

# MAX & BARNABY

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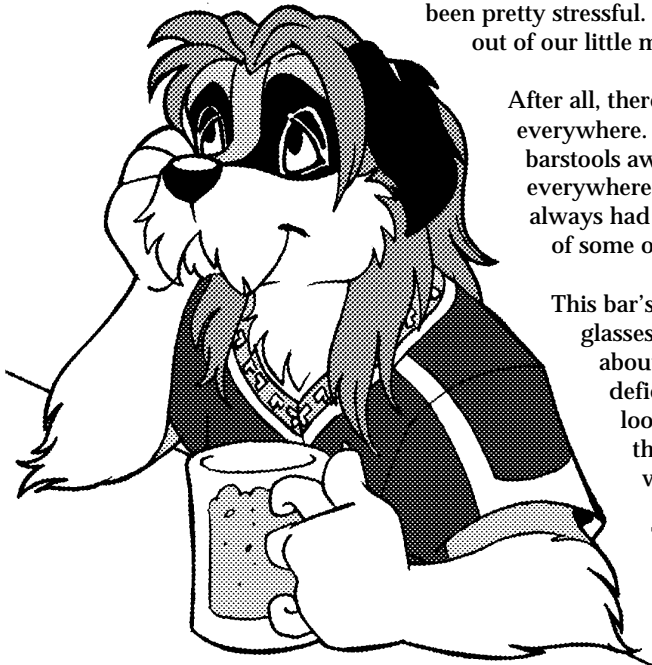
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Mert's was one of those hole-in-the-wall pubs that inhabit the strip malls of the world, small and unnoticed but somehow omnipresent. If you were just going out for a couple of drinks and to watch the game, you went to Mert's. No piano bar here, no throbbing dance music, no bouncers, and no nonsense. It was just Mert's, and that's all there was to it.

Barnaby St. Bernard was new to Mert's, but not new to bar culture as evidenced by his relaxed seat on the vinyl-covered barstool, leaning casually on the bar, one arm crooked to prop his head, the other resting comfortably on the handle of his beer mug, watching the small color tv mounted to the ceiling.

Tonight was sports, but no big-screen-TV-yahoo here; a simple game played in the background to provide homey noise for the patrons. Barnaby was watching the game mostly for lack of anything better to do, but also to give him time to acclimatize.

A new bar, a new neighborhood—moving to a different city was always a pain in the ass. Just when you left your old digs is when you realized how comfortable you were in them. And this move had been pretty stressful. His laundry this week alone...no, no, let's just push that out of our little mind, shall we?



After all, there were some things that were common to every bar, everywhere. The regulars, for instance. Like the guy sitting two barstools away. The Lonely Guy. Lonely Guy looked different everywhere you saw him; tall, short, skinny, fat, gangly... but he always had that awkwardness, as though he'd been cut-and-pasted out of some other universe and put into this one—badly.

This bar's model was chunky, with quite the belly on him. He had glasses, and messy blonde hair—there was nothing really ugly about him, in fact, he looked like a giant squeeze toy. Where his deficiencies lay were in his clothes—a big gunky sweater that looked straight out of the Goodwill, and beige rugby pants that may once have been in style 20 years previously, and big white sneakers that were probably his only footwear.

The other deficiency was in his obvious lack of social conscience, at least in terms of caring if he was awkward. Barnaby gave him the once over, up and down—comparing his own jeans and Phoenix Coyotes hockey jersey to the guy's schlepwear; his own ensemble was schleppey, but not trashcan schlep.

The guy was clean, at least, and soft spoken. Barnaby pegged him for a Lonely Heart rather than a Society's Castoff type. He had no one, but wanted someone, and failing to find the courage to go and hang out in places where he might have a chance to find someone filled his time here, instead.

Barnaby sighed. He knew the type. Saw it every time he looked in the mirror. The working term was "Painfully Shy." He glanced at the big oval mirror behind the bar: long, shaggy brown hair, floppy ears that made him look like some soft-eyed puppy, and big blue eyes that subtracted yet more years from his actual age.

