

Kelly

(Inspired by Mike C, based on characters in his novel: “James”
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Chapter 28

“Do you mind if we stop off to see Muriel before we go to the club, honey?”
Kelly asked Laura.

“Of course not, silly,” said Laura. “We have the whole day to ourselves now.”

“Thanks, sweetheart,” said Kelly. “It might sound funny to you, but I could have sworn I heard her talking to me last night when your mom and dad were over.”

“Maybe you did,” said Laura seriously. “I get feelings. Mom says they’re premonitions, but I don’t know. I wouldn’t buy lottery tickets on it!” she added laughing. “But, Mom... she’s got something else. I don’t know what it is, but she knows things. It’s called a latent kinetic psychic ability. She can’t see ahead or read minds or anything like that, but when she touches people or things, she can get a whole lot of information without even trying. She says that’s where I get my ‘feelings’. She said her Grandma was really good at it, and the ‘gift,’ or ‘curse’ as my Mom calls it, gets passed down to the first-born female of every generation. Maybe you hear voices!”

“Or I’m crazy,” said Kelly laughing.

“It was a good night, wasn’t it, Kell?”

“Really good,” said Kelly. “Your sisters are very talented. I look forward to hearing the four of you sing together.”

“Yeah, they are good, but that’s not what I was referring to. I was talking about how my dad and Todd got along.”

“Were you worried, honey?” Kelly asked.

“Just a little bit. My dad’s been a cop for a lot of years. He tends to see the worst in people before he gets to know them, and you know Todd... He’s not exactly the social butterfly.”

Kelly laughed. “Nope, that man of ours is not generally socially inclined. But he did it for you, Laura. Your dad might not understand the relationship between the three of us, but he loves you and wants to know you won’t be hurt. That’s why Todd wanted your whole family to meet us. To let them see us and get to know us. Your mother on the other hand... She does know!”

“Oh, God! I should have realized she would pick up on it the minute she walked through the door,” Laura said. “I won’t be able to look her in the eyes now. God, I hope she didn’t spook you! I should have told you about her ‘thing’ before, but I grew up around it and with her, so I tend to forget.”

Kelly smiled. “No, Honey. I was a bit shocked, but she was cool about it. I like your mom and dad, Laura. It was really nice having your family over last night. I hope we do it a lot more often. Other than that creepy guy spying on us, it was a pleasant night. Your mom said she knows you’re happy and in love, and she’s happy for you. There’s no shame in being happy.”

Laura sat back in her seat and said, “Yeah, I guess you’re right. Mom’s always been more concerned about our happiness than what society might say. She’s been really open minded for as long as I can remember. Anyway, I’m glad she knows.”

Kelly wheeled the car into a parking space at Lakeview. “The only thing that I’m concerned about now is what ‘G’ said this morning.

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After the late night, all of them were still asleep in the morning when Gloria had let herself in. Seeing no one was awake, Gloria checked the cupboards for staples and was making a list of essentials to order. Delton would go and pick it all up for her. Kelly had long ago given Gloria a credit card for just this purpose. Though Kelly still tried to keep up on her own laundry, her busy schedule, and frequent days away from home gave Gloria something to do. She had woken up that morning knowing Kelly was going to be gone for a few days, although Kelly didn’t know that herself yet. Gloria also saw that Mr. Todd was going to be busy and Laura would be tied up as well working with the younger girls. “And more company coming,” she smiled to herself. “Better order some more meat as well.”

When there was still no sign of movement from either bedroom at 9:00, Gloria ground her own blend of coffee beans and put the coffee maker on. Then she sat at the kitchen table to wait for the coffee to do its job.

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Ami woke up first. Cara had once again fallen asleep on Ami’s chest with an arm wrapped between Ami’s legs. She shook her head in wonderment at how either of them managed to sleep in such strange uncomfortable looking positions, but each morning,

they both woke up refreshed and revitalized. She started toying with Cara's nipple, watching in delight as the little nub popped out of the soft breast tissue and stiffened up, greeting its lover. Soon Cara was moaning as she woke up aroused.

Cara untangled herself and kissed her lover, slowly and sensuously. "Kelly must be up," she said. "I can smell the coffee. But you've got me all hot and bothered now."

"I can take care of that," said Ami and rolled over on top of her lover letting her leg slide between Cara's. As she kissed Cara with growing passion, their legs locked as the two girls ground their pubic bones together. It wasn't the easiest way to achieve orgasm but it worked well, and allowed them a longer period of time to build up to climax, and not a minute was wasted as they kissed and nibbled each other through the entire time. Ami's fingers toyed with Cara's ear and neck while her other hand cradled Cara's head.

Cara, being on the bottom, let her nails run up and down Ami's back and butt, sending shivers through the darker haired temptress. All too soon they were moaning into each other's mouths as they reached their climax.

"God, I could just roll over and go back to sleep now," Ami sighed, a satisfied look on her face.

Cara stretched and purred. "So could I, sweetheart, but you've got a day in the darkroom, and I've got work ahead of me with Vanetta."

Reluctantly they got up and walked nude to the bathroom, not bothering to check the kitchen first. They showered together and then, after drying each other off, went to get dressed to properly greet the day.

