

Chapter Thirty-seven

The pre-funeral meeting went well. Kevin was okay with Fr. John Murphy doing a standard funeral mass and agreed to be one of the pallbearers. Kevin declined speaking at the service and told Fr. John that there would be a celebration of life in the future; when Tina could be there to set it up. Kevin had never felt this type of depression and confessed to Fr. John that it was his fault because he bought Gus a puppy that caused Gus to be in a hurry home from church.

The frill old priest listened and then unloaded on the depression. “Look here son,” Fr. John softly spoke. “God doesn’t want the passing of your good friend and brother in spirit, to be the beginning of your pity-party. There’s enough blame to go around. I was the one that told Gus that he couldn’t bring a dog into a church.” Fr. Murphy reached down to pet Missy; she licked his hand and rolled over to have her belly rubbed.

“I know John, but I had an alternate motive for giving the pup to Gus...”

Father John listened and consoled with Kevin for at least an hour. Kevin brought up the guilt he was feeling about selling off Trask Manufacturing. This private information hit home because there were many of the Holy Family Church parishioners that worked at the trailer manufacturing plant. Downsizing and outsourcing was hitting his parish hard, but it isn’t a priest’s duty to preach economics or politics.

“Well John, I guess I’ve taken enough of your time.” Kevin stood up and extended his hand.

Fr. John shook his hand. “One last thing, Kevin... Just remember that God is in control. Put your life in His hands. ”

Missy followed Kevin out of the rectory down the sidewalk and across the parking lot to the Range Rover. When Kevin picked her up she nuzzled her small pink and black nose under his chin. Father John went to his desk to start working on Gus’s eulogy.

One thing Tina was wrong about; everyone being too preoccupied Super Bowl weekend to attend a church funeral. Kevin was at the church forty five minutes early and the parking lot was already half full. It looked like at least a hundred Trask employees were already there. Most all the players from the Sparks city league basketball team were there, along with kids and young adults that Gus had in Sunday school for over a period of fourteen years. Kevin stayed outside the church with Missy; she was a great comforter for Kevin and was getting loved on by attendees’.

Condi was there with her son Ali and both her parents. Patty was next to her and

saving two places for CP and Kevin; CP was also a pallbearer. At five minutes to ten Kevin put Missy in to the back of the Range Rover that now could have passed as a play room for a five star dog resort. CP, Kevin and the other pallbearers brought the casket from the hearse into the church. The funeral mass had a sanctifying feeling that Kevin remembered feeling at his grandfathers service. Father John Murphy approached the podium and took a rosary from his pocket along with a three page eulogy.

“God knew the name Augustine Donald Watt before he even created the universe. And Gus was made special. Every one that got to know Gus, knew about Gus’s love of superheros. The one thing that Gus struggled with was the order of tangible things in life.” Fr. Murphy held the rosary up.

“Most all major faiths use some form of prayer beads to meditate and pray by. But the Rosary put Augustine’s mind into lockdown and caused Gus a life of distress early on. You see some time in history through the good and bad of the rituals of Catholicism five extra prayers got added to saying this prayer rope. But for some reason five beads did not get added to the Rosary. Gus had the hardest time with this until someone showed him how to use small copper wire to make the five additional prayer beads.”

A few more spoke about Gus and the last person was a face Kevin recognized. The full bearded, tattooed giant with a black leather vest came to the podium. “We all have lost a great friend with the passing of Gus. But, I lost more than a great friend. I lost my sponsor; Gus helped me stay sober for the last nine years. Everytime I’d pull up to the security gate, Gus would tell me that he prayed that I didn’t see any pink elephants.” A few people chuckled, not really understanding the terminology. “Maybe monkey on my back are better words to use?”

Tears started running down the wind beaten, leathery faced, giant. He gained his composure and went on. “I did fall off the wagon a few times over the years but it didn’t matter to Gus. There was never any judgment or shame from Gus. I’d pull up to the security gate on my Harley and Gus would know. He’d just say that he would double pray that I didn’t see any more pink elephants. For me, Gus was my superhero and mentor.”

