

Chapter 9: "It's the Same Old Village"

Norman turned the laptop so she could see it. "This thing called candle magick. We'd need five black candles, rock salt, chalk, and water. It comes from white witchcraft."

"Mother?" he asked when she didn't answer right away. Norma was absorbed in reading the web page, with its purple and black color scheme and fancy cursive title.

"I'm listening." she said softly. The whole idea was somehow silly yet fascinating at the same time. She settled partly on his lap as Norman caressed her hip. "Why not?" She'd clicked over to a history-of-witchcraft page on the same site, began skimming it. "This kind of thing has been practiced for centuries. I'd think there has to be at least something to it."

This was the change in her that made love and a fierce sense of protection rise in Norman. The amnesia had rendered her more open to different ideas. She had no frame of reference, therefore no reason to dismiss something like witchcraft with a smart-ass remark. It also made Norma more open to suggestion, and damned if he was going to let anyone else plant any bad things in her mind.

"Okay, Mother. Let's go ahead and get that stuff, on the way home. "We'll try that shop where you got the sage; they've got to have black candles. They have them in every other color. The place is actually down the block from this hardware store where I've gotten stuff I needed for the motel."

Norma felt herself relax against him, enjoying listening to him talk about anything at all. "Oh? You've done such a wonderful job with this place, honey."

His lips brushed against her jawline, "I'll never have it any other way. If you feel up to it, want to stop by there and look at paint samples for the house? The owner gets new ones in all the time."

"I'd love to," she grinned, now thinking these errands were looking up.

He was secretly thrilled at the idea of introducing Norma to the hardware store's proprietor: Maddie Cavanaugh (formerly Loomis). Happily divorced, she'd built it into quite the thriving business all on her own during the past three years. Her unfaithful ex-husband had left town before the ink was dry on the divorce papers, and good riddance. Norman would never forget the surprise of stopping by for light bulbs and seeing the store's sign being replaced with "Cavanaugh Hardware."

"I went back to my maiden name," Maddie had explained as she rung up his purchases. "No way in hell was I keeping that bastard's name." She added with airy satisfaction: "But I sure kept a big chunk of his money, plus 80% ownership of this place."

Recalling that, Norman sensed Maddie and Norma would get along very well. He was looking forward to this.

Obviously other people wouldn't consider it "normal" if they walked in and saw Norma half-sitting on her son's lap. She reluctantly got another chair from the back office and pulled it up next to him. The rest of the morning was spent in the peaceful quiet they'd come to cherish. Norman told her more good memories, of them baking cookies and her playing the piano back when he was a little boy. Then about the day she'd burst into his room, full of excitement with the news they were moving to Oregon to start all over. Norma closed her eyes for a moment, trying to picture any of it. The only thing that surfaced in her memory was of the waves rolling ashore on the beach. She'd seen that plenty of times from the car, going back and forth to PT or some other errand they needed to run. The accompanying sadness had mostly

receded, now that they were together. Compared to their love, lost memories seemed to matter less anymore.

Several times, one of their gazes drifted back toward the sofa where they'd gotten playful earlier. The temptation never left them, though they somehow managed to wait. Close to lunchtime, Norma got up and stretched her back, then tugged Norman to his feet before wrapping her arms around his waist.

"I should go make us lunch, before it starts to rain. Those clouds are getting darker and I know what that means."

"Sounds great, Mother."

She stole a quick kiss, "Be back soon."

Norman's sweet smile made her reluctant to leave him even for that brief time. They'd gotten into the routine of Norma bringing lunch down to the office instead of them closing it for an hour. Too often, that was exactly when a guest arrived.

He turned on the radio low, for background noise. Norman's thoughts wandered after he had enough of reading about this white magick stuff online. That spell had to be done in the spot where the entity originated. He struggled to remember where in the house he'd first hallucinated the unreal version of her. The trouble was: Norman could no longer recall the exact moment. It had to have been in either his bedroom or the basement; that was where he'd spent most of his time back then. For some reason, his mind kept going back to "belt."

Oh yeah, that's it. When I had to get that rapist's belt back from the cops. That's it: I first saw her then. Sitting on the edge of my bed next to me.

"So we have to do it in my room," he said under his breath. Norman reread the directions, and it was only logical that he'd be the one to follow them. He'd been the first one to ever see her. Yet Norma wasn't going to like that; she seemed to have grown genuinely interested in this spell-casting and would want to do it herself. Norman tried to think of a way to bring it up with fewer chances of an argument.

But he got no more time to ruminate on that, as a family of four pulled up and came in asking about a room. Norman stood up and gave them his best motel-manager's smile. "Yes, of course we have rooms. Welcome to the Bates Motel." As he ran their credit card, the mom gushed about how vintage and cool the place was.

