

The characters William Delaney, Thomas 'Tom' Hughes, John Wortham, Lisa Marie Delaney, Ross Monroe, John Parseghian, Daniel Castle, Lonny Edwards, Jeffrey Dodge, Roger Cook, James Daggett and Samantha 'Sam' Tuttle are the property of Ray C. Stankewitz.

The Trap

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The Trap

Chapter 5

"Gone Fishing"

The dark haired man with the graying beard was driving around in his black 2006 Pontiac GTO, searching for his mark. His facial features, dark eyes and ruddy complexion showed his Cajun heritage.

"How many sand beige Ford Taurus sedans can there be aroun' here?" he muttered, passing by another one in a shopping center parking lot.

He circled the block, pulled into the lot and cruised by, scrutinizing the vehicle in question.

"Nope, not that'n" he said to himself. This particular Ford Taurus had kid's toys in the back window. "I used to be able to find a 'gator hidin' anawheres. Now I can't find a lousy car"

He looked at his gas gauge, that was currently pointing to 'E'. "Better get some gas" he muttered as he pulled back out onto the street and accelerated away.

As Lonny Edwards drove along, he kept his eyes out for that particular car. He knew it would be easy to spot; a Taurus with Massachusetts plates. How hard could that be? Turning into a gas station, he pulled up to the pumps and got the nozzle out to fill his GTO. Smelling the aromas from a fast food restaurant across the street as he put the nozzle in the fill pipe, he noticed that he did feel a little hungry. Lonny had been driving for a few hours by now in search of that elusive rental car.

“A little fuel for the car an' a little fuel for me” he said to himself as he started to fill up his vehicle.

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“I think I hooked *another* damned shark” William said, fighting with his fishing rod. Whatever he had on the line, it was giving him some trouble. “Tom, you wanna back me up here, just in case?” he asked his partner as he pumped the rod to try and reel in his catch. Tom had almost been pulled overboard earlier by a large fish and the hybrid wasn't taking any chances.

“That's not a very big one, but it is a shark” the captain said, sitting up in the flybridge. “I'll back down slowly to help you, Sir” he added, shifting the boat's transmissions into reverse. “There, that should help” the feline lion hybrid said, keeping an eye on the action in the cockpit.

“Yeah, that's better” William commented, still working the rod and reel. “We must be in a school of them” he added, finally seeing his catch a few yards astern.

“William, just bring him up to the boat but don't try to land him” Lisa said, getting out a pair of shark gloves to protect her hands. “That's a pretty big Atlantic Sharpnose shark. That'll make a good meal. Nothing like fresh shark for dinner” she commented, opening the landing door on the stern.

The captain put the boat in neutral and came down to assist in landing the shark. He put on a similar pair of gloves and grabbed the steel leader on William's line. Within just a few seconds, Lisa and the feline had the fish in the largest livewell and made sure the lid was secured.

“There, that's taken care of. Now that we have dinner caught, why don't we have some lunch?” Lisa asked, smiling widely at her guests. It was a unanimous decision to eat, turned down by none on board.

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“What do you mean you can't put the boat in the water?” Mr. Monroe blurted out, staring at the assistant behind the service desk. “I'll be in deep kimchi if it isn't in the water by this afternoon!” Ross was rubbing his eyes, thinking about the screaming that will ensue when he tells Mr. Castle about the boat still sitting on dry land.

The young gentleman behind the desk named James was looking at Ross as if he didn't hear him correctly. “Maybe I didn't make myself clear, I have only

two people that can do that for you. One is out sick today and the other is on a personal day off, fishing. You will just have to wait until tomorrow, Sir.” He went back to shuffling the papers on his desk when Mr. Monroe got his attention again.

“Will this help the situation?” he offered, holding up ten \$100 bills. The clerk blinked a few times before he spoke to Ross.

“Give me a few minutes. Maybe somebody else can run the crane” the clerk said, getting up and heading to the shop area in a hurry.

“Does the trick every time” Ross muttered, smiling.

