Lieutenant Novac-Fort Benning and Fort Lee

by Chiefraz

Summary

College is over and Castiel wants his career as an Army Quartermaster lieutenant to begin. But first there are a few little matters of Jump School, the Officers Basic Course, trying to find a babysitter for his son Jeff, being a good mate to John, pondering his feelings for Dean all while trying to maintain some semblance of sanity. Oh when can life begin?

This part of the story takes place between June 1978 to January 1979.

Suggest you start with Cadet Novac, things will make more sense.
**Moon, Spoon, June and other ridiculous things that don’t necessarily rhyme.**

Or Chingachgook got nothing on me

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

In the many versions of what important lessons one has to learn from life, (besides ‘to thy own self be true’, buy low-sell high or don’t kid a kidder and don’t bullshit a bullshiter) the biggest of them for me anyway is.......don’t let the pablum dry on a bowl. Yup, when that crap dries on something, it’s worse then cement and you have to chisel it off.

The month of May was a total balls to the wall sprint to the finish line where I thought ‘finally I can begin my life’...just to turn around in June to find myself back at the starting gate. Only this time it wasn’t the ‘midnight oil’ I was trying to burn, nope. It was my fat ass, trying to get in some kind of shape for Jump School this August. From early morning to the moment I fell into bed, when I wasn’t caring for or playing with Jeff or playing with or caring for Deans daughter Emma, was running, cycling, doing sit ups, push ups, chin ups any kind of ups to work off the puppy fat. Oh and find a light brown tuxedo with dark brown piping, a three button stitch with a yellow ruffled shirt and brown bow tie. I was a groomsman at the mating of Sharon and Bry-an.

Had to call all over town to find one that was the right cut and color AND was available for that weekend. I was just glad to be in the monkey suit instead of an omegas gown, army green was my color, not the mint green nightmare the bridesmaids and other omegas were going to have to wear.

Was sent a picture from a magazine of the tux, with the admonishment to have it ready for Saturday, the 24th of June. Not the most orthodox mating invitation I would ever receive but what the hell, what else did I have to do? John’s back to NATO HQ, Dean’s in Germany, most of the RIT cadre will be headed down to Fort Bragg soon (camp was back to 6 weeks, apparently the 5 week experiment was kind of bust) Naomi-mom said she was going on ‘vacation’ for the next two months in the Middle East. Didn’t say where but mentioned in passing she had to brush up on her Persian. Great, not like that neck of the woods didn’t have enough troubles. Now they have my mother to worry about.

Had heard from Her Mummy-ship that she and Dad......I kinda like that.....never had a ‘real’ father. Zachariah always demanded we call him whatever rank he was at the time. For a tall guy, he thought awfully short. But anywho, they were going to be in England visiting relatives. And thinking of England in all the fun ways natch, got an invite to come down the week of the 4th of July to visit the Reynolds. They’re going to be moving away to Germany in September. Lewiston got a posting as Second in Command of First Corp, BAOR in Bielefeld.

Lisa and Ben will be leaving for Germany in mid August and I’ll be heading for Officers Basic Course shortly after I get back from jump school. Got my orders for OBC but there’s a problem. Am only allowed 600 pounds of household goods and that damn couch is at least half of it. Plus, I’m not allowed to bring dependents. What am I gonna do with Jeff? I can’t leave him with Karen Singer for over six months. Have got to figure something out, maybe Mummy-ship and Dad can help.

So, in the mean time, am marking time, working out and having the chance to be a full time papa to my pup. Jeff is about four months old now. He’s still a big boy, at 26 and a half inches long and 25 pounds. He’s my little sumo wrestler. There are more freckles now dotting his nose, “the angels sure love you.” I coo’ed, “they’ve kissed you...here....here and here and here and here! Jeff would
laugh, wave his arms and legs, then let out a God awful pablum fart.

Holy crap, if the Army could bottle that stink, it would outlawed by the Biological Weapons Convention.

Camp was starting on June 9th this year, though the cadre had report today, June 6th. Got a phone call from Sergeant Major Dalton to come in and pick up my orders for jump school, as they’d just arrived that morning. Being the FNG, he was left behind to man the fort with Phyllis and Becky till everyone got back in July. Okay, it’s a little early for orders to come in but maybe the army did something right for a change. So put Jeff in his new blue and white sun suit (present from Opa, aka: Dad. Zachariah would never think of something like that) dropped the little matching hat on his head and off we went to the ROTC office.

Stepped outside in the sunshine. Whew! It’s not terribly hot out yet but man. The humidity is almost as bad as North Carolina’s. Oh crap and I’m gonna be in Georgia in August. That’s gonna be worse. Oh, well. I’ve got two months to get used to humidity.

Drove down to the RIT campus and parked in the little parking lot in front of the Admin Building. Got Jeff out of his car seat and the two of us went up to the fifth floor. The idea that the army did something right thing, pure wishful thinking on my behalf. As per usual, there was a SNAFU.

“What the hell do you mean I’m going to jump school the second week of July!” Was really glad I’d handed Jeff to Phyllis before she handed me the orders. Think I would’ve dropped him in shock.

“Actually,” Sergeant Major Dalton was a rather taciturn alpha with a long craggy face and eye brows like the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. “You need to report on the 7th, first full training day starts on the 10th.”

“Somebody made a mistake!”

“That does tend to happen,” he agreed. “But word of advice Sir.”

“Yeah?”

“Roll with it Sir, your future stomach ulcers will thank you.”

My mouth opened and closed. He was right of course but I was no where near ready. The moms were not going to be in town, Karen would be all by herself with Jeff for three weeks. “Maybe I could get the orders changed.”

“I wouldn’t try that Lieutenant,” Sergeant Major Dalton leaned back in his chair and propped his feet up on the desk. “Those slots fill up fast, you give this one up and you’ll prolly not see an opening until next year. Maybe. From what I hear, you had to give up your place last year, the Army ain’t gonna keep giving you chances. So I’d just put your mind to it, get yourself in as good a shape as you can and go.”

He was right of course, I’m an omega. How many times will ‘this ‘Alphas Army’ give people like me a chance? Even with Johns influence, no. I’ll earn it myself. Want no one to say the Winchester name got me anything I couldn’t earn by myself. Okay, let’s prove I can turn on a dime and give you nine cents change. “Thanks Sergeant Major,” gotta liberate Jeff from Phyllis then head home to quietly (or loudly) freak out and then do a load of sit ups.

“Met your mate once years back,” heard him say. When he find out? Suppose anyone would’ve told him. The cat was way out of the bag on that bit of news.
“Oh,” turned back to hear the story. “When was that?”

“Afghanistan, late 50’s.” Daltons brow rumbled in thought. “I was part of 10th Special Forces in those days. Your mate was the assistant military attache at the embassy. Interesting fella. Made quite the impression.”

“What did he do to make you remember him?” Suspect that is quite a story in itself.

The Sargeant Major winked, “if I told ya, I’d have to kill ya.” Or not.

Damn. It must’ve been good, what ever it was. “Come on, what was it? Just a hint?”

The ‘green beanie’ NCO took on a look of great contemplation, turned his face to heaven and finally said, “your mate supplied the ball for a buzkashi match between two rival villages.”

“Buzz...what-ie?”

“Buzkashi, it’s the national game of Afghanistan. It’s kinda like polo only played with a goat or calf carcass as the ball.”

Okay, sounds like a charming local custom. Not like I’d been to a few cock fights in Panama. Mostly as a ‘bag boy’ or to take home the loser for chicken soup. Now that got me thinking, how could getting a dead critter be so earth shattering? Unless it was who he took it from...and afterward, considering it’s been pretty tenderized, does everyone sit down for shish-ka-boobs?

Oh the fun and hilarious fellow that is John Winchester. And a man who is still very much a mystery to me. Since Sargeant Major was not forthcoming with any more details, I take my pup, fold my tent to wander off into the bright sunshine of a June Rochester day. Okay, I gotta get going on getting my ass in shape.

“By the way Lieutenant,” Sargeant Major hefted himself from his chair. “Meet me tomorrow morning at 07:00 am at the running track out yonder. You gotta a PT test to pass before heading down to Benning. In your packet should be a little booklet, ‘Guide for Airborne Students’, it’ll tell you what you have to do to qualify. Gird your loins Sir. If you don’t pass tomorrow, we will try it again in a week and if you don’t pass then, we will wait another week.” He looked at me through those shaggy brows, “but you will pass.”

Inwardly I was in a puddle of tears, outwardly put on the bravest face possible, “drive on Sargeant Major.”

Went home, lay Jeff down for a nap and got changed into a pair of gym shorts, sweat shirt with the arms cut off and my jump boots. Locked the door, stuck the key in my pocket and started running down Countess Drive. Ran to Winterberry Loop, went the length of that, then turned and trotted up Countess Drive and back home. Oh man, considering I’d been in PT almost every morning since April, this should’ve been easy. But it wasn’t. It’s one thing to run on a flat track, quite another on a road with rises and hills. This wasn’t even factoring in the humidity. Which is crazy, I was born in Panama. But too many years in Germany and New York State definitely thickened up my blood.

Tiredly climbed the stairs, need a drink of water. Maybe two drinks of water. Can’t even begin to dry out now. Don’t even bother with a glass, just lean in and suck it right out of the facet. Oh man, am I thirsty. Need a shower too. Am just a big sweaty mess. Go to the bedroom to check on Jeff, he’s awake and waving his arms at the colorful mobile (gift from the cadet battalion) hanging over his bed. It was a cute thing with zebras, giraffes and elephants all chasing each other around and around to the wind up music box tune: ‘I Talk to the Animals’.
“Hi there Big Guy,” leaned over his crib and kissed his cute puppy belly. “Let your stinky papa take a shower, then we can get you up for lunch and watch papa do push ups.” Jeff agreed or at least looked agreeable. Went into the bath and took a quick shower, sluicing off the sweat and dirt, then came out with a towel around my hips. Looked at myself in the bedroom mirror. Didn’t look much different, still had wide hips, a soft belly and tits that still hadn’t shrunk down enough. Which reminds me, have to express some milk for Emma. Poor little thing is still colicky.

Didn’t bother dressing, just went to the kitchen, stopping on the way to do a few chin ups, then pulled out a pan, the milk from the fridge and his puppy cereal from the cabinet. Set the milk in the pan to warm, then sat on the floor to knock out a few push ups and sit ups.

Turned off the heat and poured in the pablum to cook, then went to the bedroom to get Jeff out of his crib. “Puppy curls!” Lifted him up and down in rapid secession, of course the little shit loved it. “You’re gonna be daddy’s little airborne trooper. Woooooo, jump up, hook up, shuffle to the door!” Think I’ve got the best pup in the world.....most times. Or at least when he lets me sleep. Jeff still wakes in the middle of the night but less now that I put his cereal in the bottle for him to suck on. Man, that stuff knocks him right out.

Jeff’s neck has gotten stronger, he can lay on his tummy and hold his head up now. He also is able to sit up by himself, for a moment any way, before tipping over. Timmmmmmer! It’s kind of funny to watch, he just sits there, then topples sideways with this surprised expression on his face. Then lays there for a moment looking pissed off (damn you gravity) and gives off this angry bellar. Which stops immediately when you set him up right. Spent a good half hour doing that one day, then burned off a little more time kissing the bottoms of his soft little feet (oh there is something about puppy toes) and the mandatory rounds of ‘patty cake’ and ‘shoe the horse and shoe the mare but let the little colt go bare’.

Got back to the kitchen with Jeff on my hip, got the pot off the burner and got the milk out of the fridge to pour in to cool the gunk down. There’ve been times I’ve just did the old ‘ready, aim, fire’ with the boob milk but now trying to dry out, going longer and longer between expressing myself.

Which did beg the question on the last well puppy visit with Doctor Mosley, would the ‘hexium milch’ come back after the nursing milk dried up?

“Nope,” she said, looking up over the rims of her glasses. “Now that you’ve had a pup, your body will stop manufacturing it. It did it’s job. Hexium milch was a beguiler, hence the name, ‘witches milk’. It was one of those things an omegas body does to attract an alpha. Same reason why your hips broaden and belly gets soft when you started to have sex regularly.

At least there was light at the end of tunnel, that wasn’t a train, where I could finally get out of wearing nursing shirts. Though, there is that lacy one John bought me from Pellars in London for Christmas that I wouldn’t mind wearing for him a few more times. Or Jenny. Ooooo, have to stop thinking like that....or until after I get Jeff fed and laid down for a nap.

Sat down with him on my lap and spooned the goo into his mouth. Took a few bites myself, tastes like Cream of Wheat, kinda bland, so put a pinch of sugar in. This is a boy who likes saffron chicken soup and swigged onion soup like a champ last month. Jeff ended up wearing half his lunch across his face and t-shirt. Which is why I still haven’t invested much in his clothes. T-shirts, plastic pants and diapers is mostly what he’s still in. Other then a few shirts, overalls and the sun suit, that’s what clothes he has. Course will have to buy more at the Thrift Store (there’s always a bumper crop of puppy clothes really cheap there) when we get down to officers basic.

Finish up with lunch, leaving the pan, spoon and bowl to soak in the sink. Walk back into the bedroom and lay the little guy down for his nap. Wind up the music box on the mobile and let the
giraffes, zebras and elephants chase each other around and around. ‘If I could talk to the animals, just imagine it, chatten with a chimp in chimpanzee....’

Then lay myself down, took a leaf from Dr Spock’s book and most of the cadres mates. When the pup sleeps, so can you and I took that bit of advice to heart. Also took out ‘Spurs’ the vibrator from under the bed. Was NOT going to be caught ‘flat footed’ again. Also a spit towel from the pile of clean laundry on the bed that I hadn’t put away yet and the lotion for Jeff’s butt on the bedside table. Okay, already for a little fun.

Let’s see, a nice easy setting. Something for a long slow afternoon or until Jeff wakes up. There we go, mmmmmmm, that’s good. Who do I think of? John? But of course. Dean? Toss him in the mix. Jenny and Lewiston? Oh God yes! Benny....NO! I can’t think of him......or maybe just a little bit. “Mon Biche,” heard his seductive voice echoing through my memory. “Little Dove.” But then again, isn’t forbidden fruit the sweetest?

Replay that night down at Fort Bragg where he and Daddy Ashton free me from the chivato and then heal my wounds. “Jeff’s quiet today, but then again a PT test and getting sucker punched slowed him down a bit.” Turned over on my stomach. “One of the bastards gave me a good kidney poke.”

Picture the scene, Daddy had just left to bury the jar leaving Benny and I alone in his room.

“Oh mon biche,” Bennys hand was like a magick wand as the pain crept away and the warmth spread across my lower back. “Wish I could’ve stopped it.” His fingers traveled across the furrow of my bottom til they touched the lips of my vulva. Unconsciously canted my hips to the presenting position.

“Happened too fast,” was pleasantly warm and fuzzy headed. “There were too many and you would’ve been hurt too.” Sighed contentedly as Bennys hand cupped my pinks, this is the best I’ve felt in two days. “Wouldn’t want you hurt. You’re too dear to me.”

“Pour petite piroque,” my traiteur clucked his tongue. “Poor little broken boat. Been tossed by the waves, crashed against the rock and left to lay upon the sand to be burned red by the sun.” Could feel a drop of slick glad down my channel and drop into his palm like a bead of dew. He brought it up to his nose, breathing in the bouquet before his tongue snaked out to taste. “Like pure nectar,” he sighed.

Turned over on my back, raising my hips. “There’s more if you want”.............scratch that. Sounds like a line from a bad porn movie. The kind they play over at the Lyric ‘Art’ Theater over on North Clinton Ave. Kinda went there one night with Dean. How could such dumb movies make you wanna have sex........but sadly.....they do. But in any event, made up for the bad dialog by turning ‘Spurs’ up to the next setting and saying something like.....“please Benny please. I need you.” Also turned back over on my stomach and into the presenting position. There we go, that’s better.

“Little Dove,” Bennys hands rest gently on my backside. “Are you sure? Your insides are still pretty raw.”

“Please.” I beg. “You’re a healer, please help me.” Okay not as corny. Alright now, let’s cut to the chase. Don’t know when Jeff will wake up or the phone will ring or someone will be at the door or all the idiotic things that seem to happen when I wanna have sex. Which is why this personal make out session has to so brief. Okay Benny, do your thing. Turned the vibrator up to max and let fly. Greased my palm with the baby lotion and let ‘Miss Michigan’ take over.

True to form, the moans, groans and ‘oh Bennys’ woke someone up. Thank the Alpha God he’s not old enough yet to have stood up to catch the sight of his papa with his ass in the air, vibrator
rattling like an old truck on a dirt road, jerking off into a spit towel. That’s the problem with solo sex, it ain’t pretty.

The time slips by way too fast. I run several times a day, cycle for miles up and down the hills of Henrietta, sit ups and push ups, chin ups, doing anything and everything I could think of. As I failed the PT test the first time I took it. Swam laps in the pond in front of the rental office until one day when the secretary came out and asked me to kindly stop. Not that my Johnny Weissmuller impersonations were not unwelcome or entertaining, it was simply they didn’t want the liability should I fuck up and drown. Though she did admit how the office would miss my grand exits from the water. “Like watching our own personal Swedish movie.”

Can’t argue with that logic I suppose and as for the whole Swedish movie thing.....thank you. I think.

The weekend of the 24th rolls around and on Friday morning the 23rd of June at 07:00 AM, I took the PT test again for the third time and finally passed. At 08:30 AM, I’m packing the brown tux carefully away in the black gator suitcase. All my honeymoon pretties were piled neatly on the bed. Look at the garter belt, tap pants and the other bits of pieces of silk and satin, ribbon and lace. They seemed to belong to another omega and not me. Or not the me of right now. Instead, in went a couple pairs of khakis, jeans, pull over or button up shirts, socks and my dress shoes.

Also tossed in the ‘congrats on getting mated’ card with twenty bucks in it. Money was the one gift that everyone wanted and was never turned down.

Also packed the good collar, didn’t have many occasions to wear it and this seemed like a good opportunity to do so. The duffel was full of mostly my babes clothes, diapers and other things that make traveling with a pup akin to planning an invasion. It took two trips up and down the stairs but am finally ready to go. Had untied Jeff’s car seat/carrier from the passengers front side where I’d had it roped to the seat. Now roped it to the back of the passengers seat with the end of the carrier resting on the back bench. Drove down to Fairwood to pick up Ben who’s agreed (or at least his mother did) to be my plus one for this hog wrestle.

Also dropping off a few bottles of milk I expressed over the course of the last day or two. Hopefully that will hold Emma till we get back on Sunday. Get over there, park in front of Apartment #25 and knock on the front door. “Milchmann,” I call out, tapping on the timbers. Then, tried a different tact: “democracy!”

The door jerked open and Ben stepped out clapping his hand over my mouth. “Pleeeaseeeeee!” He begged. “Emma just fell a sleep. Took forever for Mom to get her quieted down, so plllleaseees! Shut the fuck up!”

“Here’s some milk,” I whispered. “This should help.” My First took the bag to put in the fridge and after a few minutes came back outside. “I told Mom I was leaving now. She told me to tell you that if something happens to me, she holds you personally responsible. There will be no place you can hide as she will find you, skin you alive and hang your pelt up on the wall as a trophy.”

Oh those wacky Germans. “What? She isn’t going to turn me into a lamp shade?”

Ben gave me a sour look and went to the car. “Not funny asshole.” Okay, that went over like a lead balloon. The pout lasted for a mile or two until I apologized. “So, where is this place we’re going to?” He asked with still some grump in his voice.

“Lake George,” I tried a more conciliatory tone. “It’s about 5 hours from here in the Adirondack Mountains. Think of it kinda like Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance. Only tacky as hell. You
know, typical American.” He nodded sagely, (looks like I’m forgiven). Like most Army brats, he knew the tourist towns and Servicemens resorts in Germany. And other then his trips with friend Josh to Sylvan Beach and the 4th of July weekend to the North Carolina shore last summer (that still hurt. It was suppose to have been my honeymoon with Dean), he’d really seen nothing of a ‘regular’ American vacation.

Like me, Ben hadn’t been born in the States. He came into the world at the Frankfurt Army Hospital in 1962, then lived in France till the American military was kicked out in 1966 after the Frogs left NATO.

“We lived out of suitcases and used Dad’s foot locker as a table for months cuz they lost our house hold goods.” Had heard similar stories from people who were given a few scant days to get packed up and out of country. Even heard of someones roast turkey getting boxed up while still in the oven. “We stayed with Moms parents in Stuttgart when Dad was in Vietnam and Korea, then came here about four years ago. Lived in at Fort Dix for a year, what a hole that is, then came up to Rochester.”

To pass the time, Ben and I compared notes on the places in Germany we’d been. Laughed over the crazy crap we’d gotten away with, the school trips to London, Amsterdam and West Berlin (getting in trouble at the East German border for peeking out the windows of the train). You know, the fun stuff. But there was also the not so fun part of where we lived. The warnings to vary your routes so the Red Brigade won’t get you, or the MP’s on school bus’s and the ‘go bags’ every one kept by the front door. The scary reminder that we lived on the front lines of a cold war that had every chance of turning hot in a heart beat.

Rolling up to the Henrietta toll booth to get on the Thruway, the toll taker handed over the ticket and wished us a good trip. According to the time punch on the ticket, was about ten minutes after nine in the morning.

Had to stop about an hour and a half later at the Dewitt Travel Plaza in Syracuse to hit the can, pick up some overpriced junk food then get back on the road. True to form, the minute we hit the Montezuma Swamp, it started to rain. Even though the sun had been out and shining all the way from Henrietta, the clouds were all bunched up over Syracuse and the rain was coming down like it was day 3 of the 40 and we better know how to tread water. Course the minute we’re on the other side of Syracuse, everything lets up like someone turned off the sprinkler and the sun is back out. Welcome to New York State, don’t like the weather, wait five minutes, it’ll change for you.

Once we get to Albany, I paid the $3.50 to get off the Thruway (highway robbery if you ask me) and on to the Northway (just as good a road and costs nothing to be on it). There was a Howard Johnson’s at the Latham exit, so had to stop for a lunch, pee and diaper break. Okay, maybe we shouldn’t have but couldn’t resist the lure of clam strips. Both Ben and I ordered the large clam plates, fries and indian pudding. Jeff had his bottle and a few spoonfuls of the pudding. I picked up the check for the both of us and were soon back on our way.

Had sat down with the check book earlier in the week to see just how much money was left, there was a goodly sum in the account, if I was careful. So should be able make it to August and a regular monthly paycheck without too many troubles. As long as there weren’t any disasters, knock on wood. Was debating on whether to drive to Fort Benning or fly. Was thinking of maybe driving to DC to spend time with the Reynolds and then flying out of there. Either way, have to make up my mind fast, as I have to get out to the travel office at the Seneca Army Depot to get my plane ticket.

If I do drive to DC will leave the Bug at the embassy where it’d be a whole lot safer then just
sitting in parking lot in Riverton or Fort Benning. Will also leave my good collar and valuables with Karen.

Along with the picture of the tux, Sharon had sent a map showing how to get to the camp where the mating party would be staying. The main drag was exactly the way I’d heard Bry-Ann describe it, “like the Jersey Shore in the mountains.” Which Ben seconded, as we drove by tacky souvenir shops, cheap looking motels, bars and ‘The House of Frankenstein Wax Museum?’ Oh brother. The road takes us out of town, through the twists and turns of the mountains following the lake. My First is playing navigator, calling out the road names, land marks and finally.... “there, that mail box that says ‘41’ and ‘Franklin. Turn right there.”