The church service ended and Fr. Murphy instructed anyone that wanted to attend the final blessing at the grave site to follow the hearse and to be sure to turn their lights on. The pallbearers’ slid the coffin into the hearse. Kevin was parked directly behind and was checking on Missy when something tall sticking out of the crowd caught his eye. Kevin hadn’t noticed that there were other women that had on black mourning veils. Maybe it was the shoulder length straight blond hair?

The black dress and long sleeved sweater was respectful, but, there was something else... Kevin approached from behind and tapped the woman on her shoulder. Lilly turned and immediately hugged Kevin. “I’m so sorry for your loss. I know that

Augustine was like a brother to you. I know how empty that I felt at my brother's funeral. I just needed to come out of respect and moral support."

Kevin held Lilly tight and near for a long time. Her warmth, her smell, her heart felt so placate chest to chest. The noise of cars lining up was quickly drowned out by the low rumble of at least twenty motorcycles. Cars with headlights turned on were lining up behind the Range Rover that was directly behind the hearse. "Can you ride up to the grave site with me?"

"What about Tina your girlfriend?"

"She couldn't make the service. She's in New York." Kevin looked back at the hearse and long line of cars waiting on him.

Lilly grabbed Kevin's hand and they hurried toward the Range Rover. Kevin opened the passenger door for Lilly and then walked up to the driver's side of the hearse. The hearse slowly pulled away and Kevin stood in the middle of the road and flagged for the motorcycles to follow first. It sounded like thunder as they filed in two by two behind the hearse. Next, Kevin directed the cars behind him to follow. At least a hundred cars were in the procession. Kevin took up the rear. Missy was laying in Lilly's lap when Kevin finally got in the SUV and took up last position.

"Thanks for coming. I have never felt so alone without Gus."

"I know your loneliness, Kevin. I'm here for you." Missy sniffed and nuzzled into Lilly's lap. The scent of one of her siblings was still lingering on Lilly's black dress and sweater.

"You know that you're holding the runt from the litter that I got the Saxton's Aussie from?"

"Really," Lilly replied and took note of Missy's small stature and cloudy blue eyes. "We named our pup Spooner."

"Really?" Kevin glanced over at Lilly. "I like that name. How big is Spooner already?"

"Oh he's about three times as big as Missy. I think it's all the venison jerky Dad feeds him. Dad is already training Spooner to herd. Aussie's are great working dogs."

"Herd? Your family doesn't ranch?"

"Dad wants to train Spooner to herd anybody out of the way when he's falling a tree or setting a swing choker."

"Wow, that makes sense. That rancher in Madras said that Aussie's need a job."

"What kind of job are you going to find for Missy?"

"I took her on a hike this week to clear my head and Missy was great. Being half blind and hard of hearing seem to have made her the perfect dog for my future

trekking plans and life goal.”

“It’s like that priest said. Gus’s Autism was more of a gift than an obstacle. Look at this line of cars in front of us. Gus touched so many people. His love was unconditional”

“Yes, Gus was special and he touched so many lives, especially mine.” Kevin wiped at a tear.

“What is this trekking goal you have plans for?” Lilly asked with genuine interest. Kevin had just enough time to explain how that next summer after Trask Inc was sold that he was planning to do the Snowman Trek in Bhutan. Lilly remembered that her brother always dreamed about climbing in the Himalayas, a goal out of reach for a Saxton.

CP and the other four pallbearers were waiting at the back of the hearse. Kevin hurried up the curved cemetery road, past cars and a bunch of motorcycles. He gripped the cold brass handrail. Four men and two women carried Gus’s casket to the site to be entombed between his parents. Father Murphy spotted Lilly keeping a respectable distance, holding Missy in her arms. She knew dogs in graveyards with all the grave markers were frowned on.

“Young lady come forward.” Lilly looked around; surely the frill old priest wasn’t going to single her out for holding a dog in a cemetery. “Yes you, young lady! Now the entire group was looking at Lilly and opened up a path for her.

