

Kelly

(Inspired by Mike C, based on characters in his novel: “James”
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Chapter 25

The light outside the window and the feel of the unfamiliar bed woke Vanetta early. She lay there for a few minutes, looking at her lover sleeping beside her and luxuriating in the sensation of being able to wake beside him.

She carefully extricated herself from under his arm and padded to the bathroom where she had a quick shower and brushed her teeth, then feeling naughty, slipped on one of Todd’s Trek Ts before bounding down the stairs. Firing up her computer, she grabbed her list of potential advertisers and sent three of the best pictures of Kelly that Todd had scanned the day before.

Deciding on a magazine was a bit harder. Having decided to go with a lesser-known magazine cut the potential for model payment, but the upside was that advertising costs would be lower and with Kelly personally endorsing each product, this could be a big plus for the magazine. She finally sent copies of the pictures to the two magazines that showed the most potential: ‘Fit Pregnancy’ and ‘Mothering Magazine.’ Dangle the bait and see who nibbled first. As a teaser, she sent the pictures to Jorge as well. She was about to head back upstairs when the phone rang.

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Hanging up the phone, Vanetta wondered if she should call Ami with the news, then decided against it. The girls had probably adopted Kelly’s habit of sleeping in, and she didn’t want to wake them.

Back upstairs, she noticed Bobby’s early morning erection and decided to take advantage of the situation. Stripping off her t-shirt, she slid up the bed gently and engulfed his cock in one gulp, sucking with abandon and jubilation. Soon, they would be able to do this every day. The thought made Vanetta wet between her legs. Bobby started to buck back, his hips driving his raging hard-on into Vanetta’s willing mouth. His eyes were wide open as he reached his critical peak and with a loud groan, released a torrent of hot cum on to her eager tongue.

They sat together eating breakfast, both of them in the nude.

“I don’t understand, Netta,” Bobby said. “Generally I only see you naked after we’ve worked up to the point of love making. I love seeing you like this, but it’s so different.”

“Just roll with it, Bobby,” she replied. “This is natural, the way we were born. Don’t let other people’s sense of morality get you all tied up in knots.”

Robert laughed. “I doubt that will happen,” he said. “Around here, you see more skin than clothes. It’ll take some getting used to, though.”

“The human body is a beautiful thing,” said Vanetta. “Some people are so ashamed of their own bodies they try and impose their feelings of inferiority on you and try to write laws that will change your basic nature. Of course you’re right about seeing more of it around here than most places, but this studio isn’t a breeding ground for hypocrites. While you were sleeping, I sent dozens of pictures of Kelly off to various people in the media. Kelly really does set a good example and I’ve learned to relax because of it.”

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“I don’t feel right taking money from you, Kelly,” Cara was saying after breakfast. “I mean, I’d do it for free because you’re somebody I really like. You treat me like an adult and don’t pass judgment on me.”

Kelly smiled at her. The two had ended up outside so Kelly could enjoy a cigarette, while Laura was on the phone setting up what would be a private reunion performance of the Williams Sisters. Todd and Ami were, as usual, discussing cameras and lighting and the future of digital photography.

“But you provide a valuable service,” countered Kelly. “If I didn’t have you, I’d have to pay someone else. Believe it or not, but one day you’ll want your own place to live, and wouldn’t a nice bank account help that become a reality?”

Cara conceded the point but stuck to her guns on the fact Ami had earned her money doing something tangible.

Kelly laughed. “Ami was very lucky to have her first news shoot pay off. Did you see all of the other photographers that were there? It was luck that put her in the right spot at the right time. Pretty soon she’ll be relying on a regular paycheck from the studio for being Todd’s apprentice, if she wants to bank any money.”

“Wow. I never realized that growing up could be so complicated,” said Cara. “I think we’ve been sheltered for too long. Maybe sheltered isn’t the right word, but you know what I mean. We’ve been too focused on the gymnastics, and haven’t had to deal with the real world.”

