

## Baby Steps: Generations

### Chapter 5 of 8

The stench hit me as soon as I unsealed the metal keg. A chemical cocktail that stank of bleach and chlorine, so potent that it made my nose shrivel up and my eyes water. I took a step back, looked around the patio for my phone.

I didn't need to wear a mask for this, did I?

The internet would give me the answer to that, but I was *fairly* certain everything would be fine.

There'd been no warnings about not wearing a mask on the keg's wrap-around label. Suggestions to wear 'protective gear', sure. But no explicit instruction.

This'd be fine. Right?

I shrugged to myself, pushed the concern aside.

Gloves and waterproof boots, old clothes that I didn't mind ruining. All the crap I'd need to clean out the pool. But no protective mask. And, after all the set-up I'd done with Emily last night, I did *not* want to waste any time today going out and buying one.

I'd be fine. Had to be. I was just worrying over nothing.

I glanced up at the cloudless, morning sky.

"Alright. Let's get this done..."

*"I'm not a child anymore," I said with confidence. "I've grown up. I'm not a little boy. I'm a man. I'm the man. The only guy here. The man of the house."*

*Emily gave no reply. She remained motionless, her eyes closed.*

*"Especially since the move, I've become a lot more responsible and adult. Taking charge, making waves. I've been acting less and less like the boy who spent all his time playing video games, and more like a grown-up. You saw the things I bought, didn't you?"*

*"Yes," Emily answered softly. Emotionless.*

*I'd made sure she'd been around when the delivery arrived. Had been all too happy to tell her what was in the boxes.*

*"That should've been your job. Buying supplies for the pool. But I did it instead. I took the initiative. Made things happen. I took charge."*

*No response. She only ever seemed to speak when answering a direct question, or to say something she'd been told to.*

*"I am the man of the house. And, tomorrow, I'll be doing even more to make this house a home. A happy home. Our home."*

I scrubbed away at the pool wall, big sponge in one hand and a spray bottle filled with cleaning chemicals in the other. Sweat dripped from my brow. My shirt was gone, discarded a good while back. Up above, the sun blazed bright and merciless.

Manual labour. I *hated* manual labour.

It was on me, though. I'd been foolish enough to believe that the chemicals would take care of everything – that all I'd need to do was wash them away once they'd done their job.

Not so.

The cleaning chemicals helped, sure. Made scrubbing away mold and moss and whatever else that green shit was a whole lot easier. But it didn't do everything. Not by a long shot. Not even *close*.

But I was almost done. *Almost* done.

Just needed to scrub at some of the more persistent patches of grime. The parts that'd resisted the larger brush I'd been using.

My gaze flicked up, eyes on the house. Staring at one window in particular. Curtains drawn, window open to let in fresh air.

It was a hot day. Painful for me right now, but overall a good thing. Stacy would probably be in her bedroom all day, and she'd want that window open the whole while.

With a bit of luck, everything would play out just as I wanted.

*"It's the job of a parent to make sure their children are living happy, contented lives. If a child is unhappy, it's a failure of their parents. It is your job to create an environment in which your children can thrive and be happy."*

*I'd learned a lot about my mother recently. More than I'd ever have imagined. But this one thing I'd known my entire life; Emily always tried her best to be a good mother. Always there for school events, never missing important days. Whenever me or my sister had been ill growing up, she'd dropped everything and spent days – or even weeks – nursing us back to health.*

*She tried her absolute hardest to be a good mom.*

*And I could use that against her.*

*"If your children are unhappy, it's your fault. If your children aren't happy, it means you've failed them as a mother. It's your job to ensure their happiness. You want them to be happy, don't you?"*

There was something wonderfully cathartic about watching the pool's grime and gunk drain away as I sprayed the walls and floor with a hose. Frothy green and brown slime rinsed away to reveal shiny blue and white tile.

I perhaps spent a little too long spraying the pool down.

In my defence, I wanted to get every last spec. No gunk and no chemicals left behind. Not a single drop. This all needed to go perfectly; I couldn't have any grime floating to the surface or residue cleaning chemicals sully the water.

When I was done spraying the pool, its surfaces positively *sparkled* in the sunlight. Spotless and brilliant.

Hopefully none of that gunk would end up clogging the pool's drain. There'd been a few leaves and random debris in there. But if it did, that would be a problem for another day.

*"A failure of a parent can't be trusted to make the right decisions," I said softly, watching Emily's face closely. No sign of resistance. None of the twitching or shaking I'd read warnings about. Curious. "If they failed at being a good parent, if they're the reason their children are miserable, they've proven they lack the responsibility to make big decisions."*

*It was a stretch, built on shaky logic at best. But Emily had absorbed everything else easily enough. Hadn't resisted anything so far.*

*Perhaps all those years being hypnotised had dulled her resistances. Tranced almost every day. Made to do unimaginable things, and to love every second of it.*

*Maybe her mind simply didn't know how to resist anymore.*

*"And if you can't be trusted to make big decisions, if you're not responsible enough, you should pass that burden on to someone more fitting. Someone you can count on to make the right choices, to do what you're not responsible enough to do yourself."*

*Even if she was more susceptible to hypnosis, I kept a close eye on her. Watched for unwanted reactions.*

*Better to be safe than sorry.*

I unboxed the simple filtration system I'd bought, the sound of the pool filling up in the background. I didn't know a whole lot about keeping or maintaining a pool, but how hard could it be?

