

## Chapter Five

The head start out onto Shasta Lake was short lived. Within forty-five minutes four houseboats, a party barge and some other watercrafts were following in the wake of the Stargazer. Tim was already water-skiing and showing off by having Rick steer the yellow ski boat close enough so that he could cut and spray people on the houseboats. Tina was alone on the bow with a margarita so to help her discern the past two days. Rick turned the ski boat and pulled Tim up broadside to the Stargazer. Tim cut to the outside of the wake and then back across, he leaned hard and started to spray water all down the right side of the Stargazer. At the last moment Tim straightened up and the spray ended just before it got to Tina. It was impressive. *Tim is as good of water-skier as he is a basketball player.* Tina thought and then waved.

By the maximum heat of the day the five houseboats were anchored and lashed together far up the McCloud River arm of Shasta Lake. The yellow ski boat plus some small personal water crafts were drifting around the flotilla. The small get-together grew to a sixty-plus person bash. Monday night was nonstop, the liquor flowed with the party going strong two hours past midnight. Kevin finally had had enough and went back to the captain's room on the Stargazer. Tina was already there; passed out on the bed. Kevin took off her thin strapped leather sandals, put a pillow under her head and tucked her in. Heavy drinking wasn't favorable to Tina's natural good looks and near perfect body. She was beautiful without all the make-up, manicured nails, styled hair and other add-ons. All the extra stuff was just baggage, robbing her of time that she could have spent on her inner appearance.

Kevin slipped into bed next to Tina; lying on his back with his head propped up on two pillows he thought, *there has to be more than this. Everyone here is trying so hard not to be themselves. Tina doesn't even like to drink and now... I don't want it to be like this when...*

"Kevin, I hope you don't mind that Mary and I took the extra bed. All the bunks in the other rooms were taken," Sally's voice came from across the darkened room.

"Not a problem," replied Kevin

"Boy-o-boy what a party," Sally said as she tiptoed across the room.

"No kidding. It's bigger than anything I wanted."

"Looks like Tina's passed out," said Sally as she walked past the bed.

"Yeah, she was out an hour ago."

"Even when Tina's blasted she looks good," Sally said while pulling back the sheets on the adjacent queen bed.

"Yeah, she did drink a lot," relied Kevin

"Kevin, I don't mean she got way too drunk. She only fell down a few times..." Sally paused to rethink her words... "What, I really mean is when Tina's drinking she's still beautiful and..."

"Sally, don't worry about it." Kevin adjusted the pillows under his head. "Tina got blasted and started to be a bitch toward everyone. She started drinking margaritas as soon as we left the dock."

"I did notice that. Tina seemed upset about something," replied Sally. "I overheard some conversation about abortions and walked off".

"Yeah, that a good subject to stay away from," Kevin quietly replied.

"Sort of like politics or religion. I avoid those subjects too," replied Sally

"Are you crashing already?" Mary asked halfway thru the floor opening up to the Captain's Room.

"Not so loud," replied Sally as she pointed toward Tina, passed out on the bed next to Kevin.

"Oh sorry," said Mary from the top rung of the ladder. When Mary passed thru the center of the room she whispered, "I think they were smoking weed on the yellow ski boat."

"I know, I could smell it," Sally replied, as she magically pulled off her bra without taking off her volleyball shirt. "I'm not smoking any pot out here. I don't know if I could swim if I was stoned."

"Depends on how much you smoke." Mary replied. "I think a few of those guys are so drunk that if they fall overboard that they could drown."

"That's kind of scary," replied Sally.

"I don't really care about the pot and alcohol. But, I saw a few people sniffing up a line of Cocaine! That pisses me off. They'd better keep it off this houseboat, my names on the rental agreement," Kevin spoke in a concerned tone.

"I agree Kevin. The coke bothers me too," offered Sally as she slid under the sheet.

Mary moved to the opposite side of the bed Sally was in. "If I see anyone shooting up anything, I'm leaving. It would really kill my parents, working two jobs to put me through college and then I get busted the first month after graduation."

From the ladder opening, below in the galley an aluminum door banged shut. Less than ten seconds later Tim's head popped up into the room as he stood on the second rung of the ladder. "What are you light-weights doing? The party's just starting!"

"Not for me Tim, I've had it." Kevin replied propped up on one elbow.

"What about Tina? She said that she'd have a drink with me."

"Tim, she passed out over an hour ago... And, I'll take care of her drinks!"

