

22. FACE TO FACE WITH THE WOLF

Joy tells me, "You're sort of creepy."

"I know that I'm a little creepy. I don't mean to be."

I really do mean to be weird. I can't stop it. I can't help it. I want to know things. I want to know things about people.

I'm a writer. It's my job to know what makes people tick. I use this to my advantage. I am good at what I do. So what if it puts people off. I'm not going to let go of my edge.

"If I didn't know you, I'd think that you were up to something. Although I suppose that nothing is going on."

"I thought that you were my friend."

"I've just started to wonder. You've put ideas in my head."

"You're not getting carried away again."

"I'm just getting these hunches about you."

"A hunch. It's like a guess. And you could be wrong."

"When I feel this way, I'm not often wrong."

"So there really is something creepy about me. I've never done anything to you. Why would you think that?"

"All this talk about keeping people hostage. It's too weird. Like you feel comfortable with this sort of thing."

"You've watched *Psycho* before. It's not as if you acted out anything in the movie."

"That's not what I mean."

"But it is what you mean. I'm telling stories. And you're taking them as the real thing."

"That's just what you've been saying. At a certain point, these stories become real, You feel the need to act them out."

"Or you feel the need to write more stories. Or other types of stories. None of it follows automatically."

"You have to admit that you have been acting a little strangely lately. I can't even get a hold of you on the phone."

"I'm sitting with you right now."

"I ran into you on the street."

"I'm a public figure. Everything that I do is public record."

"But you appear to have a private life that I know nothing about."

"I know less about what is going on in your life."

"Is there something that holds it all together? Anything that would make sense of it all?"

"Like a criminal record. You're asking me that?"

"I just have some questions. Things that you could answer for me."

"I'm doing my best. Where do you want me to start? The first time that I got picked up by the police."

"See. I told you that you were creepy."

"I'm kidding you."

"Your eyes seem sort of shifty."

"That doesn't mean a thing."

Or maybe it does. I'm not even sure anymore. I used to be able to keep it all in order. But even I have questions about myself.

"I know that he's in jail. But I felt that I needed to do a follow up."

"I don't even want to think about what happened." "

"I just want to be sure that it's the right guy."

"But you told me that he was picked up for these other crimes. I just thought that he seemed to be the same guy. For all I know it could have even been you."

"Are you saying that you didn't get a very good look at him?"

"He broke into my apartment. The lights were off. I couldn't tell."

"But I showed you the sketch. You said that it looked like him."

"I can't be sure."

"But you're going to testify that it was him."

"I'm going to say that I'm sure. I don't want him getting out. I've studied the picture. I remember the face of the guy that I picked out in the line up. Remember none of the other guys looked remotely like him."

"You did pick him out of a line up."

"Like I said, he was the only guy who even looked remotely close to the one. But if I didn't know you, and you were in the line up, I would have picked you out."

"You don't suspect me."

"It's just a manner of speaking."

"So you feel like we've got the right guy."

"I'm sure enough that I'm going to testify against him."

"You're not afraid of making a mistake."

"If he's the guy, I want him off the street."

"If you testify against him, we can hold him for a long time. We've got enough circumstantial evidence. But if you put him at the scene, then he's going to jail."

"I can say that someone was in my place. If it was him, I want him to go away for a long time."

"You were just kidding when you said that you thought it was me."

"I'm just saying that if it was you in the lineup, that I would have picked you out."

"And then you'd identify me in court."

"Of course, I would."

"But it wasn't really me."

"I'm just saying that I would have identified you."

"So you're sure that he's the one."

"After I saw him in the lineup. It's all coming back to me."

"You said that you never saw his face."

"I didn't say that in the interview. I didn't say that when I made the identification. You said you already have enough evidence on him. All that you need is my identification. I gave that. I can repeat it in court. I could even sketch his face."

"Can you sketch my face?"

"You're not the one. But if you had done something to me like that, I'd be able to identify you as well."

“But you don’t recognize me from anywhere else?”

“I can’t say that for sure. Not now.”

“What do you mean?”

“I know you too well now to go back and forget who you are. And if it was you, I’d remember.”

Joy has a comeback, “Your attraction for horror expresses sexual frustration. You substitute fear for any real caring among your characters. There’s the initial interest. The friendly exchange. But you can’t carry the conversation past that point. It all becomes crazy. Once the characters attempt to express their desire, it’s always in terms of a threat. It’s all associated with violence.”

“I just experimenting with a genre. Jennifer talked about that connection between horror and desire. I think that it’s more complex than you admit. People are uncomfortable with their feelings. Horror gives them an ability to express that discomfort.”

