**Emily Abroad**

by imanewb

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He moved, too fast for her to react. Disbelief rendered her speechless as she stood staring, her brain struggling to identify the scrap of material that had appeared in his hand and swiftly disappeared back into the locker room. Adrenalin pumped through her body as he snatched up her arm and half dragged her through the empty hallways.

“Wait here.” He grumbled, dropping her arm as he disappeared through an unmarked door.

Her pulsed hammered in her chest as her mind span wildly – wondering whether she should she wait, or should she run and not look back?

“Good morning Emily,” Emily’s head snapped up as the woman’s voice intruded into her consciousness, “Thank you Scott, I’ll take it from here.”

“I’m Ms. Wellyn, won’t you come in?”

Emily Jane gave the woman a wary look as she stepped inside, debating what trouble she’d get in if she just turned around and ran back to the dorms.

Sighing, Emily Jane stepped into the office and, for the second time that morning, her feet dragged to a halt as she took in the room. Its purpose couldn’t be mistaken, even if she’d only seen such things in movies or on TV before - A shrink’s office was a shrink’s office, it seemed, right down to the soft lighting, the large couch and the softly smiling woman with the dark, mesmerising eyes leant up against the desk watching her like she knew Emily Jane was on the verge of bolting.

“Shrink.” The word slipped past Emily Jane’s lips unbidden in her surprise, her hands covering her mouth as she blushed, wishing she could take the utterance back.

“Right you are,” the woman giggled, easing a little of the tension that had built in Emily Jane’s shoulders, “although it says counsellor on my contract. So come in, take a seat - we might as well be comfortable while we talk.”

Emily Jane couldn’t help but scoff. ‘Comfortable?’ she thought, she hadn’t been comfortable in what felt like forever. And this woman, a counsellor, wanted to talk. Why? What was the point in talking - she already knew all she needed about this awful place to know anything she said would be held against her, and talking wasn’t going to help cover her nudity.

Her nudity… a sharp gasp slipped out and a shame fuelled blush spread over her body as if only just realising that she was bare arsed naked in this woman’s office, having just been dragged through the halls, again!

If Ms. Wellyn noticed the angry, suspicious glances Emily Jane was giving her she didn’t comment on them as she moved to start fussing with a fancy looking coffee machine.

“We were going to meet later this week,” she said over the grinding of coffee beans, “when I’d settled in, but that’s ok. I’m glad Scott brought you in today - I’ve been looking forward to getting to know you, oh coffee?”

Emily Jane barely managed to nod a response while staring slack-jawed at this chatty, seemingly friendly, woman who was so different from all the other adults she’d interacted with at the school. Not that she had any experience of therapists but whatever she’d expected, it wasn’t this… she was making her head spin!

“Drink up,” she encouraged a few minutes later, her own coffee now in hand, “I know it’s only been a couple of days, for both of us, but I hear you’ve had a rough start, and it looks like you’ve found yourself in trouble again…”

“No,” she interrupted herself when she noticed Emily Jane stiffen, “I didn’t mean you were in trouble, just that trouble had found you. Sorry, I’m kinda new at this and, I guess, not very good yet.”

“So,” Emily Jane eventually asked, uncomfortable in the silence that followed her admission, “why are you here counselling? Or whatever this is.”

“Well, I wanted to help people, obviously, but why Rosemount? I’m not sure,” she said, “I applied and got the job, maybe no one else wanted to come here, oh,” she covered her mouth, “I’m sorry, that was…”

“True,” Emily Jane interrupted, surprising herself as she stared into her near empty mug, “most people wouldn’t want to be here, I know I don’t.”

The counsellor’s voice sounded so sad when she asked Emily Jane if she’d like to talk about it that she was unable to fight the slight urge she felt to talk, to release a little of the things she’d been bottling up.

“Everything I say in here is confidential, right?” Emily Jane asked timorously, looking up as she debated whether she could trust this woman - wondering how easy it would be to open up, and whether saying something might help.

The counsellor looked up, face serious as she nodded carefully, “Yes, completely confidential, unless you tell me you’re going to burn the school down, or something else like that… then I’d have to tell someone, ok?”

Emily Jane leant forward, studying the woman’s earnest expression. The urge to spill it all was strong, almost overwhelmingly so and, before she knew it, she found she was speaking.

Hesitantly at first, she spoke of the events of the previous few days - relaying the information as if giving a book report, she watched Ms. Wellyn carefully, waiting for the inevitable interruption when she started to lambast the school and the headmaster in particular, the sting of his treatment bringing tears to her eyes as she remembered the way he’d waved aside her protestations over everything that was wrong in her file.

Ms. Wellyn didn’t interrupt though, she just listened, sipping her coffee and making the occasional note. Emily Jane started talking more freely than she had in months, the words she wanted to say on the tip of her tongue even as a creeping sense of unease fell over her. Her throat tightened and her mouth ran dry as her mind flashed back to the party, her diary, then Him.

Suddenly the room was too small, she couldn’t get enough air into her lungs to form the words she’d nearly let slip. She leapt to her feet, stumbling as she tried to get out of the wildly spinning room. Her heart started racing, adrenaline flooding through her body, as strong hands held her tight.

“…panic attack, easy now, take slow, even breaths,” The words slowly permeated her awareness as the darkness receded.

“That’s it, welcome back Emily.” She said, helping her back to her feet, “I’ll schedule you an appointment in a couple of days, but I think that’s probably enough for one day… and I think it’d be best if I spoke to Coach Harris about what happened today.”

“Remember,” Ms. Welly continued, holding out a bright yellow piece of paper, “my door’s always open if you need to talk but, for now, take this - I’ve excused you for the rest of the morning, why don’t you head back to your dorm and get yourself dressed, and take a nap maybe?”

Emily Jane could only nod numbly as she took the hall pass, not entirely sure what had just happened, or how she’d apparently managed to forget that she was naked, again…