

Kelly

(Inspired by Mike C, based on characters in his novel: “James”
Characters and situations copyright by Mike C, 2002)

Chapter 5

Todd and Laura were asleep, face-to-face, entwined with each other, when the sound of a ship’s emergency klaxon went off.

Todd rolled his head back and groaned. “Sorry,” he said to Laura reaching over her, “I forgot to turn the alarm off last night.”

Laura, stirred by Todd’s movement, turned to look at the alarm clock he was trying, without much success, to swat.

“Hey,” she said. “I recognize that. It’s a ‘Shuttle Pod’ isn’t it? From Star Trek?”

Todd laughed. “No sweetheart,” he explained, “that is a ‘Shuttle CRAFT.’ Actually it’s a highly detailed, miniaturized scale model of the Magellan, part of the medium range shuttles currently in service on the Enterprise-D.”

“Oh,” Laura said. “I’ve seen that show. It’s the one with Scott Bakula as the Skipper right?”

Todd groaned as he rolled over, rubbing his temples. “How can I love a girl who doesn’t love Star Trek?” he asked. “And you’re thinking of the show ‘Enterprise.’ And it’s not a commercial boat so the rank is Captain,” he added.

Laura laughed as she pulled him back on the bed. “I know that my Captain. I was pulling your leg. My dad is a ‘Trekkie,’ and for the longest time I had a crush on Will Riker, first officer on board the galaxy class starship NCC 1701-D.” She continued giving details of the show as she planted kisses on his face and neck and other exposed areas within her reach.

“Ah,” he said with obvious pleasure, “so it’s not just my body you’re after, you want my mind as well!”

“And your heart,” she added silencing any further discussion with a deep, long kiss.

They made gentle yet passionate love in the bed that had been the scene of a more aggressive, demanding fuck fest the night before. They went at it leisurely, savoring each moment of the intimate contact until both achieved a quiet yet enjoyable orgasm.

Still pressed deep within her womb, Todd rolled to the side so as not to place too much pressure on Laura. She rolled with him and clamped her legs trying to keep his cock firmly planted inside, though she could feel him softening. With a sigh of regret she released him from her grasp and said, "Now I need to empty my bladder!"

With a mischievous grin on his face, Todd said, "Oh goody! My turn to watch."

"Oh no you don't!" she said laughing as she ran for the bathroom, but even though she reached it first she did not close the door on him. He walked up to her slowly as the first sound of water hitting water met his ears. Bending forward he kissed her lips and slowly slipped his hand between her legs letting the hot stream wash over his hand.

Laura blushed but said nothing until Todd searched to find the source of the stream.

"Oh... don't do that or I won't be able to finish," she said.

Puzzled, Todd asked why.

"Girl plumbing is different," she explained. "If you excite me, then the flow turns off. It's like being tickled."

Todd stopped playing and was content to feel the last of her pee dribble over his hand. Grabbing some toilet paper Laura wiped herself and stood up stepping over Todd's arm.

"Well?" she asked. "How did it feel?"

"Strange but somehow exciting at the same time." He replied.

Laura laughed and said, "Maybe next time I'll give you a shower of it!"

Todd smiled. This girl had an adventurous streak. Finally, after washing his hands, he asked Laura if she would like breakfast.

"Oh let me make it," she implored. "You can relax and watch TV or something. I think I can find my way around your kitchen well enough."

"But I'd rather help you," he said.

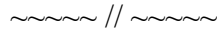
"Okay, then you can do the dishes afterwards," she laughed. "Now go and do something totally because you want to. I'll holler if I can't find anything or whenever it's ready."

Todd kissed her on the forehead, on the nose and finally a soft one on the lips. "Okay," he said. "I'll leave you to it."

After Laura left the bathroom Todd took a minute to empty his own bladder, which he suddenly realized was full, and then took the time to shave. He didn't want Laura's beautiful face scuffed with whisker burn. It was difficult shaving though because his face seemed to be frozen into a smile that wouldn't go away. Looking at his own reflection in the mirror he said, "you are one lucky son-of-a-bitch!" Todd brushed his

teeth as well, wiped down the vanity and headed for the living room to catch up on the world news.

He had caught up on CNN's World Headline News and was changing to a local news channel when he caught the scent of bacon frying. Hmm... Bacon. He knew he had some but it had been in the freezer. Laura was obviously finding her way around the kitchen without difficulty. Todd sat back suddenly very relaxed, both hands behind his head. He gently drifted off to sleep thinking of a CD Kelly had bought him.



Todd had never understood Kelly's love of Country music. A couple of years ago Todd had volunteered his talents for a Celebrity / Charity Cattle Drive in Fort Worth. It was for a good cause, a children's treatment center, and Kelly had come along. It could have been a single afternoon shoot, but Kelly had convinced him to go for the entire five days. She knew most of the actors and singers that would be taking turns leading the 'green-horns,' and Todd always did like doing a job right. They had decided to drive down, hauling the trailer behind them - a working vacation for both of them and a chance to escape from what had been a hot and humid summer in Charlotte. On the second day of the drive, Kelly had turned off the CD player and tuned the radio to 99.5, KPLX, "the Wolf."

