

## Chapter Twelve

**Tuesday** late morning, Kevin pulled up to the security gate and Gus came out of the guard shack. "Here you go Mr. Kevin Trask. Here is another day pass."

"Thanks, Gus." Kevin took the temporary orange parking card and placed it on the dash of the Range Rover. "Gus did you stay out here all night? You were still locking up when I left last night."

"No sir, not in the guard station, Mr. Kevin Trask. I did a walk down Navy Way Road at midnight to make sure no one was in the tunnel."

"What tunnel, Gus?" Kevin asked, not wanting to hurt Gus's feelings.

"You know the one Iron Man dug with his Repulsor Drill. Captain America helped him dig the tunnel also." Gus pointed south toward the Long Beach Port.

"Both those Superheroes worked on the project together."

"Yes Sir, Mr. Kevin Trask. Only a few people know that the tunnel runs right under my guard station and directly under Navy Way Road and out into the ocean."

"Gus, how long have you been guarding for us?"

Gus put up all ten fingers and counted on them, stopped and started counting his fingers again. "It's been nineteen years, seven months and three days since your Grandpa Trask gave me a room to stay in so to guard the Trask property. It was the same day of my Daddy's funeral."

"Sorry Gus I didn't mean to bring up old memories. I was only three years old way back then." Kevin apologized.

"That is okay, Mr. Kevin Trask. My Mommy and Daddy are together in heaven," Gus replied and then looked up into the late morning blue sky. "Now they both watch over me and so does Grandpa Trask."

"I think you're right Gus." Kevin quietly said, still sorry for bringing up the memories of three people that had died.

"No. Mr. Kevin Trask. I know that they are all in heaven. I don't think it. I know it."

"Okay Gus, you're right they all are in heaven." Kevin knew not to get Gus fixated on certain subjects; especially something as controversial as laying at rest or heaven. "Gus, the four years I've been away at college have you noticed anything different around here?" Kevin asked hoping to change subjects.

"Yes, there have been a lot of changes. They put those beeping cross walk signals and wheelchair ramps on, Dock Street, Navy Way Road, Ferry Street, Nimitz Road, Terminal Road, Warf Street, Maersk Road at pier 400, Seaside Ave, Mariana Street..."

"A... Thanks Gus, that's a good thing to know." Kevin knew that if he didn't interrupt Gus that he would hear about every crosswalk in Long Beach that had been upgraded to be ADA compliant.

"There are more if you need to know." Gus offered with a somber look.

"No, I'm good." Kevin answered with a smile. "All those new ramps must make it easier with your three-wheeler?"

"Don't know, Mr. Kevin Trask. Someone stole my three-wheeler, two years, three months and 4 days ago." Gus's somber face turned to a slight frown.

"Sorry to hear about that Gus." Kevin quipped, hoping for different information. "Have you noticed any changes with the people here at the plant? Do you know who Mr. Hung Meng is?"

Gus nervously scanned the parking lot and then whispered. "I don't know Mr. Hung Meng. But... Mr. Kang Chan is not a nice person; he broke my bomb inspector yesterday at 10:48am. I recorded it in the incident log if you need to see Mr. Kevin Trask."

"Is that what the mirror on the broom handle was?" Kevin asked.

"Yes Sir, Mr. Kevin Trask." Gus lowered his voice even more. "The evil purple cloud is coming to do battle in the City of Angels."

"Gus, are you talking about Los Angeles?"

"Yes sir, Mr. Kevin Trask and we need to make sure all the Super Hero's know."

The Range Rover started to sputter; earlier the tow truck driver said that the battery needed to be replaced. "Gus, we'll talk later. I'm already late."

"Yes sir, Mr. Kevin Trask. We can talk later. There is still five years, six months, eight days until **Y2K**."

"Y2K..." A puzzled look came to Kevin. The Range Rover sputtered and died the moment Kevin repeated the Y character, the numeral 2, followed by a K.

"I can push you over there." Gus pointed at an empty space under a basket ball hoop in the employee parking area.

