

Chapter 36: What Mother Has To Do..

Norman sat on the edge of Aunt Emma's bed and slowly, carefully grasped her hands. She snapped out of that semi-trance and sat up. That nerve pain was still there in both their hands and forearms when they made contact, though not as intense as in the past.

"I know." She sounded hollow. "I'm so sorry, you guys. If only that idiot had stayed put, he never would've gotten killed, and this never would've happened." Em let go of him, "I'm okay now, Norman." Her arms reached for Dylan, who'd sat beside her on the bed. Their foreheads touched as they pulled each other close, as Norman left to give them privacy.

"This is never gonna end, is it?" Dylan couldn't keep the disappointment from coming to the surface, despite the shock of seeing the destruction of his mother's property. Yes, he and Norma had moved from near-hatred of each other into these still-uncharted waters. Much of the past tension: they'd gotten it out of their systems. Yet as he leaned into the woman he loved, he knew one absolute certainty: he'd choose her. Always her. Without any doubt or hesitation. Not Norma and his brother. If he had to make a choice.

She sensed his dread at the thought of returning to that crime-infested town with its "Hills Have Eyes" vibe and facing off with some nutcases who had the Bates family in their crosshairs. Maybe literally. "It's not ONLY their problem," Em told him. "It's all of ours. You ought to be aware of that by now. Things have gotten intense and confusing, I know. But we all still MUST have each other's backs, always!"

"I just want to start over here in D.C, with you. Only you. Let them have their chance to start over too. Norman's at least sort of better. If it wasn't for those assholes in that town and that dumbass sheriff, we all could do that. Instead, now we're all getting dragged back!"

Emma dropped her hands from the side of his face, "You think we can't handle this? For fuck's sake, a little more faith in this family from you would be nice. After everything we've done. After everything we've been through. Now, I'm tired and still feeling like crap, so just shut up and come here." She turned onto her side, facing away from him and dragging him by the arm so he had only the lovely choice of spooning with her.



Norman found his mother on the balcony, her hands gripping the railing and her body shaking with sobs. "Mother." He took her by the arm and pulled her gently around to face him. Norma collapsed into his arms, her tears of rage soaking into his shirt and quickly growing cold in the icy air. Neither of them had bothered putting a coat on.

"Bastards..." She sobbed, "Who the fuck do those people think they are? This was the dream I had..for you and me, baby. Our new start. Now look at it..We didn't even do anything wrong! Nothing!"

"Shh." Norman held her tight, one hand stroking her hair while he kissed the cold tears away from her cheeks. "We'll fix it. All of it. Make it like new. If I have to work on it all day and all night, whatever it takes. He pulled her even closer, their eyes locked. Norma's breath was still ragged. Her anger gave way to wonder at this new strength and assurance in him. He was three days away from turning 18, and he was undoubtedly the man who would love and fiercely protect her from anything, do anything at all to make her happy. Her arms tightened around his neck as she brought her chilled lips to his, reveling in the warmth of his body.

"Come on, let's go for a ride on the Metro." Norman took the lead and she cherished letting him. "I think we should give Mr. and Mrs. Spooler some privacy for a little ."

A sharp laugh cut through her tears. "Norman!" She recalled when Dylan had made a similar dig at them, and it made her laugh harder. After finishing throwing everything

needed in the soup pot, Norma set it to simmer and then stuck her head into Emma's room, told them to check on it in half an hour, and that she and Norman were going out.

The two of them had gotten used to walking to the D.C. Metro station a block away from the apartment, riding the underground train and getting off at the National Mall. Even with their lives spent in suburban Arizona and briefly in small-town Oregon, the busy national capitol had become routine over the past month. Who would have thought? Norman slid his arm around her waist and hugged her close to his side as they walked along the Independence Avenue sidewalk, towards the Lincoln Memorial.

It was dusk by the time they reached the famous monument, their arms around each other's waists. Not long to wait until the memorial's lights came on, making it even more beautiful. Norma pressed her side close against his, enjoying his solid warmth. Neither spoke much, trying in their own ways to still process the outrage and pain at what had happened to their little business. Her dream that had been all her own for both of them. Norman squeezed her arm around him, leaned her head on his shoulder. They spent a while wandering around by the reflecting pool, distracting themselves watching the tourists also milling around. Every so often, she dropped a soft kiss to his neck or jawline, making him smile and nuzzle his forehead against hers. They'd gotten comfortable with this sweet public affection. No one around them noticed or cared, had no way of knowing the truth.

