

Sometimes I wondered why I had let Sam talk me into getting text messaging with my new cell phone. She was like a kid with this thing. But Katherine seemed to be just as eager to use her text capability, too. I expected this from Jo, at 24, but not from the other two, well, at least not from Sam.

Things were getting more interesting by the moment, it seemed. My mind was on Jo, who was going to have her last session with me that day. I was grateful to see our professional relationship coming to an end so that our friendship could continue. I had never taken a friend on as a client before but Jackie, the head of counseling, felt that this may have been Jo's only chance. I had to walk a fine line, making sure that our professional life never crossed over into our friendship. It could have been a tough balancing act, but she made it easy. I had always been good with boundaries, and Jackie knew that first hand.

Since grad school I had been doing counseling for years, but once I had become a massage therapist I had switched my specialty. I now worked with rape victims; women who were having trouble reclaiming their sexuality after an assault. I was not a sexual surrogate in the traditional sense. I helped women get back in touch with their bodies, their sensuality. They had to feel safe, and for some it took many years to recover to the point where they were ready to begin a new relationship, or pick up where they'd left off with a lover that was patient enough to wait for them.

I didn't talk about my work, at least not in any great detail, for obvious confidential reasons. Jo and I had met a while back and since she had gone through her ordeal she had begun working at the rape crisis center. She was special young woman, compassionate and very giving. She understood these women, for she had gone through the same thing that they had. She was an asset to the center, now reaching out and helping others. I was sure that one day she would meet a special woman who would help her reach her full healing potential.

Since I had started writing full time I took on very few clients. Jo was one of only two now. This would allow me to take on another client, and I knew that Jackie already had a woman she wanted me to work with. I had several hours of writing ahead before getting ready to see Jo.

I heard the cell go off while I was writing, but I let it go to voice mail. I checked and saw that Kat had called, so she must have left a message. As I was holding the phone a text came through. I was behind schedule and I wanted to get caught up so I put the phone down and continued my work. I was just finding my rhythm after an hour or so when the cell phone went off again. I just knew it had to be Sam. I knew when I saw the flowers that afternoon that a text couldn't have been too far away.

I was never going to get anything done if Sam and Kat didn't stop sending texts or leaving voice mails. Let's see, what was it now?

In the many months since my meeting Kat she had been calling almost daily. Our conversations were always interesting. The topics ranged from travel to charity work, art to philosophy, and, eventually, to some of the relationships we had entered into since college. Her world view was quite unique and enlightened. I enjoyed her and I was grateful that we had become so close.

The cell text tone beeped again, bringing me back from daydreaming.

I flipped the phone and my suspicions were confirmed; it was Sam again.

samrockzit: hey girl coming home sat for a few days want to do it?

Oh, that was real cute. Let me think of some witty reply, I thought.

poetgirl: do what?

She would not be amused; I hadn't taken her bait this time.

samrockzit: I have a few ideas

poetgirl: u always do thx for the flowers u spoil me

samrockzit: my pleasure too bad it doesn't get me anywhere

poetgirl: it gets you the best kisses ever

samrockzit: you have me there

poetgirl: ty

Okay, while Sam and I had never been lovers, we did kiss hello and goodbye, so she knew my lips, so to speak. Honestly, Sam was the first girl I had ever kissed. You never forgot the first time you felt another girl's lips on yours. They were so soft, so unlike anything I had ever experienced with a boy.

No man would ever kiss like a woman; I had learned this for sure in college. The way that women kissed was with such a feathery light touch. No rushing, no tongue down your throat trying to gag you. A woman's lips were inviting and you melted into them.

samrockzit: ok how about dinner Sun, I will bring it and we can watch the raw footage from the concert

poetgirl: great cannot wait behave c u sun

samrockzit: 2 wks no drink

poet girl: proud of u

samrockzit: bye bi girl for now oxox

poetgirl: k lez rock star xoxo

She still loved it when I called her “rock star”; what an ego. Well, it looked like I would get to spend time with Sam on Sunday. It would be so nice to see her; she had been on the road for over two months now without coming home. I missed seeing her, but I was used to it after all these years. I knew that she was heading home when the white bouquet had come earlier. She sent blue flowers when she was gone and white when she was about to return home. I took a moment to smell the flowers and smile, knowing how lucky I was to have friends who knew how to spoil me with what I enjoyed so much.

