

A Model Student

March 2024 – Commission

Chapter Two

Hmm... 2319 Mill Creek Road. It had to be somewhere here, right?

Abigail reached back and pried her phone from the taut-drawn constraints of her back pocket. Ordinarily she might have had an easier time of it, of course. But today of all days she had to look her best. And so, into her skinniest skinny jeans she'd struggled, thinking all the while of how great that tight denim always made her ass look...

Though they weren't so hot in terms of convenience, were they?

No matter. She swiped up on the screen at last and found the little note she'd written to herself. "2319 Mill Creek. Yep," she muttered, brushing perplexedly at the bangs that were tickling her eyes. "Margaret said to just use the main entrance. Hmm..." She glanced up, scanning the demure white strip mall complex standing before her in the Saturday morning sunshine. But where was it? That door by the corner?

Sure enough, that was it. A neat little sign stood to the right of the entrance, proclaiming it to be "Neverland Enterprises" in blocky blue letters. Abigail drew near. She reached for the knob... paused for a deep breath... and then, with a burst of energetic determination, turned it and stepped inside.

Wow. The interior was... something else! She had never been in a medical supply store before, but this was unquestionably one of them. Walkers. Wheelchairs. Braces. Shower bars and stools. All manner of assistive devices greeted her, as did a wave of odors that reminded her of... well, what, exactly? Not a nursing home, nor yet a hospital. Of cleanliness, and plastic, and underneath it all, a strong undercurrent of something soft and powdery...

But before she could do more than blink and step forward more than a few steps, a door thudded somewhere in the back, followed by the rapidly approaching click of heels. Out from behind the end aisle display of masks and respirators appeared a womanly figure. Abigail had not even had time to fully register before the woman was stepping forward and extending her hand in a rush of effusive energy.

"Abigail, is that it? Yes? Oh, My husband and I are *so* glad you could make it!" She was pumping

Abigail's hand vigorously, her own ample chest bobbing up and down in unison. "You're such a dear for helping us out, you have no idea! It's really so good to meet you..." Abigail nodded along, mustering up her best and most personable smile to mask her nervousness. "Um, yeah – likewise! I-I had no idea this place was here, actually. I've, um, never been-"

"Oh, really? Well, I can't say I'm surprised!" Margaret laughed heartily, and now that the first burst of enthusiasm had passed Abigail managed to give a quick glance up and down her prospective employer. Margaret was... wow, practically a model herself! Tall and slender. Shoulder-length hair a lovely shade of honey blonde – and genuinely natural, too, from the looks of it. Certainly older than herself, but probably still in her thirties. And as if that wasn't enough, impressively chesty.

In other words, she was making it very hard for Abigail not to glance down self-consciously at her own modest self.

"We cater to any and all medical needs, simple as that," Margaret was saying, and now she was gesturing around the store. "Whether for illness, or disability, or even just aging, we've got you covered!" She chuckled, turning back to her companion with a bright smile. "But enough about that! Here, why don't we step back to the office? Dean isn't around today, unfortunately, but I'll want to go over things and ask a few questions, of course..."

Back they went: between stacks of cardboard boxes and half-assembled walkers, until they stepped into a snug little office with a desk and two chairs. "Have a seat, dear," Margaret beamed, reaching for the file cabinet behind her. "Now, let me fetch the portfolio – if I can find it. Hmm, no, not that one. Where the heck did he put the new one...?"

Abigail glanced about, a wave of nervous excitement shivering through her. This was all pretty... plain, she guessed. But also nice. Small and cozy, like a little home business-

"Here we are!" Margaret exclaimed, and now she was waving a little bundle of papers triumphantly. "Now, okay. Let's see. We, hmm. Where to start..." She settled into her seat at last, glancing first at her documents and then up at her companion. "Well, from the top, I suppose! You and I spoke on the phone, of course. But can you tell me a bit about yourself?"

And so the interview – if interview it was – unfolded. Abigail found herself fumbling for words at the start, but by Margaret's third question she was almost comfortable. Yes, she was an only child. At university to study anthropology, yes. Oh, she loved it! The professors were really nice, and she had met some great friends...

"Well, that's just wonderful!" Margaret nodded at last, with another bright smile. "Now, I suppose you'd like to hear about what kind of modeling we have in mind. Do you have any ideas?"

