

“Kris”

By Dirty Dawg

It was a fine summer evening, a Friday. The sun still had two more hours of hang-around time, and the gentle breeze wafting in from the west filled the air with the scents of summer...cut grass and honeysuckle. The radar unit sitting on the dash of my patrol car showed a steady “00” as no one was using County Route 2, my assigned post for violators duty. Write tickets, they told me. Lots of them. So I sat here and waited. On most days, I could write three tickets an hour, and that kept my sergeant happy. Friday nights, though, this road was quiet, because it led further up county, in the opposite direction of the city where everyone wanted to go. I used the time to daydream and think and just kind of take a break from a hectic week. Summer Fridays were the best, because of the weather (I despise cold weather!) and the general laid-back attitude of everyone.

The green blur that went by my windshield shocked me back to reality. I was already turning the key before I checked the radar readout. I didn’t need it to tell me that the driver was speeding, but I was slightly curious as to how much this particular driver was going to be ‘donating’ to the county coffers. Seventy-eight in a forty. A least a hundred bucks, I thought, gunning the motor and hitting the switches for the lights and sirens. My roof rack came alive, as did my high-beams, alternating with the red grille lights. The car sped up, and I dropped the hammer. I was reaching for the radio microphone when something stayed my hand. Normally, procedure requires that I call for backup when a pursuit situation arises, but something told me not to. The driver wasn’t running...really, just speeding up a little.

County Route Two is a windy, twisty little road that stretched for another six miles, and I kept right on the car’s tail, taking every turn like Mario Andretti. I was just enjoying the ride, not worrying too much, because something told me the driver was just...playing. The car wasn’t making a serious attempt to evade me, it just wasn’t pulling over. The other car, I noted, was a Porsche Cabriolet Turbo, and could have easily left me in its dust.

The county line was fast approaching, and at our current speed, we would close the last half mile in under fifteen seconds. With three seconds to spare, my speeder hit the brakes, her rear lights filling my windshield as the car pulled to the side of the road.

Again, I would normally have run the plate through the NCIC from the terminal in my patrol car, but that small voice told me that I wouldn’t need to, that the car would come back clean. I wasn’t sure what was going on here, but I knew that it wasn’t what it had appeared to be at first glance.

I wasn’t stupid, though. I put the take down lights on, flooding the car in front of me with several hundred thousand watts of aircraft-grade lights. I worked the thumbbreak of my holster so that my Baretta 92F would be within easy grasp, should things turn ugly. I approached the car slowly, watching for any sudden movement.

“You were going at quite a clip,” I said, loudly.

And then, from the driver’s side window, came a voice from my past. “Hey, copper! You’ll never take me alive!” And then came the giggle.

And then came the memories.

Kris...Kris was the girl of my past, of my youth. She came into my life at that time between boyhood and manhood when I was still discovering who I was going to be in this world. I was 13 when Kris moved in next door to me. She was 12, the daughter of an Army officer assigned to Fort Stern.

Even at 13, I knew that when it came to the fairer sex, I was not what was considered boyfriend material. Some of my friends had begun to go on dates, attend makeout parties...all those wonderful rituals of growing up that, for some reason, I had been excluded from. The girls my age all dated boys a year or two older. The girl I could date, as it were, were a year or two younger...and none of them wanted to date me, or go into the closet to play Post Office with me, and my invitations to the neighborhood Spin the Bottle games got lost in the mail, I guess.

So when Kris moved in next door, you could say that I was a little bit excited. Our houses were set off from the rest at the end of a winding, grassy cul-de-sac, and I knew that I might have a day or two to get into her good graces before she explored beyond the boundaries of our two properties, before the other girls in the area poisoned her mind.

Looking back on those days, I remember thinking that it was a lost cause anyway. The first time I saw Kris I knew that I didn't stand any kind of a chance with her anyway. She was too beautiful, too perfect to be satisfied with a pogue like me. She was so...sweet and innocent and perfect. Tall for a girl, even at 12, standing five and a half feet and seemingly growing more every day. Long blonde hair that she wore in a bobbing ponytail that just added to her almost magical allure, wide-set blue eyes the color of the ocean on a stormy day. Her voice was slightly husky, almost man-like. Her laughter was a song that the birds in the trees themselves envied. I know it sounds like I idolized her, and to a certain degree, that is true.

Kris was more of a tomboy than I realized at first. She liked wearing jeans and sneakers and t-shirts. She kept her hair pinned up under a baseball cap that she always wore. One of the great pleasures of my young life was watching her take that cap off and shaking her long, golden hair out. She always looked like a goddess to me when she did that, some magical metamorphosis taking place that turned her from a dusty, baseball-playing, tree-climbing, insect-catching, frog-racing tomboy into a vision of young beauty and innocent perfection.

Kris showed up two weeks into the summer, and to my complete surprise, we became fast friends. Best friends, as a matter of fact. The Orioles were our favorite team, and by mutual, unspoken agreement, we would listen to every game together, either on the radio, or watching the night games at one or the other's house. I saved my allowance and bought her a fitted Orioles cap as a present. It became her pride and joy, and she wore it everywhere. Seeing her in that cap, and seeing the fat lip she gave Bobby Chambers when he stole it off her head made me feel proud.