Todd was a fan of Classic Rock, and after an hour of listening to the station, wanted to switch back.

I don't understand what you like about this music Kell," he had said. "It all sounds like the same three chords. The only thing I see different is each song has worse singers."

"That's because you aren't listening to the words Todd," Kelly said. "It's not the melody, it's what the singer is telling you."

"What?" Todd had smirked, "that his best friend has run off with his wife and the pick-up's out of gas?"

Kelly had remained silent. He obviously wasn't getting the message.

"Look Kell, I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings, but I just don't get it."

"It's okay Todd." She had said. "You can change it back if you want."

Todd had decided to leave it. She wasn't asking for that much, and besides being his partner, they were best friends who shared everything. About a half hour later he said to Kelly, "You know, I know I've never listened to this station before, but that announcer sounds real familiar to me."

Kelly had laughed. Todd liked hearing her laugh.

“He should sound familiar to you. That’s Maurice Minnifield from ‘Northern Exposure’ you’re listening to. Barry Corbin.”

“Shit... No way!” he said astounded. NX had been one of his favorite TV shows before the network had pulled it off the air.

“Yes way,” she said, mimicking the teens they so often had to deal with. “If you had read the material the charity had sent you instead of just agreeing to do it, you would know that Barry is one of the celebrity trail bosses.”

“Damn. I didn’t know he was into this cowboy stuff.”

“Not just him either,” Kelly continued with a self-satisfied smirk. “If you want to we could drop in on Janine Turner. She has a ranch around there as well.”

Before Todd could reply Kelly heard the strains of a familiar old tune starting on the radio and turned it up.

“Try listening to the words of this one Todd. Forget the music, just listen to the words.” Willie Nelson was singing “Angel Flying Too Close To The Ground.”

The song had finished and Todd realized what Kelly meant. A few minutes later they pulled into a truck stop for lunch and on the way out Kelly had bought the CD for him. Kris Kristofferson: Super Hits.

“His voice sounds a bit weather worn, but I think this CD will tell you more about yourself, about me and about the two of us than any other I can think of right now. He’s been where we’ve been Todd, and he tells the story better than we could ourselves.”

Todd went to slip it in, but Kelly stayed his hand.

“Listen to it first when you aren’t driving and when you are alone. Some of the songs on this album hit too close to home for me to be sitting next to you when you hear them. Just know that I think you’re the Pilgrim.”

Kelly had then reached into the console and slipped Bob Seger’s Greatest Hits into the CD player and they both continued the drive down singing along to “Old Time Rock and Roll.”

~~~~~ // ~~~~~

“Todd, wake up. Breakfast is ready.” Laura shook him gently by the shoulder.

“I’m sorry Laura,” he said. “I didn’t mean to fall asleep.”

Laura just pressed a finger to his lips. “Don’t worry about it. I would have loved to watch you sleep but my feeble attempts at cooking might just taste a bit better if still warm.” She laughed.

“By the way, did you know you sing in your sleep?”

Todd gave her a skeptical look. “I was singing?”

Laura laughed. "Well maybe not exactly singing, but you were definitely humming out a tune... I think its called 'Why Me Lord.'"

Todd looked stunned. It was one of the songs from the Kristofferson CD Kelly had given him.

"Well," he said finally, "I guess that's how lucky I feel having found you in my life."

Laura's eyes misted at the compliment. She led him to the kitchen where she had prepared French toast along with a plate of fried eggs, crisp bacon and hash browns, fresh perked coffee and a large glass of orange juice.

Todd's eyes widened at the sight. "Wow," he said as he took his seat. "I'm overwhelmed Laura. Who would think that someone as good looking as you could cook as well?"

Laura punched him playfully in the shoulder.

"Really," he said. "I didn't even know I had the makings for all of this here."

"Didn't you shop for it?" Laura asked.

Todd blushed sheepishly. "Actually, Kelly usually keeps my cupboards filled. I never used to eat at home. Which reminds me..." He got back up and grabbed his package of prepared vitamins and his container of pre-mixed health juice.

Laura looked at him and the prepared packages in the fridge. "Let me guess," she said smiling. "Kelly also prepares these for you."

"I guess I never learned to take care of myself properly," he said.

She patted him on the shoulder and smiled. "Kelly must be quite a cook herself to keep your cupboards filled with what I found."

Todd dug into the stack of French toast and between his sighs of pleasure he said, "She is, but she doesn't get much time to do it. And she never does it for herself." He leaned over and kissed Laura's nose, "and I've never seen her tinkle either!"

"Will you please stop worrying about me being jealous," Laura said. "Really, I like Kelly." A small blush came to her cheeks. "She's a big part of your life, I can see that. She said to me that she was happy for both of us and I believe her. I think she and I could become great friends. Now tell me what those pills were and what was in that thick brown drink."

Todd laughed. "I have no idea," he admitted. "I trust her judgment, and can swear to the positive results it's brought to my life, but I have no idea what it is. I figured I was smart knowing the difference between mineral water and spring water," he said laughing. "By the way, did I tell you that you are a fantastic cook?" he said as he polished off the bacon.

"You did just by the way you tackled your breakfast," she replied smiling.

Todd insisted she sit and relax while he washed up the dishes. "At least I have this part down to an acceptable level," he said laughing. "But you barely ate anything yourself. Don't you like your own cooking?"

"That's the problem," she said. "I like it too much, but a girl has to watch her figure you know! I usually just have a glass of juice and a grapefruit in the morning. Indulging myself in French toast is definitely not something I would do on a regular basis."

Todd looked at her seriously for a minute. "You know Laura, I do believe you and Kelly will get along fabulously."

Laura thought hard and long before she answered.

"Todd," she said. "What if it's me that strays?"

He looked at her quizzically.

"I'm not saying that I plan to, but I want to be honest with you. When Kelly and I were taking our shower yesterday..." she started to blush deeper.

Todd sat down and took her hands in his. "Yes my love?"

Laura had trouble meeting his eyes. "I can't really explain it. I've never been with a woman before, but yesterday, I got really turned on by Kelly."

Todd kissed her hands. Sucking each finger gently before opening her hands and kissing her palms.

"Laura," He said, "I do really love you, but that doesn't mean I'm putting chains on you. I told you that I couldn't promise anything more than my love for you. Why would I expect anything different from you? Life has a nasty habit of throwing us curve balls when we're all set for straight pitches. Love is the one thing we can enjoy. Forget about the morality police and live and love for the day. If something does come from this, my love for you will not change. Would you love me any less if you found happiness with Kelly?"

"No, of course not," Laura said suddenly, and then understanding filled her eyes. "I've never met anyone like you or Kelly before," she said. "I hope I don't turn out to be a disappointment to you."

"Never my love," Todd said. "You've already captured my heart. Now how about joining me for an episode of Enterprise while we let our breakfast settle?"

"Okay," Laura said brightly, "But only if you tell me which cast member you most lust after! I want to know all your fantasies!"

"Hmmm" said Todd. "The males don't do anything for me, so I guess it comes down to T'Pol or Hoshi."

As they settled down in front of the TV to watch a taped episode, Laura laid her head in Todd's lap. "I'll be your Peter meter," she said jokingly. "You'll have to be honest cause I'll be able to feel if you get hard."

"Okay," he relented. "I'd have to go with Hoshi. She's more sensual than T'Pol and there's always that oriental mystique."

Laura sighed and closed her eyes, listening to the show. She had seen this episode a few times and simply wanted to enjoy cuddling next to the man she loved.