There was a short pause; Tim focused on who was in the other bed. "What about you two? How about having a drink with the number one water skiing champ... I'm number one at more skiing, too!" Tim hiccupped then wiped at some slobber on the side of his mouth.

"I'll take a rain check," Sally said slightly lifting her head off the pillow.

"I'll pass too," said Mary through the dim lit room.

"Whatever... Well, well..." Tim hiccupped again. "I'm going to go have a nightcap and then you two make room for me. You don't want everyone knowing you two are Lesbos's... So, I'll sleep between the two of you."

"Tim cool it!" warned Kevin. "Take a hike. Go sleep on your speed boat. Don't come back in here!"

"Oh, come on Kevin." Tim climbed up the ladder into the room; he swayed back and forth. "Tina told me all about you... Tim hiccupped. "Tina said you were a prude, maybe even a virgin!"

"Tim, you're drunk. Just climb back down and leave us alone!"

"I might be drunk, prude little Kevin boy. But..." Tim fell sideways against the ladder railing.

"But what? Kevin swung his legs over the side of the bed."

"But. . . I'd be taking better care of Tina! If you don't start doing her, someone else will. She needs it."

Kevin rose up off of the bed and headed across the room.

Tim held his hand up as though to mock a fight. "Oh, Kevin you're so tough! For a prude and all." Tim climbed back down laughing.

Kevin waited a minute, then went down the ladder, shut and locked the galley door. Tim staggered from the Stargazer onto the next houseboat.

Up in the Captain's Room Kevin felt awkward and relieved that no lights were on to show his red embarrassed face.

"Tim's a jerk," offered Mary sitting on the edge of the bed with only panties on; she rubbed moisturizer up and down her long legs.

"Yeah, what an asshole! Maybe he'll fall overboard and then we'll know if you can swim when you're high." Sally said raising her head from the pillow.

Kevin walked across the room and crawled back onto the bed next to Tina.

Mary pulled up her long legs and slid them under the bed sheet and then slid over next to Sally. "I can't stand the guy. If he even tries get in bed with us I'll kick him in the balls."

"That goes for me too. We'll both take a whack at his balls," Sally offered.

"He won't be coming back up here. I locked the galley door." Kevin offered from across the dim room that was slowly being filled with a cool breeze coming across the lake and thru the open windows.

"Thanks, Kevin." Sally replied.

"Yeah, thanks Kevin." Mary replied as she moved up against Sally.

Tuesday morning started off with plenty of bloodshot eyes and hangovers. Water and aspirin were the drink and drug of choice before breakfast. By noon the wind came up and the lake was too choppy for water skiing. The plan for Tuesday evening unfolded; tie the five houseboats together in a U and close the other end off with the two ski boats then have the blast to be remembered forever.

It was a laid-back afternoon with most everyone soaking up the sun and going easy with the booze. Tina didn't say much to Kevin; she didn't want to get into another conversation about Sue, birth control or unwed mothers. Plus with Tim hanging around she could play the jealous card and make Kevin barmy enough that his only desire would be to bed her that night. Tina was the queen of drama and a master at controlling men.

By early evening the wind eased making it feel like the temperature was going up. A few diehard water skiers got out on the mirror like water before darkness set in. Rumors of a skinny dipping party started to fly. As darkness set in a few of the guys helped anchor the houseboats way up the Pit River arm of Shasta Lake. They were far up river; much more secluded than were they had partied the night before.

Tim had played it cool all day; he made sure the yellow ski boat was tied off with the small cabin facing out toward the lake. Throughout the day Tim had been talking to Tina about Sue, saying that he would help pay for an abortion or help find a good adoption agency. He confessed that Sue was not really the right woman for him and

appreciated how good of a listener Tina was.

This was Kevin's third day on the lake under the blasting sun; he finally learned how to get up on one ski and took advantage of the late day calm water. Kevin was physically zapped, sunburned and already tired of all nonstop action. After dinner Kevin was resting on the bed up in the captain's room when Tina came up the ladder. "What's the matter Kevin? We haven't talked much all day."

"I'm beat and tired of all this partying, three days in the sun has me baked." Kevin rose up and then sat on the edge of the bed.

"You have spent a lot of time in the water learning to slalom ski. Tim says you'll be a good water skier by the end of the week. Maybe, as good as him."