Kris and I spent that first magical summer together, doing all the things kids do together. Climbing trees, taking long walks in the woods, spending entire afternoons flat on our backs, staring at the clouds, talking about Important Things like Life and Love and The Meaning Of Everything. She had little time for Love, she told me. She thought she was ugly and fat. That was about as far from the truth as you could get and still speak English, and I didn't hesitate to tell her so. She thanked me, but I could tell by her expression that she didn't believe me.

As I got to know Kris better, I also understood a little of why she was the way she was. An only child, it was obvious to me that her father had wanted a son. The way he talked about Kris, the way he treated her, made me hate him quickly. He called her "TuffStuff," and was constantly treating her like he would a son. He once told her, in front of me no less, that she had better learn a trade, because no guy was going to want to marry her, ever. I saw the hurt and the shame in Kris's eye, and I wanted to punch and kick and bite her father until he apologized. The fact that her father was

a US Army Ranger, a Major in command of an entire Battalion, made me reconsider my actions. The man was huge; he could have snapped me in two with his little fingers.

The summer ended, and school began. One of the first social events of the year was the Sadie Hawkins turnaround dance. When I saw the posters going up in the hallway, I got a little depressed and morose. I knew there weren't going to be any girls shyly coming up to me, wondering if I would say yes. That's just the way my existence was. When the girls went down the mental lists as to who they would ask, my name just never came up. Kris and I were still close, but she had found some other friends, and we didn't spend as much time together as we'd used to. It was hard, but I took great pains not to let her know how much I missed her. She needed to have other friends, I felt, other, more popular friends, lest her entire school social life be ruined by her association with me, the outcast.

So you can imagine my surprise when Kris asked me to go to the dance with her. I accepted immediately, and instantly began wondering what was behind the invitation. Kris explained, haltingly, that she wanted to go to the dance badly, but didn't know any boys well enough to ask, and was sure that anyone she did ask would have turned her down. So I kind of won by default. She was glad, she said, that she was going with 'a friend,' and that she would be able to meet people there.

The phrase 'a friend' rang in my head like the death knell of my social life. I understood what the parameters of the evening and of our relationship were, and just gave silent thanks that I was going with someone. It was at that point that I knew I was in love with Kris. Quietly, desperately...but still in love.

The night of the dance will stand out in my memory for the rest of my life. I put on my best clothes, what might have been called "Sunday Clothes" had my family been religious. I went over to Kris's house to pick her up, and knocked on the door.

There was a wait of perhaps thirty seconds, and then the door opened. Kris stepped quickly out and shut it behind her. I turned at the sound, and felt my breath leaving me, my throat locking. Gone were the jeans and t-shirts. Gone was the by-now dusty Orioles cap I'd given her seemingly a thousand years ago. Gone was the rubber-banded ponytail she wore to school most mornings.

Replaced, instead, by a stunningly beautiful little girl wearing a gorgeous royal blue party dress. It came down to just below her knees. Her long blonde hair had been washed and brushed, and it cascaded around her shoulders and neck like waves of hand-spun gold.

"What?" she asked, seeing my dumbfounded expression.

"You...you're beautiful!" I managed to croak out. Kris punched me in the shoulder. Hard.

"Shut up!" she said, but there was the smallest hint of a smile in her voice. "Don't say that. It's not true." I started to open my mouth to argue with her, and then thought better of it. "C'mon," she said, tugging at my arm, "Let's go." We walked to the party silently, me scuffing the soles of my shoes on the sidewalk, Kris looking off in the distance with this look of intense concentration on her face. We didn't talk, didn't say a single word to each other.

We got to the dance, and I knew that I was the luckiest guy there. None of the other girls could even hold a candle to Kris...and they knew it. Seeing the looks of jealousy and outright bitchiness Kris got from the other girls made me feel proud and excited that she was my date.

Well...that wasn't exactly true. Kris and I had arrived together, and I had every intention, at that point, of leaving with her. But as I was to discover, I wasn't her date. Not by a long shot.

The dance was held...where else? In the gym. Streamers dangled from the ceiling, and a low-grade garage band was pounding out tunes from The Eagles and Bob Seeger in one corner, drowning out most conversations. A long table filled with refreshments occupied one corner of the

room. I mimed drinking with my hands and then raised my eyebrows, and Kris nodded, so I went off to get us some punch. Returning with two paper cups, I saw Kris and Billy Warner standing, talking. Kris had her back to me when I came up, and the band had just finished a song.

"I said, you look beautiful tonight!" Billy said, a little loudly. I winced, waiting for Kris to belt him, and then was both surprised and hurt by what happened next.

Kris laughed this nervous little giggle, looked down at the floor and said, "You really think so? Thank you." At that moment, I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me whole. I'd said the exact same thing to her on her porch, and gotten a punch in the arm. Billy had said it, and gotten the reaction I wanted. The smile, giggle and thank-you. And then it all became clear. What I had said didn't matter to Kris, wasn't important to her, because...because it had come from me. I guess she felt that since we were friends, it really didn't matter what I thought. She wanted me to think of her as a friend, not as a girl, so my feelings for her towards that end were...extra, unimportant.