~~~~~ // ~~~~~

Laura jumped up with a start. She had dozed off from the combination of the physical activities and the large breakfast but a dream had awakened her. She realized she had fallen asleep, but was left with an unsettling feeling. She sat up and turned to Todd with concern on her face.

"Todd, you have to call Kelly."

At his confused look she explained she was concerned about Kelly. "It's hard to explain Todd," she said, "but I have this feeling..."

"Feeling?" he asked.

"I know. It sounds weird, but I get these... call them what you will, but I have a feeling that something is wrong. It just came over me."

Todd had seen too many 'coincidences' over the years to ignore intuition and reached to pick up the cordless phone. Hoping he wouldn't be disturbing Kelly and thinking Tony might still be there, he hesitated. Still, worry started to creep in so he picked up the phone and then jumped as it rang in his hand. Somehow, he almost wasn't surprised when the caller display revealed it was Kelly's number.

"Hello?" he said cautiously.

"Mr. Todd?" asked the voice on the other end of the line.

Todd recognized the voice of Gloria.

"What's wrong Gloria? What's happened? I was just about to call Kelly."

"You better come down right now Mr. Todd. Something's wrong with Miss Kelly. She done locked herself in her room and I can hear her crying," Gloria said.

"I'll be there in a few minutes Gloria," he said. Hanging up the phone he turned to Laura and said, "Your feeling was right. Something is wrong and I have to get over there."

"Let me come with you Todd," Laura said. "I might be able to help."

Todd just nodded and they quickly got dressed. Taking Laura's car was handier and she drove as Todd gave directions. They made it to Kelly's in minutes.

As she parked the car Todd turned in his seat and asked, "How did you know?"

Laura looked at Todd for a minute and said, "Don't get spooked okay? I get these feelings once in a while. Usually when I'm sleeping and just at that state before I hit REM sleep. Usually about someone I have on my mind. It's not a big thing and I'm certainly no Miss Cleo."

As they got out of the car Todd said, "Okay. I guess I understand. It must be what they call women's intuition cause Kelly does that to me sometimes as well."

Laura breathed a silent sigh of relief. It was something she didn't like to talk about. She didn't understand it, but on those occasions when it did happen, she was invariably right.

Gloria had left the door open and as they entered she started explaining how she was on the way to get an ice cream when she felt the urge to stop at Kelly's. Todd rolled his eyes as he turned and looked at Laura.

"It must be a woman thing," he mumbled.

Todd managed to calm Gloria down, and noticed that Laura had instinctively found Kelly's bedroom and was talking through the door.

"Kelly?" she said. "I need to talk to you. I've got a problem."

Todd quietly made his way to stand beside Laura. Between soft sobs he heard Kelly ask, "Can it wait Laura? I'm not feeling so good right now."

