

Chapter 46

Michael Explains

Tigresa answered the telephone and, after listening for several seconds, said, “Yes, he’s right here.” She turned and said, “Michael, it’s Dr. Macaca at Piedmont Regional Medical Center. He wishes to speak with you.”

Michael took the telephone from Tigresa, put it to his ear, and said, “Dr. Macaca? Is she out of surgery? She is? How is she?”

Dr. Macaca’s voice said, “Yes, it’s Dr. Macaca. Yes, she’s out of surgery. All of her injuries have been repaired. How she is is all dependent on her. She’s in an induced coma so her broken ribs won’t cause her pain while she’s breathing but, her vitals are weaker than they should be. However, at this time, they aren’t life threatening.”

“When can I see her, Doctor?”

“Currently, she’s in Recovery. She’ll be there for another two hours but, her parents are here and Mrs. Fuchs is demanding that you be removed as her Emergency Contact and you be banned from seeing her. She’s even threatening to hire a bodyguard to stand outside of Miss Fuchs’ door specifically to prevent you from entering.”

“Sounds like something she would do.”

“Fortunately for you, Mr. Fuchs is refusing to foot the bill for a bodyguard.

“Visiting hours end at 1300 and I will recommend to Mr. Fuchs that Mrs. Fuchs go home for the night because her presence won’t help their daughter to recover any faster.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

“As her Emergency Contact, you have a right to visit her after Visiting Hours.”

“In that case, I’ll be there around 1330, Doctor. Thank you.”

“I have an ulterior motive, Mr. Thomson. You told me that you love her and her vital signs are weaker than they should be. Before I informed Mr. and Mrs. Fuchs about their daughter, I had been informed about her weak vital signs. I decided to try something I had read in a medical journal. I whispered into Miss Fuchs’ ear that you were going to visit her later this evening. You can imagine my surprise when her vital signs got stronger. When you arrive, ask for me and I’ll tell you what I want you to do tonight.”

“Yes, sir. I’ll talk to you this evening.”

Michael hung up the telephone. He turned and saw everyone looking at him expectantly.

“Well?” Tigresa asked.

Decided to tease them a little, Michael said, “Well what?”

“Well what? Well what? Michael, I’ll give you a well what if you don’t tell us what the doctor said.”

Michael made his way to a chair and sat down. After he sat down, he thought about what Dr. Macaca had said and a look of sadness crossed his face. After he managed to compose himself, he said, “Amanda’s out of surgery and in recovery. She’s expected to pull through but . . .”

Victoria said, “But what?”

“Her vital signs are regular but weak. He said that it’s like she wants to live but, at the same time, she doesn’t have a reason to live. He wants me to spend the night with her. He told me that, after she reached the Recovery Room, her vital signs were weak after the surgery but, when he told her that I would be there later this evening, her vital signs became stronger although not by much.”

Leo said, “That’s a good sign. It also proves that you were wrong about her using you.”

“Yes, sir. Back in the 20th Century of the human era, there were people that claimed that speaking positively to someone who was in a coma created a positive feedback in the brain which also caused the person in a coma to heal quicker. I hope so because, when I get to the hospital and her room, I’m going to tell her how sorry I am for leaving her last night how much I love her.”

Victoria said, “I’m sure she knows that, Michael.”

“I’m not so sure, Victoria. When I figured out that she was going to be the one announced as Reginald’s fiancée and I saw that smug look on Mrs. Fuchs’ face, I just walked out of that banquet hall and never looked back.”

Elizabeth said, “But Michael, I saw the way she looked at you every time you brought her over here. I’m willing to bet that she would forgive you no matter what you said or did.”

“I hope you’re right, Elizabeth. I don’t know if life would be worth living knowing she hated me for putting her into the situation that caused her to be injured in that accident.”

After he got off the telephone with Michael, Dr. Macaca asked to have the Fuchses paged to his office. A few seconds later, a voice could be heard on the hospital's intercom. "Paging Mr. and Mrs. Fuchs. Please report to Dr. Macaca's office. Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Fuchs, please report to Dr. Macaca's office."

Ophelia heard the announcement and said, "Jacob, Amanda must be out of surgery. Hurry, so we can see her."