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Todd woke up disoriented.

To his right was Laura's beautiful face, still sound asleep, her head on his shoulder. To his left was a pair of beautiful legs. He followed the legs to the honey colored pubic thatch that was Kelly, and continued his visual path across her still flat stomach, over the very sensitive breasts to see Kelly's face supported by her arm, across his groin. "Is this where we ended up last night?" he thought to himself.

He remembered a passionate night of love making with his two lovers after Meg and Harry had left, but aside from two terrific orgasms, he remembered nothing more.

Todd allowed his right arm to clutch Laura closer and started to softly brush her skin with his fingertips, gently cupping her breast and massaging it, while his left hand slowly stroked the inside of Kelly's thighs. This caused Kelly to spread her legs, but didn't wake her up.

Laura sighed and her eyes fluttered open. She gave Todd a soft, sensual kiss then smiled as she watched him play with Kelly's sex center.

Kelly started to get aroused, which woke her up. She smiled at both her lovers, then stretched and uncurled like a cat. Todd continued to tease her clit, and Laura slid down to give Kelly a morning kiss and to massage Kelly's tits. Kelly moaned and Todd slipped a finger into her hot sex while his thumb took over strumming her clit. In just minutes, Kelly was moaning her climax into Laura's mouth.

As Kelly dropped back from the unexpected climax, Laura turned her attention to Todd's cock, which had become erect during the three-way sex play. She engulfed his shaft, and tasted remnants of Kelly's sweet secretions and hummed on his glans. When he was close to coming, Laura licked her lips and then slid his cock to the back of her throat where she gobbled him while her hand gently massaged his balls. Todd moaned and shot his load into her greedy mouth.

"Hey," said Kelly, "save some for me," and she bent forward to steal some of Todd's essence from Laura's lips. Then Kelly slid up the bed till her mouth was firmly latched on to Laura's hot cunt. She could still taste traces of Todd's deposit there from the night before, and with lust sucked on Laura's labia and clit. Driving her tongue like a spear into Laura's love channel rewarded her with more sweet nectar, and as Laura started to thrust her hips off the bed, Kelly latched on to her clit and sucked and nibbled till Laura's dam burst and she climaxed.

Todd was all set to start to give Kelly a good tongue lashing, and was rolling her into position when Kelly said, "Gloria's here."

"What?" said Laura.

"That's just the girls making coffee," said Todd.

"Blue Mountain?" asked Kelly.

Todd sniffed the air, and grinned as he nodded in agreement. "Gloria."

Kelly and Laura slipped on panties and T-shirts and headed to the bathroom.

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"Good morning, Mrs. Clarke," said Cara and Ami when they entered the kitchen.

Gloria chastised them in her friendly manner, saying calling her Mrs. Clarke made her sound like a schoolteacher. They declined her offer of coffee, and had orange juice instead, chatting with 'G' about girl stuff till Kelly and Laura walked in. Todd was taking a shower.

“Morning, G” said Kelly, pouring herself a cup of the wicked brew. “Oh, I need this. What a night we had last night!”

“Quit bragging, Kell,” said Laura. “Hi, Gloria.”

“G’mornin’ girls. It be a fine day to rest.”

“Maybe for some,” said Todd as he walked into the kitchen, “but some of us have to work. Morning, Gloria.”

“G’Mornin’, Mister Todd,” said Gloria.

Laura poured a half-cup of the Blue Mountain coffee for herself, took one small sip, and added whole milk to fill the cup. From Kelly’s cupboard she took a small battery operated drink mixer and set it on the highest speed till there was foam at the top of the cup. Much better. Todd chuckled and said Gloria’s coffee could put hair on her chest. Laura stuck her tongue out at him.

“Thanks for the tip about the man looking for me,” said Todd to Gloria. “We found him last night, and he’s in jail now.”

“No, Mister Todd, you be too late. The one in jail, he was to find you. The man looking for you knows where you be now. He coming soon, an’ he bring whole heap a ole grief wit him.”

“Can’t you tell us who it is, G?” asked Kelly.

Gloria shook her head. “De Obi no tell me. He say Mister Todd have to fix it now. Fix de vex he carry. Den be ari.”

“Can you tell us when?” asked Kelly.

“Soon, baby, soon.” And Gloria would say no more about the subject.

Breakfast turned into a quiet affair.

Todd left for the studio with Cara and Ami shortly after, wondering what from his past could be coming to haunt him.

As they neared the studio, Ami said to him, “When we screwed up on a routine, Todd, we didn’t spend any time worrying about it. You just can’t go back and fix it. From what I understand, this is something you can fix, so like the song says, ‘Don’t worry, be happy’.”

Todd laughed. He ruffled Ami's hair. "You're right. I know it's coming, just not when, other than soon, and Gloria said I have to fix it and then everything will be all right. Obviously I'm not in any danger, or Gloria would have told me to be careful."

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Laura stopped at the main desk and chatted with Sheila while Kelly brought the bouquet of flowers she had bought for Muriel down to her room.

