

*The characters William Delaney, Thomas 'Tom' Hughes, John Wortham, Lisa Marie Delaney, Ross Monroe, John Parseghian and Samantha 'Sam' Tuttle are the property of Ray C. Stankewitz.*

The Trap

By R.C. Stankewitz

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Foreword

The Trap has several elements that need to be understood. It is set in modern times with all the annoyances that go along with it. The lead character William Delaney is a bipedal anthropomorphic creature. He used to be humanoid in form but a botched experiment by the US military caused him to develop some attributes of an equine. He now has hooves instead of feet. His face has a definite muzzle to it and his ears are now on top of his head and shaped like a horse's. He has a mane, a tail and a coat of hair that covers his body. This universe has several other anthropomorphic creatures that you are sure to meet in this short story.

The Trap

Chapter 1

"The Trip"

It was a pleasant spring evening in eastern Florida, the sun just beginning to disappear over the horizon. The small, wiry man opened the door to the motel room and stepped inside. He turned and gave his partner a sour look.

"William, is this the best you could do?" the smallish man said to his equine hybrid partner. "I've seen you get some cheap digs before but this is ridiculous!" he added, setting his bags on one of the motel room beds. William's partner looked over at him with a dejected look on his face.

"You *do know* this is Fort Lauderdale, don't you?" he asked, turning a full circle to take in the room.

"Tom, you know we aren't supposed to be high profile" the large hybrid said, dropping his bags on the bed by the door. William assessed the room; not too small, a back window big enough to get out through and some chairs and a table to do business on.

“What’s wrong with it, anyway?” the hybrid asked his partner as he shut the door behind them. Tom was busy examining the area outside the back window.

“It’s OK, I guess. I just liked the last place we were at on Maui, that’s all.”

“Yeah, that would have been a nice place to just hang out and relax” William mused, stretching out on his bed to his full length. “At least the beds here are long enough. You know how I hate it when my hooves hang off the bed” he commented, fluffing up his pillow some.

William thought back to when he had transformed into a hybrid. He had been feeling ill for several days before his transformation began. After he was through with the process, the Marines had given him an honorable discharge as they felt he could no longer do his job effectively. He was 6 foot 2 as a humanoid but the transformation had added five inches to his frame. He was rather muscular to begin with from his military days and the change had added a substantial amount of bulk to his body.

“I need to lose a few pounds, Tom. I weighed 274 pounds the other day” he said, checking the clock to see if the time was right or not.

“Oh Yeah? I could use those pounds, guy” Tom shot back; “I probably weigh no more than 130 at best right now.”

The huge hybrid smiled at his business partner as he retrieved the paperwork for their next assignment.

“You know anything about Lamborghini V12 engines?” he said, leafing through the documents.

“Why do you ask?” Tom asked the hybrid; “I pride myself to be a master in matters such as these.”

William leafed through the papers again before handing them to the ‘Master of these matters’. “That Fountain powerboat has three of those engines for power. Mr. Wortham expects that they should be in perfect working order should we buy the boat for him, that’s why.”

Tom began to practically ‘drool’ over the pictures as he examined them closely. “What model year was this boat supposed to be?” he asked the hybrid, getting a magnifying glass out to examine one photo closer.

“I’m not sure, Tom. I think the cover letter has that information on it” he replied, slipping his hooves under the covers. William looked over to see that his partner was hooking up his laptop to the Ethernet port on the wall by the table and searching for information on their mark.

“I’m exhausted, Tom. You stay up if you want but I’m gonna bag some sleep while I can. That was a long drive from Boston and I’m shot” he said, rolling over towards the wall and settling in for a night’s rest.

“OK, I’ll turn out the lights in a few minutes” Tom replied, tapping on his keyboard and sipping on some cold bottled water.

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William slept fitfully that night in anticipation of tomorrow’s activities. Hearing his watch alarm go off at the appointed time of six a.m., he sat up and stretched out his arms and tried to get the kinks out of his neck.

“Tom, rise and shine” he said to the sleeping form in the next bed. Having gotten no response from his business partner, he tried again. “Hey Tom!” he yelled rather loudly; “Get up so we can get some chow before the tourists get up.”

“Mmffmmm” was the only response that the hybrid got from his room mate.

“Tom, I’ll count to three and then I’ll do a ‘White Tornado’ on y’all” William said, getting hold of the bed frame and giving it a lift or two off of the floor.

“OK, OK! I’m getting up!” the humanoid said rather irritably, sitting up on the edge of the bed. “William, how many times do I have to tell you I’m not a morning person?” he said to the hybrid, trying to stretch out his kinks too.

“I’m going to shower up, Tom. Look in the phone book for a restaurant, will you?” William asked as he headed for the bathroom and that all-important shower.

‘Oh yeah...I could stand here all day’ William thought as he let the hot shower beat down on his neck and shoulders. The hybrid felt he could at least stand there until the water ran cold but he knew he had business to attend to. He finally got out his shampoo and soaped up his entire body with it, being sure to lather up everywhere. He worked extra on his mane and tail, making sure that they were as clean as possible. ‘Why couldn’t I have been another color than black?’ he thought as he washed out the shampoo from his tail. He was thinking it was strange that he had white ‘socks’ on his hands

and legs along with a prominent white blaze down his muzzle. ‘Why wasn’t I a solid color? I’ve seen other solid color equine hybrids before so why not me?’ he mused, thinking about all of the other equine hybrids he knew. Stepping out of the shower, he dried off as best he could and used a blow dryer to finish up.

