Grizzlies

by andlat

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Chapter 1

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Gabe groaned as he kicked at the pool water. Here he was, stuck at a hotel with his dorky little brother Gavin and three of his best friends. They were right over there, splashing in the pool and being the most obnoxious sixth graders imaginable.

“You’re only two years older than him.” His dad always said, but to Gabe, it was the biggest gap in the world. He was fourteen, much too cool to be splashing and playing in the pool like Gavin and his friends were. He had not even brought his trunks. That was how cool he was. All he did was sit on the side of the pool, soaking his feet and trying to look suitably detached to the girls who were sitting in the hot tub.

“Why aren’t you swimming?” Gavin called across the pool. Gabe only shrugged. He did not owe the little dork any explanation. Gavin shrugged back. “Cannonball!” He jumped in, the waves hitting Gabe in the shins.

“Major dork.” He muttered. He pulled his feet out of the pool, adjusting his shorts. Maybe he would wander up to the hotel room.

It was, he had to admit, pretty neat that they had their own room while the dads chaperoning their trip to the hockey game were in the room next door. They had all been told that, as long as they behaved, they were trusted to be on their own. Gabe assumed deep down that that meant he was unofficially

in charge, being the oldest. It meant he needed to be responsible.

“Quit splashing.” He called, but Gavin and his friends were too busy to pay him any mind.

“Why aren’t you swimming?” Gabe nearly jumped, spinning around to find Ayden standing behind him, towel wrapped around his shoulders.

“Forgot my trunks.” Ayden nodded.

“Why didn’t you say something? I’ve got extra.”

“You do?”

“Yeah, my dad always makes me pack extra stuff, just in case.” Ayden seemed a bit embarrassed. “And they’ll totally fit you.” It was Gabe’s turn to seem a bit embarrassed.

“It’s fine. I was just gonna head up to the room. Maybe watch TV or something.”

“We’re gonna be swimming until dinner. Won’t that be boring?”

“Naw, I’ll be fine.” Gabe turned to go, but found Gavin, Joe, and Ethan standing behind him. He could not shake the feeling that he was surrounded. The girls in the hot tub had left and the whole pool area was deserted.

“Grab him!” Ethan exclaimed. Gabe tried to get free, but there were eight hands coming for him. Gabe’s attempts to fight did little to stop them from dragging him over to the

pool bathroom, pushing him onto his back on the bench that separated the shower for rinsing from the toilet.

“Let me go!” He yelled. “What are you doing?”

“Watch me shut him up.” Gavin said with a grin. “Goochi, goochi, goo!” He said, tickling the bottoms of his brother’s feet. Gavin’s friends cackled as Gabe squealed and squirmed.

“Stop! Stop!” Gabe tried to kick Gavin away, but that only delivered his feet to another boy, who took over tickling. He was helpless as the onslaught went on and on, the boys egging each other on. Being five boys with the minimum of adult supervision, they had all drank their fair share of soda and Gabe was no exception. He whimpered and tried to get free as he felt his bladder begin to ache.

“Goochie, goo!” Ayden said, handing Gabe’s left foot to Ethan so that the two of them could tag team him.

“Stop! I’m gonna, I’m gonna” a dark spot formed on the front of Gabe’s shorts. Silence hanged in the air for a moment before the assembled twelve year old’s began to laugh.

“Holy shit! He actually wet himself!”

“Only cuz you tickled me.” Gabe whimpered, fighting back tears. That only encouraged the boys more. Joe tugged Gabe’s shorts down to survey the damage and they all started laughing as they saw Lightning McQueen and Mater on the fourteen year old’s boxer briefs.

“Cars? Seriously! Are you four?”

“He wet himself.” Ethan pointed out.

“Shuddup!” Gabe stammered. He tried to get back up, but he was so outnumbered, he stood no chance of escape.

“Grab your stuff, Ethan.” Ayden said. “I think Gabe wants to go for a swim.”

Despite Gabe’s protests, the four boys were more than able to get him ready for some fun in the pool. Gabe had been dragged into the bathroom looking like a normal boy between ten and fourteen in shorts and a t-shirt. He emerged looking more like an overgrown toddler in Finding Nemo Little Swimmers, water wings, and a brightly colored snorkel. They had not even given him trunks to wear.

