

## Chapter 8



### Solitary Confinement

One night I ran away from the dorm with another girl named Brenda. I couldn't conform to who they wanted me to be and how they wanted me to act. After the staff did much poking and prodding into my sexuality I had finally admitted to being a lesbian, and it was all downhill from there. The staff no longer trusted me around the other girls. They were always monitoring each of my relationships to make sure none of them escalated into anything romantic. Distance, however, makes the heart grow fonder, and I maintained a long-distance relationship with a girl in the dorm next to mine. We corresponded through love letters and messages given through mutual friends. I was put on communication restriction, which prohibited anyone from talking to me, with the exception of the staff. The girls would talk to me, anyway, either by whispering or through passing me notes. I was eventually transported to The Cells they found it hard to control 200 girls from interacting with me, so they locked me up the rest of my stay. The only time I was allowed to leave my cell was to go to the bathroom other than that they kept me isolated from all human contact. Of course with the exception of the staff. I missed the other girls and especially Mandy. I lived in the for about a year and in there I lost my mind. I had no one to talk to except for God and myself. There was nothing to stimulate my thoughts. Nothing was allowed in the cell except for the clothes on my back which consisted of a t shirt, underwear and pants. Anything else was considered suicidal material. I was surrounded by four walls, and they were closing in on me. Circling, circling my cell and pacing, pacing the floor. I can't take it. Nothing to do and doing nothing just breathing and thinking, the sound of

my own thoughts moving through my head, around and back again. The only relief I found was to hit the back of my head against the wall over and over until I became too dizzy to hit it anymore. After warning me, the staff would come in and restrain me, since I refused to calm down and stay quiet.

Me: let me out of here, damn it! Let me out of here!

Staff: What seems to be your problem?

Me: You, and this crazy place!

I continued to chant my obscenities as loudly as I could, I carved the nick name "MOUSE" they gave me all over the walls with whatever writing material they gave to me. I would hit my head against the walls of my cell as hard as possible. That was until the staff came into my room, handcuffed me and put a helmet on my head.

I screamed as I watched them lock the door behind themselves. Now how in the hell was I going to get this helmet off my head? I rocked myself back and forth sizing up my situation. Bingo, I popped it off with the heater that was screwed into the wall, and then I resumed banging my head again. It was the only way I had to vent my frustration.

Staff: How in the heck did you get that helmet off? Maybe I didn't put it on tight Enough for you.

Me: Damn!

He tightened the buckle.

Staff: Too tight?

Me: No.

I laid there for 10 hours on a mattress with the handcuffs and helmet still on. Finally a female staff member walked into the room.

Staff: Michelle..... Michelle

Me: What?

Staff: You've been in cuffs for 10 hours now, do you want me to take them off of you?

Me: I don't care; it makes no difference to me.

She turned and walked out of the room only to walk in again with a set of keys in her hand.

Staff: I'm taking the cuffs and helmet off. Are you going to be good?

Me: I don't know.

Staff: Good night.

She then walked out of the cell, locking the door behind her. I whispered myself to sleep. God, get me out of here. God me out of here.

One day out of the blue.

Staff: Michelle, I'm taking you to a time-out room in one of the dorms.

Me: Why?

Staff: We need the cell.

I followed the staff into the dorm. I didn't understand why they took me the long way around the campus. They put me into the room and locked the door. For some reason, the staff kept walking past my door checking up on me. What's going on?

From the room I could see the cells and ambulances driving up to the building. and after some time they drove away. What's going on? I felt for some reason I was put there deliberately. Just then, a staff member entered my room, followed by two others behind her.

Staff: Come on! Were going back to the cell.

Me: What's going on?

Staff: We'll talk when we get back to the cells.

I was quiet all the way back to the room, but then all hell broke loose.