“Did you use up all of the hot water again?” Tom asked his partner as he got his toiletries together. “I should get up before you and use up the hot water on you” he added, giving William a smile.

“No, you should be fine. I didn’t use up the hot water” William replied as he dug through his bag for some underwear. “Besides, I’m pretty safe in thinking that you wouldn’t get up before me anyway!” he shot back to his humanoid partner.

The hybrid slipped on some boxer shorts and began to brush out his mane and tail, being careful to get the tangles out. “I really should get my mane cut short” he said to no one in particular as he looked at himself in the mirror. “Less mane is less to have to deal with” he muttered to himself as he pulled on his khaki slacks and threaded a brown belt through the loops. Grabbing a loud blue based camp shirt with waves and surfboards on it, he buttoned it up, leaving the top 2 buttons open. He slipped on his hoof boots, fastening the buckles closed and shook his light leg feathering out. As he walked back over to the mirror, he was thinking that he needed to get some better boots. The ones that he currently wore were for a four legged equine and not a hybrid. Reaching the mirror, he nodded in approval at his appearance; one had to look good to buy a boat worth three quarters of a million dollars with somebody else’s money.

William used a small brush to give his muzzle, neck and arms a good brushing while he waited on Tom to finish up. He liked for his coat to shine and this really did the trick for him. He had remembered this time to bring his favorite brush with him, a Legends brand Union Bristle brush.

“Geez William, you’re gonna brush a hole in yourself” Tom chided as he came out of the bathroom, still dripping with water.

“You’re just jealous that you don’t have a coat to brush” he replied to his partner’s outburst, looking for his contact lens case in his bag. “Could you step it up a little?” William asked as he finally put his contacts into his amber colored eyes and blinked a few times to settle them in.

“You could have worn your glasses today instead of contacts” Tom said as he got dressed in his favorite navy colored slacks. The humanoid took a moment

to brush his short sandy blond hair and quickly trim his mustache away from his top lip before he pulled on a pale blue polo shirt.

“I didn’t want to fool with changing glasses today, my friend. Just some sunglasses on a keeper for me” the equine hybrid commented as he put the afore-mentioned glasses around his neck. “Let’s go eat” William said as they picked up a small duffle bag apiece and went out to the car, making sure the door was locked behind them.

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As the pair sat in a non-descript diner and waited for their waitress to arrive, William looked over the paperwork again.

“What did you learn last night?” he asked, laying the photos out to look at them again.

“Those Lamborghini power plants aren’t standard by a long shot. They had to be a custom installation from the looks of it. The regular engines would be Mercruiser brand with Speedmaster #6 outrives” Tom commented off the top of his head.

“I thought so. We’ll need to check them out closely” William said as he put the pictures away

“I’ll have the bacon and egg super platter. Make the eggs soft-scrambled” William told their waitress as she arrived, closing his menu and handing it to her. “Coffee and orange juice too, please” he added, giving her a smile. The young waitress nodded and smiled as she wrote down his order.

“Tom, order something, OK? We don’t have all day” William said to his partner, giving him a nudge to get his attention.

“Oh, I’m sorry” Tom began; “I’ll have the same thing, please” he said as he surfed the ‘net for more information on this boat they were going to see later this morning. After the waitress had left, William leaned forward and pushed the laptop’s screen closed just a bit.

“Did you even hear what I ordered?” the large equine hybrid said quietly, trying to get comfortable in the booth.

“Yeah, whatever and something on the side” the humanoid muttered, trying not to relinquish his attention from his laptop’s display.

“Tom, why don’t you put your laptop away? You’re being just a little too high-profile right now.”

The humanoid looked up at his partner, nodding his head. “OK William, just for you.”

The waitress brought them their coffee and some jellies for their toast. The small humanoid had put his laptop back in its pouch and looked back at the equine hybrid with a worried look on his face.

“I don’t know, William. I just don’t like the feel of this assignment.”

“What do you mean?” the hybrid responded, giving the smallish humanoid his full attention. Tom gave William a shrug of his shoulders as he looked out of the window at the traffic going by.

“I don’t know; it just doesn’t feel right. The contact was just too eager to show us the boat, that’s all.”

“I know what you mean” William stated, sipping his coffee. He thought for a minute before he continued. “I think what we really need is a vacation after this job.” Tom nodded his head in agreement.

“A vacation would be fine by me.” The humanoid sipped his coffee, added some sugar and then tested it for taste again. “That’s better” Tom commented as he sipped his coffee some more.

“You did get the directions to the marina?” the hybrid asked as he searched through the jellies for his favorite flavors.

“Right here” Tom responded, patting his front pocket. “The marina is off of Southeast 15<sup>th</sup> Street, near the State Highway A1A causeway.” William nodded his approval to this information.

“Tom, I’ll let you drive us to the marina, since you know the way. Besides, I don’t fit very well in our rental car. Remind me to get a bigger vehicle next time.”

“You betcha, Red Rider” Tom replied. Their waitress brought their plates laden with food to their table and refilled their coffee for them. Both of them tried to relax as they consumed their fare but it just wasn’t working at all this morning.