Kevin put the SUV into neutral and Gus pushed it across the warm asphalt. "Thanks Gus," Kevin yelled back over his shoulder as he headed toward the private

executives entrance. A few workers in the lunch room noticed Kevin as he rushed up the stairs two at a time. Kevin hurried down the hallway past the conference room turned right and was glad to see that the two walnut office doors were closed.

"Glad that you could make it in before noon, Mr. Vice President" Condi chided, stood from her desk and then walked around the four foot high counter.

"The battery on the Range Rover was dead." Kevin replied between breaths.

"Why aren't you driving that high performance car you got for graduation?" Condi asked.

"It's still up at Portland International Airport." Kevin replied.

Condi, put her hands on Kevin's shoulder twisted him one hundred and eighty degrees and started pushing him back down the hallway. "Ms. Patty Kelly has already been here for two hours. I gave her a run down and gave her the employee guideline packet to read over."

Patty looked up from the small desk when she heard footsteps coming up the stairs. She stood and made sure the perfectly pressed white blouse was evenly tucked into the gray pleated business skirt; she took a deep breath.

"Car trouble!" Condi offered as they approached.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Patty." Kevin apologized. "The battery on the Range Rover is bad. I had to wait for Triple A, and then I hit rush hour traffic."

"No worries, Mr. Trask. I really appreciate this opportunity." Patty turned and picked up a note pad from the small desk. "You got a call from the Warm Springs Federated Business Affairs, I took the contact information. An agent called about an insurance bond, he said he would call back at eleven. Tina called three times and I made you coffee."

"I'm glad Kevin hired you. The temps that we usually get are terrible," Condi said.

"Thank you, Ms. Johnson," Patty replied and then turned and picked up a pen from the small desk. "Mr. Trask should I have a new battery installed in your car?"

"Yeah that would be great," Kevin replied. "Call me Kevin, not Mr. Trask."

While Patty was writing on the notepad the phone rang; she immediately picked up the handset. "Trask Trailer, Vice Presidents' office." Patty listened and then pressed the handset against her pressed white blouse. "Kevin, its Tina, this is the fourth time she has called."

"Put her through to the office phone," Kevin turned and walked into the office.

Patty still had the handset to her chest so to mute conversation. "Ms. Johnson can

you show me how to transfer this call?"

Condi leaned over and pushed the third line button down then pushed the number 7 button twice. "You can hang up now."

Now in the office, Kevin picked up the handset and pushed the blinking **Line 3** button. "Hello."

"Well good morning Mr. Vice President. Like, I already called you three times this morning."

"I know, Tina, I just got the message. I had car problems this morning." Kevin worked himself over to the window and looked down into the plant and observed the workers.

"Like, that brand new Mercedes concept-car all ready has problem?" Tina asked.

"No," Kevin quipped with his attention focused on some workers just standing around and talking with each other. "I'm driving the Range Rover."

"Well, Mr. Vice President the reason I called was to let you know that I cancelled the trip with my parents to Mexico." Tina paused so to add anticipation and sexual temptation. "Kevin, I'm good to go with you to the Beverly Wilshire and stay in the honeymoon suite this weekend."

"Tina, that sounds good, but after you told me that you had a trip planned with your parents, I made different plans to go pick my car up at the airport In Portland, Oregon."

"Like, why is your car at the airport. Maybe I can go with you?"

"Yeah, maybe Tina." Kevin was distracted by the lethargy slowness down on the plant floor. "Tina, I'll call you later." Kevin turned, hung up the phone and noticed Patty in the doorway.

"Mr. Trask, if you let me know where you parked I will get a new battery installed in your car."

"Come over here and I'll show you." Kevin moved to the south facing window and pointed. "It's the black Range Rover over there by the guard station under the basketball hoop. If Gus starts asking you a hundred questions, just have him call up here to me."

"Gus, won't be a problem, I work with some young adults' like Gus!" Patty replied

"You work with Autistic adults?" Kevin turned and looked directly into Patty's light brown eyes. There was something about Patty that Kevin liked; probably her directness or maybe it was the way she stood up to the Sheriffs up at Shasta Lake.

"I have two young adults with Autism in my bible class." Patty replied while returning the look into Kevin's mesmerizing green eyes. "Gus practically led me by hand across the parking lot and up the stairs to Condi's desk. Gus showed me three times where he crossed out the word **parking** on the orange day pass."

