

AUTUMN'S DOCTOR



Autumn sat at the kitchen table with tears running down her cheeks, the sadness eating deep into her heart. She looked around the table at Jarod's favorite meal of pot roast, mashed potatoes, gravy, his favorite baked beans. In the center, one lovely red candle sputtered as it went out. She rose and walked to the counter, where a small cake with 'Happy Anniversary' written across the top remained, uncut. It was their first anniversary, and she had wanted it to be special. She had told Jarod that she planned on something special and romantic for just the two of them. How had they come to this after just one year? She sighed a bone deep sigh before turning to go to their room. A sob broke through before she could stop it. She sat on the edge of the bed and thought back to six months ago—to the meeting she, Jarod and his parents had.

Jarod had explained how he wanted to become a surgeon just like his papa. His father, Doctor Steven Foster, was a famous surgeon from Boston and his wife, Jessica, had moved to Buffalo to be near their son. Jarod's older sister was married and stayed in Boston. Jarod's father helped in Jarod's clinic and taught medicine at the little college two hours ride outside of Buffalo. Steven had

misgivings about whether his son would have the time. He was married and he and his lovely wife ran the clinic.

Autumn had graduated last year with a nursing degree, and she spent many hours, along with Jarod, at the clinic.

Jarod had promised Autumn that his extra schooling would not interfere with their lives overly much. He promised he would still make time for her and the clinic. He studied twice as hard, so he could take the test and graduate in two years, instead of four.

Autumn let the tears fall. She had tried to be strong for so long, but it was getting harder. She put on her flannel, warm nightgown and pulled back the covers. They were due at the clinic in the morning, and it was getting late. She tried to make excuses for her new husband. Maybe someone had a baby, or he was called on an emergency. She rolled over and cried herself to sleep. Tomorrow, she would be strong again. Tonight, she just needed to feel sorry for herself.



JAROD WALKED into his home bone tired. He had studied for the test he had coming tomorrow. One in the hundreds it would take to become a surgeon, so Autumn could be proud of him. He dragged himself to the table and noticed the burnt candle and dinner still sitting on the table, now cold. His favorite meal. Autumn had made him a nice meal and he had not been home. Did he promise her he would come right home? He couldn't remember anymore. He turned to wash up before bed when he saw the damning evidence. The anniversary cake sitting untouched on the counter. Damn, he had forgotten their anniversary. How could he have forgotten? He now remembered Autumn reminding him. He felt like such a heel. How could he have let her down like this? He shook his head; he would make it up to her, but right now, he needed sleep. He quietly undressed so not to wake his wife. He didn't have it in him to see the disappointment in her beautiful eyes tonight. He would deal

with it in the morning. He pulled the blanket back and crawled in, pulling Autumn to him, just like he did every night. She sighed contently and snuggled into his arms as he fell asleep.

The next morning, he could smell bacon and eggs. Was it time to get up already? He was still so tired. He could hear his Autumn humming in the kitchen as she made their breakfast.

"Jarod, it is time to get up. We are due at the clinic. I have much to do before our first patient."

"What time is our first patient in, Autumn? I am still tired."

Autumn stuck her head in the door. "Did someone have an emergency last night, Jarod?"

Jarod knew this was coming. He knew he would have to admit he was studying for an important test.

"I was studying for a test today. I must be fresh and awake. I need to have more sleep. Please, Autumn, unless it is something you need my help with right away, I would like to sleep a couple more hours."

Autumn slowly turned off the stove, leaving the food in the pans not quite finished. She walked into the bedroom angrily, retrieved her nursing bag and walked out of the house. Slamming the door behind her, she walked to the clinic and began her day. Her first patient was little Johnny, who had a stomachache. She gave his mom some peppermint and advised, "Put two drops in his milk, morning and night."

Her next patient was an older man who had a boil on the side of his arm. She quickly and efficiently lanced it, disinfected it and wrapped it, sending him on his way. Her next patient needed a couple of stitches. So went her day as her husband slept until nine o'clock. By ten, he had put his head in the door and asked sheepishly if she needed any help, but she ignored him. He headed to the school and his test, telling himself he would make it up to her.

After the clinic closed, Autumn went home to bathe and dress. She would go to the diner and eat tonight. Tomorrow, Amy would be coming to help with the laundry and house cleaning.

Amy was the woman Mark had hired to help Summer. She worked with Mark and Summer on Monday and Wednesday and at Autumn and Jarod's Tuesday and Thursday. On Friday, she did the laundry at the clinic. She was a very wise widow woman, and both sisters liked her instantly.

As Autumn strolled to the diner, she saw Jarod pull up outside their home. Shrugging, she continued to the diner. She refused to feel guilty for not wanting to talk to him right now. She had left a note saying 'happy anniversary' and the small box which contained her gift. She didn't expect one back; but she had fallen in love with the pocket watch. On the cover was a picture engraved of a doctor standing with a stethoscope and a doctor's bag. On the inside was a picture of herself, she had taken when a photography shop opened in town. Kayla was happy to find her a seat out of the way, so she could have some peace and quiet. As she finished her meal and was sipping her coffee, Kayla stopped to chat for a minute. Autumn was more than happy to explain to her friend why she looked so unhappy.