Sheila was thrilled hearing from Laura that the Williams Sisters were reforming as a trio and would start performing regularly all year round at long term care facilities and nursing homes.

"You should have heard them last night, Sheila," Laura said. "They really want to do this, and Kelly's got a back up band for them and organized costumes!"

"It sounds like it will be some time then before they start performing," Sheila said.

"Not at all," said Laura. "At Kelly's request, they're starting here first. Their first performance is going to be at the company picnic on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but Robert Payne, he's the one coordinating all the talent, he's got Lakeview on the list for the week after. I sneaked a peek at his file and he's going to be doing two nursing centers a week. He's got Lakeview marked, so I figure he'll be calling soon about setting a date, and then he's planning on Marriott's Brighton Gardens, New River, and Remington Place. He had more names on the list, but I didn't want to appear too nosy."

Sheila laughed. "Wow. I guess when TKO decides to do something they don't do it small or wait too long to do it!"

"Maybe I should tell you that it won't be TKO calling," said Laura. "I don't want to give away the surprise. Just so you know that when you asked for a reunion show, Kelly and Todd took it to heart."

"It's going to make the residents so happy," said Sheila. "Not many people come and entertain them these days. Too many other things to occupy their minds and time, I guess."

"Yeah," sighed Laura. "I know all about that."

"I've got to see to some meds, Laura," said Sheila. "Want to come with me? We can grab a coffee or something afterwards."

"Sure," said Laura with a quick smile. "But let's make that a tea. I had a coffee this morning that is going to haunt me for a week!"

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“Grandma? Are you awake?” asked Kelly.

“Of course I am, Kelly. I’ve been waiting for you,” said Muriel.

Kelly smiled. Muriel always said she had been waiting for her as if she could anticipate Kelly’s visits.

“How did your party go last night?” asked Muriel.

Kelly gasped. “Grandma, how did you know?”

“Johnny came last night and told me that you were feeling sad and that I should talk to you,” she said.

Kelly’s eyes started to fill with tears.

“Why are you crying, honey?”

“Grandma, why is life so unfair?”

Muriel patted the bed and beckoned Kelly to sit. “Honey, the nurses here make a big deal about how old I am. They say I’ve lived through an entire century. Of course I don’t remember the first few years, so I think its just foolishness making a big deal out of it. But as far back as I can remember, life has always found a way to work itself out. I know you feel bad because you were alone for so many years, but for me, that was yesterday. Now you have that wonderful man you are going to marry and you are going to have a beautiful baby. Some people say that when I was your age we did it the other way around, we got married first and then had the babies, but just the same, sweetheart, there were a lot of girls who did it the same way as you.”

Kelly laughed with Muriel.

“It’s just like that special friend you have, the one who sings,” Muriel continued. “I know that there are a lot of people who think it’s all shameful and the preachers talk about how wrong it is and how you young folk are ruining families, but it was the same when I was your age. We just didn’t talk about it as much and of course we didn’t have television to tell us how we should live. People are just people. Nothing has really changed.”

Kelly was surprised at how clear minded Muriel was this morning. For the first time in a long time, Muriel understood how much time had passed since she had been born in 1898.

“Kelly,” said Muriel, “I’ve seen a lot of changes in my life. I remember how excited my father was when the first airplane flew. I didn’t understand why he was excited since I was only five at the time, but I still remember him talking about how this would change the world. It didn’t, you know, at least not for many years. I was married to Johnny when the first automobile drove in Charlotte. Now, men fly to outer space, and you can’t turn around on a street without seeing a motor vehicle. But people, they haven’t changed. There’s still too many people that think happiness can be found in liquor, and just as many that think because they go to church every Sunday that they are better than their neighbors. That if they have one cow more than the next man that they are somehow better. Some people live to make money and never share it with those who have none. Others have very little and they give away most of what they have. I’ve seen the best and the worst in people and for all these years that I can remember, one thing hasn’t changed. Smart people still do stupid things. Greedy people still think they can take their money with them. And people still think they have the right to judge others for being different, when they are just as different in other ways.”

Kelly was silently crying. Never had the truth been so clear to her before.

“Good people will always be around, sweetheart, and I know you are a good person. That’s all that matters. Not how famous you are or how rich you are, but how good you are. And I know you and your friends are good people. I’ve seen it when the dust from middle of this country blew right over Charlotte. I seen it in the hearts of people that took in those poor people who lost everything during the depression and I also saw the ones that closed their door to those in need. When I turned 100, and you threw that special party for me, do you remember that, Kelly?”

Kelly nodded, the tears streaming down her face.

“That meant something special to me, Kelly. You took the time to make a real birthday party for me. Early that morning the nurses got me out of bed saying I had to watch the news. There was this fat man who talks about the weather on one of the television shows and he said my name and wished me a happy birthday. He didn’t know me, and I didn’t know him. They told me that he was telling millions of people I turned 100, but not one of those millions of people bothered to write me a card or a letter or even use the telephone. I bet not one of those people remembered my name ten minutes later. But you remembered. I even got a card from the President of the United States. You know what, sweetheart?”

Kelly shook her head.

