

ABBY

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Chapter 32 - Mood Swings

Our next challenge was that the mood swings among the residents became more frequent and severe as the new place neared completion. Hope, fear, and anxieties chased each other through most of us. We picked up on those swings in each other which intensified those feelings.

Tara and her students asked at a big meeting if they could visit the nearest hospital with a mental health wing.

It was a close voice vote which was rare. We had multiple residents counting the show of hands. The 'nays' held a slight majority until the counters asked for their and my vote. The 'yeas' now had a slender majority. Watching which resident voted which way during the voting affected the counters.

"We don't want anyone feeling ignored, threatened, or overrun."

What came out was a surprise. Nearly everyone had voted for the new Mansion at the multiple big decisions along the way. Nearly everyone had worked on it one way or another. All those it'sy bitsy teensie weensie little decisions had made a monster that overwhelmed us. We felt we had lost control, and that threatened our fragile psychics.

Those who had ever said anything had all agreed that suicide was our biggest risk. And those roller coaster emotions on the downside of the mood swings were confirming that was our biggest risk.

Many people wanted just a little privacy. Especially the women disliked the in-house public exposure of diaper changes. At least the breast pumpings relieved pressure and sometimes pain.

A hand shot up in the back. "I want a little privacy too, but privacy is where any of us can take the time to kill ourselves. Our kitchen knives are not all that secure. Guys keep having beards to shave until there is enough for an electrolysis treatment, and shaving means razors. Razors mean sharp cutting edges. Underarms get shaved too. Not everyone wants the pain or low level discomfort of eliminating their beard or body hair with electrolysis. How long does it take to strangle oneself to death? Six

minutes? That's not long enough for an absence to be reliably noticed. I for one do not want to be in a small group that has a failed member commit suicide. I'm not that up myself all the time. Most assuredly I do NOT want to know more about how to do it. I struggle too much already with those fantasies when I am deeply into a black mood."

There were wide spread murmurs, mutters, and expressions of agreement.

One of our two resident police officers made a little cough. "Ask the jail. They have cameras in individual cells. Ask if they have software that can tell from the video when something isn't right."

The officer on duty spoke out. "They don't, but we can search the Internet. Somebody has everything out there." They did search but found nothing. The officer wanted to post a contract opening for an outside computer consultant. Instead, we had Misty already here.

"Can we afford that?"

Kitty spoke up from the financial committee. "No problem."

That required running miles of little fiberoptic and electric signal cables, and most of the drop ceilings were already installed. We did the work ourselves, or, more accurately five guys and three gals became experts at fishing cable. No one trusted WiFi not to be blocked. We did not want any outsider watching from pirating off of WiFi. The latest fiberoptic technologies had little bubble lenses instead of intrusive looking security cameras. All of us knew, but didn't have to be reminded at passionate moments by the sight of camera boxes at the ceilings.

Tara called out. "I still want to visit the hospital mental health wing, and take our students too. We need to know everything we can in lieu of becoming a police state."

They went in our smaller bus for two straight days. They called a big meeting when they returned. "They almost committed all of us involuntarily. It was the image of the sign at the pumping and changing station that swung them around. The one big thing that stood out more than anything is we need more personal counselors. I think we can do that ourselves. OK?"

That was OK with a majority vote of the residents. It came out that the best therapists were not people with the highest academic degrees. The best therapists were the people who had the strongest internal communication within themselves of their thoughts, fantasies, and feelings. What they experienced within themselves during a session is what gave them the insights into what the patient was going through. Two of Tara's students seemed ready. All our bravery on the upside of mood swings had to allow all of us to have black moods on the downswings. All of us had to ask for help. Worse for myself and many others was accepting the help. It was a rocky road.

Pat and Barbie-Doll could see possible black moods quicker than anybody from their own difficult times with their own addictions. They had become adept at watching for concealed black moods from their security work with us.

