

6. HER GREAT ESCAPE

Sienna was feeling cooped in. Her fear was making her homebound. She only felt like more of a target.

“I need to get out of here.”

“It’s a long walk to town from here.”

“I really wasn’t thinking about walking into town.”

Lynette was sympathetic. She saw how dejected she felt.

“Here take my car!”

Lynette was so trusting after all.

She felt a little strange behind the wheel again. Lynette had told her how to get out of the area, but she still was a little disoriented. The small country road was deserted. She just needed to escape and she needed speed. She put her foot on the accelerator and took off. There was an answer to her mystery somewhere near the end of the night, and she needed to find what it was. She just didn’t know how!

There was almost a full tank of gas. She had an excuse. But she was aimless. She had no idea where to start. Everywhere just looked dark.

After driving for a little while she came to the main highway. The cars seemed to be coming straight at her. The lights just dazzled her. She tried to stay on the road. It had been a while since she had been driving. She hadn’t forgot, but the traffic brought in a new element. She just pulled to the side of the road and sat there.

“I’m never going to get out of here.”

One of the sheriff’s cars pulled up behind her. It was Warren.

“I saw you in Lynette’s car. It looks like you’re in a little scrape.”

“I haven’t driven in a while. It was OK until I got on the main road. Then I just lost it.”

“Don’t worry, you can follow me back.”

He turned on his flashing lights and led her back to the edge of the property. Then he stopped so he could turn around.

“Good luck next time.”

“Thanks for getting me home. I feel like a baby learning how to walk for the first time.”

The steep driveway was a test on the suspension system. She was pushing the gas just to make it up the hill. The car seemed to be swerving a bit. But she held on tight, extra tight.

She knew Jack was there because his big German shepard Max met her outside. Max almost knocked her down as he leaped up for a big hug. He kept jumping up and down as she petted him.

Jack came out the door, “He really likes you.”

“Maybe, I’ll just keep him for myself.”

“You do that and I’m going to have to arrest you,” he teased her. She gave him a big smile.

“Did you come here to see your cousin?”

“Actually, I came here to see you. “

She blushed.

He gave her a serious look, “Actually, I’ve been wondering if you remembered anything

since the other night.”

“I had this weird dream. I was falling. And I couldn’t catch myself. But nothing else really.”

“I wonder if the dream means anything.” He paused to catch his breath, “So there was nothing else.”

She shook her head. Max came back, and she began to pet the dog.

“I guess he really likes you.”

“It’s good to know that someone does around here,” she teased Jack. He still didn’t get her sense of humor.

“Tell me if there’s anything that you remember.” He started to walk away.

“You have to go?”

“I’m still on duty.”

“Glad that I had a chance to see you.”

He wanted to say something more. But he still hid behind his badge.

“You too. I mean me too. Come on Max.”

Max trailed behind him.

“See you Max.”

Max looked back at her as they approached the police cruiser.

Lynette was watching TV when she walked in.

“Do you want something to eat. I’ve got a mess of food in the fridge.”

“I ate while I was out. Thanks.”

“Jack came by looking for you.”

“I saw him. I wonder what it was about.”

“I think that there at a bit of a loss with your case. There’s usually not that many mysteries around her. It’s not that a big deal to break up a fight at the Roadside.”

“Your cousin’s been giving me the weirdest looks.”

“I think that he likes you.”

“He freaks me out.”

Lynette took sip from her sweet tea, “He’s a real nice guy.”

“How long has he been a cop?”

“He’s worked for the sheriff’s office for fifteen years. He’s a great looking guy. He’s just too intense for most of the girls around here.”

“I don’t know what to make of him.”

“You’ve got to give him a chance.”

“Really, I’m not looking for anything. I don’t even know who I am.”

“Sorry,” apologized Lynette, tripping over her words. “I’m not trying to play matchmaker”

“Don’t feel bad,” she tried to console her. “I know you only mean the best.”

Sienna walked up the stairs to her room. She felt restless trying to get to sleep. Someone was trying to hurt her. And that was all that she knew. Whoever it was knew everything about her. And she couldn’t do a thing to stop her attacker.

