

I remember getting ready that Friday. I took the whole day off just to sleep in and prepare myself for the night ahead. Cassie would arrive at my house at seven PM, and I needed to be ready. About a half hour before she was to arrive I pulled my hair up and secured it with the lovely hair stick she had given me. I had many of them.

Wearing my hair up meant that it was okay to take it down; it was a signal to Cassie that I was in a good place to proceed with an evening. The fact that she loved pulling the stick and watching my very long hair cascade down was a bonus for both of us.

Right before she was to arrive I ran the bath. Having a large roman tub was a real advantage. The candles were lit and the water was hot and filled with bubbles and the scent of rosewater. As if on cue, the doorbell rang just as the bath was ready. Walking to the front door I felt the butterflies in my stomach knowing I was going to see Cassie. Just the thought of being near her still excited me—even after all these years.

I opened the door to Cassie. She looked divine in a black Ralph Lauren business suit, her long dark hair just reached the third button of her blouse, open to reveal a generous amount of cleavage. She certainly was one beautiful Latina babe. She was carrying a pizza box and pink roses.

She smiled when she saw my hair up and walked in, bending to whisper to me, “*Je t’aime femme.*” There was nothing like hearing a woman of Spanish heritage speaking French.

All I could do was smile at her like I was 16 again. I put the pizza box in the oven. The flowers were already in a vase on the coffee table. I locked the door and, after she put down her overnight bag, she embraced me, holding me close, but so gently.

Taking my face in her hands, looking down into my eyes, she smiled and kissed me ever so lightly until finally her tongue begged entrance and found it right away. Cassie was still, to this day, so gentle and warm with me; we made love before we ever had sex.

She took my hand and led me to the bedroom, where she embraced me again and said, “I smell the rosewater, dearest, but it doesn’t smell nearly as good as you.”

I kissed her and we slowly started undressing each other with such gentleness and sensuality. After we stood naked in each other’s arms she led me over to the bath, where she held my hand, as always, while I got in first. I lay down in the tub and she followed. Bathed in candlelight, we cuddled in the warm water. My cat, Sammi, occasionally swatting at the bubbles. She loved to be around the tub.

“So are we having a three way with Sammi tonight?” Cassie remarked.

“Of course not,” I laughed, “she’s my daughter!”

Cassie and I spent a long time in the tub kissing and caressing while we pretended to wash each other. I don’t think we could have been any cleaner. She loved it when I sat on her lap while she washed my breasts and I washed hers, stopping at times to kiss her. My hair still up, we got out of the tub, dried off, and went into the bedroom, where we took our time applying lotion lavishly all over each other. The scent of roses again filled the air.

She stood up, took my hands, and said, “Come here,” so I stood next to her. She embraced me, kissing me lightly on the lips, and then stood back. Being taller than I, she easily took the stick from my hair and watched it fall down my shoulders, onto my neck and over my breasts. She always loved doing that, and it had become such a beautiful ritual.

“I love you so much, Amanda, so very much,” she said as she embraced me again. Her voice was almost lyrical as she murmured the sweetest French nothings ever heard.

Soon we were on the bed, kissing, loving, and touching each other in the gentlest ways. That night was so slow and easy. When I was in her arms the whole world disappeared. My cell phone turned off, my computer shut down, and nothing would disturb us. Cassie would kiss me for hours, literally, and I would melt over and over again.

We finally began touching each other even further. It seemed that as soon as she entered me, my body responded so quickly—a release from the build up of all of our gentle caressing. The same for her; I would slip barely inside of her heat and she would release in pleasure, moaning and whimpering, just as I had done a few minutes before. Cassie and I made sweet love with each other—gentle, unhurried and passionate, but ever so loving.

After lying in each other’s embrace we both felt that pang of hunger.

“How about dinner, sweetheart?” she said to me.

“Ah, make love to me, then I get dinner. Okay, I see how you operate,” I said, laughing.

“Well, you made a great appetizer,” she said, kissing my lips.