Father Murphy exchanged the holy water sprinkler for Missy. He then cautiously placed Missy on the casket. Missy as though she was a trained work dog laid and rested her head on her tiny front legs. The final blessing was when the priest flung Holy Water over the casket, Missy and then the crowd. Condi then led the church choir in Gus’s favorite song, Amazing Grace.

The group dissipated fairly rapidly. Closure for Kevin wasn’t even close. Gus had his super- hero collection and there was a saving account book in his top dresser drawer. Since there was no will and all the tangible stuff was on Trask property legal action would be required or all of his things would go to the state.

“Are you doing okay?” Lilly asked as Kevin stood silent, looking down at the three **Watt** headstone all lined up in a row, side by side.

“Yeah, I think so. I’m sure Gus is in a better place. He always talked about his mother never holding him.”

“Godspeed to Gus. I’m sure that he will soon be in his mother’s arms,” Lilly said just above a whisper.

“I hope so.” Kevin turned and looked back over his shoulder. All the cars and motorcycles were gone. “Lilly, would you like to go play a game of golf?”

“What? A... Sure Kevin if that makes you feel better.”

“Gus and I used to play golf when I was in middle school. Actually Gus was a pretty good player.”

Back in the SUV, Lilly held Missy on her lap and told Kevin that she was flying standby and that the last flight out of LAX was just after nine. She should be there early to get a standby seat. Kevin wasn't really paying attention, he was trying to remember where to turn. It had been at least ten years since he'd been to Gus's favorite course.

“It seemed so much bigger when I was a kid.” Kevin parked in front of the Putt Putt fun center.

Lilly let out a sigh of relief. “I can probably beat you at miniature golf. I've only played regular golf twice.”

“You're on! And what would you like to wager?” Kevin leaned over and took Missy off of Lilly's lap. His hand felt the warmth of Missy's belly on Lilly's dress.

“Well, let me think on that. I still owe you a steelhead trip. And I know you plan to start hiking. I'll bet you a pair of Danner hiking boots. They are the same company that makes corks boots for loggers.”

“Okay, you're on!” Kevin opened the door and slipped out with Missy.

Lilly met them at the hood of the car. “Wait a second, what do I get if I win?”

“That's not going to happen.” Kevin held the door into the fun center for Lilly.

There was a short discussion on dogs being on the course. Lilly said that she'd clean up any mess if needed and then Kevin paid the clerk a fifty dollar nonrefundable pet fee. Missy's vision was good enough to track the bright colored golf balls against the lime green artificial grass. Kevin's vision was tracking Lilly's black dress that crept up each time she putted. Lilly felt his occasional glance and didn't mind—the innocent flirting was a good distraction.

At the windmill hole Kevin was already behind three strokes. “If you make this shot I'll buy you dinner.”

“You're on. Lilly teed her ball. Kevin again glanced at her long muscular legs. *Clunk* the orange ball hit the windmill blade. Missy trotted across the green artificial grass picked up the ball and brought it back to the tee. “Looks like I get a do over.”

“No do over's. You owe me dinner.” Kevin said with a smile.

“That sounds good. I'm starved.” Lilly bent over and picked up the dog slobber covered ball. “We should probably leave now. I should be at the airport no later than eight.”

Kevin headed north toward Pasadena. “I know that a country club is probably not a

place that you would choose for dinner. But they have a kennel with dog sitting.”

“No, that sounds fine. But my limit on dinner is a hundred dollars” Lilly replied and then rubbed her nose against Missy’s.

Kevin used his cell phone to call the Pasadena Country club. Being a Trask didn’t require a reservation but checking in Missy would be something new. At dinner Lilly removed her long sleeved sweater, her bare muscular shoulders got as many glances as did her firm legs. Kevin commented that she was in as good as shape as his mom. Lilly asked about Linda and then Kevin shared about the cancer treatments in Florida that were proving to be positive. Next, Kevin asked about Mrs. Saxton and her arthritic hip, it was positive news also. Lilly sincerely thanked Kevin for putting her parents on the Trask Inc. health insurance plan. Kevin scoffed and gave all the credit to Patty.