“That’s okay, Honey,” said Kelly. “You’ve done a lot with your life already and you have a good head on your shoulders. If you had to face the world right after you finished High School, I could see where you might have a problem, but you’re going to University! You are going to become one of the best physiotherapists in the world! And when you turn 18, I *will* put you in touch with that place that will hire you in a flash as a masseuse. You’ll earn more money there, part time, than most people do after spending a lifetime in a career.”

“You really think so, Kelly?”

“Cara, with the strength and skill you have in your hands, I *know* so!”

“Thanks, Kelly,” Cara said, giving Kelly a kiss on her cheek.

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Kelly called Steve and set up an appointment for Wednesday. She told him of the contracts she needed written up, one for Robert, another for Vanetta. Though she disliked getting up so early in the morning, she made the appointment for before lunch so she would have plenty of time to get ready for the Williams family that night.

“Well,” Kelly said after she got off the phone, “the girls have an appointment with Joanne on Wednesday, and we have one with Steve at the same time,” she said to Todd and Laura. “Laura, can you take the girls?”

“Sure, I’d be glad to,” said Laura.

“Take the Tracker,” said Todd. “I’ll ride with Kelly.”

“I really should just give up my car,” said Laura. “I barely drive it anymore, and I know that Kat would get good use out of it. If I need to go anyplace, I can always borrow a car or hitch a ride with one of you, right?”

“Oh, by all means, Sweetheart,” said Kelly. “Go ahead and make your sister happy.”

“I’ll give her the keys and ownership tomorrow then,” said Laura.

“If the girls are going to be all buffed and shined tomorrow,” Todd said, “maybe I should start doing a dry run with them on their idea of poses today. Get it all done by the weekend.”

“That sounds like a plan to me,” said Kelly. “But on Thursday, Laura and I are going to treat ourselves to a day at the club. We’ll probably eat there as well. Think you can handle those two by yourself for an afternoon?” Kelly asked with a smirk.

“I think I can manage,” said Todd. So Kelly dialed again and made an appointment at the club and arranged for Laura to have a follow up treatment with Mistress Helga.

“We’ll have to get Steve to draft up legal papers for our wedding in September as well,” said Todd.

“I want to see the expression on his face when he hears that,” said Kelly.

“Speaking of expressions,” said Todd. “Have you bothered to look yet at Rob’s salary request?”

“No,” said Kelly as she prepared to leave for the studio. “Think we should?” she asked with a smile.

Todd laughed. “Maybe we better.”

Kelly took the paper out of her purse and opened it on the table. Cara and Ami were still occupied in their bedroom, so only Laura and Todd got to read it with Kelly.

“Hmm... a 15% raise in the second year as well,” said Todd.

“Yes,” said Kelly, “but he gave us an option to renew for the second year so that if things fall over, we won’t have to pay him for it.”

“These business professionals,” Todd laughed. “Always looking for a profit. I guess it’s hard for him to understand we’re trying to give it away.”

“He’ll learn,” said Kelly, “though I notice he’s also allowed room for a third year renewal as well.”

“Ah, a glimmer of hope for him yet,” said Todd.

“He’s not asking for too much for the first year,” said Laura. “Forty-two five doesn’t seem like an executive’s salary to me.”

“It’s not,” said Kelly, “but this is what he wants, what he thinks he is worth and you heard how he feels about charity.”

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It had started off as such a peaceful morning for everyone, and then all hell broke loose. By the time Kelly, Todd, Laura, Ami and Cara arrived at the studio, Vanetta was jumping between phones. Robert was doing his best to help, but had limited knowledge of all the things the studio did.

Messages were stacking up on the desk in front of Vanetta. Robert was taking messages and writing down callbacks as fast as he could. Laura and Kelly took over, letting a relieved Bobby off the hook.

He walked over to Todd and said, "I'd have never thought this business could get so frantic."

"It has its own mood swings," said Todd. "Things will be quiet for weeks at a time, but when the tide turns, you need to paddle real fast."

