

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 17

“Solace For The Heart”

“William, I don't know about this” Tom said to his partner. “We've been down this road before. Maybe Mr. Wortham should pass on this one.” The smallish man was looking around at the other people gathered for the government auction today.

“I know, I feel the same way” the huge hybrid said as he put his sunglasses back on. “I liked that vintage Cigarette 38 we saw a few weeks ago.” He was looking around at the other bidders, trying to size them up.

William was making sure that he had his code book with him as they waited for the bids to be opened. “It's a good thing we didn't have to try to get rooms down here” he commented. “Lisa was nice enough to put us up at her house for a while. Maybe we should take her out to dinner to pay her back” he suggested as the bids were opened.

The auctioneer checked the bids over twice before he motioned at the pair to step forward. “You won the bid” the auctioneer said, smiling at them. “You need to see that young lady over there to arrange payment” he added, pointing to a lady at the next table.

“Tom, you got that letter of credit with you?” the hybrid asked as they went to the table indicated to arrange funds transfer for their employer.

“Yeah, right here” he said, holding the envelope out for his partner to see.

“Well, this did save Mr. Wortham a ton of cash, even if he has to do some minor work to it” William commented as they stood in line. “\$329 thousand is cheaper than \$744 thousand any day.”

While they waited, William pulled out his cell phone and made a call. The phone rang several times before a familiar voice answered.

“Samantha” the voice on the other end answered. “How may I help you, Mr. Delaney?”

“Aw damn, caller ID again, Huh?” he replied as smile crossed his muzzle.

“Yeah, I stored it the last time you called me” she admitted. “Well, what do you need?” she asked. William was sure he could hear her smiling on his end.

“Is that slip with the lift still available?” he asked, crossing his fingers for luck.

“Yeah, William, it's yours. When do you want me to bring the Fountain 47 up?” she said in a cheery tone. She knew that this would mean a possible servicing contract for her marina.

“It will be available as soon as we transfer funds” he stated as Tom began to get the paperwork filled out. “Let me call you with a firm date, then.”

“OK, I'll be waiting to hear from you. Tell Tom I miss him” she asked as they said their goodbyes.

William smiled that contented smile of his as he put his cell phone away. He nudged Tom as he said “Your better half says she misses you.”

“Geez, William. Do you have to do that in public?” Tom retorted, looking up from his paperwork. “We haven't set a date yet, OK?” He was giving the hybrid a perturbed stare. “When we're married, you can say that...” He just shook his head and mumbled something as he worked on the paperwork.

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Brian was sweeping off the sidewalk in front of the restaurant before the customers would start arriving. He was making sure that everything was in it's place as he cleaned up out front.

“Brian?” the melodic voice called out. “Are you just about done?” Nana looked out through the doors of the kitchen area to see him walk past the front

windows. She smiled as she watched her partner straighten up the planter by the doors before he came inside.

“Are you staring at me again?” he asked as he made his way through the dining room to where she was standing. He stopped and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

“I will always stare at you” she replied, giving him a hug. “You made a way for me to get out of that hell-hole and become a person again. I am grateful you thought of me that day.”

He kissed her again as he went through the doors to put the broom away. Once in the kitchen, the aromas he detected were almost too good. He could make out several things being cooked by the smell alone.

As he lifted a lid to taste what was being prepared, Nana came and scolded him for it. “Shoo, you moocher! Get out of my kitchen! You have work out front to do!” With that, he took his sports coat off the hanger and put it on.

“You better be ready because I'm opening the doors” he told the smiling Sudanese cook as he left the kitchen.

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William and Tom drove up in front of Lisa's home to find no cars in the driveway. “I hope she left us a key” the hybrid said as he checked the hiding place. “Yeah, here it is” he said as he prepared to open the door. The pair was surprised by the door swinging open about that time.

“William, Tom. Please come in” John Parseghian beckoned, stepping aside for them to enter. “Lisa's not home yet but she called a little while ago to tell me she was on her way.” John showed them to the guest bedrooms so they could put their bags away. “I have cold drinks on the patio, if you'd like one.”

William looked at John kind of strangely as he asked “Non-alcoholic, I hope?”

“You're right as always” he replied. “I quit drinking after that trip to the Bahamas. I *had* to change to get Lisa to take me back.”

“You better not be drinking” Lisa said as she came through the front hall. “You remember our agreement, don't you?” she reminded John as she put her purse on the table.

“I'll close the front door” Tom stated as he went towards the door.

“No, I have it” Patricia said as she closed it behind herself. “We had fun shopping today” she commented as she went over to William. He picked her up and spun in a circle as he hugged and kissed her.

“And how are you, Mrs. Delaney?” he asked as he looked down at her with that contented smile. She reached up and planted another kiss on his muzzle.

“I'm just fine now, Mr. Delaney” she replied as she kissed him again.

John walked over to Lisa and hugged her. “I'm glad you're home” he said, giving her a kiss. “I'll never be stupid enough to hurt you again” he said as he kissed her again.

“Why don't you guys get a room!” Tom blurted out, shaking his head at the goings on in the living room. Everyone laughed over that statement.

“Yeah, yeah. Laugh at my expense” he said, trying not to laugh himself.

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Evening had arrived to find the three couples finishing dinner. They had enjoyed a stellar meal at Nana's Place, the newest restaurant in Fort Lauderdale.

“This fresh tuna steak is as good as I remember it” William stated as he loosed his belt a notch. I'm glad that Nana and Brian opened this place.”

“It doesn't seem like a year has went by” Lisa said as she picked at the dregs on her plate. She looked at John and smiled as she said “I'm glad I let you back into my life. I really missed you when you weren't there.” She was having to dab at a tear in her eye as she was saying that.

“I still feel bad about what I did” he retorted as he sipped his water. “I'm just glad that you did think about it when I asked you to.”

This is not the end, but a new beginning for our four couples.