

BORDERLINE

By Lisa K. Stephenson

My office was steadily building a workload of patients, referrals from doctors and court mandates. Each new person I had registered was beginning to make me feel less enthusiastic about the Preen case; just when my doubts began to show, in walked Dr. Mullen. “Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me—”

“Look I don’t have much time, so here is the low-down.” Dr. Mullen quickly came inside closed the door behind her, took off her coat and grabbed a seat, she then leaned so close to me I could see her laugh lines vividly. She began whispering. “Nick and Sarah, they got married you know, everything was fine and dandy, happy home, happy relationship, happy everything or so we were all lead to believe. In 88’ after the birth of their first son he almost killed the boy, held him outside the window of his nursery, some story his wife told the courts during Nick’s first hearing. At first, everyone bought the story of the tired husband, long day at work, comes home, takes his anger out on the kid, etcetera. So the wife, what she does is she keeps the kid away from him for a while, doesn’t leave him alone with the baby, then she started looking into it more and decided to get some help. Not long after her parents started to get involved and her older brother came by and threatened Preen. Now everyone’s living a double life.”

“Sarah has a brother?” I asked.

“Look, when I’m done you can ask questions, but for now just be quiet and listen, because If I’m caught giving out this information, I can lose my license. Now, where was I? So the brother became suspicious, started spying on the house, showing up unexpectedly and doing all kinds of crap. Now the older brother, he wasn’t all that great either, what happened was him and Preen both went to the same school and graduated the same year, so he knew the kind of guy Preen was and at first didn’t like the idea of his sister dating let alone marrying Preen. Then one day all of a sudden, the brother becomes loving and welcoming of the idea and convinces the sister that she’s delusional and everything she’s imagining about Preen is a lie. Now they’re married, living the good life, Dillon was fine and Sarah began trusting Preen with the baby again, then one day poof! The older brother disappears. No one knows where he went, how he went or what happened to him but the mother filed a missing report the same year as Dillon’s second birthday and the older brother was never seen or heard from again. Now the police, whatever information they have on the case they’ve never disclosed it to us doctors. The tip-off I received when I first started came from an Officer named Gary O’Neal. He felt sorry for me just as I do now for you. But I wasn’t warned about just Nicholas, no, I was warned also about the wife.”

“So where is Officer O’Neal now?”

“Retired. So, at this birthday party Sarah announces that she’s pregnant with a child, their second child, Preen became very angry and he beats her, which ultimately, he ends up killing the baby. Now after that, he goes to jail, this is when I first became informed of Nicholas and was told that I would be put on the case because he is mentally incompetent to stand trial, this is due to his past and some bullshit that the lawyer came up with rendering him

insane. But at first, the judge wasn't buying it, labeling him equip to stand trial, so he went to jail for a couple of days to be released on bail and guess who bails him out?"

"Sarah?"

"Exactly, now why would you bail out the man who just sent you flying down sixteen steps and caused you to lose your unborn child? I'm just saying the girl is kind of crazy herself if you ask me. Now he comes out and they both go quiet, no one hears of any disturbances for a while, but then about a month or so later Sarah ends up pregnant—again. Now everyone has their eyebrows raised like what the fuck is going on in that home? Now once again, everything goes quiet, baby two is born, finally. Then a couple of years later we hear that Sarah has been hospitalized with cancer. Apparently, Nicholas had been messing around. Now I decide to get radical and do some snooping and that's when I learned the things I know now. Each day in '96 as I made my way down to Pennsylvania from my office, my heart raced, terrified out of my mind because meeting this man, the man who I have heard so many horror stories about, was actually going to be in my presence. At first, he didn't speak, not a word for about four months, then he finally started to open up and kept telling me how much he hated being in the hospital and that the drugs he's getting are causing him to get worse, not better."

"I'm still confused as to who was his caretaker from '94' to '96?"

"Danielle, I can't connect all these dots for you. Dr. Goldlyn first encountered Nicholas during the time that Sarah began battling her cancer. He was present during the first trial because he was the one who after the baby died signed off on false reports convincing the judge that Nicholas was insane and therefore pushed for the lawyer to plead insanity over his actions and why did he do this? Because he was having an affair with Sarah." Her eyebrows raised and so did mine. "She fell into depression after the loss of the baby and went out to seek help for her husband but fell in the wrong arms. She didn't want her child to be raised without a father, so she convinced Dr. Goldlyn, her sugar daddy, to pull a few strings so she could go and bail him out the first time. She was informed that the cancer was derived from HPV, which meant someone gave it to her because that person caught it from someone else. So her and Preen, they make love, and then here comes baby Roger, and instead of telling Preen that she had cancer she knew their marriage was falling apart, so she played it cool a little while longer and because he was cheating on her, one night she romanced him then revealed to him that she has cancer so Preen would believe that he was the one who had given it to her; although I am not sure why that was, I suppose guilt from his own infidelity. Look that's all the time I have for today, I need to return back to the city, I have an appointment in about ninety minutes. Now do you get it, why she's not to be trusted?"

So Jasmine left, and just like that, once again, I was given pieces to an unsolved puzzle. I can't understand why it is that no one seems to want to help me. Just then a knock came to the door "Dr. White I have Dr. Goldlyn on phone line one, he says it's an emergency and that he needs to speak with you urgently."

"Okay, thank you Melissa, I got it. Yes, Liar, how may I help you?"

