

Happy Anniversary

Chapter 6.5

The rest of the time was spent chatting with Alastair and Vivian, the married couple taking some time to relax in the cool water. Even Jordan decided to spend a few minutes wading in the pool, though he kept close to the shallow side, close to the edge in case he started to sink. Thankfully, he stayed afloat, and the rest of the time proceeded without incident.

Jordan and Abigail bade farewell to the lion couple, not before promising to meet up with them again for another time. They exchanged each other's room numbers, in case they wanted to drop in and chat at any time. Vivian, especially, seemed thankful for the company; perhaps she enjoyed the attention her pregnant form was receiving from Abby.

The trip back to their suite was a quiet one. Jordan suspected the reason: his hesitation, and his hasty withdrawal, from touching Vivian's belly hadn't gone unnoticed by his wife, and she must be pondering how best to ask him. He knew she would; she was persistent about this subject, just as stubborn as he was unmoving. He wondered how long until she had had enough of his silence.

Once they re-entered their room and donned more appropriate attire, Abigail broke her silence. The first words she uttered were shocking to Jordan.

"Was that really necessary?"

He knew what she meant by the question, but still, the forwardness of it surprised him. "I didn't mean anything by it..."

"Look...I know you don't like children, or...or talking about *that*..." She looked down, traces of frustration lining her words. "But, why? Why is it so...*hard* a topic for you that you act like contact will kill you? Is it really so bad for you to talk about pregnancy? Is it such a bad thing to you that you have to run from it?"

Jordan looked at his lover's eyes, noticing them becoming both wet with impending tears of anger, and furrowed in annoyance. He rarely saw Abby become angry to the point of crying, but at this moment, it was scaring him that this frustration was directed at him.

Abby continued. "I've...been trying to respect your privacy on this, sweetie...I really have.....But if you're going to flinch every time I even mention the word, run off scared at every round belly you see..." He fists were clenched now, her tears flowing without restraint. "Just...please, let. Me. HELP." She looked into his eyes now. "I'm your wife....Why won't you t-trust me...?"

She huddled close to Jordan, trembling from conflicting emotions. For once, the fox was at a loss: He wanted so desperately to clear the air, to set straight his reasons for staying quiet.....But fears and worries halted him, again and again.

Except now. It was too much. Seeing his own wife breaking down because of his selfishness was too much for his conscience to bear. Pangs of regret and guilt welling inside, he held Abigail close, as if she was all that existed in the world.

"I.....I am so sorry..." The words crawled out of his lips slowly, deliberately, each one carefully chosen before being uttered. "You're right...I should trust you, of all people. There shouldn't be secrets between us....especially not about...p-pregnancy..."

Abigail started. Jordan never directly addressed the word in any of their conversations; he would almost use a euphemism, or at least refer to it in passing. To hear him name the subject was a surprise to her. A nice surprise, though; maybe their talks on the subject would progress now?

"But..." Jordan proceeded, pulling himself away slightly to look at his wife. "Will you....Will you wait, just for a few more days? I'm sorry, I don't want to delay this, but.....I promise, after our anniversary, or during...I'll tell you. I swear, I won't hide it any longer."

Abigail let out a sigh of relief, trying to calm herself, willing that her frustrations subside. At last, her life-partner would open up to her; it was a small victory she allowed herself, being able to convince her husband to be honest about something so sensitive. "Th-thank you...That's all I ask, Jordan."

They stood there for the longest time, simply enjoying the embrace of one another. Before they were aware of it, it was already becoming darker outside. Reluctantly, they separated and made to travel downstairs for their evening meal.

The dinner was a long and delicious one for them both. It allowed them to work out the tension previously felt in their hotel room, which they were both grateful for. The menu, also, was a bonus for them: Jordan enjoyed a plate of hot fettucine carbonara, while Abby stuck with a simple chicken schnitzel. For dessert, they shared a bowl of gelato consisting of vanilla, strawberry, and banana flavours, with a ripe cherry to top it off.

Once their meals were done, they retired to their room for an early night in. The events of the day had left them both drained, physically and mentally, and they welcomed the embrace of dreams with earnest. Thankfully, by this point Abigail was coming out of her heat, so the choice to forego pyjamas was one they both decided on.

However, they also decided to hold off on making love until their proper anniversary, "to make the night special", as Abigail put it. Jordan had agreed, knowing that celibacy for short periods always made the act sweeter than if they made love each night. Snuggling up nice and warm, the two lay in bed with the moon shining in through the balcony window, casting its glow on them as they sleep.

Before he drifted off, however, Jordan's heart pounded frantically as he lay near his wife. He had just promised her he would tell her his reasons for not wanting children. The thought of telling her soon was a terrifying one for him, as he had never confided this secret to anyone prior. The idea kept him up late into the night, before he finally dozed off beside his wife, his thoughts in turmoil as he rested.