We turned onto the side road, driving through a spread of pines and maples, till it leads us up to a rather impressive three story Tudor style, for lack of a better word, mansion, I turned to Ben. “Are you sure this is the right place?” Was expecting a little bungalow with a rickety wooden dock. Maybe a float made of barrels hanging just off shore. No, this was NOT what we found by a long shot.

“Positive,” Ben was just as amazed. “According to the mail box out at the turn off, this is 41 Cramer Point Road.” He whistled appreciatively. “Holy shit. That’s some ‘cottage’. Sharon’s family must have had mucho denaro to afford this joint.” According to the little omega, it was a little something passed down from her paternal grandparents to mom and dad on their mating day. No wonder she could go to St. John Fisher without a scholarship, then even be able to consider law school afterward. Her folks must be loaded.

Pulled the Bug up next to the other cars along side the house in front of the three car garage and we got out. Unbuckled Jeff from his car seat, “come on kiddo. Ooooo, you need a new diaper.” Had changed him down in Latham but looks like he’d filled his diaper in the mean time. Wonder if I can take him down to the lake to clean off. Ben had gone over to knock on the front door to let someone know we were there and what now?

Turned to find him coming back down the walk followed by a pleasant looking middle aged beta woman in a sun dress. “Hello, I’m Celia Franklin, Sharon’s mother.”

Shifted Jeff so that the fragrant smell of ‘Eu de Dirty Diaper’ was not so prevalent. “Uh, hi. I’m Castiel Novac, friend of Bry-Anns from RIT. This is my First, Ben Winchester and this little imp, who I really need to get some clean three cornered pants on, is my son Jeffery.”

Mrs Franklin smiled, “welcome to our little shack in the woods. Come on, let’s get you settled in and a chance to freshen up.” Got the gator bag and the duffel out of the back seat as Ben grabbed his stuff. We were lead into a grand foyer and then into one of the most impressive living rooms I’d ever seen since coming to the ‘Land of the Big PX’. And I’d spent the summer at Quarters One in Fort Riley. Maybe tt wasn’t like the castles in Germany or manor houses in England, but damn.....damn!

“You have a beautiful home Mrs Franklin,” I said marveling at the huge stone fire place, white washed stucco walls and the leather couches and chairs that just seemed to invite you to sit down to cuddle up with a book, glass of wine or a long lazy nap (or a long lazy fuck). “It looks like a Tudor in the revival style of the 1920’s.”

“Why thank you and call me Celia,” she said leading us up to an impressive carved oak stair case. (Again saved by finishing school, a short course in vintage architecture.) “You have a good eye, yes the house was built by my mates father as a summer get away back in 1924,” The first flight of stairs, lead up a second flight, Celia kept talking while Ben and I were huffing and puffing to keep up. It’s bad when a 40 some odd year old beta could leave a healthy 16 year old alpha boy and a 22
year old omega carrying a 2 ton (one of those tons was pure puppy poop.) babe and luggage (would it have killed ya to take one of the bags ya bitch?) up a flight of stairs. But finally we reach the third floor. “This will be your room, there’re twin beds that can be pushed together and Sharons old crib for your pup. The bath is across the hall and there’s central air or you can just open the window and use the ceiling fan.”

Set the bags down and switched Jeff to a little more comfortable position on my hip. “Thank you. We can get cleaned up and be down in a little while.”

“Good,” she turned and walked toward the door. “The mating rehearsal is at 07:00 o’clock tonight and afterward Bry-Ann’s family is hosting an old fashioned pig roast. The men were up digging the pit early this morning, getting the charcoal going and laying in the pig. You’ll met my mate Irv and Stew Whitman a little later, they’re are out playing golf over at the Top of the World. Tootles.” And with that off her chest, Celia left in a rustle of cotton.

Ben and I stood there for a moment, before he stage whispered “wow.”

“And how,” I added. Then turned my attention to the little stink-o on my hip. “Come here dude, let’s get you cleaned up.” The bath had a large claw foot tub and shower just perfect for cleaning up a messy pup. And me. Had been feeling a little grody as the Bug only had 2-60 air conditioning. Two windows open at 60 miles an hour and really needed a bath. Got the worst of the shit off my wiggly pup and flushed down the toilet. Filled the tub with about an inch of warm water, then proceeded to wash him down. Boy those are some nice smelling guest soaps, gotta remember to snitch one before the weekend is over.

Had folded a small towel to make a pillow for Jeff’s head. He happily splashed, cooed and peed like a fountain. Some day I’m gonna remember to put a wash cloth over that little whiz cicle.

Drained the water, picked my little one up, then got the shower going. Stood there enjoying the feel of the warm water running down my body and for a few minutes just let my mind wonder, not really thinking of anything. Didn’t wanna think of any of the stuff I had to do in the next days to get ready for the next few weeks. Like leaving Jeff with Karen. Not that she wouldn’t adequately care for him, just the didn’t like the thought of leaving him for all that time. Hmmmmm...need to give her some money for his diapers, food and such. She prolly won’t wanna take it but will make sure she does. A couple of hours or days is one thing...almost four weeks is another.

Jeffs startled cry brought me back up, the water was turning cooler and he didn’t like it. “Sorry Sweetheart, sorry Papas sweet boy. Papa will fix.” Turned off the stream and high stepped out of the tub. Wrapped my babe up in one of the big fluffy towels off the rack and set him on the large vanity. Ohhhhh...more of those nice soaps. The bath also sported a crapper and a bidet, fancy schancy. Note to self, tell Ben NOT to piss in the bidet.

Put a towel around my waist, picked up Jeff and walked back across the hall to our room. Ben was unpacking...well...shoving his clothes into the dresser. “Hang your jacket up in closet, can’t have you looking like you slept in in. Oh, the bath is free, though I’d give it a few minutes for the water to warm back up. And the toilet is on the right, bidet is on the left...don’t mix them up.”

He gave me that patented look only a teenager can give. “I ain’t stupid, know what a bidet is. Mom is always carrying on about Americans, their lack of civilized bathrooms and their weird obsession about toilet paper.” Ben snickered, “considering that German toilet paper is like wiping your butt with a splinterly stick and the crap the French make is like wax paper, in a way I can see her point about having an ass hose.”

“We won’t even talk about Turkish toilet paper,” had opened up the gator bag and pulled the
monkey suit out, putting it the closet next to Ben’s jacket to let the wrinkles hang out. If it needs more, can touch it up with an iron in the morning. The ceremony wasn’t until 10:30 tomorrow morning, so there was plenty of time to get it looking presentable.

Get Jeff’s little butt oiled, powdered and diapered. Kissed that plump little belly and blew raspberries. His green eyes shown like sun light on dew kissed leaves. My babe has a thatch of dark hair that is getting a little thicker on his noggin. Pulled out the same blue and white sun suit and a hat from the other day, dressing the little wiggling body. Then set him in the crib to give me a chance to get dressed. What do I put on? Had brought a pair of cut offs and sweats but think I’ll error on the side of caution, took out sandals, the best pair of jeans that almost fit me and a short sleeved rugby shirt. Left the shirt untucked to cover the ‘dun-lap’, as I said, they ‘almost’ fit.

Ben had shucked off his clothes, picked up the towel I’d dropped on the floor, wrapping his around his waist. Couldn’t help but run an appreciative eye over his neatly muscled landscape. Football may have put on some beef but a growth spurt kept it from turning to fat in the off season. The boy is a Winchester through and through, tall, good looking, dark haired with a heart breaker smile. Oh the Whitman and Franklin sisters and omegas aren’t gonna know what hit em. He noticed me noticing and flexed his biceps. “See something you like?”

“Assbutt,” I growled. Oh I was so busted. Hey, I’m mated, not dead. Trying to play it cool, picked up Jeff from the crib, “get in the shower, you stink.”

“Ha! You just wanna piece of this.”

“You wish,” and with that, left him to go get cleaned up. Made the long decent down the stair case, thinking I should either be tap dancing like in ‘Yankee Doodle Dandy’ or yelling ‘Rhett, Rhett, where shall I go, what shall I do?’ Well frankly my dear, I don’t give a hydroelectric damn. Got to the bottom of the stairs only after making a few sword jabs like Errol Flynn, then just stopped to listen. Need to know where the people were in this monolith, hmmm seems to be the sounds of humanity coming from down the hall to my right. So, hitched Jeff on my hip and walked down a dark wood paneled hallway, passed a rather large dining room, now I really need to have a sword fight and swing from the chandelier hanging over the long wooden table. Pushed open the swinging door and...you know that scene from the ‘Wizard of Oz’ when Dorothy opens the door to Munchkin Land, there is such a burst of color that it takes your breath away? Yeah, that’s what it was like walking into that kitchen. I either wanted to put on shades or look for Glinda the Good Witch.

Where as the rest of the house was all dark wood, white, brown with occasional dots of deep forest green, the kitchen was an explosion of burnt reds, yellows, light woods and bronze colored appliances. Hoooolly Shit! There were about eight woman of various ages and secondary genders bustling about preparing enough food to feed a small army. Recognized only one, Mrs...no....Celia and the rest must be some kind of relatives or friends.

“Um....hi?” They all turned......“anything I can do to help?”

“Girls,” Celia announced, putting down the knife she was artistically attacking a watermelon with. “This is Castiel, he’s Bry-Ann’s friend from school and part of the wedding party.” She wiped her hands on a dish towel and walked over. “And this handsome little fellow, is his son Jeffery.” Course that’s when the little brat gives a happy “aaaaaaaaahhhhhhh” and throws out his arms. The women of course melt for him and he’s whisked away and passed from hand to hand. At this rate, the pup’s feet are never gonna touch the ground.

“My gracious, what are you feeding this boy?” One of the ladies was gasping under Jeff’s weight. “He’s got some good heft to him.”
“His doctor says he’s in the 95th percentile.” I was rather proud of that fact. That MY pup was a head of the other pups. Dumb, I know but there you have it. “He’s only four months old and born a month early.” The ladies made the appropriate cooing and aaaaawwww noises, Jeff was soaking in the love and beaming it back like a Telstar satellite.

Introductions were made all around, four of them were aunts and cousins of Sharon and the other three were Bry-Ann’s mom, aunt and older mated sister. The rest of the sisters, brothers and cousins were down by the lake sunning themselves or out in one of the speed boats. “Where’s Sharon and Bry-Ann?”

“Oh, Sharon is at the Crystal Spa in Saratoga,” one of the cousins chirped up. “She’s there for a last hurrah day. You know, kind of like a bachelor party only she’s an omega and a girl. Then some shopping for the honeymoon. They’re going up to Montreal and staying at the Ritz.” She sighed, “sounds so wonderful.” Checked her neck and finger, no bite or ring. Looks like the old maid beta cousin.

“Bry-Ann is with her father and Irv playing golf,” Celia was back to mutilating the watermelon. Huh, wish I’d known that before. could’ve gone and whacked a balls with Bry during the school year. “Why don’t you go down to the boat house and introduce yourself to the rest of the family, don’t worry about Jeff, we can watch him for a bit. Noticed a crib in the corner with two pups about Jeff’s age sound asleep in it.

“If it’s no trouble,” I began but was shooed out the back door with the admonishment to mingle. Now felt weird without a pup on my hip. Walked out into a stone patio and down a set of stairs that lead to a large boat house. Breathed in the smell of pine, lake water and roasting pig. Mmmm, that is gonna be one tasty porker in a few hours. Make my way down to the water, the door to the boat house was open to show two motor boats in the bays. A cabin cruiser and sleek speedster. Wow, Sharons folks do have a bit of coin.

On top of the boat house was a sun deck with wicker chairs, chaise loungers and umbrella tables. There was a transistor radio playing loudly from a small tiki bar set up in the corner and next to it a metal wash tub full of melting ice and beers. The chairs and loungers were decorated with mostly alphas and a few betas in their early to mid 20’s sunning themselves talking softly amongst themselves.

Walk over to the wash tub and fish through. Urg, American beer. Not a Coors in sight. Even the Bass ale is that nasty import shit. Oh well, better then nothing I suppose. Pull one out of the ice, pop off the top on the edge of the bar (a little something I learned from the ladies who babysat me when we lived next door to a whore house in Panama) and take a long pull. Not bad but not the best. Could feel a few eyes on me, well might as well pick someone to talk to and get it over with.

Hmmm, who looks like less of a jack wagon...tough call in this crowd. But it was solved for me when this short alpha male type ambles over. “Hi, Nelson Eddy” (You gotta be kidding me) “Cousin of Sharon.”

Took his hand, oh let’s play the hand crusher game to show the little ‘mega their place. But finishing school did have a ploy for such occasions. A little pressure in the soft spot between the thumb and fore finger, works every time. “Hi, Castiel Novac, friend of Bry-Ann from college.”

Eddy grimaced and let up quick. “You’re in college?” Don’t sound so surprised jerk off.

“No, just graduated. Gotta Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice and a commission from the Army ROTC. In fact,” I said with modest (okay not really) pride. “I was the first omega from my school to get a commission.”
“I didn’t think omegas were allowed in the army.”

“Yes we are. Have been for a few years. In fact, I’m going to jump school in a few weeks.” Ha, fool that you are, take that. “Am thinking about Pathfinder or Jungle School too.” Now that last was just an empty boast. There is no way in hell I’d step foot in Panama with Manuel having any kind of power there. Now Pathfinder is another story. It’s only five weeks, Quartermaster is one of preferred branches to go and the school is in Fort Benning, Georgia. I could do that. It’s something to look into. Took a swig of ale, oh yeah, that’s not good.

Nelson smiled, fished out a beer and was in the process of excusing himself for being less macho then an omega, when the roar of an engine came from out in the water as a large wooden speed boat came barreling into the little cove.

“Nice boat,” I watched as the girl at the wheel cut the engine and let the momentum take the craft up to the dock.

“It belonged to grand-dad.” Nelson looked relieved to have something to brag about. “He used to race it back in late 30’s early 40’s. Won quite a few trophies in his day. It’s a Hacker Craft triple cockpit, built in 1930, Kermath engine, 225 horsepower, can reach speeds of 60 miles per hour...” He suddenly stopped in mid-sentence as his nose wiggled like an excited rabbit.

“Sorry,” blushed to the ears. “I like fast cars and motorcycles, didn’t think talking about boats would do that too.” Haven’t slicked like this since Tim the tech and I got kicked out The Pillars Steakhouse during a rather memorable lunch when I was interning with the Rochester Police. Talking about Black Betty and taking me out on his motorcycle to the ‘Can of Worms’ interchange.....“oops, sorry. Did it again.” A couple of other alphas drifted up. Shit, gotta boogie. “Excuse me, think I hear my mother calling.” Made my escape before something unfortunate happened, as there were too many of them and just one of me. Slipping into the boathouse to just hide out for a bit to regain my composure and apparently I wasn’t the only one. The smell of excited omega just permeated the air in there.

The floating phallic symbol had just pulled into its bay, as two of its riders nimbly jumped out on to the cat walks to moor it in place. Even in the dim light could tell she was a beauty. Leather seats, mahogany body, lovingly constructed by hand and all those horses under the hood. Oh crap, not again. “If you get the slicks just seeing this baby moored to the dock,” one of them followed her nose right to where I was trying to stand inconspicuously behind the door. “You’re gonna drop trou and present after you cruise in her.”

Narked out, stepped away of the shadows. “Um, hi. Castiel Novac...”

“Wow, you are real.” one of the omega boys said. “Bry-Ann talked about you a lot. We called you ‘Cas the Corpse’ because we didn’t think you were real the way she talked you up. Just some dead body she dragged around. “Hi, Jeff Whitman here, Bry’s brother. And this strikingly handsome dude is Jared.” Whoa, twin omega boys? Rare as hens teeth. Good looking too, prolly about Ben’s age. Singleye they would have a good mating contract price, but together? Those two would go for big buckaroos. And I have really got to STOP thinking like that.

Two of the omega girls were high school buddies of the twins, while the other two were Sharons teenaged cousins. Which explained why they were so practiced at jumping on to the cat walk without a mis-step. “So are you guys in the wedding party too?”

The twins made a stereo bitch face worthy of a Winchester, “yeah we are. Have to wear those stupid omega gowns. That was the only way Sharons mom could get the church and the preacher to agree to the ceremony, as there’s gonna be no biting or Sharon getting naked at the altar. We get
stuck looking like fruit loops.”

I could understand their pain. “That’s a big 10-4 good buddy. I got mated last year. Thought the priest was gonna bust a gusset because my mate didn’t do a ‘Jaws’ on my shoulder.” Then smirked, “he did later on.” Pushed aside my shirt to show the mark, “he’s a bull alpha.”

Good thing someone decided to shut the boat house door cuz there was enough slick in the air to start a mating frenzy. Course they all had to know about Johns equipment and prowess, did I get pregnant and a whole mess of other things that only omegas talk about in private (So close your ears bitches). In a while Jiff (cuz two Jeff’s are too confusing) picks up a bucket from the tool stand near by, dips it in the water and upends it on himself. Then passes it to his twin. Yeah, I guess we can’t go out stinking of slick. Then each in turn till it was my shot at it. “HOLY FUCKING @#$%^*&^%$#@! THAT’S COLD!”

Everyone smirked. “Yup,” one of the girl cousins said. “Never gets any warmer then that. That’s pure melted Adirondack snow you’re feeling. You should be here on New Years Day when the Polar bears come out.”

“They come down this far south from the Arctic?”

“No dummy, the Polar Bear club. The idiots who jump in the water in the middle of winter.” She cocked her head. “you never heard of em?”

“Oh no.” Felt a little foolish. “Nobody I knew was ever that dumb to jump in a lake in winter. Though my brother Gabe and I had to abandon ‘ship’ on the Main River in Wurzburg when the raft we built came apart. That was kinda early in the Spring and colder then crap.” And on that note, they decided I was a big enough weirdo and it was time to go up to the main house to change clothes.

I was trotting after the teens up the stairs when Jiff came to a sudden halt and took a few quick steps back. “Oohhhhh say can you seeeee the stone fox who’s up there talking to Mom!”

Jared took a fast look, turned and fanned himself. “Good night John Boy! You can tuck me in any night of the week!” The four omega girls were equally enthusiastic...“he’s so decent looking! Do you think he has a girl friend or an omega or.....who cares! Awe sooky sooky! Meeeeeooooowwww! Ohhhh pour on the milk, I could eat him with crackers!”

Walked around the giggling teens to see what the hubbub was all about.....okay. Ben was standing there talking to a middle aged alpha lady.....oh no. I knew he would prolly be omega nip, but didn’t think Benjamin Winchester would be the cocaine to omega-dom. Okay, gotta play it cool. No, let’s really embarrass the shit out of these guys. “Hi Ben!” Waved to him. “Wanna meet my new friends?”

The pups squealed and smacked me on the arms, “no! You didn’t, you can’t......heelllllooo there.” Instant cool, just add alpha.

Ben ambled over taking his time, doing his best Steve McQueen impression and gave that same smile Dean gave me that first day at RIT when I was admiring his fine ass running around the ice rink. “Guys, this is my First, Benjamin Winchester. Ben, this is.....” went on to introduce everyone. “Why don’t you guys get to know each other, I have to check on Jeff.”

Walked off and left the lot of em to stutter and stammer at each other. I can be SUCH a bastard sometimes.
Several hours later, I was standing with the rest of the groomsmen at the altar in the Saint James Episcopal Church. They were assorted cousins on both sides and Sharons alpha brother, as the bridesmaids were cousins, friends and Bry-Anns beta sister. The twins were the there to cover their heads and show off their bare ass omega butts. We had practiced processing in, groomsman first, bridesmaids second, omegas third. Then in came the bride, escorted by her father.

Her dad would hold her hand until the priest would ask, ‘were you given a pearl of great price to replace the one you hold today?’ Wonder idly what Bry and her family gave to have Sharons contract?

Daddy sez he was, priest sez he can now hand over the merchandise (not quite in those words but close enough) and dad now puts Sharons hand in Bry-Ann’s. The priest asks the questions...blah, blah, blah...do you take this.....yeah, yeah, yeah.....put on the collar.......put on the ring (for Bry-Ann) kiss and there you have it. Omegas put your clothes back on and lets go get drunk at the country club.

Sharon is looking rested and well shopped (if the forgotten tag on her obviously new skirt is any indication) from her day in Saratoga. Bry-Ann was brown as a nut from her time out on the links with dad and father in law. Which is going to look super when she puts on her white tux. Good thing the ‘no biting’ light is going to be on. With all the white and yellow duds, it would look like something out of a Hershel Gordon Lewis movie.

When Celia Franklin decided that her little omega daughter was going to get mated like any beta or alpha. I tell you what, when that beta put her mind to something, she could almost put Naomi-mom to shame. Notice I said ‘almost’. It was amazing what she did in just a month.

She must have put the strong arm on someone because the church, priest and country club were all cobbled together in three weeks.....in June and these were some pretty nice places too. One of Sharons more talented aunts and cousin made her mating gown along with all the bridesmaids dresses and omega gowns as their gift to the happy couple. Like an omega gown was hard, it was a long chiffon poncho with breech clout to match.

Rehearsal only took about an hour, so it was still plenty light out at 06:00 and dinner wasn’t going to be for another half hour.....soooooooo, hows about a ride in that shiny speed boat? But first have to get Jeff fed, changed and set down in his borrowed crib. He was in the puppy corral along with the other little guys, which was good for him as he never really was around any other pups, except in the waiting room at the Womans and Omegas clinc, when we went for check ups.

“Hi there Champ,” I hefted him up and nuzzled into his sweet chipmunk cheeks. “Have a good time with the other pups?”

Jeff yawned, “daddadaddadd.”

“Papa, say papa. You said it once during graduation. Come on, you know you can do it.”

“Daddadaadaa.”

“You’re killen me here.” Sighed and wandered about the ground floor looking for a quiet and secluded place to nurse, as I didn’t feel like climbing all the way back up to the third floor till I had to. The front living room would be nice, oh to sink into those leather couches but too many people around. Check that, too many alphas around to whip out a tit. Ambled down a hallway and right next to a small water closet, was what seemed to be a den/office/husbands hiding spot. Either way, it was quiet and had a lock on its door.
The room was comfortable, very manly and there as the aroma of books, good cigars and brandy infusing the air. Not like Johns hide away at Fort Riley, which was more of a working office, this was more of a get away to smoke, drink a fine brandy or scotch and discuss alpha male things. There were built in shelves, lined with hard covered books and not a paper back in sight. There was a leather couch against the wall, two overstuffed leather chairs facing it and a large ottoman that seemed to serve double duty as a foot rest and coffee table. A rather expensive big brother of the little flowered version I have back at Riverton. The walls were white wash plaster, ebony wainscoting with dark beams on the ceiling. There was original art on the walls, hunting dogs, pheasants and alike.

Jeff was eating mostly that mushy food that looks and smells like c-rations. Cows milk in his bottles rounds out his meals these days. Was still expressing some milk for Emma as it seemed to be the only thing controlling her colic. Just didn’t want to show up at Benning still dropping milk left and right. Sighed as I stretched out on the couch, pulled the rugby and nursing shirts off, letting them fall to the floor. Gave my chest a little shake, the boobs seemed to be a bit smaller but still see a nursing shirt in my future for a while. Oh why does life have to be like an infantryman with a jeep? Either dead stop or full bore?

Jeff was all for the change up in diet, as he latched on and started sucking for all he was worth. Making little grunting sounds and pat patting my breast, he was one happy boy. “Silly puppy,” sighed and leaned my head back. “What am I gonna do with you? Will just have to love ya I guess.” Closed my eyes for a moment, must have been tireder then I figured (had been up since ‘oh dark thirty’) cuz I’d dozed off and the next thing I know, am hearing a deep alpha male voice speaking in the gentle cadence of someone reading a story aloud:

“Who comes?” demanded the scout, throwing his rifle carelessly across his left arm, and keeping the forefinger of his right hand on the trigger, though he avoided all appearance of menace in the act. “Who comes hither, among the beasts and dangers of the wilderness?”

