

ABBY

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Chapter 42 - Car Repair

One of the guys named Bob became profoundly depressed. Tara told me about him, and Christina agreed. Depression happened from time to time among the residents. His anger got hold of him and wouldn't let go. He would not cooperate. He ignored his soaked diaper and aching breasts until someone else brought him to the changing and pumping station. Others dubbed him as having a *defiance disorder*.

I disliked that I had not seen his depression. I had thought I did better at catching issues around the Mansion House residents.

Tara, Christina, and their psychology students brought a wheelchair out of storage, put him in it, and called him Wheelchair Bob. As explained to me, having a fake physical disability worked for him as matching his psychic disability.

He used his savings from his disability income for an electric wheelchair, a high quality laptop computer, separate screen, keyboard, ear buds, and speakers. He would sit there for hours searching the Internet as he dribbled in his diaper.

We had discovered the remedy with everyone else for their depression had been finding something to do. What they did didn't seem to matter all that much for relieving their oppressive mood.

Tara connected the dots and held a meeting of the residents waiting for the gasoline station and car repair shop to open. Tara had them appoint Wheelchair Bob to the repair shop as their computer guru for parts and repair instructions. He happily chased all of that on the internet for them.

He did not give up his electric wheelchair. Oh well. We had tried our best on that.

All of our efforts for a gas station blew sky high when that task force called fuel distributors. They all wanted a lien on our land for building the gas station in their motif, name, and expense. That task force became so despondent that they attracted the attention of Tara who called in Christina before the two of them talked with me.

I called a brand name we were confident we would not use of Love's Travel Stops. I learned all I could from them of how they would want a long term contract. After that, the task force had one of their own call the distributor they thought would be the most amenable. Durkin Petroleum operated in the few states around us as an independent supplier. The task force told the Durkin representative that an unnamed person had been talking with Love, which had been true, but not quite the way the task force representative characterized those calls. Those petroleum company representatives must have talked with each other out of sight, and perhaps behind their

boss' backs, as the Durkin rep began quoting to the task force what had been in my calls with Loves. Or, maybe, what I had said had been used by many others before me trying to defeat that lien.

The task force laid out to Durkin that someone else owned the land. Mansion House owned the land, but we didn't disclose that the gas station task force had always been part of Mansion House. The bank had insisted on a separate LLC for the gas station and another for the repair shop. My thought had been *those darn bankers and lawyers*, except they were right, of course.

It worked for us. Durkin became frightened of what Love might do, and instead we signed with Durkin for a slightly higher percentage for them on fuel sales income. Our bank arranged for the petroleum sales by credit card to be deposited in a separate account which the bank reported to Durkin. There was no lien on the land. Our trust fund from a Court settlement held up. Our organization kept solvent with only small calls for contributions from all the residents and their disability income.

Durkin insisted we send a manager to a Franchising Course. We sent Wheelchair Bob. The two story building for the course didn't have an elevator. The rest of us who knew snickered behind Bob's back when he had to walk up the stairs and around in that second story. He borrowed our van where he could discretely change his diapers. We let him have disposables which we didn't use much. Pumping his breasts took longer than the time allowed for breaks, but they didn't throw him out.

A huge well lit sign to be seen from the Interstate highway cost a fortune. We grinned and paid for it after talking the bank into adding it to yet another SBA loan package. My sister-wife Kittie the former banker, and her finance task force had SBA loan applications down to a science. Change the name, a few words, fiddle with the financial projections, hit the print button, and call a meeting of the residents for approval. Those meetings became so routine as to be boring. The residents learned a smattering of Roberts Rules Of Order, and quickly called the motion on those applications. Hands shot up for a yes vote. Tara's sex toys Pat and Barbie-Doll took the official notes of the meetings. After the vote people returned to more fun things to do.

The crises about the petroleum supplier subsided into plain ole construction issues such as footings and burying the storage tanks. The water logged swamp land under us could float empty tanks breaking up the concrete overhead. The remedy ended up with the tanks being above ground and away from everything else. Fire safety required those be in a containment area which meant earthen dikes to keep a fire from spreading. Those looked to us like another pond for clams. We made those into fish farms. Feeding the fish by throwing their food across the water became a voluntary form of relaxation. They overfed the fish making them fatter for harvesting more quickly.