"Thank you, that's always great to hear about it. Here, I'll put you in..." He turned to get the key off its hook, ...Room Seven. For good luck."

As they were heading out the office door, Norma breezed in carrying sandwiches on plates, "Hello, I'm Norma Bates; welcome! Let us know if you need anything." she said warmly.

"Great; getting any business is always good news." She pushed Norman his plate across the desk and took her seat at his side. Norman couldn't agree more. It kept up appearances.

After they finished eating, he figured it was pointless to stall. "Mother, we need to do that ritual thing in my room. That's where I first saw her, a long time ago. I remember that now. I think I should be the one to do it."

Her eyebrows raised and Norma laughed instead of getting upset. Not quite the reaction he expected. "Oh really?" she teased him, "After you were the one who made fun of me for the sage? Now you want to try some magick yourself, hmm?" She tickled his side, making him jump and grasp her hand. He brought it up to his lips, kissed her fingers.

"You already know the kind of magic I can do in bed," His blue eyes locked on hers, making her breath catch, "I thought I'd try my hand at this kind," he teased her back, only sounding more suggestive with every word.

Her own ice-blue eyes grew a shade darker with lust, "I sure as hell do know that," The urge to give his lower lip a teasing bite was driving her wild. But they really had to be careful now. Any minute one of those kids or their parents could come out of their room to get ice or something. Reluctantly, Norma pulled back. "I wanted to do it," she sulked slightly, "But all right. You do it. I'm going to be right there, of course. I guess it'd be stupid to argue over something like this we found in some online--" She woke up the laptop, "--Grimoire. If this doesn't work...I don't know, Norman. Part of me feels hopeful, and part me is hoping we're not just running in circles with this."

"I know, but like you said: we don't know for sure this kinda thing can't work."

They both didn't want to dwell on the matter anymore for now. There were other things to take care of first. The rest of the afternoon passed quicker than they would've thought. Norman got caught up in showing her online photos of the different rose species he had planted in the sizable garden beside their house. Such gorgeous pieces of nature that had been nourished by the decaying corpse of a blood enemy. It wasn't the first time he found this poetic.

At four o'clock, they turned off the computer and lights, turned the "Open" sign to "Closed," and locked up. Plenty of time to get to the DMV before it closed at five. Norman held open his mother's sky-blue wool coat for her, giving her a loving squeeze after she put it on. That coat now held beautiful memories for them. It would become her favorite over any other.

The line at the DMV was long, even for late afternoon on a weekday. Norma and Norman had been waiting about 15 minutes as it slowly inched forward, before

noticing the pinched-faced, angry-looking woman glaring at them from further ahead. When she finished her business at the counter, she speed-walked past, knocking hard into Norma's shoulder with her own.

"Hey! What the hell's your problem?!" Norma snapped, her turn to glare.

"So you really are back from the dead, huh?" came the cruel retort. "Too bad it had to be you and not Lee Berman, Mrs. Bates!" The woman spat at her, "Still happy he died right after your little tantrum at the city council meeting? I was there with the PTA, and we still remember how obnoxious you acted towards us," She smirked and folded her arms, "It's poetic justice the memorial bypass taking traffic away from your dump of a motel got named in his remembrance!"

"I don't know what you're talking about, but screw off, bitch!" Norma fired back at her, not caring they were making a spectacle, "Whatever I said, I'm sure it was well-deserved! Now leave me and my son alone!"

She whipped her back to the departing former PTA mother, still fuming. "The nerve of some people!"

Norman had been saucer-eyed at the whole exchange, too stunned to come up with anything to say before the two had finished their heated war of words. "You called this councilman Lee Berman a dick at a city council meeting, years ago. Because he insulted you when you said the bypass was going to hurt our business." He threaded his arm through her elbow, trying to ignore the stares and murmurs. His mother held her head up and purposefully ignored them too.

"I'd give anything to be able to remember that," Norma admitted, struggling to keep the hitch out of her voice. "Apparently there are a few dicks in this town."

"I'd give anything to have been there when you called him that!" Norman couldn't help but laugh a little, "And those whiny women deserved you giving them a wake-up call how the world really is. Don't let it get to you, Mother. Those people aren't worth it. They're not all like that in this village. Some are nice."

Finally it was their turn. Norma gave a defiantly broad smile as her picture was snapped for the ID card. Their next stop was the bank to drop in the \$5k. Things were falling into place even more, the incident brushed aside as Norman found an open spot at a parking meter half a block from the New Age shop. She squeezed his hand before they exited the car, her expression wistful. "I wish we could be out in the open, because I love you so much."

"Me too." His lips curled into that perfect smile. "We'll go visit somewhere no one knows us. Get away for a little while, maybe this summer." Norman gave her cheek a quick kiss, "I'd love so much to hold your hand and kiss you, wherever we are. Soon."