“Horror is an immature expression.”

“Maturity is too narrow a concept to apply here. There’s a real nuance to how we feel things. Desire wells up and takes us over. It’s not just a gradual thing. The more that we feel, the more that it engulfs us. Once we’re in it, we just can’t walk out. It becomes part of us.”

“You like it that way. You act as if you are equally subject to these feelings. Not at all.”

“Joy, you’re betraying a little anger about this topic. You want to call me out for what I am writing. None of it’s abstract. You want to hide your negative feelings about people. But it’s there for you.”

“I may get angry. It doesn’t mean that I want to kill you.”

“I’ve never threatened you. But there’s an undercurrent to everything that we say. And extreme circumstances can bring it out.”

“So it just takes a bad week, and I’m going to start showing my teeth. The next thing I’m a vampire.”

“Now you’re making light of what is a very good argument on my part.”

“You may have started out with a good argument. But it’s not just argument. You are advocating this aggressive behavior for its own sake. You almost see it as having the main benefit over anything else.”

“That’s not exactly what I’m saying. I’m writing about fictional situations. But they express a real truth. You have to admit that.”

“I just don’t see it the way that you do. You’re adding an element that’s hardly ever there. Sure we all get mad. But it’s a stretch to really doing anything about it.”

“Someone cuts you off in traffic, and you’re not ready to kill.”

“I’m not disagreeing that you get pissed. But you’re not going to follow the other driver home and kill his family.”

“But you might if he shoots at you.”

“You always add that element of the ridiculous.”

“Think about it. You get all wound up. You can’t sleep. Then it only gets worse. You’re constantly on edge waiting to get pushed over.”

“So you push over the doughnut tray. Where’s the harm?”

“That may just be the beginning. Jennifer has it right. We all want power. We all want

to be bigger than we are. Once we get attached to something, the moment that it gets taken away, we get pissed. Period! There's the argument. Horror and desire are mixed together. And over time our attraction gets bigger. Like a sweet tooth. And when that sweet stuff gets shut off, we hit the roof. It's like a formula."

But our better instincts get the best of such addictions before the lock in."

"Not for everyone."

"But that's why we have horror. We can admit that part of ourselves without having it destroy us."

I feel that there is a conspiracy against me. That all my enemies get together in a room and plot what they're going to do to mess up my life. I'm not saying truly is such a plot, but I just feel that there's something wrong. That feeling inspires me to act a little weirder than usual.

I keep seeing things that aren't there. I don't know what's wrong with me.

"I feel like I haven't seen you in a year."

"Joy, it's been a while. I have to admit. Some things have changed."

"Didn't you work on a horror movie with Jennifer Fisher?"

"Yeah."

"What was that like? Do you have a crush on her?"

"We got along well. She's a friend of mine now. And the film went better than expected."

"That's funny. I always hear the opposite from other people. They work in the movies, and it destroys all their dreams of doing something artistic."

"Jennifer wants to do another movie with me."

"Aren't you just giving in to that manufactured image of hers? The perfect commodity. She's not really a woman. Just a product that sells other products."

"She's a good actress. A thoughtful person. She helped with the script."

"That's just an excuse so that you can continue that wet dream of yours."

"No, she's a nice person."

"You slept with her, didn't you? That's why you're so sympathetic."

"We made a movie together. We got along well. Sure, she flirted with me. But that's about as far as it went."

"But you want it to go farther."

"Not really. I hated her in the beginning. When she dropped my script in the pool, I wanted to kill her. But we worked through that. And now we're great friends."

"I told you that you were homicidal."

"That's just a manner of speaking."

"But you work on a movie with her, and she's tied up for most of the picture. Didn't that satisfy a fantasy of yours?"

"I could have had her tied up if that's what I wanted. I really don't give in to desires like that."

"Someone must. Why do you think that they make movies like that? You just keep looking for situations like that. I can tell that it's in you."

"Hardly. It's just a movie."

"But you said it yourself. Stuff like that changes you. When you get pushed, it puts you

in a different place. You cross over to the other side.”

“It makes you think about what you might do in a scary situation like that. But it doesn’t get me buying rope and stalking my neighbors.”

“But if you saw your neighbor in your window, would you watch her?”

“I might look at her. But I am not going to watch her change.”

“What if she wanted you to look?”

“That’s just the sort of preposterous situation that you’ve condemned me for before. No one just wants you to look. There’s always a catch.”