It was hard for Kevin to turn away and look back out the window. Actually, Patty made Kevin feel way too much at ease—just like the night they both slept on the deck of the Stargazer. "Patty there is something special I'd like you to do for Gus." Kevin now trusted that Patty would do anything that he asked.

"Whatever you need Mr. Trask," Patty, turned away from Kevin and looked out toward the window at the guard shack.

"I don't know how you would do it, or even find one of those mirrors with long extension handles on it. But..." Kevin paused when he noticed a big limo pulling into the Trask parking lot.

"Are you talking about the retro-fit mirror with the broken wood handle that Gus inspects the underneath of incoming cars with?" Patty asked.

"Yes, you're reading my mind," Kevin answered.

"Not a problem." Patty jotted down Kevin's request on the yellow note pad.

"Patty, one last thing about Gus." Kevin drew a deep breath and then went on. "Don't tell Gus that I bought the inspection mirror or ..." Kevin paused again. "I just know that Gus would be up here thanking me four or five times and I got so much work to do I just don't have time..." Kevin pointed back at the piles of documents and acquisitions papers on the desk.

"I get it Kevin. Gus, might not even accept the inspection mirror, if its a color or it's not to his likings. Gus is wired differently. I got this covered..." Patty insured Kevin.

For the next couple of days Kevin poured over the acquisition papers, contract, deed and purchase agreement and even checked to see if the sixty-six million dollars was fully funded in Mr. Hung Meng's escrow account. Patty had been a life saver from the first day. Rather it was getting a new battery installed or getting the correct papers signed off for the insurance bond; she was on top of it. By Thursday most everything seemed in order. Kevin was having mixed feelings about the sale of Trask Trailer Inc—on the upside Bull Elk Logging was a new upstart company to keep him busy.

Patty had mixed feelings about Kevin true intentions. She couldn't tell if Kevin wanted to take the money and run—or if he was having second thoughts about the Hung Meng acquisition. One thing she was sure of, is that, she wished she had never propositioned Kevin with the offer of oral sex at Shasta Lake. Even the joke that it wasn't sex per the President of the United States wasn't funny—she wished

she could take it all back. The insistence that Kevin wouldn't let her call him Mr. Trask or Mr. Vice President was another issue, but after one more day it wouldn't matter.

On the drive in on Friday morning, Kevin had somewhat concluded that selling the manufacturing plant and outsourcing most of the work was the best option for the Trask family. The workforce clause to guarantee some workers employment until the year 2000 was reasonable. The two year window for new skill training and to assist with job placement was more than fair during the downsizing period. Kevin drew in a deep sigh of relief as he pulled the Range Rover up to the guard shack. Taking over the family business was not in Kevin's future plans.

Gus immediately came out of the small building with a new inspection mirror that had wheels on the bottom. He methodically checked under the Range Rover. "Good morning Mr. Kevin Trask... You are super clear today, no bombs."

"Gus, it looks like you got a new inspection mirror." Kevin acted surprised.

"Yes Sir, Mr. Kevin Trask." Gus pushed the retractable handle together. "This is the Y2K inspector model with wheels and even a light. It is the same model that the border guards use."

"That's pretty cool. Where did you get it?" Kevin asked; although he knew the answer.

"Ms. Kelly has a friend that loans them out to everyone that has advanced Y2K knowledge." Gus whispered and looked around to make sure no one else heard.

"Ms. Kelly?" Who is that?" Kevin asked quietly, playing along and also because he wasn't exactly sure.

"Ms. Patty Kelly, the temp worker that started Tuesday; she takes the bus from Inglewood up by LAX and gets here at 6:23 am every morning. I have her name on the sign-in sheet for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and today if you need to see."

"No that's good Gus. I just didn't know Patty's last name," Kevin answered; he had never ask Patty her last name and now knew that she was Irish.

"Oh no! The bad men are coming..." Gus was locked onto the black limo coming down Navy Way Road; the left blinker came on. Gus stiffened up; he got nervous and stiffened up.