"Tina, I could care less what Tim thinks. And, I don't like all the boats being tied together. With the drugs and all that some people are doing; we could be implicated. I think we should pull away and do our own thing tonight."

"Kevin, they're just smoking a little weed. Like, it's not like nobody's business." Tina walked across the room and sat beside Kevin on the bed.

"What do you mean? Nobody's business! I rented this houseboat. My name is on the agreement. The lake sheriff patrol passed by two times today. I know they have binoculars and have been watching us."

"Kevin you worry too much!" Tina slid closer to Kevin and put her hand on his bare thigh. "Tim told me how you got up tight last night."

Kevin pushed her hand away. "Tim can take a flying leap. He's a jerk."

"No he isn't. He's just hurt and misses Sue." Tina replied defensively.

"Yeah right. I noticed him and you talking a lot today."

"We've been talking about Sue and other things. Tim is talking about putting off medical school and just getting a regular job. He is dealing with a lot of stuff."

"Hey, I don't care about Tim, his medical school fabrication or his personal problems. Three days ago I told you that I needed some space to do some thinking about going to work at the family business. Now you seem more concerned about Tim."

"I know that Kevin." Tina placed her hand on Kevin's thigh again; her mental manipulation game was working. "Like I remember you want us to be alone and spend some us time together." Tina moved her hand up under Kevin's swim trunks.

"Tina we're tied up like we just circled the wagons. We can forget about being together. This whole party thing is too much! Let's just get out of here."

"What about our friends?" Tina softly spoke while finding Kevin's manhood. She slid

from the bed and now was on her knees in front of Kevin.

"A... I don't know more than about ten people here," Kevin stuttered out as Tina's hand moved. "Tina let's untie the Stargazer and go find a place all by ourselves.

"What about the party tonight?" Tina stopped moving her hand.

"Yeah, we could leave now, before it gets dark." Kevin put his hand on Tina's head and ran his fingers thru her blond hair.

"Like, I just got here yesterday. Almost everyone is staying until Friday..." Tina looked up at Kevin and smiled. "Why don't I help you relax right now and...?"

The short bliss was halted by the sound of wood ripping out of the ceiling and then a splash! Kevin jumped off the bed hurried up the ladder to the private deck directly above the Captain's room. A section of the chrome safety railing was bent over and back inward toward the center of the deck. Kevin rushed to the side and looked down into the water to see one of the Lacrosse players surface, take a deep breath then swim under one of the house boat and out of sight.

"What happened?" asked Tina now standing behind Kevin.

"Some jerk must have stood up on the railing and bent it back when he dove in."

"Wow that looks dangerous." Tina replied while pointing at some wood screws sticking out of the splinter wood.

Kevin took a hold of the chrome railing and tried to push it back into place. The wood fractured further and the hole enlarged. Kevin could now see right thru the Mahogany decking down into the captain's room. "This is great! I promised the rental guy when he let me have this houseboat, that I would take good care of it."

"Hey it can be fixed Kevin." Tina said, now looking right through the hole noticing that she could see their bed directly below. "Just turn it into insurance. I'm sure Trask Inc. has insurance."

"Insurance! What the hell does that have to do with this? I'm going to find the jerk that dove off and get him to pay for it."

"Kevin, it's not that big of deal. Just turn it into insurance! My stepfather just got my car painted by his insurance company."

"What?" Kevin now looked directly at Tina and asked. "That's how you got the new paint job on your car?"

"I didn't; my stepfather did." I think he said that he accidentally spilled acetone on my car when he was in the garage. I don't know Kevin, but I got a brand new paint job."

Kevin turned away from Tina and looked back down searching the water. Across the

man made lagoon three people on the second largest houseboat were hooking up some big speakers out on the deck.

The party atmosphere was heating up. From behind Tina started massaging Kevin's neck and shoulders. "You want me to get you something to drink?"

"Sure why not!" replied Kevin now looking down amongst the ten or so people swimming in the manmade lagoon between the five houseboats.

Tina went down to the galley and got a beer for Kevin. She made herself a margarita; her first one all day. When she returned to the upper deck the guys had just gotten the speakers blaring. "Here's a beer!" Tina yelled over the music.

"Thanks," Kevin replied still watching the houseboat directly across from them. Half a dozen people were already dancing on the deck in front of the blaring speakers.

Tina started twisting and bopping to the music. "Let's go on over and dance, Kevin."

"Maybe after a while, I want it to be dark, before I make myself look like a fool." Kevin said and turned toward Tina.