They stood and hurried to Dr. Macaca's office. When they arrived Jacob knocked on the door and Dr. Macaca asked them to enter. Before anyone else could say anything, Ophelia started speaking. "Is this about Amanda? Is she all right? How is she?"

Dr. Macaca said, "Slow down, Mrs. Fuchs and let me speak.

"Your daughter is out of surgery. She's in recovery and will be for the next two hours. All of her internal injuries have been mended. All of her broken bones have been set. Her jaw has been wired shut."

Ophelia said, "Her jaw!?"

"Yes. I thought I mentioned that she has a broken jaw.

"Anyway, her clavicle has been set and the skin has been sutured shut. Because of her broken ribs, she has been put into an induced coma to ease her pain when she breathes. She'll be in the coma until her ribs heal complete and she can breathe without pain.

"Because of this, you can either go home and come back tomorrow or you can stay until visiting hours are over at 1300."

Ophelia said, "I'll be staying all night."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Fuchs, but your presence won't help your daughter heal any faster. Plus, our nurses are specially trained for any potential emergency. Your presence during an emergency could possibly be detrimental to your daughter's recovery."

Ophelia was adamant, "I am staying, Dr. Macaca!"

Jacob, who had kept his peace until now, said, "Now, Ophelia. Dr. Macaca is right. If there's an emergency, you wouldn't be of any assistance. Besides, we aren't on her Emergency Contact list so, we can't stay when Visiting Hours are over."

"Jacob, we're her parents. We should automatically be on her Emergency Contact list not that human."

"Sweetheart, the Emergency Contact list is decided on by the person it belongs to. It's

also the law.”

“I don’t care, Jacob. If it wasn’t for that human, she would have been happy to marry Reginald.”

“If what Amanda said after he kissed her is any indication, I doubt that very seriously.”

Dr. Macaca interrupted and said, “Unfortunately Mrs. Fuchs, rules are rules and laws are laws for a reason. Like anyone else who works for someone else, I have to follow the rules and laws. Therefore, I have to enforce the Visiting Hours rule which means you have to leave by 1300. I’m sorry.”

“Dr. Macaca, I don’t want that human anywhere near my daughter. If I have to convince your nurses to inform me whenever he shows up, I will do that and I will have him arrested for being here against my wishes. Do you understand me, Dr. Macaca?”

Jacob had had enough. “Ophelia! Enough! You can’t dictate to this hospital what they will and will not allow! You also will not dictate to them who they will and will not allow to see Amanda! Do I make myself clear?”

“But Jacob, I told you months ago that this would happen if she kept associating with that human.”

“And I told you that I don’t believe in dreams predicting the future. Besides, Michael wasn’t anywhere near her when the accident occurred.

“Now, at 1300, you and I are going to go home and you’re going to get a full night’s sleep. If Michael visits Amanda and the hospital allows it, it’s none of our business. In fact, I’ll bet it helps her heal faster.”

Ophelia growled but said nothing more.. She stood, walked to the waiting room, and sat down.

After Ophelia left, Jacob said, “Please forgive my wife, Dr. Macaca. She’s got a hatred for humans that surpasses all understanding. I’ve met Michael and I know he’s an honorable man and he definitely loves my daughter. So, please don’t listen to my wife. I don’t care if Michael visits and stays all night. So, if she asks tomorrow, nobody saw him. All right?”

“Will do, Mr. Fuchs.”

Michael spent the day with the Pantheras. After he ate brunch, he excused himself saying that, if he was going to spend the night in Amanda’s hospital room, he needed to take a nap for a

few hours. As he headed toward the stairs, he heard Anne calling to him so, he stopped and turned around.

“Yes, Sweetie?”

“Wayuh you gown?”

“I’m going to my room to take a nap.”

“You take nap?”

“Sometimes.”

“Wy?”

“Well, sweetheart, I was awake almost all night last night and I didn’t get enough sleep so, I want to take a nap so I can stay with Amanda tonight.”

“Ca’ ah slee’ wif you?”

“I don’t know, Sweetie. If your mama says you can, I don’t mind.”

Anne ran back to her mother and said, “Mama! Mah’l say ah ca’ slee’ wif hin. Ca’ ah?”

