate no more than half her usual amount. This time her mother didn’t come and force feed her like yesterday evening. Thinking about that, she was surprised that she had no negative feelings about what happened. You’d think that being made to eat those horrible beets, and being restrained so much that she couldn’t do anything about it, would not be a happy memory, but at the moment she realized she felt better at that time than she did now. Her mother wasn’t too worried about her eating little: when the three friends were together at one of their houses, the mothers always made sure they were well provisioned, and the King family was pretty big on sports and health, so the snacks there were always low on fat and sugar.

When the meal was over, Mrs. Tomas took her daughter upstairs. First she was sent to brush her teeth and go to the toilet, and there Iris finally felt the urge to defecate. She was really pleased about it, since she at least wouldn’t have to worry about that happening while with her friends. But even though she could feel it sitting there, it didn’t want to come out. She tried to force it out for a bit, but she knew that was not healthy. So she told her mother about it. “Well, it’s good news that it is there, but I’m sure you want to get rid of it before we leave. Normally we could probably do with drinking a lot of water, and keeping up the fibers, but that probably would not work in time. I think I have a solution that should work, but that is not going to be pleasant.” “Please do, this is unpleasant too, and it can’t be as bad as pooping in my diaper while I’m there!” “OK, let me get what I need. It might take a few minutes. Just wait here, and perhaps it will still come out. But don’t strain.” After a

few minutes her mother returned with a big syringe without a needle, filled with water or another clear fluid.

Her mother explained "We're going to do a sort of improvised enema. This means bringing water with some salt into your colon, so that it may dissolve the piece of hard stool that is blocking your defecation. To give it a chance to dissolve, you should keep it in several minutes at least. We'll do it on the changing table." This didn't sound very pleasant to Iris, but the alternatives seemed worse, so she followed her mother, was put on the changing table, and this time asked to lie on her stomach. Her mother didn't secure her hands. Then she put the end of the syringe into her anus, and slowly pushed the fluid into her colon. At first it just felt weird, but gradually it became very full, and uncomfortable. She had seen the syringe and the amount of fluid it contained, but it felt like much more. Then the syringe was removed, and her mother told her to keep it in. In the meantime she pulled up the pull-up and the plastic pants. Then she told Iris they were going to the toilet very carefully, so that she could just let go when she could no longer hold it. The short trip made it a lot harder to keep it in, but her mother helped her as well as she could, like with lifting her from the table and very carefully putting her on the floor. She managed to reach the toilet without letting go. "Now be careful sitting down and don't let go yet!" Without that warning Iris probably wouldn't have kept it in: it was such an automatic reaction that you could let go as soon as you sat down. But she managed for a few more minutes, and when she finally let go, it was a mix of hard pieces and diarrhea, but when the first bit with all the fluid had gone, the rest of the stool came out normally, and without effort. She gave a sigh of relief, and called "Thanks Mom, it worked," to her mother waiting on the landing.

When it was all done, she wiped and went with her mother to the changing table. There she was put down on her back again, and her hands secured. Her mother said "We have to figure out what diaper would be best. I'm sure a pull-up won't be enough for the time you are gone. What do you think?" "What about the cotton-backed diaper of which Nanny gave us a few. Those were good enough for a whole night, so they have enough capacity, and at least they look neutral. I don't want to risk a Tena Youth since it might leak." "That sounds like a good plan. We'll do that." So they went with the normal routine of cleaning, applying cream, and then the diaper was taped closed. But then her mother put the plastic pants on her again and locked them. Iris was outraged "Mom, what are you doing? I can't wear those to my friends! They might hear them, and how the hell would I explain them if they were somehow spotted? Get them off! Get them off!" But her mother wouldn't listen. "Iris, I explained to you that I am not going to allow you access to your diapers. You can't expect me to lift your punishment just because meet with friends." But Iris was starting to panic, tried to pull her hands loose and started rolling sideways. "Iris, stop that, or you'll fall off the table!" Suddenly Iris remembered they had agreed on a safeword, so she shouted out 'Jabberwocky!'.

Her mother answered "OK Iris, I hear you, and I will release you. Please lie still so that there won't be an accident." She released the wrist cuffs and helped Iris off the table. But Iris wanted the plastic pants off now, and started to pull at them, still not calmed down. "Stop that Iris. I will remove them for now, but then we need to talk." She opened the lock and pulled them down, so that Iris could step out of them. Then she finally calmed down and tears started flowing. "Oh dear, this is all a bit much for you, isn't it. Come, we'll sit on your bed and talk." When they settled down, and Iris got herself under control again, her mother started "I understand that you are very scared of people finding out, and that it all became too much for you just now. So I get that you used the safeword, and I wanted to make sure you know I take it seriously, so I released you immediately. But the safeword is for when you are little Iris, and the play gets too much for you. But in this case it is not play with little Iris, but mature Iris who doesn't agree with her punishment, and the safeword is not

a get-out-of-jail-free card. So I still need to prevent you from accessing your diapers while you are there. I understand that the plastic pants are not ideal, and I do want to find a way that is acceptable for you. But I don't think there are any clothes from the Fletchers that would be suitable either." Iris stayed silent. There were so many thoughts spinning through her head that she didn't know what to say.

Her mother stood up and started looking among the clothes in her closet. She pulled out her gray sweat jumpsuit with the butterflies on the chest, and a zipper in the back. (see Figure 23) Her mother had brought it home with her a while ago from another garage sale or flea market, and even though Iris liked it, she had hardly ever worn it because it was such a hassle to take off in the bathroom, and with her weak bladder she was always afraid that she would not make it in time. Of course that would not be an issue with a diaper underneath. "This might do. But you can take it off yourself, can't you?" "With difficulty. It's not very practical," Iris answered curtly. She was still quite upset that her mother would not temporarily relent on her punishment, but at least she was trying to compromise, so Iris did her best to be civil. Otherwise her mother might just go back to the plastic panties. "How about I add a few hook-and-eyes underneath the zipper. No one will see them, but you'll not be able to open the ones between your shoulder blades and get out."



Figure 22 Example of hooks-and-eyes on the inside of a zipper

Iris wasn't totally happy about this proposal, because she would still be forced to use the diaper during the visit. But that was the punishment, and it was clear to her that she wasn't getting out of that. And her mother had come up with a pretty good solution: the jumpsuit would make sure the diaper wouldn't be visible, like it was with her sweat pants, and it was not particularly childish. Apart from that the idea of being restrained without anyone noticing had been enjoyable when they went diaper shopping. So she replied "Well, I still think it is too harsh to insist on the punishment while I go to my friends, but this is a compromise I can live with, so go ahead." "OK, let me get my sewing kit; I'll be right back. And I don't want your hands anywhere near your diaper while I'm gone!" Iris definitely didn't want to be caught doing that again, so she lay on the bed with her hands under her head and waited for her mother. She realized she wasn't feeling as stressed anymore, now that she had managed to defecate, she wore the most acceptable diaper, and her doubts about what to wear to keep the diaper hidden were also resolved.





When her mother came back, she quickly sewed 3 hooks on one side of the zipper, and 3 eyes on the other. Meanwhile she told Iris “It is very scary to you that your diapers are discovered, and I sort of understand why. But perhaps you shouldn’t be too worried about your friends finding out. Won’t they understand that it is just temporary, for a medical condition? I’m sure they would not tell anyone else, especially if you let them know how important that is to you. How do you think they would react if you tell them that you were teased at primary school because of one accident long ago, and that you are very worried now that it would also happen at high school?” “I don’t know. I trust them that they would not hurt me, but what if they forget, or say something to me or each other and are overheard?” “But by then you’ll surely be out of diapers again, unless of course you’re little Iris. So then you can prove that you are not wearing them, and so are not a baby. And I am not saying that you should tell them; I just hope to make you a little less nervous that they may find out: I see that more as unwanted than as disastrous. I think it would only get disastrous *if* they find out, and then *if* they let it slip or are overheard, and then *if* someone learns about it who would want to hold that over you, and then *if* that person manages to convince others while you are not even wearing them anymore. That is a lot of ‘if’s, and you can’t let your life be ruled by such remote possibilities.”

This took a moment for Iris to sink in and realize she could think of no objections to this reasoning, but then she felt very relieved. Her mother was right, and she had been getting so worked up over something that was quite unlikely. She would still do her best to keep her diapers hidden for as long as she needed them, but she didn’t have to be in fear of discovery all the time. She gave a big sigh, and said “Thanks Mom, that helps a lot.” “Sometimes thoughts can run away with us, and make something small really big. Then it helps if someone else puts it in perspective. Look here, all done. Let’s get you in it.” She passed the jumpsuit over to Iris. “Will you put it on me?” “No, you’re mature enough to dress yourself today. I’ll just close it up at the back.” With all the stress and its release, Iris wanted to be taken care of and cuddled like little Iris, but she had to agree that it was best to keep those separate: she wouldn’t want her mother to mix things up either. So she nodded and put on the jumpsuit. Then she turned her back to her mother, who attached the hooks to the eyes and then closed the zipper. Now big Iris was locked in her diaper and clothes, and the thought gave her a little shiver. She turned around and gave her mother a hug, squeezing her firmly. “Thanks Mom, for working out a good compromise and for helping me with my fears.” “You’re very welcome, my dear. I guess I’m gradually learning a bit about how to be a mother to a teenage daughter. But this all has taken quite a lot of time, and we should really get going. Let’s see what you need to take. The antibiotics you need to take before dinner. And I think you should take a spare diaper, well hidden, just in case. A pull-up would probably be enough.” Iris immediately wanted to protest, until her mother mentioned the ‘well-hidden’. She could see that the alternative - not bringing a spare - would be worse, if something happened like another bout of diarrhea.

Her jumpsuit had no back pockets, only those on the side, and they were not big enough to put her phone in, so she needed a bag anyway. She decided on her black leather handbag, and started to put a few things in it when her mother stopped her. “Let me try to find a black plastic bag for the pull-up. Then we put that on the bottom, and it will almost be like a false bottom, and even if someone would look into your bag it would not be visible. Iris agreed and her mother went into the storage area, where she of course had a lot of stuff for packing and wrapping. She came back quickly with a small black package. Iris opened the bag to check that her mother had chosen the plain white pull-ups, and not the Goodnites with the violet print, which she had. Then she put it at the bottom of her bag, and packed the rest on top. Of course her mother had to add “You need to bring something for

over the jumpsuit, in case you decide to go outside.” First Iris thought she’d bring her jeans jacket, but then she remembered how its tight fit accentuated her diapered behind, so instead she took a zipper sweater that was pretty big on her. She managed to get that into the handbag as well, folded neatly because her mother was watching. With that she suddenly felt a twinge in her wrist again, so she got the wrist brace and her mother helped her put on. Her mother noticed the locking bracelet that was still on the other wrist (see Figure 1), and remembered that she found a key on a necklace in the plastic bag that Mrs. Fletcher gave them last, that might be the one opening the bracelet. So she got it, and indeed it opened the bracelet. Iris was glad to have one less thing to worry about how to explain to her friends, so they took it off.

By then it was already five to one, so they rushed downstairs, put the pill in her bag, and quickly left. Luckily it wasn’t far; even with her bicycle Iris usually managed in 10 to 15 minutes. During the ride her mother told her she should call when she was ready to be picked up. But it should be no later than 7PM, because she needed to be in bed an hour earlier today since she skipped her nap. “And we must make sure you take your pill. I can ask Mrs. King to check if you take it, because you will probably be distracted. But if you think you can handle the responsibility, I won’t, and just check that you took it when you come home. If you need to take it then it might be a bit less effective, so if you want to get rid of the infection and the incontinence as best you can, you need to take it before dinner.” Iris was pleasantly surprised again that her mother gave her the responsible option, but she agreed with the importance of not forgetting it, so she replied “I’m afraid I might forget it, so it would probably be better to ask Mrs. King. But then you need to explain what I need it for?” “Not really. I can just say that you need it, and leave it at that. Most adults are sensitive enough not to press the issue if no reason is given. I don’t know if your friends will be equally sensitive, but they might just as easily ask questions if they see you take it yourself.” “OK, let’s ask Mrs. King then.”



Figure 24 The locking bracelet with the matching key necklace

When they reached their destination and her mother was parking the car, Iris was getting impatient, because they were a bit late, and unbuckled her seat belt. “Iris, you know better than to unbuckle before the car has fully stopped. I thought we had a deal that you would always wait for me to unbuckle you, unless someone might see, and I give you explicit permission.” “But surely that is only while I am little.” “Hmm, I guess we didn’t really say. But once Sabine’s old car seat arrives, you’ll have to wait when you are not little anyway, so why not start now. Apparently you are not yet mature enough to put safety first always, even when you are in a rush. So buckle up again, and wait for me this time.” Arguing would only take more time, so Iris rebuckled as she was told. Then it was only a few more seconds before the car was neatly parked. Her mother then used the opportunity to test if she could press the buckle by squeezing herself between the two front seats, but the regular car seat buckle was too far in the back for her to reach. She knew the car seat buckle was further to the front, so she hoped she could operate that one, but for now she just gave Iris permission to unbuckle herself, and then they walked up to the King’s house and rang the doorbell.

## 7. AIM

Anna opened the door, welcomed her, and said that Mindy was there already. With some people that might be a bit of a sneer about her being a bit late, but Anna just meant what she said. They both went in, and Mrs. Tomas went to speak for a moment with Mrs. King, while the friends greeted

each other with their custom 'AIM forever' greet – AIM standing for the first letters of their names. First they talked about what everyone was wearing. Anna wore a plain white t-shirt with a pair of loose overalls on top, looking a bit like a tomboy, as usual. All three owned a pair of denim overalls, and sometimes they agreed to all wear them. If not for her friends, Iris probably wouldn't own a pair, since they were a bit inconvenient in the bathroom, and not that mature-looking. Mindy wore stretch jeans and a sweater with a horse head on it in glitter. That one was new, and Mindy told them that she got it at the camp gift shop. Neither girl had seen Iris in her jumpsuit before, so that got some attention as well, but the wrist brace fairly soon distracted from it. Iris told the part of the story she was willing to share, like she rehearsed. Once Anna heard it was not serious, she lost interest, often having bruises, scrapes, sprains and such herself, but Mindy was more sympathetic and gave her a hug for comfort.

Anna was turning on the TV and connecting her laptop to it, and soon they were looking at the vacation pictures of Mexico. She had taken some herself on her mobile, but her father had a good camera, and those were a lot better quality, although not always of the subjects the girls were most interested in. There were quite a few photos, but neither Mindy nor Iris had been to Mexico, and Anna told them a lot about what they had visited. It was interesting, but after a while it got a bit much, and occasionally one of the others called out "Next" to keep it going. Anna didn't seem too bothered by that. Then Mindy suddenly remarked 'Is that girl on a leash? She must be at least 10 years old!' Iris had also seen a girl with a pink strap around her hips, woven through the belt loops of her pants, which continued to the hand of her father, but she did not want to start having a conversation about leashes. Anna explained "That is not really a leash, more of a security line. We visited several places where there is a risk that children get kidnapped by gangs, so some parents choose to use such a line. You might compare it to a safety line when climbing in the mountains."

Iris noticed Anna was a bit defensive about the leash, and started wondering if Anna had been on such a 'safety line' as well, but she was still reluctant to participate in the subject, afraid her friends might notice something about her interest in them, so she kept quiet.

Several photo's later Mindy exclaimed "Hey, are you wearing such a safety line as well !?" She had recognized the webbing strap around Anna's shorts, even though the leash part was not visible and the webbing was dark blue. Anna reluctantly admitted that her parents got one for her as well. "How does it work?" Mindy wanted to know. That surprised Iris a bit; usually Mindy was quite aware of the other's feelings and would not press an issue if the other one felt uncomfortable about it. Right at that moment Mrs. King approached them to bring a platter with healthy snacks, mostly cherry tomatoes, tiny cucumbers and such, but also some dice of cheese and olives. She said to her daughter, "let me get it, so you can show them." "Mom!" "Anna, never be ashamed of security measures." She went into the wardrobe cupboard and brought them a line of about 8 foot (2.6m) made out of blue webbing, with at one end a small loop and at the other one a bigger loop. Anna took it, still a bit reluctant, looked for a moment at Iris but saw that her outfit didn't have belt loops, and so she went up to Mindy and asked her to stand up. She did so without hesitation, and Anna started weaving the strap through the belt loops of her jeans, starting at the back.

Iris couldn't really believe that suddenly her friends were playing around with a leash, but used the opportunity to pee in her diaper while the others were distracted. She still felt anxious about her secret interest in such things, but on the other hand Mindy's inquiries made her briefly wonder if her friends could also have some interest in her new hobby. Then she quickly dismissed such a wild idea – Mindy was obviously just curious for a moment about something unusual. When Anna had woven the strap all around the jeans, she took the other end of the strap and pushed it through the small loop. Then she put her hand through the bigger loop at the other end of the strap. Now the part

around Mindy's waist was like a noose, which grew tighter when Anna gave a pull on the leash. Iris realized that the belt loops were needed to keep it in place if the leash part wasn't pulled, or else it would just slide down. It was a very simple construction, but quite effective nonetheless, and the 'wearer' had no chance to open any buckle or wriggle out as long as the leash was firmly held, unless she dropped her pants while the leash was not taut. When Anna pulled the leash, Mindy giggled, and tried to get away, but of course the leash stopped her, and Anna was easily strong enough to keep her from pulling loose.

"It is a bit like when we used to play horsey." Mindy concluded. "I used to love to be the horse. Haven't done that in ages." Then she sat down on the couch again without any attempt to remove the line. So Anna sat down again too, on the other side of Iris, having put the leash loop around her wrist. Now the leash ran across Iris' lap, and she realized it worked a bit like a seatbelt, making it harder for her to get up. Mindy turned to her and asked if she wanted to try it too. Iris declined, and Anna added it wouldn't work well without belt loops anyway. Then Mindy mentioned that Iris was pretty quiet, and asked if there was something bothering her about the leash. Since Iris had decided to tell them about Sabine anyway, she concluded that this was as good an opportunity as any to tell them about her friend, and the restrictive measures that she needed. She explained "Actually, I saw leashes, harnesses, and such used on an old friend of mine in the past week." That got their attention. Then she started telling them about how she met her friend from elementary school recently, and how Sabine had stood up for her at school. Followed by the tragic story of her father's death and her meningitis leading to the Acquired Brain Injury. That even made stoic Anna shed some tears. Then she continued with her visiting them, and deciding to stay for a week to help out, of course only mentioning her supportive role as a 'babysitter' and companion. She described the issues with Sabine's disability, and the security measures that her mother had to use, including the leashes that triggered her story. Finally she told a bit about their outings, to the aquarium and the waterfalls.

Mindy concluded "Wow, and I thought you must have had a boring vacation, staying at home." And Anna added "That was very nice of you, to help them out like that." Iris blushed a little from that praise, but countered "Well, it may have started out that way, but I ended up having a lot of fun as well. Even with her limitations, Sabine is still my old friend. And when her mother was around, and I didn't need to be the responsible one, I could really relax and play with her at her level, without worrying what people might think of me, like at school." That triggered a question from Mindy: "Did you enjoy that, playing at the level of a three-year-old? You are always so mature." "Well, I guess I discovered that I might have been trying a bit too hard to be mature all the time, and that it was a relief when I stopped for a while and just let go."

Since this was getting uncomfortably close to her secret, she quickly diverted the attention, "But anyway, you can see why a leash, or safety line, means a bit more to me than just something to fool around with." Mindy reacted, "Oh yes, of course. I guess we should stop playing with it, since it is so serious for Sabine, and not a play thing." She stood up and pulled at the leash, so that Anna would let go of it and she could take it off. "Oh no, not at all. I just explained that it was a bit different for me, but please don't stop for my sake." And to prove her point she gave a pull on the leash that still stretched before her, so that Mindy fell back on the couch. She landed half on Iris, which resulted in a brief wrestling match. Mindy was not that big or strong either, so Iris could usually hold her own. Anna didn't join in – they had already found out that even with the two of them teaming up, they couldn't win from their big friend. Not only because of her physique, but her brother was on the school wrestling team, and sometimes practiced with, or rather on, her. This time Iris had the extra advantage of the leash hampering her friend, and after a brief struggle Mindy surrendered and they

sat down again in their normal places. Iris realized it was a good thing she was wearing the wrist brace.

"And when are we going to meet Sabine?" Anna asked. That felt like a complicated question for Iris: on the one hand she thought it could be wonderful for Sabine to have more people to play with and stimulate her, and she would love all of her friends to get along together, but there was always the safety issue with Sabine's tantrums. And even while she was sure that Nanny would keep her interest in the restrictions to herself, there always would be a risk that Sabine didn't, and for instance want to give her a bottle again or ask why she wasn't on a leash. "Oh, would you like to?" When both nodded, she continued "I don't really know if that could work, with the safety issues and such. I'll ask her mother if it would be possible, and how. I'm not even sure yet if she can come to visit me."

Then she said "But enough about Sabine and me; let's look at the rest of Anna's pictures." Anna was happy enough to continue with her presentation, but Mindy gave her a pensive look for a moment. Then they focused on the photos of Mexico again. After a while Mindy got up and started to move away, but Anna held on to the leash and asked in an imitation of her mother's voice "And where do you think you are going, young lady?" "Can I please go to the bathroom?" Mindy played along. Anna made a show of looking all around for danger, and finally let go of the leash and said, "OK, but hurry." Anna and Iris already had trouble keeping a straight face, but when Mindy came back and offered the leash back to Anna, solemnly thanking her, all three collapsed in a bout of giggling. Anna did accept the leash again though.

After a while they watched the rest of the pictures. Then they started questioning Mindy about her camp, but then Billy, Anna's 16 year old brother, came down. He told them he needed to watch a sports game, and more or less sent them off to Anna's room, since they were not watching the TV anymore after all. Anna started to protest, but Mindy suggested "Let's go up to your room, and talk about Billy's latest school results and his love life," and dragged Anna along to the stairs, using the leash Anna was still holding. That clearly hit a nerve, but they ignored his "Don't you dare!" and disappeared upstairs giggling.

When they entered Anna's room, their host waited next to the door to close it after they came in, and for fun she gave Iris a slap on her behind to hurry her inside. Both her friends immediately noticed that the slap didn't sound normal, and Anna blurted out "You're wearing a diaper!" Suddenly the whole world came crashing down on Iris, and she realized that the secret was out. She burst into crying uncontrollably. Anna quickly closed the door and steered her towards the bed, where Mindy was already sitting, and put her down between the two of them. At first they were just holding her and consoling her, saying that it wasn't so bad, and other platitudes. When she finally calmed down, Mindy said "I was already wondering: normally you constantly run off to the bathroom, and I had been curious how you would cope with that jumpsuit, and if you would need help with it, but you didn't go at all. But why are you wearing a diaper?" Haltingly Iris told them about her bladder infection, that Mrs. Fletcher helped her along with Sabine's incontinence material, and when the doctor confirmed the UTI, she had to go with her mother to Fred Meyers to get her own in full view of everyone. She continued that it was better now, but she didn't have full control again yet, so she still needed the protection.

Mindy replied "I'm sorry to hear that, but I don't fully understand why you are *that* upset about it. You're just wearing them temporarily for a medical condition. My grandma needs them all the time. And to be honest I still wear protection when I sleep away from home, because I occasionally have an accident then." "Oh, you do?" Iris asked with surprise written all over her face. Anna added "My

mother made me wear a diaper under my onesie too for the car ride to Mexico, and occasionally there too, when there might not be a safe place to use a bathroom where we were going. She actually put one on herself then as well.” This caused Iris to start crying again, but now from relief. Her friends didn’t judge her or tease her, and actually occasionally were required to wear them too. So they would be careful not to tell anyone else, because then Iris might tell others about them as well. She put her arms around both her friends and firmly hugged them.

Mindy asked again “So why does it upset you so much?” Then Iris explained that she had had an accident in elementary school, and had afterwards been teased a lot for being a baby. Sabine protected her from worse, but it was still a sore point. And with her small size, and her puberty only just starting, she was so scared that it would happen all over again in high school, if anyone learned about her needing diapers. Talking about her fears caused more tears, but it was also a relief to be able to share them, and no longer need to worry about her diapers being detected. There was so much emotion coming out though, that it took her long to calm down. So Anna asked “Would you feel better if we put on a diaper for today as well?” Iris was so startled that she stopped crying and gazed at her friend unbelievably, with her mouth dropped open. Would they really do that for her? She glanced at Mindy, who nodded her consent. Anna continued “We still have half a pack left from the vacation; let me get some.”

She came back with two diapers that were mostly white, with a few yellow and blue lines on them. She gave one of them to Mindy, who folded it open and then exclaimed “These are huge. My pants will never fit over them!” She actually sounded disappointed. Then Iris remembered the secret contents of her bag, and offered Mindy her spare pull-up. Her friend nodded gratefully, took it, and said she’d change in the bathroom. She commented on that they were a boring white, and that she herself preferred the goodnites with the cute prints. Iris explained that she thought the white ones were less childish, which Mindy understood. But she didn’t mind since they were hidden anyway, and then left the room.

That left Anna with the diaper in her hand, looking doubtfully at it. “I don’t really know how to put it on. My mother always did it, but I can’t ask her without needing to explain.” “Well, I’ve learned how to do it on Sabine, so I guess I could do it. But isn’t that weird?” “Hmm, we see each other naked in the shower at gym anyway, and it was weird when my mother did it too, so let’s just get it over with.” Then she just stood there, without taking her clothes off. Iris asked if she shouldn’t get undressed, and Anna replied “Oh, yes, of course. When my mother diapered me for the first time, I didn’t want to, and so I didn’t cooperate. So she just started undressing me, and that sort of became our routine. Strangely enough it is sort of nice to be taken care of that way.” “Well, that is what I do with Sabine too.” Iris replied, and started undoing the overalls buckles. They seemed stuck, but Anna explained that she hated it when they opened by themselves, so she had bent them somewhat to make them stay closed better. And when Iris pushed harder they suddenly opened. The sides were wide enough that they didn’t need to be unbuttoned, and the overalls dropped around Anna’s ankles. She stepped out of them and lay down on the bed.

Suddenly it felt weird and wrong again to pull the panties off her, but Iris said she would do it, so she just did it without looking. Then she quickly shoved the diaper under her friend. Anna was looking away too, obviously just as uncomfortable. She told Anna that she would normally apply cream to prevent a diaper rash, but that shouldn’t be necessary now, so she quickly closed the tapes and let Anna get up again. Still distracted by the bizarre situation, she held up the overalls for Anna, who stepped into them and let Iris pull them up. This time the side buttons needed to be opened though, since the thick diaper made Anna’s hips wider, and when she rebuttoned them the overalls stayed up. But when she started with the straps, she realized that she had put them on Anna back-to front,

and the bib was in the back. At that moment Mindy knocked on the door and asked if she could come in again, which Anna confirmed. She joined in the laughter about the backwards overalls, but then suggested to Anna "Since we're doing such crazy things anyway, why don't you put them on this way, and see how that looks. Perhaps you can start a new fashion trend." That obviously was a joke, since Anna was not at all interested in fashion. So they took one strap each, and hooked it to the bib in the back. Anna moved around for a bit, bent over and such, and concluded that it didn't fit quite right this way, but it was definitely doable. The back pockets were less suitable to put her hands in though. The piece where the straps connected to ran sort of in between her already reasonably-sized breasts, pushing them slightly apart, but also accenting them, and Anna concluded that at least the bib and buckles didn't rub on her nipples this way. "Oh, you have that too?" Iris asked. "With my skirt all that gets annoying after a while as well." "I usually just pull the shoulder straps a bit tighter, so the bib ends above them." "Good idea."

To return the favor from before, Iris slapped on Anna's behind, which made the same dull sound that alerted her friends to her diaper in the first place. Then Anna did the same to Mindy, but of course the pull-up made a less-noticeable difference. They took a look at each other and concluded that you had to look closely to see Mindy was wearing protection, although the stretch jeans were far from ideal for hiding them. And with Anna the loose overalls hid her diaper quite well, just like Iris's jumpsuit. Iris was doing her best to just goof around with the others, but of course inside she was amazed and thrilled that her friends didn't seem to mind walking around in diapers and on a leash. She tried to calm herself down, and tell herself that this was just something that would happen only once, and that it was more curiosity than serious attraction, but she couldn't help herself fantasizing about a playdate with the three of them plus Sabine, all acting and treated like irresponsible toddlers. But of course that would never happen, if only because she would never be brave enough to suggest anything like that. So she pushed those thoughts away, and started asking Mindy all about horse camp.

So Mindy told them about the horses, the fellow participants and the leaders, and also admitted that she had worn pull-ups every night, but managed to keep them hidden from the other girls. Of course she didn't need help with those, and only one camp leader knew and helped her dispose of them, although only after the first night it was actually wet. Then suddenly Iris's mobile rang. She saw it was Nanny, and realized that she should have called them in the morning. She excused herself to the other two, and went into the landing to find a suitable place to talk privately. She explained the circumstances to Nanny and apologized for not calling herself, while Nanny apologized for disturbing her while with her friends. But she wanted to make sure everything was OK with Iris. Iris explained that she had a 'mature' day, and that her mother did her best to adjust, and even let her stay at home alone for a short while. But that she on the other hand insisted that Iris couldn't access her diaper even when visiting her friends, and that she had even used the safeword. Nanny was glad to hear they were using that, even if it didn't have the effect that Iris wanted in the end, but that they managed to find a compromise. She admitted she would have found it hard to decide what she would have done in her mother's place, and that she would probably have looked for a compromise as well, since Iris had been quite naughty.

Then Iris told her about her friends finding out about her diaper, and that they had put one on out of solidarity too. That made Nanny laugh, and she told Iris that she was really glad that her friends accepted hers. Iris added that she had told them the sad story about Sabine, but of course not her own treatment at the second half of her stay there. She concluded with that her friends asked when they could meet Sabine, but that she was not sure how they could organize that, and that she was also afraid that Sabine might unwittingly betray her secret. Nanny understood, but also agreed that

it could be very good for her daughter to have other playmates, so she said she would think about the possibility. Of course Iris wanted to know how Nanny and Sabine were doing too, and Nanny explained that they hadn't done anything special, but that Sabine was gradually getting used to being with the two of them again, and she thought she might even want to talk to Iris now.

Of course Iris was very happy to hear that, and Nanny quickly put her on. "Hello Sabine" "Hello, Iwris" "I missed you." "I missed you too" Then it was quiet for a while. When Iris was together with Sabine, they could easily talk about all sorts of things, but on the phone like this Iris suddenly didn't quite know what to say, and in how far Sabine was still feeling angry. Then she had a brainwave: "How is Bobo doing?" Bobo was Sabine's favorite plushy toy, an elephant, and the question allowed Sabine to tell her all her feelings as if they were Bobo's, about how sad he had been that his friend wasn't there anymore, and how unfair that was, and that he wished that Iris was part of their family and would live with them forever. Iris told Bobo that she had been sad too, and she was already making plans about coming to visit again soon, and that she had even asked the mothers if it would be possible for Sabine and Bobo to come play at Iris's. But she didn't know if that was doable. It was a bit hard for Iris to decide what to tell, because she didn't want to raise hope with Sabine on things that might not be feasible, so she decided not to mention yet that her other friends would also like to meet her. She concluded that she expected to come to Sabine for a short visit soon, and perhaps once her father went back to work they could do more together again. Sabine wished her fun with her daddy, and Iris said they would talk on the phone again soon. Then they disconnected.

When she entered Anna's room again, she apologized for the long time she was away, but explained that Sabine had had a hard time with her suddenly not being there anymore, and hadn't wanted to talk yesterday. So when she did want to talk today, Iris needed to take a bit of time with her. She added that she hadn't yet told her about the two of them possibly meeting her, since she didn't want to raise expectations yet. That sounded logical to the other two, and with that the subject was closed and they went back to Mindy's camp. To Iris's surprise Anna was holding Mindy's leash again; she had thought that after Mindy changed she would have had a good opportunity to take it off, but apparently chose not to. When Anna saw her looking at it, she handed the leash to Iris with the words "Here, you take care of our pony for a while." This of course caused more laughter. Iris noticed that both her friends seemed to be really enjoying themselves – perhaps because they hadn't seen each other for a while. And she was having a great time too. Now that she had no worries anymore about her diaper, it was easy to relax and have fun. It was a different kind of fun than with Sabine. That was more fun for little Iris, while these two suited mature Iris better, and she felt lucky to have both.

After a while Mrs. King called them down for dinner. Anna suddenly realized that she was still wearing her overalls backwards, and tried to open the buckles to put them back on normally. But that wasn't so easy, behind her back, with the stubborn buckles requiring two hands to open. She called down "We'll be down in just a minute." "No Anna, we need you down right now. Everybody is waiting for you." Anna shrugged and gave up on the overalls, and opened the door for them to go down. Mindy had originally wanted to help Anna with the overalls, but Iris wanted to see how Anna coped with them herself, and held Mindy's leash back. Then Mindy suddenly took her sweater off and pulled it on backwards too, while they were going down. At first Iris didn't understand, but then realized that she was adding credibility that they had been goofing around with their clothes, in case Anna got questions about the back-to-front overalls.

Anna's parents and Billy were already sitting at the dining table, and the girls took the other three seats. Billy mostly ignored them, as usual. Mr. King looked at Anna for a moment as if he was seeing something different, but didn't quite know what. Mrs. King obviously spotted Anna's backwards



overalls and Mindy's sweater, but just shook her head briefly and ignored it. She tried to give Iris her pill without drawing much attention to it, but Iris saw that at least Mindy noticed, and she deliberately looked at the pill, then Iris's crotch area, and finally to her face. Iris gave a brief nod that the pill was indeed for her bladder infection. As expected the meal was healthy, but also tasty, so they enjoyed it. Billy talked a bit with his father about his learning permit for driving the car, and Anna asked if he would be able to drive on his own soon, so that he could chauffeur them around. "That is never going to happen! And there are several restrictions anyway for the first period, when an adult driver needed to be present, and only family members can be in the car."

When dinner was over, it was 6:30PM and Iris called her mother that she was ready to be picked up. Mindy was on her bike - her parents didn't have time to drive all the kids everywhere – and so she left quickly to not be on the streets alone too late. Naturally the 'safety line' was removed from Mindy's pants, and returned to the wardrobe closet. They extensively said their goodbyes with their 'AIM forever' routine, and promised to meet again soon. But Iris told them that she was expecting her father home soon, and she wanted to be with him too, so she might not be available as much in the coming week. Her friends of course knew about her father's work, and were used to Iris's irregular availability. Then Mindy got on her bike and pedaled off. Iris's mother must have been ready to leave as soon as she got the call, because she arrived not long after Mindy had left. Of course Iris said goodbye to Anna once more, and thanked her for her support. Then she also thanked her parents for their hospitality, after a nudge from her mother. Then they left.

## 8. A Shorter Evening and Longer Night

When Anna closed the door behind them, Iris couldn't wait to tell her mother everything that happened in the afternoon. She let her mother steer her to her booster seat and buckle her up, all the while telling her about the leash, the discovery of her diapers, and her friends putting one on as well. Her mother had taken place behind the wheel, and started the car when she interrupted Iris. "I'm so glad you had such a great time, and I want to hear all the details, but now I have to concentrate on driving, so please save your stories until we are home." Iris knew this was important to her mother, so she tried to be quiet, but when she remembered the phone call with the Fletchers, she just had to tell her mother that Sabine had talked to her again, and things seemed to be OK again between them. "That is great, but I wished I had brought your pacifier along, to keep you quiet."

*Figure 25 Seat Belt Buckle Guard*

Luckily the drive wasn't long, and once they were in the garage Iris could start talking again. In the mean time she tried to unbuckle her seat belt when the car had fully stopped in the garage, not making the same mistake as when they arrived at Anna's earlier. But she didn't manage to open the seat belt buckle: there was something in the way. Looking she saw a red plastic cap over the buckle, with a few small slits that her finger wouldn't fit through. (see Figure 25) By then her mother had opened her door, and said "I see you discovered the buckle guard. After you opened the seat belt once again this afternoon, I thought it would help you remember to



wait. And once we get Sabine's old car seat, you'll have to wait for me anyway. It is actually a very simple thing that I once found at a garage sale, and thought it might sooner or later come in handy."

Iris wasn't happy about this; again a restraint for mature Iris. But she had to admit that she broke the rule earlier, and that she agreed to be secured in Sabine's car seat as well, so she could not think of a good reason to complain. In the end she ignored it for now, and let her mother press her key down one of the slits to push the buckle open. Good thing they were in the garage, so no one else could see it. She picked up telling her mother about Sabine some more, while they went into the house. "Iris, as we agreed you'll go to be an hour earlier than normal today, but we can talk for 15 minutes before we need to get you ready." She recognized that Iris was still way too excited to go to sleep now, and since the bladder infection seemed to be clearing up now, perhaps the afternoon nap would not be so necessary anymore, so a bit later should be alright.

They talked in more detail about what had happened in the afternoon. Her mother agreed that it was likely that Mindy's interest in the leash was a one-time thing; teenagers often were liking something one day, and then not the next. That her friends offered to wear diapers was unusual, but perhaps because it had been so recently that they had to wear them, it was not such a big step as it might have been for them. And putting them on voluntarily was quite different than being forced to wear them. Still, it seemed like they did it purely to support Iris, and she hadn't heard anything to suggest it might be more than that. She concluded "So, I think it is wise to see it purely as a one-off, and not expect or even hope that something like that might occur again. By the way, do you realize that you expect your friends not to tell anyone about *your* diaper wearing, but you have already told me, and perhaps even Mrs. Fletcher, about *their* diaper wearing?" "But that is different!" "In what way?" Now Iris didn't know what to say. It felt quite different for her, but why? She came up with "But Nanny and you would never tell someone else!" "That is true, but do you think if Anna told her mother that she would start telling everyone about yours?" Iris realized that was not really a difference, and so she started wondering if she had betrayed her friends' trust. That made her feel awful, because she felt so strongly about them keeping silent, and now it became clear she was the one who blabbed at the first opportunities she had.

She started to tear up, and looked at her mother with big, sad eyes. "Come here, sit on my lap. I'm sorry to upset you like this, and I do think it is different. I just want to make you aware that you're walking on thin ice, and need to be very careful. Because trust is hard to earn, but easy to lose." That made Iris feel a bit better, and she inquired, "In what way do you think it is different then?" "Well, you only told the two people who know about your own diaper wearing and your special interests. In other words the people who are already in on your secret, and you already trust to keep it. And for you the fear of it becoming known is likely to be a lot bigger than for them. So I think there is a difference, but it is not so clearly defined. Therefore I thought it best to make you aware of the thin line you're walking." Iris nodded, and felt relieved that her mother confirmed that she had not done something horrible. She leaned into her, and got a firm hug.

"There was one more thing I wanted to warn you about. As we talked about before, your father has a bit of trouble realizing you are growing up, and I'm sure he doesn't yet realize that you are masturbating. It is probably best not to mention to him that you do, and to make sure that he doesn't catch you at it. Otherwise he might want to prevent it, to keep you pure. He once mentioned the possibility of a chastity belt for you, to make sure you keep your virginity and not get pregnant, and although I'm pretty sure he was joking, it's probably best not to test that." "A what?" "A chastity belt is something that is best known from the middle ages, where knights supposedly locked their women into metal panties to prevent them from having sex with others while they were away at war. But there are modern day equivalents that are suitable for full-time wearing, although of

course not so comfortable as regular panties.” “That sounds horrible. Thanks for the warning. Not that I have much opportunity at the moment anyhow, in diapers all the time, and you making sure that I can’t get into them.” Iris replied with a hint of disapproval in her voice.

“Yes, about that. I hope it is clear to you now that you are never allowed to put your hands in your diapers, even if you are not little, and even if you think they are still clean?” “Yes Mommy, I won’t do it ever again.” “OK, then I will no longer take measures to make sure mature Iris can’t, during the day. Of course for little Iris that is different, and also at night, when the temptation is the strongest. So from now on mature Iris can wear pull-ups during the day to practice her control, and wear what she wants.” “Oh, thank you Mom!” She hugged her mother back and gave her kisses everywhere she could reach. “I actually liked wearing the jumpsuit, apart from that I couldn’t take it off. It is very soft and cute, and no risk of the diaper showing or my t-shirt popping out of my pants. But of course once I don’t need the diapers anymore, it will probably be too inconvenient in the bathroom.” “I’m glad you like it. I wondered if it would ever get worn when I bought it, but it was only a few dollars, so I could take the risk. And if you wear it when I’m around, you can always ask me to help you.” “Yeah, but if I need to go urgently that might take too much time.” “That’s true.”

Then her mother continued “And which daughter will I have tomorrow? Little or Mature?” “Well, like I said I want to be mature when Daddy comes home. You still haven’t heard anything?” “No, I haven’t. Those storms are hard to predict, so we just have to be patient.” “I sort of would like to be little again tomorrow, but can we then switch before he comes home?” “Like I said I don’t want to switch whenever you feel like it, but in this case I will allow it, since we define beforehand when you will be mature again.” Then she put Iris back on her feet and said, “But now it is high time for this little girl to get to bed and snuggle up in her lovely sleeping bag.” For a moment Iris face clouded over, because it was so nice to sit here and talk, and she didn’t want to go to bed so early, but her nice sleeping bag suddenly sounded very attractive as well, feeling how exhausting the day had been for her, so she just nodded. Her mother took her hand and walked her upstairs to the bathroom.

They followed the same routine as the day before, and at the toilet Iris concluded that she had felt no more signs of diarrhea or constipation, and the her bladder control seemed to improve slowly. Especially now her friends knew she needed diapers for a while, she didn’t feel so much of a hurry in getting fully potty trained again; especially when she was little she enjoyed the diapering and not needing to rush to the toilet all the time. But of course she needed to keep working on it anyway, because she definitely needed to be in full control again when school started. But perhaps she could keep using them at night?

At the diapering table her hands were secured quickly, and she pulled on them a bit to have the feeling again of the restriction: after an exciting day of being mature, having her choices taken away again felt really good, and she felt all tension drain from her body. Her mother noticed too, and teased her a bit about it, but in a loving way. Then it was off to her bed. Her mother brought the baby monitor and activated it once more. As soon as Iris was in the sleeping bag, and it began to fill with air, she started to experience that floating feeling, and she felt her eyelids grow heavy. Her mother stroked her face a few times, and Iris managed to produce a ‘Love you Mom. Goodnight’ before she dropped off, and her mother quietly left the room.

Suddenly Iris was in a kindergarten, wearing childish overalls and a harness that was connected to somewhere behind her. She was playing with Sabine, Mindy and Anna, who were similarly attired. Their leashes were long enough to play together, but they could only reach each other’s arms, so that they couldn’t fight and one of Sabine’s tantrums would not put them in danger. They were all having a lot of fun, and occasionally wet their diapers. Then Iris’s father entered, greeted them, gave

Iris a kiss, and he said “Sleep well, my Nenita”, which was one of his pet names for Iris, meaning ‘little one’. Then Iris and Sabine were brought to a crib, where they were to nap together. Anna and Mindy were sharing the one next to theirs. When the crib door clanked closed and the lock engaged, Iris cuddled up to her friend and quickly drifted off to sleep.

## 9. Friday - Complete

“Wake up, my Maya!” That was Daddy’s voice! And Maya was the favorite of her pet names, meaning ‘Sparrow’. Iris opened her eyes and looked towards the door, for as far as her inflated hood allowed, and there was her father indeed. “Daddy!” Iris called out enthusiastically, and held out her arms for him. He came over to her, gave her a kiss on the forehead, and then lifted her up, sleeping bag at all, under her arms, and whirled her around. She squealed with joy. When her feet almost hit a cupboard, he slowed down and sat her back on the bed. Even though her father was more of an engineer than a manual laborer, he still had to often lend a hand with the physical work, and while he was not that tall, he was quite sturdy and strong. On the bed Iris needed to put her hands behind her to keep a sitting position; otherwise the sleeping bag would push her body back to a lying position.

“Daddy, when did you come home?” “It was very late. There was a sudden lull in the storm, and we had to get out quickly, so there was no opportunity to call. I got a ride from a colleague who dropped me off here, and by the time I got reception on my mobile, it was so late that I didn’t want to wake you. I guess I startled Mommy a bit by appearing in bed without warning. Anyhow, I have only slept for about 4 hours, but I wanted to get up at our regular time to get into the rhythm, and to surprise you. After breakfast I’ll probably go to bed for a few more hours, but in the afternoon I’d like to do something together. We’ll see how it works out. Mommy already told me a bit about your new interest, and the things you borrowed from Sabine. Would you be Daddy’s little girl for me today?” “Yes Daddy, of course I will.” The way her father asked, and the joy of him suddenly being there, made Iris immediately grant his wish, even though she had planned before to first be mature with him. She wanted him to also accept she was growing up, and treat her like her mother was trying to, but she had also missed little Iris yesterday, and she was sure there would be plenty of time for that later. “Daddy, I dreamed that you wished me good night.” “I really did that: when I came home I looked in on you for a moment. It sometimes happens that you register something from the real world and integrate it into your dream.” “Oh, OK. It was a nice dream, but it is even nicer that you are here again!”

“I guess I’ll leave it up to Mommy to get you ready for the day. Tomorrow I’ll see how that works, because I’d like to be able to take care of my little girl too. I’ll see you downstairs.” And with that he gave her one more kiss and left. He hadn’t opened the sleeping bag or let the air out, so Iris was stuck until her mother would come, but she was sure that would not be long. She dropped back on the bed smiling, because her big Daddy was here again, and they were going to have so much fun. And indeed within a few minutes her mother arrived and started their morning routine. She had already heard that Iris would be little today, so she brought a stack of clothes, and both the rainbow harness (see Figure 2), and the wrist leash (see Figure 15), which surprised Iris. After the sleeping bag was taken off, she was taken to the bathroom, where her mother unsnapped her body, put on gloves, and removed the diaper. Then the wrist leash was put on Iris, with the other part connected to a pipe above Iris’s reach. “Sweetie, why don’t you go on the toilet, and try to do a big one. If I’m not yet back when you are ready, go brush your teeth.” Then she left the bathroom.

Iris was left on her own, dressed only in the body, with the lower flaps folded underneath the rump part to not get dirty on the toilet. On one hand she found the wrist leash exaggerated – where would she be going to? But of course it was also exciting to be restrained again, and so she explored if she was really stuck. She knew by now she wasn't going to get the strap around her wrist off without the magnet, so she focused on the other end. She might be able to jump up and touch it, or perhaps standing on the toilet she might lean over and get near, but with neither it seemed likely that she could manipulate it well enough to get it open. And there would be a risk that she might hurt herself, and with her left wrist still sensitive she decided she was stuck. Apart from that she needed to use the toilet, so she just sat down and let go. The leash was not quite long enough to let her rest her hand in her lap relaxed: either she had to slightly pull, or let her hand hang slightly higher and to the side. Being confronted like that with her restriction made her feel a bit excited, and she was tempted to start rubbing herself in her sensitive area. But she wasn't cleaned there yet, so she thought she'd better postpone that until she was in the shower.

So she concentrated on excavating. There was not that much urine coming out, so she must have used her diaper well during the night. Number two was a little resistant at first, but pushing a little she got it going, and after the first harder piece the rest came out as normal, so she felt happy that the diarrhea was really over, and she wouldn't need the diaper for that anymore, or that syringe from yesterday. Of course not having control during the night was a bit worrying, but she wanted to first concentrate on getting full control back during the day. There didn't seem too much urgency for the night, so that could come later. Her mother wasn't back yet, so she wiped, which also involved pulling on the leash to be able to use both hands. Then she started brushing her teeth. Without anyone watching if she did a good job, she finished that pretty quickly, and was just wondering what to do when she heard her mother coming up the stairs again. She seemed to be making more noise than usual.

She entered, asking how Iris was doing. Iris told her that she managed both on the toilet, and her teeth were done as well. Her mother seemed to give her a questioning look for a moment, but then continued, "Let's get you cleaned up a bit. Since you wanted a bath, we can do that tonight, so you don't need to shower this morning." Iris's face lit up "You remembered! Oh, that will be fun," thinking back on the baths she had together with Sabine. Then she realized she wouldn't have an opportunity to pleasure herself now, and of course not during the day, and probably not in the bath either, unless she was left alone long enough and her hands were free. Her mother saw the disappointment on her face, and asked "Honey, what is it? Don't you want a bath?" "Oh yes Mommy. Don't worry, it's nothing." Her mother might be pretty open about her masturbating, but it still was not something she liked bringing up. And she realized that her mother had probably already given her the opportunity, leaving her alone, and then clearly letting her know she was coming back. So she would just have to wait for the next opportunity.

Her mother in the meantime had wet and lathered a wash cloth, but first let her wash her hands herself. Then she took off the body, and cleaned her face, neck, and under her armpits. With a large fluffy towel she dried her daughter off again, and by wrapping it around her she made it into a hug at the same time. Iris loved the feeling of the soft towel combined with the firm hug and rubbing her dry, and gradually felt more relaxed and littler. Her mother kept the towel wound around her, restricting her a bit because her arms were underneath, and kept close to her body. She released the wrist leash, and steered her daughter to the changing table. There she was lifted on, and the towel was draped over her to keep her warm. Of course her little hands were safely tucked away in the straps, and just for fun her mother rubbed her belly once more through the towel. "Shall we try out the pampers this morning?" Iris had already forgotten about the diapers her mother found

yesterday morning, but it seemed fun to her to get real baby diapers, so she nodded. They were definitely smaller than her other diapers, but the plastic at the sides still had a fair bit of overlap. Mama put on the locking plastic pants over them for extra safety in case they would leak. Of course she pulled the chain tight and put one of those new Master locks on, but she explained that these were the only ones they had, except for the pair they borrowed from the Fletchers. Otherwise a locking pair would not have been necessary. But to Iris it was another click that only moved the choice to make mistakes further away, and relaxation closer.

“When your father saw the bunny shortalls that you wore to the aquarium, he really wanted to see you in them, so I’ve brought those, together with the body that came with it.” (see Figure 26) Her mother paused for a moment to see if Iris would protest those very childish clothes. But Iris had very good memories of that day at the aquarium, dressed in the same clothes as Sabine. So if she could please her father with them, that was OK with her. Of course only as long as they stayed inside. While she was exploring how she felt about them, her mother seemed to read her mind and added “Don’t worry, I’ll make sure that you don’t have to wear them openly in public.” So Iris just nodded that she was fine with that. “I believe you wore tights underneath that time, but I don’t think you have any, and it is not warm enough to have your legs all bare, so I think we’ll have to make do with your black leggings. I should keep a look out for some new tights for you, or perhaps even a bodysuit with long arms and legs, so it is all the same color. It’s a bit of a motley mix of colors this way.” Iris agreed that she might not mind a childish look, but that she wouldn’t want a wild mix of mismatching colors – that wouldn’t be very adorable. And tights mostly used for children, so she had not wanted them anymore. But for little Iris they seemed suitable, so she simply said “Yes, Mommy.”

Her mother discovered that the dark green body didn’t open at the crotch, so she helped Iris off the changing table to dress her. When the body was on and buttoned at the back, Iris stepped into the black leggings that she also wore to the doctor under her skirtall. Then it was time for the shortalls, and her mother was puzzled for a moment by the construction, with the hood, and the straps that were fixed to the bib. Iris showed her that she first had to open the button flap and the zipper in the back, and unbutton the straps from the waist band in the back. Then Iris stepped into the leg holes, pulled them up to her waist, and stuck her head in the opening between the bib and the hood. Now the hood rested in her neck. She directed her mother to pull the straps down her back, cross them, and button them on the inside of the waist. Her mother didn’t need an explanation on how to close the zipper and button, and she also recognized the D-rings on the inside, so she added the other Master padlock to make sure Iris couldn’t take it off. Iris had planned not to mention the rings, so she might be able to do another miraculous escape trick, but that was foiled now. On the other hand it was nice to be all secure, and so she pulled a bit on the straps and stroked the bunny ears. Her mother had also found the Mary Janes shoes, put some black socks on her daughter, followed by the shoes. She even figured out how to use the screws at the end of the straps that would prevent Iris from taking them off. (see Figure 27)

Iris already wanted to go downstairs to show her clothes to her father, but her mother quickly grabbed her by the shortalls hood. “Wait a moment, young lady, you still need your harness!” Iris wanted to play and see if she could avoid getting the harness on, but on the other hand she also wanted its firm hug and the way it kept her in her chair at mealtimes. Before she could decide either way, her mother already had the harness on her, and with the loud click of the buckle at the back Iris realized her chance for mischief was gone again. She took off again towards Daddy, but her mother was prepared and kept a firm grip on the leash. Iris was forced to go down the stairs at a sedate pace, which her mother found way safer.



Figure 26 Kawaii Bunny Shortalls



Figure 27 Mary Janes Shoes

At the bottom of the stairs Iris started pulling again, and this time her mother let go of the leash, and Iris could run to her father at the kitchen table. “There is my Conejita! Let me look at you! Oh, how adorable you look.” Iris glowed with the praise, and turned around to show off all sides. “Daddy, what does Cone.. Conita, or something, mean?” “Conejita means ‘Little Bunny’ in Spanish. We didn’t use it that much back home, but it is quite appropriate now.” Iris nodded, and repeated “Conejita”. “Yes, that is it, my smart little bunny.” Iris went to her daddy and sat on his right leg. In the meantime her mother came to her with the red flower barrettes (see Figure 7) and put her hair in the unbraided pigtails again with them. Iris thought they were suitable for her current look, so she sat still to let her mother make the pigtails. Suddenly she felt a little pressure on the harness; apparently Daddy had grabbed the leash to make sure she stayed where she was. When her mother was ready Iris leaned into her father’s shoulder and asked “Daddy, will you feed me breakfast?” Her father looked at her mother for a moment, who responded “OK, for this one time. But next time you’ll need to sit in your own chair again.”

“But first let’s do the medication,” she continued. “Here is the last of your antibiotics for the UTI. Do you notice anything there anymore?” “It doesn’t hurt there at all anymore, Mommy. But I don’t think I have full control yet, especially not at night.” “Well, that was vulnerable with you anyway, and I think we just have to practice that again. I’d say that the bladder infection is over now, but to be safe we’ll use gloves when changing you for a few more days. And we don’t have to change your diaper so quickly anymore.” Iris thought that her mother had not been as diligent with that as Nanny had been anyway, but she didn’t say anything. “So you don’t need painkillers for the bladder infection anymore. But how is your wrist?” “I felt it a bit when I put my arm in the body, but it doesn’t seem so bad. I don’t need a painkiller for that.” “Shall we leave the brace off then for the morning? Then if you go out with Daddy in the afternoon you can have it on.” “OK.”

Her father made her a few sandwiches, cut them into little pieces, and fed her, while eating a large breakfast himself as well. Iris felt so happy, basking in the love of both her parents, and being kept very safe by them. She realized access to her diaper was blocked in 4 ways at the moment: the locking diaper pants, the back-button body without opening in the crotch, the locked shortalls, and the firmly-held harness. But at the moment she felt no reason to touch herself there anyway, just very happy and safe and relaxed. Her parents were talking about plans for the coming days. Like he already told Iris, her father had not slept much yet, so he was going back to bed for the morning, and her mother needed to go grocery shopping. Then in the afternoon Iris would go on a little birdwatching trip with her father, while her mother stayed at home because of the Special Needs



shop delivery. That reminded Iris of all the interesting things they had ordered, and she was tempted to say that she wanted to stay home to be there when they arrived, but of course she also wanted to go with Daddy, so she kept quiet again.

Then they started talking about her parents needing some time for finances, chores, etc., and her mother suggested that they could ask the Fletchers if Iris could go play with Sabine. Then they could also collect some more of Sabine's old things, and talk about if it would be possible for Sabine to come play with at their house as well. This was a big surprise for Iris, but she wasn't sure how she felt about going there tomorrow. It would be great fun to be with Sabine and Nanny again, but she also wanted to be with her daddy while he was here. But she knew from previous times that her father always needed to do things without her, and staying at home while he didn't have time for her was no fun anyway, so she decided that being with the Fletchers was way better than that. So she said "Oh yes, can I?" she looked at Daddy a little anxiously, not wanting to give him the impression that she didn't want to be with him, but he seemed happy enough with her answer.

Then on Sunday they had the birthday of little Raymond, her youngest cousin. For Monday they considering going somewhere fun with the three of them, and then on Tuesday her daddy would already need to get back to work. "Tuesday already?" Iris asked disappointed that her father would only be home for 4 days this time. "Yes Conejita, as you know they make the schedules in advance, so the delay because of the storm means I am home shorter this time. It would also not be fair to ask the current crew to stay longer because we were delayed in going home." Iris knew all of this, since it wasn't the first time it happened, but she still felt disappointed. So she nodded dejectedly. "So we will just have to make the days that we do have extra fun, starting from this afternoon. Because Daddy is tired now, and I can't watch birds if my eyes are falling closed," he joked.

They had finished breakfast anyhow, so Iris obediently stood up from his lap, and he left for the master bedroom, but not before handing the reins over to her mother. Iris wasn't sure what happened now, so she looked at her mother, who was also considering what to do next. After a few seconds she asked "Do you want to be a big girl and help Mommy clean up the breakfast and the dishes?" Iris was surprised that her mother apparently wanted her to suddenly be mature again, so she checked "Do you want me to be mature Iris now?" "Oh no, sorry dear, I wasn't clear. I was just asking if little Iris wanted to help me, without me needing to find some way to make sure she isn't going to be naughty again, and run off." Oh, that made more sense. Even though it would be fun to play, like to hide from Mommy, or sneak off and check her phone, her parents had been so nice to her that she decided she wanted to be helpful, "OK Mommy, I'll try." So her mother wove the reins through the back strap of her harness, so that it was safely out of the way. Then Iris started to collect everything on the table, to bring over to the sink and the fridge. She stacked the plates, with the knives on top, and then decided she could put a few more things on top, so that she wouldn't have to walk that often. Soon she managed to build a veritable tower with everything on the table. She was just thinking about how to pick it up when her mother stepped in, picked off the top items and told Iris to put them away. Iris pouted a little that her nice tower was broken down again, but obeyed.

When the kitchen was in order again, Mrs. Tomas sat down and took Iris on her lap. "Now, I need to do some grocery shopping, and I can't leave this little girl back home while her father is sleeping. So we'll go together, but I assume you don't want to go out dressed like this." It wasn't really a question, but Iris shook her head vigorously anyway. While she was talking, her mother had taken the leash out of the back strap again and kept it in her hand once more. "So I was first thinking we might put a coat on you, and it would hide the bunny face and ears. But the shorts part doesn't look like mature clothes either. Then I thought, instead of totally undressing you and put you into



something different, perhaps we could put the gray jumpsuit you wore yesterday on top. That way you'd still be dressed as little Iris, but no one would see, since the jumpsuit would cover all of it. How does that sound?" Iris remembered the last time they went to the store, and how she felt excited by wearing locked childish overalls without anyone noticing. So the idea appealed to her, but she had one question "But wouldn't the contours of the shortalls still be visible, especially the hood?" "That is a good question. Why don't we try it out, and see how noticeable it is. Or that perhaps it would look better if the hood hangs over the jumpsuit, like if you would be wearing a hoodie underneath."

So they went upstairs to Iris's room, where her mother closed the door before taking the harness off. Then she helped Iris into the jumpsuit (see Figure 23), and closed the back, first with the hood inside. They looked in the mirror, and indeed the jumpsuit bulged a bit in several places, especially where the hood was. So they tried it on the outside, but the pink hood didn't look right on the gray jumpsuit. Then her mother tried to fold the hood somewhat under the straps, and make it as flat as possible. It was still visible, but you had to look much closer to spot something was off, and considering people were not looking closely at others while doing their shopping anyway, Iris agreed "OK, this will do, but shouldn't we remove the pigtails?" "I think the look is cute for a young woman too, but if you don't feel comfortable with them I'll take the clips off." And so she did, but she also put the harness back on top of the jumpsuit.

"Now, I'm not sure how we can make little Iris stay close to me at the store. A leash will not be suitable, so unless you want to sit in the shopping cart seat, you might need to be mature for the duration of the shopping. I assume you don't want to behave too childish anyway, because you might draw attention to yourself. But if you don't do the seat, I will expect you to keep one hand at the cart at all times." Iris considered the alternatives. She would feel embarrassed if people would see her in the seat, but constantly holding the shopping cart was not that much fun, either. But the seat was somewhat different than for instance the booster seat in the car: she had seen other older girls in the shopping cart seat, just for fun, although that was mostly girls among each other goofing around. Suddenly she wished that she could just do what she liked without the risk of others judging and consequently teasing her, but that was not reality. "What about I sit in the seat and we tell people I have sprained my ankle, so that we are giving it a rest? Perhaps put a big bandage around it?" "Yeah, we can pretend that. A bandage seems a bit much though – why don't you just limp a bit?"

Now they had decided how Iris would be dressed and kept under control at the store, she was taken downstairs again, sat in her kitchen chair and attached to it with the anchor straps. That way her mother could make her shopping list without needing to keep a constant eye on Iris, and they were in each other's company. Iris tried to help with the shopping list by calling out all sorts of things she liked, which became so distracting that her mother went upstairs to get her pacifier and stuck it in her mouth. Iris could just take it out again, but she realized that she had not had it in for a few days now, even at night, so she kept it in, and just murmured her suggestions unintelligibly. When her mother was ready, and released her from the chair, she didn't even want to relinquish her paci, so her mother asked if she wanted to keep it in in the car then. Iris realized it was time to be a bit more mature now, and not draw attention to herself in the car and during the shopping, so she reluctantly took out the pacifier herself and gave it to her mother.

In the car her mother used the red plastic cap over the safety belt buckle again. Of course it wasn't escape-proof, since in contrast to the car seat harness, the seat belt could just be lengthened and slipped out of, but it stopped her from releasing herself prematurely, and in her current state of mind, half little, half mature, she found it fitting, and part of her longed for the real car seat that was so comfortable, and really secure as well. But she had no idea when the car would get the sun film,

and they could start using the car seat. Her mature part worried a bit about being locked in the seat all the time, but since it was so comfortable, and it prevented her mother getting angry when she released her seat belt before the car had come to a complete stop, she thought it would be OK, as long as no one saw her in it.

At the parking lot of the store it was fairly busy, so her mother gave her the car key so that she could use it to release the safety belt buckle. Of course she demanded it back immediately afterward, and Iris had to give the red cap to her as well: that didn't attach to the buckle, so it had to be put in place every time. When she got out Iris made a big show of limping and leaning on her mother for support, and her mother helped her into the basket of the shopping cart, from where Iris could step onto the seat and lower herself with her mother's support. It was years since she had sat in one of those, and she was surprised that it still fit so comfortably. Climbing in, she did notice that she was still wearing the Mary Janes shoes, but it was too late to change that now, so she hoped that because of the black socks underneath the black shoes, they would not be noticed. Being pushed around was sort of fun, and her high vantage point was a definite advantage because of her small stature. She had to be careful not to let little Iris get the upper hand, but was helped by her mother who treated her mature. One time though she tried to sneak a box of the Fruit Loops<sup>2</sup> she liked, but her mother never bought 'because it contained too much sugar', into the basket, but her mother caught her, rolled the cart next to the shelf again and made her put it back. Luckily nobody was close at the moment.

After they had completed the shopping list, they moved over to the toys section, to find a present for cousin Raymond. He was turning four, and her mother invited Iris to help her pick something, "because she was closer to his age," she added with a wink. Of course the statement was true for mature Iris's age as well, but still Iris felt herself blushing and looked around if no one overheard the remark. Before they reached the isles they were looking for, her mother spotted a rack with hair accessories for girls, and decided to check if there were some more nice barrettes or bands for little Iris, so they had a bit more choice and could match the colors to her outfit. This felt even more embarrassing to Iris, but her mother asked things like "do you think she would like these?", and Iris realized they could pretend they were looking for a present for a little girl. So she started to participate, and thought the bands with heart-shaped pictures of Disney's Princesses were cute, but her mother considered those too expensive, so they settled on a set of elastic bands with little bow ties in a selection of different colors. Those were better for pony- and pigtails than barrettes.

For Raymond they settled on a dinosaur monster truck. Iris thought he might also like the police car with a working siren, but her mother decided she didn't want to do that to the parents, who would certainly be driven crazy by that noise. And dinosaurs combined with a massive car had to be a safe bet. In this section there were relatively many children, and a number of them also sat in the shopping cart seat. One stared at Iris, apparently surprised to see such an old and large child in the seat, but she just waved at him, and he waved back and his attention drifted somewhere else. Of course there was more than enough to see to easily draw his attention away from her. At the checkout it was not too busy, but there were still 2 customers before them. When a woman entered their line behind them that they vaguely knew from their neighborhood, Mrs. Tomas deliberately asked Iris "Does your ankle still hurt?" "No, it is fine as long as I don't put weight on it," Iris answered gratefully.

Back at the car her mother put the groceries in the trunk, and then tried to get Iris out of the seat. But that was not so easy: she had to be lifted quite high to get her legs out, and she was of course a

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<sup>2</sup> Fruit Loops, or the branded version Froot Loops, are a breakfast cereal of brightly colored little rings, with about 40% sugar content.

lot heavier than a toddler. Iris tried to climb out herself, but that made the shopping cart tilt, and her mother quickly ordered her to stop. They were looking around for a solution when a large man, who had seen their struggle, offered his help. He had no trouble lifting her out, and put her on the ground. Iris thanked him and did her limping again to show why she had been in the seat. That gave her mother an excuse to help her into the car and the booster seat, and apply the buckle guard again. Then it was off back home.

