

# ABBY

© 2016 By Sue Erickson

## Chapter 18 - Armed Conflict

My diaper was going from damp to wet as I sat in a group therapy meeting. My breasts were beginning to hurt from being too full and needing pumping. The meeting was led by one of Tara's students under her silent supervision. It was a very good meeting.

The new air purification equipment emitted a low level hum that reduced how far our voices carried. That gave us a new sense of any privacy when just two or a few people were talking with each other.

One of the women who had been a long term fetal ball wasn't up to doing much. Instead she had taken to sitting with the police and serving as their runner. She had chosen wearing a jail orange shirtdress just like Pat, but usually without the handcuffs or chains. Somebody got through to her how ugly that was and had a shirtdress in candy-apple green made for her which worked just as well. When she arrived in that outfit people knew where she came from and paid her a respect she wasn't giving herself. She came to me in that group meeting and did her version of just standing there without saying a word.

I caught my voice from revealing how annoyed I was that she never said anything until she was asked. I smiled as a way of taming my feelings and my voice. "What's up?"

"Miss Abby, ma'am." She was always throwing away her power by deferring to other people. "The police have a phone call. They say you are needed." She knew who I really was as a male hidden inside a dress for concealing my diapers, as did all of the residents.

"Thanks." She and I scurried over to the police front desk. They had written out a message summarizing what they had been told. "Trouble at the construction site. Crane operators arrested as criminal accomplices. Work stopped."

I bottled up saying several salty words. "Can you call the travel trailer?"

"Sure." The officer punched buttons on the tabletop phone. "Just a second please for Miss Abby." She handed me the telephone handset.

"Hi. Abby here. What's up?" My business voice was pure masculine.

"Need more protection fast. There is a hostile ugly mob here at the construction site getting uglier. The police are all away leaving us unprotected. What happened is the police arrested the crane operator. Both the guy up in the sky and another pair who

had just been standing around. We don't know why. Hurry with a car for our escape."

I sent the runner for my mommy-wives. I ran over to the changing station. "Dangerous troubles at the construction site. Unlock the guns. Give me a quick change and a pump." I explained it all to Kim who hurried away for assembling the guys of our armed security team. We left two at the Mansion, and loaded up two cars with myself and three more with room for our people at the site.

They hadn't been kidding. When we skidded across the dirt to the travel trailer they was a mob of workers milling around the base of the main building. There was no possibility of any work being done. We all bailed out of our car and stood near the side of the car away from the mob. The three of our guys in the trailer ran to us.

We watched the mob and some of them glared at us.

A black SUV roared in labeled for the General Contractor construction company. It spun around throwing dust and grit towards the mob and came to a halt at our cars. The corporate president and two other older guys hopped out. They too were standing alongside their SUV on the side away from that mob. Our car was between us and the executives. We exchanged what we knew which wasn't much.

Two police cruisers arrived at almost the same time from opposite directions. The trunks of their cars flew open bringing out bullet proof riot gear, helmets, tear gas, and ugly looking rifles.

Our people and myself put on our hard-hats, and so did the construction executives.

The police asked us sharply what was going on. We protested ignorance other than a vague references to arrests. Both the chief executive and I asked them what they knew.

The police called someone before telling us. "Crane operators have been taking money on the side from syndicate criminals for reporting where we are. They are telling the crooks when it is safe for them to commit a robbery or a raid."

Us Mansion people exchange a glance.

The corporate executives looked the other way. After prodding from the police, the Executives told all their employees and sub-contractors to go home for the day.

I called the bank. Kit was out; I talked with Lauren. "These guys in construction are not trustworthy. The police arrested three crane operators which shuts down our construction. They poured footings with the wrong dimensions. We told them to confirm the concrete being delivered was the correct stuff. They ignored us. Where can we hire an inspector to take core samples of that concrete?"

"Abby; you be careful. We've heard those hammer headed hard fisted men in construction hate the Mansion and everyone in it."

I swallowed. "So, they are going to sabotage the buildings so we can never use them. You want the Feds in here on where that loan money went?"

She screamed a warning with a rising tone of voice. "Abby!" But she caught

herself. "I'll get back to you."

The only inspector we could find on the internet was from two major cities away. We felt an implication that the entire local construction industry was corrupt as the devil. We did hire that expensive inspector, and the concrete poured in our footings was defective. It would have crumbled within a year or two.

I called a mass meeting at the Mansion and explained what I had heard. No one objected to my calling the top executive at the construction company.

He yelled at me on the phone. So much for my being a nice girl. He did frighten me into soiling my diaper. After being changed I called him back. My stomach was tight as a knot as I called him. "We are putting four of our people on that site to inspect everything."

"You want to be attacked?"

"Thanks for the warning. They will be armed. What about a new crane operator? Everything is stalled."

"No go. Your job has been blacklisted."