“Believers in religion, and friends of the law and the king,” returned he who rode foremost. “Men who have journeyed since the rising sun, in the shades of this forest, without nourishment and are sadly tired of their wayfaring.”

“You are then, lost,” interrupted the hunter, “and have found how helpless ‘tis not to know whether to take the right hand or the left?”

“Even so; sucking babes are not more dependent on those who guide them then we who are of larger growth and who may now be said to possess the stature with the knowledge of men. Know you the distance to a post of the crown called William Henry?”*

The voice stopped a moment, “that’s right down the road from here. If you’re a good pup, I’ll take you down there.” Could hear the flipping of pages..... “you wanna hear more about Hawk-Eye, Uncas and Chingachgook?”

“Dadadadadadada!”

My eyes fly open to see my son contentedly leaning against the chest of Irv Franklin, Sharon’s father. He had one hand on Jeff’s middle and in the other, the small hard cover book he’d been reading from. I guess after this, ‘Pat the Bunny’ just isn’t cut the mustard for my boy. It was the kind of sweet scene that I’d imagined for John or Dad.....then noticed my shirts neatly folded on
the ottoman.

Kind of jumped a bit, but was relieved to find a colorful afghan draped over me. Irv looked up over his reading glasses. “Hi there, nice to see you awake.”

“Uh, hi Mr Franklin. Uhhhh, sorry about the intrusion, just wanted a quiet place to nurse Jeff and not to seem ungrateful, but how did you get in? I locked the door.”

“Skeleton key, the pups used to lock themselves in here or the bathrooms all the time when they were little. Dad had one made years ago to fit about every lock in the house.” He nuzzled Jeff’s soft downy hair. “Great to have little ones running around the place again and it’s Irv. Mr Franklin was my father.”

Sat up, keeping the afghan against my chest. “What’s going on now?”

Irv set the book down on the ottoman and stood up. “Stu Whitman has that pig out of the coals and was carving him up when I left to come in here. So, I suspect the hungry horde is making short work of it. “Tell you what, me and the mugwump here will head outside to the party, while you put yourself together. Sound good to you?”

“Sounds like a plan Stan,” Irv got up holding Jeff in the ‘shopping bag’ position, crossed the room and out the door. I stood and sniffed the air cautiously......just in case....nope not even a hint of of cum, slick or arousal. Should’ve known better then to doubt a man with an omega daughter but considering the lewd side glances Zachariah had been sending my way over graduation weekend, I could be none too careful. Sad to have this moment of uncertainty about an honest and good man.

Got dressed and went out to find the party in full swing. Tiki torches lead the way down the stairs from the back porch down to boat house where some one had gone wild with the Christmas tree lights. The radio was still baring away: “Here we go with the Top 40 hits of the nation this week on American Top 40, the best-selling and most-played songs from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to Mexico. This is Casey Kasem in Hollywood, and in the next three hours, we'll count down the 40 most popular hits in the United States this week, hot off the record charts of Billboard magazine for the week ending June 17th 1978”

A long table was set up on the deck and looked like it was about to fall in from the sheer weight of all the food piled on it. In the corner, attached to a long extension cord stood a refrigerator with a beer tap on its door. “Best kegerator money can build,” Sharon's brother Bill slapped me on the back and handed me a glass. “There’s a guy up in Port Henry that makes em. Dude is a genius.”

Taking a sip, wait until Bill’s out of sight, then pour the beer over the side. Blahhhhhh, American beer tastes like shit. Decide on a Pepsi instead and dig it out of the same wash tub that was full beer this afternoon. Ohhhhhhh, caffeine! Have been sooo good with just one cup of instant coffee a day but now....now...oh come to me oh dark goddess of fizz. Take a near by church key, flip off the top and take that cold wet mouth to my lips like a lover. Guzzle down the whole thing, set the ‘dead solder’ down and fish out an other. This one I take slow to enjoy the taste caramel, sugar and caffeine.

Figure it’s time to find my pup and get him to bed. As I’m mingling my way through family, friends and ‘who the hell are you types’, pass the omega boys and girls I’d had met earlier today. They were surrounding Ben giving him quite the rush. “The local drive in is playing a double feature, ‘Grease’ and ‘Sargeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band’, you wanna go with us?” Jared and Jiff are on either side of him as the girls are working hard to keep his attention on them. Oh to be the ‘belle of the ball’. My First wearing a big shit eating grin on his face.
I find Jeff still with Irv Franklin; the two of them are with the rest of the adults in a little glade away from the loud music and Christmas lights. They had a card table set up with a few lawn chairs, lit by the soft glow of jar candles. Jeff’s face was covered in pork grease and barbecue sauce and he was happily sucking on a hunk of pig’s ear. Having been to enough roasts, I know how tasty those things can get. “Hey there Pops,” Irv called out. “You aren’t gonna have a problem feeding this pup. He eats everything. Never saw a young-un so less fussy about his supper.” Which of course lead to stories of Sharon and Bry-Ann, what they would and wouldn’t eat. Toilet training mishaps and all matter of sweet embarrassing little stores that I tuck away to bust on em later with. But in the mean time...

“Think it’s time somebody gets a new diaper and put to bed.” Held out my arms to which Irv reluctantly lets him go. “Come on there ‘Sunshine’, say ‘night night’. I take his little hand and wave.

“Irv!” Almost dropped the pup in surprise. Irv of course preened happily, “smart little guy you got there. You can bring him back any old time.”

Fuck. Little brat says everything but ‘papa’.

Was pretty well pooped out by the time we get to the third floor. Shut the window to block out the sounds of the party then turn on the air conditioning. Remembered back to those hot nights in Panama where us pups would be camped out on the balcony under mosquito nets just trying to catch a little breeze so we could sleep. “It’s a long way from a barrio balcony,” told Jeff as I washed him down in the bathroom sink. “To this. Even if we’re just guests.”

“Irv!”

“Papa, say papa”

“Daaddadaaaaddaaaaaaa!”

“Good night John Boy, you’re going to bed.”

The next morning I wake up to find Ben plastered to my back like an octopus and a stick of morning wood up the crack of my ass. Winchester the Third had only got himself partially undressed, he must’ve been awfully quiet or I was awfully tired, didn’t even feel him come to bed. His pants and shoes were off but everything else stayed on. Which brought attention to his face which was awash in peach lipstick, somebody did a ton of smooching. Then, on a whim, tossed off the covers. Oops, lipstick on the dipstick. Only this was a light shade of cotton candy pink. And that’s when I pushed him out of bed.

He woke with a start and a more then a few curse words. Bi-lingual too, color me impressed. On the other hand, don’t. “Why the hell did you do that?”

Sat cross legged on the bed looking at him like he’d turned into the most interesting bug under the microscope. “How was your night last night?”

Ben grumbled getting to his feet. “You woke me up to ask me that?!”

“Only cuz you’re paved in two different shades of lip stick and now that I notice, hickey-city.”

He dashed out the door and to the bath. Could hear the shower running a moment later. Walk over to the crib to where Jeff was wide awake and filling his diaper. Ewwww, that barbecue sauce was not coming out well at all. “Sorry kiddo, gotta wait a moment or two for your!....brother.....uncle....oh what the ever livin rat fuck relation he is, to come out.”
Herr Winchester der Drei came out a little bit later, wearing nothing but a towel and a look of shameless alpha pride.

“Dummer affe,” leaned over the crib and pulled off Jeff’s plastic pants. Yuck. “What did you do..er..let me re-phrase that....what did they....brilliant Novac, it’s obvious what they did. Okay, let’s take it from the top.. were you at least careful?”


“I can think a lot of things,” I said darkly.

“We went to the drive-in. The first movie was really great.” He did a few dance steps and sang: “Grease is the word it’s got a groove, it’s got a meaning” Huh, didn’t know Ben had such a nice singing voice. Then he made a bitch face worthy of any Winchester. “The second movie was so stupid we left after 10 minutes.”

“Okay, then what?”

“We came back and took the cabin cruiser out.”

“In the dark?!”

He got rather defensive, “it had running lights and we were just following the shore line. Went to Cannon Point and pulled on to the little beach there. Sat around, had a few beers, nothing special.”

“And I suppose those hickeys and lipstick just appeared on you through osmosis?”

Now Ben got defensive, “geeze. You’re worse then Mom.”

Now THAT got my dander up. “No, I’m your First. I’m going to be defending you if the shit hits the fan. Okay pup, spill. What happened?” Made a mental note: Jeff darling. You are never going to leave the yard until you’re 30. And even THEN I’m going to have to think about it.

He shifted and squirmed, “they wanted to know if you were really my First.”

“Yeah, so?” Knew right where this was going because I heard enough stories from other omegas in Finishing School.”

“Told em yes you were. So they wanted to know if you taught me any.......’stuff’.”

JESUS H. CHRIST! Why does everything I do come back to bite me in the ass?!

“So I told em about you taking me ‘around the world’ and ‘the missionary stories all authentically told in the missionary position.”

“And what did they say?” I choked out.

“They loved the bouncy little locusts.”

Slapped a palm to my forehead, “you did have rubbers, right? RIGHT?”

He looked offended. “Of course, you taught me to be a responsible alpha. But I didn’t need em. They were all on the pill and suppressants.”

I’m dead, Ben’s dead.....we are ALL fucking dead! “You popped all their cherries!? Do you know how much trouble you’re in??!”
Ben looked like the proverbial cat that ate the canary. “None, those cherries done got popped already. I didn’t go where any alpha hadn’t gone before.”

On the upside, okay. No harm-no foul. On the downside.....I’M COMING ELIZABETH! IT’S THE BIG ONE HONEY! This is the Universes way of getting back at me. I know it. For all those covered over gray hairs on Naomi-Moms head and all the trips she made down to the MP’s office to talk Gabe and me out of trouble. Only to whup our ass’s all the way home. “Get dressed, go downstairs and make nice. The mating ceremony is in.......three hours. MOVE IT! MOVE IT! MOVE IT!”

He picked up his clothes and took off for the bathroom as I stood trying to get my heart to stay in my chest and not hammer its way out. “Jeff, don’t you EVER do anything like that EVER!”

“Irv!”

“Papa, say......oh what the fuck.”

He cocked his little head questioningly. “Fuc?” You can say that and not Papa? Oh that just figures.

Went downstairs after getting Jeff and myself cleaned up and dressed. The house was an anthill of activity, half the people were scurrying about, while others were sitting at the large kitchen table trying not to move...or puke....or have their brains leak out of their pounding heads...or all of the above. And yes, I can not help myself. “Hey Nelson Eddy, how you do’in buddy?”

Nelson looked up at me from his coffee though eyes that looked like road maps of Korea. “I hate you. The rest of us hate you and you can eat shit and die.”

Anything else I was gonna say was cut short by Celia who was popping bread into a four slice toaster next to a large coffee urn. “Be nice now. Some of us just celebrated a little hard yesterday. Anything I could make you?”

Didn’t want to be any trouble but it looks like she had some scrambled eggs and sausage already started. (Obviously the overhead oven fan was roaring along at full blast to keep the smell from drifting) Picked up a paper plate and a plastic fork, dished up some eggs and sausages along with a cup of coffee. Then took a seat at the table. In three....two.....one....Houston we have lift off. I suddenly found myself alone with seven abandoned coffee cups. “I did absolutely nothing wrong,” poked some egg into Jeffs mouth. “All I did was sit down.” Wait for it......“do you think it was my breath?”

Celia shook her head, “when Sharon described you I didn’t believe a word of it. Now, I think she may have under exaggerated you.” Somehow don’t think I’ll be invited back to Cramers Point any time in the near future. Jeff ate most of the scrambled egg, while I finished off the sausage, after which we went back upstairs to get into our respective monkey suits.

A nanny had been hired for the day to watch all little people under the age of seven. The pups could come to the mating ceremony but were taken back to the house the minute church was over.

From the Glens Falls Post-Star, Society Page Monday, June 26th 1978:

On the 24th day of June 1978 at the Saint James Episcopal Church, Miss Sharon Louise Franklin, omega daughter of Mr. and Mrs Irving Franklin of Scarsdale, New York mated Alpha Bry-Ann Elizabeth Whitman, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Stewart Whitman of Verona, New York. The right reverend Father James Grey officiate the ceremony. The bride was collared but what is now the
newest fashion, not bitten and the groom placed upon her own finger the promise ring of no prerogative.

The mating party entered to ‘Ava Maria’, Miss Franklin entered to ‘The Bridal Chorus’. The soloist sang ‘Evergreen’ from the movie ‘A Star is Born.’ The recessional was a rousing rendition of the ‘Wedding March.’

The bride wore a satin A line floor length gown with a medium train, lace bodice and bell sleeves. Her veil was silk tulle and also floor length. The brides maids wore mint green halter style evening gowns, the maid of honor in a similar style only in yellow. The omegas were clad in black chiffon with matching breech clouts and head covers. Groomsman were in yellow while the best man was in a brown tuxedo. The reception was held at the Lake George Club where the Brides family have been members for three generations. The happy couple will be honeymooning in Montreal, Canada before returning to Rochester, New York where they are students at Saint John Fisher and the Rochester Institute of Technology.

The Lake George Club, nice joint for a reception. Food was okay, the champagne a whole lot better. Think I drank most of a bottle. The cake was chocolate and I had three pieces. The band they hired seemed to know every song under the sun and played it well, cuz the dance floor never stopped jumping. Later that evening, I learned how to water ski, prolly should’ve taken off the tux first (don’t think I’ll get that deposit back) and turned down at least six offers of sex from various members of both sides of the family. Bry-Ann and Sharon didn’t take off for their wedding night at the Gideon Putnum Hotel in Saratoga until late as they were having too good a time. They promised to be back the following morning to open wedding gifts before heading out to Montreal.

Jeff still will not say Papa. But can now say ‘Irv’, ‘fuc’, ‘dada’ and ‘poo’.

Ben disappeared half way through the party with the twins, the girl omega cousins, their friends and two beta bridesmaids. He didn’t reappear until the next morning wearing nothing but a smile and one of the bridesmaids dresses.

I didn’t ask.

Chapter End Notes

Hello! Welcome back one and all to the summer and fall of 1978, thank you for coming.

ROTC Advanced Camp is now 30 days long at Fort Knox, KY. Those kids hit the ground running and for 30 days, no weekends off, do what we did in 5 to 6 weeks.

SNAFU: situation normal, all fucked up

Opa: German for Grandfather

Talk to the Animals: composed by Leslie Bricusse for the 1967 movie ‘Doctor Doolittle’ starring Rex Harrison. It won the Academy Award for Best Song.

Back in the day before Blue Ray, DVD’s, VCR’s, internet porn or the Playboy
Channel there were ‘Art House Theaters’. Code word for dirty movie theater. In Rochester, The Lyric Theater on North Clinton was one such operation. The floors were sticky even though the ‘concession stand’ didn’t sell soda or candy and the popcorn was older then you were. The movies had names like: ‘On Golden Blonde’, ‘Taboo’ and of course ‘Johnny Wadd’. You usually ended up sitting next to the gross old guy playing pocket pool or the couple who couldn’t wait to get back home. But you got to see the ‘stellar’ acting of John ‘the wadd’ Holmes, Seka or John Leslie. But you had to be careful and hope you didn’t pick the night the joint got raided as actor Paul Rubens found out when he got busted back in 1991 for indecent exposure in an adult theater. The insane press that followed side lined his career for years.

Swedish Movie: in the 1960’s and 70’s, the movies that came out of Sweden contained a lot of nudity, sexuality and things that most people in America never thought of at the time. ‘Swedish movie’ became the nice word for porn.

Castiels take on the Winston Churchill quote: ‘Democracy means that if the door bell rings in the early hours it is likely to be the milkman.’

At the time the story takes place, it was not at all unusual to make your own wedding dress, either that or wear your mother’s gown. Mom made my little sister’s dress when she got married in 1977.

Land of the Big PX: army slang for the United States. PX is post exchange. It’s a department store, kind of like Target. The supermarket on post is called a commisary.

Telstar: first communication satellite launched into orbit in 1963

To see the boat in the story”https://buy.antiqueboat.com/runabouts/1930-26-ft-hacker-craft-triple-cockpit-185-000-943.html


*From Chapter 4 of ‘The Last of the Mohicans’ by James Fedimore Cooper

I don’t know if this is just an upstate NY thing (you’ll have to let me know) but people take old refrigerators, drill a hole in the door and put a beer tap on it. Of course the keg goes inside.

Dummer affe: German insult. Stupid monkey.
Investigations, Conversations and Reflections

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Welcome back everyone. Let me see, warning, if you are Afgan or Cajun, I'm really sorry, no offence is meant.

Part One: The Talk
Quarters 2
Chièvres Air Base
Chièvres, Belgium
Thursday, June 1st 1978 18:25

Life is full of those moments that you remember as if it were an insect frozen in amber. The sight of Tiger tanks coming through the Ardennes, the sound of Chinese bugles echoing across the frozen wastes of the Chosin and the feel of Castiels body beneath mine that first time during his inspection at Fort Bragg. Now it appears tonight will be another one...when I have to ask Mary why she lied to me about sending Castiel money.

It’s not something that I come to happily nor that it will signal the end of our mating. It is simply the end of me trusting her implicitly. Mary had always taken care of the money. I bring it home, give it to her, she pays the bills and I get a little folding cash. A good arrangement, one that has worked for almost 30 years......until now. I came back from the states over four weeks ago and it took me that long to find the evidence, pull it together in the simplest presentation and then wait for the right time. Tonight is that time.

Sargeant Ellis had driven me back to the base in the nondescript gray Peugeot 504 sedan assigned for our use from the base motor pool. That car was a wolf in sheeps clothing, as it had a straight 8 cylinder engine that some hot rod jockey who’d obviously read ‘The Affair of the Wayward Jeep’ too many times, dropped in, so this thing has some shit and git. It also has an inch of solid iron plating welded to the bottom and inside the door panels, reinforced struts as well as bullet proof glass. The Thompsons sub machine gun under the dashboard and the 44 Magnum in the glove box came optional. Can be none too careful these days.

My sergeant is a long way from those wide Montana skies from wense he haled. Kept this son of the west at my side as well as Delassandro. Know that Del and my Lambkin get on as well as the Hatfields and McCoys, but I need them both. So just have to keep them from killing each other. Also at my side now is Captain Jo Harvelle. She’s replacing......no. No one will EVER replace Garth....his death still tugs hard at my heart. She is now one of my aides as a favor to her mother Ellen. Her husband Major Bill Harvelle, had been along time friend, was killed on 18 June 1961 when the Strasbourg–Paris train derailed because of a bomb on the tracks. Those sons of bitches at the Organisation armée secrète were responsible and I made sure at least one died at my hand. But Bill was on that train because of me, because I had granted him leave to go meet his wife and daughter in Paris. Even told him to take the train because it would be faster.

The 12 km drive each way always gave me time to think my own thoughts; prepare for the day or ease myself down from killing everything in sight before I get home. We cruised up to the front
gate, the SP at the guard shack peeked in, snapped to attention and saluted. “Good evening Sir.”

“Airman,” I lazily tossed back the salute. “Have a good evening.”

“Thank you Sir.” He lifted the gate and we drove on through. The base was technically ‘inactivated’ back in ’72. Snorted a laugh, what a joke that was. The US Government never really ‘inactivates’ anything and only gives back what it doesn’t want, so Chièvres is still quite the lively place. Base housing was mostly for enlisted personnel and their families, as officers assigned to NATO had to find quarters on the economy. But for those of us with enough rank or targets on our backs, there were a few slots available. My home was an old stone farm house whose former occupants were kicked out when the Germans invaded but were paid handsomely by the Americans to stay gone.

Ellis pulled the car around back, brought it to halt, then got out and opened my door. “Night Sir.”

“Good night Sargeant Ellis,” I climbed out wearily. “Have a good night and best to the Mrs.” He, his wife and pups lived here on post in the new enlisted housing. Ellis dropped back into the car and drove off in a belch of exhaust. Not for the first time, looked over at the ‘wishing well’ that was the center piece of the back yard and wished I could drop my briefcase in. Just let it fall and say ‘drown you little mother fucker’. Not happening but a nice thought.

Walked in the back door and into the kitchen. The place prolly hadn’t seen a real update since the last century but there was a small fridge, a gas stove that took a match to light the burners and enough hot water to do the dishes. We learned to take baths in luke warm water in the ancient claw foot tub. Took off my cunt cap and tossed it up on top of the hat/coat/umbrella stand/rack, then put the briefcase up next to it.

Oh I need a drink. Went to the fridge and.....YES! The martini shaker is in it’s usual spot. Half tempted to just guzzle it right out of the shaker but no. I am civilized. Took out the chilled martini glass with the pickled onion and poured in that nice cold Gibson. As it was Thursday, it was Gibson night, Tuesdays were for Martinis and the rest of the week was reserved for beer. One thing the Belgians do as well or better then the Germans, was beer. Love the pale ales with the nice thick almost chewy kind of head.

Knocked the first one back fast just to feel it burn down my gullet, settling into my gut like an ember, then drank the second one slowly. Tasting all the herbs and berries that made up such a nice bit of gin. It was then Mary came into the kitchen from the dining room. “Hello Darling,” she gave me a peck on the lips and stole a sip from my drink. “How was everything at the SALT mines?”

“Goddamn Peanut Farmer wants to give away the store. And the Russians,” shook my head disgustedly. Those ass holes, offer em a finger and they want the whole hand.” Was chairing a committee to assist the treaty committee who was reporting to another committee was reporting to a congressional committee and THIS is why I drink. Just wanna stop thinking about it all, for just a little while. “What’s for supper?”

“Cabbage pork sausage and molasses bread.” Mary went to the little fridge and pulled out a small package wrapped in butcher paper. “Both made fresh this morning down in the village.”

That’s what I love about living in Europe. Food is made in the morning to be eaten by night fall. She pulled out a cast iron skillet, set it on the stove, then turned on the gas and lit the burner. Need to get out of the monkey suit and into some comfortable clothes. Trotted upstairs to our bedroom and changed into a pair of chinos and a Hawaiian shirt, tossing the khakis (after taking off the name plate, stars and CIB) into the laundry basket.
Came back down to find Mary had the table set and the sausages browning in the skillet. She also had the bread board out to cut a few slices off the loaf. Picked up a slice, smearing it with butter before popping it piece by piece into my mouth. Could almost live on this stuff alone, it was so good. Then she diced up tomatoes, onions and cucumber, mixed them in a bowl with Italian dressing and we’re ready to eat.

After a few bites and talking a bit more of this and that, I causally ask: “oh did you send out this months check to Castiel yet?”

Mary glanced up from her dinner, “I mailed it out last week. He should have it pretty soon.”

“Good. Gotta keep Jeff in diapers.” She lied to me......again. But don’t wanna spoil dinner, it’s too good to end up tossed against the wall or on the floor. So will have ‘The Talk’ once supper is over and the dishes are done. I’m nothing if not patient. Besides it will give me a chance to prepare.

After we eat, I excuse myself and trot upstairs to my office to get the ammunition needed to confront Mary. Slide the check register and canceled checks into my back pocket, then took a deep breath, squared my shoulders and went back downstairs. She was just ‘curing’ the skillet, when I came in. “Old Girl, do you mind if we have a chat about something important?”

“Why of course Grizzle Bear.” I sit back down at the kitchen table, waiting for her to turn off the stove, wipe her hands dry on a dish towel, then take a seat. “What’s on your mind?”

“When I was in the States back the tail end of April beginning of May....I flew up to Rochester to visit Castiel and meet Jeffery.”

