

Chapter 64

Honeymoon Train Trip

Followed by a cavalcade of honking cars, Michael and Amanda reached the train station in about 30 minutes. Michael found out later that Jacob had asked the taxi driver to drive a round about way to the train station. Amanda was embarrassed and Michael was laughing quietly as they rode along. Michael even had his hand out of the taxi's window waving at everyone like he was an important official visiting Catlanna. The people who saw them waved back which caused Amanda to laugh at both Michael and the people.

After arriving at the train station, another round of hugs and well-wishes were given to Michael and Amanda. Afterward, Michael and Amanda walked up to the ticket counter. When he arrived, Michael suddenly realized that he didn't have tickets for him and Amanda to board the train. When he explained his dilemma to the ticket agent, the agent asked, "Are you Michael Thomson?"

"Yes, sir."

The agent produced two tickets and said, "Here you go, sir."

After taking the tickets, Michael looked back toward Jacob, Leo, and Edward. The three of them smiled and Michael waved at them. Michael and Amanda boarded the train and handed their tickets to the conductor who escorted them to their compartment. Upon arriving at the compartment, the conductor unlocked the door, opened it, and stepped aside as they entered. He then asked if they wanted the door locked. Michael looked at Amanda who shook her head before he said, "No, thank you."

The conductor smiled and left.

Michael and Amanda settled in for the 6 hour train ride. Unlike their previous ride, Amanda wasn't concerned with the scenery outside the train. In fact, she pulled the shade down because she didn't want any prying eyes. After Michael sat down, Amanda sat in his lap facing him and started kissing him. After unbuttoning his shirt, she'd stop kissing him and would caress his bare chest and nuzzle his neck. The pressure of Amanda sitting on his lap in the manner in which she was sitting was causing a physical reaction in Michael, a reaction he was wanting to hide until they arrived at their hotel in Dogtona Beach but it didn't go unnoticed by Amanda.

With an impish smile on her feline muzzle, Amanda said, "Michael, I wish this train would travel faster. I want to get to the hotel so we can finally make love; I've waited so long for this night and I see you're wanting that, too. " Amanda's voice was bordering on a whine.

Because of Amanda's ministrations, Michael was breathing hard and he softly moaned as

he said, "I know, Sweetie, but, for some reason, this is what your father wanted. We've waited two years for this we can wait a few more hours. Can't we?"

Amanda's whine became more audible as she said, "I suppose."

About that time, someone started knocking on the door to the compartment causing Michael to flinch noticeably. A vaguely familiar voice was saying, "Is there anything I can bring you?"

Amanda looked at Michael and said, "Perhaps a small glass of tea."

Michael moved Amanda off of his lap, moved to the door, and, with the door closed, said, "Yes, sir. We'd like to have two glasses of sweet tea, please." Then, he whispered, "And perhaps something to help us relax for a few hours."

"Very good, sir. I'll bring it to you shortly. Shall I use the pass shelf?"

Michael thought for a moment and said, "No, sir. I don't think we'll have a problem opening the door."

"Yes, sir."

Michael returned to his seat. When he sat down, Amanda glared at him and said, "I'm not taking anything to make me sleep, Michael. We're married now, so you have no good excuse for refusing to allow me my wifely prerogatives."

Michael smiled and said, "It isn't for you, wife of mine, it's for me."

Amanda looked at him and said, "For you?"

"Yes, dear. I'm sure you've noticed what you're ministrations are doing to me. I'd rather our first time be in a more romantic setting than the heat compartment of a train. If I'm relaxed, I won't be able to allow my more animalistic instincts to take over. Wouldn't you rather wait until we reach the bridal suite of the hotel in Dogtona Beach?"

"Well, yes. I suppose."

"Now, if I'm relaxed enough that I don't react to what you're doing, you can continue kissing and caressing me to your heart's content and I won't be tempted to use this compartment for the reason it was created. While that may bother you at this time, I wouldn't want my first time making love to my wife to be somewhere that someone else may have had a tryst and it not be as clean as a hotel's bed would be."

When Michael said this, Amanda's nose and muzzle wrinkled at the thought. "Ewww. Me, too."

“So, you can love on me all you want after I get the medication and I won’t have to worry that I might give in to those temptations.”

Just then, another knock on the door got their attention. “I’ve returned with your teas and relaxation medication, sir.”

Michael got up, walked to the door, and opened it. A look of surprised shocked recognition crossed his face. “I don’t believe it. Hello again, sir.”

The older man, a coatimundi, smiled as he recognized Michael. “Well, I declare, if it isn’t the human I met two years ago. I’m happy to see you again, sir.”