A few club members came over to their table and introduced themselves. Lilly felt accepted with the genuine introductions. Someone sent over a bottle of champagne and after dinner one of the older widowed members came over and pulled Kevin out onto the dance floor. Lilly smiled as she watched Kevin skillfully lead the older distinguished woman around the dance floor. The diamond around her neck was worth more than a million dollars. She was an heir of William Randolph Hearst. Lilly kept glancing at her watch— time was running short.

“I’m returning your young prince,” the stylish woman said, “but it would do my old heart good to see him dance with you.”

Lilly didn’t have a choice. Kevin took her by hand to lead her out to the dance floor. She quit looking at her watch as they slow danced. Missy was sound asleep when the valet put the dog crate into the back of the Range Rover and then handed the keys to Kevin. Lilly pulled her sweater up over her shoulder and the valet opened the passenger door for her. “Have a good evening,” he said and closed the door.

Kevin was silent for the longest time. “Sorry that you missed your flight. I can get you a hotel close to the airport or you can stay in our guest room. Kevin said with a deep buried hope that he didn’t want to admit to himself.”

“If it’s okay. The Trask guestroom is nicer than any hotel room.”

His buried hope was pleased. “I forgot you did stay over that time you drove the SL600 back from Oregon.”

“Yeah, that is when I met Maria and she told me all about the skinny dipping.” They both had had enough to drink, that the once adolescence embarrassment could now be openly laughed about.

Lilly helped Kevin bring in Missy, the oversized dog bed and a few toys. No sooner did Kevin put the bed down in the foyer, Missy crawled on to it and put her head down and fell asleep. “You know where the guest room is.” “Kevin pointed down the long hall.

“I do but I don’t have anything to sleep in.”

“I’ve got a sweatshirt up in my apartment. Would that work?”

“Not as good as the shirt that you’re wearing.” Lilly said in a sensual tone.

Kevin lost it. The all day glancing peeks and the harmless flirting had come to a head. Kevin kissed Lilly like he never had kissed anyone before. Lilly lifted her arms and Kevin pulled the black dress up and over her head. Lilly unbuttoned Kevin dress shirt and it hit the floor next to her dress. Lilly jumped up and wrapped her legs around Kevin’s waist. He carried her to the guest room.

The sun was up and shining through the curtains into his eyes. Kevin felt around the bed. He must have been dreaming—Lilly wasn’t there. The sound of running water couldn’t be in a dream. He wandered into the guest bathroom and through the steam could see Lilly standing with her back to him. It all felt too real. If he were dreaming he didn’t want it to end by speaking out and breaking the illusion with foolish words.

Guardedly Kevin spoke, “Is it alright if I join you?”

Lilly turned. Shampoo was dripping off the tips of her blond hair onto her firm small breasts and running down her flat stomach.

“Sure it’s okay. This shower is big enough for two people.”

Kevin explored all of Lilly’s wet soapy skin and his fingers found a place that he had to ask about. “What happened here?”

“Oh that is where I got stuck with a hunting knife by my brother.”

“What? Your brother stabbed you in the butt with a hunting knife?”

“Not exactly.” Lilly squeezed some shampoo into Kevin reddish brown hair and started to massage Kevin’s scalp. “I really don’t want to talk about it. It was the only time I saw my Father hit Billy with his fist.”

“Okay, no problem. But, I hope you’ll stay today and watch the super bowl game with me?”

“I forgot all about the game. That quarterback for San Francisco is one hunk.”

“That’s not what I wanted to hear.” Kevin quipped with lather running off his head.

“What I meant, was that the quarterback is almost as big a hunk as you.”

“You still haven’t answered my question. Can you stay and watch the game with me?”

“Of course, I will.” Lilly wiped soap into Kevin’s eyes. “Now don’t look at me when I get out.”

Kevin couldn’t help but watch Lilly as she dried herself off. “There should be coffee and bagels in the kitchen. Just help yourself to anything in the kitchen or pantry.