Laura raised her finger to Todd's lips.

"Actually Kelly, it's rather important and I need your help."

Laura seemed to know that Kelly would put her own problems on hold if someone else was in pain.

Kelly really wanted someone to talk to, but realized that Todd was probably with Laura and she didn't want him to know what had happened the night before. Todd might blow up and go looking for Tony. And Kelly could never discuss this part of her life with Gloria as close as they were.

Kelly was terrified she was going to lose her mind. Dabbing at her tears she finally said, "If it's really important, I guess we can talk, but I don't want Todd or Gloria to see me in this condition. Tell them I'm okay and let them go home, and then we can talk."

Laura smiled. She had guessed right about Kelly and said in a soothing voice, "Just give me a minute then and I'll tell everyone you're okay and let them go home. I really appreciate this Kelly."

Taking Todd back to where Gloria was waiting, she explained to them that Kelly would be okay now. She would stay with Kelly until she felt better and call Todd later. "Take my car back," she said. "If I need a ride back, I'll give you a call."

Gloria looked at Laura closely, finally nodding her head. "She is right Mr. Todd. Miss Kelly needs a sister to talk with, not a friend." Giving Laura a nod she said, "you take good care of my girl now." With that she headed out the door.

At the door Todd looked intently at Laura. He was genuinely concerned for his friend.

"It's not a problem Todd," said Laura. "Trust me. She's in pain and she doesn't want you to see her like this."

"Okay, but I'll keep the phone close at hand. Call me if you need help or when she's feeling better."

Laura kissed him and said, "You really do love her don't you?"

Todd looked away but Laura pulled his chin back so he had to look her in the eyes. "I guess I do. I just never realized how much, and I'm not sure in what way. She's saved me from myself and she's my best friend."

Laura just smiled at him and said, "It's okay Todd. It is possible to love more than one person, and you give what you can. Now be a sweetheart and go home. I promise I'll call you as soon as she's feeling better."

Todd kissed her once more with love before slipping out the door. Laura locked the door and went to Kelly.

~~~~~ // ~~~~~

When Kelly heard the car pull out of her driveway she slipped a t-shirt and a pair of boxers on and unlocked the bedroom door.

Crawling back on her bed she lit a cigarette and tried to compose herself.

Knocking softly Laura walked in. She looked at Kelly. Puffy eyes, scraggly hair and a red nose looked back at her.

Laura moved onto the bed facing Kelly. She nodded to Kelly's smokes and asked, "Mind if I have one?"

Kelly passed the pack of her Canadian Cameo's and her lighter, then placed the ashtray between them and shifted to sit cross-legged to face Laura.

Laura said "Thanks" and lit one up, placing the pack between them before shifting herself to mirror Kelly's position.

For a good five minutes neither spoke, just sitting silently looking at each other.

"Rough night?" Laura finally ventured.

Kelly snorted. "Yeah," she said, "the worst."

"Todd worries about you," said Laura.

Kelly looked away.

“You know both of you do that when you don’t want talk about something that concerns the other,” Laura said.

With an exasperated sigh Kelly said, “I thought you had a problem.”

“I do,” said Laura, “It’s you.”

Kelly’s head snapped up like she had been slapped. “How in the hell can I be your problem? We only met yesterday. You don’t know me well enough to hate me yet.” And with that said the tears started to flow freely.

Laura carefully removed the lit cigarette from Kelly’s fingers and stubbed both out, moving the ashtray to the nightstand and then slid up to sit beside Kelly pulling Kelly’s head into her own shoulder. She let Kelly cry for a long time, softly patting her head and rubbing her back until finally the sobs started to break into gulps.

Looking around the headboard she found a box of tissues and pulled a handful out which she slipped in between their bodies to wipe at Kelly’s eyes and nose.

“I don’t hate you Kelly,” Laura said softly. “How could I, or anybody else, hate somebody like you?”

Kelly blew her nose loudly then looked Laura in the eyes.

“How fucked up can my life be when someone I thought was a friend runs down everything I have ever accomplished and then treats me like a street corner prostitute?” Kelly sobbed out.

“Do you feel humiliated?” Laura asked.

Kelly looked into Laura’s eyes. “Yeah,” she said finally. “I was humiliated.”

“And that’s why you didn’t want Todd to see you like this. Even though he loves you.”

“You’ve got that wrong Laura. We’re just best friends.”

“Isn’t this something you would want to share with your best friend?” Laura asked. “No, the reason you didn’t want Todd to see you like this is because you love him and he loves you, and you didn’t want him to see you in this pain. Especially over another man.”

“You don’t understand...” Kelly started to say, but Laura placed a finger on Kelly’s mouth.

“What I don’t understand is how you two can keep on fooling yourselves about how you feel for each other.”

“Nothing ruins a friendship faster than sex,” Kelly said.

“Is that what happened last night?” Laura asked.

“No,” Kelly spit out. “Tony was a self centered egotistical prick before. But the first time we had been intimate I was a lot younger and I didn’t realize then just how big a prick he was.”

“So what about the guy you broke up with the night before?” Laura asked.

“Mark?” Kelly laughed. “He wanted to change me into something like a Rolex he could wear on his wrist. Another trophy to add to his collection and to impress his friends.”

“I see,” said Laura. “So Todd must really have something wrong with him for you not to want to share his love as well as his friendship.”

“No ... that’s not it at all!” Kelly said. “I can’t take a chance on ruining what we have.”

“So you think if you admit to him that you love him it will ruin your friendship?”

“I don’t want him to feel committed to me,” Kelly finally whispered.

“From what I’ve seen so far, you two are already pretty committed,” said Laura. “You have a business together that looks pretty good, you pick up his groceries and lay out his vitamins, hell, you do more for him than most wives do for their husbands.”

Kelly laughed for the first time.

“I guess it does look like we’re an old married couple doesn’t it? But doesn’t that bother you? I mean, aren’t you interested in a long term relationship with him?”

Laura got up and kissed Kelly on the head. “Yes I am, and I’ve already told him how much I love him, but don’t confuse love with sex. Sex with love is fantastic, without love it’s just filling a primal need.”

Kelly nodded her head. She realized how true those words were.

“But I’m no hopeless romantic,” said Laura. “I’ll be with Todd as long as he loves me and wants me around, but I haven’t put a ring through his nose or a leash around his neck. I’d be pretty naive to think I could have all of his affection and attention. We’ve already discussed this and it’s a non-issue. Love is something you don’t measure or dole out in portions. It’s totally without limits. Now let’s get you fixed up.” Pulling Kelly by the arm she got her off the bed and seated in front of the makeup mirror.

“Do you have cucumber in the fridge?” Laura asked. “We have to get that puffiness around your eyes down.”

“Actually I do have cucumbers in the fridge,” Kelly said, “but I have something that works better.” Pulling open one of the drawers she brought out a jar of ‘Dead Sea’ facial mud. “My emergency repair kit” Kelly laughed.

“Let me put it on for you,” Laura said, a warm stirring filling her.