We spent the next few hours eating, laughing, and snuggling on the sofa. I loved feeding her; she was so passionate even about food. I loved to hear her moan in pleasure as the food met her tongue and taste buds. This reminded me of Kat and how she would moan while she ate something I had made.

After awhile, we retired to the bedroom and, in typical fashion, couldn’t keep our hands off of each other. She grabbed me in an amazing embrace and kissed me until I thought I would never come up for air.

As we fell onto the bed our passion totally took over, and the slow lovemaking that went on earlier that evening was abandoned; now we would find our rhythm. She was amazing, and our night blissfully drifted into early morning. We were tangled up together watching the sunrise, discussing some elemental measure of the Socratic method of learning, while laughing. We had a beautiful, intellectual, and sensual relationship. But, moreover, we had a deep friendship that had carried us through relationships, my healing, and our many ups and downs in life. I adored Cassie, and would always love her with a passion that I wasn't sure that I would ever find with another woman.

As seven AM approached she cradled me in her arms and kissed me so sweetly with tears in her eyes. She hated leaving, but she had to get back to Tucson. I understood, and we kissed our goodbyes while still in bed. She told me to sleep, and she dressed and let herself out, but not before one last sweet tender kiss while tucking me in.

A few hours later I heard my phone ring twice; that meant she was home. I longed to feel her again in my arms, but she had a life to get back to, and so did I.

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I had nothing planned for the rest of the day, so I slept in and then spent the afternoon reading and, of course, writing a little bit. I was amazed, when I checked my cell phone, to find several messages from Kat and a few from Sam. Sam was letting me know that she was getting in late tonight and would be over tomorrow around four in the afternoon. Kat wanted me to call her as soon as I could.

So, I figured that I would lie out on the sofa and look at my beautiful pink roses and call Kat.

"Hey, Kitty Kat," I said into the cell.

"Oh, that's a new one," she said, laughing. Then she continued, "I just adore you. You make me smile."

"Well, that's what I'm here for, girly," I said, smiling. "So, how's Paris? Did you take in the Louvre yet?"

"No, I am going to go tomorrow. Press was crazy today, but at least they were polite here which was a first. I tried calling you last night. So...where were you, or should I say, who were you doing?" I detected a bit of a tease in her voice.

"Oh now, Kat, if I told you that it wouldn't be a secret," I said.

"Come on, you can tell a purring kitty Kat anything, can't you?" she said with an actual

purr that made me grin.

“Well, you know me. I told you I was a friends-with-benefits kind of gal. My dearest friend in the world was here for the night.” This was the first time I told her about Cassandra.

“Wow, I didn’t think you would actually share! You have never really told me about any current lovers. So, how long have you been friends, and with benefits?”

“Well, a long time, actually. We dated for a while when I was back in graduate school, but afterward we remained close and we remained ‘in benefit’, let’s say.”

“That’s a long time, angel,” she says to me.

“Angel? That’s new! Let me think, am I an angel?”

“Well, that’s what you are to me, Amanda, and you help so many in so many ways.”

“Okay, kitty Kat.” I was laughing now.

“You know, you are the only one who could ever get away with calling me kitty. I am a lioness, *roar*.” Now she was laughing too.

“Yes, well, I *am* older, so you get to be the kitty.”

Kat thought about it. “Okay, but only you get to call me that. I would die if anyone knew.”

“And who am I gonna tell?”

“Well, angel, you have me there.”

I was beginning to like the sound of “angel.”

“So, tell me, Amanda angel, are you exclusive with this woman, or are you just friends with benefits and not exclusive?” she asked, almost hesitantly.

“No, we are not exclusive. I have dated some other women, and she lives with her girlfriend.”

“You’re kidding me, right? They have an open relationship?” She was genuinely surprised.

“Well, let’s just say they have an understanding and leave it at that.”

“I am stunned. How long have they been together?”

“About four years now. She is a bit younger, but a very lovely gal.”

“And she knows about you and her?”

“There are no secrets, Kat, with her and her lovers, or with mine.”

“Okay, you are either the most enlightened woman I have ever known, or you...well, I don't know what.”

