

## 10. ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

The air was crisp. Spring had been pushed back few more weeks for the last rage of winter. It was raining hard outside. She had been out for while, and now she was wet and shivering.

“You’re shaking,” remarked Jack.

It was more than the cold. She was visibly afraid.

“I feel like he’s always watching me. I just don’t know what to do.”

She broke down crying. He gave her his shoulder.

“I really hate being like this,” she apologized. It made her feel more helpless. Whoever it was that was trying to harm her was successful. He was breaking her down.

“I’m looking after you. I’ve got my eyes on you. No one’s going to harm you.”

She hated the fact that her opponent was invisible. It was like battling a ghost. Maybe Jack could find the person before he did something worse. It was a battle with time. She felt that she was giving in. She was slowly losing her perspective.

She changed into a more comfortable blouse and her lounge-around jeans. She sat across from him on the couch.

“There’s room for two of us here,” she motioned to him with her hands.

She had her legs crossed. She was barefoot.

I know there’s a lot of country around here. But he can’t hid forever.”

“He? Do you know something that I don’t.”

“I’m just assuming from everything that’s happened so far that he’s a big man. I guess we really don’t know.”

She feared someone more powerful than herself. She felt like she needed an edge. Jack came over and sat next to her.

“Here put your arms around me.?”

He cuddled next to her.

“You make me feel safe.”

He stared in her eyes. He tried to kiss her. He could already taste her lips. She restrained him.

“Jack, I told you that I don’t want to have sex with you.”

“I just thought that you wanted to kiss me. You gave me that look.”

She answered back sharply, “What look?”

He was really becoming confused.

“I thought that you were warming up to me.”

“I didn’t say anything because I thought that you had put away your feelings.”

“I can’t hide how I feel.”

He was closer to her than he had been before. She needed to stand up.

“It’s not the right time. I can’t give you my heart when I don’t knew whose heart this is?”

He didn’t want to give up. He gave her his puppy dog eyes. She had tears in her eyes. She looked away and tried to gather the tears back in before they flowed down her face.

“I want you, Jack. I do. I just want this to be right.”

He was again closed to her.

“If you want me, don’t play with me.”

She turned her back on him. She wanted to regain her composure. She didn’t want him to see her as weak.

His muscular arm was bursting through his short-sleeved shirt. She wanted him to turn her around and just kiss her. She knew how she would dissolve in his arms. She needed to put her feelings in check, to slow it all down. This had worked before. But now her fear was greater and she didn’t know what to do.

“Kiss me, Sienna.”

“No, Jack”

She wasn’t playing hard to get. She just didn’t know what she was playing. Nothing made sense to her. If she could just get one memory back to help her make sense of it all. Surely, there was a whole life for her out there. Maybe even a true love of her own.

Now she felt that she was settling for Jack. It made her more hesitant to go along with him. Sure, he was right here for her, but that could only make things worse.

She wondered if she was missing love or running away from love. She moved near him and collapsed in his arms. It wasn’t love; it was a need to feel more secure. If she gave him time, she felt that she could love him.

She sensed a warmth in his kiss. She wanted this to mean something. How could it when he could be hiding something from her. She needed to know who he was.

She pulled her lips away from his and stayed in his embrace. He made her feel all warm inside. She had been afraid. She had been cold. She was no longer afraid. She pulled him towards her and put her head on his shoulder. There was nothing to hold her back.

When she finally surrendered to his kiss, she gave him all her body. Not a muscle resisted his touch. If her killer was out there now, she’d be an easy target. She was completely vulnerable. Who could save her?

It was only a little while ago that someone had been shooting at her. Now she was making love with Jack up in her bedroom. The caress had led to a deeper embrace. But she still hadn’t given him all of herself. They were sitting on the bed; they were still dressed. He put his hand on her breast. She put her hand on top of his and held it there. He kissed her again. The kissed seemed to last forever. It brought them closer. She could have tried to stop him from going any further. But she could hardly do that to herself now. She wanted him more than anything else in the world.

He lay on top of her. They gradually swayed together.

