

13. GOING BACKWARDS

Sienna had walked into this nightmarish world from which there was no escape. Even sleep did not give her a way out. Jack had once seemed her best ally, and now he was turning against her. Somewhere there was a world where she was real, a complete human being. But for now she was forced to hide in the shadows, only half a person in her shadow world.

Once she understood her killer, this new reality was even more frightening. His motive had made no sense for her. Standing in his tracks, she saw that he didn't need a motive. He took simple satisfaction in harassing her.

She had learned about Jack by heading to Rome. She had traveled back in time. Where was the answer for herself? She thought about walking through the apartment complex in Adairsville. What kind of answers might it yield. She drove over there in Lynette's car. To her surprise the door man let her drive through.

"It's been a while, Sienna."

It was strange being recognized by someone that she didn't know whatsoever. She found the building that her apartment was in. She walked up the stairs and looked at the door. It didn't jog any memory for her. She didn't have the key so she couldn't look around inside. She wondered if the superintendent had let Jerry in. She got back in the car and drove away.

The complex wound around a small lake in the center. She doubled back and took a shortcut out of the complex. It was as if she knew the complex as the back of her hand. As she was coming out she caught Jerry trying to get out. He didn't know about the short cut. She got out the car.

"Are you following me?"

He gave her a big smile.

"I was just making sure that you were safe."

She wondered the real reason that he was there. Adairsville was a long ways from Cordelia. It wasn't as if they had any other cases over here. Were they afraid for her safety? Or was something else going on?

As she pulled away from the complex, she deliberately headed the opposite way from Cordelia. She needed to make sure that she wasn't being trailed. If she was being followed for her own protection, she appreciated the concern. But she needed to make her own way without their help. If her assailant was on her trail, the person was just waiting for the moment that the police let up on their protection. Besides, Warren had already seemed resistant about offering a round-the-clock guard.

In all this time, the only thing that she had learned about was the rather bizarre attitudes of the citizens of Cordelia. This included everyone in the sheriff's office. But she couldn't be sure if this had anything to do with how her case was progressing.

Now that she had shaken her tail, she was going to head back to the apartment complex. This time she was going to get into her apartment. It might have taken a real skill to pick the lock. But somehow Sienna was able to make it in. And a shock awaited her as she opened the door. The apartment practically looked like someone had stripped the place. The apartment was almost the size of a small house. It had a second story with a bedroom. The kitchen and the living room was on the first floor.

The place had a gold carpet. Sienna took off her shoes and walked on the thick plush. It had been vacuumed. But there was not a thing in the room. She opened the drawers and the cupboards in the kitchen. Not a clue. She looked for a loose thread. A discarded package.

In the bedroom there was a queen-size bed with a green bedspread on it. She turned down the bed to show pillows and clean sheets. She looked in the clothes closet. Nothing again. She looked everywhere for a clue that the place was even lived in. There was such an unusual feel to the place since it lacked any sign of its occupant.

As she walked through the rooms, she tried to visualize having actually lived here herself. But she had no recollection whatsoever. She had felt the same way when she had walked the grounds. She lay in the bed and looked at the ceiling.

If she had actually lived here, where were her clothes. Wouldn't there have been some remnants of her meals. A tube of toothpaste. Soap. Anything?

Could the police of cleared out all the evidence. But they would have said something to her. She entertained the idea that a friend or accomplice had cleared out the place. Why were the sheets left? It was obvious that the apartment wasn't being used for an illicit rendez-vous. This was the weirdest thing that she had ever seen. This was a place to run away to. But she had even run away from her escape.

She had virtually given up. She reached another dead end. Was she supposed to wander from community to community until someone could give her some answers. But someone knew about her. Someone was chasing her. She wanted to believe that this was all connected.

This was the time to start living her life as if there was no yesterday. She couldn't wait for some inevitable disaster to reveal its secret to her.

As she drove back to Lynette's, she was seeing an end to all of this. She had more than recovered from her attack. She had started to make enemies in Cordelia. That hadn't been enough to send her packing. But now the strain had reached an extreme. It wasn't as if she could make up with Jack. Her relationship with Lynette was showing that strain. She pretended not to notice. But it was obvious.

The ride back was uneventful. She had a plan but still no resolve. Lynette was on the porch when she got back.

"Lynette, I'm sorry that I took the car. I was afraid that you'd need it."

"No, I didn't need it. I told you that it was yours to take. Where have you been?"

"I finally went to Adairsville. What a colossal waste of time. "

Lynette asked, "What did you find?"

"I actually got in the apartment. It was empty. Only a bed."

"Sounds like a lover's nest."

"I was thinking the same thing."

"You were a wild woman in your other life."

"That's what people are starting to think around here."

"You know what they say. You can't escape your nature."

Sienna gave her an ironic smile. "You're not saying what I think you're saying."

"I'm just saying that you can't stop a girl from having fun."

"This looks like a little too much fun. Even for me."

They both broke out laughing.

“What are you going to do?”

“I got to get out of here. I’m just this terrible burden for you. Now it’s dangerous here.”

“That means that you can’t leave. Trouble will only follow you.”

“Lynette, you’re involved now. It could just be a psycho. If he can’t get me, he’ll get you.”

“After what you’ve told me, I’m not the one to be worried about.” Lynette realized that she wasn’t making it easier for Sienna.

“I don’t know what I did to really piss someone off.”

“They’re playing a game with you. Cat and mouse. Teasing you in so that you’re setting the trap yourself.”

“I’m not sure if I’m the mouse or the cheese.”

They both tried to find a little humor in the situation.

“Lynette, at least the weather is holding up.”

“It does look like a spring shower.”

“Time to get inside.”

The rains threatened, but they held off. It was a humid day for so early in spring. Summer was invading early.

“Let’s make some iced tea.”

“Thanks Lynette, I need some kind of treat.

A treat indeed. Anything to take her mind off her laborious search.

“Lynette, sometimes, the waiting is the most horrible part.”

“Don’t you know it.”

“If only this monster would show his face.”

“Then you believe it would all make sense.

Sienna was adamant, “I really do.”

“You probably thought the same thing before you opened the apartment door.”

“It’s almost like I expect to see a chalk board with the right answer on it.”

“I think that’s what makes of us tick. It’s just more frantic for you.”

“More like a panic!”