

Kat arranged to have everything she could possibly have done the day before she had to leave for the coast. I was surprised that she had kept that a secret until this morning. I awoke to breakfast in bed. Of course, it was her standard scrambled eggs and toast, but still I was very pleased to see the beautiful tray she set in front of me. It was decorated with a few pink roses, beautiful china, my favorite strawberry preserves and, of course, the meal itself. She kissed me so gently I thought the world had stopped, just for that moment in time.

“Good morning Angel.”

“Good morning Kitty, or should I say Best Actress?”

“Not yet, I’ll let you know on Sunday night.”

“Oh, just make sure to text first, you know I will be entertaining a young lady that night since you won’t be here.”

“Younger than I?”

“Yes, you’re a bit old for my taste now.”

She raised a pillow in the air. I protected the beautiful tray set in front of me.

“I can’t very well ruin the breakfast I made for both of us now, can I?”

“That would be a real shame.”

She put down the pillow and joined me in bed to share breakfast. We were sitting practically on top of each other as I spread some preserves on the sourdough toast and fed it to her. Watching her almost get the sweet spread in her hair I gently pushed the long locks behind her ear.

“You know, Amanda, I really love you. You’re so gentle and kind.”

“I love you too Kat, you’re so strong and protective. Not to mention you’ve got a great ass.”

We both laughed and continued to feed each other breakfast. The freshly squeezed juice reminded me of the first time I went out and picked grapefruits off the tree for Kat. I loved cooking for her, spoiling her in my way. She always seemed to return the gesture in a special way of her own.

“I have a surprise for you.”

“Oh I love surprises! Well...most of the time.”

“We have the whole day and night to spend together.”

I was so shocked with all of the activity that had been going on, it never occurred to me that she would have the day off. I was beaming from ear to ear.

“So what are we going to do with that time?”

“I have a few ideas.”

Just then Kat got up and took the breakfast tray from me and placed it on the table near the bed. She hopped right back into bed, took me in her arms and kissed me as if she were going away for a week or two. Her lips upon mine were so sweet, loving, and gentle at first, becoming insistent and filled with passion quickly. Her hand was running through my hair and then down my body—finally reaching under my camisole. Her hands knew exactly where and how to touch me, she knew every sensitive spot that would make my body move under hers. Just then she stopped, only for a moment, to remove her top. Taking no time to remove mine she laid her breasts upon mine making me shudder and moan even louder. Every time with Kat was special and every time it seemed more intense. We had come to trust each other emotionally and now the sexual part seemed to follow suit.

“I want you so much, Angel.”

I could barely talk; my body felt as if it were going to explode. Somehow I managed to moan out the words “take me”.

Just then I felt Kat moving on top of me, discarding my underwear and hers quickly. Her fingers danced around my warm moist center before she opened me up and slid her fingers inside. I never wanted anything more than her inside of me at that moment. Her strokes were gentle—in and out—before moving faster, deeper, and more fully than before. Our kisses were deep and passionate, my own orgasm right about to burst when her own gushed forth all over my thigh. That’s all it took as I flooded her fingers. We were both so exhausted from such intense orgasms that we snuggled up together and fell asleep for several hours. It seemed a good way to start our day together.

Slowly we awoke curled up next to each other. She was smiling at me with those beautiful eyes of hers staring right into mine.

“Good morning again.”

“And a fine morning it is.”

“I believe you are exactly right.”

“So, should we stay in bed all day or at least get up and take a shower?”

“I like the first idea, but a shower or a bath would be nice. A change of clothes couldn’t hurt either.”

“Don’t you like my birthday suit, Kat?”

“I think I just proved how much I love your birthday suit, don’t you agree?”

I smiled and then proceeded to tickle her tummy, which made her giggle like a schoolgirl. After a tickle fight and pillow fight we cleaned up the kitchen and shared a shower where we both took advantage of washing each other thoroughly. It seemed like the day passed by quickly and here we were ordering in dinner already. We had decided on a special meal, yet one light enough not to cause any panic for Kat and the lovely dress that she was ready to wear on Sunday, which was less than two days away now.

“That was delicious babe, not quite as good as yours, but it wasn’t bad at all.”

“Is anything ever as good as I make it?”

“Never.”

“That’s one of the many traits you have that I love, you’re so smart and know just what to say.”

“You know I would never feed you a line, I only do that for the camera.”

“And you know I would never write one for you.”

“I was hoping one day you would write me a line, or many, perhaps in a screenplay.”

“You never know Kat ...maybe, one day. But, what if you do give up acting?”