“Me, also, sir. What are the odds that we’d meet again after two years?”

The coati laughed and said, “I wouldn’t say astronomical but I’m guessing pretty high, especially when there are trains making this trip from Chickcago to Mahi-Mahi every two hours.

“Anyway, here’s your tea and your relaxation medication. I hope you enjoy your trip, sir.”

“Oh, I will. This is my honeymoon.”

“Oh, well congratulations. Who’s the lucky girl?”

“I don’t know if she’s a lucky girl but it’s the lady I took the trip with two years ago.”

The coatimundi looked over Michael’s shoulder and saw Amanda frowning. He laughed quietly as he said, “I believe she believes she’s lucky. I need to make my rounds. I’ll probably see you again before we reach your destination.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Oh, you may call me, Mr. Pizote.”

“Thank you, Mr. Pizote.”

Amanda said, “Bye, Mr. Pizote.”

With his back to Amanda, Michael opened the package of relaxation medicine and poured it into one of the glasses. He took a quick sniff to verify that there was no smell and turned toward Amanda. With a glass in each hand, he returned to where Amanda was sitting and handed her one of the glasses. He sat down and took a sip from his glass. Amanda frowned

slightly because she knew that he would soon be too tired to do anything more than enjoy her ministrations. However, she took a large sip of her tea and made a frown.

“My tea isn’t very sweet, Michael. Is yours?”

Michael took another sip and also made a frown before saying, “It’s a little sweet but not as sweet as I like it.”

Amanda took another sip of her tea as Michael looked at her. Smiling, she said, “What?”

“Oh, I was just thinking how beautiful you are and how lucky I am that you decided I’m worthy of your love and affection. I’m also imagining how tonight will be after we arrive in Dogtona Beach.”

Amanda smiled and kissed him passionately. In the middle of the kiss, Amanda pulled back to yawn. At first, she didn’t think anything about the yawn. After all, she had gotten up early to start getting ready for the wedding and the excitement of the wedding had drained her strength a bit. But, her eyes started closing when they suddenly popped open and she glared at Michael.

“I can’t believe you did that, Michael.” She whined. “You said that it was for you. Why did you do it?”

“It is for me, Amanda.”

“But, you put it into my drink.”

“Yes, I did, Sweetie and by giving it to you, it helps me.”

Stifling another yawn, Amanda said, “How does it help you?”

“Because, my dear, if I’m asleep, I’ll still react to your ministrations. If you’re asleep, you can’t do anything to cause me to react.

“Here, climb into my lap and you can sleep there until we get to Dogtona Beach.”

“No. I’m going to sleep here.”

She stretched out on the seat and placed her head in Michael’s lap. Michael took down a blanket and covered her. Soon, Michael could hear regular breathing as Amanda fell asleep. As Amanda slept, he stroked her hair and scratched the top of her head the way she had said her grandmother would do. He felt a twinge of regret for pulling a fast one on her but he also felt that it was worth it. Besides, he could make it up to her at a later time.

As Amanda slept, Michael's mind wandered back to a few days earlier. He and Dr. Leo were in the Panthera home and talking.

Leo said, "Michael, do you know anything about Humanimal wedding traditions?"

"A little, Dr. Leo. Why do you ask?"

"Do you know anything about the wedding night traditions?"

"I know absolutely nothing about them. Please don't tell me I have to wait until after the wedding night to make love with Amanda." Michael was almost pleading causing Leo to laugh.

"No, Michael. In fact, it's expected that the newly married couple consummate the marriage on the wedding night; it's almost demanded that they do. The reason for that is the expectations of the wife becoming pregnant as soon as possible."

"Whew! So, what kind of traditions are we talking about?"

"When you and Amanda arrive at the place where you're going to spend your first night together as a married couple, Amanda will go straight into the bathroom. She will be preparing for your night together."

Michael laughed and said, "Dr. Leo, I'm sure human wives have been doing that since over 3,000 years before I was born."

"That isn't the tradition, Michael. After she leaves the bathroom, she's going to usher, no tell, you to go into the bathroom while telling you to not leave until she calls you no matter how long it takes."

"I can imagine that being a short amount of time considering how hard she's been trying to get me into bed with her since the day we met. However, you've piqued my curiosity. Why would she do that?"

"She's going to prepare the bedchamber to ensure that everything is in proper order to ensure a successful coupling which will include her getting pregnant."

"How will my staying in the bathroom do that?"