Kevin knew who was behind the blacked out privacy window! He parked the Range Rover under the basketball hoop and hurried back toward the guard shack. The limo accelerated in to the lot before Gus had a chance to close the orange security gate. Kevin jumped in front of the limo and held his hand up. The limo skidded to a stop. Kevin moved to the driver's window and tapped on the glass.

The sound of an electric motor hummed as the window lowered. "Get out of the way!" The driver ordered from behind a pair of dark sunglasses.

"I hope that you weren't trying to come into Trask Manufacturing without going through an inspection and obtaining a parking pass!" Kevin asked loudly.

"This car was inspected on Monday!" The limo driver barked at Kevin. "Who are you to stop us? Do you know who my passengers are?"

"Do you know that I'm the Vice President of Trask manufacturing? My family owns this property and I can detain this car for security reasons. So, if you don't want to be arrested for trespassing, I would suggest that you back up and let my guard do his job!"

The security panel behind the driver's head lowered about an inch and a few words in Chinese were exchanged—the driver put the car in reverse.

Kevin yelled back toward the guard station, "Gus, do an extra special inspection and if for any reason anyone even touches your new United States issued inspection mirror call up to my office." The limo backed up and Kevin jogged across the parking lot toward the executive entrance. *At least I got to flex the Trask name once, although I'll only be Vice President until next week...*

"Good morning Mr. Trask." Patty said when Kevin rounded the top of the stairs."

"Good morning Ms. Patty Kelly." Kevin replied with a smile. "Nice job on finding that official United States inspection mirror for Gus."

"No problem, Mr. Kevin Trask," Patty replied; perplexed with the formalities of names. Patty picked up a yellow small paper. "Mr. Bull Whitefoot called first thing this morning and wanted you to call him ASAP. He is at the Confederated Tribes headquarters and said to not sign any document until he talks with you."

"Didn't I already sign the insurance bond and paper work for the Oregon Licensing Division on Wednesday?" Kevin asked while moving toward Patty who was holding a yellow post-it with the phone number on it.

"Yes, and I faxed all the paperwork late that evening before going home." Kevin snapped the small yellow paper from Patty's finger and went into his office. "I'll be glad when this week is over."

Kevin dialed the number and was put on hold. *Click* came through the handset followed by Bull's concerned voice. "Kevin, you didn't sign any of the documents yet, did you?"

"Yes, we did Bull. My secretary faxed everything late Wednesday evening. Didn't your people tell you?" Kevin asked in a somewhat agitated tone. "Friday morning is a little late to shoot back a warning signal."

"Sorry Kevin, I thought you told me the land deal and outsourcing contracts were put off for at least a week."

Kevin's brain was thrown into reverse. "What are you talking about Bull?"

"Kevin, remember Monday around noon you faxed me some land deal acquisition papers. Well after the elders and I wrapped up the **Bull Elk Logging** documents we looked over the Trask property sale and found some real problems. If any group knows about getting taken on a land deal—it would be us Native American's."

"Bull, we're signing that paperwork this next Monday." Kevin breathed a sigh of relief. "The good news is that after Monday, I can spend more of my attention on Bull Elk Logging."

"Kevin, there's not much to do right now with the logging operation. Kenneth Saxton has already started delivering firewood to the casino. Ms. Kelly your assistant got everything in order; she was right on top of everything."

"That's good." Kevin leaned back in the office chair.

"Kevin, none of the tribe elders, advises that you sign the land sale contract on the Trask Property." Bull said in a very serious, firm tone.

"Okay Bull, I'm listening. Try to convince me not to sign." Kevin's mind was already made up but owed Bull the respect to listen. Plus, the Tribe Elders had also put time into reading over all the faxed documents and Kevin wanted to show respect.

"Basically Kevin, if you read deep into all the legal jargon and all performance conditions that have to happen by the year 2000," Bull paused to calm himself. "If productions and sales growth are not met in a couple of years the Trask Family could lose everything."

"Bull, I realize that, but with outsourcing more of the work, we reduce the cost per unit and will be more complete and grow our sales force." Kevin replied with confidence. "Plus, we have a generous two year time frame to reduce the workforce in our Long Beach plant that has been draining our return on investment."

"Okay Kevin, but let me ask you this..." Bull paused and drew in a deep breath. "Doesn't, Trask Trailers have sales and rental lots all over the United States?"