He turned to order another Sleeman's from the bored barkeep. Wednesday nights were not, after all, booming business. He checked his watch. Shit, it was quarter to midnight. He tried to remember how many beer he'd had—five? Six? Well, he'd been here since seven and if he'd had one an hour—

His mind was fuzzy. Yup, he was drunk. Yay me, he thought. At least I achieved my goal in coming here. He furrowed his brow. The more he tried to focus the more his head swam. Maybe he'd just better sit tight until he sobered up a little.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw the blond bear—Lonely Guy—order another beer. Sleeman's. Of course. And judging by his slow, deliberate movements and heavy eyelids, he was in the same boat as Barnaby himself.

Aw, what the hell. If he can have one, so can I. And the Saint Bernard motioned to the bartender for another.

Lonely Bear turned to look briefly at his barmate—since only he and Barnaby were stationed at the bar—the other one or two souls were at candlelit tables in far corners—and sort of inclined his head in polite greeting. Barnaby did the same—hi how are ya we drink the same thing isn't that neat bye-bye now—and would have turned back except for an interesting sight that caught his eye:

There was a glistening patch on Lonely Bear's faded beige rugby pants, starting just below his waistband and just now beginning to inch down one leg. The guy had pissed himself.

Barnaby felt an answering twinge from his own bladder, which in his haze he did his best to clamp down on. Lonely Guy followed his gaze and looked down at his pants, drunkenly placing a hand there as if to confirm what he was seeing.

When he looked back up, his eyes were haunted as he met Barnaby's; they said 'Here it comes, here's where you laugh and I get thrown out' or something equally horrible. But all Barnaby did was quirk his mouth in a half-smile and raise his glass in a sort of sketchy salute.

Lonely Guy seemed surprised by this, as well he might be, and clumsily lifted his fresh beer back to Barnaby. It was a gesture of thanks.

What the hell, thought the Saint Bernard and eased on over to the stool next to the bear. "Hey," he said. "Hey," replied the bear. The same quiet, soft voice Barnaby himself had. Yeah, Lonely Guy was a kindred spirit all right.

"Barnaby." He said, with a small nod.

"Max," said the other.

Both shy. Both not sure how to proceed even with something so simple as a conversation. Plus, there was the fact that the stain on Max's pants was now noticeably spreading. In another few seconds it would spill over the barstool and begin to drip on the floor.

Barnaby tried anyway. "I'm new in town. This is my first time out." His words were slow, and as blurry as his head



was. Jeez, he was drunk.

Max grinned, funny and lopsided. Yup, drunk too—well, not that his pants accident hadn't already borne out that theory. "I'm a regular," he said. He glanced down at his crotch, as the sound of pattering drops. "Shit." He squeezed his legs together, but it did nothing to stem the flow. His shoulders slumped. "Aw, what the hell," he said in defeat—and the slow but steady wetting became a torrent, as he pissed himself with no more control than a toddler.

Barnaby stared. Couldn't help it. The guy had just let go in his pants, in his fucking pants, right here in public. He hazarded a glance over his shoulder—no, most of the hangers-on had left.

Max looked up, and this time, Barnaby seriously thought the guy might cry. Jesus, he might have done the same if their positions were reversed. He hazarded a light-hearted response: "Just makin' room for the next round, hey?"

Max smiled and barked a little laugh—he had been close to tears after all—and just grinned. "Guess so."

Barnaby smiled back and raised his drink.

He and Max finished off three more beer each. Max didn't seem to want to leave his stool, and Barnaby could guess why: He was hoping his pants would dry before he stood up. One glance told Barnaby that wasn't going to happen—but he decided not to mention it.

While they drank, they talked. Max was a writer. He worked for a magazine and some other local publications, freelancing—he worked from home and this was his only "relaxation." Barnaby nodded. He spent a lot of time in his own apartment, too. They apparently had more in common than not, and the Saint Bernard found himself liking the strange chubby bear who wet his pants.

