

Today, two-year-old Daryl Berry was messing with a toy car in the blue-painted playroom of Little Beam Daycare, for it was a Saturday morning in the height of summer. The lightly-dressed sprout was far too enthralled with scratching up the lacquered floor with a little chunk of metal to notice the trepidation upon the familiar face of the manager and main worker, Dave, much like the other two children in the room who were currently enthralled with their own imagination. Dave was staring pensively through the windows because his co-worker who was supposed to be on her shift today had not yet arrived, three minutes after she was supposed to be in, and with the current crew he anticipated that he was going to have a lot of work on his hands. But he was also hoping that she would be coming for another reason.

Dave felt a poke on his right pant leg, and started to turn around suddenly, smiling lightly and bending down toward the ground when he realized who had delivered it. A spry little sapling of around four years in a set of blue overalls had come up to him, his eyes focused more on the surrounding environment in light interest than on the man he had approached. Dave spoke softly.

“Oh, it's you Connor!” Dave chuckled to himself a little, ruffling the leaves on the boy's head lightly. There was a little curving to the child's maw as he flicked some of his head leaves out of the way of his eyes. “Watcha need, little guy?” Dave continued, although a certain smell in the air was already beginning to tell him.

“Pooped. Needa change.” Connor spoke quietly, but clearly, looking up toward the man with bright eyes.

“Of course, little guy.” Dave said, the chuckling shading into a sigh near the end. “Let's get you cleaned up...”

Little Beam Daycare was something of a rare place, all things considered, for it specifically served incontinent children. It was over thirty years old by this point, for it was founded in the 1990s by an education specialist who himself had been born with genetic sacral nerve deficiencies. Needless to say, growing up had been somewhat tricky for the man, and so once he had established a career for himself in childhood education, he had decided to found a daycare where diaper-bound kids would not have to face the troubles that he had once seen. The place did not really have strict standards for etiologies, but the peculiar nature of its regulations meant that typically only the children with the most severe incontinence were enrolled in the place by their parents.

Probably the biggest reason preventing parents of only light wetters and the like from leaving their kids at the daycare was the fact that there was no toilet in the kids' restroom. None of the kids at the daycare could toilet train, and so such a thing was not necessary. The only toilet in the whole facility was located in the employee's restroom. Technically, that saved money on the water bill, but of course the diaper bill that the place racked up more than made up for it.

All daycares have a unique, loving atmosphere that cannot be captured, of course. But to the outsider, that was probably the single most defining feature of the daycare. Every last kid in the building was in diapers, and none of them would be leaving them.

Dave knew that it worked wonders for the kids' psychology of, course, not imbuing them with even the unconscious shame and insecurity that even the most accepting “normal” daycares left upon such physically disabled children. The positive life outcomes that Little Beam Daycare had in multiple cohorts of children was one of the reasons why it received such significant subsidies from the

government, which incidentally certainly helped with the diaper bill. But although Dave loved children and had utterly dedicated himself to a career in education, he did still did not like having to take care of all of the kids' changes. That was why, after getting Dave freshened up and walking out of the changing room, Dave felt immense relief as he saw Siena walk through the front door, the woman tracking some dirt into the front hall and already getting pounced upon by wild little Kaia as soon as she had entered.

"Sorry, traffic was crazy this morning, bumper to bumper on the 55 of all places..." Siena did not look up toward Dave as she spoke to him, instead just scratching the head of Kaia, who for her part was largely just babbling an incomprehensible stream of consciousness."

"Don't worry, don't really mind, but sort of curious about the dirt?" Dave tilted his head.

"Stuff in the backyard. Long story." Siena said quickly, just smiling and nodding at Kaia, who didn't seem perturbed at all that the woman's verbal responses were reserved for the other worker.

"Well I'm not going to ask questions if it means I have another hand on diaper duty." Dave just shook his head, smirking to himself.

"I dunno, seems like you handled Connor pretty well." Siena flashed a certain look at Dave, a light smile etched onto her face as she glanced upon the boy who by now had let go of the man's hand and was starting to wander back to his personal corner of the playroom.

