

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

The Trap

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Chapter 4

“Dinner for Four”

William and Tom had spent a little more time with William's cousin Lisa before leaving the hotel. They were currently browsing around in a local men's store, looking for a shirt and tie for Tom.

“How could you forget to bring a shirt and tie to go with your suit?” the hybrid asked, looking for a tie that would work with a white shirt and Tom's dark blue suit. He held up several, trying to find that perfect one.

“How about this one?” Tom said, holding up a tie that even a blind man wouldn't wear. His partner squinted his eyes in a pained way as he shook his head at his partner.

“Tom, put that one back. It's so ugly that you'd have to burn it to make it look better. Here, this one's perfect” William said, handing his partner a tie in muted blues and black. “Now you're set for this evening. Let's get back to the motel and get ready.”

“Aren't we getting ready too early? We don't have to be there until 7pm or so” Tom commented as he paid for his purchases.

The hybrid paid for his new tie and replied “I don't think so. We have to deal with commute traffic both ways. It's the middle of the week, remember?”

“Yeah, I guess you're right” Tom said as he got into the passenger side of the car. William squeezed into the driver's seat and backed out of the parking space, headed towards their motel.

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“Did you hear back on the registration?” William asked, brushing the lint off of his suit. He had already laid out his clothes and this was the last thing he would do before getting dressed. The hybrid was very picky about his clothes and how he looked.

“Yeah, I did. It's registered to the same person that was listed as the contact in that trade magazine. According to my source, the papers for it were issued today” Tom replied as he buffed his shoes.

“I guess that we can expect a call tomorrow or the next day, then” the hybrid commented as he began to get dressed.

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The two males finished dressing and then made their way back to the hotel. As they were parking their car, William noticed somebody hanging out in the corner of the hotel parking lot. He thought he recognized the man from earlier in the day.

“Tom, over there. You see him?” William said, turning off the engine. Tom nodded his head and took off his seatbelt. The hybrid gave his partner the hand sign for 'easy' and got out of the car, closing the door as quiet as possible. Tom followed his partner's lead, keeping his eyes on the man in the shadows.

It only took a few seconds for the pair to cover several aisles of parked cars and take cover behind a van, checking the figure in the bushes. As the man in the shadows turned to light a cigarette, Tom and William rushed him. They quickly shoved the man up against a wall where they could see who he was.

As the hybrid got a good look at the man, he realized who this was. “John?” the hybrid queried. “John Parseghian?” The hybrid was fairly sure about this man's identity.

“William?” the man retorted, a startled look on his face. “You *are* William Delaney, aren't you?” The man squinted to see the hybrid better. He was at a disadvantage as the light was coming over William's shoulder, hitting the man square in the face.

The hybrid let go of the man's jacket and turned towards his partner. William had a relieved look on his muzzle as he let the man stand up by himself

again. "This is John Parseghian, Lisa's ex-husband." Turning back towards John, he apologized.

"I'm sorry, John. I thought you were somebody that might have been following us, that's all." After a few seconds, William added "What *are* you doing out here, skulking around in the bushes?" The hybrid noted that Mr. Parseghian smelled like he had been drinking this evening.

John straightened his suit coat and said "I was just (hic) looking at my former hotel. She (hic) took it from me." It was becoming quite obvious that he was fairly drunk and in no condition to be out in public. Mr. Parseghian had slumped back against the wall for support, his knees being quite wobbly right now from too much liquor.

"Come on, you're coming with me" William said, putting his arm under John's and leading him towards the entrance. John wasn't putting up a fight over it, being too drunk to do so. As they approached the front entrance, William got the doorman's attention.

"Excuse me, could you help me out with Mr. Parseghian? He's drunk, I think" William said, helping the doorman to set John on a chair by the door. "Mr. Parseghian does look sauced for sure. I'll get Ms. Delaney" the doorman said, heading toward the back of the hotel.

Mr. Parseghian sat there quietly, trying to act sober but failing to do so miserably. Tom made sure he didn't fall over several times as they waited for Lisa to arrive. After a few moments, Ms. Delaney arrived accompanied by the doorman. She wasted no time in lecturing her ex-husband.

"John, what have you been told by the courts? You're to stay away from the hotel, my home and me! I have a good mind to call the police right now!" She spat out, scowling at the drunken form in the chair.

Her ex-husband looked up at her, tears streaming from his eyes. "You took my hotel from me. This was my life! It's all gone now..." he said, sobbing uncontrollably by now. It was apparent he wasn't a very good drunk by the way he was acting right now.

"If you hadn't cheated on me and then tried to kick me to the curb, you would *still* own the hotel, *You Bastard!*" Lisa spat back, crossing her arms defiantly. "It's my damn hotel now and don't you damn-well forget it!" She turned to the doorman and asked him to call for her limousine to take her ex-husband to his home. Before she turned to leave her ex, she gave him a directive; "Don't

you dare throw up in my limo or I'll use your sorry arse to clean up the mess!!”

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The trio started to walk towards the dining room when William spoke up. “You came down pretty hard on him, didn't you?” he asked his cousin. He could tell by the way she was walking that she was *pissed off*. Her hooves were sounding unusually loud as she strode along.

Lisa kept looking straight ahead as she said “He's been warned by the courts too many times. You know damned well I should have called the cops.” She turned her head and looked at the huge hybrid as she said “I dunno, William. I think I need my head examined. I still love that SOB in a warped sort of way.”

“Well, you were married to him for what, 20-something years, weren't you?” William asked as they arrived at their table. He pulled out the chair and held it for his cousin.

