

## 11. 'TIL DEATH DOES ITS PART

Too much was happening for Siena to leave it up to the police to do their job. She stopped by at the station to see Warren.

"It's been a week since I saw that guy at the gas station. You haven't even checked the credit card receipts."

"I had a man sick all last week. It's not like this is Atlanta. We don't have that many men to spare."

"But someone's been to the house since then."

"You don't even know if those things are connected. That could just be kids."

"Warren, something is wrong here. First, someone tries to kill me. Then this guy gives me suspicious looks. And now this. The message in my room. If you don't see a pattern, then what more do you need?"

She left out the details of the dress. That only added to her fears.

"I'll do it myself. I go over there myself."

"Was Jack ever married?"

"That comes out of left field."

"This picture fell out of his wallet. It had an inscription on it about his upcoming wedding. It looked like an old picture. I really couldn't look at it too closely."

"Were you going through his wallet?"

"I told you that it just fell on the floor and I picked it up."

"He was going with some girl years ago. But she moved to Rome."

"What was her name?"

"Elsie Jones. I think that she works at the library in Rome."

"Wow." She tried to change the subject back, "You look up those receipts for me."

"I sure will."

The library in Rome. She needed to follow that lead, only go to Rome and ask Elsie a few questions.

Rome wasn't that far. And it wasn't very big. Siena found the directions to the library.

"Elsie works here. But it's her day off."

"I'm Sienna Thompkins, an old friend. Is there any way that I can get in touch with her?"

The woman at the library was entirely trusting. Sienna gave her a big smile.

"She reads stories at the elementary school on her day off. She should be finished in about ten minutes. Maybe you can catch her."

Sienna watched a red haired woman leaving the school as she drove up. She jumped out of her car so that she could catch up with her.

"Elsie Jones, " she called.

Elsie turned around a little surprised.

"I'm a friend of Jack. Jack Norris."

Elsie turned white as a sheet. She stood there motionless. Then she moved.

"I thought that he'd try to catch up with me after all these years."

"He doesn't know anything about this. I hope that you won't tell him. Can we go somewhere for coffee?"

“Who are you? Why should I go with you.”

“I’m Sienna. I think that’s my name. I was in an accident. And I lost my memory. Jack found me.”

“Are you seeing him?”

“He’s been trying to help me. To help me get my memory back. But it hasn’t been helping.”

“What can I possibly do for you?”

“I thought that if I knew Jack better that I could figure out what he has to do with all this.”

Elsie suggested that they get some coffee at Delite’s. She seemed to warm up to Sienna there.

“We were married. It was something that I had looked forward to all my life. But it was nothing like I thought.”

“Jack never hit you, did he?” Sienna was anxious for information.

“No, it was nothing like that. He just so distant like he had another life.”

“He’s still like that.” Elsie felt a little hurt by the revelation. She knew that there was more going on than Sienna admitted.

“Jack doesn’t know that you came here.”

“No.”

“I hope that he won’t be mad.”

“Please don’t tell him!”

“I won’t.”

“Do you miss him?”

“He’s not part of my life any more. We didn’t stay together that long. Once we realized that it wasn’t going to work out we ended it. I couldn’t stay in Cordelia any longer. I came up here and made a new life for myself.”

“He never even raised his voice with you. He never became angry.”

“That wasn’t the Jack I knew. When something bothered him, he’d just go out in the woods somewhere. He felt this need to get away. That’s all that I can say.”

“I just feel something weird when I’m around him.”

“That’s not Jack.”

Sienna wanted to press her for more information. But she felt that she had learned enough. She hoped that Warren had done some more investigating by the time that she got back to Cordelia. She figured that she’d check up the next day.

When she arrived back at the house, she saw Max jumping around. She knew that Jack was there. She needed to prepare herself for him.

He was inside when he heard the car pull up. He walked onto the porch.

“Hey. Good to see you.” He seemed reserved.

She moved closer to give him a hug. He backed away.

“Is something wrong?”

“No. I just had a bad day at work.”

“Sorry to hear that. I haven’t seen you in a few days. I thought that you were avoiding me.”

“You could have asked me anything that you wanted to know.” He seemed a little brusque with her.

“What do you mean?”

“I know what you did?”

“What?”

“You drove to Rome.”

“I took a drive.”

“You went to see my ex-wife.”

“You hid it from me.”

“I didn’t lie about it. I just never thought that it was important.”

“You hid it from me,” she was becoming angrier.