"Have you seen his blowouts? Going to be real, I want at least two sets of hands in this gig." Dave crossed his arms, his smile just deepening.

"And you want to go into pediatrics, wow..." Siena remarked in light sarcasm.

"Education's a bit different from cleaning up kids all day. Although I'll certainly take whatever advice you can give before you bounce, though." Dave remarked.

"Eh, probably won't be for another few years or so. Still trying to schmooze my way through the damn academy. But we'll see if we can make a diaper changer out of you yet." Siena spoke to Dave, briefly whispering something into one of Kaia's auditory membranes and patting the girl's bum before setting her back off toward the playroom. The woman just smiled wistfully to herself for a little bit before getting up from the crouch, stretching for a little while before turning towards Dave properly.

"Speaking of which, going to go for a change, think you can get story time ready? I'll start getting the snacks ready once I am out." Siena remarked, already starting to walk further into the room.

"Yep, sounds good. See you." Dave said in the casual manner that only co-workers can effect.

"Alright, see you too." Siena said, and soon walked off out of sight.

It was, relatively speaking, rare for the employees at the daycare to be incontinent themselves. But if such a person did apply to the facility, they would of course receive the utmost level of understanding and accommodations. Siena, who had been working at the daycare for a few years now, had congenital urinary and fecal incontinence, and only went through less diapers than many of the kids at the place because she could stand going without changes for longer than them. She was not actually that interested in childcare, being focused on trying to make a career in geology work out, but her

experience with her condition certainly left her well-suited to taking care of the kids at the daycare and making money in the meantime.

It didn't take long for Dave to gather all three of the children in the daycare in the central room and get them seated on the storytime rug; really that last part had taken the longest, for Connor had been excitedly chasing Kaia around in some sort of game. Thus settled, Dave took some time to comb through the little shelf of books before finally picking one out: a fan favorite about a little blue bird and his journey to figure out a migratory path. The kids were experts on it, evidently enough.

"Mister Dave, how come he didn't use the magnets to find the north? Birds have magnets in their heads." Connor tilted his head a little as he commented, and for a moment Dave felt conscious about his own level of education at that age.

"He was, well, he was a very silly bird and couldn't figure out how to do so!" Dave offered, beginning to flip to another page.

"But is natural, he doesn't have to be smart to use magnets." Connor said utterly plainly.

"Yea, an' birds are good at hearing chirps! He coulda just followed the other birds and they woulda showed him where to go!" Kaia interjected excitedly.

Daryl, for his part, was just following along with the story quietly, sucking a bit on a blanket every once in a while.

"Tough crowd today, eh..." Dave sighed without really bothering to conceal it.

By the time the children had reached the happy ending (and exasperated their caretaker with a decently surprising grasp of ornithology), Siena had gotten the oatmeal, raspberries, and crackers ready. After the ringing of a little bell which was really just there for ornamentation, the children filed together in something that was more or less of a line and made their way to the kitchen, where the snack table was already set. All three took their spots on the small faux-wooden seats that ringed the table, and Siena quickly got to work serving the children. Connor got crackers and raspberries, Kaia just got a whole ton of raspberries, and Daryl asked for oatmeal (after only one joking comment from Siena about his last name).

Daryl was easily the messiest eater out of the three, but he was also two years old, and far from the most difficult the two caretakers had had to deal with at the daycare. After everyone had finished and had gotten cleaned up, the children wandered (and in Daryl's case, toddled) back to the playroom, where Connor and Kaia started up a little game by the tiny play house in the corner, apparently playing the roles of real estate agent and prospective homeowner that was all too real to the two adults who were in the room, watching on the kids. Daryl, for his part, drew quietly in a corner, working on some scribbles of ghosts. Siena, remembering how the toddler had seemed quite keen on sipping from his cup of orange juice, approached the child not long after he began drawing, bending down for an action that was ingrained at this point.

"Watcha drawing, sprout?" Siena asked even as she pulled back the hem of the sprout's shorts, the fibers of the toddler's cloth-backed disposable diaper not making any noise as she pulled the garment back and took a look.

