

AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK



**RESETTING
TOBY**

*When babying is done to help
* diaper Version **

EVELYN HUGHES

Resetting Toby

Resetting Toby

Evelyn Hughes

First Published 2026

Copyright © AB Discovery 2026

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form, by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher and author.

Any resemblance to any person, either living or dead, or actual events is a coincidence.

Resetting Toby

Title: Resetting Toby – diaper version

Author: Evelyn Hughes

Editor: Michael Bent, Rosalie Bent

Publisher: AB Discovery

© 2026

www.abdiscovery.com.au

Contents

Chapter One – The Arrangement	5
Chapter Two – Arrival	11
Chapter Three – The First Night.....	19
Chapter Four – Rules and Routines	28
Chapter Five – The Pacifier.....	38
Chapter Six – Baby Clothes	45
Chapter Seven – Girl or Boy?	51
Chapter Eight – The Locked Room.....	59
Chapter Nine – Bottles and Baby Food.....	67
Chapter Ten – Sara Visits.....	74
Chapter Eleven – Tabitha.....	83
Chapter Twelve – The Visitor	89
Chapter Thirteen – Coming Home	95
Epilogue – The Handcuffs	104

Chapter One – The Arrangement

The sheets were in the machine again, the wet sheets from the morning before.

Sara Mercer stood at the laundry door with her hand on the dial and her jaw set in the particular way it had been setting itself for the past several years, tight at the hinge, the muscle jumping once before she got control of it. The washing machine filled and began to turn, and she stood there a moment longer than she needed to, listening to the water.

Upstairs, Toby was still in bed. It was eleven o'clock, and he was still in bed. She knew that his bed would be wet, flooded probably, and yet he still slept in late.

She put the kettle on, sat at the kitchen table with a mug she didn't really want, and looked at the wall. On the wall was a corkboard she'd put up when Toby was twelve with the idea of using it for family notices and shopping lists. It had one thing pinned to it now: the card the officer had given her at the station two days ago. *Community Liaison. Youth Offending.* She had read it so many times that the text had lost its meaning.

The stairs creaked. Then the creak of the third step from the bottom, the one she had been meaning to fix for three years. Then Toby appeared in the kitchen doorway in a t-shirt and boxers, hair pushed up on one side, squinting against the light as though the kitchen were an affront to him.

“There's no milk,” he said.

“There's milk. I bought milk yesterday.”

“There's barely any.”

“There's enough for cereal, which is what I'd suggest given it's the middle of the morning, and you haven't eaten.”

He opened the fridge, stared into it with the door hanging wide, and closed it again without taking anything. He leaned against

Resetting Toby

the counter. He looked, she thought, exactly like his father in a mood, which was not a comforting observation.

“You washed the sheets,” he said.

“I did.”

“You didn't have to do that.”

“And yet someone had to, just as I will need to wash last night's sheets, which I presume are wet?” She turned the mug in her hands. “Toby, we need to talk about Wednesday.”

“We've talked about Wednesday.”

“We've talked around Wednesday. We haven't talked about what happens next.”

He said nothing. He picked up an apple from the bowl on the counter, turned it over once, and put it back.

“You could have gone to jail,” Sara said. “Do you understand that? You're twenty years old. They don't have to put you in a youth facility. They can put you in with adults, in a proper remand cell, and leave you there.”

“They didn't, though, did they?”

“Because I was there. Because I stood in that room and I told them you had never been in serious trouble before, which was nearly a lie given what happened in March, and I used your grandmother's name because her generation still means something to Sergeant Holloway, and I am not... “She stopped. Pressed her lips together. “I am not going to be able to do that again. Do you hear me? That was the last time.”

Toby pushed off the counter and went to the window, looking out at the back garden with his arms crossed. Outside, the garden was grey and overgrown, the lawn she kept asking him to mow still shaggy and wet.

“It was paint,” he said. “It was just a wall.”

“It was a heritage-listed building... not that that makes any difference.”

“It was a wall.”

Resetting Toby

“Toby.” She said his name quietly, and something in it made him turn slightly, not to look at her, but his profile shifted. “I’m not angry about the wall. I’m past being angry. I’ve been angry for two years, and it hasn’t changed anything. I’m frightened. I need you to understand that. I’m frightened about where this is all going.”