Norman tensed with anger every time he stared off into space and still saw the damaged and spray-painted motel building. No one was going to violate them, was going to hurt his mother, without paying dearly for it. He wanted them found out, and he wanted them hurting much worse.

Norma got a cup of coffee from one of the many food trucks parked here and there, and Norman bought himself a chocolate-covered ice cream bar from another one. "Ice cream? Honey, it's freezing out here," she started to admonish him when she saw him

digging into the treat. Before she could go on, he captured her lips with his, both of them giving soft moans.

"But so sweet," he said, winking as he pulled back. "I couldn't resist."

"You know how I can't ever resist you," Norma kissed him back even longer, leaving them both licking vanilla ice cream and melted chocolate from their lips. "I'll keep you warm, baby. Forever." she breathed. They stayed snuggled tight against each other as they meandered to the stairs of the memorial and had a seat a dozen steps down from the impressive statue of Honest Abe. As if on cue, snow flurries began falling.

Norman kept one arm around her as she leaned her head once again into his shoulder. His hand stroked her hip through her heavy coat. He let his mind drift, playing with the fantasy of never going back. Walking away and having another fresh new start. Ironic that so much trouble had happened in that little town, yet no trouble had found the two of them here in D.C. Sure, there had been the usually-nerve-wracking challenge of therapy and meds, but those were totally different compared to dealing with lunatics breaking into their home, stalking them, and trashing the outside of the motel. They could get an apartment like Aunt Emma's, the two of them. Norman didn't know what they could do as far as jobs, but they'd think of something. He could keep going to Bayview as he needed; the insurance would cover him for another eight years.

Surprisingly, Norman was almost going to miss that place. The constant lying and fabricating stories to protect the family had been a major source of stress, but the meds had made the voices in his head vanish, and there was only a rare and brief blackout anymore. Of course with Aunt Emma, he wasn't alone with those. The two of them knew what they had to do. And thanks to the teen murderers, pyromaniacs, and other colorful characters residing at Bayview, days there were never boring. Norman had a few short story drafts written, fictionalized versions of the life stories of a few of these fellow patients. He was going to miss the constant supply of interesting material. His mother probably wasn't going to like the bloody crime-spree stories, but he was going to be a

legal adult very soon. No one could stop him from trying to get them published. He'd probably have better luck with that here in the city too. Aunt Emma seemed to know someone who knows someone for a lot of different things.

Even as Norman entertained these nice possibilities, he know deep down they weren't going to walk away from this, no matter how dangerous it might be. They couldn't lose the investment in the motel; Norma had put their entire settlement into it. They'd have never gotten it if Norman hadn't done away with Sam. He accepted that now, and good riddance. He'd finished off his dessert-before-dinner at this point, leaned down and left a trail of soft kisses along her jawline, causing her to give a wordless murmur of pleasure. He could tell from the look on her face that she'd been having similar thoughts and had come to the same conclusion. "Let's go home, Mother." he said softly. He meant back to White Pine Bay as much as back to the apartment.

The next couple of days were subdued, if not outright grim at times. Mother and Aunt Emma both tried to be upbeat because of his upcoming birthday, though it often seemed forced. Even Dylan backed off from razzing him about anything. The day before it, Norman took the GED test and passed it easily, even with recent difficulty focusing on any review for it. One more thing out of the way. The next morning, he woke to the lovely feel of his mother's lips on his neck, his face, across his chest..then she slid her body further on top of his, and his manhood immediately jumped to attention. He grasped her hips and pulled her against him. One ear trained momentarily in the direction of Aunt Emma's bedroom, but there was nothing except silence coming from it. They had to still be asleep. Even if the other pair got up, an audience wasn't anything new anymore.

"Happy Birthday, baby." she murmured before pressing her lips to his. He kissed her long, slowly, his tongue flicking against her bottom lip. His hands slid under the pink-and-black lace negligee she'd worn to bed. It barely reached the tops of her thighs, and she was wearing nothing underneath. Norman gave a moan of delight as he teased her lips apart, his hands stroking the soft warm skin of her back. He knew every single

sensitive spot on her body, and he loved her little shudder as he found one of them along her spine. He massaged her there, as she whimpered against his lips. Then he moved both hands to grip the lacy fabric stretched over her skin, pulled it up.

"Mmmm..take this off, Mother."

She sat partway up and raised her arms so he could slide it up and over her head, toss it aside. "You really want your first present right now, don't you?" She had a wicked smile as she ground against his hardness tenting his boxers, all he'd been wearing, leaving a wet spot on them.