“I would love to direct, maybe produce too. But, if you wrote a part with me in mind I would come out of retirement quite quickly, to be sure.”

“You’re so sweet.”

We decided to listen to music and play a game of chess on our iPhones that night. Kat and I both loved technology and a good strategy game like chess actually relaxed us. We would even play when she was out of town. It was amazing how technology had changed our lives.

“Checkmate!”

“Again? Really, Angel after awhile I get tired of losing to you.”

“You wouldn’t want me to let you win now, would you?”

“No, you know that would piss me off.”

“I love playing with you Kat, you provide quite the challenge.”

“I’m glad to hear that. You’re so good at this.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere.”

“I didn’t think I needed flattery; like this morning, for instance?”

“You did come in the bedroom with breakfast in hand, or should I say tray?”

I loved the playful banter between us. Kat and I had conversations which ranged from our respective creative efforts to logic and science. We had an easy way of relating and of communicating. Our relationship was growing ever closer and I was grateful for it. Feeling blessed to spend the whole day and night together I felt a pang of sadness. I figured it was because she would be leaving in the morning. For that matter, so would Sam. I couldn’t believe they had agreed to share a flight over. I was actually glad that Kat had agreed to go with Sam and her band. They wouldn’t be sharing a flight back though.

The rest of the night we cuddled, talked into the early morning hours and finally fell asleep with our arms wrapped around each other. I was awakened by the sound of Kat snapping her suitcase together.

“Sorry, Angel.”

“Kat, why didn’t you wake me?”

“You looked so peaceful, how could I?”

“I’m going to miss you.”

“And I’m going to miss you baby.”

“Hurry home, I’ll make sure to keep the bed warm.”

“With you in it, it’ll be hot for sure.”

With that she kissed me, insisted I stay in bed, and went out the front door. I heard Steve and then heard the alarm reset. It was quite comforting knowing someone was always watching out for Kat, and I didn’t mind the security either. I fell back into a deep sleep and didn’t wake up until I heard a text message come in. I loved the chimes on my cell phone. The text was from Sam thanking me for everything and letting me know that she and Kat had safely arrived in Los Angeles. I felt even more relieved after seeing that and didn’t even manage to text her back because I fell back asleep again. I must have been so tired from the lack of sleep the night before. I wondered how Kat was managing

it.

Several hours later, after I woke up, showered, and ate, I heard from Kat.

“Hi baby.”

“Hi kitty.”

“I miss you already.”

“I miss you too.”

“How was the ride over?”

“Interesting, Sam is really different around her band members. I found her to be quite pleasant.”

“Really? I’m glad to hear you two were actually civil to one another.”

“Yes, but she’s a bit pissed that you didn’t text her back right away.”

“Damn, I forgot! I know she gets a little crazy that way, but I fell back to sleep.”

“I’m sure it’s good for her to know she isn’t the center of your universe.”

“Yes, that’s a good thing. I’ll text her when we’re done. Wow, tomorrow night is the big night. It’s so hard to believe.”

“I know, and yet all I can really think about is coming home to you. Awards are so silly in the end. How can you truly say one of these performances were better than the other? The work is outstanding among everyone. I hate that it has to be this competition.”

“You love competition, at least with me when we’re playing chess.”

“You know what I mean.”

“Yes, I do. I’m sure of one thing, with me you’re always the best.”

“Thanks babe. I’ll talk to you tomorrow, before and after the show.”

“That sounds good to me dear. I’m going to be getting ready for tomorrow night with Jo.”

“That will be fun for you, while I’m working it for the cameras.”

“Poor dear.”

“You really feel for me don’t you?”

“I’d love to feel you.”

“Oh, who’s the bad one now?”

“Bye, honey.”

“Bye baby, love you.”

“Love you too, star.”

I sent a quick text off to Sam so she would feel better. Then I proceeded to make a few dips and some pasta salad to go with our food tomorrow night. Jo and I decided to keep it simple and have some Italian sandwiches from the deli. I told her to let me fill in the rest. I knew she loved Mexican food too, so I made my multi-layer dip and homemade tortilla chips to go with it. There was nothing like fresh homemade salsa with cilantro and jalapeños to make it a really nice spicy and authentic treat. I had taken Mexican cooking lessons when I was younger, but I really learned authentic Mexican cooking from the mother of one of my close friends—she was the real deal. There was something about the Latin cultures that I always loved. They had warmth, passion, and a sense of what was important.

