

Chapter 25: New Horizons

It was after one in the morning by the time Emma-Christine and Dylan returned to the family's shared motel room. This after packing all her stuff in two large rolling suitcases plus her shoulder bag, checking out of her motel, driving across the city, and getting lost once before finding their new digs for the night. Norman and Norma appeared to be sound asleep, cuddled up in each other's' arms in the bed closer to the bathroom.

They tried to be as quiet as possible as they got ready for bed. Em resisted the urge to take another shower, telling herself she'd do it first thing in the morning. In her hospital room, she'd taken six of them in 48 hours, the feel of drying blood refusing to fully leave the surface of her skin. The first time, she'd leaned her forehead against the tile wall as the hot water pounded on her, keeping her eyes shut tight. She knew that horrible redness was washing away, swirling down the drain, but she didn't want to look. She didn't have to. She saw enough of it in her mind.

Now Em changed into her regular sleepwear: a worn OSU basketball T-shirt and black boy-short panties. Dylan was in his undershirt and boxers as she slid under the covers with him.

"Hey, will you take that off?" She whispered, tugging at the hem of his shirt. "I want to feel you. Please?"

"What about them?" Dylan whispered back, jerking his head in the Norms' direction.

"So? They're asleep. Come on, baby. I don't like you wearing a shirt to bed." She hissed, getting more insistent.

Dylan did as she wanted, lifting his shirt over his head and dropping it to the floor. The feel of her in his arms was heaven. Only her thin shirt was between their chests. If only they were by themselves in the room; they'd wake up and make love all morning after getting some much-needed sleep. He'd have to settle for wrapping his arms around her as she snuggled against him, her head in the crook of his shoulder.

As he drifted off, he relished the feel of her body relaxing into his, all that tension finally leaving her. He wanted all that pain and trauma to leave her too. He'd do anything to make that happen.

Two nights of flashbacks, hallucinations, and nightmares had led a nurse to sedate her. Now, Emma fell into a deep sleep with him holding her. He was everything. All she needed. She could move on, as long as she had him.

The first traces of sunrise were visible through the window drapes when Norman woke up. Out of habit, he gently pulled Norma even closer as she was spooned up against him. He left soft kisses on her neck, then reached around and cupped her breast through the silky fabric of her pajama top. He released the top buttons and she gave a soft moan as his fingers slipped in and found her her nipple, rubbing and pinching it as he nibbled on her bared shoulder.

"Ohh..sweetie.." She whispered. He was so hard against her. Morning love-making had become a regular start to their day, and there was no better one. It started off slow, sleepy, and sensuous, building to shattering climaxes. When they finally got out of bed and into their normal routine, both had springs in their steps.

"I had so much fun last night, Mother. I want to, right now. They're asleep. We can be quiet." He whispered back.

Norma briefly thought she should protest remind him they should wait until they got home to the privacy of one of their beds. But her body was screaming the opposite, railing against the thought of deprivation. Part of her rational mind was shocked that she didn't care the other two were about five feet away. In fact, she was getting even more aroused at the thought.

She kissed his lips. "Me too. Wake Mama up everywhere, Norman. You know how I love that."

He gave her lower lip a soft bite, "Oh, yes. I do."

Norma rolled onto her back and started pulling down her pajama pants. He helped her and slid them the rest of the way off. Norman then undid the rest of her top and gently pushed it off her. He was bare-chested, and his own pants followed hers to the floor. She pulled his warm, smooth, perfect body against hers, needing him, unable to truly live until he took her and made her his.

Norman rolled on top of her, slipping his hard member inside her. Norma parted her legs wide, then wrapped them around his waist, taking all of him deep inside her. A whimper of delight escaped her before she could stop it. He quieted her by capturing her lips with his, their hips rolling together.

Emma-Christine awoke to the soft moans in the next bed over. She kept her eyes mostly shut, with her eyelashes hooding what she saw. She felt Dylan's chest gently rising and falling under her; he was still sound asleep. If she moved at all, she'd wake him up. She kept totally still. She watched as her nephew slid on top of her sister, their bed sheet falling down to his waist.

