

## A Thirst for More

### Chapter Ten - May 2021

Damn, it's good to be back.

Oh, not because of the snow and the raging, icy cold. Not because of the crazy-short days and the nights that seem to begin at 4 in the afternoon. Not even because of the quaint, historic houses, which to my eye just looks like a bunch of drafty, rickety old heaps that need to be bulldozed and replaced with something efficient and modern.

No, it's good to be back here in snowy New England because it's so unlike where I've come from.

I guess the Christmas break was all right, as Christmases go. Got to spend time with Dad before he headed out on another long-haul run across the country. Wandered around the old place. Checked out my old tree fort, and the pond where I grew up swimming. Saw, and then turned away from, my creepy-ass old high school with its horde of ugly memories. And you know, after two weeks in that strangely quiet and laid-back place, I found myself more ready than ever to leave once more.

Though my luggage seemed emptier on the way back. I know why, too. You see, two weeks away gave me more than enough time to go through that entire pack. You know, the pack of diapers I brought along out...

I stare up at the ceiling now, wondering how on earth to even go about telling the ever-obliging Mrs. Fenoli of the pickle I'm in. With my foot healed at last, there's no logical reason why I should even dream of wearing such things. I can get around just fine, after all. I can chug my water every night and wake in the dark and find my way – carefully, this time – down the creaking stairs to the toilet same as always. I shouldn't even think twice about it. And yet... I am.

At any other time I'd be plagued with guilt, ordering myself internally to quite being weird and try to be normal for once. And yeah, that voice is still somewhere inside me. But after this past holiday? Well, something feels different. I'm sick of being afraid, and trying to be normal, and worried to death about what others will say. I'm done with it. And if I still want to wear skirts or diapers or even freaking heels, well, what of it? I'm still the same Adrian I've always been, right?

Well, not quite the same. Adrian, but less afraid.

Anyway, I muse now, turning with a forceful grunt into my pillow, it's late. Thanks to the jet lag I

don't feel tired, but I'm sure Mrs. Fenoli's probably already asleep. I just need to wait and find the right time to mention it to her... to ask if she can tell me where she found those things...

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Turns out my body decided to take matters into its own metaphorical hands.

I can feel my face growing hot as I survey the damage in the bleak morning light. A massive damp patch, more than half the width of the entire bed, makes it unavoidably plain that its occupant wasn't able to stay dry during the night. *I actually peed the bed- I mean, I guess I did wake up a few times before with a wet diaper- Dang it, whatever will Mrs. Fenoli say?*

Fortunately, she's actually not nearly as flustered as I might have feared.

"Oh, really?" She seems hardly more flustered by my stammering admission than if I had told her that another six inches of snow were expected by nightfall. "Well, then, I guess we'd better jus' pick ya up a bit more protection, hmm?" "Um, yeah?" I'm blushing, but I need to press on. "I'm- I'm really sorry. And I want to pay for them too, you know- If you can tell me where, you know, to buy-"

"Shuah, shuah, I get it!" She's beaming at me affectionately over the breakfast table. "I know you're a responsible young individ-yew-al, Adrian. Now, I gotta tell yah, if yah gonna pick 'em up yah-self, yah gonna need to head over to that medical place up on Benedict Street, way out towahd Fremont. An' I'm happy to go theah normally, but with the snow an' all..." She purses her lips meditatively, before brightening a moment later.

"Now, I've got it! Why don' yah just take a look online and see what yah can find? Those delivery folks get around in this weather better'n I ever can. And plus, then you wouldn't hafta buy 'em in person-" and here her voice drops into a conspirational whisper, "'cause I know yah might feel a bit embarrassed..."

Online. Duh, of course! And so it is that shortly after breakfast, I find myself perched on the edge of my newly-stripped bed, opening up my browser's incognito mode and typing in a search for something that I would never have imagined only a few months before: adult diapers.

And let me tell you: the results that come up are my first unforgettable entry into a world the existence of which I had never even suspected.

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Oh, it's not particularly worth describing those first few months of my year. I began my second semester, of course. I met new classmates, some nicer than others. I found myself becoming more comfortable with Mrs. Fenoli, and with myself. And yes, I became at first grudgingly, then more willingly, accepting of the two aspects of myself that were now becoming undeniably plain...

I was, and am, a gender nonconformist. I couldn't deny any longer, with the old blushing cheeks and waves of guilt, that I sincerely loved and craved the feminine things of life. I found myself asking more and more people to use my correct, nonbinary pronouns. I spotted a beautiful kilt online – bought it on impulse – and one brave, unseasonably warm day in February, decided to wear it to class. And the compliments and thumbs-ups I got were incredible: like the benevolent, warm sun coaxing new greenery out of the cold ground.

But yes, I was also something else. I was now a bedwetter. What's more – and odd as it might sound – I was a bedwetter who, deep down, didn't actually didn't want to stop being one. Oh, sure it was kind of embarrassing those few times I leaked. And decent diapers, I'd soon discovered, weren't exactly cheap. But by now they were comforting, and secure, and I found – odd as it might seem – secret delight in how their forgiving bulk effortlessly concealed the protrusion of my male anatomy. Even better, Mrs. Fenoli – bless her heart – never gave me a moment's hardship about them, asking only if I had everything I needed and if there was anything she could do to help.

"Yah, no worries," she tells me this warm afternoon in April, as I'm apologizing for carrying out my heavily-laden trash bag before it can start smelling. "I know yah got it all handled. And yah know," she smiles, glancing up from the mass of pie dough she's working on the counter. "Theah's a whole lot o' things worse than wettin' yah bed, hon."

I guess there are, I reflect now as I step out into the spring sunlight and make my way to the garbage bin. Like being afraid of your own self. Like not daring to be and do and become what you really want.

I don't have time for that stuff anymore. I want more. I want- I want-

I want to be me. And hell – if a few pronouns and skirts and diapers at night are part of who I am right now... well, then that's who I'll be.