"It isn't your staying in the bathroom; it's what she'll be doing while you're in the bathroom. Tradition states that she has to light as many candles as years she's been alive. One of those candles has to be red and another one has to be white, the rest can be any color she chooses. The red candle and the white candle have to be as close to the bed as possible without being dangerous to the two of you. She will also place flower petals all around the room and on the bed."

“Any particular type of flower?”

“She’s a fox, Michael so I don’t know what their traditions call for but among felines it’s chrysanthemums. She’ll also have two flowers in her mouth. You’ll have to take the flowers from her while kissing her.”

Once again, Michael laughed as he said, “Well, I’ve got two hands so . . .”

“No, Michael. You can’t use your hands.”

“Well, how in the world am I supposed to take the . . .” A light suddenly turned on in Michael’s head. “Oh! That’s a very sexy kiss, Dr. Leo.”

“It is. It serves two purposes. First, you take the flowers from Amanda which ensures a long, happy, and fertile marriage and second, it makes her ready for her first time.”

“First time? Oh! Okay. Duh!” Michael laughed.

“Michael, sometimes you are as dense as basalt.” Leo laughed at his little joke, even Michael laughed.

“What do I do with the flowers after I take them from Amanda?”

“You put them into a vase that Amanda should have placed near the bed.”

“Won’t that be kind of difficult if I can’t use my hands.”

Leo laughed again and said, “You can take the flowers from your mouth with your hands and place the flowers into the vase.”

“Oh, well, that makes things a lot easier.”

Smiling, Leo said, “Ya think?”

“And after putting the flowers into the vase, Amanda and I make love?”

“Yes. And don’t be surprised if you two don’t get a lot of sleep that night. If Amanda desires you as much as you and Jacob have implied she does, she’s going to want to make love all night long. I know that Tigresa did and I’m betting Ophelia did, too.”

When Leo mentioned Ophelia, Michael’s mind wandered to the reception earlier that day. After announcing the Father-Daughter dance, Michael was standing watching Jacob and Amanda

dance and was smiling as he saw how happy Amanda was. Suddenly, he became aware of a presence at his side. He looked and saw Ophelia standing there. It was one of the very few times she had chosen to willingly stand near him so, he was certain she had a good reason.

“Mrs. Fuchs, I didn’t see you standing there. Is everything all right?”

“Yes, Michael. But, I need to tell you something.”

“What’s that?”

“You were talking about wedding traditions a couple of minutes ago. Well, the fox race has a wedding night tradition and I need to tell you about it.”

“A wedding night tradition?”

“Yes. When you and Amanda arrive at the place where you’re going to spend your first night together as a married couple, Amanda will go straight into the bathroom. She will be preparing for your night together.”

“Mrs. Fuchs, that doesn’t sound like much of a tradition. I’m sure females have been doing that since over 3,000 years before I was born.”

“That isn’t the tradition, Michael. After she leaves the bathroom, she’s going to usher you into the bathroom while telling you to not leave until she calls you no matter how long it takes.”

Even though he had had this same conversation with Leo a few days ago, Michael decided to repeat what he had said to Leo. “Okay. Now, you’ve piqued my curiosity. Why?”

“She has to prepare the bedroom for your first time together.”

“How?”

“The tradition says that there has to be as many candles in the room as years she’s lived. In her case, 20 candles. One of those candles has to be red and another one has to be white. These two candles have to be close to the bed. Amanda has to have two roses in her mouth, one red and one white. The roses must have thorns.”

“Ouch! That would be rather painful. Why do the roses have to have thorns?”

“I’ll explain that in a moment.

“Amanda has to be prepared to give her virginity to you. In other words, she has to be naked or wearing as little clothing as possible.

“When you leave the bathroom, you must go to her and take the roses from her mouth.”

Michael laughed and said, "That'll be easy. All I have to do is . . ."

"You can't use your hands."

"Oh. That will make it a little more difficult."

"Yes, I know. You must use your mouth to take the roses from Amanda."

Michael looked a little confused but said, "I guess Mr. Fuchs had to do the same with you."

"Yes, he did."

"How did he do it?"

Ophelia looked away in embarrassment as she said, "He kissed me."

Michael smiled as he asked, "How could he take the roses from you by kissing you?"

"Let's just say that Jacob kissed me more passionately than he had ever kissed me before that night."

Michael smiled as he realized what Ophelia was saying. "I see. I guess that would work. But, what is the significance of the thorns?"

"The thorns will be painful to Amanda's tender mouth."

Realization dawned in Michael's eyes. "So, by taking the roses from Amanda's mouth, I'll be sharing her pain."

"Exactly."

"But, what do I do with the roses?"

