

Twelve Months to a Better Life

March 2024 – Chapter Five

"It's the big day, Jayden. Who's ready to get this thing over with?"

Erica's voice was bright and enthusiastic: or at least, as enthusiastic as it could be so early on a Tuesday. She gulped the last of her coffee and glanced over at Jayden, who was pulling dutifully at his large new "smart" water bottle. "There'll be morning traffic, remember?" she reminded. "We'd best be on our way any time now!"

He nodded behind the bottle, then slipped down off the bar stool and padded in the direction of the hall and his waiting shoes. "Thanks again for taking off work," he commented, slipping awkwardly to the floor with a soft thump and barely audible crinkle. Erica's eyes rested momentarily on the visible bulge in his jeans that testified to the disposable diaper beneath. But then, she shrugged and smiled as she reached for her purse.

"Hey, it's what being married's all about, right?", she smiled, watching her husband slipping his second foot into those new shoes they'd gotten him at the doctor's request. No laces, no bothersome knots to tie. Just that nice, wide Velcro – exactly like the shoes a grandpa might wear. Or a toddler...

"In sickness and in health," she reminded him, and now they were stepping out into the garage. "And that includes root canals!" "I guess," he shrugged, dropping into his seat and reaching for the seat belt. "At least I don't have to worry about dragging myself to the office tomorrow. You know, if I'm still feeling icky."

"Yeah, you got that right." Erica was craning around now, backing the car smoothly out of the garage. "Sure was nice of your work to switch you over to all remote, huh?"

"Yeah." His eyes grew thoughtful and a trifle embarrassed at the memory. "Though I guess it would be hard for anyone to ignore a memo from Doctor Natalia, huh?" "Exactly," Erica assured with a smile. "And like I said: even if you don't get in as many hours some weeks, it's okay. I make plenty to keep us going, honey. All you need to do right now is let Shannon and Doctor Natalia tell us what's best..."

The conversation paused. The road whirred past beneath them, the dingy winter trees flashing by in a blur of brown and grey. Then, with a soft biting of his lips, Jayden spoke up again.

"And, uh... Thanks for letting me go with something, you know... thinner. I know I wasn't supposed to get a change. But I don't think I could have handled going out in... you know..."

"What? In your nice new cloth diapers, honey?" Erica wasn't trying to be a jerk, but the sweetly joking tone brought a flush of embarrassment to her husband's cheeks. "I dunno – I think they're pretty cute! Hey, I bet the dentist might even have complimented you on being prepared. I bet they've made more than their fair share of folks needing the bathroom halfway through a procedure..."

"Oh!" She interrupted her own laugh with a sudden recollection. "Speaking of which, you brought your water bottle, right?"

"Uh-huh," Jayden assented, lofting the vessel in question into view. The translucent plastic gleamed in the light, and he pointed at the level of the water sloshing gently inside. "Nearly sixteen ounces this morning! Though... I guess you don't need to know that..."

"Well, not as soon as I check my phone. I'll double-check when we're there." Erica glanced down at her phone resting in the ashtray. "It's amazing what they have these days, isn't it? Who'd have ever thought they have Bluetooth-enabled water bottles, huh? But hey – if Natalie says it's worth trying, I'll definitely give it a go." She smiled once more in wry encouragement. "After all... we have to make sure our dear little Jayden stays hydrated, don't we? A gallon a day keeps the doctor away!"

Well... to those teasing remarks, her diapered husband could only respond with a wordless blush.

Ironically, it was a few hours later that he probably *should* have been blushing – and wasn't.

"IV sedation can make folks sound a bit weird sometimes," the dental hygienist had told Erica when she'd guided the groggy Jayden out to the waiting room. "Now, it's nothing to really worry about. Just make sure he gets home and has a good nap, okay? And call us if anything really unusual happens, or if you see blood..."

No blood, she mused now, glancing over at the bleary-eyed fellow beside her. But damn, was he loopy! So loopy that... well, heck, it was just her and him in here, she admitted mentally. Why not ask him a few fun questions – just to see what he'd say?

"Hey, Jayden?" She smiled, interrupting his distorted, slurring rendition of "Take On Me." "How you doing, hmm? You need to go home and get a change?" She glanced briefly down at his jeans, wondering internally if he had consciously peed himself while in the chair, or if it might have actually escaped without his control. Not that it really mattered for her, of course. But it was still interesting to consider. Would her husband ever actually lose his conscious control?

"Shange?" Jayden blinked over at her, and then a wry smirk blossomed on his face. "Oh, yeah! I'm... *all* wet. Shee? Look!" He waved erratically down at his crotch. "I'm peeing my pants. Again. But... but thad's okay."

"Um-hmm? Yeah, I guess you're right!" Erica tried not to sound too much like an excited kindergarten teacher, but it was genuinely hard. "It's totally okay to pee in your diaper, honey..."

"Yeah! 'Cause my Mommy... she's gonna shange me." He blinked out the window, then let out a most unnatural giggle. "She makes me wear my diaper to bed, did you know? Every night! An', an' an' I- I..."

"Really?" Erica was smiling tolerantly, shaking her head at how the sedative had clearly loosened up his inhibitions. "Every night, hmm? Goodness, you must really need them, huh? Is it because you wet the bed?"

"Oh, yeah." He was nodding now with all the sage frankness of a four-year-old. "I'm a- a- good little bedwedder! Uh-huh. An' good bedwedders go pee-pee every night. Every night. They can't help it. An' then Mommy changes me... and I have my bottle... an'..."

He trailed off into an incoherent mumble, and Erica bit back a rueful smile. Oh, my. *Good little bedwetter*, hmm? Those audio files Natalia had prescribed had indeed said something about encouraging bedwetting. She'd shrugged them off as mere quackery, of course. After all, who could possibly listen to a single little MP3 and end up losing such a basic degree of self-control? But now that he was so frankly repeating what he must have heard for the past months... hmm...

Well, she'd just have to watch and see. In the meantime, she needed to get this dude home and resting up. As for his meals, hmm. The doctor had said just liquids and soft things. So maybe a supper of soup, or maybe mashed potatoes? And then of course she'd get him off to an early bedtime: well-hydrated of course...

Later on, Jayden would protest that he'd definitely done it consciously. Or if not, it had all been the fault of the medication. But Erica knew better.

Because there was no denying what he'd told her, let alone the proof that next morning. Jayden was lying there, flopped unconscious beside her. His pajama shorts were slipped down to reveal the bulging plastic pants and cotton padding beneath. Then, as she leaned close, her ears caught the unmistakable, whizzing gurgle of a night-swollen bladder, streaming long and full into the waiting padding.

All while the thickly diapered fellow slumbered on, blissfully unconscious of just what a good little bedwetter he was in fact becoming.

(To be continued!)