

# The Recovering Couple

It was just like any other day of the fall. The days got shorter, the temperature grew colder, and the leaves changed colors. However, there was one thing different. Today was Thanksgiving. Even after living in the states for twenty-two years now, Alexander still wasn't used to celebrating many American holidays. His wife, Ashley, however was born and raised her whole life in Rhode Island. So holidays like Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and 4<sup>th</sup> of July were very important to her and her family. Alexander's father had been born and raised in the United States as well, however Alexander like the rest of his family was not.

Normally Alexander and Ashley would have gone to her parent's house for Thanksgiving since the couple fly overseas every year to visit Alexander's parents for Christmas. This year however Ashley's parents decided that they would celebrate their anniversary early and booked a vacation on a cruise. So, much to Alexander's relief, this year they would be celebrating Thanksgiving with his younger sister's family. Katherine was the only sibling in Alexander's family who had kids. She had two sons named Sebastian and Gavin. Sebastian was the older of the two boys. Much like his father, Sebastian was a shy yet brilliant boy. He has glasses like his mother, but will only wear them at school. The younger brother, Gavin, is a tall energetic and bubbly boy who doesn't like being away from his brother too long. Alexander and Ashley always look forward to seeing their nephews.

Growing up both Alexander and Ashley always wanted kids. After the two got married, they were both quite eager to start a family. However after three years of trying without any success; the couple began to think they would never be able to have children themselves. Then it happened. Ashley got pregnant. The two were overjoyed when they found out the news.

Unfortunately in the 4<sup>th</sup> month of her pregnancy, Ashley got severely ill and had to be hospitalized. She almost didn't make it, but after a month of treatments and rehab she was able to pull through. The baby...wasn't so lucky.

The next couple of years was a very trying time for the both of them, especially for Ashley. She didn't leave the house for the first couple months, and she would wake up most nights crying. When friends or family came by to check in on her, she often had to force or fake a smile and pretend everything was alright. Pretty lies that she would said more to herself than to the people around her. Sadden and concerned for the wellbeing of his wife, Alexander decided it would be for the best if he retired early from the military to be with her. With Alexander home now, Ashely slowly began to recover from her despair. It took two years but on the night of their 5<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, Ashely was finally able to smile and laugh without sadness in her eyes. Since that night Ashley has finally returned to her old self again.

“Hurry up or we're going to be late.” Ashely said as she waddling down with several boxes of food in her arms.

“Hurry up? Ash, I was ready forty-five minutes ago.” Alexander chuckled. “I was waiting on you. If somebody weren't so busy burning cookies and dropping potato salad on the floor, we could have been there by now.”

“Oh sure, blame it on me. I just wanted to bring some food so your sister wouldn't have to cook that much more since she has two extra guest this year.” Ashley said with a fake pout. Alexander laughed.

“You know Ash, you're really cute when you pout over little things.”

“I am not pouting.” Ashley said as she hid her face behind a box of cookies she made for their nephews. Seeing her struggle, Alexander reached over and took most of the containers of food.

“Here, let me help you.” With a sigh of relief, Ashley thanked him.

“Thanks. Those were starting to get heavy.”

“It’s okay to ask for help you know. I’ll always be there for you. Even for the small things.” Ashley looked down and nodded a little.

“I know and I appreciate it. I really do. I just wanted you to relax a bit. Ever since...since I got sick three years ago, you were always there for me. You even went and retired early from the military for me. I...I just want things to go back to the way it used to be.” They were quiet for a while, and then Ashley looked up and saw Alexander smiling with a bit of sadness in his eyes.

“You don’t need to worry about me so much Ash. I’ll be fine. So instead of dwelling on the past, let’s try to live for the future. We have so much more to look forward to.”