“I'm not sure what you were going to say, but I hope it wasn't 'slut'.”

“No, Amanda, I am just shocked. Particularly that women could be so open about it.”

“Well, I've told you before, Kat, I am reclusive, not exclusive. Now you know what I meant. So, tell me about your day, or is it night there now?”

“It is night. We are nine hours ahead of you there in Phoenix and, of course, LA right now. Today was interesting. I could've slapped Marie, I swear.”

“Wait a minute, isn't she one of the supporting actresses you had a fling with?” I inquire.

“Well, yes, we did, and she thought she was going to get some on this trip, which she might've if she hadn't been such an ass. We were signing autographs outside the hotel and she was rude to a fan of hers, so I stepped in and made a joke to cover for her. I told her to go upstairs and rest since she was tired, and that she could use my room to lie down. Of course, she thought that meant something else. Well, this darling little girl was so disappointed, but happy to have my autograph. I even took a picture with her and kissed her on the cheek.”

“Oh my, I know you, Kat. Is there anything left of Marie?”

“I got up to my room, and she was naked on my bed. I looked at her and told her to get dressed. She was shocked, to say the least. I explained to her that her career would be a very short one if she ever treated a fan like that again. I informed her that most stars wait until they are on the A-list before they act like that, and she was barely on the B, for heaven's sake. I told her that even if she did ever make it on to the A-list it still wasn't acceptable.”

“So what did she do?”

“Well, she was upset, but she knew I was right. Some of these ingénues, they get a little taste of fame and act like prima donnas. She needed to learn that fans pay our salaries, and we should be grateful when they come to see us. It's not rocket science. As you can imagine, I want nothing to do with her. Of course I will be her friend, but no more escapades. Her attitude totally killed any desire I had for her.”

“Well, many women in France would love a shot at you, kitty Kat.”

“Yes, but the question is, would you?”

“I am not in France.”

“You know what I am asking, Amanda.”

“Yes, I do and I am stunned, actually.”

“Why? You have to know I am attracted to you by now. And we are both open about our preferred arrangements, so to speak. Unless, of course, you are telling me you are not attracted to me?”

“Well, after watching one of your earlier movies you do owe me twenty dollars and two hours of my life back.”

“I can always count on you to tell me the truth,” she said, laughing, and continued, “If you actually watched the whole thing I would be amazed.”

“No, I fast forwarded to your parts after a while. Not even *I* love you enough to sit through that movie.”

“Maybe I should start sending you the scripts to read before agreeing to do another movie! Amanda, I want an answer to my question. Don’t try to avoid it by getting me to laugh and be embarrassed about my earlier work,” her tone turned serious.

“Kat, I will think about it, but I can’t answer you right now. That’s a big step in a relationship, and I am not sure we know each other well enough yet to be at that place.”

“Well, we should talk more, then, and share more so we can get to that place,” she said rather boldly.

She was a top girl; of that I was sure. And she knew me well enough to know that we would be well matched in many ways. But, as usual, I was hesitant. It meant sharing things with Kat that I wasn’t exactly ready to share. But Cassie had reminded me to be more open to other women. How smart would it be to open up to Kat? I had no idea.

We continued to talk well into the night, sharing stories. Kat was so sweet; she insisted on calling me back so that it would be on her dime. She was like that; she had a thing for wanting to take care of me in many ways, as she insisted I was taking care of her in the ways that she needed.

The next day a beautiful bouquet of pink Asiatic lilies mixed with blue irises arrived with a lovely card. I had no idea how she managed to get a delivery on Sunday. The card read, “Angel, thank you for spending your Saturday night with me in Paris. It felt almost like you were right here with me, one day I hope you will be. Love, K Kat.”

I must be the luckiest woman on Earth, I thought. Beautiful flowers filled my home, I had the love of good friends and, apparently, of a lover, or would it be lovers? I smiled to myself, knowing that I would somehow have to explain all these flowers to Sam later. Oh well, maybe I would just let her wonder.