Tigresa looked at Michael and said, “Is it really all right with you?”

“I’ve just gotten two kittens who sleep with me so, I am getting used to sharing my bed but, I’m a little worried about what you might think of me sleeping in bed with your two-year-old daughter.”

“Michael, we’ve known you for almost a year now. During all that time, you’ve always treated Anne like a little sister. You’ve never looked at her with anything but love for a sister in your eyes. We trust you to give up your life rather than allow her to be hurt.”

Smiling, Leo said, “Besides, I believe you know that if you did anything you shouldn’t do, we’d make sure you never did it again.”

“Oooh-kay!” Michael said. Picking Anne up, he continued, “Come on, Sweetie. Let’s take a nap so you’ll have plenty of energy to keep mama and daddy on their toes all night tonight.” He tickled Anne and headed off to his room.

Michael carried Anne up the stairs and to his old room. He removed his shirt and shoes after putting Anne on the bed. He said, “Now, lay down so I can take a nap, Anne.”

After they lay down, Anne said, “Mah’l?”

With his eyes closed, Michael said, “Yes, Sweetie?”

“Manna huht?”

“Yes, she is. She’s hurt very badly.”

“See ge’s bettuh?”

“I hope so but we won’t know for a long time.”

“Ah ho’ see ge’ bettuh. Ah luh huh.”

“So do I, Sweetie. So do I. Now, let’s get to sleep, okay?”

“Uh-kay?”

A couple of hours later, Michael woke up and saw Anne had moved in her sleep and was now dangerously close to the edge of the bed. He quickly reached over, caught her waist, and gently pulled her back toward the middle of the bed. He looked at the clock and noticed the time was 1000. He got out of bed, put his shirt and shoes on and Anne never moved. He reached out and gently put his hand on her chest and caressed her. Anne stretched and yawned showing off her tiny incisors and canines.

Michael smiled as he thought, “Dr. Tigresa won’t be breast feeding you much longer.”

Anne opened her eyes, looked at Michael, and smiled. She reached her little arms up to Michael. He leaned over and she wrapped her arms around his neck. She hugged him as he stood and picked her up.

“Let’s go see mama and daddy.” Michael said.

“Uh-kay Mah’l.”

“Do you need to go potty?”

Anne paused for a couple of seconds before saying, “Uh-huh.”

“Okay. Here’s the bathroom. Do you need help?”

“Uh-uh.”

“Okay. I’ll be right here when you finish.”

“Uh-kay. Mah’l.”

About a minute later, Michael heard Anne calling him. He opened the door and saw her standing in the middle of the room with her underwear around her ankles. He said, “Do you need help?”

“Uh-huh.”

“You can’t pull your underwear up?”

“Uh-uh.”

“Okay. Stand still.” Michael knelt down and pulled her underwear up as snugly as he could. Then, he picked her up, turned on the water in the sink, and said, “Now, wash your hands.”

Anne washed her hands and said, “Tankoo.”

“You’re welcome. Now, let’s go see everybody.”

As they approached the living room, Michael could smell dinner cooking. As they got closer, Michael realized that Tigresa was cooking his favorite meal. As he entered the living room carrying Anne, she started bouncing in his arms when she saw Tigresa.

“Mama! Mah’l le’ Anne slee’ wif hin!”

“I know. Did you sleep good?”

“Uh-huh.” She hugged Michael and kissed his cheek.

Tigresa said, “Michael, you are going to eat dinner with us, aren’t you?”

That didn’t sound like an invitation so much as a command, so Michael replied, “I can tell that you’re cooking my favorite meal so, of course, I am.”

After eating, Michael picked up Anne and hugged her. Then, he said his good-byes with promises to visit again next weekend and to keep the Pantheras informed as to how Amanda was doing. He drove home and was greeted enthusiastically by Me-You and Buddy. He fed and watered them, cleaned their litter box, took a shower, and played with them. Watching the kittens play took Michael’s mind off of Amanda’s troubles that he continued to believe could have been prevented had he not allowed his pride to control his actions the previous night.

As he sat there watching Buddy and Me-You, he felt his eyes growing heavy and, before he knew it, even though he'd slept for four hours a short while ago, he fell asleep again. However, this wasn't the restful sleep he'd enjoyed at the Panthera home. This was the sleep of someone being tormented by his person demons, or, more specifically, demon.