"Yes we do Bull, I think we have almost eight-hundred different locations."

"Okay Kevin, then answer me this..." Bull paused. "Why is not one of those off-site locations being purchased by Hung Meng Imports?"

Kevin leaned forward in the high-back office chair and looked at the piles of documents on his desk. "Bull, I'm sure that they are purchasing most of our other location. Maybe, I didn't fax you all the paperwork?"

"Kevin, I hope that you find those other land sale documents," Bull replied with a real concerned tone.

"Bull, I do appreciate the call and I'm glad that your Casino guests will have firewood for this winter." Kevin said wanting to change the subject and actually not planning to look back through the piles of paperwork in front of him.

"Kevin, I just wanted to warn you that the land sale contract is not good," Bull warned the last time and then hung up.

Kevin got up from the desk and walked to the window overlooking the parking lot. He watched Gus inspect one of the delivery trucks coming into Trask Inc. Then Kevin gazed even higher out into the busy Long Beach Harbor—he didn't want anything to do with the world's hustle. Kevin's thoughts got interrupted by clicking footsteps entering the office.

The sound of Patty's high heels gave her up. "I brought you a cup of coffee, one cream, and one sugar." Patty was as efficient with words, as she was with multi-tasking.

"Just put it on my desk." Kevin turned to gaze back out the window. "Patty thanks for getting all the paper work up to Oregon. The logging operation started work yesterday."

"No problem, Mr. Trask. I put everything in a folder and included the tax forms you'll need. I wasn't sure if you wanted to use July or the end of December for the fiscal year for your accounting period."

"I'll run that by our accountants," Kevin replied, "the main thing is Ken Saxton is cutting timber." Kevin returned to the desk, looked at all the paperwork and then up at Patty. "You have been a big help this week. I'll make sure that Condi cuts a check for you."

"Thank you Mr. Trask." Patty replied in a somewhat downcast tone. She returned to the small desk in the hallway and spent the next couple of hours making sure everything was filed and easy to find. Kevin's calendar only had one appointment the following week and that was for the sign-off with Hung Meng on Monday morning.

Just after the plant lunch whistle blew, the sound of footsteps coming up the stairs caught Patty's attention. "Is Kevin in the office?" Mr. Robert Trask asked; surprised to see someone at the small hallway desk. "Are you one of Mr. Meng's private auditors?"

"No Sir," Patty replied, stood and extended her hand. "I just came on-board this Tuesday to help Mr. Kevin Trask wrap up a few things."

"Oh!" Robert Trask shook Patty's hand. "You're an attractive young thing."

"Thank you Sir," Patty replied.

"Did Condi find you at the Temp agency we use?"

"No sir, your son and I have some history. Kevin called me on Monday and..."  
Patty's explanation was interrupted when Kevin came out the office door.

"Dad, I'm glad that you came up. I want you to look at something!" Kevin said in a keyed up voice.

Robert Trask let loose of Patty's hand and walked toward the office door. "Kevin any small changes can be made Monday morning, all the lawyers will be at the meeting and..."

"Dad this isn't a small change!" Kevin held up a fistful of papers. "This land sale contract is only for the Long Beach manufacturing plant. We will be left hanging on the hook for the eight hundred sales and service sites! Plus, there are two performance clauses that could shift all the debt to the Trask Family Trust in less than two years."

"Kevin, just hang on!" Mr. Trask entered the office and closed the door.

Ten minutes after the quitting whistle blew, the plant was almost empty. Mr. Robert Trask busted out of Kevin's office with his head straight ahead; he was late for his golf lesson. Patty was just shoving the chair under the small desk when Condi came up the stairs with a bi-fold perforated piece of paper. She handed Patty a paycheck for her four days of work.

Kevin came out of the office looking as though he was ready to collapse; five days of corporate quandary had Kevin overwhelmed. He looked over at the two women, "How about you two joining me in a drink?"

Condi looked at Patty and smiled. In four short days the two women had shared things about each other that no one else knew. "Sure Kevin, where would you like to go?"