"You take them from your mouth and place them into a vase that Amanda should have placed near the bed. After you put the roses into the vase, you and Amanda consummate the marriage."

"I'm guessing there's significance to making love at that particular time."

"Yes, the thorns represent the pain that you two will experience sooner or later in your marriage. The making love represents the pleasure and happiness that you two will experience when the pain goes away."

"I see. I'm guessing that Amanda knows about this tradition."

“Yes. Jacob and I told her last night after you left to go home.”

“Does that give her enough time to prepare the wedding chamber for this tradition?”

Ophelia smiled and said, “Jacob had already gotten the bridal suite ready before we told Amanda.”

“He does think of everything. Doesn’t he?”

“He tries to anticipate anything that could happen.”

When that thought crossed his mind, Michael suddenly realized that Jacob had given him and Amanda a trip to Dogtona Beach as a wedding gift. Therefore, he had sent word to the hotel to have everything ready for Amanda to prepare the bedroom for their first night together as a married couple.

When he thought of this, Michael whispered, “Mr. Fuchs, you sly dog of a tod. I don’t think I want to play chess with you.” Then, he laughed quietly.

His thoughts then turned to a little later at the reception. It was almost time for the garter toss and the bouquet toss. He gathered his groomsmen around and said, “Listen, guys. I know catching the garter is a big thing but, I want all of you to back away from Hernando when I go to throw it. Okay?”

One of them asked, “Why? You know the traditions. I’ve got a girlfriend I intend to propose to soon.”

“There’s nothing stopping you from proposing,” Richard said. “Michael has a reason to ask us this and he’ll tell us. Right, Michael?”

“Yes, Richard. I want Hernando to catch the garter.”

“But, why?”

Michael nodded toward where Hernando and Anne were standing. Everyone could see how they were holding hands as they talked to one another. They even saw Anne giving Hernando a big hug which Hernando reciprocated.

“Oh. But, what if Anne doesn’t catch the bouquet?”

“Don’t worry, Edgar. Everything’s planned.”

Meanwhile, Amanda was talking to the bridesmaids. “All right. I know how each one of you wants to catch the bouquet but, please, when I throw it, back away from Anne.”

Juliet said, “But, Amanda, Edgar is planning on asking me to marry him and I want to catch the bouquet.”

“Juliet, if you know he’s planning on asking you, why do you need to catch the bouquet?” All the other bridesmaids laughed.

“Well, why do you want us to back away from Anne?”

Like Michael, Amanda nodded toward Anne and Hernando. “See how much they like each other. Michael and I discussed this a few days ago and we decided to help them. I’m sure they’ll be happy to know what the traditions are. After all, Anne is a little girl and Hernando is a Mexican red wolf. As you can see, he’s enjoying the attention that Anne is giving him.”

Juliet looked a bit dejected but said, “Yeah, I see it, Amanda. All right. Since Edgar is going to propose anyway, catching the bouquet won’t make it any more certain.”

Just before it was time for Michael and Amanda to leave for their honeymoon, Michael took Amanda’s hand and led her to a chair. As he led her, all the groomsmen followed and as they followed, Raul was urging Hernando to join them. Amanda placed her foot on the seat of the chair and Michael slid his hands up her calf and thigh until he touched the garter she was wearing. He slowly slid it down her leg and around her foot. He looked at it with a surprised look on his face. It was a brilliant red, significantly redder than her fur. He turned toward the groomsmen and nodded. All of the groomsmen backed away from Hernando and Michael threw the garter in an arc that allowed the garter to fly straight to Hernando. Hernando ducked and didn’t catch it.

The garter landed on the floor a few feet away from Hernando who stood there looking at it until Raul said, “Pick it up, Hernando.”

Hernando said, “But daddy, I didn’t drop it. Mah-cah threw it at me.”

“It’s kind of a game of catch, Hernando. But, because Michael threw it to you, it belongs to you. You don’t have to give it back to him.”

“Oh. Okay, daddy.”

Hernando walked over and picked up the garter. When he did, everyone cheered causing him to look around like he’s done something wrong. After this, Raul led Hernando away from the crowd toward the photographer.

After Hernando was led away, Amanda walked to the front of the crowd and said, “It’s time for the bouquet toss.” She took a couple of warm-up swings and all the bridesmaids snuck

away from Anne. Anne, for her part, was so engrossed in what was happening that she didn't notice she was all alone on the dance floor. Amanda made a soft toss right at Anne who backed away from the bouquet.

Tigresa said, "Anne, pick it up."

With tears forming in her eyes, Anne said, "But, Mama, I dint drop it. Amana frowed it at me."