Make no mistake. I knew that Kris didn't mean to hurt me, wouldn't have said those things for the world had she known the effect they ended up having on me. But that didn't lessen the pain one iota. That's when I began to understand what role I was going to play in the lives of all my female friends. I was always going to be the best friend, the surrogate big brother. They would take the flattery I offered in the spirit in which they thought it was intended, that of a friend who was 'required' to say such things. On that warm fall night, that scent of sweat and moisture that seems to be in every school gym in the world filling my nostrils, the sounds of the band pulsing against my eardrums, I watched silently for almost ten minutes as Kris flirted with Billy. She laughed at his jokes and tossed her hair, and even went so far as to scuff the toe of her shoe back and forth on the floor when Billy told her she had the bluest eyes he'd ever seen.

When he asked Kris if he could call her, sometime, maybe? I closed my eyes and wished with all my heart and soul that she would tell him thanks, but no thanks. Her quick and eager acceptance made another little piece of my heart break off and float away. Billy left, smirking at me over Kris' shoulder as he walked away. She caught the expression and turned to see me there. I smiled my best smile and handed her the cup I'd brought. It was a paper Dixie-cup, and was dented from where I'd been gripping it. She took and sipped from it, her eyes finding and tracking Billy Warner across the room.

The rest of the dance passed slowly. About six different boys came up to her and asked her to dance, and she did with all of them. She and I danced, but she was always looking elsewhere, following the boys. I just watched her, entranced by her subtle and captivating beauty. And truth be told, I felt like an ass, because I knew that she would never look at me the way I was looking at her. I wasn't in Kris' future as anything but a friend, and a little part of me died that night.

But the worst was yet to come. With twenty minutes left to go before the dance ended, Kris came up to me.

"Uh...Dan, can...um..." I thought I knew what was coming, and I was right. "Billy wants to walk me home, and I was wondering if..."

I let her off easy, because at that moment I wanted to be anywhere else but there. "Sure," I said quickly. "No problem. Have fun. Call me tomorrow."

She smiled and I smiled back, and I turned on my heel and left. I walked home...alone...and knew with a certain sureness and sadness that that was the way I'd be spending most of my life anyway. As good a time as any to get used to it, I supposed. The walk home seemed to take three times as long as the walk over had.

I was in my room (which faced Kris's house) working on my tie when I heard noise through the open window. I got up and walked over and saw Kris and Billy on her front porch. They were standing in front of her door, talking quietly.

And then they fell silent, and Billy started... leaning towards Kris. I was rooted to the spot, powerless to move, watching this happen like you watch a car accident happen. You can see it coming, but you know it's too late to do anything, and it's all in slow motion. They kissed, and I wanted to scream and shout. That was my kiss, the one I'd earned. I'd been Kris's friend, I'd fallen in love with her, I knew all her secrets. I knew her favorite color was royal blue. I knew her middle name was Ethel (a name she hated,) and I knew that her father thought she was fat and ugly. I knew that her cat's name was Mr. Cheevers and that her mother liked to sing "Amazing Grace" while doing the laundry. Kris and I had a thousand and one experiences together, an entire summer of history that this...boy couldn't begin to touch. That was my kiss, with my girl. And Billy was getting it.

They pulled apart. The kiss hadn't lasted more than a second or two, but all that had flashed across my mind in that time. Billy pulled back further, and then Kris lunged at him, kissing him back. This kiss lasted longer, and I felt the tears starting, hot, fat drops of salty water slowly filling my eyes only to spill out and run down my cheeks.

That kiss ended, and Billy turned to leave just as Kris turned to go into the house. As you can probably guess, she turned towards me, saw the light, looked up, and saw me standing there crying like a baby.

I just turned away from the window and went to bed.

Things between Kris and I...changed after that. There was a new coolness, a new distance between us. Kris had seen me, had seen the manifestation of my feelings for her with her own two eyes. As much as she was my friend, that's all she would ever be, and Kris didn't want to lead me on or encourage me. Even at that young, tender age, she understood more about the dynamics of our relationship than I did.

What I did was try and forget how much I loved Kris. I put it away, in a secret place deep inside, and worked to rebuild the friendship. Kris and Bill started dating, as much as you can date at that age. They would go for ice cream or go to an afternoon movie together, always holding hands, always staring into each other's eyes. Billy took every opportunity to kiss Kris when I was around, and it drove me quietly insane.

Kris eventually broke up with Billy, but the damn had been broken. Kris was a beautiful young woman and she had no trouble finding suitors. I had taken to watching her on her front porch with my lights turned off. Kris was always proper and virtuous, never allowing more than a peck on the cheek and a fast hug. It still hurt like hell to watch, though.

Kris and I grew further apart. She was popular now, both with the boys and the girls. She ran for Sophomore class president and won, with a lot of help from...me. I campaigned for her, put up posters, did everything her campaign manager asked me to. When she won, and made her short acceptance speech, she thanked everyone who had given time and effort on her behalf...except me. I felt my face flush with anger and embarrassment as she walked off the stage. She caught my eyes, and silently mouthed the words, "Thank you," and kept walking. That was it.

Since I was a year ahead of her, my prom came first. But Kris was dating a kid in my class at that time, and I knew she was going, too. As you can probably guess, I went stag. Kris looked beautiful in her special dress. She was 16 then, a gorgeous young woman in the full bloom of her young life. Her date, Richard, was the handsomest kid in our class, and they made a wonderful

couple. I watched them slow dancing around the gym, eyes locked together, a little smile on her face.