Her bodyguard could hardly protect her now. She hoped that someone wasn’t skulking around in the darkness. All that could be heard in the room was their rhythmic breathing. She welcomed the passionate calm. Their excitement for each other radiated from the calm so that the intensities of feeling rolled over them. He pushed her to experience more and more profound ecstasies. She could no longer contain herself.

Her liberating cries filled the night. If there was someone listening, they certainly would have come running to see what was all the commotion. She did not spare anything as she worked to get to know him. She felt all his secrets melted away under the extreme heat of their affectionate bodies. Even as the ultimate vigor subsided, there was still a pull that held them together.

Satisfied, they shared a bed together. His embrace carried them through the night.

In the morning she tried to carry on the affection. He pretended as if the night had caused him to err, and he had to take back his mistake.

“You’re making me feel like you regret what you did.”

“It’s not that I regret anything. I never thought that it would end up like that.”

“Do you hate me for it? You’ve been pressuring me for over a week.”

He seemed at a loss for words. “No, but you’ve been trying to hold me off. Now this. I don’t know what to make of it.”

“Did you have fun?”

“More than that. I just don’t want to feel used.”

“You shouldn’t feel bad about this. This is what you wanted.”

She was getting a clearer intuition about him. He had staked his prey and enjoyed the hunt. Now his interest seemed to wane after he had gotten what he wanted. He rushed around trying to get ready. He pretended that the night before hadn’t happened.

“I’m sorry if I seem like a jerk. It’s just that I have get down to the station.”

“I’m sorry.”

He tried to make the best of things.

“I’ll stop on by later.”

He was a mystery to her. She had worked to break down that wall. It only made him resist her more. Did he know something that he didn’t want to tell her? It was hard for her figuring it all out.

Sienna spent the day reading a mystery novel on the porch. Lynette came back from work that evening.

“He was here last night.”

“Yeah, he was.”

Lynette quizzed her.

“You don’t sound all that excited.”

“I’m not. We had a really great time. Then he just went back into his shell.”

She tried to cover for him, “You’ve got to understand that he’s always been that way. You can teach an old dog new tricks.”

She remembered his gentle caress on her shoulder. She longed for his kiss.

“Sometimes you’ve got to try!”

“Are you going to see him tonight?”

“I don’t know what he’s up to. He ran out of here like a rabbit being chased by a hunting dog.”

“If he doesn’t want to party. Let go out and get some drinks on our own.”

“Not the Roadhouse again.”

“I know another place. It’s a bit of a drive. Cartersville.”

“I’m just getting sick of being hassled by Billy Nobody.”

“Lynette’s taking care of you tonight.”

Lynette put on her short jeans skirt and her boots. She was ready for a serious party.

They were already in the car and driving when Lynette asked her, “Sienna, how do you get your eyes to look like that. I would like some tips from you.”

“I’ll show you next time that we go out.”

“That’s a promise that you better keep.”

“Those are the only kind.”

Sienna felt like she was taking a break from the emotional drain of the night before. She had fallen hard for Jack, and now he was giving her the cold shoulder. She wasn’t going to let it get to her. She had enough to worry about.

The bar in Cartersville wasn’t that different than the Roadhouse. But it was a change of scenery.

A biker seemed to be giving her the eye.

“Do you know me?” she wondered.

“If I knew you, I don’t think that I’d forget.”

He wanted to smile, but there was a mean glare in his look.

“You were giving me a strange look.”

“I just assumed that you’ve lived a lifetime of strange looks. You can just add mine to your collection.”

Sienna persisted, “So you’ve never seen me in here before.”

“If you can’t remember, it must have been one hell of a party.”

Lynette came back to the table to see Sienna going down fast. She thought that she’d have to come in for a rescue mission.

“Is this dude hassling my lady?”

He gave one look at Lynette and had a quick comeback.

“She came up to me. I guess she couldn’t resist a handsome SOB like me.”

She didn’t want to encourage him to get aggressive. “Yeah, I guess that’s what it was. Well thanks for taking care of her.”

Back at the table, Sienna attempted to explain, “I thought that he knew me from somewhere. I guess I’ll always be looking for clues. Something to put it all in place.”