Our project kept failing final construction permit inspections. There was always one Tom Fool thing or another. We hired an out of state inspection service who came up with a list of deficiencies as long as your arm. A quarter of our residents took up station at the site with copies of that list which kept growing. Nothing was ready for the inspection service off unless at least two residents had seen the work. If just one resident had watched the sub-contractors quickly became adept at charging prejudice. The inspection service found more flaws. The general contractor was going nuts with all of the errors made by the sub-contractors.

Kitty called the bank's loan committee. They groaned, too, but kept up their own vigil.

There were so many of us on site that travel trailer always had at least one resident on duty during the day. We kept our watchful standards of no one ever pumped or changed themselves.

Finally, we could board our two buses in relays and all of us go visit the new Mansion House and Restaurant. We thought this was our last inspection. They loved the new kitchen and dining hall, the new community rooms, the semi-private bedrooms, and the windows. The windows didn't have bars. They simply didn't open. Fire suppression and ceiling sprinklers were everywhere. The top floor had a large attractive patio with big windows that did open. The ornamental grill work there didn't suggest confinement or security when it was both. We had a big fight with the fire marshal over how the main building was being constructed. Safety, security, risk of suicides, and a little help from the mental health wing of the hospital had prevailed.

But not such luck on this being the last visit.

I was standing in the enclosed walk way over the railroad cut when I knew something wasn't right. It had been Tara's idea to build a parking garage over the tracks. I was visualizing that and how it would work when it wasn't working. There was no good way to bring a walkway from the garage to the security desk. The more I worked on it the worse the parts kept colliding with each other in my head.

We had a hard day at the construction site for the new Mansion House. Our inspection company was present for the higher than usual number of ready-mix concrete trucks that were to arrive. Our on-site mixer had broken down. We suspected sabotage. The first truck of concrete had failed an inspection. Then the second and third. There was quite a line of transit mixer trucks with their fresh heavy loads arriving only to wait.

The Chief Inspector was on his cell phone. He signaled to me. The other end of

the call was the Chief Executive of the concrete supplier.

He yelled at me in rough, salty, demeaning words.

He was so bad that I both dribbled and made a small poop in my diaper. I squeezed in a short sentence. "You cut out that bad language."

His volume went up and the length of his swearing phrases became longer. "You wait right there."

He hung up before I could object to his ordering me around.

I reported all that to the inspectors and the on-site residents.

That line of cement trucks kept getting longer.

A black shiny SUV came into the site so fast it skidded on the gravel. The driver stayed in place. A big mean dude exited the right front door. "Where's that trouble causing worthless picayune little sleazy dame named Abby?"

I reached in my big red plastic shoulder bag and had my hand around the grip of my 44 revolver. A police cruiser parked nearby told me at least one police officer was nearby. "Take that back."

He scowled worse than anything I had ever seen and sneered. "Make me you little bitch."

"Take that back, or I'll scream 'hate crime'."

He stomped his way across the dirt with venom written across his face.

I waited without moving. My thumb cocked my revolver. "Stop right there."

His face became meaner if possible.

A police officer was next to me, but that man kept coming.

I removed my revolver from my bag and aimed at one of his big fat thighs. "I told you to stop right there."

His right hand came up to slap me, or grab me, or something.

I shot him square in the thigh.

He went down in pain screaming a string of swear words.

The police officer had already called an ambulance.

His hands gripped his leg oozing blood. Nobody moved to help him until the ambulance arrived, bandaged him, added a splint, and carried him away.

The inspector on my request walked the line of cement trucks returning them all to their plant.

That was just the beginning. Our prime contractor site manager informed me that cement company was tied in with the mob.

“You sure?”

“Yep.”

The police officer had her cell phone out and was calling for backup.

The site manager closed down the site. Without that concrete all of their work had to wait.

To their credit the police called in the FBI on that hate crime issue and on local corruption.

My hands shook and I was anxious sweaty damp as the resident on duty in the on-site travel trailer attended me. She changed my diaper and gave my breasts a quick pumping.