“Ghosts! N' angels n' monsters n' stuff.” Daryl chirped back, shooting his head back toward the woman with a smile.

“Mmmm, that looks cool little guy!” Siena said with a little lilt to her voice that made Daryl giggle. Not seeing any excrement in the rear or trough of the toddler's diaper, she let the waistband snap back and started to feel her hand around the exterior shell of the garment, her hands soon finding their way to the front. As she had expected, there was a light, steady warmth there, the padding having a bit of give when she poked it. The wetting was light, all things considered – far from change-worthy, especially for these little kids who were used to much heavier loads. Satisfied, the woman just took her hand out and patted the little boy on the head, the mint-green sprout beaming all the more at the attention. Having completed her job, the woman decided to take a look at the drawing that the child was so invested in. Predictably enough, she found a messy assortment of crayon colors in vaguely bipedal shapes. Siena smiled lightly to herself. Somehow, it did not get old.

Siena had just started to walk when she saw Dave head through the archway that led to the kitchen. “Dishes?” she shouted lightly after him.

“Yeah.” a sound of similar volume came to her soon after.

The woman just put her hands on her hips for a little while and thought to herself. That was one matter off the checklist.

Siena looked around the room, her eyes eventually settling on Kaia, who was now off by some shelves, working on a puzzle set, her session of play with Connor having ended a little while before. The woman walked over, her eyes briefly glancing over the half-visible scene of a forest that the puzzle pieces depicted before they settled on the girl.

“Working on a puzzle, Kaia?” Siena asked as though the sapling could have been doing anything else.

“Yea.” Kaia made out, glancing back at the woman once before she returned to her work. Siena could spy the intent in her eyes.

“I see.” Siena remarked, beginning to squat down by the girl and examining the scene more thoughtfully. Looked to be a pretty standard coastal woodland, albeit one without evergreens.

“What kind of trees are those, Kaia?” Siena asked after the three-year-old had placed down a few more pieces.

“Deci, deci-oo-” the girl paused for a moment. “They lose leaves.” she finished, adding another puzzle piece as she did so.

Siena smirked a little at that, although Kaia could not really tell.

“That's right! Smart girl.” Siena commented, scratching Kaia's head a little, to which the girl gave a little smile in response.

Once Siena had withdrawn her hand, Kaia looked back at the woman for a few moments, her gaze seeming to focus more on the lower parts of the woman's body. A few seconds later, she spoke.

“What's grown-up diapers like?”

It was no secret that Siena was in diapers just like the kids, and in fact their knowledge of that fact ultimately helped one of the stated goals of the daycare, as it gave the children a relatable adult role model to look up to and demonstrated that they had a place in the world. Siena's answer came simply and concisely, but openly.

“They're a lot bigger.” Siena went through the most obvious matter first. “Other than that, though, they're a lot like yours. They gotta work, after all.” Siena continued and Kaia giggled a little towards the end. “Another thing is that they don't have silly little pictures, they're all white.” Siena said, smiling at the girl. Of course, she was, well, lying, all things considered. While Siena was most intimately familiar with medical diapers, she knew of other kinds. The kids could learn about that when they were older.

Kaia nodded to Siena, her attention drifting again to the puzzle. The woman briefly turned her head to examine the rest of the room, finding Connor busy trying on some of the little outfits in a toy chest and Daryl still coloring, with Dave in a corner of the room keeping an eye on the toddler. Satisfied, the woman returned her attention to Kaia's work on the puzzle, and stayed with the girl for a good ten minutes. By the end of that time, Kaia had finished up the puzzle, which now revealed the image of a frankly gorgeous woodland scene. Siena stared at the finished picture for a little while, reminded of some hiking expeditions she had gone on with friends back in the day. It was then that she was drawn out of thought by a very familiar scent.

The first thing that Siena did was focus her attention on any potential somatic perceptions close to her rear. Almost immediately she was assured that she was not messy. Which meant...

“Hold up, stinker.” Siena shook her head as she smiled a little, reaching a hand toward the waistband that poked up from beneath Kaia's shorts and pulling it back. The little whiff of smell that came out told all.