“That’s why you’re a novelist. So you can create the catch. And once you do, it gives you the excuse to look. You decide that she’s a little cracked. So you just stare at your window in the hopes that you might get some kind of reaction. And you find meaning in every little gesture. It becomes a conversation for you. And you keep track.”

“You’re going off on me again. I’m not that far gone. This is what I’m writing about. Not what I’m living.”

“So what is the script that you’re going to do with Jennifer?”

“About a missing girl.”

“Who of course is being tracked by some psycho. I can tell where all this is going already.”

The police arrive at her house. It is two plainclothes officers. They show their identification.

“You reported that a man was looking through your window.”

“I thought that they’d send a squad car. Why detectives?”

“This is part of an ongoing investigation. When we heard what was going on, they decided to send us.”

The tall one in the finely tailored suit is doing all the talking.

“I feel as if I know you.”

“I don’t think that we’ve ever met. But I have done a great deal of investigation on some related cases.”

“You say related cases. This was just some guy looking in my window. What happened in the other case.”

“He broke in the apartments or the houses. He took the woman hostage. It turned really ugly.”

“Did he kill the women?”

The detective stares back at her.

“How do you even know that it’s the same guy?”

“I don’t. It’s just a hunch. That’s why I rushed over.”

“Maybe I should go away for a while.”

“We could use you to try to set him up. I know that it might be a little frightening. But I could stay at your place. We could also have a squad car in the area.”

“You have the time to stay at my place.”

“It would also be on my off hours. We really want to catch this guy.”

“What would I have to do?”

“Not too much. Just look sexy. Maybe leave your curtains open.”

“What do you want me to do? Strip for him. Touch myself on the bed. Spread my legs and invite him in.”

“You might not have to go that far. But anything that you might do to entice him would be helpful.”

“And he’s just going to show up here.”

“What if you’re not here.”

“I’ll have my partner here take over for me.”

“Yeah, I can do that.”

“So both of you are going to be staying in my place. How do I know that I can trust you.”

“We’re the police.”

“And you get this feeling of power by just hanging out here. How do I know that you’re all not working together?”

“You don’t seem to have any respect for the police. We just want to do our jobs.”

“You seem to be going beyond your calling by asking me to look sexy.”

“It was just an idea. I thought that it might inspire you. It could get him going.”

“Do you think it might get you going too? You could wait in my bedroom, and watch me as I slipped my fingers in my panties. I could lick them for you before I did it. I’m sure you’d like to try a little of the same. I could come over to where you were sitting and let you touch me. I could get on your lap and ride you like a pony. Maybe you could slip a few bucks in my garter. Is that how you guys operate these days.”

“We try to serve the people. I wasn’t suggesting anything illegal.”

“Serve. Do you give good service? Would you go down on me? Is that how you would protect me, officer?”

“So now you have porno cops going around offering their services.”

“She’s the one who’s overreacting. They’re just trying to do their jobs.”

“But the one officer wants to use her as a decoy.”

“Joy, you always seem to have an answer.”

“If I do, that’s because it’s my job to do that sort of thing.”

“And you’re doing a great job. What, are you my conscience?”

“I might be if you that’s what you need.”

“What are you implying?”

“That you’d do what you could to get what you want. To get off on your sex scenes.”

Joy may have a point. I’ve seen a few things by accident. A woman changing. A couple engaged in intimacy in a car. All these things turned my on. Not entirely in a sexual way. More in the way of a curiosity. And once I give in to this feeling, I want more. I may start off jealous of the intimacy. But then I crave my vantage point. I don’t want to give it up. My writing has offered me that glimpse into other people’s lives. It only takes a little to get me started. And I keep seeing more and more along the way. I’m getting x-ray eyes. Seeing all sorts of things that I shouldn’t. I start off wandering, and who knows what’s next. I penetrate the inner sanctums. Houses with all their lights on. A door temporarily unlocked. A willing hostess inviting me in.

I don’t want to give in to these feelings. I have spent too long portraying the same thing. I am not the person who breaks in to apartments. I’m not really attracted by drugging or

subduing another person. But my imagination is becoming a little over-active. And I am not sure where I am going to stop with this. I'm taking chances. Doing things that maybe I shouldn't. Staring a little too long. I'm trying to get beat on those around me.

Maybe there's someone else who feels just like I do. Someone who wants to take a chance. Do something out of the ordinary. I want to hear her story. I want to know about her deviance. I want her to let me in on her secret. I'm willing to play along.