In the garage her mother didn't release her from the booster seat until she had brought in the groceries. Then she got her out, took her inside on her hand, and immediately upstairs to her room. There her jumpsuit was taken off, and she was put in the harness again. Then she got her pigtails again, with two of her new bow ties, in pink to match her shortalls. And before she knew what was happening, her mother had also locked the bracelet from Sabine on her right wrist again. "Here, we took it off yesterday when you visited Anna, but there is no reason not to wear it again, especially now that you're going to the Fletchers again tomorrow." Iris actually didn't mind; it looked nice and it was something else that she couldn't take off herself. And it reminded her of her good friend, and the fun she had with the Fletchers last week. "Oh, I should call Imogen to check if you coming over suits with their plans. I should have done that earlier; I guess I just expect them to be home all the time. We'll do that now." "Mom, I see I have a new message on my phone. Can I check it?" "OK, you can do that after we called Nanny." Of course Iris wanted to do it right now, but she had not expected her mother would allow it so soon, so she gave her mother a smile.

They went downstairs again, and Iris was anchored to her kitchen chair once more. Her mother sat down next to her, dialed the number and put her mobile on speaker phone. It took a while before Imogen Fletcher answered, and she apologized that she first had to make sure Sabine was safe in her activity chair. Of course they understood, and Iris's mother told her the reason they were calling. Mrs. Fletcher said that Iris was always welcome, and that tomorrow would not be a problem. She needed to do a few things, like groceries, and it would be very welcome if Iris could stay home with Sabine then – she could do things a lot quicker. Then in the afternoon they could have fun with the three of them, and she asked if Iris wanted to be mature or little then. Since Iris needed to be mature in the morning anyway, she thought it would be fun to be at equal footing with Sabine in the afternoon. Nanny warned them that since she had borrowed them so much, Iris should bring along what clothes she wanted to wear. The harness that was used on her was still there, but she could take that home with her afterward, if she wanted. Mrs. Tomas added that she would like to borrow the high chair, take a look at the car seat, and perhaps some other odds and ends to keep her little escape artist safe. Mrs. Tomas promised to have things ready for them. They agreed to arrive at around 9:30AM, and that Iris would be collected again at 4:30PM.

Since Sabine was right next to her, Nanny put her mobile on speaker phone for a bit too, and Iris could tell her friend that she would come and play again tomorrow, for the whole day, until dinner. And that she was wearing Sabine's bracelet, which reminded her of her friend, so that she was with her a little bit all the time. Sabine said she wore hers too, but the idea that Iris was a little bit with her as well if she wore the bracelet was a new idea for her, and she liked it. Because they would have plenty of opportunity to talk the next day, they kept the call short, and after the goodbyes her mother disconnected.

"So, let's get you installed that you can check your own phone then. I believe we'll do the same thing as the day before yesterday – you liked that. So Iris was taken to the playpen and lifted in. She got a pillow at her back, and her shortalls straps in the back were connected to the playpen bars with 2 tie wraps – one at each shoulder. This way Iris was quite comfortable, but still very secure as well. She wiggled and pulled a bit to explore her limits. Then she got her phone from her mother.

The message was from Anna. Her friend wrote that when she went to bed last night, she found out that she really couldn't get the overalls off by herself. She couldn't do the buckles with one hand, and not reach them with two hands together either. In the end she had to ask her mother for help, who found it a 'very interesting' use of the overalls. That gave Anna the idea that her mother would remember it and might use it as a punishment or something one day. And then her diaper was discovered. Anna had kept her promise to Iris to tell no one, so she just said that they had just been fooling around. Her mother didn't like it that Anna had not asked, and that disposable diapers created a lot of waste, so they should not be used for play. Because Anna hadn't used it much yet, her mother had made her wear it during the night as well, so it would at least have been used properly. But now everything was back to normal. The way Anna had written it was more like 'look at what just happened to me', than that it was reproachful, blaming Iris for her trouble. But it made Iris feel even more guilty anyway about betraying Anna's diaper wearing to both her mother and Nanny.

She decided to call for her mother to talk about it. She arrived somewhat concerned, and was relieved that everything seemed OK with Iris, and she was still where she was supposed to be. Iris told her what her friend had written, and how that made her feel. Of course her mother understood, having made Iris aware of her actions in the first place. First though she asked about what exactly they had done to Anna's overalls that she couldn't take them off herself. Since Iris had a similar pair, it was not hard to guess why. Then she asked if Iris had an idea what to do about her guilty feelings. Iris replied that her only idea had been to call Mommy to fix it, but saying that she realized that it wouldn't work that way. So her mother suggested "OK, what about this: you call Anna's mother, and tell her about your UTI and the temporary incontinence. Then you explain that you were so upset when your friends discovered your incontinence material, that they supported you by putting diapers on themselves. That way you make clear that Anna had a good reason for using one of the diapers, and shouldn't be punished, and it evens out that you told me about Anna using them in Mexico. Of course you can ask her to tell no one else."

Iris's first reaction was that there was no way she was going to voluntarily tell more people about her need for diapers, but she also saw that her mother's suggestion would resolve her negative feelings. And she trusted Anna's mother enough to not gossip about her issue – in that aspect Anna and her mother were alike. She pulled a face and asked, "Can't you just give me a kiss to make the bad feelings go away?", knowing in the back of her mind that it didn't work that way. But to her surprise her mother stepped into the playpen, kissed her forehead and gave her a hug. Then she asked if it had helped. Iris thought some more about Anna, and had to conclude that the guilt was still there. "Yes, if you have a conflict, or feel guilty, you can only resolve it with the people involved. And all too often you need to do things that you don't want to. But the alternative is worse. I'm not saying calling Anna's mother is the best possible solution, but it is the best I can come up with." This was obviously a job for mature Iris, and that was also the way her mother addressed her. Dressed and restrained like she was, it was strange to need to make a phone call like that, but on the other hand this way there was no running away from it. Literally. She could not think of a better solution than her mother's, so she thanked her mother and said she would call. Her mother took that as a dismissal, and left her to it.

She didn't have the number of Anna's mother, so she had to call Anna herself and ask if she could talk to her mother. Of course Anna was a bit surprised, but she could hear her friend was serious, and in her no-nonsense way she just obliged, and then Iris was talking to Mrs. King. "Hello, Mrs. King, I want to tell you something, but it is very hard, and I need to know you will not tell anyone else. Except Anna of course, who already knows." "As long as it is nothing illegal or dangerous, I

promise.” “Oh, it is nothing like that. I ... , eh, When I was ...” Mrs. King kept silent and allowed Iris to find a way to tell her. Then Iris just blurted out “I have a bladder infection, and now I am not fully continent.” “Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.” “So yesterday I wore a diaper, but Anna and Mindy found out, and I was so scared that everyone would then learn that I wear diapers, like a baby, that I was really upset. But then Anna and Mindy offered to wear a diaper too, so that I would not be the only one. So Anna really shouldn’t be punished for being such a good friend that she would do that for me!” “Thank you for telling me. I thought it was a strange thing for Anna to do, but now I understand. And it was very good of her to not betray your secret to me. And don’t worry, she is not in trouble. I wasn’t going to punish her anyway. I’m not sure what she told you, but I only made her wear the diaper at night because here we don’t waste things, especially things that contribute so much to the landfills. So that was what the pill before dinner was for?” “Yes. But this morning I had the last one, so the infection should be about over.” “Oh, that is good to hear. And the backwards overalls?” “Well, Anna didn’t know how to put a diaper on herself, so I helped her. But it was all so weird that I let her step into the overalls the wrong way. And then we thought it would be interesting to see how that looked and felt. And when you called us for dinner, you didn’t give us time to change it back to normal.” “Well, thank you very much for telling me. Now everything makes sense again. And you called me especially because you worried that Anna might be in trouble?” “Well, I was so relieved and surprised that Anna did that for me, and also shared that she sometimes wore diapers on the Mexico vacation, that I couldn’t wait to tell my mother. But then I felt guilty that she got into trouble by not betraying my secret, while I did tell hers. So now I hope this evens things out. You will not tell anybody else, will you?” “Of course not.”

“Thank you so much for understanding. Can I talk to Anna now?” Then she told Anna what she talked about with her mother, and she apologized for telling her own mother. But Anna didn’t quite understand why Iris felt the need to tell that to her mother: she wasn’t really in trouble, and Iris hadn’t explicitly promised to keep Anna’s diaper use a secret, although of course she would have been upset if Iris told all sorts of people who didn’t need to know. And to Anna it was different because she didn’t need them, but only wore them when there would be no safe bathrooms available. On the other hand she didn’t mind either that Iris told her mother, and that she now didn’t have to keep that secret from her anymore. Iris told her that her mother should know that Anna did such a selfless and kind thing, instead of assuming she had just been frivolous, and was also glad to know why the overalls were on backwards. For Anna it was not such a big deal – of course she supported her friend when she needed it. But for Iris it had been, and she thanked her friend again, and told her what a relief it had been that her friends accepted her diaper. Then she concluded that she was glad that Anna was not in trouble, and that everything was fine between them. She added that she would go to Sabine again the next day, and she would ask if it would be possible that all four met.

When she disconnected, her mother was not in sight, and she was still stuck in the playpen, so she started checking out her normal haunts, but there was not so much new there. Then she remembered something her mother mentioned in the car yesterday evening; that chastity belt thing her father once brought up. It sounded scary, but she was also curious what one would look like. So she did an internet search, and found plenty of pictures about them, although many were also blocked by the adult filter on her phone. They looked both scary and fascinating at the same time, and pretty uncomfortable. She could imagine wearing one for a short while, for fun and excitement, but to be locked in something like that full time would be torture. So she renewed her resolution to avoid giving her father any reason to think about one for her. It probably had been a joke anyway; she could not really imagine her father being so mean, even if he was not quite the perfect father he had always seemed, like forbidding any clothes that looked like leather, but letting her mother

enforce it. She felt in her crotch, and although of course the diaper and the 3 layers of clothing were making sure she could not achieve serious stimulation, it was still nice that there was some feeling of pressure, instead of a metal plate blocking even that.

“Are you enjoying yourself?” Iris startled, but luckily it was her mother. “Oh, I was just thinking about that chastity belt you mentioned yesterday, and how horrible it would be not to be able to feel anything down there.” “Don’t worry too much about that, I’ll make sure that it won’t happen, even if your father would seriously consider it. But rubbing yourself in plain sight while he is home might not be the best idea.” “Yes Mommy, I’m sorry.” “Anyway, did you make the phone call?” “I did. Mrs. King was glad to know what happened, and why her daughter was in diapers with her overalls backwards. But Anna didn’t really see a problem, so perhaps it was not necessary to call.” “Do you still feel guilty?” Iris considered her feelings for a moment, and then replied “No, it feels alright now.” “Then the call has served its purpose. Perhaps not for Anna, but it helped you.” “OK, I can see that.”

“Now, I was thinking that it might be a shame if this little girl took her nap after lunch, because it would make the time she could be outside with her daddy shorter. So how about you take a nap before lunch, while Daddy is sleeping as well?” “Could I sleep with him in your bed then?” “I think we had better let him sleep this time. He was very tired.” “But I’m not sleepy at all. I just sat around all morning, on the kitchen chair, in the booster seat, in the shopping cart, and now here.” “I guess that is true. What about we go play in the garden for a while, and see if we can get some exercise?” That was a novel idea for Iris: perhaps on a trip or a vacation she might throw a frisbee with both parents, but at home she never considered doing something like that with her. That was what friends were for; only little kids played with their mothers. But thinking about how Nanny played with Sabine, she could see the merit, and so she agreed. Because the garden had high hedges, it would be private enough that she wouldn’t have to worry about someone seeing her attire.

So her mother cut the tie wraps and helped her out of the playpen. This time she unhooked the leash from the harness Iris was still wearing. In the garden they selected badminton, and soon they were having fun hitting the shuttle up and down. Her mother was pretty good, and often had to compensate for the inaccuracy of Iris’s hits, but gradually Iris noticed she had to move around a lot too. She suspected her mother was deliberately making it harder for her to tire her out, but she didn’t have the breath to complain. And apart from that, getting her tired was the whole idea. The weather was pretty sunny, and it was warmer than it had been for a while. So after some 15 minutes they were both quite windy and hot, and they retired to the kitchen for a cool drink.

Then her mother reattached the leash and took her upstairs. Iris was undressed up to her body, and her mother asked how her diaper was. Iris used it at least once, although she believed she lost urine too during the badminton. The diaper seemed to have absorbed everything though, and didn’t feel too heavy or wet. Her mother felt it, and decided it would last until after her nap. So Iris was put into her sleeping bag, and left alone. Because of the unusual time it took a while to fall asleep, but the exercise had helped, and the floating feeling in the sleeping bag always relaxed her, so in the end she fell into a dreamless sleep.

## 10. Around Noon

It was Daddy again who came to get her out of bed for lunch. Iris thought she hadn’t really slept much, and was already half awake when he entered. This time he was clearly looking more rested, and already dressed in the camouflage pants and shirt he often wore when going into nature. His

hair was wet, so apparently he had showered, but even though the bathroom was right next to her room, she hadn't heard anything, so she must have slept deeper than she expected. Since this time his appearance wasn't a surprise, Iris didn't call out, but gave him a very big smile to show how glad she was that he was here. "There is my sweet Maya again. Did you sleep well?" "Yes Daddy, but can I get up now? I'm hungry." "Yes darling, I'm here to get you up and take you to the changing table, and Mommy will show me how to take care of you there. She told me you can explain to me how to get you out of the bag." Iris lifted up her feet, and showed him the zipper and the valve of the sleeping bag. He first opened the zipper, and her feet popped out. He wiggled her toes a bit, like you would do with a baby, and Iris had to giggle. Then he opened the valve, and they began getting the air out, but her father was so careful that it wasn't very effective. Iris let him, although she would probably have been quicker on her own. She hoped he would get better at it.

When the sleeping bag was finally off, Daddy sniffed a bit and asked what she had been doing. Iris had noticed her body odor too, and told him about the badminton in the sun. He concluded that she would have to be put in a fresh body, because little sparrows were not supposed to smell like that. To make certain she knew he wasn't blaming her, he tickled her a bit, and Iris shrieked and tried to get away from him. But he quickly grabbed her in a hug, lifted her up and carried her to the changing area. They were intercepted by Mrs. Tomas, who redirected them to the bathroom. She instructed "Why don't you first put on these latex gloves, to make sure you don't come into contact with the UTI bacteria. Then you unlock her panties and remove the diaper. Fold it closed and use the tapes, for as far as they will still stick, to make it a compact package that is clean on the outside. Give it here, I'll discard it. Then you let her go to the toilet and give her a little privacy: it's hard to release your bladder when someone is watching. She evacuated already this morning, so it should be only number one. You can let her wipe herself: we'll clean her area anyway before putting on a new diaper."

Even though this was all about her, Iris felt a bit left out. Her mother was only paying attention to her father's actions, and he was concentrating on doing it right. In the meantime she was just treated like a doll or something. It was one thing to be treated like a small child, and she liked being taken care of and pampered without needing to do anything, or having any responsibility. But being ignored as a person had never been a part of that with Nanny or Mommy. While sitting on the toilet she decided she needed some attention. So she got up, not realizing that the pee flow hadn't completely stopped, went up to her father and hugged him. "Iris, what are you doing?" he boomed when he realized she was spreading pee over the bathroom floor, and some of it even ended up on his pants. "You were ignoring me," Iris explained reproachingly. "What do you mean? I'm trying to take care of you!" "I think she's saying that we are taking care of her body, but not talking to her or involving her in any way," her mother evaluated. Iris nodded gratefully. "I'm sorry, I guess we were so focused on getting you ready for the afternoon that we forgot to involve you. But you really shouldn't just get up from the toilet: look at the mess you made!" Only now Iris looked at the pee dribbling down her legs and the trail on the bathroom floor. "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry! I didn't know it was still flowing!"

Her father picked her up under her armpits, keeping her a bit away from him, and deposited her on the toilet again. Iris's eyes glimmered with some tears, because she had been naughty without intending to, and also because she hadn't felt the pee was still flowing. "It's OK, darling. I guess you still don't always feel when you pee, especially when you are excited. But from now on you should not get up from the toilet until you are sure the flow has stopped." "Yes, Daddy." Her mother elaborated "The Fletchers have a strap on the toilet that will keep Sabine seated until she is released. I guess we need something like that as well. We should be able to make something with

the straps and buckles that arrive today.” Her father agreed, and even Iris nodded hesitantly – that might be better than making a mess when she didn’t intend to, although of course it would also prevent her from being naughty on purpose. “Carlos, I think you had better change your pants, just in case the urine still contains some UTI bacteria,” her mother warned.

While her father disappeared to change, her mother took a wet cloth and cleaned her a bit to reduce her body odor, helped her put on the wrist brace and took her to the changing table. There she considered which diaper would be best for the afternoon. It would be best for everybody if her father wouldn’t have to change her on their trip, she mused, so the pull-ups were not ideal. The night diapers with the cute prints were the only ones that were really safe for the night, so, except that one time to try them out, they were not using those during the day. So that left the Tena Youth and the Pampers. The latter ones had seemed to hold up well during the morning, and Iris confirmed that they were comfortable too, so they decided to put her into those again. By then her father had returned, wearing his brown leather pants. When he saw Iris looking at them, he joked “I thought I’d better put on something I can wipe clean, being around such a messy little girl!” She pulled a face, not only because of being called that, but also because it was not fair that he wore clothes of that material in front of her, while not allowing those for her. But she could see they would be practical, and it was her fault that he had to change, so she hugged him once more and repeated she was sorry.

“It’s OK, my Maya. Now, let’s get you changed.” He lifted her on the table, and strapped her wrists in as her mother instructed. “You need to do them just a bit tighter. This little girl is a bit of an escape artist, so you shouldn’t give her any opportunity to wiggle out of them. For now we use an improvised strap that is meant to be put around the waist and the wrists, but with the supplies arriving today we should be able to make something better and more comfortable.” While telling that to him, she had put her hand on Iris’s stomach and wiggled her around a bit. Iris smiled, feeling that she was included in the conversation now, and appreciating her mother not tickling her while she was helpless like that. Even though she had already wiped in the bathroom, her father used some wet wipes to clean the whole area thoroughly. One thing that was more comfortable with her mother was applying the cream: the calluses on his hands were a bit rough on her skin. But of course that was not something he could help. It did stimulate her sensitive area a bit more, and she couldn’t quite suppress a wiggle. “You see she is pretty sensitive in that area, especially now that she has entered puberty. Being touched there is hard to ignore, and that is also the main reason for making sure her hands stay out of the way. But she knows she is not supposed to wiggle, and if she can’t stop, you just have to leave that area alone and hope she doesn’t develop a diaper rash. But usually she is a good girl and tries to ignore any stimulation there.” Iris nodded, glad her mother recognized that it was not easy for her.

Then her mother explained about the Pampers, and her father managed to get them on her almost as good as her mother. Iris was a bit surprised about that, but he told her that he had also changed her when she was even littler, and he hadn’t quite lost his touch. “Next are these plastic panties. The disposable diapers have a waterproof coating on the outside, but with the clothes we put on her, they are not so easy to check, so to protect a bit extra against leakages, and also smells, we put plastic panties on her over the diaper. Imogen Fletcher kindly lent us a pair to get started, and at Fred Meyers they advised this pair for teenagers who might interfere with their protection. With the chain in the waist band and a little padlock, they can’t be taken off without the key. With clothes on top that our little girl can’t take off herself, the locking function is not strictly necessary at the moment, but since I already cleaned the borrowed panties, these are the only ones we have at the



moment. We'll get some more in the shipment today, also normal versions. But Iris doesn't mind the chain much, do you?"

Iris knew the chain was usually pretty tight, and of course without any stretch, but it was not much worse than wearing jeans with a tight waistband, like when she was growing out of them. She was mainly aware of it when she for instance bent forward, because then the pressure increased. But that mostly just reminded her of her restrictions, and she liked that, at least most of the time. She was pretty open with her mother about how she felt about these confining measures, but it was different now that her father was there too, and even though he participated in her treatment now, it still felt a bit weird to talk about these feelings with him. So she just said "It's OK, I guess." She saw her mother faintly smile with that response, while her father just pulled the chain tight and closed the lock. He felt with his hand how tight it was, and pulled on it a bit, saying "So, that should keep this Conejita safely in her diaper." Somehow that made Iris feel a bit different than when her mother said such things. She wasn't sure exactly in which way, but it somehow sounded more final, where with her mother it felt more like play. It made her feel a tiny bit anxious, but that also made a somewhat more exciting. Since she couldn't explore the panties herself at the moment, she pulled a bit on the wrist straps instead. She saw her mother noticing that, but not mentioning its relevance to her father.

Then it was time to get her dressed, and her mother explained that it was a pretty warm day, so she had selected a suit from the Fletcher collection with a partially open back and no sleeves, which was not particularly childish, and should hide the diaper well. Because of the open back she wouldn't be wearing a body underneath. Iris got curious: how could a suit with an open back prevent her from taking it off, or accessing the diaper area? She had to wait a little longer though, because her mother decided she was first getting sun screen on to protect her back, arms and head from sunburn. She was released from the table and put onto her feet, and then they started applying the sun screen. With both parents cooperating, that didn't take long. In this case Iris definitely preferred her mother doing it, because of her father's callused hands, but then again it was no worse than a coarse towel, and getting attention from both of them at the same time also made her feel warm inside.

When her mother next unfolded her suit for the afternoon, Iris saw it was a bluish green jumpsuit, but she had little time to study it, because it was quickly handed to her father. He held it open for her to step into the legs, after figuring out what was the front and what was the back. But he knew the back was open, so that was not too hard. When Iris had put her feet into the long legs, he pulled it up and held the top open for her to stick her arms in, prompted by his wife. There were some loose flaps of fabric on the sides that Iris didn't quite understand, but she just let her parents figure it out. Since the suit didn't have any embroidery or appliques, or extensive frills, she assumed her mother was right, and even though it looked a bit strange, it wasn't particularly childish. There seemed to be some buttons on the top at the back, and indeed when it was pulled over her shoulders, her parents started doing up some buttons just below her neck. There were only a few though, apparently, and below that it felt open, although those loose flaps seemed to be hanging partly over the open area, like a short cape worn backwards. The bodice seemed to be fairly close-fitting, but below the waist it was a bit billowing, allowing room for her diaper. (See Figure 28)

After the buttons in the neck were closed, there also seemed to be a short zip and a button or something on the waist band, and the fumbling at the back, followed by a click, suggested to her that she wouldn't be able to open that on her own. Because the other buttons were so high, she wondered if she wouldn't be able to undo those at least, but then she heard her mother say, "Look, these flaps would normally hang loose, but a zipper was added to close them up, covering the buttons. And the zipper pull is on the inside, so you need to close it from below. That way our little

girl can't get at the pull from above, and it's too high up for her to reach from below. Ingenious, and no one will see she is prevented from taking it off herself." And indeed Iris felt them closing the zipper, which was a bit fiddly at the top since there wasn't that much room, but the flaps were loose enough to do it. She wanted to test if she really couldn't escape from it, but with both parents there she got no chance, and was quickly put into the rainbow harness again, and taken down for lunch, with her father holding the reins.



*Figure 28 Open-back Jumpsuit*

At the table she was put in her own chair and the anchor straps were attached to her harness. Then her mother wondered "Sweetie, I don't want you to stain your jumpsuit; otherwise we might need to put you in something else, and there might only be more childish things left. We're just doing a bread meal, so will your old baby bib suffice, or should I get the pink rain jacket?" Iris thought for a moment; she didn't want to wear something more childish when she went outside with her father, but she was sure that she could eat some bread without spilling, and it was already getting warmer in the house as well, so the PVC coat might be warm and sweaty. So she answered "Holly Hobby, please," referring to the picture on the baby bib.

With the harness keeping her firmly back, she couldn't reach the whole table to make her own sandwiches, so her father made her one with cheese and one with chocolate paste, and cut them into small pieces. After everything that happened in the morning, including the badminton, Iris was quite hungry, and quickly started putting a piece into her mouth. They were rather small though, and one piece at the time didn't go fast enough for her. So she started cramming two into her mouth at the same time, and even tried a combination of cheese and chocolate, but decided she didn't like that mix. Her mother warned her to be careful, and she nodded, but was too occupied eating to pay much attention. And then she misjudged how far she had put in a second piece, and it dropped from her mouth. Alarmed she looked down, but it seemed to have landed on the bib before sliding off down to the table. She worriedly looked to her mother with big eyes, who came over quickly with a wet cloth, and checked the damage. There was a tiny bit of chocolate paste on her jumpsuit, at the edge of the bib, but she managed to wipe that mostly off, and decided it was hardly visible and Iris

didn't need to change. She added "But I'm glad we ordered a decent bib with sleeves, and I think that will see a lot of use."

Iris was disappointed in herself for spilling, and since her worst hunger had been satisfied, she finished the bread one piece at the time. Then she licked her fingers clean of the choco paste that had gotten on them and sat back content, and finished the glass of cranberry juice her mother had poured her. Her mother said she would clean up, and that they could go. Enthusiastically Iris jumped up, but of course that didn't work with the harness, and she fell back into her chair, which wobbled a bit before ending up on its four legs again. "Easy!" her father warned, and added "Just be patient a little bit longer, while I get everything we need. Iris had no choice but to wait for him at the table, and told her mother which birds she hoped to see, and which were her favorites. After a few moments her mother followed her father though, and she could hear them talking, but she couldn't make out what they were saying.

Then her father came back with a fairly large backpack, and her mother let him put black socks on Iris's feet, and showed him how to put on the Mary Janes and lock them on her feet. Then they released the anchor straps and the harness. "We won't make you wear a harness outside, but you need to be careful to stay close to Daddy." Iris, who had been out with her father lots of times, knew they had never lost sight of each other, so she readily promised. Then her father took her by the hand to the garage and put her in the booster seat. He had gotten the red buckle guard from his wife, and quickly figured out how it had to be applied. Then he clicked the seat belt in it and Iris was safely kept in her seat. Then he got behind the wheel, used the remote control to open the garage, and they were off.

## 11. Birdies

"Daddy, where are we going?" "We're going birdwatching." "I know that! But where?" "In nature." Iris sighed. Apparently her father didn't want to reveal their destination. "We're going to a place where there are trees," he then continued, and Iris realized this was a sort of guessing game. But trees were not much of a clue, so she deliberately guessed wrong: "Our back garden!" "No, silly, we wouldn't need the car for that! There is also prairie." OK, that helped a bit. Not all nature trails had such open areas. But still, too much to choose from, so to get him to give a better clue, she again named an unlikely destination, a small park in town with grass and trees: "Guy Lee Park". "No, not many birds there. But there is also running water." Now she was getting somewhere. In the direction they were driving that would probably be the Willamette River, either the west or the south branch. The route her father took was exactly the way to one of their regular places, so she guessed "Mount Pisgah", around which there were several trails, and also an arboretum and a wildlife exhibit. "Very close!" "Ah, then it must be the Buford Park Trails!" "Exactly, you got it! We'll take the North Trails, those are not too hard for a little girl." Iris stuck her tongue out at him; she was perfectly capable of doing one of the harder trails around Mt. Pisgah, but he was watching traffic and didn't see it. Actually it was warm enough that an easier trail might be more comfortable, and that area offered a lot of diversity, which was always nice for birdwatching. So she replied "I like it there, Daddy."

They arrived at the parking area at the start of the trail, and since her father was a regular visitor here, he had a pass that enabled free parking. There were several others around on the parking lot, but not that close, and Iris didn't feel like protesting when her father came over to help her out of the booster seat, after he got his backpack from the trunk. She did look around if anyone was watching, but nobody was. She felt really happy, being outside with her daddy in such lovely

weather, knowing he would take care of everything and protect her, and she had nothing to worry about. She took his hand and skipped along to the start of the trail. Normally it was not that useful to start looking around for birds around the busy parking lot. Of course there were always some Turkey Vultures high in the sky, and some Chickadees or Finches in the trees, but you didn't need to go to a nature trail to see those. But halfway down the parking lot her father suddenly halted, stopping her in her tracks too. That was a bit jarring, and she turned to him somewhat upset. But he held his finger to his lips to signal her to stay quiet, and pointed to a parked car not that far away. There was a bird sitting on the side mirror of the car, and Iris recognized it as a Brownheaded Cowbird. They were not that rare, but still a nice find, especially so close and on a car. After some seconds it seemed to become aware of them and flew off. Iris thought that is was a very nice start of the trip, and hoped their luck would hold.



*Figure 29 Brownheaded Cowbird*

At the end of the parking lot they had to walk on the side of the road for a little while, to the start of the trail. Mr. Tomas held a firm grip on Iris's hand there, even though there were no cars in sight. Since there were few people around, and no one looked at them strangely, Iris was OK with that; it made her feel Daddy was looking out for her, and nothing could harm her. When they entered the trail he let go of her hand. On such trails it wasn't always easy to walk side-by-side, and when they were looking through their binoculars, they needed both hands. "Now my Maya, will you be careful and stay close to Daddy always?" Iris was getting a bit impatient. They had done this lots of times, and they already talked about that at home as well, so she replied "Yes Daddy. Let's go now. Can I have my binoculars?" "Oh, didn't you bring them yourself?" "Daddy, how could I. I was tied to the kitchen chair all the time!" "Oh yes, of course. I'm so sorry; I hadn't realized. This is all pretty new for me. But you know what, you can sometimes look through Daddy's pair." Iris was disappointed, but she did normally bring them herself, so she could understand that her father had not thought of them, and she hadn't thought to ask either. He normally didn't allow Iris to use his; they were quite big and heavy, and he was very careful with them. So Iris decided not to let it spoil her good mood, and said "OK", although he could hear a little of her disappointment in her voice.

Now that she was not in a harness, or a booster seat, or on his hand, she took the time to explore her new suit. The pants went down to her shoes, and with socks on there was no exposed skin, so she didn't have to be quite so careful about thistles, brambles or nettles. And she was used to watching out for Poison Ivy. The pants were fairly close-fitting around the ankles, so there was little chance that they would catch on branches, but then got wider towards her waist, and billowed out a bit around the diaper. She was pretty sure no one would see that she was wearing one. She felt the area, and the pampers weren't as thick as her night diapers or even the Tena Youth anyway. The plastic pants crinkled a bit, but she was used to that by now, and had never seen anyone noticing that noise. The upper body of the suit was more fitted, and once more she wished that her chest would develop a bit quicker, because the suit made it quite obvious that there were no curves there. The back felt a bit weird, at the top close around her body, and then the rest of her back open. She could feel those flaps on her bare back, sliding along her skin when she moved. The zipper was a tiny bit scratchy, but it didn't bother her. The sliding flaps actually kept the air moving, cooling her down a bit in the warm sun. She decided she really liked it, especially for when she was out in public. For

inside she also liked clothes with the appliques or embroidery – in comparison this one was a bit boring, all one color.

At home she hadn't been able to look at it in the mirror, and she wondered what the back looked like. She started exploring it a bit with her hands, also because she was curious if she really couldn't get at the zipper pull. "Iris, leave your clothes alone!" "But I was just curious about the back – I haven't seen it in the mirror." "It looks really wonderful on you, like a little lady. If you leave it alone now, I'll let you look in the mirror when we get back." Iris nodded, and her father checked that the back was still fully closed. Then they started exploring again.

After a while, in an open area they scanned the sky for birds of prey, and spotted something that was probably a hawk. Her father looked at it through his binoculars, and confirmed it was a red-tailed hawk. While they were looking at it, they suddenly noticed a much smaller, black bird flying up to the hawk and it started harassing it. It probably had a nest or chicks nearby, and was trying to chase it away. Her father identified it as a red-winged blackbird. It seemed like an uneven battle, but the blackbird was persistent and fearless, and in the end the hawk decided to find a different place to look for prey.



*Figure 30 Red-tailed Hawk and Red-winged Blackbird*

Iris could see it happening, but of course she missed her binoculars, so she prodded her father that she wanted to take a look through his pair. Reluctantly he took them from his eyes, hung its strap around her neck, knelt behind her, and helped her hold the heavy pair against her eyes. It took Iris a while to get a good view, since she had to twist the barrels closer together to fit her eyes, find the birds and adjust the focus, and by then the encounter was almost over. But still it was nice to watch the hawk in so much detail. She was convinced she could have handled the binoculars by herself, but she knew he was anxious that anything would happen to them, and was glad he allowed her to look through them anyway, so she let him help her. And actually she could lean into him a bit, with him behind her, and didn't need to tilt her neck as far back to look straight up. Again she felt so safe, with him steady as a rock while she leaned into him, and his arms around her. Suddenly she missed her harness for a moment, hugging her and keeping her safe like this all the time. But then she thought how she would feel if others would see her like that, and she couldn't believe she had even considered it. She was never going to wear a harness outside! Except perhaps if she was with Sabine, and far away from anyone who could recognize her, like at the aquarium. But the embrace from her father still felt good, and she was grateful he let her look through his binoculars, so she gave him a kiss on the cheek and thanked him, before he took the binoculars back and got up again.

Sometime later they suddenly saw a group of smallish gray birds running across the path into the tall grass on the side. A bigger one at the front and back, and 4 little ones in between. The fact that they were running on the ground and not flying, darkish gray, and their particular shape made it easy for Iris to decide these must be quail, and there was only one species of quail around here, so she whispered to her father "a California quail family!" Her father quietly confirmed, and they watched while the birds moved through the high grass, where the little ones were not visible anymore, and



the parents also disappeared into the shrubbery a few moments later. “Did you see the little ones? They were sooo cute!” Iris exploded when they were out of sight. “And they ran so fast already!” Her father smiled about her enthusiasm, and told her that they faced many predators, and so the chicks only survived if they were quick enough. “Yes, I can see that. I guess their father isn’t quite so big and strong as mine.” That made him smile, and she hugged him and leaned her head on his chest for a moment, feeling a strong family bond after watching the quail.



*Figure 31 California Quail family*

While her father kept a steady pace, except when he stopped because he saw a bird he wanted to look at, Iris darted to and fro, looking at flowers, butterflies, and of course birds. But without binoculars it was often hard to determine what she was looking at, and she didn’t want to ask her father all the time when the bird was probably just a sparrow or chickadee. But gradually she was tiring, and started to lag behind. When her father called her to keep up with him, she jogged up to him again, but that made her breathe quite hard. “Is my Conejita getting tired from running up and down all the time?” he asked. Iris nodded, not really wanting to admit that she was glad he chose the easiest trail on this warm day, but she would be very glad for a break and a drink.

There didn’t seem to be any benches close by, so her father found them a slope close to the path, where he spread out a cloth from the backpack, partly in the shade and partly in the sun. Iris gratefully sat down in the shade, and admired the view downhill<sup>3</sup>. Her father sat down in the sun, but put the backpack in the shade as well, after he had removed their water bottles and handed Iris hers. There was also a little snack for both of them. Of course they regularly scanned the sky and the trees for birds, but there were only some of the most common birds around. Iris knew that it was not the best time for birding, since the birds were more active in the morning than in the hottest part of the day. But this was the only time they had available, and they couldn’t complain about their sightings until now, anyway.

Her father told Iris some stories about his work and his colleagues, and she talked a bit more about Sabine, and Anna and Mindy. After a while Iris got impatient, afraid that they’d miss all the good birds by just sitting there. But her father wanted her to rest some more, because they still had some ways to go. He stood up and sat down behind her, took her in his arms and let her lean into him. Then he started slowly rocking her. Iris thought he was trying to get her to sleep for a bit, but she was wide awake, especially after her nap earlier. She liked the feeling though, and she did start to feel a bit more relaxed. He clearly noticed that her talking was getting less excited and softer, so he kept it up for a while. Finally he got up again, and said “Come on, lazy daughter, it is high time we started moving again!” Iris recognized that he was teasing her, and playfully punched him in the

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<sup>3</sup> See for an idea of the landscape: [https://www.google.com/maps/@44.0093835,-122.9800634,3a,75y,270.3h,77.73t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipOR0IVtPWxz5Kwey4G-KsR1mXKC3o\\_UTcYPQIxG!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipOR0IVtPWxz5Kwey4G-KsR1mXKC3o\\_UTcYPQIxG%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-0-ya240.85068-ro-0-fo100!7i8704!8i4352](https://www.google.com/maps/@44.0093835,-122.9800634,3a,75y,270.3h,77.73t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipOR0IVtPWxz5Kwey4G-KsR1mXKC3o_UTcYPQIxG!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipOR0IVtPWxz5Kwey4G-KsR1mXKC3o_UTcYPQIxG%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-0-ya240.85068-ro-0-fo100!7i8704!8i4352), although this viewpoint is somewhat more south, closer to Mt. Pisgah, than where they were.

stomach, but that didn't seem to have much effect. He collected their stuff, making sure they didn't leave anything behind, not even their waste, and they were off again.

"Iris, I warned you before. Stop fiddling with your clothes," he suddenly said some time later. Iris started to reply 'But I wasn't' when she realized her left hand was at her back. But she wasn't doing anything with her clothes – there was just an itchy spot, so she told him. He took a look and decided it was a mosquito bite – it had probably seen its chance while she was sitting still in the shade during their break. "OK then, stop scratching your mosquito bite!" "Yes, Daddy." But that was hard, and he had to warn her several more times. Iris remembered that Nanny had put mittens on her when she couldn't leave a mosquito bite on her forehead alone, so she tried, but it was hard. Luckily her father apparently didn't bring along anything like that.

Occasionally they encountered people on the trail, but the area was large enough that they were mostly alone. When they did, she greeted them friendly, knowing her outfit was not childish, and the diaper was well hidden. And indeed, most of them smiled at her and then looked around them again; they were not there to watch people. Some of them also had binoculars, and then her father usually exchanged a few words on which species they had seen.

They were already on their way back when Iris saw a pair of birds at the top of a cluster of pine trees. They were probably just some finches, but Iris wanted to look through her father's binoculars again, and he let her. "Hey, that finch seems to have a deformed beak: the tips are bent to opposite sides." Iris noticed. Her father quickly put the binoculars to his own eyes, and concluded softly "Those are not finches, but crossbills!" Iris had not seen those, or even heard of them before, but realized quickly how they got their names. Her father was quite enthusiastic; apparently he had not encountered them around here either. He kept on looking at them, and in the mean while congratulated her on spotting them.



*Figure 32 Red Crossbill*

"The colors are hard to see, against the sky. I think it is a red crossbill, but I want to be sure it is not a white-winged crossbill if I am going to report it. And I need to check if they happen to have a ring on their leg." Iris felt proud about the compliment her father gave her, even though deep inside she knew it was more of a coincidence, because she just wanted a look through the binoculars again. But without her own binoculars, they were too far away to even make out their strange beaks. Her father kept studying them, and luckily even though they sometimes hopped to another tree top, they stayed in sight. After a while it got boring for Iris, and she started looking around a bit more. Then she saw a butterfly with colors she didn't recognize. She stepped a bit closer, but in flight it was always hard to get a good look at the wings. When it sat down a little further away, Iris inched closer to get a better look. Unluckily it had folded its wings upward, with the bright sides against each other. The undersides were drab, and gave her no clue what she was looking at. It flew up again, but after a few moments sat down again. Iris didn't see the butterfly itself, but had paid good attention where it landed, so she moved in that direction in the hope of seeing it again. She did, but only when it flew up again. Apparently the butterfly had enough of this game of tag, and flew away out of sight.

Now Iris looked around where she was, but she didn't see her father anymore. She was quite sure from which direction she came, so she confidently set off in that direction. But she didn't recognize anything, and suddenly wasn't so sure anymore where she was. Still, she couldn't have gone far; a

few more steps and she would surely see her father again. But she didn't, and suddenly she got uncertain, and called out "Daddy?" "Iris?" came the response, and her feeling of relief made her realize how scared she had felt. She started moving in the direction of the sound, and called out again. Now his voice seemed to come from another direction. "Iris, are you moving too?" "Yes Daddy, I'm coming to you." "No, stay there, and keep calling out. I will find you." Good thing her father knew what to do! She knew he was going to find her soon, and she was not scared anymore.

It still felt like quite a while, and she probably called out at least five times, but then he appeared, picked her up in his arms, and gave her a very strong hug. Iris was so relieved, and she hugged him right back. But then he said "What were you thinking? You know better than to go off by yourself! What if we hadn't found each other anymore, and I had to go home alone and tell your mother I had lost you? And you would stay behind all alone, and it was getting dark?" That really scared Iris, and she started seriously crying and blubbering apologies. She just wanted to see the butterfly, but it kept flying off, she explained. "It's OK now, I'm here again. Then he opened the backpack, saying "When your mother told me to bring this, just in case, I couldn't believe I would need it, but it seems she was right." He took out the wrist leash that Iris got at the special needs store when she lost sight of the others for a moment. (see Figure 15 Iris's Wrist Leash)

"No Daddy! Not that! Not in public! Please, I'll be good now, and stay really close." "I'm sorry Iris, but you promised that when we started the trail too. This way you'll be safe, and you can look all around without worrying you might get lost again." "But Daddy, what if people see me? I'd die of shame!" Iris wailed. "And if someone I know saw me, my life would be over!" "Hush darling. It won't be so bad. I'm sure no one you know will be here; it is not that close to Eugene. But if you see anyone, just come really close to me, or hold my hand. Then people won't see the line, or at least not that you are attached to me with it. They might think it is just a cable so that I don't lose my keys or one that protects my wallet from being stolen." Iris thought that was a good idea, and even though she still really didn't want to, she did get lost, and so she offered her his wrist to put it on, still in tears.

He studied the leash for a moment, but, being an engineer, he soon figured it out and wrapped the locking end around her wrist. The buckle snapped closed, and he checked that it was locked. "Hmm, cheap quality, but still pretty ingenious, and good enough for its purpose." The other end he put around his own wrist. "So, that wasn't too bad, was it? And now you are all safe again and can't get lost." Iris was still too upset to answer, but her father held her and dried her tears until she recaptured herself. "Come, let's go on. Who knows what other birds we will discover. Those from just now were indeed red crossbills, and I didn't see any rings on them. That was a very nice find." That distracted Iris from the leash, and she started asking him about the differences between the two species of crossbill, if he had seen any before and where, etcetera. By the time they were back on the path she was her normal self again, and had mostly forgotten about the leash. When they continued, she started moving around a bit again, picking a flower for her hair, watching a dragonfly, and such, and she was regularly at the far end of the leash.

When her father was checking out a few birds again, she once again moved further away from him without paying attention to the leash length, and was suddenly halted in her progress. Of course that also gave a pull on her father's wrist, and he lost his grip on the binoculars. Since its strap was around his neck, it just fell to his stomach, but it startled him, and he called out "Iris, be careful! Don't pull like that!" "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. I guess I'm not paying as much attention now to staying close to you, since I'm on the leash anyway." Her father had to admit that he told her she was safe now and couldn't get lost, so he couldn't really blame her. So he removed the strap around his own wrist, and wrapped it around his belt instead. That way Iris was still attached to him, but he



had both hands free. For Iris it made little difference, except that she could continue to roam without risking his anger. The few times they did encounter others, she went close to her dad, like he advised, and the people didn't appear to notice anything strange and moved on. One time though there was a dog off its leash, which made Iris think 'wow, I'm trusted less than a pet'. It was a beagle, and normally she would have run up to it to pet it, but this time she stayed with her father. She wondered what to do if it came up to her, but it was much more interested in all the smells around him, and just ran by.

They spotted several more birds on the way back, but nothing special. When they neared the parking lot again, her father removed the leash from her wrist, and held her hand again. Iris was happy that she didn't have to worry being seen leashed at the parking lot, and perhaps her father didn't want to be looked at like a parent who keeps her way-too-old daughter still on a leash either. When they were back at the car, he opened the door for her to get into the booster seat, and gave her the buckle guard. "Here, you should be able to put that on yourself." And indeed it was very simple. It felt strange though for her to lock herself in, but she thought it would also be useful, particularly at busy car parks, because a parent leaning over her to buckle her in could draw extra attention. This time her father did that anyway, to check if she had done it correctly, and gave her a little compliment. But she hoped a next time that wouldn't be necessary anymore.

Of course they talked about what they had seen during the hike, and Iris tried to describe the butterfly that she chased when she got lost. But she hadn't seen enough details to give a good description, so her father couldn't really help her either. He did name a few species with the colors she had seen, which were around at the time of year, so she could look them up to see if she recognized any. She realized she didn't have her phone with her either, so she would have to wait until she was home for that. Thinking back on the trip, Iris felt quite good about it, which surprised her a bit given the wrist leash thing. But in the end no one had noticed, and it had allowed her to stay little, because she didn't have to pay much attention to where she was going. Still, she was determined to do better a next time, and make sure she would never have to wear it in public again. How hard could it be not to get lost, after all... Today it wouldn't have happened either if her father had brought her binoculars – then she would have been watching the crossbills with him and not have gotten distracted by the butterfly. Suddenly she smiled at the thought that since it was sort of his fault, he should have been the one wearing the leash. Though of course he had, in a way.

Back home her father opened the seat belt, and took her into the house by the hand. Her mother had heard the car or the garage door, and stood waiting for them. "Hi Mom, did my things arrive?" Iris asked eagerly. "Yes dear, I was just going through them a bit, but it will take me a while to go through everything and see how they work. I did keep your sleeved bib already apart, so with dinner your clothes will be well-protected. Iris nodded, and looked to the kitchen table, but she didn't see it. Her mother already had her rainbow harness in her hands, but when she wanted to put it on her, Iris protested that she was promised she could look at her jumpsuit in the mirror, and the harness would spoil the look. Her father admitted he had promised that, so her mother took her to the large mirror first.

Iris already had a reasonable idea of the front, and she mostly just wished again that she could fill its chest a little better. But on the whole she liked the look and the contours. Turning her back towards the mirror, she could finally see the flaps and the open back. She had thought that it might look a bit weird, with a zipper keeping the flaps together that were designed to be hanging loose, but it actually wasn't so bad. It looked more like it was a two piece suit, with an open back jumpsuit and a short jacket on top, which didn't continue to the front. She moved a bit, and it moved pretty naturally too. Her mother asked what she thought of it, and Iris said it looked very nice, and elegant.

She concluded it was very suitable for wearing in public. She wasn't sure if a thicker diaper would make the back bulge out a bit more noticeably, but with her pampers it was not bad, and pull-ups would be even better. "Can I see how it looks if the zipper is open?" she asked. Her mother obliged, and Iris could see that the back flaps hung a bit more natural, but it wasn't a big difference. There were four buttons fairly close to each other, just below her neck, and then the open back started, which appeared to leave the most of her back uncovered.

"Now that I've started undressing you anyway, let's see how your diaper is doing." She felt between Iris's legs, and at the same time looked at her face. Iris realized that she hadn't been paying any attention to her toilet training today, and had let go completely automatically all day. She felt a bit upset with herself about that, but not too much, because there had been so much else going on, with her father finally home again. Tomorrow she would try again. She said, with a trace of disappointment in her voice, "I'm not sure how often I peed. It feels heavier, but I don't know these pampers too well yet, so I'm not sure if they can take much more." "Well, it feels like it should hold out for a little longer, and the plastic panties will help if we slightly misjudge, so let's just take it off after dinner, when you'll have your bath." Iris's face immediately lit up: she was going to be bathed today. She had been looking forward to that, after her good experiences with it at the Fletchers. "Would you like to check your phone while I finish preparing dinner?" "Yes please, I want to check what butterfly I saw earlier."

Her mother put the harness on her, and then parked her in the playpen. Without overalls the convenient straps to tie her to the bars were not available, so her mother disconnected one side of the reins, wound it a number of times around the bars and reconnected it to the harness, so there was not much leeway left. With zip ties she connected both sides of either clip, so it couldn't be disconnected without cutting the tie wraps. (see Figure 33) "So, that should hold you," her mother concluded, and then added "I hope," remembering a previous surprise. She left Iris there, and went upstairs. Her father had in the meantime gone into the office; probably to report his sightings. Iris remembered that her mother hadn't zipped up her jumpsuit again, and with neither parent watching her, she saw an opportunity to explore if she would be able to undo the buttons while they were uncovered. The harness would probably still prevent her from taking the jumpsuit off, and why would she? It was not like she would want to play with her private area under her diaper, out here in the open. Especially not since the punishment for her previous transgression was still fresh in her mind, as was the warning about her father's possible ideas about keeping her chaste. And it would be blocked by the plastic panties anyway. But it was the challenge that interested her.



Figure 33 Buckle kept closed with tie wrap

The first two buttons were fairly easy to reach, and even though the button holes were tight enough to make it fiddly, she had them open fairly quickly. The third already posed more of a challenge. It was too low on her back to reach with both hands, but after a while she managed it with one hand. Then it quickly became clear to her that the fourth one wouldn't be possible. She could touch it, but not put any type of force on it, especially not with the harness on top, and how it kept her close to the bars of the playpen. So she decided to redo the buttons, in the hope that her mother would not know about her attempt. But getting the third button done up again posed even more of a challenge

than undoing it, and when she heard her mother's footsteps coming down the stairs again, she quickly withdrew her hands, leaned back against the bars, and gave her an innocent smile.

But her mother suspected something from her behavior, and started checking if the harness was still safely keeping her in the playpen. Of course she noticed the buttons that were undone. But instead of berating her or simply doing them up again, she said "Oh dear, are you so hot that you want to take off your suit? Well, I guess I can see that, on this warm day. Just wait here, I'll get you something cooler." And without waiting for Iris's reaction, she went back upstairs, leaving Iris behind a bit baffled. When she came back, she only seemed to carry an old t-shirt of Iris, that her mother normally didn't want her to wear anymore, because it had become too short. And of course she was not supposed to go around with an exposed belly. Iris was still unsure about what her mother intended, but just let it happen. First her mother cut one of the tie wraps around the reins clips, released her from the bars, and then removed the harness. After unlocking and opening the waist and undoing the last button, she helped Iris to step out of the jumpsuit. Then she put on the t-shirt, and the harness on top of that. After she redid the reins the same way they were before, she gave Iris her phone, and said, "Have fun. I'll be in the kitchen getting the food ready."

This was totally unexpected for Iris. She was used to being put into all sorts of clothes that she couldn't remove, but now she was suddenly sitting there in only a t-shirt, with exposed diaper and plastic pants. Obviously her mother had realized that the locked panties would still prevent her from accessing her diaper. Iris felt naked, and was none too happy that her diaper was in full view now. She stammered "But...", without quite knowing how to continue. Asking if she shouldn't wear any pants was no use – obviously this was what her mother intended – probably as a sort of disguised punishment for trying to open her clothes. Since complaining would not help, and she had nothing to cover herself with, except a pillow, she used the opportunity to explore her panties and diaper. The pampers were swollen of course, but not as much as for instance her night diapers could be. Still, it looked to her like they probably couldn't take that much more. She wondered if she could see anything if she filled them some more, and managed to produce some pee. But on the outside nothing appeared to change. She had half hoped that she could make it leak – that would be a way to get back at her mother for dressing her like this – but she couldn't produce enough wee for that. Then she felt the plastic of her panties. It was pretty thin, but still strong enough that it probably wouldn't tear easily. Around her legs there was elastic, and around her waist of course the chain. That was tight enough that she couldn't really get under it, but she explored what options the leg holes offered. She could get her fingers under and touch the diaper, but didn't really want to mess with it.

"Iris, leave your diaper alone. Don't make me restrain your hands." Iris quickly pulled her hands away from her diaper. Apparently the crinkle of the plastic pants had been loud enough for her mother to hear in the open kitchen. The threat was pretty effective, because Iris wouldn't be able to use her phone if her hands were disabled somehow. So she focused her attention on the harness instead. It didn't take her long to decide that she was stuck: she knew she wasn't able to open the harness buckle in her back, and the tie wraps effectively blocked her from opening the reins. Convinced that she was stuck, she leaned back and took up her phone. She was pretty sure that if she looked at pictures of some of the butterflies her father suggested, she would be able to figure out which one she saw. But it was way harder than she thought. She was sure she remembered the colors and some details, but looking at the pictures she realized that her memory wasn't as clear as she assumed, and she ended up with several options that might be it. But it could just as well be one that she hadn't looked at. Frustrated she almost threw her phone away, but at the last moment remembered that her mother warned her not to lose or damage this one, or she would have to do

without a phone for the foreseeable future. So she punched her pillow a few times instead. Then she apologized to it; it had been nice to her, and wasn't to blame for her failure with the butterfly.

That had calmed her enough to pick up the phone again, and check for messages. Mindy and Anna were in a bit of a discussion about a film that Iris hadn't seen, and Mindy also suggested they meet up again on Sunday. Iris had to decline because of her cousin's birthday. That was all the way to Salem, so she had no chance to combine things. Even though she had worn a diaper when she last met them, it still felt weird to message with them while she sat in a playpen with her diaper exposed. She put the pillow between her legs to try and hide it, although of course she realized they couldn't see her. For the rest nothing much appeared to be going on. Then her father came into the living room again, and sat down on the couch next to her. He looked surprised about her current attire, but didn't mention it. He reported that he had logged their sighting of the crossbill on the birding site he frequented. Iris told him she had tried to identify the butterfly, but failed. He confirmed that looking up something from memory was always much harder than you thought, whether it were birds, butterflies or plants, and he stroked her hair for a bit. That was nice, and she no longer felt upset about the butterfly.

When her mother called them for dinner, he checked how her harness was attached, got a pair of scissors from the kitchen, and snipped one of the tie wraps. Then he picked her up and put her on his hip. "Ooh, you are getting a big girl! I don't know how much longer I can keep picking you up like that!" Iris had to giggle – her father was so strong that he couldn't be serious, so he must be only complimenting her on growing. She realized that she didn't feel angry at him about the wrist leash during their trip, and comfortably snuggled up to him. But the kitchen was only a few steps away, and there he quickly put her in her own chair. Iris tried to keep her arms around him, hoping she could sit on his lap again during dinner, but he just pulled her loose and connected the first anchor strap to her harness. Then he realized that he needed to fully remove the reins, since the end that was still attached occupied the buckle for the second anchor strap. So he cut that tie wrap as well, and soon she was firmly held in her chair. She pouted a little, but quickly was distracted when her mother came to her with a package.

It contained the bib they selected together, and after Iris was allowed to take it from the bag, she had to put out her arms, and it was put on her. (see Figure 18 Sleeved Bib) Because it only closed in the back at the neck, the anchor straps apparently were not much in the way. Iris thought it might have been designed for that. Her mother closed the buckle in her neck, which made a pretty loud click. Iris felt a bit of a shiver down her spine from that sound. She remembered it was a locking buckle, so the bib was not coming off until her parents decided to. And she suspected it would even be harder for her to open the anchor straps now, with the back of the bib in the way. Its front went down pretty far, ending in a pocket over the whole width, to catch anything that might slide down. The sleeves were quite long as well, but the elastic around her wrists prevented them from going over her hands. It would take quite a while before she would outgrow it. She felt the material, and it was both smooth and soft. The front was decorated with a funny picture of a monkey. This definitely was better than the improvised bib of the rain jacket worn backwards, and she was really happy: it was brand new, and all hers. She was very grateful of Sabine's old things, but getting something new, all for herself, was special. "Thank you Mommy, it is wonderful!" she exclaimed. Both parents smiled at her enthusiasm.

Now Iris knew she would not need to be careful to keep her clothes clean (not that she was wearing much at the moment, anyway), she fully relaxed and attacked her food with abandon. It wasn't long before her bib was decorated with several pieces of food. "Iris, please make sure that the food ends up in your mouth, not on your bib. I didn't cook to feed the monkey!" her mother warned her with a

joke. "Oh, Maria, let her today. She is just testing her new protection, and if at the end there is no food anywhere else than on her bib, we know we can trust its function even when she is wearing something nice." Her mother nodded, and didn't complain anymore. But her little joke backfired a bit, because now Iris did actively try to feed the monkey, talking to it like to a baby to get it to open its mouth. But of course the monkey didn't cooperate, and when her parents didn't rise to the bait either, she soon stopped and put the food in her own mouth again.

Her father told his wife about the trip in the afternoon. Of course Iris wanted to contribute too, and this time it was her father who warned her not to talk with her mouth full. But she made sure to point out that it was her father who forgot her binoculars, and that was why she got distracted and was put on the wrist leash. But her mother ignored her, and explained to her husband, "Yes, once Iris really relaxes into little mode, she stops being careful and paying attention. Then she totally relies on the grown-up with her to keep her safe and out of trouble. Such a big contrast to when she is her normal self. I even trust her enough now to leave her alone in the house for short periods during the day. Yesterday was the first time, and she did well." "But how do you know she won't go into little mode, and suddenly create a mess or do something dangerous?" her father inquired, obviously not convinced that this was a good idea. Now Iris felt the need to defend herself, or rather her mature version. That was confusing! She struggled to formulate some good arguments, but she was firmly in little mode, and her brain didn't really cooperate, so she got no further than "She doesn't. ... Eh ... I won't!" Her father gave her an angry look, and Iris found it quite unfair that she wasn't allowed to defend herself, but then he pointed at his mouth, and she realized she talked again with her mouth full. She closed it, and then heard her mother almost exactly say what she had meant to say, "Iris switches to little mode by choice, and there are some triggers that help her. But if she is in normal clothes, not restrained in any way, and knows she has to be responsible, she will not switch. And if you make clear there is something serious, you can also bring her out of little mode. Like this morning when I took her to the store. I explained to her that she probably didn't want to be in little mode there, and so she came out of it. Imogen Fletcher even trusted her enough to leave her alone to babysit Sabine." "Yes, that." Iris added once she had swallowed. She knew she could switch to mature mode if it was necessary, but decided not to, now that her mother had explained it so well. Her father looked at her for a moment, and didn't seem totally convinced, but he said nothing more.

When dinner was over, her mother came over, scraped the bigger pieces of food from the bib with a spoon, and put it in her mouth. Iris didn't really like that; the food was cold, and she had eaten enough. But since it was the mess she made herself, she cooperated anyway. Then the buckle in her neck was released with the magnetic key, and it was pulled off her. She would have liked to keep it on for a bit longer: it was so soft and bright, and it hid her diaper somewhat. But she was sure she would be seeing a lot more of it. "Why don't you go sit with her for a while on the couch, while I clean up here, and get her bath ready?" her mother suggested. So Daddy got her out of her chair, reattached the leash, and took her to the living room. There he took her on his lap, and turned on the TV to watch the news. Iris knew that that was important to him, especially since at work he didn't always have much opportunity, and that she was supposed to stay quiet. But she was too excited to keep that up, and made remarks and asked questions several times. Her father tried to shush her, and she tried, but that didn't quite work. After a while he called 'Maria, do you have something to keep our daughter silent for a while?' And so her mother appeared from the kitchen with her pacifier. Iris accepted it in her mouth, and her father could focus on the news while she snuggled up to him and only half listened to all the bad things happening far away.

The pacifier and the cuddling managed to slow her down effectively, and she started getting a bit sleepy. That suited her father, and after the news he continued with a program with background stories and discussions about the news. That was even more boring, but Iris was quite content just to sit there. After a while her mother went into the office, quickly came out again and went up the stairs. Soon she could hear the water running, filling the bathtub. That got her awake again, and she tried to get up and follow her mother upstairs, but her father had a firm grip on the leash and kept her with him, until her mother came and got her. She asked him to do the rest of the kitchen and the dishes, but he answered only with a grunt, engrossed in the program. She first removed Iris's pacifier, which was somewhat reluctantly released. Then she took off the wrist brace, and finally took the leash from him, and lead her upstairs.

In the bathroom she checked the water level and temperature, and decided to let it run for a bit longer. In the meantime she put on latex gloves, unlocked Iris's plastic panties, and opened her diaper. It was indeed almost filled to capacity, but it had done a good job for such a small diaper, and the tapes had held as well, even though it hadn't had the usual support of a bodysuit. She put Iris on the toilet, and went to discard the diaper. Iris was a bit surprised that she wasn't restrained at all, but she was still a bit drowsy from when she sat with her father, and she had no inclination of running away from getting her bath. So she sat on the toilet like a good girl, even though there was nothing coming out, having produced what she had available while sitting in the playpen. Her mother was back within half a minute, and when Iris indicated she had nothing to produce, did a quick wipe of the area to keep the bath water clean. Then she turned off the taps, took Iris's t-shirt off, and lifted her in. The bath water seemed too hot at first, but after a few seconds she got used to it, and the warmth suffused her. Not that she had been cold, but with it getting evening the temperature had already dropped somewhat, and she hadn't had much clothing on, so the warmth was still welcome.

Her mother asked "Would you like foam with pine scent, or oil that smells like roses in the bath?", but then answered her own question "I guess the foam only works well if you put it in while the tap is still running, so we had better go with the roses this time. Next time I'll try to think of asking you before I fill the bath." Iris was just thinking that the foam was really fun to play with, but she also liked the smell of roses, and how soft the oil made her skin feel, so she just answered "Roses smell nice." "Would you like to soak for a while on your own?" "Hmm, that sounds wonderful." "Good, but I'm afraid I have to take a few precautions to make sure you'll not be playing too wildly and flooding the whole bathroom." While saying that she retrieved a blister package that she apparently had taken up with her, which contained the bath cuffs that they had ordered. (see Figure 19 Longer Bath Cuffs) She took them out and attached the suction cups high up the bath sides, fairly close to the head end. Then she took Iris's hands and wrapped the Velcro cuffs around her wrists. Iris let her, since she already had gotten a bit used to them at the Fletchers, and she hadn't protested when her mother ordered them. It didn't feel the same as her new bib, because that was cute and colorful, and better than what she used before, while these were just used to keep her out of mischief. But they helped making her feel relaxed and safe, so she didn't mind them either. Then her mother left the bathroom, but left the door open.

Iris leaned back in the bath. She let her neck rest on the neck pillow that they already had. It was a rubber roll that also attached to the bath with suction cups, and you could fully relax in the bath without the risk that your head ended up under water. The cuffs held her wrists above the water, but she could let her arms hang in the water, and her fingertips could touch the water as well. The band from the suction cups to the wrist cuffs was a bit longer than she was used to at the Fletchers, but not long enough for the hands to reach each other and give her a chance to open the Velcro. She

pulled on them to see if she could pull the cuffs free from the bath, but the big suction cups easily resisted her efforts. She also realized that her hands were pretty far from her sensitive area, so no chance of playing with herself there. But since she was so relaxed, she didn't really feel much urge to do that anyway. Then her mother suddenly appeared again, and put the baby monitor in the bathroom, at a safe distance so it wouldn't get wet. "Just call if anything is wrong. I'll be back in a while to get you all crisp and clean."

Since there were no bath toys, no foam, and she couldn't use her hands to splash water around or make waves, there wasn't much to do, and so she just lay back and relaxed. She did try to keep her head under water for a while, and see how long she could hold her breath, but quickly realized that without the use of her hands, water ran into her nose, which was no fun. She quickly resurfaced and tried to snort the water out. "Are you OK, darling?" came her mother's voice over the monitor. "Yes Mommy, I just got some water up my nose. I couldn't keep the water out with my hands tied, when I put my head under water," she answered, slightly reproachful since it was her mother who tied her hands. "Well, you had better keep your head above water then," came the matter-of-fact reply. So she just relaxed and enjoyed the warmth and the floating feeling, and how it was a different kind of floating than in her sleeping bag.

After a while she got impatient though. It felt like she had been in there for at least half an hour, and her mother still hadn't appeared. So she called out "Mommy, when are you coming to wash me? There is nothing for me to do here." "Just a few more minutes, my impatient Iris, we're still doing the dishes." Iris didn't have a choice, so she leaned back again. Suddenly a song popped into her head: "Splish, Splash, Splosh!". She had no idea where it came from; it was not one she had done with Sabine. But out of nowhere the words popped into her head, and she started singing, and comparing the sound with her ears above and below the water.

"Oh, you remember that song?" Her mother had entered the bathroom, dressed in a raincoat. Iris hadn't heard her come up because of the singing. "It was one we did when you were little. I had no idea you still knew it." "I didn't know either; it just popped into my head." "That is interesting. I think we'll sing it some more while I wash you. But first this: if I release your hands, will you behave and not make me or the bathroom floor all wet? Because if you do, the cuffs will go right back on." "Yes Mommy, I'll be good." Iris meant it; she was so relaxed and a bit drowsy, and she was so glad her mother was here now to pamper her, that she had no intention of making trouble. When her hands were free, she did play with the water a bit, because she had been unable to do so until then, but was careful not to splash much. Her mother stroked her head and said "That's a good girl. You don't always have to make a mess to have fun, you know." Iris thought that was not really fair; mostly she didn't intend to make a mess, and it just happened because she was not paying enough attention. Only during dinner, when she wanted to test her new bib, she had been a bit messier than she had needed to be. So she decided to ignore her mother's remark.

Her mother took a sponge, put on some bathing gel, and started cleaning her from top to toe. That was more like it, and Iris really enjoyed it. Still she couldn't quite help fooling around a bit, for instance pulling her right arm away just when her mother grabbed for it. But her mother wasn't fazed, and just grabbed the left arm instead. They kept up singing for several minutes, but stopped when Iris's face was being cleaned. Her hair was last, and got shampooed and rinsed twice. "And now my little girl is all clean again, and it is time for her to get out. There is still a bit of time before you need to be in bed, so I'll take you downstairs for half an hour." She pulled the plug, lifted Iris from the bath, and wrapped her up in a big fluffy towel. She started drying Iris, and in the meantime suggested, "Tomorrow you will be going to the Fletchers again. Imogen told us that she needs you to babysit Sabine in the morning, but you can be little in the afternoon, if you want. So, I'd say you

might start the day as mature Iris, and switch to little Iris there. Is that how you see it, too?" "Today was so nice that I don't want it to end. But I do want to be mature too, and I should be if I am alone with Sabine. So OK, tomorrow morning I'll be all grown up again. I wonder how that will be for Daddy."

