



CHARLIE AND THE BABY FACTORY

Chapter I



BecomingBabyAgain

The entire town sat in the shadows of the factories two huge chimneys. The lorries came and went at the start of each morning through the great iron gates that closed off the factory from the public. It seemed as if Wonka's Baby Factory, which made and distributed everything from diapers to baby bottles and soft toys, had been there as long as the town had! Nobody really had any memory of it being built anymore, and it had long been known that nobody who worked in the factory live outside of the walled off complex. Many thought that in this day and age, it was probably all automated with enormous machines that made great clanging and stomping noises, but many still had a hint of imagination that there was something more to that foreign place. Of course, nearly everyone in that town payed almost no notice to the factory anymore; It simply became part of the landscape like the trees and the hills.

Then the world erupted. It seemed that this factory which had sat so silently in the background for centuries was opening up to the public. The world's press descended on that town with their satellite vans, annoying reporters and "*can I have a small mochaccino*" attitude. Every night the television news would say the same lines over again with the same amount of surprise in their voices each time.

"And finally, Willy Wonka's Baby Factory which has been exporting all manner of childcare items for nearly 300 years will be opening its doors for the very first time..."

Charlie did not understand the fuss. To him, it was simply a factory that made diapers and baby bottles, who cares what's inside? Granted he was curious, but it would be nothing more than conveyer belts and probably a very boring man with a monotone voice showing them round offices. He had read that it wasn't even going to be fully opened to the public! Only 6 people who had received invitations would be shown around the factory (who he guessed would then sell their stories to the highest bidder). The funniest part was that the invitations weren't even going to be sent out as you'd imagine, rather that 6 'golden' coloured diapers would be hidden in their packages waiting for the lucky person that would uncover them! Charlie laughed as he thought that surely every diaper becomes a yellowy golden colour if worn long enough!

Days passed and for Charlie, the routine life of commuting and work never changed. Each morning he would wake up, drive to work, sit at a desk for a boring load of work, drive home and pretty much go to bed ready to repeat the whole thing. Suddenly though, his drive became much more interesting. He spiced up his commute by driving to work past the factory, just to have a small glimpse through those great gates that closed off the world of mystery. He would admit that ever since he heard the news about just 6 visitors, he had become more interested in the factory. In fact, he realised that he actually wanted one of those golden diapers, just for the curiosity to see what was actually inside. However, he couldn't bring himself to be seen buying baby diapers as a single man, what would people think!

The news of the first Golden Diaper being found hit the news screens much sooner than Charlie or indeed anyone expected. Its winner was a young woman who like Charlie had been so curious to have just a small glimpse of what was inside, but she actually had the

courage to spend her hard-earned money on little diapers. More winners were announced in a steady stream over the coming weeks, always announced at the end of the news with a little interview with the lucky person. They'd smile and always say that same kind of thing about "how lucky they are" or "how they never expected it to happen to them". After a mere three months of waiting, there was only one golden diaper out of the six left unfound. Nestled away in a package just waiting to be found. Charlie found that he was thinking about it more and more, it could be in any of his local shops, or maybe someone had already bought it and the package was just waiting to be opened. Perhaps the last one had already been found but was in some kind of secret auction for the highest bidder ready to be swiped up by some industrial spy hoping to find some ideas to steal from one of the world's biggest selling brands.

Winter had settled in and the evenings became much colder. It began to get dark early in the afternoons and the mornings were drizzled with a cold chill. Naturally to counter such chilly weather, everyone in Charlie's apartment block had the heating turned nearly all the way up to full and as a result it was boiling. The day had been another dreary office load, and to get out the desperately hot apartment, Charlie decided to go for a little walk. Nothing too long, just some time to himself with some headphones to relax a little. The street lights projected a faint orange glow over everything. Charlie left his apartment block and turned left down the street, past the small takeaway places that seemed never to be closed and all the shops with their shutters down. He walked further a little out of the town until down by the pavement, right in the gutter, there was a small pile of litter.

At first, he really payed no attention to it beyond thinking about his disgusting people were for leaving their rubbish lying around. Just a few empty cans, some takeaway boxes, and assorted junk. There was even a diaper in the pile. In the warm glow of the streetlamps, Charlie did a double take. Was that the golden diaper? No? It must just be the orangey light?

No. He kicked the other rubbish away with his foot and picked up the diaper. There was a small message printed over the front of it.

Congratulations. You've found of 6 golden diapers!

We'd like to invite you for a tour of Willy Wonka's Baby Factory!

Just as the others had said before him, in phrases that he had began to hate. Charlie couldn't believe how lucky he was! Or that it could have happened to him!