

It's the Little Choices

Part Fifteen

Commission – April 2021

What a difference a month can make. It seems like only yesterday I was stepping through the door to find my dear Fiona crouching submissively on the carpet before me, clad in nothing but one of her gorgeous Carousel diapers. Oh, how she'd gazed up at me with that blushing, pleading expression! And how I'd melted in an instant: rocketing up into Mommy space, pulling her close, needing nothing more than to feel her within my arms, to shiver with pleasure at the sensation of her suckling at my breast like the sweetest and most beautiful and most adorable baby girl ever...

But today?

Today I'm stepping through the door once more – into the troubling stillness of an empty apartment. At 1pm on a weekday. This is a time when ordinarily I'd be meeting with one of my numerous clients: drawing up concept boards and marketing budgets and cash flow projections and who knows what else. But now, it all feels like it's starting to spin out of control...

See, there's this freaky new virus thing in the news. And from the sound of it, it's nothing good: no known cure, no reliable info on how it spreads and how quickly, no clear data on how many people it kills. Businesses are urging folks to stay home, and meetings are being rescheduled, and flights to and from Asia are starting to be cancelled. I don't know what the hell is going to happen, but for right now at least, it sounds like I'm going to be doing my marketing consulting from home.

As for Liz? Well, that's part of why I'm back. For it wasn't more than an hour ago that I got her text: "Gonna be home early! Guess this is my last day here at work for a bit! Bank's closing for two weeks until the virus is under control. Love you!" Of course she didn't quite say when "early" was. But I know she's gotta be scared and upset by all of this nonsense. I want to be here for her when she gets back... even if all I can give is a hug and a few reassuring words that it will all be okay.

That's how it began on that Tuesday back in March: our first-ever pandemic lockdown. For here we still are, though another entire month has elapsed. Still stuck inside. Still figuring out how to do our work remotely. And yes... still together.

Which is such a comfort in a world that is completely out of control.

I glance over at Fiona now, seated cross-legged on the sofa where before she was always playing her video games. Now she's working – or at least, trying to work. Entering data. Processing reports. Doing whatever the bank tells her she can do from home. And all while sitting there in nothing but a My Little Pony T-shirt and a cute little lavender skirt... a skirt that does almost nothing to hide the prominent bulge and the white plastic peek of the diaper around her booty. In her mouth is that beloved "nail-biting device" that we both now openly call by its real name: her paci. Beside her is her ever-present friend Stumpy the elephant. And in the cupholder is her sippy-cup of juice.

How freaking adorable my little partner is!

I suppose that's the silver lining to the dark storm-cloud of the pandemic, isn't it? There are probably damned good psychological reasons for what she's doing, of course. In a scary world of unprecedented fear and uncertainty, of course it's only natural for us all to find comfort in the simple, secure things that help us feel safe. But I'm pretty sure it's more than uncertainty that has led my Fiona to be so open with her Little side now.

There's the isolation, for one thing. After all – as she giggled last night when I was teasing her about her diaper being on display – who the heck was going to see her, besides me? It's just the two of us in here: bored out of our skulls for much of the time, and free to do whatever we want as long as we remain isolated. To that we add the fact that I love seeing her in her childish clothes, and that she is clearly starting to love wearing them more and more.

So between my gentle encouragement, her own shy longing for them, the insecurity of a world on fire, the boredom, and the months of accumulated and ongoing hypnosis... well, it was practically a given that she would go all-out into her Little side, wasn't it?

I've certainly been doing my part, of course. We're working together in the same house every day, and so I'm doing everything I can to help. For one thing, I've found a few of the less-obvious hypnosis tracks and have put them into a "Zen the Duck Out" playlist for her to listen to while she works. I come by her work area now and then, and I pat her head and ask how my baby is doing and sometimes tuck the paci back into her mouth if it has slipped out. On impulse I've ordered a few more babyish clothes and items for her – onesies and socks and bibs – so now her dresser and closet are looking more juvenile than ever.

Though perhaps best of all is her new sleeping arrangement.

Just last week, I sat down and explained to her how this latest project I'm working on is now demanding meetings at ungodly hours, thanks largely to my client having returned to a time zone fourteen hours different from ours. I now need to be at work at my desk from 9 until almost midnight four nights out of five. And since that desk of mine is in a corner of our bedroom... well, it only made sense for us to find Fiona some other place where she could nestle down and sleep, uninterrupted by the blue glow and murmuring voices of my Zoom calls.

Yeah. I don't suppose anyone ever expected our walk-in closet to be transformed into a miniature nursery, did they? Much less a nursery for a full-grown young woman: complete with a single mattress surrounded by improvised railings to make a quasi-crib? And done up in a waterproof mattress protector and pink sheets covered with princesses and unicorns? And a little mobile hanging from the clothes rack above?

Never mind expectations. Of course my dear Fiona still blushes a bit every time I teasingly herd her, with bottom crinkling softly beneath her pajamas, into her "crib" to go "nighty-night" while her Mommy works. But I see the shy grin, the love in her eyes, and the contented little wriggle of her booty as I tuck her and Stumpy down into those adorable sheets. I know she's coming to love her new bedroom and the sweet little routine we've developed. And somehow, I'm guessing that she's not going to give it up anytime soon. Even if and when the need for it is eventually past.

But tonight, I think it's time to have even more fun with her.