"God yes! Please.." he begged, which sent her nearly into a frenzy. She grasped the waistband and yanked them down, shifted so she was straddling him and wrapped her hand around his cock, bringing another loud groan as he began thrusting his hips.

"Mama loves it when you beg." she kissed him, giving his lip a soft bite as she guided him inside her soaked wet opening. "I'm gonna take good care of you. Always." She slid all the way down on him and gripped his member rhythmically, in that way that drove them both wild. Norman grasped her hips, positioning her so he could see all of her perfect body as she rode him. Their increasingly loud gasps and cries of pleasure eventually brought a sleepy-eyed Emma out of her room. Dylan had rolled away and pulled their comforter over his head, gone back to sleep. Em stood in the living room entrance and watched, that smirk that was so like Norman's playing across her lips. Her eyes grew brighter with lust as she watched Norma reach that climax, hips bucking wildly and letting out a loud keening of ecstasy.

Norma felt that slippery gush of her own fluid as she came good around him, then her whole body started to slacken. But not before she beckoned her sister over, slid her hand along her cheek, and kissed her deeply. "I get so fucking hot when you watch," she murmured when they parted. "I'm gonna miss that."

"Me too," Emma exhaled softly.

"Could I watch you two? One more time, please?" Norman was back to more begging.

Em leaned down and gave him a much briefer kiss, followed by a soft throaty laugh. "If you're good. Glad you're having a nice birthday so far." With that, she left to make coffee and get out the fixings for breakfast, though as usual she wouldn't be the one making it.

Norman's birthday fell on a Sunday, so no Bayview. The rest of it was fairly pleasant. He got some sharp-looking clothes from both Mother and Aunt Emma, a few books on creative writing and "how to get published" from Aunt Emma, and his gift from Dylan was definitely a surprise: a flash drive with a whole lot of photos and videos of the tourist spots the family had visited during their time in D.C. That night, they went out to dinner in another one of Maryland's nicer restaurants. And later, Norman did get another view of his mother and aunt pleasing each other, before Mother turned all of her loving attention to him, and before his brother and aunt retreated once again to her bedroom.

The next few days passed in a blur for Norman, a mix of driving to Bayview, taking in all the stories he could remember in group sessions, wrapping things up with the psychiatrist, and driving in the gridlock back from Bayview. Wednesday was Norman's last day, and 10 minutes before Aunt Emma was to pick him up: who should he run into in the common area but Danny the Vigilante, freshly sprung from solitary. The guy seemed slower-moving from the stronger meds he'd been given, though he didn't slow down a bit with the talk about his gorgeous blonde girlfriend who was going to show up and spring him out any day now.

Norman gave him a weary smile as he turned to leave, "I hope it happens for you."

Danny added as a parting shot, "Hey, you've got someone special too. I can tell. You've kept it close to your vest and that's smart. Keep it real out there."

That was the last person at Bayview Norman spoke to. The next hours of packing and traffic passed almost too quickly to be real. The next time he felt he could slow down, he was in an airplane middle seat, snuggled against Mother as he'd switched so she could have the window seat. Seeing the lights and monuments of D.C. still made her so happy. When would be the next time they'd get to come back here? Summer would be the motel's busiest time, hopefully. Maybe after that, this coming year. In the two seats in front of them, Aunt Emma and Dylan had broken out a deck of cards and gotten into some game that included heated discussion. When they'd been in the air for about an hour, Aunt Emma turned around and poked her head over the seats.

"Norma, I've taught your son how to play Texas Hold'em, and he cheats!" she announced.

"I don't cheat; you cheat!" Dylan retorted, even as he was stifling a laugh.

Norma rolled her eyes and flicked her hand dismissively at them, "Calm down, both of you. Have another Bloody Mary and maybe go join the Mile High Club, why don't you?" she winked at Em.

Dylan and Aunt Emma did get another cocktail each, but the tiny bathrooms on the plane were too tight a fit for them, due to their heights, to make any real Mile High Club progress. Seven hours and two movies later, they touched down at the Portland airport. An hour and a half later, their taxi pulled up in front of the darkened Bates property on Highway 88. Only one outdoor light gave them enough to see to get up the hillside stairs. As Norma went to unlock the outside front door, she saw its stained glass window had been shattered as well. Deputy Harrison's photos hadn't been close enough to catch that little detail. Norma slammed her fist into the worn wooden siding of the house, in tearful frustration. Even after finding and taping some plastic sheeting over the gaping broken window, none of them slept very well that evening.