"Well, I guess I better go to the office and give my notice, I suppose," said Robert. "I can give them the names of lots of good replacements, so I should be cleared out by the end of the week and I can start putting your plan to paper and start submitting it to the schools and teachers. I'll get my three musicians lined up and make arrangements to start practicing with Laura's sisters."

"That's fine, Rob," said Todd, "but you don't have to keep me informed of everything you're doing. This is your show now, Robert. The success will be your responsibility, and I can get back to doing what I do best."

Robert smiled a nervous smile.

"Don't worry so much, Rob," said Todd with a smile. "Things will work out. And if you really get stuck feel free to ask for help."

Robert snuck a kiss in with Vanetta and left.

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Cara and Ami worked out with Todd for an hour while Laura and Kelly and Vanetta kept the phone lines open. Most of the messages were from advertisers who had heard through the grapevine that Kelly was going to do a 16-month special. Vanetta grinned to herself. Good ol' Jorge! It looked as if he had done exactly what Vanetta suspected he would, and when the first magazine got the pictures and then a potential client had gotten them as well, it became a race. Everybody wanted a piece of the action.

Kelly had a good idea of what was going on, but decided that since she had allowed Vanetta to come up with a proposal, she was just going to play secretary on this one and kept taking messages, though she was secretly pleased at the names of some of the companies calling.

Laura was having a ball just helping. She enjoyed the animated conversations she overheard, watching Vanetta gesticulate as she dropped her proper English at times to deliver a verbal barrage in patois to some potential client.

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Seeing that Kelly and Laura were still busy on the phone, Todd asked Cara and Ami to help him pack up his personal stuff from the apartment.

“What about all the bedding?” asked Cara, looking through a closet.

“Leave it,” said Todd. “It won’t fit Kelly’s bed and besides, Kelly has more than enough.”

“Same with the towels and such?” asked Ami.

“Yep, we’ll just take my clothes and personal hygiene stuff. A couple of personal items that I’ve kept all these years and we’ll leave the rest.”

“Jesus, Todd,” said Cara after an hour. “We’re all done. I can’t believe you just packed up all your possessions in four boxes in an hour.”

“I dress simple, I live simple,” said Todd as if that should explain it all. “I spend most of my time downstairs in the studio anyway, or over at Kelly’s. My important stuff is either locked up, or still in storage from when I moved down here. Remember that for years I lived on the road just like Kelly. It’s hard to accumulate a lot of possessions when you’re always moving to another location.”

“And you’re just going to leave your TV and stereo?” asked Ami.

“Do you see any reason why we should have double of everything at Kelly’s?” he asked.

“No, I guess not,” said Ami. “You don’t even have a lot of movies or CDs.”

“I probably have more CDs in the truck and in the Hummer,” he said. “You’ll see that my DVD collection is mostly Star Trek. I did have it all on videotape, but DVDs are more compact. Now, let’s haul this stuff downstairs and we can get to work on some of those poses you were telling me about.”

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Some of the calls had been for Kelly and Todd, and Kelly dealt with those directly. One was from Rachel. She had the paperwork for the apartment block completed and Steve had approved it, and now it was just up to Kelly and Todd to stop at the bank and pay the overdue loan off. Kelly just called that one in. She knew the bank wanted to keep her money, and she could see no reason to take another unnecessary trip. Rachel would stop off later on in the afternoon to finalize the paperwork. From there, Steve could take care of the rest.

Taking a break, she asked Todd if he had any ideas about management of their new building.

“I’d like someone to live in, if we’re going to make it a seniors building,” said Todd.

“That’s what I was thinking as well,” said Kelly. “But we’ll need to interview people pretty soon so we can start renting the units out.”

“Why interview?” asked Todd. “Why don’t we keep it in the family?”

“Are you thinking of Meg and Harry?” Kelly asked.