It was late in the evening, about twenty minutes until the entire thing was over. I was staring at the streamers taped to this ring hung from the center of the ceiling when I felt this tap on my shoulder. I looked over as Kris sat down in the empty chair next to mine.

“Dance?” she said softly. I nodded and stood. I wanted to dance with her very, very badly, but didn’t want her to know *how* badly. We moved to the floor just as an old Elvis tune started playing. “I Can’t Help Falling In Love (With You)” We danced slowly, at arms length, even as I tried to bring her closer. We stared at each other, and I felt something... break loose inside me. I was six days away from graduation, and college called. This was Kris’ way of saying goodbye, her final gift to me. Or so I thought.

The dance ended, and I leaned in and quickly kissed her on the cheek, and squeezed her hand. “Thank you,” I said sincerely, turned and left. I walked home (again,) that same walk I’d taken four years ago. I got home and trudged upstairs, thinking about college and my future, trying to forget my past and Kris. But it wasn’t to be.

In my bedroom, sitting on my bed, was the dusty, creased Orioles cap. No note, nothing. Just the cap. It looked lonely and forlorn sitting there, and I joined it, running my fingers over it, thinking back to that first summer, the seemingly endless days spent making memories, memories that were going to have to last a lifetime for me, because I knew there wouldn’t be any more.

When I came home from college and joined the local police department, Kris’ family had moved. Her father had been promoted and transferred, and Kris was...gone. A new family lived next door, an elderly couple who had retired and were spending their twilight years in the house the love of my life once lived in.

They turned Kris’ bedroom into a sewing room.

That was four years ago. I was 22 at the time, Kris was 21 and somewhere else.

It was four years later, now. I was 26, and Kris was 25, and she was in the car, laughing that same laugh.

“Hey, copper! You’ll never take me alive!”

“Kris?” I asked, my hand still on my gun. I knew it was her, but I was still careful.

“Dan!” she squealed, getting out of the car and running into my arms. Her hug was ferocious and tight, and I found myself wrapping her up in my arms, pulling her closer. She smelled wonderful, just the way I remembered from those summers almost fifteen years ago.

We pulled apart, and I got my first look at her in eight years. The time had been kind to Kris. She was a beautiful young woman, mature and luscious. Her breasts were full and firm, held in a tight grasp by the black leotard top she wore, and were pressed together by the size-to-small leather vest she was wearing. Her tight, round butt was molded by the snug jeans she wore. Long, slim legs were tucked into cowboy boots. Her hair was kinky now, either naturally or by some beauty parlor magician, and it looked wonderful.

“I stopped by the station, and they told me you were out here looking for speeders, so I figured I’d let you finally catch me!” I just smiled and hugged her again.

“When do you get off?” she asked.

I told her that my tour would be up at midnight.

“Would you like to...oh, I don’t know...go out for a drink or something?”

I agreed, and she told me to meet her at Finnegan's, a local pub. She turned to get back into her car, and then stopped, turning back to me to kiss me quickly and chastely on the lips. "It's so good to see you again, Dan!" she enthused. Kris got in the car and was gone.

I spent the rest of my tour in a daze. Three people blew by me at over sixty miles an hour, and I let them all go. I was in too good a mood to chase anyone, let alone write any tickets.

Midnight came, and I rotated out, changing into street clothes and taking my Baretta and shield with me. Department regulations required that I have my gun and shield at all times, but I wasn't thinking about enforcing any laws that night. My mind was filled with questions. Climbing into my PathFinder, I drove over to Finnegan's in two minutes flat, a trip that normally took ten.

Walking in, I spotted Kris talking to two guys at the bar. Spotting me, she excused herself and walked over to greet me. Throwing her arms around my neck, she gave me a kiss that took my breath away. It was a close-mouthed kiss (no tongue!) but it still shocked me to my socks.

"God, it's sooo good to see you!" she said, smiling up at me, her arms still around my neck. Her hands dropped to my waist, and she felt my pistol, snug in its inside-the-pants holster.

"So, is that a gun in your pocket-?"

"I'm just happy to see you," I finished. "But yes, it's a gun." We cracked up at the stupid joke and made our way to the bar. The two guys she'd been talking to had vanished, and she didn't even give them a parting glance. We sat and I ordered a beer.

"So," I asked, "What are you doing in these parts?"

"Well...I finished medical school, and...I'm back."

"Back? Back where?"

"Back here. I've decided to start a family practice here. I'm going to be the new town doctor. You can call me 'Doc.'"

That news, frankly, blew me away. "Really..." I said, not sure, exactly, what this meant. Kris was apparently back in my life...but in what capacity?

"You don't sound very excited, Dan." There was soft reproach in her voice, and I moved quickly to control the damage.

"I just thought that I'd never see you again."

"Didn't you get any of my letters?"

That shocked me. "No. Not one. What letters? I never got any letters from you!"

"I...gave them to your mother to mail to you after you left for college. When I left, I mailed them to my parents, and my mother gave them to your mother...and you didn't get any of them? Not one?"

I nodded, suddenly understanding. My mother knew how I felt about Kris, and knew how Kris, at the time, felt about me. Trying to protect me, I suppose, she hadn't given me a single one.

"I thought you hated me," Kris said softly. "I kept apologizing in my letters for...ignoring you. For not..."