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“Has everyone had enough to eat?” Lisa asked, standing by the serving counter. The group was still sitting around, trying not to fall asleep. Their full bellies, coupled with the rhythmic rocking of the boat was threatening to lull the passengers off to sleepy-time land.

“Oh no, not another bite” William complained, getting up off of the couch. “I need to walk this off” he said, going out onto the deck.

Tom and Sam were waving the food off too, both of them stuffed. “I need to get up too” Sam commented, following the huge hybrid outside. As they stood outside getting some fresh air, the lion hybrid came down from the flybridge to check on their catch.

“I’m sorry, I haven’t introduced myself” he said to William. “I’m JD. That’s short for Jeffrey Dodge. I kinda came with the boat.”

“I’m William Delaney, Lisa’s cousin. The man with me is my partner, Tom Hughes” The huge hybrid replied. “Nice to meet you” he added, offering his hand.

The feline smiled and shook his hand. “Any relative of Lisa’s is always welcome on this vessel. She’s a good person to work for.”

“So, tell me how you ‘came with the boat?’” William asked, stretching his arms as he began to yawn. The equine hybrid had over-eaten for lunch and he was paying for it right now.

“I was the skipper when Mr. Parseghian bought the vessel so I stayed on with him” the lion said, smiling at them. “When it became Ms. Delaney’s, she kept

me on the payroll.” He reached down and checked the latch on the livewell again. “Don't want that baby loose on the deck” he commented, checking the latch once more.

“Being kind of cautious, aren't you?” Tom asked as he came out to the cockpit with the rest of them. He was still yawning himself from too much good food.

“Yeah, had one get loose on Mr. Parseghian. Tried to bite a few ankles before I clubbed him” Jeff responded, checking the time. “Ma'am, we need to get back to port soon. You said to remind you” he said to Lisa, who was still in the salon.

“Thanks, Jeff” Lisa said to her captain as she came out on deck herself. “I needed to give our chef enough time to cook our dinner so we do need to get in soon.” As the lion got them headed back to the berth, the fishing party put their equipment away and enjoyed the ride back to port.

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“I leave for a few hours and you idiots use the mobile crane to put a boat in the water?!? I should fire all of you!!!” Samantha shouted, looking at her staff. “That thing's worth more than most of you will ever make and you're putting it in the water?!? *What on earth* were you thinking?!?”

Sam had came by the marina to check on things only to find *that* Fountain 47 floating at slip #11. “I don't understand” she said, trying to calm down. “I said to leave that kind of work to those people that have been checked out. Who ran the crane, anyway?” She waited a moment before she added “Anyone?” She had fire in her eyes as she faced the men, armed crossed, tapping her right foot on the floor.

“I did” Roger Cook finally said, stepping forward. He rubbed his bushy red beard and looked at the floor. “The man gave us \$1,000 extra to do it today. I was real careful not to damage it, Ma'am.” He was shaking his head because he knew he was in hot water with the boss lady.

“OK, at least Roger had the guts to step forward and take the heat. Anybody else want to take some blame? Hmm? I *know* he didn't do it by himself.” Samantha was looking at a group of guys that couldn't look her in the eye right now.

“I helped” James Daggett the service desk clerk proffered up, stepping forward to stand by Roger. The young man was nervously rubbing his arm, knowing he might get fired.

“Did you at least check to see that it wasn't taking on water?” she asked, looking at the two men in front of her.

“I did, Ma'am. It's not leaking at all. I even crawled between the engines to check the flex boots at the drives” the red-bearded mechanic said nervously. He looked up to see if that information would ease her worries.

“At least you were thinking, Roger. I don't see how you fit back there, though. That's a tight squeeze even for me” Sam remarked, looking at Roger with one eyebrow raised.

“It wasn't easy, Ma'am. I almost got stuck a few times” he replied, still looking at her. He saw a smile starting to cross her face.

“OK, here's the deal” Samantha said, smiling by now. “Give me a cut of the money and I'll let you keep your jobs.” She held her hand out as the two men gave her a third of the money, digging through their wallets to make the correct change. “Now, go check the Fountain for water leaks again.” She didn't wait for an answer from either one of them as she turned and headed for the parking lot.