It had been two weeks since she had decided not to drink anymore. I was proud of her for finally giving up her second-to-last vice. Sam had gone through dry periods before but, for some reason, I thought this time might be the one that found her sober for good. Age had brought her a new awareness of time and she was beginning to lay the foundation she knew she needed to be in a relationship.

I remembered that I had a message waiting for me. I dialed my voice mailbox and heard Kat saying, “I am getting ready to board a flight to Paris, Amanda, I just wanted to say ‘hello’. I will call you when I get settled into my room. Hope you are having a good day. I can’t wait to catch up; things are so crazy right now. Love you.”

Kat was currently doing press for her new movie, which would open internationally that coming weekend. Of course, everyone thought that she was dating her co-star, which was quite funny to those of us who knew her. We knew that wouldn’t be happening.

Rumors apparently had been swirling for years that she was bi-sexual, but not even that was true. She might have been dating the supporting actress, but never a male co-star. She never had come right out with it either way, and the mystery left everyone guessing.

I enjoyed her stories of the women she had known in such a fashion. She would relate to me the funny stories she had of sex in a trailer with a co-star or a hot delivery girl, although she swore it didn’t happen often. Yeah, sure, I bet, I would think to myself. But, she did tell me which gorgeous women she had been with and how awful some of them had been in bed. A few of them had met her standards, but she sure seemed a lot more satisfied with women that weren’t in the business. Kat didn’t seem too interested in committing to anyone, as her schedule and her life really didn’t afford her the luxury of a full time relationship.

The press junkets could be a nightmare. Kat got very testy during those times. She didn’t sit well, so having to answer the same questions hour after hour, day after day would get to her. She was gracious as hell and lovely with her fans, but privately she felt worn out by the traveling. She would feel better when she visited the Louvre and got her energy recharged while viewing Cezanne. I told her to check out Degas while she was

there. Degas, of course, was one of my favorites, but my heart would always belong to Georgia O'Keefe, whose lovely and provocative work I admired at the Met in NYC whenever I was there. I knew little of art, just what I liked by sight and by feeling.

There went the text sound again. I flipped open the phone once more and got a lovely surprise.

lovergirl: hey babygirl I have to come up for a meeting Friday, can u handle a one night stand lol

poetgirl: that sounds great with who

lovergirl: with a hot sexy Latina babe who whispers French

poetgirl: hmmm Italian n Latina sounds caliente

lovergirl: oh yes can only stay Friday but would be a lovely 12

poetgirl: you bring dinner?

lovergirl: the least I can do

My heart started to beat faster, and it matched a pulsing in another part of my anatomy as my mind drifted to Cassie and her surprise trip up to Phoenix from Tucson. I was beginning to like this text messaging.

lovergirl: love u c u at 7 wear your hair up

poetgirl: yes dear love u c u then

I knew exactly what she meant when she said, "wear your hair up."

Those 12 hours might be the best of the month, I thought.

I was still at my desk, trying to pull myself out of a lust-filled daydream, when an email came in letting me know that I had a message waiting at MySpace. I decided to take a break and check it. MySpace had been a fun way of getting to know some very interesting women. Jo had turned me on to it about six months earlier. I had been amazed at how many lovely women I had gotten to know via emails and, in some cases, by phone and messaging since then. I could understand why Jo loved it so much. It was funny; she always teased me about the comments that I received. And Sam and Kat checked in to read my latest poems and, I suspected, to pull my chain, as they so often did, about my page. They tried to guess what kind of mood I was in by listening to the song I had on my profile that day. Of course, Sam wanted to know why her songs weren't always the ones on my page. Again, what an ego, but I still loved her.

As I checked MySpace I saw that Jo was confirming tonight's appointment time, which

was seven PM. I sent a message back, confirming the time and that I was looking forward to seeing her. What had we ever done before email, voice mail, and text messaging? It was all so amazingly helpful to keep one connected. But there were times when it all got turned off. Those times were only when Cassie was here and the world disappeared.

My mind turned to Jo now and how she was about to become a lot closer to me. She would find out in our last session something that would forever bond us together. Those appointments were always some of the most gratifying and intense. The last session would be where we said goodbye, but in Jo's case it would be hello to the next level and dimension of our friendship.