Another thing—they both had "the Gut." It was a constant companion and one of the main reasons, they joked, they could never get close to anybody. "How can we," joked Barnaby, "our arms won't reach?" And he put out his arms in a comical imitation of a toddler trying to reach something that was just out of range, which split Max into hysterics.

This in turn set Barnaby off. They had officially reached the "Everything Is Funny" stage. They laughed until tears rolled down their eyes; and when Max started a new river running down both legs of his rugby pants, he didn't even bat an eye—just looked down and laughed.

Barnaby heard the pattering on the floor—the bear was causing a small waterfall, he must be! But when he looked over, Max had only wet his seat, not overflowed it. Yet the noise continued.

Max was smiling at him; trying not to, but unsuccessfully. His eyes dipped down, seemingly riveted to Barnaby's jeans.

Oh, god!

Barnaby looked down—and the pleasant, warm tingling in his head suddenly coalesced into a warm tingling in his groin—which was soaked, and continuing to spread—in fact, he had pissed his pants so badly it looked like he'd gone swimming in them.

"Oh, shit."

"C'mon, quick," said Max, and hauled him, still pissing, out of his chair. "Thanks," he threw over his shoulder to the bartender (whose back was thankfully turned) and herded Barnaby out the door.

Once outside, they waited while Barnaby finished soaking his jeans. It took so long, they started laughing again. In fact, Max shrugged his shoulders and re-soaked his own pants. They were beyond caring.

"My place is just across the park," Max said. "C'mon."

"No man, I gotta get—" Barnaby indicated some vague direction with a flailing arm.

"C'mon," Max said. "You're not gonna make it all the way, and it's late."



Barnaby burst out laughing again. "I didn't make it, period," he said, slapping his wet thigh. A new fit of giggles caught the two of them, and Max led them back to the old brownstone that housed his apartment.

Once there, Max led Barnaby right into the bedroom. "Get those off, I got stuff," he motioned, as he started taking off his pants.

Barnaby was still chortling, but there was a note of fear in his voice. "Dude, I'm not gay," he explained.

Max blinked owlishly. "So what, straight guys like to wear pissed pants all night?"

Barnaby nodded, holding up a hand in negation. "Sorry, I'm just sayin', y'know."

Max nodded. His briefs—formerly white—were stained piss-yellow, as were Barnaby's own. Max dumped them all in the tub. He handed Barnaby a plastic container. "Wet wipes," he explained. "If we tried to shower tonight we'd fall down and kill ourselves."

More giggles erupted at the idea of either of them flailing around in the shower, drunk as they were.

Max opened his closet while Barnaby cleaned his wet legs, groin and backside with the wet wipes in the bathroom. When the Saint Bernard finally emerged, he was agape at what he saw in the closet:

Diapers.

Under the few hanging sweaters and pairs of pants, was a whole huge shelf of diapers—cloth, disposable, all neatly stacked next to pair upon pair of rubber and plastic pants, diaper pins, and...

"Oh, shit. Are those baby clothes??" Max blushed. Or maybe he was just flushed from drinking, it was hard to tell.

"Y-yeah," Max stuttered. "Sleepers and stuff."

"Wow," Barnaby gaped. "You're, like, a big baby."

Max looked hurt. Barnaby attempted to clarify. "No, no, it's okay. I have diapers at home. I wet the bed." Was this frank admission coming out of his mouth? A few hours ago he'd rather have put a cigarette out in his right eye than tell a stranger that fact. And yet, his beer-loosened tongue continued, as he put a hand on Max's shoulder: "Hell, I SOAK it!" And he laughed.

Max laughed too, relaxing. "Well, I got a rubber sheet on my bed, so go right ahead. But we should wear diapers, though."

"Don't you want me on the couch or somethin'?" Barnaby asked, nonplussed. Sleep with the bear? What the hell?

"Couch doesn't have a rubber sheet."

"Oh." This was perfectly logical.

"C'mere," Max said, gesticulating with his hands.

"Wha?" It was getting hard to think, let alone move. He walked over to the bed. Max pushed him over, and he fell like a ton of bricks—right onto a thick stack of diapers, which Max began to pull up between his legs.

