

The characters William Delaney, Lori Delaney, Thomas 'Tom' Hughes, John Wortham, Lisa Marie Delaney, Samantha 'Sam' Tuttle, John Parseghian, Daniel Castle, Lonny Edwards, Jeffrey Dodge, Roger Cook, James Daggett, Bernard Richmond, LTJG Ron Cox USCG. PO3 Ken Leese USCG, Fireman/EMT Bill Carapina, Tonya Smith, Kenji Suzuki, Dr. Patricia Gaines, Brian 'Bruno' Parks, John R 'Uncle Johnny' Edwards, Peter 'Pete' Kashnikov and Ross Monroe are the property of Ray C. Stankewitz.

The Trap

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The Trap

Chapter 10

“A Game Of Endurance”

William was sitting at his table, pushing the dregs of his breakfast around his plate. Eggs, toast, hash browns and sausage had set pretty well with him this morning. A few aspirins for his headache helped the situation so he wasn't in a world of hurt for a change.

He was thinking about how to get out of this mess when the door opened. “William, how are you feeling?” the doctor asked, walking over to sit down across from him.

“The huge hybrid looked over at her with a wistful smile on his muzzle. “If it were different circumstances, I would say I was feeling great, compared to yesterday” he answered, looking at the doctor. “Let's just go with OK for now.” He looked at her seriously now as he told her “I have to get out of here and find Tom.”

“Why don't you just tell them what they want?” Patricia asked, looking very upset to the big male. “If they have to persuade you, they might hurt or kill you.” She had tears in her eyes as she said “They killed my husband, William. Bernard and Ross aren't beyond killing you too. Especially Bernard. He hates our kind.”

The hybrid looked at her to see that she wasn't kidding. “They killed your husband?” he asked, still not sure he had heard that part right.

“Ross told Daniel that my late husband had jumped Bernard. They shot him 31 times, William!” she answered, practically in tears by now. “Tell them

something, anything! Don't let them hurt you!" The doctor began to cry as she stood up, putting her hands over her muzzle to muffle her sobbing.

William got up and went around the table to put his arms around her and hold her, trying to comfort her. "Don't cry" he said, knowing her crying would make him cry too. "They won't hurt me" he said to her, trying to get her to settle down.

"The hell they won't!" Brian said from the doorway, frowning at him. "I was there just after it happened. Ross and *that bastard* Bernard were laughing as they put fresh clips in their pistols." He shook his head as he told the male equine "Her husband wasn't a hybrid, William. I think they did it to get back at her. They wouldn't even think twice about giving you the same treatment."

William was mulling all of this over in his mind, the need to get the hell out of here was burning brightly. Maybe these two hybrids could help him out.

"I need to find Tom and get out of here" he said, still holding the sobbing female. "Brian, you act like you don't like it here. Let's arm up and walk out of this dump."

"If we leave" the bear hybrid said, stepping into the room and closing the door behind him, "We wouldn't make to the marina alive. Castle has the local police in his back pocket. They would just set us up and kill us at his whim." He waited just a second to speak again, listening at the door. "Besides, he has goons outside the house."

This situation wasn't looking good to William. This feline hybrid was definitely around the bend from his viewpoint. "What can we do?" he asked, still holding the doctor in his arms. She was no longer sobbing, but listening to the two men talk.

"I don't know, William" the bear hybrid replied. "Let me figure out something that just might have a snowball's chance in hell of working and I'll get back to you. Just hang in 'til then if you can."

Brian turned to leave the room but stopped. He looked back at the two equines and said "If it looks like they might try to kill one of us, I'll be using this" he said, patting his M16. "I'll try my best to get them first."

###

“Lisa, just let me toss him in the drink” Jeffrey stated, staring a hole in the man fueling his vessel. “It won't take but a minute...” The lion hybrid had a devious smile on his face as he stood there.

“Jeff, cool it” she replied, standing by while Peter Kashnikov filled the tanks on his boat, a Donzi 38ZF. “If he can help find William and Tom, let's try to be civil.” She looked over at the feline hybrid and smiled. “There's plenty of time afterwards for such things as that.”