“18 years, although it felt like an eternity at the end. I knew he was cheating, I just didn't know it was with our head chef” she replied to the equine hybrid.

“I hope you fired the chef” Tom said, taking his seat and putting his napkin on his lap.

“Not at first” Lisa said, sipping her water. “I demoted her to line chef so when she complained I gave her the prep line duty. She told me she quit when I told her she was fired for poor performance.”

The two males smiled at that last piece of information. They sat and enjoyed the live music from the house jazz band for a few minutes as they looked at the menu. Lisa did take the time to point out the house specialties for them.

After a while, Tom's date came into view. It was none other than Samantha Tuttle, wearing a smart maroon slacks outfit. She was wearing her long flaxen hair down, cascading over her shoulders. Her smile was lighting up the room and her eyes sparkled.

“Well, if it isn't the hybrid, his cousin and the quiet one again!” she said as she stood by the table. The gentlemen stood up as Tom went and held Samantha's chair as she sat down. The small man was looking like he was

ready to have a coronary right now. He sat down and took a big drink of his water, trying to get his composure back. William and Lisa were both having to keep from laughing at Tom's reaction to his date.

Samantha reached over and put her hand on Tom's. "I take care of Lisa's boat for her. They conspired to ask me to go out with you so blame them." she said as she picked up the menu. She was smiling just a little as she picked up and began to read the menu. Tom was pointing at the two equine hybrids, mouth opening and closing with no words coming out.

"He doesn't say much" Samantha commented, looking over at the smallish man. "I hope he can dance" she added, smiling at her date.

"I..Uh...Oh Hell! Yeah, I can dance a little, Just don't expect Fred Astaire, OK?" he replied, getting another sip of his now-dwindling supply of water. "I'm pretty sure that William had something to do with this" he added, giving his partner a dirty look. The huge hybrid was trying to look innocent again, fighting to keep a smile off of his muzzle.

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Dinner was over with and the two couples were sitting near the dance floor, resting after a few fast numbers had been played. Tom was retying his shoes for the second time tonight.

"I can't believe how graceful you can dance" the humanoid commented to his partner. William looked over at Tom as he replied "My mom made me take dance lessons, guy. I was picked on by the bullies all through school because of that."

Tom was smiling, thinking of his partner getting picked on. He was going to make a comment to that effect when Lisa broke in.

"How would all of you like to go deep-sea fishing tomorrow" she proposed, smiling widely at the thought. She was happy when everyone agreed to her idea. "OK, then. We'll leave at 6 a.m. Tomorrow. Samantha can give you the directions to my boat slip."

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The two males had arrived at the designated slip to find Lisa already on board. "Are you going to gawk all day or are you going fishing?" she asked, giving her guests a huge smile.

As they stepped onto the craft, they were still in awe that Ms. Delaney could afford such a nice vessel. She motioned for them to go into the cabin to an awaiting continental breakfast. The two gentlemen were still agog about the richness of their surroundings that they didn't notice Samantha's arrival.

“Now neither one of them are saying anything” she commented, poking William in the ribs to get his attention. The hybrid looked to see that Ms. Tuttle had arrived.

“Oh...Good morning, Sam” he said, giving her a smile. “I'm sorry, I was just thinking how...elegant this is for a fishing boat” he commented, looking around some more.

“Yeah, it's very nice” Lisa said as she joined the others. “John and his former partner in the hotel owned this one before I married him. Part of the pre-nup was my half-stake in her. When we got divorced, this was a fringe benefit. His former partner is still mad at him.”

Lisa poured coffee for all and passed around the pasties. “It's a 60' Hatteras with twin 12V71 Detroit Diesels for power. Last check put it worth about \$350,000.”

Samantha smiled as she added “It's in excellent shape with all servicing done on her. We don't have to worry about getting back to port. No 'Gilligan's Island' stuff here. We could go out to the Bahamas and back with no problems at all.” She was literally beaming with pride over her maintaining the craft.

A feline hybrid wearing a captain's cap made his appearance at the door to the aft deck. “Are we ready?” he asked. Lisa nodded and he left to take them out to sea.

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Ross Monroe was standing in front of a large oak desk, trying not to appear nervous. He was facing his employer who was not pleased with what he had heard. The feline hybrid sitting on the other side of the desk had just shredded the papers that he was looking at and now he was glaring at the human across the desk.

“What do you mean, you haven't had the vessel launched” the feline said in a dangerous tone. “I don't want to hear what you haven't done. I wish to hear that it's in the water, you idiot!” The feline, a slender cheetah hybrid, got up from his perch and walked around to face the blond-haired man. “You will get

it in the water today! Do you understand?" he shouted, surprising Mr. Monroe.

"Yes Sir, Mr. Castle. I will get it in the water today, Sir" Ross said, trying to ignore his gut feeling to run like hell right now.

"That sounds like a military 'Sir Sandwich' to me! Get out of my sight, Idiot!" the feline spat out, returning to his chair. He smiled as the door closed behind Mr. Monroe.

Mr. Castle picked up his phone and dialed a number. After a few moments, the phone was answered by a man's voice. "Lonny here" the voice said in a southern drawl.

"This is Daniel" the feline began. "Have you located the accommodations of Mr. Delaney?" he asked, drumming his fingers on the desk top.

"I lost him last night, Sir. I'm scouting the area for his rental car right now" the voice on the other end informed him.

"See to it that you find out where he's staying" the feline said, hanging up the phone without saying goodbye.

The cheetah leaned back in his chair, rubbing his hands together. "I will get even with you, Mister Wortham. I *will* get even" he said, smiling an evil smile.