“Gavin, please. No!” He whined as they tugged him toward the pool, bare feet slapping on the floor.

“Alright, no one splash baby Gabe. Might hurt his feelings!” Gavin said, smirking.

“Let’s push him in!” Gabe coughed as he came up for air, but he realized that, as long as he stayed in the pool, the chances of someone seeing his swim diaper were much lower.

Of course, Gavin and his friends had other plans. They kept pushing and prodding him into joining in their never-ending jumping contests and soon discovered that, thanks to the water, any one of them could pick him up enough to expose his swim diaper. It felt like an eternity of torment before finally, it was time to go to the room to get ready for dinner in the hotel’s restaurant.

More relieved than he could remember ever being, Gabe made a beeline for the bathroom where his clothes waited, but the boys blocked his way.

“Let me through!”

“Where are you going?” Joe asked.

“To put my clothes back on.”

“Nope, your clothes are all wet from you peeing on them.” Ethan said. “You gotta go back like this.” Gabe sighed, defeated. He tried to wrap the towel around his waist, but his tormentors had other ideas, draping it over his shoulders so there was no hope of hiding his swim diaper.

“This is ridiculous.”

“Here.” Gavin pushed the snorkel’s mouthpiece into Gabe’s mouth. “Keep that in there. If we hear you say anything, you’ll be going to the dads dressed just like this.” Gabe glared at him, but it did not seem to bother Gavin one bit.

As they left the pool area, Gabe tried every trick he could think of to avoid exposure. He tried to cover his swim diaper with his hands, but Joe and Ayden grabbed a hand apiece and held it. Gabe tried to make them walk more quickly, but they seemed more than happy to amble along, the four of them chatting away about the hockey game after dinner. It seemed to take forever to get to the elevator and even then, they had to walk down the hall to their room.

Finally, Gabe thought as they got into the hotel room. Now he

could get dressed and things would go back to normal. He would not tattle on them, at least not yet, he thought. It was better to wait until the perfect moment. He walked over to his backpack, but Gavin was quicker.

“Oh, no you don’t.” Gavin grabbed Gabe’s backpack and placed it on the shelf in the closet. He had to stand on his tiptoes to reach, so he knew Gabe stood no chance. “You just wait. We’ve got clothes for you.”

“But I can’t just I don’t ugh!” Gabe stomped his foot angrily. “I’m not staying in this!”

“We weren’t planning on it.” Gavin said, giving Gabe a look as if his temper tantrum was completely uncalled for. “You’ll have a full outfit, same as us. Shirt, shorts, all that.” He patted his brother’s cheek. “You just gotta be patient.” Gabe groaned. With it being four against one, he stood very little chance of getting anywhere. He just had to play along.

Unsure of what to do, Gabe sat down in the chair at the desk and watched as the boys joked around and roughhoused in between showering to rinse the chlorine from their hair and getting dressed. As Ethan walked by in just his boxers, Gabe silently cursed himself for the boneheaded move of wearing Cars boxer briefs. They were all sharing a room, so even if things had been normal, there was a very good chance someone might have seen them. How could he have been so stupid? He looked down at the Finding Nemo swim diaper and groaned.

Gabe grew more and more self-conscious as Gavin and his

friends got on jerseys and other team paraphernalia while he sat there in the swim diaper, water wings,and snorkel. Why was he still wearing all that?

“Alright, I think we’re all ready.” Joe said. He gasped and feigned surprise. “Gabe! Why are you still in your swim stuff?”

“Maybe he wants to swim again.” Ethan said. “He’s still got the snorkel and floaties and everything!”

“Naw, he’s being a good baby and waiting for us to get him dressed.” Gavin said smugly. “Isn’t that right, Gabe?” He only grunted. “Does widdle Gabey wabey need tickles?”

“No, get away. And grab my clothes. This game is dumb.”

“We’ve got clothes for you, Gabe. Come sit here on the bed.” Ayden said with a smirk. Gabe felt a chill run down his spine, but what choice did he have? He could yell for help, but would the dads across the hall hear?