There was enough dim light for her to see this much: Norma was absolutely gorgeous. Full breasts, rosy nipples, curvaceous hips, beautiful golden hair spilling onto the pillow as she rode with him. And Norman: his long and lean body, his tousled hair the same color as her own, his full pink lips as he lowered them to Norma's. He looked almost pretty. Incredibly, hot arousal coursed through her own body, needy pulsing wetness starting between her thighs. She should have been shocked, scandalized..her nephew was making love to his mother, and she was getting so turned on, watching. When did she become so depraved? But..god..they were so beautiful together. Their love for each other made them that beautiful. She couldn't tear her eyes away if she wanted to.

Em could only take so much. She turned and pressed her lips to Dylan's neck, kissing him, biting on his succulent skin. He groaned as he woke up. She pulled his boxers down forcefully. Then she pulled her shirt over her head, yanked her shorts off, then rolled on top of him. Before Dylan could fully realize what was happening,

Em turned and met Norma's, then Norman's eyes. Too late for any of them to pretend they hadn't seen anything. Norman smirked and winked at her. Norma briefly ran her tongue over her lower lip, moistening it. Then she seized Norman by the hips and thrust faster, harder with him. He let out a groan of pleasure and matched her quicker pace. She saw the sensuous expression on her sister's face, and she'd never forget it. She didn't care about Dylan; he'd probably turn away and that was fine, but god help her..she wanted Em to watch.

"Emma, what are you doing?!" Dylan hissed at her. "They're.." But he didn't have to finish, his face growing hot as he saw his mother and brother in the throes of hot, heavy sex, practically right next to them. With their eyes drifting over to him and Emma-Christine every so often.

"Shhh...it's okay..it's all okay.." she murmured, grasping the sides of his face and kissing him passionately. "You don't have to watch them, just look at me. You want this; I can tell." No doubt about that. His cock was standing straight up, aching with need for her as she settled on top of him, guiding him into her slick wet folds.

Dylan started to protest further, but all rational thought left him when he slid inside her. Yes, it felt naughty..perverted, even..and so damn good. The Norms wanted to watch them? What the hell. Let them. They were already far closer as a family than society would ever accept. What was a little voyeurism between them? Anymore, it didn't seem like much of a step further.

Okay, little brother. Let's see who's more of a man.

Dylan pulled her against him, running his hands over her naked back, then down over her ass, pushing the sheet down further so Norman and Norma could get an even better look. Em moaned into his throat, her tongue assaulting his. She broke the kiss, leaning over and biting his earlobe. She whispered, "I need you. I need to feel alive again. Make me feel alive again. Fuck me good, and I'll give you a nice little reward later."

He was all too happy to oblige. He grabbed her hips and held her tight to him, thrusting hard up into her as she rode him, their favorite position. His eyes drifted sideways in time to see Norma arch back and scream out, “OHHH FUUCCK!!!” as she came, Norman pounding hard into her; his own spasming climax following seconds later. Both of them went slack against each other, gasping.

Not to be outdone, Dylan abruptly rolled over, flipping his own lover onto her back and slamming his cock into her for all he was worth. She gave a squeak of surprise, then cried out, “Ohhhh yeah that’s it!! Fuck me like that, baby!! Ohhhh my god!!” Followed by more of her obscenity-laden encouragement. He sucked on her neck as he drilled into her fast and hard, with her gripping and releasing him over and over deep inside. Emma-Christine soon let loose with a long screaming orgasm that rivaled Norma’s. He felt that hot sweetness gushing all over his cock, making him cum harder than he could ever remember, filling her with his own warmth. Spent, he rolled onto his side, his arms around her, pulling her against him.

Norma and Norman were still wrapped around each other, enjoying their own afterglow. And evidently enjoying the hot performance they’d just seen, judging by the deep kisses and more daring caresses they kept giving each other. Dylan couldn’t help shooting a cocky smirk at his brother, one that Norman returned.

Norma was the first one to speak, “We’re going to take a shower. Come on, sweetie.”