~~~~~ //

An hour later Kelly's mudpack had dried completely. She had her eyes shut and could barely move her lips, but was content to let Laura pamper her. While the mud was drying Laura had called her mother and explained she was going to be spending the night at a new friend's house. Her mother, glad to see Laura happy again didn't question who the friend was. Laura prepared a large pitcher of fresh fruit juices and with a straw helped Kelly to take sips from the glass. Kelly was totally relaxed and before the mud set completely asked Laura how she knew about the humiliation she had experienced the night before.

"I was 15 and I fell in love with the high school's football hero. I was so happy he even paid attention to me that I was sure this was the stuff of fairy tales and we would live happily ever after," Laura explained.

She had surrendered her virginity to the 17 year old that, according to all the girls in school, was the dream catch.

"I was an advanced student and getting good grades when I met him, and he was a late starter. The more involved we got the more time I spent doing his homework and less time on my own. He would call and I would jump to be with him. We were a steady item until last year when he was offered a football scholarship to some college in Michigan. I was sure we would go there together, but after he received his confirmation, he told me that we had rushed into our relationship too soon and should start dating other people. By that time my grades had slipped so I was barely passing having spent all my time on his homework. I realized I had been a convenient tool for him to advance his career hopes and my family couldn't afford to pay for my tuition at any school. I started working full time this summer hoping to be able to save enough that maybe next year I could apply to a local school."

Laura took a break in her story to fetch a basin of warm water and a washcloth. As she carefully moistened the mud and wiped Kelly's face clean, she continued.

"I was hurt and humiliated," she said. "My folks were disappointed and I've been trying to get my life back on course ever since. I've been doing some correspondence courses to bring my grades up to match my SAT's, but it's slow going. I was all set to give all males a wide berth and then a friend arranged for me to have a portrait done by Todd to cheer me up. As you noticed yesterday, I have given up on my vow of celibacy and I haven't felt so positive about myself in years. I realize now that my former fiancé was a user, so yes, I think I know what it feels like to be totally humiliated."

Kelly's heart went out to Laura.

"Now then," said Laura, "time to take care of your hair. I think you are due for a long warm soak in a tub. You do have one right?"

Kelly laughed. "Yes, I do, but how about we have something to eat before that?"

Laura felt her stomach answer for her and said, “that sounds great, but you have a really good friend who is probably on the verge of a nervous breakdown if you don’t call him and let him know you are okay.”

Kelly nodded silently.

“And I want you to tell him just how you feel about him,” Laura added.

“No,” Kelly said. “I’m swearing off sex until I get my head on straight.”

“Jesus Kelly,” Laura said with a bit of frustration in her voice, “I didn’t say you should offer to jump into the sack with him. Obviously you have some issues to work out. I just want you to admit your feelings for him and let him know you are okay.”

Reluctantly Kelly picked up the phone and dialed Todd’s number.