"Got the stuff, Ayden?" Gavin asked. Ayden snickered and reached into his bag.

"Course. Spider-Man jammies and, of course, his diaper." Gabe shot up.

"Diaper? What?"

"Well, you pissed your pants at the pool, remember?" Joe said with a snort. “Or did you forget?” Gabe blushed, but pushed past it.

"Aren't we going to dinner?"

"If you want dinner," Gavin said patiently. "You have to cooperate like a good little boy. You're not going down in just your swim diaper."

"I'll just grab my clothes." He shoved past them, but that only meant he had a full audience to snicker as he tried and failed to reach his backpack.

"You know what?" Gavin said. "Here's what we'll do. Either you let us dress you in your diaper and your jammies." He smirked. "Or I throw your bag down the garbage chute and all you have to wear is what we give you."

"You wouldn't dare. I'll tell the dads."

"Dressed the way you are?" Ayden snorted. "Yeah, right."

"Gavin and his friends were mean to me!" Joe said in a falsetto that was a cartoonish, if not entirely inaccurate, imitation of Gabe. "They made me wear a swim diaper after I wet my pants!"

"Ethan, do you remember where the garbage chute is?" Gavin asked, pulling Gabe's backpack down from the shelf.

"Stop! Wait."

"By the elevator, right?" Ethan said.

"Fine." Gabe growled, his infantile attire only making him look more like he was about to throw a toddler temper tantrum. "I'll wear the pajamas."

“And the diaper?”

“Just to dinner, right? Not to the game?” Gabe did not even want to go to the game, but as long as he did not have to do it in the Spider-Man pajamas and a diaper, he would not complain or even pout, he promised himself.

“Not to the game.” Gavin said. Gabe eyed him suspiciously. There had to be a catch. “Seriously, Gabe. This is just for dinner, kay?” Gabe sighed.

“Fine.”

“Uh, does anyone actually know how to do a diaper?” Ayden asked. The four of them exchanged looks and Gabe snorted derisively.

“I’ll look it up.” Ethan said, grabbing his phone.

“Gabe, get undressed.” Gavin said. “Unless you really want to keep your water wings on.” Gabe growled as he yanked off the water wings, throwing them on the floor. They bounced comically.

“Yoink!” Joe yanked down Gabe’s Little Swimmers, the fourteen year old yelping and covering himself.

“Dude, we all saw it earlier.” Ayden said.

“But you looked again!” Ethan teased. “Didn’t you, Ayden?”

“Shut up!”

“Guys, we gotta get Gabe diapered.” Gavin said, taking control. “Lie down and you won’t be naked for long.”

“Can’t we make him streak or something first?” Ethan suggested.

“Dude, you’re gonna get us kicked out.” Joe said. Gabe rolled his eyes. Why was he at the mercy of such dorks? He noticed that his backpack was now on the floor in the closet. Could he make it over there and then lock himself in the bathroom? It seemed like a crazy idea, but he had to try, didn’t he?

“Ethan, can you go put Gabe’s bag back now that he’s behaving?” Gavin asked. “Lift your legs, buddy. Your diaper needs to go under your butt.” The boys all cackled as Gabe complied. He was hungry, so if this was what it took, he would obey.

“And you promise I’m not wearing this to the game?” He asked. The question hung in the air while the boys tried to figure out how the diaper’s tapes worked.

“We should do Pull-ups next time.” Gabe thought he heard Ethan mutter. Next time?

“I cross my heart that you won’t wear this to the game.” Gavin said. “We’re just having a little fun since you pissed yourself.” Gabe wondered why they had brought all this stuff. They would have never known he would pee himself, but he knew better than to ask.

“There, it’s done.” Joe said, extracting his finger from the tape it had gotten stuck to.

“Stand up and put on your pajamas.”

“Oh, good.” Gabe muttered darkly, wincing as the diaper crinkled. It felt so thick as he stood, pushing his thighs apart. He had thought it had been demeaning wearing the Little Swimmers, but those seemed as thin as his boxer briefs had been compared to the diaper.

“God, he’s a total baby.” Ethan said.

“Well, if he poops, you’re changing him!”

“I am not pooping!” Gabe exclaimed.