Jo arrived right at four PM the next day. It felt good to have showered and rested most of the day before getting dressed for company. Kat and I had already spoken and she was busy getting ready now and doing interviews. Jo arrived in the late afternoon so that we could have plenty of time to catch up and enjoy the night ahead. I opened the door to see Mike, another bodyguard, watching Jo closely as he hadn’t met her yet. I put my arms around Jo and welcomed her.

“Jo, I’m so glad you’re here.”

“Me too.”

“Thanks Mike, you’re a doll. This is Jo, a friend of Kat’s and mine. She’s also Sam’s girl.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Jo.”

“Thanks.”

“If you need anything, Amanda, I’m right here.”

“Thanks Mike. I take it Steve is with Kat.”

“And a few others are watching after her tonight. Los Angeles is a bit crazy on these nights.”

“I can’t imagine and I don’t want to either.”

Mike smiled brightly; I think he felt the same way.

“You two have a great evening.”

“You too Mike, and thank you.”

With that I closed the door and explained to Jo that Mike was new, that he was a great guy, just a bit precautious. In a bodyguard I felt that was a good thing.

“You look beautiful, Amanda.”

“So do you Jo. Heard from Sam?”

“Only every hour it seems like. She’s been texting me like crazy.”

“I bet she’s nervous.”

“She sure is, and that doesn’t seem like her.”

“It’s a big night for her.”

“It is for Kat, too.”

“Yes, but I suspect it means more to Sam. She took a lot of crap when she first came out all those years ago. It wasn’t easy being known as a lesbian rock star. Though she certainly enjoyed her career, she enjoyed it even more as people became less interested in her sex life and more interested in her amazing music. She’s come a long way in her life and this would be the crowning achievement, next to finding you, of course.”

My smile let Jo know I was sincere. I was known for saying it like it was. I didn’t feel I had time to “blow smoke up someone’s ass,” so to speak.

“Thanks Amanda, I guess I never looked at it from that perspective before. I love her so much. She even makes it easy when I have a bad day or week, when I remember the past. She’s learned to be gentle and let it pass. I never would have believed it a year ago if you had told me we would be sitting here watching the biggest awards show of the season and seeing our girlfriends on television.”

“It does seem surreal at times.”

Jo helped me in the kitchen as we made our way to the living room with all of the goodies. She seemed excited to try the seven layer dip and salsa.

“Oooh and homemade chips, you’re the best!”

I went to the door when Mike called to let me know the delivery was there. He handed

me the package and thanked me for his. I knew what his favorite sandwich was so I made sure there was a dinner package for him too. After all, being the good Italian girl I was I just had to feed him, it was in my blood.

We sat down and watched the preshow. We both screamed when we saw Sam being interviewed. She was certainly in rock star mode. What a character she was, and yet underneath who would know she had the heart of angel, a protective angel that was. Then, we saw Kat walk the red carpet and she looked positively radiant. As always, she was classy and kind to the reporters and to the fans, stopping to sign autographs. I cried watching her, knowing how much appreciation she had for her fans and how much good she did in the world because of her celebrity. It was honor to be her friend, a privilege to be her girlfriend.

Jo and I stretched out on the sofa and love seat as we watched the show begin and we kept looking for shots of our girls. Every now and then we would see one. It was exciting and nerve wracking all at the same time. The evening seemed to drag on as we waited to hear Sam perform her nominated song. Another hour passed and then finally Sam came on stage. She let the audience know that this song was for Jo. I thought Jo was going to melt into a puddle before my eyes. I went over to her and held her hand as she watched the woman she loved, that brought her all the way back, sing in front of millions of viewers. But, it was for Jo that she sang. It was for her that she gave up the past and started anew again. It was for her that she pledged her love and kept her word every day. My friend had grown up on stage and became a fully actualized woman in private. I was never so proud of Sam then at that moment, not because of her nomination or her fame. It was because of what she did for Jo, how she gave up her selfish, girlish ways and took on the responsibility for another. Sam had been successful from a young age, but tonight, in my eyes, she was successful as a well-rounded woman of substance.

The audience gave her a standing ovation and she soaked it up. Sam was living in the moment, but I suspected she was thinking of Jo. After she left the stage a commercial came on. Just then Jo received a text from Sam. A simple "I love you." Nothing more was needed and Jo replied in kind.

"I'm so stunned."

"I know Jo, I know. She was amazing and she loves you."

"I'm not sure this can get any better."

"Oh, I think it's just the beginning."

"I think you might be right."

We had more awards to get through before we would see if Sam had won for Best Song. Suddenly Jo was ready for more dip, chips, and salsa.



“How do you make this layered dip? It’s so delicious.”