"Oh, come on Kevin. I'll teach you how to dance like a pro. Just do what I do. Tina started dancing; she put her hands up on Kevin's shoulders, moved closer and rubbed her breasts against Kevin chest. Then she lowered her hands to his waist pulled him in and started to grind herself against him.

"What do you call this? Dirty dancing," Kevin, asked with a hinted smile.

"I don't know... It's whatever you want to call it." Tina smiled back.

"Well, we'd better head over to the music or I won't be able to control myself." Kevin winked at Tina.

"Is that a promise Kevin?" Tina asked while moving her hands up to Kevin's head and pulling his lips towards hers. She French-kissed Kevin while continuing to grind into him. "Why don't we go back in and lay on the bed for awhile? You said you wanted to wait for it to get real dark before we go over and dance."

"A... Yeah, why don't we?" Kevin replied as his mind turned primal.

Tina seductively twisted away from Kevin and went down the ladder into the captain's room and got onto the bed. Kevin followed gulping down more than half of the beer before he laid back on the bed Tina rolled up on to Kevin and started pushing his shirt up. Kevin's hands mimicked Tina's and were up under her shirt against her bathing suit top. Tina sat up straight and pulled the shirt up and over her head; she reached around back to undo her bathing suit top. Kevin gazed at her...

Kevin's eyes locked on the ripped hole in the ceiling right above them; he glanced

over to the ladder down to the galley. "Tina we'd better not. Somebody might come up here or if somebody goes up on the deck they can see right in."

Tina reached for the bed sheet and pulled it up over the two of them. "Now no one can see and it's dark in here."

Kevin focused again on the jagged hole in the ceiling, "Tina the times not right. If someone comes up the ladder they'll know what we're doing..."

Tina leaned forward, her feigned breasts slightly touched Kevin bare chest. They'd been this far before and it always ended with Kevin stopping short. She had several boyfriends before Kevin—not one of them had ever rejected her. She wanted to ask why the reluctance again, yet kept her thoughts to herself. *Kevin has problems. Maybe he made one of those purity contracts all the churches are pushing these days. Or... He always talks about what his Grandfather did to him.*

"Tina let's head on over... I'm ready to dance now."

"You sure Kevin?" Tina replied in a discarded tone.

"Yeah, I need another beer first. Then I'll be ready to go."

*You'll probably never be ready to go. When and if we finally do go all the way, I'll start playing the hard to get role on you!* Tina thought to herself. Deep down Tina wanted to knock Kevin off of his high horse. She missed not having the upper hand and not using sex to get her way.

Kevin lifted Tina up and off to the side of the bed. "You ready to head over?"

"Ok let's go join the party," Tina said in a somewhat soured tone.

"Great!" Kevin sprang off the bed and toward the ladder.

Down in the galley Tina was still adjusting her bathing suit top under her shirt. "Hold on Kevin I want to make a drink."

"Sure, I need another beer too." Kevin opened the door on the refrigerator and it was empty. He remembered Hank let him rent the Stargazer because the galley refrigerator was not working. *How am I going to explain that big hole in the ceiling? Hank said he didn't like renting to college kids...*

"Kevin the beers are in that ice chest under the table," Tina said while pointing. "Get me some ice."

"Thanks, I forgot about the fridge." Kevin got a beer from the cooler, handed some ice to Tina then sat at the table.

At the counter Tina dumped the ice into the blender, added tequila and triple-sec to margarita mix and switched it on. She looked through the cupboards and found a

lime green plastic water bottle with a red straw coming through the top. After turning off the blender she emptied the Margarita ice mix into the green bottle snapped on the top and took a small sip. "Kevin you should take over more than one beer."

It took three times stepping and navigating from one houseboat to another before they were next to the blaring music. There were at least twenty people on the lower deck, plus a dozen or so on the upper deck screaming, jamming and dancing to the music. Kevin pushed Tina thru the bumping bodies to the ladder to the upper deck. Tina had only taken one sip from the lime green sport bottle; Kevin was on the second beer when someone yelled, "Mosh Pit!"

One of the guys climbed over the railing on the upper deck than back flopped onto the crowd on the lower deck. They caught him, passed him around overhead and then tossed him overboard. Some more Lacrosse players back flopped into the crowd and they got tossed into the private lake area surrounded by house boats. The music kept getting louder as did the unrestrained crowd and drinking.