“Yes, Mother.” Norman got up with her, both of them pulling the bed sheet around each other, obscuring most of their bodies from view as they headed for the bathroom.

Norma called back over her shoulder, “Glad you’re enjoying your birthday so far, Dylan!” She grinned at them before shutting the door, soon followed by the sound of the shower.

Em had still been trying to catch her breath, but she jerked up to look him in the face. "It's your birthday?!" She gave him a slap on the shoulder, "When were you going to tell me?!"

"Uhh..I was going to, today. I just didn't get the chance yet!" He chuckled, then kissed her. "Yes, I AM enjoying it, I'll have you know!"

"God, yes! That was incredible." She pressed her forehead to his, stroking his jawline. "I love you, Dylan." she said softly.

"I love you too, Emma. If I could marry you, I would. If you'd have me."

She felt tears of happiness pricking her eyes. "Of course I would. If only." In a way, without knowing it, Dylan was honoring a dead man's last wish--by making her so happy. She'd have to tell him about that at some point, but it could wait.

"Well, we're going to give you a proper birthday celebration. You and me. Feel like taking a little side trip before we go home?" she asked.

"Nothing I'd love better."

Meanwhile, Norma had gently pulled Norman by the hand under the hot spray of the shower. She got the soap and body sponge, started washing his back, then his chest. He rested his hands on her waist, leaned down and kissed her some more.

"Did you enjoy that, honey?" she had a mischievous grin on her face.

"I loved it, Mother! You like Aunt Emma watching us, don't you. I could tell. It got you even hotter..even wetter..for me." His turn to wash her; he took the sponge and soaped up her breasts as she gave a pleased moan.

"Hmm..yes..it did."

“Mother?”

“Yes, Norman?”

“Do you think about her, in that way?”

Norma was taken aback. Her perceptive boy had seen what she was barely aware of herself. “I don’t know, Norman. She told me she was with another woman once, years ago. Maybe I’m a bit curious, about what it’d feel like. That’s all though. You know, a physical thing. I love her as my sister, but there’s no way on earth I’m IN love with her! I will NEVER be in love with anyone but you, ever again, for the rest of my life!”

Norman smiled and slid his arms further around her, their slick bodies pressing together as the water rinsed the soap off both of them. “I know that, Mother. I’ll never be in love with anyone but you, for as long as I live. I did tell you I dreamed about you kissing her once, and it was very hot. I really liked it.” he gave her a suggestive grin, “Do you think...maybe..um, you know..the three of us, if she was at all interested..” he blushed at the thought. “Dylan wouldn’t have to know.”

Norma gave him a lingering kiss, “Mm..I’m liking my naughty boy’s way of thinking. Maybe, IF she showed any interest, and if the setting was right, we could have a little fun with her. We’ll have to wait and see if the opportunity happens.”

“I’m liking my naughty Mama’s way of thinking, too.”

They finished showering and emerged from the bathroom, both of them wrapped in fluffy motel towels. “It’s all yours.” Norma told Dylan and Emma-Christine. He’d already put his boxers back on, though she was still wrapped in only the sheet from their bed.

“Don’t mind if we do!” Em grabbed Dylan’s hand and pulled him in that direction. As they passed, Norma told her “I’m happy you’re feeling better, Emma.” Then she winked.

Em winked back at her. “Oh, yeah. Much. Let’s all go get breakfast after we’re dressed and ready to go. Sound good?”

“Sounds perfect.” Before Norma could think about it, she reached her hand out and ran it briefly over the nicely-defined-but-still-feminine muscles of her sister’s upper back. Em looked surprised for a moment, but then her face softened as Dylan was calling for her to join him in the shower. It was just the lingering sexual tension in that small room, had to be. She put the gesture out of her mind, for now.

After checking out, the four of them had breakfast in the coffee shop adjoining the motel. While they were waiting for the bill, Em reasoned she should come out with the truth, while all of four of them were still together. She cleared her throat, “Guys..um..Damn it, I hate to spring this on you on Dylan’s birthday, but I need to tell you something serious.”