“I remember you saying that,” Marys face didn’t twitch an inch. Damn, that woman is good enough to be in Congress. “Saw the picture you took of him. My goodness he’s gonna be a big boy.”

“That he is,”I said happily. “That pups is going to be a quarterback for Norwich, mark my words.” Then almost in passing..... “Castiel mentioned he only received one of my checks, none of the others.”

“Well, I sent them out and got the canceled checks back.” She was rather indigent. “I can get them if you want.” She made to get up.

“No need,” I said softly. Mary settled back in her chair, confident I would end the conversation right there. The way I always did in the past when there were questions about what was paid and what wasn’t. “I have them right here. But......would you mind explaining why the check register says ‘Castiel Novac’ but the checks are made out to cash and you endorsed them?” I leaned forward, took the check register and checks out of my pocket, laying them out on the table top like a game of Solitaire.

Her face was a parade of emotions; anger, resignation, sadness and the kind of humor that isn’t funny. “Do you even love me any more?” So we’re starting out with that one, which is fine. Glad she gave up on the lying when guilt, anger and love are so much more potent weapons.

“I do, but I’m a bit more disappointed and let’s stick with the subject. Why did you do it and where is the money?”

“It’s in an envelope in my underwear drawer,” Mary stood up as if to go get it. But instead began to pace to and fro. “You really wanna know why I did it?” Watched as the look of pissed off relief brought up the rear of her emotional parade. Far be it from me to rain on it. “Do you know what
it’s like to be the mate of the ‘Great General John Winchester?’

“Uh no. But always thought it wasn’t a bad thing to be.”

“Oh it wouldn’t be. If only people were looking at me but they’re not. They don’t ‘see’ Mary Winchester. They see the ‘Legendary Montagnard mistress Kate’. Lover, fighter and maker of some really good ribs.” She halted in mid sentence, “we need to go there next time we’re in North Carolina. Uh where was I....oh yes.” Back to your normally scheduled tirade.......“or Mal. Yes I know about Malek. You talk in your sleep and besides that ‘Nanner’ makes goo goo eyes at you every time he comes to visit.”

Oops. Always though we were a whole lot more discreet then what she’s alluding to. Guess not.

“Thank goodness for all the dozens of other women and omegas around the world you’ve bedded over the years.” Sarcasm was always her weapon of choice. “They made such perfect beards. But now it’s Castiel.” Now this is what she worked her way up to. “The priceless Castiel Novac. Is his pussy really worth the kings ransom you traded our future for? That jewelry was suppose to be our nest egg. A down payment on a summer home in Vermont, a winter home in Florida, my knitting business.” Mary had designs on a knitting machine to make stocking caps and mittens to sell at the ski lodges in Vermont and the Adirondacks of New York.

“Actually, yes it is.” If I had to be mercenary, then so be it. “That boy and the children he could produce are worth ten times the gold necklace, ring and brooch I paid Naomi for him. Besides, the Dodd and Son tiara is still in its case at the bottom of my sock drawer. So I didn’t give away everything.” There was a momentary puff of sweet chocolate (Marys scent was coco and vanilla when happy but the kitchen was starting to smell like someone burned down the chocolate shop) “Castiel is my ticket to a third and fourth star, then a job at Norwich or with some defense contractor. If you’re concerned about our future, then he is the key to it.”

Now that got her attention, thought it would.

“Besides,” Now that she calmed down to think clearly, could continue with the campaign. Will be like Sherman through Georgia. “You agreed with Naomi, that mating him would be the best course of action at the time.”

“YES!” She stopped and whipped around. Sigh, we were like France and Germany between wars, all polite and lovey. Then boom! ‘World War pick a number’. “Because who can say no to Naomi fucking Novac? She wouldn’t quit until it was her way or else. I said yes to protect Dean and to get that conniving bitch off my back, nothing more. I didn’t sign up for that slick to be showing off his ass in ‘Mega Magazine’ or this whole ‘profound bond’ nonsense with the Reynolds. I. SIGNED. UP. FOR. NONE. OF. IT!” Then as quick as her anger went up, Mary slumped back down in her chair. “I didn’t think you’d love him. Figured you’d fuck him out of your system in a few weeks and be done with it.” There were tears in her eyes. “But you didn’t.”

Pulled her into my lap and let her soak the shoulder of the Hawaiian shirt with tears, spit and snot. Didn’t mean to hurt her. Mary is the woman I’ve loved since we were three years old, she was the one I always saw growing old with and retiring to Northfield, VT. Maybe teach a few courses at Norwich. Have the grandpups come to visit. It was always such a lovely idea, the kind you see through rose colored glasses. “I’m sorry.” And I did mean it. “Sorry that I hurt you in any and every way possible.” Held her tight, “but that profound bond is another thing that is going to pay dividends.” The first being to the old solders home in Fort Dodge, Kansas. The contents of the Cas’s bowl at the First Party last summer bought a lot blankets, heating oil, sweets and smokes for those old codgers. Man, there were old Liberty dollars, a 20 Franc gold rooster and other gold coins both new and old from at least five other countries. “But I do have one small request for you. Don’t
let your anger at Castiel touch his child. Please don’t hate our grandpup.”

That brought her up short. “What? What are you talking about?”

“Jeff. That money you were suppose to have sent was to help support OUR grandpup.”

Now my dearest Mary has a moment of guilt. “Dean is suppose to support this child. It is his after all.”

“But Castiel is mated to me. So we are sharing the responsibility for his care.” Now let’s go in for the kill. “What do you have against this child that you won’t even say his name? Don’t think I could ever heard you say it once. His name is Jeffery George Hugh Aston Benjamin Winchester. Granted that’s a mouth full but Jeff will do.”

“How could you say such a thing?” Firing right back, that’s my sweet Mary Mary quite contrary. “How could I hate a child?”

“You’re right, I apologize.” Then in a nasty nice voice.....“what was our grandpups name, the one that isn’t Emma, Ann or Ben?”

For a moment, thought she was going to spit in my face, but then.....“Jeff. Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin.......Winchester.”

“Good. Now was that difficult? Course not.” Now let’s really get under her skin. “Oh if you were bothered by Castiels photos in Mega Magazine. Then you are love the ones that are going to show up in the November issue where he’s the ‘Pinkie of the Month’.”

“WHAT!” She looked horrified. “Why did he do it? What reason could he have possibly had for purposely doing this to us?”

“He had eight thousand good reasons, four thousand up front and the rest when the magazine comes out.” I took a cigar out of my breast pocket, took off the wrapper and with a quick fluid movement of the Zippo, kissed the flame to good Cuban leaf. The other reason why I adore living in Europe. Cuban cigars. “He felt he had no choice, as there was no support money coming in.” Let the idea sink in. That because of HER actions (Dean had a better excuse why his payments were spotty) Castiel did what he thought he had to. “Naomi was more then a little annoyed.”

“I can imagine,” Mary was rather indigent. “Her son lowering himself to be in THAT kind of skin rag.”

“No,” I said through a fog of cigar smoke. “She was ticked because Knot Magazine only gave her two thousand for posing.” Couldn’t help myself, “they did offer me four.”

“I’ve died and gone to HELL!” She stormed off my lap and out of the kitchen. Could hear the pounding of her feet going up the wooden stair case, then moments later coming back down. “Here,” my dearest mate tossed a plain white business envelope down on the table in front of me. “The money’s all there. You can count it if you wanna.”

“Oh no,” I said grandly, picking up the envelope and tucking it into my breast pocket. This fight didn’t just end, know from experience the sniping and firing volleys across each others bows will continue for at least another hour. But in the mean time, ‘load up those cannons boys’, can’t help myself “I trust you.”
It’s funny where life takes you. Never know what will happen after you step out of the shower, brush your teeth, shave and dress for work. Take this morning for example, I woke up in the BOQ in Vogelweh, yeah that me-last window on the left facing the parking lot. Have been calling this two story white monstrosity home until Lisa and Ben get here. Have been on the waiting list for family housing since last October, so by the time they come in August, we’ll have quarters here on post.

So as I was saying, had caught the shuttle bus into work to find out, tonight I’ll bed down in the suburbs of Paris. France that is, not Texas. Had been called into the boss mans office the moment I came in, even before getting a cup of the sludge that Sargeant Rodreguz calls coffee and almost sat down at my desk. Was snagged by Private Jones one of our clerks and told to shag ass over to office of Brigadier General Theodore S Kanam, provost marshal and hard ass extraordinaire. He wanted to see me, like in here now.

Had met him once when I first came here. He squeezed me in for a quick ‘welcome to CID’ speech. You know the one, ‘expect great things from you, blah blah blah, natter natter natter. Get out of my office and get the bad guys’. On the way over, of course had to check my list of sins, nope. Nothing that would get me in that much trouble. With anyone.....even Dad. Okay, so there was this black beta first lieutenant at the O club last night......she was gorgeous and I was good. Just flirted. I ain’t dead you know. So, after giving myself a clean bill of health, got to the Kanam’s office.....Holy Sister of God! The beta lieutenant from last night was there too. SHIT SHIT SHIT! Maybe I am in trouble. But slapped on a smile. “Lt Robinson.”

“Mr. Winchester,” there was a momentary look of surprise on her face too, but like me, the lieutenant snapped to and banged a smile on her face. “Fancy seeing you here.”

Before anything else could happen, the middle aged civilian omega secretary announced the general would see us now. She also gave a glower that said to leave what ever shenanigans we had the night before at the door step, shape up and fly right in front of ‘HER’ general. Oh have seen secretaries and company clerks like this all over the world. And you wanna stay on their good side.

“Thank you ma’am,” gave her my most dazzling smile. Clicked the heels of my combat boots together, bowed, then took her hand and kissed her finger pads.

Her gruff exterior melted like a spring snow. “Nice to see a young man with such good manners.” The mating collar around her neck was plain, old fashioned and you could tell she’d worn it every day of her mated life. But like me, the old gal wasn’t dead.

“If you’re done nibbling my mates fingers,” came a voice that was both parts amused but coated with possessiveness. “You’ll get your ass in here Winchester.” SHIT! This was the generals mate?! Oh crap, the name plate on the desk said Elizabeth Kanam. Of course I didn’t make the connection.

Stepped into his office, strode to the front of his desk next to Cassie, stopped and came to attention.
Gave the best salute Dad ever taught me how to do. “Warrant Officer Winchester reporting SIR!” Course he made us sweat, Cassie is going to kick my ass when we get outta here.

“General,” Mrs Kanam walked in with a tea tray. “You’ve marked your territory, let the poor things put their arms down.” The Provo marshal pretended not to hear his mate at first. But one look at her face, he quickly made the command decision that if he wanted his dinner tonight and not sleep on the couch, he’d better do what she said. The general returned our salutes and asked us to sit.

We (after the General of course) were handed bone china tea cups and saucers with tea balls. Mmmm, lemon tea. She dropped in sugar lumps and then left the set, returning to the outer office, closing the door behind her. After a few moments of stirring our tea and taking a tentative sip, the brass tacks were gotten down to.

“You two are going on assignment to Interpol. Now normally, those high horsed sons of bitches take forever getting back to us when we ask for assistance but for some reason, they called here and just about fell all over themselves saying they had information vital to one of our investigations. AND they wanted to have you go there and were willing to fund the trip. They requested someone well versed in our on going probes in the black market trade of stolen army equipment. Well, that’s you Lt Robinson. You come highly recommended by superiors.” Holy cats! Didn’t notice Cassies insignia last night (her impressive chest yes) and only gave a passing glance to the ‘Hershey bar’ on her collar, not the dagger through the sun burst and rose of Military Intelligence.

Then General Kanam turned a fascinated eye on me. “You, Mr Winchester are interesting. Interpol requested you by name. Now how would they know you? I’ve looked at your record. You’re good at what you do. Not great” (HEY!?) “but competent. But too new to this field to gain any reputation. Any ideas on how they know of you?”

My mind is spinning like Baby’s tires on black ice. How on earth would Interpol heard of me?! Dad? No, Mom would’ve phoned up immediately. Dad tells her everything. Crowley? Would be like him to put me somewhere so I could funnel him better information. That was the deal I made with The King of Hell back at RIT. Cas would be mine if I’d be Crowleys eyes and ears. Had been carefully sending letters to my ‘dear Auntie Rowena’in Maryland for the last six months. My mouth opened and closed a few times before finally squeaking (and it was manly one too) “not a clue sir.”

“Be that as it may, you two are going to be our point men on this. Pack for three days, khaki uniform and civies. You won’t be traveling in uniform.” That’s a gimme, these days any bastard with hard on against the US would think nothing of trying to take it out on any poor Joe in Army green. “Pick up your orders, train tickets and TDY advances from Elizabeth, you’ll be met in Paris by one of their agents. You’ll be staying at some joint called the St Cloud Hippodrome. Have no clue what it’s like only that it’s cheap and has a bar on site.” Booze and a bed. Works for me. “Now, get moving. Your train leaves in an hour and a half. Dismissed.”

Cassie and I salute then leave his office, pick up the manila envelopes with the orders, tickets and money, then get out door. Just as happy to be out of there and away from the Generals scrutiny. Checked the ticket, we were due out of the Kaiserslautern Hauptbahnhof or Hbf at 11:00 AM and suppose to roll into the Paris L’Est train station at 14:15. Better get a move on it cuz when the Germans say 11:00, they aren’t just a’woofen. “See you at the station,” Lt Robinson said over her shoulder as she walked away toward the parking lot. Mmmm, must be jelly cuz jam don’t shake like that. Gave myself a little shake, have got to get going. Catch the shuttle bus back to Vogelweh,
hit the BOQ to change and get packed up.

Pull out the big brown Sampsonite suitcase I got for song at the thrift shop on post and tossed it on the bed. Some body must have gotten tired of lugging that monster around, as it was big, well made and heavy. Packed up my khakis, good shoes and then a pair of slacks and chinos. Oxford shirts, socks, underwear, have a couple of sports jackets, three ties and a shaving kit then snapped it shut. In the matching brief case on the credenza, put in my cunt cap (as there was no way a hat was going near the bed) orders, other assorted paper work and the chrome plated 1911 Colt 45 with the pearl handles Dad gave me for my 15th birthday. Even now, it’s still the best present I’d ever got, Christmas or birthdays combined.

Changed into the one suit I owned, another thrift shop goodie. Passport and military id would be in the breast pocket of the jacket as we’d still have to make the border crossing and like in any old movie, everyone wanted to see your papers. Heft the cases, went down the stairs and waited for the shuttle bus to take me over to the train station. Kaiserslautern Hbt was built in 1848, bombed to crap during the war but rebuilt in the 1950’s. So the outside facade looked old to fit the rest of the area, inside everything was fairly new. Found a bench, sat down and opened up the brief case to take out the ticket. There was about 1200 francs in the envelope, so between the two of us, we could have an interesting time on 2400 francs. Or a great time if I could find a card game to hustle on the train.

As most of my money went to support Lisa, Ben and Jeff, had to figure out a way to keep a little coin jingling in my pocket. So on pay day there was always a poker game at the BOQ and inevitably some ‘ring knocker Hudson High boy’ who thought he was better then ‘ROTC pukes’ or ‘90 day wonders’ or ‘jumped up NCO’s’ would wanna play. Now normally I wouldn’t skin the suckers, needed them to keep coming back, but the ring knockers. Would take them for every cent and their wrist watches too. One night, went back to the room looking like I could wear the ‘hammer and sickle’ and say: ‘wanna buy a watch comrade?’

Now Mom being an officers mate, knew how to play bridge, whist and gin rummy, but she was a mean poker player and taught me how to play the cut throat versions of all of them.

“Dean, you ready to go?” Cassie was suddenly standing in front of me, as if she’d popped up from the ground like a tunnel rat or faerie folk. “Geeze, for an MP type, you startle easy.”

“No! Where did you come from?” Mmmmmm, the girl looked nice. Deep purple summer weight suit with red blouse and peep toe pumps to match. Wonder what color the panties are and if those are stockings or panty hose? “And you didn’t startle me. You...surprised me. Big difference.”

“Uh huh. You always squeak when you’re ‘surprised’?” Cassie was trying not so hard not to smirk. “Come on, they’re calling our train dude. Hustle your bustle Lillian Russell.”

“I DON’T squeak.” Get it together Winchester, you’re lead on this hog wrassle. “Yeah....let’s go.” Stood and picked up the suit case then follow her through the station, on to the loading platform and on to the long red train with black and yellow trim. We find our seats and settle in for the ride. At the tick of 11:00 there’s a jolt and then the slow leap forward as the train pulls away from the station.

The cities, towns and villages of southwestern Germany pass by but I was more interested in what was inside our train car. Mmmmmm, anybody playing cards? Yes! There they are, a group of middle aged Bavarian business types playing Cego. (The accents are thick in that part of German ya’ll country) Thank the alpha God Lisa taught me how to play the game in all its variations.

“Grüß Gott Meine Herren” I smile becomingly “Got room for one more? Lake Constance rules?” Apparently some the rules of Cego changed from town to town (think Texas Hold’em for poker)
and even neighborhood to neighborhood. And Lisa’s mom (bless that old alpha broads heart) taught me how to cheat in ALL of em.

They let me in on the game, especially after I bought the Hefeweizen. After all, every man jack and alpha does need a breakfast after all. Slipped Cassie some francs and sent her off to the club car to get some wiesswurst, sweet mustard and pretzels. The big soft kind. “Trust me on this,” I whispered, when she was about to protest. “Especially if you wanna do more then just sit in a hotel room at night watching bad French TV for the next couple days.” Well that got the expected result and she was off like a shot.

Spun a cover story of being a manufacturing engineer for the General Electric Company, based in Mannheim and was traveling to Paris with my secretary to get a turbine working for Alsthom Atlantique. My new comrades were in sales; machine tools, farming equipment and shipping containers, as their business cards announced. Took the time to read them carefully, memorizing their names (Earnest, Ingel and Udo all named Schmidt. No relation) then take out the silver card holder from my pocket and put the cards in like they were crown jewels. Asked their forgiveness for my lack of a business cards, as my putzfrau had accidentally tossed them out in a too efficient bout of cleaning. Was waiting for new ones to be printed, but in the mean time. But took out a note book, tore out three pages to jot down my name and phone number. This would get them my Phone Mate answer machine, it’s message was general enough that it would serve the purpose should they call.

So by the time we half way to Paris, I’d won 1500 D-Marks off the lot of em, so to celebrate bought another round of beer, some cheese spätzle with ham slices and more beer. I didn’t need to skin these guys completely. What I DO need is for them to think I’m NOT some ugly American, but was lucky, a good winner and a capital chap. So what’s a 100 D-Marks in beer and food, when I walked away with my 1400 francs intact and 1300 D-Marks free and clear. It got better as we pulled into the Paris L’Est station, (had bought a round for everyone in the car) so you had 20 happy German men and women stamping their feet and singing ‘Erika’:

Auf der Heide blüht ein kleines Blümelein
und das heißt: Erika.
Heiß von hunderttausend kleinen Bienelein
wird umschwärm't Erika
denn ihr Herz ist voller Süßigkeit,
zarter Duft entströmt dem Blütenkleid.
Auf der Heide blüht ein kleines Blümelein
und das heißt: Erika.

Put enough beer in a middle aged German alpha male and you get to see the remnants of a young man full of piss and vinegar, who marched out to fight for the Fatherland. Prolly those were the best years of these guys lives. After 1945, life took a turn for the worse, being the losing country, again. But this time (and it took time) they did have the chance to pull their country from the ashes and now chubby men in their mid to late 40’s are headed into the heart of a former enemy to do business. But it didn’t mean they still didn’t like to tweak a nose or two.

“Pretty slick Winchester,” Cassie whispered in my ear as we waved goodbye to our new acquaintances as they disappeared into the bubbling mass of humanity coming and going through the vaulted halls of the L’Est Station. “You took their money and they enjoyed every minute of it. I don’t get it. They should be pissed, but they’re not.”

I polished my nails on the front of my suit jacket as we walked through the main concourse. “Just a talent,” said with some modesty, not a lot. “I gave them a great story to bring home, used some of
the money to buy them food and drink, so in no way would they feel cheated or that they didn’t get a good return on their money. Plus the three of em got to feel young again, flirt with a pretty girl” (which Earnest and Ingel did shamelessly with Cassie, much to her embarrassed delight) “or handsome guy” (Udo had a hand on my knee under the table a lot).

Before Cassie could comment on that, we heard a British accented voice say: “excuse me. Mr Winchester? Lt Robinson?” Turned to find a fellow with small slate board with the words ‘Winchester/Robinson’ chalked on it, standing a few feet away. “You ARE them aren’t you?”

Looked him up and down, although dressed impeccably in gray suit and tie, the dude looked like he forgot to shave this morning. “And if we were?”

“Mick Davies,” held up his badge and picture id. Horrid likeness, like any photo id. Hate looking at mine. “Interpol. Glad to see you made it. Come along now, we have much to do and short time to do it.” Before either Cassie or I could say ‘yes, no, maybe’, he’d hustled us through station, by people of every imaginable shape, size and shade that were flowing this way and that, till we were outside across the plaza to where a rank of taxis awaited. Mick leaned in the window of the nearest one with their green light on and told the driver something in rapid French. Who promptly began cursing (Hey, former NCO here. I can cuss in 5 different languages-including French-and not use the same word twice) gestured widely but stopped immediately when handed some money. “Okay, in we get. We’re only going a few blocks, but couldn’t see you carrying those heavy cases all the way there.”

Good thinking on his behalf, cuz that Samsonite was about ready to break my arm off. The driver had gotten out, tossed our luggage in the trunk, waited till the three of us crowded into the back of the cab before getting into the car himself. You know, I thought I always drove fast. Could go out on the Autobahn and keep up with any ‘Herman’ in a Mercedes or Audi without fear. This guy scared me. Half the time his hands weren’t on the wheel, he was turning around to talk to us about something. Haven’t been this scared on the road since.....well......when I taught Lisa to drive.

Thank the Alpha God the trip only lasted a few minutes, when Mick interrupted the drivers tirade to pull over and let us out. He paid up, got the luggage out of the trunk and the cabbie drove off in a huff and a cloud of exhaust. “Our driver was discussing how bad traffic has gotten lately.” Mick said dryly. “And how awful the other operators are.”

“Well that’s a pot meet kettle moment,” Cassie growled. She was still a tad ashy, the drive had obviously not mixed well with the beer and the sausages we’d had on the train. “Do you think we can just get to our hotel without wearing half the pedestrians as hood ornaments in the city now?”

Our guide had walked over to a bright red Citroen Visa Club, popped the back hatch and stuffed our suitcases into the small space.

“Don’t worry Lieutenant.” He said cheerfully getting the passengers door for her. “You’ll be right as rain in a little bit. Besides, the ‘Old Man’ wanted to see you as soon as you got in. Just a quick hello, welcome to Interpol, that kind of rubbish. Then we can get you to your hotel.” Looks like we’re stuck for a while longer before we can hit the town.

Micks driving is decidedly better then our cabbies, so Cassie was looking more like herself by the time we pull in front of an unassuming three story high rise in the suburb of Saint Cloud. It had a tall iron fence to it’s front and sides, a guard shack at its entrance and can bet there’s CCTV camera some where. There’s a secure parking lot where he finds a empty space and brings the car to a halt. “Here we are folks.” he said cheerfully. “Interpol. Greatest police agency in the world.”

Cassie and I glance at each other, smile sweetly and decide at that point to keep our mouths shut. No sense in pissing off our hosts until it was absolutely necessary with what we really thought of
them. We get out and troop over to the entrance, stopping at the front desk to show our identification and get visitors badges. About that time, a young woman comes down the hall way, “oh good. You’ve finally arrived.” Huh, another Brit.

