

ABBY

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Chapter 41 - Hospital

A disembodied voice on the telephone informed me that my wife Kittie had been admitted as a hospital emergency patient from a traffic accident. I quivered in fright. I sent a runner for our four sister-wives, and separately for Tara as the Deputy Chair of the Mansion House organization. I went straight to the pumping and changing station for both of those functions, and had them change me with an especially thick disposable diaper.

My sister-wives and I sorted out that Kim and Sheri would accompany me to the hospital, and Peggy and Megan would remain at the Mansion House for our telephone contact. The three of us that would drive to the hospital all had airbrushed makeup, our best earrings, and our best suit-dresses or blouses and skirts. Christina and Doctor Dave told us going in our best would have better cooperation.

I packed my shoulder bag as a purse with my wallet and those books from the church. That bag also served as a diaper carrier with new disposables, cream, powder, and plastic bags for disposing of used diapers.

Out the door we went into the auto garage. The battery in my car had become depleted. Kim had me drive her car.

We easily found the intersection on Oak Park Boulevard at the hospital. In my anxious rush I almost caused a fender bender traffic accident outside the hospital's parking garage. That so unnerved me that I had trouble parking the car without scraping anything. I prevailed, but didn't feel relieved. I caught myself tripping on a joint in the parking lot concrete floor.

The Emergency Front Desk had to be a pain, of course. Peggy and Megan back at the Mansion House were already working their way by phone through the hospital administration. Christina and Dave with their credentials finally had someone connect the dots. I had my baby blue feminine wallet out of my shoulder bag and handed my driver's licence to the person sitting at that desk. Pride welled up in me for having that driver's license with my new name and my picture with my long feminine hair. "I have a low voice."

A woman with a hospital name badge arrived with credentials too small to read, but she wasn't in a nurse's or volunteer's uniform. "Are you Abby Metzger?"

I nodded. "Yes."

"Follow me." She took me straight to the ICU. A nurse at their nursing station had Kim and Sheri wait as she took me down a hall. "We're only letting you in after Doctors

Christina and a Dave insisted. Kittie arrived with a concussion and went out cold on us. We're testing whether anything went wrong with the medications. Our orders are for you to sit with her, hold her hand, and speak softly that you are here with her. OK?"

I nodded.

A loudspeaker blared something I didn't understand. "Oh my Gawd," burst from the staff person's lips. She trotted down the hall and ducked into a room. I followed.

In a patient's room someone in a white lab coat on her knees on the bed straddled the patient. She spoke a language I didn't understand. Her tone obviously poured out all the love she could. They were holding a fixture from a flexible tube over the patient's nose and mouth. There were two monitors going.

The equipment seemed like some of the stuff we had, so I actually understood parts of it.

A raucous buzz interrupted everything as a monitor's graph fell flat to the bottom of the screen.

Someone swore. "Kee-ryst."

People were pushing other people out of the way. The woman who brought me backed into a corner as she pulled my hand taking me with her.

They hurriedly rolled another machine into the room.

Everyone glanced at a monitor and stuck things on the patient which were connected to wires from that new machine.

"Ready?"

"Do it."

A med-tech pulled down on a big handle. Needles jumped and monitors flashed new numbers.

The patient on the bed jerked arms and legs.

That person standing next to me leaned into my ear. "Her heart stopped." The woman kneeling on the hospital bed kept saying the same things over and over. "C'mon Kittie. You can do it. We don't lose patients here at Memorial Health Care. Please. We love you."

The person standing next to me interrupted. "Abby is here. Tell her Abby is here."

"Another?"

"Not yet. Not strong, but the monitor shows her heart is beating. More oxygen."

A monitor graph had low spikes again and a big number cycled between 30 and 45.

I leaned into the person next to me. “She’s lactating heavily. She may need to be pumped.”

That woman gave me a strange look.

“I’m her intimate partner, just with a low voice. We’re an ANR.”

Her eyebrows moved in a way that signaled *what does that mean?*.

I whispered. “Adult nursing relationship. My breasts will ache too, which is why I know her’s may need attention. I brought a pump for mine.”

She nodded she understood, but we’d have to wait. She didn’t ask me about my low masculine voice. I wondered if the hospital could change my voice.

Someone with a stethoscope in the pocket of her white lab coat came in with a multiple page print out. Two people talked with her in low whispers and she responded in kind. All three nodded, and they sent a med-tech scurrying out.

I had them make a report to Kim and Sheri waiting at the nursing station.

The people near Kittie’s head were talking in low soft tones to her. Everyone glanced at the monitor display which slowly improved.

The woman next to me moved in closer to all those people. “Her partner is here, and we have been told to have her hold the patient’s hand. Can we make room?”

One of the guys pushed a chair through the crowd to Kittie’s side opposite the door and all that equipment.