“Babies can’t help it.” Joe replied smugly. Gabe glared daggers at him as he pulled on the Spider-Man pajamas.

The shirt was snug, but it fit him. He almost wished it had not, but what was to stop his tormentors from taking him to dinner in just a diaper? Even if they were told no, he would have had to walk through the whole hotel like this. The shorts were another story. The diaper strained them to their limit, the legs all but disappearing so that it looked more like briefs than shorts. He was obviously wearing a very thick, very babyish diaper.

“I can’t do this.”

“Tough. You’re doing it.” Ethan said, grabbing his hand. “Even if we have to drag you.”

“Aren’t you starving, Gabe?” Joe asked. “I know I am!”

Despite Gabe’s fears, the trip down to the hotel restaurant was uneventful, other than having to waddle quickly to catch the elevator. He avoided the gaze of the businesswoman who

eyed the boys cautiously, but he was pretty sure she was more annoyed by how rowdy they were and had hardly even noticed the oversized toddler he was. He tugged self-consciously at the legs of his shorts as they emerged from the elevator into the lobby. At least he had been allowed to keep his scuffed up sneakers. Even if he was wearing them without socks, they were the most mature part of his outfit. By a long shot, he thought acerbically.

The server sat them down at a booth, smiling down at Gabe as he waddled past her, still trying in vain to tug down his shorts. Was the waistband peeking out? How long had it been like that?

“I’ll be right back, buddy.” She said, patting him on the shoulder. What was that supposed to mean?

“Maybe she wants your number.” Joe teased.

“Yeah, she wants to babysit him!” Gavin said, a bit too loudly for Gabe’s liking. He punched his brother – his dorky little brother – in the arm.

“Does she have a booster seat?” Ethan asked, watching with eagerly wide eyes as the server returned, a red molded plastic seat in her hand.

“Here we go! A special seat for the Spidey fan!” She said, setting it down in the booth. “Climb on up!” All Gabe could do was clamber up into it with what felt to him like half of the restaurant watching.

Sitting there in the booster seat, he felt like he was on display,

his brightly colored pajamas seeming almost neon compared to Gavin and his friends' jerseys. He kept tugging on the legs of his shorts, hoping that no one could see up them to the diaper he wore. The way it puffed out in all directions, he knew there was no point. Everyone thought he was a baby.

Everyone else got menus, but he was given crayons and an activity sheet. It did not even have any options on it. Gavin, sitting next to him, smiled.

"Don't worry, baby." He teased. "I"ll order for you."

"Get me a burger." Gabe whispered.

"I don't see that on the kid menu."

"But"

"And what about for you, little guy?" The server asked, smiling at Gabe. Gavin's hand covered his mouth.

"For my brother," Gavin said. "Let's do the chicken nuggets, apple sauce, and" he looked at Gabe. "Do you want chocolate milk or white?" His hand remained over Gabe's mouth, so he sighed and mumbled.

"Chocolate."

"Good baby." Gavin whispered. He began to chat with his friends, but his hands under the table removed Gabe's shoes, letting them fall to the floor. "Gabe! Did you kick your shoes off?"

"No!" Gabe glared at Gavin. "You took them off."

“Well, remind me to put them back on your feet when we leave.” He smiled and grabbed one of Gabe’s bare feet, dangling far over the floor thanks to the booster seat.

“You don’t really need them while we’re sitting down.” Joe remarked thoughtfully.

“He won’t be needing any bathroom breaks!” Ethan crowed. Gabe gave him a death glare, but no one seemed to notice.

“Too bad he wouldn’t fit in a highchair.” Joe remarked, eyeing a baby on the other side of the room. Gabe glared at him too, but Joe only laughed. “What? You’d look super cute.”

“I’m older than you.”

“Raise your hand if you wet your pants today.” Ethan said. They all laughed as he grabbed Gabe’s hand and made him raise it. “Gabe’s a proud pants wetter!”

“I am not!” Gabe yanked his hand away from Ethan. “This is ridiculous.”

“Quit whining. Just get through dinner and then we’ll be done.” Gavin whispered to him, sounding almost reassuring. “I promise.”