“All I could think about was, if this man knew me at all, he would know that turning 100 was just turning one day older for me. If he had the time to send a card, he could at least have written one himself. Did he think his signature was so important to me? I didn’t even vote for him. At least, I don’t think I did.” Muriel laughed. “Sometimes I get a little forgetful.”

Kelly laughed through her tears.

“But I remember the party, and all the flowers you brought and have brought before and after. I know you have a busy life, Kelly, but you always make time to come and see me. That’s goodness. You have goodness in your heart.”

It took Kelly some time for the tears to stop flowing. She was sniffing when she arranged the flowers she brought in the vase next to Muriel’s bed.

“Johnny said you made a new home for a lot of people and you named it for me. That is so sweet, baby. After I’m gone, people will still say my name and know who I am.”

“Grandma, you’re not going for a long time,” Kelly said. “I need you,” and the tears started again.

“Hush now, honey. I’ll be around for a little while yet, but you have your own family now, and it’s a good family. Besides. I’ll always be with you. Just open your mind, and you’ll hear me. Maybe in a dream, maybe in the voice of a stranger, but I’ll be watching over you.”

And Kelly wept.

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Todd and Ami were in the darkroom developing the pictures of the trial run on the equipment. As had become habit for Ami, she had slipped off her T-shirt and was working topless, just wearing panties. Todd certainly didn’t mind. Though she claimed her desire to only be for women, Todd knew that Ami liked to be looked at. Somewhere inside her, there was an exhibitionist dying to get out. Todd chuckled to himself as he switched chemical containers. He often worked in just his scrub pants. The room had a great ventilation system, and was airconditioned to an even 72°F, but the closeness of the room made one feel over dressed.

Ami knew that Todd liked to look. It aroused her to know that he considered her beautiful and desirable. Not that anything would come of it, her love was for Cara as his was for Kelly and Laura, but he was human as was she. Her nipples constantly puckered at the thought. She often wondered what he would look like naked. Not as she had seen him that night in the garden, but naturally nude. Maybe sports photography would not be her specialty after all. She could easily see herself shooting erotic photos for magazines.

Cara, Ami thought, she enjoyed being nude, but didn’t get the thrill out of it like she did. Cara was more a voyeur. Ami knew that Cara got hot looking at Kelly when she was oiling her skin. She couldn’t blame her. Kelly was another body that was designed to arouse passions. And Laura... Laura generated a different kind of heat. Sensual. Ami hoped one day to get Laura in front of her lens. She could see Laura smoldering

with passion. She wanted to dress Laura up and just shoot reams of film of her in various erotic costumes. The timer's going off interrupted her thoughts. Almost reluctantly she helped Todd do the final rinse of the negatives. They would take a break now and start printing in an hour.

Both Todd and Ami were clothed again when they emerged from the darkroom, and a bit surprised to see Harry, in full uniform, sitting chatting with Vanetta and Cara.

"Hello, Harry," said Todd extending his hand. "I didn't expect to see you so soon. Is this an official visit or are you off duty?"

Harry shook Todd's hand firmly. "It's a bit of both actually," he said.

"Do you have time for a coffee or a soda?" Todd asked.

"That I do," said Harry. "Rank does have some privileges."

Todd laughed, and they moved to the kitchenette where Cara offered Harry a choice of beverages. Harry settled on a cup of coffee, and then after declining a bite to eat, turned serious.

"The guy we nailed last night," he said, "he's still in the cooler. He refused to give his name, so Lew printed him and got his identity through the computer. He's no process server, and not a registered private eye, but he got his phone call last night and he called out of state."

Todd looked confused.

"Sorry, Todd. It wouldn't mean anything to you, but it tells me that he's either after you or Kelly. Until you took Laura to Florida she'd never been out of the Carolinas. Now, I can tell you this. We can't use it, but after he made his call, Lew had the boys check to see where he called. Turned out to be a number in Cleveland. I followed up on it this morning and it belongs to a small time, ambulance chasing, legal firm. You know the kind. The ones that advertise all the time about no cost unless they win the case?"

Todd nodded. He knew that kind of lawyer and had always considered them the scum of the legal world. "So we know he's not after or interested in Laura or Cara or Ami," he said.

"That was what I thought as well," said Harry who got himself another cup of coffee. "Did you or Kelly piss off somebody in Ohio?"

Todd thought about it for a minute then shook his head. "No. If it was a model who worked for us that thought they might get more money, for whatever reason, they would have gone after the New York office since that's where the agency is

headquartered. I've driven through Ohio lots of times, but never did any work up there, and as far as I know, neither has Kelly."

"That's why I came here first," said Harry. "He's not a licensed investigator, so we're thinking somebody shady. He had a cell phone, some unprocessed film and a key to a cheap motel just off I-77 in South Carolina."

"Out of your jurisdiction," Todd said, guessing which way this was headed.

"That's right," said Harry smiling. "Lew and I... Did Laura tell you that Lew is her Godfather?"

Todd shook his head.