Tara took me aside. "Cindi; you are too different from everybody else, and therefore isolated. It comes from your being the Chair for so long. Pick an activity; golf; Jaycees; canasta; hiking; fishing; start a poker club. In there you can be one of the crowd." Tara had the same issue. We found the greatest enthusiasm grew for a model railroading club. The women residents smirked at the guys for wanting toy trains, except a few of them joined too. The railroaders grew better friendships from working together building their layout of track. At least all the committees and task forces knew where to find us on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. We rotated the timing during railroading meetings of when they would go out for diaper checks and breast pumpings.

The women had several other groups. A few guys would join their book groups,

but not so much their gardening and knitting groups. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings became the group nights. Tuesday and Thursday evenings became task force, committee, self-help, and organization wide meetings. After the schedule settled in comfortably, the Saturday evenings became variety shows where the predominate theme developed into having fun about ourselves in a vaudeville kind of way. Many Saturday skits would start with "we love you Cindi. We know this didn't happen this way, but have fun with us about ourselves". They would then make up an outrageously funny story about me which had actually been about their foibles. The residents on the church choir would use these Saturday evening meetings as an opportunity to practice the hymns for the next Sunday morning. That became so popular we bought a complete additional set of the Hymnals for everyone joining in.

My five sister-wives were on the verge of a separation. They had tried giving up their diapers as a prelude to leaving. They consulted Christina as our natural woman psychologist. She pointed out to them that their and everyone else's high volume of human milk production would be painful to stop. She added that they, and everyone, men and women, were addicted to the self-made, legal, feel good, oxycotin hormones from producing milk. Going about in a thin diaper without plastic pants almost worked during the day, but not at night. It didn't help that we only had a few toilets, and those were all too often in weird places that were hard to find in a hurry. The residents had voted for fewer toilets at an early stage of construction, and that had required a building permit variance. My sister-wives trying to give up their diapers would suddenly dart off, except they didn't make it all the time.

Instead of a separation and their departure, we had a space remade into a pleasant sitting room for us with three private small bedrooms. Kim added a hot tub jacuzzi. I became frightened of the other residents, all of whom were voting members, would object to the favoritism. Instead we had separate sittings rooms installed for men, for women, and mixed, and each of those had a big jacuzzi. Others had their own sitting room and hot pot. Kittie always had me in the late evenings unless one of the other sister-wives wanted me in bed. Kim and Sheri slept together, as did Peggy and Megan.

During all this they became depressed. They had grown tired of the unending task forces. My sister-wives consulted with Christina who brought in Tara. Ultimately they discovered a whole new answer when another business failed who had rented one of our retail stores. They started a bridal shop. Our seamstresses were charmed as they had become bored making so many of our standard denim shirtdresses. Kim, Sheri, Peggy, and Megan went from never going out all that much to enthusiastically visiting every Chamber of Commerce, Jaycees, Kiwanis, Rotary, Lyons, and civic club they could find. Kittie would go with them when she could break away from her financial and banking work. Our Pastors introduced them to other Pastors who introduced them to the couples planning on being married.

They had wedding gowns made for themselves without the trails and modified a little for concealing their diapers. Wedding gowns are a close form revealing fit. They included a little extra cloth for their driving a car. They would go out in pairs where each could describe the gown of the other. That was easier than each describing herself. They carried blazing white clutch style small handbags decorated with sequines.

Their new found customers asked about other clothing. They and me as yet another committee came up with Exquisite Fit Tailoring as one more business name. They oversold our capacity and set up satellite seamstress shops among the Cajon, Creole, African-American, and other pockets of poverty.

Tara, Christina, and my sister-wives working together on their issues found another issue. Their combined answer became I would carry my big shoulder bag whenever I went outside, and with my 44 revolver hidden away in it. Their concern came from their observations that a few truckers can be ham fisted. Truck repair can be different; there are drivers who could hate us; go armed.

Occasionally the car repair shop called me when the mechanic on duty as the manager or Wheelchair Bob couldn't console a distraught customer. As best as the mechanics and I could tell my feminine appearance threw the distraught customer off of their psychological tracks. They had wanted a masculine confrontation when my feminine appearance didn't match what they had been expecting.

Most often the problem developed into a communications issue over a newly diagnosed problem with their car. The mechanics learned to write notes of their telephone calls with the customers. The unhappy customer had authorized a repair, typically expensive, and had forgotten it. Or, they didn't want to pay for it. Occasionally their credit card declined the major charge.