“Agent Antonia Bevell,” Mick made introductions all around. “Lt Robinson, we’re going to have you go with Agent Bevell. Kill two birds with one stone so to speak. She’ll bring you up to date on the information we have on the black market activities in your stolen military hardware in the Kaiserslausen area.” Then he turned to me, “if you’ll come with me, you’ll be briefed in the other area of this investigation.” Was about to raise a ruckus, when Cassie touched my arm, “Dean. The sooner we do this, the sooner we can get to the hotel.”

Oh alright. Follow the Brit down a series of corridors and stairs, didn’t like it but there you have it. Hate not knowing where I was and this was just a maze and don’t like trusting people I didn’t know. Even if they were supposedly on ‘our side’. Finally Mick stopped in front of one of many doors and opened it. “The ‘Old Man’ will see you now.”

Really didn’t care if his guy wanted to see me or not, the warm beer buzz had worn off and I was seriously ticked. “I don’t give a rats ass who’ll see me......”

“Dean?” Oh no.

“Sammy?” Looked in and there was my moose of a younger brother seated at a conference table across from some old dude who looked like he was an escapee from a library basement or some cheap British spy movie.

“So glad you could join us Mr Winchester,” the guy said pleasantly. “That will be all Mr Davies.”

“Right Sir,” and he closed the door behind him. Leaving Sammy and me to face........ “I didn’t catch your name?” Not that I gave a fat flying fuck.

“Richard Moore,” the old alpha gent said pleasantly. “I know most of you Americans don’t care much heraldry, so we can dispense with all that. As for why you’re here...”

“What I wanna know is why you’re here Sammy.” Turned to my brother. “Who invited you to the party and why?”

“That’s SAM,” he said with an embarrassed sigh. “Sammy was a chubby 12 year old. I suspect you were asked here for the same reason I was, to talk about the black marketing of stolen army equipment.”

Richard, ‘don’t call me Herald’, Moore took a briar wood pipe from his jacket pocket along with a kitchen match. He flicked his horny old thumb across its head with practiced ease causing it to spark to life. He lit the tobacco in the bowl, taking some puffs to get it going and then waving it out with only a whisp of smoke and the smell of sulfur remaining. “I’m afraid gentlemen I’ve called you here under a false flag.” Now I knew why all I could think of was library basement and bad spy movies when meeting him. His scent was of old books, must and secrets.

“What!?” We chorused as Sammy and I both rose to our feet. “You drug me away from court, I was in the middle of the second day of questioning a witness,”began Sam. “Hey, what about me?!” I was equally indigent. “I had work to do, cases to investigate and you called us away for why? What’s so damn important?”

“This,” the old man opened a folder on the table in front of him, pulling out an 8 by 10 inch photo and sliding it across to rest between Sam and I. “The snap was taken by one of our agents stationed
at Heathrow Airport in August of last year.” The camera had focused on three people waiting at
the baggage carousel but only one of them both Sam and I recognized. “Luke Novac.” The growls
coming from way down in our throats were dark, angry and dangerous.

“Yes indeed,” Richard Moore pulled another photo from the file. “Commonly refered to as Lucifer,
one of the ‘Angel Novac’s as we call them. Unfortunately this next photo is not so pretty.” And it
wasn’t. The face was badly damaged, half eaten by fish, crabs or leaches, the body bloated by
being in water. “This is what’s left of the boy standing in the middle of the group. Omega,
wouldn’t you say?”

Quickly looked away from the picture. “Well, he certainly had the look about him.” Big doe eyes,
submissive posture, head covering and robe. Nothing like my little Maid of course.

“Well, he isn’t. He’s a beta biologically. Autopsy revealed his body had traces of Preomerine, an
omega hormone therapy drug. He also had been surgically altered. Have you heard of Christine
Jorgensen?

Had to think a moment, “wasn’t she that alpha dude back in the 50’s who wanted to became a beta
chick, just like that tennis player here a couple of years ago? What’s her name.....Rene Richards?”

What? I read.

“That’s correct, the procedure has come a long way since the 1950’s,” the old man commented.
Then in a conversational tone. “It’s not that difficult really. Start with the Preomerine injections for
a few months. Then small incision between the anus and scrotum, cut the testicle sack in two, pull
out the ball, give the skin a stretch, turn it inside out, stuff it into the incision. It creates a vagina
and the ball becomes the vulva lips. Take the remaining testicle and put in a small silicone breast
implant. And voila! Instant omega. Pretty clever. Only thing is, the subject has to continue taking
the Preomerine either by injection or tablet. If they don’t, in a few months time, they revert back to
their previous secondary gender. This poor lad was found floating in the Thames in January.”

The whole talk of incisions and inside out testicles was making me a little queasy. Snuck a look at
Major Sammy, he was looking a little green around the gills too.

“First we thought this was a fluke, a one time incident. Then four more bodies showed up in the
Spring. Then we got reports of similar finds in the Danube, Tiber, the Ebro in Spain and even here
in Paris.”

“Similarities?” I ask. “Anything they share in common?”

He consulted the report. “So far they’ve all been betas, all young, none more then 15 or under 12
years old. Usual age for an omega contract purchase. As for where they’re from, it varies. Some are
North African, others are from Central and South America, there are even a few from the Chinese
main land.”

“So someone is making a lot of money trafficking these pups. But what I wanna know is why the
buyers don’t go to the authorities to report it. Why are they just killing the false omegas instead of
kicking them out?”

“That is indeed a pretty question,” Richard Moore said cryptically.

Sam was looking at the first picture again, studying it intently. “Who’s the third person in this
photo?”

Now the old man sighed and his expression turned to one of misery, “he’s the reason why you’re
here and why discretion is of the greatest import. I fear he’s mixed up in this nasty business somehow. The boy’s name is Eric Reynolds. He’s a student at the Imperial College for Engineering in London, his father is Major General Lewiston Reynolds and……..and he’s my grandpup.”

“Soosoo?” I feel for the guy but “what does this have to do with Sammy and me?”


“The Who Found What?” Glad the light bulb went on for him but I’m not getting this and don’t like it already.

“Our ‘Profound Bond’ with the Reynolds,” Sam looked surprised. “Didn’t Dad tell you about it?”

“Uh, no.” Really not liking this now.

Sammy gave me the stink eye of death. “Because it never came up in our conversations Jerk…”

“Well it should’ve Bitch.”

“Are you done being a moron yet?” (Oh I have not yet BEGUN to more-on) ‘I figured Dad told you as he’d mentioned it to me. Castiel is Madam First to Jesse Reynolds, the youngest alpha son of General and Lady Reynolds. Only it’s more then just that. We have a Profound Bond that binds House Winchester and House Reynolds together for the mutual benefit of each. It’s like becoming family or being mated, only you mated to the whole family. It’s a huge honor.” Honor my ass. It would’ve meant Cas would’ve had to have sex with the little bastard. How could Dad allow this?

“And the First Party was quite the ‘knees up’ from what I understand.” The old guy sounded quite proud. “Commanders from around your country, as well as representatives from five different foreign governments were there. Your fathers mate purported himself rather well, he earned your father and your family a great deal of political capital that night. And from all accounts, Jesse has taken the lessons to heart and is on his way to becoming a fine alpha.”

There was a party? What did they all do? Watch Cas pop this kid’s cherry? It took everything I had not to lunge across the table and sink my teeth into that old bastards turkey neck.

“Were it only so for Eric.” Huh? So what’s this got to do with…..oh, think we’re getting to the point in a round about way. “The pup contracted Scarlet Fever when he was young, nearly died of it at one point. Was sickly for years until he finally grew out of it. His mother coddled the boy way too much and now he’s spoiled, easily lead astray and has no sense of duty.” (Read conscience.) Richard Moore took a puff and blew the arid smell of Balkan Sobraine tobacco into the room. “The lad’s mother is my only daughter. It would break her heart to know her oldest boy is mixed up in this nasty business.”

“What makes you think your grandpup is involved.” Sam looked at the picture again, “he could’ve only had a brief contact with these guys.”

“We thought so originally.” Now the old man looked ashamed. “But what would you assume of a second year uni student who moved out of the residence hall mid term into a posh flat in South Kensington, without a flat mate? For being who they are, his parents are not wealthy people and are doing their best to meet tuition and fees.”

So the kid’s dirty. “What is it that you’re looking for us to do?” I’m still not liking this ‘bond’ thing at all. It’s one thing for Cas to have done that whole First thing for Ben but quite another for
people I don’t know and from the sounds of things, may not want to. “As much as I don’t wanna see any more beta pups dead in the river, this has nothing to do with the US Army.”

“Oh but it does. You will see a very familiar name come up in both these issues.” Richard Moore looked surprised that I’ve even ask. “Your key to this whole mess, both for the black market in your militarys equipment and the trafficking of betas is Luke Novac. Catch him dirty handed, break up the gang and make sure my grandsons name is not involved.”

Tall order but if I can send Luci to Leavenworth to make license plates.....oh that would be sooooooo sweet.

Richard ‘don’t call me Herald’ Moore, used the phone next to him to call Nick to come get us. The photos stayed put, but the autopsy and police investigative reports with their translations were given to us for review. “Now I have your word, you’ll keep Eric out of harms way and his name off the record?”

Could see my brother was not all that happy about it, neither am I for that matter. The little bastard is up to his neck in it and we have to bail his squirrely ass out. But.....it’s not the first time had to go with the lessor of the evils to create the greater good. “Deal.” We both said together. Now can we get the fuck outta here? Sammy and I meet up with Cassie a short time later. Nick drives us over to the hotel and drops us off. He’ll be back around 09:00 in the morning to pick us up to head back for a tour and further briefing.

That night, Sammy, Cassie and I went out for dinner at some little joint not too far from the hotel. We talked some about the day but mostly ate food that was made by people who liked to put meat on a mans bones. Raw oysters, some kind of little fish cooked in butter. Beef ribs in an orange sauce, fingerling potatoes with more butter, tender greens dressed in a vinaigrette and wine. Lots and lots of wine. Port to start the meal, light whites, full bodied reds and then champagne with dessert. Definitely kinda sorta spent up the money I won today on the train.

Morning came way too soon and why does Paris seem so happy about it? Just from the noises coming from outside the open window, people were going by wishing each other good morning and cars beeping and birds singing.....oh my aching cruddy head. Plus who used my tongue as a welcome mat? Tastes like all of Third Army marched through barefoot, with the 11th ACR rolling through next. Flipped over and tossed an arm around a nice warm cuddly.....

HOLY SHIT IT’S CASSIE! I flounder out of bed and land flat on my back on the floor. Oh thank the Alpha God, I’m still dressed. Oh my fuck’en head, I’m dying. SHIT! If I had sex with Cassie, I really will be dead. Sniffed the air....farts....wine....no sex. She still has her clothes on, I have my clothes on. Nothing happened. Maybe we tried to have something happen (don’t remember much after dessert) but were so drunk we both passed out. Okay! I’m in like Flynn. No harm no foul.

Part three: Utrinque Paratus
British Embassy
Office of the Military Attache
Washington DC
June 6th 1978 09:00 AM

“You wanted to see me Sir?” Had gotten word first thing when I arrived at the office, that General Reynolds wanted a word. Not even time for a hot cuppa. Stopped in the loo on the way to his office to check my appearance. Can’t go in looking like a dogs breakfast or have a few blonde hairs from where I was keeping the British end up last night.....and early this morning. So now I stood at
attention before his nibs, waiting for either the world to either fall in or me to fall out.

“Yes Novac, at ease. Please sit down.” General Reynolds was behind his desk, papers and reports set off the side, except for three envelopes lined up in front of him. “Novac, have you given thought to your future?” Odd question.

“Well Sir, I.....know that soldering is what I’m good at. Should like to do my bit for Queen and Country for as long as I’m able.” Alright, let’s just down to it.....“Am I being sacked?”

The general seemed to think this was the funniest thing he’d ever heard, because he exploded in laughter. Leaned back in his chair and let the tears roll down his face. It took a moment for him to regain composure. “Is THAT why you think I asked you here?”

“Well Sir, figured I’d get that question out of the way first thing.”

Now Reynolds looked at me hard. “Have you done anything worth being sacked for?”

“Oh no Sir, of course not.” Or at least nothing I’ve been caught at.

“Good, let’s keep it that way. The reason I asked you here today and asked that question is that you are now at a juncture with three possible avenues toward your future. Each different, but all would advance your career in the direction you wanted or didn’t think of. But all come with plus’s and minus’s.” He laid his hands on the desk with envelopes in between. “There are orders in these envelopes with your name on them, all you have to do is choose.”

This was almost as bad as being sacked.

“Go ahead man, quit waffling and pick one or all. But think about them carefully.” Reynolds picked up his teacup and took a sip.

I chose one in the middle, lifting it as if it was going to bite and tore open the flap. Pulled out the contents, unfolded it and read. “These is orders for my own command in 1 Para.......in Northern Ireland.” Can see what the General meant about plus’s and minus’s. The next envelope......would be to remain at the embassy under the command of the Ambassador himself. Not that he isn’t a bad chap and it certainly would be a feather in my cap, it’s just his wife has started to make sheeps eyes at me. Not that she isn’t a nice looking bird, it’s just that I don’t like getting that reporter chaps crumbs.

The last envelope contained orders to remain on General Reynolds staff in 1 Corp HQ. This is a great opportunity as a staff officer, not as good as an actual command, which was the down side as my career would need one for advancement. “How long do I have to consider my options Sir?”

“Take the day to think about it,” Reynolds is now standing and I pop to my feet. “But I do expect an answer in the morning. You’re dismissed.” I don’t remember leaving the Generals office, nor walking through and out of the building. My head was in such a jumble. These were amazing opportunities each in their own right, but which do I choose? Walked about until I find myself by the statue of Sir Winnie at the edge of the embassy grounds.

“What would you do Sir?” I looked over at the stern visage. “Would you stay, go or stick with the General?” Course the old plonker doesn’t say anything, but he did give me an idea. “Right you are Sir, a pint it is.” So I went off to get drunk.

Part Four: Tit for Tat
It was very much a surprise (to everyone but me) that Mummy had not come right away to visit her new grand pup. Not that she won’t have come to help after Byron was born. It was simply that she’d run into a spot of trouble in Vienna and it took a bit to get untangled. Nothing that her Webley Mark 4 and diplomatic immunity couldn’t take care of. But the Austrians were a bit stubborn about the whole thing. Dead Russians and all, proved to be a bit of an embarrassment for everyone. To have all those great hulking alpha lads taken out by a little old beta lady with chronic dyspepsia. Poor Mummy, she burps like a water buffalo.

But arrive she did and settled into the guest room with her usual acclaim and three steamer trunks. “One never knows what one needs in these savage lands.” she was most adamant of that fact whenever visiting the Americas. Didn’t matter which one.

“But Mother Moore,” Lewiston was most exasperated as he and Jesse were lugging the trunks up the stairs. “This is the United States, Washington DC.”

“Yes, and your point?” Lewiston then decided to save his breath for the next two trunks, as arguing with my mother was never the best of idea. The woman always ran him in circles to the point where he would pout and say she should run for a seat in Parliament. Then he’d go and drink up most of my Beefeater gin. We’d go through a lot of gin whenever Mummy came to visit.

But my dearest Mum didn’t come without bearing gifts. A posh christening gown for Byron to be baptized in, along with a few airport prezzies for the rest of us. Oooooo, Tabac Blond Caron! My favorite and expensive too, even for a tiny bottle. Marillenschnaps for Lewiston, he did so love that apricot brandy that almost forgave her for her excessive luggage. Almost. A football jersey for Jesse from his favorite Austrian team, Kapfenberger SV and snow globe that played ‘Climb Every Mountain’ for Erika. Wish Mummy would remember that Erika hated them and that there were better ways to bring messages through.

Speaking of...She also brought a bit of news that a certain Mr Fergus Crowley would find interesting. Made a phone call and yes he would be home tomorrow about 11:30 in the morning. His flight to Heathrow wasn’t until late that very afternoon. He was joining Lady Bela at the family estate in the Cotswolds. Apparently she was visiting her brother for the first time in years and wanted warm things up a bit before she made her demands. He also wanted to borrow the ring her father had given to Castiel and in turn gave to me. “If I do, expect tit for tat.”

“Why madam,” his voice oozed across the phone lines. “I would expect nothing less.”

I asked Mummy to watch Byron whilst I was gone, as Erica was spending the next few days with a friends family at Virginia Beach and Jesse went to a ‘jamboree’ in Maryland with the Scouts. He took up with the branch of the British Boy Scouts here in America. They’re mostly sons of embassy personnel and Ex-pats here in the Washington DC area. “Are you sure you don’t want me to come with you my dear? Mummy was a bit concerned. “Rowena’s get is a wiley creature. The fruit doesn’t fall far from the vine.”

“Oh don’t worry,” I said getting dressed. “As the Americans say: it’s a piece of cake.”

“Well don’t let that brute get his fingers in the pie,” Mummy warned darkly. “He’s not called the ‘King of Hell’ for nothing.”
“True, but you raised a far more clever pup.” I pulled on a stylish head cover, kissed Byron and Mum, then set off for Annapolis. It was a lovely day, bright and sunny, the perfect kind for a drive or a bit of mischief.

I love this part of the country, wouldn’t mind a bit more time here but duty calls...again. And considering I helped engineer this move, there is little room to winge about it. Some time, will take the pups and do a proper walk about Annapolis proper. Including their navel academy. Would like to say I saw the final resting place of that pirate, John Paul Jones. Know we’ve all friends now, but the bloody bastard is still nothing but a free booter and attacker of the port of Whitehaven.

Pulled into the car park of the Crowley residence shortly before noon. Wonder if he’s going to have luncheon ready, or am I to be his food for thought? I suppose we shall have to see. Have dressed just as carefully for the occasion as the last. This time a little matronly as I’ve not got my figure back yet; went with an A line dress of that thick polyester material, pale yellow with buttons up the front, long sleeved white silk blouse. Mummy said I dressed like her Majesty the queen, in all deference to our sovereign, THAT was a bit of a left handed complement.

Got out of the car, went up the walk to ring the bell and waited. The door swung open and there was Fergus is his usual black. Would love some time to see just what he would look like in a Hawaiian shirt and Bermuda shorts. Something with palm trees and hula girls. “Good morning Mrs. Reynolds,” ever the perfect gentleman. He gave a bow and kissed my finger pads, though his tongue snaked out when he’d got to the thumb pad and tickled the palm. Oooooo, the ‘Great Game’ begins a new.

“May I get you some tea?” The door clicks and locks shut behind me. “Or something a bit stronger?”

“Stronger I think is more suitable for our conversations today.” He leads me into the living room and I settle on the leather couch to watch him go over to the liquor cabinet, then pause. “As the Americans say,” the randy old spider asked the well armed fly.... “what’s your poison?”

Thought a moment, “Scotch, single malt is you have it.” The room hadn’t changed from the last time I was there, oh yes there was something different. A picture of Jeff, proudly displayed on the mantle. He must have been only a few hours old, as his eyes were closed in sleep and all that dark hair done up like a Kewpie dolls.

Fergus smiles, “I believe I do. A little special something, Springbank 16 year old. He pulls out the bottle and pours just enough to see if it were to my liking. Mmmmmm, there was the taste of warm honey, dried fruit and malt on the tongue. The amber liquid burned smoothly down my throat leaving a mallowy, nutty finish to remember it by. Held my glass out for the rest of the finger. “So glad I could find something your ladyship likes.”

He pours himself a finger or two and then settles himself on the ottoman before the couch. We chit chat about Byron, Jeff and the weather. Then got down to business. “What is it that I can do for you Mr Crowley?”

Causally, he took a sip from his drink then leaned over and took hold of my right foot lifting it to his lap. “Oh Seven Hells, even my mother doesn’t even wear shoes like these. How she totters about on high heels is a mystery that defies gravity and physics.” Fergus slips the shoe off and tosses it aside, then reaches down and takes the other shoe off. “There, now you look a bit less like the Queen Mum.”

“Oh that’s better.” I wiggled my toes, it did feel good to have those ‘nana shoes’ off. “You wanted to borrow this ring?” Held up my right hand and waggled the ring finger. “You know of course, all
of ‘God’s’ secrets are gone from it.”

“You know that and I know that,” Fergus has reached over was busily pushing those pesky dress buttons through their holes. “But does my Darlings brother know that?” He smiled wickedly, “not really.”

I stood up and allowed the dress to fall from my shoulders to the couch. Turned around and bent over to retrieve some papers from my handbag. Gave him full view of my tap panted bottom, stockings and the straps of the garter belt holding them up. Fished about for a moment it let him have the full effect before straightening up and turning round. “A gift from Mummy. These should be useful to you,” I handed him the papers. “Her Ladyships brother is a very naughty boy.” Ah looks something else straightened up just by the way he’s sitting.

Fergus read the first few paragraphs, his eye brows climbing up his forehead. “Oh, I think this will do quite nicely.” Then he looked up, “now about the ring.”

“Tit for tat,” I shook a finger at him. “What do you have for me?”

He reached over with both hands and caught me behind the knees, pulling me over to straddle his lap. “Hong Kong silk, lovely stuff.” Mr Crowley purred and he undid the pearl buttons. “Can’t get it messy now can we?” It slid off with a whispered rustle to the carpet. “You have me at a disadvantage my dear Mrs Reynolds.”

“Is that so, Mr Crowley?” I moved a little on his ever growing stiffy.

“A nursing omega is very desirable indeed. Belly still soft from pregnancy and vaginal walls so tender, they’re almost virginal. How has Lewiston kept his hands off you?” He slipped one of the cups of the nursing bra open, the breast was plump, the nipple brown and at attention. Fergus’s tongue snaked out for a quick lap. Then a tickle at the tip, until his mouth settled on and began to drink. It felt...nice....well it should considering his pants are open and the tip of his willy is rubbing against my little boatman. The tap pants are quickly soaked as are the lap of his trousers.

“Lewiston has been rather busy of late and I’ve been caring for our pup,” OH MY GOODNESS THAT FEELS TOO GOOD. Got to think of England, football scores....Lewistons mother...naked. That worked, for the moment.

Fergus’s lips come off the nipple with a pop and a drizzle of milk trails down my belly. “Mmmm, I wonder if what they say is true about omegas milk? That it makes an alpha virile enough to impregnate a stone.” He laid me out on the couch, taking a finger and gently pushing aside the wet folds of cloth and looking longingly at my ‘hot house flower’. Open and dripping, waiting, wanting and dreading all at the same time to be plucked. Opening a drawer in the coffee table, Mr Crowley took out a long thin vibrator. “Since I am a gentleman,” he bowed grandly. “Ladies do come first.”

Without preamble, while I still have my wits about me, “tit for tat Fergus.”

“The Argentines are gearing up for war with Chile. They’re not going to honor the agreement of the British courts giving the islands of Picton, Lennox and Nueva in the Beagle Channel to the Chilean government. It’s so plain, even the Americans see it (and that’s saying something) and they’ve stopped selling them weapons. Those idiots in Britain haven’t seen it or pretend not to, so they’re still selling them Type 42 Destroyer war ships. Some time this year, the Argies are going to invade those islands and any others in the three passages on Cape Horn.” He spoke so matter of fact that it frightened, yet titillated as he was gently sliding the vibrator in and out of my pinks.

“That’s my girl, but one more thing.” The vibrator was turned up a little higher. ‘This is a preamble for bigger things. The junta is eying the Falklands again. Just because they were tossed
off the islands in 1833 doesn’t mean those bampots don’t have a long memory and need a win to get their peoples minds off their troubles. And for the same reasons, there are those back in Britain, who wouldn’t be adverse to such a war.”