Three beers later, along with a few drinks off of the lime green sports bottle; the rational side of Kevin's head was spent. Kevin stepped over the railing, "Mosh-Pit!" were his last words. The crowd caught Kevin. His pleading to be set down earned an extra ten seconds overhead before he got tossed into the lake. A wake-up call shot to his brain. *Wow I'm drunk... I'd better swim around for awhile so to sober up.*

Before long there were at least twenty people in the water. Sally tossed in a volleyball while someone tied a plastic garbage can to the pontoon on one of the houseboats. Out of nowhere a makeshift water polo court happened. The girls from the Pepperdine Volleyball team jumped in and became a team. Their competitive killer attitudes turned the casual game into a heated match. After about forty-five minutes of full-on water polo anybody that wasn't playing was watching. Kevin had a short flashback to the heated tennis match with the crowd above in the stands at the Pasadena Country Club.

An hour later the side Kevin was on lost three out of four games. All the volleyball girls on one side was an unfair advantage, but it was still a reputable defeat. Unlike the tennis match at the country club last Saturday, when Mr. Meng used the excuse that they don't play against women in his country. There was the usual high five's, butt grabbing and you cheated song and dance exchanged as most of the players started climbing back onboard to the circled houseboats.

Exhausted and dehydrated Kevin swam over to the Stargazer. It took most of his strength to pull himself out of the water and lumber into the galley. At the sink he bent over and starting drinking water directly from the faucet. Straightening up in front of the porthole he looked out and around the other houseboats for Tina.

With a fresh beer in hand Kevin completed a walk around of the flotilla asking if anyone had saw Tina. The two ski boats were the last place to check. The cabin on

the bright yellow ski boat had a light on. Kevin was just about to step on board when he got a whiff of Marijuana. Next he heard uncontrollable laughter and froze.

Kevin listened carefully and heard Tim coaxing someone about smoking a little weed and then going skinny dipping. 'Skinny-dipping' were two words Kevin distained, ever since he got caught in the pool when he just turned fourteen.

Next Kevin heard Tina's voice, "Like, I'd like to smoke some weed. I just hope Kevin can't smell it. And like forget the skinny-dipping, Kevin is a big prude about stuff like that."

There was more laughter, "Tina you're right! Kevin is too much of a Goody two-shoe to do that. Smoke pot and go naked all in the same night. Like what are we thinking?" Tim's voice bellowed out of the cabin.

Kevin leaned back from his eaves dropping position. He back tracked along the outside walkway of three of the houseboats. He made it back to the Stargazer without anybody paying any attention. The galley was empty. Kevin went over to the table, sat down and folded his arms across his chest. *So I'm a Goody two-shoe... I'll show them. But no matter what, I'm not doing drugs. I swore to myself after Richard's son got shot doing a drug deal, that I would never go down that path.*

Kevin stood up, walked to the counter and resolutely grabbed at one of the liquor bottles. Half a glass of brown whiskey, some ice, topped off with ginger ale was now his drink. He gulped it down and started mixing another, when the aluminum screen door opened. "Are you finished playing Water Polo?" Tina asked as she came into the galley.

"Yeah, we're finished" answered Kevin, not turning to look at Tina.

Tina came over slid her arms around Kevin waist and leaned her head against his back. "Do you want to go dance?"

"No!" Kevin took another long gulp then wiped at the corner of his mouth.

"Like who won?" Tina asked as she worked herself around to a position between Kevin and the counter.

"The volleyball women did," Kevin quipped as he added more brown whiskey to the glass. "Where've you been?" Kevin asked firmly.

"Oh, I was talking with Tim. Like, you know he really misses Sue. Like, I think they might get back together." Tina replied rubbing herself into Kevin.

"No, like I don't know. And like I don't care. Like... I don't give a crap about Tim. Like, I think he's a jerk. Like, he uses women... Like forget it Tina." Kevin took another drink pushed away from Tina and then walked out the aluminum door.

Tina followed! "What's the problem, Kevin? Did I do something wrong?"

"No... It's my problem, and you're right." Kevin took another drink.

"Right about what?" Tina grabbed for Kevin's hand.

"Oh you know, about us, I mean about me." Kevin took another drink.

"Kevin, I think you're getting drunk. I've never seen you this way."

"I'm not drunk!" Kevin straightened up, as though to be at attention.

"Kevin what's the problem?" Like, are you mad or something?"