Every auto repair business any of us had ever seen had cars stored out back that were personal projects of the mechanics. Our mechanics with their needs for a breast pumping every two hours and a check or change of their diapers didn't travel around all that much. The few repairs they took on for a profit on the resale of the car were stored in our multi-level garage. The ground around our car repair shop appeared especially well kept.

One day my cell phone played a current favorite tune of mine. This time it was *Walk On By*. "Hello, Cindi here."

"Cindi, this is Bob. Please come to the repair office."

I replied "On the way", but did not feel that way. I hooked the strap of my big bag on my shoulder. I had on no makeup, no earrings, and wore the plainest of a white blouse and a red pleated skirt. Kittie scowled at me for how I looked and brushed my hair. I interrupted her from using any lipstick on me. "Wheelchair Bob would not want me to look any better."

He had found for sale on the internet a vintage Lionel locomotive diesel engine set of a Sante Fe F3 in three units known as an A-B-A combination. It had been Lionel's all time most popular electric toy train engine. Its pristine condition collector's value made it relatively expensive. All the guys in the model railroading club had fat bank accounts from their unused disability income. I asked myself *if they wanted it, why should I object?* He had been so withdrawn he didn't think he could ask. I thought *Tara would tell me later*, and did, "push him a little. Time for him to grow," by which Bob as a he appearing as a she like many of us with our enlarged breasts would mean grow psychologically.

"Aw, Bob, just ask around at dinner time. Let them decide." They outbid all of the other interested parties and bought it. It arrived spiffy clean, shiny, and new complete with the original boxes.

After I had told him to ask around the railroading club three big rough looking guys came in the car repair office. "Yer money, an' be quick about it if yer know what's good fer ya'."

I slipped my hand in my big shoulder bag and plopped it on the counter top separating the staff area from the customer area. I wrapped my right hand around the grip of my 44 revolver in my bag. "Get out. There is a police cruiser ninety seconds from here."

He swore the "F" word before calling me a "blond whore".

I kept my masculine voice level. "Bob, summon the police."

Bob had made that task easy. He punched a pair of keys on his computer, and it summoned the police for a robbery. That also stopped the rotation among the surveillance cameras and recorded from the pair in the office.

The nearest big man growled using swear words again. "I'd better teach you whoring injun squaw yer manners." He put his hand around the leading edge of the counter top that would rotate open.

I didn't have any Native American in me that I knew of. We were only four feet apart. Bob and his wheelchair prevented my backing up. That big guy, with fists and arm muscles to match, could do me real harm.

I lowered that shoulder bag and pointed the revolver inside it for his legs. I didn't tempt fate he might have a bullet proof vest under his dirty shirt. I fired. Shooting from inside that shoulder bag reduced the noise.

He collapsed to the floor with a scream for his pain. He wrapped his hands around the bleeding from the in and out bullet holes.

The man right behind him roared with rage using an impressive string of swear words as he stepped over the body of his buddy.

I withdrew my revolver from my bag, and bellowed "HALT!" He didn't stop. I aimed at his face, held my breath, and squeezed the trigger.

The hole in his forehead appeared right above his eyes, and a little left of center. The hollow point bullet blew out the back of his skull making a bloody mess on the floor behind him. He collapsed in a heap.

This time that gunshot explosive roar in the small office made my ears ring.

The third man stalled.

I roared "HALT!" again.

A pair of our mechanics hired from the outside and armed with heavy tools arrived in the doorway behind the third man. One Cajun mechanic had a big massive ratchet wrench held high for hitting that third man over the head. The Creole mechanic had a tire iron held in his two hands at mid-level for puncturing the third man's gut.

Everyone froze in place.

I ordered. "Bob, throw him your towel." Bob had a phobia about germs from the public and kept a towel and hand sanitizer close by. That towel would reek of the sanitizer by the end of each day when he added it to our huge laundry for wet diapers.

He threw it over the counter top.

I glared. "Wrap that around his bleeding leg."

He found his voice and whined. "This is my third. I'll get life."

I found I had an authoritarian voice. "Tough. Correct me if I am wrong. I believe a death in the course of a crime is considered to be the same as Murder One. Kneel on the floor and help your buddy's bleeding unless you want your head bashed in."

He did. The police arrived who called for an ambulance and a morgue truck.

Wheelchair Bob called Misty to set up the two videos for the police to have for their report.

The police glared at me. "Better get a concealed carry permit."

When I made out the application to the Department of Public Safety for that permit, I took it to a police cruiser parked outside our restaurant. "Could you hand carry this for me?"