Just as I was about to start flipping through the filtration system's manual, I heard footsteps approaching behind me.

Glancing back, I saw Emily.

Wearing a sundress that hugged her slutty body beautifully, hair tied behind her back and a wide smile on her face. She was carrying a tray, an empty glass and a filled jug resting atop it.

Lemonade. Homemade lemonade. Chilled too, judging from the condensation on the glass jug.

When in the world had she made *that*?

Between unpacking our stuff, and sorting out all the documentation and legal crap involved in buying a new home, when had she found the time to make – and chill - fresh lemonade without *me* noticing?

My mouth watered at the sight. Partly from the lemonade, mostly from the sexy piece of ass that was my mother.

"Hey," she said brightly, "how's it coming along?"

"Almost done," I grunted. "Give it an hour or so, and everything will be ready."

"Lemonade?" Emily smiled happily, holding the tray out.

*"You want your children to be happy, don't you?"*

*"Yes."*

*"You want them to have happy, fulfilling lives?"*

*"Yes."*

*"But wanting it isn't enough," I said. "Your job as a mother is to make it happen. And if they're not happy – if Stacy and me aren't happy – it means you've failed at that job. Failed as a mother. Their pain and misery will be your fault."*

*For the first time, she shifted. Eyebrows narrowing, lips twitching. The echoes of pain arching through her.*

*Good.*

*"Sometimes," I continued softly, "the best thing you can do for them is step aside. Let someone else take the lead. Trust someone else to do the right thing for everyone."*

*Her face didn't relax back into a neutral state. Not right away, at least.*

*"Relaxation. That's what we need. A day to unwind. Relaxation after all the effort and stress of moving in. Me and you and Stacy. Relaxing by the pool tomorrow, going for a dip, having a fun time. Lots of laughing and enjoying and relaxing. That's what we all need. Doesn't that sound nice?"*

Hands on my hips, I grinned at the full pool. Water twinkling in the afternoon sunlight. Clear blue, not a blemish in sight. It was the idyllic back-yard swimming pool, surrounded by a tile patio. Two sunbeds under a parasol, a little table between them.

It was *perfect*.

All I had to do now was take a shower, get nice and clean, and grab a pair of swimming trunks.

Once more, I glanced up at my sister's bedroom window.

From there, she'd have a perfect view. And, with her window open like it was, she'd hear everything.

From this point on, my work for the day was done.

I'd set up all the dominoes. Now it was time to watch them fall, hope all the pieces ended up where they belonged.

Time would tell.

I splashed her with water, revelling in the surprised yelp she gave. Her jump, chest bouncing, as she tried shielding her face was wonderful to watch. Laughter filled the back yard. Care-free joy, simple and beautiful and loud.

It was a psychological trick.

The louder a noise in a person's ear, the louder they'd talk to counteract it. Me putting on summer-time music, setting it just a little too loud, meant that Emily had unknowingly raised her own voice to match. Her laughter was louder than usual, her playful scolding echoing up from the pool easily.

My eyes flicked momentarily to the house, to my sister's bedroom window. Still open. Letting in all the sounds of happiness and glee.

Good.

As I was turning my gaze back to Emily, she swatted water at me, a wide grin of her face.

It was my turn to yell in surprise.

"Got'cha!" Emily giggled, voice carrying over the loud music. "Surrender?"

"Not a chance!"

The battle that followed – me and her splashing water at each other – was loud and boisterous and filled with shouts and laughter. At one point, I ducked under the surface, swam underwater towards her. Her milky-white legs kicked gently at the water, trying to push away from me.

"No!" I heard her shout-laugh distantly, the sound muffled and muted by the water. "Don't! I swear, if you–"

I grabbed her ankles, pulled her underwater with me.

There was a smile on her face as she pushed me away, cheeks puffed out with a held breath.

I swam backwards, away from her, and she gave chase with a grin.

It took all my energy and willpower not to gaze at her body.

She'd chosen to wear a practical swimsuit. A one-piece with little space for cleavage. It hugged her body nicely, squeezing tight around her chest. Not the two-piece bikini I'd been silently hoping for, but that made sense. With how colossally huge Emily's tits were, there was no way an ordinary bikini top would stay in place if she went for a swim.

The black one-piece was a sharp contrast to her pale skin, made her stand out sharply in the crystal-clear water.

When I resurfaced for air, Emily burst from the water in a shower of twinkling water droplets. Long, red hair clung to her body; shoulders and neck and chest and back. Wet and dark and wild.

Her full lips were curled into a victorious smile as she splashed me with water – laughing as I threw my hands up in surrender.

"You win," I half-shouted. "You win!"

My eyes flicked over to the house again, that same window.

It was closed now. Finally, Stacy'd had enough of listening to me and our mother having fun.