"Men can be so inconsiderate. I had the same problem for a while when Tom was getting things up and running at the law office. Finally, after many fights, he decided to hire some help. That is when he hired Mark. It was the very best thing. Finally, we had time for one another again. Maybe you should suggest to Jarod he hire another doctor and nurse. This town is growing so fast; I am sure we need another. It would take some of the pressure off both of you."

Autumn looked at her friend, a smile growing across her face, "That is a wonderful idea. It is just what we need. Thank you so much, Kayla, for suggesting it. I will go right now and tell Jarod what you said."

Autumn hurried home to discuss the new idea with Jarod, but she found him sound asleep when she arrived. Tomorrow, she would ride to Jessica and Steven's house and talk to them about it.

Autumn left early, at the crack of dawn. She left Jarod asleep as

she saddled her horse and took off for her in-laws' home. When she arrived, she was met at the door by a smiling Steven, who was just kissing his wife goodbye.

"Must be nice to have time to kiss your wife," Autumn stated angrily.

Steven looked up at his wife and then back to Autumn. "Seems like we need to talk. I have time; come in and have a cup of coffee."

Autumn looked down, ashamed at her behavior. "I am sorry; you don't deserve that, but, yes, I need to talk to you about something, and Lord knows I don't see Jarod enough to talk to him about it."

Jessica set a cup of coffee down on the table for Autumn before she and Steven sat down.

"Tell us, Autumn, what is going on? Is Jarod not spending enough time with you?"

"Yesterday was our first anniversary and he spent it studying for his test. He didn't come home until almost midnight and then he sent me to take care of the patients, so he could sleep and be ready for his test. I haven't seen him for two days."

"What a fool my son has become. I warned him it would be hard." Steven shook his head.

Jessica looked dismayed. "I will never have grandchildren if this keeps up. Do you have a suggestion, Autumn dear?"

"Yes, I was going to talk to Jarod, but he was asleep when I got home yesterday. I think we should hire another doctor and nurse. We are buried in patients who come to the clinic. That doesn't count the emergencies. That, and with Jarod going back to school and carrying twice the

school load, we are losing ourselves."

"I think that is a wonderful idea. I will talk to Jarod about it, this afternoon, when I go to the clinic. I have another suggestion. Maybe we could add to the back of the clinic and make a small surgery. I have been pondering a hospital, but I am not sure we could justify the cost if we don't have enough need."

Autumn giggled. "You see Jarod more than I do; I will let you bring it up. Remember I would like another nurse, also." She turned to look at Jessica. "That is if you really do want a grandbaby."

Autumn left her their home in a much better mood and was happy to see Jarod at the table when she returned.

Before she could say anything, Jarod spoke up, "I am so sorry, Autumn, please forgive me for missing our anniversary. Please let me make it up to you. How about, tonight, we go to Kayla's? I will arrange a romantic meal at our favorite table in the corner."

Autumn agreed before she changed to go to the clinic. Jarod and she walked together hand in hand. Autumn had forgiven him, but in her heart, she still harbored just the slightest hard feeling for the night that was lost. Both worked hard most of the morning until Steven came in the afternoon to help with some of the harder cases. As the day was winding up, Steven asked Jarod if he could talk with him privately.

Autumn said she would go ahead home and start his bath while they talked.

Amy would be doing laundry in one of the back rooms of the house. That would mean hot water for the bath. Jarod and his father had come up with the idea. Amy would heat tubs of water in copper tubs over a large fire in a stone room in the back. The tub had copper pipes attached that could be shut off or opened with a valve. One pipe went into a large tub for washing and another went into the water closet and into the tub. Cold water was added by hand. The laundry room was slightly higher than the rest of the house, so the water ran down to the washer or the water closet. Autumn loved laundry day because she could get two clean, hot baths. The tub had a drain that went outside so she didn't even have to empty it. She would fill the bath with hot water for herself, drain it and fill it again with clean hot water for Jarod. She could add her favorite rose water to the bath and Jarod had pine smelling soap. Autumn went down and started the fire, if she wanted a hot bath, but Amy was doing it anyway, today. The wash tub had a

large wringer or two large rollers that squeezed the water out. Jarod had hired a strong boy to crank the paddles for the washer and crank the wringer on wash days, so Amy didn't have to work so hard. It made it easier on Amy and took half the time to do the laundry. The boy helped Amy carry the laundry outside to the clothesline.

Mark and Summer had the same system put into their home. They added an extra room inside for the water closet and a laundry room made of cement blocks for the laundry room.

Autumn lazed in the hot bath, relishing the warmth and the rose water she had put into it. She pulled the drain plug and got out to dress for the evening, refilling the tub with hot water for her husband. She sat at her dressing table brushing her long blonde hair.

Jarod came in whistling a tune while he undressed and headed for the water closet.

Autumn hmped; he could remember it was wash day but not their anniversary. She laid out his clothes and dressed. She chose something nice but not too fancy for them both.