“Alright, let's get you cleaned.” Siena said and almost immediately after hoisted the girl up, sitting her up in her arms carefully so as not to squish her bottom. Kaia, for her part, was very cooperative.

Siena took Kaia to the changing room right by the nap time room, a lightly-colored and decorated space with a window to the yard, through which bright beams of sunlight came in. The woman carefully laid the child down on one of the two changing tables, tugging the girl's shorts off before bending down to fetch supplies. Close to the changing tables, on the ground were two changing mats, which the oldest kids who could changed their own diapers used. Once Siena had acquired all of the necessary supplies, she got to work untaping Kaia's diaper, holding her breath in as best as she could manage while she did so and quickly using a wipe to clean up the mess. After she was done, Siena deposited the old diaper into a diaper pail right by the changing table and swiftly slid a new diaper with lavender designs underneath Kaia's bum. After that, it was a simple matter of applying powder and rash cream before taping the diaper up and giving Kaia a little pat on the head for being so good during her change. Siena picked up the girl and set her down onto the floor, Kaia now starting to walk towards the door, eager to get back to playing.

Siena herself paused before opening the door, though. While she placed back some of the supplies onto the changing table's shelves, she noticed that the lid of one of the diaper pails was ajar. After opening it up, she was able to confirm that the thing was indeed full. It looked like the one that Daryl often used.

While the woman didn't sigh, she did feel her eyelids droop a little bit at the revelation of more work, and considerably unpleasant work at that. Still though, she kept her face bright when she turned back toward Kaia and opened the door so that the girl could leave. Once that was settled, the woman kept the foot pedal of the diaper pail depressed as she pulled out the long disposable liner, the drawstring automatically coming shut as she did so. Luckily the smell was largely kept sealed inside, but seeing what could have been a weeks-worth of full diapers through the transparent lining was not doing wonders for her appetite, so Siena just gritted her teeth and started to haul the thing along outside of the changing room.

Almost immediately the woman was greeted with the sound of crying. Instinctively, the woman turned her head toward the location of the sound, and found Connor sitting down on the floor, tears streaming down his cheeks and little sad spasms taking over his throat while Dave attended to him. Dave himself looked toward Siena once she came out, his brow obviously furrowed.

"Hey, uh, Siena..." Dave trailed off a bit as he noticed what the woman was carrying, although he continued soon after. "Could you take Daryl outside? He really wants to play outside right now." he said, his voice occasionally pitching up into frustration before he would correct himself. It was then that Siena noticed Daryl standing by the archway that led to the front of the daycare center, his eyes focused on Connor and his maw curved lightly downwards.

"I, I'm kind of in the middle of emptying out one of the diaper pails, Dave. I, what happened to Connor?" the woman asked, her tone changing every few seconds as she balanced all of the different matters in her mind.

"He fell down and scraped some skin, I'm getting the band-aid right now, but I'll need to be keeping an eye on him." Dave said as another little wail escaped from the boy. "I get that you're kind of busy at the moment, but could you please take Daryl out while you're hauling that thing to the dumpster? He's been very patient but I can tell he's getting a bit antsy..." the man trailed off, his eyes flitting between Connor and Daryl.

"I...yeah. Yeah that's fine." Siena replied after a moment of thought. It wouldn't really be that much work at all, she thought. "I'll keep an eye on him out there." the woman continued.

"Thank you." Dave took a deep breath, shaking his head a little bit, although now a light smile had formed on his face. "Good luck."

Siena just nodded back to the man, and looked toward Daryl as Dave returned to comforting Connor.

"You heard the man. C'mon, little guy."

As one could imagine, Daryl was giddy and excited as he followed Siena out through the front door. The dumpster was located in an awkward little alley space right by the daycare and adjacent to the yard in the back, which meant that Siena had to travel through the front of the daycare, which had a little playground that was hedged in by a fence. Daryl followed behind the woman, his eyes caught on the trees that birds were flying by and the cars that were moving down the street. After a few moments of thought, Siena decided to bring Daryl along with her instead of letting him to stay in the fenced playground; she wanted to keep a close eye on him. The toddler waited by the woman as she took some time opening up the lid of the green dumpster by the daycare and making sure it stayed open as it rested against the building, throwing in the disposable liner after a bit of effort. After that, the woman

breathed a sigh of relief and closed the lid. Daryl looked on at the whole process in curiosity. When Siena noticed, she couldn't help but give something of a small, exasperated smile.