I dropped my shoulder bag next to the chair, sat down, and took her hand. She felt cold.

I leaned in to her ear. “Kittie, honey, this is Abby.” We never called each other honey before, but the crowd needed a marker. “Christina and Doctor Dave told me to be here and hold your hand. You feel so cold. I’m here. I love you. I’m staying here with you through your ordeal.” I kept up that commentary trying to use a woman’s caring words, but doubted whether I did the right thing. I focused so intently on Kittie’s still face I didn’t notice the crowd had thinned out a little. The monitors showed a steady pace of her heart.

A new med-tech arrived and conferred with the people arranged on the other side of the bed. One of the women doctors picked up her head at me. “Are you Abby?”

“Yes, ma’am. There are two others waiting who need to be in on this.”

“Kittie’s partner.”

I nodded. They seemed to be uptight about relationships.

“Come out in the hall, please.”

The chair had slid into the bed requiring effort to slid it away and get up. I had been so concentrated on Kittie I had forgotten to dribble into my diaper. I wet as I went

out into the hall. That damp warmth down there comforted me.

We had a terribly complicated discussion with the medical staff, Kim, and Sheri. Out of it I gathered Kittie had been hit from the side in a freak auto accident. She had been tossed around in the car. Her head had slammed into a side window of the door for the driver.

Now there was something wrong with the medications. "Does she take anything?"

I glanced at Kim and Sheri who had those answers of what women at the Mansion House could be taking.

Eyebrows popped up with that.

I didn't explain who we were.

"Blood tests say she is over medicated." I hadn't heard that she could have been sneaking unauthorized prescription drugs. I didn't say anything about that. They continued. "Now we need to rectify that and give her other medications. But this could backfire. We need family approval. Can you do that?"

"Does this keep her alive?"

"Maybe this helps, but maybe not. We want to stabilize her heart and vital signs. Her breathing is troubled, and we can give her oxygen. If we don't do something she will be in pain, and that could cause trouble even while she is out.

I glanced at Kim and Sheri who gave discrete nods. "I don't like pain, and Kittie doesn't either." I didn't tell them all I could have. "Are you recommending this?"

A different woman doctor arrived in a white lab coat for which I felt rescued. They explained it all over again to her. She looked at me.

I looked her straight in the eye. "What do you recommend?" Her head pulled back. She told me later I had surprised her with my directness she had not been expecting.

They conferred in pharmaceutical and medical jargon. "Yes, Abby, tell them to go ahead."

I glanced at Kim and Sheri again who nodded discretely they agreed, too. "Thanks. I feel much relieved. She says yes, so I say yes. Do it."

The doctor put her hand on my arm holding me back as they went in. She spoke in a very low voice. "Thank you for coming. They all think you are a woman with a low voice, but Doctor Christina told me better. Your secret is safe. But if they knew they would not want you in there when they take off the rest of her clothes and insert a catheter. Can you stay?"

I leaned into her ear and whispered very low. "I put on a new thick diaper before coming. Do I look good enough?"

She backed off a little and smiled at me. "All of you look fabulous. I didn't expect

anyone to be so well dressed. Your hair is great.”

“All of us are lactating heavily. Have them breast pump her. They aren’t believing me.”

We were interrupted. “You can come in now.”

This time nobody objected when Kim and Sheri came along with me. I went to that chair, pulled it back close to the bed, took Kittie’s hand, and used those same words as before.

That Doctor took Kittie’s other hand and said her style of caring words.

Another doctor asked me to leave. The primary doctor nodded she agreed. Kim, Sheri, and I weren’t out in the hall too long as they pumped Kittie’s breasts.

Kittie’s room had a restroom where Kim, Sheri, and I pumped our own.

The hospital brought us dinner and drinks.

I sat there holding Kittie’s hand. I don’t think the hospital figured out that I had only been going to the restroom for my breasts. They gave us a sheet of instructions for sitting with critical care patients.

That primary physician returned. “Anything you need?”

“I only brought a few replacement disposable diapers. The hospital must stock those. Yes?” I became proud of myself adding that woman’s style question at the end.

“Sure. What if they insist they do the changing?”

I felt embarrassed, but not so much as to be warm at the ears. “If they insist.”

They did change the three of us without any word or sign this could be unusual. Later I asked that doctor. She responded they hadn’t been surprised because of the way she had made Doctor Dave’s comments into ‘doctor’s Instructions’.

When Kittie’s eyelids fluttered I pressed the call button and people were there in under a minute. I talked in a low voice to Kittie as Kim and Sheri returned.

They rigged a fluids bag and added lines for medications and anesthetics.

Kittie went back to sleep.

I pushed the call button again when her face scrunched up with pain, and they returned quickly. They upped a dosage, and explained in Kittie’s far ear what they were doing.

I interrupted. “She feels chilled to me,”

They took her temperature with a gadget at her ear, and added a warmed blanket to the bedcovers.