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At four PM, right on time, the doorbell rang, and there was Sam. Upon opening the door I was greeted with yet another bouquet of flowers, white of course, because she was home. I smiled as she grabbed me and gave me a big hug and a kiss.

“Hello, Mimi!”

“Welcome home, Sam!”

Her face dropped when she saw all of the flowers that were already in the living room.

“It looks like a florist exploded in here!”

“Well, isn’t that a lovely thought,” I said, taking the flowers from her and cooing all over them. “Mmm, exotic white orchids. You spoil me.”

“Well, I was trying. It looks like some other women beat me to it.”

“Stop it now, come on in. And what did you bring for dinner?”

“Mexican tonight, Mimi. You can’t get good authentic Mexican food out on the road. It just isn’t the same.”

“Mmmm, sounds delicious, rock star.”

For that I received a big smile. We got comfortable in the living room and watched her recent concert footage while eating the delicious food that she had brought with her. She knew my favorites and we shared everything, just as we had done as teens. Sam had taken me out to my very first Mexican restaurant when I was 15. It was so strange, never having had it before. She had ordered for us, and I remembered the first time that I’d tasted a cheese enchilada. I thought that I had died and gone to heaven. I actually remembered everything about Sam and me, mainly good memories, and the few that I would rather be forgotten.

We got to a special place in the concert footage where Sam dedicated a song to her best friend. Oh no, here we go, I thought, but to my surprise it was not the song that I had expected. This time, she played the song “Amanda” by Boston, and I just about melted. She had never sung that song live in front of an audience before, but she had sung it to me in private.

I hugged her and sat and watched her sing it from the stage. I was so touched and I thought again that I had to be the luckiest woman in the world. Life was balancing out in wonderful ways right now.

Our night fell into a lovely long evening of discussing everything from world events to her concerts and her decision to get sober once and for all. I was so proud of her.

Sam still wanted to settle down. She was really tired of the road and very tired, all of a sudden, of one night stands. Apparently, she wanted something deeper.

While we were talking she noticed a picture of me with Jo and asked about her. I explained that she was a friend that I had also worked with. She was intrigued, and I told her, "Don't go there." She wanted to know why not. I said, "Just don't."

"Is she one of your girls?" Sam asked.

"No, Sam, she is not; she is a friend *without* benefits." Although, in my heart, she had a very deep benefit: she knew something about me that even Sam didn't.

"Well, she's really cute, and you can't blame me for asking about her."

"No, I can't."

"I'm sure I will run into her someday around here."

"Yes, you probably will."

I wondered what would be so wrong if they did meet. But what Jo needed was a woman with infinite patience and so much understanding. Could Sam be that woman? Was she capable of giving up her drive for a long enough time if they did click? I wondered about it, and there was an odd feeling that maybe it just wasn't the worst idea in the world. But only time and fate would know.

After saying goodnight to Sam I picked up my cell to retrieve my messages. Sure enough, there were three messages waiting.

The first had just come in from Sam.

samrockzit: goodnight mimi thanks for tonight

poetgirl: goodnight ty for everything esp amanda

Then the next message from Cassie:

lovergirl: hey baby girl I ty for fri

poetgirl: the pleasure was all mine and yours

The third from Kat:

kkataacts: thinking of u oxox

poetgirl: u 2 ty for flowers beautiful xoxo

kkataacts: as r u always

I was surprised to get a text back from her so quickly. She must have had an early press call or a plane to catch. I had to admit, the woman certainly had charm.

Three women, one weekend. Now, that was getting to be a bit much, even for me. But I sure had fun trying to keep up.

I walked through the house smelling the flowers, exhausted and ready for bed. My cell was at my bedside and the light was turned off. Then I heard the message tone again.

kkataacts: purr nuzz angel

poetgirl: meow kitty kat purr night

It was official: I was either really tired, or completely crazy. But, either way, I was extremely happy.

I fell asleep easily that night and awoke the next morning, for the first time, not with the knowledge of dreaming of Cassie, but of Kat, and that scared the hell out of me.