"Excuse me? Look, no time for formalities, you need to get your ass down to the hospital now!"

"Why, what happened?"

"Just move it!"

I arrived at the Reece hospital as fast as I could and couldn't understand for the life of me what was going on, there were people yelling, crying and sobbing all over the place. "Hello, hi, I'm here to see Dr. Goldlyn, he's a psychiatrist—"

"I'm right here, what took you so long? Apparently, your guy threw his son out of a second-floor window then got pushed himself by the cop on duty sent out there to check it out." As usual Dr. Goldlyn was smoking his Italian cigar, despite the no smoking signs hanging on every door in the hospital.

"Oh my God are you serious? So where is the little boy now?"

"They're both in ICU."

"Look, if you and I are going to work together, you need to start telling me the truth about some things."

He started to laugh at me as though I was one big joke, and honestly I am beginning to feel like one. Nothing is making any sense and all of this drama is way too much for me to deal with. "Okay, well since I'm just one big joke to you, then fine, I quit."

Just as I began walking away he searched his conscience and called my name, "Danielle, wait a minute."

"What, what do you want?" Now I know I got him, so I turned around and folded my arms to remain looking serious.

"Okay, I can't afford for you to quit, cause once you quit, as soon as he is discharged from here, they're going to place him right back into my institution and I can't afford to have him there, so go ahead, ask me anything you want."

"Were you or are you sleeping with the Preen wife?"

"That's confidential inform—"

"Confidential my ass! I'm sure if I went to your wife with this crazy hunch of mine she won't find it confidential now will she? Especially since she may have caught the HPV virus." Dr. Goldlyn grabbed my arm so tight I could tell he was pissed; he walked me away from all the nurses and commotion and began his story.

"I knew that blabbermouth wouldn't be able to keep her damn mouth shut. Shit! Okay, so Sarah and Preen were having some issues and she needed someone to do home visits, now I own a psychiatric ward, why she would think to come to me is beyond me. But I guess I was a last resort, she told me about the baby incident and then I told her there was nothing I could do. I assured her that if she searched hard enough that she would be able to find someone who could and would gladly take on her case, someone who was licensed to do so. But she insisted and I don't know I guess I was horny that day. She said she would do anything I asked, for the sake of her husband and her family. So I asked her if she really meant anything and so she went on her knees and she blew me. I fucked her, she left. I decided to visit the prosecutor for the case and we had a very nice conversation and so Nick got off easy. I wasn't expecting things between Sarah and me to continue, but then she kept telling me how depressed she was and what not. Then, once Nick became permanently stationed in my ward, she visited frequently until one day I decided that I need to call things off because for one my wife was becoming suspicious and although I managed to deflect and had her thinking I was fucking one of the group leaders in the institute, I decided I wanted to stop, I

wanted to be a straight man and do the right thing. So Sarah and I called it quits, which happened to be the same day Nick burned my eyelid, after that she stopped visiting him and the rest is what we see happening now.”

“You’re a cheap, sad, ugly son of a bitch. Don’t you ever call my office looking for me ever again, I never want to hear from you, if you try to reach out to me in any kind of a way I’ll make sure to bring everything you just told me straight to the medical board. Do you understand me?”

“Whatever, maybe you’re the one in need of a good fuck.” He blew the smoke from his cigar in my face.

“If you want to keep that other eye of yours, I suggest you realize who the hell it is that you’re talking to.”

Walking away I headed straight towards Sarah, I knew she was in no mood for a conversation but I had to figure out what was going on and if there was anything I could do to help. As far as I am concerned, despite being told that she isn’t to be trusted, she is obviously going through some pain that I myself have come to know all too well. Watching her yell and scream did nothing but make my heart sink, I wanted to speak but I couldn’t find the words, nothing was coming because all I could do is stand here and daydream about my days with Mark and how he almost sent me to an early grave that blessed Monday evening. If women spend half as much time assuring their own happiness like that of their mate, I’m sure the world would be a better place. Men only do what we allow them to get away with and he keeps beating and she keeps returning. No one is that desperate or that stupid, so there has to be more than what meets the eye with these two, and I am determined to find out what.

The next morning I decided to take the day off and possibly get some me time. I had been looking into some adoption agencies because I figure, well, maybe it’s time that I think about having a little child of my own. My first thought was the try a sperm donor since it was both quick and far more efficient. I would simply go through a list of donors and see which one catches my eye. The list I had emailed over to me showed about twenty-four men, all of which looked really good on paper, and although that is important, I.Q. is the official tiebreaker in this particular situation. My life has become so overwhelming that I just don’t have time to date or meet anyone special enough to take seriously. I just realized that besides Melissa, I have no friends and me being in my house all alone is now becoming scary. I need a new change of scenery, the one I’m looking at doesn’t seem pleasant at all. I see my life five years from now in the same situation, sad and lonely, dealing with patients and their problems, issues, dramas, and sad cases. Sitting behind the desk in my study I decided to crack open a bottle of Moscato rose, my favorite little pink drink. I sifted through some files and came across one that seemed very interesting, a woman named Naomi Niki Anderson who registered with me yesterday. Age 27, hometown Brooklyn, NY, 5’6, African-American descent and now she has been court ordered to see me because her dad was murdered and it seems as though she killed him post their affair, beginning when she was only sixteen. Reading further is only going to make my head hurt, so I decided not to, suddenly my telephone rang.

“Hello, White residence.”