"Lift up," Max said, and Barnaby blearily obeyed. He felt a soft gentle tickling—he looked down at himself, over his expansive belly, to see Max sprinkling baby powder on him. He wanted to protest but he felt heavy, so heavy...and then Max was pulling the diaper up, pinning it, and some shiny blue stretchy, nice-feeling pants were pulled up over them. "Rubber pants," Max said. "For big Saint Bernards."

Barnaby mumbled something about thanks before he passed out.

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Light—painful, unwelcome—stabbed at his eyelids. He rolled his head to the side. Jesus, his head hurt. He cracked an eyelid open a bit. *Where the fuck--?*



He was in a strange bed with someone. In a strange room. Holy shit!

Then the panic subsided. He'd come home with that guy Max, after they'd both pissed their pants in public. Jesus. Had they--? No, no, they'd gone straight to sleep, nothing untoward had gone on.

The room smelled. He felt the bed; he'd pissed himself in his sleep. Soaked the bed. And from the feel of it, so had Max. His hand briefly touched Max's butt—it was very padded.

Diapers! Max had put him in diapers—and was apparently wearing them himself, not that they'd been able to contain the sea of Sleeman's

that they'd both drunk. He rolled over.

*Squish.*

There was a wet, squelchy feeling that was more than just three thicknesses of soaked diapers pressing against him. In horror, he reached down to feel the seat of his rubber-clad rump.

There was a soft, flattened bulk there that while completely unwelcome was not unfamiliar. And the smell suddenly made it all clear:

He'd messed himself in his sleep. Like a baby. Lost all control and pooped his friggin' didees.

Max murmured something and stretched. He was awake and was going to find out--! Aw, hell! How was Barnaby going to get out of this one? He sank back into bed and pulled the sheets up to his chin. *Oh shit oh shit oh shit...*

Max's hand met his under the covers. Max squeezed his hand. Barnaby broke out in a sweat. "Guess we were both Super Soakers, huh," Max grinned. He threw back the covers—the bedsheets were blue, and were soaked almost from top to bottom—and got up. He was wearing a thick, balloony diaper and pair of yellow rubber pants.

As he stood up to get out of bed, the back of his diapers suddenly SAGGED, and hung in the rear.

Barnaby stared. Max had--! Just like he had!

Max absently felt around the seat of his pants. "Aw, jeez," he said. And when he turned to face Barnaby he looked embarrassed. "I messed my pants in my sleep. Too much to drink—I'm really sorry..." He had that little-boy-hurt look again, as though he were expecting a slap or getting yelled at.

"I did it too," Barnaby squeaked. Fear had constricted his throat. "Jeez, I'm sorry—"

Max visibly relaxed. "You too, huh? I just LOSE it when I drink. Must be why I drink so much," he snorted, mostly in jest but Barnaby could tell there was an older story there—one that would take getting to know Max better to tell. Barnaby had a few stories like that himself.

Max was headed to the kitchen. Barnaby cocked his head, oblivious to the fact that he was sitting up in his own mess. "Aren't you gonna—" he jerked his muzzle toward the bathroom.

Max smiled shyly, "I don't usually change right away. I don't have a lot of control the 'morning after', and I usually just—" There was a whizzing noise, and Barnaby saw Max's diaper sag more. Max blushed. "See?"

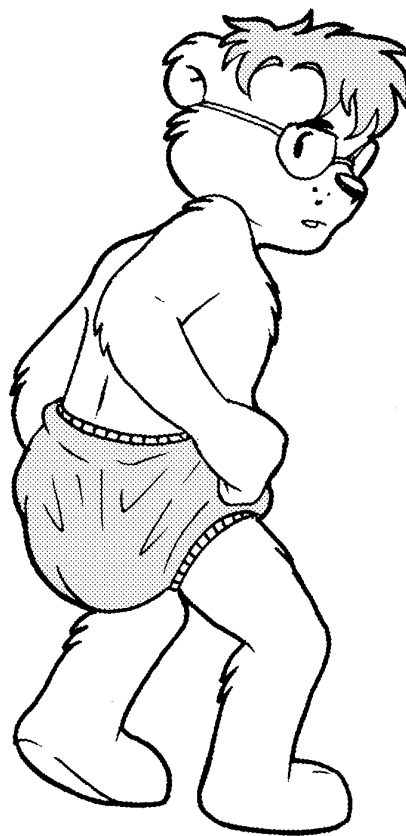
Barnaby immediately felt relieved. No matter what happened, he doubted his own lack of control could be any worse than Max's. But was the bear really just going to walk around like that?