"Well, we figured that he's been looking for you or Kelly. We can process the film, but then we might know specifically and then it becomes official, and we'd have to change the charges. Right now he's being held on a whole bunch of charges, but we have Laura listed as his target. An unregistered concealed weapon makes for a good case, but not enough for us to hurry it along to a judge. He's not talking and so far no lawyer has come for him or called about him. We figure that sometime later today we'd turn the key to his motel over to the South Carolina state troopers."

"Why are you doing this, Harry?" Todd asked.

"Well... The guys at the station know about the stuff you and Kelly do for other people, especially the summer camps for underprivileged kids. My captain figures that if you have something you'd rather not have become public knowledge, well, we have nothing to stop you from moving on."

Todd laughed. "Sorry, Harry, I appreciate the concern from you and the captain, but Kelly and I have nothing to run from or for. Contrary to what people might think, we're pretty boring normal people. Aside from some undeclared imported beer."

It was Harry's turn to laugh. "Hell, if we arrested every citizen for having untaxed alcohol, we'd never get any police work done. We'd only be interested if you had a truckload of it. So, as far as this Ed Labadie goes, we'll just let him cool his heels in a holding cell till someone comes to claim him. We didn't think you had anything to run from, but you got to understand, you and Kelly, you're respected for what you do for the community. Ever since Kelly started giving those yearly lectures at the schools about bike and skate safety, we've actually seen a decrease in accidents. She doesn't talk down to the kids and the girls want to be like her and the boys... Well, let's just say they hope to have a girlfriend like her one day."

Todd chuckled. "What ever works," he said.

"So you said this was a personal nature to this visit," Todd said.

Vanetta, Cara, and Ami took their cue and after making sure that Harry had a fresh cup of coffee in front of him, left the two men alone.

Harry sat back and smoothed his hair from his forehead. “Yeah. Meg and I got looking at that contract again last night after we got home. I’ve got to tell you, Todd, I’m running on pure adrenaline now. The coffee helps. We were up till nearly four this morning discussing it.”

Todd nodded but said nothing.

“We looked over all the duties and responsibilities, and you were right when you said it’s a job. Mostly light maintenance and book keeping, but on the way home Meg and I took a drive by the building. It would be too much for Meg to manage by herself, so we understood why Kelly could offer a job to Kat. We read the parts about sub contracting services like the lawn care and the gardens. Hell, we could probably sub-contract out most of the work other than collecting the rent, but that’s why you figured a family would be better, isn’t it?”

Todd nodded again and said, “for a family, this is a money making proposition. If all you do is collect rent, it’s not much more than a free apartment. Right now, the carpeting in the hallways is all brand new. Same as the glass entrances with the automatic doors. But, they need to be cleaned on a regular basis. A family, a tight one, could divide the work up and it would be a healthy income.”

“Yeah,” said Harry. “We did the math on that as well. That is more than a healthy income. We’re going to take the girls over tomorrow morning, and discuss this with them. I’m pretty sure I know what the answer is going to be, but we want them there to be part of the decision making process.”

“You’re a good father, Harry,” said Todd.

Harry tilted his head for a second, then looked at Todd and said, “I’ve tried, Todd. We’ve tried. Meg blames herself for getting sick after the twins were born, and I’ve blamed myself for not having better health insurance. When Meg’s energy dropped off, we figured it was the result of her having the twins, but then it didn’t come back and she got depressed. The blood tests eventually showed she had Hemochromatosis and it looked like it was going to do her in. Then one specialist said he could fix her up but it would mean time in an institution. It was a rough haul, and I had to take a leave of absence to take care of the girls. The doctor was right though and he got Meg better, but by the time she was, we were nearly bankrupt. Would have gone that route too except we nearly had the house paid off. That was our starter home when we got married, and I never thought I’d be raising four daughters in that little place. So, we ended up refinancing but the interest rates were still high in 1986, and we’ve been fighting to repay the *new* value of our house off ever since. Raising four girls can be expensive, and when the twins were going to school, Meg took whatever job she could. We always said they

wouldn't become latch key kids, so it was just part time here and there, and we haven't made any big dent in the principal."

"I would have never guessed that you and Meg were struggling financially," said Todd. "Laura said something about you not being able to pay her university tuition, but we had no idea."

"Neither did the girls," said Harry. "That's why I was pissed when I heard that Meg's hours were going to be cut. I'd love to get off the force and deal with nice people instead of wondering if the next call has a bullet waiting for me. We really appreciate this chance, and we'll give you an answer by tonight."

"That would be fine," said Todd. "The sooner you're ready to start, the sooner we can get people moved in."

Harry nodded and got up. "So," he said. "I'll call later on tonight. Now I better get back to work."

Todd shook Harry's hand, thanked him for helping out with the stalker, and said they'd have to have another barbeque again soon.

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"Remember the first time you brought me here, Kelly?" asked Laura.

Kelly was still puffy around the eyes. She had stayed so long with Muriel that Sheila and Laura got worried and went looking for her. They found her with her head cradled in Muriel's arm, sobbing. Laura knew at once what had happened. When Kelly had asked her if they could visit Muriel, Laura had understood Kelly's need, and had anticipated the outcome, but it was what Kelly needed.