"Oh, like I'm always such a Goody two-shoes that I would never get mad or go naked. Is that what you and jerk boy think?"

"You heard us?" Tina's face started turning red.

"I didn't hear anybody or anything... I just smelled weed!"

"So what Kevin! Like, I was just talking with Tim. I didn't smoke any pot. I know you don't like it. And I'm sorry if. . ."

"Tina forget it..." Kevin finished off the drink and flung the ice cubes into the lake!

"Here hold this," Kevin said then handed Tina the empty glass. He then turned away from her and pulled the sweat shirt up and over his head. Kevin had the V back of a swimmer; wide, strong shoulders with a firm trim waist. Kevin's tall muscular physique was accented with a four day tan. Tina was surprised when Kevin pulled off his shorts stepped over the railing, stood on the pontoon and yelled, "Let's get naked!"

"It's a skinny-dipping party!" echoed between the houseboats. Two guys followed suit, stripped, and then jumped in. People were flying from the upper decks and lower decks. Two girls wrapped in beach towels let them drop to deck then climbed the water slide and slid tandem down the blue fiberglass into the lake. Tina stood on the Stargazer deck dazed and surprised.

The cool water had somewhat a sobering effect as Kevin swam back to just below where Tina was leaning against the railing. "You coming in?" Kevin yelled.

"I don't know? Maybe we should talk. And like, there's so much light."

"Well turn the lights off and come on in." Kevin said with a devilish grin.

Tina vanished into the galley turned off the light and stripped off her shirt and bra. Thru the darkness a camera flash went off from one of the porthole window. It took a moment for her eyes to readjust to the darkness. She heard footsteps running down

the outside deck, then someone jump from the Stargazer to another boat.

Finally, Tina appeared in the galley doorway with just a pair of panties on. She had her arms folded across her chest, walked to the edge of the deck jumped in and swam toward a houseboat across the way. Kevin started to swim after Tina. About halfway across something grabbed onto his leg and pulled him underwater! Kevin kicked free! He surfaced and gasped for air. Something grabbed his leg again! Kevin kicked free again and swam as fast as he could back to the Stargazer and scrambled on deck.

Moving up and down the deck Kevin noticed air bubbles coming from the direction he'd just swam from. The air bubbles went right under the Stargazer. Kevin rushed to the opposite side of the lower deck when a head with a swim mask appeared. Frank pulled the scuba regulator out of his mouth and started laughing.

Kevin bent down under the railing. "Frank you bastard! You just scared the hell out of me!"

"It was 'Jaws' that got you," Frank said and started laughing even harder.

"You son-of-a-bitch, Frank. I almost crapped."

"Oh, that would have been a pretty site underwater." More laughter from Frank. "Hey Kevin, you look pretty good naked," Frank said now holding onto the Stargazer ladder to climb out of the water.

Kevin broke out into laughter as he helped Frank onboard. Frank pulled off the mask and tossed it on the deck. Kevin walked to the front corner of the Stargazer and spied out across the man made lagoon. There were at least three dozen naked bodies swimming in the flotilla's lagoon. In the dim light Kevin could make out Tina's blond hair way across the way holding on a pontoon on one of the far houseboats. Kevin ducked back out of sight and walked back to Frank who had just taken off the scuba tank. "Frank let me use your swim fins."

"Okay, you want the tank too?" Frank asked.

"No, I can make it all the way across the lagoon without a tank," Kevin said as he pulled on the swim fins then slipped into the lake.

"Here take this," Frank tossed the swim mask to Kevin.

With the mask over his face, Kevin took a deep breath and swam under the Stargazer and then surfaced to get his bearings. Another deep breath and about half way across the lagoon someone above on the surface was swimming in the same direction. Kevin kicked harder and swam just under Tina's long tanned legs and quietly came up underneath the houseboat pontoons. Kevin worked himself along the bottom of the boat till he was on the opposite side of the pontoon, adjacent from

Tina. There was the sound of splashing water and then laughter.

"Tim go away! I'm waiting for Kevin." Tina blurted out.

"Kevin, I don't see him. Maybe that water-polo loser passed out?" There was a hollow tin can thump sound when Tim's hand latched onto the aluminum pontoon.

Kevin gently grabbed on a crossbeam under the houseboat; then with his other hand pulled the swim mask up onto his forehead.

"I just wanted to take a better look at your boobs." Kevin heard Tim's words perfectly. The words 'take a better look' implied that it wasn't the first time...