"Umm, well..." Abigail paused at the unexpected question, her forehead furrowing under her bangs as she thought. "I guess, hmm. Considering what you're selling... I dunno. Maybe things like posing with walkers? Or masks and stuff?"

"Well, good guess! But no, my husband and I usually do those shots." Margaret leaned back in her chair. "You might do a bit of that now and then, of course. But what we really need a huge amount of help with right now is our lines of incontinence products."

"Umm... inconti-?" "Incontinence products," Margaret repeated patiently. "You might know them as adult diapers? Or 'Depends'? Though honestly, those are nothing but a horrible brand-"

"Oh!" Abigail gulped, Margaret's casual remarks washing over as she tried to process what had just been said. *Adult... diapers?* But of course... she was in a medical supply store, right? And old people did need them sometimes, surely...

"To- um, to model? them?" Her voice had the most annoying habit of sliding upward when she was perplexed or anxious, and now it was practically squeaking. But Margaret seemed not to notice.

"Oh, of course!" she bubbled enthusiastically. "See, that's just the thing, isn't it? What do you think of when you think of adult diapers, dear? What's the first thing that comes to mind?"

"Umm..." Dang, this was getting awkward! "Um, well, old people? Elderly?" "Exactly my point!" Margaret was nodding emphatically. "But in fact, did you know that *ffty* percent of adult women have at least some degree of incontinence? It's absolutely not just old people – and that's the point we need to get across, isn't it?"

"Which of course is where *you* come in, dear!"

So it went, that unforgettable first meeting. Abigail was startled, naturally – almost repulsed. But as Margaret explained it all to her, it began to make so much sense. Hundreds of thousands of people dealt with this every day. Sure, it was easy to be embarrassed by a silly leaky body, or to try to pretend it didn't exist. But that wasn't helping anyone, was it? Might as well try to pretend that

some folks didn't have periods, either! No, what they needed was a smart bit of marketing using precisely the techniques that worked so well for other products. A young, ordinary but attractive woman, smiling and showing the world that a silly little thing like incontinence was nothing to worry about...

To be fair, Abigail was close to refusing at one point: the point when Margaret had energetically declined her hesitant proposal that maybe she could hide her face. "But that defeats the whole point, doesn't it?" she'd asked with a short laugh. "Pretty hard to reduce stigma if the model isn't even willing to be seen, huh?" And immediately afterward had come the clincher: the compensation.

Well, it still wouldn't be easy, Abigail mused as she duly signed her name to the contract. But fifty dollars an hour would make it a heck of a lot easier!

"And besides, they're far more modest than something like a bikini would be," Margaret assured her, rising with a flourish of the now-signed documents. "So don't worry your head about that. You'll be doing something great, and you'll be helping us out to boot! Now, come along – let's show you what we have in mind..."

Which is how Abigail ended up before a stack of cardboard boxes in the dimly-lit warehouse, watching timidly as Margaret slit one open and reached in to produce a bundle of thick, folded rectangles that gleamed pale in the gloom. "Here, these are for you," she instructed briskly, pressing them into Abigail's clumsy hand. "You said a 29 inch waist, right? These should be perfect!" Margaret was bubbling on, seemingly oblivious to Abigail's uncertain expression. "Of course, we won't be shooting until next weekend. But it'll be best if you take these and give them a good try..."

"Wait... try?"

"Oh, haha!" Margaret burst out gaily, laughing heartily at Abigail's astonished face. "Oh, no, not like that! I mean *put them on* – you know, for fit, and so you can get comfortable knowing what they feel like. You obviously don't need to use them as intended – I mean, not unless you *want to*..."

"Heh, heh! No, no, I'm good," Abigail managed, blushing hotly at what a stupid question she'd asked. Of course she wasn't going to *use* them – heck, no! It would be quite enough to put one on. And even *that* was going to be, well...

So she emerged at last, a good hour after her arrival. In her one hand was a sheaf of papers: proof that she was now not only a gainfully employed member of society, but an honest-to-goodness model. Meanwhile, from her other shoulder hung a discreet cardboard bag, bobbing as she strode back toward campus in a flurry of nervous excitement. No one but her needed to know about its contents, of course. Not passersby, not Jalisa, not even her own mom! No one but her, and that lovely, bubbly Margaret...

The Margaret who was at that moment gazing through the tinted shop window, watching her depart with a knowing smile on her lips.

(To be continued!)