Yes, they did, and the approval came back super fast through them which meant to me they cared for us. Our free burgers, subs, and sodas for them counted too.

After the shooting, I seemed tense and walked stiff legged as I went through the tunnel from the car area. My first muscle to relax made a lump in my diaper.

Tara made a big scene at dinner that night. She showed the video of those two men being shot and told them Bob and I would suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from that. She made me cry. I lost track of who and how many gave me hugs right then which could have been by every nearby resident.

My five sister-wives clustered around me as one of them towed me by my hand as I continued weeping while they took me to a chair. No self-serve for me that night. The kitchen came up with a favorite of mine of a thick grilled steak with Brazilian farina/farofa on the side. Christina quoted favorite passages at me from the Gospels of Mark and Thomas which made me cry even more.

Tara told them to keep me crying. My sister-wives daubed my face of the tears with hot wet towels. My diaper had become soaked by the time they led me to the pumping and changing station.

A few women did the same things with Bob. Although we thought of him as a confirmed batchelor, he started dating them. Eventually Bob and one of them moved in together. The rest of us were charmed.

Back at the car repair area, those cars for sale grew into a separately named used car lot. The mechanics facetiously called it Swamp Critter Cars with a logo of a huge alligator carrying a derelict car on its back.

A car parts company wanted to provide us with a stock room. We told them no. The problem we saw had been staffing it, which meant safeguarding it from petty theft. With everything we were doing we didn't have that many extra people, and that duty came across to us as perhaps a little too lonely and depressing. We do not consciously

set ourselves up for more depression.

A tire distributor wanted to stock us with common tire sizes. That seemed less vulnerable to petty theft, but we didn't think we had the space for the storage. They created a new answer. Pilings were sunk in nearby swampy water logged land no one could use, and a full sized forty foot conex container resided there anchored in place. That container had seen better days. When we installed a modern auto painting shop with all the environmental controls on the other side of and next to the railroad tracks, that old rusty container became the first big project. Instead of hiding it, we made it almost attractive painting it a glossy medium blue. Later repaintings as burgundy and then forest green had it almost disappear against a backdrop of trees and swamp growth. While the container had been moved off its pilings we had that spot and everything nearby filled in. Our mosquito problems almost disappeared, and we had more land.

All these new businesses spawned off of the gas station kept needing more space. We bought an elderly bulldozer and the mechanics rebuilt it with a front loader. All that soggy dirt it carried for more land made space for additional clam beds, fish farms, shrimp colonies, and ultimately our own oysters. The first time that bulldozer bogged down in the muck scared us. It didn't quite stall, but we all fretted and bought an incredibly long length of multiple chains for towing it out if it ever did become stuck.

That bulldozer with its squealing tracks and roaring diesel engine attracted our first big customer of a construction company. Gary tried us after another repair shop had botched fixing the hydraulic cylinder on a crane. When the long boom arm had crashed to the ground it had barely missed killing an employee and had spewed expensive hydraulic fluid. The soaked earth had to be dug up and sent out for burning the contamination away. The mechanics sent for me for this big and expensive job.

I used my excuse with Gary of "I have a low voice" which worked again. The hydraulic plunger had become scored and that had wrecked the new seal. Wheelchair Bob found a new plunger on the internet and the hair raising price. I do not know how I talked Gary into advance funding that expensive part. When he squealed away burning tire rubber in his pickup truck to fetch the crane I handed Wheelchair Bob the big check. He and the mechanics grinned at me and my success which made me pucker up for a cry like a girl from all those feminine hormones. I barely held it in.

The restaurant's twenty four hour a day cleaning crew on jail work release kept having graduates wanting to work for us. Instead of asking for skills and the fudging that could produce, we had them cleaning the hotel when that opened, cleaning the gas station and related areas, and offering to pump gas instead of self-service. At the gas pump they would tell the customer where the restrooms were located and offered to watch the fuel hose. As the customer followed the signs inside for the restrooms, for the store, and for the restaurant, the former jail inmates suggested another sign. It read in big letters "Love Thy Neighbor" and had a stack of author names below of Jesus, Ghandi, and Budda. At the bottom edge of the sign was a wooden box with a slot in the top. A line above it read "Children With Disabilities" which meant the kids on Saturday at the church on the other side of the highway. It attracted so many five dollar bills in a day they made a bigger box.

Having changed my name to Cindi, I ever more wanted to change my voice to match my feminine appearance caused by my enlarged lactating breasts.