"Tim, don't be so fresh." Tina replied. Tim's words made her think about the camera flash that went off thru the galley porthole.

"Oh, I don't mean it like that... Tina, I know that you had plastic surgery and I just wanted to see how good of job they did." Kevin heard the sound of hands moving on the aluminum pontoon. They sounded like they were moving toward each other.

"Who told you I had plastic surgery?" Tina wanted an answer.

"A. . . "Tim hesitated."It's just since I'm going to be going to medical school and all. And that plastic surgery is one of the fields I've been considering. And..." Tim was losing his train of thought as he stared at Tina's chest so much wanting to reach out and touch her.

"Did Sue tell you?" Tina added to his arousal state with a flirting smile.

"Well, sort of... Sue said that your stepdad paid for you implants when you graduated from high school. The only reason she told me was.... Well, Sue is thinking about getting it done. If they look as good as yours I can't wait."

"Sue has never mentioned that she wanted to get implants. Plus you know now that she's pregnant she won't need to."

"Yeah, I noticed; plus her butt is getting big too!"

"Tim, that's not nice. That's your child inside her making her bigger. You know you'll be a father soon."

Yes, Kevin thought to himself from his vantage point between the pontoons.

"Yeah, possibly so Tina..." Tim replied almost inaudibly.

Kevin listened even harder for Tina's reply.

"Well, like I've been telling you. That's something between you and Sue."

"Yeah I know." Tim resolutely replied. "Tina, I can't tell you how much I appreciate you listening to all my problems these last couple of days."

"Tim, like I wouldn't listen. Like, Sue's my best friend."

"Thanks Tina. I wish I had more friends like you."

"I'm your friend Tim... But right now I need to find Kevin." Tina swam off...

Kevin took a deep breath, let loose of the crossbeam, sank underwater and then started kicking the swim fins super hard. He made it back to the far side of Stargazer, immediately threw the fins up on the deck, climbed up the ladder pulled the mask off and hurried around to the other side.

Swimming with her head above water so not to get her hair wet, Tina caught Kevin rounding the bow of the Stargazer. She yelled, "Kevin, where have you been?"

"Oh... A. I needed to help Frank with his scuba tank and stuff? Kevin yelled back.

"Are you coming in or are you going to stand there naked all night?" Tina asked.

Kevin looked down; he'd forgotten about stripping. "A... I'll be right in but I'm going to make myself another drink first."

"Can you hand me my drink? It should still be full?" Tina said as she held on to the side of the Stargazer.

"Sure!" Kevin reached for the lime green water bottle that was next to his shorts. He grabbed the water bottle in one hand and his shorts with the other. "Here you go." Kevin handed Tina her drink.

"Why are you pulling your shorts back on?" Tina asked.

"I'm not going into the galley naked." Kevin quickly pulled on his shorts. the aluminum screen door slapping shut sounded as loud as a firecracker. He switched on the light; the illumination blasted his eyes. Kevin spilled the brown whiskey while pouring his drink. It felt as though the houseboat was rocking and rolling on huge waves... Kevin steadied himself and then staggered over to the table and sat down.

A few minutes later Tina came through the door and looked at Kevin with his head slumped. She grabbed a yellow beach towel off of a chair, wrapped it around her body. "Are you okay Kevin?"

Kevin jerked his head up and replied. "I think the sun and waterskiing today has done me in. Water polo and whiskey probably don't mix well either. I just need to rest for a minute..."

"Well, if you don't want to get back in the water right now why don't we go lie down?"

"That sounds good Tina. Why don't we go upstairs?" Kevin slid out from the booth

Tina let the towel fall before she started up the ladder. Kevin switched off the galley light then quickly followed Tina. Up in the Captain's room they walked through the darkness to the queen bed. Tina's hair tips were dripping water; Kevin licked the water droplets off of her neck. Hurriedly Tina rolled on top of Kevin and pushed his broad shoulders down into the mattress. Kevin tried to sit up but Tina applied more force to his shoulders. Tina found the elastic band on Kevin's shorts and reached inside...

"Oh no, I'm ..." Came through the darkness. Kevin froze and Tina rolled off him to the left. "Kevin is that you? It's me, Sally. I'm sick, I'm going to ..."

The splashing sound of someone getting sick on the floor echoed off of the walls! Kevin jumped from the bed and turned on the light. Sally had her head over the back of the guest bed throwing up. Mary was knelling next to her holding her hair. The vomit smell immediately followed...