“It’s a modified recipe I came up with one day. You layer the following: refried beans with jalapeños, then sour cream with taco seasoning mixed in, diced green chili peppers, grated medium cheddar cheese, grated jack cheese, fresh diced tomatoes, green onions, chopped black olives, and then a sprinkling of cilantro to top it all off. I cover it with plastic wrap and let it sit over night in the fridge, of course.”

“Kat is one lucky woman.”

“Thanks Jo, I’m glad you enjoy my cooking.”

It wasn’t long after our chat that we saw Sam’s award category. We waited to hear the partial songs played and then the announcement.

“And the winner is...Samantha Stanley,” was all we heard before we both screamed again. Poor Mike outside was probably wondering just what was going on. Then again, I’m sure he had figured it out. Jo and I kept hugging as we both stood up to watch Sam accept her award.

“Thank you, thank you so much. You don’t get here without a lot of help from others. Thank you to my fans, especially to the women that helped me to get started in coffee shops and who followed my career from the beginning. I belong to a special community of women, lesbian or not. Until recently I never really knew how much one friend had helped me start my career. I knew she was there all of these years, but I never knew what she gave up to help me. I just want her to know how much I love her and how lucky anyone is to have her in their lives. I want to thank my band, all of the women who inspire me, and to the one who inspires me in private, I love you, Jo.”

Jo began to weep right in my arms. I was in shock to hear Sam so sincere, so thoughtful, and so filled with a perspective that she had only recently grown into. I started to cry myself as I looked at the television.

“Well done my friend, well done.” Of course I was speaking to Sam as if she was right there in the room.

Then the call from Sam for Jo came in.

“Hello.”

“I love you too Sam. Yes, she saw it. She’s so proud of you, as am I. Okay, see you in the early morning. Oh and one more thing. I really do love you, rock star.”

Jo hung up, sat down, and just stared ahead at the television. She was clearly stunned and filled with happiness. And my heart was filled with love for both of my friends. We sat in silence until the show started again and then put the sound up. Kat’s category would be up soon. They kept showing pictures of her sitting in the audience. We didn’t

see it on television but we would later learn that Kat gave Sam the thumbs up when she finished her acceptance speech since she was in the first row. Apparently Sam had done the same back to her. It was simple and clever how two top girls communicated.

Sam stayed to watch Kat's category from backstage. They showed clips from the various movies the actresses were in and then the announcement came. It wasn't Kat's name they uttered but that of an older more experienced actress in her sixties now. Kat's face showed nothing but admiration for her fellow thespian and she cheered for her. The actress who won thanked every actress in the category with her by name. She was classy and kind. My heart ached for Kat, but I knew she would be alright. Sam was there when she went backstage at the break.

"I'm sorry, Kat."

"Oh, don't be Sam, I'm really okay. By the way, congratulations, rock star."

"Thanks, I just want to get home to Jo, you know?"

"Yes, that's how I feel too."

They both discussed coming home early but they knew they needed to stick around and do the press interviews and show up at a few parties, especially the events that were for charities.

Back in Phoenix I felt my heart ache a bit. I texted Kat and let her know I loved her and she was my star. She texted back right away with "I love you, can't wait to see you." It was all I needed.

After about ten minutes Mike called my cell. He had a package for me that had come a bit earlier but he didn't want to disturb us. I went to the door and retrieved it from him.

As I stood by the sofa I opened the package up and something fell out of it wrapped up in lace. A letter fell out too. I opened up the lace to see my half of the gold heart that Cassandra and I had shared all of those years ago. It was only moments later that it hit me why I had this back in my hands. There was only one reason we would ever return our part of the heart, in case one of us died. Holding this in my hand I didn't need to read the letter to know Cassie was gone.

I collapsed onto the sofa, shaking, crying, and clutching her heart in my hand. I couldn't stop crying—I couldn't make any sense. Jo tried to calm me down but nothing worked. All I finally managed to say through my tears and grief were the words "Cassie's gone."

Jo kept holding me, trying to comfort me, but I was inconsolable. She called Jackie and told her what had happened. Jackie was on her way over. She didn't seem surprised when Jo called so she figured that Jackie also knew what Cassie had kept from Amanda the past year. Jo wondered how Julia was coping, she hadn't heard from her but she knew why. Now it was time to be here for Amanda. She had felt awful keeping Julia's

secret, yet she knew Cassandra was right in letting Amanda go to find happiness. The letter on the table looked like it had Julia's writing on it. There was so much to tell Amanda, but that would have to be done another night.