When they arrived at the diner, Autumn could see Jarod had stopped and set everything up on his way home. Their quiet table was set up with a candle in the middle. Jarod seated Autumn before taking his chair as was his custom.

"Shall I order for us, Autumn, or do you want something extra special tonight?"

"You may order, Jarod, you know what I like," she answered as she looked around to see who was dining tonight.

Jarod ordered for them both. First a salad and then steaks with potatoes and carrots. For dessert, he had a surprise.

After they both ate their lovely meal, Jarod pulled his chair back and invited Autumn to sit on his lap.

Kayla brought in a beautiful cake with 'Happy Anniversary' written on it. She smiled from ear to ear while she walked over to the table. Many of the other diners saw what was going on. Most of

them knew the "Doc" and his wife., and everyone stood up and began clapping.

Autumn hid her face in Jarod's shoulder, embarrassed at all the attention. Jarod helped her back to her chair and cut a slice for them both, then instructed Kayla to share the rest with everyone else in the restaurant. Everyone clapped again and began to enjoy their own small piece of cake.

Jarod took Autumn's hand in his and looked into her eyes. "I love you more than my own life, Autumn, please never forget that. I know my life gets hectic a lot of times but never forget I love you. I am so sorry I forgot our anniversary, but I will make it up to you. My father suggested we get more help. He wants to add a surgery onto the back of the clinic, too, but we need another doctor and nurse. It is getting to be too much for us both. As soon as we get a new doctor and nurse and train them, I want to take you on a trip. Just the two of us, to someplace special. I thought maybe to Boston to visit my sister and her husband, but you may pick wherever you wish to go."

Autumn squealed with delight at the idea of a trip. "Let me think about it, please. How long can we be gone? Maybe a month?" she asked anxiously.

Jarod chuckled at her excitement. He loved it when her eyes sparkled with happiness.

"It may take a couple of months to find someone suitable for both of us, a couple of months to train them and get the town people to accept them. Papa said he would help with the training, so we could leave in two or three months, and with Papa's help, we could be gone for a month. It means taking time off from my studies, but I could visit the same hospital in Boston that my father worked in. I could do some research for my thesis while I am there." He held up his hand at the first sign of her raising a complaint. "I promise it will not take very much time from you. Maybe one or two days a week. Agreed?"

Autumn looked at him suspiciously. "I have heard that before, husband."

Jarod stood and raised his right hand high in the air, addressing everyone in the restaurant, "As all of these people eating our cake as my witnesses. I promise."

Everyone, including Kayla, cheered as Autumn got up and gave her husband a kiss. "In that case, I agree."

As they reached their home again, Jarod picked up his little wife and carried her over the threshold into their room.

"Undress for me, Autumn, let me make up to you the mess I made of our anniversary."

Autumn blushed so prettily as she nodded and began taking down her hair. It flowed to her waist.

Jarod walked over to his wife and ran his hands through her hair, smelling the roses. "Mmm, your hair is always so soft and smells so good." He lifted it off her neck and kissed her neck on that special spot between her neck and shoulders. He gently turned her and began unbuttoning her dress, kissing her back all the way down. Straightening, he slipped her dress slowly off her shoulders and down her hips until it pooled at her feet. He turned her towards him again and claimed her mouth with a kiss that curled her toes. Her woman parts began to tingle as he lowered the straps to her slips, kissing her shoulders. Sliding them down to join the dress, she was left in her underclothes which he quickly got rid of. She stood naked in front of him, her hands covering her woman parts in embarrassment. Jarod gently moved her hands. "Mine, darlin', don't hide what is mine."

Autumn's blush deepened.

It always amazed Jarod, after all this time being married, how beautifully she blushed. He laid her gently on the bed and quickly undressed. He lifted the covers and slid in. Sitting up on his elbows, he just looked at his beautiful wife and wondered for the millionth time how he got so lucky. His hand roamed over her breasts briefly before he took one and then the other into his mouth and began

suckling gently and then a little more forcefully, plucking at them with his teeth. His hand found its way between her legs to her nest and what lay beneath it. He entered her with his finger until his fingers were wet with her juices before he proceeded to rub her little nub. Around and around, harder and harder, until he could hear her moan his name and lift off the bed.

"Please, Jarod, do something, Please, I need you inside of me."

Jarod positioned his rock-hard cock at her entrance and then impaled her right to the hilt. He began to piston in and out until he could feel her insides tighten on his cock. She was ready to come apart, thrashing back and forth, pushing her bottom up to let him in deeper. He pounded into her until he heard her squeal his name. They both exploded at the same time. He pulled her in to his side, laying her head over his heart until they both caught their breath. He kissed her gently before they both fell asleep.

The next morning, Autumn was making a delicious breakfast, while Jarod dressed. Over breakfast, they discussed what kind of doctor and nurse they wanted.

"Papa said he will put an advertisement in the Boston paper and several other prestigious hospitals around the country. I will put ads in the other major cities around Montana and Wyoming. Hopefully, soon, we will get some answers back and some resumes. He got up and kissed Autumn goodbye.

"Take your time; we have an easy load today."

Autumn hummed while she cleaned the kitchen. Life was getting better.