Lisa strolled over to where Peter was overseeing the fueling of his craft. “This is real nice for a broke ex-hotel owner” she commented, taking stock of his vessel. “Triple 300 horsepower Mercury outboards, eh? Where are you going in such a hurry?” she asked, looking at him with a smirk on her face.

Peter smiled as he looked up at the female hybrid. “Lisa, you never know when you might need to make a quick run to...*someplace*” he replied, smiling that crooked smile of his. “It will do about 55 knots wide open but I will not run that fast today. I must run at a reduced speed to conserve fuel.”

“Yeah, about that” she stated, crossing her arms. “Do you know how much you're costing me? 300 gallons of premium grade gasoline isn't cheap, buddy boy. You better make it worth my time and money.” She was looking to see if he had understood her fully.

“Lisa, I realize you do not like me because I am a friend of your ex-husband” The Russian replied to her. “Please trust me, my lady. I will try my best to find this William and his partner Tom.”

“OK then. Here's the frequencies we'll be on” she said, giving Peter a list of the radio frequencies. “If you do find something, just call me. We need the Coast Guard there if we actually do find them.”

Peter nodded as he taped the frequencies next to his radio.

###

William was taking in the situation he was in. He was in a room adjacent to his own, standing up with just his boxers on. His wrist bands were connected to cables that held his arms straight out from his body. They weren't under a heavy tension, thankfully but the mere fact that the bands were digging into the heels of his hands meant this wasn't comfortable at all. His body was already sore from what had been going on for a while.

He was watching his 'coach' pour his fifth cup of what he guessed was Saki. The slight Asian man was smoking like a chimney, having gone through a pack of smokes in the last few hours. He was still holding that laminated 3' long bamboo stick that he was using as a 'coaching tool.'

“William” the 'coach' said in perfect mid-western English, turning to face the hybrid. “You will tell Mr. Monroe what he needs to hear. Once you have done that, you will be taken back to your family.” With that said, he hit William in the left deltoid muscle. That had to be the 10th time he had hit that *exact* spot.

Ross was sitting behind a desk at the other end of the room, reading an old issue of 'Outdoorsman' magazine. He was grinning at William, relishing the punishment that the hybrid was taking.

“You know what?” William hissed at his tormentor, trying to keep himself under control. “When I get out of this, I'll twist your head off *slowly*, ya little *shit!*” William was getting very tired of this. It wasn't the fact that this man was hitting him that was pissing the hybrid off. It was the fact that he knew exactly *where* to hit him for maximum effect.

“Tell Mr. Monroe what he needs to hear” the Asian man said again, hitting William in the other deltoid. “I will stop when you do so.”

The 'coach' continued to keep up his rhythm of speaking and hitting William for quite some time that afternoon.

###

Lonny and Tonya were making the crossing to the Bahamas, running as fast as possible with the seas. The trip so far was going smoothly by Lonny's standards.

“Honey, are you sure you're going the right way?” she asked, looking around at the ocean. Although Tonya's family were ocean-going people, she couldn't navigate her way out of a swimming pool.

“I'm on the right heading” he replied, pointing to the compass and GPS device. “We'll be there in an hour or so.” He looked to confirm his heading before advancing the throttles a little. “Maybe less than an hour if the water stays this smooth” he commented, watching the horizon.

“What are we going to do when we get there?” Tonya asked, taking another Dramamine tablet. She was getting a little green around the edges from the seas.

“We'll look for his boat, that's what” Lonny replied, trimming the outboards for better speed. “It's too distinctive to hide, if you ask me.” He was keeping his eyes on the water, scanning for trouble. He knew it was only a matter of time, now. Ross would pay him what was owed to him.

###

William was still standing, but he was hanging his head by now. His tormentor, who he had learned was named Kenji, had beaten the hybrid quite thoroughly in the last few hours. The 'coach' was careful enough not to leave a mark, hitting him in the big muscle groups only. His body was in incredible pain from his torture and his hands had went almost numb, the circulation being cut off by the bands around his wrists being pulled at.

“I don't know what to tell you” William wheezed out, trying to keep his composure. “I *never* memorized those damned numbers! They were changed too often!” He looked at Kenji as he finished what he was going to say. “Your *ass is mine* when I get out of this.” He was looking a hole in the Asian man, ears laid back.

