

ICE STORM

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Chapter 8 - The Rep

On the ride home from the hospital I rode in the back seat of Andrea's car as Denny sat in the right front seat. A white van had parked across the street from the house and two houses over. I carried the box of my clothes as we went in.

Two policemen met us inside and gave each of us a miniature call button. "It connects to the people on duty in the van. One long push for anything suspicious. Several fast ones for immediate trouble."

We each held one in our hand as we suspiciously examined it.

Denny suggested sending out for a pizza instead of cooking with days old stuff from the fridge. I removed the cooler from my backpack and left that on the kitchen counter. I carried my hard hat and box of clothes upstairs. Denny cleaned out the fridge throwing away the milk and lettuce. Andrea darted around the house checking everything remained as it should have been.

The pizza smelled delicious. They being real women had tea.

I had a soda while secretly enjoying warming an expanding wet area of my diaper. "I need your help."

Their eyes shifted to me.

"The company owner and the work site boss visited me at the hospital. I have no idea how they entered that secure ward, but they did. They offered me a pay raise, but there is a catch." I explained all of that. "What do you think?"

Andrea supported Denny when she talked first. "Take it. They tolerate you in your women's clothes and diapers. Just how likely is any other he-man construction company going to put up with you and your unique ways? As for all offers, insist of having it in writing before accepting."

Andrea agreed.

Early the next morning after changing myself I dressed in pure girl's clothes of a nice coral pleated skirt and a white blouse. Under the blouse I had a B cup bra with inserts. I figured by now everybody at work knew me, so what the hell, as long as I looked acceptable. For a girl, that is. I fixed a cheese omelet for breakfast, sandwiches for lunch, and packed my cooler with ice and sodas. I tried being as quiet as possible, but Denny came into the kitchen with every appearance of having just woken up. I poured her a glass of orange juice.

Her hair could only be described as a wreck. “Off to work? You’re not put together quite right. Let me help.”

She didn’t give me much choice with a hair brush in her hand as she turned me around and brushed my hair from in back. Tangled hairs pulled and hurt.

“Ouch.”

“Sorry. You need a hair clip. Do you have one?”

“Yes.” I ran up the stairs and returned with a large clip and a bottle of hair conditioner.

She brushed my hair using that conditioner and pulled it together with that clip. “You look better.” She turned me around with a tube of lipstick in her hand. “Hold still.” She put a hand behind my head as she applied it to my lips. In the mirror my hair seemed better and the color of the lipstick appeared right.

She snuck a hand up my skirt and my thighs felt her hand cupping around my plastic pants. Her voice sounded joyful. “Just checking. Off you go.” She smacked my padded butt.

I didn’t know whether to be happy I had a friend, or angry with her and her behavior. I decided Andrea had always been right that I never knew my feelings.

I packed everything in my backpack, put on my hard hat, and took a bus as usual. I made enough money for a car, but there didn’t seem to be enough parking, and the company bus had less than a reliably regular schedule. My girl looks must have been working as nobody on the bus gave me more than a second glance, except a few guys of course. I doubted many girls wore hard hats to work, but there must have been some because nobody scowled. Maybe they had secretaries and bookkeepers on construction sites elsewhere.

I slipped my arms through the straps of my backpack as I walked down the sidewalk from the bus stop. Those straps accentuated my bust. ‘Get used to it’, I told myself.

The three guys I met at the time clock all greeted me in their normal way. They complemented my outfit with their eyes running up and down my body. Nice to be accepted back. I punched in and walked out into the early sunlight.

A gruff voice called from behind me. “Sandy.”

Aw oh. Now what? I thanked myself for my revolver. “Yes; what is it?”

“I’m Tim the Shop Steward. Come with me.”

“I’m needed up in that crane.”

“Shop rules are I can talk with you for ten minutes.”

“And what it I want to work right now?”

“State law. Are you coming, or do I log a complaint?”

“Where?”

“One of the office trailers. It’s private.”

“Log a complaint. I want protection of someone I trust.”

Fortunately I saw Jodi coming out of the shack with the time clock. “Jodi from Sandy. I’m twenty feet in front of you, and need you.”