“Yeah. I figure that Harry’s got over 20 years in and can start collecting his pension from the force, and he’d be handy for some of the minor maintenance stuff. Meg’s been working part time to help make ends meet, and before Laura moved in with us, they were struggling with a three bedroom house and four daughters.”

“*If* they go for it, it would be ideal,” said Kelly. “They’d have the three girls to help out, and I’m sure that they would enjoy the financial freedom. Everything I’ve seen says they are good people. Honest and hard working, and I especially like the idea that they’ve always given to the community.”

“So, should we ask them ourselves, or send a letter?”

“I think we better do this one ourselves, Todd,” said Kelly. She chuckled. “Whether they know it or not, these people are going to be our in-laws!”

Todd laughed and said he would bring it up on Wednesday night.

Kelly headed back to the phones and Todd joined Cara and Ami in the shipping bay.

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Ami and Cara had picked a few outfits each to show Todd how quick and easy it would be for them to change between poses, and were chalking up.

Todd loaded his Blad with high-speed film. These shots weren’t meant as ‘keepers’ but would show if there was any miscalculation in the lighting arrangement. It would be fun to develop the film afterwards with Ami, letting her see for herself how her plan had worked out.

Instead of using the springboard to mount, Ami had Cara give her a boost and soon, Ami was presenting Todd with exactly the poses she had promised. Her hair

tumbled down as she did a handstand on the top bar. Balancing herself she opened her legs, and Cara gave Todd a running commentary on when to shoot.

“When her toes are like totally stretched out, and her feet are in line with her legs, that’s what she would look like if she was in the middle of a full swing through,” said Cara. “It takes a few seconds longer to do it this way, but Ami’s got the strength to hold the pose.”

“Now, Todd!” said Cara, and Todd hit the shutter release on the Blad.

“Okay, Ami,” said Cara, “just a second longer. Turn and close your legs.”

Ami balanced herself on one hand as she pivoted on the bar, bringing her legs together and with supreme effort pushed herself up to change the muscle tone in her arms.

Todd realized what Ami was doing. If she held the pose without the push, it would look like she was doing very difficult push-ups, but by pushing away from the bar, in a still photo, a person would be hard pressed to prove she was not in the process of coming out of a spin.

Ami’s face showed grim determination and on the second push she heard the shutter click. She quickly relieved the pressure on her arms, allowed herself to roll forward and down till her hips were level with the bar. Then she spun and dropped to the mat below. Aside from a slight flush on her face, there was no sign of fatigue.

“That was great, Ami,” said Todd. “I just hope the rest of the poses won’t be that hard on you girls.”

“Hell,” said Cara, “The poses are nothing compared to doing a three minute routine where you have to keep moving all the time!”

Ami started to strip out of her suit. “I like these with the built in breast protectors,” she said. “The panty part is just like a bathing suit. These should sell really well.”

Todd looked at her nude body for a second. “If they sell well,” he said, “it will be because of what you and Cara do in them,” then he moved around to start snapping shots of Cara on the Balance Beam.

Cara had stopped in the middle of a parallel split, about 18 inches up, and Todd snapped one of her in that pose before she sank straight down. Her left foot was in front of her, toes pointed straight forward, while her right leg was behind her, foot flat to the beam. One pose while she was sitting up straight, and another as she brought her head down to her left knee. With her hair cascading around her face, she looked angelic, and

Todd was already seeing the final print in his mind as he decided to add some soft effects to the picture.

Todd continued to walk around the Balance Beam and Cara seemed to know just what would present the best angle for showing off the uniform. In one shot, she placed her hands between her legs and lifted herself off the bar, spreading her legs, and pointing them slightly forward. As Todd continued to move, so did Cara, finished the maneuver lifting her entire body off the beam balanced on just her hands, her body in line with the wood beneath her.

“That’s it, Cara,” said Todd. “Good enough for government work.”

Cara let out a sigh and lowered herself to the beam to catch her breath, her arms and legs dangling from the sides. Todd snapped a candid one of that.

Ami was all geared up and ready to tackle the vault and for the next two hours, the girls showed Todd all the possibilities for good shots.