Curiosity overcoming his desire to change, Barnaby crept to the door of the bedroom, the giant blue rubber pants he was wearing dragging at his hips with the weight of his sodden, soiled diapers—and watched as Max lit a cigarette and sat down at the kitchen table.

Sat DOWN. Barnaby heard the squish. He gulped. Maybe it was just because it was the morning, but part of him seemed terribly excited at what he was witnessing.

"You just...sit in it?" He said, creeping into the kitchen.

"Sure, why not? It's not like I'm not used to it." Max said, puffing on his morning cigarette. He motioned to it. "You don't mind if I...?"



"Nah, go ahead," Barnaby waved. "I'm used to smoke."

Tentatively, he pulled out a kitchen chair. Maybe he could... just like Max...he looked up. Max was watching him. His shy face seemed to beg Barnaby to join him.

Barnaby's affable face broke into a grin. "What the fuck," he said, and plopped himself down, heavily.

*Squish!*

He deliberately wriggled into his chair. "There. Baby Barnaby is in the house," he said.

He and Max both laughed. They spent some time just chatting, now that they were both sober.

Max had been in diapers since childhood. He had never quite gotten a handle on being dry, and candidly admitted to wetting his pants, messing himself and other generally babyish behaviour even when he was sober.

"I'm a thumbsucker, too," he said. "BIG baby."

Barnaby breathed a sigh of relief. He held out his thumb to Max. "See the wrinkles? Sucked it all last night in my sleep."

They smiled at each other. "You sit there, I'll make breakfast."

"Thanks," said Barnaby. He spread his legs and immediately a warm wetness spread in his crotch. "Ahhh... yeah. I see what you mean," he said to Max as the bear grinned at the expanding diaper of his new friend.



Breakfast took another hour and a half, with the two sharing opinions, ideas, and mostly just enjoying sitting in their babyishly soiled diapers. Max even offered a further surprise by offering baby bottles to drink out of, which Barnaby accepted with a yelp of surprise.

"You know, I could live like this every day," he said afterwards, his head now feeling much better and his tummy pleasantly full. Usually he didn't eat breakfast after a night of heavy drinking, but today it hadn't seemed troublesome. "But I think I should get going."

"I'm afraid it'll be another hour and a half or so," Max said. "After I put our stuff in the laundry. Our clothes are still soaking with pee, remember?"

Barnaby winced. "Can't believe we DID that." He paused, thoughtfully. "Hey, if you wear diapers all the time, why didn't you just wear one to the bar?"

Max blushed. "I thought it would be too noticeable. I thought I could handle just a few beer."

Barnaby nodded in sympathy. "I hear that. I got some change in my pockets



for laundry, if you've got a coin-op."

Max grinned. "Thanks. Feel free to use the shower. And I have a diaper pail beside the potty."

Barnaby nodded. "Handy." And he hopped into the shower to undo his soiled diaper while Max pulled on a pair of baggy sweat pants over his diapers, and took their wet clothes—and the bedsheets—to the laundry.

By the time he was out of the shower, having paid extra attention to his furry backside—Max was back.

"The clothes'll be awhile. Maybe you should get a clean diaper on." He smiled warmly.

Barnaby suddenly felt bashful. "I... don't know how to..." he said coyly. His big blue eyes batted innocently at Max, who was only too happy to accommodate.

He motioned the chubby cubby over to the bed. "Get over here then," he said. Barnaby dutifully laid on the bare, white rubber mattress sheet. Barnaby covered his face with his hands. "Geez, this is embarrassing," he moaned.