As she got into her beetle, she saw Roger and James hot-footing it across the lot toward the slip where the boat was docked. “I leave for 5 minutes...” she muttered as she shook her head. She coaxed her bug's engine to life then pointed her car towards home so she could change for dinner.

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“...and then I made them split the money with me!” Sam said, trying to keep from laughing. William was still wide-eyed as Tom and Lisa laughed at the thought of Ms. Tuttle facing down her staff. The remains of the shark dinner were spread around the outdoor table at Lisa's home.

“They could have sank it right there!” the equine hybrid exclaimed, shaking his head. “What idiots!”

“Yeah, like I said before, if I stay away too long, they try to burn the place down” the flaxen haired woman commented, taking another sip of water.

“Would anybody like dessert?” Lisa asked. She was standing by the outdoor bar at her home. “I have Coconut Creme pie, Apricot pie and Key Lime pie. Any takers?”

“Lisa, that's a dumb question” William said, looking over at his cousin. “You know I *crave* Apricot pie!” He was smiling at the thought of having a delicacy that he didn't get very often.

“Key Lime for me” Tom said, moving his plate out of the way. “Two slices, please?” he added, almost drooling at the prospect of more Key Lime pie this week.

“I know Sam likes Coconut Creme and I'll have some too” Lisa commented, getting the desserts put out on plates. As the foursome enjoyed their dessert, William's phone rang.

“William” he said, taking the call at the table. “Yeah, that would be fine. 8 a.m., then. Bye.”

He ended the call and looked at Tom. “That was Ross on the phone. We can see the boat tomorrow according to him. It took him long enough to call, don't you think?” William commented. “We knew when it was put in the water...” The smallish man nodded as he enjoyed his pie, smiling at his partner.

“Would you guys like me to go with you tomorrow?” Samantha asked, thoroughly enjoying her pie. “I can give you an hour of my time, if you would like.”

The huge hybrid looked over at her as he said “Sure, I would appreciate that. It would be good to have a third opinion.” William then took another big mouthful of pie, savoring it.

“OK then. I'll see you two in the morning. Just come over to the office and I'll have coffee and donuts for us” Sam stated, taking another bite of her dessert.

###

It had developed into a long day for Lonny. He had been checking all of the marina parking lots for the possibility of finding that one rental car. As he pulled into another lot, he spotted a Ford Taurus rental car by the sticker on the left corner of the rear bumper.

“That's it right there” he said writing down the plate number just for reference. “I got you now” he commented, easing his GTO back out onto the street and finding a vantage point to keep tabs on it.

Opening his cell phone, he pushed the '9' key for speed dialing. After a few moments, a man's voice with a British accent answered. "Do you have good news for me?" the voice asked,

"Yes I do. Found the car, Sir. I'll watch'n see where it goes" Lonny replied, a devious grin crossing his face. The voice on the other end laughed as the person ended the call. "You owe me big time, cat" Lonny said, settling in to watch.

###

Ton and William had stopped at a convenience store on the way to the motel. The smallish man had a pounding headache this evening from too much wine and pie.

"Tom, when will you learn not to drink wine like that" the hybrid said, looking for some deodorant. He was almost out so he was using this opportunity to restock.

"It's a reaction to wine and pie" Tom replied, looking for some extra strength aspirin. "I'm OK as long as I don't mix them." It was obvious that he was hurting because he was wearing his sunglasses indoors at night, quite out of character for him.

"Must be all the sugar affecting you, then" William suggested, finally finding his deodorant. "You ready?" he asked,

"Yeah, let's get back to the motel" Tom suggested, heading for the checkout counter.

As they waited for the person in front of them to get their lottery tickets, Tom pointed to a tabloid on the rack. "Do you believe that?" he commented, shaking his head. The tabloid had a rather large picture of two nondescript felines, both of them holding rather large wings as they were running down a sidewalk. The headline read:

"Archangels in California Beaten with their Own Wings!"

"Do you believe that crap?" the small man said, paying for his aspirin.

"Naw, who would ever believe that" the hybrid said, shaking his head.