

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, Cathy Wirges, Detective Stan Osterman, Elgin Atwater, Nana Déby, Jose Delgado and Ross Monroe are the property of Ray C. Stankewitz.

The Trap

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The Trap

Chapter 16

“The Morning After”

“Brian? Are you awake?” Sam asked, peeking into the hospital room occupied by the bear hybrid. He appeared to be sleeping so she decided to come back later.

“Don't leave” he responded, opening his eyes and smiling at her. “I'm awake if you want to visit.” He reached out and used the controls to put the head of the bed up.

As Samantha sat down next to his bed, he reached out and held her hand. “Thanks for being there when we needed you” he said as a tear rolled down his cheek.

“You can thank Peter for that” she replied. “If his GPS device hadn't failed, we wouldn't have been there.”

“How are the others?” he asked, trying to get comfortable. His arm injury was painful so he was having trouble finding a way to lay without his arm hurting.

Sam tried to smile as she told him “William just got out of surgery and Lisa is in recovery. The other lady just had a minor injury.” It was obvious that Sam was still upset about all of this.

Brian nodded at the information she had given him. “As long as everyone got out of that hell-hole OK, that's all that counts.”

“Yeah, as long as they all got out of there” Sam agreed, looking at the bear hybrid.

###

Peter Kashnikov was sitting in a room at the Coast Guard headquarters in Miami Beach, facing a pair of Coast Guard officers.

“Mr. Kashnikov, you are trying to tell us you have no idea how those firearms got on your craft?” The Commander was still looking at the report that had been taken at the scene. “Well? I'm waiting for an answer” he stated, crossing his arms.

“I do not know, I am telling you. *Maybe* they brought the weapons with them” he suggested, trying to remain cool and calm.

“There was a small arsenal on that vessel!” the Lieutenant blurted out, looking at the report. “There were 17 AK-47 rifles and nearly 10,000 rounds of ammunition on board among other things!”

The Commander was shaking his head at the notion that 5 people toted that kind of firepower to the vessel while under fire. “I'm not buying your version of the story, Mr. Kashnikov but I'm telling you this; we're keeping an eye on you for a while.”

Before he could say anything in his defense, the two officers left the room. Peter got up and went out into the hallway to shout after them “Will you take me back to Fort Lauderdale? Please?”

###

John had been up for way too long, sitting by Lisa's bed. She had made it through the surgery to repair her shoulder but she had not woken up yet. “Lisa, wake up” her ex-husband said softly, still holding her hand. “Lisa, I'm here. I love you and I missed you” he said, wiping the tears from his eyes.

A nurse came in and checked her vital signs. She then took a moment to look at the bandages on the hybrid's shoulder. John had to wait outside while all of this was going on. As he stood there in the hallway, Tom walked up and stood by him.

“I guess William's OK” the smallish man said, looking down at the floor. “That was a hellish firefight for not being a war zone” he added, sticking his

hands in his pockets as he turned to face John. "I hope Lisa's gonna be OK. She shouldn't have gotten in the line of fire like that" he stated as he wiped a tear out of the corner of his eye.

John nodded as he replied "That's my Lisa. She jumps in with both feet...err... I mean both hooves and just goes for broke. That's how she took me to the cleaners when I divorced her." Mr. Parseghian was fighting back tears as he told Tom "I would give up the rights to everything just to have her back. I didn't realize just how much she meant to me."

"I guess we all make mistakes, don't we?" Tom commented as he stood there and looked at William lying in his bed.

"Hurting her was the biggest mistake I ever made" was all that John could say, wiping the tears that were flowing from his eyes.

###

William became vaguely aware that he was lying down on what must be a bed of some sort. He was sore from head to toe, especially his right leg. "Am I still in that house?" he thought, trying to get up. He could feel something on his right arm so he slowly opened one eye to see that he had an IV in that arm and this looked like it might be a hospital room.

Looking around, he saw a call button on the controls for his bed. He smiled, pressed it and laid his head back on his pillow.

"Mr. Delaney? Did you want something?" the nurse asked, coming in to his room to stand by his bed.

"Yeah" he replied. "Where am I?" William felt that this was enough to know for now.

"You're in Miami Beach at the Mount Sinai Medical Center" she replied, checking him over. "How are you feeling?" she asked, looking at his records.

"I'm really hurting" was his reply as he winced in pain. "What happened to me?" he queried as he tried to sit up. He discovered this was too painful so he gave up that notion.

"You were shot in the leg, Mr. Delaney" the nurse said to him. "If the people that were caring for you hadn't been as good as they were, you would have bled to death from a severed artery."

William winced at that information. It was a good thing that Dr. Gaines was with them or he would have been a goner for sure.

“How about Lisa?” he asked, preparing himself for the possible bad news.

“She's across the hall” the nurse said as she checked his wound. “She is still unconscious, I have to tell you. We hope she will come out of it in a few hours.”

He nodded as he took in the information. “Please let me know when she wakes up?” he asked.

“We will let you know” the nurse responded as she left the room.

###

Samantha was sitting with LTJG Cox, going over the report that she had made related to the events on the stricken vessel.

“I read through your report and I have to say that there is one discrepancy that I have to clear up” the CG officer stated. “My helicopter crew says that they observed two flares go up and you say that you only fired one. Care to clarify this for me?” Sam could see that he was confused by what he was reading.

“I'm telling you, I only fired one flare” she replied to him. “The gun wouldn't open to reload it so we thought we were doomed.”