The mountain air was crisp and restful. But it still couldn’t pierce her fear. She lay there still and awake. She needed to close her eyes and just let go.

That night she didn't have the same dream. She finally did get to sleep. And she woke up rested.

Lynette left her the car. She got a ride to work. After breakfast, Sienna vowed to again take the car on the road. Things seemed so much easier during the daytime. There weren't cars driving at her. She even made it to the main highway without any problems. It took about ten minutes to get to Cordelia. She felt satisfied just winding around the square and heading back to the house.

Was it really worth all this trouble? She needed to do more than this. Where could she go? It was strange having freedom but not having a way to use it. The world seemed like a mass of possibilities. The past was there to help work through the confusion. It gave her a present; it gave her a future. It gave her purpose. Without a past, she wandered aimlessly around the square. She had no plans. No one to see. Nowhere to go.

The only thing that seemed real were the basic physical realities. Memories, emotions—all that was numb to her as long as she couldn't figure out who she was. A full tank of gas or an empty tank of gas—it all seemed the same.

If she went straight back to the house, she would be admitting defeat. Just driving around might inspire her curiosity. It might recall a critical clue. Everything was so peaceful in Cordelia. It had no recollection of her turmoil. The town seemed to be suffering a more severe amnesia than Sienna. Suddenly she saw that they were both on the same footing.

She knew that they were judging her. But she knew something about them that they couldn't admit. This was true memory loss. All mistakes were erased from the town register. Cordelia spoke only of its apparent perfection. Only death could tell the actual story. And the dead tell no tales. So Cordelia was safe to pursue its immaculate state. The lawns were all manicured. The square was free of trash. It was free of ill thoughts. There was no place for greed or desire.

Any one of these citizens could be the one who was trying to kill her. This frightening motive was entirely hidden by the town's regularity. This creature had blended in for years. And this might continue long after she had left this place.

As she pulled out of the square, she noticed that there was a car behind her. She thought that they were going in the same direction so she tried a couple of quick turns. The car was still on her tail. At first, she thought that it might be one of the cars from the sheriff's office. But they would recognize Lynette's car. They would have pulled alongside her.

The car was a Crown Vic. But it wasn't a new government car. It was one of the old ones with the Landau roof. The car stayed far enough back so that she couldn't see who was in it. She thought that she'd pick up speed and see if it could stay with her. She did just that. On the highway her pursuer wouldn't let up. Sienna maintained a constant speed, and the car stayed with her. She tried to push it on the curves. Just enough to stay on the road.

If the last time out, she had retreated in fear, now she was forced to call on all her residual driving skill. At first, she had thought that it was someone from a neighborhood watch program. But they had followed her way out of town. Nevertheless, it might be a towns person who resented stranger. But Sienna was in Lynette's car. Would the person have reacted that violently to Lynette, or even one of her friends.

She started to think that this was probably someone who knew who she was. But how did

he know to follow her from the point that he did. She looked back. She couldn't even tell if it was a woman or a man.

Sienna kept pressing. She didn't want this to turn into a chase. It had become just that. When she hit the interstate, she was heading at 85 miles an hour. She started pushing for more. She didn't want a cop to stop her. But that might be the best thing. As she was heading close to Cartersville, she figured that she would exit from the highway and turn around. The Crown Vic stayed up with her. Now both of them were heading back north.

She couldn't drive against traffic or try to evade the car on the emergency lane. All that stuff worked in the movies. But it was set up from the beginning. If she tried any of that, she'd end up in a fatal accident. But she didn't know how to lose the car. The only hope was to drive to the sheriff's office. She jumped off I-75 at 393. She kept going at a good clip. When she was about five miles from the Sheriff's, the car turned off. It had grasped her intention.

She debated whether she should stop by at the station. What could she tell them? Her intention had been to avoid the chase. Not get caught up in it. So she hadn't tried to see who was following her. That might have resolved something for her. Did the chase have anything to do with her amnesia? Or was it all related to something that she did in Cordelia.