"As long as it's Jennifer Fisher. Isn't that what you're hoping for. That mysteriously, she has your number. In a very lonely night, she is calling out your name. What are you going to do about it? How is this going to change your life? Nothing comes without a price. Are you really willing to work for this? And isn't this just going to put you in a worse hell? It's your move. What are you ready for?"

"Joy, it's just inspiration for my writing."

"But isn't there a point where you can't keep to your side of the fence. Things are just moving too slowly, and you need to push things along. You need more than her moving back and forth before her window. You need some provocative gestures. Something to take your mind away from your everyday boredom. You want something that can accelerate the process. You want to know that she's out there playing for you."

"Are you trying to set me up?"

"I know what gets you going. I know that this seed is working its way inside. It's been planted in your brain, and it is starting to grow. There is not a thing that you can do about it."

"I'm pretty innocent here. You're feeding me with stuff."

"It's in your books. It's in your scripts. It's in your mind. You want the distance. You want to see. But you don't want to be seen. You want to amass the power."

I observe. I'm a writer. I have to extend myself far beyond what I see. I have to peer into the soul. If your private actions offer a clue, then I have to see what you do in private. I don't have to follow you around. I can see it in your clothes, in your walk, in your gestures. You can't escape from me. I know who you are. Indeed I do. I know more than that. I am in your thoughts. I know what you are up to at this very moment.

"Do you want to stay for a drink?"

"I really should get home. With all the weird shit that has been going on around here, I thought that I needed to walk you to your place. Here you are."

"That was really nice of you. You need to come on in."

"Just for a few minutes."

"A few minutes could turn into a few hours. You seem lonely."

"I'm not really alone. I just seem that way. We really could be friends."

"That's why I wanted you to come in. I'd like to get to know you. I'm really glad that you offered to walk me back to my apartment. There's just such strange guys everywhere I go. They force themselves on me. I won't even take a drink from a guy anymore. I don't know what he might put in it. I can tell that you're not like that."

"How can you tell?"

"I've got my hunches."

"You do. You know about things like that."

"It's almost psychic, I feel that I can look in a person's soul."

"And what do you see when you look at me?"

"I see a lonely person. Someone who is reaching out for love."

"I see the same thing when I look in your eyes."

"With me, it's different. I'm running from love. I suppose that you've seen me with load of different guys. That's not a weakness on my part. I'm just trying to figure out who I'm supposed to be with. I'm learning what my limits are."

"I don't understand."

"Of course, you do. I don't like to be alone. And I meet a guy. I don't really want to be with him. But I know what he wants. And I feel lonely. It doesn't hurt to give a little bit of yourself. I try to not surrender my soul. But it is hard. Especially when I give so much of myself. What can I say? That I like sex."

"Are we going to have sex?"

"We might. Do you like that?"

"This feels a little rushed. I'm embarrassed."

"You've got the equipment, don't you? You have nothing to be afraid of."

"We've just barely met."

"Don't tell me that wasn't the reason that you wanted to walk me home. I know what I've got. A great body. Guys look at me all the time."

"I'm not into this sort of thing. Aren't you afraid to be with so many guys?"

"I protect myself."

"I'm looking for a simple girl. This just seems to complicated. If we have sex, is it just for tonight."

"You looked like the right kind of guy for me, if you know what I mean. I can usually spot that kind of thing. If you're good, I'll let you come back."

"But who's to say if I'm really good?"

"I'm the one who makes the decision. That's why I asked you up here."

"All this seems so fleeting. So temporary. So wrong."

"You're not calling me a sinner or something. If you don't like the arrangement, I could suck you off and then you could go. That's all that I really need to get me aroused. I can masturbate when you're gone."

"You just seemed like such a nice girl. I never imagined you like this."

"Of course, you did. You wanted me like this from the first day that we passed in the street. You went off and beat off while you thought about my tits. Don't lie about it. Now I'm giving you the chance that you wanted and you're calling me a whore."

"I want it to be special."

"So do I. If you're good in bed, then we can get together again."

"I barely know you. I'll be nervous."

"If you're a stud, you'll know what to do. You look like you've got just what I needed. Come over here and I can give you a feel. If you get good and hard, then it will be perfect."

"I thought that you were going to get me a drink."

"Come give me a kiss. What are you afraid of? Does sex make you frightened? I can take good care of you."

"I don't know if that's enough."

"All that sentimental stuff. That happens over time. Don't worry. This will be good.

"I really should go."

"Are you going to go home and beat off to porn. This is the real thing. Don't tell me that you haven't been looking at me from your window. I know that you can see it all."

"Don't you get tired of this over and over again."