“That sounds great. Do you want me to bring you back a cup?”

“Sure, I’ll be out back letting Missy do her thing.”

Lilly made coffee and then found her way into the study. She did a double take at all the historic and classic books, she knew to be careful with coffee in this room. An eagle carving from Ivory was something she stopped to look at. The carving had a brass plate on a walnut base with the artist name. She thought to ask Kevin about the artist, but didn’t want to show how naive she was about art. She opened the doors onto a rear patio surrounded by a waist high perfectly trimmed hedge. Kevin was over by the pool staring off into the distance.

Lilly approached from behind with Kevin’s dress shirt on. “What are you thinking about?”

“I just have this feeling that I should have said something at the funeral yesterday. Or maybe it’s what I did to Gus?” Kevin took one cup of coffee.

“What did you do to Gus?”

“I don’t want to talk about it. Just like whatever your brother did to you.”

“It wasn’t what my brother did. All he was doing was throwing his hunting knife at a tree. The knife ricocheted and stuck me right in the butt. I screamed and Dad came running and hit Billy with his fists.

“Oh wow! So the police must have come and arrested Ken?”

“For what?”

“For beating up Billy!”

“Are you kidding? So if you had a kid that kept throwing a knife after you told him not to! What would you do Kevin, put your son in a time out?”

“I don’t know? Maybe I’d never had given him a knife in the first place.”

“Billy, was always fishing, hunting and out in the woods. A knife is a tool. I always carry a knife when I guide.” Lilly hated defending the hard working class to city folk. “What, your parents never hit you or anything?”

There was a long silence before Kevin answered. “My Dad did backhand me once and made my lip bleed.”

“Only one time in your entire life?” Lilly backed down her tone a notch.

“Yeah, I think.” Kevin took a drink of coffee. “Most of the time I was at daycare, boarding school or a sports camp. My Dad and Mom had more important things to do.”

“More important things to do than raise their child?”

Kevin didn't have an answer to defend the way he was brought up. He had everything a child ever wanted. But then, something that Gus always wanted flashed in his head. *To just be held by a parent...* "Lilly, we were brought up in different families but our parents do love us. Think of all the children that never experience or felt the love of a parent."

Now Lilly was silent. Kevin did grow up so differently. But who was she to judge. "Why don't I make us some biscuits and gravy or omelets and hash browns?"

"You know how to do that?"

"Yeah, I think I can figure it out." Lilly smiled at Kevin and thought. *It isn't his fault that he was born into the upper class.*

Kevin wandered around the grounds with Missy no more than two steps behind. She finally did her business. Kevin still had unsettled feelings about not speaking at the funeral. Maybe when Tina did the celebration of life event, he'd find closure. Twenty five minutes later Lilly yelled from the study patio that breakfast was ready.

"Wow you're a good cook." Kevin said standing at the counter shoveling down the ham and cheese omelet.

"Making breakfast isn't cooking," Lilly said as she poured fresh orange juice.

"Whatever. These hash browns are great."

"Maybe too much garlic."

"No, I like garlic." Kevin took a drink of orange juice

"I snooped around pantry. I can make us some nachos for the game."

"That would be great. I can order us pizza. I do know how to do that."

Lilly laughed. "Do you have some sweats or something I can get comfortable in?"

"Sure. I'll go dig around in my apartment after we're done."

Kevin dug around his apartment for more than for sweats; something was missing and he just couldn't put his finger on what. Lilly was digging around the kitchen and found everything for nachos plus more. They settled in on the overstuffed couch in the entertainment room. Kevin went for the Chargers just because Lilly thought the quarterback for the Forty Niners was such a hunk. The Los Angeles Rams were still his team, even after they moved to St. Louis.

By halftime the game was 28 to 10 and Lilly decided to really see where Kevin's head was at. "Do you want to go skinny dipping or watch all the halftime commercials?"

Kevin jumped up from the couch and opened a cabinet next to the huge projection TV. Everything was over organized; all the VHS tape titles were in alphabetical order due to Robert's compulsiveness. Gus and Robert had a lot of the same traits.