Laura had lost two of her grandparents at an early age. She had had an exceptionally close bond with her mother's mother. Cancer had taken her away when Laura was eight. Now, nearly eleven years later, she still remembered staying with her 'Grams' during the day before she started school. Then all the visits after school up until cancer took her away. Gramps never recovered from his loss and died just a year later from a broken heart.

While Laura still had Nana and Granddad, the relationship wasn't as close. Laura had learned her affectionate ways from 'Grams' and her mother.

Sheila and Laura brought a pot of tea to Muriel's room and the four of them had a little tea party. Sheila raided the kitchen for some cookies and they talked about how soon Laura's sisters would be coming to sing for the seniors.

As the next hour went by, Muriel started to tire, and soon, she gave Kelly a kiss and a hug and told her she would look forward to Kelly's next visit. Kelly gladly accepted the Tylenol that Sheila offered and then Laura drove the Elantra slowly to the club. They had showered and changed, and decided to have a late lunch before going to the steam room to open Laura's pores for her second body wax treatment.

Just like before, Amy, one of the white uniformed girls, had provided them with strawberry daiquiris and fresh strawberries in a bowl lined with chopped ice, and offered them imported cigarettes.

"Sure I remember," said Kelly, suddenly smiling. "It was here that I first touched you." Her memory replayed that day in erotic living color. "And you had the nerve to ask me if I would still respect you in the morning!"

Laura laughed. She inhaled on the cigarette she had chosen from the humidor Amy had brought to the patio. Kelly had chain-smoked two cigarettes in the car on the drive over. Her nerves had finally calmed down as they had approached the private, guarded entrance to the club, and though it was noticeable to anyone who looked closely, no one commented on Kelly's recent crying spell.

"If I remember correctly, we did a lot more that day than just your delicious touch on my body," said Laura. "I confessed my love for you that day."

"And do you still love me?" asked Kelly.

"You know I do!" said Laura. "More and more with every passing day."

For lunch they had grilled trout and a tossed salad. They were going to eat light, saving their appetites for the supper and dessert they planned on having later.

"Kelly," said Laura. "When Brenda comes with Sherri, are you going to take her here?"

Kelly twisted her mouth in the most adorable way. "I thought about it, honey, but this place means so much to us, you and me, I can't do it."

"I don't mind," said Laura.

"I know you wouldn't," said Kelly, "but... this place is really special to the two of us. While I had made love with another woman just before I met you, I really fell in love with you here. This will remain our place forever."

"That's sweet, Kell. I knew I loved you, but I wasn't sure that I could physically love another woman until that day. It's been one of the major turning points in my life, right here," then Laura laughed. "In the showers!"

“Yes,” sighed Kelly. “The showers. That’s where we really made love the first time ever. I will never forget that as long as I live.”

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A totally different Laura walked into the steam room this time. Instead of being shy about her nudity, she hung her robe up at the door and didn’t even bother to wrap up with her towel. Kelly smiled at her, and followed suit. They placed their towels on the tiled tiers, and Laura laid on hers with her head close to Kelly’s butt. Kelly was sitting with her arms spread on the tier above her, letting the soothing steam soak her body.

“So?” Laura asked. “Where are you going to take Brenda for your night out?”

Kelly sighed. “I’m not even sure that I should, honey. I think it would feel too much like I was cheating on you and Todd.”

“Oh, fiddle fart,” said Laura. “Brenda introduced you to woman love. Todd and I both know that.”

“Yes, sweetheart, but as much as I love Brenda, I’m not in love with her. I’m in love with you and Todd.”

Laura rolled onto her stomach and looked up at Kelly. She tweaked Kelly’s nipple to get her attention. “That’s just plain silly,” said Laura, looking Kelly in the eyes. It’s not like you’re a fancy dessert that someone can eat all up leaving none for us. Well, okay you are a fancy dessert and you can be eaten,” she stopped and laughed at her own joke. “But you know what I mean. Love has no limits, Kelly. Share some of yours with Brenda. Have a good time. I understand what you mean about this place, but that doesn’t mean you can’t go someplace else.”

Kelly bent over and kissed Laura. “Thanks, honey. We’ll see.”

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Film for Ami arrived with the courier that afternoon. Cara and Ami were sitting with Todd looking at the 8 x 10s Todd and Ami had printed from their test run.

“These are excellent,” Todd said. “You girls were right. We should be able to wrap this up tomorrow and after we verify that the negatives are right, we can call CrossTrain to take this stuff all down. With it out of the way, I think I’ll set up a backdrop and lights just for the pictures of Kelly during her pregnancy.”

“Why?” asked Ami. “Why not just use the main portrait setting?”

“Because,” said Todd, “we never know who or what we’ll have in for a shoot, and by marking the lights exactly, and Kelly’s position on the floor, we’ll save a lot of time.”

“I see,” said Ami. “Assembly line photography,”

“Hey, you!” said Todd with a smile, “I’m after consistency.”

Ami smiled. “I figured that. It’ll be easier to see her progress if the setting is the same.”

“Now you’ve got it,” said Todd. “It will let me work more on her posing than on checking the lights.”

“Speaking of lights,” said Cara. “Do you see how on the Vault, there’s a shadow running parallel to my legs?”

