

My weekend with Kat was magical. We laughed and cried and talked about so many things, each of us listening with open hearts. Even though many of our conversations were deep and profound, we left the heaviest subjects untouched. It seemed as if we were laying the groundwork for bigger things to come. We found so much healing in those few days that we spent together. It took a lot of time to build the kind of relationship that would be necessary for us to trust each other fully, but I felt we were very close to having done that piece of work.

I wished that she could have stayed longer. Waking up on the day she was to leave I found my eyes fluttering open to see that she had been looking down upon me as I slept. It seemed an eternity passed in that moment.

“You are so beautiful.”

“Kat, stop it. I just woke up.”

“I know, and no one should look that good just waking up, but somehow you do it.”

I proceeded to hit her with a pillow, which led us into a very playful pillow fight. That was something I had not done since I was a child. I loved the way that Kat and I brought out the playful side of each other when we were together.

She pinned me down and I just laughed.

“Now I have you!”

“Yes, you win.”

She looked at me and I at her with a certain knowing. I wanted her to kiss me and yet I knew I wasn't quite ready to go there, emotionally. She sensed it and kissed my forehead instead, very gently and sweetly.

“Time for breakfast, angel.”

I was getting ready to tell Kat about Trisha when her cell rang.

It was Marie, the woman with whom she had remained friends even after the incident in Paris. She was a mess and really needed Kat's help, professionally at least.

“Well, it looks like I have to head back to La La land and help Marie out.”

“What happened?”

“Well, the shoot is going well for her except she is stuck with a few scenes that are pivotal. Apparently her dailies look great but when she gets to the scenes where she has to cry on cue she just can’t. She tried using glycerin but it just doesn’t look right. So, she is really upset, especially seeing how well everything else is going. She has the emotions, the physical aspects, and the dialogue down. She just can’t seem to get there with the tears.”

“So, are you going to share your secrets with her to help her out?”

“Now just whatever do you mean?”

“Well, we both know what it takes to get there but few can do it as well as you, Kat.”

“Why is it you always seem to know more about acting than I think you do?”

“Ohhhh,” I grinned, “could be the fact that I acted in high school and college. And remember who I grew up around.”

“Yes, but your knowledge is deeper than that.” Kat did a double take. “Wait. What?”

“I didn’t tell you that my father used to be a money man?”

“So *that’s* where I know that last name from. Your father was Tony Lazzetti? Damn, I should’ve figured that out before.”

“Yes, he was an executive producer on a few films.”

“As I recall, those films did quite well. He had a real rep in the business for being able to pick a winner.”

“That was Dad. He knew where to invest his money.”

“Wow, I had no idea you were so, shall we say, connected.”

“No, not really. He put up the money but wasn’t involved in the process much. I really learned a lot in college when I started to focus on directing plays instead of acting in them. But then, after what happened, I pulled out of everything and switched majors to Psychology.” I realized I was alluding to the very subject we didn’t have time to discuss.

“You know, angel, we still need to talk about that. I didn’t want to push you but I really want to know what happened. I realize that I kind of took up our weekend with my issues but it felt so good to get it out. I hope you trust me enough to tell me your story next time. I want to know everything about you. I know I have to leave today, so let’s make sure we set aside time to talk about what happened the next time we’re together. If you are ready, that is.”

“I will be. It helped me a lot, your opening up so much this weekend. It makes me trust

you more, if that makes any sense.”

“It does.” Kat’s smile lit up her amazing eyes, which met mine in a way that could only be described as sweet and compassionate.

“I’m glad you are going to help Marie. She seems like a promising young actress. How have things been between you since Paris?”

“Well, we are just friends and that is a good thing. I have noticed that she is always pleasant and accommodating when out in public with her fans now. So I am pleased with that. She is still struggling a lot trying to figure out the whole ‘Am I bi or lesbian’ deal. But she is young and, amazingly enough, I don’t have any attraction toward her anymore.

My eyebrow raised inadvertently at that remark.

“Oh, really? Well, if you aren’t interested maybe she would like to meet a woman older than you.”

“Hey, I thought I was young!”

“Oh, please Kat, you know I’m joking. Hell, I could be her mother.”

“Yes, but you couldn’t be mine.”

“True.”