I would spend the next few hours in peace, calming myself with meditation. Then, a relaxing shower before I would see Jo for the last time as a client.

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At exactly seven PM Jo rang the bell and I walked toward the door to greet her. As I opened the door I could see her standing there with a sweet smile and, of course, those lovely light blue eyes that would one day make a woman melt. I was so proud of her for coming through all of this and finding her way to heal.

She came in and we settled in the living room. After months of massage therapy and working out the issues with her body at home she had rediscovered her sensuality, and now her sexual feelings were starting to blossom again.

“So, this last night is all about where you find yourself now and what the future holds, Jo.” I said to her.

“Gosh, Amanda, I can't believe it's been over two years since all that happened; I never thought I would feel normal again. I am so grateful to you and Jackie, to all the women who helped me get my life started over,” she said so sweetly.

“I understand, Jo, more than I was ever able to tell you before.” I took her hands and looked directly into her eyes.

Then, I continued, “I am about to share something with you that will forever bond us to each other and in confidence, as you have shared with me.”

“I can't imagine being any closer to you than I already am, Amanda,” she said, almost whispering.

I touched her chin with my finger and lifted it up so that she was looking me in the eyes. I continued on, “Jo, all the times I told you that I understood, I did understand more than I could tell you then. I have lived through what you have, and if it weren't for

Jackie and the women at the center I never would have healed or made it through.”

The look on Jo’s face was one of utter compassion and sensitivity. Tears began to fall down her face as she gathered her composure to speak.

“I am so sorry, Amanda, I never would have known. It makes me so mad to think some guy hurt you like this,” she said through her tears.

“Jo, listen to me again, I have lived through what you have.” At that moment it became clear to her what I was saying. Jo and I had each experienced our trauma not at the hands of a man like most, but at the hands of a woman, a lover, in whom we trusted at the time.

When a woman was assaulted by another woman it was devastating. It not only took away her trust of other women, but of people in general. It shattered her ability to ever feel safe again, in her mind and throughout her whole being. Women were supposed to be there to comfort, to nurture, or at least to not harm you. When a woman hit another woman or raped her, it was a total shock not only to her sense of balance in the world, but to her sense of herself as a female. Her self-worth was shattered and had to be rebuilt, as did trust, over time.

Jo was looking at me in amazement. I could tell that she was still trying to process what I had just told her.

“And you recovered. You have Cassie, and all. Oh, my heavens. I really can heal from this, have a lover again some day.”

“Yes, Jo, you can. And, I promise you, with the right woman you will experience something so profound, so intensely intimate that you feel your soul has been touched. It isn’t an easy road—it is difficult and frustrating—but you can become closer and more alive than you ever knew was possible, with the right, gentle lover,” I said.

Her eyes brightened as she suddenly realized all that was possible. “I am just amazed at how together you are and how you have lived your life. Can I ask when this happened?”

“In college; it was a long time ago. Now you know why the center is so special to me, why I do the charity work I do.” More pieces of the puzzle started to fit for Jo. This new knowledge made her closer to me, her friend, who had helped her find her way back. But there was a boundary, a line never crossed, and how I pulled it off amazed her.

“We now share something, a bond that will forever be there between us. I have told you this in total confidence, Jo. I will be here for you as you take the final journey when you find a woman you are willing to explore that with. And now we can find our way back to our friendship as our professional relationship ends tonight.” She smiled as I said that.

“I am so grateful to you, Amanda, but regaining our friendship means the world to me. I know this wasn’t easy for you, but thank you for taking me on as a client.” She again

looked at me with an appreciation for which I was thankful.

“So, is there anything you want to ask me before we officially end our professional association?” I asked her.

“No, I am ready to move on.”

With that, I gave her a big hug and sent her on her way. I was so proud of her.

I was grateful for the gift of healing that I found with the women who had helped me, and for the ones I was able to reach out to and help now. I was constantly amazed at a woman’s ability to live through some of the most horrific events and still heal. The ability to reach a place together was so deep that one actually helped the other carry the pain in that moment. To be able to speak your truth of what happened to you and find a loving pair of eyes accept you totally touched the soul and healed the spirit.

Any sacrifice that I had ever made was forever made worth it in those moments. I knew that no matter what I had been through, I was given the privilege of touching a woman’s soul and I never took it for granted.



