

“Miss Evie!” Nephyr exclaimed, hopping up from his small chair as the red-tailed hawk entered the preschool classroom to hurry over to her, momentarily forgetting about how his pants had been confiscated earlier in the day to allow for the teacher to see whether or not he was fibbing about needing a diaper change. But, considering what the peregrine falcon had been through with his caretaker and temporary mommy over the weekend, running up to greet her in just a tee shirt and diaper was something that she practically expected from him.

“Hello, my sweetie birdie~!” Evie chirped, pulling him into a winged hug once he was in range of such an attack, which he was more than happy to reciprocate. “Were you a good little hatchie for Miss Garland today, Neph?”

Nephyr felt his cheeks grow warm beneath his black feathers, and he nodded sheepishly at his caretaker’s inquiry. It had been a standard day of preschool for him—which was embarrassing in and of itself, seeing as he was in his early twenties. Plenty of games, simple learning exercises that he’d been coaxed into participating in despite being intelligent enough to teach the material himself, a naptime session that had been strangely refreshing, and a couple of necessary diaper changes. He’d been made well aware that he’d needed one or two more changes than some of the other kids in the class that actually **NEEDED** to wear diapers, and were around the age of learning how to potty train. The big kid potty wasn’t a luxury that Nephyr had been allowed for several days now, as it was one of the terms of the program that he was in the process of carrying out—something that Evie was very happy to enforce.

Never mind the fact that to Nephyr, it was feeling a little less like a punishment with every day that passed.

“He was a *very* good bird for me today!” Miss Garland, the preschool teacher, answered for him, working together with his caretaker, to make him as flustered as possible before he left for the day. “He was awfully shy here and there, but he didn’t fuss about a thing, even when he needed his diaper changed. Ooh, speaking of which, I’d better get you your britches back before you head out—though I think it’d be awfully cute to see such a big hatchie strolling down the street with their pampered bottom on full display~!”

Nephyr huffed cutely, hiding behind one of his mama’s wings as he playfully whined, “D-don’t give her any ideas!” to which both of the ladies laughed heartily. As the badger went to retrieve his pants for him, the falcon looked curiously at his caretaker. “I-I’m happy to see you, mommy, but what are you doing here? I thought that mean old Craig w-was supposed to pick me up to take me to the n-nursery.”

Evie smiled at him, running her wing through the feathers atop his head. “That’s how things were supposed to go, but I was able to pull a few strings at the nursery for us. I had a wonderful time taking care of you over the weekend, and I think that you’re the type of baby who behaves the best when there are as few distractions around as possible—so, just you and a caretaker or two. You can certainly play well with other littles, but from what I saw, you were at your happiest when it was just the two of us. So, from here on out, I’m going to be your guardian! We’ll still need to make visits to the nursery, but for the rest of the time that you need to undergo this process, we’ll be together for a good majority of the time~”

The falcon was beaming before Evie had finished her explanation. Spending more time with the female avian was exactly the thing that he wanted! There was something about her that he just couldn’t get enough of. She’d been the one to help him feel more comfortable with the process that he had no choice but to go through, and she’d already opened his eyes about several things along the way. The thought of ‘working’ a bit closer with her was something that sounded wonderful to him. And no more of his old coworker taunting and teasing him about these arrangements? What an amazing deal! “Th-that’s wonderful, mama! Yay! S-so, it’s just me and you for the day...?”

“Not quite,” hummed a new voice, one that made Nephyr’s heart flutter in his chest. He gazed shyly over Evie’s shoulder as another bird stepped into the room. It was Natalie, who was helping Evie take care of him for community service hours—apparently, it fell into the necessary margins, since his rehabilitation program was run by the state. They’d been friends with one another for years, and the crush that he had on her was big enough for Evie to figure it out without even needing to ask him about it. “I’ll be tagging along with you—assuming that you don’t have a problem with it, Neph~?”

“O-of course not! No problems!” Nephyr stammered shyly, glad that she couldn’t see how hard he was blushing under his feathers. Miss Garland returned with his khaki shorts, and he was relieved to have something to conceal his bright blue diaper in front of his caretaker and crush—even if the imprint that his diaper left upon his pants was a little more obvious than he would’ve liked it to be.

