

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

Copyright© 2007 All Rights Reserved

No reposting without permission

The Trap

Chapter 2

“The Meeting”

William thoroughly disliked it when his partner drove them around as Tom had never fully believed in a brake pedal and its proper usage.

“I’ll just close my eyes so I won’t see it happen” the huge hybrid said, bracing himself for certain impact.

“It’s OK, I missed him by a mile” Tom said as he swerved to miss another local driver, apparently not going fast enough.

“I’ll take your word for that” William replied as he braced himself just a little better.

“You’re really scared, aren’t you?” the smallish man asked.

He noted that the huge hybrid was gritting his teeth, eyes squeezed shut with a death grip applied to the grab handle by the door. Tom’s partner didn’t verbally reply to that question but just nodded his head in the affirmative. William was slightly relieved when he sensed that his partner had slowed their diabolical pace some.

“Better?” Tom asked, making a turn onto 15th Street.

“Thank you” William replied, finally opening his eyes to see where they were going.

“It’s not hard to find, buddy. The marina is at the end of the road” the humanoid said, slowing down.

He slid their rental car into a parking space and opened the windows just a crack before turning the engine off. As they started walking over to the office to ask directions, William spied a nearly identical rental car as theirs, parked just three spaces over. 'Have to remember not to try to drive that one' he thought to himself, smiling at the thought of Tom trying to get into the car with no luck to be had. That would be a priceless photographic moment.

The pair had almost gotten to the marina office when they were hailed by a voice from across the yard.

"Mr. Delaney?" the voice questioned.

William looked around to spy a rather heavily muscled man standing by a boat that matched the description of the one that they were looking for. This 'gentleman' had quite an unusual appearance, to say the least. He was obviously well past his forty's but he was not fat by any means. He looked more like a California surfer crossed with a muscle builder with his sun bleached, shoulder length blonde hair and deeply tanned skin. Once the pair was within comfortable distance, the man spoke again.

"Hello, I'm Ross Monroe. I was asked to meet you here" he said, extending a hand in greeting.

"William Delaney" the large equine hybrid said to Mr. Monroe, shaking his hand. "This is Tom Hughes, my associate" William added, indicating towards the small humanoid.

"Nice to meet you" Tom said, shaking Mr. Monroe's hand. The blonde-haired man cleared his throat as he gestured towards the boat in question.

"This is the powerboat you came to see. Feel free to look her over but I regret that there is one small problem." The pair now had his undivided attention. "It will be several days before we have the registration in hand, gentlemen. The marina won't allow us to launch her until we have her properly registered."

William looked over at his partner with one eyebrow raised. Tom nodded and William looked back at Mr. Monroe.

"That will be fine with us. It'll give us more time to check the craft over and maybe do a little sight-seeing in the meantime."

William gave the man his best disarming smile as Mr. Monroe nodded and held out his hand again.

“William, I’ll call you when she’s in the water, then.” William shook Mr. Monroe’s hand, gave him a card with his cell phone number on it and then excused himself to head towards the powerboat with Tom hot on his heels.

The pair had climbed the portable steps to the deck and stepped down into the cockpit, pretending to be looking at the boats interior.

“William, something’s wrong” Tom said quietly, watching Mr. Monroe climb into his car that was parked across the lot.

“Yeah, I agree with you. Something stinks” the equine replied.

Tom turned to look at his partner as he asked “What do we do now?”

The hybrid thought about that question for a while before he answered. Slipping into the pilot’s seat, he reached out and touched the steering wheel, feeling the grain of the leather beneath his fingers.

“Tom, let’s run the registration and check her over closely. If we find one thing wrong, let’s get the hell out of here.”

Tom nodded in agreement as he waved at the over-age surfer driving out of the marina parking lot.

“OK Tom, let’s get busy” William said, opening the cabin hatch and squeezing down into the cabin that had been designed for people much shorter than he. Tom wasted no time in opening the engine hatches and getting down between two of the engines, beginning to give the power plants the once over.

###

With their initial inspection over, the pair found a local sandwich shop at the suggestion of the marina’s mechanic. They had needed some tools to check the lubricants in the trio of propulsion units and the mechanic on duty had been more than happy to help them. As they sat down to eat, the mechanic came through the door of the eatery.

