

*AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK*



# THE DIFFICULT BOARDER

EVELYN HUGHES

*The Difficult Boarder*

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## *Chapter One: A New Arrangement*

The rain had just started tapping gently on the windows when Marjorie opened her front door. Harry Langston stood there in a hoodie several sizes too big and with a rucksack slung over one shoulder, water beading in his unkempt hair. His eyes, half-defiant and half-weary, flicked past her and into the house behind her, as though measuring the distance between himself and dry warmth.

"You're late," Marjorie said, not unkindly. Her tone had that clipped sharpness she'd carried since her husband passed, full with no wasted breath, and no unnecessary pleasantries. "But I suppose it can't be helped. Come on in."

Harry stepped inside with a vague grunt. He smelled like cigarettes and damp cotton, and the scent clung as he passed her into the narrow hall.

"This way," she said, closing the door. "The room's upstairs. I don't tolerate loud music, drugs, or filth. Rent is due every Sunday night. No guests. Are we clear?"

"Crystal," he muttered. "I'm not here to cause trouble."

Marjorie narrowed her eyes. "Hmm... we'll see."

The guest room had once been her husband's recovery room, sterile, sparse, with a tall oak wardrobe and a neatly made single bed. A plastic mattress protector still crinkled faintly under the sheets, a remnant from the unpleasant sickbed days.

"This'll do fine," Harry said, dropping his rucksack to the floor with a dull thud. "Smells like a hospital."

"Cleanliness is something you'll come to appreciate," she replied.

He didn't answer. He just collapsed onto the bed without removing his shoes.

She frowned but said nothing... for now.

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Marjorie always rose early, even on weekends. She had already boiled the kettle and begun slicing bread when the hallway

creaked. Harry stumbled in, yawning, wearing the same hoodie and sweatpants.

"Sleep well?" she asked over her shoulder.

Harry scratched his head. "Yeah, I guess."

She turned then, frowning. "*You guess?*"

He gave a half-hearted shrug. "It was fine."

But she caught the subtle hints. The faint flush in his cheeks. The downward glance. And when he shifted in his seat, the fabric of his sweatpants clung to him in an odd, heavy way. Her stomach sank in disappointment.

"Go upstairs and strip the bed," she said, voice even. "Bring the sheets down. Now."

His head jerked up. "What?"

"You heard me."

He hesitated. "Why?"

"Because you wet it," she said plainly.

There was a pause, and his face twitched, then went blank.

"I... I didn't mean to," he stammered.

"Clearly. But what you *meant* and what you *did* are two very different things, Mr. Langston."

He opened his mouth... then closed it. She folded her arms.

"You didn't mention this condition of yours when you moved in," she said coolly. "I might have put a nappy on you last night if I'd known."

His cheeks flamed red with embarrassment.

"That's not funny."

"I wasn't joking."

When he returned with the damp bedding, she inspected it grimly, seeing the yellowed centre and the unmistakable smell.

"Drop your pants."

"What?!"

"You heard me," she said, gripping the hairbrush from the counter. "You're getting a spanking."

"You've got to be kidding!"

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She took a step toward him, suddenly very close. Her presence filled the kitchen like a thundercloud.

"Do I *look* like I'm kidding?"

He looked like a deer cornered in headlights, but slowly, his fingers fumbled with the waistband of his sweatpants. They dropped, revealing thin, childish briefs. They were wet, too.

"I see," she murmured. "So your underthings weren't spared either."

She pulled out a chair and sat down. "Over my knee."

"Shit," he hissed, red-faced.

"I said *over*."

When he didn't move, she grabbed his wrist and yanked him. He stumbled forward and found himself draped over her lap, his face pressed against her skirt, his backside exposed and vulnerable.

Smack.

The first hit echoed through the room.

Smack. Smack. Smack.

"You do *not* wet your bed like a toddler and lie about it!"

Smack.

"You do *not* soil my home!"

Smack.