"Yes, that could be interesting. But for now you might start thinking what you want to bring along to the Fletchers tomorrow. I assume you want to start the day wearing normal clothes, and change into something from Sabine's old clothes for the afternoon? This one time you can choose what to wear there; keep in mind that it will likely be another warm day. I assume you also want to bring your pacifier. Anything else? You don't have to answer right away – I'm asking you now so you have time to think what you want." "Can't you just choose? I don't want to think about such things now. But I do want my paci, and I guess I'll pick my own clothes for the morning." "OK, perhaps this is not the best time to ask. I don't need to collect everything now, so we'll see how you feel about choosing in the morning, when you are all grown up again. If you still don't want to decide, I'll pick what I think is best." "Thank you, Mommy." By then Iris was all dry, except her hair. For that her mother took a hair dryer and a brush, and got it ready for the night as well, dry and braided.

"Now, I would normally put you in your pajamas, but of course you are not wearing any currently. What about I already put you in the sleeping bag; I'll leave the feet open, and the hood down. If I don't inflate it yet, it will just be like a nightgown." Iris nodded. She liked the sleeping bag, and it was not like she would be doing anything active for that last half hour, anyway. Her mother first diapered her in her night diapers, again with the locking panties, and then took her to her bedroom, bringing along the baby monitor from the bathroom. Iris noticed how big and thick these diapers were, especially compared to the pampers. In her room her mother dressed her in a thin sleeveless bodysuit and then pulled the sleeping bag over her head and down her body. Then she took Iris by the wrist, because her hands were fully enclosed. And because the sleeves were slightly short, she could not quite stretch her fingers, so holding hands was not convenient. It almost felt strange to be in the sleeping bag without it being inflated, and she could freely move her head, arms and legs, and bend over as much as she liked. Then her mother took her down the stairs, going slowly to make sure Iris didn't trip over the bottom of the sleeping bag. But that was not a big risk, since fully stretched her legs were a little longer than the sleeping bag anyway.

Downstairs she was put on the couch in between her parents. Her father looked and smelled at her, and remarked "There is my little Maya again. All ready for the night, and smelling sweet as roses. Did you enjoy your bath?" "Yes Daddy. It was a bit boring on my own, but then Mommy made me all clean again, and that felt really good." "That is good to hear." When he saw her feet sticking out of the sleeping bag, he pushed them in and closed the zipper. "So, now your feet won't get cold, and you can't run away." Iris pouted a bit; her mother had promised that she would leave the zipper open, but her feet were warm and cozy inside the bag, and she had no intention of going anywhere: it was way too nice to have both her loving parents right next to her.

They started watching a comedy series on TV. Iris didn't quite know who to snuggle up to, so she decided to change every now and then. That had the extra advantage that the parent she crawled against gave her a one arm hug and stroked her for a bit. Gradually Iris got pretty hot in the bag; of course it consisted of several layers, and was really a bit too warm for this weather. She started waving her hand in her face to cool off a bit. Her mother noticed and opened the zipper for her feet again, saying "Yes, I can see the bag is a bit warm. Luckily we already have thinner pajamas and the tent for you to sleep in, but we will need some time to set that up, so for tonight it needs to be the sleeping bag. But I said I wouldn't close the zipper, so now you should get some cool air in from below." "Thanks Mommy, that helps."



Of course the show on TV ended much too quickly, and even though Iris didn't want to go yet, her father just picked her up and carried her upstairs. He put her on the bed, enclosed her feet again, and started pumping up the bag. Even though Iris was getting used to it, it was still a funny feeling, and she giggled. But the trip earlier in the day, the bath, the warm sleeping bag, the hugging and stroking all had contributed to make her pretty sleepy, and she had already half drifted off when her father disconnected the pump, gave her a kiss, wished her good night, and left. It was only when she woke sometime later that she realized she was still lying on her back. She tried to roll on her side, but realized her father had inflated the sleeping bag a little too much. After several attempts she had to conclude that she was stuck, and felt a bit like a turtle on its back, ineffectively wiggling its legs. And the exertion also made her realize she was pretty hot again.

She considered calling for her parents, but wasn't sure if they were still awake. She didn't hear anything from downstairs, but that was normal, unless the TV was on unusually loud or her parents were in a heated discussion. So she tried to look at the time on her alarm clock, but that required some further exercise. 11:16. She realized that she didn't really know what time her parents went to bed, and she was afraid that they wouldn't like it if she woke them up when they had just fallen asleep. And her mother had already explained that for tonight she had to make do with the sleeping bag. Still, she didn't want to go through a whole night like this, so she quietly called out "Mommy, Daddy, are you still awake?" There was no immediate answer, but after about ten seconds she heard her mother ask what she wanted, slightly out of breath. Had she been exercising? No matter, she wanted help, so she explained that she couldn't get on her side, and was very hot. Her mother gave a small sigh, and answered she'd be right up.

A minute or so later she arrived in Iris's room, wearing a short bathrobe instead of her normal night set. She knelt near Iris's head, and felt her forehead, and the amount of air in the sleeping bag. "Yes, I guess your father has been a bit too enthusiastic with the air pump. I'll let some air out. But what can we do about the heat? I think the only thing we can do is to open the bottom zipper again. But I can't have you getting up and wandering around, especially since you might trip on the sleeping bag." "I won't Mommy, I just want to sleep." "I know darling, but I need to be sure. Would you mind if I chain your ankle to the bed? I don't really like to do that, but I'll make it long enough that it won't hamper you, and loose enough that you won't feel it." "I guess it would be OK then." So her mother got the chain and 2 padlocks, opened the zipper, locked one end loosely around an ankle with the small master padlock, and the other end to the leg of the bed with the big old-fashioned lock. "How is that? Try some positions to sleep in and see if it is long enough." With the somewhat deflated sleeping bag, Iris could turn on her side again, and pulled her legs up a bit. That was somewhat easier now that the zipper was open, and she could pull them up pretty high before the chain stopped her. Of course the chain felt cold at first, but it soon warmed enough that she didn't notice it anymore. "Yes Mommy, that seems OK. Thank you."

Her mother stayed for a little while longer, stroking her forehead, but it soon became apparent that this was a solution that allowed Iris to sleep unhindered, so she soon hurried down again to her own bed. For Iris the cool air from the bottom definitely helped, although her torso and head were still pretty warm. She pulled at the chain for a moment, feeling its range, and tried to push it over her ankle with the other foot. But her mother had done a good job, and even though it was not tight, there was not enough room to get her ankle out either. Her curiosity satisfied, she turned onto her side again and soon fell asleep.

## 12. Saturday – the Fletchers Revisited

Iris was rushing; it was her first day back at school, and she was already late. Someone pulled at her shoulder, and called her name, but she refused to be distracted and hurried on. But her mother was persistent, and in the end she managed to wake Iris up from her dream. “Iris, wake up. You need to get ready if we are to be at the Fletchers at 9:30.” Iris still felt groggy, having woken only hours after falling asleep, and even after her mother had opened the sleeping bag zipper, she had still been a bit warm, and probably hadn’t slept as deeply as normal. Still, visiting Sabine and Nanny again got her awake, and she twisted her feet towards her mother so she could open the valve and let the air out of the sleeping bag. Suddenly her ankle was halted. She had all forgotten about the chain her mother locked on it to make sure she wouldn’t leave the bed, after she had gotten the use of her feet back. “Did the chain bother you in the night?” Iris noticed her mother’s way of speaking was more matter-of-fact, and realized she had already made the switch to treat Iris as her normal age. “No, not at all. I only just realized again it was there.” “I’m glad my improvisation didn’t bother you, and obviously kept you where you belong at night. Let me unlock it, get you out of the sleepsack, and out of the plastic panties. Can I leave it up to you to get out of the diaper, clean the area, put on a pull-up, and dress by yourself?” Now that felt like a bit much maturity for Iris, and she replied “I never did the diaper and the cleaning myself yet. I’ll try, but it would be nice if you’d be there to see if I’m doing it right.” Her mother’s attitude made it easy for her to leave little Iris behind, even though part of her would have liked it if her mother took care of the diapering and dressing.

When Iris was freed from the chain and the sleeping bag, her mother took her to the bathroom, unlocked the panties and let her remove those and the diaper. Since Iris heard her explain the procedure to her father only the day before, she didn’t have much trouble, although of course it was a bit different to actually do it, and on yourself it was always a little clumsier. Then her mother told her to use the toilet, fill a bowl with warm water, and come to her at the changing table with it when she was ready. Left alone in the bathroom, Iris realized she had an opportunity to play with herself, but with her mother just down the hall, and the need to be at the Fletchers on time, she reluctantly decided now was not a good time. Apart from that she had to do #2, and rubbing herself while defecating didn’t seem like a good combination.

When she arrived in the area where the improvised diaper table stood, her mother was at the work bench at the other end of the area, and when she heard Iris she covered up what she was working on with a sheet. Of course that made Iris curious, and she decided to take a peek when she saw an opportunity. But first her mother was waiting for her to clean herself. Wiping there with a wet cloth, and then dry it off with a towel wasn’t much different from washing yourself in the shower, and her mother just watched. And for getting one of the pull-ups with the Disney figures and pulling it on, she didn’t need help either. So in the end she felt a bit silly for asking her mother to be present. Then her mother asked “Are you confident that you won’t get a diaper rash? Since you skipped the cream?” Oops, guess her mother was useful anyway. With the pull-ups it was no problem to take them off again, and apply cream. Now she was touching her sensitive spots with her slippery fingers, and she lingered there for a few moments before she remembered her mother was watching, and she quickly moved on. Then she put on the pull-ups again. “Well done. I think next time you’ll be able to do that on your own,” her mother concluded.

“Do you already know if you want to choose what to bring along to the Fletchers, or leave it to me?” “Oh, I’ve only just woken up, so I haven’t thought about it yet. I guess I’ll wear something easy for the morning, so that I can try to make it to the toilet if I feel the need. For the afternoon I don’t really know; I haven’t even seen everything we brought from Nanny. I guess Sabine would like me to wear the bunny shortalls, if you think the weather would be good for that. But I don’t know, if we

are going out of the house I'll need something less conspicuous." "It is going to be another warm day, so I think those shortalls would be very suitable. And if Imogen has something specific in mind, there is probably something in Sabine's closet that you can borrow. I'm not going to pack a suitcase full of clothes for a one-day-visit." "OK, I guess so. Of course I need my phone, and my pacifier. Oh, have we gotten that pacifier strap from the store? So I can finally have it in during the night?" "I think we got everything, but I still have to sort it all out, so I'll let you know when I come across it. You won't need it at the Fletchers I think." "No, Nanny has one, but since I'm not even going to spend the night there... Is Sabine's old harness still there, or did we get that?" "I don't think we *borrowed* it, at least not yet. Imogen had not given us restraints, except for the belt we use at the changing table now, so that we'd take it slow and not run the risk that you felt trapped or forced. If you'd like, we can see if there are a few extra things we can borrow that she no longer has a need for. Then I don't have to improvise with chains and tie wraps so much anymore." "Yeah, I guess so." Little Iris liked to be restrained, but mature Iris wondered how many restraints she really needed, and if there were so many available, whether her parents might sometimes decide to use them a bit too much, because it was an easy way to get little Iris out of the way. She was pretty sure that they would not be used on mature Iris, but not totally. If mature Iris would get lost, perhaps? But of course that was not going to happen.

"For the rest I don't know what we should bring. Perhaps diapers and panties for the afternoon. Can you think of anything else?" Iris pondered. "I think that should be enough. And Imogen also managed during last week, when you didn't bring anything, so I'm sure she'll manage. So why don't you get dressed, and then we'll have breakfast." And with a little slap on her behind she was sent off to her bedroom, while her mother turned to the work bench again. Iris tried to slow down to get a peek at what was underneath the sheet, but her mother didn't allow that, "Come on, get moving. We don't have much time to spare." Defeated, Iris went to her room, and wondered what pants would be best. Since there was no way she'd wear those bunny shortalls on the way back, but would probably be wearing a thicker diaper, she needed something wide enough, and easy to pull off for the bathroom. Her sweat pants were probably best; not really nice clothes for visiting people, but she was sure Sabine and Nanny wouldn't mind. Since it would be a warm day, she chose a light green polo shirt on top.

Then she went downstairs, where her father was reading the morning paper. When he noticed her he stood up and spread his arms. "Who is my little Maya?" "Dad, I'm a teenager now. I don't mind hugging you, but that welcome is more for little Iris." He looked a bit disappointed, but accepted her normal hug. When she disengaged, he looked her over and asked "Is that what you are going to wear to the Fletchers?" "Yes" "You know sweatpants are only for inside; I don't want a daughter of mine looking like trailer trash<sup>4</sup>." "But Dad, I need something easy to train to use the bathroom again." "I'm sure you have something a bit more decent in your closet that will do. Don't you want to look nice for Sabine and Imogen?" Knowing her father was not going to budge on this, Iris stomped off back up the stairs. At the landing her mother came out of the work area to check what was going on, and Iris complained to her about her father's attitude, and that it was challenging enough for her to use the toilet again, without being hampered extra by her clothes. "I know, honey. But this is important to your father, so let's look what alternatives we can find."

She followed Iris into her bedroom and opened her closet. The jeans were mostly too tight to combine with incontinence materials, and leggings would clearly show them. "How about these?"

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<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia: "Trailer trash is a derogatory North American English term for poor people living in a trailer or a mobile home." The US comedy series 'My Name is Earl' can give you a fair idea of what is meant.

She held up a pair of pleated slacks that Iris mostly wore for special occasions. "I can't wear those to Sabine! They would get dirty, or even damaged when we sit on the ground and play." "Yes, I guess you are right. We'll save those for the birthday tomorrow. But this should work." She held up Iris's skirtall. "You can just lift the skirt up – that is even easier than pants. And with these temperatures you don't need a legging or tights underneath." Since Iris didn't like them so much, she tried to come up with reasons why they would not be suitable, but she had to admit they were probably her best choice. She had one issue with them though, "But with a skirt people might see the pull-ups underneath." "I wouldn't worry about that; Sabine and Imogen know anyway, and who else is going to see you? Apart from that, these pull-ups look a lot like cute normal underwear, so even if someone would catch a brief glimpse they would not suspect." Iris had to admit that her mother was right, so she gave up her resistance and changed into the skirtall. Her mother watched her, but didn't help, even when Iris struggled a bit with getting the straps over her shoulders.

Only when Iris had clipped both buckles onto the buttons on the bib, she remarked "Your left strap is twisted." Iris tried to feel, but had a hard time getting it right, and she finally asked "Can't you help me?" "Of course, darling. I was just waiting for you to ask, because you might not want to be taken care of like little Iris." Iris looked at her mother surprised, "Thanks Mom, that was considerate. But I guess I'm not so used to these straps; they're kinda hard to do on your own." In the meantime her mother had flattened the strap, and with a firm pull closed the buckle again. She checked for a moment if both straps were the same length, and gave a quick pull down at the skirt to make it sit right at the hips. "There, all ready. I'm glad I bought them; they have been useful these last weeks, and they look so nice on you." Unenthusiastically Iris replied "Yes Mom, I guess so." "And what should we do with the wrist brace? Do you want it for the whole time you are there?" "Well, it hasn't hurt for a while now," Iris stated, and rotated her hand, "so I don't think I need it anymore." "That is nice; we'll leave it off then."

Together they went downstairs for breakfast. Her father put the paper away, looked at her once more, and said "Much better. Those look really cute on you." For a moment Iris suspected that her parents had colluded to make her wear more overalls and skirtalls, both giving such similar comments, but decided that was too unlikely. So perhaps she did look nice in a skirtall. She knew Mindy had a black velvet pair with an applique of Taz on the bib, that looked really cute on her as well. And funny, because she was nothing like that Tasmanian devil cartoon character. No longer upset that she had to change, she thanked her father for the compliment and sat down at her normal place at the table. "Don't you need your bib?" her father asked, pointing at her sleeved bib, which was still on the table. Iris started saying "Dad!" in an upset tone of voice, when she noticed him winking at her. "Very funny!" but she couldn't resist touching it for a moment; it was so cute and soft.

After breakfast her mother ordered Iris to get the things she wanted to bring along herself, like her phone and pacifier, and to get diapers for the day, while she got out a weekend bag and disappeared into her office. Iris put her phone in the bib pocket, got the pacifier in its little box, and went to the changing area to get her diapers. She thought she wouldn't be allowed to bring her thick night diapers, so she settled for a Pampers for the afternoon. They had performed well during the bird watching trip, and looked nicer than the Tena Youth. Her plastic panties were there too, and although her mother had not mentioned them, she thought she might better bring them along. Otherwise she would probably be sent back up to get them. By then her mother had gotten everything else together, and after Iris put her things in as well, the bag was zipped up and they went to the car. Of course Iris first said goodbye to her father, with a quick kiss on his cheek. "Mom,

I think I had better go to the bathroom first.” “OK, go quickly then, there is not much time to spare anymore.”

So Iris took the downstairs toilet, lifted the skirt and pulled down the pull-ups. She hadn't been sure she needed to go, but wanted to try and keep them dry in the morning. Of course once she was in the car there would be no opportunity before they reached the Fletchers. While sitting and trying to deliberately let go, she checked the pull-up. She wasn't sure, but it seemed like it contained a trace of urine already, so she had probably already leaked a bit. But it was very little, and well-absorbed, so when she was ready and had wiped, it didn't feel gross to pull it on again. She waved to her father once more on her way to the garage. She was a bit sad she couldn't spend time with him today, but also looking forward to her visit. Back at the car Iris got the buckle guard to put on herself. That felt a bit double; on the one hand she was trusted enough to lock herself in, but on the other hand she wasn't trusted not to release the seatbelt before the car had stopped. It was a stupid rule anyway: it was not like she was going to be seriously injured even if the car would bump into another one while they were parking. Of course she would never undo the seatbelt while they were on the highway or even on a larger city road. But she didn't want to cause a delay, so she just accepted it, put it where it was supposed to go, and clicked the buckle in.

On the road she quickly forgot all about it, trying to imagine what fun she would be having with Sabine. Of course she first had to babysit, so she needed to be responsible, but as soon as Nanny came back, she could really let go and have fun. She wondered if Nanny had anything planned, or that they would just be hanging around in the garden, and perhaps play that board game again. Sabine would probably want to give her a bottle. When they arrived at the Fletchers, Nanny had probably seen the car, because she opened the door and stood there waiting for them while her mother found a parking spot. Iris waited until the car stopped, and then quickly tried to unbuckle the seatbelt, impatient to go and greet Nanny. Which didn't work, because of the buckle guard. Of course her mother noticed it, and nodded to herself, while she maneuvered the car better into the parking space. Iris realized she had tried to open the seat belt too early again, even though she had waited for the car to stop. The nodding of her mother could only mean that she got confirmation again that the buckle guard was needed. Bummer. Now she was sure her parents wouldn't stop using it anytime soon.

Finally her mother turned the engine off, and handed her the car keys so she could open the seat belt. She held her hand out to get them back, and warned Iris not to storm off to Nanny, but look both ways before she crossed the road. What mother said that to her teenage daughter? It was better than needing to hold hands, like with little Iris, but not much. Yesterday had been a lot of fun, but today her father nagged about her clothes, and her mother about traffic safety. Suddenly she felt glad to be away from them for a day. Which in turn made her feel guilty, for her mother had been trying very hard to work on their relationship, and also did a lot to make little Iris happy. So she said “sorry, Mom”, and then immediately realized that it was only her thought she was feeling bad about, and she had not spoken it out loud. Not wanting to share that unworthy consideration, she thought quickly, and added “for trying to undo the seat belt; I really thought you had stopped.” “I get it, but you'd better wait until I turn off the engine: when I first stopped I was blocking another car from leaving, so I had to correct that.” “OK, I get it.” Then Iris quickly got out of the car, looked if nothing was coming, crossed the road, put her arms around Nanny and squeezed tight. Her mother grabbed the weekend bag and followed more leisurely.

Iris felt like she hadn't seen Nanny for weeks, even though it were only four days. But so much had happened in between! She felt a bit ashamed: this was not how a teenager was supposed to greet her friend's mother, but more suitable for little Iris. But she couldn't help herself – she just had to

express her joy. Of course Nanny hugged her back, while in the meantime welcoming Maria, and inviting them in. Iris quickly let go of her, and followed them in more calmly. Sabine was in her playpen tent again (see Figure 34), and while she was usually sitting in it calmly with her dolls and toy animals, this time she had her face and hands pressed to the netting and called out “Iris!” as soon as she saw her friend. Iris wanted to go to her, but had to wait until the adults moved further into the living room, before she could dart past them and put her hands on the netting as well. “Nanny, can I go in?” “Yes Iris, go ahead. But remember, always be alert and let me know as soon as you think something might go wrong.” Iris knew Mrs. Fletcher was referring to the tantrums Sabine sometimes threw, but she had seen two already, and felt confident she could spot them in time. Actually they were more like bouts of uncontrolled rage, those two times set off by frustration. So she replied “I will,” zipped open the tent door and crawled in. Mrs. Fletcher zipped the door up behind her. This meant Iris couldn’t leave the tent without help either, but she was used to that, and fully trusted Nanny.



*Figure 34 Sabine's Playpen Tent*

As soon as she entered the tent, Sabine jumped on her and hugged her strongly, saying she had missed her so much. “Oof” Iris exclaimed, being squeezed too hard for comfort by her stronger and bigger friend. “Sabine, be careful with her!” Nanny called out, and Sabine let go. Iris rubbed her arms and ribs, and Sabine looked concerned and asked “You OK? I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to hurt you!” Iris knew her friend was very impulsive, because of her brain injury, which was another reason she always had to be restrained in some way. But also that she was still a very caring person, and that she felt really bad if she had hurt someone unintentionally. “Oh, it is nothing bad. Just a bit sore.” Actually Iris suspected she might end up with several bruises, but she didn’t want to upset her friend, who could not help her behavior. Then she put her arms around her friend herself, who very carefully put her arms around Iris again. “I missed you a lot too.” In her mind she decided that Sabine might have missed her more, since she had been so busy working out things for little Iris, and with her father being home, while Sabine’s situation was the same as before she came. Then they sat down, each with a cuddly toy, and started chatting. They also showed each other they were still wearing their matching bracelets. (see Figure 1 Iris's Locking Bracelet) Not that Iris had much choice; she doubted her mother would unlock it unless there was a good reason, and now she was glad her mother locked it back on after her visit to Anna and Mindy: Sabine would have been disappointed if she wasn’t wearing it now, and she doubted she would have thought of it by herself this morning.

In the meanwhile the women settled on the couch and started talking too. Iris also wanted to listen and join in that discussion, because it seemed like it was about her, what more stuff they might

borrow, and the possibilities of Sabine staying over at their place. But Sabine wanted her full attention, and somehow it was harder inside the tent to concentrate on what happened outside. The netting sides might keep them in, but were hardly a barrier for sight or sound. Still it acted like a separation from the rest of the world, and gave them their own little safe space. So Iris gave it up for the moment, and focused on her friend.

Sabine wore fairly normal-looking denim shortalls, which legs continued to her knees. Surprisingly there were several belt loops at the hems. The straps buckled to the bib with belt buckles, and each had a little pink heart-shaped padlock dangling from it, so that the buckle couldn't be opened. The back was similar to normal overalls, but there was a horizontal strip of fabric between the shoulder straps, close to the neck, to prevent them from being pulled off the shoulders. It looked to have been added later, as did the belt loops on the legs, and the one at the back, just below where the straps split. The sides were only slightly higher than with Iris's denim overalls, but next to the zipper on one side, it had a belt in the same material as the shortalls that was pulled pretty tight, and also had a little padlock dangling from the buckle. Sabine apparently liked the little hearts, and occasionally played with them. The shortalls didn't have any appliques or embroidery on them, and they looked more like something worn for hiking than the frilly and childish clothes that Sabine usually wore. It reminded her of the utility jumpsuit that Sabine had worn on their first hike where Iris was fully treated as a little, as practice for their trip to the aquarium.

They played with the toy animals for a while; Sabine of course with her favorite, the elephant Bobo. Then suddenly Iris felt the need to pee, so she called for Nanny to let her out. Mrs. Fletcher responded immediately, looking closely at Sabine for signs of trouble, but Iris explained she needed to visit the bathroom, while Nanny unzipped the door. Iris rushed out, but then slowed halfway to the downstairs toilet: she had not been able to stop the flow long enough. Still she continued, in the hope of at least depositing part of her bladder contents in the toilet. But when she lifted her skirt, tried to stop the flow for a moment, and pulled the pull-ups down, there was not that much left. When she was sure nothing more would come out, and wiped, she wondered if she should pull them on again. Just wearing a diaper that slowly got wet was one thing, but taking it off and putting it back on again seemed gross. And of course pull-ups wouldn't have the capacity of a real diaper, so she didn't know if she should get a new one anyway, or that she was supposed to use this one some more. She hadn't thought to bring a spare pull-up, just the pampers for the afternoon. Not putting it back on would mean that she would have to leave the toilet without any underwear under her skirt, and carry the dirty pull-up in her hand. That seemed worse, so she decided to bite the bullet and put the pull-ups back on. And it wasn't so bad, after all. Like a proper diaper, the pull-up had absorbed the urine and left the surface mostly dry. After a few seconds it felt almost like before, apart from that it of course had become a bit thicker and heavier.

Coming out of the bathroom, she felt ashamed that she hadn't made it to the toilet in time, but had no choice than to explain to the adults that most of it went into the pull-up, and she wasn't sure if she should continue wearing them. They decided it would be better to put on a new one, since it would be best if she was fully protected while Mrs. Fletcher was away. But then Iris had to admit that she hadn't thought to bring spare pull-ups, but only a diaper for the afternoon. And once she was in a diaper, she wouldn't be able to train herself in going to the bathroom anymore. Her mother called her over, lifted up her skirt, and checked the pull-up. "It looks to me like this should be able to take another wee or two. What do you think?" That last question was aimed at Mrs. Fletcher, who had taken Sabine out of the tent and onto her lap while Iris was on the toilet. So she couldn't easily look up close, but replied "I can't see it very well from here, but pull-ups are designed to last the night, so it should be able to handle more than one load. Unluckily we don't have any pull-ups, and if

we did they would probably be too big and drop off, especially once they get wet. You're welcome to one of our diapers, but like you said, then toilet training is over. But if next time you manage to reach the toilet in time, because you don't first need to get helped out of the tent, it should not be a problem at all. Iris responded, "Thank you, Nanny. I feel a bit bad for not having made it in time, but I'll do better next time."

Upon that, her mother asked her to come over, took her on her lap and put her arms around her. "You don't need to feel bad. You just started training again, you noticed you needed to go, and tried to reach the toilet in time. That is the most important step, and the rest is just training your pelvic muscles again." Iris had hesitated a moment before sitting on her mother's lap; that was not a very mature action. But she could really do with the comfort, and felt her eyes getting slightly moist when her mother told her she did good, and the rest would come. She didn't start crying, but leaned into her mother a bit more and enjoyed her position. Perhaps even teenagers needed comforting every now and then.

In the meantime Nanny continued fiddling with Sabine's shortalls. There were straps now hanging down from both sides of the bib, that had not been visible before. Apparently they could be hidden on the inside when not in use. Nanny pulled the straps around Sabine's upper arms, put one through the belt loop at the top of the back of the shortalls, buckled both ends together, and put on another small padlock. Now Sabine's upper arms were held close to her body. Nanny asked Iris "Do you like Sabine's new shortalls? She wanted something more suitable for an active big girl, so we chose this one. It had long legs, but I had them made into shortalls for this nice weather. The extra fabric was used to make some simple modifications, like the ones you helped me with on the jumpsuit." While she was explaining, she took another strap of fabric out of one of the cargo pockets on the legs, put that through the belt loops at the ends of the legs, and locked that on too. Now Sabine's knees were also held close together. "There, all done. What do you think, Iris?" She put Sabine on her feet, who immediately showed her new shortalls to the visitors. "Oh, those are really nice Sabine, and they look all ready to go for an adventure into nature, well, except for those straps." Sabine radiated pleasure on the praise, and shrugged about the straps limiting her.

Mrs. Tomas asked "What is the function of those straps? You said that Iris helped you with them?" "When Iris was here last week, she felt sorry for Sabine to always need to be in the tent or in her activity chair when others were around. She came up with the idea that if we could limit her arms and legs somewhat, she would not be able to do too much damage when she had one of her tantrums, and it would be easier to subdue her. Iris volunteered to try out several options, and we ended up with a modified jumpsuit that worked pretty well. Even though Sabine is quite a bit larger and stronger, when she had another tantrum Iris managed to hold and control her until the attack passed. Sabine doesn't mind the straps too much, since they enable her to move around freely, and be more involved in whatever is going on." "And you figured this out?" Mrs. Tomas asked her daughter. "Well, I made the suggestion, but then we figured it out together. It was fun, and I'm glad that I could do it for Sabine." "Well done! I am proud of you." Her mother's grip tightened around her into a firm hug. Now Iris radiated as well. That was not something her mother often said! And more to herself she continued "Interesting that you can adapt clothes to be more limiting with such simple measures."

"And how is your UTI?" Nanny wanted to know next. Iris replied that she had finished the antibiotics, and didn't seem to have any symptoms left, except that she didn't have full control over her bladder yet. So now she was training to regain that, at least when she was in mature mode. Nanny was glad to hear that.



Then she explained to Sabine and Iris that they had been talking about possibilities for Sabine to go and visit Iris. Sabine's eyes grew wide, and she exclaimed "Can I?" Her mother continued "We are looking at the possibilities, and what would be needed at the Tomas's to make it safe for everybody. Now that Iris is treated as a little some of the time, they already have made some changes. But we need to do a bit more. Maria will take our old high chair with her now, so that they have a good chair for you at the table. And perhaps Iris would like to use it sometimes, as well." She winked at Iris, knowing she had enjoyed the chair last week. "They will also need some way to limit Sabine to a play area. A place where she can sleep safely could be useful as well, but for a first visit we will probably not be staying so long that that would be needed. We are confident that we can make it work, so we decided to tell you. But we will have to try it out, and there is still a chance that we have to stop doing it if it doesn't work out. So don't get your hopes up too much!" It looked like Sabine hadn't understood everything yet, but she definitely realized she could come over to her friend, and play with her there. Of course Iris was very enthusiastic about the idea as well, so she got off her mother's lap grabbed Sabine, and did a little dance with her. Sabine was still careful at first not to be too wild with Iris, but gradually relaxed, and both girls could freely express their joy.

Mrs. Tomas explained to her daughter "This means that we have a good excuse to have a high chair, and also the car seat, and when guests see them, we can explain why they are there. We won't have to keep hiding all the things for little Iris." This was more good news for Iris, and little Iris would get a lot of fun stuff. Mature Iris felt a moment of concern that everything that was needed for Sabine would be a bit much for little Iris, but that was quickly drowned out by all the good news, and Sabine's joy. She wondered about one thing though, "But how can we explain people that we have a car seat for Sabine, if she is just coming to visit us at home?" This time it was Nanny who answered, "Again, don't get up your hopes too much, but if things go well, and Sabine will sometimes be at your house without me, it would be convenient if your parents could also take her for a trip, or bring her home." "Oh, that makes sense. Will you then keep the booster seat in the car as well, so that I can be there as well when you drive Sabine around?" Iris asked her mother. "I hadn't thought about that yet, but that seems like a good idea. And then we'd have a choice of seats for you. The car seat is safer, so we'll normally use that, but at least we'll have the option then." Iris had hoped that she could keep using the booster seat unless she was in toddler mode, but her mother apparently intended to keep her to her promise that she would travel in the car seat even in mature mode.

Sabine's old high chair was still standing at the table, and they went to take a look. (see Figure 35) Sabine came along, holding Iris's hand. Mrs. Fletcher explained its features to Mrs. Tomas, and asked Iris to sit in it so that her mother could practice. Iris's first reaction was to refuse, not wanting to sit in a toddler chair as a teenager, but quickly realized how silly that was, and cooperated. Getting put into the harness, and with the tray clicking closed, she immediately felt more childish, but this time she prevented little Iris from taking over. She needed to be mature this morning, even though she was looking forward to the afternoon. She was quickly released again, and then Nanny disassembled the parts that were easily taken off, like the tray and the foot board. She suggested that Iris and her mother put it in the car, while she kept Sabine company. Iris had already helped last week with bringing the chair down from the storage room where she had slept, so she knew it was not that hard to handle with two persons.



Figure 35 High Chair with Tray

With her mother holding the bottom end, and Iris holding the back rest, they had no trouble getting the chair to the car, Iris making sure to check for traffic before crossing the road. Getting it in the car was a lot harder though. First they tried the trunk, but it was too big for that, and because of the booster seat they couldn't lower the back bench. Then they tried putting it on the free seat next to the booster seat, but it was too high. In the end they managed to put it in upside down, with the backrest in the leg room in front of the free seat. To maneuver it there, Iris sat on the booster seat – for once without a seat belt – and steered it onto place from there. Trying to pull it into place, suddenly Iris felt a sharp pain in her sprained wrist. Apparently it was not fully healed yet, and this inconvenient fiddling to get the chair into place had put too much pressure on it. She quickly pulled it back, and managed to get the job done with the other hand. At last it was in place, and the door closed. Walking back, she held her wrist, and her mother noticed it. “Did you hurt your wrist again?” “Yes, I thought it was all better, but I hadn't expected heavy lifting today.” “I'm sorry. Just try to be careful with it the rest of the day, and we'll put the brace on again when you get home.”

Back in the house Nanny announced that there wasn't that much time left before she had to leave, and she needed to go upstairs with Maria for a while. So Sabine and Iris were asked how they wanted to spend the time that she was away: with Sabine in the activity chair, or watching TV or a video on the couch. That was normally for Sundays, but she was willing to swap with today if they wanted. Of course there would not be TV the next day then. Iris said that if Sabine was in the activity chair, they would have more chance to talk than when a movie was playing, and could do all sorts of things, like coloring, games, puzzles, etc., but that she didn't watch that many movies, so that would be nice too. Sabine said she liked talking too, and a movie she could also watch alone. Iris was once more impressed with how much better her friend was with forming thoughts and voicing them. “That was well said; you sound like such a big girl now!” she complimented her friend. That was the best compliment you could give Sabine, but Iris didn't say it because of that. Sabine actually got a bit moist in the eyes, which was quite unusual for her, and she hugged her friend once again.

Nanny removed the limiting straps from the shortalls, and installed Sabine in the activity chair. (see Figure 36) To Iris she said “You know the way around here, so feel free to get anything from Sabine's room to play with. And here on the table are the coloring books – this one you worked in.” She handed Iris the coloring book little Iris had worked in a few times the previous week, who accepted it hesitantly. It was not really a teenager activity, but little Iris really liked it, and as long as no one knew but Sabine and Nanny, at least it would keep her occupied while Sabine was working in hers. So she sat down next to Sabine, and both started in their book, while the mothers went upstairs. After a while they came back down with 2 bags. One was put in Iris's weekend bag, while her mother held the other, probably taking that home with her already. She came over to Iris, kissed her goodbye, saw the coloring book and told her jokingly to be a good little girl, and always do what Nanny told her. “Yes Mommy, I'll be good.” Iris played along.



*Figure 36 Sabine's Activity Chair*

After she left, Nanny made sure they had enough to drink, Iris had her number on her phone, and both were comfortable. She noticed Iris rubbing her chest, and reacted “Iris, it is not well-behaved to rub yourself there in company.” “But I wasn't! ... Well, I was, but it is just that the top of the bib and the buckles irritate my nipples. The bib of these skirtall is just the wrong height.” “Oh, I see. I might have something to help with that,” she continued after a moment's thought, checked the time, and

added, “come upstairs for a moment with me, there is just enough time.” In Sabine’s room she searched in a cupboard while she asked Iris to bare her upper body. Iris undid the shoulder straps, and let the bib drop. But she hadn’t thought of the phone in her bib pocket, and it fell out. Luckily it landed on her foot, and then on the carpet, and when she anxiously picked it up, it was OK. With a sigh of relief she put it in one of the skirt pockets for the moment, and then she took off her polo shirt. By then Nanny had found what she was looking for, and said, “This is Sabine’s first training bra. Put it like a t-shirt – it’s stretchy. It is already slightly padded, but I’ll add some extra tissues in the cups. That should protect your nipples, and will also make your chest look a bit more developed.” Iris was a bit stunned; it was only last week that she finally discovered the first signs of breast development, and now she suddenly was wearing a bra. It was a bit loose, but because of the stretch it was doable, especially since it was not needed to keep any bulging tissue in place. Now she was not only a teenager, but was wearing something that showed she was becoming a woman! She put her hands around Nanny’s neck, pulled her towards her, and gave her a big wet kiss on each cheek. “Thank you Nanny, this is so wonderful!”

She wanted to go look in the mirror in the bathroom, but Nanny stopped her and said there was no time for that now, and she should get dressed again. She was running late. Of course Iris obeyed, and quickly put on her polo shirt and tried to do up the straps of the skirt again. Again that was a bit of a struggle, so Nanny helped her. Iris decided she needed to practice that a bit more, since she didn’t want adults to constantly help her dressing. (Of course little Iris was exactly the opposite, and loved being taken care of.) Walking down the stairs, the top of the bib and the buckles moved up and down a bit again, but the padding prevented all but the slightest feeling. This made wearing the skirt a lot more pleasant, and having bare arms and legs was also nice with these temperatures. Quite a difference from her mother’s usual insistence that she’d dress warmly.

Downstairs Mrs. Fletcher quickly grabbed her things, kissed the girls goodbye, and hurried out the door. They continued with the coloring, and Iris looked at the line drawings she had colored in before. It surprised her to see that although she still agreed with the color use, the execution had been pretty sloppy. Apparently little Iris cared less, or didn’t concentrate so much. Now mature Iris decided she was going to show her how it was done, not crossing the lines and putting color everywhere within the areas. She realized she was trying to compete with herself, but still felt the need to show she could do better.

In the meantime Sabine wanted to know more about Iris’s other friends, Anna and Mindy, because Iris had told her on the phone that they were interested in meeting her. When Sabine finally had run out of questions, she was silent for a while, concentrating on her drawing. Then she suddenly said “Knock, knock”. Every American child knew the responses, and Iris automatically answered “Who’s there?” “It is I” “I who?” “I-ris!”. Now it might not have been a great joke, but not only was it the first joke Sabine made since they got reacquainted, but it must be one she thought of herself as well! Iris was so surprised by it, and what it said about Sabine’s mental capacity, that she at first didn’t know what to say. Sabine was looking at her with a mix of expectancy and triumph, but her face dropped when Iris wasn’t laughing. Iris realized her mistake, and tried to laugh, but couldn’t quite make it believable. “Oh Sabine, I’m so sorry. I was so surprised that you made a joke that I just forgot to laugh. This is such a big thing, for you to make up your own joke! I’m so proud of you. And so honored that you did it with my name. And you pronounced it right. So many things to be impressed with that I all forgot to laugh, but it is really funny!” So she got up and hugged her friend fiercely, for as far the activity chair allowed. Even if Sabine couldn’t quite understand why Iris hadn’t laughed, she obviously felt the appreciation and affection from Iris, and hugged her right back.

After a while Iris finished her drawing, and didn't feel like starting a new one. She thought about the mental progress Sabine had made, and wondered if it would be possible to do a very simple crossword puzzle with her. She had a booklet with children's crosswords and similar puzzles at home, that she enjoyed when she was younger, but hadn't looked at it in years. She thought that could be both fun and challenging her friend even more, but that it wasn't likely that her friend would have such a book. Still, she decided to go look upstairs, so she checked that Sabine was OK, and then went looking. As expected, she didn't find one, so she decided to bring back a reading book instead, selecting one that had more and longer words than some of the picture books that were for toddlers. Then she decided she would take the opportunity to use the bathroom, to make sure she would not wet her pull-up a second time, and perhaps overtax it.

Back down she stood next to Sabine, and watched her progress with her coloring. It seemed like it was almost done as well, but Sabine took her time to look at it and decide if she wanted to add anything, and in what color. Iris stroked her head and face in the meantime, which Sabine clearly enjoyed. Then she decided she was done, and purposely put her crayons back in the box. "I've brought a book for us to read. Would you like to read it together, or shall I tilt the chair backwards, and you can just sit back and enjoy listening to the story? Sabine thought for a moment, and then replied "we read togetherh." Iris had no indication that Sabine could still read since her brain damage, but since her mother had told them during their first visit that she had the mental capacity of a two year old, she expected that Sabine just wanted to look at the book and the pictures. But Sabine had other ideas, and when Iris put the book on her chair's tray and opened it, she started to try and figure out the letters and what words they formed. She could name a few of the letters, but when Iris helped her with the others, she made clear she wanted to do it by herself. But this was clearly too much too soon, and Iris soon recognized the growing frustration within Sabine. She told her friend it was alright, and tried to close the book, but it was already too late, and soon Sabine was in full rage. Several pages of the book got torn up before it was catapulted through the room.

Iris quickly went to the back of the chair, where Sabine could not hit her accidentally. She decided to tilt the chair backwards, in the hope that such a position would help calm her friend down. She kept telling her friend that it was alright, and that she loved her, and whatever other soothing things she could think of. Instead of locking the chair into the backwards position, she decided to keep rocking it up and down, like you would do for a crying baby in a cradle. That made her think of singing a lullaby, and she started with the first song that came into her mind, the 'Splish, Splash, Splosh' song she rediscovered the previous evening in the bath. It was hard for her to judge, having only seen two tantrums before, but it seemed to her that the combination worked, and Sabine calmed down quicker than those other times. As usual Sabine started crying when it was over, upset with herself for losing control, and for destroying the book. Of course Iris did her best to comfort her, and tell her it wasn't her fault, until she calmed down, and was back to her normal self.

Then Iris told her that she thought it was very brave of Sabine to try to read, but that she should start more slowly. She knew that Sabine could read quite well before the illness, but now she had to start all over again. And like in kindergarten and the lowest grades of elementary school, you started with individual letters, and then small words, and not with a whole book at once. "We'll talk with your mother, and perhaps she can help you to learn again, but for now I think we should give it a rest." Sabine nodded; those rages always left her exhausted, and she was afraid to become frustrated again if she tried now. Iris set the chair in upright position again, and gave Sabine her drink. After some moments of silence, Sabine asked about the song that Iris sang. During the tantrum she had not listened to it, but now realized she hadn't recognized it. So Iris told her about her bath yesterday, and how it suddenly popped into her head. She sang it again, and after a while

Sabine tried to join in. When it was finished, she said “We should bath together today!” That sounded great to Iris, remembering that yesterday the first part had been a bit boring, just on her own and not able to do much, with her hands in the cuffs. “Oh, I’d like that. But my mother comes to collect me before dinner, so I don’t know if there will be time.” Sabine looked disappointed, but nodded that she understood. “But we can ask!” Iris added, and that made Sabine smile again.

Iris collected the book and the torn sheets, but was uncertain if she should just throw them in the garbage, so she left them on the table. Then she considered what they could do next. More coloring didn’t look too appealing, and she thought reading a book, even if Sabine would only be listening, would invoke memories of the tantrum, so that was out too. Perhaps she could find a jigsaw puzzle in Sabine’s room. She got up, but when she was halfway up the stairs the front door opened and Nanny entered. Feeling a bit mischievous, she waited for a moment until Nanny entered the living room, and then descended the stairs like a diva making her grand entrance. With a smile Nanny genuflected and kissed her hand, as if she were royalty. Then they both burst into laughter, and soon Sabine joined in too. Nanny sat down at the table with Iris, so that Sabine was included, and asked how it had been. Iris enthusiastically told her about the ‘knock, knock’ joke that her friend made, but that was no surprise for her friend’s mother. Nanny told her that Sabine had worked it out, and came up with the punch line, but that she was uncertain if she was saying it right, and wanted to practice a few times. She fully agreed with Iris though that it was a huge step in Sabine’s mental development.

She had already noticed the remains of the torn book, and asked about them. Iris told her about her idea with the book, and that Sabine was actually trying to read, but that it resulted in a tantrum. Nanny first checked that Sabine was all OK again, and then said, “Iris, I am disappointed that you haven’t called me about it; we talked about that last time.” “Yes, I’m sorry, but during the tantrum, I was fully focused on Sabine, trying to help her through it. Since she was safe in her chair, there didn’t seem to be any danger to either of us. And once she had calmed down, she needed comfort too. And when it was all over, there was nothing you could do anyway. Trust me, I would certainly have called if I hadn’t been sure that the situation was under control. And you probably would be back soon anyway. It happened maybe 10 minutes ago.” “OK, I see what you are saying. But I still want you to call me as soon as you have the opportunity, because there might be something I want you to do, or talk to my daughter. It is hard for me to leave my daughter alone with a 13 year old, even a very mature one, and knowing that I will always be called whenever there is something would make it easier for me.” “Oh, I guess I hadn’t looked at it that way. I’ll do better next time.”

Then Iris went on explaining that she talked about reading with Sabine afterwards, and that she promised to talk with Nanny if it would be possible to start practicing reading a bit, starting with the letters and slowly building up from there. Mrs. Fletcher agreed that if Sabine was interested, they could give it a try. Sabine nodded, apparently not discouraged by her earlier failure. But Sabine’s mother warned them that they shouldn’t get their hopes up too much, since there were likely to be limits to what the damaged brain could do. Iris saw a determined look on Sabine’s face: she was not going to give up easily! Then Sabine told her that Iris had sung a song for her while she was upset, and that it was a song for in the bath. Iris explained that she was experimenting with slowly rocking the chair back and forth, as a calming motion, and then thought of singing a lullaby with it. That bathing song was the first that came into her head. Then Sabine begged her mother if Iris and she could bathe together again today. Nanny explained that they bathed after dinner, and that Iris would be collected before dinner. But she added that she would think about it, and perhaps ask Mrs. Tomas when she arrived.

Then she got up and said it was high time for lunch. But first she asked Iris how her pull-up was doing. Iris explained that she had gone to the bathroom a while ago, before she really felt the urge. Nanny concluded that she would change Iris into a proper diaper after lunch, but let her go to the toilet once more, to be safe. When Iris came back, Nanny was waiting for her with the harness with the bear face in front, that Iris had worn before, and put it on her. (see Figure 37) Iris gave a big grin and helped Nanny to put it on: at last it was time again for little Iris. When the buckles in the back closed and were locked, Iris noticed that the chest strap ran over the buckles of her skirtall, and she was doubly glad for the cushioning of the training bra. She assumed she would be put into her bunny shortalls when her diaper was changed. Then she was taken to the chair next to Sabine, the leash was put around the back rest, and the wrist band locked there. With the spring-like leash, she could still easily lean forward, but was probably prevented from getting up, and certainly from leaving the table. Of course the high chair she had been in the last days of her previous visit was already taken away by her mother, so now Nanny had to improvise a bit.

Sabine was aware that Iris was now treated again like herself, and since she was sitting higher in her activity chair, she could extend her arm and pat Iris on her head. With Sabine's limited fine motor skills, and because it was not so easy for her to reach over and see what she was doing, it was a bit clumsy, but Iris liked it anyway, and once turned her head and kissed Sabine's hand. Meanwhile Nanny had disappeared into the kitchen, and they heard sounds of cooking, like from a mixer in a bowl. Apparently this was not going to be a simple sandwich meal. When Iris heard a frying pan on the stove, and a few seconds later something poured in that immediately started sizzling, she guessed "Pancakes!" Sabine immediately repeated "Pancakes!", and soon both of them were shouting out for them, and banging with their hands on the table. Nanny had to shout really hard to get herself heard, "Ladies, if you will not be quiet now, I'll eat the first ones myself!" That quieted them down quickly.



*Figure 37 Pink Toddler Harness*

When the first ones were ready, Nanny brought them over, together with plates, cutlery and toppings. Then she put the familiar leather-like sleeved bib on Sabine. "Iris, did you bring a bib?" "I didn't think I needed it, but perhaps my mother packed mine? I got a new one yesterday, with sleeves, and a cute bear in the front," Iris enthusiastically explained. But it wasn't in the weekend bag, so Nanny had to get the bib that Iris had worn before: a pink hard-plastic one with a big pocket at the bottom. (see Figure 38) It made a loud ratchet-like sound when Nanny closed the strap around her neck, almost like a handcuff would make. Then they could finally have their pancakes. "Iris, I need to go bake more, could you please put something on Sabine's, and cut it into bite-sized pieces?" Iris just wanted to start eating her own pancake as quickly as she could, but then Nanny wouldn't have the next one ready, so she agreed. Sabine only had a fork with an extra thick handle to put the pieces in her mouth. Iris realized that if she would use her hands with her pancakes, Sabine would quickly adopt that too, and it would get awfully messy, so she tried to behave and keep using her knife and fork. But that couldn't prevent that occasionally something dropped on the bib, which she then collected from the pocket. Some of the syrup also ended up on her arms, but because the sleeves of the polo shirt were short, that could just be washed off. Sabine didn't stay clean either, but she was well-protected and she ignored it.

When Nanny had finished baking, she brought the stack over and started eating herself too. She wiped her forehead, "Pfff, that is hot work, at the stove with these temperatures." But looking at the two girls enjoying themselves so much, she smiled contently. They almost managed to finish the whole stack, but finally all were satisfied. Then she got a wet towel and cleaned up both girls. "Now Iris, I'll first go and put Sabine in bed. You just wait here until I get back. Just do some more coloring or something." Then she helped Sabine out of her chair, and took her upstairs. Her friend waved her goodbye, with a slightly sad look that they had to separate for a while. Iris felt a bit drowsy from all the pancakes, but being left alone, she could not resist exploring her harness and bib. She knew Nanny was pretty strict in not allowing her to try to open any of her clothes or restraints, for fear that Sabine would copy it, and it would get harder to get her to accept the protective measures that were needed. Even when she tried to open this bib, the last time she wore it, and was out of sight from Sabine, she punished Iris by letting her wear it longer than needed, and even a little bit outside, to the car. But now both Sabine and Nanny were far away, so she thought no one needed to find out that she explored it a bit. Her fingers had just found the place where it should open, when Nanny suddenly called from upstairs "And don't you dare open your bib!" Bummer, Nanny knew her too well!



*Figure 38 Sabine's old Bib*

She half-heartedly tried to explore the harness, but that was closed with two side-release buttons at her back, which were locked. She thought they might be the same buckles as on the yellow rain jacket she had worn last week, and with those she had managed to partly twist the locking cylinder with her bare hands and her nails, while she was in the back of her mother's car, on their way back from the doctor. But to repeat that behind her back, hard to reach and without looking, would be beyond her. The wrist part, that locked her to the chair, was somewhat easier to reach, although the harness kept her close enough to the chair that she could only reach it with one hand at the time, and that didn't work either. Nanny had done a good job again.

So she reached for the book with the torn pages, and tried to put the pages back in the right order. That didn't take very long, and without sticky tape she couldn't repair it. Instead she started reading, and was still at it when Nanny came back. "OK, let's get you ready for bed as well." "But Nanny, my bladder infection is over now. I don't need a midday nap. And I was hoping that we could talk again, like we did last week in the evenings." "I really enjoyed those chats as well, but little girls need their downtime. Or is there something urgent you need to discuss with me." Iris saw that Nanny was giving her an opening, but unluckily she couldn't think of anything important or urgent that she needed to talk about. "No, I guess not." "Then upstairs with you - you wouldn't want Sabine to feel you are treated different than her, would you? And don't you want to spend some time in your crib?" "OK, I guess it wouldn't be fair. And I do like the crib. Can I be grumpy bear again?" Iris was referring to the Carebear sleeper that she had worn last week, before they switched to the inflatable sleeping bag. It actually was more like a costume than a sleeper, complete with integrated hood and mittens, and with separate matching feet. "I thought you might, so I have already put it on the bed. Are you sure it won't be too warm for you?" "Last night I still slept in the sleeping bag, and that was pretty warm too, so in the end Mommy opened the zipper at the bottom, and then it was OK. I think the sleeper should not be worse than that, if we leave off the feet."



When Nanny had removed the bib and released the leash from the chair, she took the wrist band in her hand and sent Iris ahead up the stairs, while she brought along the weekend bag. The storage room where Iris slept last week was nothing special, but Iris still felt a bit like it was her room, and had fond memories. Nanny locked the wrist band around a bar of the metal crib that had served as Iris's bed, so that she had her hands free. Then she put the weekend bag on the bed, and started browsing its content. "These are the diapers we'll put you in?" "Yes Nanny, they are size 7 Pampers that Mommy found at a garage sale, and they still fit me. It is fun to wear something actually for small children, and they work pretty good, too." "And these will be the panties." Iris nodded. "Oh, did you bring the bunny shortalls for later? Sabine will love that! Ah, and here is your toothbrush and paste."



*Figure 39 Carebear Costume Grumpy Bear*

Of course Nanny remembered that her mother was so strict with brushing her teeth, and it didn't surprise Iris that her mother had packed them for her. Nanny handed them to her, took her to the bathroom, and told Iris to use the toilet. She secured the toilet strap around her waist, making sure she wouldn't get up before she was allowed. She took the pull-up, quietly entered Sabine's room to deposit it into the diaper pail, and she returned with the cream and a box of wipes. Iris said she was ready, so Nanny released the strap and used the wipes to clean the area, while Iris held her skirt up. Then she was told to brush her teeth. When she was ready Nanny took her back the 'her' room. There she first asked for Iris's phone, and put it in the weekend bag, so that it wouldn't fall again or get lost. Then she took the skirt off, spread the pampers on the bed, and asked Iris to lie on them. She applied the cream, taped the diaper closed, and pulled the clear plastic panties on. She noticed the Master padlock that hung open on the chain, and said "Your mother seems to want to make really sure that you won't take off your diaper!" while she closed the lock, and gave it a pull to make sure it wasn't coming off. "Well, the lock that came with it was pretty flimsy, but she didn't have a better one that was small enough, so she found two of those at a garage sale. We should have a set of those heart-shaped locks now, in the shipment that arrived yesterday, so I think we'll be using those in the future." Nanny gave a neutral 'hmm', apparently not convinced that Mrs. Tomas would not prefer the extra security of the high quality lock. "Shall I take the training bra off again? You probably won't need it with the shortalls." "Can I keep it on? I feel like such a big girl with it." Nanny laughed, "Imagine that, little Iris wanting to be a big girl. But if you want to keep it on I don't mind."

Then it was time for the sleeper. First step into the legs, then put the arms in, with the hands ending up in the mittens, then the hood over her head, and finally the zipper from her lower back all the way up to the top of her head. Nanny even used a little padlock that made sure Iris couldn't unzip herself, and fastened the Velcro straps around the wrists, so she couldn't pull her hands into the suit. Then Iris was helped into the crib, and Nanny pulled up the railing until it engaged at the top with a clank. The blinds were lowered, and suddenly it was pretty dark in the room. "Shall I put on the night light?" "No thanks, I don't need it." "I believe I saw your pacifier in the bag, do you want it?" "Yes, please. I haven't worn it at home because it kept falling out in my sleep, but I missed it." So Nanny got the strap that helped keep it in, put the personalized pacifier in (see Figure 12 Iris's Personalized Pacifier). She opened the sleeper zipper to lower its hood, and buckled it loosely



around Iris's head. As usual she let Iris test if she could remove it when needed. Then she put up the hood again, zipped and locked the Carebear suit once more.

Nanny stroked her head for a little while through the bars, then wished her 'sleep well', double checked the baby monitor and reminded her that she could always call if there was anything, and left. The procedure was so familiar that Iris's body automatically responded and she started feeling quite sleepy. The suit was a bit hot through, so she tried to lower the hood, remembering she had done that before. But her head wouldn't fit through the opening. Then she remembered that Nanny had made it a bit smaller during her stay, to make sure Iris's head was protected if she happened to bump her head into the bars of the crib. So she gave up, and turned on her side. That was a lot easier than with the inflated sleeping bag! Quickly she drifted off into sleep, suckling contently on her pacifier.



*Figure 40 Iris's Drop-side Bed*

### 13. Afternoon Antics

When Iris woke, she heard sounds coming from Sabine's room, which was next to hers. It was probably Nanny getting Sabine out of bed and ready for the afternoon. She expected to be next. She was actually glad to have a few more moments to herself, and enjoy the situation. It was wonderful to have the pacifier in without the risk of it falling out. Though the Carebear suit was a bit too warm for this weather, it was so soft and cozy that she didn't mind. She felt at the top of her head for the padlock, and pulled on it a bit, just for the confirmation that she was safely kept in and had no chance of doing anything she was not supposed to. The lock firmly connected the zipper pull to the D-ring, and wouldn't budge. Of course the suit wasn't quite complete without the feet, but that was a very acceptable compromise. She stroked her face with the mittens, as far as it wasn't covered by the hood and the pacifier strap, to enjoy the plushy fabric. The crib was not locked, but you needed to press on both ends at the same time to slide the side down, and her arms were not long enough for that, as she found out after she inadvertently locked herself in on the first night. That was not such a happy memory, since she had to pee in the bed because she had no way out, and wasn't wearing a diaper then. But soon after she started to appreciate the security. She took the bars in both hands and rattled the side, and even though she knew she wouldn't be able to, tried to reach the handles on both sides.

After she had enjoyed herself like that for a while, she heard two pairs of footsteps crossing the landing outside of her door. Being in the crib was fun, but suddenly she wanted to be part of the action again, and got impatient. She shouted 'Nanny, I'm awake!' The pacifier and the strap blocked much of the sound, but she wasn't prepared to take the pacifier out yet, knowing she would probably not get it back in. To make sure she wasn't forgotten, she started to rattle the crib railing to make more noise. The door opened and Nanny entered with Sabine, who was already wearing her bunny shortalls. (See Figure 26 Kawaii Bunny Shortalls) "You'h in my old bed!" Sabine exclaimed. Iris realized Sabine had not seen her like this before, so she tried to pull the pacifier out of her mouth to answer. But Sabine put her hand over it to keep it there, and then started stroking her head. Iris started purring like a cat. She already felt so comfortable and safe, and that made it even better. She crawled up to the railing as far as she was able, so that she was touching Sabine through the bars.

Sabine felt the little padlock on the top of Iris's head, pulled at it for a moment to look at it, nodded, and then continued the stroking.

"Mommy, can I go in with hehr for a while?" "I'm sorry Sabine, but that would not be safe. Besides, it is high time for Iris to get up, and get dressed into those cute shortalls too. Sabine nodded reluctantly, and stepped aside to let her mother open the crib. Iris put her legs over the edge of the bed and tried to jump down, but Nanny stopped her with a quick "STOP! You know you are not supposed to get out by yourself." Iris pulled the pacifier down and replied "But Nanny, that is for when I'm wearing the feet." "No, you will always wait for me, so you are not getting used to jumping out yourself, and then forgetting when you do wear socks, or those feet." Iris only responded by holding out her arms for Nanny, so she could be lifted off the bed.

Before she went to bed, she hadn't fully made the switch to little Iris; perhaps Sabine's tantrum, and Nanny's remark that she should have phoned her were still too fresh in her head to fully relax, but after this nap in the crib, in the suit, with the pacifier, the transformation was complete.

Now that she was out of the crib and standing on the floor, she wanted action, and started playing with Sabine's shortalls, pulling the bunny ears loose from the straps. She knew those were only attached with snaps, so it was not like she damaged them. Then she tried to dart around to the back, and put the hood up. Nanny was trying to open her sleep suit, which of course didn't work with Iris fooling around, so she asked Sabine to hold Iris's arms, to keep her in place. Sabine liked to help take care of little Iris, and grabbed hold of Iris's wrists, making sure she stayed in place. Then Nanny could open the little lock on top, and pull the zip down. She folded the hood down to the front, and removed the pacifier strap, putting the pacifier in its little box. Then she opened the Velcro around the wrists, Sabine shifting her grip on Iris's arms without letting go. "Thank you. You can let go now." Sabine obeyed, but Iris noticed she was still keeping a good eye on her, ready to grab her again if she tried to get away or not cooperate. When Iris was mature, Sabine accepted readily that Iris was in charge, but when she was little, she loved playing the big sister, making sure she wouldn't run away, giving her a bottle with milk, etc. For little Iris that felt like two people were looking out for her and keeping her safe and in line, so she didn't mind at all.

Knowing she'd have no chance to do mischief, and wanting to get out of the warm suit and dressed for the next fun activities, she cooperated, and soon the suit was off. Nanny checked the diaper, but Iris had gone to the bathroom just before her nap, and had not produced much since, so it still seemed dry. Because it was important to mature Iris, little Iris had decided she would try to practice holding it, and only releasing the pee when she wanted to. For a moment she thought it would be fun to fill it just when Nanny was checking, but there was not enough yet to produce any noticeable effect. Then she got the green body on. Doing up all the little buttons in the back took a while, and Iris started fidget a bit, getting impatient, but not enough to make Sabine grab her again. Then she could step into the bunny shortalls. Nanny made sure the shoulder straps were buttoned securely at the back, and then used a little heart-shaped padlock she found in the weekend bag to make sure Iris wouldn't take them off. Iris realized that must be one of the set her mother had ordered.

Then she asked Sabine to make sure Iris didn't run off, and this time Sabine grabbed both shoulder straps in Iris's back, just where they crossed, with one hand. Iris thought that was a good idea, and tried to do the same with Sabine, but she didn't allow that, and with her grip on Iris and her longer arms, she could prevent Iris from reaching them. So Iris focused on the bunny ears instead, and did the snaps again so the ears were pointing up instead of hanging down. Then she stroked its face, which made Sabine smile. She heard Nanny going into the exercise room directly across the landing. When she returned she brought the harness that was normally used to keep Sabine upright on the

treadmill, but had also been used on Iris in the garden. She got ready to step into its leg loops, but Nanny just kept the harness in her hands, and asked them to come downstairs with her. As Iris expected, Sabine didn't let go of her, and steered her down the stairs.

"Now, of course it is much too nice weather to spend the whole day inside, but there is not enough time to make a trip into nature either, so we'll have some fun in the garden instead. I don't want you to get grass stains all over your new clothes, but with these temperatures the rain suits are too hot. So for today you'll be wearing these disposable coveralls." On the table were two suits of a material that looked more like paper than fabric, but was sturdier than it first appeared. (see Figure 41) They had elastic around wrists and ankles, a hood, and a zipper. Based on the hood Iris concluded that the zipper was in front. Nanny held out the first one for her to step into, but the zipper side was towards Iris. She thought Nanny had it turned around, so she tried to step into the legs with her back towards Nanny. That way the zipper was the right way. "No Iris, please step in the other way. You are right that they are normally worn with the zipper in front, but I don't want you to fiddle with them, so you'll be wearing them the other way around. That way you can't use the hood, but that is not needed for the garden anyway." While talking she had pulled the suit up, let Iris put her arms in, folded the hood to the inside, so that it was not hanging below her chin, and pulled up the zipper in the back. Then she took a piece of tape that she had obviously already prepared, and stuck it over the top of the zipper.



Figure 41 Disposable Coveralls for Kids

Then it was time for the harness, and finally Nanny put sunscreen on her face and hands, which were the only areas of skin that weren't covered. Nanny put her in the tent, and then started the same procedure with Sabine. Nanny must have prepared the whole procedure while they were napping, since she had even got the garden harness for Sabine from the shed already. (see Figure 42) Iris found it a bit unfair that she had to wait in the tent, while when she got dressed Sabine was allowed to wait without being restrained. But Sabine was behaving very well, and Iris could see that the two of them were so used to work together that it was a lot faster than with Iris. Then Nanny got Iris out again, and took them both into the garden, holding on to their harnesses. Both the line for Sabine, and the chain that Nanny had used for Iris before, were already there, and secured to the ring in the grass. When both girls' harnesses were connected, she released her grip, and they were free to move around within the reach of their lines. Iris declared "I'll go and find something to play with in the shed," and she ran off towards it. She knew her line was longer than Sabine's, so that she could get out of her reach if she had a tantrum. But this time the chain was not long enough to reach the shed, and Iris was unexpectedly stopped in her tracks and landed on her bum.



Figure 42 Sabine's Garden Harness

The pamper was not as thick as the diapers from Sabine that she had worn last week, and also because it was not anticipated, she landed pretty hard, and hurt her coccyx a bit. "Ouch" she cried out, and started rubbing her behind. Nanny and Sabine came over quickly, and Nanny asked concerned if she was alright. The sudden pain, although it was not that bad, had put a few tears in her eyes, and she wiped them away with the sleeve of her coverall. She got up and moved around a bit, and then concluded, "It's OK. It hurts a bit but not bad. It was just unexpected." She got a hug from both mother and daughter, and Nanny used a tissue to dry her eyes and let her blow her nose. "Nanny, why is my chain shorter today?" she asked. "Because today I'll be with you all the time, so I will go get whatever we want to play with, and you can just stay on the grass, and get some sun." Iris pouted: she had been outside all yesterday afternoon too, and now she wasn't allowed to pick her own toys to play with. Nanny continued, "And if anything happens, I will protect you. Sabine really likes to see you as her little sister, and it is good for her to try and be responsible for someone else. So I thought you wouldn't mind if you were treated a bit younger and less trustworthy than Sabine." "Oh. I understand. If it is for Sabine I don't mind. I like you both taking care of me and keeping me out of trouble, really."

