**Dare Me**

by neverdoubted

**Dare Me - Chapter 15 - Doctor's Orders (Part 2)**

Lucy was still on edge the next morning for several reasons. Besides spending all night wrestling with the return of her urge, she had the daunting physical to deal with that morning. It was also the last full day before her cheer tryouts, something she had spent nearly every waking hour for the past month fretting over. She fumbled her way through breakfast, dropped her first plate on the floor, and almost poured orange juice over her pancakes. When she got to the car, I had to remind her to go back in and get her release form. But I let it slide with only a slight reprimand. That girl had a lot on her mind.

She had vastly overthought her attire and gone with a nice dress which would have been more appropriate at a school formal or a nice restaurant. It was a pale pink number with a slightly flared chiffon skirt. The top only had one strap and was bare over the other shoulder. That meant she had to wear her fancy, strapless bra for the occasion.

Her shoes were pearl colored, Mary Jane style flats with a low, but flattering heel. She would be very uncomfortable if they asked her to run or do exercises in them. But she hadn't consulted me before picking out her outfit. She also had adopted an annoying, new habit of responding to any constructive criticism I may offer about her attire by mocking my fashion sense. So, I kept the advice to myself.

We drove across town to a building complex which was unmistakably governmental in function. The sprawling, two-story compound had a flat roof and unnecessarily thick outer walls. What sparse windows it did possess were almost afterthoughts - tall, but too skinny to let any light in. Whoever designed it did not have any aesthetic eye whatsoever.

The brutalist building, which belonged to the county, housed the public health department at one end and the DMV office at the other. The DMV got much more traffic (see what I did there?) and since we weren't here to register a vehicle or apply for a driver's license, we easily found a parking spot at the less busy end and went straight inside.

Through the tiny glass opening of the “welcome” desk, I presented the signed document from mom authorizing me to make medical decisions on her behalf regarding Lucy and explained the purpose of our visit per the instructions from the school. Acting as Lucy's legal guardian for the day, I tried to project confidence and authority.

The bored secretary barely looked up. She buzzed us through an unmarked, metal door with instructions to head to the clinic's waiting room deeper inside the facility. Lucy was nervous and reluctant to proceed, so I led the way through the ominous door.

Inside, there were no windows at all, only artificial light coming from dated, fluorescent fixtures overhead. The yellowish light flickered occasionally and, if you stopped and paid attention, you could hear them buzzing. The contrast to the bright sunny day we had left outside made a person feel uneasy. The long, undecorated, seemingly endless hallway didn't help.

I took a deep breath as the door clicked shut behind us. The stale, humid air felt heavy in my lungs. The air conditioner was struggling to keep up with the soaring summer temperatures outside. Lucy was unnerved and took a half-step closer to me. She looked like she wanted to cancel the whole thing and go back home. I’m sure she was expecting a nice, clean doctor’s office with aquariums and friendly nurses, not…this.

Seeing a small, plain sign with an arrow advertising the free health clinic, I flashed her an encouraging smile and said, "this way, come on". When she refused to move, I took control. Treating her like I sometimes had to when she was performing a dare and showing signs of hesitating, I grabbed her firmly by the hand to make it clear my words were a command, not a request. Reluctantly, she let herself be led by the hand down the long hallway, but she did remain tense as we walked.

We followed the signs as best we could, taking only one or two wrong turns, and eventually rounded the corner to find a bigger sign pointing to the clinic waiting room. She seemed relieved to see an indication that we were, in fact, in a health clinic and hadn't been tricked into an endless maze built by a madman to torture hapless teenagers or accidentally stumbled upon some sort of minimum-security prison facility.

But her relief was short-lived when we came face to face with a vivid reminder of her upcoming exam in the form of a girl. She was young and short, not even Lucy's age, and when she stepped out of the bathroom door to our left, it was obvious that she was in the middle of her own exam.

Just like Alexandra had claimed over the phone, the girl was dressed in a skimpy hospital gown. Whether she still had her underwear on or not, I couldn't verify, but her arms, legs, and feet were all completely bare. At first, she was intensely focused on the small plastic cup she was holding which was full of a light-yellow liquid. Taking care not to spill a drop, she turned toward us and took one step in our direction. But then she noticed us and froze.

Her eyes went wide as she realized she was standing in a remote hallway dressed in not enough clothes with two strangers blocking her path. And to top it off, she was holding a cup of her own pee! Her flight instinct taking over, she let out an audible squeak then grabbed the back of her gown with one hand and started walking backward the way she came. Her rapid retreat to the bathroom was punctuated by a powerful "click" of the door lock being securely engaged.

More than anything, I found the encounter amusing. But that's because I wasn't the one who would soon be in a similar state as that poor girl. I looked over at my sister fully expecting to find a look of sheer terror on her face. Her cheeks were blushing, and her mouth had fallen open, but to my surprise, she didn't look terrified. She looked...preoccupied.