The next two days were even more frustrating, especially on Norman's end. When he took a bucket of soapy water and a rough sponge to the red and black spray-painted obscenities on the sides of the motel, the yellow paint scrubbed off with it. The whole building was going to need to be scraped down to the bare wood and repainted for it to look even. Dylan helped him for the first day and a half, but then he had his own plans to wrap up any loose ends before he moved back to D.C. with Aunt Emma. The two outdoor cameras they'd set up had also been smashed, probably with a baseball bat or something similar. Mother and Aunt Emma spent some time each on the phone with the manufacturer, trying to get them to honor the warranty and get them replaced at no extra cost.

Aside from the paint-scraping, Norman voluntarily took on the task of cleaning up the seemingly-millions of bits of broken glass from each of the motel rooms' carpets. It was another tedious and frustrating task. Some of the thrown rocks or pieces of brick had hit and shattered some rooms' TVs, leaving even more of a mess for him to clean up. By sunset of their third day back, Norman had made it to room eight, scraping up all the broken glass he could find. The overhead bare lightbulb only provided dim light, and it was overcast outside, looked like a storm was rolling in.

He was nearly finished when a blonde silhouette appeared in the doorway, wearing one of her flowered dresses. Though this was a dress he didn't recognize; she must have just gotten it. She came up to him and slid her arms around his waist, "I've missed you so much, sweetheart." She pressed her body to his, turned him around and brought his mouth down to hers. Though it felt wrong. This was not his mother. A brief flash of lightning, and he saw her face. He tore the blonde wig off her head, setting her red curls free. "YOU!!" he cried out. It was Blair Watson. Little had he known, she'd been watching every move he'd made since they'd returned.

"What she's doing to you is wrong, Norman!" she cried, her arms trying to pull him against her, "I can take you away from all this..baby, please!!"

Those were the last words Norman heard. The next thing he knew, he was in the kitchen at home, sobbing out the whole sordid story into his mother's chest.

Norma kissed him on the forehead, then gently pushed him away. She went to one of the side drawers in the kitchen and pulled out a pair of black vinyl gloves, snapped them on over her hands. She'd learned a few handy things from her big sister. With comment and with a terrifying, empty look in her eyes, Norma snatched the biggest knife from the knife block and strode to the still-broken front door.

"Mother!" Norman cried out, "Mother, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry!! I didn't know it wasn't you! It was too dark, and it happened so fast!

"Norma? What the hell are you doing?!" Dylan followed, made a grab for her arm, but he wasn't fast enough and she slipped past.

Norman shoved past his brother, on her heels and still begging her to stop, come back in the house. All three were at the bottom of the hillside stairs in seconds, seemingly.

Norma spun and screamed at him, "I'LL BE BACK SOON!! Your aunt and your brother will look after you!!" With that, she sped off in the Mercedes into the night.

Blair Watson's house was at the end of a cul-de-sac, according to the directions on Norma's GPS. None of the neighbors on either side of her were home. They were most likely at a town hall meeting going on, to try to find a new qualified sheriff.

Norma parked half a block away and strode up to Blair's front door, eyes fully dilated. When the slut teacher opened the door and tried to slam it closed in fear, Norma slapped her right hand hard against it, kept her from closing it.

"Come on, bitch." Norma snarled, "You know what you tried on MY SON!!" she screamed the last two words as she slammed the door wide open and advanced on Blair.

"You're the sick bitch!!!" the teacher screamed back at her. "Don't think I don't know what's been REALLY going on!!" She cried out even as Norma backed her against the kitchen counter. "You've been fucking your own son!! Don't think I----"

Her last words were cut off with a gurgle, followed by a hard spray of blood as Norma slammed the butcher knife deep into Blair's carotid artery. When she yanked it free, a geyser of warm blood sprayed all over her front. Never letting go of the knife, Norma leaped up as the lifeless body slumped to the kitchen floor.

Never letting go of the knife, Norma jumped back into the Mercedes and sped back to their still-damaged home. She'd barely stopped in the gravel parking lot and gotten out before Norman was right there, throwing his arms around her. Then he felt the cold stickiness on her front and saw the drops of in still on her face. There was a smear on one cheek where she'd swiped some it away.

"MOTHER!! OH MY GOD MOTHER!! That's blood!! What happened?!"

"Shhhh..baby, stop. Calm down. It's not mine." Norma grasped him tight to her. "I'm fine...I took care of it."