"What are you doing?" Lilly asked from her relaxed laid out position on the couch?
"I'm looking for a blank VCR tape to record halftime on!"

They were in the heated pool way longer than the halftime show. Missy even joined in with the skinny dipping party. She walked along the pool edge keeping close to wherever the sound of laughter went. Kevin returned to the entertainment room and rewound the VCR. Lilly went to the kitchen with the promise of a better dinner than pizza. Along with searching the refrigerators and pantry for food, she searched the study for paper and a pen. The old roll top desk was the most likely place for stationary, but it was locked. The small half sized metal closet next to a large reading stand wasn't locked. There were rolled up building plans tucked into squared off cubby holes. Permits and legal documents in neatly stacked piles and shelves with color coded binders. Lilly found a red binder with some blank pages of engineering paper in the back. She took out one blank page, put the binder on the reading stand and went back to the kitchen.

Fish baked on a bed of rice and fresh asparagus in a cheese sauce ended up for dinner. As Lilly cooked, she jotted her thoughts on the gridded paper. Earlier in the day a heated discussion about families and relationships didn't go well. Hopefully, words on paper would help Kevin understand where she was coming from.

Irish Cream and cheesecake followed a delicious dinner into the late night. This night of sharing each other and closeness turned out to be as exceptional as the previous. They talked about spooning their first time at the cabin when Kevin had the cold chills after a solo attempt on Mt. Hood. Their next time at the cabin and too much alcohol and too much time in the soak tub, did Kevin in. Lilly reminded Kevin how he peed all over the railing and himself. Lilly slid back into Kevin and they fell asleep in that position. Being with Lilly was more than Kevin ever dreamed intimacy could be. Lilly knew that this dream had to end.

The sun was again shining through the window of the guest room. But on this morning there was no sound of water running in the shower. In fact the stillness was unsettling. Kevin jumped from the bed and dashed into the bathroom! He hurried down the hall and looked down the foyer. The door to the study was open and he spotted a folded piece of paper sticking out of red binder like a big bookmark. On the outside of the of the tri-folded grid paper were four words: **For Kevin's eyes only.** Kevin opened the paper.

Dear Kevin, I'm not going to say I'm sorry for what happened. I left before Marie came to work so that the past two days will always be just between you and me. I would feel terrible if Tina found out about something that just happened. It wasn't planned or intended to hurt or change your relationship with Tina. Many times I've pointed out that we come from different families. Now, we both need to go on with our separate lives. Thank you for always making me feel special.

Always your friend, Lilly

There was noise coming from the kitchen. *Great Lilly is still here!* Kevin dashed across the foyer into the kitchen.

“Good morning,” Marie said as she hung her jacket on a hook, next to the service door.

“Marie, did you see a taxi or airport shuttle out front?” Kevin asked anxiously.

“No Kevin, I didn’t. Are you expecting someone?”

“A... No. I’m not expecting anyone...” Kevin put the red binder on the counter and clutched onto the note.

Marie noticed the red binder and knew what it was. “Kevin whenever you get important documents out of the vault, please put them back. I found those remodeling plans under your bed about two months ago.”

“What?” Kevin opened the red binder—it contained plans on how to fill in the tunnel at Trask Inc. It was the red Binder that Gus gave him when Nick Icorn came down in the beat up motor home. Kevin flipped through the binder and found something that he knew would require a lawyer to immediately look over.

“Kevin, have you been running around the house naked all weekend?” Marie asked.

Kevin was fully clothed when he went to the home office of the long time family attorney. Missy was welcomed with opened arms by Vincent Eger’s wife. Along with remodeling plans, Gus had detailed a wish list. If something happened to him, his super-hero collection of books was to be sold to pay for a remodel of the Navy training room. In one of the plastic sleeves Gus left a ten thousand dollar United States Saving bond to Condi for her son, Ali. There was a second savings bond for the holy Family church. Whatever proceeds that were left was to go for Autism research. Kevin’s hunch was right. Those lines of instructions constituted a Last Will and Testament.

