

Chapter 9: Too Close For Comfort

Cutting and pulling up carpet one-handed was a major pain. Not to mention a slow-moving one. Norman had ended up doing most of the work, but her sweet-as-ever boy didn't mind. He was only worried that Norma might've hurt herself worse. It was tough to get a good grip on anything with the fingers of her right hand, thanks to the bandages. She'd tried to pull up a carpet section, and it slipped--causing her to whack her stitched hand against a bed frame. Pain shot all the way up to her forearm, making her eyes water and causing her to double over in agony.

"Mother, it is all right? Let me see!" He sat down on the floor next to her, took her right hand gently and looked at it. No blood on the bandages, which was good. The stitches underneath seemed to be holding like they were supposed to.

"It's okay, honey. I just banged it by accident. Guess I need to be more careful."

"You should go back to the house."

"No, it was my idea to start pulling up the carpet in these rooms tonight. It's better to get it done before the new one gets here."

Even though she was only supposed to take one a day, Norma swallowed a second Lortab--the powerful anti-pain medicine the doctor had prescribed. She was usually wary of prescription drugs due to sedatives' effects on her own mother so many years ago. But these weren't sedatives, and they did the job on her hand. They also made her feel giddy, euphoric, and in the mood to do something reckless in particular.

They'd made it to Room 4 before agreeing to call it quits after that carpet was pulled up. Norma hadn't even realized it was after 11pm. She awkwardly cut at the carpeting with the utility knife in her left hand while Norman ripped it loose a bit at a

time from the bare floor. They'd gotten about halfway from the bathroom doorway to the room's door before she stopped.

"I need a break for a minute." She leaned her head on his shoulder, and he leaned into her as well, enjoying the closeness they'd had to avoid most of the time lately when others were around.

He pressed his forehead to hers and stroked his fingers along her jawline, then ran his thumb gently down the center of her bottom lip. Norma cupped his cheek with her left hand and brought her lips to his. He kissed her softly; he'd been fighting the need to kiss her so many times over the past week. It had been very tough. She kissed him back eagerly, both of them letting out soft moans as their lips parted and she slipped her tongue against his. It sent electric pulses of desire down through her whole body.

"Honey..close the door."

Norman leaned away from her just long enough to grab the edge of the room door and throw it shut. He lunged back into her arms, they kissed passionately as she reclined on the floor, pulling him on top of her. This was dangerous, they knew that, and it only sent their excitement to a fever pitch.

"I want you. I've never wanted you this bad!" He murmured against her lips.

"I've missed this so much; My god Norman, it's been driving me crazy!"

"Me too." He started unbuttoning her plaid flannel shirt, running his hands over her beautiful soft skin. He hesitated,

"Wait, Mother, what if Dylan--"

“He’s probably at some bar and won’t leave ‘til they close. Stop worrying, sweetie; no one can see us here on the floor anyway. Now come here!”

Their lips locked again as he lifted her bra, then kissed his way down until his mouth found her nipples, licking and lightly sucking as his hands gently cupped and squeezed her breasts. Norma gave a loud moan, her hips starting to heave and her body throbbing with need. She reached down and ran her hand over the hardness straining inside his jeans. She unzipped and pulled them over his hips, followed by his briefs. Her good hand wrapped around him, stroking his cock’s sensitive underside just how she knew drove him wild. Norman could barely keep from losing it early as he somehow managed to undo her jeans and slide into her.

“You feel so good Norman, so damn good!” she gasped as they began thrusting with the same rhythm. The pleasure after the deprivation was so intense; she was going to have to struggle not to scream as she felt a hard climax building in her. Norman felt her cum seconds before he did, his hips jerking and spasming. He bit down briefly on his own fist to keep from crying out as total ecstasy slammed through him. Somehow the need to keep it quiet was making it all the more erotic.

“Ohhhhh god!! omigod! Mother..I love you...love you so much!” he collapsed on top of her, burying his face in the crook of her neck, kissing her there over and over.

“I love you too, Norman! You’re all I want..all I need. We’re supposed to be together.. god I need you! Always..”

“I can’t keep waiting like this. I want you all the time, every day! I can’t think about anything else! Can we get him to move out, please? Please, Mother?”

“I know; I want you in bed with me, want this every night. It’s so frustrating..” she kissed his forehead. “I’ll think of something, I promise.”

“Okay, Mother.”

She grinned, “One more time?”

“Of course!” he laughed softly, wrapping his arms tighter around her and kissing her lips. Norma slowly rolled over until she was on top of him.