The phone was answered on the first ring.

~~~~~ // ~~~~~

There was a hesitant “Hello” from Todd as he answered the phone.

“Hi Todd, it’s me.” Kelly said. “I’m sorry I made you worry about me.”

“You didn’t make me worry Kell,” said Todd. “I worry about you all on my own.”

Todd’s last remark caught Kelly off guard.

“Why do you worry about me Todd?” she asked.

“I know you Kell, you put up a brave front and you act like you know exactly what you’re doing, and that you’re in charge, but I know you better than anyone, and I think you’d like to let go once in a while and let somebody else take charge. The only problem is, you’ve been going to all the wrong guys for it. You’ve been on your own for a long time kiddo, and you and me are the only family either of us has. That’s why I worry about you. It eats me up when I see you hurt.”

“But...in all these years, you never made a single move towards me,” she said.

“That stupid rule you always spout off about not fooling around with models.”

“Jesus Kelly,” Todd sighed. “There’s no rule. I just said that cause I didn’t want to hurt you. You’re my best friend and I love you, but I didn’t want to be another disappointment to you where sex is concerned. I wouldn’t jeopardize our relationship over something like that. Every time you broke up with another guy you’ve been hurt and angry. I didn’t want to be one of those guys.”

“Oh Todd. I do love you, but you have a wonderful new girlfriend now, and I won’t get in the way of your happiness. I just wanted you to know that I love you. I’ll see you at work tomorrow okay?”

Laura took the phone from Kelly’s hand and took over the conversation.

“She doesn’t understand does she?” Todd asked Laura.

“No, not yet,” said Laura, “but I think the time is close. Would you be awfully disappointed if I didn’t come back to the studio tonight?”

“Of course,” said Todd, “But a girl’s gotta do what a girl’s gotta do, and I love you all the more for it. Do you want me to drop your car off or will you come in with Kelly tomorrow?”

Laura looked at Kelly and asked, “Would you mind if I spent the night with you?”

Kelly looked at Laura with curious eyes. “No, I wouldn’t mind, I just thought you said that to your mother so you could spend another night with Todd.”

Laura laughed. “No, I don’t need permission from my mother to stay out for the night, I just call her so she won’t worry.” Turning back to the phone she said to Todd, “I’ll ride in with Kelly tomorrow. Have a good evening sweetheart. Try and dream of me.”

“I love you,” said Todd.

Laura hung up the phone.

“Okay, that’s all taken care of, now let’s talk about food!” Laura said smiling. “What do you feel like having? I’m not Martha Stewart but I can fix us something.”

Kelly started laughing, and seeing Laura’s surprised look laughed even harder. Finally bringing herself under control she said, “I’m sorry Laura. I wasn’t laughing at you. But have you ever heard of IMClone?” and promptly started laughing again.

~~~~~ // ~~~~~

Kelly insisted on doing the cooking but didn’t object when Laura jumped in to help prepare the grilled chicken over a garden salad. While the two girls cut and sliced vegetables for the salad, Kelly told Laura the story of Tony’s recent stock market misadventures. While Laura knew nothing of the stock market, she could appreciate the irony of Kelly’s humor.

“I sure can use the roughage,” Laura said as she dug in for a second helping of salad. “I’ve had nothing but takeout for the last two nights and then I made things worse this morning by making breakfast for Todd and ended up eating way too many carbs.”

Kelly looked at Laura and asked, “And Todd didn’t offer you a container of his go-juice?”

“Is that the brown stuff in the little bottles?” Laura asked.

“That’s the stuff.”

“I think he might have been afraid to give it to me,” Laura laughed. “I asked him about all those pills he took and the drink and he said he didn’t have a clue what it was.”

“That man needs to learn how to take care of himself,” Kelly said as she got up and pulled a container of the same out of her fridge. “Here you go Laura, this will help clear you up and out, but for the best results you should have it everyday. Which reminds me, I haven’t had my own vitamins today.”

Kelly popped open her large vitamin bottles and took out double doses. As she handed Laura half of the pills, she noticed Laura looking curiously at the small bottle. Kelly pulled one out for herself and said, “be sure to shake it well Laura, and don’t sip it. It’s four ounces of prune juice with two tablespoons of ground soy lecithin and two of milled flax seed. What I do is take the pills and swallow the juice to chase them down. The pills are all natural and you don’t have to worry about reactions to any of them.”

She showed Laura the way to do it.

After Laura had swallowed all of the pills and emptied the juice bottle she said, “That wasn’t so bad.”

Kelly laughed. “I’ll have to set you up on a regular regimen of these if you want to see some really amazing results. If you want, we’ll mix up enough tonight so that we can stock Todd’s fridge for you. I’m assuming that you will be spending a lot of time there.”

“As much time as I can,” Laura said, “but I still have to go to work through the week if I hope to get back to school.”

They had washed the dishes and were sitting at the table having a leisurely smoke and a glass of wine.

“Do you want to go to school for the sake of going Laura, or do you want to earn a degree?”

“Is there a difference?” Laura asked.

“A big difference,” Kelly said. “I earned my bachelor’s in fine arts while I was on the road modeling. It’s called ‘distant learning,’ or at least it was when I did it. Some friends we made recently, they are way ahead of any kids their age because they didn’t stop studying for the summer and are doing it the same way. It’s a lot faster as well because you can move at your own pace, and if you have the ambition you can really move ahead because you aren’t slowed down by the class speed.”

Laura nodded and then finally said, “I’ll have to save a bit more first I think, but I will definitely look into it. Thanks for the tip.”