"How about that small Mexican lunch joint, on **Navy Way** road, that overlooks the harbor?" Kevin pulled the office door shut that still had the name **Richard Johnson** stenciled in an arch across the top glass panel. "I know they make a great Margareta there."

"A... I think I might have to pass," Patty replied, knowing that the last Long Beach to Inglewood bus was at 6:05pm.

Condi knew about Patty's DUI and that she had to take public transportation. "I'll give you a ride."

Kevin also knew that Patty was taking a bus down from Inglewood and that it

dropped her off at 6:32 am because Gus had relayed the information to him. Gus probably knew how long and how many stops on the bus route but didn't know why Patty wasn't driving a car—neither did Kevin. "Okay then, I'll see you two there."

Kevin, found a small table on the deck about twenty yards back from where **Navy Way** road took a long sweeping turn toward a container shipyard. Truck traffic was nil after 5:00pm on the terminal peninsula; especially on a Friday. Even the Mexican restaurant was empty. There were a few Longshoremen shooting pool inside and three bikers at the bar. Kevin poured a second Margarita and watched the Seagulls rise on the ocean breeze and then dive into the harbor for almost anything edible; including garbage.

Finally, Condi and Patty appeared from the patio door and sashayed toward Kevin. Every eye in the bar watched the two professional women sit down with class and style that rarely graced the working section of Long Beach Harbor. Kevin signaled for another pitcher of margarita. He poured his third large glass of the tequila, triple sec and lime and wasn't holding back. He demanded that Condi give up her father's home address! Condi told Kevin that he needed to stay out of her family's business but when Kevin informed Condi that it was about returning some private stuff he had come across, Condi relented.

Patty barely sipped at her Margarita and listened intently about how Mr. Hung Meng showed up the year Kevin quit Gonzaga and started his sophomore year at Duke. Condi showed empathy for Robert Trask and knew the low production numbers couldn't support the high labor cost in the United States. Condi was already looking at a few of the dot.com businesses that were popping up all over Silicon Valley. She had to be proactive during the downsizing; especially raising a two year old as a single mom.

No matter how much Kevin drank and how smoothly Condi was trying to fill him in—the fact that Grandpa Trask Trailers' may be entirely built overseas cut into Kevin's core. Condi spoke her peace about the inevitable end of the Trask dynasty in the United States and was happy that nothing more than giving out her Dad's address was shared about the Johnson's family problems.

There were plenty of skeletons in the Kelly's family closet that Patty could have shared but she stayed quiet. She had only known Condi for four days and Kevin for a little while longer. Patty actually knew about Kevin's history going back to when he started dating Tina, but the first time she actually talked to Kevin was when they met on the Stargazer at Shasta Lake.

Condi finished her Margarita, looked at her watch and said. "We need to go; it's Jackson's dinner time."

"Okay Condi," Kevin hiccupped. "I can give Patty a ride; I know how to get up to Englewood up by LAX." Kevin hiccupped again. "I can always use that new hi-tech

GPS phone unit in my fancy concept car."

Kevin, your fancy sports car is still sitting up at the Portland International Airport." Condi replied with a scowled expression.

"Oh yeah, I forgot." Kevin let out a juvenile laugh and then rubbed his head.

"You're driving a Range Rover Mr. Trask." Patty added.

"I told you Ms. Kelly to call me Kevin... not Mr. Trask. You have done that all week and you make me feel like your dad or something. Can't you call me Kevin like you did up at Lake Mead?" Kevin hiccupped again.

"That was Shasta Lake, Mr. Trask... And yes I will call you Kevin if you let me drive that fancy Range Rover. I have never driven anything that cool."

"Okie dokie," Kevin replied and held up the keys. "You can drive my cool Mercedes 600 SL with the bad-ass twelve speaker sound system."

Without the slightest hesitation Patty snatched the keys from Kevin fingers. "You got a deal. I drive and I'll call you Kevin."

Condi winked and gave the thumbs up to Patty above Kevin's slumped head. "Okay, I got to go pick up Jackson, Gus said he could watch him for an hour."

"Gus Watt is watching your baby." Kevin looked up from pouring the rest of the margarita mix into his empty glass. "I wonder if I can get more salt for the rim of my glass." Kevin looked around for the waiter.