With a "Isn't that right, big sis? It will be just like it was at school," she put her arms around Sabine's neck, jumped up, and expected Sabine to catch her by putting her arms under her back and knees. But Sabine hadn't expected it, and now she fell backwards on her bum, with Iris landing in her lap. But her behind was well-padded, and Sabine was not one to show pain or discomfort easily, so she just laughed and said "Silly gihrl!". Nanny added with a smile, "I know you like being impulsive, but please be careful not to damage my daughter!" That made Iris go over Sabine's body, and counted her feet, her legs, her arms, her fingers and her head. "Nope. All still there," she concluded. That made them all laugh again, and Sabine started to tickle her. She squealed for fun, even though the tickling wasn't all that effective. She played along though, and tried to get away, but the harness and the chain made it easy to keep her there. So instead Iris tried to tickle her back. After a few minutes they ended up lying next to each other in the grass, Iris out of breath from trying to compete with her 'big sister', and from the laughing. She felt her injured wrist a bit, but it wasn't bad. Nanny just sat back and enjoyed the sunshine, letting the girls have their fun.

After a few minutes of just enjoying the weather and each other's company, Iris jumped up and asked Nanny what they were going to do. "I thought we might try some bowling." "I like that. But last time it was a bit hard for Sabine." "Ah, but this time I'm going to help her a bit." "Me against you two? Then I'll lose!" "We'll see. If you need it I might help you a bit as well..." That sounded fair to Iris, so she nodded and followed Nanny to the shed for as far as her leash would allow. Sabine came along too, and her line was actually a bit longer this time. But after the explanation from Nanny that felt proper to Iris. While waiting for Nanny to get the equipment and set it up, she inspected her clothes. The coveralls were pretty large on her, but the elastic hems helped. Probably it was the same size Sabine wore, since hers fit better. She could already see several grass stains, and she was glad she was wearing them, so that she didn't need to be careful. The fabric was a bit see-through, so she could see her shorts underneath. Strange that she had been resolved never to wear those when she got them at the store; they were so cute, and because they left her legs, arms and back uncovered, nicely cool in this weather. The coveralls partly let the breeze through, so it was not too hot in the sun. She hardly noticed she was wearing it backwards: it was so large and shapeless that it didn't really matter. Only the slight bulge of the hood tucked in the suit under her chin felt slightly out of place.

"Iris, when you are done admiring your outfit, will you join us?" Oops. She had not been paying attention, and Sabine had already moved to the area where Nanny had set up the pins. Quickly she

went to them. Nanny had selected the flattest part of the lawn, put up the pins on one end, and a little mat on the ground some 5 yards (4.5 m) away, from which they were to throw. Iris was invited to go first, but missed with the first ball. She corrected her aim with the second ball, and managed to down six pins, which earned her a little applause from the other two. She felt really proud and smiled broadly. She went to set up the pins again for Sabine, but that was beyond the range of the chain: she was stopped two yards (1.8 m) or so away from them. This time she wasn't taken by surprise, so she didn't fall when the harness stopped her. "Thanks Iris, but I'll set them up again. We can't have you waving or throwing the pins around now, can we?" "I guess so," she answered, and moved back to Sabine, who was already on the mat and ready to throw as soon as the pins were set up again. "Sabine, please wait until I am back with you. I don't want to be hit by one of those balls if your throw is not going in the direction you aimed for." "Yes, Mama."

When her mother was at her side again, Sabine first tried it by herself. But she had trouble getting the timing right, and the ball went into the air a bit, and then when it landed it didn't have enough impulse left to roll much further. The direction was not quite precise enough either. She didn't manage to get near any pin with her two balls. Nanny took a turn as well, and managed 5 pins with her two balls. Iris secretly felt proud that she had scored higher than her, but of course also showed appreciation for Nanny's attempt. For Iris the next round wasn't too much better than Sabine's; the first ball hit a little knoll in the grass that deviated it from its course, and she only hit one outside pin, and with her second ball her timing was off as well, and it stopped before it reached the pins. On Sabine's turn her mother started coaching her, and guiding her movements. Instead of throwing from her arm, Nanny showed her how to rotate her hips, let her whole body guide the throw, and not use force. She put her hand under Sabine's and steered it during the throw. The ball only just missed the pins, and Sabine cheered as if she had thrown a strike. It was a much better result than her previous attempts, and Iris went over to give her a quick one-armed hug.

On her second attempt, Nanny managed to get seven pins with her first ball, but the ones still standing were spread apart, so she had no chance to get them all, and in the end her second ball went through the gap. Iris wanted to try the hip rotation as well, but it wasn't as easy as it looked, and the ball went off in a totally different direction. Sabine laughed, which caused Iris to feel insulted, "I was just trying what Nanny told you, but I didn't get her help like you." And Nanny added "Sabine, it is not nice to laugh when Iris misses like that. She didn't laugh at your first attempts either." "I'm sohwwy, Iwris. I didn't mean to. I didn't expect it. Mommy, will you help Ihris too?" "Iris, do you understand that Sabine didn't want to be unkind, but sometimes when something unexpected happens, it just makes you laugh, even if you don't want to?" Iris nodded – that had happened to her sometimes too, like when a friend dropped a plate in the school restaurant and food splattered everywhere. "Would you like me to help you too?" "Yes please." And then to Sabine, "It is OK, I am not upset anymore." They hugged, and then Iris got ready for her second ball.

This time Nanny explained that even while her body rotated, her arm should move in a straight line towards the pins. Iris didn't understand how to do that, but Nanny had some practical tips, "Keep looking at the pins, and as soon as the ball leaves your hand, you point at them." Iris tried to coordinate all of that at the same time, and the tips helped her, but the ball still missed the pins. "This doesn't work. I'll just do it as I did before," she concluded impatiently. "Of course you can, but don't you think you are giving up too easily? It will take some practice to do it right, but then you'll get better than you are now." Iris still looked unconvinced, so Nanny added, "Would you like me to guide your hand like I did with Sabine next time?" Iris was in doubt. Normally she loved being helped, like with dressing and such, but she also felt like she should be able to do this on her own,

and not need to be steered like a disabled child. Nanny saw the hesitation, and said, “You just let me know when you want it.” Iris nodded.

They played on, and Iris kept trying on her own, stubbornly refusing help. After a number of turns, when she missed all the pins once more with her first ball, she got frustrated and threw the second ball at the pins overhead, and stamped with her foot. “Whoa! We are not doing it like that, that is much too dangerous. I think this little girl needs a break.” Nanny came to get her, but Iris didn’t want to give up, and tried to get away. But Nanny simply picked up the chain, reeled Iris in, and firmly grabbed hold of her harness. The girl realized that she had no chance to resist, gave up, and quietly let Nanny disconnect the chain from her harness and bring her over to the swing hammock. (see Figure 43) She let herself be put in it, and Nanny clicked the harness closed. The last time she was put in this hammock, she had already tried to open the harness buckle, and hadn’t figured out how, so she knew she was probably stuck there until Nanny helped her out again. She was still a bit upset with the bowling, and that she was forced to have a time-out now, so she didn’t say anything and didn’t look at Nanny either. But the woman just ignored that, gave her a pat on the head, and said “I think we could all use a break, with a nice cool drink.”



*Figure 43 Sabine's Swing Hammock*

Sabine had already followed them for as far as her line allowed, but her mother first disappeared inside the house. She came back with another line in her hand, and when she released Sabine from the line holding her in the center of the garden, she used that one to secure her on one of the garden chairs. “We need the hammock for little Iris now, so you can sit in one of the grown-up chairs today.” That made Sabine smile, even though Iris thought the swing was probably more comfortable. Actually it was so nice that it was hard for her to keep sulking, and when Nanny came back with two sippy cups, she accepted one and thanked Nanny nicely. She told Sabine “I like your hammock,” and swung up and down. “Yes, me too. But now I sit in a grown-up chair!” Sabine answered proudly. Iris noticed that her friend was slowly getting better in pronouncing the ‘r’, especially if she was relaxed. Iris tried her drink; last week she often got water because she had to drink so much, but this time it was a refreshing lemonade with ice cubes. Yummy! There was still enough shade that they were out of the sun, which was nice too. It wasn’t like tropically hot, so that you wanted to get out of the sun as soon as possible, but after doing activities for a while the shade was nice too. The drink made her feel her bladder, and she decided to let go. There was quite a bit of pee, and she could feel the pampers swelling, especially because of the crotch strap.

They enjoyed their drinks in silence for a while, until Nanny explained to Iris, “With sports and games the right technique often looks easy, but it is quite hard to get all the parts right, and then in the right combination, and with the right timing. Once you start trying too hard, or you are getting frustrated, you add extra tension to the muscles, and that doesn’t help either. To make substantial progress, everyone needs to work with a trainer and will often be guided to make the right movements. That is true for adults and big children, as well as for little girls. So there is no shame in asking for help.” Iris pondered that for a while, and decided Nanny was right, as she so often was. “OK. Would you help me then after the break?” “Certainly.” Iris had been so focused on her own game that she couldn’t even remember how well Nanny and Sabine had been doing, but they were not keeping score anyway, so it didn’t really matter.

When they had all finished their drink, and felt cooled down enough, they went back to the game, and Nanny connected the harnesses to the lines again. The chain, and the padlock that connected it to the harness, weren't very soft or child-like, but they made it abundantly clear to Iris that she was not getting away, and that was nice too. Iris felt a length of the chain down her back, so apparently Nanny had made her reach even shorter this time. She guessed that she was trusted even less now that she had misbehaved. Like they agreed, Nanny helped Iris this time like she helped Sabine. She made Iris relax and let the swing do the work, and that helped a lot. It was actually quite intimate and pleasant, and Iris wished she had not been so stubborn before. It was not like she was throwing strike after strike, but that was probably impossible on the slightly uneven grass anyway. Even Nanny hadn't managed a single one. Her highest scores were not that much higher than her first throw, but it became more consistent and the problem that the ball would not always reach the pins disappeared. Sabine still didn't manage so well on her own, but with her mother's help she regularly managed to knock down at least some of the pins, and she was quite happy with that.

When they finally had enough, Nanny told them that she had something inside that she wanted to try with them. So she put the bowling set back in the shed, took the girls in one at the time, and removed their harnesses and coveralls. Both were put in their regular harnesses instead. Nanny explained that she had found a DVD with children's quizzes on it, and thought it would be fun to try to do one. The DVD came with a block of scoring sheets, but she decided they were just going to do it for fun, and not make it into a competition. She attached Sabine's harness to the ring hidden in the couch, like she had done last Sunday, when they were allowed to watch a video. For Iris she didn't have a second ring, so her just put the end of the leash around her wrist, saying she was keeping Iris close to her today. Then she decided to get them another drink and a little snack, so Iris had to come with her, and got to help Nanny by carrying the sippy cups.

Then they settled on the couch, with Nanny in the middle, who started the DVD. There was a fun presenter who did the intro, and on the main menu they could choose which quiz to start. They simply started with the first, and then the presenter asked a question and offered three multiple-choice answers. The participants had 10 seconds to choose their answer. It were often things they had to recognize, like pictures or sounds, for instance of animals. During the 10 seconds the three options were shown, sometimes as pictures and sometimes as short words. So it was more for children in the lower elementary school age than for toddlers. On the whole it was not that hard for Iris, and Sabine did surprisingly well, too. Sometimes Iris waited with calling out her answer until Sabine had given hers, and she saw that Sabine was not just parroting her choice, but actually knew the right answers. They had a lot of fun, like with imitating the sounds, even if the questions were not that challenging, and were enjoying their drinks and snacks. After a while Iris felt the need to pee again, and saw no reason to hold it, so she let go another big stream. But then she felt some moisture dribbling down her thigh. She jumped up and said "Nanny, I think I'm leaking!"

Nanny got up as well, checked the bottom of her shortalls, and concluded, "Yes, you definitely need a change, and you can't sit on the couch anymore, so we'll go right now." She paused the DVD, and switched the TV to cartoons, so Sabine had something to watch while they went upstairs. This time they could use the changing table in Sabine's room, and soon Iris was out of her harness, shortalls, and body. When Nanny wanted to open the plastic pants, she asked Iris where the key was. At first Iris didn't understand; Nanny always had a whole set of keys to open the different types of locks she used. But then it became clear to her that those locks always shared the same keys, while the panties were locked with a Master padlock in which only its dedicated key fitted. They went through the weekend bag, after Nanny had used some wipes to make sure Iris wasn't spreading her urine around, but they couldn't find the key there. So Iris called her mother to ask where she put it. But



her mother told her she didn't even know that Iris took the plastic panties along – she had not asked her to get those, and hadn't realized that Iris had put them in the bag. She thought with the warm weather it would be more comfortable not to wear plastic pants, and as long as the clothes were locked, that was good enough for her. So she hadn't given the key along, but had it with her at home. She promised to bring it with her when she came to collect Iris, but she couldn't be there earlier, so they had to make do until then.

Nanny had listened along, but didn't immediately have a good solution. Then she said, "Perhaps I should just get a pair of scissors and cut open the bottom of the panties. Then we can at least put a clean diaper on you. You can't keep walking around like this, and perhaps start leaking more." "No!" Iris exclaimed, "Mommy is surely going to say it is my fault, and make me pay for the destroyed panties. Just when I have almost saved enough for a new Xbox game!" "But don't you want out of those wet pampers?" "Yes, but I don't want the panties destroyed for that!" Nanny thought for a few moments longer, and then said "What about this: I find the biggest diaper that we have, and we put it over your pampers and plastic pants. I will need to make a few small holes in the bottom of the plastic pants, to make sure the urine reaches the absorbing part of the big diaper, but those will be easily repaired with some tape. It will not be that comfortable, with the wet diaper underneath and the big bulk of a second diaper over that, but at least your clothes and my furniture will be protected. It's only an hour before your mother will be here. Is that OK?" "Yes Nanny, and thank you for finding a solution."

So they went back to the changing table, where Iris was secured, and Nanny got out a big and bulky diaper. She pushed the legs of the plastic panties up as far as they would go, snipped a few holes in the bottom with a pair of scissors, and then closed the diaper over it. Then she inspected Iris's clothes, and concluded that both the body and the shortalls were a bit wet, so she couldn't wear those anymore. First they tried the skirtall that Iris wore in the morning, but that didn't fit over the big bulk around her waist. Of course Nanny had lent Iris all the clothes that were too small for Sabine, so she looked into Sabine's current wardrobe for something Iris could wear until her mother came, and she could switch back to a single diaper and the skirtall. Then Mrs. Fletcher remembered the party jumpsuit that she used to wear herself when she was young, and had always kept, which Iris had worn on her last morning of her previous stay. She knew it fit Iris, and it was very roomy around the waist. So she got that out, and dressed Iris in it. (see Figure 44, with the color of the one on the left, and the bib of the center one.) Iris still thought it was a weird, old-fashioned suit, but was not going to complain after all Nanny was doing for her. After the buttons at the back were closed, and the strange lace collar/bib thing attached on top, the harness went on again, and Iris was taken downstairs once more. The diaper package was so thick that she couldn't close her legs, and had to walk bow-legged.

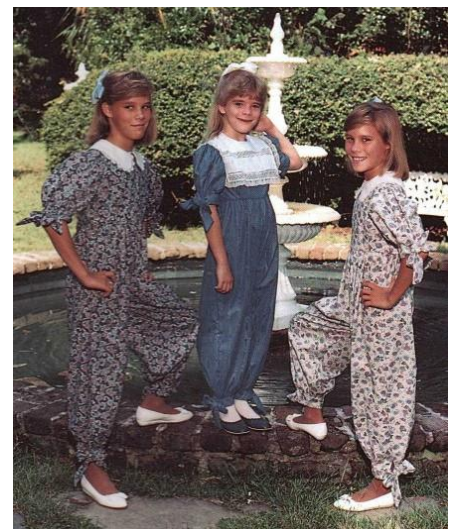


Figure 44 Imogen's Party Jumpsuit

Sabine was glad that they were back, and Nanny quickly turned on the DVD again. Iris sat down next to her again, and almost felt like she was sitting on an extra pillow. But she quickly got used to it. There were only three more questions left though, and soon the quiz was over. The presenter told them to total the scores, which they of course ignored. Nanny stopped the DVD, and they chatted for a bit about how they liked it. They agreed that they might try one that was a bit harder next time.



Then Sabine asked, "Mommy, can I give Iris a bottle?" "Yes you may, if Iris agrees." Iris had already expected it, and although it was still a bit weird to be treated like that by her friend, the way that Sabine handled her was very loving, and so she consented. Nanny parked Iris in the tent, and removed the leash from her own wrist. Then she went into the kitchen to warm the milk for the bottle. When it was done, she released Sabine from the couch, and gave her the bottle with the words, "Iris has already drunk quite a bit, and we had to improvise with her diaper, so it is only half-full." Sabine shrugged and took the bottle. Then she went into the tent and immediately grabbed hold of Iris's harness. She sat on her knees and pulled Iris in the usual position, with Iris's head on her lap. "Open up!" Iris accepted the nipple between her lips, and started suckling. Nanny zipped the door closed.

It wasn't that long ago that she drank a full sippy cup during the quiz though, and halfway she started to feel she had enough, so she tried to turn away to stop drinking for a bit. But Sabine didn't let her, and made sure the nipple stayed in her mouth. Nanny was keeping an eye on them though, and she intervened, "Sabine, perhaps you should give Iris a little break, and not make her drink the whole bottle at once. She might even need to give a little burp. Her daughter nodded, put the bottle down, and tried to pull Iris up, so that she was at her chest with her head over her shoulder. Iris knew what she was trying to do, and played along, even though she didn't need it. Sabine started patting on her back to help her burp, and kept doing it when Iris didn't produce anything. "Sometimes little girls do not need to burp, so if nothing comes you just let it go." Nanny coached. Sabine stopped and started rocking Iris while humming tunelessly. That was nice, and Iris felt fully relaxed. After a few minutes Sabine decided it was time for the rest of the bottle, so she put Iris into the drinking position again. Iris realized her friend was not going to give up until the bottle was finished, so she started suckling once more.

Then the doorbell rang, and Nanny welcomed Mrs. Tomas in. Even though her mother had also given her a bottle after she came home from her stay here, Iris still felt it was a bit embarrassing to be seen like this, so she tried to get up. But Sabine kept a firm grip on the harness, and Iris had to stay where she was. Her mother looked a bit surprised at first, but then got a tender look in her eyes. Mrs. Fletcher explained that Sabine liked to treat Iris as her little sister, and Mrs. Tomas said they looked very cute. "We'll let them finish the bottle, and then get them out." They retreated to the couch, where they started conversing softly enough that Iris couldn't follow what they were talking about. "That's a good gihrl. All done!" Sabine observed, and once more tried to burp Iris. This time she could produce a little one, which was good, because it quickly stopped Sabine slapping her back just a little too hard. Iris said "Thank you," and hugged her friend.

The mothers hadn't missed that the bottle feeding had finished, and came over. Mrs. Fletcher opened the tent and let them out. She passed Iris's leash to her mother, and took Sabine's herself. Mrs. Tomas gave her daughter a big hug and covered her with kisses, making Iris giggle. Then she held her at a little distance and inspected her, saying "Let me look at you. Such a cute harness, and locking on both ends. That seems useful. And what is this beautiful suit you are wearing?" Iris explained that her own clothes got some urine on them, and that Nanny let her borrow this one. Her mother mentioned it looked just like the suits some of her friends wore at birthdays and such, when she was young, and Imogen told her it was indeed an original from her own youth. "Oh, that brings back memories. It looks so nice on her. I'll have to look online and see if I can't find her something like that." Iris wanted to shake her head and tell her mother not to get her such a weird suit, but she didn't want to insult Nanny, so she kept quiet. "And how is your diaper doing?" Without waiting for an answer, her mother felt between her legs and noticed the enormous bulk there. The other

woman explained their temporary solution. "So I guess we'd better relieve you from those plastic panties then, and get you out of those wet pampers," she concluded.

Iris noticed that Sabine wanted to ask something, but seemed unsure how. She guessed what that was about, so she asked "Mommy, Sabine would really like for me to sleep here tonight." "Oh, I see. But we need to go to Salem tomorrow, and we have to leave early, so there won't be time to come here to collect you, get you dressed properly for a birthday, and so on. So that will have to wait for another time. But don't worry, there will be enough opportunities for you two to play together, and I'm sure there can be more sleep-overs as well." Iris had already guessed that answer, but hoped that now her mother would be less likely to deny her second request: "But can we at least have a bath together then, before I leave?" Mrs. Tomas looked at Mrs. Fletcher, who said that for her it would be possible, if Sabine agreed to be made ready for bed before dinner. Sabine nodded enthusiastically. "Let me check with my husband then, because we'll be home later than planned." She took her phone upstairs for some privacy, and returned not long after. "He's still busy doing some modifications, so I guess the girls can have their bath." That earned her a loud cheer.

All four went upstairs, the mothers holding the girls' leashes. In Sabine's room, Mrs. Fletcher first handed Sabine's leash over to Iris's mother, to get the bath started. When she came back, she took Iris's leash, and showed her mother how she connected the wrist strap to the ring on the wall opposite the changing table, and locked it. "That should keep Iris out of our way, while we get Sabine ready for the bath first." "Can't Mommy just hold me?" Iris pleaded, not wanting to be excluded from what was happening. "Iris, stop whining. It will only be a few minutes, and it will be your turn quicker if we can just concentrate on Sabine," her mother replied, not unkind, but also brooking no argument. Of course her help was not really needed, but she looked on interested, trying to learn more from Mrs. Fletcher about taking care of a teenager in diapers, and she asked several questions. She took a look at the plastic panties Sabine wore, and concluded the ones from Fred Meyers were not that high quality, and that she should perhaps get a few more pairs like that. Apart from the one Iris was in, which was now a bit less waterproof, she had ordered only one more locking pair until now. Given the choice, she preferred the extra security those offered over the non-locking ones.

Sabine was put on the changing table for a moment, to take off her diaper and give the area a good wipe – especially with 2 girls in one bath, it was better not to start with urine in the water. Mrs. Tomas took another look at the table's wrist straps and the one for the waist. When she was here the previous time, she was mostly interested in how to diaper her daughter, but with the plans for Sabine staying over at their place, and with Iris's continuing interest, she wanted to know more about the safety aspects as well. When Sabine was fully naked, she was released from the table, and taken into the bathroom. She was already put in the bath, and Iris heard Nanny tell her to be a good girl and not splash too much. It seemed to her that her mother was giving her a chance again to prove that she could behave herself, instead of restraining her from the start.

In the meantime her mother was already releasing Iris from the wall, and she started to take the harness off. As far as Iris knew, her mother had not seen it before, but she seemed to know how to undo it. By then Nanny had returned as well, and they started getting her out of the jumpsuit. Her mother fingered the white lacy part and once more admired the suit, while Nanny showed her how to undo that bib/collar thing, and together they undid all the buttons in the back. When it was off, her mother saw the training bra, and asked about it. Iris told her about the rubbing on her chest by the skirtall, and how Nanny had come up with this training bra from Sabine. Then Nanny asked "Maria, you look sad, or disappointed?" "Yes, I guess I am. But don't think that I am not grateful that you helped my daughter that way. It is just that I wasn't there when she discovered the first signs of

puberty, and then I started looking forward to go shopping with her to buy her first training bra. And now she's already wearing one." "Oh, but you shouldn't look at it that way. This is not hers, and it is not worn because she needed a bra. Perhaps you could look at it like this: when she was young, she might have dressed up in one of your bras, as most little girls like to play dress-up. That wouldn't spoil getting her a training bra for the first time either, would it? Once she is starting to need one, and you go find one with her, that will still be her first bra." "Oh yes, that sounds right. Thank you, that helps. It is so easy to miss those key moments in your child's life, but this one we can still have."

Iris piped up, "Yes Mom, it was just to help me. Perhaps you should get a pair of overalls or a skirtall as well, so you know what it is." Nanny added, "I have a few as well; they can be quite comfortable and practical, although sometimes the bib can be exactly at the 'wrong' height." She pronounced 'wrong' in a peculiar way that Iris didn't understand. "Hmm, perhaps I will. I'll keep an eye open for them at the garage sales." That surprised Iris; she had not seen her mother in anything like that before, so she had just been angling for some sympathy, not really expecting that her suggestion would be taken seriously. And wasn't her mother kind of old for them? The black corduroy pair that she had seen Nanny wear looked nice enough on her, but with her mother it felt different.

Once the jumpsuit and the training bra were off, Nanny nipped out to take a quick look at the water level in the bath, and if her daughter was behaving. When she came back Iris was already secured on the changing table, and her mother put on rubber gloves and carefully removed the big diaper. Because it had double tapes, she could open it without tearing the waterproof outside material. The inside had a little bit of urine in, but she concluded they should be able to use it for the rest of the evening – it was a pity to throw it away hardly used. Then she finally unlocked the plastic panties, and removed the soaked pampers. Those were quickly discarded into the diaper pail. "Sorry for those little holes in the panties, otherwise even the big diaper on top wouldn't have helped. I'll take it down to clean and repair it," Nanny explained. Iris's mother replied, "Oh, that is no problem. I'm just glad that you found a way to keep my daughter from leaking all over the place." Iris thought her mother would probably have reacted differently if it had been her telling she made those holes. "While I'm downstairs, you can clean Iris, take her to the bathroom, put the apron on yourself, and put her in the bath. There are cuffs on the sides if you don't trust her to behave."

When Nanny left, Iris's diaper area was cleaned and carefully inspected for redness, because she had been wearing a wet diaper too long. But the cream Nanny had put on before the nap seemed to have done its job well, and the skin didn't show any issues. She was released from the table, and taken into the bathroom, where Sabine was glad to see them. Mrs. Tomas judged the bath was full enough and turned off the tap. She put on the apron that Imogen had already laid out for her, and helped Iris get into the bath. Iris carefully felt the water temperature with her toe, and said it was too hot. "Come on now, Iris, you know it always feels hot at first. You'll get used to it quick enough." She just lifted her daughter and deposited her in the water. "Ouch!" Iris yelled as soon as her feet hit the water, but then felt it was not that hot after all, and she relaxed. "You see, it couldn't have been too hot. Sabine was already in it!" "Oh yes," Iris said sheepishly. Her mother looked at Sabine, and noticed she had one hand in the wrist cuff, and the other free. "OK, I'm going to leave one hand free for you as well. Don't make me regret it!" And with those words she secured Iris's wrist on the far side of the bath, so that she would have an easier time to secure the other one if her daughter was making mayhem.

The girls were allowed to play with the foamy water, and with the bath toys. Of course there were a few rubber ducks in different colors, but also a paddlewheel boat and a turtle. Their interaction was somewhat limited, since the one cuff held them on opposite sides of the bath, but they could meet in the middle, where a giant duck attacked the paddle boat, and threatened to sink it. Then a giant

turtle came to its rescue, and scared the evil duck away. Mrs. Tomas kept watch, enjoying their carefree interaction, but warning them as soon as the play got too wild and water threatened to go over the edge. When Mrs. Fletcher rejoined them, dressed in her rain coveralls, the mothers washed their daughters from top to toe. Both girls relaxed and thoroughly enjoyed their spa treatment. Too soon it was time for them to get out, but there was a big soft towel for each, and they were dried off thoroughly. Then Nanny took Sabine to her room to diaper her and put her in her blanket sleeper, while Iris's hair was blow-dried and then braided by her mother. "Mommy, can I have some bath toys as well?" Iris asked over the noise of the blow-dryer. "I think there might be one or two in the box with your old baby gear, but I can certainly find something for you sooner or later." "Oh, and Mommy, don't tell Nanny, but I don't like that jumpsuit. It looks weird." "It is nice that you didn't say that with Imogen around, but little girls will have to wear what their mother decides. You are not big enough yet to pick your own clothes." Iris thought she wasn't that little, and should have a say in what she wore, but she didn't want to spoil the mood, and kept quiet. She considered that had never ever seen such a suit before, so it was not likely that her mother was going to find something like that for her anyway. Most people would surely have ditched such hideous suits long ago.

"Iris, now that we will soon be going home, you have to decide if you want to stay little for the rest of the day, or that you'll be all mature again." Iris already had to be mature in the morning, and with all the fun she was having, she had no desire to suddenly be grown-up again. Instead of answering she stuck her thumb in her mouth, which was an answer by itself. Her mother pulled it out again, "No Iris, we're not going to start with that again. It is fine if you want to stay little though, we have a few new things and some surprises for you that we can try out then." That made Iris sit up straight, and of course she wanted to know all about the surprises. "But it wouldn't be a surprise anymore if I already told you, now would it? You'll just have to be patient; you'll see them soon enough." Iris tried to think of what they had ordered from the store, but they had looked at all sorts of stuff, and she wasn't sure which of those her mother had actually ordered. But there was no way she was going to convince her mother to tell her, so she just had to wait.

Once her hair was ready, they moved to Sabine's room, Iris still wrapped in the towel, and her mother firmly holding her hand. Sabine was already diapered and her mother was just zipping up her 'finding Dory' onesie, which Iris had worn once when they came back from the aquarium. It had a thinner fleece, so reasonably suitable for these temperatures, and the zip in front was locking. (see Figure 45) It immediately triggered Iris's memories of their trip, with all the fish, seabirds, otters and sea lions, and she started talking about it enthusiastically to Sabine. "Ladies, you can continue chatting, and I am glad you have such good memories about the aquarium, but we do need to keep going. So Iris, let's get you on the changing table," Nanny interrupted. Sabine moved to the top end, so that she was close to Iris's face. And when Iris automatically put her hands up, she used the opportunity to secure them in the straps. Her mother checked if they were the right tightness, and loosened them a bit, explaining to her daughter that if you put them on too tight, it would restrict the blood flow to the hands, and they might get cold or even painful. Sabine listened attentively, and tried to do one once more. This time her mother approved, and stroked her face to let her know that she appreciated Sabine's efforts. Iris thanked her as well; it felt a bit strange to thank her friend for restraining her, but she agreed with Nanny that Sabine was really doing her best to take good care of her.



Figure 45 Disney's Finding Dory Onesie

Again her mother apparently trusted her enough to not restrain her, although she had asked Mrs. Tomas to close the door when they entered. Sabine and Iris continued chatting, and Sabine held one of Iris's hands. She probably also realized that the visit would soon be over now, and wanted to make the most of the time left. In the meantime the mothers tried to get the large diaper on Iris, but it didn't really fit well. They decided to fill it up a bit with a booster pad, and in the end Mrs. Fletcher got a roll of tape to make sure it closed tight enough around the legs and waist. Then she handed Iris's mother the plastic panties, showing her they were clean again, and there was tape on both sides of the holes that she had to make in them earlier. Her mother decided to put them on Iris again, since she had chosen to stay little for the evening, and would be wearing a skirt. It was a bit of a squeeze, but she managed to pull them on over the large diaper package, and snapped the lock closed. Iris felt that her diaper was still a thick package, but of course it was a bit better than before, when the soaked pampers added to the bulk.

Iris was helped off the table, and her polo shirt and skirtall were put back on her. Since there was only one diaper now, it fit again, though barely. Now that the training bra was off, she quickly felt her nipples again, and she put her hands under the top of the bib to prevent the rubbing. The feeling might be pleasant at first, but soon it would get too much and start irritating. "Iris, you can't go around like that. I understand that it is a bit uncomfortable, but I don't have anything else for you to wear, since your shortalls need to be washed. But perhaps we can shorten the shoulder straps, so that the top of the bib is a bit higher," her mother pondered, and both mothers started fiddling with the straps without waiting for a reaction from her. When they were ready and had hooked the straps to the bib again, it came about an inch (2.5 cm) higher. Of course that meant that the sides and the bottom of the skirt were a bit higher too. Iris wasn't bothered by the higher sides, but the bulk of the diaper was very obvious, and Iris tried to pull the hem down in an effort to keep it hidden a bit better. It had little effect. "I'm sorry Iris, I can see that it doesn't look that great, but we hardly have to go outside, so no one will see," her mother sympathized, but then immediately started putting the harness back on Iris. Iris tried to avoid it, saying "Mom, I can't go outside with that on!" But her mother continued anyway, explaining, "I brought your jacket for the way back. We'll put that on over the harness, and no one will see it. But the risk of you crossing the road without looking is just too big, so I need it to keep you safe. You decided you wanted to stay little, and you just aren't very careful then." Iris tried, "but they will still see the leash!", but her mother discarded that argument too, "You'll just have to stay close to me, then no one will notice it. Come on now, Iris, your father is waiting for us." Iris gave up her resistance; staying close seemed to work well for hiding the leash, as she found out with her father the previous day, and it was only a few yards to the car, so it couldn't be too bad. And she *had* chosen to stay little.

After they had gone downstairs, Mrs. Fletcher put Sabine and Iris in the play tent. Iris was confused: wasn't she supposed to be going home now? "You two just play for a little bit, I need to do a few more things with Maria." Sabine wasted no time in grabbing Iris's leash, and tried to put it on her wrist. Like the last time she tried, this was a bit too challenging for her, and before she might start to get frustrated Iris helped her, and soon they were connected. It had no practical effect, since the leash was longer than the width of the tent, but it was the idea that counted. They couldn't lock the wrist band, like Nanny had done the previous time, since that also required the key. They started playing with the toy animals again. It was probably about ten to fifteen minutes before the parents came back, and then it was time to say their final goodbyes. For today that is, because the intention was that the Fletchers would come to visit Iris somewhere next week, after Mr. Tomas had gone back to work. Still they found it hard to be separated again, and Iris also shed some tears when saying goodbye to Nanny.

Then her mother took hold of the leash and put Iris's denim jacket on her, over the harness like she promised. "Now, just stay close and no one will notice anything." Iris still wasn't happy about being harnessed outside, but it was important to her that no one would notice the leash, so she stayed really close. So close in fact that her mother had to push her a little bit away, to stop them from constantly bumping into each other. They exited the house, of course waving all the time, and walked up to the car. "Do you see anything different, Iris?" her mother asked. The change was obvious: Iris could see her own reflection in the car window. "You already have the sun thingie on the glass!" "Yes, indeed. They had an opening for us today, so after I dropped you here, I brought it over." Iris moved on to the door behind the driver seat, where her booster seat was, but her mother stayed near the other back door, told Iris "this way", and opened the door. Iris moved back to her mother quickly, because the leash had become more visible when her mother didn't follow her. In the back seat she saw Sabine's old car seat (see Figure 46), next to the booster! So that was what the mothers had been doing while she waited with Sabine. Her mother wasted no time, and quickly lifted Iris into the seat. Before she knew it she was secured in the harness and the chest clip was locked.



Figure 46 Sabine's Old Car Seat



Figure 47 Merrit Buckle Guard



Figure 48 Merrit Chest Clip

Iris wasn't sure what to think. She immediately felt the comfort of the seat, and the hug of the straps keeping her firmly in her seat. With that red buckle thingie (see Figure 25 Seat Belt Buckle Guard) she needed help to open the seat belt on the booster seat lately, as well, but she still could have lengthened the belt and slid out underneath. The car seat with that special buckle and chest clip (see Figure 47 and Figure 48) was specifically made to keep the occupant in, and she had no way out now. But that thought made her feel all warm and secure, and she remembered why she had agreed to it in the first place. "Thank you Mommy, I like this seat." "I like it too. It is very safe, and you look so cute in it." Her mother took place behind the wheel, and started the ride back home. Iris had to feel the seat again, and try the buckles, even when she knew she had no chance. She noticed how the crotch strap bulged out a bit because of her thick diaper, and how it pulled up her skirt. The plastic pants and the diaper underneath were partially exposed, so she tried to pull the skirt down, but it was too tight over the diaper, and the shoulder straps pulled it up too high. She couldn't pull the fabric down underneath the crotch belt to cover it completely. "Iris, don't fiddle with your clothes." "But Mommy, the diaper shows underneath my skirt." "Don't worry, no one can see it."

That was true. Iris could still look out of the windows normally, so it was hard to believe, but she had seen herself that you couldn't look in from the outside.

For the first few minutes Iris still felt a bit uncomfortable, and anxiously looked around if there was no one looking at her, but no one did, and soon she got used to the situation, and wiggled a bit in her seat to find the most comfortable position. It was quite relaxing to be held like that; on a normal seat you still needed to keep yourself upright, but here the harness took care of that, and even her head was supported by the wings of the headrest. She was still wearing the walking harness underneath her coat as well, and the leash dangled down the side, but it didn't bother her. Suddenly she missed her pacifier. With growing confidence, she started making faces at the people in the other cars. It wasn't a long trip, and there was no rush hour on Saturday, so they were back home quickly. Back in the garage Iris knew no one could see her, so she was not worried about the car seat or her exposed diaper. Obviously this time she had to wait until her mother released her from the car seat harness, and that didn't happen right away. First her mother got the weekend bag from the trunk and went into the house. It was minutes before she was finally released, and led into the house.

#### 14. Evening Surprises

The first thing Iris noticed when she entered the kitchen was the smell of cooking. Her father must have been preparing dinner, because she smelled peanuts. That probably meant Kare-Kare, a traditional Filipino dish that he loved to make. It was a stew with meat and vegetables in peanut sauce, and Iris really liked it, also because it was not as spicy as some of her father's other dishes. Her stomach agreed with her, and produced a serious rumble, even though the milk bottle wasn't that long ago. Her father was standing there, waiting for her with open arms, and she stormed forward to him. Her mother let go of the leash, and her father lifted her in his strong arms, and twirled her around. "There is my favorite girl again!" Iris had felt a bit sad to leave the Fletchers again, but with such a welcome she was also very happy to be home again.

He carried her to the table, where the high chair was already standing ready for her. (see Figure 35 High Chair with Tray) Seeing it standing there at their own table, Iris fully realized it was her chair now. That was a different feeling than at the Fletchers, where it had just been play. Like with the car seat, it was getting more serious now. But she had good memories of being in the chair, and it made her helpless enough that her parents would always need to take care of her. So she cooperated when her father put her in, and her mother showed him how to put on the harness.. Like with the car seat, the crotch strap pushed her skirt up, and the diaper became visible. Her mother remarked, "I can see why Sabine wears pant bottoms all the time. Not only to stop wandering hands, but skirts obviously don't combine so well with crotch straps. But it will do for now." Then they added the tray, and with a push it clicked closed. The previous week Iris had already studied how it opened: you needed to push a button on both sides of the tray, behind her back. From her position there was no way she could even touch both at the same time. And the harness buckle was hidden below the tray, so she was not getting out until her parents allowed her to.

But she wasn't interested in escaping the chair – she wanted food. To show her eagerness, she hit the tray with her flat hands a few times. But first she needed to put on her bib. Her father held it in front of her, and she put her arms in, and the buckle was closed in her neck. The front of the bib was resting on the tray, because it was quite long, and he tried to push it down between the tray and her belly. "I think we had better put this on before the tray next time." Iris nodded; there was not that much room between her belly and the tray. But he got there, and then it was time for the food. It

was indeed Kare-Kare, and Iris almost started to drool from its savory smell. Her father sat right next to her, put her plate on the tray in front of her, and started feeding her. The stew made that easy, since everything was already cut down to bitesize pieces. Of course he ate his own food as well.

Iris couldn't believe how happy she felt, in her own high chair, with the cute new bib, and both parents doing everything they could to take good care of her and make her happy. She wanted to give her father a kiss, but of course she could hardly move her body in the chair, so she kissed his hand instead when it approached her with a new bite of food. He hadn't expected it, and the food ended up on her bib. "Iris, what are you doing?" he asked a bit gruffly, but not angry. "Sorry Daddy, but I just feel so happy. I needed to give you a kiss, but I could only reach your hand." He scraped most of the food off the bib and stuck it in her mouth, saying "Oh, that is very sweet." Then he got up and stood right next to her, stroking her head. She tried to kiss him, but he pulled back. "Only when your mouth is empty." The meat in the stew was beef, which always took a bit of effort to chew, but Iris tried to process it as fast as she could, and when she swallowed he bent over and let her kiss him. "Thank you Daddy, for everything. And of course Mommy too." He sat down again and wiped his cheek with a napkin: of course there was some food around Iris's mouth that ended up there. Then he continued feeding her.

When most of her hunger was satisfied, Iris wanted to start helping Daddy a bit, by picking some of the bigger pieces off her plate with her hands. But her father gave a short slap on her hand, making her drop the food. "No Iris, no eating with your hands now. Just let Daddy feed you." Her mother suggested, "perhaps we need some straps on the chair as well, to keep her hands out of the way." Iris was already startled from the slap on her hand; it hardly hurt, but it had been unexpected. And she felt that the chair was restraining her quite enough, so she shook her head vigorously, and demonstratively folded her arms in front of her, to prevent her hands from doing more naughty things. "Don't you do that again," she told them strictly.

When they had all finished, Iris was wiped clean, and then there was ice candy. That was another Filipino treat, with fruit juice, sugar and milk mixed in a slender plastic bag and frozen solid. You ate it just like a popsicle, and after her father had opened the plastic at the top, she could hold it herself and eat it. Such a treat didn't happen that often, if only because it was her father who made them, and he was away most of the time. Of course her first bite was too big, and she felt the sharp pain of brain freeze. She pulled a face, but knew it would soon go away again, so she ignored it. She did take smaller bites after that, though. When it was all gone, she felt very satisfied, and convinced her tummy was filled to the brim. She leaned back with a contented sigh. Her parents took longer to finish their treat, and her father asked her how her visit had been. That invitation wasn't wasted on Iris, and she started telling about everything that happened in much detail, even the mishap with the plastic panties. She didn't stress her own involvement though, and skipped the part where she was afraid to have the panties destroyed and having to pay for them. That might only give her mother ideas.

After a few minutes her mother briefly interrupted her, and told her father to take her to the living room. Since he cooked, she would do the cleaning and tidying, and because of the open kitchen she would still be able to hear Iris's story. So her father unlocked her bib and took it off. Apparently he had his own set of keys now. Then he took off the tray, opened her harness, and helped her out of the chair. This time he let her walk, but not without taking hold of the leash. When she entered the living room, she immediately noticed that her playpen was no longer there. "Daddy, why is my playpen gone?" she interrupted her own story. "Oh, that was only temporary. It is not really suitable for bigger girls, and especially not safe enough for Sabine. We're not sure yet if we are going to get something to replace it, but in the meantime we have installed some alternatives that should keep



you where we want.” “Oh, OK. I sort of liked it though, because it was from when I was even smaller.” “Don’t worry, it is not gone. We just put it back in storage.” “But what are those alternatives?” “You’ll find out soon enough. Nothing to worry your pretty head about for the moment.” Of course Iris was curious now, and looked around the living room what those alternatives might be. Where the playpen stood there now was a bean bag, which Iris remembered from years ago, before it was moved out of the living room. But that didn’t seem very restrictive. And for the rest she couldn’t spot anything different than before.

Daddy distracted her by asking more about the visit, sat down on the couch, and took her on his lap. He put the wrist band on, so that he didn’t have to hold the leash. He noticed the locking buckle, and called out to his wife, “Maria, why is the parent wrist band locking?” “So you can anchor it to something else, and Iris won’t be able to get away even without supervision.” “Ah, that sounds useful,” and then to his daughter, “please continue.” He turned on the TV on a news channel, but muted it, and just kept half an eye on the headlines. Iris ignored it and kept talking, while she leaned back into her father, felt with her finger how rough his chin already was with the stubble from the day, and toyed with his hair. But it was really too short to do anything with it. She was glad her hair was much longer, even though it was a hassle to wash, comb, etc., but her mother would probably do that some of the time now, so that was nice.

Her hair was already braided after the bath, ready for the night, so she couldn’t play too much with it. But the loose hairs at the end were useful to tickle her father in his neck. He was just looking at the TV for a moment, and automatically his hand slapped to the itchy spot, expecting a mosquito. By then Iris had pulled back, and after a few seconds she tickled him again. But this time he spotted her, and grabbed her in a bear hug. “Now I’ve caught that nasty mosquito,” he exclaimed, “I think I’ll bring it outside so that it no longer bothers me.” He lifted her up, and started moving towards the kitchen door to the garden. Iris squealed, “No Daddy, it wasn’t me! It was a ghost with a feather!” Her father halted. “Are you sure?” “Yes Daddy, I saw it myself.” Her father returned to the couch with her, acted as if he was looking all around for the ghost, and then concluded, “I don’t see any ghost. I think this little girl is making up stories to fool her poor old father!” “No Daddy, it was really a ghost!” “I’ll teach you to try to fool me.” He started mock-wrestling with her, and when he had her in a firm grip, he started tickling. “Admit there was no ghost!” “Hahaha, never, hahaha.” Suddenly she felt herself peeing: the tickling made her lose control, but the diaper quickly absorbed it. Soon she couldn’t take the tickling anymore, and gave up. “Yes Daddy, it was my braid,” she admitted.

By then her mother had joined them, and they watched some TV, until she said “Iris, I have another surprise for you upstairs.” Iris realized that once she went up, she’d end up in bed, but she was curious enough to allow her mother to take her up without trying to stay up longer. “Nighty night, Daddy” “Sleep well, my Conechita.” Her mother took her to the bathroom first, where she pulled the skirtall up over the diaper, and inspected it. She concluded, “That should be good enough for the night, especially with that extra booster pad.” She didn’t bother to pull the skirt part down again, and just got Iris to brush her teeth. With the diaper already on, and her hair already braided, there was not much more to do to prepare her for the night; her mother just let her wash her hands and face, and then took her to the bedroom.

Iris quickly spotted several changes there: the inflatable sleeping bag was gone from her bed, and instead there was this gauze tent standing on her mattress (see Figure 20 Mosquito Tent). Inside lay a onesie in green, with butterflies on it. She remembered that they had selected these on the website of the Special Needs store, but seeing them in reality, in her own sanctuary, was quite different. The tent seemed a bit scary to be in for the whole night, but just like with the crib and the play tent at the Fletchers, she hoped it would feel different once she was inside. Her mother took

her skirt all off, and the polo shirt, so she was standing there with only her big diaper and the plastic pants. Her mother pulled an old t-shirt over her head, and then picked up the onesie. Iris felt the material: it looked nice, and it felt soft, probably terrycloth. The zipper was already open, and her mother held it up for her to step into. Her feet came out at the end of the legs: for the summer her mother had selected a onesie without feet or mittens. That almost felt strange after the way her sleeping bag, and the Carebear suit enveloped her. As expected, the zipper was in the back, and after her legs were in, her mother lifted it up and let her put her arms in.

The hood hung down at her throat, and her mother pulled it over her head. But when it sat in place, her eyes were still covered, and only her nose and mouth were free. Iris remembered they chose it so that she could sleep better when there was light coming through the curtains by day, but that was not needed now. Still, there didn't seem to be a way to wear it without the hood. Her mother was fiddling inside the hood, and seemed to pull a flap out from both sides. She pulled them together at the back of Iris's head, and connected them. She redid it a few times until she was satisfied, and Iris could hear that it was probably Velcro that kept them together. Then her mother found the zipper pull at the top of her head, and started pulling it down. It went all the way down her back, through her crotch, and then up again up to around her navel. Some more fiddling and a click, and Iris assumed she was locked in. She felt with her hand, and indeed there was a little heat-shaped lock on her tummy. Automatically her hands went up to her head, uncomfortable that she couldn't see anything. But the flaps made sure that the hood was kept firmly in place over her eyes, and she couldn't budge it. "Mommy, I can't see anything," Iris exclaimed slightly panicky. "It's OK darling, I'm here. Soon you'll go to sleep, and you won't need to see anything anyway until we come and get you tomorrow."

Iris was uncertain how she felt about these latest pajamas. It was nice that they were of thin material, because the sleeping bag was too warm now, and she could use her hands and feet freely. But not being able to see was a bit intimidating. Even Nanny had never blindfolded her, although her room there was so dark with the blinds that she hadn't been able to see at night, anyway. But this was different. Her mother didn't rush her, but held her and stroked her head. "Do you think it will be OK?" she asked. With her mother holding her, Iris felt calmer, and told herself it was just something new to get used to. The onesie felt very nice, it was just not being able to see. She replied, "I think so." "OK, let's get you into bed then." She steered Iris to the tent opening, and let her crawl in. "The tent is all around, also under the mattress, so there is no way that you can fall out if you roll to the edge of the bed. So you can move all you like without worrying. And you'll not be plagued by naughty mosquitos or ghosts," her mother joked. "I have put your summer duvet in there, so if you get cold you can lie under it. With your hands free you should have no trouble finding it and pulling it over yourself."

Iris laid down, and it still felt like her own bed. The mattress and the pillow were still the same, and lying in the middle of the bed, there was no indication there was a tent around her. Then she heard her mother zipping up the tent opening. Suddenly it became a bit too much for her, and she called, "Mommy, don't leave me alone!" Her mother zipped the door open again, and sat on the edge of the bed. "I'm here darling. It's all OK. And the baby monitor is here, so if there is anything wrong during the night, just call." "Can you stay with me for a while?" Her mother told her to move a bit further to the back of the bed, and she crawled in and laid next to her daughter. "Here I am. Isn't this cozy!" She put an arm around Iris, and stroked her some more. After a while she asked, "Do you think it will be OK, or do we need to find another way to let you sleep peacefully tonight?" "When you are here, I'm not scared." That wasn't really the answer her mother was looking for, and she wasn't planning to sleep with her daughter all night, but apparently little Iris wasn't sure yet, so she

waited a while longer, and talked to her about Sabine and Nanny. That cheered Iris up, and soon she was feeling her normal self. And when her mother started to leave the bed and the tent again, she just turned on her other side and said, "Goodnight, Mommy, and thank you. It was a wonderful day, and I got all these new things. It was almost like my birthday." "I'm glad you liked it. Do you want your pacifier?" "But it will only fall out again during the night." "Yes, probably. But at least you will have it as a comfort to fall asleep." "Oh yes, that sounds nice." So her mother got it and put it in her mouth. She didn't mention the strap they had bought to keep it in yet. That seemed a bit too much all at once for her little girl.

She opened the door, and stood there for a few seconds to see if her daughter was still feeling alright, but she seemed content now. So she turned off the light and closed the door. Now that she was alone, Iris had to explore her new sleeping arrangement a bit further. She was already feeling a bit sleepy, but too curious to go to sleep just yet. The face opening of the hood was way too small for her head to fit through, and those straps kept it tight over her eyes. With the hood zipped closed over the Velcro, she had no chance to open them. It was a bit strange that the zipper went all the way to the front; if it went halfway down her back, she would have been able to get in and out just fine. She felt the little padlock again; this must have been a new one from that set of 10 that they ordered. There was no way to tell the color, but she expected her mother would have chosen something that matched her onesie. The hasp went through the hole in the zipper pull, and through a D-ring just above where the zipper ended. She pulled here and there, but everything seemed sturdy, and although those heart-shaped locks were simple, there was no way she was going to get them open with her bare hands.

Exploring the tent was a bit harder without the use of her eyes. She could feel the gauze all around her, narrowing towards the top. It was just high enough for her when she was on her knees, so she couldn't stand upright in it. She remembered from when she entered her room that there was an opening, or door, at the side, which was of the same material. The zipper ran from one side, along the bottom, to the other side, so that when it was open it hung down freely from the top. There were some ties or loops so that it could be bundled at the top, keeping the opening free. Now of course it was closed, and she felt all along the zipper. In one bottom corner there was a triangle of fabric covering the zipper on the inside. She couldn't feel any zipper sliders, so she supposed they might be behind that triangle, out of reach. But because her hands were not covered, she could get a few fingers behind the triangle, and thought she felt the zipper sliders there, as she expected. Perhaps she could manage to move them enough to reach the ends of the triangle, where she could get a better grip on them and open the door? It was not like she wanted to escape at the moment, but she thought it would be useful to know if she could, so she tried carefully if she could get them to move. But there was no pull on the inside, and they wouldn't budge. Iris suspected that it were sliders that would only move if you pulled on the pull, like zippers on clothes where you didn't want the zipper to slide down by itself. So, like she expected, there was no way out. By now Iris was used to her eyes being covered, and with the lights out it was not so different than without the blindfold, so she no longer felt scared. She laid back down, turned on her side, and suckled on her pacifier. It was still warm enough that she didn't feel the need for the duvet. Feeling comfortable and sheltered, she drifted off to sleep.

## 15. Off to Salem

When Iris woke, it was still dark. She took a look at her clock, but it didn't seem to be there. Then she suddenly realized that she was wearing her new sleep suit with the incorporated blindfold. So

there was no way for her to tell what time it was, and if her parents would soon come to get her out. She didn't like that, but of course the blindfold still couldn't be budged. Pretty awake now, her thoughts turned to the tent she was in. Since her mother guaranteed her that she couldn't fall out, she decided to give it a try, and rolled to the edge of the bed. And indeed, the gauze caught her gently, and prevented any mishap. With her sprained wrist still fresh in her memory, she felt that wasn't a bad thing. But on the other hand, it wouldn't be a bad thing either if she found a way to get out by herself. She thought again about the zipper sliders, and the triangle of fabric that made it hard to reach them. Would it even be there if there really was no way to open them from the inside? Suddenly she remembered a backpack she had a while ago. At a certain moment the pull broke off its zipper, and you couldn't just push the slider to open it. But she figured out she could lift up the piece of the slider that locked it in place, just as if it would be pulled up by the pull. Doing that with her thumb nail, she could push the slider with the finger to open the backpack. She actually got so used to it that it was weeks before her mother found out about it, and got her a new backpack.

What if the pulls were removed from the tent zipper on the inside, but that locking piece was still present? She felt the way to that triangle again, and tried once more to get her fingers behind it, and feel the sliders. Her suspicion was confirmed: there indeed was such a bump on the slider. Enthusiastically she tried to get a nail behind it, while at the same time pushing on the slider with another finger. It was quite a challenge, and her fingers got tired, but at a certain moment she managed to move one slider half an inch, before her grip on the locking part suddenly slipped. She checked her finger and felt that she had damaged her nail. She decided she had better leave it alone; there was no real reason for her to leave the bed, so it might be better to keep the option secret until she really wanted out. Moving around, she noticed that her diaper was even thicker than when she went to sleep; obviously she had filled it more, and now it was almost as thick as the soaked pampers plus the dry diaper combination from yesterday afternoon. It kept her knees apart. She felt the package through the pajamas, and realized that she liked it: it made her feel very conscious of the diaper, making her feel very little.

It had gotten a little colder, so she decided to get under her duvet. Feeling around, she quickly located it, and pulled it over her when she laid down again. It was useful to have full control with her hands, and not be hampered by the inflated sleeping bag, but at the same time she also missed that. While getting into position to try and sleep some more, she encountered her pacifier, so she put it into her mouth again. That immediately relaxed her, and soon she drifted off once more.

It felt like she had only just fallen asleep when she woke from her door being opened, and her mother coming in. "Good morning, Iris. It is time to get up. We're going to leave in an hour for Raymond's birthday, so you need to get going." She came closer and started opening the zippers of the tent door. "Iris, have you already tried to get out?" Oh oh, her mother must have spotted that the zipper sliders were a bit apart. She didn't have a good answer, so she kept quiet. Apart from that it felt strange to not be able to look at her mother when speaking. "I guess we need to be even more careful with little Iris. But of course today you will be your normal age again, so let me help you with the tent and your night attire. Then you can go through your own routine."

While she was talking, she had opened the zippers, took Iris's hand and helped her out of the bed. She unlocked the PJ zipper, and opened it all the way to the top of her head. Then she undid the flaps of the blindfold, and folded the hood down in front. "There you go." "Thanks, Mom." It was a relief to be able to see again, and look at her mother when talking. "By the way, do you have any idea why the zipper goes all the way to my belly? It is way longer than I would need to get in and out." "Well, I don't remember reading an explanation on the website, but my guess would be that it makes it possible to change your diaper without taking it off. We could try that one time, to see how

that works. Perhaps it is more comfortable than lying naked on the changing table.” “I see. Yes, I guess we could try that. But I don’t like the blindfold so much. Like I couldn’t see how late it was when I woke up before. I thought we had gotten it for the naps, when it was light outside, but not for the night.” “Did it still make you anxious?” “Not really, that was over pretty quickly. I don’t know, it is just not something I enjoy, I guess.” “Oh, that is a pity. I had counted on using this for the warm nights of the summer. We don’t have much of an alternative at the moment, so let’s try it out a few more nights, and then see how you feel about it. If you still really dislike it, we’ll see if we can’t find an alternative.” “Can’t I just wear my regular PJs, at least when I am mature?” “Hmmm, we’ll see.” Iris could hear from her mother’s tone of voice that she wasn’t that enthusiastic about her proposal, so it would probably be one piece sleep suits or sleeping bags for the foreseeable future. Well, as long as no one could see it, she didn’t really mind; the ones she had worn until now were quite comfortable, and as long as she needed incontinence materials, and didn’t have to get up in the night for the bathroom, it didn’t matter that she couldn’t take them off herself.

Iris realized that she had already switched to mature Iris. Her mother’s matter-of-fact way of talking and helping her out of bed had triggered the change. While they were talking she had taken off the onesie, and her mother unlocked the plastic pants. She checked them, and concluded that the diaper had done its job, and there was no leaking. She noticed, “Oh yes, Imogen had used tape to make it fit right, so I guess I need a pair of scissors to get you out. Wait a moment, I’ll be right back.” She left and Iris could hear her go the workbench. Iris saw the pacifier lying in the bed – it hadn’t taken her long to lose it again, after she fell asleep with it. She thought she remembered that they had also ordered a strap like Nanny had, to keep it in. She decided to ask her mother about it for the coming night.

Her mother reentered the room with a large pair of scissors, and several pull-ups. “Here is your pull-up. I’ve brought several more, so you have some spares with you today. I assume you wanted the plain whites ones again. Now hold still, so that I don’t cut you.” Iris was sure she would have remembered to bring some spare ones with her today, after not being able to change to a fresh one yesterday morning, and felt a twinge of annoyance that her mother didn’t trust her to remember. So her, “Yes Mom, those are fine,” came out a bit negative. “I think you should wear those nice pleated pants we looked at yesterday. And look at this blouse I found with Sabine’s stuff. With the puff sleeves it looks really festive, and the white makes a nice contrast with the dark blue pants. Well, actually it has panties attached, so it is more of a body, but that are just a few snaps in the crotch, and it will help you hide the pull-ups. If you are worried about quick undressing for the toilet, you can even leave the snaps open if you want.” “OK, I’ll take a look at them.” In the meantime her mother had succeeded in cutting open her diaper, and got it off pretty quickly. “There you are. Off to the shower with you, and make sure you clean the diaper area well. Here is the cream to use before you put on the pull-ups.” Again her mother reminded her of something she had forgotten the previous day.

“Oh, before I forget, do you want panties over the diaper? We have some now that aren’t locking. Do you want a pair, so that you won’t show wet spots on your pants if your pull-up leaks? Or would you rather take that risk than that someone might hear them crinkling?” “I think I’ll skip those for today. It seems much more likely that the panties draw attention than that the pull-up would leak, especially if I can put on a fresh one if needed.” “OK, I can see that. But please pick out some spare pants and top, so that you can at least change if there is an accident anyway, like with the pull-up, or if one of the kids spills something on your white blouse. They won’t have any clothes in your size that you could borrow.” “That is a good idea, Mom. I will.”

She went off to the bathroom. First the toilet, and she managed to defecate. Then she brushed her teeth to get rid of the bad taste from the night. The last two days she had been bathed, which was very nice; now she had to do everything for herself again in the shower. But it had one big advantage: she could finally play with herself again. That didn't take long, and she felt like going for a second round. But in the end she decided that her parents would start complaining if she took too long, so she just got on with cleaning herself. Since her hair was washed the previous afternoon, she put on a shower cap to keep it dry. That saved her the effort of washing and blow-drying.

Back in her room she used the cream and put on the pull-up. After that thick night diaper it almost felt like she was wearing normal underwear. Then she took a closer look at the blouse. Like her mother said it had attached panties, but it still looked more like a blouse than a body. (see Figure 49) It was not something she would have picked herself, but she agreed that it would combine well with the blue pants. She thought about choosing a simpler blouse, since her mother had not actually ordered her to wear it, but she didn't really have a reason to reject it, and was unsure if her father would object to a less festive choice, and send her back again to change. So she undid the buttons, and stepped into it. Even though the snaps in the crotch were open, with the attached panties that seemed easier than pulling it on over her head. All the blouses she knew buttoned in the front, so that was how she was trying to put it on, but then noticed that the part through the crotch was much longer in front. But that should be the other way around: from earlier experience she knew it was very hard to do the snaps then, and they sat uncomfortably in the butt crack. She came to the conclusion that it buttoned in the back, and then realized that she should have expected that, since it used to be Sabine's.



*Figure 49 Party Blouse*

But that meant that it was probably hard, or even impossible, to button herself up, and get out again without help. The blouse looked quite close-fitting, and the material didn't have any stretch, so just pulling it on and off with most buttons closed was not going to work. So now her mother wanted her to wear something she couldn't take off again, even when she was not little. Not that she would have need to take it off, but still she didn't like it. Still, she couldn't waste time, so she turned it around, pulled it up, and stuck her arms in the sleeve. She closed the buttons she could easily reach, and just left the rest open. Even the buttons on the short sleeves were in the back, and difficult to do by herself. She decided to close the snaps in the crotch, because that would prevent it from creeping up and possibly exposing her pull-up. Pulling a few snaps open on the toilet would take so little time

that she wasn't worried that it would cause her to wet her pull-ups. Then she put on the pants, which was simple enough, even when they zipped at the side instead of the front.

She decided to go down first, to have breakfast and get buttoned up, and then later return to pack her things, like the extra pull-ups and the spare clothes her mother suggested. In the kitchen her father only briefly looked up from his newspaper, and simply said "Good morning, Iris". That was rather cool! Her mother did come over and looked over her clothes. "Yes, that looks very nice. Oh, does the blouse button at the back? I hadn't realized. Here, let me help you close it all the way." Iris wasn't sure she believed her mother not realizing the back buttons, but then again, she hadn't at first, either. When all the buttons were done, it was pretty close-fitting. Her mother looked her over once more, and said, "This will do just fine for today. Now, come and have your breakfast." Her father looked up again for a moment, and added "Oh yes, very nice," and then started with his own breakfast. Iris couldn't sit down at her normal place at the table, since the high chair was there now, so she took the remaining empty seat. "Now, it is important that you to keep your nice white blouse clean, and you don't have the best track record in that area. I know you are not little now, but I would really like you to put on the bib for the meal, as an exception. You may choose not to, but then if you do make a stain, you'll be punished." Iris resented being pressured like that, but in the end decided that wearing the bib was the lesser evil. She picked it up from the table and put it on, not looking very happy about it. She tried not to close the buckle in the neck, but then it kept sliding off her shoulders. So finally she put the buckle ends together and let them engage. "Wise choice," her mother said.

Iris started to half expect that her mother would also come up with a reason for her to wear a harness or sit in the high chair, but that didn't happen, and she got through breakfast normally. Her bib was still clean at the end; next time she thought she might risk punishment instead, although of course she didn't hate the bib, just that her mother had so little faith in her. She went over to her mother and put her back towards her to get it off, but her mother didn't unlock her yet. Instead she invited Iris to come with her, so Iris followed her into her parent's bedroom, worried whatever else her mother had planned for her. "Come, sit at my vanity, and we'll make you even prettier." Oh, this was a pleasant surprise: she still wasn't allowed her own make-up, probably as the only thirteen year old in the world. But occasionally her mother used some of hers. Of course less than Iris would have wanted, and mostly in muted colors, but it was still a treat. She got a soft pink nail polish, and her mother noticed her damaged nail, so she used her file to remove the sharp edges and make it look acceptable. "You should be a bit more careful with your nails; I can't make this disappear. Did you damage it with the tent zipper?" "I was just curious how safe it was," Iris defended herself. Her mother didn't respond, but concentrated on putting one thin layer on her nails, and then lipstick in the same color. A tiny bit of blush on her cheeks, and pencil to her eyebrows. "Mom, I can hardly see the difference," Iris tried, but her mother just replied, "That is the intention. Make-up should make you prettier without drawing attention." "And when will I finally get some of my own? Mindy has her own for years now, and even Anna has a few things, although she doesn't use it much." "You know how your father is. But I'll ask again; perhaps now that you have entered puberty, he will see that it is time. But even if he allows, it will not be much!" "OK, thanks Mom."

When it was done, her mother unlocked the bib and took it off, careful not to touch the nails. "Now you should go upstairs to collect your things. But first use the hair dryer for a full minute on your nails, so you won't smudge them. Don't touch anything before that!" Cheered up a bit with the make-up, Iris went up, flapping her hands to quicken the drying. After she had used the hair dryer, she took a good look at herself in the mirror. Most of Sabine's old clothes made her look childish, but, especially with these pants, Iris found this blouse made her look more mature and

sophisticated, and the make-up added to that, even if you didn't see much of it. So she started to feel a little better; her mother could be annoying, but she also had good taste and sometimes she did something unexpectedly nice. Knowing she didn't have that much time, she went to her room. To be able to use her bed to collect everything she wanted to bring, she rolled up the door of the tent and used the ties to keep it there. She took a quick look at the zipper sliders, which confirmed what her fingers had already discovered. Then she collected her normal things, the three extra pull-ups, and she browsed her wardrobe for spare clothes. She settled for red cotton pants that should be wide enough for the pull-up, and looked decent, and the light green polo shirt she had worn the previous day. She had only worn it in the morning and a few hours in the evening, so it should be fresh enough as a spare. Ever so often she admired her pretty nails. Her pants didn't have back pockets, and the side pockets were fairly small, so she had to put her phone in her backpack. Like her mother suggested a few days ago, the pull-ups went into a dark plastic bag at the bottom, so no one would spot them even if they looked inside the backpack.