As Michael slept, he heard a maniacal, evil laugh. Then, "I told you this would happen. But, would you listen to me? No. I told you something bad would happen to her if you continued down that road to bestiality. Didn't I?"

"No, you didn't. You said she would die in an automobile accident. She's still alive."

"Technicalities."

"Humph! You sound like a lawyer but, I've always wondered if lawyers were actually demons I disguise."

"Very funny. Why can't you be reasonable like that animal's mother. She believed me when I said that she would be hurt. She did everything she could to interfere with her daughter's relationship with you."

"Hunh! You didn't have to threaten Amanda's life to get Mrs. Fuchs to do that. Mrs. Fuchs just flat out hates me. She would have tried to interfere anyway. She's been doing that since Amanda and I met."

A melodious voice spoke. "Michael, this is the test I warned you about. If you pass this test, Amanda will be yours for 60 years."

Michael heard himself laugh and say, "Only 60? Why that's hardly enough time to get to know her."

The melodious voice laughed and said, "At least you still have your sense of humor"

"Well, if I don't laugh, I'll sit here and cry like a little baby

"Why didn't you warn me about her engagement to that Arctic fox?"

"Michael, telling you about the accident was, technically, a violation of a revelation agreement."

"What . . . are you talking about?"

"What I mean is the opposing interested parties have limitations on what we're allowed to say to get someone to make the decisions we hope that person will make. Revealing a potential future event violates that agreement."

“But, you said . . .”

“I said that the accident would occur and there was nothing you could do to prevent it. I also said whether or not Amanda survived the accident or not would depend on you making the correct choice.”

“But, wasn’t that revealing a possible future.”

“No. Since he had already revealed a possible future, it freed me to reveal a different possible future. I didn’t tell you what you had to do, though.”

“Why don’t you two leave me alone and allow me to decide my own future.”

“Michael, I’m sorry but, when you prayed last night, you asked for assistance and that’s what I’m here for. However, before you ask, I’m not allowed to meddle in human affairs other than to offer moral support. That’s what I’m here for.”

“Great. Well, when you leave, take him with you even if you have to hogtie him to do so.”

Michael heard a melodious evil laugh and then, “Since you specifically asked me to remove him and gave me leeway to do it, it shall be as you ask. But, I can’t hold him forever; I can hold him for a while, though. Good luck, Michael.”

When he heard this, Michael’s eyes popped open and he looked around to be sure he was in his apartment and alone. He looked down at his lap and saw Buddy and Me-You sleeping peacefully. As he looked around he felt a peaceful calm surround him. Michael could see a sheen of sweat on his arms as he looked around and smelled the odor of someone who’s been working at a gym without benefit of deodorant.

Michael nudged the kittens and said, “Let daddy get up you two. He’s got to take another shower.”

Both kittens slowly opened their eyes, yawned, and stretched languidly but, neither made any real effort to move. Finally, after a few seconds of allowing them to continue to stay in his lap, Michael gently picked each one up and moved them. Once again, each one stretched and yawned. Then, they sat down and watched him as he got out of bed, gathered his clothes, and headed to the bathroom. As he walked, both kittens fell into step behind him and followed him into the bathroom and waited while he showered. They waited patiently as he dried off and put on his underwear before returning to his bedroom to finish getting dressed.

Michael walked into his kitchen and prepared himself a glass of tea. It was only 1230 and the hospital was about 13 minutes away from his apartment so, he had a little time to kill before he needed to be on the road. He sat in his favorite easy chair and turned on his television and enjoyed one of the few television shows that he actually liked to watch. He quietly laughed as he watched the show because it was a show he remembered watching back when he was

growing up except it had Humanimals instead of humans playing the different roles. After he turned off the television, he petted the kittens and told them that he wouldn't be back until the next morning. Then, he left his apartment, got into his automobile, and left to go to the hospital. As he drove along, he was a bit worried that Dr. Macaca wouldn't be able to convince Ophelia to leave at 1300 as he had said he would. This worried Michael because he really wanted to see Amanda and apologize to her even though he knew she wouldn't be able to respond to his apology.