"I know, Honey. She did that because she wanted you to have the bouquet. So, go pick it up."

With uncertainty in her voice, Anne said, "Okay, Mama." Then, she walked over to the bouquet and picked it up. When she did, once again, everyone cheered. Unlike Hernando, Anne smiled because she thought she had done something good.

After Anne picked up the bouquet, Tigresa said, "Come on, Anne. Let's go show Hernando what you did."

Beaming, Anne said, "Okay, Mama!"

Tigresa took Anne's hand and led her to Hernando. Anne said, "Hernano, look what I gots."

Hernando said, "Wow!" He showed her the garter and said, "Look what I gots."

The photographer, who had been informed what was going to happen, said, "Look over here you two." When they did, he took three photos in quick succession of them holding hands and their prizes.

After Anne and Hernando left the dance floor, Michael turned to everyone and said, "Now, for the real garter and bouquet toss."

After running these situations through his mind, Michael smiled. He looked over at Amanda who was sleeping so innocently with her head in his lap. He continued lightly scratching the top of her head. Every now and then, a small whine would escape her mouth but she never got upset. In fact, she only snuggled against him more tightly each time she whined. Michael imagined she was dreaming that, for some strange reason, he had decided to leave her. He knew of her insecurities and him leaving her was her biggest insecurity and fear.

The rumbling of the railcar along the rails and the steady clicking of the wheels had a hypnotic effect on Michael and he found himself fighting sleep. As he fought the sleep that was

slowly, gently overwhelming him, he looked toward Amanda and noticed that After this, the gentle swaying of the rail car and the regular click-clack of the wheels on the rails started to take their toll. As he fought the sleep that was slowly, gently overwhelming him, he noticed that the blanket covering her had started to slip off, sh he reached over and tugged it back into place over her. When he did this, Amanda grabbed his hand, held it tightly between her breasts, gave it a caress and a kiss as she murred happily as she whispered, "I love you, Michael."

Even though he knew she was asleep, Michael responded, "I love you, too, Princess."

Soon, Michael closed his eyes and fell asleep as he continued to lightly scratch the top of Amanda's head.

Some time later, Michael opened his eyes as he heard the conductor singing out, "Next stop, St. Alsatian. Next stop, St. Alsatian. Five minute stop as passengers board and disembark. Five minute stop as passengers board and disembark."

Michael stretched and looked at Amanda who was just stirring herself. She sat up, scooted close to Michael, looked lovingly into his eyes, and then punched him in his side. "That's for making me sleep on the trip down here." She punched him again and said, "That's for fooling me into thinking you were going to sleep instead of me."

Neither punch was even remotely painful so Michael laughed at her. "I'm sorry, Sweetie, but I told you why I did it."

Amanda snuggled into his lap and said, "I know. But, that doesn't make it any better. Where are we?"

"St. Alsatian. We'll be leaving in about 5 minutes. Do you want something to drink?"

"Yes. I'd like a soft drink." Amanda said as she moved out of his lap.

Michael stood as he said, "All right. Dr. Panther, Pupsi, or and Oka-Cola?"

"I'll take a Pupsi."

"I'll be back before you know I'm gone."

"I doubt that." She smiled mischievously.

Michael made it to the club car, got two Pupsis in bottles, and returned just as the conductor was singing, "All aboard. 30 minutes to Dogtona Beach. 30 minutes to Dogtona Beach."

Michael and Amanda drank their soft drinks as they rode along and talked. Amanda was still a little irked about the trick Michael pulled on her but she also understood his reasoning

About 25 minutes later, the conductor sang out, "Next stop, Dogtona Beach. Next stop, Dogtona Beach. Five minute stop as passengers board and disembark. Five minute stop as passengers board and disembark."

Michael and Amanda stood and retrieved their carry on luggage and waited for the all clear to disembark. Three minutes later, the train started to noticeably slow and two minutes after that, the train came to a complete stop. They could hear the conductor singing, "Dogtona Beach. All passengers for Dogtona Beach disembark. All passengers for Dogtona Beach disembark."

Michael and Amanda left their compartment and headed to the closest exit. Soon, they were standing on the train platform at Dogtona Beach and watching the train slowly pull away from the station. They headed to a nearby auto rental kiosk where they found out that a car had been reserved for them along with directions to their hotel.

Michael said, "Your mom was right."

Amanda replied, "What do you mean?"

"She told me that he tries to plan for every contingency and he seemed to know which auto rental kiosk we'd walk up to."

Laughing, Amanda said, "That's my dad."