We smiled at each other with a knowing that we were certainly on the track to becoming more than friends. But how much was one risking if she went there with someone whom she loved as a friend, someone whom she needed as a friend? It was exciting to think of making love with Kat, but the risk of losing the friendship was too much even to think about, and yet it was all that I *could* think about.

She left and I felt such a sadness deep inside knowing that it would be weeks again before we could see each other. Our time together was always special and I looked forward to her calls and texts.

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Three weeks passed quickly. I would work on one of my projects and would see a client here and there. And life, honestly, was taking on a new dimension. Sure, I still missed Cassie from time to time, but Kat and the rest of my friends filled my days and nights with emails, texts and, of course, dinner and so much more. I was grateful that I had women in my life who I could count on.

Sam and Jo were making progress in their relationship. I was just thinking of Sam when the phone rang.

“Hey, Mimi.”

“Well hello, Rock Star!”

“Damn, that never gets old.”

“I guess I have been saying it to you for quite some time now, haven’t I?”

“You believed in me before anyone else did.”

“What are friends for?”

“Well, you’re the best, Mimi.”

“Glad you know it,” I said laughing.

“I am so happy. Jo spent the night last night. And, before you get to asking, nothing happened. Except, she does let me hold her. I can’t believe how that in itself is enough right now, you know?”

I was smiling when she said that, thinking about how amazing it was to hear *the* Samantha Stanley happy with just holding her girl close. It felt like I was living in an alternate universe.

“That is wonderful, Sam. I am so happy for you and for Jo.”

“I hope we get to do that a lot more, and guess what else?”

“What?”

“She let me kiss her and it was so sweet I thought I could’ve died right then and there.”

“Ah, so was it the kiss that made it enough?”

“No, but it sure didn’t hurt.”

“It’s wonderful to hear you like this Sam. So, how’s the new song coming along?”

“It’s almost finished. I can’t wait to play it for you.”

“I can’t wait to hear it and, of course, I am sure someone else can’t, either.”

“She doesn’t know it’s for her yet.”

“Wow, she is going to be quite surprised.”

“I hope so. By the way, thanks Mimi. You have been so helpful and supportive. I know we have a long way to go, but I think Jo is the one.”

“Oh my heavens wait, let me sit down. Did I hear you right? Has the Rock Star fallen for a younger woman? She would be the first woman you have ever said that about.”

“I just know, this is what I want. I just hope that in the end I am what she wants.”

“Just enjoy every moment, Sam. It’s all any of us ever really have.”

“Ah, my philosopher babe.”

“Yes, that’s me and I have to get back to work now.”

“Okay, girl. Talk to you soon.”

“Absolutely. Bye Sam.”

“What?”

“Oh, I am sorry. How could I forget, Rock Star!”

Laughing, I hung up the phone and proceeded to work on my project.

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Kat called on a Friday night just as I was getting into bed.

“Hey angel, go to your door.”

“What?”

“Go open your front door.”

“Okay, okay, hold on.”

I went to the front door and opened it to find a big box with a pink ribbon on it.

“Wow, what the heck? Kat, what did you do?”

“Open it, girl.”

“OK, hang on while I bring it in.”

I brought the package inside and sat on the sofa.

“Put your speaker on, babe.”

“Just a sec.” I hit the speaker button and set the phone on the coffee table. “There we go. Can you hear me?”

“Yes, angel.”

I started with the card that was attached. It read: Angel, because I believe in dreams again and always want you to know how much you mean to me. Hold on to this until I see you. Much love, Kat xxxx

“Oh Kat, the card is beautiful. Thank you.”

“Open it, babe.”

I proceeded to open the box by pulling the big pink ribbon. Inside I found a large stuffed animal. It was the most beautiful unicorn I had ever seen with pink markings and ribbons of aqua and pink. And there was a CD with a song on it that she had burned, with the lyrics to the song attached.

My heart melted into a puddle right then and there, “Wow, this is beautiful. Oh my heavens, just beautiful.”

“Put the CD on, babe.”

“Okay.”

The song she had picked was Alanis Morissette’s “You Owe Me Nothing.” I read the lyrics and realized that Kat knew me better than almost anyone else did; she had to in order for her to have picked this song out.

“Oh Kat, this is amazing. I love this song. And this unicorn is beautiful. I don’t know how to thank you.”

“Hearing you now is thanks enough, sweetheart.”