I told our police guardians. That word 'black' flashed in my head. I had only seen white guys working at the site. "Can't be that hard operating that crane."

I called the General Contractor again. "When can we meet and one of your guys show several of us how to operate that crane."

Kit and Lauren on a speaker phone told me not to. Interrupting that way could lead to violence.

"So? Just stop?"

The phone went silent for a short time. "We'll get back to you." The boss of their boss called. He yelled at me on the phone.

"I have the FBI regional office phone number. Are you going to help? Or do I call them?"

"I'll call you back." That night he put a gun to his head at home and pulled the trigger.

Several of the guys mounted a fifth wheel on one of our pickup trucks. They brought the travel trailer from the construction site to our location.

I was at breakfast when the runner in that peculiar green color shirtdress found me. "Miss Abby, ma'am, the front desk wants you." At last she had spoken without waiting for permission. I almost gave her a hug before remembering Tara's students saying she wasn't ready for one of those.

There were fifteen police and sheriff's officers at our front desk. "Do we need this many to guard us?"

"You are guarding us. We sent our families out of state. We fear a wave of

assassinations.”

The officer on duty interrupted. “Trouble.” They all gathered around him and the front desk monitor showing the outside cameras. “Bunch of rough necks arrived on the trail from that old boat crossing. They must have brought their own boat. They had body armor and rifles.” The sergeant quickly organized the officers into three teams. One inside at the other end of the building of the door we never used to that boat crossing. The other two went around opposite sides of our building.

We fished out our own revolvers and stood guard at the front door and loading dock.

The monitor quickly attracted a crowd of residents watching a fast firefight outside at the old trail from the old mansion house. We felt a blast through the floor. One of the cameras at that entrance quit working. The other swivelled around viewing the devastation of assailants strewn around like trash.

“They knew they were losing and did the terrorist suicide blast thing to take down as many cops as possible. You got any stretchers?”

Four of our guys ran up the stairs and into old storage rooms. They came down with two stretchers.

A siren wailed outdoors. The police had called it.

The assailants had all died. They had left behind the gift of an aluminum john-boat.

The eight police outside were the worse for wear from their experience. Ringing ears; torn uniforms; blood; and two were flat on the ground.

Tara pointed a finger at me. “No; Abby. You don’t go. You are too valuable. We can’t loose you.” She saw something in me. Barbie-Doll handcuffed one of my wrists to a wrist of Pat. “Sorry; stay.”

I was suddenly very angry. “I’m not your puppy dog.”

“Tough. Have a tantrum. Wet your diaper. But you stay inside for the good of the cause.”

I pouted, but that didn’t last longer than the first stretcher in the door.

“Where?”

A police officer bellowed. “The Dining Hall.”

Both stretchers went in there dripping blood across the floor.

A bottle of disinfectant arrived from the ambulance. Dining Hall volunteers shoved chairs aside, and selected four tables. They scrubbed with elbow power as they did their living best cleaning those old table tops.

The two unconscious police officers were lifted onto those tables. Volunteers stripped off their clothes. At least we had diapers and plastic pants for them before

they let go.

The ambulance driver was an old thin guy who should have died already by the seamed look on his face. The med-tech was a rotund Cajun-Creole. He opened his laptop. "No Wi-Fi." He plugged his cell phone into it and dialed somewhere. "I have a head wound and a chest wound. We are in the middle of riots. I'm all there is between life and death. Get a surgeon on Skype."

"The head wound is bleeding. They do that. That chest wound looks bad. We do that first." He sent the driver and volunteers for surgical packs, anesthetics, and more stuff. He had on ear phones from his computer. "Have four volunteers scrub for surgery."

Two of our men and two of our women came to him. We didn't have surgical clothes called scrubs. He washed his hands with antiseptic and had them do too. Two of the police officers who had stayed inside scrubbed up. One officer mixed saline solutions while the other poked needles into hands and hooked up tubes from the solution bags. Face masks went over noses and mouths. A small oxygen tank came in from the ambulance. Tubes went to the unconscious woman with the chest wound. They found they had just enough surgical gloves.

We borrowed a police officer's computer and set it up to take video of the surgery. He couldn't shoo us away. We stood along a wall, but wouldn't leave.

The unconscious woman had an ugly wound in her upper left breast. One of our women volunteers who was scrubbed removed the unconscious officer's uniform jacket, blouse, and bra.

The old ambulance driver removed an obsidian crystal knife out of a surgical pack and cut in.