WAR. The very word was like a shot of adrenaline to the system. As an army officer, my darling Eric might have to go. My foolishly brave mate would do everything in his power to be there and do his bit. No. Must get this information to Mum and Dad. They’d know what to do. I caught Fergus’s hand and pulled that piece of cold plastic from inside of me. No, I need hard warm flesh and a dash of pain. Grandly I sat up, reached over and caught Mr Crowleys tie and flipped him down on the couch. “Now Sir,” as I dropped the sodden tap pants to the floor, stepped over and knelt on to the cushion. “Tee up, that’s a good fellow.” Then lowered myself on to his lovely rosied cock head. Felt the stretch, pull and protest of muscle pushing against muscle. Oh make it hurt. “Tell me more of this invasion.”

A secluded cottage on Bayou Loin
Breaux Bridge, Louisiana
Saturday, June 3rd 1978

I lean against the porch rail of our honeymoon cottage, watching the fireflies dance and listening to the call of de bullfrogs and at least one bull gator. That ole rascal be braggen to the lady gators. I suppose I could be doing the same thing, letting the others know I’d lead my new mate into the land of marriage and intimate relations. We waited to have sex, kinda sorta, not like we didn’t do everything else, but Andrea promised her momma she’d go to her mating bed a virgin. Or at least one part of her was, until now.

Our little love nest, thank the Alpha God, had electricity cuz it was darker then a bankers heart and sticky hot as a crotch out here in de bayou. Maybe not the legal kind of electric, as the wires all run through the trees and not poles but as long as the air conditioning is running, I ain’t complaining.

Had gotten up to come out for a smoke and a bit of a think. Looking back, I can honestly say the best part our mating day was the expression on the face of Mr Beau Harvey the manager of Oakbourne country club when it was invaded by my bayou relatives dressed in their Sunday finest. You could tell that he was ready to have a hissy fit to see all this Cajun white trash dare step foot his club. (Wish third cousin four times removed Bourdreux coulda come. He mate a Creole beta. Now THAT woulda been a hissy fit of epic proportions) But, seeing that Andrea’s family had been life long members and Daddy Kormas had more money then Moses along with sitting on the clubs board of directors, there wasn’t a damn thing Mr Manager Man would do. Except watch, fume and pour the bourbon with a clench toothed smile.

It was an all day affair starting in the morning when I went to church, confessed my sins to Father Bourdeau (Forgive me Father for I have sinned. It’s been over a year since my last confession. I drank, swore, used the Lords name in vain, lusted after an omega and knew him carnally) and spent the next 20 minutes saying penance. Hope my knees will hold up for a bit of dancing this afternoon.

As dress blues would’ve been too hot for the occasion, ponied the $200.00 (will prolly never wear them again unless I’m going to Hawaii) for a white class A uniform and saucer cap. Had to admit though as I was getting dressed in Ma mere and Pa’s bedroom, that I did look sharp. Was admiring myself in Ma mere’s vanity mirror, even had the sword to complete the ensemble, when there was a tap at the door. “Ya’ll decent?”
“Yes ma’am,” I called out. It was Maw Maw. She came in slowly on her cane and sat down on the edge of the bed. Nobody was really sure how old Marie Claudette Lafitte truly was. The family bible said July of 1889 while her birth certificate said September of 1890 and her sister Suzette sez they were both wrong, it was in the Spring but the year escaped her. So we don’t ask any more, as that old beta is snake fast with her cane and it do hurt, it do.

“Mon beau chile,” she looked me up and down, both with her glasses at the end of her nose and up to her eyes. “You look as fine as yo Paw Paw on our mating day all those years ago. He wear his uniform too, my little ‘red leg’ from the 141st Artillery Unit.” My Paw Paw, Alpha God rest his soul, was deaf as a post from the concussion of the guns. Which made me really consider my options in the Armour Corps.

“Is the rest of the family ready?”

Maw Maw made a rude noise through her nose. “Your Ma mere since 08:00 this morning been ready. You Pa finally got on his tuxedo, your two brothers are dressed but don’t know how long they stay clean and your sisters are in their brides maids dresses. Your Andrea is a nice beta, but she be tres color blind yeah. Those dresses, sa c’est villain!” The outfits were a bilious shade of mustard yellow that made every one look jaundiced. The groomsman were a bit luckier as they wore dark blue, to go along with dress blues of the three guys from the Citadel who were in the wedding party. There were at least 20 fellas I graduated with who were going to be at the ceremony, which is why Andrea and I are honeymooning in the bayou. Those sons of bitches won’t be able to find us for a bit of mischief.

“Time, she fly fly by, yeah. Voter naissance, Le Bon Deau,” the old lady sighed. “Caul over your face, screaming like a gros vent.” Then Maw Maw gave me ‘the eye’, the one she always used to see if’n you stole the pecan pie she’d set to cool on the side board or played hooky from school to go fish’in. “You sure about this? You can run, no body say nothing, yeah yeah.”

“I’m sure, I love Andrea and wanna be with her.” The fact I gotta report to Fort Knox next Friday for officers basic and Andrea goes to stay with her parents for the next six months, had nothing to with anything. Then off to Germany to the 11th Armored Cav Regiment. Asides, it's a little late now.

Maw Maw sighed and patted my hand. “If’n you’re sure. We jus want you to be happy. Okay Boo, wash your teeth, se brosser les cheveux. You gotta be at the altar in an hour.”

Saint Marcellus Church was just down the road a piece, so it wouldn’t take more then a hop, skip and jump to get there. Blew a few deep breaths, checked my coat pocket, yup the ring box is there, will be taking one to Fort Knox later in the week.

Came out to the living room where Pa was sitting on the couch, jiggling his legs waiting for me. The man look fine in his tuxedo, better then any Sunday morning ever. He work hard all his life for this moment, today Troy Thibadeau Lafitte ain’t just no fork truck driver at the Tabasco factory, he’s the father of de finest kind coon ass Citadel graduate and army lieutenant, who is going to walk in to dat foo foo country club like he owned the joint. “You look Micheal the Archangel come to earth, you do.”

“Thankee Pa,” I said modestly. “Come on, we pass by the church, we go yeah.”

We get to there and in the vestibule was the l’amour de maman, or dowry blankets were on display for folks to see. Did a quick check, yup, there were 10. Will be taking one to Fort Knox with me later in the week.
The ceremony was long, there was a full mass, communion, singing and the mating vows itself. Father Bourdeau exhorted the congregation on the importance of family, pups and faithfulness. Andrea did look beautiful in her gown. Like a queen of the Mardi Gras, she was. Radiant, beauteous and just fit to bust. Reached in my pocket and pulled out the ring (knew better at the last minute then to give it to my brother Aubin) then slid it on her finger. Then took the ring from my other pocket, the ring that said I was hers alone and no once else would I ever know biblically. Lifted the vale, we kissed, the priest finished up (finally), then Andrea and I turned to face family, friends and the who the hell are you’s as Lt and Mrs Benjamin Lafitte.

That country club was nice, Oakbourne was the finest in the parish(I woulda been just as happy with the VFW hall here in New Iberia) and very chi chi. We had the big ole ballroom with a good dance floor big enough to hold the 10 piece band and for us to do the La Bal de Noce. Also made sure they served up ma meres gumbo. She said no pup of hers was gonna go be mated without it, so she cooks up buckets and brought that soup along here early. My ma mere can be a fierce little omega when crossed, even Pa knowed enough to get out her way when she wanted to do something. As did the kitchen people at Oakbourne were soon to find out. Harper Lee Truly may have been a runaway omega from St Landry Parish, who jumped the broom with Troy Lafitte but she was still a traitecuse of some power and a force to be reckoned with. Even by folks with their noses in the air, even they had to walk on the same ground and ma mere knowed enough people under the dirt.

So we slurp the gumbo, eat the dinner (I’ve had better c-rations) but by this time was so hungry would eat the slime out of a snakes ass hole. After supper, then cut into the cakes. My grooms cake is chocolate with blue and white frosting in the shape of a palmetto palm, while the wedding cake is...well vanilla and looks like a wedding cake.

Andreas people didn’t want us to do the money dance, said it looked trashy and low class. But tell a Cajun NOT to do somethin and we will bust a gut TO do it, gumbo ya ya. By the time the band was playing ‘Good night Sweetheart’ my little bride looked like a million bucks. Literally. She had more dollars pinned to her then a stripper on a pay day Friday night. Not that I would know about such things, ahem, I just heard tell.

And so here we are back at Bayou Loin, I’m watching the fireflies and the smoke from my cigarette, listening to the critters in de swamp. “Benny Darlin,” I hear Andreas drowsy voice coming from the door way. “Come on back to bed, Baby.” She has the bed sheet pull round herself, not like anybody was gonna see her. My mate pads over, takes the cigarette, putting it to her lips. The smoke coils and writhes like lovers as it comes from her mouth. “What’re you thinking about?”

For just a fleeting moment I think of my Little Dove but then quick like say.... “You Mon Cher and all our todays and tomorrows.”

Chapter End Notes

The Affair of the Wayward Jeep: a short story by Bill Maulden, that takes place during the Korean War. It’s about a mechanically inclined private who soups up a generals jeep.

SP: Security Police. What the MP’s were called in the Air Force in the 1970’s
There was a time when your bank would send a monthly statement for your checking account that included all the canceled checks you wrote. You could balance your check book and file the canceled checks. If there was ever a question, you could dig out the check immediately.

Nanner: derogatory term for someone from Afghanistan.

to see a picture of Dean's BOQ:
:https://www.usarmygermany.com/Communities/Kaiserslautern/KTown%20-20BOQ%20early%201960s.jpg

Hershey bar: slang for a first lieutenants bar, on the fatigue uniform its black. Where a second lieutenant’s refereed to as a ‘butter bar’.

Wanna buy a watch comrade: during WW2 Russian solders took wrist watches when ever they could Why? Because in Russia, there weren’t any as heavy industry was more important then light industry or the companies that would make watches. So they would take them, keep one for themselves and sell the rest.

US Dollar to French Franc 1 USD = 4.606 FRF Mon, 05 Jun 1978

Cego: a card game played mostly in Southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

Grüß Gott meine Herren: Bavarian German for ‘Greet God gentleman’ A very formal way of saying hello.

Hefeweizen: a wheat beer that is drank with breakfast in Bavaria

‘Erika’ was a German marching song written by Herms Niel, a composer of songs and marches, some time in the 1930’s:

On the heath, there blooms a little flower
and it's called Erika.
Eagerly a hundred thousand little bees,
swarm around Erika.
For her heart is full of sweetness,
a tender scent escapes her blossom-gown.
On the heath, there blooms a little flower
and it's called Erika -you can go to You Tube and put in ‘Erika-marching song’ to listen to it

Putzfrau: German for cleaning lady

Preomerine: my version of Premarine an early hormone therapy for menopause. It took its name from the words PREgnant MARes urINE. Gross, I know. Well, considering penicillin is just moldy bread, why couldn’t there be something made from horse piss.

Utrinque Paratus: Latin for 'Ready for Anything'. The motto of 1 Para.

Bampot: Scottish insult for a violent deranged prick

On December 22nd 1978, the Argentine army gathered at the Chilean border and at the coast of Cape Horn ready to invade. The action came to halt a few hours later
when Pope John Paul the Second sent a message to the leaders of both countries to seek a peaceful solution. The Pope would send Cardinal Antonio Samore to mediate and ‘on 9 January 1979 Chile and Argentina signed the Act of Montevideo formally requesting mediation by the Vatican and renouncing the use of force’.–from Wikipedia

Maw maw: Cajun french for grandmother

Red Leg: a member of the Field Artillery branch branch of the US Army. Field artillery men used to wear a red stripe on their pant leg. It’s still a term in use today.

Sa c'est villain: Cajun French for ‘that is ugly’

Votre naissance: your birth

Gros Vent: hurricane

se brosser les cheveux: brush your hair

C'est sa Couillon: such a fool

Coon ass: it can be insulting or proud description of a Cajun depending on who’s using it. Like Cyrano’s nose, if an outsider says it....insult, if you are using to describe your self or a fellow Cajun....a complement.

La Bal de Noce: a Cajun wedding tradition where the bride and groom march around the dance floor and the guests at the wedding march behind them. Once everyone is there, then the happy couple have their first dance.

Traitecuse: a female Cajun traditional healer
WARNING: the sex is both consensual and non, however, no one is really upset it happened.

There are few sights more beautiful I’ve found, then the sun coming up over Lake George. The misty mountains, covered in green and gray, brought bright with the rays coming between those peeks. Had gotten up early that Monday morning to stand on the boat house deck and watch. I’ve seen the sun rise on Easter morning over the Pacific in Panama, in the middle of the Atlantic ocean when I was a tiny pup aboard an old troop ship carrying soldiers families to Germany in 1960 and when it cut through the fog like the divine light of heaven while on a ferry crossing the English Channel. Could honestly put this moment on Lake George with all those.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?” Turned and saw Sharons father Irv coming down the path with two steaming coffee mugs in his hands. “Don’t know how you like it, so erred on the side of light and sweet.”

“Thank you. That’s just the way I like coffee.” Not really, but since Irv was kind enough to bring it out, ‘regular’ became my favorite for the moment. Took the cup, breathing in the aroma and gratefully drank. After months of instant coffee, this was like heaven. Apparently Celia liked her coffee fresh, so the bag of Eight O’clock was right next to the electric coffee grinder. It wasn’t as pretty as the hand crank ones made of cast iron and porcelain I used to see in Germany, but it still turned out some decent brew.

We stood on the deck watching the still water catch the sun light, streaking it with greens, blues, silver and gold. “This is my favorite time of day,” Irv said softly. “It’s why I come up here every summer, why I keep this white elephant, even though it costs me a fortune and hope one of my pups will want to keep it in the family when I’m gone.”

“I’m sure Sharon and Bry will want it some day,” it was too lovely a place to fall to ruin or be torn down for the next bigger and ‘better’ thing. A practice Americans seem to fall prey to.

“You should see around here in the Fall,” Irv continued. “When the mountains are all orange, red, brown and green. It’s truly spectacular.”

“I bet it’s beautiful,” not that I’m fishing for an invite. But it would be kind of nice. We stand a while longer, sipping our coffees, not really talking, there was no need as the scenery did all the speaking for us.

“If you and that little rapscallion,” Irv broke the silence. “Are around the end of September, come on up. Would love to have you.”

“Thank you, would like that very much. If you can give me your address, can write you from officers basic. We’ll be in Virginia from the end of August to mid January. Then off to Germany.” My orders had finally come down, K-town, 21st Support Command, the Reserve Storage Facility. Looks like I’m going to be neighbors with Dean. Should be getting a letter pretty soon from my sponsor; oh man got so much to do this week. Drain my coffee cup, as the mental list started to get longer; got to get Ben and Jeff up, cleaned up, then get on the road.

It was very sweet of Irv to offer and I took him up on it, knowing I would never be back. Can’t
spend the money on a plane ticket when there are so many things that were going to need money put towards it. Getting the car up to snuff to take overseas, rent for a place on the economy in K-town if family quarters on post aren’t available. The army gives you an allowance but it’s never enough and I’m done living in ghettos.

Thanked my host again, pecked him on the cheek and excused myself to get the day started. Looked back at the lake one more time, it was still beautiful but the golden moment was gone as a power boat skimmed by, churning up the water signaling reality and the hard light of day that was now upon us.

Yesterday, everyone had kind of laziest about nursing hangovers, sleeping late or just coming down off the emotional high of the mating. Wonder if there were going to be any pups born nine months from now? There usually was one or two, a mating ceremony always brought out urge to fuck like bunnies in everyone around the happy couple.

Speaking of the happy couple, Bry-Ann and Sharon should be enjoying the Ritz Hotel in Montreal about now. They left about mid afternoon Sunday after they came back from their first night together as newlymates. Bry confessed to me they were too wired from the reception to sleep or even fuck, so they went for a walk to calm down and ended up sneaking in to the preforming arts center down the road to listen to the Philadelphia Philharmonic.

Said they saw this dude named.....named....Yo...You...Mama....some guy who played cello. Then went back to the hotel room and collapsed. Next morning of course they did the dirty deed, a lot.

After which, they checked out and came back home to open their gifts. Got the usual blender, toaster, toaster oven and money. Cash and checks. Two nice fat checks from their parents. Those were going towards their new apartment out in Rochester, somewhere between the two colleges. Was going to offer them mine as a sublet but it would’ve meant a longer drive for Sharon to get to classes at Saint John Fisher.

So they finished opening the presents, (Bry-Anns mom keeping a tally of who gave what, so everyone could be properly thanked when the notes went out) pocketed the cash, endorsed the checks and a deposit slip so Sharons mom could take em to the bank on Monday, then the love birds took off for Canada.

But back in the here and now, walked through the kitchen, got another cup of coffee and went upstairs to get Jeff and Ben moving. Had promised Lisa to get her erstwhile son home by this afternoon, in the mean time he was having WAY too much fun hanging out with the twins and the other omegas. Sorry Hugh Hefner, the Bunny Club is closed. Jeff was awake and waving his arms at the ceiling fan.

“Irv!”

“Papa sweetheart. Say papa.” Oh I give up. Did my morning ‘puppy curls’ as we went to the bathroom, stripping off the plastic pants and nasty diaper. Kissed his cheeks, blew raspberries on his forehead and tickled my pups little toes. Jeff laughed and nuzzled on my shoulder, letting loose a lovely milky scent of happy puppy. My babes first scent, put my nose against his soft downy hair and breathed it in. I was here for this, not away like when he discovered his right hand. But here, this second, to take in his special moment. Course that’s when I noticed that warm feeling I was having was wet and dripping down my chest. “Oh come on!” The world takes a collective piss on me all the time, not you too! “Let’s get us cleaned up and dressed.” Was glad I brought more then one change of clothes.

Ben was just waking up when Jeff and I came back. My First had wisely checked himself over and
cleaning up BEFORE coming to bed, so all evidence of his misdeeds would be erased. Except for one or two bite marks on his ass (and that bridesmaid dress he was sporting when he came in an hour or two ago) he did a reasonably good job. “Morning Cas,” Ben stretched and yawned. “Hey there little brother.”

“Irv!”

“Boy when he latches on to something, he doesn’t let go does he?”

“No,” Sighed and didn’t even try to correct him. “I’m afraid he doesn’t.” But now to business, “okay, up and at em. We gotta get a move on.”

Ben put on a sad pouty face worthy of any five year old. “Do we have to? Jared and Jiff were talking about going into ‘The Vill’ today, maybe play some miniature golf, then hang around town.” Oh it all sounds like fun, but it won’t get us home and I have a lot to do this week.

“Sorry kiddo,” laid Jeff down in the crib, then pulled out the duffel bag. “No can do. I promised your mom to get you home today and besides, I’ve got a lot to do before reporting down at Fort Benning on July 7th.” Hate being the adult. It’s a dark and lonely job....but SOMEBODIES gotta do it.

“Come on Cas, pleeeeeaaaassse!” Since pouty face wasn’t working, out came charming face complete with scent. “Just a few more hours.”

“I’m sorry, but we do have to go before we wear out of our welcome.” Then slapped him on one of the bite marks decorating his ass. “That trick didn’t work on me with your dad,” (oh yes it did for a good while but he doesn’t have to know that) “and it’s not gonna work now. So, ‘off and on’. Get cleaned up, dressed and packed.”

“You’re mean and you suck.”

“Nope, I’m a nice guy and I swallow,” I said cheerfully. “Now move it.”

It was about noonish by the time we finally left. The twins had taken Ben out for one more ride in the wooden speed boat and Irv got to read another chapter of ‘Last of the Mohicans’ to Jeff. Looks like ‘Pat the Bunny’ and ‘Go Dog Go’ are not gonna cut it for this pup. Not when you’ve got to run around the Adirondacks with Uncus and Hawkeye. Will have to get a paper back copy from Waldens before I leave for Georgia so Karen can read to him.

But leave we finally did. Ben and the twins promised to write each other and exchanged addresses. Could see this going on hot and heavy until my First moved to Germany and then maybe it all lasting for another month or two before the letters peter out. Sad but that’s the way of things. Irv and Celia held Jeff and kissed his cheeks, he ‘Irv’ed’ a few times for them before being strapped in his car seat. “Now don’t you folks be strangers,” they called out. Even though I knew Celia really didn’t care to see me again.

“We won’t,” piled the luggage in the front end of the Bug and slamming down the lid. “May just see you in September.” Then we got in and drove away, the great old Tudor fading into the forest of Cramers point. Monday seemed to be kind of a slow day in Lake George Village, there were few people window shopping but the weekend crowds had headed home already, leaving a few die hards to vacation a bit longer. Until next weekend when the swell of fun loving humanity returns.

Ben was slumped in the passengers seat just kind of looking out the window with unseeing eyes. “You okay over there?” Made the left turn onto the Northway headed south to Albany.
It took him a while to say something, “I really liked those guys. They were fun. And I didn’t miss...Calvin...so much.” How can you tell someone things will get better, when it hurts so bad right now?

So did the only possible thing to get him cheered up, I asked him about the bites on his butt. Oh that changed the mood considerably. Ben sat right up straight and puffed out his chest, the smell of proud alpha filling the car. “The guys wanted to give me something to remember them by. It hurt a little and then felt really great and then we had some wild ‘chick a boom chick a boom, don’t ya jess love it’.” Not like I really wanted to hear about his sex life but if it got his mind on something else, could live with being in the gutter for a little while.

Also confirmed my suspicions that my First was one of ‘those’ kind of alphas. A dude who needs a little pain to kick start his pleasure.

So we drove down the Northway, Ben bragging, me making the correct comment here and there, and Jeff babbling along. Mostly ‘dadada’, ‘Irv and ‘gook’. He added a new word to his vocabulary. Great, he knows Chingachgook but not ‘papa’. Little guy is a peach. Took about an hour to get to the thruway toll booths, then tack on another hour to get out to the Dodgeville Rest stop. Oh man did I have to pee, Jeff needed a diaper change and Ben wanted road food.

Did my business first, then got down to the business of cleaning up Jeffs messy butt. “Good god, what was Irv feeding you?” Those were some nasty, stinky poops in that diaper and so colorful too. Baby shit green and barbeque orange. You are off pigs ears for the near future, as in forever or until you can wipe your own ass.

Was so busy getting Jeff cleaned up that I didn’t notice the guy at first. Which I really should’ve considering I was at the sinks right in front of a mirror. But it’s a men’s room....it stinks of piss, cum and Comet and who looks at each other in a mens room? Apparently pervs do and I forgot. Because didn’t realize anything was amiss until I got that uncomfortable feeling of being watched.

There were a couple of beta men at the urinal but they were too busy with their own business. Then looked over at the stalls, there were feet and legs from three of em, until I noticed an old pair of old jungle boots weren’t in front of the crapper but off to the side and too close to the door. Then there was a whitish goo dripping from the bottom of the stall door.

Oh yuck! Don’t know who this guy is beating off to, but don’t wanna hang around to find out. Got Jeff cleaned up as fast as I could, didn’t even stop to toss out the nasty diaper, just stuffed it in the shoulder bag and diapered my pup in record time. Then got the fuck outta there.

Got back to the car where I found Ben sitting hunched over in the passengers seat holding ‘The Lovers Kiss’ with trembling hands. “What happened? What’s wrong?”

“That...that...that guy.....Todd. From last year, the Dead show....the one who gave me the ride from Syracuse when Trevor and the guys left me behind at Colgate, the one who wanted to.....to....” He was shaking so hard, thought he was going to accidentally shoot one of us. “He’s here. I saw him....when I was at the snack bar. He was headed into the mens room.”