“You’ve got to watch yourself in a place like this. If you show the least interest the guy will be bird dogging you for the rest of the night.”

“I’m just trying to find out information.”

She still wasn’t sure about Lynette. She appeared to be getting in the way as if there was something that she didn’t want Sienna to find out.

Sienna continued, “I guess you’ve got my back. Thanks, dear.”

“The only thing that you can trust in here is the alcohol. Everything else is pure poison.”

“You took me here!”

“You told me that you wanted to get out of the Roadhouse.”

“I did. Thanks for the drink.”

She realized that alcohol was sometimes her only consolation. It was all about getting to know herself differently. After a few drinks, they were already telling jokes.

“Guys are all the same, Sienna. They’re all talk until they have to put up or shut up.”

In the back of her mind, Sienna was thinking about Jack. What was he really up to? Why hadn’t he found more about her case. He was just taking it to heart. Getting lost on the subject of the investigation.

Sienna didn’t want to say anything more about it to Lynette. She didn’t want to let on

that she was worried about what might happen with Jack. The less that Lynette interfered the better.

The biker was staring at their table.

“Lynette let’s get out of here before he comes back over here.”

Lynette was a little suspicious of the motive.

“He said that he didn’t know you.”

“Yeah.”

“I wish that you could just remember something.”

“I’m trying my damndest to make something happen.”

Lynette advanced a wild plan, “Maybe we should go back to the site, and see if it might not trigger some memories.”

She liked the suggestion. But it was 2 in the morning.

“Are you sure that you want to do this? We’ll be stumbling around in the dark.”

“Yeah, but I bet no one’s around there right now.”

“I don’t think that I could find it in the dark.”

“I know exactly where it is .”

As they got closer to home, Sienna pressed her to change the plan.

“Let’s go there another time.”

“Sienna, what can you remember about that night.”

“Not much at all. I remember something about a struggle. And someone was trying to hurt me. But that’s about it.”

Lynette was extra curious. She wanted to pry for more details, but she felt that Sienna couldn’t tell her much.

“Maybe you’re right. We’ve had too much to drink. I don’t want to pass out in the woods. Not tonight.”

She begged off without much resistance. Sienna headed up to her room.

“I’m going to turn in. Thanks for getting me out of the house.”

Jack had been there while they were out. He left a note on her door. It apologized for his behavior that morning. He said that he hoped to see her again sometime during that week.

She met him for coffee at the diner.

“I’m really sorry about the other night.”

“Jack, I have no trouble accepting your apology. Maybe we should just take some time off.”

“I really didn’t mean it to come to this.”

“No, really. It would be best for both of us. I hardly know any more now than a few weeks ago. I know that my killer is still out there. But I have no idea why anyone would want to hurt me.”

She could sense possessiveness on his part.

“That’s why it might be better if I was around you more.”

“But he’s not going to try something if you’re around me all the time. The only way to flush him out is if he thinks that you’re not around.”

“I could follow you.”

“It’s just better that you don’t draw attention to me.”

“Are you saying that you can take care of yourself? He tried to kill you.”

“It’s not up to you to deal with this on your own. Warren can make sure there’s always someone looking out for me.”

“I told him that I can do that job.”

“You’re already too mixed in to me personally.”

His frustration was only making it more difficult to convince him. She should have realized that this might happen. She needed to find the man who gave her the look at the gas station. Anyone who could help her remember.

“Did you go to the station after I told you about that guy?”

“I thought that you said that you weren’t sure.”

“You didn’t do a follow up?”

Warren sent someone down there.”

“You needed to pull all the credit card receipts for that day.”

She wondered why they had been so lax with the investigation. It was almost as if someone knew what was really going on and he was were dragging his feet until the trail was too cold to follow up.

She had been putting together her own chronology since the accident. The patterns had been starting to emerge for her. Now it was just too cloudy to make sense. All this stuff with Jack was throwing a wrench in the machine. She needed a way to straighten it all out.

More than ever, she felt that she was on her own. Warren was too incompetent to do anything. And Jack had his own agenda. She was afraid that she was becoming part of it. She had tried to run away once before. This now seemed like the perfect time.