“OK, if that's what you want to report, that's up to you” Lt. Cox said as he made some notes. “I'll go back and talk with my aircrew.” He got up and left her sitting there, pondering what she had just heard.

###

Jose Delgado, one of the ward's orderlies was working on some paperwork when he caught some motion out of the corner of his eye. Looking up, all he could say was “Dios Mio!” He then dropped his paperwork and headed in that direction.

“Mr. Delaney! Get back in bed right now!” the orderly yelled as he made his way towards the huge hybrid. “You've already been warned once, Homey! Get in bed *NOW!*” Jose shouted, trying to get his attention. All the orderly could see was this huge equine hybrid giving him a dismissing wave as he crossed the hall to see about his cousin.

“John, is she awake yet?” William asked as he came into Lisa's room. His cousin's ex-husband looked up at the huge equine and shook his head 'no'. “Damn, how long is she going to stay out?” he asked no one in particular as he sat down and got his IV bag on a stand pulled over to his chair.

Mr. Delgado finally made his way to the room, sounding slightly out of breath. “Mr. Delaney...did you *not* hear me?” the burly orderly asked, crossing his arms as he stared at William. “I'm tired of this, guy. Don't make me tie you down to your bed” he said to William as he was shaking his head.

“Yeah, yeah. You and who's army's gonna tie *me* down?” the hybrid retorted, giving the orderly a hard stare. “After what I've been through, you ain't shit! Go get your army and meet me in the hall in 10 minutes” he said as he turned to look at his cousin again.

“You know, I believe you think you could take us, Homey!” the orderly stated, flexing his hands as he cracked his knuckles. The orderly was giving William some hard stares of his own.

“Did you serve?” William asked, looking over at the orderly.

“Yeah, medic with the Army Rangers. What of it, Holmes?” Jose retorted.

“Well, I served too. I was USMC Black Ops. Ever heard of our detachment?” William said nonchalantly.

“Black Ops?!? *Oh Hell*, you can just stay right *f***ing* where you are, Homey! I won't mess with you!” the orderly blurted out as he turned and left. William could hear the man telling the others on staff just to stay clear of the big hybrid and that William was a crazed killing machine. John and William just smiled at one another over that outburst from the orderly.

“Hey you two...you woke me up” Lisa said quietly, reaching up to hold her head. “Where am I?” she asked as she opened her eyes and looked around.

“Geez, you had us worried!” William blurted out as John began to cry. “You've been out for a few days now!” He leaned over and gave her a kiss on the cheek. “You're in Mount Sinai hospital in Miami Beach.”

“How long have you been here?” she asked her ex, looking at him with one eyebrow raised. “John, you look like something the cat dragged in that the kittens wouldn't eat. Haven't you gotten any sleep?”

“Never mind me, how do you feel?” he asked, reaching out and holding her hand.

“Like I've been through a meat grinder” was her reply. Lisa looked to see that her shoulder was all bandaged up. “Did they say how bad it was?” she asked as she reached up to touch it, only to wince in pain.

“You'll never play tennis again” John replied as he wiped the tears from his eyes.

“No loss, I never could before” Lisa retorted, as a hint of smile was crossing her muzzle. “Go tell the nurses I need something for the pain” she asked, wincing in pain again from her shoulder.

“I'll go tell them” William said, getting up from this chair and leaving the room.

Lisa looked at her ex-husband for a moment before she spoke. “John, I had this crazy dream that you said you'd give up everything to get me back. Kinda crazy, huh?” She was looking to see how he would respond to that.

“I would give up everything” he replied as he held her hand. “I realized that you were the only person that I ever really loved. I really screwed up when I cheated on you and I wish that there was some way I could erase what I've done.”

“John...I...uh...I don't know what to tell you. I still have these mixed up feelings for you. My heart tells me to love you and to hate you at the same time.” Lisa was fighting back tears of her own as she spoke to him. “I don't know if I can let you back into my life just yet. I don't know what to tell you...” She turned her head away from him as she began to cry.

“Maybe we could try dating and work up from there” John suggested as he wiped his tears away. He was waiting for her answer as she turned to look at him.

“John, let me think about this, please?” she asked, gripping his hand tightly. “I promise you I *will* think about it.”

###

William had made his way to the nurse's station and leaned over against the counter, winded from being out of bed too long. The head nurse, an older female with graying hair looked up to see him standing there.

“Mr. Delaney, What are you doing out of bed?!?” she blurted out, surprised to see him walking at all. “Get back into bed right now before I get Mr. Delgado to put you back in bed.” She was giving him a stare that would melt steel.

“You're on your own, lady” Mr. Delgado said from the end of the counter, shaking his head as he looked up. “I ain't messin' with *that* home boy.”

“I'm not here to cause trouble.” William said, looking over at a wheelchair. “Could I sit down?” he asked, motioning in that direction. The nurse nodded as she kept her eye on him.

He sat down and took a deep breath. “I came here because my cousin said she wanted something for the pain.” He sat there for a few more moments, wincing from the pain in his injured leg.

“Are you OK, Mr. Delaney?” the nurse asked, reaching over to check his pulse. He was shaking his head at her question.

“No, I'm hurting. Real bad” he replied. “I may heal up quickly because I'm a hybrid but I still hurt.” He looked over at the orderly and asked “Will you wheel me back to my room?”

“Sure, Homey. I'll wheel you back” Mr. Delgado said as he sat his paperwork down. “Maybe the nurse here could get you something for the pain” he suggested as he pushed the hybrid back to his room.

The nurse just shook her head as she watched the two men go off down the hallway. “Ex-military...they're all head cases...”