For a moment Iris's eye fell on the pacifier, and little Iris suggested it would be nice to have in the car for the long drive, but she quickly discarded that idea. What if it was discovered: with her name on it there was no denying it was hers. Even towards her parents it was not a good idea: she wanted to be taken seriously as a teenager, and her mother already wanted her to use things for little Iris, like the bib, the blouse from Sabine, and such, while her father forbade all sorts of more grown-up things.

When she had collected everything and put it in her backpack, she took it downstairs. Her parents were also collecting the things they needed to bring on the kitchen table, and Iris spotted the wrapped gift for Raymond, which she had helped pick. There was also a bowl with food; which they apparently wanted to contribute for the lunch. Her mother told her that there was a chance of a rain shower later in the day, so Iris should bring her new yellow rain jacket. "Mom, that one has locking buckles!" "Oh, don't worry so much, Iris. We'll leave it in the car, and I promise I won't lock them. Really, no one will notice that they could be locked. But if you prefer your pink rain suit with the hearts on it instead, I'm fine with that as well." Oh no, that one was much worse. At least the yellow one didn't look childish or weird, unless you recognized the keyholes in the buckles. But they were black, and you had to look closely to see the holes. So reluctantly she got it from the coat rack and added it to the table. (see Figure 9 Sabine's old Yellow Rain Jacket) She passed the toilet on her way, and realized she had better go once more before she would be stuck in the car for 1.5 hours, and she had no illusion that she'd be able to hold her bladder long enough for her father to find a restroom. Undoing the snaps in her crotch was quick enough, so she decided to do them up again, which took a little more time than pulling them open.

Soon after they were ready, and after the larger things were stored in the trunk, Iris moved to the back door behind the driver seat to get into the car. "Iris, please go to the side with the car seat." "But Mom, I don't need the car seat when I'm not little." "It is still safer. We talked about this before, and you agreed. Don't you want its comfort for the long drive?" "I guess so, but when we arrive, our family will see me being taken out of a car seat! I'd die of shame." "I agree that would not be a good idea. But how about this: we'll let you out of the seat before we open the doors. Then you can cross over to the booster seat, and get out of the car on that side. With the reflective sun foil, no one will be the wiser." "Hmm, I guess that would work. But what about when we leave?" "Then you just get in from the other side again, and climb over into the car seat. You can buckle yourself in then." Her mother seemed to have an answer for everything, so she moved over to the other side of the car and let herself be put into the car seat, not looking happy. But once she was in, she realized that the extra comfort during the drive was a real benefit, and as long as no one else saw her... She still felt a little bit of frustration, but not enough to ignore her parents or be rude to



them. Her father took the wheel, her mother took the seat right in front of Iris, and they started the drive.

At first her parents talked about the birthday; who was going to be there, and how old the children were by now. Suddenly Iris heard something interesting, and reacted enthusiastically, "Will Grandpa and Grandma also be there?" That wasn't so normal as it would sound, because her grandparents lived in San Jose, California, and they'd have to take a plane. Driving would take a full day, and her grandfather didn't drive that far anymore. "Yes, they've booked a flight, and will stay with Uncle Richard and Aunt Yelda for a few days before flying back. I'm sorry that we didn't tell you before, but we only heard yesterday, and there was so much going on when you came home that we didn't remember to tell you." This cheered Iris up – she might only see her grandparents once a year. Perhaps that was why her mother made her extra pretty?

By now they were on the I5 highway, and it was all straight ahead until they reached Salem. Her parents were quiet for a while, and Iris thought back about the morning. Something started bothering her, and she couldn't shake it off, so in the end she blurted out, "Mom, Dad, do you love little Iris more than me?" Her mother responded, "What a strange question. Of course not! What makes you think that?" "Well, yesterday evening you were so kind and make me feel so happy, and then this morning Daddy hardly said a word to me." Her father protested, "Iris, that is not very fair. Yesterday morning I tried to welcome you with a hug, and you found that inappropriate. So today I treated you more like an adult, say like I'd greet one of my coworkers on the platform first thing in the morning, and now you are disappointed I don't do more?" "Don't you love me more than one of your coworkers then?", Iris continued, a bit insulted. "Of course I do. I just don't quite know how to show it to a teenager who feels she is too big for childish affection. And it is not like you came over and gave me a kiss either." "I guess so. Perhaps I don't know what I want. It is much easier with little Iris.

"And Mom, you keep treating me like little Iris. First you reminded me of everything I forgot yesterday, like the spare pull-ups and the diaper cream, then you wanted me to wear something from Sabine, that I can't take off myself, then the bib, the yellow jacket, and now the car seat. I'd not be surprised if you brought my pacifier along as well." "But Iris, I wasn't treating you like a child. I let you shower alone, and collect your things. I even put makeup on you. And yes, I reminded you of a few things, just like I did with your father; would you really want me to take the risk that you forgot about spare pull-ups, and be in serious trouble at the birthday?" "Well, I guess it was better to be safe. I don't know, it was just everything together." "Perhaps I was a bit too careful, with the reminders, making sure your blouse didn't get dirty, and such. I just chose the most convenient options, and didn't realize how it would feel for you. But are you really upset with the car seat? You look really comfortable in there." "I guess that's OK. It was all a bit much, and it felt so different from yesterday evening." "I can see that. And we do like very much to have little Iris join us some of the time. You see, it took quite a while to conceive you, and during the birth a few things went wrong, and having a second child was no longer an option. We were so happy those first years, finally having the little girl we hoped for. Daddy wasn't working at the platforms then, and was home every evening. Things were going fine, and you grew up without major problems. I guess it was the happiest period of our lives.

"Then of course the start of elementary school didn't work out so good for you, and we worried more. It was not as easy anymore to protect our little girl. By then your father was offered a very good position at the platforms, and with you gone to school it was easier for me to manage alone, so he accepted, and we were not together so much anymore. For us it was a big relief when you became friends with Sabine, and we are also glad that we can do something back for her now. And

although being a parent is never easy, the problems got more complex while you grew up, and now we have to let go more and more. It's quite a balancing act to give you more independence and let you make your own mistakes, but also keep you safe and make sure you don't get into serious trouble because you still lack experience and judgement. So when little Iris is with us, it feels like we're back to that very happy period on our lives, and things are relatively simple. But that doesn't mean that we love mature Iris any less; it just can be a bit harder to show." It was not like her mother told her things that she had never heard before, but put like this it was easy for Iris to see why her parents liked little Iris, and she had never realized that for her parents it also felt simpler to deal with her.

Then her mother added, "And, to be honest, we had an extra reason to make you happy yesterday evening. There were a lot of new things, and we thought it would be easier for you to get used to them if you felt happy and loved. So we made it into a fun evening, and I guess it worked." Iris could see that if her parents would have been more distant, or more strict with her, she might have not cooperated so well with the car seat, the high chair, the new onesie and the tent. But was it fair? Did her parents trick her into accepting them by putting her in such a good mood? Or did they just help her get used to the things she wanted anyway? She did agree to, and for some of them even asked for, these things beforehand, so she decided she couldn't call it tricking. Perhaps it was a bit manipulative, but she couldn't really blame her parents for that; she did that herself as well. Like yesterday, when she first asked her mother if she could spend the night with Sabine, which she expected to hear 'no' on, so that she'd be more likely to allow the bathing. And being bribed with loving treatment sure beat being threatened with punishment if she didn't do what her parents wanted. She noticed she felt relieved, and that any resentment or other bad feelings had left her. "Thanks Mom, I guess it was a bit silly of me. But I had to ask, because it kept bothering me." "That's quite alright darling. You can always ask, and I am glad I was able to explain these things to you."

Everyone was quiet again, in their own thoughts. The view along the highway was not so very interesting, and her father turned the radio on with classical music. The monotonous view, the calming music, and the comfort of her seat made Iris think that if it hadn't been morning, and she hadn't slept decently, she would have quickly fallen asleep. And then she did anyway. She woke again because something was brushing her face. Opening her eyes, she saw her mother using a tissue to wipe her jaw. When she saw Iris was awake, she explained, "Sorry to wake you up Iris, there was a little drool, and I wanted to wipe it off before it ended up on your blouse. But now you are awake anyway, we want to ask you a few things about tomorrow. You do not need to answer right now; if you want more time to think, we'll ask again on the way back.

"You know we are doing a family trip tomorrow; do some fun activities, walk a bit in nature, and such. We wondered if you wanted to be mature or little on the trip. If you want to be little, we will go somewhere where no one will recognize you, and it will be a bit like when you were at the aquarium: you will be dressed and treated like a little girl in all aspects, and people who see you will assume you are disabled or something. But we won't go to crowded places, so there will not be that many people seeing you anyway." This was not an easy question for Iris, as her parents already expected. She had to be mature today already, and thinking back to yesterday evening, it would be so nice to be little Iris and have both parents cuddle her all day. But out in public was still quite scary, especially if Sabine wasn't there with her. "Oh, I see. I think I will need a little time to decide. But I have a few questions. If I am little, would you have a hat for me, so that most people won't be able to see my face?" "I will have to look; perhaps there is something with Sabine's old things, and otherwise I am sure we can improvise something. At least we have a baseball cap." "OK, that would help. On the other hand, if I go as mature Iris, could Mindy come along? She has so little opportunity

for such outings.” Iris was referring to the large family size of Mindy McConnell: with 2 parents and 7 children, an outing required major organization, and there was almost always something else for at least one of the children, which blocked going away for a whole day. And going to places with admission fees cost a fortune.

“That is kind of you. We’d have to think about it, but we were actually hoping to spend it just with the three of us, before your father leaves again. As we just talked about, it is a bit harder for us to connect to you compared to when you were little, so we hoped that spending all day together would help with that, and your father can see how much you have developed lately.” “OK, I can understand that. I guess Mindy will have to wait for another opportunity then. So you’d prefer me to be mature tomorrow?” “Oh, I really don’t know. We enjoy little Iris so much as well, so we decided to let you choose.” “OK, I will think about it. Ask me again on the way back.” Then Iris realized that was not so politely phrased, so she quickly added, “please”. She really appreciated her parents explaining things to her like this, and allowing her to choose. Of course once she decided to go as little Iris, her choices during the day would be rather limited, but that was how little Iris liked it. But it showed they were taking mature Iris serious.

“Now, I’m sorry, but I have to ask another tough question. We got an invitation to visit Jack and Diana tomorrow evening.” Iris knew them, they were old friends of her parents, and she had met them a number of times, like on birthdays. “Normally we would ask Miranda to come over and keep you company.” Which was a nice way of saying she still needed a babysitter. Even though Iris had recently been left alone at home for a short while during the day, her parents obviously were not ready yet to leave her alone for the whole evening. “Just to make sure you are alright, get you to bed in time, and such. But getting you ready for bed has gotten a little more complicated recently. So we would have to explain to Miranda about little Iris, and how she is treated. We trust her to keep your secret, and I’m pretty sure she would not mind taking care of you that way, or else we would not even suggest it. But we want you to be OK with it, or else we’ll cancel the visit. Then we will still need to find a solution, because we need to be able to go away for an occasional evening.”

Iris suggested, “But what if you just leave a bit later, and put me to bed before you leave?” “There still has to be someone in the house, because if there is a fire or other emergency, you won’t be able to save yourself. And someone needs to listen to the baby monitor in case there is something wrong, or you need something. Even if Miranda would come over after you are in bed, we’d still have to explain the monitor, and if she checks on you during the evening, she’ll see your new sleeping arrangement.” “But if I am mature that evening, can’t I just get my night diaper before you leave, wear normal pajamas, and we put the tent away for that night?” “At the moment I don’t trust you enough yet to not put your hands in your diaper again; there is too much temptation during the night. When you are ready to wear pull-ups at night again, and we are training to keep them dry, that will be different, but before that happens you will need to be able to keep your pull-ups dry during the day. This has nothing to do with punishment; but your UTI has only just passed, and we’ll work on your control again together. And until we are ready, I’m just helping you stick to the rules.”

“Okay, then just lock panties on me. But I should still be able to use normal pajama’s and no tent.” Iris suggested a bit exasperated. “I might be willing to consider normal pajama’s for that night. But I don’t think that will be a solution: your thick night diapers, and the plastic panties, will make enough of a bulge that Miranda is bound to notice. After all, she is paid to keep an eye on you. And about the tent: your wrist is not even completely healed: only yesterday you forced it a bit again. And you are so used to being protected now when you sleep, that I worry you would might fall out of bed if we suddenly stopped. We might give it a try once, but I want to be there; it would not be fair to Miranda to let her deal with you if you injure yourself again by falling out of the bed.” Bummer, her

mother made too much sense. There really didn't seem to be a good solution to let Miranda watch her *and* keep things secret from her. She didn't want to force her parents to stay home every evening for the foreseeable future, and she loved and trusted Miranda like few other people, but telling her was such a big step! In the end she concluded, "Mom, if I would ever decide to tell anyone else about little Iris, it would be Miranda. But I'm still very scared that sooner or later we tell one person too many, and it will no longer be a secret. I need to think about this some more." "Of course, darling. These are hard choices, and that is why we felt we should ask early, and give you thinking time." "Yes, Mom, and Dad, thank you for that. I guess I'm making things a lot harder for you as well, with all this." "Oh, don't say that! There are always challenges when raising kids, and I'd much rather find a solution for a babysitter than worry about you shoplifting, drinking alcohol, or worse."

They had finished their talk just in time, since they were already in Salem and off the motorway. A few minutes later they entered the street where the birthday boy lived, and found a parking spot. Her mother managed to reach Iris's chest clip and unlock it from her seat. She could reach the harness buckle as well, but not get her hand low enough to put her finger in from below. Then she remembered she could also put the plastic key for the chest clip through the hole at the front of the buckle guard, and that worked in opening it. Then Iris could climb out of the car seat, wiggle over to the booster seat, and get out of the car on that side.

## 16. Birthday Boy

They walked over to the door, and rang. Almost immediately it was opened by a little girl. Well, not as young perhaps as little Iris. Iris knew she was about 6 and a half, because she had been to her niece Yolanda's birthday half a year ago. "Welcome to the fourth birthday of Raymond Drummond," she produced, obviously a rehearsed line. Then she exclaimed in a more natural way "Hello Uncle Carlos, Aunt Maria, Cousin Iris, I'm so glad you are here!" And she gave them all a hug and a kiss on the cheek. She wore a knee-length baby-blue dress with a tulle skirt and a fitting lace bodice. There was a big bow in the back. All in all a typical princess dress that many girls of that age love, except the color. Yolanda loved girly and frilly things, but strangely enough she disliked pink. "Yolanda, don't keep them at the door, but invite them in," her mother called from inside the house. Yolanda blushed a bit and asked them to come in. She took Iris's hand, and before they entered the living room, whispered to her, "I hoped you'd come; it is a bit boring with all the adults." Iris smiled and squeezed her hand. As an only child she knew how that felt.

As soon as they entered the living room, a boy dressed as Spiderman stormed towards them. He halted directly in front of them, and looked up at them expectantly. He must have been warned not to ask for congratulations or presents, but it was obvious he wanted it all, and the sooner the better. Since Yolanda had taken the lead, and took Iris with her, she was in front of her parents. So she squatted, congratulated him, and gave him a hug. He was already a lot bigger than the last time she saw him, and at an age where he had no trouble remembering who these visitors were. Then her parents took their turn, and her father did a fist-bump, which was cool. His mother Yelda came up to them, welcomed them as well, and apologized for the boy's attire – he had insisted on dressing up, and since it was his birthday... Of course the Tomas's responded that it was no problem at all. They greeted the mother as well, and congratulated her with her son's birthday.

Raymond was still standing there, impatiently hopping from one leg to another. Mrs. Tomas didn't make him wait longer, and handed him their present. Immediately he sat down on the ground with it and started tearing off the paper. Then he exclaimed "Oh, it's the Dino-faur T-Rex 4x4! Terrific!"

Obviously the 'terrific' part showed he was happy with it, but to Iris it seemed even more telling that he exactly knew the type and model. She imagined he had often stood in the toy-store gazing longingly at these. He immediately took it out of the box, and started inspecting it, with its opening mouth and the other moving parts. Then he rolled it back a few times, and let go. The truck started to ride through the living room by itself. Iris hadn't even known that it could do that. She noticed it didn't make too much noise, so she hoped that he wouldn't be driving his parents crazy with it, like her mother had predicted when they were looking at a police car with working sirens.

Then it was time to greet the other people present. First Uncle Richard. Iris always had trouble seeing any resemblance to her mother, his sister, both in looks and behavior. But then again, Anna and her brother were not very alike either. She actually felt closer to Aunt Yelda, even though they of course were only related by marriage. But her uncle was kind enough to her, and she also greeted him with a kiss and a congratulations. The next people in the circle were her grandparents. Her face lit up when she saw them, and quickly stepped up to greet them as well. But her grandfather asked, "Richard, who is this young woman?" "Come on Dad, It is your granddaughter Iris!" "Hmm? That can't be. My granddaughter is perhaps about 8 years old, not this almost mature woman!" Iris recognized her grandfather was having a bit of fun. He may be super old, but he was still clear in his head, and never had trouble remembering her age when he called to congratulate her on her own birthday. He was just giving her a backhanded compliment about how grown-up she looked, which of course she was very grateful for. Still, she couldn't resist reacting, "Grandpa, I'm thirteen now! You know that." He surrendered, "Hmm, you do sound like her. I guess you must suddenly have grown up while I wasn't looking. Let me look at you, you look all ready to go to a job interview." The others all agreed that Iris was dressed very nicely, and her outfit made her look really mature. Iris gave a quick look at her mother, and quickly formed a kiss with her lips, showing her appreciation for her mother's efforts in the morning. She might enjoy being little Iris very much, but when she was grown-up she still appreciated getting recognition for her maturity as well.

Her grandmother was next. She hadn't stood up to greet her, because she had some trouble with her hips, so Iris just squatted next to her. Her grandfather was more of a joker, but her nana had a very warm personality, and they greeted each other very heartily. Next were two people she had only seen a few times, on other birthdays here. They reintroduced themselves as John and Mary Wilson, the next-door neighbors. So in total Iris counted 2 children, 1 teenager, and 8 adults. She assumed Raymond probably had, or was going to have, a separate party for his friends, because there were no other children, and she had the impression they were the last ones, since they lived furthest away. Well, apart from the grandparents, but they must have arrived yesterday, or even earlier. She saw her grandmother trying to make place between her and her husband for Iris, which caused her face to show her pain, but she persevered, and Iris gratefully went to sit with them. Her parents took the last two free chairs, Raymond sat on Aunt Yelda's lap, and Yolanda sat on the armrest of her father's chair.

After the obligatory asking how the trip had been, and the general health, her grandparents asked Iris lots about her school and what else was there in her life. Iris decided a birthday was not the best moment to share the sad story of Sabine, so she just mentioned that she had run into a friend from her old school, and she had spent several nights there and got reacquainted. "Any boys yet?" her uncle asked. Iris considered that a little insensitive, but she was also sort of used to get that question whenever she was with a group of adults. She just gave the briefest reply that she thought she could get away with, "No, nothing yet." She didn't feel like explaining that with all the girls in her class already hitting puberty, and showing off their developing chests, she was not really drawing the boys' attention, and she wasn't one of the popular kids anyway. Of course she sometimes had one

crush or another, but without any sign of encouragement from the boy, she had never dared to act on it. And now with little Iris, and the Fletchers, her mind wasn't really on boys at all. Of course Yelda made sure everybody got cake, coffee, or soda. Unsurprisingly Iris wasn't allowed coffee yet, but once her mother had let her take a tiny sip, and she didn't like it at all, so she was happy with a Fanta.

Yolanda was the first to get bored with the adult talk, and moved over to the corner of the living room where the children had their toys. She called Iris to join her, but the older girl was still talking to her grandparents, and told her cousin that she would come over in a bit. Raymond got some extra attention because of his birthday, but after a while he too moved over, and started playing with his new toy. And once the standard topics that children and teenagers were asked at such gatherings were exhausted, the grown-ups fell back to conversation topics like refinancing mortgages, retiling bathrooms and such, that Iris didn't find interesting, and had nothing to contribute to. So she went over to the children's corner as well, deciding it would be a nice task for her to keep her cousins occupied and out of the grown-ups' way. When she stood up, she noticed a little pee escaping from her bladder, so she quickly clenched, went to the toilet, and managed to hold the flow long enough. She checked the pull-up, and could hardly see or smell the urine that escaped, so she decided there was no need to replace it yet. She wondered how she would have replaced it anyway; her backpack with the spares was in the living room. She decided to move it to the hallway, under the coat rack next to the toilet, when she had an opportunity to do so without drawing too much attention. That would mean she would not notice if her phone rang, since she had no pockets in her outfit big enough to hold it, so it had to stay in her backpack. Maybe she should ask her mother for a purse, although normally her pant pockets sufficed. But she was not called often anyway, and as little Iris she usually didn't even have access to it.

Back in the living room she saw both children were playing with their own toys, and had little interaction. Raymond was pretty much engrossed in his own world, but Yolanda was overjoyed that her older cousin came over to play with her, and enthusiastically showed off her dollhouse and all its inhabitants, and they played with it together. After a while Iris felt it was not fair that she was spending all her attention on the one child, and not even the one celebrating his birthday. She told Yolanda that her brother deserved some attention too, so she went to him and asked about his dino truck and the other gifts he had received. He enthusiastically demonstrated what he had gotten, and especially all the options of the truck, like that it could open its maw, how to wind it up to make it ride by itself, and that it could even ride on its back wheels with its tail as support. (see Figure 50) Iris decided to come up with a story where the children could interact. But that wasn't easy: there was not much a doll house and a dino truck shared. In the end both children quickly reverted to what they were doing before. It was not that they didn't like each other; they just had little in common, and found the other's fantasy world too alien to relate to.



*Figure 50 Dino-faur T-rex 4x4*

A while later Yolanda whispered to Iris that she needed to use the bathroom, and if Iris could help her. This surprised the teenager; normally children that age didn't need help, did they? And she was wearing a dress, so she should be able to just lift it up. But Iris also realized that her cousin would not ask it if it was not necessary, and probably felt ashamed. She could relate to that. So she got up as if there was nothing unusual, and went with Yolanda to the hallway. On the way out she quickly

grabbed her backpack. In the hallway she put it under the coatrack, as she planned, briefly mentioning to the girl that she wanted to check her phone. Then she asked Yolanda how she could help her. "Could you unzip my dress for me?" "Of course, but can't you just lift it up?" "No, it has panties inside. Mom doesn't like that my underwear is visible when I practice my cartwheels or sit with my legs apart. It's a bit silly because my underwear looks nice enough. But I really like this dress, so I guess it is OK." She demonstrated by lifting up her skirts, and showed that there were indeed panties in the same fabric attached to the dress. Iris said, "I see. Yes, it's called modesty, and grown-ups find it important, so we just have to get used to it. I actually wore a friend's dress not that long ago that also had them. It is sort of nice though that you don't have to worry if your panties are showing." "I guess so." Then Iris unzipped her, and she disappeared into the toilet.

That gave Iris a moment on her own, and the excuse about her backpack was actually a good idea, so she got her phone out and checked her messages. Mindy and Anna were asking again when they could meet up, but Iris had to reply that she wasn't sure yet. It had to be after her father left again, and she didn't know yet when Sabine and her mother were coming over, so she would check and get back to them. By then Yolanda opened the toilet door, so Iris put her phone away and helped her pull up her dress and zip it up again. Yolanda did a little twirl to show off her dress, and Iris gave a suitable compliment. When they reentered the living room, Iris got a little nod from her aunt, signaling her appreciation. They had just started playing again when the mothers started setting up the lunch, and since the dishes were already prepared, that didn't take very long. It was set up like a buffet, so the adults could just heap things on their plate, and take it to where they were sitting. But for the two children a place at the table was set. Iris realized that it would probably get rather messy if a four year old could access all the dishes, then walk around with a full plate, and then hold the plate on his lap or on the ground. For Iris no special preparations were made, so she assumed she was to do the same as the adults. That made her feel proud, recognition of her being no longer a child, although she also realized that she would have felt a bit insulted to be treated the same as a 4 and 6 year old.

Yelda asked, "Richard, will you take care of the kids?" It was phrased as a question, but Iris thought he didn't really have a choice: his wife had played hostess until now, and prepared the table. Anything other than agreeing would make him look bad. So he did, but Iris could feel he would have preferred to continue talking to the other men. Then she surprised herself by blurting out, "Shall I sit with them instead?" She didn't know why she said it, but it felt right. Perhaps to avoid the boring conversations of the adults, or that she would be the 'child' with them, while she was the mature one with the kids, or because she gotten to like babysitting with Sabine, or perhaps there was a bit of little Iris awakened while she played with Yolanda? It was a jumble inside her, but she had said it now, Uncle Richard looked relieved, and Aunt Yelda said, "Oh would you? That would be very kind of you. I'll set it up for you. But first we get those little hands clean." She took her children to the kitchen and made sure they washed their hands thoroughly, and then of course Iris did hers as well.

Then her aunt asked, “Now Raymond can be a bit messy; would you like an apron to protect your pretty blouse?” That reminded Iris of her mother putting a bib on her this morning, but an apron sounded a lot more mature, and her mother would probably be upset if she refused and then got a stain, so she agreed. And this time it was not for herself being messy, anyway. Her aunt got an apron made out of blue see-through material with white dots that she hung around Iris’s neck, and then knotted the two strings around her waist. It was so long that it almost reached her feet. (see Figure 51) For Yolanda there was a much smaller purple apron to keep her dress clean, which she accepted without fuss; perhaps also because even Iris got one. But Raymond got a sleeved bib, like Sabine and little Iris had, also in a plain purple color. “Mom, I’m four now!” he protested, but she simply replied, “Yes dear, so it is time that you show me you can keep your bib clean.” That shut him up; apparently that hadn’t happened yet. Iris looked at him and fiddled a bit with her apron, to show he was not alone, and gave him a wink. That helped, and he didn’t look upset anymore.



*Figure 51 Yelda's Apron*

Back at the table, when she sat down Yelda noticed how low the top of the apron was, offering little protection for the part of her blouse above the table. “Here, let me put it a bit higher.” She started fiddling with the neck strap, pulled the apron all the way up so the top touched her throat, and then did something to keep it there. Iris couldn’t be sure, but it seemed like she put a knot in the strap. She got a place mat and plate like the children, with normal cutlery. (The children’s were smaller.) They all got had a large napkin too. Both kids had the same sort of chairs as her high chair, with the adjustable seat and footrest, but without tray or harness. They were very practical, since both could sit at the table at a good height and had a place to put their feet, instead of having the table top at armpit level and their legs dangling. They sat opposite each other, and Iris’s place was next to Raymond’s.

Aunt Yelda explained to Iris, “Now, Yolanda can scoop from the dishes herself; just make sure she doesn’t put too much on her plate at once. With Raymond you let him choose what he wants, but you’ll put it on his plate, and carry it back to the table for him. They can eat the dry things, like bread sticks or cherry tomatoes, with their hands, but should use their cutlery with the salads, pies and such. Raymond, it is your birthday, so today you can pick whatever you like. Yolanda, I expect to see some vegetables on your plate too. Iris is in charge, so you two do as she says. Iris, if there is anything, just let me know. We’ll be in the garden.” Iris hadn’t expected all of that; she thought she would just be sitting with them, keep them entertained, and make sure they didn’t make too much of a mess. But now she suddenly was instructed to take care of them as a babysitter. It sounded a bit like a job this way, but it also showed that her aunt trusted her with that role. Realizing that made Iris feel quite proud, and she nodded to her aunt that she understood the rules and accepted the responsibility. Then Yelda pointed out some of the dishes that had ingredients that one or the other kid didn’t like.

When she joined the others in moving furniture outside, to supplement the garden chairs, Iris decided they might as well get started. She left her plate for the moment, took Raymond’s, and invited both to come with her to the buffet. That her apron was so high now at least helped her not trip over the hem. The birthday boy got to pick first. Having such a big selection to choose from wasn’t easy, and it was apparently very important for him to pick exactly the things he liked best, asking Iris several times what the foods were. Yelda had explained a bit, and she could recognize



some more, but some things she didn't know. He didn't seem too bothered by that though, and she got the impression that he asked as much for the attention as for really wanting to know. His sister got impatient, having to wait until he had chosen, and said "Come on, Ray, just pick already." Iris intervened, "Yolanda, I know it takes long, but let's be kind to him on his big day." The girl nodded, and settled down for the wait. But apparently her remark had the desired effect anyway, because suddenly Raymond had decided, and pointed to several dishes in quick succession. He also chose one that her mother pointed to as something he wouldn't like, so Iris double-checked that it was really what he wanted, and then gave him a little bit of it. "So, this way you can try, and if you like it we'll get some more." He hesitated for a moment, but then accepted her decision and pointed at the next dish.

Once she started filling Raymond's plate, she gave a nod to Yolanda that she could start too, and the girl behaved exemplary, using the supplied spoons, a cake server for the pies, and such, taking moderate portions, and also adding vegetables. She kept looking at Iris for confirmation, and so she told the girl she was doing great, which she seemed extraordinarily pleased with. Iris had no idea what would be a normal portion for a four-year-old, but the plates of the children were smaller, so she stopped when it was reasonably full, although Raymond wanted to pick more. "Why don't we try this first, and then you know which are your absolute favorites, and we go and get some more of those," she suggested to him, and that seemed like a good idea to him. So they went back to the table, where Iris put his plate down in front of him, and then picked up her own plate to get lunch for herself as well. Thinking of how little Iris would behave, she was pretty certain that Raymond would start eating with his hands the moment her back was turned. Remembering how Nanny sometimes dealt with that, she kept her eyes on the buffet but said distinctly, "Raymond, use your cutlery." A giggle from Yolanda was all the confirmation she needed that she had guessed right.

She would have liked to take her time to pick the best things from the buffet, but felt she should not be away from the children for too long, so she chose some of the safer options, and took a fair helping of those. Then she returned. Raymond looked at her with big eyes, and asked "How did you know?" "Oh, I was little too, not that long ago," thinking that that was only yesterday, but of course letting them think it was years ago. And indeed Yolanda reacted, "I'm sure that was pretty long ago, before I was even born!" "Yolanda, please don't speak with your mouth full." It was something that she had heard so many times from her parents that it came out almost automatically. And so she hadn't expected the reaction from Yolanda: the girl's face got really red, and she didn't look up from her plate. Iris thought she could even see some moisture in her eyes. She wasn't sure what caused the reaction, but knew she needed to do something, so she stood up, went over to her cousin, stroked her head, and said. "Everything is OK. Just try to do better next time. You don't want to know how often that has been said to me!" Yolanda looked up at her and said "Really, to you?" "Yes, to me! I easily forget it when I get enthusiastic about something." Yolanda didn't seem totally convinced, but she wiped her eyes and it seemed she was feeling alright again.

Iris quickly returned to her own side of the table, because Raymond had used the distraction to start messing around with his food, and there was a lot of food visible on his hands. Iris moved right next to him to wipe his hands with his napkin, but he didn't want her interference, and pushed her away with both hands on her chest. Now Iris was very glad she had accepted the apron, or else she would have two hand-shaped stains on her blouse now. "Raymond, you need to let me help you, and start using your cutlery again like a big boy. Or we might have to wait for a while before you can get seconds." Again an idea she borrowed from Nanny, when she threatened to eat the first pancakes herself yesterday. And again it proved effective with Raymond as well: he stopped resisting, and even held his hands out for her to clean. She wiped them, and some of the bigger smudges on his

face, and then handed him his cutlery again. For the following minutes he was trying to prove he was a big boy, and she praised him.

Unfortunately, the potato salad she picked as a safe choice, and took a lot of on her plate, contained more pepper than she expected, and she got quite thirsty. She was glad the children hadn't chosen it. Soon her drink was finished, so she went into the kitchen to refill her glass with water. She took a quick deliberate look behind her to Raymond, who still behaved, to make sure he knew she kept her eye on him. When she returned Yolanda had finished her plate, and asked if she could go for seconds. Iris let her go on her own, and warned her friendly that with such buffets you often took too much, so it was better to go up and down a few times than to end up with a lot of left-overs. Yolanda nodded and skipped over to the buffet. She had listened well, and returned with her plate only half full. Raymond's plate didn't contain much anymore either, but Iris decided she'd go for seconds first, to not leave Raymond alone with a new plate full of opportunities to misbehave. Of course she skipped the potato salad this time, and realized she now had to follow her own directions to Yolanda, and only take moderate portions, to give the right example. Little Iris whispered in her head "It sucks being grown up, doesn't it", but she didn't quite agree. Even though it was hard work, it felt right, and satisfying to be able to use her own experiences to make them behave without needing to be too firm. She suddenly realized for the first time that she wanted children of her own later, though not for a long time yet.

She put her half-filled plate back on the table, and checked with Raymond. All the food was gone, except for the bit his mother had warned that he wouldn't like. "Aren't you going to finish your plate?" "No, I don't like that." "Well, if you don't eat it, it will stay on your plate and we won't be able to fit as much on it." Iris thought it wasn't such a good argument, since he probably couldn't handle another full plate anyway, but he did give it another try. He pulled a face, but bravely took another small bite. Iris was impressed, and decided to help him, "You know what, I'll take half of it, and you eat the other half. Deal?" She held up her hand. "Deal" he replied, and smacked her hand in a wild high-five. She shoveled half of it to her own plate, and started eating it. It was a pasta dish, which explained why he wanted to try it in the first place, but there was garlic and olives in there, so it was not surprising he didn't like it anyway. Her father used those regularly too, so she was used to them. Actually, this could very well be the dish her parents brought over. Raymond bravely finished his, and then Iris took him to the buffet again. Yolanda seemed to still behave well, and enjoyed her food, so Iris saw no problem to let her eat on her own for a moment.

By now the adults had settled on the terrace, and were also starting to use the buffet. That meant Raymond had to wait his turn, which obviously wasn't his favorite pastime. Iris distracted him by asking if he already had a party with his friends. From his answer Iris thought she understood that he had, but he used a lot of names and places that didn't mean anything to her. She didn't really mind; he was distracted from the wait. In front of them was the neighbor, John, who seemed to understand more of it, and asked some follow-up questions. While he was distracted, Iris sought out her aunt, and asked whether there was a separate dessert that the children should save some room for. When she got confirmation, she quickly returned to the birthday boy, and they could start filling his plate again. She warned him that there would be dessert as well, so he should not take too much. He immediately decided to stop eating, so that he could use all the room he had left for that. Iris put her hand on his stomach, as if that would help her estimate how much room he had left, and said there would not be unlimited dessert, so he probably should take a few more things from the buffet first, and let him pick three of his favorite things. Of course it was a gamble, not knowing how much he normally ate, but he was an active and robust child, so she thought it should be OK.

They all finished their second helping, and decided they didn't need more food. Luckily their mother already gave them their dessert before the grown-ups had finished. Otherwise Iris might have had a hard time keeping them at the table. It were little cardboard cups of ice cream in different flavors, which of course the children loved, and Iris liked hers a lot as well. When she finished it, she realized she had eaten quite a bit more than normal, and she sat back satisfied. If she had worn jeans she might have considered opening the button, but with her side-zipped slacks that wasn't an option. She saw a similar reaction with the two children, and Raymond actually yawned. They quietly talked for a bit longer, until their mother came and told Raymond it was time for his nap. Of course he protested, and wanted to keep celebrating his birthday, but his mother told him he still needed some rest, so that he would be able to play all he wanted in the afternoon. This was probably a daily routine, and after another yawn the little boy gave in relatively quickly. She took his bib off with a quick pull at the Velcro in his neck, and folded it inside to keep the food remains from the table she put it on. Yolanda managed to get her own apron off, and Iris also undid the tie in the back and tried to lift it over her head. But whatever her aunt did, the neck strap was too tight around her neck to get it over her head. She tried to pull, but it was no use. "Here, let me help," Aunt Yelda offered, and started undoing the knot. "You shouldn't have pulled on it," she said while wrestling to loosen it, but then she managed to get the knot out of the strap and lifted it off over her head. "There you go. I see that it has been useful." "Yes, thank you. Raymond tried to push me away a bit at one point." Iris wanted to make sure that her aunt didn't think she had been messy herself.

When she took Raymond by the hand to take him to his bedroom, she asked Iris, "Would you like to come along and put him in bed?" Raymond looked startled and said "But Mom!" "Oh, come on pet, it is nothing to be ashamed of. I'm sure Iris will understand." There was clearly something he wasn't happy with, but to Iris's surprise he stuck out his other hand to her, and so she took it and followed them upstairs. When they entered his room, the first thing Iris noticed was his bed. It was in the shape of a race car, with a bright red frame with wheels, a hood, and everything, and a mattress inside. He proudly showed it to her, and under the hood there was a big chest for his toys. It even had working headlights, which he turned on for her. (see Figure 52) Then her mother took off his spiderman costume, which simply closed at the back with a few pieces of Velcro. Underneath he had a normal t-shirt and jeans, but his behind seemed to bulge a little more than usual, so Iris started to suspect he was wearing a diaper. That would explain his reluctance for her to come along. He took off his pants himself, and indeed there were pampers underneath. Iris recognized them – they were similar to the ones she had at home, but of course a smaller size.



Figure 52 Raymond's Race Car Bed

"He normally only needs them at night, and not always then, but with such an exciting day as today there is the occasional accident too. And with the Spiderman suit the toilet visits are a bit harder, so he consented to be diapered today," his mother explained. Iris replied towards Raymond, "Oh, that might run in the family. It took me a long time to stay dry, especially at night. I was quite a bit older than you are now before it was fully under control." That cheered the boy up, and he moved towards the dresser in his room with a changing mat on top, and his mother lifted him up. "Iris, do you have any experience with changing diapers?" she asked. "A little bit. You know that friend I told about earlier today, that I stayed with last week? She got brain damage after we lost contact, and

now is incontinent. It is a rather sad story, and I didn't want to spoil the mood of the celebrations with it. But her mother let me practice a bit on her. Actually I was there first to help her single mother out, but when I got reacquainted with my friend, we also had a great time, within her limitations."

"Oh, that was very nice of you. Would you like to change Raymond?" She looked at the boy first, surprised that her mother hadn't asked him if he was OK with it, but he seemed to have accepted her as someone who took care of him. Sharing a weak bladder probably helped too, and he didn't protest. "OK, if you help me I will try." So she proceeded to undo the diaper. There actually wasn't so much in there, but apparently her mother was used to changing him before nap time, so she just discarded the diaper in the pail. She looked around for either a bowl and wash cloth, or wipes to clean the area, and her aunt handed her a box. When she wiped the area, suddenly the boy got an erection. She looked at his mother in shock, but heard that it regularly happened with boys, and it didn't mean anything. She should just ignore it. Of course that was news to Iris, but she did her best to go on as normal as she could. Then there was baby powder instead of diaper cream, so she learned how to use that, and wipe her hands before handling the diaper tapes, or they would not stick well. Putting a new pampers on and taping it closed was not new to her, and she managed pretty well. Her aunt complimented her, and then handed her his PJ's. It was a onesie in the design of a racing jumpsuit, matching his bed. She helped him in it, and told him how cool he looked. He spontaneously hugged her and said "Thank you".

"Would you read him a story, and stay with him until he sleeps?" Again Iris was a bit surprised that her aunt asked her all these things, but she enjoyed it, so she agreed. She got a book, and the instruction to do no more than 1 chapter. Raymond crawled into his bed, and just laid on top of the duvet, since it was warm enough. Iris started reading, while his mother quietly left. She tried to make the reading fun, doing some voices and such, but noticed that he got more awake, so she toned it down a bit, and gradually saw him calm down. But when the chapter was finished, he was still awake, and wanted her to read some more. Iris told him that she wasn't allowed, so he would just have to go to sleep on his own. "Will you lie with me then, until I fall asleep?" he asked next. Iris had no instructions about that, and it was his birthday. But there was a practical issue, "I don't know if I fit in your bed very well." "Sure, I will move over," he waved away her objection. When he did, Iris realized she had little choice. Refusing now would probably make him upset, and then he might not sleep at all. So she stepped into the bed next to him. She had to pull up her legs, and he crawled into the area between her legs and chest, making himself comfortable. She started stroking his head, and he quickly relaxed and started to drop off. But for Iris this was the normal time little Iris was put to bed, and her body reacted to her lying down as well. Before she knew it she had fallen asleep too.

## 17. More Celebrating

Iris awoke from a sudden flash of light, and, not immediately knowing where she was, promptly bumped into the side of the car bed. "Ouch!" This bed definitely was not suitable for someone her size. The pain quickly got her awake, and aware where she was. The flash must have come from Aunt Yelda, who was standing there with her mobile aimed at them. "Oh sorry, are you OK? You two looked so cute, I just couldn't resist making a picture." Raymond was now stirring as well, didn't seem surprised that she was still there, but just snuggled up to her. Then he realized it was still his birthday, and he could join the festivities again. That made him jump out of bed in a hurry, leaving Iris behind. The teenager considered asking her aunt to delete the picture: she felt ashamed that she fell asleep in the middle of the day. That was something she associated with little Iris, and even though she wasn't dressed childishly, she didn't want her family to think she still needed an

afternoon nap like her four-year-old cousin. But her aunt asked, "Did you sleep well? That was really nice of you to keep him company, and I'm sure he would have gotten out of bed way sooner if you hadn't." Oh, if her aunt just interpreted it as something she did for her cousin, and not that she might have needed it, it was not that bad. She still wanted to ask her aunt if she could perhaps not show it to everyone, but then she would have to admit that she felt ashamed to have fallen asleep, and that didn't seem to be a smart thing with her cousin standing right there. She got out as well, and the three of them looked at the picture. Iris had to admit to herself that if it had been anybody else, she would have found the picture adorable.

Raymond was taken out of his racer onesie, and back into his clothes. He insisted again on his spiderman costume, so that went on once more as well. Downstairs the living room was abandoned, and everyone was in the garden. Yolanda was jumping on a trampoline further back, and as soon as she saw Iris she beckoned her to join her. That looked like great fun, so Iris asked her aunt if the trampoline was suitable for her too. The woman answered that she occasionally jumped on it herself, so that shouldn't be a problem. "Just make sure everybody is safe, so no jumping near the edge, and only one person on it at any one time – unless you are just sitting or lying on it. That was a bit of a pity: it would have been fun to jump together, like in sync, but she could see the trampoline was not big enough for that. But when she heard her grandfather was telling a story, she wanted to listen to that too: he was always quite entertaining, and even though she had told her grandparents most of what was happening in her life, she hadn't heard much yet about theirs. She put both hands up towards Yolanda, with her 10 fingers pointing upwards, trying to let her know she'd be there in 10 minutes. She wasn't sure that her cousin understood, but then the girl was distracted by Raymond, who also wanted a turn on the trampoline.

She decided they should be able to work that out between themselves for a while, and looked around for a seat near grandpa. But there were no free chairs on the terrace. She glanced through the windows to see if there was anything she could easily move outside, but then her father, who had seen her looking around, tapped on his knee to invite her to sit with him. Her first reaction was that that was too childish, but considering his cool demeanor in the morning, and his explanation for that in the car, she didn't want to disappoint him again either. Perhaps if she just sat on his knee, and didn't cuddle up to him, it wouldn't look too bad? She took him up on the offer. Sitting down she suddenly felt that her pull-up seemed thicker than before, and she realized that she had probably wet herself during the nap. She suppressed the urge to immediately jump up again to put on a fresh pull-up in the toilet: that might raise questions, and her grandfather had just started recapping what he had told before, so that she could follow the story. She decided she had to wait a while, and excuse herself when the story had finished. The pull-up was not uncomfortable yet, and she felt didn't feel her bladder, so changing shouldn't be urgent.

Her father seemed to accept that she wasn't leaning into him, and made no effort to pull her closer. Instead he put his hand on her back, with a combination of stroking it, and offering some support. She felt his hand bumping a bit into the buttons of her blouse, but that didn't seem to deter him. She really enjoyed the caressing, and decided that even mature Iris could occasionally do with some affection. If she would still be sitting on his leg when she was 40, that might look weird, but perhaps for a 13-year-old it was still acceptable. At least none of the others showed any surprise or disapproval. Actually the pull-up was useful here, since sitting on the bony part of his leg could get uncomfortable after a while, and this way there was something of a pillow in between.

When the story was finished, she excused herself as planned, and went to the toilet. She grabbed her backpack and took it in with her. It was a bit small, but at least she knew that no one would surprise her and see her getting a pull-up out of her backpack. She had to undress her lower half:

you could tear up the sides of the pull-up to take it off easily, but to put on a new one she had to remove her pants anyway, and therefore also her shoes. Folding down the toilet lid made sure nothing would accidentally fall in. The lid actually had a plush cover on it – she wondered why: as if people were going to the toilet to sit on the lid. But for her it made a nice surface to put her pants. Pulling down her pull-up, she decided it was clearly used, but could probably handle another wetting. But she had plenty of spares, so there was no need to take any risks, and after cleaning the area as well as she could with toilet paper, she pulled on a clean one. No cream available of course, but she wasn't planning on filling this one anyway.

When she was dressed again, she suddenly realized she needed somewhere to dispose of the used pull-up. Putting it in the tiny bin in the toilet would certainly draw attention when it was emptied, and the big kitchen bin was probably no better, and seemed unhygienic. Now she was thankful that little Raymond still needed diapers some of the time: pulling hers in the diaper pail in his room, it was unlikely to be noticed. She tried to listen if anyone might be near, but heard nothing, so she carefully opened the door, and when she saw no one, came out, put her backpack under the coat rack again, and snuck up the stairs with the pull-up in her hand. It felt like she was doing something illegal, sneaking around the house like this, and her heart was beating fast. But she made it without any problems, and once the pull-up was discarded she felt relieved. Then she walked quietly down again. But suddenly she heard the living room door opening, so she quickly reversed direction and tried to go up far enough to not be seen, without making a sound. Not being seen also meant she could not see who was there, but after she heard the toilet door close and being locked, she decided it would be safe enough to get down. She quietly descended, and went into the kitchen to wash her hands. There she gave a sigh of relief.

Back in the garden Raymond was on the trampoline, and Yolanda eagerly beckoned her once more. Looking at the grown-ups, the only person missing was her mother, so in the end she wouldn't have had trouble to explain why she was on the stairs, but of course she hadn't known that. She went over to the kids, and immediately got a hug from Yolanda. Raymond looked happy to see her too, and even came off the trampoline to let her have a turn. She had not been on a trampoline before, except when they did gymnastics during PE at school, but of course then you just did one jump and landed on the thick mat beyond. It was a basic, round trampoline with the black springy area in the middle, and blue cushions around that covered the springs. She started off carefully, but gradually got the hang of it and went higher. That was exhilarating, but also a bit scary, because she had to be careful to keep landing in the middle. After a several jumps she started landing off-center, where the elasticity was lower, and she didn't bounce up straight. She quickly slowed down to prevent accidents, and got off to have a rest and let her cousin have a go.

Yolanda was obviously more experienced, and quickly jumped higher than Iris has dared. Seeing her older cousin watch her, she started doing some advanced maneuvers, like spreading her legs or lifting them to touch her toes with her hands. Now Iris saw another reason why her dress had to have attached panties. She seemed pretty proficient, but after a while started landing off-center as well. But she kept on going, and trying to show off. Iris got worried, and said "Yolanda, please slow down. You're taking too much risk!" She was relieved when the girl obeyed. But even with stopping she was not quite controlled, and Iris quickly had to step in and managed to catch her when she started to fall towards the edge with the metal frame. "You can jump very well, but you'll impress me even more when you always put safety first," Iris told her. Yolanda was a bit shaken from her near accident, and nodded subdued. By then Raymond had gotten some of his toys, including his new dino truck, from the living room and started playing with those. Perhaps waiting for two others

before he could jump again was a bit too long for him, or perhaps he was just more interested in his new toys.

To give Yolanda a rest, she proposed to get something more to drink, so after asking Raymond what he wanted, they went into the kitchen together. Iris was thirsty again too, so they each got a glass of soda, and one for the birthday boy as well. Back in the garden they sat on the edge of the trampoline to drink theirs. When they had enough, they put the half-empty glasses somewhere out of the way, and Iris wanted to try and jump some more. With her previous experience, she managed to stay in the center better, and after a few jumps even tried spreading her legs in the air. And then suddenly felt her bladder letting go on a landing. Luckily she was just on her way up when she realized what happened, so she had a bit of time to recover from the shock, but still made a clumsy landing. She realized that with the challenges of changing her pull-up in the toilet, she had forgotten all about emptying her bladder, as of course she should have done before starting to jump up and down. Inwardly she cursed herself for her stupidity, while at the same time feverishly thinking what she should do. Running off to the toilet so shortly after she came back from it would raise suspicion or even concerned questions from the grown-ups. Stopping and trying to hold it until she could go without anyone noticing would raise questions from Yolanda. So the only thing she could think of was just to let it happen, pretend she just fumbled a landing, and continue as if nothing happened. Luckily her pull-up was fresh, so it should have no problem containing her urine without leaking.

In this case it was an advantage that her bladder control was still tenuous, because it wasn't hard to just let go and act as if nothing was happening. After her fumble she stopped jumping, and said "Oops, that didn't go as planned" to Yolanda, hoping that would be enough of an explanation that the girl wouldn't ask more. Then she took her time to take position again in the middle of the trampoline, giving the urine time to flow, and then slowly started up again. Now that her bladder was empty, it didn't take long to get into the rhythm of the jumping again. After several more jumps she slowed down again, and let Yolanda have her turn again. This time the girl was more cautious, and stayed in control. After a few more swaps, they finally had enough, and got the remainder of their drinks. Iris was a little out of breath. At that time the two neighbors said their goodbyes and left, and Iris realized it probably wouldn't be too long before she had to leave too, given the time needed for the drive home.

She decided it should not look too strange anymore if she went to the toilet again, to make sure she would wear a clean pull-up for the way back. So she excused herself again after Aunt Yelda had come back from seeing the neighbors off, and went into the toilet with her backpack once more. The second time changing herself was quicker than the first, but she wanted to make sure her bladder was empty, so she sat on the toilet as well. Because she didn't really have anywhere else to leave her pants, she first redressed, and then went to sit down as usual. It didn't surprise her that nothing came, but she was glad she at least tried. Once she was dressed again, she listened for a moment, and then opened the door. But just at that time Aunt Yelda came into the hallway, and saw Iris standing there with her backpack in one hand, and the dirty pull-up in the other. It happened so fast that Iris knew she had been spotted even before she could take any action. She turned bright red, looked to the ground, and felt tears welling in her eyes. She had failed to keep her shame hidden.

Aunt Yelda quickly said, "Oh Iris, I'm so sorry. I didn't know. But I'm sure there is nothing to be ashamed of. Why don't we go upstairs, find a quiet place, and we can talk." She put an arm around Iris and guided her up the stairs. After a whole day of behaving maturely, and having a certain amount of responsibility over the children, Iris suddenly felt very small and young again, in a way different from little Iris. She let herself be led upstairs, where they first went into Raymond's room. Her aunt took the pull-up from her and deposited it into the diaper pail. "Hey, there is already one in

there," she observed. "Yes, from when I napped with Raymond," Iris replied briefly and softly. Then Yelda took her to the parent bedroom, closed the door behind them, and sat with Iris on the edge of the bed. Iris realized she was still holding the backpack in her hand, so she put it down next to her on the ground. Yelda started "Iris, I know you have a weak bladder, and, like you told Raymond, that it took quite a while for you to gain complete control. But I thought that you had managed that some years ago, and judging by the speed you regularly ran off to the bathroom the previous times you were here, I'm pretty sure you didn't wear protection then. What happened?" "Well, I got a bladder infection recently. It made it hard to hold my bladder, and I was told to pee whenever I could, anyway. So I needed to wear protection. Two days ago the antibiotics ran out, so it should be better now, but I still don't have much control, especially when I sleep. So now I have to wear diapers again at night, and pull-ups during the day. And I am always scared that people will find out and think I'm still a baby. Especially other teenagers."

Iris realized that she only had to admit to the UTI, and not to little Iris. That made her feel a lot less depressed, and she gave a big sigh. Her aunt misinterpreted it, put her arm around her, and told her, "But that is nothing to be ashamed of. Lots of women get bladder infections, and many need to use protection for a while. This is not something you can control, just like you would need a band-aid because you got a cut and were bleeding. The only thing you can do is train diligently to regain control, but it has only been two days. And even now you only wet because you fell asleep when you didn't plan to, and when you started jumping on the trampoline, which is challenging enough for many women." "Yes, but I was so stupid to forget using the toilet when I changed the first time, even though I knew I was going to jump." "That is easy to say in hindsight, but it must have been stressful to change without being noticed, and in an unfamiliar environment. Then it is always hard to think of everything. By the way, thank you for depositing the first pull-up in the diaper pail – that was clever and the most hygienic place for it." That cheered Iris up some more; perhaps she had been a bit hard on herself in a difficult situation. Her aunt handed her some tissues, and she wiped her eyes.

"It was no coincidence that I ran into you, by the way. Of course I would not have done it that way if I knew what you were doing, but I wanted to have a quiet word with you anyway." Iris looked at her aunt surprised. Had she done something wrong? "I wanted to let you know how much I was impressed with you today. When you started playing with the children, you kept them nicely busy, and when Yolanda needed to go to the bathroom, you helped her quietly and without question. You also seemed more relaxed when playing with her, like you were no longer so afraid that people might think you still enjoyed such things. You really made an impression on her. And when you even offered to sit with them during lunch, I thought it would be a good idea to let you have your first experience in babysitting, so I gave you a set of instructions, and then retreated. Of course I kept a close eye on you, so that I could step in if things got out of control. It wouldn't have been fair to you to let you deal alone if there would be problems. But you handled them fabulously, and even got Raymond to eat something he didn't like. And to Yolanda you were her shining example by then, and she wanted to do everything to make a good impression on you. That is what made her so upset with herself when she spoke with her mouth full."

Iris thought, "Wow, she wasn't kidding about keeping a close eye. She has noticed everything, and I wasn't even aware she was looking." Her aunt continued, "Normally Yolanda can be quite a handful, but today she was really on her best behavior. I guess you'd call it a touch of hero worship." That made Iris blush again, but this time from the compliment. She wasn't sure she believed it though: how could anybody see her as a hero, to look up to? But it explained some aspects of Yolanda's behavior that had been puzzling to her, so she assumed it might be true. Strange! "And then



Raymond accepted really quickly that you came up with us for his naptime, and didn't even complain that you diapered him. Then you got him to sleep. And finally you kept Yolanda safe on the trampoline! Really, I could not have wanted anything more from an actual experienced babysitter. If you didn't live so far away, I'd definitely ask you if I needed one." So much praise, just after the shock of her pull-ups being discovered, was too much for Iris, and she started crying again. She felt she didn't really deserve so much praise, because she had just been doing what her parents and Nanny had been doing with little Iris in the last week. It almost felt like cheating. But of course she couldn't explain that to her aunt, so she just stammered that what she did was nothing special, and that she already had a little bit of experience with babysitting her friend Sabine last week, when her mother had an appointment.

"Well, I still think you did a great job, and I am proud of you. So I had been thinking on how to reward you. It didn't seem quite right to give you money, but then I noticed you are wearing a bit of make-up. Knowing your parents, you probably don't have much yet, so I thought you might like this." She handed Iris a lipstick in a somewhat darker red color. Iris was so surprised that she didn't know what to say, and just stared at it. "Don't worry, I haven't used it yet," Yelda added. "Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to hesitate. It is just so unexpected. My first own lipstick! Thank you so much!" Iris had recognized the brand as one of the more expensive ones, so this wasn't a trivial gift. She gave her aunt a great big hug and a kiss on both cheeks. "I'm glad you like it. I think this color will suit you." Iris looked at the lipstick a bit more, and then carefully put it in her backpack.

Next Aunt Yelda said, "Don't worry about the pull-ups, I won't tell anybody about your temporary issue. But if you agree, I think it would be good if I let your mother know that I accidentally found out, and that we talked about it. She is probably wondering why you are away for so long. I can send her a text, so no one else will hear." Iris realized that she probably would have to tell her parents about her wetting two pull-ups anyway, so she replied, "If you think it is better..." So her aunt started typing away on her phone, while Iris checked her backpack and made sure the remaining pull-up was safely hidden in its plastic bag at the bottom. Then they went downstairs again. To her surprise Yolanda and Raymond were sitting together on a swing bench, looking at a book. It seemed like they were looking at the pictures and thinking about the story. Yolanda also tried to decipher some of the words, but reading the story was a bit too hard for her yet. For a moment Iris got nervous, because she had a flashback of Sabine's tantrum when she also tried, and failed, to decipher the words from a book. But then she realized that this was a normal 6-year-old, for whom this was no reason to get frustrated. Still she thought she should help them, and glanced at her parents if they were already getting ready to leave. But her mother, who had just been looking at her phone, nodded to her, and gave her a wink. She must have just read the text Aunt Yelda sent her. Her relaxed reaction helped Iris further to not make too much of this. After all, her aunt had a child with similar problems, so she knew how sensitive something like that could be for children.

She went over to the children, and asked if they'd like her to read the story. Both reacted enthusiastically, and made room in between them for her. Once she sat down and was handed the book, they crawled up to her. That was a bit hot in this weather, but the obvious affection gave her such a warm feeling that the temperature really didn't matter. She could understand that her parents liked this about little Iris. She wanted to put her arms around the both of them, but of course someone had to hold the book and turn the pages. She tried to let the book rest on her lap, and it stayed open. So while they were looking at the page, she could hug both children. When she had read the text on the page, and they had looked at the pictures, she started to pull her arm back from around Yolanda, but the girl turned the page for her, and she could leave her arm there. From then on a little nod from Iris was enough to get the girl to turn the page again, and they had a

wonderful time. Iris marveled about how unconditionally children gave affection, and how lucky she was with these cousins.

"Iris, we leave in 10 minutes. Make sure you are ready," she suddenly heard from her father. Not unexpected, but still unwelcome. Iris decided she could still complete the page before she needed to get ready. She only wanted to go to the toilet one more time, to hopefully not need her pull-up during the drive. When she reached a point in the book where she could wrap up the reading, she tried to get up to get ready, but Yolanda grabbed her arm, looked at her with big eyes, and said "Don't go!" Raymond copied his big sister's example, and grabbed her other arm. Iris was touched, but she had no choice. "Guys, I'm so sorry, but I can't stay here. I need to go back with my parents, to my own house. I can't just stay here; they'd miss me, and I would miss them!" Yolanda nodded and reluctantly let go of her arm, and Raymond then did as well. "I'll miss you too, but we're family, so we will always meet again." Then she went to the toilet, which was a lot easier now that she didn't have to change her pull-up. Back in the garden, she started to say her goodbyes. That was not easy; she had no idea when she would see her grandparents again, and Aunt Yelda was pretty special to her as well. But the children of course were the hardest. She told Yolanda to take care of her little brother, and Raymond not to worry too much about his bedwetting, but just to keep trying, and sooner or later he would get it under control. He nodded seriously.

## 18. Decision Time

Then suddenly the sun disappeared, and dark clouds were drifting in from the west. Quickly everybody helped to bring the indoor chairs in to the living room. Apparently the weather forecast of rain in the afternoon had been correct, and before long it came pouring down. The grown-ups took a look at the sky, and concluded it would probably take too long to wait it out. So her father, who had brought a jacket with him, took a sprint to the car, got it unlocked, got Iris's and her mother's jacket from the booth, and sprinted back. They said their goodbyes one more time, and then got ready to get to the car. Iris waited until she was right at the front door to put on her jacket, hoping that no one would look too closely at the buckles. In the turmoil no one did, and soon they were back in the car. Iris first on the booster seat, where she took off her jacket, and put it on the floor in front of her. Then she moved over to the car seat, where she buckled herself in. Her mother gave her the plastic tool to lock the chest strap as well, and of course wanted it back directly after. This was quite a contrast: after a day of being sort-of responsible for two children, and being praised for being so mature, suddenly she was back to being treated as much more irresponsible, in a car seat that she couldn't get out of herself, with all the safety features activated.

But she was still with half a mind on the party as well, and she didn't protest. Somehow the rain also helped: the feeling of being safe from the weather in the car enhanced the feeling of being safe and comfy in her car seat. The windshield wipers were working hard, and her father was carefully maneuvering, with her mother also looking around. But Iris trusted them to keep her safe, and sat relaxed and in thought about all that happened. Once they were on the highway, her parents relaxed more as well, and they started talking. "Iris, I got this text from Yelda that you two had a little talk about the pull-ups. Care to tell me about it?" her mother asked. Iris knew she had no chance of keeping her wetting hidden; not only the text, but her mother was sure to check how many clean pull-ups there were left. So, even though it was painful to admit she hadn't been able to keep dry very well, she told them about the nap with Raymond, and that she discovered afterwards that she must have wet her pull-ups. Then the changing in the toilet, the deposit of the dirty one upstairs, and her nearly being spotted. "Oh yes, I had briefly wondered where you were, going off to

the toilet, and when I went a while later, you were not in the garden, the living room, or the bathroom.” “Yes, I was on the stairs hiding, because I didn’t know who it was, and I couldn’t think of a good excuse why I had gone upstairs.”

Then she had to admit forgetting all about actually going on the toilet while she was in there, and how it went wrong on the trampoline. Again her mother had had her suspicions, “Watching you on the trampoline, I was already wondering if and when that would happen. So when you faltered, I suspected that you indeed had an accident. I think you kept it hidden well enough for the others, but when you shortly afterwards snuck off to the toilet, I got my confirmation. Do you feel bad about wetting twice?” “Well, at least disappointed. I’m trying to practice staying dry again, and I failed.” “But honey, you didn’t fail by wetting without noticing, at least not while you were awake. You just happened to be in a few situations that were too challenging for the moment. So, I don’t think there is anything to feel disappointed about; you have only just started trying again. Do you remember that we did some exercises together when you were trying to get more control when you were younger? I think we should start those again. I’ll look if I can find what we did back then; it’s been a while. By the way, if we would have our own trampoline, do you think you would use it often? I feel like you could do with a bit more exercise.” “Can we? Oh yes, that would be so much fun. And I’m sure Sabine would love it too. She’s always working out.” “I’m not promising anything, but I might look around a bit. But please continue; how did Yelda learn about it?”

So Iris told about her leaving the toilet that second time, and Yelda spotting her, that they went upstairs, and that she talked about the bladder infection with her aunt. “All the adults say is that it is not my fault, and it is not childish, but it still doesn’t feel that way. Perhaps it has been so long ago for you that you wore diapers or wet yourself, that you don’t really remember how bad other kids can make you feel about that.” “But Iris, it should be about how you feel about it, not what others think of it. I have seen how hard it has been for you at school, but believing what they say, you let them win, and give them a reason to bully you. If you really believe the truth, that it is just a medical issue, like temporarily needing a crutch because you hurt your leg, you will not make yourself a target.” “I guess so, but I don’t know how.” “We’ll just keep talking about it, whenever you have doubts, and gradually it will come.”

While she was talking about the chat with her aunt, she might as well tell about the second part of the conversation too. Hiding the lipstick from her mother would do no good: the moment she’d use it her mother would see. So even though she was scared that she had to hand it over to them, to keep until they decided she was ready for it, she explained how Aunt Yelda told her about her ‘test’ as a babysitter, and that she had said Iris had done a good job, and had rewarded her with a lipstick. This time it was her father who reacted, “Yes Iris, we all saw how well you were handling the kids, and were taking your responsibility. Everybody said how well you were doing, even though 13 is rather young to be a babysitter.” “Sometimes it felt a bit like cheating. I just remembered how Nanny treated Sabine and me, and how you treat little Iris. That was only yesterday, so that wasn’t hard.” “Still, you managed to say the right things at the right time, and you also gave the good example, like accepting the apron and all. We think you have earned that lipstick. So we have decided that you can gradually have some make-up of your own. Mind you, you will need to ask permission every time you want to use it, at least until we establish some rules when you can and when you can’t. And you’d better let your mother teach you how to use it; I won’t have you walking around like a clown, with thick layers of whatever women put on their faces.” “Oh Daddy, thank you so much! I’ll be careful with it, and ask permission. And Mom too, of course.”

Her father continued, “It was really nice to see how much you have grown, well, at least mentally, and have developed responsibility, and good social skills. I’m glad puberty doesn’t only mean that

my little girl no longer wants a hug from her old Daddy.” “Yes, I’m sorry Dad. But I did sit on your knee today, even though I was a bit scared that it might look childish.” “You did, and I appreciated it. And nobody saw anything wrong with it. We can enjoy affection whatever our age. But what I am trying to say is that I’m away so much, and when I’m home it is often just the three of us. It was really good for me to see how you interact with others. I must admit that I had my doubts when your mother started leaving you alone in the house, and I thought Imogen was not being very wise, leaving you in charge of her daughter. But I guess she knew you better than I did, at least in this aspect. I will think some more about it, but perhaps we can gradually give you some more responsibility, like your mother already started.” Wow, this was something Iris definitely hadn’t expected. Who would have thought that her impulsive offer to sit with the kids for lunch had all these nice consequences! “Oh Dad, Mom, that would be great. I know I will not disappoint you.” She wanted to hug her parents now, but the harness kept her firmly back, and even though she stretched out both her arms, she could not even touch her mother, but only the seat. Luckily her mother saw, turned around, and held her hands, so she squeezed them hard to show how much this meant for her.