**Me: What's going on?**

**Staff: Mandy, was taken to the hospital.**

**Me: For what?!**

**Staff: She swallowed a razor.**

**Me: No! Oh my God. No why? Where are they taking her?**

**I was in disbelief; I couldn't even comfort her.**

**Staff: Back to California.**

**Me: California?!**

**Staff: Try to behave yourself.**

**I began pacing back and forth, filled with all of this energy and nowhere to put it. I screamed and screamed and cried. The staff member locked the door behind herself and peered through the window to see what I was going to do.**

**Me: Mandy! Mandy! Mandy!**

**I chanted her name, knowing I was never going to see her again. I already missed not being able to talk to her. That was horrible enough. Not being able to say goodbye was indescribable. I started to hear her voice in the back of my mind.**

**Mandy: Would you take your life if I were to commit suicide?**

**Me: Yes.**

**Mandy: Promise?**

**Me: Yes, I promise.**

**I don't know why she asked this of me, maybe she knew what she was about to do, Maybe she wanted to make some sort of pact with me. She asked me this question in all seriousness when we were still living together in the dorm. Had I known what she was going to do I would have said something even if it meant she would hate me forever. She was my best friend. She may as well been a million miles away, because she was no longer with me. I am all alone here in this place, no one loves me, no one visits me, no one cares about me. I don't want to be here anymore, everyone forgot about me even my case worker Rob. I might as well die.**

**Me: May I take a shower after breakfast?**

**Staff: Yes, Just get your clothes out of the closet when you finish.**

**I had no intention of eating my breakfast, instead I utilized the time it would have taken me to eat to instead sharpen the plastic fork to a point against the cement walls of my cell. Once I found it sharp enough, I knocked on my cell door.**

**Staff: Yes?**

**Me: May I bring my tray to the front?**

**Staff: Yes.**

**I knew how much time I had to work with from the numerous showers I had taken before. I had to work fast. I knew it had to take some time to bleed to death, and once they found out what I was doing, they would stop me. So I had to act fast.**

**I was unable to lock the door from the inside, so I sat down and wedged myself between the toilet and the door, so the staff couldn't easily get to me. I took the sharpened plastic fork and dug it into my left wrist, it was so painful and much more difficult then I had anticipated. I had to rip through the skin, and the skin was much thicker then I had imagined. By the time I had gotten to an artery, it was too late; they had caught me.**

**Staff: What's taking you so long in there? Time's up.**

**Me: Okay. Be out in a minute.**

**I could hear the doorknob being turned above my head, so I dug as deep**

and as hard as I could, but I couldn't reach the artery in time.

**Staff: Open this door! What are you doing in there? Open this Door right now!**

**Me: Wait a minute. Just wait.**

**Staff: No. Open this door right now.**

She kept pushing the door in, and I was losing my grip on the fork. I couldn't dig and continue wrestling to keep the door closed any longer, so I released the tension and let her push her way in.

**Staff: What have you done to yourself?**

She grabbed me and wrestled the fork out of my hand.

**Me: Don't touch me!**

**Staff: Emergency! Emergency! I have an emergency in here. Please, help!**

She grabbed me and pulled me into the hallway. I fought to get out of her grip, but I was overtaken by three other staff members who came to her aid.

They wrapped gauze around my wrist and placed leather restraints on me. I kept fighting to the point where the campus nurse shot me up with a tranquilizer so they could better transport me. On the way to the hospital, I was able to catch a glimpse of the outside world I was no longer apart of. I forgot how beautiful everything is, the trees, the houses, the sky. Finally, The doctor stitched me up, and I was sent back to the cells as if nothing had happened. I resumed doing nothing but time.

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Sue - She was a cute petite girl who always smiled at me. I was taken to the cell room in her cottage to sleep one night and she snuck into my room while lights were out. She whispered stay strong Michelle. You're a tough girl. She then reached down and gave me long hug. When she left I cried because it felt so good to have physical contact with someone, especially someone who felt like that, she could have gotten caught. I never forgot that hug.

One day she was sent to the cells, and she was sitting behind me on a sofa as soon as I saw her I couldn't help but smile, I hadn't smiled in awhile, to entertain her I grabbed my fork from my styrofoam lunch box they rarely checked for the plastic utensils. I had been searched every day for months so I knew the routine. While she was watching I showed her the spoon when I reached behind my back as they were searching first they felt my legs then were the hands and arms that is when I shifted the spoon from one hand to the other and then down my leg onto the floor in front of me. I picked up a pencil from the desk asking if I could write "Yes" I dropped the pencil on the floor in front of me. "Sorry" grabbed the spoon and the pencil. Gave Sue a wink and smile. Then I went into my room. It was nice seeing her again, and sharing my little bit of magic with her.