Todd had shot off three cartridges - thirty-six shots - and told the girls to call it a day. He and Ami would process the film after lunch and they would review all of them together.

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While Ami and Cara went to shower, Todd put the camera away and dropped the exposed film in the darkroom, before finding out how Vanetta, Kelly, and Laura were coming along.

“Where’s Ami?” asked Kelly. “It’s been so hectic that a message Vanetta took this morning was at the bottom of the stack on my desk. Seems the DOD would like a few enlargements of the lifting of Mueller’s Wheel. She just grossed another grand out of her day at the marina!”

“Good for her,” said Todd. “You can tell her when she gets out of the shower. But, aren’t all payments going to the corporate account?”

“Yes they are,” said Vanetta. “If you like I can set up personal accounts for both the girls at the company’s bank. They have branches all over, so they can withdraw anywhere.”

“That would be good, Vanetta. We could drop in for them to sign the papers,” said Kelly, “and then they’ll have access to their money and you can start transferring over their money as it comes in,” said Kelly.

“What about Cara’s salary for taking care of you, Kelly?” asked Laura. “I think the company should pay her for that since you are going to be a working asset again.”

Kelly laughed. “No, I’ll just pay her from my own money,” she said.

“That’s not right, Kelly,” said Vanetta. “Laura’s right. Cara is providing a very valuable service. Not just to you personally, but to the company and the contract you’ll be signing.”

“Hey!” said Kelly. “I haven’t said yet that I’ll do it, I just said that I would look over any proposal you came up with.”

Vanetta started to laugh. “I’ve been watching you as these calls came in, Kelly. You like the idea of a long term commitment endorsing products that you really believe in.”

“Yes I do, Vanetta, but so far I haven’t seen enough to make it worthwhile,” said Kelly.

“But you forget that I’ve been working at this already,” said Vanetta. “I already have a lot of companies lined up, and it isn’t just you they are interested in either,” she said with a smirk.

“What do you mean, Netta?” asked Kelly.

“You’d be surprised at how many companies wanted in because Todd would be taking the pictures.”

It was Laura’s turn to laugh. “Always the bridesmaid, but never the bride, right, Honey?” she said giving Todd a poke in the ribs.

“Hey,” said Todd. “This was never about me. This was for Kelly and for the baby, you know.”

“Can’t be helped, Todd,” said Vanetta. “I saw an opportunity and I took it. As of now, you are both on the open market as talent, and I intend to get the most I can out of that for the company.”

Kelly wrapped her arm around Todd. “I think we’ve created a monster!” she said with a smile of affection for Vanetta. “How long before you have a proper proposal for me to consider, Boss?”

“I’ll have you signing the papers by Friday,” said Vanetta. “I know that you’re going to want to do this.”

“We’ll see,” said Kelly.

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After their shower, Cara and Ami joined Laura in the studio kitchen.

“I think I need some real protein,” said Ami.

Laura held back her wicked thoughts, though she couldn’t hide the smile from her lips.

“What’s so funny?” asked Ami.

“Nothing, really,” said Laura. “I was just thinking of how I get my protein right from the source.”

“Eww, gross,” said Ami, screwing up her face.

“You can’t knock what you haven’t tried,” said Laura.

“Thanks, but I think I’ll pass,” said Ami. “I’d rather have something chewable.”

Laura laughed out loud, her mind on the chewing she had done on Todd’s cock the night before. There was something positive in the air, she could sense it, could almost feel it in her bones. She just couldn’t put her finger on it yet so she busied herself grilling up some skinless chicken breasts while the girls made up a salad.

Kelly and Todd were in deep conversation at Todd’s workstation, leaving Vanetta free to start assembling her package deal for one of the magazines she was considering.

“How much should we pay the girls while they’re here?” asked Todd. “I’m really hoping they can get their parents to approve their staying here to finish off their last year of High School with Rob, so that they can concentrate on what they do best, and prepare for University.”