Tina gagged, wrapped the sheet around her body and hurried down to the galley. The smell quickly permeated across the room. Kevin put his hand over his mouth, flew down the ladder and hurled in the galley sink. He drew some deep breaths while running water to clean out the sink. Tina leaned up against the galley wall, disgusted with the entire situation.

Mary bolted down the ladder and pulled open cabinet doors looking for cleaning supplies. She apologized for Sally and headed back up to the captains room.

Hunched over, Kevin swished out his mouth and spit into the sink. Tina held her breath and went back up to the captain's room and returned holding a pair of white cotton shorts and a sports bra. She dropped the sheet, pulled the sport bra on over her head and went over to Kevin. "Are you feeling okay?"

"Yeah sort of..." Kevin replied slowly. "But that vomit smell is making me ill."

"No kidding!" Tina replied as she pulled on the white cotton shorts. "Like where are we going to sleep?"

"We'll probably have to sleep up on the top deck on the lounge chairs."

"Like, I can sleep on one of those things."

"Whatever... Just give me a minute to clear my head."

"Sally's a pig." Tina stated as she walked over to the screen door to listen to the music.

"Jeez, Tina, she just drank too much. Sort of like you did last night"

"She's still a pig, plus I didn't get sick last night. Now, where am I going to sleep?" Tina looked out thru the screen across the water. "Everyone's dancing over there!"

"Tina, if you want to head over, go ahead. I'll see about making up a place for us to sleep."

"Are you sure Kevin?" Tina replied without taking her eyes off of the wild dancing.

"Yeah, I'm sure." Kevin swished more water around in his mouth and spit into the sink. "I'll get my head together and then see about getting something made up for us to sleep on."

"Okay Kevin, if it's okay with you." Tina didn't hesitate, the aluminum door slapped shut; she picked up the lime green water bottle from the deck and was gone.

Kevin closed his eye and let his head rest on the side of cupboard door. Mary returned to the galley for more paper towels and apologized for Sally again.

After twenty minutes, Kevin lifted his head off the galley table and went up ladder. The moment he entered the Captain's room, the smell of bleach blasted his nostrils. Kevin grabbed the blankets and sheets off the bed and pushed the bedding up thru the opening to the top deck. Sally was moaning and twisting below, still being ravaged by grain alcohol

The fresh air on the upper deck helped clear Kevin's head. He pulled off some lounge cushions and made up a bed. Then he turned a few lounge chairs on edge to make a make-shift privacy wall. The high vantage point from the top deck was like a lookout with seclusion. Kevin focused on the large group of gyrating bodies for Tina but didn't see her. He scanned around the flotilla and on the far end Tina was alone sitting on the side rail of the yellow ski boat. Kevin yelled and waved his arms.

Kevin's attention getting effort halted when the cabin light came on and he saw Tim's head thru the small porthole of the small bow cabin. A knot twisted in Kevin's stomach and he ducked down behind the lounge chairs that were turned on their edge. Kevin wanted to turn away—but the need to spy won out. Tim backed out from the small cabin and Kevin could see a small orange glow by his mouth. The orange glow got brighter then Tim handed the joint to Tina.

Kevin's head slumped. *I hate all of this... My Grandfather was right. Sex is more than a game of who gets who. All the extra crap and emotions that comes with getting laid is not worth it...* Kevin raised his head and peeked over the lounge chair. Tina handed the joint back to Tim then stood on the ski boat railing and stepped back onto the houseboat. She started bee-bopping and shaking her head to the music. Tim took another hard drag off of the joint then flicked it into the lake. Kevin crawled over to the made up bed and collapsed.

When Tina's favorite song blared out, Kevin again took up his spot behind the

lounge chairs on edge. Tina was dancing by herself and flowing to the music like a Greek Goddess. Out of nowhere, Tim showed up with her lime green water bottle and she took one drink. The song didn't even finish before Tina was falling all over Tim...Kevin turned away when Tina wrapped her arms around Tim's neck.

Back on the cushions Kevin stared up at the dark and glittering star filled dome. An odd feeling came over him as the vastness of the universe started to over shadow the smallness of the party. *It's weird but the other day I had more of a connection with Danny on our car ride than I have ever had with Tina. Maybe...*

In that brief thought a shooting star trailed all the way across the sky. Mysteriously, it looked to be moving away—not falling toward Earth. A cold chill ran down Kevin's back.