Kelly grasped Laura’s hands. “Please tell me you’re going to give modeling a chance.”

“Yeah, well both you and Todd talked about it, but I don’t want to be a charity case simply because I’m sleeping with Todd.”

“Oh my,” said Kelly. “Who’s the one with a self esteem problem now?”

Laura laughed a little at that. “Irony isn’t it? All my life I had wanted to get a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology so I could help other people. But then a jock suckered me in, and now I dish out fast food at Arby’s. I was devastated Kelly. Because he was a late starter and a slow learner, his classes were caught up in no time with me doing his homework and assignments and he had enough credits to graduate in January. Meanwhile, I didn’t get mine done because he was busy doing me. Three days ago I would have thought a job offer as a model was a cruel joke, but I’ve seen the prints of what I look like ‘purtied up.’”

“Well Laura, this isn’t a cruel joke, and it’s not charity either. You get to earn your own way, and if you play by the rules, you won’t get hurt.”

“Rules?” Laura asked.

“Yep,” said Kelly leaning back. “This is a job and we have specific rules for all our models. They’re not too hard to follow. You never allow yourself alone in a situation with just the photographer on a paid shoot. If he doesn’t have an assistant there, you walk out. You never do your own make-up, and if the person taking care of your hair and make-up isn’t doing a good job of it, you walk out, because you also represent us. The client always pays for the travel and if you are given first class, I don’t ever want to hear that you cashed it in and took coach instead. You only work overtime if approved by our company via fax so we can make sure that you get paid properly for it, and you never, ever model anything not specified in the contract. No uppers, downers or diet pills. No speed, crack or coke in your private life and you never drink on the job. No tattoos or body piercing either as long as you are under contract with us. Sound too harsh?”

Laura looked at Kelly with her mouth hanging open. The girl who had a few hours before been in so much pain had just turned into the ultimate business woman.

“And finally, if another agency approaches you, you talk to us first. That’s just common courtesy. I think that just about covers all of it. Any questions?”

Laura just stared at Kelly for a few minutes.

“Umm... why the rule about changing tickets on a plane?” Laura finally managed to get out.

Kelly laughed and returned to her normal self. “Because you are worth it. Any of our models who travel, we insist they get treated as special people. No cheap motels either. We don’t want you to think less of yourself than what we think you are worth.”

“Ah, okay, but ... umm ... what about a little grass?” she finally asked.

“Not on the job,” Kelly said smiling.

“Wow. I never realized...”

“That it’s a real job?” Kelly finished for her. “It is but the pay off is pretty good. I’ve seen your body, and I’m quite sure that Todd captured your best points and features even though you have a lot of them. I don’t think you’re a prude, but one of our clients is adding lingerie to his catalog line. Nothing cheesy and nothing important will be exposed and both Todd and I know the photographer and the make-up people. If you’re interested I’ll give him a call. I’m quite sure I could arrange for a five day session, four hours a day at...” Kelly thought carefully. “I’d have to check with Todd and see the photos but I think I could easily get you three fifty to four fifty per hour.”

“Four and a half bucks an hour?” Laura exclaimed. “I thought you said a person could make a reasonable living at this.”

Kelly laughed out loud which was unfortunate, as she had just taken a sip of wine that sprayed out all over Laura.

“Oh God, I’m so sorry Laura,” Kelly said still laughing as she reached for the paper towels and tried to dab off the wine from Laura’s t-shirt. “I meant four hundred and fifty dollars an hour.”

Laura blushed feeling foolish.

Kelly saw the blush and reached her arms around Laura hugging her from behind.