"Yeah. That's why I end up having to kill the guys who get possessive?"

"What are you talking about?"

"That was just humor. You need to learn how to take a joke. Now take off your clothes, and let me see what you've got."

"Take off my clothes?"

"That was a joke. You just seem a little lonely over there. Come sit next to me. You've seen girls like me all your life. You've wondered what it takes to get close to us. And now you know. I'm no different than that sweet young thing that you've had your eyes on all night. We all want the same thing. Raw and hard. And I hope that's what you're ready to hand over. I do want to be satisfied in every way imaginable."

"But this seems so impersonal."

"I'm a person. You're a person. What more do you want?"

"I don't think I want this."

"Am I making you frustrated. Let me take off my blouse. Then you'll know what this is all about."

"No, don't do that. I really do need a drink."

"I just don't want you losing it too quickly. You know how to hold on."

"You're not mocking me, are you?"

"No. I'm trying to be a good hostess."

"I feel as if you're making fun of me."

"You don't have a crooked dick, do you?"

"You are laughing at me."

"You really are inexperienced. Have you ever been with a woman?"

"Of course I have. But you are making it sound cheap."

"You just like keeping women on a pedestal. Maybe I should perform for you. Just do a little dance. And you could beat off. Then I could lick it up."

"Why are you so perverse?"

"Because that's what you like own deep. That's why you're so aggressive with women."

"What are you saying?"

"Don't pretend that I don't know you. You've got a reputation. A real nasty one. I've had my eyes on you. I know what you like. That's why you're here. I bet that you're already hard."

"It's not like that."

"Do I have it wrong? You get aggressive because you can't get it up."

"I'm not like that."

"Come sit by me. You can show me what you're really like."

"You must be mistaking me for someone else. I'm not who you think you are."

"I told you that I'm almost psychic. I know what you're like. You do this sort of thing all

the time. Then you feel guilty about it."

"I'm not like that."

"Are you trying to deny it. I know."

"You don't know anything about me. Don't pretend that you do."

"You're a man. You're all the same. You just want to get off. Then you can leave."

That's all that I want."

"That's not what I'm here for."

"You want me to get you excited. Then you'll hurt me. Is that why you feel frustrated? Is that why you hate women? Women who are attractive like me? Women who like to have fun"

"I know how to enjoy myself. I'm not a pervert."

"No one really is. They just don't get enough of what they need. You've seen me naked in the window."

"What if I have? You stand there naked and beg for someone to look at you. I just don't spend my time looking. I feel sorry for you. That's why I walked you up here."

"And after you fuck me, you're going to feel sorry for yourself."

"Don't think that's going to happen after all this."

"Or course, it is. You're just working yourself up so that you're good and hard. I told you that I know you well."

"You don't know a thing."

"She would never give in to him like that."

"This is Jennifer Fisher in the role. She taunts the guy. She makes him believe that she's the only thing in her universe. After he feels so dirty about himself, he can't do anything else but give in. She'll get him to confess all his perversions. And she'll make it seem as if she'll go along."

"I haven't seen you around here in a while. Have you got your man?"

"I stopped looking?"

"He wasn't the guy anyway."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know. I thought that you had a sketch."

"Here's the sketch."

"It looks a lot like you."

"But it isn't."

"It could be. So are you going to leave me alone now."

"I told you that I never found him."

"What do you want to do? Stake out my apartment."

"I want you to invite me in your apartment."

"I know that. But if it isn't official business, it's never going to happen."

"You want to incite the reader. To get him going. To titillate. You're just trying to excuse your voyeurism."

"This is our nature."

"It's your nature. You're trying to seduce the world to your way of thinking."

"Joy, you can't say that."

"Your success has gone to your head."

“I haven’t change a bit.”

“Now you have an excuse to indulge your perversion.”

“You are just like me.”

“We may be looking across at each other. But there really is no similarity between us.”

“You want to be right too.”

“You are such a carnivore.”

“What do you mean?”

“Always on the hunt. Always ready to feast.”

“The next thing that you’re going to say is that you can hear me howl.”

“Study his face. I want you to remember what he looks like.”

“He looks a lot like you.”

“Forget that I’ve even been here. You need to look out for him.”

“Why?”

“He’s going to hurt you if he finds me.”

“He knows where I am. He hasn’t done anything to me yet.”

“He’s waiting for the right moment.”

“I have more to fear from you than him.”

“He’s dangerous. Take my word for it.”

“I can’t take you at your word. I don’t even know who you are.”

She pushes the picture away.