Each stroke was firm and practised. She didn't shout. She just scolded with measured disappointment, as though she were punishing a child who'd broken a house rule.

Harry whimpered, kicking slightly, humiliated beyond words.

When it was done, she let him stand. His face burned, and his lip trembled. He didn't meet her eyes.

"You'll be sleeping with a towel under you tonight," she said, standing. "And tomorrow, I'm buying waterproof pants. If there's another accident, you're going into nappies. Understood?"

He nodded mutely.

"Say it."

"I... I understand."

"Good. Now go clean yourself. And I suggest you wash those briefs as well. I will not be touching them."

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Later that night, from her doorway, Marjorie watched him cross the hall in borrowed pyjamas. His head was bowed, and his steps were slow. The storm outside had grown stronger, rain pattering like fingers on glass. He hesitated at the edge of the guest room, looking back briefly.

Marjorie didn't speak.

She just gave him a look that promised: One more slip, young man, and your choices will be taken from you, and Harry, as though sensing the truth of it, quietly shut the door behind him. He was terrified of the future. It wasn't just an accident. He was a regular bedwetter and it was why he was kicked out of his last two places.

## Chapter Two: Slipping Further

The third morning in a row, Marjorie found the guest room window cracked open, letting in a thin draft, and the bed unmade yet again. She wrinkled her nose. The faint ammonia tang in the air was now unmistakable.

She peeled back the covers. The towel she'd instructed him to lay beneath himself was askew, bunched halfway off the bed. The fitted sheet bore a familiar pale stain, damp to the touch. Beneath it, the plastic mattress protector glistened like glass. The bed was soaked again.

Marjorie stood in silence, hands on her hips, lips tight. The first accident had earned him a spanking. The second had earned him a stern warning. But now?

Now it was deliberate. *Lazy. Defiant.*

She stripped the bed in tight, angry motions, the fabric whipping through the air as she tugged it free. And underneath the pillow, tucked like a guilty secret, lay something that made her blood run cold.

A pair of her panties.

They were floral, in pale blue, folded neatly but unmistakably hers. They were worn, soft, and unwashed, a set she'd worn only last week. She knew what it all meant.

*He's been sniffing my worn panties like a horny teenager! What am I going to do with him?*

Marjorie picked them up between two fingers like something dead and contaminated. Then she heard the shower running.

She walked to the bathroom and shouted. "Harry!"

There was no response. She knocked harder. "Harry, open this door. Now."

The water stopped. A few seconds passed, then the door cracked open. Harry stood in the steam, towel around his waist, hair dripping.

"What?" he asked, annoyed.

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Marjorie held up the panties. "Want to explain *these*?"

His face drained of colour. "I... I don't know what..."

"Don't lie to me," she said sharply. "Do *not* lie to me."

He swallowed. "I was just curious. I didn't do anything..."

"You stole my worn underwear," she cut in. "After *wetting* yourself like a child for three nights running. And on top of that," she moved past him, ignoring his flustered gasp, "you left your own soiled briefs on the floor!"

She snapped the towel rack aside. There, behind the toilet, a pair of filthy grey underwear slouched in the corner like a discarded rag.

Her nostrils flared.

"This is *disgusting*," she hissed. "You are behaving like a filthy, sneaky, untrained little boy."

Harry backed away, eyes darting to the door. "I'll clean it up, I didn't mean—"

"Oh, *you'll do more than clean*," Marjorie said, grabbing him firmly by the arm. "I warned you what would happen if you kept acting like this."

"Wait, no! Please!"

But she was already dragging him, dripping and barefoot, down the hallway.

In the living room, she sat down hard on the old wingback chair and yanked him face-first over her lap.

"Marjorie, stop! I'm sorry—!"

"You'll be *more* sorry in a minute."

CRACK.

Her palm landed hard on his bare backside. Again. And again. The slaps rang off the walls. It was a lot harder than the first spanking.

"You *wet* your bed, you steal from me—"

CRACK.

"You leave *filthy* underthings on my floor—"

CRACK.