“Good! Not that you *really* have much say in the matter, babypants,” Natalie teased playfully, her nickname for him earning a giggle from the preschoolers who were still waiting for their parents to pick them up. Natalie and Miss Garland exchanged introductions before they all said their farewells to the badger, who

wished them a pleasant rest of the day as she handed Nephyr his small, blue backpack, with Mordecai, his plush bird companion, sticking out of the main pocket.

The falcon held wings with both his caretaker and friend, walking in between them as they headed towards the preschool's exit. Nephyr was trying his best to keep his waddle as subtle as possible—something that always proved difficult with the extra thick diapers that he was kept in. “S-so, where are we going? Are we heading back to your house, mama? Or to the nursery?”

“Actually, to celebrate this new arrangement of ours, I was thinking that we could make a stop on the way back to the nursery,” Evie chirped, smiling at her charge. “We’ll need to check in at the nursery and stay for a little while so I can get some things taken care of, but we’ll all be heading back to my house once that’s done. Before any of that, though—how does a trip to the local mall sound to you?”

Nephyr tilted his head curiously. The shopping mall? He supposed that didn’t sound too terrible. He rarely ever found himself at the mall, and even when he did, he typically only hit the game stores before escaping as soon as possible. It wasn’t really his thing, but if it meant unwinding after a day of preschool and recharging before going to the nursery...maybe it wouldn’t be so bad. He nodded, smiling back at his mama. “Th-that sounds like a good time to me, mommy,” he told her, stretching the truth just a tiny bit. He didn’t want to rain on the girls’ parade, since Evie was clearly excited about going there. And he knew that Natalie spent a good deal of time at the mall, herself.

He hoped that they didn’t run into any of the eagle’s friends there.

“Is there anything that we’re looking for there?” Natalie piped up, signaling that this had been Evie’s idea from the start.

The hawk shrugged. “Nothing in particular! I just think that it’ll be a good place to walk around, stretch our legs, and show off how much of a cutie our little Neph is,” she hummed, squeezing the wing of a very bashful falcon in hers. “Though, I imagine there might be something that we stumble across that I’ll have to buy. It can be a dangerous place for me sometimes.”

“Oh, yeah, same here, for sure,” Natalie chuckled, wiggling her tail feathers. “I can never leave without impulse buying *something*. They’ve got some good food in the food court, too. And Neph—if you’re on your best behavior, you might just get a treat~!”

The falcon smiled shyly, his own tail feathers giving an excited twitch at the proposition. A trip to the mall suddenly sounded a whole lot better! Sure, it was basically bribery...but who could turn their nose or beak up at the promise of a free treat? “Okay, Nat! I’ll b-be on my best behavior for both of you!”

“There’s a good hatchie,” cooed Evie as they stepped out into the warm air outside, heading for the parking lot, receiving a few curious looks from parents and kids along the way. Once they’d reached Evie’s car, she pulled back the waistband of Nephyr’s shorts and diaper, peering into the latter. “Need a change before we head out, little guy?”

Nephyr gulped shyly, feeling particularly flustered as Natalie took a more hands-on approach to check the front of his padding through his pants for any dampness. Once he’d regained his senses, he told them what they’d just discovered, knowing that they wanted to hear him say it. “N-no, mama. I-I don’t need my diaper changed.”

“Do you need to go potty at all?” insisted the hawk. “It’ll be a long ride until we get to the mall—about a half hour or so. If you go potty now, Nat and I will give you a change before we get on the road. If you potty in the car, you’ll have to wait until we get to the mall.”

The falcon fidgeted with his wings shyly. “N-no, mommy. I don’t need to go that badly.” He was telling the truth, more or less. He wouldn’t have minded taking a potty break, as the water he’d drank after recess was working its way through his system. But, he didn’t think it’d be enough to warrant needing an entire change, since neither he nor Evie liked to waste diapers. And the thought of wetting himself while both of the girls watched him was something that made him feel deeply bashful. He knew it was silly, since he’d done so before—and they’d both changed his diapers a handful of times, and Evie had even given him a bath the previous night—but it still made him squirm on the inside. Maybe a little on the outside, too.

Thankfully, Evie didn’t push the issue any further. She gave him a pecking kiss on the cheek before stepping around him, clicking a button on her keychain to unlock her car so that she could open the rear door for him. Naturally, he would be sitting in the backseat, while the ‘actual’ adults rode up front. He ducked to step into the backseat...only to freeze once he saw what awaited him there. It was a child’s car seat, but sized up for someone like him. It was mostly gray, but had plenty of pink to signal that it was intended for girls. That was all there was to it, really. It was

just a car booster seat...yet, it was more than enough to make Nephyr blush as he looked between Natalie and Evie.