Todd swung the big magnifying lens over to the spot that Cara was talking about. “Good eyes,” he said, smiling at Cara. The three of them went and adjusted the lighting. It only took one adjustment of a lower flood to remove the shadow, and Cara held the same pose so Ami and Todd could inspect for any other trace shadows.

Satisfied finally that they had accounted for all possible scenes that could be anticipated, Cara and Ami brought all of the CrossTrain uniforms and suits out so that they would be within easy changing reach on Friday.

That afternoon, the printer delivered three super quality prints of Kelly and Laura’s Star Trek picture, already dry mounted on corrugated plastic backs and ready for framing, so Todd and Ami did a run downtown to the Frame-It shop where he usually got his large frames. Cara stayed behind, saying she would rather help Vanetta, but really, she was fascinated with the way Vanetta had set up the package deal for Kelly and had come up with an idea of her own. She wanted to swing it by Vanetta.

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“This is what I had in mind,” said Cara after Todd and Ami had left. She explained her vision of Kelly, nude of course, holding two glasses of prune juice. One right in front of her, covering her left nipple, the other hand extended as if offering a glass to the viewer.

“If the picture is taken at the right angle,” said Cara, “the extended hand should hide the right nipple. It would be sexy as hell, yet not showing anything that might offend anybody.”

Vanetta agreed. “I love your sales line,” she said to Cara. “It’s got a double meaning, and it could easily become a catch phrase.”

Cara laughed. She had thought of it shortly after she had started on Kelly's regime of vitamins, and had survived the first few days after her body detoxified itself. "Prune Juice... It keeps you going!"

"Maybe you should take marketing as a second major," Vanetta suggested. She loved the idea, and knew she would get it worked into the ad campaign. Then let the prune juice people make copies of that one and hang it all over the outlets where they sold their product.

For the rest of the afternoon, while Todd and Ami were gone, they reviewed the ads that Vanetta had already been working on. Cara caught on fast and by the time Todd and Ami returned, she was handling the phone calls for Vanetta.

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Muttering quietly to himself about taking his life into his hands, Todd agreed to let Ami drive. He insisted that if she wanted to get her license, he would want her to take a proper Driver's Ed course, something she and Cara could do together in a single week.

Todd allowed her to get the feel of the wheel and the truck taking a less traveled route into Charlotte's business core before he insisted that as good as Ami was, they were now going to be driving among living, walking people, and it would be better to have a licensed driver behind the wheel.

Todd selected three matching metal frames in a brushed dark gray finish. Simple, yet it helped bring out the colors in the pictures. He and Ami waited for the pictures to be mounted, then took off for a place where Todd could get a decent coffee. Ami decided to have one as well.

"Might as well be as wired as you," she said to him.

Todd laughed. "I don't need coffee to get wired," he said. "The job itself will do that. I guess it's like my smoking. I don't do it often, but sometimes I just feel like indulging myself."

"Is that what you're doing when you look at me when we're in the darkroom, Todd. When all I'm wearing is panties? You're just indulging your primal urge?"

Todd looked at Ami for a minute before answering. She was sucking on an iced French Vanilla Cappuccino, while he sipped his espresso. "I'm being human," he finally said. "I've been around nude bodies since I started photography. I've been on the beaches in Europe and in the Caribbean, and it doesn't generally affect me, I mean, I appreciate the beauty of the female body, but the reason I look at you, Ami, is because you are a natural exhibitionist. You like to show off your body. You like getting my attention."

Ami blushed. "I never thought of myself that way," she said. "But if we're going to be honest, yeah, I guess I do like being nude and it gives me an ego boost knowing that you like what you see. I feel safe around you, Todd. And with your years of exposure to the nude body, when you look, I feel very beautiful."

"Nudism is a natural way of life for some people," Todd said. "You see it more in other countries, where there aren't the social hangups. When Cara gets nude, it's more of a comfortable way of being for her, but you, my little apprentice, you need to accept the fact that you are beautiful. You don't need my validation for that."

"But what if I like your validation?" Ami asked. "Does that mean I have a self-esteem problem?"

Todd reached out and touched Ami's hand. "No, Sweetheart. Some people do enjoy being admired. It's one of the reasons Playboy can run their specials on women in various fields of work, like airline personnel or executives or lawyers. People who you would think would shy away from baring it all. It's just one facet of who we are. In time, you'll probably just be comfortable being nude, but right now, you're looking to be noticed when nude. There's nothing wrong with you. You're just going through a stage of self-discovery."

Ami was visibly relieved. "I thought there might be something wrong with me," she said. "I remember girls at school being called cock-teasers, and I never wanted you to think that about me."

Todd smiled at her. "I never thought that for a minute, Ami. I know your preferences, but even if I didn't, I wouldn't assume that you were easy because you like to be looked at. That's a woman's prerogative, to be seen as desirable."

Ami looked at Todd and saw that he was serious. "Thanks, Todd."

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While Kelly and Laura were having the dried mud scraped off their bodies, Robert helped Todd hang the Star Trek poster of Kelly and Laura in the main entrance of the studio.