Vincent offered to do the probate and file the correct paperwork, thinking it would be a simple process. He was unaware that Gus’s collection of superhero books was worth over a hundred thousand dollars. Vincent reminded Kevin, that if and when Track Inc. was sold, he would still only get an annual fifty thousand dollars trust payment, until he turned thirty. Vincent setup a follow up meeting two weeks out. Mrs. Eger happily offered to puppy sit anytime, she also told Kevin to say hello to Robert and Linda. Kevin spent the rest of the day stopping by comic collectors and book stores.

Tuesday morning Kevin had the red binder in hand and Missy at foot. The first stop was to go see CP on the assembly line. CP studied the remodeling plans and since everything was laid out with such detail he felt that he could manage the project without a problem. Kevin left the binder with CP and they set up a project meeting

for Thursday. Kevin asked CP to keep everything private.

The next stop was the head office and Kevin entered without knocking. Both Condi and Patty looked up from note pads. "Hello Kevin, I thought you might be taking the whole week off for bereavement," Condi said.

"Could I get you a cup of coffee?" Patty offered.

"That would be great Patty. Could you give me a minute to discuss something private with Condi?"

"Sure, Kevin," Patty stood and pushed her hand down her pleated skirt and walked over and hugged Kevin. "That was a nice church service that you arranged for Gus."

"Thanks, it was. Bbut I wished I would have spoken about Gus. No worries, Tina and I will be doing a celebration of life here at the plant in the near future."

The name Tina made Patty immediately break the embrace. "I'll go get your coffee."

"Kevin, if you want to do something here at the plant you better start on it right away. Mr. Hung Meng's people called first thing Monday morning. They want to push the closing date up since Gus's apartment is not being part of the contract any longer."

"What an asshole! Gus hasn't been in the ground for three days and he wants to start to capitalize on a tragic accident."

"Yeah, I don't want to push the date back either. I'll be out of work come June first."

"A... yeah. I guess I will be also." Kevin was thinking about what Vincent told him. That he couldn't draw money out of the trust until age thirty. "By the way Condi. Gus left you something. Or I should say left Ali a ten thousand dollars savings bond."

"What?" Condi almost lost it, but she was a pro at hiding emotions

"I found some papers and other stuff all in plastic sleeves in a red binder that Gus gave to me months ago."

"That sounds like Gus." Condi turned and looked out the window. "Red was his favorite color and for sure everything in plastic sleeves, would be all Gus."

I never knew that red was Gus's favorite color.

"There's probably a lot more that you don't know about Gus." Condi used a white handkerchief to wipe at a tear. "But one thing for sure about Gus. He had a superhero heart."

There was a knock on the door. "Here's your coffee." Patty snipped. She always got this way when she heard the name Tina.

Condi and Kevin carefully went over the earnest money contract. It was very specific that the closing date was to be June first. Kevin said he needed at least that much time to fulfill another request that Gus had detailed out in the red binder. They

decided to not setup any type of meeting with Hung Meng for at least forty five days. He had signed and dated the million dollar earnest money contract and legally was held to the June one closing date about ninety days out.

With Missy at his heels, Kevin left the office. At the half circled counter he asked, "Patty can you order flowers or roses or whatever would be appropriate to send to someone that traveled a long way to attend the funeral."

"I didn't see Tina there. I thought she stayed in New York."

"No, not for Tina. Send some flowers to Lilly. You must have her address."

Patty immediately popped up out of her chair and came around the counter and picked up Missy. "Oh you're so cute." She said as they nuzzled noses. What would you like the card on the flowers to say?

"Just say thanks for the weekend." Kevin rubbed at his forehead. "No, how about. Thanks for coming to the funeral and playing golf." Kevin was still rubbing his forehead. "Oh, just forget it." Kevin took Missy back from Patty's love hold.

"Forget sending flowers?" Patty quipped

"No, send flowers or roses to Lilly. But just put, from Kevin on the card."