He said nothing.

“And I need to talk to you about the mornings.”

A stillness came over him then, different from the sullen stillness of before. Flatter. His shoulders moved up a fraction.

“What about the mornings?” he said to the window with a hint of defiance in his voice.

“You know what about the mornings.”

“It’s a medical thing.”

“I have asked you to see the doctor. I have asked you three times.”

“It’s a medical thing, and it’s not a big deal. Other people have it.”

“I know other people have it and I have never once made you feel ashamed of it, I hope — “

He made a sound that was half a laugh and not a kind one.

“I have *tried* not to,” she amended, keeping her voice level. “But Toby, those sheets aren’t being washed by themselves. And I have to wonder... I have to be honest with you... I have to wonder whether some mornings it isn’t quite as uncontrollable as you’d have me believe. Whether some mornings it’s easier than getting up and going to the bathroom. You’ve been lying in those wet sheets all morning.”

“That’s disgusting,” he exclaimed. “That’s a disgusting thing to say.”

“Is it untrue?”

He turned around then, and there was real heat in his face, the dark flush along his cheekbones she recognised. “Yes. Yes, it’s

Resetting Toby

untrue. You think I *want* to wake up like that? You think I..." He stopped. His jaw worked. "Forget it."

"I don't want to forget it. I want to talk about it."

"I'm going out."

"You're not going out. You're on licence, Toby. You're not permitted to — "

"I'm going for a walk. In the street. I'm not committing crimes in the street." He was already in the hallway, his voice reaching her from around the corner. "I'll be back."

The front door opened and closed with a controlled bang, not a slam, just firm enough to make the point, and Sara sat at the table and listened to the washing machine and breathed. It was all so difficult, and then there were the things she couldn't talk to him about.

His masturbation.

Masturbation was hardly a rarity for a twenty-year-old boy, but Toby masturbated in his wet bed. On the sheets. Noisily in part because of the crackly nature of his plastic bed undersheet. Sara would often hear him humping his wet bed, sometimes twice in a morning, before getting up, obviously hours after awakening. She didn't understand his ambivalence to his wet beds. She certainly didn't understand his masturbation in those same wet beds, and try as she might, many mornings the evidence was still strewn across the bed that was wet from side to side and pillow to near the end of the bed. Why was he doing that? Yes, Sara knew of one of his former school friends who still wet his bed at age 16, but he eventually stopped, while Toby was wetting every night with no sign of stopping.

And then there was the vandalism, this time it was graffiti, and he had been caught red-handed.

She looked at the card on the corkboard.

Then she took out her phone and scrolled to a different number. A number she had gotten from her friend Philippa three days ago, written in her own handwriting on a folded piece of paper

Resetting Toby

currently sitting in the pocket of her cardigan. She had unfolded and refolded it perhaps ten times since Wednesday.

The phone rang four times.

“Hello?” The voice was unhurried. A woman's voice, warm but measured, the voice of someone who did not startle easily.

“Is this Ellen?” Sara said nervously. “My name is Sara Mercer. A friend gave me your number. I'm told... I'm told you work with young men who are... who have.” She stopped and started again. “I'm told you have a method. That it works. And I am at the end of what I know how to do.”

A brief pause on the other end. Not hesitation. Consideration.

“Mrs Mercer,” said the voice. “Why don't you just tell me about your son in your own words?”

Sara looked at the ceiling and let out a long breath. “Where would you like me to start?”

“Start wherever you need to. I'm not going anywhere.”

And so, slowly at first and then faster than she expected, she did. She talked for nearly forty minutes. She talked about the friends who had gradually become the wrong friends, about the school that had been the wrong school or perhaps the wrong fit or perhaps just the wrong time, about the slow retreat of the boy she had known into something guarded and sharp and often cruel. She talked about the incident in March and about Wednesday. She talked about the laundry, and after a moment's hesitation, she talked about the sheets specifically, the every-single-morning of it, the industrial quantities of washing powder, the mornings she had stood in his doorway and looked at the dark spreading stain across the mattress and felt, shamefully, a complicated anger she couldn't fully name. She even hinted at something else in how he stayed in it often until late mornings.