She faintly nodded. Time passed before her face lost some of that tension.

I catnapped sitting between rereading favorite parts of a book from church. Her hand which wasn't as cold before. Kim and Sheri rotated hand holding duty with me.

The time on a monitor said a little after four in the morning when Kittie's hand squeezed mine. She tried to talk, but remained too weak.

I held my ear to her mouth. "Abby. Is this you, Abby? You look lovely."

I became surprised she said so much. "Yes, Kittie, this is Abby. Sheri and Kim and nearby. I wore really good clothes. My best suit dress needed cleaning and pressing. Is this good enough? Am I making you proud with how I am dressed?"

She squeezed my hand. Kim and Sheri arrived and she squeezed their hands.

When they released her two days later she remained weak. "Stay with me."

At the Mansion House she signaled with a finger for me to join her in bed. Our four sister-wives all agreed. Under the covers I went. She rolled on her side and smiled at me. Just a weak smile, but my eyes watered at that. She moved her hand at my face and put two fingers at my mouth. This wasn't making any sense until I let her fingers slip between my lips. I sucked.

Her voice remained weak and soft. "Good girl, Abby. That's the comforting I needed from you."

"Yeth, Mommy. You are safe. I am here with you. If you want you can go to sleep now and rest."

She lay there watching my face for a few minutes before she went to sleep.

Kittie's and our sister-wives brought in the doctors and medical staff we had in and around the Mansion House. They helped us understand the stages of Kittie's recovery. We fed, changed, and pumped her in our semi-private quarters. We also kept her locked in one of those cages the Mansion House had brought from the old location. She reported feeling dizzy and understood why we didn't want her standing up too fast.

The first time we were prepared to use a wheelchair for taking her anywhere Kim and Sheri took charge having her bend over the mattress of the opened cage. Sheri wrapped her hand from behind around the bulge in Kittie's plastic pants. "Good girl. Keep piddling in your diaper like a little baby. Your poopies are your gifts to your Mommies. Say 'yeth, Mommy'."

She did. "Yeth, Mommy."

"You understand Mommy keeps you in diapers for your piddle and poop."

"Yeth, Mommy."

They kept that up before letting her sit and be strapped into a wheelchair.

First they brought Kittie to the pumping station, but wouldn't let her stand up from the wheelchair for a changing.

The dining hall became a whirlwind of well wishers.

A week later Kittie asked to be allowed to stand up on her own. Peggy and Megan held Kittie's arms the first few times. They switched Kittie from disposable to cloth diapers, but Kittie continued wanting to be changed privately.

I returned from visiting the motel construction which put me into a foul mood. Peggy waited for me at the changing and pumping station. She let them hook me up for pumping before changing when she broke the news to me. "Kittie's recovery process has her taking on her former terror. She understands she died clinically at the hospital while we were there when her heart stopped. That is allowing her to see herself in a new light. You won't believe it. She is talking of visiting the bank."

I didn't believe it until I heard Kittie talking that way.

Once Kittie felt safe again starting with walking she recruited a committee that became a task force. She recruited those people on her own.

She and her task force wanted a new well equipped hospital near us. They found swamp land on the far side of the shopping center. They expanded the clam pond for dirt as fill in the swamp land. Having a building permit required driving piles deep into the ground. When they did that the hospital building's foot print became smaller as its height rose. The hospital's height being as tall as the hotel made Northside seem to be a real place.

The bank loved the way Kittie presented plans and opportunities for the new Northside Hospital. Her self-esteem soared. She learned from our business coach, Cindy, to never take a 'no' for an answer. Don't let them put that on you. Instead a 'no' meant a 'not yet'.

Kittie's task force divided itself into multiple committees for heavy construction, finishing work, operations, medical equipment, finance, and only they knew what else.

What else included recruiting. They made me Chair, but of what remained unclear. I told them no. Tara smacked me on my diapered butt in front of my sister-wives. I became Chair of the Northside Hospital Foundation.

Cindy cut me no slack. None at all. When the Medical Equipment Committee told me they wanted a Cybreknife machine, and a prestige surgeon to go with it, I had learned to ask Cindy before responding. She told me how she had done that in her former life.

For those calls I changed my name to Cindy. That is, officially with a Court order spelling my new name as Cindi. At least to me that sounded better on the phone. Cindy became furious with me over my name change, but she got over it.

By the time I had recruited the Surgeon for that Cybreknife machine I knew more than I had ever wanted with how that could perform surgery with the patient frequently remaining in their street clothes. It could cut cancer cells at a rib without cutting into the rib even with the patient's slow breathing.

Only then did Cindy hit me with a bomb of an idea. One of those machines back home had changed her voice. That's where her soprano singing came from. She told me more and sent copies of the surgical reports.

I became a highly enthusiastic fan of having this hospital.