“Ow! Wait, Mother, there’s something under my back.” He’d rolled onto something hard and rectangular wedged under the carpet. Norman gently had both of them sit up so they could see what it was.

Norma gave a groan of longing irritation, not wanting to separate from him or have this interruption. Who knew how long until they’d be alone together again? She watched while he grabbed the utility knife and cut the object free. It was an old leather journal with the word “Jiao” carved on the cover.

Curious, both of them looked through it, their eyes growing wider by the second.

“Oh my god! Mother..these drawings--those girls; is that supposed to be HERE?! At this motel..they were right..SHE was right all along..”

“That writing looks like Chinese or something. You know what this means, Norman? We’ve got to call your Aunt Emma and get her out here right now.”

They started doing up their clothes, but before they could finish and stand up, they saw headlights shining through the motel room window as a car pulled into the parking lot right outside the room.

“Oh, shit!”

They both scrambled fast with the rest of their clothes. Norma's hair was disheveled and falling out of the jaw clip she'd had it in. Fixing it with one hand wasn't easy either, so she ripped the clip out and tossed it aside. She also had to rebutton her shirt a second time so it wasn't crooked. Norman quickly zipped up his jeans before shoving the journal under the bed, pulling the comforter down so it concealed it.

"Be calm. We're just finishing with the carpet for tonight. That's all, just be casual."

"Yes, Mother."

Norma drew a deep breath before opening the motel room door and stepping outside to greet Romero and Shelby.

"Good evening, gentlemen. If you're looking for a room, I'm sorry we're not open yet."

The sheriff was looking at her with an expression of bewilderment. "What are you doing out here at this hour? I thought you couldn't get a warrant to search these rooms yet. Did you do something to your hair?"

Then he took a couple of steps closer, got a better look at her in the dim porch-light, and realized his mistake. "Oh I'm sorry! I thought you were someone else, someone I've been working with. You look--"

"--almost exactly alike. Yes, I know. I've been hearing that a lot lately." she finished, giving him what she hoped was a charming smile. "I'm Norma Bates. This is my son, Norman." By now Norman had come out of the room and was standing close behind and to the side of her.

“Sheriff Alex Romero. This is Deputy Zach Shelby.”

“Nice to meet you. If you don’t mind: I’m left-handed-only for the time being.” They exchanged some modified handshakes.

“What happened to your hand?” Shelby wanted to know.

“A nasty little welcome gift from the former owner on our second night here. The late former owner, I should say.”

Romero was still scrutinizing the two of them. “I’m sorry that happened...Norma and Norman..hmm..I’d say that’s unusual, but it seems stranger things have been happening. We just wanted to drop by to make sure everything’s okay after what happened last Monday night.”

“Boys take their fathers’ names all the time. And yes, everything’s fine! I appreciate the concern. We’re just starting some renovating, getting rid of this old carpet.”

“It’s almost midnight. Your son has school tomorrow.”

“I, uh, I had no idea it was that late.”

“Do you mind if we take a look around?”

“No, not at all.” Norma sounded calm but she was struggling with panic on the inside.

Don’t let him look under the bed! Don’t let him look under the bed! Their not finding that journal was suddenly all that mattered. It needed to go into the hands of her sister and the FBI, not to these two.

Romero thankfully took only a cursory look around the room. Shelby hung back in the doorway, making an attempt at small talk with Norma. He seemed more than a little interested in her, which drew a very dark look from Norman.

“So, about Keith Summers.” Romero rejoined them. “I’ve learned the FBI intervened when he attacked you. Apparently they’d been watching this place. Did you know anything about it beforehand?”

“No, not a thing. If you two don’t mind: I’m tired, it’s been a long day, and I really don’t want to rehash that whole story again. I’ve already told the FBI every little detail of it. They have it all recorded. Why don’t you save yourself time and go ask my sister if you can listen to it?”

For one of the few times in his life, Romero was completely dumbfounded.

“EXCUSE ME?! Are you referring to Agent Emma Spolee? You’re telling us she’s your sister?!”

Norma got the distinct impression she’d made a big mistake mentioning that.

“Well, yes, but it’s not what you think, Sheriff. It’s more complicated than that, and--”

“It seems pretty clear to me. Thank you for your time, Mrs. Bates. We’ll see ourselves out. It was nice to have met you. You too, Norman.”

They weren’t even in their SUV before Romero was scrolling through the numbers on his phone. Not a stretch to guess who he was trying to reach. As soon as they were out of sight, Norma and Norman sped back into the room, where she grabbed her own cell off the night stand.