"Yeah, but it's worth it," Max reassured him. He powdered Barnaby's diaper area again, and this time pulled up a crinkly, bulky disposable. "These are the thickest disposables ever," Max said.

Barnaby wriggled. "Nice," he said, eyes shut in bliss. He was keeping his eyes closed, not daring to believe things could really be going this well.

Max got up to use the shower. Barnaby lay there a while, wriggling around. To be free to wear diapers like this, having a buddy who wouldn't judge him, who was the same as he was...! He put his thumb in his mouth. The slow deliberateness of it made him tingle; he was doing it on purpose, right here, where someone might see. Even if that someone was Max, it still made things... somehow exciting.

Max returned from his shower, clean and smelling of baby lotion. He slipped on a crinkly pair of disposables, which bagged pleasantly below his chubby belly. Barnaby opened his baby-blues. Max was holding a baby bottle, that appeared to be full of milk. Barnaby's eyes widened.

"Is that... for me?" His voice was small, quiet.

Max nodded. "You looked like you could use it. It's warm milk, with a teaspoon of vanilla. Tastes good." He sat on the bed next to Barnaby, and motioned for the burly St. Bernard to put his head in Max's lap.

Barnaby looked nervous. "I dunno—"

Max smiled. "It'll taste better than that thumb." Barnaby realized he'd been talking around his thumb, which was still in his mouth.

Sheepish, he laid his head in Max's lap. The bear hadn't done anything to make him uncomfortable so far, after all.

Max tipped the bottle to Barnaby's lips, and as he gingerly accepted it, he began to suck at it. Big Barnaby, gone for a few beers at Mert's, was now sucking a baby bottle, wearing nothing but a diaper, cuddled up in the lap of a pants-wetting stranger he'd met only last night.

It was madness, it was crazy—but it felt so good. He felt himself relax in spite of everything, and murmured happily as he drank the rest of his bottle. Max was right—it really was good.

He didn't know when he fell asleep. All he knew was Max was shaking him gently awake, holding up a pair of jeans. "Hey, sleepyhead. These look familiar?"

Barnaby blinked, blearily. "Woah—did I fall asleep? Sorry..." he was embarrassed. He'd slept like a toddler, just dropping off after his bottle.

Max shook his head. "Just like a baby. And look..." he pointed to the St. Bernard's diaper. Barnaby followed the pointing finger to look down at himself. At some point in his sleep, he'd wet himself again.

He was surprised, but this time, with a kind of guilty pleasure. He'd wet during a nap, just a little nap, just like a baby. Wet his diaper and everything!

"Need a change?" Max offered.

Barnaby blushed to the roots of his fur. "Um... I think...I'd kinda like to wear these home..."

Max nodded knowingly. "Uh huh."

Barnaby fidgeted, embarrassed. "It just seems a shame to waste another diaper, I mean, this one can handle a few more...I mean, uh a little more...um..."

Max handed Barnaby his jeans. "I understand." To Barnaby's chagrin, he stayed to help Barnaby put his pants on, even helping him do up his belt. It was embarrassing, but again in that good way.

Max had pulled on a pair of old baby-blue shorts with an elastic waistband, complemented by a matching short-sleeve shirt. He couldn't have looked more like a giant toddler if he tried.

Barnaby pulled on his Coyotes jersey. "I guess I'll be going," he said. He felt sad.

Max's face echoed his unspoken emotion. The two paused at the door to the apartment while Barnaby fidgeted. "So, uh, see you later, I guess..." "Yeah," Max replied disconsolately.

Inside, Barnaby raged. There was so much he wanted to say. "Thank you," for one. But how did you tell a guy you'd like to get together and wear diapers again? There were just no words—and not for the first time, he hated being shy. Say something, say anything, dammit!

"See you at Mert's on Friday?"

Max brightened instantly. "You KNOW it!" And he reached out and hugged the Saint Bernard goodbye.

But not goodbye forever—just goodbye until next time.

Barnaby walked to the bus stop whistling happily, crinkling slightly, and feeling all right about the whole thing—and after all, tomorrow was Friday.