They looked at her with worry. She rushed on before anyone could ask questions, “The night of that raid, Sheriff Romero tried to blackmail me. Blackmail all of us, by extension. Right before--” she swallowed hard before she went on, “Before he died, he said he was sorry, but all the same..”

“Emma! What did he want?! What did he say to you?” Norma’s eyes went wide as she threw out the questions.

Emma clasped Dylan’s hand as he moved even closer, next to her in the same booth. She continued, “He’d figured it out about me and Dylan. He wanted me to help him get on the police force in D.C., and he demanded I let him take part in the raid on Fieretti’s operation that night. If I’d refused either, he would’ve gone to my superior. It wouldn’t ruined ALL of us, led right back to you and Norman, too!”

“Holy shit!’ Norman exclaimed, “God...” he seemed to be struggling for more of the right words.

“I know. Then after he shot Fieretti, the guy fired a fatal shot into him. I think that because I said ‘Yes’ to his demands, he’s dead because of that. I’ll probably wonder for a long time what could’ve happened if I’d made a different decision.”

Norma had turned to look out the window as Em recounted these events. When she looked back at her, her expression was calm and certain. Her eyes were cold.

“Emma, stop right there with that wondering. He put himself in that situation, and he made a bad choice and got HIMSELF killed. It was NOT your fault! You did what you thought you thought you had to do!” She paused, drank the last of her hot tea. “I’m seeing more clearly now what the four of us are up against. How bad it could be if anyone got too close to any of us. As far as I’m concerned, he was expendable. Nothing in this life matters to me more than this family, and I mean NOTHING.” She laced her fingers through Norman’s, then she reached across the table and took Dylan’s hand in her other one, surprising him. Norman took Emma-Christine’s hand on the other side of the table, the four of them forming a circle. An unbreakable one.

Dylan gazed at each of them, “I’m with you, Mom. You’re right. I have all of your backs, from here on out. No matter what we might have to do to keep anyone from finding out about any of us.” He turned to Emma-Christine, “I love you, more than anything. I wouldn’t want to live without you. I love you as much as he loves her.” he nodded towards the Norms.

“You know I feel the same about you. I’m not letting you go, Dylan. No matter what, no matter what happens next.” She smiled despite tears forming in her eyes again. She was so damn tired of crying; she didn’t want to do any more of it. “You two know how I feel about you,” She told Norma and Norman. “You’re my true family. I’ll always love my parents who raised me, but you’re all parts of me. You always will be.” She drew a deep breath, “One more thing: I need to go to his funeral. It’s the right thing to do. Regardless of what he did, he’s still a fallen brother law officer to

me. It's the way I was raised, and anyway there's going to be a routine inquiry at the Bureau about it, eventually. It would look bad if I didn't go to the funeral."

Norma, Norman, and Dylan all nodded in understanding, "Okay, Emma." her sister assured her. "We'll all go." Her tone left no room for disagreement, and neither of the boys gave any. The check had arrived by then; they paid up and hit the road. Norman and Norma got in the Mercedes; Dylan and Emma-Christine got in the F-150, the latter two headed for Portland for an extra day of birthday celebration.

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The next day, a Monday, Norma finally had the chance to open their motel for business. The hard work on all the upgrades had paid off; the place looked so much nicer than its former dilapidated state. Unfortunately, there hadn't been a single guest and it was nearly five-thirty in the evening. She'd sent Norman to check the lightbulbs in each of the rooms, making sure they'd all been replaced and none had been missed. The newest issue of the White Pine Bay Current had arrived earlier, and she examined the front page. The bold headline read, **Sheriff Alex Romero Slain In Criminal Raid**. The guy had the whole front page dedicated to him, color photos included. No small obituary in the back pages for him, causing Norma to roll her eyes. The accompanying article mentioned neither of the FBI agents in charge had been available for comment. It also said there would be a public funeral service that Thursday morning.