“Now I think we both need a bath!”

~~~~~ // ~~~~~

Kelly had run the tub and filled it with naturally scented bubbles. She had turned the stereo on low playing “Women of Soul” and lit a few candles. Both girls had climbed into the Jacuzzi, with Laura complaining that she was supposed to be pampering Kelly. They sat facing each other letting the jets wash their cares away.

“Just supposing,” Kelly said. “What if Todd and I did consummate our relationship. How would you feel?”

“Hmm” said Laura. “It was only yesterday when I asked you if I was trespassing on your territory. What was it you said to me?”

Kelly laughed. “Yes, but that was different. Todd and I didn’t have a relationship.”

“Excuse me?” Laura said. “It seems to me you have a much stronger and longer relationship than I have with him.”

“Maybe,” said Kelly, “but we’ve never been intimate. What would you say if you found Todd and me getting it on?”

Laura leaned back and thought carefully.

“Well,” she finally said blushing, “If I happened to walk in, I’d probably ask if you would mind if I joined in.”

It was Kelly’s turn to blush. “It wouldn’t bother you?”

“Kelly, I told you that Todd and I have already discussed this. He’s as stubborn as you about your relationship, but if he’s happy, then I am happy for him. I only hope that he will still have some room in his life for me.”

“Hmm,” was all that Kelly could say. She remembered the special relationship between Sherri, Brenda and Sara with James when she had seen them at Regan’s. She wondered if she could handle an open loving relationship like they had. And then there was the question of her feelings towards Laura. Her thoughts were soon interrupted by Laura who was insisting Kelly turn around. Kelly did and felt the sea sponge washing her back.

“Hmm, that feels so good,” she said. “It’s the one spot I can never reach.”

“I know exactly what you mean,” replied Laura.

Kelly allowed Laura to scrub her back and sides and then turned again letting Laura do her legs and her chest. She watched, fascinated, as her nipples grew under Laura’s ministrations. Laura finally beckoned Kelly to stand and she carefully washed between her legs, both front and back with a loving touch.

Not willing to just be a receiver, when Laura finally stopped the scrubbing Kelly did the same for Laura. The bath water had cooled a bit but the body temperature of both girls was hotter than before. Both were novices at instigating love with another woman so finally with more than a bit of sexual tension and frustration, they allowed the water to drain from the tub and stood under the showerhead washing each other’s hair. Eventually, reluctantly they got out of the tub and towel dried each other, then Kelly announced she had a tub of raspberry sherbet in the freezer, and wrapped just in their towels they each got a bowl and headed for the living room to watch a repeat of “Six Feet Under.”

Finishing their desert and with the inevitable bottle of mineral water, Kelly decided to give Laura a pedicure and paint her toenails. She fetched an old sheet from the closet and spread it on the sofa. Laura turned sideways and laid back as Kelly turned to face her, her foot in Kelly’s lap, knee raised, allowing Kelly an unobstructed view of Laura’s pussy. Kelly took great care and time cutting and buffing Laura’s toenails before finally putting on a coat of very light pink nail conditioner. Kelly’s towel had loosened with her movements and had dropped to her waist exposing Laura to a visual feast of her breasts. The talk had become very quiet and limited, both girls lost in thoughts of their own.

Laura offered to do Kelly's feet but Kelly had just had hers done earlier in the week, though she did accept Laura's second offer of a foot massage. Dusk had descended and with another glass of wine the two girls made small sporadic talk. Kelly was giving Laura advice on losing the razor and doing her legs, groin and underarms with wax strips.

"It will last much longer and you don't get the stubble two days later," Kelly said. "Maybe later this week I can help you with it since it will be your first time. The first time is the hardest, and you need to put a balm on the skin afterwards to stop you looking like a boiled lobster."

After putting away the polish, files and buffing pads, Kelly returned to sit beside Laura on the sofa. It was getting late, but not late enough to head to bed so Kelly switched to a Blue Movie station.

Fate was dealing the cards tonight, and instead of the cheesy, straight to video, adult flick they had expected to see, the Canadian film "Better Than Chocolate" started, featuring Christina Cox and Karyn Dwyer. A life affirming story about two young lesbians who fall in love.

"I can change to something else if you like," Kelly offered.

"No, that's okay," said Laura. "This looks like a good movie."

The towels the girls had worn earlier had been discarded. Both had seen and been seen nude by the other quite a few times in the past two days. With a bowl of fresh strawberries between them and a thick rich cream for dipping the two girls put their feet up and watched the plot unfold.

About an hour into the movie, Laura retrieved her towel and laid it across her lap. She was incredibly horny. Catching the movement out of the corner of her eye Kelly said the light was bothering her eyes a bit and did Laura mind if she turned off the overhead light, leaving only a table lamp on for illumination.

Laura said she didn't mind at all and a few minutes later slipped her hand under the towel and tried to manipulate her clit without being noticed.

Kelly was as aroused by Laura's actions as she was by the movie and shortly placed her own towel over her lap.

"It's getting to you too?" asked Laura.

Kelly smiled.

Within minutes the pretense was dropped and both girls were shyly masturbating under their towels. Laura was the first to gasp out her climax setting Kelly off on her own. A few minutes of heavy breathing and then a few more as they exchanged embarrassed glances.

“Oh what the hell” said Kelly, “We’re both adults, let’s just admit that the movie was a terrific turn on.”

“Maybe not just the movie?” Laura replied shyly.

Kelly looked at Laura and finally nodded. “Probably not.”

As the credits rolled on the screen, Kelly said, “Well at least we know in the movies there is still a happy ending to be found.”

“I think in real life there are happy endings as well Kelly, but too often we are afraid of reality taking the pleasure out of it.”

Kelly turned the television off and asked Laura if she wanted to spend the night in the guest room.

Laura blushed that beautiful blush again and said, “If you don’t mind Kelly, I’d really prefer to sleep with you. Not that I would try anything,” she quickly added, “I’d just like to cuddle you and feel you next to me.”

Kelly stood up and extended her hand to Laura. “That’s fine with me,” she said with a smile.

Putting everything away and cleaning up the living room the two girls retired to the bedroom for the night. Both exuded a delicious aroma of sex, and as they climbed into bed, Laura kissed Kelly on the lips and said “Good Night Kelly. Thanks for sharing with me.”

Kelly’s eyes misted as she kissed Laura back and said, “It’s me who should be thanking you. This has been one of the best nights I’ve had in a long time.”

As Kelly turned on her side, Laura snuggled up as close as she could till they fit together like two spoons in a drawer. Laura found the courage to reach around and grasp Kelly’s breast in her hand and hearing the contented sigh from Kelly, quickly fell asleep.

***To be continued...***