Smelling an opportunity, she decided to give it a try, “So, will you allow me to be alone tomorrow evening then?” But her mother answered, “Iris, don’t push it. We might gradually allow a bit more, but it will still be a while before you’re ready to be alone for a whole evening. And apart from that, like we talked about this morning, you need help with your sleeping arrangements.” “Yes, I guess you’re right. I’m just so scared to tell anybody else, but on the other hand it would be wonderful to confide in Miranda, and to be able to talk with her about it.” “I understand, dear, and we don’t want everybody to know either. But we believe that Miranda will not betray our trust, and that everything will be alright.” “Well, I haven’t been able to come up with a better solution, so I guess I’ll just have to take the risk then.” Now that she had made the decision, and spoke it out loud, suddenly her body reacted, and she started trembling, and then crying uncontrollably. “Oh honey, what is the matter?” In between sobs Iris managed to tell her that she didn’t know, and it just happened. “That’s OK darling. It’s just the tension coming out. Just let it go, and afterwards you’ll feel better. Carlos, please make sure we’re not bumping into anything in the coming minutes. My daughter needs me.”

Then her mother did something so out of character that Iris spontaneously stopped sobbing, and stared at her open-mouthed. Her mother undid her seatbelt while the car was moving! Then she put her chair back as far as it would go, turned her body around so that she was kneeling on her seat, and undid Iris’s chest strap. Now they could hug, sort of, and Iris could let it all out. It might have been ten minutes before it stopped. She was still shaky, and a bit light-headed, but there was also relief and a calm descending on her. Her mother wiped her face the best she could, and once she was sure her daughter was alright again, she relocked the chest strap, turned her seat upright, and buckled up again. “Thanks Mom. I guess I needed that.” “It’s quite OK, darling. It is often best just to let it out. You are not regretting your choice?” “No, I don’t think so. I’m still scared, but I guess that is normal.” “Oh, certainly. It is a big decision. But if you are certain, I’d better send Miranda a message. We need to ask her if she is available tomorrow, if even wants to promise to keep a secret, and then, after we tell her, she has to be willing to take care of little Iris, or at least accept your current sleeping arrangements. And then we’ll have to show her how your tent and onesie work, how to unlock your panties if you happen to need a change, etc. We can’t just let her come over tomorrow evening and dump this on her, so she’ll have to come over tonight.” Iris hadn’t expected that, but she had to agree that they couldn’t just surprise Miranda with something like this. For her that meant that suddenly she’d have to share her secret in a few hours instead of in a day. She felt

her fear rising somewhat again, but at the same time thought she might as well get it over with, instead of worrying about it all day tomorrow. So she concluded, "Yes, I think you should."

Her mother typing the message made Iris think of the messages from Mindy and Anna she found earlier today, and that she had promised to ask her mother when there would be an opportunity to meet again. She wanted to check her phone to see if there were more messages since then, but she had put her backpack on the floor next to her wet coat, and the harness prevented her from reaching it. The car seat's sides even prevented her from trying to hook one of the straps with her foot, and pull it towards her like that. After her mother finished the message, she asked her when she could meet her friends again, so that it wouldn't clash with the visit of the Fletchers. "Well, dear, I'm afraid I don't know any more than you do. We don't any appointments for the next week – I wasn't sure when Daddy would be leaving again, so I didn't plan anything else. I guess we could have Imogen and Sabine over any day after Tuesday. I'll send her a text as well."

When she had finished her second text, the reply from Miranda had already come. She was available this and the next evening, and agreed to come over at 7PM. Iris thought "Well, that is it then. This is really happening." But her mother left her little time to ponder over that, and said, "Now, there is one more thing we talked about this morning that we need an answer on. I'm sorry to put so many difficult questions to you at once, but we need to know today if you want to be little or mature tomorrow. And once Miranda comes over, I don't think there will be an opportunity anymore." One of the goals Iris had set herself while her father was home this time, was to prove to him she was growing up, and should be allowed more responsibility. She had already succeeded with that, and more, so that was no longer a good argument for mature Iris. But there was still the risk of being recognized if she were to be little. Her mother already agreed that they would find her a hat or something, which would help, and that they were going to a place where no one should know her. She inquired, "Where do you plan to go if I decide to be little?" "What do you say, Carlos, shall we tell her?" "We planned to keep that a surprise, but if it helps for you to decide, it is not a secret. We'll go to Fern Ridge Lake." "But Dad, lots of people from Eugene go there!" "You should have a little more faith in your father, my Maya. The lake is big, and for recreation most people just go to the nearest area, on the Perkins Peninsula, or perhaps to Zumwalt Park. We plan to go all the way to the opposite side, to Richardson Park and Kirk Park West. For most people from Eugene there would be no reason to go all the way over there, perhaps apart from the occasional birdwatcher. But I assume you don't have many of those in your class at school." "No, I never heard of anyone else's interest in birds. Well, okay then. I'll be little Iris tomorrow." From the joy she felt inside when she said it, Iris knew it was the right decision.

By then her mother's phone had signaled another incoming message, and she told Iris "Imogen proposes Thursday. I think that would suit us well. Then you could meet with Anna and Mindy on Wednesday – that will give me a chance to catch up on my buying and selling. How does that sound to you?" "That sounds wonderful. Let's do that." "OK, I'll let her know, and fill in the details. You can let your friends know." "OK, I will. That is, I would, if I could reach my backpack with my phone." She demonstrated the problem by stretching out her arms and flailing them in the direction of her backpack. "Ah, I see. Well, let me get it for you then." So her mother twisted around and managed to get hold of the backpack. But instead of handing it to Iris, she took it and started looking for the phone. "Mom, I can look myself." "Oh yes dear, sorry. I just confused you with little Iris for a moment, the way you were flailing around in your car seat. Here you go." "Thanks, Mom." Iris was actually a bit surprised that her protest had been successful; usually her mother knew what she was doing and would stick to her plan. Perhaps it was not so easy for her parents that she switched between mature and little Iris all the time. So she posted a message to her friends, and quickly got

positive responses. They'd fill in the details later. She returned her phone to her backpack, and dug up the lipstick. "Here Mom, this is the gift from Aunt Yelda." Her mother took it from her, and tried to take a look at the color. Even though the rain had stopped, it was still overcast, so there was not that much light. But she concluded, "Very nice. And it is a really nice brand. It might not have been a color I'd have picked, but I think it should work for you. That was a really nice gift from Yelda." "Yes, I'm very happy with it. And thanks again for letting me keep it." Iris got it back, and carefully put it in her pack.

Now that all the plans were made for the coming four days, Iris could sit back. Mentally that is; physically she didn't have much choice anyway. Summing up the decisions she had made, she concluded that she might have made some scary choices, but also the most fun ones. She was looking forward to a day at the lake as little Iris, and having Miranda take care of her would surely be fun as well. Her fear seemed to have receded. Not that she wasn't still scared, but they had thought really carefully about the risks, and now that the decisions were made, it was out of her hands, and she could now only hope for the best. Apparently her anxiety attack, or whatever she just went through, had helped her to find her balance again. She started thinking about what to tell her babysitter. Apparently her parents were in thought as well, since there was hardly any talking, except for a short question or remark. There had been so much to talk about, that it didn't take long anymore before they entered Eugene, and then they were home.

Her mother just handed her the plastic tool so that she could open her chest clip and buckle guard, and she could get out herself. This was definitely different than how little Iris was treated, and for mature Iris it was hardly worse than with the booster seat, especially with that red buckle cap. So she got her coat and her backpack, and went into the kitchen. Her parents followed closely after. She hung up her coat near the front door, used the bathroom, and went upstairs. "Dinner will be ready in 10," her mother called after her. Apparently they had already prepared something. Not a bad idea, given that Miranda would already be there in less than an hour. But it gave her just time to empty her backpack. She decided to change into the green polo, so that she would not be required to wear the bib again. But she quickly realized she needed help with her blouse. She decided to bring her polo down with her and ask her mother to help her change. She put the rest of her things away, and cleared out a little space for her lipstick and hopefully a few more beauty products soon. Only the remaining pull-up she decided to keep in her backpack – that way she would always have a spare with her, even if she forgot to pack one. Then it was time to go down.

On the stairs she already smelled something like fish, and she noticed that even after the extensive buffet for lunch, she was hungry again. Her mother was stirring in a big pan, so she considered asking her father to help her change, but that didn't feel right. Fathers were not supposed to undress their teenage daughters. So she went to her mother and asked her to unbutton her. "Honey, I can't stop stirring at the moment. But why do you want it off? Don't you want to show off how festive you look to Miranda?" "But you'll make me wear that bib again." "Do you dislike it so much, then?" "Well, no, but it is for little Iris, not for me." "I'll repeat what I said this morning: you can choose not to wear the bib, but get punished if you get a stain then. We're having clam chowder<sup>5</sup>, with green salad." Iris remembered how she concluded in the morning that she should do alright, and could take the risk of a punishment. And the chowder was white, so even if she did spill something, it probably wouldn't be seen, so she accepted the challenge.

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<sup>5</sup> Clam Chowder is an American soup, traditionally with clams, salt pork, onions and potatoes. There are lots of different varieties; the Tomas family here chose the New England or 'white' variety, with milk or cream.

Iris started eating carefully, but after a while a strip of onion slid off from her spoon and landed back on her plate, splattering a bit. She nervously checked, but no drops seemed to have reached her blouse. But she felt her mother's eyes on her, and started feeling nervous with each bite. After a few more spoonfuls she gave up, and just put the bib on herself. Her parents nodded approvingly. Somehow it felt to Iris as if they considered her more mature for putting on the childish bib, instead of less. Perhaps it was similar to the diapers: better to take a childish precaution than to make a mess. Thinking she might earn even more 'mature points' with them, she volunteered to help cleaning the table and filling the dishwasher, even before asking for her bib to be removed. In the end that happened only just before the doorbell rang and Miranda was admitted.

Iris was used to Miranda dressing mostly in jeans, t-shirts and such, but this time she wore a shiny black leggings and a black tank top, with a red leather jacket on top. She must have picked up on a disapproving gaze from Mr. Tomas, and she apologized, "I'm going to a concert later, and I wasn't sure how long this would take, so I prepared to go directly from here. Of course tomorrow I'll dress in more appropriate clothes for babysitting." That seemed to placate Iris's father. They all settled down in the living area, and Mrs. Tomas started the talk, "Miranda, thanks for coming at such short notice. We asked you over today because we want to tell you a few things that will affect your babysitting tomorrow. But it is a rather sensitive matter, and it is very important that you tell no one else. So my first question is, do you mind us telling you about it, and are you willing to keep it a secret? I assure you it is nothing illegal or anything. We believe we can trust you with it, but only you can decide if you want to be burdened with knowing something you can't tell anyone else." For Miranda this clearly came as a surprise, and she took a moment before she answered, "It is OK. I'm willing to listen to the secret, and not tell anyone else. I'm babysitting for more people, and you do run into things sometimes that the family wouldn't want others to know, so I'm used to keeping those to myself." "Thank you, we appreciate it. Then I think Iris should tell you herself what it is, and then we'll ask you if you still want to babysit tomorrow." Again this was obviously puzzling Miranda, and she looked at Iris with curiosity.

Iris, sitting on the couch between her parents, gave a big sigh and started her story, hesitantly at first, but soon getting into the flow. She had concluded that she couldn't just say out of the blue that she liked to sometimes be treated like a small child, wear diapers, and be restrained, so she just had to start at the beginning. So she started with her meeting Sabine again, and ending up staying with the Fletchers for a week. Then about the UTI, and the need to wear diapers. How she came up with a plan to go to the aquarium, that involved her being dressed and treated like her friend. And that she liked it, because of how relaxed and secure it made her feel. So she asked for the treatment to continue for a few more days. Then her mother discovered it, and they finally decided that she'd be little some of the time at home as well. She concluded that she still needed diapers, or at least pull-ups, around the clock now, and that she was protected from falling out of bed after a recent fall. Those were also used when she was mature. For little Iris they had borrowed a whole stack of clothes and other things to keep her safe, and got a few more things themselves.

This was much to process for Miranda, and she started asking questions, "So, you are sort of saying that you feel free when you are restrained? That is weird." "Well, I've always been so concerned about coming across mature, that when I suddenly couldn't anymore, it was such a relief. And if I am prevented from do anything wrong, I can do whatever I like without fear of breaking rules or putting myself in danger. Of course I do need to trust the person restraining me, but then I feel really taken care of and safe. I know it must sound super weird, but I feel so happy when I'm little Iris. Well, of course unless I can't have something I want, or happen to be punished for being naughty, but that is never mean either." "Silly girl, I've been telling you every time I'm with you to relax a bit more, and

don't worry all the time whether you might look childish. And now you find relaxation in actually being childish. But I guess it makes some sort of sense, and if it makes you happy, I'm fine with it. So, what sort of things are we talking about, that you borrowed or bought?" "Oh, there is lots. I have a car seat now, with a harness I can't get out of myself. Mom really likes that, because it is even safer than my booster seat, and she was always complaining that I undo my seat belt too early. Now I can't. And there is the high chair. Shall I show you?"

They all went into the kitchen, where Iris showed the chair, the harness and the tray. "Go on, Iris, sit in it," her mother suggested. Of course mature Iris found that embarrassing, but realized that Miranda should know everything, if she was going to babysit for little Iris. So she sat down and let her mother show Miranda about the harness and the tray. "And she can't get out?" Miranda inquired. Iris answered by showing her that she had no way to reach both of the buttons on the tray ends at the same time, and that the harness buckle was hidden under the tray. "It's a bit strange; I've never seen you dressed up so fanciful as tonight, and now you are in a highchair!" "Yes, we went to a birthday of my cousin today, and we are only just back. This blouse, or body really, is one of the things we borrow from Sabine. I need help to take it off." "I can see that. But it still looks really nice on you." "Thanks. Normally little Iris is dressed quite different though. Many of Sabine's clothes are rather childish and girly. But I can't take off any of them: Sabine got into her diapers often, so her mother got all sorts of clothes to prevent that. And after Mommy discovered I had put my hand in my diaper at night to play with myself, she doesn't trust me anymore either, and makes sure I can't. At least at night; when I am not little I wear pull-ups now to retrain my bladder control, so then I need to be able to go to the toilet by myself." Of course admitting about her hands in her diaper was hard, but Miranda was like a big sister, and they had talked about that kind of playing before, so she went ahead and told about it. Miranda needed to know why her mother insisted on locking panties at night anyway.

"So, what kind of clothes do you normally wear then? Do they all have little buttons in the back?" "Let me get a few things, it is easiest to show you," Mrs. Tomas replied. She just left Iris in the highchair, and went into her office. "Mommy keeps those clothes in there," Iris explained, "I don't know everything that we borrowed yet, so it is sort of a surprise for me what I'll be dressed in." Iris was starting to feel a bit more little. Being stuck in the highchair, and talking about all the little stuff, made her feel smaller, and now Miranda also started stroking her hair. It seemed hardly something she had consciously decided, but was just such a natural thing to do. When her mother came back, she brought the denim pooh overalls, the dark green body and the bunny shortalls, and her locking harness. She demonstrated the variety of ways that stopped Iris from taking them off, and the keys that they used. Of course Miranda would get her set tomorrow. Mr. Tomas moved to the living room and turned on the news – there was not much for him to do here. When Miranda saw the bunny shortalls, she exclaimed, "Oh, those are too cute. I think if they were my size I would want to borrow those!" Little Iris agreed, but big Iris was quite surprised that the teenager she looked up to as a big sister would want to wear something as childish as that. But didn't that cute doctor mention as well that such clothes were fashionable at the moment? "Well, if you'd really want them, I might be able to order a pair in your size," her mother suggested. "Let me think about that. I'm not sure there would be that many opportunities I could wear something like that. But I do like them."

While demonstrating, her mother had put the clothes on the opposite side of the kitchen table from where Iris sat, and stood with her back towards her daughter. Iris felt excluded, and struggled in the chair to get a better view, but that didn't work. After a while she started banging her tray to let the others know she was still there. "Ah, there is little Iris," her mother reacted. Iris realized that her mother had excluded her deliberately to evoke the change to little Iris, and stuck her tongue out.



"Yes, that is her alright. Miranda, come meet little Iris." The babysitter played along, and gave little Iris a hand, and said, "Hello cutie. I'll be taking care of you tomorrow evening. I'm sure we will get along just fine." Then both had to laugh, and Iris got a hug from Miranda. Mrs. Tomas reacted, "Oh, so you do not object to taking care of Iris tomorrow, given the changes?" "No, I guess not. It seems clear to me that Iris likes the new setup, and I have taken care of small children as well, so I'm sure I can handle her in either mindset." Then to Iris she said, "Thank you for trusting me with this big secret. I promise to keep it, and never ever tell anyone." Iris felt moved, and her eyes got a bit moist. She stuck out her arms to invite Miranda to hug her once more, which of course she accepted.

Mrs. Tomas continued, "Tomorrow we'll go on an outing with the three of us, and Iris has decided she wants to be little during the day. First I thought we might make her switch to mature Iris for the evening, so you only have to deal with some of the new measures, but if you think you are up to dealing with little Iris, it might be easiest not to have her switch. Beware though, she can be naughty, and is a little bit of an escape artist, so you need to be careful to keep her secure." "Oh, I'm sure I can handle her. I'd like to get to know little Iris a bit better, so don't go through the effort on my behalf." "OK, we'll do it that way then. And don't worry, we'll make sure she will already be secured in her night diapers, so unless there is an accident or something, which I don't expect, you won't have to change her. Now, it is getting bedtime for this little girl. Why don't you come along, and we'll show you the bedtime setup and routine." Miranda checked her phone, and decided there was still enough time. But Iris protested that she was still wide awake after everything that happened, and she wouldn't be able to sleep anytime soon. She showed how awake she was by bouncing up and down in her chair, for as far as the harness and tray allowed. "I know dear, it has been an exciting evening for you. But you need your rest, and once you're in your jammies, and feel your soft pillow, I'm sure you'll fall asleep just fine."

Not waiting for further protests, she let Miranda remove the tray and open the chair harness, but before Iris was allowed to get out, her walking harness was put on her, and safely locked. Her mother showed the babysitter how to do that, and also that she could lock the wrist strap on the other end to something, if she would need Iris to stay somewhere for a moment. "Come, let's go up, and show Miranda your bedroom and everything." That sounded like a good idea to Iris, and she took Miranda's hand and bounded up the stairs. But her mother slowed her down with the leash, "Iris, take it easy; we don't want you slipping on the stairs and falling down, do we." And to Miranda she explained, "Little Iris can be quite impetuous, and trusts us to keep her safe." On the landing her mother first directed her to the bathroom, where she was put on the toilet. But nothing came. "Did you wet your pull-ups, sweetie?" "I think I did when I was in the high chair, and was bouncing. Sorry, but I couldn't stop it when it started. And before that in the car, when I was so scared." "That's OK dear. Miranda, we're first concentrating on having mature Iris regain control; then we'll see if we can do some potty training with our little girl as well. Iris, let's just put on the pull-up and the pants for the moment; we'll change you in a few minutes." Iris pulled a disgusted face, but then nodded. She could stand it for a little while longer.

Next it was the toothbrush, where the babysitter was instructed to let her brush on her own, but keep an eye on that she brushed everywhere. Then Iris's hair was put in a braid for the night, and she washed her hands and face. The next step was the changing table, but when they arrived in the area, there was a different table than the one she was used to. This one was much more elaborate than the metal laundry table that they had improvised with until now. It had a wooden frame that seemed to be adjustable in height, a plank underneath that was filled with her diapering supplies, and the top was a thick cushion covered in some fabric that looked to be waterproof. At several places there were straps of black webbing hanging down from the sides, and across the middle ran a

loose strap, with 2 straps with buckles attached. There seemed to be a separate head rest attached to the furthest end. (see Figure 53) Iris looked at her mother surprised. “Yes, dear, a better table. We concluded that the metal laundry table wasn’t suitable to attach straps to, was hard to get a comfortable cushion on in such a way that it wouldn’t slide, and a bit narrow. We thought we needed something better if we want to be able to also change Sabine here safely. Then your father had the idea to look for a massage table on Craigslist: we can always use it for its original purpose as well, and I can fold our laundry on it just as good. And there happened to be one for sale in Eugene. It was more luxurious, and a bit more expensive than we were thinking of, but it was still relatively cheap, and directly available, so we picked it up yesterday, when we borrowed a little van while our car was getting the sun foil. I did my best to keep it as a surprise for you until we actually needed it.”

“Oh, Mommy, it looks wonderful. Can we try it out now?” “Of course, darling. That is why we are here.” Iris suddenly realized something, “When you brought me my pull-ups and the cream this morning, was that to keep this hidden a bit longer?” “Yes dear. I thought it would be nicer if we could immediately use it when you discovered it, so I was hoping you wouldn’t see it until now.” “Oh, I’m sorry Mommy. I was a bit annoyed that you didn’t let me prove that I could think of the spare pull-ups and cream myself, but you were only trying to surprise me.” “Well, it didn’t hurt that I could make sure that you didn’t forget those either, but you might remember I didn’t check if you had indeed packed everything, like the spare clothes. So I did leave you some opportunity to prove yourself. Now, let me get you up on the table.”



*Figure 53 Massage and Changing Table*

When her mother had lifted her onto the table, which was a bit higher than the previous one, Iris stretched out and immediately felt the wonderful thick foam underneath the upholstery. “I could sleep on this!” she exclaimed. “Now, let me first get her safe from rolling off.” She took the straps that were attached to the strap that ran across middle, and closed the buckle on Iris’s tummy. She adjusted the length to that it fitted Iris closely. To Miranda she explained, “You see, we have used buckles that you can lock, if needed. Usually that won’t be necessary. Now go to the head end, and use the two straps there to secure our little girl’s wrists. We don’t want her to interfere with the diapering, and even for mature Iris we use them, because she is just starting puberty, and the diaper area is very sensitive. So each time we clean there, or apply cream, her hands tend to go to the area, and the straps help her not to. Miranda found the straps, and Iris cooperated and held her hands above her head. With two clicks her wrists were strapped in, but these straps were much longer, and she could still touch her face. “For mature Iris we can leave the straps long, so it is more comfortable for her. But with little Iris if we don’t lock the buckles, make sure that the straps are short enough that her hands cannot open the opposite buckle. There are sliders in the straps to change their lengths. Miranda did what she was asked, and now Iris’s hands were well above her head again. But the straps were still a bit longer than the previous construction on the laundry table, so she could still move her arms around a bit, and with the thick padding on the table it was still a lot more comfortable. Of course she had to test that she couldn’t undo either buckle, but Miranda had done a good job, and there was no way out.

“Mrs. Tomas, what are these other long straps for?” Iris couldn’t see what Miranda was referring to, but apparently there were even more straps than had been used on her. “Those are to keep her legs out of the way, in case she ever gets uncooperative, or won’t keep them still. We don’t really expect to need them, but since we were adding straps anyway, we thought we might as well complete the

set." In the meantime she was trying to remove her daughter's pants and pull-ups, but Iris was distracted, and didn't lift her behind. Her mother gave her a short slap on her outer thigh, not hard enough to hurt, but it grabbed her attention, and she quickly raised her bum so that her mother could bare her bottom. The strap around her waist was tight, but strap that it was connected to, that was attached to the table sides, was loose, and she could lift her bottom as high as she wanted. But it quickly stopped her when she tried to move sideways, so she was sure she wouldn't be able to roll off the table. Mommy and Daddy had done a really good job, making it both more comfortable and more safe for her.

Her mother was struggling for a moment with the parts of her blouse body that snapped between her legs: with most bodies she could simply push them up far enough so that they were out of the way from the diaper area, but the blouse was not stretchy, and pretty close-fitting. She managed to fold the bottom parts under the stomach and back parts, so then she could continue with the cleaning, creaming, and putting the thick night diaper on her, all the while explaining what she was doing, and why, to Miranda. Then she got out a pair of panties, but they didn't sound like the cheap ones Iris had been wearing until now. Her mother held them up for her, saying, "Do you remember that you wanted us to buy these? So, let's give them a try tonight." They were pink with light blue elephants, and had blue belts around the waist and both leg openings (see Figure 16 Locking Diaper Pants for the model) They were less noisy, and felt a bit stickier. But mostly they were so much cuter than those clear plastic ones from the department store. "Yes Mommy, please." When they were on, her mother took 3 little heart-shaped padlocks and showed them to Iris as well. "The same ones Nanny uses. I like those too," Iris concluded, and her mother pulled the 3 belts tight and clicked the locks on them. This was again quite different from the plastic panties: the thin chain in its waistband always dug into her a bit, while with these broad belts it was more of a hug. "Pull your knees up, please." Iris did, without really knowing why, but she felt the belts getting tighter, and her mother checked if they were not too tight. "Does that feel OK?" "I think so. It doesn't hurt or squeeze. Can I feel them now?" "Just a second, dear, we'll get you off the table, and then you can admire them."

While her mother released the waist strap, Miranda got her wrists free again, and she was lifted off the table. Then they could look at the panties while she was standing up. Iris wasn't really used to the rubbery feel; it was different than plastic or the PU of the bib, but it was sort of nice. She felt the waist band and the thigh bands, and concluded that they were pretty secure too, and she would not be able to access her diaper while these were locked on. She also felt the little padlocks, and knew she was not getting them open without a key either. They were small and light, so they dangled more like ornaments, and it reminded her of the little locks Nanny had used on Sabine's new shortalls, and how Sabine liked to play with them. She could understand why. Miranda also looked and felt the panties, and complimented her on how lovely they looked. Iris hugged her mother, "Thanks Mommy, these are wonderful." "Yes dearie, they look very nice. I think we can let you play around in the house without anything over them." Iris wasn't sure how she felt about that; sure they were nice to look at, but wasn't it just babies who crawled around in only their diapers? Surely she was a bit too big than that? When she was put in the playpen a few days ago with only a diaper and plastic panties, she felt pretty exposed, although of course these looked a bit more like shorts.

She didn't have much time to think it over, because her mother handed the leash of the harness she was still wearing to Miranda, and took them to Iris's bedroom. There they explained the mosquito tent to Miranda, the sleeper, and why it had the incorporated blindfold. Iris still wasn't thrilled about having her eyes covered again all night, but she had agreed to try it out for a few days, and with Miranda there she didn't want to complain. When it was on, and the little lock at her belly button snapped closed, she was helped into bed. "Do you want your pacifier?" "Yes please. But Mom,

didn't we also get that strap that keeps it in?" "We did. Do you want it? I thought it was perhaps a bit much together with the new sleeper." "No, I think it helps. It calms me, so that when I wake and I can't see, it is easier." "OK then, I will get it." Apparently it was still in the study, because she heard her mother going down the stairs. Iris stuck her hand out towards where the tent opening should be, and, like she hoped, Miranda took the hint and grabbed it. "Are you really comfortable with all of this?" "I don't mind the locking panties and sleeper; as long as I need diapers, there is no reason for me to take them off anyway. Sometimes I wish I could play a little with myself, but I know I shouldn't when I'm diapered. The blindfold I don't really like, but I promised to give it a try, and if I still don't like it Mommy will think of something else for me to wear. And the tent is OK too; I don't have to get out at night now, which is wonderful, and I fell out of bed the first night I was back home, but now that can't happen anymore. Sabine has a play tent that is a bit like this, and it feels like you're in your own little world when you are in it. I think that is the same with this one, but I haven't yet been in it while I can see, so I don't really know yet. Do you want to come lie with me for a bit?"

Miranda replied, "Oh, why not," and she took off her shoes and crawled in. She undid the strings holding the door flap up, and laid on her back. "Yes, I see what you mean. It is rather cozy this way. And of course no bugs will bite you, and you are safe from the monster under the bed as well," Miranda joked, and then did like she was the monster and tried to grab Iris. In the single bed there was hardly room for Iris to try and get away, and of course she could not see the attacks coming. That actually made it scarier, and she half shrieked, half giggled while she was under attack. When her mother came back, she looked at them for a moment, and then asked Miranda, "Shall I close the tent for a moment, so that you can really feel what it is like?" "No thanks, not today. I really need to get going." Miranda climbed out and straightened her clothes. "Bye Iris, sleep well, and I'll see you tomorrow." "Bye Miranda. See you then."

"Oh, Miranda, please stay for a few moments more. There are a some things I still need to explain." Mrs. Tomas put the pacifier in the strap. "Now, I believe that Mrs. Fletcher usually puts the strap under the hood. But then I would need to open the sleeper again. So why don't I just put the strap over the hood for tonight. Miranda, it is important to always test if the strap is just loose enough that Iris can pull the pacifier out herself. Then she can call for help if anything is wrong." She let Iris test it, and perhaps because the strap was new, it was slightly harder than she was used to, but she had full control of her hands now, and she managed it. With the buckle within reach, she opened it herself and tried one hole less tight. Realizing that she could now take it off by herself as well, she did, and asked, "Mom, does it have to be so loose, if I can take it off myself anyway?" "Hmm, good point. I can see now what the advantage would be of putting the strap under the hood. But since it is voluntary anyway, I don't mind if you unbuckle yourself. But suppose there is something wrong, and you are panicking – wouldn't it be better than if you could just pull it out? You might not remember then that you can access the buckle." "Oh, I guess so. OK, I'll leave it like you did it then – not too loose, but if I pull hard I can get it out." Satisfied Iris put it back, and laid back content. To Miranda her mother explained "The buckle can also take a little padlock, so if Iris is naughty and won't be still, we can also put it on tight and lock it, as a time-out. Now, it is very important to always check if the baby monitor is here, and working. You probably won't hear her shout if you sit in the living room with TV or music on, and she can't save herself if there is anything wrong, like a fire. We'll give you the parent monitor tomorrow, but if we forget you can find it in our bedroom. "Yes Mrs. Tomas, I see that it is important. I'll make sure I have it and listen to it."

Iris's mother continued, "So, it is time to close the tent now." Iris heard her zip the door closed. "I'm locking both zipper pulls together now with one of these little padlocks, Iris, so it is useless to try and get the zipper open, and damage your nails again." Iris nodded that she understood. "I'll send your

father up, because he'll want to wish you goodnight as well. Sleep tight, and tomorrow we'll have another fun day at the lake, and then Miranda will take good care of you in the evening. So lots to look forward to. Goodnight, darling." Miranda echoed "Goodnight", and when the door closed Iris knew she was alone again. But it wasn't long before her father entered, and asked "Is everything OK here?" Iris nodded, and kept suckling on her pacifier. He knelt down by the bed for a moment, and softly talked a bit about the past day, and how proud he had been of her. He kept his voice fairly monotonous, and although Iris kept listening to him, she also felt herself relaxing, and sleep wasn't far away. He concluded with a, "Goodnight Iris, and pleasant dreams." Iris mumbled something similar into her pacifier, and her father quietly left. Iris fluffed up her pillow a bit, snuggled into it, and drifted off into a peaceful sleep.

### 19. Up and Away

"Time to leave the nest, my little Maya." Iris awoke from the sound of her father's voice. She couldn't remember being awake during the night at any time, and even now she felt drowsy and content. Of course her first reaction was to turn her head towards the sound, but then she realized she wasn't be able to see him anyway. Somehow that didn't bother her so much; she wasn't sure if she was getting used to the blindfold, or that she knew it would be taken off within minutes anyway. Her second reaction was to say, "Good morning, Daddy," but her pacifier was still in her mouth, so it didn't sound much like she intended. But that was something she didn't mind at all, and she happily started suckling on it. Even if he didn't understand it, he must know what she was trying to say.

She heard something that sounded like the opening of a padlock, and remembered that her mother had connected the zipper pulls last evening, so that she would not damage her nails in attempting to open them. Even though it was yet another restriction, she didn't mind: knowing there was no use trying, she could relax more easily and not waste sleep time experimenting, while she didn't have a reason to leave the bed anyway. Actually she didn't even want to leave it just yet, but to enjoy the rosy feeling of waking up after a long and restful sleep for a little longer. The sound of the zips opening told her that her father was not going to let her. Realizing this was the last full day he would be here, she decided to be a good girl and cooperate. Well, more or less. Of course there was always time for a little mischief. When she estimated that her father had unzipped the tent door and tied it out of the way, she put out her hands in an invitation to help her up. But when he took them, she suddenly gave a sharp pull so that he fell forward, half on her in the bed, but with his legs still outside.

"Iris, you naughty girl!" He didn't sound angry. "You want me to lie in here with you?" Iris nodded vigorously. "Well, today we are not in a hurry, so I guess we could do it for a little while. Wait a moment while I take my shoes off." He crawled into bed with her, and enveloped her in his strong arms. Almost automatically she snuggled up to him, just like Raymond did with her yesterday noon. When he started stroking her head, her happiness was complete. "This is really cozy. Perhaps it would be useful for your mother and me as well, against bugs. We'd need a different model though, which of course also opens from the inside, but also has doors on either side so we don't have to crawl over one another to go to the bathroom at night. Of course this lucky Conejita doesn't need that," he mused, and tickled her gently for a moment. Iris nodded – once she could do without diapers again, she would definitely miss them during the nightly rushes to the toilet, being able to sleep all through the night now.

Way too soon he got up again, and said, "Come, we shouldn't keep your mother waiting too long. We're going to do a shower this morning, because we probably have little time for a bath before

Miranda arrives for the evening. He removed her pacifier strap, which she let go of reluctantly, and it came out with a plop. "You know you shouldn't suck or bite much on the pacifier? That way your teeth could end up sticking out more, and you'd need braces. The strap will help you to keep it in, so you don't need to do that yourself." "Yes, Daddy. I normally don't. It just makes me feel so relaxed that I often don't want to let go of it." Then he unlocked the sleeper, and pulled up the zip all the way to the top of her head. After he undid the Velcro straps that kept the hood close to her eyes, he went to her front, lifted up the hood, peeked under it, and said "Peekaboo!" That was a bit babyish even for little Iris, but the unexpectedness of it made her laugh anyway. Then he helped her out of the sleeper.

Taking her to the bathroom, he let brush her teeth. Then he called out, "Maria, she's ready for the shower." While waiting for his wife, he explained to her that since her body was developing, they had decided that it was more appropriate that he no longer did things that required him touching her private parts. Big Iris felt that that was right, even if she couldn't quite explain why, but little Iris didn't see the point, and asked "Why?" "Because grown men should not be touching their teenage daughters intimately." "Why?" Hey, this was fun. Daddy was obviously not quite comfortable taking about it. "You'll understand when you are older." "Why?" Her father was saved from further inquisition by the arrival of her mother, who wished her good morning, and then quickly took over from him. She was already wearing her raincoat, and started by taking the rubber panties off. "How did you like your new panties tonight?" "Eh, I didn't really notice them. They were under the sleeper, you know. And I didn't wake until Daddy woke me." "Well, that sounds like at least they didn't bother you, and I see no red marks or anything, so that's good. And it seems to close the diaper off quite well, so very likely they will be effective against smells and small leakages too. I think you made a good choice." "Of course!" little Iris bragged, and then had to snigger.

When the t-shirt and the diaper were off as well, Iris was first put on the toilet. When she had finished she was steered to the shower, where to her surprise the bath cuffs were attached to the wall. (see Figure 19 Longer Bath Cuffs) All four of them: two high and two low. Her mother explained, "I don't want you moving around freely in the shower: I'm sure you'd make a great big mess, drench me, and perhaps even slip and hurt yourself. On the other hand putting both hands and both feet into the cuffs seems a bit much, unless you are going to be really naughty. But I want to try out how that would work, so I'm going to put you in all four for the moment, and we can see how that works. Just to test – you are not being punished or anything." Her mother looked at her questioningly, apparently waiting if she would protest. Iris wasn't sure she'd like to be secured like that, and worried that it might be uncomfortable, but on the other hand it would mean Mommy would have to do all the pampering, and Iris could just let it all happen. So she shrugged, and stepped into the shower. If she really wouldn't like it, Mommy would certainly make it better.

The two leg cuffs were fairly far apart, but because the straps were about 8 inches (20cm) long, she could still stand mostly normal. But she couldn't get her knees quite together. Those for her wrists were further apart, and when her wrists were in them, and she let her arms hang relaxed, her upper arms were about horizontal, and her lower arms vertical. She found it a reasonably comfortable position, at least for now. Her mother took the shower head, turned on the water until the temperature was right, and then put it back in its bracket above Iris's head and aimed it so that most of the water hit her. Then she said, "Just soak in it; I'll put the used diaper in the pail, and then come back to wash you." Of course as soon as she left, Iris started experimenting how much she could still move, but with her hands she had no chance to touch her body anywhere, nor the shower head or the taps. They hardly got wet, because they were outside the water stream. She spread her legs a bit more, to see how high she could lift one up. But because she couldn't get the other leg straight

under her, she could not balance, and she could only get her foot off the ground for a very short time, quickly falling back. She did manage a little bit of splashing when she landed – that might be something to demonstrate to Mommy. Of course leaning back against the tiles was cold, so she made sure to keep standing free from the wall behind her.

When her mother returned, she took a sponge and put some shower gel on it. After turning the waterflow partially off, she started scrubbing Iris from top to toe. Getting at her back was a bit hard though, because Iris couldn't come forward much. Her mother decided to release her feet, and see if that would work a bit better. She turned the water off completely before squatting down, and then Iris could put her feet straight under her again. There was more water on the floor there, and with her legs free, she could put them down with a nice splash. Of course a lot of water ended up on her mother, and since it came from down, the rain coat didn't help much. "Iris, that is not funny! My legs are all wet now." Iris had seen she was barefooted, and there were no pants coming out from under the coat, so she didn't quite know why her mother made a big deal out of this: just wipe them with a towel and the problem was gone again. So she didn't look very contrite, and didn't apologize. "I guess those leg cuffs need to go on again as soon as I have done your back, and we'll probably need them the next times as well." "No Mommy, I was just playing around a bit. You can just dry your legs, can't you?" "You think that is all?" Her mother lifted her coat, and showed that the skirt she was wearing underneath was quite wet as well. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that," Iris apologized, although she couldn't quite repress a grin at what her nice splash she caused. "I'm disappointed that you think it is funny. I understand that you didn't think about the consequences, but that is exactly why we need some precautions, to make sure you don't make such mistakes. I guess I could also do with one of those rain coveralls, like Imogen uses." Iris hadn't wanted to start off their fun day out like this, and she felt a bit ashamed about her grinning, so she said, "Well, if you think it best," about the leg cuffs, and then added, "You can borrow my pink hearts rainsuit if you want." They both had to laugh at that idea, Iris mostly about how her mother would look in it, and her mother mostly about the idea that it would fit her.

Her mother tried again how well she could reach Iris's back now, because Iris could now stand further away from the wall. But her arms were still in the way. "OK, let's experiment some more. I want to figure out what works best, so let's see if I free one arm instead. Spread your legs again please." Iris cooperated, and her legs were secured again. Then her mother released one arm, but held on to the wrist while she sponged down the back. By pulling on the wrist she could turn Iris's body, to make sure she could freely access everywhere. "Yes, this works better." While she had the arm anyway, she cleaned it as well. "Mom, my other arm gets cold." "OK, dear, we'll do that one now." For the lower legs and feet, the cuffs needed to be undone again, because Iris couldn't stand on one leg while they were spread out by the cuffs. And when her mother wanted to do her hair, she decided that would be a lot easier if Iris was facing the wall, so she undid all the cuffs, made Iris turn around, and redid them. The leg cuff straps were only just long enough for Iris's feet, and that made her stand wider apart, which was a bit less comfortable. But she wanted to be a good girl, after her unintentionally drenching her mothers clothes, so she did what she was told, and didn't complain. And of course there was compensation: just relaxing and letting herself be taken care of was definitely one of her hobbies.

Once her hair was washed and rinsed, she was thoroughly sprayed to remove all soap and dirt. After the tap was turned off, she still wasn't released, and she wondered what was next, since she could see little of what her mother was doing while facing the wall. She was wrapped in a large towel, and her mother started drying her off. When she did her front, she came quite close, and enveloped Iris in a sort of hug while rubbing her with the towel. This was so pleasant that Iris leaned back, half

leaned on her mother and half hung in the cuffs. But of course her mother needed to move on, so she pushed Iris back onto her feet. Drying the arms and legs was just too inconvenient with the cuffs, so in the end she just released Iris fully, and finished drying her off. Then the towel was wound around her head, and she was taken to the new changing table.

In the meantime her mother evaluated the procedure, "This didn't work too well. Constantly releasing your limbs and then resecuring them, and me getting wet. I think we need to come up with a different solution. Perhaps next time we'll shower together; I just need to come up with a way to make sure you can't slip and fall, or get away from me, without it hindering the cleaning too much. But if we have the opportunity, bathing you seems less complicated. How was it for you?" Iris was a bit surprised, normally her parents, or Nanny for that matter, just decided what was best for little Iris. Now she suddenly had to think. "I don't know. I guess it was OK. But it was cold sometimes, for my arms, or when I leant against the tiles, or when you turned the tap off. Baths are nicer."

When Iris saw the straps hanging down the sides of the changing table, she remembered her mother mentioning leg straps, for if she wouldn't keep her legs still or didn't cooperate. She was curious how that would work, and although it was a bit scary, once she was secured on the table with her waist and wrists, she started wiggling her legs around. "Iris, if you can't hold your legs still I will need to secure them." Iris just kept wiggling. "You want me to? Iris, like I told you before, you can just ask." Iris shrugged. Asking for it didn't seem much fun, somehow; doing it like this felt more naughty and exciting. So she just kept up the wiggling, and when her mother grabbed for her leg, she tried to evade her grip. But it was just play, so she didn't really put up a lot of fight. Apart from that, lying on her back with the hands held above her head, she couldn't see well to effectively evade. So her mother soon got hold of the first leg, and folded it upwards so that her knee was close to her chest. Then she got the strap, and clicked it around Iris's ankle. Now her leg was kept pointing upward, and even though she could bend her knee a bit, and swing the foot left and right, she couldn't lower her leg anymore. While she was distracted by that, her mother had gotten hold of the other leg, and soon it joined the first. Now her bottom was no longer in contact with the table. It wasn't exactly an uncomfortable position, but Iris couldn't remember ever being so stuck before, with only her hands and feet having a little room to move about. And being naked and exposed like this, it felt very vulnerable. She started doubting if it had been such a good idea.

But her mother had not finished. She shortened the wrist straps all the way, and locked all the buckles. Even the leg straps were shortened a bit more. In the meantime her mother explained, "You wanted to experience all the features of the table, so let's do it properly. And since you were naughty in the shower, and were not cooperative here on the table, I think you deserve a little bit of punishment." While she said that, she suddenly slapped Iris's buttocks with her hand. It might not have been very hard or painful, but still it stung, and it totally surprised Iris. Her parents never hit her! Before she had come to grips with what was happening, a second swat hit her. "Ouch! Mommy, no!" She tried to get away from the spanking, but she was truly stuck, and had no way to avoid it. After a few more swats Iris was crying and promising that she'd never do anything naughty ever again.

After five swats on each buttock her mother finally stopped, and went around the table to Iris's head. "It's OK now darling, it's over. Mommy still loves you, and now we can forget all about your naughtiness. Actually you were not really that naughty, so I didn't hit hard, and only a few times. Just so that you know how you might be punished if you were really bad." She wiped Iris's eyes and stroked her head. Iris realized that her bum felt more warm than painful, and that her mother could surely have hit a lot harder. Her reaction had been more from the unexpectedness, and the feeling that she was being punished, than from real pain. With the loving attention from her mother, the



crying stopped quickly, and she looked at her mother seriously, and said, "I'm sorry. I didn't want to be naughty, but I'll try harder now." "That's nice darling. Now let's give you a nice big cushion on your behind, and get you into the cute jumpsuit I selected for today." "Which one did you pick?" "Oh, you'll see soon enough. I'm sure you'll look adorable in it."

"I'm going to put a Tena Youth on you for the morning. I know it doesn't look very cute, but with your new panties on top, that won't matter so much, and it can absorb more than the pampers, so we won't have to change you so quickly." Iris nodded, still a bit subdued from the spanking. With her legs like this, Iris could hardly see anything that was going on, but her mother apparently could do everything without her needing to lift her bum, keep her legs open, etc. She could just relax and let it happen. During the spanking she had been jerking on the straps holding her down in a serious attempt to get out, but now that was over, and her mother was lovingly taken care of her again, she didn't mind them anymore. Although she thought that next time she'd be a good girl again, and avoid the leg straps. Her mother was applying the cream, and she was very soft-handed on the buttocks. Iris hardly felt them hurting anymore. When the diaper was on, her mother asked if she would keep her legs still and cooperate if she released them, and Iris replied sincerely that she would. That made it easier for her mother to put on her new panties with the elephants on them, and after the three clicks Iris knew her diaper was safe from her wandering hands.

Then her mother unlocked the three remaining buckles holding her to the table, and after adjusting the wrist straps to their previous length, she was released, and could sit up again. She was a bit nervous that she might feel her bottom, but between the diaper and the thick padding on the table, she didn't feel anything. Her mother lifted her off the table, and let her step into a pink body with short sleeves. Apparently it didn't open in the crotch, but closed with a short zipper in her neck. Then she held up the jumpsuit she referred to. It wasn't one Iris had seen before, so she was trying to get a good look. It was of blue denim, seemed to have some ruffles, and she also saw some appliques. But with her mother trying to pull it up, she didn't get a good view, so she tried to fold the fabric away so that she could get a better look. Her mother pushed her hands away, "Iris, you need to cooperate better. You can take a good look at the suit once you're wearing it." Her mother didn't sound angry, but not cooperating was one of the things that earned her the spanking, so she quickly pulled her hands back.

Once her feet were in the legs, Iris could recognize that it were long pants that were pretty wide at the bottom. She had worn some more suits like that lately, and the wide legs gave them a bit more feminine look. When the suit was pulled up to her hips, her mother started adjusting some straps around the inside of waist, that apparently could be used to make it fit closely. After the adjustment, she pulled up the zipper a bit, and the suit became quite tight around her stomach. "That seems a bit much. There still has to fit a breakfast in there as well," her mother concluded, and patted jokingly on her stomach. She lowered the zipper again, and slightly adjusted the straps. Then she pulled up the suit, and let Iris put her hands into the arm openings. There were no sleeves, but over the shoulders there was a wide ruffle. Then the zipper was closed, and her mother fiddled a bit with the pull. "There, that should do it. Now, let's go to the bathroom so you can see how it looks." (see Figure 54, for the basic jumpsuit without the additions)

In the mirror Iris could see the jumpsuit better: it looked like denim, but it was lighter and more flowing. The legs stopped a bit above her ankles, and if she stood with her legs together, the wide legs made it look a bit like a long skirt. Just above the waist there were cutouts at either side, showing a little bit of skin. The straps inside the waist were probably to prevent her from getting inside the pants through those cutouts. There were also little straps on the waistband at the sides to make it fit more closely, which surprised Iris, because the straps on the inside had the same function. She adjusted them a bit; they were loose, so she buckled them one hole tighter. The straps seemed longer than necessary, but Iris had no idea why. The material differed slightly from that of the jumpsuit, so they seemed to be added later.

The ruffles ran all the way from the waist band in front, over her shoulders. When she twisted around to see the back, she saw they went all the way down to back to the waist band as well. She recognized the zipper pull as one of the locking ones, so she wouldn't be taking it off herself. The front of the suit also had 3 appliques: on her chest there was Piglet, and the legs had Tigger and Eeyore, all from the Winnie the Pooh books. Iris thought they were super cute and had to touch them all. "It looks wonderful, Mommy. And I hadn't even seen it before. Are there even more cute clothes from Sabine that I haven't seen yet?" "You'll see."



Figure 54 Denim Ruffle Jumpsuit

"Time to get your hair done," her mother introduced the next step, and took her to the bathroom. Iris followed gladly; having someone else do her hair was always a treat. Her mother apparently realized that too, because she only closed the bathroom door, but took no further precautions to stop her from getting away. After the blow-drying, her mother did pigtails again, but this time braided them. She finished them off with the little bow-ties they recently got at the department store. She chose pink ones, matching the body. "Now, let's go down and have breakfast," her mother suggested, and she grabbed hold of the back of Iris's jumpsuit to keep her close and not allow her to rush down the stairs. Downstairs she met her father, and they wished each other good morning. Then she was put in her high chair. Iris did her best to cooperate well; this was the last full day with Daddy, and she was determined to make it a fun day without her causing trouble. The spanking hadn't been that bad, by itself, and she didn't even feel her bum anymore; it had mostly been startling and a bit humiliating. But it made her feel that she had made her mother upset with her, and that might be the worst part – she had just wanted to have fun and be only a little bit naughty.

Once she was secured in the chair with her bib on, her mother first went to change out of the wet clothes, while her father put a plate in front of her with breakfast. It was obviously something he had cooked, and she believed it was called Silog, or something like that. There was a heap of fried rice, a fried egg, and 2 hot dogs, nicely arranged on a plate, with slices of tomato and strips of bell pepper on the side. She could smell the garlic in the rice, although it wasn't as much as he sometimes used. It might not sound like something you had for breakfast to most Americans, but she had eaten this often, and actually liked it, especially for the variation. She quickly picked up one of the hot dogs to take a bite, but her father stopped her, "Iris, please wait for your mother to come back." Iris put it

back on her plate; she knew it was not polite to start eating before everybody was at the table and had their food. But Daddy should have waited to put the plate in front of her, and not tempt her like this. Instead she tried to make the pile of rice into a smiley face, after a strict glance from her father with her cutlery instead of with her hands.

When her mother came back, she had changed, but also brought a little piece of paper with her. She came over to Iris, and slid the paper into a little plastic sleeve high on her chest, which Iris hadn't noticed before. There was text on there, but Iris didn't want to try to decipher it upside down, so she just asked her mother what it said. "It reads 'I'm Iris Tomas. If I am lost, please contact', and then my mobile number." "Mom, I don't need that! I can tell people perfectly well who I am and who to call." "Oh, can you? So what is my telephone number then?" Iris was convinced that she knew it; she called her mother often enough. But it was on speed-dial on her own mobile, and she couldn't remember the numbers. "Oh, OK. I don't know. But I can just use my own mobile to call you." "No, dear, we're not going to bring your mobile. With all that water there is too much risk of you losing or damaging it. You won't need it with us, and since your suit has no pockets, you can't carry it with you anyway."

Iris still felt it was unnecessary, but she had run out of arguments, so she changed the subject, "Can we eat now?" "Yes dear, go ahead, and show us how well you can already use your cutlery." This was not really what Iris wanted to hear; being fed was her favorite, but otherwise eating with her hands was much easier, and it was nice to also feel the textures of the food. But she decided to do what she was asked, and bravely attacked the food with fork and spoon. Of course the rice was easy, and the egg she could also pull apart with her fork. But the hot dogs were more stubborn, and trying to pierce them with her fork didn't work very well. When one shot off her plate, her father came over, and cut the hot dogs and remaining egg into small enough pieces. "Thanks, Daddy," Iris tried to be polite, although this way eating was pretty boring. After she had eaten the nice hot dogs and the egg, and most of the rice, she didn't feel that hungry anymore, and got bored. She started toying around with her food, rather than eat it. She was half-expecting them to say something about it, but they didn't, and when they had finished their plates, they got up and started with the preparations for the trip. Iris called, "Are you not going to release me?" Her father came standing next to her, and answered, "But Maya, you haven't finished breakfast yet. And since we don't need your help with the preparations, you're welcome to take as long as you want."

Bummer. In other words, they were not going to let her get away with not finishing her plate. "Well, if that is what they want," thought Iris, and started cramming all that was left into her mouth. When nothing more could be fitted in, she tried to start chewing, but that wasn't so easy. And the combination was not that tasty either. By biting down, the space in her mouth decreased, and her lips couldn't cope with the added pressure, and burst open. Part of the food came out, with some of it landing back on her plate, and some sliding down her chin onto her bib. Luckily her parents were not paying attention to her, and she bravely tried to get the food still in her mouth chewed and swallowed. She decided this was not a good way to get her plate clean, so she ate the rest normally. Only the pieces that fell out she skipped: that looked too yucky to put back in her mouth. Then she called out, "Finished!" Her father came back, looked at the remains on her bib, and on the plate. He shook his head, "You managed to make a right mess of it again, my Biik. I don't know how you do it, but let's get you clean again." Iris looked at him questioningly – her father had not used that name for her before. "Biik means piglet; that is what I'll call you whenever you make such a mess." Iris nodded; she loved piglets. She lifted her bib, and pointed at the applique on her chest. "Oh, that's right. Perhaps I should call you Biik all day long." Iris knew it wasn't really nice calling someone a pig, but it seemed appropriate, and it was not like anyone else would know what it meant, anyhow. So

Iris just grunted like a little pig. Her father ruffled her hair, and said, “You’re a silly girl, but I love you.”

In the meantime he had cleaned her up, removed the bib and the tray, and helped her out. “Now, what are we going to do with you? We can’t have you underfoot while we’re preparing for the trip.” It was obviously a rhetorical question, because he didn’t wait for an answer, but took her to the living room, and placed her on the couch. There he pulled out 3 straps from behind the cushions that Iris knew hadn’t been there before. There was one strap in the middle that ended in a loop. The two straps on either side ended in the parts of a buckle. He put Iris on the middle strap, pulled it up between her legs, put one of the other straps through the loop, and connected the buckle to the third strap. Then he turned on the TV on a children’s channel and put the remote control back on the coffee table. Iris looked surprised – her parents must have added these straps while she was with the Fletchers. That was two days ago, and she had not even noticed they were there. They had certainly been busy, and Iris wondered if there were any more surprises like this for her. She started exploring the straps. The two around her hips held her firmly against the back cushion, forcing her to sit upright, and the crotch strap made sure she couldn’t slide out. Climbing out didn’t work either: seated her legs made an angle preventing her from pulling them upwards. The straps were of the same webbing as the straps on the changing table, and the buckle looked like you needed one of those magnets to open; there was no keyhole, and nothing else to open it (see Figure 14 Magnetic Solid Buckle). It was clear she was stuck again.

The TV showed Bob the Builder, which she didn’t really like. But try as she might, she could not reach the remote control, so she had to watch what was on. So this was the alternative to the playpen. At least it was not visible to guests, and sitting on the couch was more comfortable than against the little fence. Of course it was sort of hard to really keep her in the playpen, and the first time she had managed to escape, while these three simple straps managed to defeat her effortlessly. But the idea that the playpen had kept her in when she was really little was nice too, and of course sitting on the couch was not especially childish. Her parents had mentioned that they were considering adding something to replace the playpen, so perhaps that would be nice too. She started concentrating on the TV, and get into a comfortable position. But the straps kept her pelvis mostly in place, so she could not slouch, hang or lie. It was unusual sitting straight on the couch, but not that bad, and she could still put her feet on the couch, or fold them to a tailor position, which was kind of fun too.

She could sometimes see a parent coming out of the study, or from upstairs, with a bag, and hear them going into the garage. Apparently they were bringing quite a lot of stuff. But of course the car had a big trunk, so they might also bring things just in case. She thought for a moment if there was anything she wanted them to bring, but she didn’t feel like thinking, and she trusted her parents to bring everything she might need. Well, except her phone, apparently. But in the last few weeks she often had had no access to it for long periods, and little Iris didn’t really miss it, and even big Iris thought it was sometimes nice not to be distracted by it all the time. Then her father came to get her; apparently she was the last bit that needed to be loaded into the car. She had expected to see one of her harnesses by now, but after her father unlocked the buckle, he just picked her up and carried her like a baby to the car. That made her giggle, and she stroked his face. Even though he had obviously shaved, stroking up she could still feel the roughness of the stubble. He deposited her in the car seat, snapped the harness closed, and locked the chest clip. Then he gave her a kiss on the forehead and said, “There you go, my Biik. Enjoy the ride.”

## 20. Luscious Lake

The drive took them northward first, and then westward. Since her father was driving, Iris felt free to ask her mother something that was still bugging her a bit, “Mom, are you still upset with me?” “Iris darling, why would you say that? Of course I’m not upset with you.” “But you spanked me this morning, and you never did that before.” “Oh dear, was that so bad for you? I thought I didn’t hit very hard, and definitely not long.” “Well, I felt it, but it didn’t hurt much. It was just that it felt like I had done something very bad, because you normally never hit me. And I so wanted today to be fun, and now I feel I messed that up, and I didn’t even realize that what I did was so bad.” Of course this caused a few tears to dribble down Iris’s cheeks. “Oh Iris, I didn’t mean for it to have such an effect on you. You were only a little naughty, and although you made me change clothes, it was only water, so no harm done. But since you seemed to ask for the complete treatment on the changing table, I thought I’d show you what we could also do if you would be seriously bad, like causing real damage or danger. I’m glad that you didn’t like it, because punishment is not supposed to be fun, but this time it was more playful. If you had just asked to try out the leg cuffs, I would have explained more, but since you decided to act as if you were naughty, I decided to treat you as if you were. But even if you had been really bad, and earned a serious spanking, after the punishment it is over. That is the advantage of a punishment: after you did something bad, and received the punishment, the score is settled, and you can start again with a clean slate.”

Iris suddenly had to laugh through her tears – she felt so relieved that she hadn’t messed up, and she had totally missed that her mother was also just playacting. “You tricked me! I totally believed you were serious!” “Well, I was a little bit upset about my wet skirt, but we were just trying out what worked and didn’t work in the shower. So you just did what I can expect from little Iris, and I’ll have to find a way to make sure that you can’t cause mischief. So, no more worries, and we are going to have a great day out today.” “Yes Mommy. Thank you.” She was handed a tissue to dry her face, and a few sips from the water bottle. Gradually she started paying more attention to where they were. By now they were at the outskirts of town, just crossing the Willamette River, with the sand and gravel quarry directly beyond. But that wasn’t very interesting to look at, just some diggers and trucks, and loads of piles of sand and stones. They were actually already in Santa Clara, but like Thurston, where Sabine lived, it had all grown together into one big town, really. This was not a place she had been that often, but Iris knew it, sort of.

A bit later they passed the airport. Iris hoped that a plane would pass directly over their car while they drove by, but with only a few arrivals and departures per hour, that didn’t happen often. Still Iris was straining against her harness to get a good look outside, because the headrest wings were still folded, so she had to try and lean forward to get a good view. “Mom, can we put the headrests of my car seat more to the sides? It is hard to watch out of the windows now. I mean later, when the car is parked.” “OK, dear, we’ll take a look. I’m not promising anything though; when you sleep in the seat your head rests against the sides, and it also protects your neck better if the car would be hit from the side.” Iris didn’t have much hope – once her mother saw a safety argument she usually wouldn’t budge. But at least she didn’t say ‘no’ outright, so that was something. Around the airport there were mainly fields, so they had really left Eugene now, but soon after they already entered a more residential area again. Iris couldn’t remember ever having been on this road beyond the airport, so she didn’t know what it was called, but perhaps it was sort of a rich suburb, because there were lots of large free-standing houses, some with pools, and large gardens.

At the end of the suburb was a small marina, and they got their first view of the lake. Iris had seen it before, on the other side, but again the size impressed her, and it almost looked like the sea to her, although of course there were no large waves or sandy beaches. After the marina they were driving

directly next to the lake on their left side. But soon they couldn't see the water anymore, since there was a sort of artificial earthen wall bordering the lake. But then there was water on the right side as well, which seemed more like a normal-sized lake, and she could see a woody area beyond. This was a really beautiful area<sup>6</sup>, and Iris exclaimed, "Oh Daddy, it is wonderful here. Can we go exploring the forest? And can we climb that hill further up the road, and have an overview over the area?" "Yes, my Biik, we'll spend the day around this area, and a bit more beyond. I'm not sure though if we can go up that hill, and there look to be too many trees to have a good overview. But I'm sure we can find plenty of beautiful locations today." Now it felt to Iris that their trip was really starting to get interesting, and she started to hum a tune. At first she wasn't even sure what it was; it was just the first melody that popped into her head. When she realized it was the Bob the Builder theme, she quickly stopped, because she didn't like that series, and it was more for boys anyway.

Just then her father turned off the main road into a little car park. There were no other cars there, but of course there was some traffic on the road. First the parents got out, and seemed to be talking for a little bit, before they got into the trunk and collected several things. Then her father got her out of the car seat and lifted her out of the car. Her mother stood ready with the pink rain coat with the hearts, put it on her, buckled the strap below her throat, and put a little padlock through the buckle pin. (see Figure 55) Over that went the pink harness with the teddy bear in front (see Figure 37 Pink Toddler Harness), which was locked as well, and her father put the other end on his wrist. Iris was so used to being treated like that by now, that she at first just let it happen. But then she realized that this was out in the open, and people might see her, and suddenly she got insecure and started looking around nervously. But there were no other people around, and the occasional car zoomed by too quickly to see if she was noticed. Then her baseball cap was put on her head, and she started to feel that she getting hard to recognize, and so she could relax a bit more.



Figure 55 Sabine's old Hearts Rainsuit

Her father explained, "I stopped here for a moment because it is a nice spot, and just a bit further there is a dam that I'd like to take a look at. But also so we can decide what we are going to do first. We thought it would be a nice idea to rent a pedal boat and tour the lake for a while. That is a bit further along the lake, at the harbor at Richardson Point. If we do that first, there won't be so many people around yet, in case you still feel worried that you might be recognized. And there will be fewer boats on the lake as well. But it might still be a bit chilly on the water, while in the afternoon we will probably like the coolness. So let's walk around a bit here, and see how nervous you feel, and how warm it already is." Her parents were wearing light coats as well. Iris asked, "What is a paddle boat?" "It is a small boat, usually for 2 or 4 persons, with pedals like on a bike. So we have to pedal to make the boat go forward." "OK, I can do that. I am good with pedaling on my bike. It sounds like

<sup>6</sup> See [https://www.google.com/maps/@44.1221888,-123.2959667,3a,75y,251.16h,68.25t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipPF4ybho8Emwlb1X\\_wUIW\\_cBV9ANFrgUMHxI9R!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2F5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipPF4ybho8Emwlb1X\\_wUIW\\_cBV9ANFrgUMHxI9R%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-0-ya188.41893-ro0-fo100!7i8192!8i4096](https://www.google.com/maps/@44.1221888,-123.2959667,3a,75y,251.16h,68.25t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipPF4ybho8Emwlb1X_wUIW_cBV9ANFrgUMHxI9R!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2F5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipPF4ybho8Emwlb1X_wUIW_cBV9ANFrgUMHxI9R%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-0-ya188.41893-ro0-fo100!7i8192!8i4096) for a nice overview over the area, from the north side of the Fern Ridge lake.

a lot of fun, so lets do it now! Well, after we looked at the dam then. And perhaps we can climb that hill too. Oh, I don't know what to do first." "We'll first look around a bit here, and then we'll decide."

Both parents took one of her hands, and together they crossed the road, walked to the lake, and then along it to the dam. While they were walking, her mother asked, "Iris, we know that you are afraid of pictures being taken of you, because they might end up being seen by people who you don't want to know your secret. And we don't want everybody to know either. So we have respected that. I did send the picture of you sleeping with Raymond in his bed on to Imogen Fletcher – but you were not little then, and I wanted to show her how well that blouse looked on you." "Hmm, I don't mind Nanny seeing it, but please don't send it to anyone else." "OK, I won't. But like I told you before, we are really enjoying the time with you, and we would like to have a few pictures of us three together, just for ourselves. So we were wondering how this would sound to you: we won't take pictures with our mobiles, because other people might see something then. But we also have a separate compact camera, that is not connected to the internet, so there is no risk of others seeing it accidentally, and we won't be able to send them to anyone else. At home we will of course load them onto our computer, but no one else has access to that. How do you feel about us taking some pictures today with that camera?" Iris had to think about that for a moment, but then replied, "If no one else can see them, I guess it's OK. I think I would also like some pictures of us together, and with some of these cute outfits." Being out with both parents in such beautiful weather, at a very pretty place and with all sorts of fun things to do, it was easy not to worry too much about such things.

Iris had expected the Long Tom River to flow into the Fern Ridge Lake, but it was the other way around: the river led the water from the lake away into the Willamette River, a lot further north. The dam regulated how much water left the lake, and so the water level at the river was lower than that of the lake. Of course the Willamette River ran straight through Eugene, and apparently both rivers ran parallel north for a time. Again something strange: the sea was to the west, so why were the rivers not going there? Her father explained that the water couldn't cross the mountain ridge between Eugene and the sea, and so ran all the way north, through Salem and then Portland, before it finally joined the Colombia River that ran west towards the sea. Iris thought that was a lot of distance to travel for all that water, and that it would have been better off just to erode a canyon through the mountain ridge instead.

She imagined that the Hoover Dam would be even bigger, but this Fern Ridge Dam was quite impressive too, with 6 massive doors to regulate the water. The water level in the lake was perhaps 30-feet (10 m) higher, so there were no great waterfalls or thundering noises. It was actually a bit too sedate for her, but she imagined that it might be more serious here when the weather was bad, and lots of rain had fallen. They were not allowed on the dam itself, but they could get a good look at everything from the roads along the side, and there was an information sign on the ridge near the side of the lake. Her parents started reading, but that soon became boring to Iris, who didn't feel like deciphering all those complicated words. After looking at the pictures for a moment, she pulled her hands free from her parents' and started exploring. There were really big rocks at the edge of the water that seemed fun to climb over, and look at the puddles of water between them, but the leash stopped her short. They were standing on some concrete slabs that were really uninteresting, and she couldn't reach the other sides either.