“Ami’s turned out to be everything you hoped for?” asked Kelly with a smile.

Todd smiled at her. His partner, his wife to be, and the mother of their baby growing inside her. “Yes, much more than I could have hoped for. She’s a natural, and one day she’ll be in more demand than me,” he said.

“Not for a few years,” said Kelly, “but she certainly does have the knack for it, and with you as her teacher, she won’t end up clawing her way to the top, she’ll be there by the time she’s ready to spread her wings.”

“But that doesn’t answer my question,” said Todd.

“Well, how about we start them off at two-fifty a week?” asked Kelly. “I think that’s fair. They have no rent or food expenses, and they don’t need to shop for clothes either. I think that’s a good wage for students, don’t you?”

Todd laughed. “I think that is a *very* good wage for anybody these days. We should get Vanetta to deposit their first month’s wages into the accounts she opens for them. And get her to deposit Ami’s pay for the sale of the Wheel photos at the same time. When we finish the shoot for CrossTrain, we’ll just tell them to check their accounts. I think they will be pleasantly surprised.”

“Maybe Ami would be surprised right now to know that she got a second sale off the pictures,” said Kelly.

“Oh, God. I think I’m having a senior moment,” said Todd. “I keep forgetting to tell her about that.”

“That makes two of us, Sweetheart,” said Kelly.

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Kelly had finished passing the information on to Vanetta about the regular pay for the girls, and the deposit information, and then they had joined the others for lunch.

Thick, bite size pieces of grilled chicken adorned the fresh salad. Laura had seasoned the chicken with garlic and curry with fresh chopped chives. Ami and Cara had chopped two stalks of Romaine lettuce and added a dozen cherry tomatoes cut in halves and half a seedless cucumber. For flavor they added olive oil and lemon grass, and Cara dumped in nearly a full box of garlic flavored whole-wheat croutons.

As they sat eating and drinking their bottled water, Todd mentioned to Ami about the second sale of her photographs, but she shrugged it off. Todd smiled. Ami was thinking about the next job already. The Wheel had been fun, but now it was behind her and she was looking for a fresh challenge. He looked forward to taking her to Brookhaven and really giving her a free hand to really experience all the different aspects of commercial photography.

After lunch, Cara made a pot of green tea while Ami washed up the dishes. Kelly sat back and had her second cigarette of the day.

“So what are we going to call the new building?” Todd asked her.

“If its okay with you, Sweetheart, I’d like to call it Muriel’s Place,” said Kelly.

“That sounds good to me. How about we get it designed in wrought iron and mounted high up on the front of the building?”

“Thanks, Todd,” Kelly said. He could be so sweet and supportive of her needs, she thought.

They were just finishing their tea when Rachel arrived. Laura volunteered to take Ami and Cara to the bank to activate their accounts, and Todd told her she should stop off and get a set of keys made for herself for the Tracker.

A loving kiss from Laura, and sweet cheek kisses from Ami and Cara and they were out the door.

Rachel’s visit was more a formality to get their signatures than anything else. Steve had already reviewed and initialed the paperwork and left stickers where they should sign. Todd told Rachel to register the building as “Muriel’s Place” and arranged for her to get someone to do the lettering and mounting of the sign.

Todd spent the next hour cleaning his camera, his feet propped up on his desk, while Kelly helped Vanetta enter all the regular data from the New York office. Laura and the girls were back by 2:30, and Todd and Ami headed for the darkroom. By 4:30 they were out again, Ami holding a stack of proof prints.

Everyone was impressed with the poses and agreed that you couldn’t tell it wasn’t part of a regular routine. Todd was very pleased. Friday he could get the CrossTrain job out of the way and get his bay freed up again, and then he’d be free to start the job at Brookhaven.

It had been a busy day at the studio, and Todd was all set to head back to Kelly’s when he remembered the van Robert had requested. He discussed it with Kelly and Laura, but they decided that Todd should pick out the van with Robert. Kelly and Laura convinced him to go with the name he had wanted and to have it painted on the side in bold letters.