“I’m sorry. We were kids. It was years ago. It didn’t last.”

“Lynette made you out to be this lone wolf who had never been tamed. But you had a secret.”

“And you went to Rome without asking me.”

“I need you permission now.”

“You were checking up on me.”

“Were you following me?”

“Elsie called me.”

“She told me that she wasn’t going to call.” She looked over at him. He seemed broken up.

“She was my wife. She had nothing to do with you. All of a sudden you show up at her work. She was suspicious. She called me.”

“I’m sorry that I went up there. I agree that I should have asked you first. I had to know.”

“You don’t trust me,” he was defensive.

“You make it hard to trust you.” He tried to hug her. She blocked his advance.

“I told you that I need more time to make sense of this. I don’t even know who I am.”

“Are we breaking up?”

She was taken aback, “We’ve hardly been together.”

The strain was becoming difficult for her. She felt frightened about the world. He was only adding to that fear.

She voiced her confusion, “I just need you to leave me alone.”

When Lynette came home that evening, Sienna was at her wit’s end.

“Maybe I shouldn’t stay here any longer.”

“I told you that my house was your house.”

“Lynette, you’re going to hate me after what I’ve done. I drove up to Rome today.”

“You should have never done that. Did Jack stop by here?”

“He was pissed.”

“He should be. You shouldn’t have opened that wound. It took him a long while to get over it. To make himself normal again.”

“What happened?”

“Not that much. He just loved her. But he couldn’t make a go of things. That was years before he was part of the sheriff’s office. I really felt sorry for him then. She really broke his

heart.”

“It was all her doing.”

“No, not at all. It’s just that she saw it coming to an end before he did. She didn’t want to hang on. She left Cordelia. That was all too sudden for him. He could have taken a gradual change. But she just up and left one day. They filed for divorce soon after that. He pretended that they could have reconciled. In his heart, he knew that they were over.”

Sienna wanted to make it up to Lynette, “I don’t mind if you want me to go.”

“Don’t worry about it. It’s only natural that you feel the way that you do. Especially after you went through all that with Jack. I warned you about my cousin.”

“You also sang his praises. I think that you softened me up.”

“He deserves the best.”

“I know that!”

It had been a long day. Sienna thought that she had a little more information to assist her in her search. She thought that it was time to get ready for bed. Lynette was working the late shift, and she was alone in the house. Her light was the only one on inside. From outside the window, you could see her silhouette through the curtains.

She moved about the room as she hung up her clothes from the day. She stood in place a few minutes as she worked to pull her nightgown over her head. As she was doing this, the clasp on her silver chain opened and the chain fell to the floor. She watched it fall. Then she stooped down to pick it up. As she reached down, she heard a crash. Something came through the window. She looked at the glass. It looked like a bullet hole. She stayed down. She quickly flipped the light off. She was on all fours crawling in the dark.

“What the hell was happening?”

She was afraid. She kept thinking about the doors. Had Lynette locked them? She didn’t want to go downstairs. But she was trapped up here. If the shooter decided to come in the house, she had no way to get out. She was panicking. She had no way to fight him off. She needed to get to the phone.

There was an extension in Lynette’s room. She usually kept the door closed. Sienna stayed down. She slithered over to the door, and pushed it open. It wasn’t locked. The phone was on the night table. She pulled it down. She heard the dial tone. She breathed easier. The lines hadn’t been cut. She nervously dialed the sheriff’s office.

They ran the siren when they pulled up so that they’d make her feel safer. It was her signal to leave her hiding place. She was in her robe and slippers. Warren and Jerry both made it by. Each was in a separate car.

“I couldn’t get Jack on the radio. I think that he might have gone to Rome. He seemed pretty shaken up.”

“I’m pretty shaken up. Whoever it is, I know that they’re still out there. That thing on the mirror was more than a prank.”

Jerry took a look in the back. “

”I found some shell casings. It all makes sense from where the shots hit the window.”

“I only heard one shot,” claimed Sienna.

Warren comforted her, “We’ll have the lab take a look at the casings. And I’ll have Jerry stay here for the rest of the night. I’ll be back tomorrow to ask some more questions.”

Sienna gave Jerry some help, “You can camp out on the couch. There’s the TV. Do you want me to get you some coffee?”

“I’m OK for now.” He had a cup with him in his car. Warren walked the grounds himself. He bent down and picked something up. Then he drove away.

Sienna could calm down now that they had chased her assailant away.