When she had finished, there was a short silence.

“His bedwetting,” Ellen said. “Every morning, you said?”

Resetting Toby

“Every morning without exception for as long as I can remember. And heavily. It's not... It's not a small thing. It's almost the entire bed.”

“Pillow too?”

Sara sighed. “Yes, the pillow is often wet as well as the top sheet. It's everywhere.”

A warmth came into the voice that surprised her. Not amusement exactly, but something knowing and almost fond. “I see,” Ellen said. “Mrs Mercer, I think I can help you. I'll tell you something. Every young man I've worked with has had this, to one degree or another. I've come to think of it as significant. As telling me something useful. They all wet the bed to some degree.”

“What does it tell you?”

“We can talk about that when we meet. I'd like you to come and see me. I'd like to hear the rest of it in person, and I'd like you to see how I work.” A pause. “Your son's name is Toby?”

“Yes.”

“How does he feel about coming to me?”

Sara looked at the back garden through the window. The unmown lawn. “He doesn't know yet. He won't want to.”

“They never do,” said Ellen simply. “That's all right. That's where we start. It's where neither you nor I actually give them a choice.”

Chapter Two – Arrival

The drive took two hours.

Toby sat in the passenger seat with his elbow on the window ledge and his forehead almost touching the glass, watching the suburbs thin out into the countryside with the expression of a person being transported to a sentence. Which, Sara thought, was not entirely inaccurate. She had told him three days ago. The conversation had gone about as well as she had expected.

“You're sending me away! No! I won't go!”

“I'm getting you help.”

“Help. Right. What kind of help?”

“The kind that works. The kind I should have found sooner. You have some problems that need solving.”

Toby swore under his breath. Swearing was forbidden, and a bad word would get a look that seemed to carry power. Up until a few years ago, swearing would have gotten him spanked with the wooden spoon, but Sara had tired of that, and it didn't seem to work for long. She had, however, never spanked him for a wet bed.

He had argued for an hour. He had gone silent for a day. He had argued again, differently the second time, with less heat, more a kind of disbelieving negotiation, as though he could find the right combination of words to make her change her mind. She hadn't changed her mind. She had packed a bag for him while he stood in the doorway of his bedroom watching her fold his things, and at a certain point, he had simply stopped talking, and that silence had held all the way to this morning and for most of the two hours since. The choices were not his to make.

“How long,” he said to the window.

“We've talked about this.”

“You said weeks. What does weeks mean?”

“It means as long as it takes.”

Resetting Toby

“As long as *what* takes. You haven't told me what she actually does.”

“She works with young men who have lost their direction. She's had a great deal of success.”

“That tells me nothing.”

“Toby.” Sara kept her eyes on the road. “I need you to go in there with an open mind. That's all I'm asking.”

He said nothing. Outside, a field of wet grass went past, a farmhouse, a stand of trees with their branches bare against a low white sky.

“What if I hate it?” he said, eventually.

“Then you hate it. But you still stay.”

Another silence.

“The police actually required this? They actually said — “

“The terms of your release were that you enter a supervised rehabilitation programme.” Sara had rehearsed this sentence. She delivered it smoothly, without hesitation, and looked straight ahead. “Ellen's arrangement satisfies those terms.”

This was not precisely true. What was precisely true was that Sergeant Holloway had said something vague about it being strongly advisable, and Sara had done the rest herself. But Toby didn't know Sergeant Holloway's exact wording, and the effect was the same, and she was past the point of feeling guilty about it.

He lapsed back into silence until she turned off the main road onto a smaller one, and then onto a gravel lane that curved between hedgerows and ended at a house, large, well-kept, Georgian in its proportions, with a garden that was ordered without being severe. There was a light on in a downstairs window. There was a dark green front door.

“This is it?” Toby said.

“This is it.”

“It looks like someone's grandmother lives here.”

Resetting Toby

“Someone's grandmother *does* live here,” Sara said, and turned off the engine.

Ellen opened the door before they reached it.