“We better.” He hissed, even if he wished he could duck under the table and go back to the room. He knew he would never make it, and even if he did, how could he get into the room without the keycard? He realized glumly that he did not even know which one of Gavin’s friends had keycards. He

sunk down into the booster seat, feeling pathetically helpless once again. He clenched his toes, remembering he did not even have shoes on.

“Did you tell Gabe about his special surprise?” Ayden asked.

“Surprise?”

“Oh! He’s excited!”

“What is it?” Gabe asked. “You said we’d be done after this.”

“We will.” Gavin said, rubbing his arm. “It’s just something fun waiting for us back at the hotel room.” Gabe’s hunger vanished, replaced by an ominous weight in his stomach. He did not like the sound of that at all. He tried to get answers, but their food arrived.

“Aw, you didn’t do your coloring page.” The server said when she came with their food. Gabe smiled up at her.

“Don’t worry. He’ll do it later.” He took it and, folding it up, slipped it into his pocket. The server seemed mollified by this, placing the plate of chicken nuggets in front of Gabe.

“There you go, little guy!” She said cheerfully.

“Is your diaper still good?” Ethan asked, reaching over to check Gabe even though the server was right there. Gabe slapped his hand away.

“Aw.” The server said with a smile as she finished up. “Holler if you need anything, boys.” She smiled at Gabe one last time before walking away.

“Yeah, she wants you, dude.” Ethan murmured. Gabe glared at him and he snorted into his french fries.

All five of them were soon quiet as they ate their food. Gabe felt self-conscious about his childish meal, but chicken nuggets were still good, even if he usually preferred something more exciting to dip them in than the ketchup that had come with the meal. When Gavin had ordered for him, Gabe had had a vision of the boys insisting on feeding him, but they were all too busy with their own meals. There had not even been a mumbled comment about a bib. Even the server, who seemed to see him as a toddler, had not offered to bring one. So much for being the perfect server, Gabe thought with a smirk.

“That was good!” Joe said, leaning back a bit. “Isn’t it weird the dads haven’t checked on us?”

“As long as they’re paying, I don’t really care.” Ethan said with a laugh. Gabe squirmed a bit. He did not want the dads – Ethan and Joe’s dads to be specific – to see him like this, but that was the only hope he had for escape. Surely they would put a stop to all this. He sighed as he realized that there was little chance of that. Gavin and his friends would be far more convincing than he could ever be and the last thing he needed was for his own mom and dad to hear about him wetting himself earlier. He found himself tugging on the legs of his shorts without even thinking about it.

“Ready to go back to the room?” Gavin asked, smiling at Gabe.

“If it means getting out of this stuff, yeah.”

“Oh? Did you have something else you wanted to do?”

“N- don’t we have to get to the game?”

“We’re all already ready.” Joe said, gesturing melodramatically down at his jersey.

“Oh, I bet Gabey’s just excited for his special surprise.”

“What is it?”

“See?” Gavin smirked. “Well, let’s get your shoes on first.” Gabe groaned. “Can you be a big boy and ask me to put your shoes on?”

“Please put my” his irritated monotone was nowhere near good enough for Gavin, who knew just the thing to get him to be more bubbly and cheerful.

“Goochie goochie goo!” He cooed, tickling Gabe’s feet. Gabe squirmed and nearly fell out of the booster seat.

“Stop!” He yelled, drawing the attention of quite a few diners.

“Why?” Joe asked. “You’re wearing a diaper, aren’t you?”

“That’s not the” he squirmed as Gavin brushed his feet with his fingers.

“Ask nicely.”

“Please put my shoes on!” He wiggled, feeling as if there was the world’s brightest spotlight on him.

“I will if you stop being a squirmy wormy!” Gabe rolled his eyes.

“I hate you so much.” He muttered. Gavin simply shrugged and pushed Gabe’s shoes on.

“There we go! Back to the room we go!”

Once they got back to the room, Gabe could feel curiosity gnawing at him, though he did what he could to hide it. What was the special surprise? Were they going to dress him up? Like what though? The team's mascot? It was Grey the Grizzly, so that didn't sound so bad, even if he might come out of it looking like a big teddy bear, knowing his brother and his devious friends. He used to even have a stuffed Grey the Grizzly. It had been a gift back when his dad still had hopes that Gabe might be a hockey fan, one that he slept with every night until Gavin made fun of him for being a fourth grader who still had a teddy bear.