“Little First,” had to go slow with this. Shifted Jeff way back on my hip, so that if the gun goes off, hopefully my babe would be protected. “I’m going to ask you for the weapon.” Held out my hand,”please.” Took a moment before he felt safe enough to shakily set the 45 in my palm. Checked it quick, good he didn’t take the safety off. Then stuck the weapon in the pocket of the painters pant I could finally lost enough weight to squeeze into. “Know this is going to be hard, but what was he wearing?”

“I don’t know,” Ben wailed, the car was filled with the stink of terrified pup. “Green, old green
army pants and boots.”

“Jungle boots?” Was getting angry, this monster had scared my First....

“Maybe.....”

“There was someone in the of the stalls peeking out and beating off. All I could see was his feet, in a pair of beat up jungle boots.”

“Ohhhhh gross!” Now the smell of fear was changing to one of anger. All burnt metal and wet dog. “Did he hurt you or Jeff?”

“Nah, there were too many other people around, so he was just getting his rocks off peeping.”

“Let’s call the cops, have him arrested.”

“They gotta catch him in the act and he might not even been there by the time the cops get here. Unless.....we can keep him here for a while. Think you can remember what his van looked like?”

Ben got out of the car and scanned the parking lot. “There, that one. That ugly old Ford van. He must have got it fixed from when it crashed in the ditch. What are you going to do?”

Handed Jeff over to him, then pulled out the nasty diaper from the bag. “Chemical warfare,” then strolled over to the van. Casually, slid a finger along the grill, yup there’s the latch, popped it quick, lifting the hood, propping it against my shoulder. Didn’t matter if anyone was passing by, I looked like I was suppose to be there. Unwrapping the diaper, oh Christ on a crutch that’s bad hockey, wiped the contents across the hot engine. Then let the hood slam shut. Walked to the back of the van, twisting the diaper long and thinnish, knelt down and stuffed it up the tail pipe. It expanded and took a bit to stuff up but got that diaper in there. “I am SO much trouble with the Geneva Convention.” Then took the 45 out using the butt to smash a tail light before kicking the shards under the van.

Walked back to the Bug as if nothing happened and climbed in. “Wish I had a potato, but a diaper did just as well. That thing isn’t going anywhere, it’ll either melt itself in tight or catch fire. Either way, the police will notice and more then likely will stop to help, they’ll toss the van just on general principles cuz the dude looks like a stoned out hippie freak. Bet there’s enough stash to send him to jail for a while. With the drug laws Governor Rockefeller enacted, that guy is gonna WISH they caught him for weenie wagging.”

Ben had strapped Jeff into his car seat in the mean time and had been jingling the car keys to keep him occupied. “But why wipe the shit on his engine?”

“Cuz I’m a petty, vindictive slick, and he’s MY bitch now.”

“Remind me really to never piss you off.”

I leaned over and kissed him on the forehead, “you couldn’t do anything to make me that angry.” But then again, couldn’t help myself. “Though you getting dolled up in my prettys came close.”

Out came the patented Winchester ‘bitch face #5’. “Are you EVER gonna let me live that down?”

“Nope.”

“Son of a Bitch!”
“Bith!” A little voice came from the back seat. Oh just kill me now. The pup will learn how to swear like a trooper before he ever says ‘papa’ again. We left before Todd could come out, though it would’ve been great fun to watch. Especially when he tried to kick over the engine.

The rest of the trip was uneventful. Listened to the radio, sat under an underpass with a bunch of motorcyclists for about an hour when the rain came down so hard outside of Syracuse that the windshield wipers couldn’t keep up. The bikers were up from Jersey on their way out to Niagara Falls when they ran into a wall of water. So like us, they pulled off and sat down to wait.

The rain finally let up enough were those of us on four wheels to safely shove off. It was getting late and I’d promised to have Ben home at least by 05:00 that afternoon. Speaking of, he’d calmed down enough (with the help of a bet of scent) to doze off and not wake up until the crunch of tire on gravel as we pulled into the Fairwood Apartments about a quarter after five. After a quick hug and kiss, I boogied. Had no desire to be around for an ass reaming by Lisa, complaining about being ‘late’ (finger quotes from Hell). Got back Riverton a few minutes later, unbuckled Jeff from his car seat and slung the diaper bag over my shoulder. At this point was too tired, would come back for the duffel bag later.

Unlocked the front door to the apartment and closed it behind me. Now I’m just beat. Trudged up the stairs, blah. The air is stale and is hotter then hell up here. Turned the air conditioning up to get the rooms cooled off and a little circulation going. Got Jeff out of his little sun suit and laid him in his crib. “Some day huh Sunshine?”

“Daaadaaaaaaa!” He babbled and waved his arms and legs in relief to out of the car seat and his clothes. “Paaaappa.”

“Say it again Sweetie!” Picked him up and looked in those bright green eyes. “Pleeeaaasse! Papa, say papa!”

“Pappppaaaaaa! Gook!”

Kissed his little cheeks as we spun around in a happy circle. “I don’t care, you said papa first!”

The weekend had caught up with the both of us and we went to bed early. For the first time ever, Jeff slept through the whole night. I woke up a few times, just because I didn’t hear crying. Got up to check, nope, he was on back, arms and legs sprawled, looking like a little star fish on a rock in the moon light. Spent a while standing at his crib, gazing down at that tiny wonder with the long name who’d changed my life so much.

The next morning dragged my carcass out of bed to go running. Ohhhhhh, could I tell I hadn’t run in two days and sat too long in the car yesterday. Even with stretches, my legs were stiff and heavy. Got less then two weeks to correct this, cuz I’m NOT getting washed out the first day. Lumbered back like a waltzing bear to do pull ups, sit ups and the other fun exercises.

Got Jeff up, changed and tried to get the little guy to eat his pablum. But after a weekend wonderfulness of scrambled eggs, pigs ears and what ever else Irv was putting down this pups gullet, bland puppy cement wasn’t gonna hack it. After one spoonful, he refused any more and even ended up knocking over the bowl. Glad the little shit thought it was funny, cuz I didn’t, the crap went everywhere. Got it cleaned up before the stuff set and I’d have to chisel off.

Obviously the pup isn’t going to eat the pablum so looked around for some else. Am NOT going to nurse him, need to get dried up before going to Georgia. The last thing I wanna do is run around in a wet nursing shirt, though still might have to wear one for the support. The boobs have shrunk some but still not so I’m flat chested. Checked the fridge, got out some milk (will have to do a little
shopping) and then took a sleeve of saltines from the bread box. Crumbled up some of the crackers as fine as possible in a bowl and then poured on the milk. Waited a bit for them to get soggy......and it worked. Jeff ate every bit. Right now don’t know or care what the nutritional value of saltines are, just as long as he ate.

Set him in back in the crib while I went down to get duffel bag out of the car and then check the mailbox. Hmmm, Rochester Telephone.....USAA-the car insurance....oh letter from John and a post card of the Eiffel Tower from Dean....he was in Paris. Hmmm, he was there for a few days on business but still got to see some of the sights. Opened Johns letter, oh my....a money order for $200! He apologized, there was a bit of a snafu (I’ll just bet) but here’s the money for the last three months including this month. The letter went on to say, if I would send him my account information, would have the money direct deposited to my bank every month.

Okay! That works. Dean’s a little spotty of late but then again....he’s got a family with a new pup to support. And John.....has a mate and a life style.....so he has the deeper pockets at this point. Okay, this will be one of the several things I have to do today; get to the bank, take the tux back to the rental shop (kiss the deposit goodbye) pick up a few groceries and then back to training.

The next few days fell into a routine of running, cycling, push ups, sit ups, chin ups. Swimming in the Riverton pond, okay I wasn’t suppose to and was told not to by the rental office. But what they don’t know after hours wouldn’t kill em. And nobody narc’d me out, guess the neighbors liked the wet t-shirt show at sun down. Was also arranging my stuff; things to leave behind, things to keep and of that, what would I need immediately and could go into Dad and Mummy-ships basement in Annapolis. With only six hundred pounds allotted, which sounds like a lot but it isn’t, had to be choosy.

Also coordinated with Phyllis and Becky up at the RIT ROTC office. They put together my 201 field file, copy of the PT test results and financial records, then gave me the medical form for Doctor Mosley to fill out to show that I’m medically able for the rigors of airborne training. Which she filled out and included a copy of my medical records during and after pregnancy. 10 copies of my orders and think that’s all the paper work necessary.

Friday rolled round and I was busier then a one legged man in an ass kicking contest. Had to get to the post office to fill out the card to get the mail stopped until I got back. Then get to the bank to take out $550.00. Two hundred of that was for Karen, $300 converted into travelers checks (don’t leave home without em) and $50 bucks in cash to get myself to Washington DC. Wrote checks for the rent and to Roch Tel and USAA. Cleaned out the fridge of anything would die in a few days. Meaning, most everything except ketchup and mustard. After all that, I was off to the Seneca Army Depot to get my plane tickets and arrange for the move of my household goods to Fort Lee, VA.

Had decided to drive down to DC to spend a few days with the Reynolds. During that time would go over to Annapolis and drop off some stuff in Dad and Mummy-ships basement. (They sent a house key) Would leave the Bug at the embassy, where it’d definitely safer then leaving it in the parking lot up here in Riverton. Then fly out of Washington to Columbus, Georgia for three glorious weeks of fun in the sun. Yeah right, keep telling yourself that Novac.

Got the directions to the depot from Karen Singer, as she’s always going out there with Gato Tracy, the supply sergeants mate. The two ladies also handed me shopping lists and some money. Since I was going anyway, could I pick up a few things at the commissary for them? No problem, anything for my two favorite people. That morning, sat at the kitchen table with a map and the sheet of line paper with the instructions plotting my route. “Take the Thurway east bound to Exit 42, get off and take RT 14 south, then get on this road, that street, a few more twists and turns.....you’re at the depot.” Looked over at Jeff who was laying on a blanket on the floor, having
‘tummy time’ - something Dr Mosley recommended. Said it would strengthen his neck muscles, or something like that. “You ready for an adventure kiddo?”

“Gook!” Close enough for government work.

Seneca Army Depot sits on a hill side outside of the town Romulus between the Cayuga and Seneca Lakes and is about an hour and change from Henrietta. Driving over, all I could think of is how this place must be wonderful in the summer and the total shits in the winter. Once there, got stopped at the gate, stated the reason why I was there, showed my drivers license, dependent id and both sets of orders (jump school and officers basic), signed the visitors log and was given directions to the transportation office.

As it was about five miles down the road, had a little time to look around as I drove through. Funny place, it was either full of nothing ie: woods, fields or swamp or a dense cluster of buildings. There was a crazy quilt of World War Two ‘temporary’, 1950’s brick and 1960’s cinder block. Also noticed a three story barracks with the sign 295th Military Police Company. Huh, what could be so important out here in the middle of fucken no where that they’d need a whole company of MP’s? Weird.

Then came the REALLY weird that brought the car to a screeching halt and made me wonder if I was seeing things. In one of those wooded breaks between clumps of buildings, a snow white deer was ambling across the road with her equally white fawn. Okay, it’s a ghost right? In the middle of the day? There is a ‘no shit’ ghost deer taking her sweet ole ectoplasmic time RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME! They walked leasurly from the road and into the tree line, but didn’t fade like most supernatural beings I’d seen. “Did you see that Pup?”

“Irv!” Jeff chirped through the fingers in his mouth.

“Yeah, me too.”

Got to the transportation office, one of those 60’s cinder block buildings, two story with air conditioners hanging out of the windows. Found a spot in the small parking lot, got Jeff out of his car seat and made sure I had the folder with multiple copies of my orders. “Now be a good boy for Papa, let him get his plane tickets and get a pack up date.

“Papa?” He cocked his little head, brow wrinkled as if a light blub clicked on behind those big green eyes. “Paaaappappapaaa!”

Kissed his little head. Most beautiful sound in the whole wide world as I carried him across the parking lot. problem was, it was less beautiful as I was trying to speak with the alpha female second lieutenant who was processing my orders. The golden ships wheel and wheeled wings of the Transportation Corps glistened on the lapel of her mint green uniform. She was wearing one of those new summer uniforms the army was phasing in to replace the green and white seersucker ones the women wear now. Men are suppose to be getting light green shirts to replace the tan ones but wasn’t required to buy any yet.

“Talkative little fella isn’t he?” The lieutenant was trying to be polite but failing fast. There was another officer behind me, a major and his mate whose impatience was coming off in waves of burnt pine and marshmallow. Great, he smelled like a pissed off s’more. But we made it through and when I was able to get outta there, had a pack up date of August 22nd but in the mean time, had tickets to fly out of Dulles International at 07:05 in the morning on Southern Airlines to Atlanta with a connecting flight to Columbus on July 7th.

The return flight was set for the 28th of July, if everything went right and I wasn’t washed out, hurt
or left due to family issues. As I was leaving, noticed a framed photo on the wall of a white stag caught in mid leap. Okay, maybe ghostly is going on around here. “Excuse me,” caught the attention of a passing clerk, she was one of the middle aged beta ladies who you knew actually ran the joint. “This is gonna sound like a silly question, but are there white deer running around here?”

The woman smiled, “yes there are.....and no you aren’t seeing things, nor are they ghosts. We get that a lot. There’s a herd of white and ‘regular’ deer if you will, here on post. As you noticed, the depot is fenced, so no predictors or hunters can get in. Or the last time hunters were, it was back in the 50’s. At last count, there was about 800 head, with 200 them being white. They aren’t albino, their eyes are brown not pink, it’s just a recessive gene that has become dominate because they’ve been interbred and protected.” Then she said proudly, “this is the largest herd of pure white deer in the world.”

“They’re beautiful,” I laid a cheek on Jeff’s downy hair. “Saw a doe and fawn on the way over here. Thought I was seeing ghosts.”

“That’s most peoples first reaction,” the clerk said. She also let me know where the commissary and post exchange were, as I could fill Karen and Gato’s shopping lists. The PX wasn’t that big, but had a decent selection of merchandise for its size. Including a whole wall of cigarettes, cigars and pipe tobacco. Six dollars a carton of cigarettes?! Damn, smokes are getting expensive. Picked up a box of ‘Cowboy Killers’ for Gato, a set of Pyrex nesting mixing bowls for Karen—her last ones bought the farm when slipped out of her fingers and she dropped them in the sink.

Got Jeff a couple little outfits, as the ones I got for him to wear last month are now a little tight and high water. “Can’t have my favorite guy looking like he’s waiting to hitch a ride on the Ark, now can we?”

“Irv.” We’re back to that now aren’t we. “Paaaapapaapapaapa!” Okay, we’re all good again. Then a few more sets of fatigues and name tags for me.

Okay, commissary next. Walked up and down the aisles, pulling things from various lists, including my own. Found the diapers were a lot cheaper here then either Two Guys or Star Market, so tossed a few boxes into the cart, along with jars of puppy food for Jeff. Got up to the register (thank the Alpha God it wasn’t a pay week, this place would’ve been crawling with mommies and retard-o’s) separated the groceries into three separate piles and paid for them that same way. Shoved a few bucks in the baggers tip can and pushed the shopping cart out to the Bug.

Shopping done, drove back to Henrietta, stopping at Karens to drop off the stuff I got for her and Gato. Karen decided she was tired of having dinner alone, so had an invite to stay, she then called Mrs Tracy. “Baby girl, if you could find a sitter on short notice, come on over for a bite and gossip.” Credit where credit was due, that beta broad was over in a half hour.

So we had burgers, corn on the cob and potato salad. Kind of a picnic inside as it was still too hot and sticky to sit outside comfortably. Opened up the strained carrots and mushy meat for Jeff......who looked insulted. So mushed up a bit of potato salad and tucked it down his gullet along with the carrots and mystery meat.

Got caught up on the ‘doings’ at camp. Who was doing well, who was floundering and then a surprise. “Oh, Bob ran into a friend of yours down there,” Karen said nonchalantly as she picked at her burger. “Sends his regards.” Who would I know down there at Fort Bragg this year? “Said his name was Hugh Ashton. How do you know a sergeant from The Citadel and does he have anything to do with Jeff’s middle names?”

Since there was no way to get out this gracefully and since my time here was so short, telling the
truth about last summer wouldn’t matter any more. “Got time for a story?” I asked, pushing back a little from the table. Karen got up, went to the fridge, pulled out a bottle of wine, then got three glasses out of the cupboard. Read the label, “oh my, Auslese weine mit prädikat and a 1976 vintage too!

“If we get to the bottom of this bottle, then got another one in the fridge,” she said pulling out the cork and pouring three glasses. “Spill, got the feeling this is gonna be good.”

Told how I’d almost been taken over by a chivato, an evil animal spirit sent by a bruja. (No one needed to know it was brother Luci who paid the witch) That my friend Benny Lafitte, took me to see a sergeant from his school who was, among other things, a Pennsylvania pow wow doctor. Well Hugh ‘Daddy’ Ashton did the ritual, prayers and spell work, then took a foot long bloody centipede (the shape the creature manifested itself) out of my nose.

Karen looked incredulous and Gato blessed herself. Being a third generation Zonian or resident of the Panama Canal Zone, Gato Tracy knew there were more things in ‘heaven and earth’ then dreamed of in any ones philosophy. “Tell you some time about santara my mom hired to chase a jaguar spirit back to the jungle,” she said. “That thing was a shadow being that crept around the house, scaring folks and hiding my socks.”

The next part was hard, talking about Padraino’s murder, it still hurt so terribly. Then meeting brother Micheal and the Argentines at the officers club, being chased by the Argentine Captain to the Normandy Pool, tearing up my thighs on the chain link fence and then after avoiding the captain (okay, I pushed him in the pool) went to hide out in Daddy Ashtons room at the Alpha barracks where he was the platoon sergeant.

“Wait a minute,” Gato interrupted. She held out her glass for a refill which Karen poured the last of the first bottle. That dead solder got tossed in the trash as she went to grab the other bottle out of the fridge. “This pow wow doctor was a platoon sergeant in an alpha platoon? And your buddy took you there to be de-bugged and then you went to him alone in the middle of the night, all busted up and pregnant? Ooooo you’re a crazy little gringo.”

“So I’m told,” refilled my glass as well. “Was afraid my brother would be watching my barracks, so figured the only safe place was somewhere no one would ever imagine I’d go.”

“An alpha barracks.”

“Yup.” Explained how I stayed the whole weekend, resting and healing. Being cared for by Daddy Ashton and Benny. Then told how Hugh would be there again to save me a third time in the aftermath of a near rape—it’s consequences and his reward of becoming one of my Firsts. “There are alphas who are rich as Moses who are turned down by a Madam First, while there are others church mouse poor who because their deeds, are offered it freely.” Then I blushed and stumbled, “that’s how his name became part of my life.”

“Then who’s George and Benjamin?” Asked Karen.

“George Scratchley Brown. The general who saved Johns career. Benjamin is for...Ben. Dean’s first born.” Actually it was for Benny, but that was a secret for me alone. Now that I’ve just bared my soul, really wanna get drunk and forget.

Woke up the next morning, covered by an afghan, face planted on Karens shag carpet. Ewww, also came to with a big head and the smell of coffee pile driving up my nose.

“For a guy who’s lived in places where drinking age is being able to see over the bar and having
money for the drink, along with having just graduated college,” heard my hostess say as she set a steaming cup of coffee down on the floor next to my face. “You’re such a light weight.” Figures, Karen is prolly a veteran of many a night of drinking and ‘girl’ talk.

Slowly raised my hand and gave her the peace symbol, too bad I forgot to use both fingers. But in a little while, with the help of the coffee, aspirin and a ham sandwich, got my act together. Got Jeff up and fed, thanked Karen for her hospitality and then headed out. Had to stop on the way home and vomit breakfast but actually that kinda helped. After getting home, stumbled upstairs and went back to bed, staying there most of the day. Lay my little one beside me, breathing in his milky puppy scent, memorizing each little bit, from fingers to toes. Would be packing one of his little t-shirts to keep on the pillow while I was away.

Packed my duffel up on Sunday, made sure there was the 4 sets of fatigues, 5 pairs of socks and white t-shirts, soft cap, web belts, two pairs of boots and a khaki uniform with cunt cap. My uniforms had the name and US Army tapes sewed on along with my rank and branch insignia. Put in a few pairs of boxers and for a moment almost put in a pair of silk panties but then at the last moment put them back in the dresser. I’m not Johns little hardass in ribbons and lace, not if I wanna be taken seriously by everyone including myself.

That night put everything Karen would need to care for my babe into the Bug. Kept out just enough to put him in clean clothes and diapers in the morning. “Jeff,” this is silly. I’m making a speech to a pup who’s sound a sleep. Even if he were awake all he could do was say, ‘papa’. Oh who am I kidding? He’d say ‘Irve’. “There’s nothing in this world I’d want more then to stay here and watch you grow for the next three weeks. But I can’t. Not if I’m gonna have a chance to make a life for us.” Touched his soft smooth skin, he’s got an ‘outie’ bellybutton, just like me.

“God! This is messed up. Why would jumping out of a perfectly good airplane be sooooo, important?!?” Cuz, it is. It means I’m as good as any alpha, even if I have to work harder just to stay even. “Love you Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin Winchester. With all my heart and soul. We’re going to have the best life, one way or the other. I promise.” I fell asleep that night cuddled around my babe.

Five o’ clock the next morning, I was up and dressed. Too full of nervous energy to really sleep well or do anything but pace the rooms. Was in my most comfortable pair of jeans, pull over and sandals as this was going to be a full driving day. Jeff was still asleep when I picked him up and put him in the car seat. Duffel, paper work, Jeff’s stuff...money, plane tickets and road maps. Also packed in the car were several boxes of books, my album collection, record player, vacuum cleaner and the foot stool/coffee table. Anything to lighten the load on pack up day. Will bring them over to Dad and her Mummyships house in Annapolis after I get to DC. Then lastly, the small lock box with my posh collar, jewelry, blank checks, passports, will and Jeff’s birth certificate. Also was a motorized letter allowing Karen and Bobby to get Jeff treated by a doctor or hospital should he become ill or injured.

There, I think that’s everything.

Drove over to Riverknoll and pulled up in front of ‘Casa Singer’. The lights in the apartment were already on, good because I felt kind of bad already getting her up this early. My little one had woken up a bit and was drooling on my shoulder, when I freed him from the car seat and held him like was the most precious thing in the world.....which he was.

“Good morning,” Karen had stepped out on to the front stoop. “All ready for the big adventure?”

“A part of me is,” I said coming over and handing her the diaper bag. “Another part just wants to go home and forget about the whole thing.”
“I feel like that every time we got PCS’d,” she took the bag and Jeff, then headed inside. “Just finally got some of the boxes out of storage and unpacked from 3 moves ago. Knew Bob had brought home some knick knacks from Hong Kong and Korea, the last he was there. Just forgot what box they’d been packed up in.” Had heard that same tale of woe from Naomi Mom. When she finally got all the moving boxes out of the basement and unpacked, she found 2 German toasters, both Krups and both totally worthless in this country without a voltage converter.

Went back to the car and got out the diapers, his clothes and food. It took a couple of trips but all of his stuff was inside and scattered around Karens living room. That’s when I also pulled out the $200, “here. You’re going to need this.” This time was not going to take ‘no’ for an answer. Nor this time she didn’t refuse the money or make any noises to do so. “That should be enough till I get back. If it’s not, let me know and I’ll get you more.” June and July have put a big dent in my savings what with going to Lake George, the car insurance and now this. Hopefully can make it last just one more month before heading down to Fort Lee.

Well, that’s done. Guess I should get going, this is going to be an all day trip and need to get going. Now. Really should be going now. “Can I hold him one more time?” Karen gently lay the dozy pup in my arms.