It had taken me a long time before I, myself, had been able to be trust enough and heal enough to begin my final journey. In that time I went to graduate school and learned all that I could to become a good counselor. Then, one day, I met Cassandra and my life changed.

Cassie was the woman who had taken me so gently from a scared young woman to a powerful and mature woman recapturing her sexual nature.

She had made it safe and had taken the time I needed to find my way back. She was the first woman with whom I had been willing to try being intimate with after what had happened with my ex. She had been so sweet and kind. She had been finishing her PhD in Psychology at the University. When we went out on a date she would simply hold my hand. She would even ask if she could kiss me goodnight.

She was willing to wait for me to feel comfortable before we went any further than those sweet kisses. I remembered the first time we actually made out on my sofa. She had asked me if we could kiss for a while; if I felt safe enough to let her hold me and be that close for more than a few seconds, as had been the length of our kisses goodnight. She had assured me that all I ever had to do was stay “stop” and she would.

She had lightly held my face and kissed me so softly, capturing my upper lip with hers. Her feather-light way of kissing me had made something stir deep inside. I had felt my passion returning and, because of the intensity of the moment, I started to cry. She had

kissed my tears away and gently pulled me into her so that she could hold me.

That was as far as we had gotten that night, but what happened next had changed me. As she held me and stroked my hair she'd asked to me to tell her what had happened to me. And for some reason it had just poured out, what had happened that night with Trisha when she'd been so blindly drunk and violent. In a torrent of words, I recounted the episode that would haunt me for the rest of my life.

Trisha had come back to our dorm room and had seen me there with our friend Beverly. We were simply sitting on the bed talking. She had been pissed and I could tell she was drunk again. Beverly hurried out.

My girlfriend was out-of-her-mind jealous. She accused me of sleeping with Beverly. I told her she was crazy and to go sleep it off. That sent her into a rage and she hauled off and hit me. I had been so stunned that I didn't know what to do. I struggled against Trisha but she was much taller and stronger than I was. She was drunk, out-of-control, and beyond angry and she'd taken it out on me.

I had told Cassie everything, every detail, as I relived the horror of that night. Cassie had listened to it all; how shocked I had been, how my body had been so badly bruised inside and out that I had been unable to move due to the pain, how Trisha had cried after realizing what she had done—begging me to stay.

I had gone to student health services when, the next morning, the pain had been so blinding that I couldn't stand it. That was when I first met Jackie. She'd been called in to talk to me because the doctor had suspected that I'd been raped. She wanted to know if I wanted to press charges, and I said no. I had been unable to wrap my mind around the fact that my girlfriend had done this to me. I had been a mess, and I didn't want to be touched by anyone for a very long time after that. Even a hug had been too much to ask.

And Cassie had just looked at me, saying over and over, "I am so sorry, baby girl, it wasn't your fault." And when I looked up I'd seen tears in her eyes and I began to cry even harder, letting go of the memory that had never seemed to go away until that night, when it really had begun to fade.

Cassie had accepted me even after I'd told her the worst of what was inside of me, how damaged I had felt, how utterly ashamed I'd still felt. Cassie had just looked at me with love, compassion, and an understanding that I had not even allowed myself.

I couldn't believe she had still wanted to be my lover. It had taken a long time and she'd so showed so much patience, gentleness, and caring.

Cassie had led me from that scared young girl to a woman reclaiming a life she thought was lost forever. She knew to be so gentle and make no sudden moves on me. Till this day she would never make any move that would scare me back into memories of the past. I had learned to trust her and, little by little, to discover that I could indeed feel



again, let go again, and be in the moment—free.

I could never repay what Cassie had done for me, or fully describe what remaining lovers, had meant to me. We had gone on to live separate lives, but we remained close friends with benefits all this time. She was the one who had encouraged me to go into counseling, even further than I had planned. She was mother, soother, healer, lover, and above it all, one of my best friends with whom I felt completely safe.

So now when I could help other women I felt a sense of gratitude for turning what I had lived through into a career that gave something back.

Cassie would be here the next day and I needed to rest and get a lot of sleep. I had to get ready for a very intense evening, as they always were with her, my friend, my lover. I was looking forward to the next night and having the world disappear for at least 12 hours within her embrace.