Blood was everywhere nearby from the wound and the cut. He cut deeper following the diagonal path of the wound which exposed a short section of a rib had been obliterated. He cut wider and deeper fearing the worst and hoping for anything better. Through his knife he felt something hard. Working around there he found a metal fragment lying against the major left lobe of the patient's heart. He spread the bloody opening with the fingers of one hand. He reached into the wound with his other hand and plucked out that fragment. The leaking surface of the heart's outer pericardium layer appeared roughened with little fragments sticking in it. It seemed to have been burned by hot metal. There was a shallow cut across the outer surface with blood spurting out of the left anterior descending artery. The matching vein also seemed damaged. Through his vision clouded by tears and dripping anxious sweat he saw the patient's heart left ventricle make a beat of a single contraction. That contraction was pushing fresh oxygenated blood out to her body, and especially to her brain.

They cleaned the wound of bone splinters, threads, and bits of metal. The anesthetic came from a book and his listening on his ear buds. They used the best they had of antiseptic solutions flushing the wound and washing the dried blood off the skin.

His hands shook as an emotionally exhausted wreck as he applied an internal self-dissolving patch over the bleeding and oozing area of the heart. He sewed self dissolving sutures on his way back out of the chest leaving in a drain.

“Where’s her ID? What’s her blood type? Go to the ambulance and bring in all you can find.”

They found a blood pressure gauge. Her blood pressure was down to forty before they could hook a plasma bag in. Then the first unit of whole blood.

He went to the other patient. “Head wounds are bloody. But the skull remains un-punctured.” He bandaged that officer’s head. “Give him saline and anesthetics. How’s our life threatening case?”

He returned to the woman patient and took her pulse. “Not good. Stand by with more plasma.”

He slumped in a chair. “Thanks,” which meant to the Skype connection. “She’s survived this long. We have done what we can. That’s it, plus prayer.” He removed the ear buds.

Mack known as Marsha our chief chef was present. “Ask him whether he wants coffee or a soda.”

He looked up at the small mob keeping a distance. “You shouldn’t be in here.”

I stood as tall as I could. “Sorry. How else to wish you all the best? And them. This is how we heal ourselves from our trauma.”

He nodded. “Coffee.”

A cup and saucer was passed hand to hand to one of the scrubbed volunteers who handed it to him. “How’s the blood pressure?”

“Fifty five. Pulse same.”

He gave a wain little smile. “Somebody thank God for me. I’m too wasted.”

A woman’s voice behind me gave a prayer.

Those scrubbed volunteers had those other police take off their torn clothes. By now they had seen we allowed no modesty. None. They even had bleeding cuts in their underwear. When pushed near their wounds they reported no big increase in pain. That was decided to mean there was nothing serious in them that shouldn’t be there.

Bandages were applied. The only spare clothes we had were the long length version of the blue-gray dresses. With a blush they accepted those. They declined diapers, and instead were taken upstairs for visiting what passed as a restroom.

His computer squealed. He put the ear buds back in his head. “We are touch and go. They remain alive. One has had open chest surgery. Our anesthetics, plasma, and blood will run out soon. We have to get out of here.”

He listened to those ear buds. “No, not to that nearby city. The mob must be there.” He listened again. “OK. That’s an hour plus away. Tell two of the cruisers to guard the ambulance.” After another pause he yanked the ear buds out. “OK. We’re a go. Get the two stretchers out of the ambulance. Arrange the escort.”

Two stretchers were brought in from the ambulance. Tables were slid in place for those two stretchers to be next to those unconscious patients. They were tenderly lifted onto those stretchers. The med-tech strapped them in place and covered them with thermal blankets. Volunteers brought the fluid bags as four people each picked up those stretchers and carried them out.

The police remaining with us monitored the ambulance's progress. Out in the countryside a ten wheel dump truck had swerved running it off the road. The ambulance driver was good; his brakes were better. He rammed into a front tire of the dump truck. The ambulance's left front fender was a wrecked mess when they sent us cell phone images.

The police ordered the dump truck driver to come down from the cab.

He refused. He put that truck in reverse.

The police shot out the tires, and put a few into the radiator. He stopped, but he wouldn't come down from the cab and its locked doors.

The ambulance had to go on. The police pried a fender of the ambulance out from rubbing a tire. They had to go.

The driver wouldn't cooperate.

The ambulance and police rushed away. Others could find out more when they had the time. By the time anyone returned the truck had been burned where they had left it.

The police called that we were wanted at the construction site. We said we couldn't be there in less than an hour.

Tara intercepted me and told me she needed help. Too many of the residents were fearful from the conflict, and despondent. They were going down the rabbit hole of feeling helpless, hopeless, and with a deep depression.

I told her I was so rushed I would have to get back to her.

Her comments made me into a sweaty wreck when my wives gave me a quick rag bath, changed my diapers, and pumped my breasts. They gave me a quick airbrush of a makeup base, touched up my face, and combed my hair. Every kink in my hair hurt when they worked so fast. They brightly painted my fingernails, applied lipstick, and attached earrings. I was a slightly flawed version of the million dollar look as I ran to the door. My run was followed by whistles and cat calls of the guys and ohs and ahs of the gals. I heard my mommy-wives in my head telling me to 'get over it'.