“Surprise!” giggled Natalie, who looked infinitely more ecstatic about said surprise than her friend did. “Do you like it? It was all my idea! When I got to the nursery earlier and Evie explained her plan to me, I suggested that we get a car seat for you to ride in—because, like, how *cute* is it? It’s got a cupholder and everything! Now you get to ride around like the coolest kid in town!”

Nephyr clicked his beak shyly, and Evie was already trying to usher him to sit down in the oversized toddler seat. Maybe he should be a little concerned about just how eager his crush was to treat him like a gigantic baby, and how into her role of assistant caretaker she was getting. It was just as flattering as it was embarrassing, though, and the falcon decided that it’d be best to go along with things. Just like he’d been doing for the last several days. If he wanted to eventually win Natalie’s favor, then protesting something that had been her idea probably wasn’t the way to go about it.

The falcon ducked into the car once he was relieved of his backpack, keeping himself bent over until Evie had helped position him to set his posterior in his new seat, his diaper rustling underneath his shorts as he sat down. The car seat was surprisingly comfortable—he could tell that it was made of steel and plastic, but the cushioning upon it was extremely soft. Nephyr felt wistful as a faint memory returned to him, sitting in the back of his parents’ car, dozing off on long trips, sleeping soundly while secured in his seat...he couldn’t recall if his actual kiddie car seat was as comfortable as the one he found himself in now, but he could certainly picture himself taking a nap in this one.

“You’re just the cutest thing, Neph,” Evie cooed to him as she secured his array of seatbelts—a pair that went over and under either of his wings to fasten into a central port that rested against his torso, and a strap that went up in between his legs to buckle into the same port, whilst also making the bulk of his diaper a little more pronounced. She set his backpack down next to him, ensuring that Mordecai was facing forward within it. “All comfy and snug? Anything too tight?”

Nephyr nodded to the first question and shook his head to the second, well aware of the way that Natalie was peering into the car over his caretaker’s shoulder to catch a glimpse of him sitting in a car seat for the first time since he’d been a child, the eagle stifling giggles the entire time. Nephyr knew that she was giggling not to make fun of him, but because she, like Evie, found him to be adorable.

Naturally, this was something that kept his cheeks perpetually warm while around the two avians. “I-I’m fine, mama. This is...kind of cozy, honestly.”

“This is generally the favorite model of car seat that we have in stock at the nursery,” Evie informed him, picking up a blue pacifier that was resting on the regular seat beside him and popping it into his beak after picking some fuzz off of the nipple. “Everyone always talks about how comfy cozy they are~ And like Nat said, it’s got a holder for your bottle!” Rather than a bottle, however, Evie placed a sippy cup full of juice in the holder, giggling as she stroked his cheek with the tip of her wing. “But I’ll be nice and let you use a sippy cup while we’re out and about. Just be careful not to drop your pacifier when you get a drink!”

The falcon nodded again, chewing on the soft silicone of his pacifier’s teat, something that he found a little more relaxing than he cared to admit. He smiled at Natalie behind it as she finally took a seat in the passenger’s side up front, though she continued to keep an eye on him through the mirror of the sun visor. “A-ah’ll be caweful, momma,” he promised, his words a little jumbled by his pacifier.

“Good hatchie,” cooed the hawk as she stepped back and closed the door that he’d entered. He and Natalie were left alone in the car for several long, tense moments as the caretaker stepped around to the driver’s seat. Nephyr was certain that his crush could hear his heart thumping in his chest just as easily as one could smell the baby powder wafting from his diaper, stirred up a little from having sat down in the booster seat. For now, though, Natalie was content enough to admire his cuteness in silence—interspersed with stifled giggles, that is—as Evie buckled her seatbelt and started up the car.

The car ride was fairly uneventful, though the two girls up front were more than keen to talk about Nephyr in a way that made him squirm plentifully in his new throne. Evie made sure that he was aware of the large, pink diaper bag sitting on the floor to the side of him, as if it was possible to miss the presence such a thing. Natalie asked him about his plushie Mordecai once he’d retrieved the toy from his backpack and hugged him in his lap, which prompted Nephyr to recount the tale of his childhood toy and how this one was just like it. So, he was technically called Mordecai the Second, though he was known as simply Mordecai. Natalie found the story to be quite adorable—especially seeing as he’d told it all via mumbling around his pacifier.