That stupid leash. It was not like she wanted to run away or anything, just play a bit between those big rocks. So she kept on pulling on it in the hope that her father would let her free, or at least understand that she wanted to do something more interesting. "Biik, will you stop pulling!" "Daddy,



will you stop reading!” Her father gave a pull on the leash, making her stagger backwards, and her mother intervened, “Iris, that is no way to talk to your father. I understand that this is a bit boring for you, but we’re doing a lot today that is fun, and some things that are specifically for you. So please allow us a few things that we like to do too.” Iris realized that her mother was right, and she was being selfish, but she defended herself, “I don’t mind you reading, I just want to look around these rocks, and I can’t reach them. What is the harm in that?” “You really need to trust us to decide what is safe for you. Those rocks are probably slippery with moss, and you might easily slip and fall, hit your head, fall into the water unconscious, and drown.” Iris hadn’t realized that, and the image scared her. “But you would rescue me,” she half stated, half asked. “Of course, if we would notice it in time, and we could reach you. But even then, we might need to go to the hospital with you. At the very least you would be soaking wet, and probably have a number of scrapes. That is not the way we would want this day to end.”

Now Iris felt bad, and came over to her parents. For a moment she hesitated who to go to for an apology and a hug, but then decided it was her father who she had been pulling against, and unkind to, so she went to him, put her arms around him and said she was sorry. She felt a bit shaken from what her mother described, while she had seen no danger, and clung to her daddy for comfort. Luckily he was not mad, and hugged her back, saying, “Nothing bad happened. Just allow us to take care of you, and things will be fine.” That helped, and Iris realized that their protection had worked, and she had not actually done anything bad or dangerous, so she soon felt her normal self again. Her parents were already at the third and last information panel, and she asked what it read, more because she wanted to show her parents that she agreed that they should also do the things they liked, than that she was really interested. Of course with her father being an engineer, he would be interested in such things. So he explained to her what it said about when and by whom the dam was constructed, and how it prevented serious flooding problems, although the combination of a high lake level with an earthquake would still be challenging. But further down the Long Tom and Willamette River there were more dams, and together they could cope with a lot of problems. The lake had several marshy and wetland prairie area’s that could buffer extra water if needed, and that also created a good place for recreation and wildlife.

Actually this was more interesting than Iris thought, and she had not expected there was so much involved in making sure her house stayed dry. Her father explained it well, and once he mentioned wildlife she became even more interested. He took her to the side of the information boards so that they could have a free view over the lake, and he pointed out all the swallows that were skimming over the lake surface. “Many of those are purple martins, and here is the largest breeding colony of them in the whole of Oregon.” To Iris they just looked like small black birds, but they were flying so fast and erratically that it was hard to get a good look at them. Her father explained, “We’ll get a better look at them later, especially when we are out on the lake, and if we can find one sitting down you’ll see that they have beautiful dark blue and purple colors. There are lots of other water birds as well, and turtles too. Look, there are a few on the rocks.” (see Figure 56 and Figure 57) They were pretty far away, and Iris wanted to go towards them, but her father held her back and said they would have better opportunities to look at them later, and they’d get out their binoculars.



Figure 56 Purple Martin



Her father looked at his wife and said, "Still feels a bit chilly near the water. Perhaps better to do the pedal boat after lunch?" She agreed, and when Iris looked disappointed, she added, "Darling, don't you think it will be nicer on the cool water when it is hot in the afternoon? Shall we first go and see if we can climb that hill then?" That made Iris's face light up, and she said, "Yes, that would be fun too." Apparently her parents were done reading, because they went back to the road, and crossed the bridge over the Long Tom River, next to the dam, to go towards the hill. Because there was only the road to walk on, her father grabbed the back of her harness to keep her right next to her. This time Iris was glad that he was keeping her close; they were going the way she wanted anyway, and this way she didn't need to be careful on the road. But they crossed the bridge without cars speeding by, and as soon as they could, they went off the road towards the lake. Iris didn't understand, because the hill was on the other side of the road. But her father apparently was trying to take a little distance from it, to see if there were any paths up, or they could see indications that there was something like a viewpoint. They didn't see anything useful though, and her parents discussed whether it was better to go along the lake, on the south side of the hill, or along the Long Tom River, along its east side. Since there was a nice path along the lake, they decided to take that and see if there was some way up further down the road.



*Figure 57 Red-eared Slider Turtle*

It was a nice place to walk, with a view over the lake, but they didn't find a path up. After a while they passed a little office of the Army Corps of Engineers, who built and maintained the dam. There was somebody standing outside, and her father walked up to him, hoping he might be familiar with the area, and know if there was a way up. This immediately made Iris quite self-conscious, and she tried to stay a bit behind her father; of course because of the leash she had to come along. The man took a quick look at her, but then focused on her father, and explained that there was nothing like a viewpoint on the hill. There was a little cemetery that might give them a bit of a view, through the trees, but that would not be all that great, he expected. If they wanted to give it a try, they had to go a fair bit up the side road along the Long Tom river, and then turn left. He estimated it was about a mile. Her father thanked him, and they went back to the other side of the road, where they could discuss what to do. Her parents thought it would take a fair amount of time to get there, and the view was probably not worth it, but Iris didn't want to give up on her idea. So her father suggested driving the car up there – that would save them a fairly long walk. Iris had no objection to that.

So they went back to the car, Iris was secured in her seat again, and they drove up the road along the river. The first side road they passed obviously only went to a bed and breakfast, so they skipped that, and took the next road left. It meandered a bit, but after a few minutes they reached the entrance of the cemetery. Before they entered, her father seriously told Iris that they needed to be respectful at a cemetery, so there would be no playing around, and she was not allowed to touch anything. Iris promised seriously; she knew you had to be solemn at graveyards, and since they were only up here because she wanted it, she would make sure that she would behave. Still, her father directly grabbed her harness at her back, so that she had to stay right next to him. They entered the cemetery, and immediately felt a calm and restful atmosphere. It was only a small cemetery, but the graves were spread around in between the trees, and Iris thought that if she ever needed to be buried, this would be a good place for it. Still, they were not here for the graves, so they moved towards the southern edge to see if they could get a view over the lake.

Through the trees they could see some parts of the lake, but there was no place where they had a wide view over the area. Still, they could see a bit more of the shape of the lake, and get a view of the opposite bank here and there, so it had not been a complete waste of time. Iris felt a little disappointed though; she had really hoped for some spectacular views. So they went back fairly quickly, and this time Iris looked a bit more around, and they passed one gravestone with such a cute little cherub statue on top that she had to stroke it. But her father quickly jerked on the harness, and pulled her away. "Iris, you promised not to touch anything. If you try it again we need to make sure you can't." "But look at how cute it is!" "It's OK to look with your eyes, but not with your hands. Suppose the little statue is not attached to the gravestone, and it falls down and breaks when you touch it." "Ooh, I don't want that! I would feel horrible." She thought for a moment, and then added in a small voice, "Perhaps you should make sure I can't. Just for the graveyard, to make sure I don't make another mistake." "Well, I appreciate that you ask, but I'm not going to get out some straps or mittens for the little walk back to the car. Why don't you walk ahead of me, and I'll hold your wrists." He bent her arms behind her back so that her wrists were together, and then grabbed both wrists with one hand.

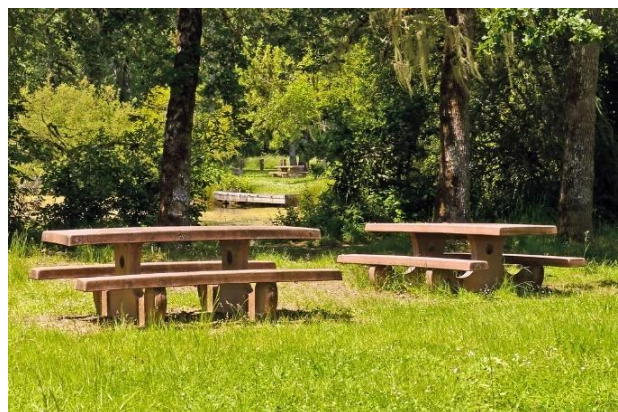
But that didn't really walk comfortably, and her mother stepped in. She lifted Iris's jacket a bit on one side, opened the strap at the waist band, took her wrist, and buckled the strap over it. Now the strap, which Iris thought was to make the jumpsuit fit closer, was suddenly around her wrist, keeping her wrist right next to her waist. Then her mother did the same on the other side. Her father, who apparently hadn't known about that function of the straps either, thanked his wife, took hold of the harness in her back again, and they walked on. For Iris this was something new: she had not yet had her hands restrained while walking, and she noticed that keeping her balance was a little bit harder. She never realized that she unconsciously used her arms for that, but now they were stuck to her sides, it was suddenly obvious. She actually was glad of her father having a direct hold on her harness; if she would trip, she couldn't stick out her arms, but he would prevent her falling down. This was definitely more comfortable than how her father held her, although feeling his strong grip on her had its nice aspects as well. She considered thanking her mother for this better option, and, although it felt a bit weird to thank her for restraining her, she had asked for it, so she said, "Thanks Mommy, this is better."

On the way back to the car she stumbled once over a root she hadn't seen, but her father just kept her up by her harness, and allowed her to get her feet under her again. She turned to him and gave him a smile as a thank you. It was a strange way to walk, but it was also a challenge, and it relaxed her, knowing she couldn't do anything wrong. So when they were back at the car she actually felt a bit of regret that it was over. Her father picked her up to put her in the car seat, and then concluded, "Oh, I guess we said the straps were only for the cemetery, so I should probably release you." Iris shrugged; it would only be a little while in the car, and it was not like she could do much with her hands anyway. So he just continued putting her in the seat, but then they noticed that her elbows pointed out beyond her back, and that meant she couldn't sit in the car seat properly. So he took her out again, released the straps, and put her back in. Having use of her arms again, she used the opportunity to hug her father and give him a kiss while he was putting her in the seat. Just for fun she held the hug a little longer while she was already in the seat, so that he couldn't get up straight, and because of his inconvenient position, it was not that easy for him to pull loose. "Wow, this little Biik sure knows how to misuse her temporary freedom! Perhaps we should make sure she can't use her arms for the rest of the day." Iris, recognizing this was not a serious threat, squealed, "No, Daddy, No!" and quickly let go. Then he buckled her in, and even locked the chest clip, even though it was only a short drive.

During the drive her father unfolded the plan for the rest of the day: they were first going back to where they parked near Fern Ridge Dam, but then continue a little bit into Kirk Park, that Iris had already seen just before they stopped, and found so beautiful. There they would look around a little bit, followed by a picnic in the recreation area. He had decided against Richardson Park, which was nearer to the boat rental place, because there also was a camping, so it would be busier. Next they would go get a pedal boat and tour the lake, and what time they had left they would spend exploring Kirk Park further, and hopefully do some more birdwatching. Which of course didn't mean they would not also look around for birds at the other times, especially on the water. This sounded like all Iris could imagine she'd want to do here, so she reacted enthusiastically.

After they passed the dam again, there were several car parks. Her father kept going to the one furthest into the park, and they could still find a free spot there, although there were a number of cars there, and several people. This suddenly made Iris feel scared again; at the dam and the cemetery they had been on their own, and she could be little all she wanted, but now she had to go out in her childish jumpsuit and raincoat, harnessed and leashed. Nervously she started fidgeting in her seat and pulling her cap down over her face. She reminded herself that this was no different than the visit to the aquarium, but then Sabine was there, and it had been easy to follow her example. First her parents got out, and started to collect the things they wanted to bring from the trunk. When her father came to get her, and tried to unlock her chest clip, Iris put her hands over it. "Daddy, I don't want to get out. Can't we wait until those people are gone?" "Is my little Maya suddenly a bit shy?" he teased her. He continued more serious, "It really won't be that bad, you just have to get through it, and then it will be OK. Just like with the wrist leash when we went birdwatching. It won't do any good waiting for all the people to leave; before they are gone new people will arrive." When Iris was still uncertain, he played his trump card, "Do you trust Daddy to keep you safe?" Of course she trusted him, and so she reluctantly removed her hands and let him take her out of the seat. He quickly put on the wrist band of the leash, so she would have to stay close to him again.

Luckily her parents already had everything ready, so they could immediately start walking, and Iris stayed quite close to her father, hoping the leash wouldn't draw attention. She had pulled her cap so far over her face that she couldn't see the faces of the other people, and so she didn't know if there were others looking at her, or even people she knew. But she felt that if she couldn't see them, they wouldn't be able to recognize her either, and so she slowly started to feel less anxious. Of course it also helped that they were soon leaving most people behind. She saw that there were several picnic tables with benches spread around the area near the parking lot (see Figure 58), and they passed a small wooden building with bathrooms. Her mother entered it, while her father explained that they would be waiting at the other side, out of sight. "Here the people from the carpark can't see you, so you can relax. Of course we don't have the benefit of your underwear, so we need to use these toilets. When your mother is back I'll go as well." They were looking out over a grass field with some trees, and in between the trees Iris thought she could see more water. Her father explained that there was a little lake, with another recreation area at the other side. There they would find a nice private place.



*Figure 58 Kirk Park Recreational Area*

When her mother joined them, she took over the leash while her father excused himself. “And how is your diaper doing?” Iris blushed, and admitted, “I haven’t really paid much attention. There was so much distraction. I did let go in the car once, but for the rest I don’t really know. I guess big Iris won’t be too happy with me.” “Oh well, this week has been a busy time, with many changes. I’m sure that once we get into more of a routine, and we start doing those exercises I mentioned before, that it will get better. These toilets are pretty basic, so no changing station here. I’ll check you when we find a nice place for a picnic.” “Oh, can we take off my coat then? It’s getting warm.” “We’ll see, perhaps I’ll leave the body off instead. If we’re in the shade it might still be a bit cooler. And you’ll need waterproof clothing when we go on the pedal boat.” As usual her mother was more concerned about her being too cold than too warm. But for little Iris it was easier to just let her decide, and deal with the occasional discomfort, than to try and think what she needed for herself. They were silent for a little bit, and looking around at the beautiful surroundings.

Suddenly Iris spotted a small playground, with a climbing frame, some swings and a slide, next to the area with the picnic tables. “Oh, Mommy, can I go and play there?” “Do you want to? I’m not going to take your harness off and let you run around there on your own, and it is in full view of the carpark and the picnic tables.” Oops, Iris hadn’t thought that through. She looked crestfallen, and so her mother said, “You know what, after the pedal boat, we will probably return here to do some more walking and bird watching. Perhaps it won’t be so busy then, and you’ll feel OK about it.” That gave Iris a little bit of hope, although she wasn’t sure if she’d want to fully be little Iris on the playground if there was even one stranger near.

Her father appeared again, and he led them along a path through the trees, which led past the little lake they had seen through the trees, onto another grassy area. There they looked around a moment to see a promising place for them. It was a pretty large open area, with an occasional tree, and there were several others spread out, some alone or with two, but most often families. They saw no more picnic tables. They decided that the foresty area at the other end would probably do best, also because most people were staying closer to the carpark, so they walked along the lake to the edge of the trees. Of course Iris looked out for birds, but perhaps because of the people around, she didn’t see anything special, and her parents also didn’t allow her to stand around and take a good look around. There were some mallards and coots on the little lake, and a blue heron at the other end, but even that one flew off. (see Figure 59) She occasionally heard the rattle of a faraway woodpecker, or saw something moving in the trees and shrubs, but she didn’t manage to get a good view of anything.



Figure 59 Great Blue Heron

When they reached the edge of the forest, they were probably at least a 100 yards (90 m) away from everybody else, and her parents put their things down among the first trees. Her mother spread a picnic blanket in such a way that it was half in the sun and half in the shade, and some trees sheltered them from being seen from the larger part of the open area. “So, let’s first see how your diaper is doing,” her mother announced, and invited Iris to lie down. She started unlocking and removing Iris’s harness, then her jacket, her jumpsuit, her body, and finally her diaper pants. Now that Iris couldn’t see any other people, she didn’t worry to be seen, and just enjoyed being taken care of. She counted out loud all the locks keeping her secure: two locking buckles on the harness, one padlock on the jacket, one locking zipper of the jumpsuit, and three more padlocks on the

panties. It seemed like way too much to keep one little girl out of her diapers, but she didn't mind, since it was her mother needing to unlock and lock all of them, and she could just lie comfortably in the sun. It was nice to shed some layers, and lying in the sun with only her diaper was warm enough. Her mother checked it, and decided it was better to put a new one on. After the cleaning and putting on a fresh diaper, it was time again for the locking layers, and her mother started counting the clicks along with Iris. She left the body off, like she planned, but also the jacket. "For now it is warm enough, so I will leave the jacket off too, but I want no complaints when I decide that you'd better wear it again." Iris promised, happy to not be too warm now, and that she could see little piglet on her jumpsuit again. She put her finger on it, and said "Biik". "Oh, that is what your father has been calling you today!" Then her mother applied sunscreen on her arms, face and neck.

Of course her harness had to go on again, and then her father got out a long, thick rope that had small loops at either end, and winding it around a sturdy tree, he pulled the rope through the loop at the other end, so that it formed a noose around the tree. With the other end he walked away from the tree until he found a distance he liked, around 30 foot (10 m), and put a simple knot in the rope, forming an extra loop. This he took over to Iris, and with a padlock he locked the loop to her harness. The rest of the rope he loosely wound around the first part of the rope, doubling it up, and he knotted it at the end, so that she would not step on it. When her mother let go of the leash, Iris was able to walk around freely, as far as the rope allowed. It was similar to how she had been leashed in the backyard of the Fletchers, only this was a rope instead of a chain, and her range was larger.

Thinking about Sabine, she decided she'd demonstrate to her parents what her friend always did when she was put on the leash in the backyard: she started running towards the end of her reach, to let her harness stop her and land on her diapered bum. But her father quickly realized what she was doing, grabbed the rope and stopped her more gently than the tree would have done. "Oh no, that is not a good idea. Your harness is not constructed to support your whole weight, and you might end up with bruised ribs if you try that," her father explained. "But Sabine always does that, and I did it too, and if you wear a thick diaper it doesn't even hurt." "And did you do it with this harness?" That made Iris realize what her father might be concerned about, "Oh, well, we do it with a different harness, with leg loops and all." "Ah, you see, those are probably climbing harnesses, that are constructed to keep you safe when you fall, not child harnesses to keep you from running off and get lost. Those are a lot better in spreading the force over your body, and the attachment point is lower, so it will stop your whole upper body, while with this harness your shoulders will be pulled backward, and you might end up on your back and hurt your head." Iris realized that he was right; when he stopped her she had already felt that it was different than with the garden harness, and less comfortable. "I'm sorry, I just wanted to show you what Sabine always does, and it is fun there." "I know you didn't mean any harm, my Biik, but you sure make it challenging today to keep you safe." Iris had realized that too; this was already the third time her parents had to prevent her from making an unintentional mistake. She was just so enthusiastic about doing this trip, and wanted to make the most of it. She trusted her parents to keep her safe, but she decided she needed to be more careful for the rest of the day, so that they didn't have to worry about her all the time.

Her father saw her pensive and disappointed in herself, so he quickly changed the subject, "Now, it is still a little bit early for lunch, so we thought we could play a bit. How about throwing a frisbee? I made the line pretty long, so that you can run around a bit to catch it. Or would you prefer to play with a ball?" "Yes, frisbee is fun," Iris answered, also because she couldn't really do that with Sabine, who didn't have enough coordination for that. Her father got one out of his bag, and her mother and he spread out into the open area, while telling Iris to stay close to the tree, so that she had a lot of leash room to move around and catch the frisbee. Iris had thrown a frisbee before, and



she could do it reasonably well, but today it didn't seem to go that well. Her father threw it at her, and his aim was good, so she had little trouble catching it. But when she tried to throw to mommy, she tried hard to do it as well as daddy, but it was not quite going in the right direction, and her mother had to walk a fair bit to retrieve it. Her second throw went more upward, and then it returned more-or-less in her direction. "I've got it," she called out, and started running to try and catch it again. "Iris, stop!" her father called, but she was almost there, so she kept going, although his shout slowed her down a bit. And that was a good thing, because suddenly she was at the end of the leash, and her shoulders were jerked backwards. She fell, first on her behind, but then also on her back. It didn't really hurt, probably because she had slowed down, but she still felt the chest strap, and was angry at herself of again not being careful, so soon after she promised herself to try harder.

"Iris, are you OK?" her parents called out almost simultaneously. Iris got up, and said "I'm fine. Sorry." Her parents checked her over, and concluded that there was nothing wrong, but her mother said to her father anyway, "Let's play with the ball instead. Then she won't have to run so much." Iris didn't want to give up trying with the frisbee – she wanted to prove she could do it better, but after her fall she was sure that protesting wouldn't help, and she had agreed to let her parents make all the decisions about keeping her safe. Her ribs still felt a bit tender around the harness, so she didn't want to run into the end of the leash unexpectedly again. So she just looked down and murmured "OK". With the ball her parents moved closer, and they started kicking it over. But the ground and the grass were pretty uneven, so it was hard to control its direction and speed well, and they switched to throwing it instead. That worked better, and Iris soon relaxed again and enjoyed the play.

After a while her parents decided it was time to eat, and so they started the picnic on the blanket. Now that Iris no longer needed a long leash for the play, her father knotted a loop much closer to the tree, and moved the padlock on her harness to it. Now Iris only had a reach of some 6 foot (2 m), but that didn't bother her. It was actually sort of nice because it made her feel more safe, and the click of the padlock actually gave her a little tingle. But soon the lunch absorbed her attention, and she noticed all the adventures had made her hungry. There were all sorts of little things, most of which she liked, and sooner than she wanted she was full. The big meal had made her a bit sleepy, and she yawned. Her mother immediately took advantage, and proclaimed it was time for her nap. "But Mom, there is so much to do here; it is a waste to spend the time sleeping!" "Oh, but we'll still have a lot of time to do them after you slept, and I'm sure we'll all enjoy them better if you are well-rested." "But I'm not tired or sleepy at all!" which Iris demonstrated by opening her eyes very wide, standing up, and jumping up and down. Her father laid down in the shade and said, "Come here, lie with me for a while. If you are still awake after a while, we'll skip the nap. That seemed like a good deal to Iris, and she crawled up to him, lying her head on his arm. He put his other arm around her, and held her nice and tight. Her mother got out a sleeping mask and put it over her face, and spread a towel over her as an improvised blanket. Since Iris wanted to go on with their adventures, she tried to stay awake, but the big meal, her father's embrace, and the peaceful sounds and smells of the nature around her were stronger, and soon she was asleep.

## 21. Lovely Lake Lounging

When Iris woke again, she was lying on her own. She pulled the blindfold off – that was a difference with her nights, when she couldn't – sat up, and looked around. Her mother sat nearby, and said, "Did you sleep well?" Iris thought for a moment, and answered, "Yes, Mommy. It is very nice with

the trees and the bird sounds.” She wanted to go over to her mother, and decided it was too close to get up for, so she crawled over and installed herself on her mother’s lap. This was actually a bit far for the short leash, and she felt it getting taut, and the harness slightly pulled on her. But she decided she liked it reminding her that she was kept safe, and her mother’s arms around her made that even stronger, and she snuggled up, allowing herself to get more wake up slowly. Looking around she realized that her father was not there. Her mother noticed her looking, and explained, “Daddy is scouting a little bit around, to see what the nicest places are to go to after the pedal boat. He’ll be back soon.” Of course there were adventures to be experienced, but for now Iris just enjoyed the intimacy, the sunshine, and the beautiful nature around her. Idly she started playing with her jumpsuit. The appliques, the ruffles, and such.

And of course she had to check if the zipper was well locked. But she was literally sitting under the nose of her mother, so of course she saw what Iris was doing, and told her, “Iris, you know you are not allowed to fiddle with the closures of your clothes.” Iris pulled her hand back, but after a moment she started exploring her harness, and see if she couldn’t undo the knot in the leash. But it was in the small of her back, and of course she could not see it, so it was not quickly obvious if and how she could undo it. “Iris, I just warned you not to fiddle with the closures.” “But that was my clothes, I was playing with the leash now.” Her mother wasn’t impressed with her argument, and gently pulled her arms to her waist, where she used the waist straps of the jumpsuit once more to disable Iris’s exploring hands. In hindsight Iris sort of knew that something like this was bound to happen, but she hadn’t really had an opportunity to test her limits until now, and it was too tempting to pass up on. But now her hands were stuck at her sides again.

In the graveyard she accepted the straps because they prevented her from accidentally damaging something, but here she didn’t think there was much she could do wrong, and starting to get more awake and active, she suddenly resented her mother restricting her like this. “Mommy, that is not fair, I didn’t try to open my clothes anymore,” she exclaimed, and started to pull on her hands. But as she had gotten used to, the clothes and restraints were far too sturdy for her to pull apart or get free from. “Let me out!” she shouted again. “Iris, please calm down. You don’t want to draw attention to yourself.” A part of Iris realized that her mother was right, but she was too upset to suddenly stop, and she kept on protesting loudly. Then her mother got out her pacifier, put it in her mouth, and held it there with her hand. After a few seconds Iris started suckling on it, and quickly calmed down. Her mother let go of the pacifier, and held her again in a hug. “You see Iris, I know you like to test your restraints, but with Sabine coming over in a few days, we really need to make sure you don’t give her a bad example. Once she is here, you’ll be too distracted to remember, so it has to have become a routine by then.” Iris hadn’t thought about that, but she knew that Nanny found it important too, and had punished her when she tried anyway. So she nodded solemnly that she understood. “Sometimes I still have trouble understanding what you want. You liked the wrist straps in the cemetery, and now you seemed to be challenging me like you did on the changing table this morning, so I assumed you sort of wanted them again.” Iris shrugged. She wasn’t sure she understood either; she just reacted how she felt at the moment. But now she suddenly was OK with her hands being restrained, although she would have preferred to hug her mother back. She had to settle now to stroking the upper leg that her hand was close to.

Shortly after her father came back, satisfied with his exploration, and Iris’s hands were released again, although she was warned that they would quickly be restrained again if she transgressed once more. Her mother added, “If you want, you can keep your pacifier in until we are in the pedal boat; it might help make believable that you are on a leash, and will help make you less recognizable, with it covering your mouth.” Iris nodded. It would also soothe her when it got scary around other

people. “But remember that this is an exception; normally you can’t have it in during the day.” Iris wanted to stick out her tongue, which of course did not work; she didn’t agree with that rule, and sometimes really missed it during the day. Her teeth were fine, and way too strong to be deformed by something as soft as a pacifier, so it was probably just her mother being overly concerned again.

Iris’s harness was unlocked from the tree leash, and the regular leash went around her father’s wrist again. After her parents had cleared up everything, and made sure that they left no litter, both parents took a hand again, and with three abreast they went back to the car. Held on both sides, Iris had no opportunity to hide behind one of her parents when they approached others, but she had her cap on again, and the pacifier made it all a bit less scary. Soon she was skipping, and just ignoring people around her. It started to feel more like at the aquarium, where people might look at her for a moment, but then mostly ignored her. She was glad that her rain jacket was off now – it was warm enough, and she liked to show off her nice jumpsuit, and feel the sun on her arms. Soon they were back in the car, and drove off the parking lot, across the dam, and further along the lake. There was a little park between them and the lake, and then there was an area with trees, so they couldn’t see the lake anymore. But the road curved to the left, so Iris thought they were still staying near it. They passed the entrance to the camping, and took the next towards Richardson Point, where the harbor was.

Her father parked, and said they should wait for a moment, while he went to inquire where the pedal boat rental was. That was a good idea, because when he came back he told them that they had to go to the camping harbor for those; the building here was the yacht club, way too fancy for such ‘toys’. So they drove back a little bit, and entered the camping grounds. This was a pretty busy area, and there were all sorts of signs, so her father had no trouble reaching the car park near the harbor, and the building for the rentals. This time all three got out, and her mother got another bag from the trunk. Then they went into the building, where her father rented a four person pedal boat.

Her mother took Iris along to a out-of-the-way corner, and took out the whole pink hearts rainsuit from her bag, plus the matching rain boots. (see Figure 55 Sabine's old Hearts Rainsuit) “Iris, it is going to be pretty wet on the boat, so you’ll need to wear your rain gear.” Iris looked doubtful; it seemed too warm for that, and she didn’t want to hide piglet again. But her mother wasn’t interested in her opinion, took off her harness and shoes, and let her step into the bib overalls. The strong straps went over her shoulders, and her mother had to pull pretty hard to get them buckled high up her back. “Hmm, these are already a bit small for you. I guess you’ll need another set before too long.” “But I like these; it is fun that these white hearts change color when they get wet.” “We’ll see, for now they are good enough.” When her mother noticed that the buckles for the straps had little holes to put a padlock through, she got out a few, and with two clicks Iris was certain she would not be able to take them off. It was probably quite hard even without those little locks, with the buckles at the back. Next Iris had to step into the boots (see Figure 61), and finally the jacket went on top, and her mother buckled and locked the little strap under her chin as well. “There you go, all protected from the water. You deserve a kiss for cooperating so well.” Actually Iris got two, and a hug. Iris decided that it was a lot better to just let her parents do what they wanted, instead of protesting; they were going to do it their way anyway, and now she earned extra affection. And they really seemed to know best, while today Iris’s ideas might not have turned out so good.





Figure 60 Four-seat Pedal Boat



Figure 61 Sabine's old Rain Boots

Her father had finished with the paperwork, and the guy took the three of them to the waterside, her mother holding Iris by the hood of her jacket. He showed them the pedal boat that her father had selected, with 2 seats in front that had pedals, and 2 backward facing seats behind those, without pedals. (see Figure 60) Looking at Iris's parents, he said, "We strongly advise a life jacket, or more accurately, a Personal Floatation Device, for smaller children." "Yes, I think that would be best," her mother replied. "How much does she weigh?" "I guess around 75 pounds (34 kg) at the moment." "Right, then she should still fit into our larger child model." He went into a nearby shack, and soon came back with a life jacket in light blue, with pink straps, and several flowers printed on it. He opened the two buckles on the crotch strap, the two on the waist straps, and the zipper. Then he held it up for Iris to put her arms into. Iris didn't feel comfortable about this strange guy suddenly wanting to put more clothes on her, and she tried to move away. But her mother pushed her towards the man, and said, "Come on Iris, it is for your safety. The sooner you put it on, the sooner we can go out in the boat." Iris wanted to cooperate, and of course go out on the lake, so she hesitantly stepped forward again, suckling strongly on her pacifier, and put her arms in the arm holes. He pulled the jacket closed, and did up the zipper. "Look at how well that matches with your nice rain suit, with the pink straps and the white buckles and flowers." Iris had to admit that it looked nice, and she touched the flowers.



Figure 62 Child's Life Jacket

The guy clicked the waist buckles closed, and then tried to do up the crotch strap. But that was too much for Iris, and she kept her legs closed. Her mother stepped in, "I think it is better if I do that." Iris nodded gratefully, and the guy stepped aside. With all the diapering, Iris was used to her mother touching her between her legs and snapping bodies closed, so with her the crotch strap was not a problem, and soon the buckles clicked closed. The guy stepped forward again, and adjusted the straps until it fit her closely. Flicking the little padlock on her rain jacket with his finger, he asked if there was a risk that she'd try to take the life jacket off. "I'd say that is a definite yes – she is always trying if she can get things off, and she doesn't always see danger." "OK, we occasionally get children like that, but we have a simple solution. Just wait a sec." He disappeared into the shack again. Iris felt really little, having the grown-ups talk about her like she wasn't there, and her mother made her sound like an actual mentally-challenged kid. And she only had to mention a few of the things that really happened today! He came back with a few clear tie wraps; apparently he wanted to secure the buckles with those, like her mother had sometimes done with the buckles of her rainbow harness. Again this made Iris feel uncomfortable; not only was he putting her in the life jacket, but now this man she didn't know was also to lock her into it? She started to turn away again, but her mother put her arms around her from behind at shoulder height. It was a hug, but also kept her in place, and the man proceeded to wrap the tie wraps around the life jacket buckles while her

mother distracted her by mock-biting in her neck. "There, all safe now," he concluded, and continued, "Have a nice trip, and I'll see you when you get back."

After he left, her parents were still not ready in preparing Iris for the boat. First her mother took hold of her pacifier, to take it away. Iris looked pleadingly, and didn't immediately want to let it go. "Iris, you wouldn't want to risk losing your pretty pacifier in the water, do you? Especially since you got it from the Fletchers," her mother explained, not bothering to remind Iris that it was the agreement anyway that she could keep the pacifier in until the boat trip. And her father added, "I'm counting on you to tell me when you see interesting birds, so you need your mouth free." Those were two pretty strong arguments for Iris, and she also remembered that her mother made an exception for her, so she released it and then said, "Yes, Mommy, Daddy, it's OK. And thank you for letting me use it until now. I felt less scared with it." She already started to feel hot though, with the complete rain suit and the life jacket on top, and she realized it might be good that she had no way to take any of it off – now there was no temptation. And on the boat she could probably put her hands in the water to cool down.

Then her father got out the rope leash, attached it to the boat, measured out the right distance, and put in the same knot as before. Then Iris was helped into the back seat, and the leash was locked to the loop on top of her life jacket. Again Iris thought they were overdoing it: why would she need a life jacket if the leash prevented her from even getting into the water? But she wanted to get out on the water, so she just let it happen. Her father got her binoculars out: this time he had remembered to bring them, and she smiled at him to show her appreciation. He didn't just hang them around her neck though, but first he attached its carrying strap to the loop of the life jacket with a cow hitch knot. "So, this way you can't lose it," he explained. Iris thought that was a good idea. It didn't hinder her in any way, and now she didn't need to be so careful with it. Her parents also put on light waterproof jackets, put their bag in the leg area of the spare seat, and then they got in and started to leave the harbor. Finally they were on their way.

When they started to move, Iris wanted to explore the range of her leash, so she started moving around. The bag was in the way of sitting in the other seat, so instead she attempted to put her hands in the water, and leaned over the side. Her father had apparently made the leash as long as he could without letting her fall overboard, and she was grateful for that. She could get her hands in the water, and enjoyed the coolness of the water. "Iris, what are you doing?" her father asked, and continued without waiting for an answer, "We need to get out of the harbor first, and safely get clear of the other boats. Once we are in a quieter area, you can play around, but for now please stay in your seat and don't rock the boat. "Yes, Daddy." She understood that it was only for a little while, and suspected that if she didn't obey, her leash would probably be shortened, so she sat down again and wiped her wet hands on her jacket. There was just enough water to make one heart go a bit darker. She promised herself that when she was allowed, she'd get some proper water on her suit and see the real effect of the color change. But now she contented herself by just looking around.

There was actually quite enough to see, with a young couple standing on a kind of surfboard and propelling themselves forward with a paddle, a few inflatable boats with outboard motor, another pedal boat, some small yachts, and a few sailing boats. Nothing really big. A sailing boat passed them fairly closely, and she could see a family on board, with the kids also in life jackets. Looking closer the life jacket had straps and d-rings like a harness, with a line attached to the boat. The children were probably 6 and 9 or something, so definitely younger than Iris, but she still felt better for seeing she

was not the only one leashed and in a life jacket. She tentatively waved at them, and they waved back, apparently not greatly surprised by her attire.

Iris started looking around through her binoculars, although there were not that many birds so close to the boats and people. She couldn't blame them; she would prefer not to be surrounded by so many boats either. There was a cluster of birds flying overhead though, but the binoculars didn't help much, because they were still black silhouettes against the light sky. But because of their shape, and the fact that they flew in V-formation, she was pretty sure they were geese. She also took a closer look at some people in the boats, and one of them turned his head towards her, she quickly stopped looking through the binoculars and shifted her gaze. Without the binoculars, the guy was so far away that he couldn't have been aware she was looking at him, but even though she already knew that, it was still hard to believe when she saw someone through the binoculars looking right at her. She tried it once more, and again could not stop herself from quickly pretending she wasn't looking as soon as the person seemed to look at her. Strange!

The pedal boat wasn't going very fast, so after a while they still weren't free of the harbor. Even though there was still enough to see, Iris got impatient and told her parents to go faster. Her father explained, "Iris, these boats are not made for speed. We are not deliberately going slow, but we do need to not exhaust ourselves in the first few minutes." "I bet I could go faster!" Iris claimed, and her mother humored her, "I'm sure you could, dear, but unluckily you don't have any pedals." Iris could see that switching places while on the water was probably going to be difficult, and certainly not something her parents would allow, so she sat down again and entertained herself again with her binoculars. Once they left the little bay with the boat rental, they turned right and passed another harbor. Iris recognized it: they had been on that parking place – so this must be that fancy yacht club. The boats here were more luxurious, both sailing boats and pure motor boats, but nothing really big. Iris thought that the boats were probably limited to the lake, with the dam blocking the exit, so people didn't need boats you could sleep on here.

It took a bit of maneuvering to pass the marina, since most boats were either going out towards the middle of the lake, or coming back from there, while they were following the shore, and thus crossing all their paths. The pedal boat was not that easy to steer, also because they didn't go very fast, so sometimes they slowed down before Iris knew why, only to see a little later that there was a boat crossing in front of them. Suddenly she was happy to leave the pedaling and steering to her parents – this might not be as easy as she thought. Once they passed the harbor of the yacht club, they passed some land with trees and grass, but there were still parked cars and boats on trailers. Of course when Iris sat on her seat she was facing backwards, but most of the time she sat either with her knees on the seat to look forward, or at least looked over her shoulder where there were going. So she saw they still not in quiet waters quite yet, because there were still a few piers with boats coming up. Luckily there were no other boats crossing their path there, and once they had passed that, they came to more natural surroundings, and there were no more boats near. Gradually the coast turned a bit more marshy, and soon they started to see more birds as well.

"Look Daddy, it's a heron, but all white. Is that a ... what's it called... albino?" "No, Maya, it is not an albino. Officially it is not even a heron, but an egret, though those are quite similar. This is a great egret – they are closer to the size of a blue heron than the little egrets. Doesn't it look pretty?" Then a second landed near the first, and together they strode majestically through the water. Iris' mother was not particularly interested in birds, although she did like nature walks, and enjoy the wildlife if she happened to see it. She didn't even have binoculars. But she remarked on the beautiful sight as well.

Gradually they moved on, and for a while there were mostly the common birds around, and they also just enjoyed the environment, with the water, the trees and the plants. There were Irises along the water, which Iris of course recognized, since she was named after those flowers, and she entertained herself by calling out every time she saw them. Now that her parents were not actively pedaling, she leaned over the side again to feel the water, which was still pretty chilly. Actually she was not particularly hot anyway, even with her rainsuit and the life jacket; her parents had been right that it was cooler on the water. Although the sun was pretty hot, there was also a cool breeze.



*Figure 63 Great Egrets*

Having her hands wet, Iris decided she wanted to see if she could make all the hearts on her suit change color, so she started scooping up water and distributing it over her jacket and bib pants. Of course all hearts wasn't possible, since the life jacket covered a number, and those on the bib were not accessible either. The life jacket with its crotch strap even prevented her from lifting up her jacket to reach the bib. But she gave it a good try with the ones she could reach, and soon a number of the white hearts were turning dark. Not all of the ones she made wet changed color though, but she remembered that Nanny told her that that was how it was supposed to be. The downside was that her rain boots were over her pants, so the water ran down into them, making her feet wet and cold. And she had to keep making her suit wet; with the warm sun they soon dried up and turned white again. Of course a fair bit of water ended up in the boat, around her feet, as well. But she ignored that, and proudly stepped up on her seat to show her parents the result. "Oh, I didn't know that they could do that. That is really fancy," her father reacted.

There were a few little waves, and Iris started to wobble, so she quickly stepped off her seat, and her boots made a splashing sound in all the water that had collected in the leg area of her seat. Her father reacted, "You do realize that with a boat you are supposed to keep the water out to keep it floating? Now you have to bail it out again!" "It's not that much, I'm sure we'll stay afloat," Iris defended herself. "Nevertheless, it's better to keep it dry. Here is a small bucket. Just scoop up what water you can and throw it overboard again." The little bucket apparently came with the pedal boat, because there was a rope knotted to the handle. "Hey, the bucket is leashed as well!" Iris noted. She didn't really mind this 'bailing' thing – it was fun to see how far she could throw the water. All too soon she was scraping the last drops from the bottom, and her father told her that was enough.

A while later her father suddenly softly called out, "Look Iris, wood ducks!" Iris had to look several times where exactly he was pointing, and then she saw a few ducks along the shore pretty far away. But with her binoculars she could recognize them. Her father had once shown them to her in a book, and also showed a picture of the mandarin duck, which was its closest relative. The mandarins really looked spectacular, but they were only found in the wild in Asia. She remembered being upset about that, having no chance to see those. But because of that she remembered the wood duck well, and it was still one of the prettiest ducks you could see here. Perhaps one day she could travel to Asia to see the mandarins, but until then she had to 'make do' with the wood ducks. She knew that wasn't fair to them, and in her mind she apologized to them for thinking that. They were pretty shy, and stayed fairly far away, but they didn't fly away, so she could watch them for a while. "Thanks Daddy, they are almost as pretty as their relatives."



*Figure 64 Wood Ducks*

After that it was fairly quiet for a while, and Iris was looking around for things to do. She spotted the bag her parents had deposited in the leg area of the seat next to her, and became curious what sort of things her parents had brought along. When they were pedaling again, she softly pulled it onto the seat, and tried to open the zip quietly. But she was stopped by a little padlock keeping the zipper pulls together. Foiled! Her parents knew her too well! She pulled a little on the padlock, but of course it was no use. And feeling the contents of the bag from the outside wasn't very helpful either. So she quietly slipped the bag back where it was, and looked around once more. Still nothing really interesting around. She started to feel a bit lonely; even though her parents were less than a yard away, sitting down she couldn't see them, and they couldn't see her. And they were mostly talking quietly to each other. Feeling the need for some attention, she decided she would go and sit on her father's lap for a while, and started to climb over the barrier in the middle, in between her parents. "Iris, what are you doing? You're rocking the boat!" her father exclaimed. "It's boring in the back. I want to sit on your lap." "You need to stop now and go back to your seat. It is not safe. And our legs need to be free to pedal, so we can't have you on our laps at the moment." Iris obeyed mockingly, sat down and crossed her arms. This wasn't as much fun as she thought.

Her parents stopped pedaling again, and suddenly Iris felt her hair being stroked. She looked around, and now her mother had turned around, probably sitting with her knees on her seat. "Is the boat ride getting a bit long for you? We're already on our way back, because we don't have much time left. Don't you like it anymore?" "Well, it was fun, but it is just like I'm all alone in the back." "Yes, I can see that. Perhaps we've not spent enough attention to you. I'm sorry about that." The uncommon apology and the stroking made Iris feel well again, and to show her appreciation she turned her head and kissed her mother's hand. "Look, an Osprey with a fish," her father suddenly called out, and they all looked up, and easily spotted it. Not only because the osprey was a pretty big bird, but it also was fairly close to them, flying from the lake towards the shore. They could see it pretty well even without binoculars, but Iris still used them so she could make out even more details. It flew towards a cluster of taller trees, and landed somewhere out of sight. "Thanks dad, that was beautiful."



*Figure 65 Osprey with Fish*

Soon after Iris recognized the area with the harbors, and she knew they were getting close again. They reached the rental pier without incident, and her parents got out, and collected the bag. Her father made a show of checking that they had not forgotten anything, but didn't look at Iris, and then they started to move away. "Hey, you're forgetting me!" Iris called out indignantly. Her father turned to his wife, and said, "I believe I hear a little Biik squealing." Again he made a show of looking

around, but ignoring Iris. "Do you know where that sound is coming from? I don't remember bringing one," he asked her mother. Iris was almost sure they were teasing her, but still she started to feel a little anxious about being left behind. So she attempted to climb out of the boat, but of course the leash stopped her. She shouted out, "Daddy, I want out," and she demonstratively pulled on the leash again. "Oh look, I believe it is our little Piglet," her mother exclaimed, apparently feeling they had taken the joke far enough. "Where?" "There" her mother answered at the same time Iris called "Here, Daddy!" "Oh, look at that. It our little Biik after all. What are you still doing there, come along now." "Daddy, I can't." "Why, is there anything wrong with your legs?" "DADDYYYY" Iris had gotten impatient. "OK, OK, you don't have to squeal like that, I'm coming." Now Iris's leash was finally unlocked from her life jacket, and he helped her ashore, where her mother took her hand, while he recovered the leash from the boat, and double checked they had left nothing else.

The guy who helped them when they started had obviously noticed that they were back, because he was already walking towards them, checked that the boat was securely moored and then turned to Iris. "Shall we get you out of your life jacket again?" Iris nodded shyly; back on land she quickly felt the warmth of all the layers, and it would be nice get rid of its bulk. Then surely her mother would get her out of the sweaty rain suit as well. It had not been so bad on the water, where she could always cool down by putting her hands in the water, but now she would like to feel the cool breeze on her skin again. And the suit was a little tight, even though she knew that the shoulder straps were at their maximum length already. Luckily her thick diaper prevented it from pressing too much between her legs, but on the other hand when she peed during the trip, it all became just a little tighter because of the swelling diaper. So she allowed the guy to cut the tie wraps, open the buckles, and help her out. Fleetingly she felt a tiny bit sorry to let it go, because it did look quite nice, with the bright colors and the flowers, but mostly it was a relief. Politely she said, "Thank you. It is a nice jacket," which made the guy smile, and say, "You're welcome anytime".

Next stop was the little office again, where her father apparently had to do a bit more paperwork, while her mother took her to the corner again and started to undress her. First she took off the jacket, which felt really nice. Then the first boot, but when she pulled on it, a whole gush of water came out. "Iris, your boots are soaking wet! Now I made the floor all wet. What did you do?" Iris had all forgotten about the water that ran into her boots while she was trying to get the hearts on her bib pants to change color. Once the water had warmed, it was not so uncomfortable anymore, and she quickly became used to the squishy feeling. It actually felt a bit naughty, so she had not felt the need to empty them while in the boat. Now her mother sounded a bit upset, and even though she didn't feel that guilty, she decided to be nice, "Sorry, I was just trying to make the hearts dark." Then she added mischievously, "Maybe next time the rain pants go over the boots?" trying to shift some of the blame. Her mother took her suggestion serious, "I wasn't sure if the pant legs were wide enough, but I'll try that next time. That is, if we can still get you into them by then." Well, with the slow speed that Iris had been growing, she was sure that it would take a while yet before she really didn't fit into them anymore. Still, she liked it, and didn't want the suit discarded, "Then I won't grow anymore, so I can always keep wearing it!" "Yes, dear."

Her mother tried to keep most water in the boot she had removed, and put it to the side. Then she pulled off the drenched sock, which of course made more water drip on the floor. "Hmm, I'm making a mess here. We had better do this outside. Luckily her dad had finished at the desk, picked Iris up, and together they went outside. There was a bench near the water, so they put her on it, and there they removed the other boot, emptied both, and wrang out the socks as best they could. Then her mother dried her feet with a towel. She concluded, "We can't put these wet socks back on, and I hadn't expected that we'd need spares. Let's leave her feet bare for the moment, so they can dry



fully. With the towel she also dried of some places where the bib pants were not quite dry, and then disappeared with in into the office, probably to clean the wet spots on the floor there. Iris wasn't restrained at the moment, but she realized that barefooted she wouldn't be able to get far before she would be caught. And after her lonely feeling in the boat, she had no intention of getting away from her parents, so she patted on the bench next to her to invite her father to sit with her.

"Don't you want your rain suit off first?" he checked with her. Iris wanted to be cuddled, but thought that she would enjoy that even more if she was wearing less, so she would not be too hot. So she replied, "Yes Daddy, that too." He asked her to stand up; the pavers in front of the bench looked acceptable to stand on with her bare feet, so she did. He unlocked the straps at the back, and managed to get them off her, although her mother would probably had done it quicker. She actually was back before he had gotten it off both her feet, and he handed the pants to her. She had also emptied the boots, and was carrying them together with the wet socks. "Carlos, will you carry her to the car?" "Mommy, can we cuddle a bit first?" "Still feeling the lack of attention on the pedal boat, hmm? Well, I guess we can sit here for a few more minutes." Iris gave a joyous smile, and held her arms open to both parents. She was actually unsure which parent she would prefer, but as long as she was held tightly for a while, it didn't matter. Since her mother was the one asked, she stepped in and took her on her lap, while her father sat right next to them. She put her legs on his lap, so that she was in direct contact with both, and snuggled up. She was a bit moist from sweat under the rainsuit, and with the little breeze near the water it was actually comfortably warm to be that close.

Even though she liked being secured, for now it was also enjoyable to not have anything like a harness or life jacket wrapped around her. Of course the jumpsuit was still locked on her, but that was no more restrictive than other, 'normal' clothes, and even her feet were not covered at the moment. She wiggled her toes around in appreciation, which her father took as an invitation to start playing with them, while her mother squeezed and rocked her gently. Oh, this was heaven. Suddenly she remembered though that it wouldn't last long anymore, and her father was leaving again within a day. Even though she knew in the back of her mind it was silly, she softly said, "Daddy, can't you stay home for a while longer? I don't want this to end." "That is very nice of you to say, my Maya, but the people who are at the oil platform now want to go home too, and visit their daughters. It would not be fair to let them wait. And of course I would not earn any money to pay for such trips, and put food into that little tummy of yours, and nice shoes on these cute little feet." Iris nodded. She knew, and didn't want to take away time from other fathers and their daughters either, and she liked food in that belly of hers. But she felt so strongly that she had to say it, anyway.

After a few minutes the biggest need of Iris to be held was over, and even though she was still loath to give it up, she also wanted to go on, and see what the rest of the day would bring. "Thanks, Mommy and Daddy. I'm ready now to go home." Her parents looked at her surprised, "But Iris, don't you want to go on and see if it is quiet at the playground, and walk through nature at Kirk Park?" "Na, we can do that a next time. Now I first want to have a good sleep in my bed so that I'm rested when Miranda comes." Now her parents looked thoroughly flabbergasted, but after a few seconds Iris could no longer hold her laughter. "Ha, ha, fooled you! Got you back for leaving me behind in the boat!" Now her parents understood that Iris hadn't been serious, and her mother squeezed her a bit firmer. But her father had some very inviting bare feet on his lap, and that proved too tempting: he grabbed her legs so that she couldn't pull away or kick, and started tickling under her soles. Iris tried to get away, but with both parents holding her she had no chance, and soon she cried for mercy.

Her parents accepted her surrender and released her. "Carlos, why don't you carry her to the car, so that she won't hurt her bare feet. We'll put the sneakers back on her at a Kirk Park picnic table." Her father put her on the bench, and turned to stand with his back towards her. "Hop on," he invited

her, and then she rode piggy-back to the car. That was fun, and all too soon they were at their destination, and she was secured in her car seat. As far as Iris could remember, this was the first time ever she was in the car without shoes, and it was kind of interesting to use her feet to feel the texture of the seat and the chair in front of her. Her legs were not long enough to touch the carpet on the floor, especially since the harness forced her to sit up straight. And they couldn't reach around the chair to her mother either. She did push against the chair with her feet a few times, but when her mother reacted by saying that they should apparently look into ways to secure her legs as well, she quickly stopped. The harness keeping her in the seat was sort of nice, because she could fully relax while still being kept up straight, but not being able to move her legs, especially on a longer drive, didn't seem so much fun. And it might even be used on big Iris as well !?

It didn't take long before they were at the car park of Kirk Park again. There seemed to be just as many cars as before, but there were fewer people around, and only one of the picnic tables was occupied, and that one was not close to the playground. After the interaction with the guy from the boat rental, Iris already felt more confident that people accepted her as someone with limitations, just like at the aquarium. Now the attraction of the playground was bigger than her fear of being looked at or discovered, so she asked if she could go to the playground now. "If you want to, we can do that, but first let's get some shoes on those little feet, and make sure you can't run off." "OK" Iris was fine with that; it was fun to have her father carry her around, but also nice to be able to go where she wanted, although of course within the limits of the leash. But after how she had been restricted to her seat on the pedal boat, being 'just' on a leash didn't seem too bad. She knew her parents wouldn't let her run around free anyway, and that that was probably for the best.

She was taken out of the car seat, and put on the nearest picnic table, where her mother put her feet in her sneakers, without socks. She explained that she was putting the socks in the sun in the hope that they would be dry before they started their nature walk, so that her little piglet wouldn't get blisters on her trotters. In the meantime her father put the harness on, but did not put the parent band on his wrist; he only held it in his hand. Then they looked around at what the playground had to offer. Her parents discussed for a moment what they considered suitable, and decided it was not a good idea to just let her play by herself, because there was no gate around. They decided that she could use the slide and the swings. Her father removed the leash from her harness, took her by the hand, and let her climb up the slide and go down by herself. In the meantime her mother had moved to the bottom of the slide, picked her up there, and took her to climb up again, while her father went to the bottom. Of course it was not a spectacular slide for a thirteen-year-old, but for little Iris it was still exciting, especially when she tried some variations, like lying on her back, not seeing where she was going. That made her squeal a bit. Then she even tried going on her stomach, head first. She expected her parents to protest, and although they exchanged a glance, they didn't, and that was even more scary and fun. Only when she tried to put her legs outside, her mother warned her to stay inside the slide with all body parts.

"Can I try the swings now?" Iris asked after a while. Her father took hold of her harness in the back, and they went over to the swings. It was a rack with 3 swings on them, two regular swings with only a plank to sit on, and one that was a complete chair. Iris thought that was a bit bulky and probably harder to swing with, but of course that was the one her parents took her to. Her father lifted her into the chair, and then moved a Y-shaped bar from the back over her, which clicked closed between her legs. It was a little like the car harness without the waist straps, but instead of fabric it was thick, inflexible yellow plastic. It was something she expected more on a roller coaster than on a swing, but she had to conclude it did a great job with keeping her in place. She wondered if she would even be able to get out of it on her own, as long as the harness was in place, but she had no time to



experiment, since her father started pushing her, and even little Iris knew it would not be smart to open the harness while she was swinging up and down. The seat was child-sized, but Iris still fit in it well, although the harness didn't allow for much movement within the seat. (see Figure 66) It felt very safe, but when her father got going and she was going higher and higher, it was still a lot of fun, and she started calling out "Wheeee" while she descended from the highest points. Of course going down from the highest point in front was the scariest, since that was accelerating backwards, and especially in this seat Iris had no way of looking where she was going then. After a few swings her cap flew off, and her mother went to pick it up, but kept it in her hands, having no easy way to put it back on. And it would probably fly off again, anyway.



*Figure 66 Special Needs Swing Seat*

After a while her father stopped pushing, walked over to his wife who had sat down at the picnic table, and started talking softly enough so that Iris couldn't hear it. She could hold on to the front chains with her hands, and tried to keep the swing going, but with the seat that was harder than with a regular swing, because her body was held firmly in place, and so she couldn't go very high anymore. Then suddenly a boy of about 5 years old came running towards the swings, and took the one next to hers. He sat down, but before he started swinging he took a good look at Iris. Without her cap she felt a bit exposed, but at least she didn't know the kid. "You're big!" he pronounced. Iris didn't think she was, and shrugged, although the harness hampered that somewhat. "Why are you not on a normal swing? Are you one of those stupid kids or what?" That was hurtful, and Iris didn't know how to respond, but some tears welled up. "Dennis, you're very rude. We don't say such things to people like that." Apparently his parents had come over as well, and had overheard his remark. Iris still didn't like being called 'people like that', but at least it made him apologize. "I'm sorry, I didn't want to be rude. But I don't know how I should say it."

Then he decided a new introduction was in order, "Hello, I'm Dennis." "Hi Dennis, I'm Iris." "I'm five, and that are my parents. They want to walk here, but that is boring. I like it more to stay here." His parents had moved to Iris's parents once they had heard the apology. Iris didn't know what age she should say that she was, so she just skipped that part, "I like walking in nature. It is really pretty here, and I like to watch the birds." Now Dennis didn't quite know what to say to that, so he concentrated on swinging for a while. Then he told her about the 'Lightning McQueen' sweater he was wearing. Iris recognized the name from the Cars animated TV series, but had never been that interested in it. It was sort of nice though to talk to the boy, who had more or less accepted her as an equal. "Oh, is he your favorite?" she kept him going. Better to let him do the talking, so that he would not ask things that she might find hard to answer. In the meantime she started to explore how the harness was released; she tried pulling, feeling around if there was a button, or if she could squeeze out on the sides. It didn't work, but the boy saw her attempts and called out, "Daddy, Iris tries to get out on her own!" The little snitch.

When her own father came over to investigate, she tried to divert his attention, "Daddy, push me again!" But he checked if the harness was still secure anyway, and then looked at his watch. "Iris, we need to go on, or else there is no more time for the walk before we have to go home." Iris had been looking forward to the walk as well, but she also liked to swing. So she tried to negotiate, "Daddy, can we do a few more swings first?" "OK, but only five more. Count with me?" She tried to count

along, but she couldn't stop herself doing the 'Wheee's, so she let her father do the counting. All too soon he was at five, and stopped pushing. She tried to keep it going, but he halted the last movements, and moved to the front to release the harness. He looked it over for a moment, and then pushed something at the underside of the seat. Iris realized that she would never have been able to reach that, so the harness had been secure. When she was helped out, she looked at it once more; it was a comfortable seat, and the rigid harness had made her feel very safe. Knowing now that she had no way of getting out herself gave her a little tingle. She would not mind doing this again sometime, although it was a bit bothersome that she couldn't swing by herself very well. While her father reattached the leash to her own harness and his wrist, she said, "Goodbye Dennis. Have a nice day." "Bye, Iris." And then she added, "You should try this one, too." She sort of hoped that his parents would lock him in too, and then he'd be stuck in a swing that he couldn't do much in. Iris knew that she was being a bit mean, but he first called her stupid and then snatched on her, so she didn't feel guilty about it. But he just said, "In that? No thanks," and continued swinging where he was.

Her father took her over to the picnic bench where her mother also was. Dennis's parents went over to their son, so they were on their own again. "You need a new layer of sunscreen," her mother informed her. "Can't we just go? It's only been a few hours; I'm sure it is still there." But her father sat on the bench, took her in his lap, and put his arms around her. Again the combination of holding her, but at the same time also cuddling her. So she just let her mother rub the substance all over her exposed body parts, while she leaned into her father and enjoyed the closeness. "Your socks are not quite dry yet, so you'll just have to do without them for the walk," her mother informed her. Iris shrugged; her feet felt fine, and in some way it felt a bit naughty, like not putting on underwear. Then the cap was put on her head again, she got her binoculars, and they started the walk. Apparently her parents had done preparations for the walk while she was on the swing, because her father also had his binoculars, and a largish backpack that seemed well-filled. She saw her socks dangling on a strap of her father's backpack – probably to dry as quickly as possible, so that they could be put on her feet again. Her mother had her regular shoulder bag, and Iris didn't need to carry anything. Not that that would have been easy with the harness, anyway. Iris felt full of energy, and insisted on having each parent hold her hand, and skipping in the middle. She realized that she really hadn't been very active since lunch, sitting in the car, the boat, and the swing, and even being carried around. It was good to *do* something once more.

They actually went all the way to where they spent their lunch, past the little lake where the blue heron was striding again. This time there were fewer people in the recreation field, but Iris still recognized some groups that seemed to have settled there for the whole day. Iris was glad her parents were not like them; she didn't like spending all day lounging in the sun, but much preferred adventures and discoveries. Iris tried to look around for birds, but her parents kept walking, so she didn't have time to really look around, and with both hands held, she couldn't use her binoculars either. She wasn't ready yet to stop holding hands though, and with the people around, there was less chance to spot anything nice, anyway. So she just enjoyed herself and chatted with her parents, even though that might also scare away birds. Even with only the jumpsuit on, it was pretty hot in the sun, so they tried to stay in the shadow of trees whenever they could.

Iris just spotted the tree she had been leashed to, when her father suddenly stopped. Because she was holding hands with him, she was jerked to a halt too, and then stopping her mother jerked on her other arm as well. Iris didn't complain though; she knew the likely reason for him to halt. And indeed he pointed further along the edge of the forest, and whispered "Flicker". Those were not that rare, and Iris already knew it was a type of woodpecker that often ate ants on the ground. Following

his finger she had little trouble spotting the bird that sat on a little mound of sand, which could very well be an ants nest. Iris cheered the bird on in thought, because it got rid of those pesky insects. Letting go of her parents' hands, she used her binoculars to take a closer look, and she could see the bright red spot at its neck, and how it was busily digging in the sand with its beak, followed by tilting its head backwards to swallow. She offered her mother her binoculars to let her see it too, but her mother smiled but shook her head. When Iris turned to watch the bird again, it wasn't there anymore. "Where did it go? Did we scare it off?" Iris wondered aloud. "It just flew up – it will probably have young somewhere, to bring some of the food to. I didn't get the impression it was paying us much attention." Oh yes, feeding the young was important, so she wished the Flicker good luck, and grabbed her parents' hands once more to keep going. It was a nice bird to look at, but not rare enough to hang around in the hope that it would come back. Pity though that she didn't see it fly up – it had fantastic red colors underneath the wings.



*Figure 67 Northern Flicker*

At the end of the clearing, there was a little path disappearing into the dense vegetation. Now they could no longer walk three abreast, and she had to let go of her parents' hands. Her father let her go first, which Iris was grateful for: behind him he would block much of her view ahead. And it also made her feel a little proud that she was allowed to lead the way, even though of course the leash would keep her close and safe. Soon they were out of sight and sound of any other people, and Iris felt now the adventure had properly started. The path was still free, but with both trees and shrubberies she couldn't see far to the sides. She imagined that if the path became more overgrown, she would need to hack her way through with a machete, as she had seen on adventure movies. Perhaps there was even an abandoned temple with a treasure if they went into this wilderness deep enough? There were a lot more bird sounds around her, and also some scuttling at ground level, but it was hard to spot anything through the thick foliage.

It didn't last long though before there was more light up ahead, and they could see through the trees. There seemed to be more swamp-like water ahead. The path made a bend so that they started walking along the edge of the trees, having forest on their left and water on their right, with a muddy area with low growth in between. A family of coots was making its way through that area, and especially the young looked a bit clumsy, partly swimming, partly climbing over plants or through mud. It made her giggle. A bit later she saw something moving in the water that didn't look like a bird or a fish. With her binoculars she saw that it must be a mammal. "Look Daddy, a rat. Or is it a beaver? Are there beavers here?" Her father looked too, and concluded, "Close, but it is a nutria. They are related to rats, but are pure herbivores and not opportunistic omnivores. They look similar to beavers, but do not have that wide tail." Now her mother was interested too, and she borrowed the binoculars from her father. Iris would have offered hers too, but she couldn't blame her: her father's were very good, and you could see things even closer with them. But she was happy with her own pair, since they were nice and small, and a lot less heavy to carry around on your neck.



*Figure 68 Nutria*

Suddenly Iris realized that there was a road on the other side of the water, because some cars were passing by. On the far side of the road there was a sort of artificial earthen wall that looked very familiar to Iris, "Daddy, is that the road we came here on?" "Yes, Iris, I believe it is Clear Lake Road, with the dam. Kirk Park is to the north of that road, and you can see from the sun that we are looking southward, so that all fits. We might very well be at the exact spot you pointed to from the car that you found so pretty." "Really? It looks quite different from this side." Not wanting to give the wrong impression, she added "but also very pretty." Her mother stood behind her, and she put her arms around her daughter loosely, and agreed, "Yes, this is a really nice park. I'm glad we took this walk, next to all the other activities. But it won't be that long before we need to start going back; we need to be back in time to get you fed and ready for Miranda, and ourselves for our visit to Jack and Diana." "Do we really have to go back already?" "No dear, there is a bit of time left, so we can explore this path a bit further. I'm just warning you in advance." "Oh, OK." "How are your feet doing? Any sore spots?" "No, they're fine."

The nutria was no longer visible, so she added, "Let's go on then," and immediately took the lead again. Apparently her parents had no objections, since she didn't feel the leash going taut, so she kept on moving. But it was no use rushing; she wanted to take her time to enjoy the environment and look around for animals, so it wasn't long until she decided it was better to do a short walk and enjoy it than a longer walk and not see anything, and slowed down again. A bit later the path bent southward, and there was a cute little bridge to cross a little stream that came from the forest and ended in the pond they were walking along. Shortly after that the path split, and Iris stopped and looked questioningly at her father. He looked on his phone, and then asked his wife, "These paths make a loop of a few hundred yards. Is there still enough time to go around, and then walk back?" "Yes, that should work. But hold on a moment, let me check if Iris's socks are dry yet." She checked them, and concluded, "Good enough." There were no benches around, or anywhere along the path they had walked, so she suggested, "Carlos, why don't you take Iris on your back once more, so that I can put the socks on her?" So Iris climbed on his back once more, and her mother started taking off her sneakers. Her father decided to move to the railing of the bridge, and put Iris's behind on it, while keeping hold of her. Now he didn't have to carry her weight anymore. Her mother looked doubtful for a moment, and warned, "Don't drop her in the water. Iris, you keep holding on with both arms." Both agreed, and then soon Iris had her socks and her sneakers on again.