Jodi came quickly. “Glad you’re back. What’s up?”

“Shop steward frightens me. Can you sit in?”

“Aw. Tim’s OK. Go ahead.”

“Thanks.” I almost said ‘sorry to ask’, but saying that would not have been true.

Tim became blunt when we went in the equipment trailer. “Why aren’t you a member of the Union?”

“Nobody said anything. I’m up in that crane all day.”

“Well, this is a Union company. It’s required by law.”

“Oh. I’ll tell Sam to tell the office. Now, what’s all this about?”

“We find Union members jobs. Better jobs. How would you like to make more money?”

“Sorry. Rick, Sam, and the crew chiefs have been good to me. They’ll match the offer. How much?”

His face showed his anger. I dropped my backpack on the nearest table and reached in it. “Do you know I have disabilities? At least Rick listed me that way. My girl friend told me this morning to insist on all offers be in writing.” Could Denny be called a girl friend? No, but Tim didn’t need to know that. “If the Union is so good, you will know the correct way to add my disability to the offer.”

His face expressed so much anger I had my hand around the grip of my revolver concealed in my backpack.

“Rick visited me in the hospital. He saw something in that dead man the police didn’t see. Did you?”

Tim’s face flashed reactions across it, but I couldn’t tell what those were.

I backed away to one side of the trailer to make way for a straight path for Tim to the door. If he cornered me and physically threatened me in any way I could shoot him without removing my revolver from the backpack.

He had his hand on the door handle.

I said. “Tim. You were mean to me just now. Do I file a complaint, or are you going to finish your introduction of the Union?”

He bolted.

Outside I saw Sam and went straight to him taking off my hard hat as a symbol for a conversation without broadcasting it. We both said “good morning” at the same time in stereo. I told him what Tim had done and asked if I should file a complaint. “No, Sandy, I wouldn’t, not for that. What you can ask me to do is to have the office put a note in your and the Union’s file. Write that out tonight if you want.”

“Thank’s Sam. I’m going up that ladder to the crane cab if that’s OK with you.”

“Git.” Sam used that word regularly, and not a nasty way.

The day became very busy with two days of catch up work. I put in an amazing fourteen hours on the clock. Down below one of the crew chiefs had taken over from Sam for the night. When I came down he sent me to the office where an envelope waited for me. Inside were several sheets of paper of Rick’s job offer, and Sam’s report of Tim’s conduct. A third told me to visit four other cranes the next day, and they had attached inspection forms giving the address for each one.

I took a taxi home in my mixture of excitement, dread, and my diaper needed help.

Denny stood at the sink in the kitchen. “Hi, there. How did your day go?”

“You won’t believe it.” I told her which surprised me how easily I talked with her.

“I believe it. Now, no fussing about this. I’m taking you straight up stairs and changing your diaper before dinner.” She grabbed my wrist.

I yanked my hand away.

She slapped my face. “Behave, Sandy. It’s not like I don’t know.”

Feelings grew on my back like weeds and thorns. I sat on the nearest chair in the kitchen and buried my face in my hands and wept.

She pulled a chair up next to mine with an arm around my shoulder and her face near my head. “It’s OK, Sandy. Maybe I pushed too hard. I’m sorry. But you are unique; it’s late in the evening; we both need dinner, and I care for you.”

That made me cry even more.

“That bad, huh?”

I nodded.

She kissed my cheek. “C’mon. I think you leaked and wet your wonderful skirt and the chair. Let’s go upstairs. You can close your eyes. You need changing, and I already know.”

She tugged at my hand. My skirt and the chair seat were wet. I kept weeping in a daze as she towed me upstairs, removed all my clothes, laid me down, and changed me. She left the bra off of me as she dressed me in a denim shirtdress.

Back in the kitchen, she gave me a huge glass of iced Arizona sweetened tea. She gave me that as if she knew that would help me wet my new diaper faster for an orgasm later that evening.

She set the table for us to sit side by side, and she served the pizza. "Sandy. I want you to consider something very carefully. It's not that I do not know, because I do know you very deeply. There are no long held secrets in that psychiatric ward. Changing your diaper is nothing compared to I want a relationship with you. No overtime this Friday. We're going to a movie, or something."