Along the way to the mall, Nephyr slowly drained the contents of his sippy cup, ensuring to keep a good hold of both his plushie and his pacifier whenever he

went for a sip. Natalie could probably reach around and retrieve them for him if he dropped them, but he wanted to maintain some semblance of bigness—though this was difficult to do, considering his booster seat and apparel. Never mind how drinking all of his juice while already needing to go to the bathroom was surely dooming him to do something that would make him decidedly *not* big in the near future. This made him feel plenty shy, of course...but he was surprised to find just how high his spirits were as he rode along in the back of Evie's car. It was as though being in his car seat was stirring up distant memories of him doing this as a hatchling, and was instilling within him the same innocence and glee that he'd felt back then.

"Here we are!" declared Evie, once she finally turned the car into the large, sprawling parking lot of the mall. "Thank goodness traffic wasn't too terrible. You still awake back there, little Neph?"

Nephyr nodded, giving her a feathery thumbs-up through his reflection in the rearview mirror. He'd come rather close to falling asleep once or twice, as his booster seat was nice and snug, but he'd managed to stay awake for the duration of the journey. Still, Evie must've caught his eyes fighting to stay open a few times during the trek. "Yeph, mommy, ah am."

"Managed to keep your pants dry the entire time, lil' birdie?" Natalie hummed, plenty eager to jump aboard the teasing train that Evie had started—not that it had really stopped at any point during the drive.

"O-of courshe ah did," huffed the falcon behind his pacifier, turning his beak up as they pulled into a parking spot, not too far from one of the mall's various entrances. He clicked his beak as he shifted in his seat, adding in a meeker tone, "A-at leasht, um...a-ah tink ah did."

"You only *think* that you did?" echoed Natalie, turning around in her chair after unbuckling her seatbelt. A wide grin had spread across her beak. "Did you have an accident, baby birdie~? You can tell me and your mommy if you did! You know that we'll understand!"

Nephyr huffed again, hugging Mordecai tightly with one wing as he took his pacifier out of his beak, squirming in his seat as Evie shifted her gaze to him, too. "I-I...I'm being t-totally honest. I-I don't, um...I don't think that I-I had an accident. B-but I'm not sure."

"Can you elaborate, Neph?" Evie prompted gently, silently signaling for Natalie to lay off the teasing for just a moment.

The falcon hid his face behind his wings, his cheeks growing red-hot under his feathers. Having to explain bathroom-related things to these two ladies was deeply embarrassing, but he knew that he didn't have much choice. And, considering what they'd all been through together already, he knew that trying to sweep things under the rug was a little bit pointless. They both knew that he did all his business in diapers, so why bother covering up that fact? "I-I, um...keep having accidents while I'm in Miss Garland's c-classroom. I-I might've had one or two otherwise, but th-they happen there the most. L-like, real accidents, w-when I don't realize that I have to go until a-after I'm done or in the middle of it. S-so, um...I r-really don't know if I'm totally dry right now o-or not. These d-diapers are good at hiding wetness from me."

The silence that resulted from his short speech was thankfully brief, as Evie took it in stride. "Well then, that just means that Nat and I will need to make it a habit of checking you just a little more often! There's nothing to be ashamed of when it comes to having accidents, Neph. You've been through a lot lately, and it's probably a bit of a shock to your system. You're not the only one in this program to start having spontaneous accidents, I promise you."

"And hey, at least you're wearing protection when you have accidents," Natalie pointed out as Evie got out of the car and circled around to help Nephyr out of his seat. The falcon couldn't tell whether or not his friend was being genuine or trying to tease him further until she added, "I wet the bed a couple of times growing up. It sucked waking up all cold and sticky, and doing the laundry afterwards was like, *super* embarrassing. I mean, I probably wouldn't have wanted to wear a diaper to bed every single night just in case, but like, if I'd known that an accident was gonna happen one night...better to have one little thing to take care of than make a whole morning ordeal out of it, right?" She rubbed the back of her head awkwardly. "I dunno if any of that makes much sense, but there's my two cents about it all."