"You want another pitcher?" Kevin asked Patty.

"No not really, Kevin," Patty replied.

"Well then... I guess its time we go for a spin in my fancy sports car." Kevin stood and had to steady himself against the table; he pulled some money out of his wallet and put it on the table. "Do you think that will cover the two pitchers?"

"Yes, that's plenty of money Kevin," Patty bent down than raised up under Kevin's arm so to steady him out off of the deck into the parking lot. She helped Kevin to the passenger side door and Kevin crawled up into the Range Rover. It had been almost a year since Patty had driven; she moved the seat forward, adjusted the mirrors than started the engine. She made sure the left blinker was on and slowly headed north on Navy Road way. She didn't take the Seaside Freeway; instead took New Dock Street hoping to avoid any traffic cops. The back roads would take longer but were a safer bet. Kevin didn't know the difference; he had reclined all the way back in the passenger seat and was singing along to the radio.

The trip up to Inglewood took less time then Patty expected and she was working on

a couple of different plans. She put plan one to the test. "Kevin, why don't you spend the night with me tonight, you might have had just a tad bit too much to drink."

Kevin slowly rose up in the passenger seat. "No... Tonight just doesn't feel right... But thanks Patty, I think you're hot and got a smoking body... But I told my Dad that we needed to talk over breakfast... Over breakfast, out by the skinny-dipping pool." Kevin reclined the seat back again. "That stupid pool that Grandpa Trask caught me and Maria in." Kevin took a labored long breath. "We were naked."

Plan one wasn't going to work. Patty put on the right blinker and turned into a small diner parking lot. "Remember you said that you would feed me if I drove."

"I did?" Kevin sat up in the seat just as Patty shut off the Range Rover. "Yeah, that sounds good... "I could go for some steak and eggs." Kevin opened the door and almost stumbled in the parking lot walking to the door. Patty held the large diner glass door open for Kevin.

Five cups of coffee, steak, eggs, pancakes hash browns and three trips to the restroom and Kevin was on the mend when Patty's cell phone rang. "Excuse me Kevin this is probably my Mother." Patty dug in her purse and pulled up the antenna on her cell phone. "Hello."

Kevin motioned to the waitress to bring the check and could hear yelling through the phone all the way to his side of the table. "Kevin, the call is for you. It's Tina."

Kevin took the phone, "What the hell are you doing out with that bitch?"

"Tina calm down, we worked late tonight and I offered Patty a ride home so that she wouldn't have to ride the bus." Kevin looked across the table and gave Patty a deceitful wink and then took the phone outside. Five minutes later Kevin returned with Patty's cell phone and started to apologize.

"Kevin you don't own me an explanation. If nothing more, that call sobered you up." Patty slid out of the booth and her skirt hiked all the way up to the middle of her firm muscular thighs'. "I'll drive to my house, and then I think you should be good to make it up to Pasadena.... But drive careful."

"Maybe, I'll take you up on the offer to spend the night." Kevin winked at Patty.

The ten block drive to Patty's parent's home was both quiet and awkward. Patty pulled up curbside in front of the three bedroom double car garage track home; she put the Range Rover in Park and set the brake then looked over. "Kevin It was great working this past week, I learned a lot and what an opportunity it was for me."

Patty's words snapped Kevin out of his stupor; not a drunken stupor—all the coffee had done that. "Sorry Patty, its just that call from Tina. We have had some relationship problems recently that we need to work out."

"I get it Kevin and thanks again." Patty pulled on the driver's door handle.

"So, I'll see you Monday morning." Kevin stated as he opened the passenger door.

"A... Yeah!" Patty replied as her heart jumped for the unexpected work request. When they crossed paths at the hood of the Range Rover Patty lifted up on her toes and gave Kevin a kiss on the cheek. "I'll see you bright and early Monday morning." Patty would have skipped up the walkway if it weren't for the high heels.

From the drivers' side of the SUV Kevin yelled, "Thanks for sobering me up and listening to my personal problems and my story about Grandpa Trask and ...."

Patty waved one last time, went through the front door, kicked off her shoes and leaned back against the door. With her eyes closed her head pointed upward, *Thank You God, for another week of work...*