For now, they had to be content with walking side by side and pretending to be nothing more than mother and son. "Some things have changed around here, but at its heart: It's the same old village. Only better."

"That's good to know, honey. I don't want to run into more creeps ranting about what I can't remember. I'd rather stick close to home. Well, once we can get rid of...you know." Norma was not going to mention the reason for today's visit to the shop, not on the street where passers-by might overhear. Some people may be nice in this town, but she knew enough about how quickly gossip spread.

This time she spent a while browsing around through the bins of tall candles, as well as through the variety of stones, crystals, jewelry, and books on manifestation, meditation, Wicca, and plenty more. Norman grew bored after a while but didn't want to look impatient, sticking by the door and holding the black candles, vial of rock salt,

and a few other things she'd added. The last thing Norma grabbed was a paperback on the history of witchcraft in America. If nothing else, it would make for an interesting read while she was doing her leg workouts.

Norman pushed the door to the hardware store open, holding it for her. Norma's eyes immediately fell on the very pretty blonde woman behind the counter. Maddie was helping another customer, but she still looked over and gave Norman a welcoming smile. Then her eyes widened and her expression shifted as she noticed who was standing next to him. Norman's mother awakening from a five-year coma had been the talk of White Pine Bay for months. Awakened and eventually strong again, a medical anomaly that happened one time in millions.

At seeing Ms. Cavanaugh, Norma shared a similar look on her face: surprise, disbelief, even a little nervousness. Though she couldn't have said why she felt the last one. The woman looked uncannily like her: same shade of blue eyes, the same height, similar face shapes and hair color. Even nearly the same hairstyle.

"Norman," she whispered at him, "She looks exactly like me. Just ten years younger. If that much. Is that why you started shopping here?"

He didn't have time to respond before: "Norman!" Maddie rushed from around the counter and met them halfway up the aisle, with a warm smile of welcome. "And...Mrs. Bates!" She extended her hand and Norma accepted it. "I never thought I'd get the chance to meet you. You look wonderful! I was so happy when I heard the news. You're all Norman ever talked about."

Norma began returning that infectious smile as she shook her hand. "Norma," she corrected, "Please call me 'Norma' It's nice to meet you too. And thank you." She was getting a clearer idea of why Norman had been drawn to this vivacious woman. Not only because they resembled each other so much. Hell, Norma began to feel slightly drawn to her as well.

"We're here because I want to have our house repainted, and Norman said this is the place for paint samples."

This only added to Maddie's enthusiasm, "Of course, come on. I'll get the binders. I'm glad for the recommendation, Norman!"

One at a time, Maddie pulled three thick binders out from the shelves under the counter. She and Norma wasted no time flipping through them, discussing various shades of blue for all the trim and which whites would look best without throwing a glare in the sun. The ancient looking wood of the old house would need to be sanded smooth and primed before being painted. It was a big job, one that would net Cavanaugh Hardware a handsome profit. One that Norma was more than willing to provide. Strange how she found herself so at ease talking to this woman she'd just met.

The conversation gradually moved away from the differences in shades of light blue Norman had offered an occasional comment, but this was his mother's project first. Maddie had glanced at the dark green canvas shopping bag Norma had set on the floor. Finally she commented, "Oh, what did you get over at Crystal Pathways? I keep meaning to go browse over there, just haven't had the time."

"Umm...this book I thought looked interesting," Norma plucked the Wicca history book out of the bag, not mentioning the rest of the haul. "Something to read while I'm working out my legs. I have to do that every day, build the muscles back up."

"It looks like you've been dedicated to it," Maddie looked vaguely shocked for a second, that those words came out of her mouth without thought.

"It's been tough, but worth it." Norma said, "Well, we'll take these." She gathered up the dozen or so each of blue and white paint color cards. "Oh, I was wondering: You have a lovely-sounding last name, Maddie. Is it French?"

"French-Canadian on my dad's side. Louisiana Cajun on my mother's. So I've had more than passing encounters with this kind of thing," She handed Norma back the book, "Let me know what you think of it."

The two women appeared to have forgotten Norman was beside them. He added, "Maddie, you probably need to come over and take a look at the house. You know, to see how much paint it might need."

"Well, that's more the contractors' job. But sure: I could come and get a general idea."

"How about Saturday after closing?" his mother suggested before he could.

"That would be perfect. I don't do much after closing, usually just hang out at home with Netflix."

After saying their good-byes and agreeing on six o'clock Saturday evening, Norma gave his hand a squeeze as they walked towards the car, "Norman, honey, did you become friends with her because she looks like me? Tell me the truth."

"Yes. That was a lot of the reason." he admitted.

"I can tell you like her. She's very pretty and very nice," Norma opened the passenger door and slid in next to him, "I like her too." Her eyes grew more intense, "So this is an interesting situation, isn't it?"