"Shh," I said, holding a finger to her lips. "Don't worry about it. I got over it. I...went on."

"So," Kris said brightly, after a minute, "What's going on in your life? Got anyone special?"

I snorted. "You know better than that."

She heard the hurt and loneliness in my voice and just let it sit there.

"Still have my hat?" she finally asked. I nodded.

"Why did you put it on my bed?" That had been bothering me for nine years.

Kris took a while to answer, sipping at her beer as she framed a reply. "Back then...on the night of the prom, I wanted you to have a fresh beginning. You were going off to college, and I was still home, in town. I wanted you to move on, Dan. I knew how you felt about me. Hell, the whole

school knew! I didn't think it was fair for you to carry around all that baggage...especially since I couldn't return the feelings."

"So why'd you write me?" I challenged.

Kris sighed. "Because once you were gone...you know the old saying. You don't appreciate something until after it's gone." At that moment, I remembered another old saying. 'If you love something...let it go. If it comes back, it's yours. If it doesn't it never was.' I had let Kris go, and now she was back. Was she mine?

Kris and I spent that night catching up on nine years of each other's lives. I told her about college and being a cop in a small town. She told me of college, and medical school, and her internship. She'd graduated a year early from college, and then finished medical school in three years instead of two.

"I was looking for something. What, I didn't know. But I do now."

I left that alone for the moment. Too many explosive, volatile emotions surrounded that. Kris was leaving me openings left and right...and I was determined to be sure what she was thinking before I made my move. If she was hinting, one more day or week or month wouldn't make a difference. If she wasn't, and was just making conversation, I couldn't stand the pain and the humiliation again.

We went our separate ways that night, Kris kissing me again before she got into her car. I drove home and fell into a deep, restless sleep. I dreamt of the prom, only this time we were adults, and Kris was my date, and she was wearing that same dress, only in adult proportions, and the cowboy boots, and we danced every dance together in an empty gym, just the two of us.

I had four more four-to-midnight shifts left to go before I rotated to midnights, and three days off before I had to start midnight-to-eight shifts the following Saturday night. Those four shifts I spent thinking about Kris and I...together. She had been hinting the entire time that night at the bar, and I was trying to work up the courage to call her up and ask her out.

Finally, I did it. Wednesday night, I was in my house (the same house I'd grown up in, my parents long retired to Florida,) pacing in the living room, staring at the silent phone, letting it mock me. Nothing ventured, etc, I thought, and sat down. Unfolding the bar napkin that Kris had scrawled her telephone number across, I dialed the seven digits with a shaking hand.

The phone was answered by a machine, and I breathed a sigh of relief. I'd already rehearsed the message I'd leave on the machine. It was easier to talk to the machine, because it couldn't say no. And the message I'd leave would give me an easy out.

"It's Dan," I said after the beep. "It's nine-thirty Wednesday, and I was wondering if you would like to have dinner with me Friday night. If you do, call me at home. Leave a message if I'm not here. If I don't hear from you... I'll understand. Talk to you"

There was a click on the line, and then Kris, out of breath. "I heard the phone ringing when I pulled into the driveway," she gasped, "and almost broke my key off in the lock when I heard your voice. Give me a second..." She caught her breath, and I heard sitting noises in the background: the scrape of a chair against a kitchen floor, the weight of her body settling into it.

"Dan...are you asking me out on a date?" My blood turned to ice and I wanted to die. Another ten seconds, and the message would have been safely with the machine. Forty-eight hours of silence from her, and I would have realized that once again I'd made an asshole out of myself, that there was no way in hell this intelligent, sexy woman would ever want any part of a pogue-

"Dan? Are you still there?"

I sighed. "Yes. I was asking you out on a date. I'm sorry. It was just that in the bar-"

"I'd be delighted, Dan." Silence from me prompted a footnote from her. "Really. I'd be delighted. I was hoping you would ask."

"Fine," I managed. "I'll pick you up at seven."

"You don't even know where I live!" she chided.

"You forget. I'm a cop. I know everything. See you Friday." I hung up to the sound of her songlike laughter and immediately freaked. Because now I had to face something I'd been ignoring for a long, long time.

At the tender age of 26, I was still...a virgin.

Friday came, and I was nervous all day. I bought new clothes and then discarded them, tossing them into the back of my closet. I wanted to look good, but casual and unstudied, like I hadn't gone to any trouble. I settled on a light blue oxford, wash-faded jeans, and cowboy boots. I was known well enough in the town that I could tuck my Baretta into the small of my back and not worry about someone calling the cops. After all, I was the cops!

I studied myself in the mirror as I shaved for my first date with Kris. I, too, had changed since Kris saw me last. I'd lost about thirty pounds in college, and another ten or so when I joined the force. Constant workouts had gotten me in shape, as a fat, flabby cop was not effective on the streets. My face was mostly still the same, though. Average. Brown eyes, the shade of shit. A small nose, neither distinctive nor striking. I'd grown a mustache, the color the same as the mousy brown on my head.

"You're an idiot," I told the mirror. "She's never going to love you..." And then I put thoughts like that out of my head and finished preparing for the date.

I drove over to Kris' place wondering what the hell was going to happen that night. If I'd known, I might have turned around and driven right back home. Pulling into her driveway, I parked and turned the truck off, getting out and ascending the front porch stairs. Ringing the doorbell, I turned around and remembered another night I stood on a porch, waiting for Kris.