Vanetta called Bobby and said Todd would pick him up, and then Todd called Eric, the owner of the GM dealership, and asked him to stick around a bit later than normal. Eric didn’t seem to mind at all.

Kelly, Laura, Ami, and Cara put their safety gear on, and wheeled their bikes out on the now deserted streets of the industrial park. Kelly had wanted to go blading, but realized that now she was pregnant and posing, she would have to be extra careful. Within minutes, they four of them were whizzing along the smooth paved streets. Ami’s eyes were still not trained enough as a photographer to notice another photographer taking their pictures as they pedaled away. No one noticed the driver of the gray Buick duck down in his seat as they turned the first corner.

Todd picked Robert up at the corner near the realty office and with friendly banter headed off to the dealership where Todd had bought both his Tracker and Hummer.

Eric came out to greet Todd personally, keys in hand. This GM dealership specialized in trucks and work vehicles. Eric pointed to the row of new vans that had arrived in the past month. Todd stopped for a moment, movement in the corner of his eye catching his attention. He turned his head to watch a dirty gray sedan cruise slowly by, but couldn't see the driver through the heavily tinted windows. Something about that car bothered him, but it slipped from his mind as he turned his attention back to Eric.

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“Fuck. Shoulda stayed close to the studio. With them other four bitches out of the way there’d only be that black cunt to deal with. Coulda worked something out. Fuckin’ bitch spent the night there with her boyfriend. The guy Todd Ayres picked up on his way to town. That nigger lover Robert Payne. Should knock him over the head and smack some sense into him. Polite folks know not to mix colors. Maybe when this job’s done I’ll teach the teacher a lesson he won’t forget!”

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By the time the driver of the gray Buick made it back to the industrial park, the girls were returning from their little evening spin. All of them were laughing and enjoying life.

The mysterious driver backed into the loading dock of a small metal stamping plant half a block away, but noticed one girl looking in his direction. His engine was off though, and his windows were tinted dark enough that he was sure she couldn't see him and she didn't look long. Ami turned her attention back to the others as they pushed their bikes into the studio's side door and into the storage area.

He waited until they were inside then slowly turned the key in the ignition. He had been out in the open a bit too much. Time to get another set of wheels and come back tomorrow. Maybe there wouldn't be so many people coming and going.

Vanetta was working at her desk, putting together what she felt was the cream of the advertising crop. The companies and their products all complemented each other. Jorge was the one who was uncertain. He wanted to have Kelly model his clothes, but he just didn't make maternity wear, not sure there was a market for it in home sales. But Mike had argued with him, as had all his sales staff. Jorge used to make unique outfits for the international runways of the fashion world, and as a favor for a friend, he could make a few that wouldn't be for catalog sales. At least that was the argument put forth by Mike.

“Out of 16 months, Jorge,” Vanetta said. “How many months will she need actual maternity wear? You know Kelly. She likes her baggy T-shirts and shorts.”

Finally Jorge had relented. He would advertise as a sponsor only. No need for Kelly to wear his designs. He loved Kelly, but had been so badly stung in the fashion

world before starting his home clothing line that he would not put his designs on display in regular distribution magazines. If Kelly happened to wear something designed by Jorge, and they made it into the magazine, he would certainly not complain, as his home sales reps would love to point it out to customers, but as long as there were no designer labels attached to any of the other clothes she wore, he would go along for the ride.

Vanetta was busy typing all of the details up when Kelly, Laura, and the girls got back in.

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“If it’s just six kids,” said Eric, “I don’t think you’ll need a full size van.”

“Six kids, plus a driver, plus instruments,” said Robert. “Possibly another passenger as well at times.”

“It has to seat eight adults, Eric,” said Todd, “and comfortably.”

“Then I would suggest the Express 2500 LS with the extended wheel base,” said Eric. “The Chevy Express Passenger Van offers four seating configurations, with optional seating for 8, 12, or 15 people, and still plenty of room for cargo.”