The 'coach' looked at his watch as he stubbed out the butt of his smoke. “Ross, we are done for the day” Kenji said, lighting up another cigarette as he stared at the big hybrid. “He needs a few days to rest before we coach him again.” The tormentor then turned and left the room, still holding his coaching tool.

Ross laid down his magazine, got up from his chair and wandered over to the hybrid. He was looking at William with an evil look on his face. “It's just you and me now, buddy. Here's what I think about this” he said, punching William in the ribs. This had an immediate effect on the hybrid, causing him to slump down a little as he tried to catch his breath. Before William could avoid it, the man punched him in the muzzle, busting his lower lip.

Ross smiled as he said “How do you like...” He never finished that sentence, having been struck in the back of the neck by Brian's rifle butt.

“How do you like *me* now?” Brian spat out at the fallen tough guy on the floor. He gave him a kick in the ribs for good measure. “Good thing I saw Kenji leave the room. Come on, buddy. Let's get you patched up” he said to the hybrid, unhooking the cables and helping him to the doctor's room. “I'll be back for your ass” he said over his shoulder to Ross as they left the room.

###

Lisa was sitting in the cockpit of her craft, watching the ocean as she ate her dinner. It had been a long, unproductive day for the reluctant team. John was sitting on the cockpit sole, sipping on the remains of a soda and Peter was still in his craft tied up along side, talking to someone on the radio. Jeff and Samantha were still making their sandwiches in the galley.

“Let's go on to the Bahamas, maybe Port Lucaya. It is the closest big port to Florida” Peter suggested as he climbed back onto the Hatteras. “We can anchor offshore and look around in the morning.” He smiled a devious smile as he said “I have many friends in Port Lucaya.”

“You may be onto something there” Sam said, munching on some potato chips. “It'll be too late by the time we get to port to do much. I know a great place for breakfast near the harbor master's office.”

“OK, we'll go on to Port Lucaya” Lisa said, looking to see if everybody was in agreement.

###

“This is going to leave a scar, I'm afraid” Patricia commented as she finished sewing up William's busted lower lip. “Why didn't you dodge that punch?” she asked, examining the results her work. It was so hard to fix a lip that was *this* busted open.

“I didn't see it coming” William replied, making faces from the pain. The doctor had done her work without anesthetic, fearing it would react with that stuff Bernard was dishing out indiscriminately.

“We gotta get out of here” Brian said quietly, making sure nobody was in the hallway outside to overhear them. “He's gonna kill one of us before it's over, I just know. Castle's lost control.”

Dr. Gaines was cleaning up William's muzzle that had gotten covered in blood with a wet washrag. She kept thinking about her first meeting with the huge hybrid. “William, when you were under the influence of that drug, you kept calling me Lori. *Who is Lori?*” she asked as she wiped down his neck.

William got a sad look on his muzzle as he looked at the doctor. “She was my wife. I lost her to a burst aneurysm about 9 years ago.” He sniffed and wiped a tear from his eye. “Your voice sounds *exactly* like hers. You must be from the same area of Tennessee that she was from.” The equine hybrid wiped some more tears from his eyes.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked" she said, giving him a hug. "I *am* from Tennessee, a little place called Pikeville."

William nodded as he said softly "I know where that is. Lori was from Spencer." He looked up to see that Patricia was crying, thinking about home.

She then looked at him and said "We *have* to get out of here."

"Guys, I have to go see about Ross" Brian said, looking out in the hallway again. "Keep a low profile while I take care of that scumbag." He turned and quickly left the room.

William sat there for quite a while before he asked "Why don't we just walk out of here? Who's gonna stop us? I don't think Brian will." He looked at her to see what she would say to that.

"Look out the window" she replied, putting her supplies away. "This place has three armed guards around it." She looked over to see that William was looking out the window at the area beyond. "Brian is the only one inside that has a rifle. Wanna try throwing rocks at those guys?"

Brian made his reappearance in the room with a smile. "Daniel kicked Ross out of the house for a few days. I reminded him that *he had said* not to leave a mark on you. Castle is pissed at Ross now."