Sienna had only been driving around the square, very slowly. How could that attract attention? Maybe there was some freak in the town who had something against her. Or it could be someone who hated Lynette. Nothing made sense. But she knew that she wasn't safe.

Her heart was still pounding. She had got caught up in the chase. Previously, she had felt like an observer with no place in the world. Now she was reminded of her one main goal, to stay alive. Everything again came into perspective. Even if she was uncertain about her identity, she wanted nothing less than to keep breathing. Her struggle was personified in this faceless driver.

She thought that Jack might have some answers. But she really didn't want to go to the sheriff's office. Maybe he'd be at the house again.

When she drove back, she was disappointed. She didn't see Max. She didn't see Jack's truck. She had made sure that no one had picked up her trail after the sheriff's office. Unless the person already knew that she was here, they would have no idea where to find her. For the time being, she didn't want to do any detective work. She just wanted to catch her breath.

Lynette wouldn't be home for a few hours. Sienna would rest and get some dinner. Night descended with a sense of gloom. It made her more trapped. Previously, she had welcomed the serenity of the night. Now, she was reminded of how little she could see at night. Her pursuer could make it all the way to the house before she knew anything. She needed something to take her mind off this. Television wasn't helping. She was really too awake to take a nap.

She just sat on the couch in a semi-trance. When Lynette came in, she saw Sienna in that state.

"Snap out of it."

"I got chased on the interstate."

"Hell!"

"Someone in a Crown Vic. You don't know anyone in a Crown Vic."

"No, not at all."

"What about Jack?"

“It couldn’t be Jack. Not Jack. He has a truck, and that’s all. His truck and the police cruiser.”

“Whoever it was, they wouldn’t let go. They stuck to me like glue until they realized that I was heading to the sheriff’s office.”

“Did you tell them?”

“What could they do? Be on the look out for a Crown Vic. I didn’t see any license plates. Nothing.”

“There are a lot of weirdos around here.”

Jack ended up showing at around 10:30. Sienna was stunned by that point. She tried to mouth the words to him.

“I got chased today. On the interstate. Someone in a Crown Vic. I thought that it might be you. Playing a game with me.”

“I don’t have another car.”

“Yeah, I know. I didn’t see who it was.”

“We’ve got an old trick if someone is following us. There’s this curve that turns back on itself. Next thing you know it, your pursuer is right in front of you.”

“I need to know about it.”

“I’ll show you some time.”

She could see that he was warming up to her. He had gentle eyes. The rest of his features were more rugged. He seemed to be fighting this battle inside. She wanted to be sympathetic.

“I’ve got to go to bed. I’m going to pass out. Lynette will be out of the shower in a minute.”

“I really need to go,” Jack let her know. He was still in uniform. “I’ve got another call that I need to make. I just wanted to make sure that you were safe.”

“I am for now.”

He wanted to give her a hug. She moved away.

“Thanks again,” she affirmed. “I’m glad to know that you’re looking out for me.”

After he left, Lynette finished dressing for bed.

“You should have told me that he was here.”

“Lynette, you were still in the shower.”

“I could have hurried up. Wait. I get it. You wanted to be alone with him. That’s OK.

“I’m really not interested in your cousin. He’s the one who seems eager for me. I just don’t want to hurt his feelings.

“Sienna, he’s a grown man. He can take care of himself.”

Sienna couldn’t avoid her fatigue. “I am completely bushed. I’ll talk to you in the morning.

Sienna was so tired that she was convinced that she wouldn’t have the bad dream. She just sunk in her pillow and went out like a light.

In the morning she hopped up ready to go. Maybe that was what she needed to sleep, some real excitement in her day. But that may have been just too much. She didn’t want to get in a chase again.

“You can have the car again today.”

“I think that I’ll pass.”

She didn't want to stay a prisoner here all day. But she thought that she could deal with it. Once Lynette was gone, she went for a walk. It was a beautiful day. Sunlight filled the trees. Even the darker spots of the woods seemed safely illuminated.