“What’s the difference between the Express regular and the LS?” asked Robert.

“Money,” laughed Todd.

Eric looked hurt.

“The LS is the luxury model, Rob,” said Todd. “It gives you cloth seats and carpeting instead of vinyl seats and floor.”

“Well... I don’t think we need to get the more expensive cloth package,” said Robert.

“Yeah, tell me that after a day of riding around on plastic seats,” said Todd. “Okay Eric, load it up, what have we got?”

“Don’t you want to take one out for a test drive?” asked Eric.

“Robert. You want to take this tank out for a test drive?” asked Todd.

“Well, I think we should, don’t you?”

“You go for it, Rob. Take it out and see if she feels good enough to ride. I’ll work Eric over till he gives us a real deal.”

Robert waited while Eric hung dealer plates from the rear doors and then took it out, sitting proudly in the driver's seat.

"New guy?" asked Eric.

"Yep. Going to tackle a new project for us," said Todd. "Let's go inside and write her up, Eric. I'll take the whole package deal of options. Here's the color I want," said Todd flipping through the catalog of options. Metallic Blue, three layers of clear coat after you get this lettered on the sides above the rear wheel wells, and across the hood and the back. I want that lettering in gold flake, Eric."

Eric laughed when he saw the logo that Todd had created on the computer in the morning. "Okay, Todd. I can get that done for you. If you let me have till next Monday, I'll put a good roof rack on it as well."

"Sounds good to me," said Todd. "Make the invoice out to 'Seniors:TNG,' a subsidiary of TKO Inc. Steve should have that as a legal entity by the end of the week."

"What if your new guy doesn't like the ride?" asked Eric.

"Trust me, Eric. He'll be back in about ten minutes and he'll try to be nonchalant about it, but just look at his eyes."

Eric laughed, got Todd's signature on the bill of sale and the two of them walked out together.

Robert pulled in a few minutes later trying to keep the jubilation from his face. The extended wheel base gave a much smoother ride than any car he had ever been in, and with the full size van, it gave him the advantage of seeing over top of all the other traffic. It made him feel powerful, and one just like this would be his to drive all the time. Todd had explained the name of the new non-profit venture to him and that the name would be written on all four sides of the van, but Robert thought the name was rather good, and he looked forward to all the questions he would receive about it.

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After dropping Robert off, Todd took his girls home. He laughed to himself as he thought of them as "his" girls. Actually, it was the other way around. He was their man. Lover to two, mentor and part time big brother for the other two.

As they got out of the tracker, Ami looked up and down the street.

"What's up, Ami?" asked Todd.

“I’m not sure,” she said. “You know how you told me that as a photographer you don’t miss much? I’m seeing the street the same as always, but I feel like there’s something wrong with the picture. Like there’s something that doesn’t belong.”

Todd looked up and down the street as well. “Yeah, Ami, I do understand. I got that feeling this afternoon when I went out with Robert.” He put his arm around her shoulder and led her towards the house. “If there is something out of place, Ami, I’m sure you and I will spot it.”

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“Fuck! Those two were lookin’ right at him. It was lucky he had found an unlocked garage from where he could see the house. Wonder what the young cunt’s name is? What is it with Ayres? He’s shackled up with four bitches? So far all he had was the name of the one that owned the house. Kelly Jennsen. The one with no tits. He wouldn’t mind a taste of the other one, the honey colored brunette that was always hanging off him. At least she had a set of ta-ta’s. But what was the deal with the other two? He wished he could get a look inside at night. Must be pretty interesting with all that poon hangin’ around. But he better keep his distance. Fuck up this job and there’d be no use goin back home.”

He dialed a number on the cell phone he’d been given. “Yeah. I found him. Yeah, it’s him. I got pictures for proof. What do you want me to do next?”

“Fuck! Wait? What a waste of fuckin’ time. Lay back until the boss gets here.”

To be continued...