The door opened and I turned around. Kris was wearing a light blue, off-the-shoulder dress. It came down to just above her knees, and she was wearing those same cowboy boots. Her hair was in a bouncy ponytail, her face scrubbed clean and devoid of makeup. She looked perfect.

"Well? What do you think?" she asked, twirling for me.

"I'd tell you," I started.

"But you're afraid I'd punch you, right?" I was touched that she remembered that night as well as I. "Tell me anyway," she said, batting her eyelashes at me.

"You look beautiful," I said sincerely.

"You really think so? Thank you." Wow. That was too much. It was as if I were Bobby, in the gym, at that first dance. I was blown away. It was like Kris had peeked inside my head and read the mental script that I kept of that night.

We walked to my truck, got in, and drove to Finnegans for dinner. When we walked in, every head turned and every guy was instantly jealous. I felt a little puffed up with pride, and we made our way to my regular table, a small intimate little booth in the back. She slid in next to me, her leg pressing against mine.

The waitress came over. "Hello, Dan. What can I get the law tonight, and his pretty date?"

"Cheryl?" Kris asked. Cheryl Lingstrom had been a classmate of mine, a girl who had been charitably known back then as...well, as the class slut.

“Yes...?”

“It’s me! Kris! Kris Russo!”

“Kris?” The girls squealed and hugged. “What are you doing back in town?”

“I’m setting up my medical practice here!” Kris said, sitting back down. She put her arm through mine and grabbed my hand. “And having dinner with the handsomest man in town!”

Cheryl’s eyebrows went up at that, but she didn’t say anything. She just nodded and opened her pad. “What’ll you folks have?”

We ordered, and then Cheryl left us alone. I was still blushing from Kris’ earlier comment. “So tell me about what goes on in law enforcement in this town,” she said softly, staring into my eyes. I was at a complete and utter loss of words, and was only saved by the arrival of our salads. Cheryl put them in front of us and vanished, leaving me the opportunity to feed my face. It was better than trying to make conversation with Kris. I had no idea what to say. I didn’t feel witty or charming. I didn’t want to say or do *anything* to fuck this up. She looked so beautiful, so perfect, sitting next to me.

So right.

That’s what it felt like...that it was right, perfect, pre-ordained that Kris would be there with me. The years apart vanished, and it was like we were kids again, no secrets, endless summer afternoons talking about Important Things and looking at the clouds.

Cheryl was a great waitress, the entrees coming directly on the heels of the appetizers, and Kris and I didn’t have much opportunity to talk. She and I both declined desert, and the check came with rapidity heretofore unseen at Finnegans. I tipped Cheryl mightily, and Kris and I left.

We got into the truck and Kris was silent. I smiled, and remembered my gift. Reaching back behind her seat, I found it and dropped it into her lap. Kris raised it in her hands, and then smiled at me, the warmest, most beautiful smile I have ever seen on another human being. She put the dusty, creased, well-fingered Orioles cap on her head, letting the ponytail stream out the back.

“Let’s go to the docks,” she said. I nodded and started the truck. The docks were mostly just a series of piers, used by some of the bigger ships up until about ten years ago. They were mostly deserted now, and had turned into a local lover’s lane.

We got there and parked, and then got out and started walking along the water.

“You’re awful quiet tonight,” Kris offered. I just shrugged. “Penny for your thoughts,” she tried again.

“I...just don’t want to fu-...screw this up.”

“You’re not.”

“I know. That’s why I’m not talking.” She laughed and I joined her.

“Do you know why I was so happy when you called and asked me out?”

I said that I did not.

“Because...one of the reasons I came back here, back home, is you. I knew that you were here, living and working. ...I want you to be a part of my life, Dan.”

That was fairly vague. I didn’t say anything. I’d learned a few interrogation techniques, and one of them was to let the silences build, let the subject dig themselves in, rushing to fill the void.

“After you left for college...I felt empty. I knew how you felt about me, and I missed that. I was selfish and petty back then. I liked the idea of having this boy devoted to me...even if I wouldn’t ever think of dating him. It made me feel beautiful and desired and wanted. You remember how my father used to be. I broke up with Richard that summer when he started fooling around with an older girl. She let him make love to her, and he wanted me to do that with him, but I just wasn’t

ready. We had huge fights. He tried that old 'if you love me you'll do this for me' routine, and I used that old 'if you love me you won't make me do this' thing on him. So I got rid of him. And I was angry for a long time, angry because I suddenly realized that you never would have given me that ultimatum. You would have waited until the time and place were right, and then it would just happen...naturally, beautifully, the way it was meant to be. And with that realization came the understanding of how shabbily I'd treated you over the years. That's when I started writing."

"I know," I said quietly.

"Excuse me?"

"I went through some of my parent's papers. I found a box full of your letters in the attic. I read them. All of them."

"Oh." Her voice was suddenly small and far away.

"If I had gotten them...I would have come to see you, Kris. Like you asked. But I never got them, I swear."

"I know," she nodded.

We fell silent for a few moments. Kris shivered a little. The wind was coming in off the water. She turned her back to the water, facing me, and I could see the hard points of her nipples under the dress, and I realized with a start that she wasn't wearing a bra!

"Cold?" I asked, turning to leave. She reached out and touched my arm.