"Well," Todd said to Vanetta, "there's not much more I can do around here today. Ami and I have finished loading the film magazines for tomorrow, so we might as well go home and make something to eat."

Vanetta laughed. "You mean you're going to order Chinese again," she said.

Todd laughed. "Yeah, I guess."

Robert was setting up his new computer. While Todd and Ami had been out, Office Max had delivered the desk, reclining executive chair and the P-4 with the 20-inch monitor. Since “Seniors: TNG” would be separate entity from TKO, there was no reason to tie it into the TKO server and it was a stand-alone system.

“Rob,” said Todd as they all sat in the kitchenette sipping on a fresh batch of vegetable juice, “I’ve made a small adjustment on the pay scale for the boys who will be backing the Williams Sisters.”

Rob looked at Todd.

“Kelly and I were thinking that if we were going to be paying for school kids to visit long term care facilities, it didn’t seem right that all the boys would be getting out of this would be music lessons. If they mesh with the Williams Sisters, and they commit to a year, we’ll toss in a two thousand dollar scholarship for each of them for post secondary education. It will be locked into a registered plan with the bank, and gather interest until they start their post-secondary education. If they continue for a second year, we’ll double it again. We’re doing the same thing for the Williams Sisters. Speaking of which, since you’re free now from your other job, do you think you can take them all out tomorrow for a ‘get to know you’ lunch and then to a Tack Shop and get them all outfitted in something Western? Let the girls choose the outfits they want to wear. Satin would look nice in a Western shirt, but they might prefer something in lightweight cotton. Use your judgment. Let them pick three outfits each, and then dress the boys in something that complements the girls. If they want hats, go for it. If they want boots, that’s okay as well. I’m pretty sure the girls will want riding skirts. It looks more feminine. No jeans though, unless they are the studded ones for the boys. Plain black pants will do better, and then coordinate with Vanetta to set up a day next week for them all to come in and I’ll do the publicity photos.”

Robert had been taking notes and said, “Sure, Todd. I can arrange that. If you don’t mind, I’ll also start bringing them here after hours for practice sessions so they can get their programs together and get used to performing as a group.”

Todd smiled. “Good thinking, Rob. I take it that Steve set you up with an account and debit card for ‘Seniors: TNG’?”

“Yep, he did. I still need to go to the bank and pick up the card and sign some documents, but that’ll only take a few minutes. I’m installing an accounting program on the computer so that at any time we’ll be able to tell where the money is going.”

“Great,” said Todd. “Call Eric and tell him that you want a loaner for tomorrow so that you have the room to take six teens around in comfort.”

Robert nodded.

Todd got up and said, "You two have a great night. Ami and Cara and I are going to batch it tonight."

Vanetta smiled and wished them a good night as well, and as they were leaving, Robert was already on the phone setting up appointments and arranging for a vehicle.

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Todd stopped at his favorite Chinese take out, and he and the girls went through the menu till they decided to stick with old favorites. Won Ton soup, spring vegetable egg rolls, chicken fried rice and of course chicken balls. Fried Won Tons and fortune cookies rounded out the order.

As soon as they pulled into Kelly's, the girls left him to go and change. Or rather, to get out of the clothes they had been wearing most of the day.

"Ami!" said Cara. "Aren't you going to put anything else on?"

Ami looked down at her high cut French panties. She was wearing nothing else. "Nope. I feel overdressed as is."

Cara sighed and pulled off the T-shirt she had slipped on. "Why not," she said. "Todd has seen us in less, and tomorrow he will see even more."

Todd had slipped a movie into the DVD player and the three of them sat cross-legged on the living room floor, around a coffee table, attempting to use chopsticks with grace. Todd, having years of experience, easily manipulated the chopsticks, much to Cara's consternation. Ami took the easy way out, spearing chicken balls with a single chopstick. Finally, with a loud "Hmph," she went to the kitchen and came back with forks. It was some time before Todd stopped laughing.

They watched the end of "Coyote Ugly" after having finished off the last of the fried Won Tons, being very careful not to spill any of the cherry sauce on the carpet.

It was a relaxing evening. Ami went through Kelly's DVD collection, many of which Todd had bought at one time or another and brought over and just left, and then she spied "Wild Things," with Denise Richards and Neve Campbell.

"First we have dessert," said Cara.

"I'm not sure I have room," said Todd.

"Trust me, you always have room for yogurt," said Cara.

"Yogurt?" said Todd, screwing up his face at Ami.

“Frozen,” said Ami. “It’s better than ice cream.”

Cara had mixed the fruit juices that Ami had drained from the fruit the night before, and had placed it in a container that she had slipped into the freezer. It wasn’t frozen, but it was nice and slushy. She took three bowls and scooped the frozen blueberry yogurt into them and then liberally applied the fruit juice slush. She topped them with maraschino cherries and carried them and spoons out to the living room.

Todd was a bit skeptical, but after his first taste, he smiled and devoured the bowl.

Ami and Cara cleared up the dishes and trash, then the girls poured a glass of wine for themselves and Todd and the three of them sat on the sofa together to watch the steamy, erotic, “Wild Things.”

To be continued...