Time to strike.

"Wonder what Stacy's doing," I said, nodding at the house. "She should be down here too. If anyone needs to relax and have fun, it's her..."

Emily followed my gaze, a slight frown marring her smile.

"I asked if she wanted to join us," Emily said softly. "But she didn't reply. I think she's still upset..."

"All the more reason for her to let loose and have fun! It's such a nice day. It'd be a shame if she wasted it pouting in her room. I'm sure a lil' dip would cheer her up."

My words were forced, the tone of my voice betraying me. It sounded rehearsed and crude. But Emily didn't seem to notice.

Slowly, she nodded her head.

"I'll go ask her again," she said softly, beginning to swim to the pool's edge. "See if she's changed her mind..."

I watched her go, eyes glued to her wide, bouncy ass.

As soon as she disappeared inside the house, I climbed out of the pool. Turned the music's volume down a notch. Stepped closer to the house, focusing all my attention on listening.

For an eternity, there was nothing. No sound other than the summertime, happy music.

Then, just as I was beginning to doubt everything, when I was certain my plan had failed, I heard it. The most wonderful, amazing sound to ever grace my eardrums.

Stacy's angry shouting. Her screaming at our mother.

I couldn't make out the words, couldn't hear exactly what was being said. But it was obvious that my sister was *not* happy. And she was more than willing to *voice* that unhappiness.

Perfect.

All the pieces were falling into place.

My sister's bitchy attitude, her resentment towards Emily for moving us all to the other side of the country. The heat and climate that Stacy wasn't used to. Her friends not being around. Music playing, grating away at her. And the laughter. The fun me and Emily were so obviously – and loudly – having, practically spitting in the face of the girl who'd had to leave her whole life behind.

Emily going up there, pestering Stacy about joining us and having fun, was the last straw. All that pent-up frustration and anger and resentment came roaring out.

It was music to my ears.

When the shouting stopped, ended by the sound of a door slamming shut, I walked over to a sunbed and picked up a dry towel.

Before Emily came downstairs, I made myself scarce.

For the next few hours, she'd have to wallow in her thoughts and failings alone. Day ruined, joy replaced with sorrow. Words I'd planted in her mind like seeds would sprout, repeat over and over again. Not just the words themselves, but the sentiment and feeling behind them. Fermenting. Growing freely for the next few hours.

Then, in the evening, when things were dark and quiet and lonely, I'd make my move. Harvest the bounty of my manipulation.

All I had to do until then was wait.

*"It's a mother's job to ensure the happiness of her children. If her children aren't happy, it's a failing on the mother's part. If the mother is the reason for their unhappiness, she'll have done far worse than fail them. She'll have failed herself. Failed as a mother completely."*

*Just a little bit more. One last kick to push her over the edge.*

*"A good mother does everything she can to make her children happy. You want to be a good mother, don't you Emily?"*

*"Yes," she whispered softly.*

*"You want your children to be happy, don't you?"*

*"Yes."*

*"Sometimes, you might fail as a mother. People fail at things all the time. What's important is that you keep trying. Try even harder to make them happy. Do whatever it takes so you don't fail them again. That's what a good mother does. And you want to be a good mother, don't you?"*

When I entered the living room, saw my mother's downcast face, I almost felt bad. Guilty for setting all this up.

I pushed the feeling down, killed it instantly.

If I wanted the prize, I couldn't let those kinds of emotions rule me. I could have everything I wanted, but only if I was strong enough to grasp it all. Only if I had the

willpower and resolve to *take* it.

Emily forced a smile when she saw me.

"Hey," I said, walking over and sitting down on the sofa next to her. "What's on?"

On the television, there were some animals. A voice-over.

"Oh," Emily shook her head. "I don't know. A nature documentary, I think. I was just-"

"Don't worry about Stacy," I said, cutting her off. Had to get her used to me taking a commanding, controlling role in her life. "She'll come around. She just needs time. She'd sad, is all. Misses her friends."

Emily pursed her lips, slowly nodded her head.

The look on her face told me she didn't believe that. She blamed herself. Knew that Stacy blamed her. Had spent all day listening to her mind telling her that it was all her fault.

We sat in silence for a time.

I'd broach the subject if needed, but it'd be far better if Emily brought it up first. If she initiated.

"Are you..." She whispered at last. "Are you happy?"

I looked over at her.

The earnesty in her eyes was like a needle stabbing right through my chest. The quiet, desperate need to hear me say 'yes' shone in her irises.

"Happy?" I said, pretending to think about it. "I don't know. I think, for the most part, I am..."

"For the most part?" Emily practically pleaded.

"I guess... It feels like something is missing. Something that's stopping me from it." From being 'happy'. I didn't need to say that last bit. Emily would think it for herself. "If I had that, I think I'd be happy."

"What is it?" Emily asked, eyes wide and beautiful. "What's the something that's missing?"

I looked at her, heart pounding in my chest.

This was it. The moment of truth. Sink or swim.

"Intimacy... Romance and passion and connection. And..." I watched her closely, almost lost myself in her stunning irises. "And sex."