“Gabe, come over here.” Ayden said. Gabe sighed and walked over.

“He’s waddling a lot. Are we sure he didn’t pee?” Joe asked.

“I did tickle him a little in the restaurant.”

“Sit down on the bed so we can get your shoes off.” Gabe sighed. Why had he not taken them off? To deny Ayden the pleasure, he kicked them off and smirked. “What a big boy!” Ayden said with a laugh. “Guess we’ll skip to your diaper change!” Hearing his cue, Ethan yanked down Gabe’s shorts.

“Hey!” Gabe tried to tug his shirt down, but his diaper was on display for everyone to see.

“Still dry!”

“Not for much longer!” The boys all laughed.

“Gavin. You said I only had to wear this stuff to dinner.”

“Well, maybe I was just talking about your shorts.”

“What? I can’t go to the game in a shirt and diaper!”

“It’s not time to go yet, Gabe.” Joe said.

“Do you want to hang out in your t-shirt and diaper or just your diaper?” Gavin smirked at his snickering friends.

“Neither!” Gabe yelled. “I’m grabbing my clothes!”

“Oh, no you don’t!”

“You’re dressed already, buddy.” Ayden said.

“This is ridiculous, guys! I’m taking this off.”

“You do.” Ethan said, grabbing his wrist. “And we’ll put you out in the hall. Naked.”

“Maybe that server will come back!” The boys all laughed.

“She did seem to like you, bud.” Gavin said.

“She was mom’s age!”

“So?”

“We’re not making him streak, dude.” Joe said, looking at

Ethan disapprovingly. “Since you’re so obsessed with seeing Gabe naked, you’re changing him when he shits his diaper.”

“Watch your language!” Ayden scolded. “There’s a little boy present.”

“Guys, stop! I need to get ready for the game!”

“We’ve got just the accessory you need.” Gavin said. “Are you ready for your special surprise?”

“Sure.” Gabe sighed.

“First, do you wanna stay in your t-shirt and diaper or just your diaper?” Gabe groaned.

“Come on!”

“Choose.” Gavin looked his brother right in the eye. “The dads will be here soon.”

“So will”

“Shut up, Ethan!” Joe and Ayden said in unison, glaring daggers at him. Gabe looked at them in confusion. They were hiding something.

“What’s it gonna be, baby Gabey?”

“Don’t call me that!”

“Why? Mom still does.”

“Only when she wants to embarrass me.” He muttered. The boys all snickered. Every one of them still had some embarrassing thing their parents did to them, but it was

always funny to hear it happen to someone else. Almost made them feel automatically more mature by comparison.

“What’s it going to be?”

“Shirt.” He muttered, crossing his arms.

“And?”

“And diaper.” He whispered.

“Should we tickle the answer out of you?” Gavin asked, eyebrow raising. Gabe groaned.

“My t-shirt and diaper!” He yelled. The boys all laughed,

“That’s the spirit!” Gavin said. “I guess you’re ready for your super special awesome extra cool surprise!”

“Yes.” Gabe said, eager to just get whatever this was over with. Gavin smirked.

“Joe, can you grab my bag?”

“Sure!” Joe carried it over to Gavin, who dug around in his bag. Out came a familiar face.

“Look, Gabey! It’s your best friend!” Gabe stared at the worn face of Grey the Grizzly. “He left him at home because he wanted us all to think he’s big. Course, your diaper kinda ruins that, huh?” Gabe could only grunt. “Give him a hug!” Gabe sighed and complied, taking the bear.

“Does he really still sleep with him?”

“Naw, but he still lives in Gabey’s room!” The boys all

laughed. Gabe sighed.

“Oh, shit!” He nearly jumped out of his skin as there was a knock at the door.

“Told ya you’re a bad influence on the baby.” Ayden said.

“Calm down, buddy. That’s not the dads.” Gavin said, rubbing Gabe’s back. “Hug your teddy bear.” Gabe had to swallow to stop himself from blurting out that his name was Grey and he was not a teddy bear. Maybe he still cared more about the bear than he was willing to admit.