She was not what Toby had assembled from the word *rehabilitation*. He had built someone clinical in his head, a professional of some kind, a therapist perhaps, someone with a lanyard and an intake form. Ellen was tall, broad-shouldered, unhurried, wearing a dark green cardigan over a blouse, her grey hair cut short and neat. She was perhaps fifty, maybe a little more. She looked out at him from the doorstep with dark eyes that moved over him in a way that reminded him, uncomfortably, of a doctor conducting an initial assessment.

“Toby,” she said. Not a question.

“Yeah,” he said.

She looked at him for a moment longer than was comfortable, then smiled, not unkindly, but without particular warmth either, and stepped back from the door.

“Come in, then. Both of you, for now.”

The hallway was wide, with a flagstone floor and a coat rack and the smell of something baking coming from the back of the house. It was warm. Toby stood in the middle of it with his bag over his shoulder while Ellen and his mother did the brief exchange at the door — yes, the journey was fine, yes, she had found it all right — and he looked around and tried to find something to dislike and found mostly that it felt like a home. That was unsettling in its own way.

They sat in a front room. Sara and Ellen were on chairs. Toby was on the sofa, his bag at his feet, his arms folded.

“I'll speak with Toby alone in a moment,” Ellen said to Sara. “But first, any last things you'd like to say to each other?”

Toby looked at his mother. His mother looked at him.

“Be sensible,” Sara said. “Please.”

He nodded. Once. He looked at his shoes.

Resetting Toby

Sara stood, and she squeezed his shoulder as she passed, and he didn't shake it off, which was as much as he was able to manage, and then he heard the front door close and the car start on the gravel and the sound of it diminish and then he was alone in a strange house with a woman he didn't know and the particular silence that follows departure.

Ellen was looking at him.

"All right," she said. "Look at me."

He looked at her.

"I know you don't want to be here," she said. "I know you think this is temporary, something to get through. I want you to set that idea down. Not because you have to be happy about being here, as you don't, but because the part of you that's waiting for it to be over is going to make everything harder and longer than it needs to be. Do you understand me?"

"Sure," Toby said.

"When you speak to me," Ellen said, without raising her voice, "you answer properly. Yes or no. Not *sure*, not *whatever*, not a shrug. A clear answer."

A beat. He felt the back of his neck warm.

"Yes," he answered.

"Good. Now. Your mother has told me about you, but I want to hear from you directly. I'm going to ask you questions, and you're going to answer them honestly. Not to get a good result, not to manage what I think of you, but honestly. Trust me, I'll know the difference." She settled into her chair with the ease of someone who had done this many times. "How long have you been wetting the bed?"

The warmth at the back of his neck became something else entirely. He felt it move up over his ears and across his face, and he was suddenly, furiously glad he was not a person who flushed easily. No one but his mother had ever mentioned his bedwetting.

Resetting Toby

“I don't... that's not...” He stopped. Started again. “That's a private thing.”

“Yes,” Ellen agreed. “And you're going to tell me about it anyway. How long?”

He looked at the wall. At the window. Anywhere that was not her steady, untroubled gaze. His jaw was tight. “I don't know. A few years.”

“Every night?”

“Most nights.”

“Every night,” Ellen said, as though correcting him gently on a matter of fact. “That's what your mother told me. Every single morning without exception.”

The flush was full and burning now, and there was a pressure behind his eyes he wasn't expecting and absolutely was not going to give in to, not in the first ten minutes, not in front of a stranger. He pressed his back teeth together.

“Fine. Every night.”

“And heavily,” she said.

He said nothing.

“Your mother used the phrase *bed flooding*.” Ellen's tone was completely neutral. As a matter of fact, the way a doctor might ask about symptoms. “She said it isn't a dampness. It's a thorough soaking. Sheets, mattress protector, sometimes through to the mattress itself.”

“Can we not...” He stopped. His voice had done something he didn't want it to do, a slight unevenness he couldn't control. He pressed it back down. “Can we not talk about this?”

“We can't *not* talk about it,” Ellen said, not unkindly. “It's important. It's one of the first things I need to understand about you.” She leaned forward slightly. “Toby. Look at me.”

He looked at her. His eyes were bright in a way that he was furious about.