There was no need to elaborate. He knew exactly what she meant. Hell, the unspoken erotic tension was thick enough in the small space of the car. Thick with taboo forbidden-seeming thoughts running through both of them. Norman took the risk and slid one hand under her skirt as he kept his eyes on the road, feeling the

warm smooth skin of her inner thigh. Her eyes closed and she breathed out, "Mm..." He massaged in circles higher, then stroked his fingers lightly over the silky fabric covering her mound. Norma's knees dropped further apart, as much as space allowed. "More.." He rubbed over her clit, still on the outside, only increasing the pressure a little. It was not going to be harder or quicker until she begged. Two fingers slipped under the elastic and just inside her. "Ohh.."

"You're so wet already," Norman somehow managed to keep the car steady on the road and get them parked safely at home. The next thing they knew, the front doors were flung open and slammed behind them seconds before they were on each other. With more renewed strength, Norma pushed him against the shut door and kissed him with all the pent-up need from the whole day.

His hands roamed over her hips, yanking her tight against his straining arousal before cupping and squeezing her ass hard enough to make her give a short yelp. Her legs wrapped around his waist as Norman lifted her. They were not going to make it upstairs. Norma held him tight around his shoulders as he carried her fast to the sofa. Her skirt was bunched up and he grabbed the waist of her panties, yanking them down as she sat back, her legs spreading.

"I'm gonna make you cum...hard.." His low and promising words sent a tremor of hot need through her. He kissed her lips one more time before kneeling, gently pushing her knees even further apart until he could see every fold of her. "Fuck. You're so beautiful." Gently he licked at her soaked entrance, slowly up and down one side before the other, taking his time and tasting all her sweet flavor he could get.

"Please...Norman.." she was gasping, "..Do it.."

"Do what, Mother? Hm?"

"You know what! You're driving me crazy for god's sake don't stop!"

He looked up, a wicked grin on his still-wet lips. "No, I don't. What do you want me to do?"

"Suck my clit, right now!" She took a handful of his hair and pushed him back down, "Don't you fucking dare stop.."

"Of course, Mother." he exposed her swelling little nub more, fascinated at her slick pink flesh turning a shade darker with her aching arousal. Getting her to talk dirty made the already-hard bulge in his pants swell. Norman wrapped his lips around her clit, sucking slowly at first before massaging with his tongue. He kept moving down to suck more on the lips of her opening and dip his tongue just inside. Then back to her clit before she had the chance to draw much of a breath. His hands reached under her dress and stroked her naked hips, then her sides. Norma was letting out louder moans, squirming and bucking her hips as he gradually sped up. He shoved two fingers inside her, rougher than before. Raking and rubbing over that spongy sensitive spot, and it didn't take long.

Norma's back arched and hips jerked hard as she came, her scream so loud that her throat burned for a couple of seconds. He slid in a third finger, still massaging her g-spot and having her ride out the hardest orgasm she'd ever had.

She went limp against the cushions, her face shiny with a light sheen of sweat. "God..honey. That was fucking amazing," Norma weakly pulled at her son and lover's shoulders, bringing him into her embrace and kissing his cheeks, then his lips. Norman caressed her lips with his, savoring it.

He bit her neck softly, "Mother," He whispered into her ear, "I'd love to take you from behind. Could we? Please?" Suddenly the sweet, shy side of him was back, asking, waiting for her permission. It only made her want him more. Her mind and body had no recollection of the past sexual violence she'd been subjected to in that position,

including from Norman's late father. A reset button had been hit. As with so many things, it was her first time all over again. "Yes, baby. We can," She gave him another lingering kiss. "Go slow, at first. Then harder." She shifted onto her feet as he moved off her, then she reached down and unfastened his pants, pulled them and his briefs down his legs. Norma turned her back to him as his arms encircled her waist. He kissed lower along her neck as he gently pushed on her lower back. She bent over and gripped the dark wood of the couch frame, his hands sliding her skirt up around her waist, teasing her with the anticipation.

"Spread your legs," his voice was almost guttural. He pressed against her and grasped his cock, rubbed the tip against her slickness, then over her clit. "Do you want this, Mother? Hm?"

"YES!! Please, baby! Please!" This teasing was driving her insane. "Bring that beautiful cock inside me! NOW!" He slid slowly into her to the hilt, Norma letting out an animalistic moan. In this position, it was an entirely new sensation. He began sliding back and forth, slowly, spreading her apart. His hands gripped her ass and hips, landing a smack every so often. Norma's head dropped as one hand grasped the back of the couch for support. The other reached under her dress and rubbed one hardening nipple. She closed her eyes and thought of that sunny blonde hair, that sweet demeanor, that perfect and easy smile. She also thought of smaller, more feminine hands gripping her hips. Oh, if they brought that woman here to join them. The possibilities seemed endless.