Nephyr smiled appreciatively at his friend's attempts to cheer him up—though he was really just embarrassed about things rather than actually being upset—though he had to shake the idea of his childhood crush wearing diapers like him out of his mind as Evie went about undoing his seatbelt buckles. It wasn't such a bad thing to picture, though this was a fact that filled Nephyr with a good deal of mixed emotions. "I-I get what you mean, Nat. I-I guess you have a point. It's not all th-that bad, just...embarrassing. A-and I hope that it doesn't continue when I'm...a-allowed to stop wearing diapers." The sentence almost sounded wrong to Nephyr,

which did little to help the swirling emotions inside of him. He *did* want to stop wearing diapers, and he *was* looking forward to the day when he'd be done with this rehabilitation program...wasn't he?

"I'm sure that will be the case," Evie assured him, holding his wing to help him step out of the car, making sure that he had Mordecai in his grasp. She pocketed his pacifier for now, and retrieved the diaper bag from the floor of the vehicle. "Like I said, your body is probably just experiencing some side effects of all of the things happening to you lately. Once the stress is gone, I'm sure that it'll all return to normal. Now, drop your drawers for me, dearie. Let's see if you've gone and piddled in your pants."

Nephyr gulped, knowing that he had to do as he was asked to, even though the two girls had been more than capable of checking his diaper with his pants still on while they were still at the preschool. He glanced around quickly, and thankfully, despite the mall's parking lot being fairly crowded with cars, there weren't any people in their immediate vicinity. Holding Mordecai in one wing, he fumbled with his shorts with the second, eventually allowing them to slide down to his knees and exposing his bright blue diaper to his caretaker and crush for the second time that afternoon.

Despite the very public self-pantsing, Evie took her time in examining the crotch and backside of his padding, while Natalie stood on the sidelines looking as though she was thoroughly enjoying the show. After several tense moments, while Nephyr was too busy looking around for others who might see him in all his diapered glory to examine the actual state of his underwear, his caretaker finally had her diagnosis. "Looks like you leaked a little bit up front. Nothing too terrible, and definitely not enough to urgently require a change. Still, I expect that it won't be too long before that juice finishes working its way through you~"

The falcon whimpered meekly, quickly pulling his pants back up before Evie got the bright idea of making him walk around without them in public. It was bad enough to have his absorbent undies on display for all to see back in the preschool classroom. He didn't know if the hawk would push things that far, but he could never anticipate what sorts of things that she had in store for him. "I-I'll try to pay attention, a-and let one of you know when that happens," Nephyr promised, a little surprised at himself.

"Good hatchie!" cooed Evie, giving him a peck on the cheek as she took his wing, starting to lead the troupe towards the nearest mall entrance. For once, Natalie

took up the rear—and Nephyr couldn't help but think that this was so she could stare at *his* rear, his diaper shifting and rustling under his pants. "You're certainly adjusting well to your punishment, dear. I suspected that you'd eventually come around to finding it bearable at least, though I couldn't say for sure, from the way that you were acting the first couple of days."

Nephyr swallowed nervously, wondering if his caretaker was trying to probe him for further information. Did she know that he wasn't loathing this treatment as much as he had been just a few short days ago? Did *Natalie* know that? He supposed that it was a little obvious that he was warming up to things, since he was hardly protesting anything that Evie wanted to do with him. But how much did either of the girls *really* know? Did they know that he was close to enjoying all of this? *Was* he enjoying any of this? He didn't know for sure, himself. The mere thought continued to fill him with confusion and apprehension.

One thing for certain was that walking along in silence wasn't doing him any favors. He cleared his throat awkwardly, adjusting the wing that was holding Mordecai—only now realizing that he *was* holding his plushie as he brought it through the mall's entrance, the cool air conditioning washing over them. "I-I mean, um...I-I don't really have a choice o-other than to just go along with it, r-right? S-so, making a fuss isn't really doing me any f-favors."

To his relief, Evie simply nodded and left their conversation at that as she led the way into the shopping mall. There were plenty of people wandering about, but thankfully, it didn't seem to be terribly busy. He supposed that most people did their shopping here on the weekends, and Mondays were less crowded as a result. Still, there were a few more people than Nephyr cared to see, and he could tell that some were already taking notice of his plushie companion and his childish—though not outright babyish—apparel. He hoped that the imprint that his diaper left in his shorts wasn't as noticeable as he thought it to be.

"Say, I think there's a pretty cool toy store just up ahead and to the right," Natalie piped up, her voice echoing a little from the tiled floor and walls of the mall. "Maybe we wanna take little Neph to check it out?"