The door opened and a bored-looking hotel employee pushed something into the room. Gabe stared at it in horror. There was no mistaking it. That was a crib. The employee took one look around the room and saw the boy standing there in a diaper, hugging a stuffed bear. Clearly this was the right room.

“There you go.” He said.

“Thank the nice guy, Gabey.” Thankfully, he left too quickly for Gabe to be forced to comply.

“Alright, let’s get baby Gabey ready for bed.” Joe said, grinning at Gabe.

“Don’t call me that!”

“Ooh, he’s fussy wussy.” Gavin teased.

“I’m not sleeping in that!”

“Count, Gabe.” Gavin said.

“What?”

“Count! Two beds, five of us. Where did you think you were going to sleep?” Gabe had not even thought of that.

“On the floor, I guess?”

“Well, this will be better than the floor.”

“Mattress is pretty hard. I dunno.” Joe remarked.

“Testing it out to see if you want to steal Gabe’s crib?” Ethan teased. Joe punched Ethan in the arm.

“Shuddup.”

“Well, climb in, Gabe.”

“What? Now?”

“Yep. It’s bedtime.”

“But the… the game?”

“You didn’t want to go. You told me, mom, and dad that.” Gavin said.

“And us too.” Ayden added.

“So, we gotta keep you out of trouble while we’re at the game.”

“But… I don’t… no.”

“Let’s help him, guys.”

“Stop! Stop!” Gabe fought desperately, but the four of them managed to easily overpower him.

“Watch your fingers. We’re closing him up!” Joe said, lifting the side of the crib and locking it into place.

“You really think I can’t climb over this?”

“Honestly?” Ethan said. He shrugged. “Might be tougher than you realize.” They stepped back to watch Gabe’s efforts. He stood up, wobbling slightly as he tried to find his balance between the mattress and the diaper pressing against his thighs.

“Go on! You can do it, Gabey!” Gabe rolled his eyes, grabbing the side of the crib for balance.

“Oh, that totally doesn’t make you look like a baby.” Gavin snorted. “Give up and lie down like a good boy.”

“But I’ll miss the game!”

“You’re not going to the game.” Gavin said matter-of-factly. “It’s past your bedtime, so what did you think was going to happen?”

“But”

“Lie down. Unless you really want to be sorry.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Gabe asked, trying in vain to hide how concerning and ominous that sounded.

“Yeah, what does that mean?” Joe asked.

“Think about it, baby Gabey.” Gavin said. “You can either lie down in a dry diaper or lie down in a soggy diaper.” Gabe groaned.

“C’mon, this joke’s gone too far.”

“I’ll give you until the count of three. One.” Gabe glared at his brother, more than willing to call his bluff. They both were as stubborn as mules. “Two.” Gavin reached into the crib and brushed behind Gabe’s knee. He squirmed, falling down and landing with a whumpf on his butt. “Two and a half.” He grabbed one of Gabe’s feet.

“Fine! I’ll lie down!” Gabe threw his head down onto the pillow.

“Attaboy. Now, you lie here nice and snug and try to sleep. We’ll go to the game.”

“But”

“But nothing.” Gavin said. “This is where you belong.”

“But” Gabe searched desperately for any way out. “You can’t leave me alone. I’m just a baby.”

“Well, it’s great to hear you admit it.” Gavin said, his friends all laughing in surprise at Gabe’s admission. “But we all know you really aren’t, so you’ll be fine. You can’t even get out of your crib, though I’m sure you’ll try.” Reaching through the bars, he patted his pouting brother’s cheek. “We’ll let you go back to being a big boy tomorrow. This time, I really promise.” He smirked. “Besides, Grey’s here to keep you company, isn’t he?”

“But” Gabe fought back tears. This was all too much.

“Shh, we gotta get going. Be a good baby and try to get some

sleep.” Gabe could only remain there, whimpering softly and hugging Grey as he listened to the boys leave the room. “Yeah, Gabe’s not feeling good, so he went to bed early.” He heard Gavin explain. “I think he had too much sugar.”

The End