

~ CHAPTER ONE ~

Ann Going Home

I can see it clearly in my mind as if it were yesterday. The police sergeant was knocking on the bathroom door asking me if I was okay. I can still feel the sting from the force of Spencer's hand across my face. Tears fell from my eyes like a rainforest monsoon. There was a big hole in the bathroom door where he had discharged the old 12-gauge shotgun. The only reason I was still alive is because I hid in the cast iron bathtub we had purchased from a flea market the year before. I guess the second reason is because the shotgun jammed the second time Spencer tried to shoot it.

Spencer had completely flipped out this time. The constant drinking and marijuana smoking had made him lose his reality. Nothing has been the same after his stroke. He had become jealous and suspicious about everything. Spencer was a bitter man. He accused me of infidelity with every man that looked in my direction. I would get embarrassed because he would chase men away who only smiled politely at me.

Shortly after Spencer attacked me, the police arrived. One of the policemen asked me to get out of the tub and open the door. I could see Spencer lying on the floor handcuffed. His eyes had the look of a rabid dog. The police kept telling him to be still and not to move. He was spitting, still trying to get at me.

As I left the bathroom, I was escorted to the living room where the sergeant in charge consoled me as I attempted to regain my composure. The sergeant asked me if I needed to go to the hospital. I said no. He strongly recommended that I spend the night with a family member. It would have been nice; however, I didn't have any family living in Prattville.

Shortly afterward, Spencer's brother-in-law arrived. Sam was the chief of police in Prattville, a small rural town in Ohio.

"Are you ok Ann?"

“No, I am not Sam. Spencer just tried to kill me.”

“I heard the call on the radio. I got here as fast I could.”

“Thanks sergeant,” I said, as Spencer was being lead out the door to the awaiting squad car.

Sam sat beside me putting his arms around my shoulders. I completely loss my composure and cried uncontrollably.

“What do you need me to do Ann?”

“I need to call my sister in Georgia. I have to leave here!”

“Yes, I understand. Are you going to press charges? If you don’t, we can only hold Spencer seventy-two hours.”

“I don’t know what I am going to do Sam. I do know for a fact that I need to leave here.”

“Who do you want me to call?”

“I need to call my sister, let me get my address book.”

I walked slowly to the nightstand in my bedroom to retrieve my address book.

“Here is Lisa’s number Sam. Can you dial it for me?”

Sam dialed the number and handed me the phone.

“Here you go Ann.”

“Thanks.”

“Hello, Lisa!”

“Yes.”

“This is Ann.” I sobbed.

“Girl, why are you crying?”

“Spencer totally lost it. He tried to kill me!”

“What?”

“Yes he tried to shoot me. The police just took him away. I am here with Sam.”

“Girl, get your clothes together and catch a plane tonight and fly back to Atlanta. We will figure it all out after you have had some time to calm down.”

“Lisa, can you make me a plane reservation for tomorrow morning; I am too shaken up right now to coordinate anything.”

“Yes, I can. Let me speak to Sam.”

“Here is Sam.”

“What in the hell is wrong with Spencer?” Asked Lisa?

“I don’t know. I am just as surprised as anyone. Ann has been the pillar of support for Spencer since his stroke. She has cared for him like any good woman would. I guess he must have been drinking while on his

medication. The doctor warned him about what could happen if he drinks alcohol while the medication is in his system. He was totally out of it when I arrived. My deputies had to restrain him. I told the sergeant to take him to lockup at the mental ward. We will hold him for a minimum of seventy-two hours.”

“Seventy-two hours! You need to keep him locked up forever. What is wrong with him trying to kill Ann? I knew she should not have married him.”

“I understand how you feel Lisa; however, you know his family is highly respected in these parts and his father will probably have him out on bail as soon as he can. I will help Ann get her things together and catch a flight out when you schedule it.”

“Okay Sam, I’ll call Ann back as soon as I arrange her flight.”

Sam put the receiver on the hook.

“Did she hang up?”

“Yes, she did,” said Sam.

“Ann, please explain what happened.”

I told Sam I didn’t really know what caused Spencer to go off the deep end. When I returned home Spencer was standing in the hallway looking angry. He has been acting really strange over the last two months. I had noticed a slight change in behavior but I didn’t pay much attention to it. I was always mindful of what the doctor had told Spencer. He knew he couldn’t have anything to drink while the medication was in his system. Spencer must have been drinking.

While I was cooking supper, Spencer grabbed me by the hair and threw me to the floor. He began to hit me and yell that I was with some other man. I had only come home a few minutes late because I stopped at the grocery store to pick up some fresh collard greens and tomatoes. I really don’t understand why he went off today. I had planned on cooking him an old fashioned southern supper. I have tried my best to be attentive to him. I know the stroke has affected the part of his brain that deals with reality and the medication he takes helps him stay focused on the present while treating his anxiety and depression. I have tried hard not to have anything that contained alcohol in the house because I feared something like this would happen.

Last month while I was cleaning up in the basement, I found a telephone-recording device under the stairs. I was shocked to find out that he had been recording my telephone conversations. I never said anything to him because I didn’t have anything to hide. I hoped he would listen to

the tapes and see that I was not talking to any other man. I made every attempt to strengthen our relationship. No matter what I did to make things better for us, his jealousy and suspicion got worst.

“Excuse me Ann, you were talking about tonight.”

“I am sorry Sam, like I said he just hit me repeatedly. I ran upstairs and locked the bathroom door. Spencer kept kicking it and cursing at me. He had gone mad. I still don’t know what triggered it. I jumped in the tub. I thought he would break the door down and start hitting me again. Shortly afterward, Spencer stopped kicking the door and shouting for a minute and then I heard the gun go off. It blew a hole in the door near the doorknob. I thought I was dead. I passed out. When I came to, I heard the policeman calling to me through the hole in the door. I guess one of the neighbors must have called the police. I just lay there, scared out of my wits until the police asked me if I was ok and for me to unlock the door. So you see, it all happened so quickly. I believe the medication caused him to be jealous and paranoid while I was out shopping. Sam, you know how good I have been to him. Spencer changed so much since the day he had the stroke.”

“Yes, I know Ann. I had discussed Spencer’s problem with his sister. She has talked to him on several occasions trying to reassure him that you loved him.”

The phone rang.

“Hello, this is Ann.”

“Are you ok,” asked my mother.

“Yes mother. Sam is here with me and the police took Spencer to lockup at the mental ward.”

“Ann, I am here with Lisa. She has you scheduled to fly out on Delta flight 319 at 12:00 p.m. to Atlanta. You need to get your things together and be ready to go. Is there someone who can take you to the airport?”

“Yes mother, Sam said he will come by in the morning and take me.”

“Make sure you take everything you can carry and all the money you can withdraw from your account.”

“I will mother and don’t worry I’m safe now. I will be all right tonight. Spencer will not be able to get out of lockup for at least seventy-two hours. Tell Lisa I said thanks. I will call you in the morning before I leave to go to the airport. Good night, Mom.”

“Okay, baby. If you need anything don’t hesitate to call me and let me know.”

“Okay mother I will. Good night.”