The falcon whimpered softly, ducking his head to avoid the gaze of people who he *knew* had heard his crush's proposal, and the nickname that went with it. He should've seen it coming that this wouldn't be a simple, relaxed, typical stroll through the local mall. Both Natalie and Evie would take any chance possible to embarrass him at every twist and turn. He clicked his beak as his temporary mama

turned to look at him. “Does that sound like a fun time to you, Neph? Do you wanna go and look at the toy store? I know we said that we’d get you a treat if you’re on your best behavior...but I don’t see any reason why we can’t do that first and foremost. Something tells me that you feel like being very well-behaved today, so I’m willing to take the risk of treating you sooner~”

Nephyr’s cheeks had heated up to their usual level of blushiness by the time Evie had finished her statements. She was *very* good at making him feel like a little hatchling. A little *too* good. But, maybe it was easier than he thought, considering the diaper under his clothes and the plush bird in his wing. He nodded slowly, hoping that no stranger would catch wind of what was going on and start tailing them. He didn’t want a repeat of what happened at the aquarium visit from a few days ago, when a couple of teenagers had exposed his secret to the other visitors...just recalling the humiliating experience made him subconsciously step closer to his caretaker as he replied, “Y-yes, mama, I-I wouldn’t mind taking a look. I-if it’s okay with you.” He supposed that feeling little and mildly embarrassed about things was far preferable to feeling outright humiliated. He didn’t think that either of the girls would ever push him into being the latter.

“We wouldn’t be suggesting it if we weren’t okay with it!” Evie hummed, following Natalie’s directions and guiding the flock of birds towards the toy store, her wing still firmly holding onto Nephyr’s. It wasn’t long before their destination came into view. It was unmistakably a toy store, with all of the displays in the overly large mall windows, advertising sales that were *probably* not as great of a deal as they were made out to be, but still enough to make the buyer feel better about their purchase. That, and it was a way to attract children who were all too eager to spend their parents’ money.

This thought made Nephyr falter as they stepped into the toy store, as the sound of excited and curious kids filled his ears once they’d passed the threshold. “W-wait, I don’t have my wallet on me.”

Evie cocked an eyebrow at him curiously as she nudged him to the side, encouraging him to walk further into the shop so that they weren’t taking up the entrance. “That doesn’t matter, sweetie. I offered to treat you, remember?”

“I-I know, but...I-I feel kinda bad, making you buy me s-something that I can afford myself...”

“That defeats the purpose of a treat, silly hatchie!” Nat piped up, making the falcon shrink a little. She certainly liked to call him all sorts of embarrassing nicknames, even more so than Evie did. “Baby birdies like you can’t be expected to buy their own toys, can they? That’s mommy’s job! And the babysitter, sometimes~” She winked, holding out her wing. “Here, take my wing, and we’ll find something fun for your mommy to get for you. And make sure to keep an eye on your little Mordecai—we don’t want him getting mixed up with the other toys!”

Nephyr looked at his caretaker shyly, who nodded encouragingly as she let go of his wing. “You’d better do as she says, little Neph. Don’t worry—I won’t leave the store without you two.”

“A-alright, mama,” the falcon chirped, feeling a shiver run along his spine as he took Natalie’s wing. Her grip was soft and warm around his wing...but, the same could’ve been said for Evie’s. The eagle’s just felt a little extra special.

“Attaboy,” cooed Natalie, pulling him deeper into the toy store—almost seeming as though she was more excited to be here than he was. Maybe it was just because she wanted to see him treated like a hatchling some more? Or did she actually like this store? He supposed that he could see it being the latter; the store was quite colorful and stimulating to the senses, with all of the bright and cluttered displays and shelves filled with all sorts of shapes and sizes of toys. There was a section for board games, stuffed animals—which they should probably avoid, lest Mordecai get mixed in with others of his kin—action figures, girly toys, and particularly infantile toys...thankfully, Natalie didn’t guide him towards those right away. He figured that he should probably make his decision before they ended up in that area.

“S-so, um...what should I get?” Nephyr asked as they weaved their way in between displays, thumbing through a barrel of foam swords and idly drawing a wing-finger over some packaged toy cars and trucks. He wasn’t exactly sure what he was supposed to be looking for.