"Kiss me," she said. "Please." I turned back slowly, and wrapped her up in my arms. She had gained about an inch, and stood about five nine. Her face was at the perfect height. Lowering my face towards hers, I closed the distance between our lips in slow, agonizing increments. And then we were kissing...really kissing, for the first time. Her mouth was soft and hot, and after minute her lips parted, and her tongue came knocking against my mouth. I opened my mouth, and then we were deeply Frenching, her hot moist tongue in my mouth, setting my toes on fire. Kris' arms encircled my back, moving up to my shoulders, pulling me tightly against her.

"Mmm," she moaned into my mouth. Pulling away, I turned my head to the other side and came in again. This kiss was hotter than the first, if that was at all possible. Our mouths worked eagerly, hungrily together, and I knew at that instant that I had never stopped loving Kris, not completely. This was perfect and right and just and inevitable. I was kissing the woman I loved, the woman I'd always loved, and she was kissing me back.

"Take me home," she moaned against my throat when we parted. "Take me to your house and make love to me, Dan. Please!"

I pulled away from her, pursing my lips. "There's something you should know," I started, ready to reveal my secret to her, finally.

Her features clouded, her eyebrows drawing together. Concern was written all across her face. "What?"

"I...um....I've never...." Surprise turned to outright astonishment.

"Never? Ever?" I shook my head. Laughing, she said, "You saved yourself for me?"

"No...I mean, yes, but not...I mean, there was never anyone else who...wanted to....with me, I mean.....I mean.."

"Shh," Kris said, kissing me. "I don't care why. And it's not important. I just wish that I was...that I hadn't.. ...before tonight...that way, it could be, for both of us, the first..."

"Shh," I said to her, kissing her again. "For me, it will be. I've...dreamed about this...forever. Whenever I thought of my first time with a woman, it was always you in my mind. Always you showing me what you liked, what you wanted. Teaching me how to do it right, to make you feel good."

“But what about you?”

“I don’t care. If...if you get pleasure, the maximum pleasure, that’s all that was important to me.” And it was true. It was.

“Take me home,” Kris said. “Take me to your bed, Dan.”

The door to my house swung open, and Kris stepped in ahead of me. I closed and locked the door, and turned to face her. Kris leaned up on her toes and kissed me, softly, once. Taking my hand, she led me up the stairs to my bedroom. It was the same bedroom I’d slept in as a child. I’d replaced the twin bed with a king-sized, the thing dominating the entire room.

Kris shut my bedroom door and turned on the light by the bed. She turned to me, biting her bottom lip and slowly walked over to where I was standing. She kissed me again, wrapping her arms around my neck. Once again, our mouths were working hungrily and eagerly against each other. My hands were on her waist, gently holding her. One of Kris’ hands left my neck and found my hand, lifting it to her chest and placing it on her right breast.

Gasping into her mouth, I closed my fingers around that full, perfect tit. It’s plump, heavy weight felt like heaven in my hand, and I gently hefted it, testing it’s bounce and resiliency. My thumb worked across her nipple, and Kris gasped into my mouth. Thinking I’d hurt her, my hand flew off her breast and smacked against the wall. “I’m sorr-” I started. Kris smiled and reached for my hand, replacing it on her breast.

“It felt good, Dan, that’s all. Don’t worry. If you do something I don’t want you to, I’ll tell you. But I don’t think that’s going to be a problem.” And then we were kissing again. The kisses gained strength and passion and emotion, and I had to move my mouth. I was gasping, hungry for air. Kris kissed my neck and chin, moving down to my throat. Her hands left my neck and started working on the buttons of my shirt. Kris kissed each new portion of skin that was revealed, taking several minutes to lick and tug on my nipples with her lips and tongue. I reached behind me and removed my pistol, reaching past Kris to put it on the dresser. I checked the safety before returning to her arms. Didn’t want it going off NOW. I was in danger of shooting off, though.

Kris pulled my shirt off and tossed it over her shoulder. She leaned down and kissed my stomach, then moved lower and teasingly licked my belly button. I felt her hands on my belt buckle, and I stopped her.

“You,” I said. She smiled and stood, holding her arms out. I kissed her neck and shoulder and throat, Kris moaning as I did so. Her hands were in my hair, nails lightly scratching my scalp. She kissed my ear and licked me there, turning me on even more.

I slid the short sleeves off of her arms and gently lowered the top of her dress. Kris’ breasts bobbed as the material passed over them, and for the first time in my life, I had a pair of naked female breasts to kiss and touch and stroke.

They were perfect, as only a young girl’s can be. They weren’t overly large, but they were in perfect proportion to the rest of her body. Perfectly round, about the diameter of an orange, they sat high and proud on her chest, the little pink nipples stiff in excitement. I dipped my face down and kissed her left nipple, tugging at it gently with my teeth. Kris’ fingernails dug into my scalp, pulling my mouth closer to her breast. Moving to the other one, I repeated the action. Kris pulled my face away and her mouth ascended towards mine, her tongue reaching out and licking and teasing mine. She worked the dress off her hips and it fell to the ground. She sat on the bed and worked her boots off, standing to face me again in just her tiny pink panties.

I lost my pants and boots and socks in a heartbeat. We were facing each other, her in her panties, me in my jockeys. I had a tent in mine, though. Hooking her fingers in her panties, Kris lowered them, and I saw the fine blonde down covering her mons.