I put an arm around her that evening as we finished the pizza, but worried I had over-stepped the bounds.

Upstairs by myself I felt miserable as I gave myself a very hard time. I wanted a date with Denny. I wanted her in bed. But I hadn't been able to ask.

The next morning I dressed myself in that denim shirtdress to not be so over the top, and no bra. I did brush my hair with conditioner, used the hair clip, and a little lipstick. But I didn't like it. I went back to a pure girl look for my long hair with a bra and red pleated shirtdress. I took another taxi to the first crane on the list. The site boss and the operator were very surprised at me and my appearance, but the office had called and said they had authorized me. Up in that crane I checked off boxes on the form, wrote comments, and it all seemed good to me. The operator made himself a little stand-off-ish, but having a girl up there would be totally unexpected, and I if I had been the crane operator, I would have been surprised by me in girl clothes as much as he.

At the second site something seemed wrong right from my entering the trailer office. The two men in there glared at me with real anger.

"You call Rick. Or do you want me to leave, and then I'll call him myself?"

One of the men came half way up out of his chair with his bunched fists on the table. The man next to him caught an arm.

I removed my backpack and had a hand in there.

The nicer one put on his hard hat, and talked into it. "Tony, this is Eric. A company inspector is here, but they sent a woman with a low voice. We have to send her up." He focused his eyes on me. "Go ahead."

Outside several mean looking dudes stood around between me and that crane.

I went back in that trailer. "Tell them to get away from me."

"No. They have a right to a break."

"No coffee or sodas in their hands. I don't think so. Do I call Rick? Or do I call for police protection?"

Eyebrows curled and lips quivered. "Get your ass out of here."

"You escort me."

Which they did taking me off the site as I carried my backpack in one hand with

my other hand in it. A block away I called Rick on my handheld.

Fifteen minutes later he arrived, and two police cruisers arrived shortly after him. I had my backpack on my back as all six of us walked onto that worksite. Rick had us standing together next to a pallet of parts without our saying a word. He called off the time from his handheld.

Four minutes went by before those two men I had met trotted over.

Rick kept his voice amiable. "Guess I should have sent an order with a photo. Sandy here is going up that crane. Anything she needs to know first?"

I almost said I'm not a she, but Rick knew that. If he needed to call me a 'she', then that's the way it had to be right then. I thought *I richly deserved his comment*.

After a minute of no one saying anything, Rick spoke to me. "Go on."

About half way across several workmen suddenly assembled ahead of me. I took a few steps back.

Rick took photos with his handheld. "Make way." He didn't add 'or else'. He had to say it again.

Those men backed off, but only a little.

I made as stern a face as I could. "Stand back or I'm calling for Rick and those police. I mean right now."

They stepped back a little.

"Further."

They did.

I reached the bottom of the crane where there were boxes and crates stacked around the base.

Men had moved back in the direction I had come from blocking my view of Rick.

I quickly climbed to the first platform, took out my cell phone, and called Rick. "You'd better come see what is stacked around the base of this crane. Doesn't look right, and those men have moved back for blocking my way out."

A few minutes later a pickup truck arrived with a crew, loaded up those boxes and crates, and carried them away. A policeman came and stood at the bottom.

I climbed that ladder. The work site just about stopped as all those men were looking up my skirt. I hoped they enjoyed the view for the many minutes it took to climb all the way up.

At the door to the crane cab I had a clipboard in my hand. I shouldn't have bothered. Inside a half full bottle of beer sat on the floor, and the cab smelled like pot had been smoked in there. Litter had been strewn on the floor. The paint on the inside had been dinged and chipped the same as on the outside. I could feel the cab shudder

as the crane swung around. A cell phone on a ledge reported what a police car had been doing. I beat a hasty retreat to the first landing down.

I called Rick. "Pardon me, sir, but you sent me up here. My call is to shut this down." I reported what I had seen and smelled in the cab. "From the unsafe conditions I see from this platform, shut the whole site down. Sorry sir, but that's what I see. I think there is a poker game in progress in a shipping container on the floor next to where I am on the tower."

