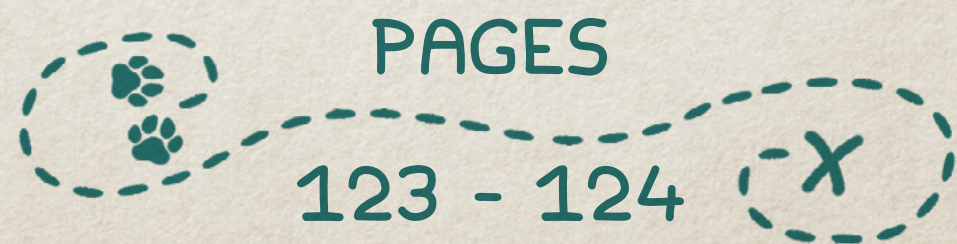


WITH LITTLE PAWS WE TODDLE AFAR

A Babyfur Regression Adventure

CHAPTER 6 *The Babysitters*

PAGES
123 - 124



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For the next two hours, I happily play in my playpen and watch cartoons. I never would have imagined how much fun I could have crawling around the pen while playing with my babyish toys. I build a little city with my blocks and then push my little train around through the city. I announce from behind the shield of my pacifier, "Whoo Whoo! Choo Choo! All aboard the Lion Express! Can you please collect everyone's ticket, Mr. Raz?" My plastic diaper crinkles loudly as I crawl around pushing the train. After a bit, I turn my attention back to watching Dipsey on the TV. As I sing along to her songs, I decide that I want to be a part of the band. I grab my little toy xylophone and begin hitting the colorful metal bars with the little wooden mallets. For some reason I don't even try to keep a beat, I just randomly bang on it and amuse myself with the fact that I am making noise. After growing tired of the xylophone, I grab the rings from my stacking toy and begin to noisily clack them together as though they are cymbals. Drool runs down my face and onto my shirt as I giggle babyishly. Before long, my shirt isn't the only thing that is wet. Now bloated from its wetness, my diaper squishes beneath me as I rock back and forth while continuing to noisily clack the rings together. I feel so very small and infantile at this moment. As I sit here in my playpen sucking my pacifier while wearing just my Choo Choo shirt and diaper, I feel less like a big cub, and more like a happy little three-year-old. Far from the now regressed eight-year-old that I actually am. I don't have a care in the world and feel so secure within the pen knowing that my friends-turned-babysitters are taking care of me. To me, it's as though I am in paradise, and I have no desire to leave it.

As continue to play in my playpen like a happy little toddler, my three friends hang out on the couch. For the most part, they chat amongst themselves. The only time I'm part of the conversation is when one of them comes over to check my diaper or asks me "How's the little baby doing?" Not being part of the conversation amplifies my desire to act little, and being treated as just the baby in the background makes me feel even more infantile. After a bit of soggy playtime, I hear a car door slam from outside. The front door's knob turns and Mom enters the house. Her arms are loaded down with shopping bags. After setting them down by the door she turns her attention to my friends and me sitting in the living room. She smiles happily, chuckles, and says, "I see you needed to bring out the playpen for Asher. I hope he wasn't too much trouble for you guys." My three friends look at each other uncomfortably. Before any of them can reply, I throw my paws into the air, begin to make grabby paws, and happily shout out to Mom. "Mommy! Mommy! You're home Mommy! Uppies Mommy! Uppies!" Mom walks over, lifts me up out of the playpen, and gives me a huge hug followed by a kiss on the forehead. She smiles at me and coos, "So, Did Mommy's little boy have fun with his babysitters today?" I nod my head and excitedly squeal from behind my pacifier as I begin to ramble, "Uh huh! I had lots of fun Mommy! I got to play on my slide... and Zach sent me to space... and I got to use my imagination... and I saw cool things in the clouds... and... and..." Mom laughs as I gleefully tell her about my day. When I finally stop to catch my breath she interrupts me, "So, were you a good little boy for Jess, Jenn, and Zach?" Knowing the truth, I look down at the floor as I feel a bit ashamed. Not wanting to answer, I just begin to silently suck my pacifier. Jenn pipes up and saves the day though. "He was a perfect little angel Mrs. Nicole. There was a little mishap in the kitchen, but it wasn't anything we couldn't handle." Mom smiles at my friends. "Well, that is good to hear. I know my little cub can sometimes be a handful. Speaking of handfuls would you three mind helping Arthur and I unload everything from our cars? I have a ton of bags in my car and he should be here anytime now. Arthur could probably use a helping paw again, Zach. He has a very large box to carry upstairs. I am sure it's a heavy one." My three friends agree to help. Mom sets me back down into my playpen. She kneels down and ruffles my mane with her paw, "Now you just stay here and be a good boy Asher. After we get everything unloaded, Mommy will be back to change your diaper and make us some dinner." I happily nod and reply, "Okay Mommy! I'll be a good boy!" Mom smiles, gives me one last pat on the head, and then the four of them head outside.

Just as the door closes, I hear my snarky little plush friend from behind me. "Pfff... Chocolate Gnomes? Come on Kid, you can do better than Chocolate Gnomes! An actual toddler could come up with a better excuse than that!" Angry, I quip back at Raz, "Shut up Raz! I didn't see you coming up with any brilliant excuses! You just went silent and limp like you always do. What's wrong Little

Buddy? Are you scared of the big bad adults?" Raz is obviously thrown off guard by the fact that I actually insulted him back for once. He pouts, "No, I'm not scared! I... I'm just a little worried. What would happen if they found out Asher? Would they dissect me? Would I ever see you again?" I let out a sigh, "Okay, I get why you'd be worried, but one of these days you will need to learn to trust my friends and parents Raz. You should put a little faith in them. At some point, I am sure you end up at the lab alongside me. I know my father too well. He is going to want to examine us both at some point." Raz lets out a sigh, "Yeah, I guess you're right Asher. There will come a time, but for now, it's best if I stay silent. I don't think you realize just how odd this whole situation is for me as well. You aren't the only one adapting to a new way of life. Heck, I'm still trying to wrap my head around how I could tap in and visualize your imaginary thoughts during our Great Chocolate Caper. I can't remember much from my past life, but I do know for certain that our exposure to the contents of that vial should not have caused that side effect. Maybe I can work on some theories of my own." Just as the last word leaves Raz's mouth, he drops to the floor as a lifeless plush once more. The front door swings open. I turn to the doorway to see Dad and Zach carrying a very large rectangular box. The two are squabbling as usual as they make their way through the living room. *What could they possibly have bought that's that large?* Mom, Jess, and Jenn follow close behind as they carry armfuls of shopping bags. I stand up at the edge of my playpen and yell to Mom from behind my pacifier. "What is all of that stuff Mommy? What did you and Daddy buy while shopping?" Mom smiles wide and simply replies, "They're surprises for my little boy!"