When he was finished in the rooms, Norman joined her and read through the newspaper as well. "Hm..I have an idea, Mother. Why don't we each get a rose to drop on the casket?" He did some searching on his phone. "It says if you drop a black rose like that at a funeral, it's a way of saying a final farewell. Also a way of moving on. Maybe it would help her move on, you know, have some kind of closure."

She gave him a soft smile. He was so sweet, always. "I think that's a good idea, sweetie. Go ahead and order four of them." Apparently the local florist could make

roses dyed that color; it would take a couple of days. Norman sent the order through.

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“When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Tho' you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.” -Sara Teasdale

The morning of Romero’s funeral saw pouring rain and a slate-grey sky. Seemingly the whole town had shown up at White Pine Bay Cemetery for the service. Nearly all of them gave the Bates family a wide berth. They also gave them plenty of hateful glares. Norma and Norman shared one large black umbrella; Dylan and Emma shared the other one. They all heard snippets of “I can’t believe they showed up,” and “They’ve got some nerve.” All four did their best to ignore it, standing somberly by the grave with the coffin set to be lowered into the earth. The coffin itself was a rather lovely phantom silver color, which chrome trim and a large bouquet of flowers on top.

Norma stood with her arm through Norman’s, half-listening to the eulogy, “...his tireless sacrifice keeping our community safe...his dedication to justice..blah, blah, blah..” She knew it was all a crock of bullshit. The dearly-departed late sheriff would have destroyed the four of them, given the chance. She rotated the single black rose she had in her hand, around and around. When they’d first arrived, she’d thought they were morbid-looking, even ugly. Now, in the muted overcast light, with the beads of rain on each of the petals, her black rose did almost look beautiful.

Finally, the minister finished and invited anyone to come up and pay their last respects. Both wearing black suits, Norman and Dylan went first, dropping their black roses onto the coffin. Norma was wearing a conservative black dress with a single strand of pearls. Emma-Christine was in a black pants suit, with a black shirt instead of a colored or white one, for once. The Calhoun sisters stood for a beat over the open grave, both dangling their roses over it. Then they let them fall. The flowers fell right onto the oversized bouquet, staying there.

“We won’t forget.” Emma murmured. It was all any of them needed to say.

As the four of them headed for their cars, they were accosted by an angry-looking red-headed woman and a man who could only be her husband. “If you people hadn’t shown up in this town, this never would have happened!” she snapped at them.

“Really? Right after his funeral?” Norma’s tone was disgusted.

Emma-Christine cut in with, “It was an unfortunate tragedy, but our family isn’t to be blamed! I was the only one there, and I was doing my fucking job! I WON’T apologize for that!”

The redhead gave a cruel sneer “Good luck with that motel business. You’re going to need it!” Then they sauntered away.

“SCREW OFF, SHITHEADS!!” Norma yelled at them before Norman took her more firmly by the arm and led her away.

“Come on, Mother. They’re not worth it; they’re a bunch of idiots. Come on, let’s go home.

Em echoed his sentiment, “Not at his funeral; we don’t want to make a scene. Ignore them. Let’s go.”

Norma couldn't let go of that woman's cruel words as she sat at the motel desk later that afternoon. What if their motel got black-balled? All because of an unfortunate death her family had no real part in? People in this town seemed such small-minded idiots; she was starting to realize that.

Her fears were relieved somewhat, when a petite blonde woman opened the office door and walked in. She was carrying a rolling suitcase in one hand and had a dry-cleaning-bag-covered hanger in the other. A tan-colored sheriff's uniform was visible under the plastic.

"Hi, I need a room for the next week or so. I just moved here, and I still need to find an apartment." she told Norma. The woman looked to be in her mid-forties, with low-lighted blonde hair tied back in a low knot, warm grey-blue eyes, and an easy smile.

"Of course! Will this be cash or charge?" Norma asked her.

"Charge." The woman handed Norma her credit card. "I suppose I should introduce myself, this being such a small town. My name's Leyla Harrison. I'm your new Sheriff's Deputy." She held out her hand and Norma shook it.

"Great to meet you, Deputy Harrison. I'll get you set up in Room 1."