Unexpectedly, she turned to me. From the familiar gleam in her eye, I thought for sure she was going to cave and ask me for a dare. She had fought off the urge last night. But from experience I knew it wouldn’t go away. But she surprised me by only asking, "hey, Mikey, will you...come into the exam room with me, please? At least for the start?"

"Don't worry, Goosey," I assured her, "I'll go with you until you get settled."

Satisfied, she relaxed her shoulders slightly and still holding my hand firmly, she resumed walking toward the empty waiting room.

We each found a magazine and sat beside each other to wait. Mine was about cars and hers was celebrity gossip. She turned her pages like she was reading it. But she clearly had other things on her mind. That little girl in the tiny gown had rattled her and it was taking an immense effort to control her imagination and fight off the urge to say what part of her very much wanted to.

When her name was called, we both followed a nurse into a nearby exam room. The room was bigger than it needed to be and had lots of wasted floor space. There were cabinets tucked into one corner and one of those barely padded exam tables that sits really high off the ground. There were no windows, but I immediately noticed ice cold air blasting from the vent above us.

I was slightly offended when the nurse, a rather rotund lady with graying hair, asked us where our mother was. I pulled out my medical authorization and stood tall as she scrutinized my claim. Finally, she huffed, and opened a folder to start a new file on Lucy. This is back when medical clinics did everything on paper instead of computers.

The lady asked all kinds of questions about Lucy's health and wrote down her responses. I made the mistake, when she asked about our family medical history, of letting it slip that our dad had died under mysterious circumstances.

The news piqued her interest and generated a whole new round of questions. I tried to answer her honestly, but I really didn't have much information to share. I only knew what mom had told me, and she wasn't very forthcoming on that particularly sore subject.

Hearing that an immediate family member had suddenly dropped dead rattled the nurse. She wrote down pages of information for the doctor which made the intake interview longer than it should have been. But once she concluded she wouldn't be able to get any more information about dad's death from me - not enough to solve the mystery, at least - she made a frustrated frown and reluctantly moved on.

After capturing Lucy's basic vital signs, the nurse extracted a blood sample for further tests. I hadn't been asked to provide a blood sample when I got my physical, so I was surprised. Either the clinic had changed their procedure, or the nurse was just being extra cautious after learning about Lucy's dead father. I suspected the latter but didn't have enough authority to push back on the request.

The nurse then unlocked one of the cabinets and pulled out the dreaded gown. She waved it around while explaining what all the doctor would be doing to complete the rest of the exam. When she mentioned something about the guardian agreeing to a scoliosis screening, I vigorously nodded my consent as if I knew what the hell a scoliosis screening was.

Upon seeing her gown, Lucy was reduced to a bundle of nerves. She wasn't even listening anymore and just stared at it with big, round eyes as if hypnotized by it. I know she was picturing herself wandering up and down the halls in it because that's exactly what I was doing...snapping out of my daydream, I forced myself to pay attention and listen to the nurse in case she was saying something important.

"-while the kinesiology lab is being renovated. So, the doctor may do the whole exam in here, or he may opt to relocate to the physical therapy room upstairs."

I nodded again as if I had been listening, but she could tell I hadn't been. She rolled her eyes and handed me the gown. With a soulless government job and other patients to attend to, she couldn't care less what fate awaited us. Her work here was done.

Once we were alone, I lifted the gown and studied it with an excited grin. All the ingredients were there for a golden dare opportunity. The final piece had literally been placed into my hands. It couldn’t have been more gift-wrapped. More than just a skimpy piece of cloth, the gown represented control over the situation. Rather than handing it over to my sister without a second thought, why not keep it and instead make the rest of her physical a little more daring? That plan sounded so natural that I had to stop and remind myself about one minor detail. Lucy wasn’t currently doing a dare.

It should be apparent by now how unhealthy my sister’s devotion is when it comes to dares. I’m not exaggerating or lying about it, nor am I trying to make fun of her. It’s just the truth, wouldn’t you agree? And it was that willful act of ceding total control to another person that always seemed to get her into so much trouble. However, until she said those two critical words, she retained her bodily autonomy and was under no obligation and felt no duty to do anything I said.

I’ll admit, even though she appeared to be in the right mental and physical state to be receptive to a dare, I had my doubts that she would heed any of my instructions until she had formally requested one. It sucked. Normally, when she came to me, I struggled to think up sufficiently creative humiliating tasks for her to perform. But for once, I was in such a fertile environment for embarrassing ideas that more and more kept popping into my head without me even trying! Of course, attempting any of them carried a high risk of totally blowing up in my face. But do you think that stopped me from trying?