“Anything your little heart desires!” Natalie replied, which didn’t do much to help his plight. She let go of his wing to inspect a small tray of mood rings—something that hadn’t been in fashion for years, but always seemed to have an audience amongst kids. Anything that changed color ‘magically’ was admittedly entertaining if one didn’t know how it worked. “This has been one of my favorite stores ever since I was a kid,” Natalie mused aloud, trying and failing to get one of the rings to sit right on her finger, moving on to a few boxes of mystery figures from

some kid cartoon that he didn't recognize. "I rarely ever come in here anymore, since I'm usually with friends who just wanna look at makeup and stuff. Which is fine, I guess, but...I dunno, you see that stuff once, and you've seen it all. It feels like this place is different every time I come in here—which, seeing how infrequently I visit, is probably the case."

Nephyr wiggled his tail feathers curiously, inspecting a few plastic canisters of slime and wondering why in the world kids liked the things that they did. "I-I didn't take you for the type, Nat. It's cool that y-you like the stuff that you do."

The eagle nodded slowly, weighing individual mystery boxes in her wings to see if she could determine which hidden figure was which without opening them. "I have...tastes that probably aren't typical for girls my age. I guess being around you makes me a bit more comfortable to explore that stuff. It's not like I'm the one walking around in diapers all the time," she added, giving him a sidelong smirk.

Nephyr scoffed and rolled his eyes, though he couldn't stop himself from smiling back at her. "Hah, hah. Low-hanging fruit, N-Nat." A box of collectible figures on the bottom shelf of the display caught his eye, so he crouched down to have a closer look. As he did so, however, bending his body had a rather warm result. His eyes widened as he felt heat blossoming in the front of his diaper, prompting him to quickly stand back up straight to minimize the damage. However, he realized that it was already too late. He couldn't jam his wings into his crotch or cross his legs, as that would make things far too obvious. So, all that he could do was stand there meekly, his gaze fixed unfocusedly on the toys directly in front of him as he started wetting his diaper. Again, he was having an actual accident, and there was nothing that he could do to stop it!

And it turned out that his abrupt shift in position followed by complete silence from him was about as unsubtle as he'd feared it to be. Natalie leaned in close, lowering her voice to a whisper. "Are you having an accident, Neph?" There was no malice or teasing to the question. It was a simple inquiry—but it was still enough to make his cheeks turn as hot as the diaper in between his legs.

All that the falcon could do in response was nod meekly, and murmur a bashful, "Y-yes." He hugged Mordecai tighter, trying not to draw attention to himself as he flooded his pants, spreading his legs a little further as he felt his pee splash around before being absorbed into his thirsty diaper. It was a hefty wetting thanks to the cup of juice he'd consumed, but thankfully, his disposable underwear was very up to the task. He'd yet to have a diaper leak on him by more than a few

droplets because of an awkward sitting position, and he was hoping that this trend would continue in such a manner. He braced himself, preparing for the onslaught of teasing from Natalie once he'd finished wetting himself...

"Well, don't worry about it too much, Neph," she soothed him, rubbing his back up and down with a wing. As he turned to look at her, she smiled gently and said, "I can't help you hide it from mama Evie, but I won't tell her about your accident if you don't want me to. It's up to you."

Nephyr's tail twitched, the feathers ruffling at his friend's conspiracy. To tell Evie would be to suffer through an embarrassing and public diaper change, which would have to happen sooner or later. To put it off would mean having to wander through the mall in sodden padding...and there was no guarantee that his mama wouldn't figure him out anyway. Did he really want to wander around with a more pronounced waddle than usual...?

"L-let's, um...k-keep it our secret for now," Nephyr stammered, once again finding himself surprised at his own decision. Maybe it was choosing the lesser of two evils, but it didn't *feel* that way. He couldn't fathom why his thoughts continued to travel the way that they did...they simply *did*.

"Sure thing, sweetie," the eagle hummed, rubbing his back for a few more moments as they shared a wordless exchange, both birds eventually pulling away to resume their perusal of the toy shop's selection...and in Nephyr's case, to ponder why the idea of walking around in a soaked diaper was almost exciting. Nephyr soon decided upon a poseable dragon toy—he figured it was from a videogame of some sort, but he just liked the way that it looked. He'd been surrounded by so much 'cuteness' lately, and he needed to restore some level of coolness to his situation. And no, riding around in a booster seat with a cup holder wasn't his idea of cool. Natalie, meanwhile, picked out a small handful of mystery boxes that she was going to buy for herself, until Evie insisted on making the purchase for her, saying that the eagle had already been such a great help with taking care of Nephyr and deserved a little treat of her own—something that rendered Natalie a bit bashful, herself, which her friend couldn't recall ever seeing her like.