"Christ," I said, "it grew a beard!" Kris laughed with sudden remembrance. That first summer, we'd gone swimming down at the lake, and since neither of us had brought a suit, we'd swum in our underwear. I still remembered the brief glance I'd gotten of her fat, bald little twat.

"Very funny," Kris laughed. So did yours, I bet!" I took a deep breath and hooked my own fingers in the waistband of my underwear and slid them down my legs. We were finally, gloriously naked for each other.

For the first time.

She was perfect, beautiful, fragile.

And, for tonight, at least, mine.

We fell onto the bed together, laughing and giggling like kids. Kris rolled over on top of me, kissing me. Her long, lithe body felt hot and smooth against mine. My hands cupped her ass, that ass I had lusted after for so many years. She ground her crotch against mine, and I could feel the moisture of her arousal against my thighs and pubic hair. My cock was trapped between our bodies, rubbing against Kris' stomach.

"This ain't no gun in your pocket, pardner!" Kris laughed, reaching between us to stroke me. Her touch was feathery light and exciting. "Careful," I warned. "I'm a quick shot!"

"I know...this first one's gonna be fast. Don't worry about it. We have all night. And all day. And all night. And all day again...!" She stroked me, once, twice, and I climaxed, covering both of our bellies with my cream.

"Mmm," Kris said. "So hot and creamy...!" She got off my body and licked her way down to my crotch, cleaning me with her mouth. She worked slowly, teasingly, lovingly. I didn't get soft at all. Not one little bit. My hot, hard cock was eager for action. Kris worked it slowly, taking my entire length into her mouth with gentle, deep strokes. My first blowjob was better than I could have ever imagined.

I was getting close to another orgasm when I pulled her face from my cock. "Now you," I said, rolling her onto her back. Eagerly, Kris spread her legs, and I got down between them...and realized that I was lost. I had never seen...one of these up close before.

"What's the matter?" Kris teased. "Don't like the view?"

"I like the view fine," I said. "I just...need a map!" Laughing, Kris showed me what I needed to know. She pointed out all the locations I needed to be aware of, and told me to go to it.

I never could have imagined how exciting she would taste. So hot and tangy. So beautiful. I sipped and licked and blew and gently sucked at her, covering every inch of her pussy with my mouth, lips and tongue. Kris announced that she was getting closed, and directed my attention to a very specific spot. I worked it, and her, using my lips and tongue, and felt her shudder under me. I was bathed with her secretions, and I gulped them eagerly. Kris pulled me to her, raising her face for a kiss.

"Mmm," she said. "I taste good!" I smiled, and we kissed again, softly. "Ready for the main event?" she asked.

"Ready as I'll ever be!" I assured her. Reaching one hand down, Kris located my throbbing member and guided it towards her pussy. I felt wetness and warmth, and then I was sliding inside. She was incredibly hot and tight and wet and slick for me, and I groaned as I bottomed out inside her. She clutched at me with her muscles, milking me, and I groaned again. It was beyond belief. I was inside the woman I'd loved for so many years, finally a part of her. What we'd done tonight

could never be taken back, never be undone by anything anyone ever did. If I died tonight, I'd go a happy man to whatever came after this life with no regrets.

Pulling out, I slid back in again, the second thrust better than the first. We set up a slow motion, a gentle rocking gait, and stared at each other as we made love this first, special time.

"I love you," Kris whispered. "I can't help falling in love with you," she said in her best Elvis and I laughed, once again touched that she remembered and realized how important she, and that night had been to me. Was to me.

My strokes began to quicken, and Kris grunted in pleasure, her legs coming up and around my back, one palm against my ass, urging me on. We made love hungrily, eagerly, giving and taking to and from each other, staring at each other's eyes as we became one on my bed that night.

When I spent again, Kris joined me, her pussy contracting around me, milking me, happily accepting my creamy offering. I collapsed, rolling over onto my back, bringing Kris with me. She kissed me then, once, softly on the lips, and snuggled her face into my chest.

"This feels so...right," she said, just before drifting off to sleep.

"I love you," I said, and felt her arms tighten around me.

I slept.

I woke first, and disengaged myself from Kris. I went downstairs and made coffee, eggs and toast. Retrieving the paper, I put it on the tray and carried the whole thing upstairs. Entering the bedroom, I saw that Kris was still sleeping. The covers came up to the bottom of her butt, that perfect ass of hers looking soft and smooth in the early morning light. Kris had taken the rubber band out of her hair sometime during the night, and her golden tresses were spread over the pillow. I could see the press of her breast against the bed, and saw her perfect, pert little nose buried in the pillow.

She was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen in my life. She woke then, smelling the foot. Donning my shirt from the night before, she motioned me over to the bed. We ate in silence, sharing the paper and enjoying the companionable silence.

I was reading the sports page when I felt a hand inside my bathrobe, reaching for my cock. I lowered the paper and saw that Kris had unbuttoned my shirt. I could see her breasts inside, moving gently against the material.

"Again?!" I said in mock horror.

"Again!" Kris said, grabbing the paper and tossing it away. "Love me, Dan. Again. All day today. And tonight. Forever."

Lowering my face to hers, just before I kissed her, I said, "Forever."
