

Oversized Glasses

She wore those oversized sunglasses. The ones they sell at novelty stores for clowns. Or the one that parents get for their kids from Kings Island or Six Flags.

Or Disney World.

She lay there, with the ability to look through those sunglasses as if she was a big kid. To her, she was a big kid. And she hated it.

Her name was Abby. Abby Mae. She was the first of eight in the family eventually. She was always the "fast learner."

In her first year, she had learned how to crawl, sit and stand. The standing took a little bit of energy. Sometimes too much energy for such a small body and she ended up sitting back down -- sometimes forcefully.

Good thing those Pampers are cushy!

Then, it was the game Mom called "keep away." At least, that is what she kept saying to the young girl as she stood and moved around the house by holding onto things. Sometimes those things were sturdy enough to support the tiny fingers as they held on while the rest of the body attempted to do something it was not used to.

Sometimes, those items were not, and Mom had to rush and keep something from injuring her child. Or if it did, she would reach down and comfort the child, holding her between the woman's breasts.

Why doesn't she feed her with those any more?

The girl continued to grow and after several doctors' visits -- all which the young girl hated because all she got was something stuck in her somewhere and the ONLY person apologizing had nothing to do with it -- Mom. Mom started calling the little girl "my big girl." That's what started it all.

"Big girls learn how to eat with a spoon." She would ram that spoon, covered with all kinds of strained or pureed things, down the mouth of her child. Meanwhile, she would sit there eating something called "Yogurt" from a plastic container.

"Is this what I have to look forward to?? Years of eating stuff from a jar?? Yuck!" the child thought to herself.

One day, however, Mom was frustrated. She looked all over for something called a purse, and she could not find it. She looked in the refrigerator and in the cabinets, and all she could find was that stuff called Yogurt. So she fed it to the young child. The child looked up at her as if to say "Hey!! You know that's YOUR FOOD YOU'RE FEEDING ME!" and after a few more shovels, the child started to smile and so did Mom.

She later found that "damned purse." It was in the car. She forgot that it was there and left it in there all night long. She quickly looked and discovered that nobody bothered any of the cards or pouches in the item.

"Abby," Mom would say, "Big girls know how to take a nap." She would lay the child down on a blanket and watch her between something called a "soap". It was on a large screen with all kinds of colors in the living area of the home. She would turn it on at a certain time, and listen as people would talk to her and to each other. Occasionally, other babies -- that's what Abby really was, a baby -- would appear talking about a new diaper, or a new bottle or something which babies are supposed to play with.

Abby's toys were whatever was in reach. It was whatever she found.

"Big girls know how to take a bath by themselves," Mom later told Abby -- and little later, her brother Ben. She would turn on the water, adjust the temperature by her hand over the faucet, and undress both Ben and Abby and sat while they played in the water. She never went away, which was good because Abby did not know if she could say seated in the large tub. After a while, she would wash first Ben and then Abby and then get them out of the tub and wrapped them with warm towels. She would get the towels all hot from the dryer and let them cool a bit before putting them around Abby or Ben's small bodies.

She did the same for everyone -- Abby, Ben, Carmen, Denise, Esther, Franklin, Geoff, and Harriett.

One afternoon, Mom and Abby went out to gather food and she saw that Abby wanted those oversized glasses. They were on an end cap, below the baby food jars but above the boxes of baby cereal. Abby reached out and grabbed them, and remembering that everything has a flavor, she placed them in her mouth.

"Abby!!" Mom shouted, and then looked at her child. Abby had attempted to place the glasses on her face. Mom bought them for her, and it became

Abby's most prized possession. She took them to high school and placed them in her locker. She took them to college and placed them on the face of her largest and favorite teddy bear. She took them when she got married and moved into a home, placing them on the top of the chest of drawers in her bedroom.

They were almost broken when Abby's husband, in a fit of rage, upturned the chest and everything on it. Abby caught her husband using the "big girl" approach -- that same approach her mother used on her -- to have their daughter Cathy to sit on his unclothed lap.

"Big girls do this all of the time...you want to be a big girl, right?" was what he told his child.

Abby hit him on the side of the head with a flat aluminum skillet and told her child to go to her room, lock the door and do not let anyone but her in. She then waited until the child left the room and returned to her bedroom.

Then, she let him have it again with the pan, yelling things like "you sick so-and-so!" and "you should be ashamed of yourself!"

As the police took her husband away, he yelled at Cathy's mother.

"I'll be back... If she wasn't so much like you, I'd never tried to do it! I'm coming back for you!"

"Grandmom?" The child looked up at her grandmother.

"Is that why when Mom went to Heaven, you placed those big old glasses in the box with her??" The little girl squirmed as she looked at the face her grandmother was making.

Grandmom nodded, then stroking the child's dark hair, added, "It is called a casket, and yes, dearie. I wanted her to have something in Heaven to remember while she waits for all of us to hopefully see her again."

"Am I a big girl?" the little girl asked, jumping off her lap.

"No," the grandmother smiled as she got up and motioned for her

granddaughter to take her hand, "You don't want to be a big girl. Big girls get into trouble. You can be a child for as long as you want."