*Figure 69 Rufous Hummingbird drinking nectar*

Iris half wondered why they didn't just let her put them on herself, but this was more fun, so she didn't even mention it: when her mother drew attention to their appointment in the evening again, she realized once more how little time she had left with her father, with him leaving the next day, so she wasn't going to say no to any pampering and fun they could have together. For a while she felt sad, but the weather was too nice and it was too beautiful here to dwell, and soon those thoughts moved to the back of her head, and she enjoyed herself once more. They were on a bit of land that bulged out into the pond, and the vegetation was lower than in the forest. They passed a flowering bush, and there were a few hummingbirds visiting the yellow flowers. These little birds were not rare, and you only had to hang a hummingbird feeder with sugar water in your garden to get regular visits by them,



but it felt different spotting them in the wild, and they spent some time watching how they hovered at one spot in the air while poking their long bills into the flowers. The wings beat so fast that they looked a blur, while the rest of the bird was perfectly still. They looked cute, but they could be quite aggressive, and more than once one chased another away.

After completing the loop, they were back at the little bridge, and then it wasn't long before they were back at the recreation area. They saw the flicker again, but there was no more time to stop, so they kept going until they were back at the car. By now Iris was so used to wearing her harness in the open that she didn't even worry anymore about others on the parking lot seeing her. Her father removed the harness and put her in her car seat again. Iris was sad that the walk was over, but it had been a fairly long stroll, so it was also nice to sit again. She looked at the playground; there was a family with two small kids, and she was sure there was no time left anyway, so she settled down for the ride home. Soon they were driving on the other side of the pond again, and Iris could see the bulge of the land where they saw the hummingbirds. Of course they were way too far away now to see them, but Iris tried to look through her binoculars, that her parents perhaps had forgotten to put away. But from a moving car that was not a good idea; she couldn't get her bearings, and actually started feeling a bit nauseous, so she quickly stopped again. As so often in the car seat, and especially now after the brisk walk, Iris started dozing off soon after.

## 22. Babysitting

Iris woke from the car being parked, but when she looked around she saw they were not in the garage at home. "Daddy, why are we stopping here?" "We thought you might like a pizza for dinner; we'll be eating at our friends', so we're not cooking today." Her mother had not even finished the sentence before Iris cheered. This was a rare treat! But then she started fearing she had to go into the pizzeria on a leash, and this one was close to home, so there might very well be someone who knew her. "Daddy, Mommy, I don't want to go inside with my harness. Can't we do without? I promise I'll be good and stay real close!" Iris got quite worked up, and squirmed in her seat. Her mother calmed her down, while her father got out of the car, "Don't worry dear. We ordered ahead, and Daddy is just going to collect it while we stay in the car." Phew, that was a relief. But it also triggered a new question, "But don't I get to choose?" "Well, you were sleeping so sweetly that I didn't want to wake you, and I wanted to keep it a surprise for as long as I could, so I picked something I know you like: the Quattro Stagioni. It is the one with the four different quarters, with ham, mushroom, peppers, and artichokes." Iris was still a bit miffed from not being able to choose herself, but her mother was right that this was one of her favorites, and hearing it already made her mouth water.

That got worse when her father returned and the smell permeated the car. He gave the box to his wife, and started the last part of the drive home. "Mommy, I'm hungry. Can I have a slice now?" "Honey, you know we don't eat in the car. And you will definitely need your bib when you eat pizza; you wouldn't want piglet to get all smudged, now do you? Don't worry, you'll be in your high chair before the pizza has had time to cool off." That wasn't fair – tempting her with that delicious smell, and then letting her wait. Now she wanted out of the car seat, to get at the pizza. But of course her attempts to escape had no effect. Frustrated she kicked the back of her mother's seat again, but then remembered the threat of her legs going to be secured, and quickly stopped again. Of course there was no chance anymore of her falling asleep again, but her mother managed to distract her by asking her to name all the birds they had seen that day. Traffic was pretty busy, because it was rush



hour, so the drive took a little longer than usual, but Iris was still busy thinking of all the birds when they reached their destination and turned into the garage.

Iris was afraid that her parents would first unload the car, and get things ready inside before helping her out, but this time her mother got her first, and immediately took her, and the pizza, to the kitchen table, where Iris got the bib on, and was put in her high chair. Then the pizza box was put in front of Iris, and her mother checked that the pizza was pre-sliced. She also doublechecked that the bib was covering her clothes fully, probably realizing that it was going to be rather messy, letting her little girl loose on whole pizza slices. This was the first time Iris got a good look at the box, and she realized it was smaller than she was used to. "You got me a child size one!" she reproached her mother, disappointed. "Yes dear, you usually can't finish a full-sized one, and I'm not going to throw away half of it. Remember you had a big lunch." "But that was ages ago. I'm so hungry I could eat two full-sized ones!" "We'll see. Just start with this, and I'll leave instructions for Miranda if you are still hungry later." Of course that made Iris curious – would there be a nice dessert? But she couldn't wait any longer, so she started grabbing the first slice of pizza. Apparently her mother had not even bothered with cutlery, which was fine with her: pizza should be eaten by hand. Now the downside of this quattro Stagioni pizza became apparent: with which topic should she start? It was hard to choose, so in the end she closed her eyes, and stabbed with her finger randomly into the pizza. It ended up in a part with peppers, which was fine with her. The pizza was not hot anymore, but still warm enough. Her mother had already moved away, back to the car to help unload.

Iris realized that her parents had decided to let her eat without supervision, knowing she could not leave the table, and the bib would protect her clothes. Somehow Iris felt a bit disappointed about that – now that she was expected to make a mess, there was no opportunity to be naughty anymore. Just to not be too compliant, Iris decided she was going to do her best to *not* make a mess. That was a challenge, when eating whole slices of pizza with large pieces of topping, like artichokes. But with the box right under her mouth, she managed to contain what she spilled, and even wiped some dripped tomato sauce from her bib. Iris liked her idea, and started anticipating how her parents would react when they saw her all clean. At that moment they were busily moving about, every now and then taking a look if she was doing OK. By now they had put away all the stuff they had brought along for the trip, and her mother had already changed into a nice dress.

When the doorbell rang, it startled Iris, and she suddenly became anxious. What if that was not Miranda, but someone else, and he or she would see her in the high chair with the bib on? She tried if she could at least get that off, but the neck opening was too small for her head to fit though, and she couldn't even get her arms out: with the harness keeping her firmly to the back rest of the chair, she had too little wiggle room. But then she heard her mother say, "Welcome Miranda, great timing. Iris is just finishing eating, and we are nearly ready." Now Iris could relax a bit more; of course it was still a bit scary that Miranda would see her like this, but she already had seen her in the high chair yesterday, and had heard all about little Iris without freaking out. And after being little in public, and on a leash all day, Iris noticed that she didn't feel much anxiety about her babysitter anymore.

She actually wanted out of her chair to join the others as soon as possible, so she quickly started putting as much of the last slice into her mouth as would fit. But she hadn't realized the older girl would come over to say hi, and when she did Iris's mouth was much too full to say anything. So she waved, and opened her mouth to show why she didn't say anything. "Iris, no! It is not polite to show the contents of your mouth when it is full," her mother admonished her. Iris closed her mouth again, unrepented, and started working again on emptying it the regular way. Miranda gave her a quick pat on the head, and mentioned she really liked her bib. More of the children she sat with should have something like that, instead of the usual small fabric bibs. It would also be very useful for arts and

crafts. Iris nodded; she liked the bib as well, making it OK for her to be as messy as she felt like. Her mother added, "Yes, we used one we still had from when she was a toddler, but that was not nearly enough, and she quickly managed to get food all over her sleeves." Then she took Miranda away to the office, and when they closed the door Iris couldn't hear them anymore.

Soon Iris had finished the pizza, and even the last crumbs in the box. She called out to her parents that she was ready, and her father appeared to get her out. "What is it Iris, trouble finishing that whole pizza?" "All gone!" "I don't believe it; it can't be all gone already. And certainly not without your usual mess on your table and bib." He made a show of looking around, and under the table, and even behind her ears, to see where she had hidden the pizza. That made Iris laugh out loud, and she replied, "No, really. It is all gone!" "Well, I can't see it, and of course my little Biik would never lie to me, so I guess you must have eaten it all." "Yes, Daddy, Really! Can I get out now?" She stamped impatiently with her feet on the footrest of the chair. He removed her bib, got her out of the chair, and held first his hand and then his ear on Iris's tummy. "I guess it might be in there, given that you look 5 months pregnant," he concluded, which Iris vehemently denied, and then he took her upstairs to put her night diaper on her, holding her by the wrist. He explained that they had agreed that her mother would do the changes, but she needed more time to get ready, and explain some more things to Miranda, so this time he would do it. Iris said she didn't mind; her father wasn't as good at it as her mother, and his hands were not so soft, but any time spent with him before he had to leave again was nice.

Once he opened her zipper, Iris helped herself out of the jumpsuit. He also let her remove the pink bodysuit, and then he lifted her onto the table. Iris wanted to cooperate well, so that he would think good thoughts about her when he was away again, and to not let her parents worry about her tonight. So she even tried to put her hands into the cuffs, but above her head and out of her sight that didn't work, and her father helped her close the cuffs. He apparently misunderstood her motivation, because he remarked, "So anxious to get out of your diaper? Is it so full, or did you do a big one in it?" He felt the package between her legs, and concluded it didn't seem too bad. "No Daddy, I just want to help." "That's sweet, my little Maya, thank you. Here comes the waist strap, to keep you safe." He put the pink body over Iris's chest to prevent her from cooling off too much, and then unlocked the plastic panties, cleaned them and put them aside for the moment. The diaper was pretty full, but not overflowing. He got one of the thick nighttime diapers with the cute patterns, and added an extra booster pad, explaining that it needed to last the whole evening and night.

He added, "Tomorrow I have an appointment at 12PM with a colleague to drive to the pickup place of the helicopter. He lives in Sutherlin, which is about an hours drive southward. Mommy will drive me there, and I hope you want to come too." "Of course, Daddy." "Good. Now I wouldn't like my colleague to see you in childish clothes and harness, so I think you should be mature tomorrow." "Yes, Daddy." Iris agreed with him; of course she didn't want all of her fathers coworkers to know she liked being little. But on the other hand it was so much fun to be little with him, and she worried that big Iris might be a bit stand-offish, and not let him know how much she loved him. But that was not to be helped. By then she was all wrapped up in a clean and extra thick diaper, and the three locks of her cute panties clicked one by one. She wanted to touch them, but of course her hands were stuck above her head. Her father suggested, "Shall we already put you in your PJ's?" "Daddy, No, then I can't see anything anymore!" "And what is there to see then? Mommy and I will be gone." Iris decided that if he was teasing her, she could do it back, so she retorted, "There's Miranda, and she is a lot nicer to look at than you! And I want to watch TV." "Ouch, that hurts. Well, OK then. I guess it is back into your piglet suit." Iris thought for a moment if there was something

else she wanted to wear for Miranda, but decided the jumpsuit would be fine, so she nodded, not sure if he was asking or telling her.

So he released her from the table, put a clean grey body for the night on her, and then back into the jumpsuit. He fiddled a bit with the zipper, undoubtedly locking it again, and then picked up the harness to put it on her again. "Daddy, I wore that all day already. Can't we leave it off?" "Iris, I don't want Miranda to have to chase you if you decide to be uncooperative." "But it is a bit auwie, here under my arms. Can't we at least let Miranda decide if she wants it?" Her father looked at her inquisitively, trying to figure out if she had some mischief in mind, so she tried to look as sweet and innocent as she could. "Well, OK then, but I'd better not hear from Miranda that you have made things hard for her." Iris just smiled sweetly at her father, and offered her hand to let him take her down.

In the living room Miranda was on the couch, watching TV. Iris thought she heard sounds from her parents' bedroom, so her mother was probably getting ready for the evening. Miranda noticed them arriving, turned the sound of the TV off, and padded on the couch next to her to invite Iris to sit with her. Her father walked over with her, with one hand holding Iris, and in the other still the harness. Iris pulled at her arm to go to Miranda, but he still held on to her, asking Miranda, "Iris asked to not have to wear the harness tonight, after having been in it the whole day. But she can be quite mischievous, and likes to escape, so I think you might be needing it to make sure she doesn't get away. We compromised by letting you decide if you want it on her." Miranda took a good look at Iris, who tried to look innocent, and pleaded, "It's a bit auwie under my arms." "Oh, does it hurt when you wear it, or only when you pull?" Iris thought she probably wouldn't get away by claiming it already hurt when she wore it, because the sides were padded, and it had not been on very tight today, so she admitted, "Only when it is pulled." "Oh, then it is simple. We're not going anywhere, so as long as you don't pull, it won't hurt." She continued to Mr. Tomas, "It seems to me that she is planning something, so I think we better put the harness on her." Iris realized that Miranda could read her pretty well too, and that her plan to create some opportunities for getting away, and perhaps hiding, or doing something naughty, had been foiled before she even started. She let her father put the harness back on her, and although she still acted like it hurt a bit, she could see she was not fooling either of them.

Her father carefully locked both buckles in her back, and then handed the leash over to the babysitter. "You should wrap the strap around your own wrist. There is a locking buckle on that end as well, so you can secure her to something. Here is my set of keys." Miranda fiddled a bit with the wrist strap, unsure of how it worked, and needing to do it with one hand, so Mr. Tomas stepped in and helped her put it on. "There, now Iris won't get away from you." Iris stuck out her tongue at her father, but even though she had tried to not be restrained, she felt safe again, and it was somehow exciting to be leashed to someone else than her parents or Nanny. And she trusted Miranda. So she sat on the couch right next to her, and cuddled up. "If you have no further questions, I'll be getting myself ready to leave." "No Mr. Tomas, everything is clear. Mrs. Tomas talked me through it all, and I'm sure I have everything I need to handle your daughter." This time it was Miranda who was more than deserving of the tongue Iris stuck out at her: she was being talked about like a little terror who needed to be strictly handled, while she was essentially a very sweet little girl. She had conveniently forgotten that she had just tried to trick them into letting her free of the harness.

While her father went into the parental bedroom, Miranda asked Iris how her day had been. Iris started to tell her all about the adventures, and soon Miranda turned off the TV and focused fully on her charge. After a while she hardly noticed she was talking to a girl only three years her junior; Iris's behavior, choice of words, and child-like enthusiasm gave a pretty consistent impression of a girl



much younger, and it felt natural to talk to her and treat her like that. It was clear that this was not a girl acting like a younger child, but showing an actual part of her personality that normally was hidden. Miranda had always liked babysitting with Iris, since they could talk well, and her charge was a bit like a younger sister she never had, that she could support and advise. This way it of course was different, but it seemed at least as enjoyable, with Iris so cute, enthusiastic and cuddly.

After some minutes Iris's parents came out of the bedroom again, nicely dressed, and her mother in make up and everything. It was clear that they were looking forward to their evening, and Iris was glad for them. She had settled down with Miranda now, and was in the middle of her story, so when they came to say goodbye, and tell her to behave and listen well to her babysitter, she was almost casual in her goodbyes, hugs and kisses. After all, she would probably need to go to bed pretty early, and when she woke they would be back again. So after a last check if Miranda had any more questions, they left. Iris immediately continued with her account of the day, sitting down right next to the bigger girl again, and possessively taking hold of her nearest arm. After Iris had finished her story, Miranda asked about her jumpsuit, and so Iris told her about Sabine and her clothes, and demonstrated that she couldn't open the zipper herself. Of course she also had to show the appliques. Obviously Miranda recognized the Pooh Bear characters, but she noticed that Iris really liked them, so she let her tell about them anyway. "And your harness? You didn't want to wear it tonight, so you don't like it so much?" "Well, I do, sort of, because it keeps me safe, and I don't have to be all responsible and careful. But sometimes it is nice to be free too."

When they didn't immediately think of a new subject to talk about, Iris asked if they could watch some TV, which Miranda knew was allowed, so she turned it on again, and together they watched a Disney comedy show. Iris wanted a bit more volume, because that made it more immersive, so she made a grab for the remote control that Miranda had put next to her on the other side. But the babysitter intercepted her, "Iris, you need to ask me if you want something. I'll operate the remote, so that you don't accidentally drop it or change a setting by accident that we might not know how to undo." She moved the remote control a bit further away from Iris, so that she could not easily make a grab for it anymore. The girl pouted, but then asked if the TV could be a bit louder. Miranda increased the volume a bit; not as much as Iris would have liked, but she decided it was good enough.

*Figure 70 Preformed Bean Bag*

While they were watching, she played a bit with Miranda's arm, which she was still holding. Gradually she also started playing a bit with the wrist strap that her harness was connected to, and at a moment when there was a loud noise from the TV, she tried to give the Velcro a quick pull and get the strap free from Miranda's arm, allowing her to get away. But that made enough noise that the babysitter noticed anyway, and she quickly stopped Iris's attempt with her other hand. "Iris, that is very naughty! I thought we had a nice time together, but you were only interested in getting away!" Iris was startled by the strong reaction of the older girl; she had only been fooling around a bit, but now suddenly the mood had turned. And it got worse. "I think you need a time-out," the babysitter announced, took her over to the bean bag, and let her sit down in it. Iris would have preferred to keep cuddling up to Miranda on the couch, but the bean bag was also very comfortable, so that didn't seem too bad. It was not just a shapeless sack



with filling, but preformed as a chair. That was very nice, since it had a real back to lean into and sit up straight with, but it still formed around your body, and allowed all sorts of positions, because the filling could shift and adjust. (see Figure 70)

So without complaining Iris settled herself in the bean bag. But what Miranda did next surprised her: she tore at an extra piece of fabric near Iris's left arm, which she had not even noticed. With a loud noise one side came loose. Miranda took Iris's arm, put it under the flap, and put it back where it had been attached. There it stuck again, with Iris's arm underneath. She realized that the flap had Velcro underneath, and had been recently added to keep the occupant in the chair. It was not uncomfortably tight, but fit close enough that she couldn't pull her arm out, and the wide strip of Velcro was strong enough that she got nowhere trying to pull it loose. It didn't really surprise her that Miranda went to the other side next, and repeated it with her right arm. Now she understood what Miranda meant with the time-out. Her mother must have shown her this option while her father was changing her upstairs. Even though the bean bag had been in the living room for two days now, Iris hadn't noticed the added flaps at all, although she also had not yet sat in it. But she was pretty sure that they were added recently; when it had been in the living room when she was younger, she would have noticed them. But Miranda wasn't done yet, and there were 2 flaps for the legs as well. Now Iris was completely stuck in the bean bag, but it was still very comfortable; the arm and leg straps were at the position where you would keep your extremities anyway, and she could still wiggle her bum and rump to dig out a very comfy hole to sit in. She also realized that this was probably very useful for when Sabine would visit, but this time she was the one stuck in it.

Miranda removed the harness wrist strap and left it hanging alongside the bean bag. Then she took her position on the couch again, and turned the TV volume a bit down again. She started watching the program again without paying further notice to Iris. The little girl realized that Miranda meant business, and was not going to be so easy to mess around with. The punishment wasn't horrible; sitting in the very comfy chair, and still being able to watch the TV, but she had very little freedom of movement now, and, most importantly, no one to cuddle up to. Miranda was ignoring her, so Iris had little else to do than watch the comedy show. Sometimes they laughed, but when Iris made a remark about it, she got no answer.

At first she accepted that she was being punished, but after a while she started to feel lonely, and wiggled impatiently. She tried once more to get free, but the flaps did a very good job in holding her arms and legs in place. "Miranda, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have tried to get loose. Can I now sit with you again?" she tried next. But even though Miranda gave a little nod, apparently acknowledging her apology, she did not answer. The punishment was not yet over. Iris tried to concentrate on the TV again, but after a few more minutes she tried again, "Miranda, I was only playing around, having a bit of fun. Let me out now." More silence. "Miranda!" "Iris, if you can't stay quiet, I'm going to have to help you." She went upstairs, and came back with the pacifier and the strap. Knowing she had no chance to fight it, she accepted Miranda putting the pacifier in her mouth, and tightly buckling the strap around her head. She even got a little padlock and clicked it on the buckle. Of course that was superfluous, but again it showed that the babysitter was in complete control, and didn't allow Iris to get away with any mischief. But for Iris this was no punishment; the pacifier was always nice, and especially now that she felt ignored, it supplied comfort. And the click of the lock actually gave her a pretty strong tingle, and if her hands had not been restrained, she would have been sorely tempted to put them in her crotch. Knowing she could do nothing anymore to improve, or worsen, her situation, she suckled on her pacifier furiously and gradually relaxed.

When the show was over, Miranda announced that the punishment was over, and started to release Iris. Having given up all resistance, and with her pacifier, she had drifted into a very calm place, and

she almost thought it a pity to come back, and also to give up her paci, but in the end her desire to cuddle and talk with Miranda won, and so she cooperated and didn't protest. Miranda didn't forget to put the band of the harness on her wrist again, and this time she even locked it onto herself, making sure Iris saw that. Then she gave her a hug, and told her everything was OK again. Iris felt much relief, and her eyes got moist for a moment. Then they settled back onto the couch. "What shall we do next? More TV?" At that moment Iris remembered her mother promised her that she'd leave something edible for Miranda to give to her; perhaps it was that wonderful Italian dessert Tiramisu something? Or ice cream? So she told Miranda how unfair it had been that her parents only got her this tiny pizza, and that she was hungry again. "Oh yes, your mother told me you might want something extra. I'll need to get it from the kitchen though. You just wait here for a moment." She removed the wrist band again, and this time she knelt on the couch on the other side of Iris, and somehow attached the band there. Then she went into the kitchen, where Iris heard the sound of the microwave opening and closing. Apparently it was something warm? For dessert?

Of course Iris had to explore where Miranda managed to attach her leash to. She found a metal ring low on the wall behind the couch, not far from the bean bag. That was new as well. Her parents had been really busy last Saturday while she was at the Fletchers! The wrist band was firmly locked to the ring, so Iris was stuck again, but this time she had the whole range of the leash to move around. Curious about the dessert, she tried to move past the bean bag so that she could look into the kitchen, but that was too far, and the leash wouldn't stretch enough to look around the corner. Then the microwave pinged, and Miranda removed whatever was in it. Iris quickly went back to the couch – she didn't think she did anything wrong, but she didn't want to be punished again, so she played it safe. Miranda came back, holding a bottle of milk. Of course, that was what her mother had left for her, and needed heating. Well, it wasn't ice cream, but having someone else give her a bottle was also quite intimate and enjoyable. Even if Sabine did it, so it should be nice with Miranda too. But the babysitter just held out the bottle for her, apparently expecting Iris to hold it herself. Iris tried, "Will you feed me?" and held her mouth open for the nipple. "Oh, would you like that?" Iris nodded enthusiastically. "OK, how do we do it?" Iris explained that Miranda should sit on the couch, and she'd put her head on her lap, and drink the bottle. She added that Miranda should keep a direct hold on the harness to keep her there. Of course that last direction was not really part of it, but with Sabine she had gotten used to it, and it felt right.

So they did, and soon Iris was suckling on the bottle contentedly. Of course with one hand holding the bottle, and the other on the harness, Miranda couldn't stroke her head, but she said, "This is very cute. You are a strange one, though, but I like it," and kissed her forehead. Iris had partly downplayed the size of the pizza, because of her mother's promise, but she was a bit hungry too, so she had no trouble finishing the bottle. She was actually a bit disappointed when all the milk was gone, and Miranda removed it from her mouth. Then she pulled Iris up by her harness, and sat her up straight again. "Let's burp you as well," Miranda proclaimed, and pulled Iris against her with the harness. Slapping lightly on her back, Iris produced a little burp, earning her a "Well done". Then they both had to laugh. But Iris had enjoyed the procedure, and so she gave Miranda a kiss on the cheek. Then they went back to watching TV, with Iris leaning on the shoulder of Miranda. They watched a nature documentary about meerkats, which was quite interesting and cute.

After a while Miranda noticed that Iris started to lean more heavily on her, and that her charge was already half asleep. "Come, little one, let's get you into bed." Iris was very content where she was, and so didn't want to go to bed. She considered claiming that her mother had promised her that she could stay up late, but it was unlikely that Miranda would fall for that – her mother had probably already instructed her, and otherwise she might call her mother to check. So she reluctantly got up,

and waited for Miranda to unlock the wrist band from the wall and put it on her own wrist again. Then they went upstairs, but not before Iris said “Paci” and pointed at it, so that Miranda would bring it along. They went straight to the bathroom to brush her teeth, with Miranda watching that she did it well enough. Since Iris was already diapered and in the body for the night, they skipped the changing table and went directly to Iris’s bedroom, where Miranda first closed the door, and then removed the harness and the jumpsuit. Then the pacifier went in, and before the strap was closed Iris mumbled a quick ‘goodnight’. “Now, lets get you into those special pajamas of yours.” She apparently had paid good attention yesterday, and it didn’t take her much longer than her mother to get her in, close the blindfold and then zip her up all the way around to her belly. Click said the lock, and she was guided into her bed. Making herself comfortable, she already felt the sleep creeping up on her, even though she had considered staying awake until her parents came back, so that she could say goodnight to them. But when Miranda had closed the tent, put the lock on the zippers, and checked the baby monitor, she could hear Iris’s breathing already becoming regular, and with a soft “Goodnight little Iris, sleep well,” she turned off the light and left.

### 23. Tuesday - Goodbyes

When Iris woke the following morning, she felt like she had slept a long time, but her parents apparently hadn’t come to wake her up yet. The blindfold of the sleeper was very effective, and so close to her eyes that she preferred to keep them closed anyway, so Iris couldn’t judge if it was already light. She was uncertain what to do; if it was earlier than she expected, calling out might wake her parents. So she tried to turn on her other side, and see if she could sleep a while longer. But she was quite awake, and after a little while she decided that this was not going to work. She started playing around a bit, fiddling the little padlock on her tummy that made sure her sleeper didn’t come off. Yep, that was secure. She could pull the bottom of the blindfold only a little bit away from her face, and she thought she saw some daylight, but she couldn’t be sure. She remembered Miranda had locked the tent, and she could also feel the little locks on her plastic panties through the fabric of the sleeper. No way she was going to get out, or get her hands in her diaper. She noticed that she was getting a bit excited, and tried to rub her crotch through the diaper and the other layers, but the diaper was pretty full by now, and the extra booster in it made certain that whatever she did, she couldn’t get any stimulation of her sensitive area. Her father didn’t need to get her a chastity belt at all – the diaper did just as good a job! But she knew that she was going to be mature again today, so she should be able to play with herself in the shower.

If only her parents would come and get her. Getting impatient, she decided that it had to be late enough to get up by now, so she called out to them. Softly at first, without removing the pacifier. But then she realized that that wasn’t very useful – if they didn’t respond, she still wouldn’t know if they were still sleeping, or up and not hearing her soft noises, so she would have to call out louder anyway. She tried to pull away the pacifier to call out louder and clearer, but that didn’t work: Miranda had not buckled the strap loose enough. This actually made it a little more comfortable than when the strap was shifting around so easily, but now it made it harder for her to call out. She tried pulling it partly aside, and then tried to speak fairly loudly, “Mom, Dad, can I get up now?” She thought the volume was OK, but of course the words didn’t come out very clearly. But there came a quick response from her mother anyway, “Iris, I didn’t understand what you said, but since you are awake, I assume you want to get up?” “Yeah” “OK, I’ll be up in a minute.” Iris was quite comfortable, but now that she had decided to get up, she got impatient, and it seemed to take much longer than a minute for her mother to arrive. To keep herself occupied she started to explore the tent once more, but of course she found no gaps, and the netting was strong.

“Look who’s all up and ready to get going!” Her mother’s voice didn’t startle her, because she had heard the footsteps on the stairs and the door opening. She opened the tent and helped Iris out. “Why didn’t you take your pacifier out when you called for me?” Iris didn’t want to implicate Miranda, so she just shrugged and continued to suckle. Her mother started to remove the sleepsuit and pacifier, and then took her to the bathroom, where she opened the body and unlocked and removed the plastic panties. Iris had to touch them for a moment before they were off – they were always hidden underneath other clothes, so she could hardly ever enjoy their fun design and feel the material. When the diaper was off as well, her mother told her “You go ahead with your normal routine, and take a shower. Then call me so that I can put a diaper on you.”

Iris hadn’t quite made the switch to big Iris yet, and for a moment she felt lost, not having a parent tell her what to do and make sure she did it. Then her mature self stepped in, and she did the toilet, teeth, and shower. Finally she could take care of that itch between her legs again, and that was wonderful. When she was ready and had dried herself off, she remembered her mother telling her to call her to get diapered. But mature Iris wore pull-ups, so she concluded her mother was probably just confused. So she got a fresh pull-up from the diaper area, and dressed in pants and a top she knew her father liked, modest but cheerful. The pants were somewhat wider than some of her others, but still only just fit over the pull-ups. She checked in the bathroom mirror, but concluded they probably were not too noticeable. When she looked at her alarm clock, she noticed that it was already 10 o’clock. She had indeed slept pretty long!

At the bottom of the stairs her mother came towards her. “Iris, I asked you to let me know when you were ready, so I could put a diaper on you.” “But Mom, I thought you were confused with little Iris. I have put on a pull-up.” “Yes dear, I know you normally use a pull-up. But the car trip will probably at least take an hour, and we might not have an opportunity for you to change your pull-up there – your father and his colleague will leave quickly, and I don’t expect we’ll be invited in. And I really don’t want you to use a gas station toilet. We might be gone for 3 hours easily, or longer if we decide to do some shopping, and I’m not sure a pull-up will be enough for that. So I think you should wear a diaper until we are back. You can still practice holding your pee until you decide to let go.” “Oh, I didn’t know that.” “Of course; I didn’t tell you. Still it would be better if you’d talk to me before you decide to deviate from what I ask you. Now you’ll have to change again. But let’s do that after breakfast. Your father has slept late too – it is going to be a long day for him – but he is up now, so you can eat together. After that he has some more administration and packing to do, so he won’t have much time for you.” That was normal, so Iris wasn’t too disappointed.

On the kitchen table, her father was just studying the news paper’s front page. He looked up as she neared, and welcomed her, “Good Morning, sleepy head.” Well, two could play that game, so Iris answered alike, which made them both smile. She went up to him and gave him a short kiss on the cheek. Then she took her seat across from him. During breakfast she was thinking these were her last moments alone with her father, and she thought, “what the heck,” went over to him, and asked if she could finish her breakfast on his knee. This surprised him, but apparently in a good way, because he smiled and opened his legs to let her sit. With one hand around his shoulders, she managed to eat the rest of the bread she had already made with the other, while enjoying their closeness. To her own surprise, she could enjoy the cuddling that little Iris loved so much without feeling immature. Again she realized how much enjoyment she had missed simply by the behavior she had required of herself, and for a moment she felt sad about that, and that it would now take a while before she’d be able to do this again with her daddy.

Then the food was gone, and her father tapped her bottom as a signal to get up. Reluctantly she stood up, and started cleaning the table. Wanting to show her appreciation and her love, she cleared

up his things as well. He gave her a quick hug and disappeared into the office. When the dishwasher was loaded, and the other things stored in their cupboards, she decided to go check her phone – that was way too long ago again, and she was afraid her friends might have been waiting for her answers for ages. There were indeed several messages about their meeting tomorrow, but before she had time to think about what to answer, there was a knock on her door. “Yes?” “Iris, let’s get you properly diapered. Come along to the changing table please.” “But Mom, I’m just trying to answer some messages from Anna and Mindy, about tomorrow.” “Why don’t we make sure you are ready first, so that when your father wants to leave we can go immediately. I’m sure your friends can wait a few more minutes, and messaging you can also do in the car, while the diapering ...” Iris sighed, put her phone down, and followed her mother to the changing area. Frustratingly, her mother was right again.

She took her clothes off herself, including the pull-up, and then laid down on the table. Knowing she had just paid attention to her sensitive area, she didn’t think her hands needed to be secured. So she kept them next to her, but her mother brought them above her head anyway and put the cuffs on loosely. She didn’t mind enough to protest. Her mother took a Tena Youth, which would have been Iris’s choice for this occasion too, and quickly put it on her. Then she released the straps and Iris sat up again. “Now, what shall we do for plastic panties? As we agreed you don’t need locking ones today, but the only ones we have that are not locking are these with the yellow bath ducks on them. We also have the clear plastic ones from the department store that are way less obvious, but *are* locking. I guess we haven’t realized that we needed something for this situation as well. Which would you prefer?” “Can’t I just go without panties?” “Normally I would be OK with it, if you wanted take the higher risk of leakages and smells, but you’ll be in the borrowed car seat much of the time, and I don’t want to have to figure out if we can get urine out, and how.” “Well OK, I guess that no one will see them, but if they’d catch a glimpse the ducks might be spotted more easily than a thin chain.” So her mother helped her into those, pulled the chain tight and clicked one of the heart-shaped locks on it.” “Mom!” “Oh, sorry dear. Routine I guess. But one end of the chain might disappear into the channel if it is loose, so why don’t we keep it like this.” Iris shrugged; it was not like she was going to change herself, or was planning to put her hands in anyway, so it didn’t really matter.

Before she stepped into her pants again, she explored the material and the chain of the plastic panties a bit, since as little Iris she was not allowed to. “Iris, don’t keep me waiting. And like I said yesterday, please get into the routine of not touching the closures on your clothes, for when you are together with Sabine again.” Not wanting to argue, she quickly pulled her pants up, but where they had fit reasonably well over the pull-ups, the current package was too big. “Bummer, I think these are about the widest pants I have, apart from the jogging pants daddy doesn’t want me to wear outside, and the slacks I wore Saturday.” “Well, those are not really suitable for today; let’s keep those only for the fancy occasions. I guess that leaves us with the skirtall, or the butterfly jumpsuit? But the skirtall doesn’t combine well with the car seat harness.” “Let me try my denim overalls; those are not that wide, but perhaps still better than these pants.” They moved into Iris’s bedroom, where the overalls did indeed fit over the diaper, if not with much room to spare. Iris checked and thought the diaper package was fairly obvious, but her mother said that only people who knew what to look for would notice, and only if they looked closely.

Iris considered for a moment if she should not put on the jumpsuit instead, but decided she would mostly be in the car anyway, and her father’s colleague was pretty unlikely to watch her closely, so she decided to keep the overalls on. It would be nice to be able to take her own clothes off, for a change, even though with the thick diaper and the locked panties there would not be a reason to.

Her mother agreed, and started adjusting the straps a little bit tighter, so that the bib was pulled straight and the buckles were above her sensitive chest. At first Iris didn't find that unusual, and just let it happen, until she realized that she was mature today, and she should be doing such things herself. But those overalls straps were always such a hassle to adjust, especially when wearing them, so she just let it happen anyway.

"Iris, why don't you collect the things you want to bring along, and also an extra Tena Youth, just in case. Then come down and we'll pack a lunch." While her mother left her room, Iris looked around what she might want to bring. Of course her phone. Pacifier for in the car? Nah, not for mature Iris. Baseball cap for if she wanted not to be recognized? No need really – she was in normal clothes, and they were going somewhere where no one knew her. Sweater or hoodie? It seemed a bit cloudy, but her mother would probably want her to bring a coat, and her denim jacket should be enough, and a bit tight if she put a sweater underneath. Put on some lipstick from Aunt Yelda, to look extra nice for daddy's goodbye? He probably wouldn't appreciate that. So in the end she just got her small backpack for the diaper (again in a black plastic bag), and the lunch. She looked at her phone for a moment, tempted to start answering her friends' messages, but her mother wanted her to get ready first, so that might have to wait until she was in the car.

Downstairs her mother already had collected some juice boxes, 2 cups of yoghurt with fruit, 2 pears, and she asked Iris to make some sandwiches. Her father's lunch was probably already packed, and he was busy walking in and out of the bedroom and office, and bringing his large suitcase and a duffel bag to the car. When the lunches were ready and packed, he was already waiting for them, showing some signs of impatience. It was almost a quarter to 11, but with an hours drive and some extra time for setbacks, it was time that they got underway. Iris got her denim jacket, and decided to put it on. Knowing her parents wouldn't allow anything else, she then stepped directly into the car seat, and buckled the harness. It was still a bit strange to her how easy it was to strap herself in, but how impossible it was to open the harness buckle again. Her mother even let her have the plastic key to lock the chest clip herself, which she had only done once before, but it was not that hard – she had already unlocked herself more often, and this was very similar. Of course her mother kept watching her until she got the key back. Her father was behind the wheel again; he always drove when both her parents were in the car. Obviously her mother would be driving back.

By now Iris was used to be in the car seat, and trusted the sun foil and the headrest wings to protect her identity, so she didn't feel anxious anymore. There was no talking while they were driving through Eugene, but once they were on the I5 highway south, Iris dug up her phone from her bib pocket, asked her mother about one of the messages she got from Anna, "Mom, you know I'm going to meet up with Anna and Mindy tomorrow. But now Anna writes that her brother will have friends over, and suggests that we meet up at our place instead. We don't really like to meet at Mindy's, since it is always so hectic with all the children, and she doesn't have a room of her own. But I don't see how we can have them over with us, with all the stuff for little Iris. And even if we can find a solution to meet somewhere else tomorrow, I don't know how I can keep that up, and never get friends over again. I don't know what to do." "Well, lets go over all the stuff for little Iris then. There is the car seat, but that will be in the garage, so no reason why they should see it. And even if they do, we can tell them it is for Sabine, when we have her over. The same for the high chair. The diaper area shouldn't be a problem with Anna and Mindy either: they already know you have bladder trouble again. If you want, we could also put the diapers and other supplies in boxes or crates, so that they are not visible. And the massage table is just that. Perhaps a bit unusual to have in ones home, but no reason to suspect it is mostly in use as a changing table. Your mosquito tent is also

useful for its normal purpose at this time of year, but it is easily collapsible, so we can also take it off your bed if needed. Anything I've missed?"

Iris was convinced there was more; her whole house was filled with things for little Iris, it seemed to her. But, thinking it over, her mother seemed to have covered all the major things, and things like her sleeved bib could obviously just go into a cupboard, or in the boxes in the office, which was off-limits for her and her friends anyway. The straps to keep her seated on the couch were normally hidden behind the cushions, and she had not even realized herself they were there until they were used on her. The same with the flaps of the bean bag chair and the ring behind the couch. She thought hard, but she couldn't come up with anything else that was a problem, and she had to admit that her mother's explanations for the obvious things were believable, and even partially true. Her friends might look a bit surprised at the stuff for Sabine, but it seemed unlikely that they would question the explanations and suspect the were also for Iris. It still seemed scary, but her friends had also accepted her diaper, and even put one on themselves, so Iris started to believe that she could pull it off. Of course she would prefer not to lie to her friends, or in this case only tell the partial truth, but telling the whole truth was obviously impossible, and never having her friends over again was not an option either. So she concluded, "I guess you're right, Mom. It seems hard to believe that we can just explain everything away, but I can't think of anything that we can't put away or have a reasonable explanation for. Would 10 AM be OK then? Mindy has an appointment with the dentist later in the afternoon." "Hmm, I haven't really had time to think much beyond today, but I don't think there is anything else tomorrow. I will need your help though with cleaning and laundry after they have left, and get the house in order for the Fletchers the next day." "OK, I will. Thank you!"

On one hand it felt a bit weird to thank her, since her mother had convinced her to do something that was pretty scary for Iris, and then required her to help in the household as well. But even in the car seat, diaper and overalls, Iris still felt almost fully mature, and could also see things from her mother's perspective. In the end her mother only came up with a solution for *her* problem, and since having her friends over, and then Sabine, was also for her benefit, it was no more than fair that she should help with getting the house ready for that as well. So she felt it was a fair deal, and happily answered her friends that they were welcome at 10. "Oh, Anna also wrote that after what we did with her overalls the last time, she expects Mindy and me to wear ours this time. I guess I'll be wearing these tomorrow again then." "That's OK dear; they look nice on you. But you had better do your best to keep them clean then," her mother quipped, of course referring to the messiness of little Iris. "Ha ha. Very funny."

During the rest of the car ride, they talked a bit about this and that, and Iris got caught up with the messages and forums on her phone. Looking outside was still a bit of a bother with the headrest wings, but her mother still hadn't looked at that, and Iris wasn't too sure she wanted them adjusted anyway. They also helped keeping her face hidden, in case the sun foil wasn't enough, and while she was busy on her phone, she could just let her head rest against them. For a change she didn't fall asleep, but considering how long she had slept last night, that didn't surprise her.

It was not that busy on the road, and so it was after driving only about 50 minutes that they entered Sutherlin, and turned off the I5. Mr. Tomas said they still had 20 minutes before he was expected, and that this colleague probably was still getting ready, and might not appreciate them showing up this early. So he parked the car for a moment, and checked the map on his phone. "It looks like there is a nice lake nearby, Ford's Pond, so lets take a quick look at that to kill the time." Then he drove on for a mile or so, and parked the car. Iris got the key to open her chest clip and press it into the hole in the buckle guard to open that as well. There didn't seem people nearby, so she just got out of the car on that side, instead of climbing out over the booster seat. Her parents had gotten out as well,



and Iris decided to take her father's hand. Not that she saw any reason why she would get lost, although perhaps he would still find it safer after what happened at the Buford Park Trails. But mostly because he was going away again, and she wanted to be close to him. In the car she had pushed those feelings to the back of her mind, but now the sadness of the pending goodbye hit her, and she had to fight to hold back her tears for a moment.

Luckily the pond was quite beautiful, and quickly distracted her. The sun had broken through the clouds, and it was already warm enough that Iris took off her jacket, and tied it with the arms around her waist. From the entrance there were trails going left and right around the water. Of course they didn't have time for a real walk, but they went up one path for a little bit to be able to look around quietly. It actually wasn't that unlike the lake next to Kirk Park, with a bit of marshy area. But there were few bigger trees, so they had a nice overview over the whole pond. Iris thought it should be called a lake instead of a pond, since it was not that small, and walking around it might easily take an hour. On the other side of the road from the entrance, there were houses, and Iris envied the people living there, who could just walk out of their front doors and step right into such a nice nature area. Her father suddenly gave a little jerk on her arm, "Look Iris, I believe it is a Peregrine Falcon!" He was pointing up in the air, and Iris could mostly just see a silhouette against the bright sky. Of course they had not brought any binoculars, unluckily. But her father was good at recognizing the shapes and flight behavior, so he was probably right. That was a really nice sighting, and so unexpected. She had seen them once or twice before, but they were very interesting, since they were the fastest birds on the planet, and used their speed and agility in the air to capture other birds, like pigeons and doves.

When Iris squatted down for a moment to pick a nice flower for her hair, one buckle of her overalls got loose, even though her mother had already tightened the straps a little. Her father helped her to do it up again – of course he was no fan of having one or even two straps loose, like it was fashionable at the moment. He checked the buckle for a moment, and said, "The buckles would stay in place better if they were a bit narrower at the bottom." Iris agreed, "Yes, Anna was bothered by that too, and she just squeezed the buckles together a bit." "That sounds smart. Here, let me do that for yours too." He got out his Leatherman tool, selected the pliers, and carefully squeezed both buckles a bit. He tried them, and had to pull a bit to get them hooked on the button, but then they didn't open by themselves anymore. "There you go." "Thank you, Daddy." In her mind, Iris corrected herself, 'Dad', not 'Daddy' – apparently having her clothes adjusted for her, and the click the buckles now made when they closed made her feel a bit little.

Then it was already time to leave again. Iris proposed that she used the booster seat for the short drive up to the colleague, so that he wouldn't see her in the car seat. Her parents looked at each other for a moment, and more-or-less to her surprise agreed. Her mother added, "Just make sure you don't unbuckle before we do." "OK, I won't." After a short drive, coached by the voice of the route planner, her father parked the car in a street, and they all got out. There was a guy already loading stuff into his car; her father recognized him and took his family over. After short introductions, he got his own gear from their car and loaded it into the other car as well, while her mother exchanged a few words with the colleague. He didn't seem very interested in them, or in talking, though. Then it was really time to say goodbye, and now Iris couldn't hold her tears back. She promised him to behave well and always listen to her mother, and made him promise to return safely again. After a while the colleague went and already sat behind the wheel, apparently getting impatient, and so Iris let go of her father reluctantly. After another quick hug and kiss he also said goodbye to his wife, handed over the car keys and got in the car as well. Iris and her mother kept

watching until the car disappeared from sight, arms around each other and waving like crazy. “Well, now it’s just you and me again,” her mother sighed, and they walked back to their car.

## *The End of Part 2*

## Image credits

Instead of trying to describe all the equipment and such of Iris in words, which I usually find hard to figure out in stories I read anyway, I decided to add pictures instead, like in the prequel. Here I give more information on the images and where I found them. I have not requested permission from the copyright holders to use the pictures (with a few exceptions), but hope they don't mind me advertising for them. If anyone of them objects, please let me know and I will remove the picture. On the photos that contain people I did hide their faces. I also explain where the actual product deviates from what I describe in the story, as far as I can judge from the product descriptions online, not actually having ever seen most of the items.

Figure 1 Iris's Locking Bracelet <i>and</i> Figure 24 The locking bracelet with the matching key necklace	Love Heart Lock Stainless Steel Bracelet with Key Pendant Necklace There are a lot of sellers and models and colors on eBay, Aliexpress etc. who all use the same images, so instead of linking to a specific offer, just search there for something like 'steel heart bracelet key' Note that these steel bracelets are actually pretty sturdy, and suitable for concealed restraint, although the locking mechanism of course is rather primitive.
Figure 2 Iris's Baby Harness	Dreambaby Leash Safety Harness Reins Baby Toddler Walking Kid Strap Keeper Belt <a href="https://www.walmart.com/ip/Dreambaby-Leash-Safety-Harness-Reins-Baby-Toddler-Walking-Kid-Strap-Keeper-Belt/146052552">https://www.walmart.com/ip/Dreambaby-Leash-Safety-Harness-Reins-Baby-Toddler-Walking-Kid-Strap-Keeper-Belt/146052552</a>
Figure 3 Velcro Wrist-to-waist Restraint	Nylon Waist to Arm Wrist Straps Binder Cuff Set Restraints Couple Game Black <a href="https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/313421280403">https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/313421280403</a> I changed the buckle in the back to a Velcro closure.
Figure 4 Hello Kitty Bib	Forever 21 HELLO KITTY red overalls dress: <a href="https://ar.pinterest.com/pin/700732023253906942">https://ar.pinterest.com/pin/700732023253906942</a> (no longer available) For Iris I changed these into (pants) overalls, made the sides a bit higher, and added the locking buckles.
Figure 5 Wrist Brace	Night Wrist Sleep Support Brace - Fits Both Hands <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Night-Wrist-Sleep-Support-Brace/dp/B074MKSSHK">https://www.amazon.com/Night-Wrist-Sleep-Support-Brace/dp/B074MKSSHK</a>
Figure 6 Key-locking Buckle	From writer's collection, bought from Aliexpress
Figure 7 Red Flower Barrettes	DAISY FLOWER HAIR BARRETTES GIRL HAIR FOLD & CLIP PLASTIC <a href="https://www.ebay.com/itm/182151189990">https://www.ebay.com/itm/182151189990</a>
Figure 8 Iris's Baby Playpen	Dreambaby MAYFAIR CONVERTA 3 IN 1 PLAY-PEN - WHITE <a href="https://www.dreambaby.com.au/mayfair-converta-3-in-1-play-pen-white.html">https://www.dreambaby.com.au/mayfair-converta-3-in-1-play-pen-white.html</a>
Figure 9 Sabine's old Yellow Rain Jacket	Fleece Lined Rain Coat, <a href="https://poshmark.com/listing/Fleece-Lined-Rain-Coat-5bba1226df0307df50b5a01a">https://poshmark.com/listing/Fleece-Lined-Rain-Coat-5bba1226df0307df50b5a01a</a> (no longer available) actual item is toddler sized.
Figure 10 Crinklz Original Diaper	Crinklz Tab-Style Briefs Adult Printed Diapers <a href="https://www.northshorecare.com/adult-diapers/printed-adult-diapers/crinklz-tab-style-briefs-adult-printed-diapers">https://www.northshorecare.com/adult-diapers/printed-adult-diapers/crinklz-tab-style-briefs-adult-printed-diapers</a>
Figure 11 Little Keeper Sleeper	Little Keeper Sleeper, Long Sleeve – Green Stripe <a href="https://littlekeepersleeper.com/product/long-sleeve-green-stripe-size-2t-18-no-logo/">https://littlekeepersleeper.com/product/long-sleeve-green-stripe-size-2t-18-no-logo/</a>

Figure 12 Iris's Personalized Pacifier	Unicorn customized pacifier <a href="https://elycecreation.com/produit/tetine-licorne-korriganne/">https://elycecreation.com/produit/tetine-licorne-korriganne/</a>
Figure 13 Magnetic Side-release Buckle	From writer's collection, bought from Aliexpress. Also available on eBay ( <a href="https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/1-Plastic-Handcuff-Key-Locking-Side-Release-Buckles-DIY-Paracord-Bracelet-Parts/353182997296">https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/1-Plastic-Handcuff-Key-Locking-Side-Release-Buckles-DIY-Paracord-Bracelet-Parts/353182997296</a> )
Figure 14 Magnetic Solid Buckle	From the writer's collection. Removed from toddler wrist strap bought from Aliexpress.
Figure 15 Iris's Wrist Leash	Chinese toddler wrist leash with magnetic lock. These actually fit a large range of wrist sizes, and are often listed for 1-12 year-olds, and some even fit adults. Often erroneously called induction lock, since it uses standard magnets, and no current is involved. Since almost all sellers use the same image, I'll not list the one I used these pictures from, but you can find them on Aliexpress, Amazon, eBay, etc.
Figure 16 Locking Diaper Pants	Locking Rubber Pants <a href="https://shop.kinkydiapers.com/locking-rubber-pants-1049-p.asp">https://shop.kinkydiapers.com/locking-rubber-pants-1049-p.asp</a>
Figure 17 Locking Pacifier Strap	Leather AB/DL Maxi Locking Pacifier Holder Gag <a href="https://www.subspaceleathers.com/leather-abdl-maxi-locking-pacifier-holder-gag-112-p.asp">https://www.subspaceleathers.com/leather-abdl-maxi-locking-pacifier-holder-gag-112-p.asp</a>
Figure 18 Sleeved Bib	Vicloon Sleeve Bibs <a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/Vicloon-Waterproof-Feeding-Painting-Children/dp/B075VQG7GY">https://www.amazon.co.uk/Vicloon-Waterproof-Feeding-Painting-Children/dp/B075VQG7GY</a> actual item is toddler sized, and with Velcro closure instead of a locking buckle
Figure 19 <i>Longer Bath Cuffs</i>	Frisky Hands Up! Suction Cup Cuffs <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Frisky-Hands-Suction-Cup-Cuffs/dp/B016AQ3C48">https://www.amazon.com/Frisky-Hands-Suction-Cup-Cuffs/dp/B016AQ3C48</a>
Figure 20 Mosquito Tent	Pop Up Camping Tent Bed Canopy Mosquito Net <a href="https://www.aliexpress.com/item/33022655668.html?spm=a2g0s.8937460.0.0.43702e0eabiRZY">https://www.aliexpress.com/item/33022655668.html?spm=a2g0s.8937460.0.0.43702e0eabiRZY</a>
Figure 21 Decorative Chain	Cast Brass Decorative Oval Lamp Chain - Unfinished Brass <a href="https://www.grandbrass.com/item/ch215/chain-brass_chain-decorative/">https://www.grandbrass.com/item/ch215/chain-brass_chain-decorative/</a>
Figure 22 Example of hooks-and-eyes on the inside of a zipper	Hooks and eyes put onto the inside of the zipper of a vegan leather romper from my own collection, to demonstrate where Mrs. Tomas added them to the Butterfly Sweat Jumpsuit to prevent Iris from taking it off herself. For this demonstration I had not sewn them onto the romper.
Figure 23 Butterfly Sweat Jumpsuit	SHEIN Girls Butterfly & Slogan Print Knot Front Jumpsuit <a href="https://www.shein.com/Girls-Butterfly-Slogan-Print-Knot-Front-Jumpsuit-p-1794839-cat-2007.html">https://www.shein.com/Girls-Butterfly-Slogan-Print-Knot-Front-Jumpsuit-p-1794839-cat-2007.html</a> (no longer available)
Figure 25 Seat Belt Buckle Guard	Ganen Car Belt Lock Buckle Guard Prevent Children And kids Opening The Seatbelt Securing the car seat Beltlock (Red): <a href="https://babycare247.com/accessories/ganen-car-belt-lock-buckle-guard-prevent-children-and-kids-opening-the-seatbelt-securing-the-car-seat-beltlock-red/">https://babycare247.com/accessories/ganen-car-belt-lock-buckle-guard-prevent-children-and-kids-opening-the-seatbelt-securing-the-car-seat-beltlock-red/</a>
Figure 26 Kawaii Bunny Shortalls	You can find these Chinese-made shortalls at several places (e.g. eBay). The picture comes from Aliexpress: <a href="https://www.aliexpress.com/i/4000722365285.html">https://www.aliexpress.com/i/4000722365285.html</a> The hood in the story stems from my imagination, although there are also some shortalls and skirtall that have them, like <a href="https://kawaiiabe.com/products/baby-bear-dress">https://kawaiiabe.com/products/baby-bear-dress</a> - also very cute. I also moved the zipper from the side to the back.

Figure 27 Mary Janes Shoes	<p>Classic Mary Jane shoes (Lolita style)</p> <p><a href="https://www.ebay.com/itm/Womens-Lolita-Leather-JK-Uniform-Shoes-Mary-Janes-Flats-Shoes-Retro-Round-Toe-/123733788471">https://www.ebay.com/itm/Womens-Lolita-Leather-JK-Uniform-Shoes-Mary-Janes-Flats-Shoes-Retro-Round-Toe-/123733788471</a> (eBay auction, so link will function only a limited time)</p> <p>The locking feature was added for the story.</p>
Figure 28 Open-back Jumpsuit	<p>H&amp;M Jumpsuit türkis Casual-Look Damen Gr. DE 38 Hose Trousers</p> <p><a href="https://www.ebay.de/itm/383476458340?hash=item5948fa6364:g:A5AAAOSwiMteeb-z">https://www.ebay.de/itm/383476458340?hash=item5948fa6364:g:A5AAAOSwiMteeb-z</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.ebay.com/itm/284385765552?hash=item4236b668b0:g:qyoAAOSwsE1g~Z4j">https://www.ebay.com/itm/284385765552?hash=item4236b668b0:g:qyoAAOSwsE1g~Z4j</a></p> <p>(Picture combined from 2 eBay auctions, so links will function only a limited time)</p> <p>The zipper between the back flaps was added for the story.</p>
Figure 29 Brownheaded Cowbird to Figure 32 Red Crossbill	<p>Pictures from the writer's vacations in Oregon. Not super good quality, but they should give a fair impression on what you see normally when you're birdwatching.</p>
Figure 33 Buckle kept closed with tie wrap	<p>From the writer's collection.</p> <p>An example on how to 'lock' a regular side-release buckle closed with a tie wrap; the rainbow harness has slightly different buckles, but the same principle applies.</p>
Figure 34 Sabine's Playpen Tent	<p>This is the Pop 'n Go playpen tent, from the California Beach company, but that one is normally open at the top. I found a version of the tent that has netting over the top as well ('mosquito-free') which looks more inescapable: <a href="https://thebestplaypen.com/collections/exqline-full-bugs-proof-baby-playpen-upgraded">https://thebestplaypen.com/collections/exqline-full-bugs-proof-baby-playpen-upgraded</a>. (Note that the exqline website itself no longer lists this product – perhaps a patent infringement?)</p> <p>I have no experience with the tent, and only know what I found online, but I exaggerated the dimensions and sturdiness of it, and that it can only be zipped from the outside.</p>
Figure 35 High Chair with Tray	<p>Keekaroo Height Right Chair</p> <p><a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39969515419540460">https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39969515419540460</a></p> <p>The real chair probably wouldn't allow the tray to be used with a 13-year-old, and the latching mechanism in the story is my invention too.</p>
Figure 36 Sabine's Activity Chair	<p>Rifton's Hi/Lo activity chair:</p> <p><a href="https://www.rifton.com/products/special-needs-chairs/rifton-activity-chairs">https://www.rifton.com/products/special-needs-chairs/rifton-activity-chairs</a>. In the story I mention the pads having memory foam, which is an artistic deviation from the actual product.</p>
Figure 37 Pink Toddler Harness	<p>"Child Kid Leash Backpack Harness For Toddlers Anti Lost Wrist Cuff With Lock Anti Lost Belt"</p> <p><a href="https://www.aliexpress.com/item/4000258883511.html">https://www.aliexpress.com/item/4000258883511.html</a></p> <p>Note that these harnesses are often so big that one will probably fit someone like Iris. A similar one I have has a maximum 29" (73cm) chest. The locking buckle on the parent side is made up for the story, although I have seen a few requests for that in reviews.</p>
Figure 38 Sabine's old Bib	<p>Practical baby bib in soft &amp; comfy plastic   BABYBJÖRN:</p> <p><a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/358036239099766550/">https://www.pinterest.com/pin/358036239099766550/</a></p> <p>Obviously exaggerated the size to make it suitable for teenage girls.</p>
Figure 39 Carebear Costume Grumpy Bear	<p>Carebear costume of Grumpy bear, with attached hood and mittens, and back zipper. The shoe covers are separate.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fun.com/care-bears-deluxe-grumpy-bear-costume.html">https://www.fun.com/care-bears-deluxe-grumpy-bear-costume.html</a></p>

	Note that the normal costume doesn't have Velcro straps around the wrists, and the socks from the story are actually shoe covers.
Figure 40 Iris's Drop-side Bed	Paramount K600 bed <a href="https://www.paramount.co.jp/english/product/detail/index/10/17">https://www.paramount.co.jp/english/product/detail/index/10/17</a> In the story I allow Iris to pull the side up without the double handgrip, which shouldn't be possible with the real bed.
Figure 41 Disposable Coveralls for Kids	Soft Kids Disposable White Coveralls <a href="https://coveralls.en.made-in-china.com/product/mSsJnNdfhYo/China-Soft-Kids-Disposable-White-Coveralls-Children-Youth-Disposable-Coveralls.html">https://coveralls.en.made-in-china.com/product/mSsJnNdfhYo/China-Soft-Kids-Disposable-White-Coveralls-Children-Youth-Disposable-Coveralls.html</a>
Figure 42 Sabine's Garden Harness	Singing Rock Zaza Kids Full Body Harness <a href="https://www.ropesgear.com/products/singing-rock-zaza-kids-full-body-harness">https://www.ropesgear.com/products/singing-rock-zaza-kids-full-body-harness</a> This harness is actually for smaller kids than Sabine.
Figure 43 Sabine's Swing Hammock	Swingz n thingsz Special Needs Chair: <a href="https://swingz.com.au/special-needs-chair">https://swingz.com.au/special-needs-chair</a>
Figure 44 Imogen's Party Jumpsuit	PBJK's Designs Girls Jumpsuit 6x-12 <a href="https://pattern-walk.com/product/pbjks-designs-girls-jumpsuit-size-6x-12-uncut-sewing-pattern/">https://pattern-walk.com/product/pbjks-designs-girls-jumpsuit-size-6x-12-uncut-sewing-pattern/</a> For ready-made jumpsuit for women that is very similar: take a look at: <a href="http://www.cameoappearancevintage.com/shop/90s-floral-jumpsuit">http://www.cameoappearancevintage.com/shop/90s-floral-jumpsuit</a>
Figure 45 Disney's Finding Dory Onesie	Disney's Dory onesie <a href="https://poshmark.com/listing/Disneys-Dory-onesie-by-Disney-extra-small-6035462809d7607556300f34">https://poshmark.com/listing/Disneys-Dory-onesie-by-Disney-extra-small-6035462809d7607556300f34</a>
Figure 46 Sabine's Old Car Seat	Diono Radian RTX car seat. Picture from: <a href="https://www.carousell.sg/p/diono-radian-rxt-car-seats-2-for-sale-bought-in-august-2018-202730292/">https://www.carousell.sg/p/diono-radian-rxt-car-seats-2-for-sale-bought-in-august-2018-202730292/</a> (Link might function only a limited time) In the story it is used in combination with the Merritt Buckle Guard – I know that doesn't work in reality since it is not quite an IMMI buckle.
Figure 47 Merritt Buckle Guard	Merritt Buckle Guard <a href="http://www.merrittcarseat.com/escape-proof/">http://www.merrittcarseat.com/escape-proof/</a> for IMMI buckles
Figure 48 Merritt Chest Clip	Merritt Chest Clip <a href="http://www.merrittcarseat.com/escape-proof/">http://www.merrittcarseat.com/escape-proof/</a> Should work with any harness with standard width straps.
Figure 49 Party Blouse	Vintage Puff Lantern Sleeve Shirt Womens Casual Back Buttons O-Neck Loose Short Sleeve Tops Ladies Cotton White Blouse <a href="https://www.aliexpress.com/item/32586473578.html">https://www.aliexpress.com/item/32586473578.html</a> In reality this is a blouse, not a body, and in woman's size.
Figure 50 Dino-faur T-rex 4x4	<a href="https://www.fatbraintoys.com/toy_companies/aeromax/dino_faur_.cfm">https://www.fatbraintoys.com/toy_companies/aeromax/dino_faur_.cfm</a>
Figure 51 Yelda's Apron	Adjustable Bib Apron, PVC Cooking Kitchen Aprons for Men and Women, Waterproof, Extra Long, Blue <a href="https://guernsey.desertcart.com/products/70382304-adjustable-bib-apron-pvc-cooking-kitchen-aprons-for-men-and-women-waterproof%EF%BC%8C-extra-long-blue">https://guernsey.desertcart.com/products/70382304-adjustable-bib-apron-pvc-cooking-kitchen-aprons-for-men-and-women-waterproof%EF%BC%8C-extra-long-blue</a> It also comes with sleeve protectors, which were not necessary in the story since Iris's underarms were bare.
Figure 52 Raymond's Race Car Bed	Delta Children Disney Cars Convertible Toddler to Twin Bed with Lights and Toy Box <a href="https://www.kmart.com/delta-childrens-disney-cars-convertible-toddler-to-twin/p-024V007401690000P">https://www.kmart.com/delta-childrens-disney-cars-convertible-toddler-to-twin/p-024V007401690000P</a>

Figure 53 Massage and Changing Table	Master Massage - 30" Laguna Stationary Massage Table <a href="https://massagetools.com/laguna-stationary-table-30.html">https://massagetools.com/laguna-stationary-table-30.html</a>
Figure 54 Denim Ruffle Jumpsuit	Next Lipsy Cut Out Jumpsuit <a href="https://www.nextdirect.com/nl/en/style/ls166912/P42297">https://www.nextdirect.com/nl/en/style/ls166912/P42297</a>
Figure 55 Sabine's old Hearts Rainsuit	Hatley Colour Changing Sweethearts Raincoat and pants (no longer available) <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/233765036894047914/">https://www.pinterest.com/pin/233765036894047914/</a> <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/233765036894047601/">https://www.pinterest.com/pin/233765036894047601/</a> For the story I made the pants overalls. They go up to size 12, so no need to exaggerate the size.
Figure 56 Purple Martin , Figure 57 Red-eared Slider Turtle , Figure 59 Great Blue Heron	Pictures from the writer's vacations in Oregon.
Figure 58 Kirk Park Recreational Area	<a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/46052415@N08/14090210497/">https://www.flickr.com/photos/46052415@N08/14090210497/</a>
Figure 61 Sabine's old Rain Boots	Stephen Joseph Girls' Rain Boots, from <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Stephen-Joseph-Girls-Rain-Boots/dp/B07JY64JPW">https://www.amazon.com/Stephen-Joseph-Girls-Rain-Boots/dp/B07JY64JPW</a>
Figure 60 Four-seat Pedal Boat	<a href="https://www.takemefishing.org/blog/may-2021/pedal-boat-fishing-tips-for-beginners">https://www.takemefishing.org/blog/may-2021/pedal-boat-fishing-tips-for-beginners</a>
Figure 62 Child's Life Jacket	HeySplash Life Jacket for Kids <a href="https://www.amazon.com/HeySplash-Watersports-Flotation-Survival-Suitable/dp/B07XNQ5RDG?th=1">https://www.amazon.com/HeySplash-Watersports-Flotation-Survival-Suitable/dp/B07XNQ5RDG?th=1</a>
Figure 63, Figure 64, Figure 65, Figure 67, Figure 68, Figure 69	Pictures from the writer's vacations in Oregon.
Figure 66 Special Needs Swing Seat	Large Adaptive Swing Seat <a href="https://www.eliteplayequipment.com/products/large-adaptive-swing-seat/">https://www.eliteplayequipment.com/products/large-adaptive-swing-seat/</a>
Figure 70 Preformed Bean Bag	Willstar Fashion Large Bean Bag Sofa Cover Lounger Chair <a href="https://www.walmart.com/ip/Willstar-Fashion-Large-Bean-Bag-Sofa-Cover-Lounger-Chair-Sofa-Ottoman-Seat-Living-Room-Furniture-Cover-Dark-gray-27-5-31-5in/801270479">https://www.walmart.com/ip/Willstar-Fashion-Large-Bean-Bag-Sofa-Cover-Lounger-Chair-Sofa-Ottoman-Seat-Living-Room-Furniture-Cover-Dark-gray-27-5-31-5in/801270479</a>