“Well, if it isn’t the hybrid and the shy one again” she said, trying not to laugh. “So...how’re the sandwiches, gentlemen?” she asked, leaning against a chair at their table.

William smiled as he asked “Why don’t you have lunch with us? We would appreciate your take on that boat.”

The flaxen-haired female nodded as she replied “Thank You. I think I will” and strode off to the counter.

The two men waited while the female mechanic ordered her meal and paid for it. After a few minutes she returned with a positively gargantuan sandwich and a soda. As she sat down with them, not giving the men a chance to stand, she introduced herself.

“The name’s Sam. That’s short for Samantha. Samantha Tuttle.”

“William Delaney and Tom Hughes, at your service” the hybrid said, giving Samantha a smile and nod. The small humanoid just smiled and nodded.

“He doesn’t say much, does he?” Sam asked, pointing at Tom.

“You must forgive him, he’s shy around women in general” William replied, taking a bite out of his sandwich.

“I am not!” Tom shot back. “I’m just shy around pretty women, that’s all.”

The female smiled as she said “Oh stop that. I’ll have to warn you that flattery will get you everywhere.”

Sam felt herself blush heavily from Tom’s compliment. It had been a long time since she had heard an honest sounding compliment out of a male.

The hybrid casually sized up the mechanic as she ate. Sam wasn’t a soft woman by any means; her taut muscles showed distinctly under her tanned skin. The hybrid couldn’t help but notice the bottom half of a tattoo peeking out from under her right sleeve.

“Samantha, would I be too bold as to ask if that’s a United States Marine Corps tattoo on your arm?” William asked.

She smiled at the equine hybrid as she replied. “Yup, it is. I was a LCAC mechanic.”

William nodded as he thought back to his military days. He had spent many hours on a LCAC doing his job for Uncle Sam.

“Excuse me” Tom spoke up; “Would somebody tell me what’s an LCAC?”

Samantha and William both chuckled as she replied “LCAC stands for Landing Craft, Air Cushioned. It’s a big, honking hovercraft. Burns about a thousand gallons of fuel an hour when it’s running.”

“Oh...” Tom said, taking in that bit of information.

William looked up to see a smile on the female mechanic’s face. “You’ll have to excuse Tom again. He was an Army regular.” He looked over to see his partner scowling to which he just smiled.

William thought he had better speak up. “Sam, what can you tell us about that powerboat?”

She smiled as she picked at her sandwich.

“That particular Fountain 47 was delivered new by our marina a few years back. Those 9.3 Liter Lamborghini V12 power plants with the surface-piercing drives are a total custom installation. It has 2,400 horsepower total and I have never, I mean *never*, had it wide open on an inspection run. Just way too scary, it you ask me.”

She looked at the two men to see if they had grasped what she had told them before she spoke again.

“I have seen 115 mph on the GPS speedometer, however with plenty of throttle left.”

The two men just looked at each other in amazement as Samantha continued.

“It was sold to a new owner about a year ago I think but the former owner tried to trailer it out of here a few months back. That’s why it’s sitting on bunkers in the lot. It’s a bit harder to steal if you can’t move it.”

“OK, that answers one question, at least” Tom commented, writing down some notes.

“It’s in primo condition with very low hours” Sam added.

Before William could ask, the female mechanic anticipated his next question. “No, I won’t put in the water for you. It still needs to be registered.” Sam took a sip of her soda and continued. “That should be done in a day or two. It’s already been inspected and deemed seaworthy.”

The trio chatted for a while, getting to know one another. After a while, Samantha spied the clock on the wall and got up, excusing herself.

“Sorry gentlemen, I have to get back to work. If I stay away too long, my mechanics will burn the place down.”

William and Tom both bid her farewell and watched her leave the deli and get into her car, a vintage split window Volkswagen Beetle.

“What do you think?” Tom asked, watching her walk across the parking lot.

“I think you like her” William replied, getting up from the table. While Tom got himself a piece of key lime pie to go, the hybrid went outside and made a few phone calls. Ending the last call, he smiled a contented smile. So far, everything seemed to be going OK, everything considered.