A part of me was so moved and excited, and yet I felt an undercurrent of sadness well up inside of me. The last woman to give me a stuffed animal was Trisha, before the night that changed my life. Would it always be like this? Something wonderful and then a memory pulling me back? The chasm between happiness and sadness always seemed to be there.

“Are you OK, babe? You aren’t saying anything.”

I was jerked out of my reverie. “Sorry, Kat, I am just so moved. Honestly, this is

perfect!”

“No, babe, I sense something else. What is it?”

Damn her. She was beginning to know me too well and could read my voice.

“I am just so overwhelmed. This is so thoughtful.”

“And...?”

“And what?”

“What is wrong? You sounded so happy and suddenly you sound sad.”

And then, as if on cue, came the tears. I hated that something so amazingly thoughtful could bring back such bad memories.

“Please, angel, what’s wrong?”

“I love it, Kat, honestly. I am overwhelmed, I guess.”

“You said that. You’re covering. Tell me what’s wrong.”

“I just, well, I just remembered the last person to give me a stuffed animal, that’s all.”

“Who? Oh no, was it your ex, Cassie?”

“No, it wasn’t.”

“Well, then who, dear?”

“Trisha.”

“Is she an ex of yours?”

“Yes, and more.”

“What do you mean, more?”

“She was the reason I lost a semester in college and changed majors.”

Kat would put it together. She was smart; she was going to know now.

“Wait, you were in college when you were...” I knew that it had dawned on her; she had put it together. Her moment of silence told me that she had not expected it to be a woman who had done the damage so long ago. Then she did something that stunned me.

“Say it, Amanda.”

“No, I can’t.”

“Yes, you can.”

“Trisha was the woman I lived with, the one who abused me.”

“And...”

“Damn it, Kat, I didn’t want to do this over the phone.”

“And...what else?”

I was so upset, so frustrated, that I blurted it out.

“She raped me, all right? There. I said it.” Shocked to hear the words finally come out of my mouth. My truth finally splayed open fully to the reality of what had happened. I felt scared and ashamed all over again.

I had never uttered the actual words before, not even to Jackie. I had danced around it but had never said it.

“I’m sorry I had to do that, angel, but you needed to say it.”

I was crying too hard to get any words out. I was scared that Kat would run away now that she knew the worst.

“Amanda, listen to me. Can you say something so I know you can hear me?”

“Yes, what?” I managed to choke out.

“I love you, and I am here for you; this changes nothing. Except that you trust me enough now to tell me what happened, I hope.”

I calmed down while listening to Kat reassure me. I regained my composure enough to talk again.

“I am just so sorry. You were so sweet. This gift is amazing. But I haven’t had a stuffed animal since Trisha and it all came rushing back.”

“I know, honey. You know I understand. I am sorry it had to happen when I am not there to hold you. And I am sorry that my gift did this, but I am not sorry you finally told me. I will be there in the morning.”

“What? You aren’t supposed to come until next weekend.”



“That’s what they make planes for, honey. I just checked and I can get out of here by five a.m. I’ll be at your place very early. I have Monday off so we can be together the rest of the weekend. I want you to tell me everything. I want to know now, Okay?”

“But Kat, weren’t you working with Marie again?”

“This is more important. She understands things come up. You are family.” I couldn’t help but smile when she said that.

“OK, I won’t argue.” I knew better than to argue with Kat. In the end she would wear me down and I would give in, and I was too tired for that now.

I fell asleep with the phone still connected and Kat didn’t hang up until she left for the airport. I woke up when the doorbell rang, confused, wondering who was at my door, the phone next to my face.

Then it all came back when I saw the unicorn.

Looking like hell, I went to the door to find Kat with a concerned look on her face. She came right in, shut the door, and grabbed me so tight that I thought I would break.

And, as if on cue, the moment I was in her arms I started crying and I didn’t stop until I had told her everything about Trisha. I told her things that I had never even told Jackie or Cassie; it all spilled out. So many years of pain held inside, memories that I had walled away, all told to Kat within the safety of her arms all throughout the weekend.

Where this would lead us I didn’t know. All I knew was that I had to let it all go so that I could meet Kat, or any woman in my life, more whole than before. It was time to start again. It was the unending process of life, death, and rebirth within us. All painful, yet filled with wisdom if we were brave enough to walk that path. And Kat was walking mine with me as I was with her. But it didn’t matter where we were headed because we knew that we weren’t alone anymore.