Their new trinkets purchased, the trio of birds exited the store and continued to wander through the mall, entering whatever stores the girls liked or ones that simply caught someone's eyes. It was a fairly relaxing and embarrassment-free jaunt compared to what Nephyr had been expecting it to be—though the addition of a wet diaper squishing and rustling in between his legs with every step ensured that *some*

embarrassment lingered regardless. He was positive that Evie had been aware that he'd had an accident right away, judging from the knowing glances that she kept shooting his way. But, she'd made no insistence on putting her pink diaper bag to use just yet, perhaps trying to encourage Nephyr to request a change of his own volition, and was content to let him waddle his way around in the meantime.

Eventually, the matter of an early dinner came up—walking around so much had worked up an appetite for the three birds, and they decided that a trip to the food court was in order. They'd seen and smelled it a little while earlier, and they'd be able to find their way easily. Evie, however, insisted upon checking a directory, which confused Nephyr. Her reason for this was soon made clear as she fished a handful of quarters from her pocket and motioned Nephyr towards the kiddie rides set up right next to the map of the mall.

“Take a seat while mommy and Natalie find our way around this place,” the hawk hummed encouragingly, waiting for Nephyr to take his choice of kiddie ride. There was really only one choice to make, though, unless he wanted to stay hunched over inside of a school bus or fold his legs uncomfortably as he sat in a boat. The falcon stared at the red and blue rocket ship with wide eyes, a gaze that was soon transferred to his caretaker.

“Y-you can't be serious,” he squeaked out, hugging Mordecai tighter against his chest. This was a fairly quiet corner of the mall, but there were still other people milling about. Several pairs of eyes would be on him.

“Very serious! We'll only be a minute, and I can't imagine the ride will last much longer than that.” Evie winked at him, not bothering to lower her voice as she used a particularly effective means of encouragement by saying, “I suppose you'd rather have me change your wet diaper on that bench right over there...?”

Nephyr chirped nervously, wasting no further time in hopping aboard the rocket ship, straddling the seat and holding onto the handle with his free hand. He shivered as his soggy padding squished underneath his rear, and it was quite colder than it had been when he'd first had his accident. Humming in satisfaction, Evie pushed the quarters into the coin slot on the kiddie ride, wishing him a safe voyage before going to stand with Natalie at the directory—both of whom were clearly paying more attention to him than to the map.

The falcon huffed shyly, keeping his eyes on the rocket's nose below him so he didn't see the other mallgoers who were surely curious about the adult avian

riding the kiddie toy. His ride came alive with flashing lights as it began rocking back and forth, bobbing up and down. His diaper squished underneath him as he rocked along with it, making him feel incredibly small. Like a toddler who'd wet his pants, and was trying to desperately hide it from his mommy, who was more than aware of things and eager to make him feel even smaller...

Nephyr felt the same whiff of nostalgia that he'd felt when he'd been buckled into his car seat just a little earlier. He'd always loved rides like these when he was younger. He was always begging his parents to ride on them whenever he saw them, and it was always a grand event when they finally said yes. It had taken him a long while to grow out of them, too. All through elementary school, he continued staring at the kiddie rides wherever they happened to pop up, and could occasionally convince his parents to let him ride them again. He'd eventually become too shy to ask as he got older, and had to leave the innocence of childhood behind for fear of what others would think of him.

And now, here he was. Riding on a toy rocket ship. Wearing a wet diaper. Clutching his favorite stuffed animal. In the middle of a public mall. And he found that he could hardly care about what others thought of him, watching him rock back and forth on the ride. He was happy. This felt good. It felt *right*.

He couldn't entirely wipe the giddy smile off of his beak as the ride slowly came to a halt, and his caretakers approached him. He stared at them with starry, almost tearful eyes. He didn't get off of the rocket. Everything that was happening...it was filling him with glee and delight. He didn't want those feelings to stop. He wanted to hold onto them tightly, to cherish them while he could. Shifting in place a little, pressing his beak against Mordecai's soft, faux feathers, he mewled a shy question to Evie.

"C-can I go again? P-please?"

To Be Continued