"Hmm, guessing someone finds it funny just how much work they make for me? That was from your pail, y'know..." Siena ruffled the toddler's head leaves as she spoke, but it was only light teasing.

Daryl just giggled excitedly at the woman's response, and while she sighed again, she couldn't force the smile down. The beaming from the child was so pure it was hard to get mad at him.

Siena had started to walk back towards the front playground while holding Daryl's hand when yet another smell came to her olfactory membrane. This time, she did not even stop to check herself. She just bent down and pulled back the waistband of Daryl's diaper, confirming that he was indeed messy.

"How long were you dirty, Daryl?! Was this while we were walking? You should always tell grown-ups when you're dirty..." Siena spoke, and Daryl just giggled and nodded his head up and down. Siena just put a hand on her face and shook her head.

"Okay, well, I'll leave *that* to Dave. No playtime for you until we get you all clean." Siena sighed as she walked toward the gate back to the daycare. She stopped, however, when she noticed a man in a postal uniform carrying a large, brown cardboard package.

"Ah, uh, hello ma'am? Do you work here? I have a package for Little Beam Daycare..." the man spoke, briefly looking down at a little tablet before he looked back up at Siena.

"Oh yes, I'm a worker here, thank goodness you're here, actually..." Siena's previous concerns were washed away as she started to approach the postal worker, reaching the man after only a few moments.

"Well that's good! Just need you to sign off...do you want me to take it up to the front or can you handle it from here?" the man asked lightly as he oriented the tablet towards Siena, revealing a small screen waiting for a signature.

"Umm..." Siena looked briefly at the package. Yeah that was a whole case, that would take a while. "Could you bring it up to the front, actually? Sorry, that would just take a a while and I *still* need to get this stinker back inside." she shot a little glare down at the sprout by her side then, although he only smiled.

"Of course, it's all part of the job!" the man nodded, and when Siena opened the gate, he followed along behind her, bearing the large package in his hands.

"Thank you for the timing, we were almost out of diapers before the next shipment..." Siena trailed off, her gaze now turning towards the sky, which was currently filled with grey clouds.

"I can see why." the man replied, his professional training mostly covering up the little smirk at the edge of his maw as he looked down at Daryl. Mostly, because Siena could still spy it and responded in kind. She could use commiseration at this time, she thought.

Just after the three reached the front door of the daycare, a light sprinkling started to come down from the sky, and Siena wasted no time in getting both Daryl and the package inside. Before Siena and the recently-arrived Dave had even finished speaking with the postal worker, the rain had started to come

down in full force. Siena and Dave quickly wrapped up everything with the worker so that the poor man would be able to get out of the rain as soon as possible, and were left with a sprout in need of a diaper change, a package in need of unboxing, and a way of entertaining three excitable children on a rainy day before it had even hit 1 'o clock.

“So...what next?” Dave was the one who broke the silence, looking back at his co-worker who was leaning on a wall by the entrance, her gaze focused on the ceiling as she breathed in and out in recovery.

“...Don't know.” she admitted. Both of them could hear the sound of rain on the building, and through the windows, both could see the grey world beyond, one which contrasted with and yet was inseparably bound to the miniature universe of the daycare. Siena scooted up a bit, looking back at Dave, and that was when she noticed Connor and Kaia coming through the archway, Daryl eagerly toddling over to them. Siena took a deep breath before she bumped Dave with an elbow and turned his attention towards the three children who were now excitedly talking amongst themselves. For some reason, both of the caretakers found themselves remaining silent as they waited for the children's discussion to conclude. When they were done, they looked at their caretakers with beaming smiles and stood up as properly as young children could manage. That was when they all delivered their message, simultaneously.

“Pillowfort day!”

Dave blinked. Siena sighed. But both started to walk forward, to make the children's request a reality.

It was, all in all, just another day at the daycare.