"Another meeting? Aww, but I wanted us to watch a movie!" Fiona's only half-teasing as I rise from the table and clear away our dirty plates. "Sorry, baby – I don't have a choice," I sigh, returning with warm washcloth in hand and reaching down to firmly wipe her face. It's another little gesture between us – usually wholly unnecessary unless she's been particularly messy, but full of all the happiest connotations of a Mommy cleaning up her sticky little girl. "I'm afraid it can't be helped. But tomorrow night I promise we can watch something, okay?"

"Okaaay," she concedes, peering up at me with grudging assent. "Does that mean I hafta go to bed early again?" "Yep!" I tell her cheerfully, noting with quiet satisfaction that she's completely drained the entire glass of juice I gave her. "Now, no whining, okay? We'll get you washed and bathed and tucked into bed soon – and if you're very good and don't complain, I'll give you a special treat!"

Oh, we're both playing along here. She's not mentally a three-year-old, despite my bright words and

her own plaintive voice. But that doesn't really matter. It's the sort of game we love to play now – the way we show our love to one another.

"But- but I'm a big girl," she whines softly as I help her out of the bath and she catches sight of the open, night-weight diaper I've prepared for her. "I don't- I don' wanna wear a *baby* diaper to bed!" *Of course you don't, you silly thing*, I muse, smiling brightly at her protests with all the motherly innocence I can muster. *Never mind that you and I both know you've been wearing either a diaper or a pull-up to bed for months now...* "Oh, sweetie, don't worry!" I console, giving her a condescending pat and pushing my reluctant partner down to the towel beneath her. "Even big girls have accidents sometimes, you know. And I know you've been doing *super* good at staying dry! But you don't want to risk having an accident and making your pretty sheets all wet, do you?"

"*No-ooo*," she again concedes, and I'm melting a bit as the scent of the powder and the crinkle of the diaper beneath my fingers reminds me of just what a baby I'm helping her become. "Now, remember: if you wake up and you need to go potty, baby, don't be afraid to come ask Mommy to help, okay?"

Of course she agrees, blushing self-consciously beneath her frizzy auburn pigtails. And of course I'm grinning, thinking of her special treat: the full bottle of milk I've already prepared just for her...

You see, I love giving my Fiona choices: little choices that give her an easy out should she so want it. Choices that have shown me, time and again, just how much she genuinely wants to immerse herself in the regressed world of an adult baby girl.

This choice is obvious, I'm thinking as I hand her the liquid treat and plant a kiss full on her lips and murmur what a good girl she's been. She literally has her choice within her hands tonight: either drink that bottle full of warm, honeyed milk that she loves so much... or not. She's an adult. She knows damn well the limits of her own bladder, and just what effect another entire twelve ounces of liquid will do to her already well-hydrated system. And most importantly, she also knows precisely how well our closet is positioned before my webcam... and thus how impossible it will be for her to escape her little nursery to use the bathroom as long as I'm on my Zoom call.

This call is long. Even longer than I expected. And it feels longer still, thanks in part to my own inner ruminations and uncertainty over what Fiona will have decided. Maybe she took the mature route. Maybe she's sitting there, bored and staring over at her untouched bottle, sucking on her paci and wishing her Mommy would have given her a treat she could conscientiously have. Or maybe she's given in the tiniest bit... gulping now and then at the bottle... reasoning that a little sip

can't be too bad...

When at last the call is done, and I lean back in my softly creaking chair to let the accumulated tension ease out of my shoulders, I'm listening: listening for the thump and pad of her feet. Listening for the voice of my dear partner, complaining about how long the call was – or more likely, begging in urgent tones for me to come help her take off her diaper and use the potty...

But I hear nothing.

I rise from my chair, stepping softly to the closet, turning down the light before easing open the door and allowing a warm glow of light to filter into my darling's little nursery. There she lies: fast asleep, mouth half-open, her paci beside her drooling lips. Under one arm is Stumpy the elephant, grey and soft and cheerful as ever. And in the other hand...

In the other hand is the bottle. Completely empty.

I lean down, breath catching at the sight before me and the lovely situation it implies. My dear Fiona: so full of milk, so well-hydrated, so helpless to make her way to the bathroom for all these hours... Is she-? Did she-? Might she-?

The pink cotton sheets are warm and soft as my fingers slip underneath, and I feel my heart pounding as I feel my way toward her padded crotch. I just- I need to feel- Just a good mother, checking up on her little girl to see if she needs-

A change.

Because there it is: the lukewarm, clearly soggy bulge of the diaper between her bare legs. Obviously and undeniably and unmistakably wet. And not just a little bit, either.

My darling partner has made her little choice. And judging by how fast asleep she is, she doesn't exactly seem to be minding the consequences.

I'm smiling, trembling with pleasure and joy as I withdraw. *Where's the stereo again?* It's definitely time for that final track: the one I've been saving until I know for sure she's ready for it. *Ah, here it is! Down to the final track... Volume down... And click Play...*

As the first strains of the "Wet and Messy Night and Day" hypnotic file waft through her little

nursery, a shaky sigh escapes me and I withdraw from my sweetheart's nursery. Fiona's something else. She's my baby now, of that there's no doubt. And most importantly, choice by little choice, she's shown me that she is embracing it more wholeheartedly than I ever imagined.