I heard something overhead. The operator came down.

I dropped my clipboard, swung my backpack down on one arm, and reached in it for my revolver. "STOP!" I backed across the platform the few feet I could away from the ladder he had been coming down. "I said STOP" again.

He had arrived only three steps up the ladder from the platform when I saw a big knife in his hand.

"Drop that knife."

He didn't as he jumped down the last few steps of the ladder.

We were only two feet apart when I shot him square in the chest.

He stumbled back against the safety rail, and slumped to the grate floor. On his own he fell on his side, and rolled on his back dropping that knife over the side of the platform to the ground. He squirmed putting him into a precarious position part way over the edge.

It didn't seem hard to push him with my foot as I put my hand and revolver inside the upper half of my shirtdress. That put my gun out of obvious sight from down below.

He hung there briefly before falling to the ground. It seemed odd to me that he didn't scream as he fell.

As I turned around to check if anybody could be coming up after me, I put my back to Rick and the police. Where they couldn't see me I put my revolver back in my backpack, and put it back on.

Two workmen were climbing the ladder, but stopped as a whistle blew for the entire work site to halt.

Something smelled wrong. Above me smoke came out of the crane's cab.

I went down that ladder as fast as I could.

I stopped at the bottom landing thirty feet off the ground as those two men below me were still on the ladder not too far below.

More police were arriving. They ordered those two men down.

A police officer met me at the bottom. "You Sandy?"

"Yes sir."

“Come with me. I’ve been ordered to escort you out.”

Instead we went to an office trailer where Rick and a police lieutenant were waiting. I told my story again, but omitted my shooting that man, and they didn’t ask.

An insurance investigator arrived who wanted me to tell it all over again. By now two more corporate officers had arrived. This time I remembered to ask what happened to that pickup truck with the boxes from the base of the crane.

A representative of a bank arrived, who of course, wanted to hear everything all over again. We were interrupted by the police lieutenant hearing something in the ear piece of his police radio-phone. “There’s a truck moving out there. Is that the truck you saw?”

“It’s similar, but I can’t tell.”

He spat orders into his phone.

Two officers intercepted that truck. When they opened the cab door a manikin fell out of the driver’s seat.

The lieutenant screamed into his radio. “Clear the site. Clear it now. Bomb squad.”

His two officers shot out the truck’s tires and ran out of there.

The Lieutenant sent everyone in the trailer out and we ran like hell. My women’s flat shoes worked for running. I wondered what would happen if I had been wearing high heels. I didn’t own any, but I had thought about it.

The police blocked the roads alongside the work site.

We were across a parking lot and around a store when a horrendous blast stopped everyone in sight. That truck had exploded.

“Uh, Rick sir, would you tell that trade Union to go to hell. Tell them they and their shop steward were part of what went on here, and tell them for me.”

He smiled. “Sure. Bet the police want you back in that secure hospital wing again.”

“This time would your office send me a course to take by computer while I’m in there.”

“Son, you could give the course. What do you want to be called, anyway? Son? Girl?”

My hands were shaking from the close calls of those men and that explosion. “Sir. Sam and I use Sandy as my name. What ever works for you.” I wet my diaper.

He shook my hand. “Let’s look around the corner and see if that crane is still standing.”

We did. It remained in place. “I’ll have to call a professional engineering firm to

inspect that crane. I'd like you to be with them for the education."

"Yes, sir."

"Sam is going to be right pissed you're being hidden in that hospital again."

I guessed I had it coming doing anything as ridiculous as wearing diapers and women's clothing covering over the bulge. "Sir, how do I tell him thank you? Send a box of chocolates? Case of beer?"

Rick grinned at one side of his mouth. "I won't tell if you won't tell. In the Union rules that's called bribery. Suitcase of beer ought to work. I'll call you from the office with his home address."

I sent a case of chips with the suitcase of beer.

Once again nobody asked me about a gun. The news had live coverage. Even knowing when and what to listen for, the man's body had been between me and the camera and microphone and in the way. The breeze up there had muffled the sound of the gun shot.

I signed up for a self-defense course.