As William nodded to this information, Brian lost his smile. "I have to put you back in your room now. Dinner's on it's way so you'd better eat well. You need nourishment and rest, buddy."

###

"Lonny, are you sure about this?" Tonya asked, watching him tie off to an anchorage. "Won't we get in trouble?" She was looking around with the binoculars to see if anyone was coming.

"No, we'll be OK here for the night." he replied, checking to see that they were secured properly. "The port operator might try to charge us for tying up in the morning, though." He sat back down in the cockpit and took the binoculars from his girlfriend. "I'll see'n if I can locate that boat" he stated, scanning the berths.

After a few moments, a smile spread across his face. "There she is; the 'Better Daze' with that *son of a bitch* Ross boardin' her. Let's go pay a visit" Lonny said, setting the binoculars down.

###

Lisa was making sure that her craft was tied off properly for the night. Jeff had already checked the lines but she was double-checking just to make sure. As she stepped into the aft cockpit, she saw Sam scanning the port with her binoculars.

“Anything interesting?” she asked, looking around herself. She hadn't been here in years, ever since her and John had divorced. In a way it was bringing back some painful memories for her.

“Naw, just a bunch of boats out there, that's all” she responded to Lisa as she stopped to look at one boat in particular. “There is one boat that does catch my attention” she commented, still looking at it. “I think that one over there” pointing off towards a Donzi cuddy cabin fisherman a few anchorages away. “I think that one belongs to John R Edwards.”

“John R Edwards?” Lisa said, looking kind of confused. “Who's he?”

“You know-he owns 'John R's” the flaxen-haired female replied. “It's that Cajun restaurant about a mile from the marina. Best breakfast in town, as far as I'm concerned.” She looked at the craft some more before she lowered her binoculars and looked at her friend. “What would he be doing over here during the week? Shouldn't he be working?”

“Don't worry about it. Let's go tell the men that they'll have to sleep on the couches” the female hybrid said, motioning towards the salon. “I'm sure Jeff must be close to having dinner ready.” the two females opened the cabin door and stepped inside.

###

William was finishing his dinner of steak and lobster, loaded mashed potatoes and broccoli. He had to admit that if it had been different circumstances, the feline might be a good person to know. As he picked at the broccoli, Mr. Castle walked into the room carrying a bottle of red and a bottle of white wine.

“I have come to see what Ross did to you this afternoon” Daniel announced, setting the bottles on the table. “Let's have a look” he added, tipping William's head up. “That does look nasty” he commented, examining the damaged lip.

He sat down across from William and smiled at him. "Ross has been banished from the house because of this regrettable incident" the feline said, opening the white wine. "Would you care for a glass?" he asked, pouring himself some wine.

"No thanks, I don't drink" William replied as he picked up his glass of water. "I never was a drinking man. I don't care for wine, either. Sorry" he stated as he sipped his water.

William leaned forward and looked the feline square in the eyes. "You have Tom's key's, right?" he asked, never once looking away. He was trying to read his body language.

"I have his belongings, if that's what you're asking" Mr. Castle replied, sipping his wine.

"Why don't you send somebody to the marina parking lot with the keys" William suggested. "Have them look for a metallic beige Ford Taurus rental car. My bag's in the trunk. I *can* help you then."

The feline smiled a little as he replied "If I can spare the manpower, I will do that for you. Regrettably I must tell you that this will not delay your coaching sessions. Day after tomorrow, Mr. Suzuki *will* resume coaching you." The feline got up and left the room, giving Brian a nod as he walked by him.

The guard waited until he was sure the feline was out of earshot. "If I thought I could have gotten away with it" Brian said, getting up off of his chair, "I would have shot him in the back just now." The bear picked up the chain and reached in his pocket for something.

"Give me a hand here, will ya?" he asked, handing the end of the chain to William. He showed the equine a *very small* black zip-tie. "Hold that bracelet up to the lock" he motioned, using the tie to connect the lock to the band. "If you need to, you can break that *real easy*. They're getting complacent and that's a good thing for us. They'll *never* notice this."

"Thanks, Brian" William responded, making sure to be careful about tugging on the chain. "Maybe tomorrow?" he asked, giving him a questioning look.

"Let's see what tomorrow brings" the bear hybrid replied as he left the room.