“Come on, Em, pick up, pick up, please..”

Emma S. heard her phone as she stepped out of the shower and wrapped herself in a towel. Both Norma and Sheriff Romero were calling her at the same time, which could mean any number of things at this late hour. Hoping Norma was calling for the reason she thought of, Em tapped “Ignore” on Romero and “Answer” on her sister.

“Norma?” Is everything all--”

“Emma, you’ve got to get out here right now! We found something in one of the motel rooms; it’s this diary of sorts with a bunch of drawings of girls chained up, and...being abused. It looks like it was done in this motel.”

Agent Spooler drew a sharp breath, thrilled beyond words. They had found something, something that sounded great. Great for the investigation, that is. Her instincts had been right. As they usually were.

“Okay, you two stay right there and wait for me. Leave it where it is and don’t touch it anymore. I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

Norman had already retrieved the journal from under the bed and was looking through it further. Norma held the phone away from her ear and hissed at him, “Norman! Put it down, don’t touch it anymore.” while motioning for him to put it on the bed they were sitting on. He gave her a sulky look for treating him like a child, but he did as she said. She went on to Emma S:

“It’s got a bunch of writing in it, looks like Chinese or Japanese or something. Whatever it says, what’s happening to them looks awful, horrific..”

“We can get it translated and find out. Just sit tight. See you soon.”

“Wait, Emma?”

“Yeah?”

“Sheriff Romero and Deputy Shelby were here a few minutes ago, introducing themselves. I, um, I told them we’re sisters.”

“Oh, shit! Seriously?”

“That’s bad, isn’t it?”

Emma S. closed her eyes for a second, trying to calm down and not unleash a verbal tirade on the younger sister she was still getting to know.

“It sure as hell isn’t good. It creates a conflict of interest. Legally I can’t work a case like this that involves my family, and you three certainly qualify. Norma, if this gets out--and I know it will--I’ll need to get a hold of the assistant director--my boss--and ask to be reassigned!”

“I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to! I wouldn’t have if I’d known it’d cause trouble for you; it just slipped out!”

“You didn’t know. It’s okay; don’t worry about it. It would’ve come out sooner or later anyway.”

All during this exchange, Agent Spoole’s call waiting was beeping incessantly. Romero was blowing up her phone and was evidently not going to stop until she answered.

“It’ll be all right, Norma. Let’s focus on what you two found in that room tonight. I’m leaving as soon as I can throw on some clothes. See you in about 20 minutes.”

“All right. Bye.”

Norma ended the call and looked at Norman. "I'm sorry I snapped at you. Guess I made a huge mistake blabbing to the sheriff about Agent Spoole being related to us."

"Why would that matter?"

"Because, Norman, she can't keep working to catch these scumbags in this town if everyone knows we're related. It's called a conflict of interest."

"That's stupid! She saved your life, and she wants to save the rest of these girls, so nothing like this has to happen to any more of them. What more do they want?"

"Yeah, well, those are the rules, apparently."

"What's going to happen now?"

"I don't know. She said she'll be here soon, and we need to wait right here for her."

She gave him a tired but loving smile and caressed his cheek once again, lifting his face so their eyes locked.

"It's sure been one crazy ride since we moved here, hasn't it?"

"Yeah. And that was a close one when those two drove up!" he chuckled a little at the memory of them frantically getting dressed.

"Norman, that's NOT funny! That was WAY TOO CLOSE, too close for comfort! We can't be that careless again! Do you have ANY idea how much trouble we'd be in if anyone ever found out about us?! How much trouble I'd be in? I'd go to prison! You'd be taken away forever! The law doesn't care how much we both want this and how

much we love each other!! It would RUIN us! Ruin both our lives!” Tears spilled out of her eyes. “I’d die without you. They might as well kill me if that happens. You’re everything to me! You’re the other half of my soul. I don’t ever want to live in this world without you!”

“Oh Mother! Don’t cry, please don’t!” Norman started tearing up as well. “I’m so sorry, Mother. I won’t say anything like that again. I know how serious it is.” He put his hands on the sides of her face and leaned close so their foreheads touched. “I love you more than anything, more than my own life! I’d do anything for you, anything! I’ll be careful. We can do this, like you said. We just need to be careful. We will be. It’ll all be okay, Mother.”

He pulled her into a tight hug for long moments, her tears soaking into his T-shirt. “I love you too. So much.” she murmured. They had a little while before Em got there, and they’d be able to see her car’s headlights through the window. Norman lay down on the bed and wrapped her in his arms. They waited, simply holding each other.