“Irv?” He nuzzled, his lips and tongue wetting my neck. Tasting my skin and breathing in the scent of his papa. Then looked at me curiously and laughed. “Gook!” Which reminds me, took the paper back out of my jeans pocket and handed it to Karen.

“We’re on Chapter Six, the part where Hawkeye is drinking from falls. He loves that part. I’ve read it three times already.” Then remembered, “he likes the sounds of cows, pigs and cats. And rabbits.”

“I’ll bite,” the good lady asked, amused. “How does a rabbit sound?”

“Eaaaaaaaaaaa...What’s up doc?”

“Get out,” she crooked a finger towards the door. “You gotta long way to go and now you’re just making silly talk, to keep from getting on the road.”

I know. “Be a good boy for papa,” whispered in his little ear. Then handed him over to Karen. Dear Lord, if it’s this hard just to go three weeks to Jump school, what will happen if I have to go to war for months on end? Could feel the tears, well up in my eyes. One more kiss on the head, one more look... “Bye Sweetheart! Love you! Thanks Karen.” And I was out the door. Walked out to the car, back straight, head high.....the words ‘don’t walk like some omega pussy’ bouncing about my brain. Opened the car door, sat down, started the car and pulled away to begin my great adventure.

Got as far as the bottom of the hill before having to pull off to the side of the road and sob my heart out. Sat there with the car idling, leaning against the steering wheel, wailing and carrying on, till caught sight of myself in the rear view mirror. Oh yuck. Red puffy eyes, snotty nose, holy Alpha God, did I look bad. And pathetic. And nasty. And.......done feeling sorry for myself. Reached over and took the map out of the glove box. Wiped the snot and tears with the back of my hand, then rubbed it off on my pant leg. Had studied the roads last night, but needed a moments distraction to stop thinking about lay behind but what lay ahead.

“Okay, take Route 15A down to 39o and take that all the way to Painted Post (what the hell kind of name is that?) we’ll pick up Route 15 and take that all the way through Pennsylvania.” Okay, let’s go. Except....turned around and went back to Karens. “Here,” I was standing at her door again. “Forgot his car seat.”
“No problem,” she traded me the seat for a cup of coffee. “Glad you remembered. Now scoot.”

“See ya in three weeks! Will call when I get in to DC.” Now there was really no excuse but to get out of there before......before I never wanted to leave. Squared my shoulders and walked to the car. I’m Lt Novac and I’m gonna be a paratrooper. My boy is gonna be proud of me. Climbed in the Bug and now I’m leaving for real.

It was actually a good day for travel; the sun was out and there wasn’t much traffic on the road yet. The day before the 4th of July, you’d think folks would be getting up and out for an early start but didn’t seem to be the case. Which was fine by me. Or maybe people just didn’t think this part of New York was a place to go on holiday. 15A wended through open fields, small towns, wooded stretches and lakes. About an hour and change in, needed a couple of things. A bathroom, another cup of coffee, some breakfast and gasoline.

All of which I found at this big tourist hotel called the Lodge on the Green just outside of Painted Post. Still wanna know who the hell kinda name is that for a town? Parked and found the coffee shop, hit the head, then came out, gotta a table and sat down. “What can I get for you Hon?” The waitress was a stocky middle aged alpha woman with sensible shoes and henna red hair. She came up with practiced ease, coffee pot in one hand, a glass of water in the other and an apron pocket full of creamers.

“Some of that coffee to start with.” As the words came out of my mouth, she dropped a few creamers on the table, flipped over the mug, filling it just enough to add cream and sugar. Took a quick look at the menu card, “I’ll have the two strips of bacon, eggs sunny-side up and rye toast please.”

She set down the coffee pot on a near by table, took the order pad and pen from her ample cleavage and wrote down the order. “What will your alpha have when he or she gets here?”

Oh crap, they must not get many omegas traveling alone around here. Last thing I need is to draw attention to myself. There were few early raisers and don’t need any big ears or itchy noses to know my business. “No, he’s still asleep in our room. Poor thing, drove most most the night to get here.” Smiled coyly, “we’re up from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It’s our first mating anniversary, we’re going to Niagara Falls.” Oh can I still pile it on higher and deeper or what? “He’ll be over for lunch.” Inwardly I sighed, my first mating anniversary was on June 25th. It went unnoticed, uncelebrated and had forgotten about it until halfway down the Thruway to Lake George. Happy anniversary to me.

“Well, that’s awful nice.” Huh? What? Oh yeah, the waitress is still yammering on. “Your alpha in the military?” She topped off my coffee. “My oldest boy is stationed in Germany, he’s a mechanic with one of the tank units over there.

“Yes ma’am. He’s a captain in the 82nd Airborne.” I smiled like a proud little omega mate. “He’s so wonderful and brave.”

“Awww, bet you’re gonna have the cutest little pups together.” She said walking off to the kitchen to put in my order. ‘I do have the cutest little pup already’, I growled under my breath. There were two newspapers on the table next to mine, ‘The Leader’ and the ‘Elmira Star-Gazette’. Flipped the papers around to read the headlines. What’s happening in the world today. ‘Battle rages in Lebanon for third day’. Looks like the Israelis are still in southern Lebanon going at it with the Palestinians. ‘Vice President Mondale is going to Egypt’ and ‘China stops aid to Vietnam.’ Plus all the local yokel news you could stand.

“Here you go,” the waitress came back. “Two strips of bacon, eggs sunny side up and rye toast.”
She set the plate down, refilled my coffee cup then set the check next to my water glass. “Enjoy.”

Dug into the food, mmmmm, pretty darn good for hotel food. Usually it’s expensive and not all that great. But for a $1.50 plus a dollar tip, not bad at all. Read the papers as I ate, enjoying the time to be able to do so cuz for the next three weeks, down time is going to be a luxury. But gotta get going, got a long way to go yet. Hit the head one more time, left the $2.50 on the table and left. Topped off the tank at the Texaco station next door and then took off down the road.

Crossed over into Pennsylvania a half hour later and drove on through mountain passes, forests, small towns and cities. Green, never saw so much wild woods since leaving Panama. Route 15 was a two lane in some places, a four lane in others and construction through out. Geeze, what’s going on in this state? Got in to Lewisburg shortly after 12:00 noon and was again looking for a clean place to contemplate the fate of the world and grab some lunch to go. Stopped in at the Colonial Crest Hotel and restaurant, it’s not too fancy but it served the purpose. Put in an order for a BLT and a root beer. Retooled the fib about my alpha, this time he waiting in the car and that I needed just to use the ‘little omegas room’. Was so cute, thought I was gonna vom. The mens room was clean and smelled like pine. It also had a good solid door lock, so I felt safe to drop my drawers and have a seat.

Some day, I’m going to be able to travel alone and not have every alpha/beta itchy nose wanna know where my alpha was.

Finished up, paid for the food and left. Down the road a ways, found a place to pull off that had a couple of picnic tables and a view of the river. Get out and have a seat at one of those tables, eat my lunch and watch the waters of the Susquehanna flow by. The sandwich was good, like there was anything you could do to bacon, lettuce and tomato, other then maybe under cook the bacon. The root beer was local, out of some place called Catawissa. Didn't take long to polish off and toss the bottle in the back seat. Must remember on the way back to find a grocery store and get some of that Big Bens soda. Got up and stood, letting the vertebrae fall back in to place as the breeze off the river fill my nose with the smell of birth, life and death. Better push on, still got a ways to go and am only about half way there. On the other hand, there was an A&P supermarket not far down the road. Stopped there, bought some more of that good Big Bens root beer. Whew, feeling a little warm. Hope I’m not coming down with something, not after everything I to do to get this far. WILL NOT get side lined with a summer cold.

But the soda helped and to keep from dwelling on my possible down turn in fortune, turned on the radio to sing along with what ever came on:

You got me looking at that heaven in your eyes
I was chasing your direction
I was telling you no lies
And I was loving you
When the words are said, baby, I lose my head
And in a world of people, there's only you and I
There ain't nothing come between us in the end
How can I hold you when you ain't even mine
Only you can see me through
I leave it up to you

Do it light, taking me through the night
Shadow dancing, baby do it right
Give me more, drag me across the floor
Shadow dancing, all this and nothing more

Listened to what ever came over the dial as the stations waxed and waned as I drove through the mountains. Rock, pop and even caught the tail end of some Philly soul station. Made me wish for AFN or even better....Radio Luxemburg, ‘The station to the Stars’ as their DJ’s used to sing out. You could hear their broadcasts all over Europe. Even the Iron Curtain couldn’t keep ‘the Great 208’ from bringing rock to the Eastern Bloc. I picked them up in Schenectady once when I was working late one night mopping floors at an all night greasy spoon. Something was going on in the atmosphere that evening to bounce the signal all the way across the Atlantic. Sang along with the Commodores now: “Ow, she’s a brick house, She’s mighty-mighty, just lettin it all hang out. She’s a brick house, that lady’s stacked and that’s fact, ain’t’ holding nothing back!”

It was getting on to around 05:00 when I finally made it to Washington DC and the traffic had picked up considerably. Had the directions to embassy on Massachusetts Ave NW but with construction, road blocks and people just trying to get to....where ever, I was getting lost. This is insane...maybe not the epic proportions of Paris traffic. Flashed back for a moment to the ride around the Place de la Nation on a stolen......er ‘borrowed’ Ducci motorcycle. Gabe and I had ran away to Paris when I was 15 and he was 17 after we lifted this guys wallet that had a ton of money in it. Any who, we ‘borrowed’ the bike from in front of this cafe, the owner was stupid enough to leave the keys in the ignition and the two of us were stupid little punks who made the most of that decision. So we went on one hellofa banger ride through rush hour traffic, course the cops were soon after us. Okay, so we were going the wrong way up Boulevard Voltaire, it’s Paris, who the fuck would’ve known the difference? Guess the cops did and lit out after us, took a while, but we lost them in the Quartier Asiatique. Those were good times.

And if Jeff EVER does that, I will fucking kill em and then ground his little ass for life!

But in the mean time, how in the name of the Alpha God did Jenny drive in this? Oh yeah, she’s the Lady Jeanette Jerome Reynolds. That omega broad can do anything. Finally gave up trying to find the embassy around 06:00 o’clock and began looking for a place with a pay phone to call and have someone come find me. The gas stations I passed all looked kinda....freaky deek...in a too alpha kinda way, not the kinda places a lone omega would wanna go and say they’re lost in. Even with the ‘Lovers Kiss’ and ‘Snubby’ the 38 snub nosed revolver were in the glove box.

Ended up in front of this Japanese joint that looked like they were classy enough to have a pay phone but not that high brow to give me a hassle to use it if all I order is just some tea. “Welcome to Tokyo Sukiyaki,” the beta hostess in traditional dress bowed and smiled. “Are you dining alone or waiting for your party to arrive?” Now that’s more like it. Could get used to coming into a place like this, where the first question out of their mouths isn’t ‘where’s your alpha’?

“Well, I’d like some tea please and to use your pay phone. I’m kind of temperately mis-oriented (as my dear old drill sergeants always said: ‘you are never lost cadet, you are only temperately mis-oriented’) and my friends were expecting me prolly an hour ago.”

The hostess’s smile never wavered, even in the face of some number 10 cheap ass nervous omega stinking up her entrance way. “Where do your friends live?”

“They’re stationed at the British embassy.”

Now her face lit up, “the English people come here all the time. Major Balti is soooo funny.” She turned to one of the waitresses who had come up and at the mention of this ‘Major Balti’ they both
started giggling into their hands. Dude must be a major laugh riot to get this kind of response. “Come, have your tea. Rest.” She motioned me to a small table just inside the dining room. “Where you want to go is not far from here. If you have their phone number, I will call your friends to let them know you’re here and safe.”

Figures, drive all over creation and end up close but no cigar. Story of my life. Gave Jenny’s name and the phone number, then sat down at the table. The tea was quickly brought out along with a single sweet red bean bun. Just enough to take away the ‘grum-bellys’ but not to spoil dinner. Ate the bun slowly, savoring the softness of the bread and the subtle sweetness of the bean paste that was more European in character than American.

It was about 15 or 20 minutes later when the delightful familiar aroma of a certain British omega filled my nose. “Darling, we began fearing for the worst when you didn’t arrive earlier. That drive is far too long for someone alone.” Her Ladyship strode in like she owned the joint with the hostess in her wake and a waitress following flirting and giggling behind her hand with.....Balthazar! “Ume-san was very kind to call and let us know you were here.”

Was caught up in her arms before I could say another word. Other then to look over her shoulder to see Balti gobble down the rest of the bean bun. Jump’in Jebus, he really is a major. Being at the embassy has been good his career. Beats the heck out of getting shot at by the Irish Republican Army. After a long ride, the rough start and the rougher ending, sigh, at this point it doesn’t matter any more. I’m here. “Came along Major Novac,” Jenny turned a commanding voice his way, “let’s get your brother home. Pay for his tea and bean bun, that’s a good lad, we’ll be outside.”

Went down the short flight of stairs to find her ‘beamer’ was double parked in front of the restaurant with the emergency lights flashing. “Where are we in relation to the embassy? How close did I get?”

“Depending on the time of day and if there is something amiss,” Jenny said as she walked over to her car. “Five minutes to an hour.” Found out we were at 1736 Connecticut Ave NW, the embassy was on Massachusetts Ave NW, basically around the corner and up the street. My brother came out a few moments later, smiling like a cheshire cat and carrying a small take out box. <p/>

“Here,” he said, tossing me the box. “A few more bean buns, courtesy of Ume-sama.”

Jenny snagged it in mid-flight, damn that slick is fast, “come along you two. We can eat buns when we get home. Or in your case Major,” she cast an eye back at the waitresses who’d come to the doorway to bow and wave goodbye. “I suspect your buns will be more lively when you bite them.” Oooo, he been busted!

Balti drove the Bug to the embassy, give him credit for keeping up with her Ladyship in a car he hadn’t driven in years (but then again its a VW Bug, they’re all basically the same and besides, how hard can a stick shift be?). I just collapsed in the passenger seat, too wore out to make conversation, or even think very hard of what I left behind and what’s in front of me. “Cas? Little brother?” Huh? Did I doze off? “Wake up, we’re here.”

The passengers side door flung open and as I stepped out was immediately pushed back in by a flying tackle of a hug. “Oh so glad you’re here!” Jesse Reynolds was nipping, kissing and trying to talk all at the same time. “When you were late, thought you had an accident or were kidnapped by pirates or eaten by werewolves!”

“Pirates? Werewolves?” As far as I knew the only ‘pirates’ were in Pittsburgh and were wolves...there wolves....there caste.....Frau Blucher......wheeeeee! Sorry.
“A Hammer movie marathon was on this past Saturday night,” Jenny tisked, “he spent half the night watching and the rest waiting for Oliver Reed to burst through the window. Took my best silver cake knife, you wicked thing.” She gave him a light slap on the back of the head.

In the mean time, gently got untangled from the overexuberant pup, so I could get out of the car. Now that I’m not pregnant anymore, can do this whole ‘official’ greeting of a Madam First to their alpha more easily. Went down on one knee. Ah tradition. I should be in the chorus line of “Fiddler on the Roof”, for all the tradition a well (okay ALMOST) trained omega goes through. “Alpha Reynolds, this unworthy one was blessed to have been able to offer himself to you.”

Jenny nodded her approval at my greeting to her son. “Now what do you say Darling?”

The boy thought a moment, “I hold you like you’re the most precious thing in the world, cuz you are.”

“Good lad.” Lewiston Reynolds had picked that moment to come out of their quarters. Balthazar quickly snapped to attention, as my little alpha’s father was still in uniform. The general returned his salute smartly and then turned his gaze to me. “Madame First, you are welcome in our home.”

“Thank you Alpha Reynolds,” then… “Could you help me up? The knees aren’t working too good right now.”

“Oh quite.” He held my hands as I was trying to get my uncooperative legs to move.

“See you in the morning Little Brother. Get some rest.” Balthazar saluted once more and when it was returned, he did a crisp about face and walked toward the unmarried staff quarters. Or at least that’s what Jenny said they were. And whether Balti would be spending the night there after his spirited welcome by the ladies of Tokyo Sukiyaki, one could only guess.

“Come along,” Lewiston pulled my duffel out of the back seat. “Let’s get you inside and to some supper. We’ve even eaten already but saved you a plate.” He handed the bag to Jesse to take up to the guest room. Went inside and was about to sit down at the kitchen table when I remembered the promise to call Karen to let her know I made it in. At least it was after five o’clock so the call wouldn’t be as expensive.

Could hear the muffled ring, then a click and a far away voice, “Singer residence.”


“Oh good, how was the trip down?”

Twisted the long phone cord between my fingers. “Long, kinda boring. Got lost once I got here in the city, ended up at some Japanese joint about a mile from the embassy. But I’m standing in my friends kitchen now. How’s Jeff?”

Eating like a horse, pooping like a cow and who the heck is ‘Irv’?

, “Irv is the father of the omega girl whose mating Ben and I went to. For some reason Jeff latched on to his name. He says it more then ‘papa’ or ‘dada’. We talk a moment or two more, didn’t want to run up Jennys phone bill. “Is he awake?”

“No, I put him to bed a little while ago. If you call around 06:00 tomorrow night, I’ll make sure he’s up.”

Balled my fists. Need to rein in the ache that stabbed through my heart like a hot iron spike.
“Thanks Karen. Have a good night.”

“You too Cas. Bye now.” And she hung up. Set the hand set back on the receiver and plastered a smile on my face. Then sat down at the table.<p/>

Wordlessly Jenny put a dish down in front me. “Hope you like chicken curry and sticky rice.” She then took the seat across from mine. There is so much I wanna talk about, but...several bites in even the act of chewing was becoming a chore. It wasn’t that the food isn’t good, it’s just I’m too wore out to enjoy it. So trying to form coherent thought and words was a little out of reach right now.

Jesse had come back into the kitchen and sat down beside me. His nose twitched, “you smell....nice.”

Huh? “Little First, I smell like I drove all day on nerves, root beer and adrenaline in small car with 2-60 air conditioning.” Set the fork down and leaned back. “Sorry guys, but do you mind if I finish the rest of this for breakfast?”

“Of course not darling.” Jenny took the plate and set it on side board. “You look completely knackered. Now off you get, have a good sleep and feel better in the morning.” I stood, kissed Jesse on the forehead and then linked arms with his mom and walked upstairs to the guest room. Flicked on the wall light switch and the room was aglow in small pools of light from the bedside lamps. It was as I remembered it from the last time, large four poster of dark wood, chest of drawers and windows that allowed in the light of a morning sun. “Goodnight Castiel,” her ladyships voice was that low sexy melodic line of just two words that sent an electric jolt up and down my spine.

Leaned in and put a light kiss on her mouth. Then one more because that first one wouldn’t be lonely. Must have a third because....because I want one more touch of those soft full rose petal lips, heady scent and her lush post pregnancy body pushed against mine. John was right, this was a time when omegas are at their most beautiful. Now was in a fog of want, need and how did it get so hot in here? Was sweating like a whore in church. Jennys clever fingers were all racing across my clothes, unzipping, pushing buttons through holes and tugging away that pesky material. “My, my.” She whispered, her lips winnowing along the shell of my ear.

Oh crap, I stink. “Just give me a minute to take a bath,” said quickly, turning to go to the washroom in the hall. Didn’t matter if I were naked or not. Just wanted to please my Jenny. Flung open the door and found Lewiston on the other side, hand up to knock.

“Had just come up to say goodnight,” then his nose twitched. “Or not.” He stepped in the room and locked the door behind him. Okay, skip the bath. “Fledermaus,” the growl was as suggestive as the tongue that ran across his lips.

“Doesn’t he smell lovely?” Jenny cooed, kneeling on the bed rucking up her skirt to show the tops of her stockings.

“Indeed he does Mouse,” Lewistons voice roughened as his mate beckoned with scent and salacious looks, his exotic scent turning more and more erotic with each passing second.

“Come here, you great silly man. I want you first.”

Her long stockinged legs were as an ‘x’ across his back, his trousers had wiggled to half mast
about his knees as those scarred white globes bobbed up and down like a buoy in the North Sea. I stood there like a statue at the side of the bed. Watching. Hard on pressed painfully to my belly, slick streaming through pinks like a monsoon and my mind burning to ash. The two of them are beautifully wanton; an alpha taking his omega. Some times you just need an old fashioned fuck; a few sloppy kisses, clothes go up, down or sideways then right to the down and dirty.

Her Ladyship turned her head away from where she’d pressed it into Lewistons shoulder a moment earlier. Those glittering eyes taking in the poor creature beside the bed. “Come closer,” she said lazily. Then, patted a spot on the sheets beside her. “lay down......right here.” Could feel the sweat rolling down the middle of my back, what’s happening? Downstairs, was too tired too eat, but now am wide awake. Everything’s unreal....like someone took a magic marker and outlined certain things but left others smudged and unclear. Licked my lips, it’s too hot. I’m burning up.

“Jenny,” even my voice cracked like a dry stick.

“Don’t worry Darling,” she crooned. “We’ll take care of you. Now be a good boy and spread your legs. A little wider, there you are. You’re such a fine omega for me.”

“Wanna to be good for you.”

“Oh but you are Sweet heart. So very very good.” Watched Lewiston get up and toss off his uniform. The shirt and tie fall to the floor, the trousers followed momentarily with a metallic clunk of belt buckle and pocket change. His chest was lightly muscled, not bad for a man, who despite age and time behind a desk, still went to PT with the enlisted ranks, because he needed to be able to show the lads how it was done. There were a few puckers on his right side and upper arms that show where the bullet went in or out. The rips in his flesh that barbed wire or knives have a habit of leaving behind. Where these marks would’ve repulsed others, it made me want him all the more. His dick was swaying to and fro, hard and glistening with his mates slick. His cock ring was missing tonight, but Lewiston was still rather impressive without it.

Jenny had gotten up off the bed, moving swiftly to the door, unlocked it and peeked out. She slipped out and a moment later returned with a glass of water in hand. “Here, drink slowly. Can’t have you drying out now can we?”

The water was a cool stream tumbling down my throat. Tipped my back back to catch the last, it may not have been enough, but it was a start. “Thank you, that’s better.” Now was ready, “My Lord Alpha, how do you wish me?” Bowed my head and lowered my gaze. For John I was bold and brash but tonight for Lewiston, I play the shy submissive.

“I want to see you,” he said huskily, creeping on to the bed. “Your face, bodys fire and for a moment, what John Winchester possesses to make you so.” So it’s Missionary, that grand old position that’s everyone sneers at but there is something about having a mass of alpha meat pressing your back into a mattress, floor, back seat or any surface. It’s power and comfort and well......just everything. And of course, with my usual luck, that is when we all hear a loud and rather insistent cry of Byron Arthur Odysseus Reynolds coming from the direction of their bed room

Jenny leapt off the bed like she’d been shot from catapult. “Carry on,” she called back over her shoulder, “will be back in a jiff.”

Well, that was like a bucket of ice on the whole situation. But Lewiston, having been rewarded for his quick thinking, cool nerve and ability to turn a disaster into victory, used these very same traits to get the mood back. “Now,” he said, pulling out and sat cross legged like a yogi on a mountain top. “What would John do to get you back into good form?”

Grinned from ear to ear, “actually. He’d tell me a funny story or a joke.”
The general sighed, “some how most of the jokes I know are rather long in the tooth, too dry or as an American, you’d never understand the cultural reference.”

“HA! Bet I would, I wasn’t born here after all only came to the US five years ago. But, okay. Tell me a funny story.” Now lets pry a true story out of him. “What did you think of John when you first met him?”

Lewistons lips twitched. “I thought he was a big git.” I snorted a giggle. “Bloody John Wayne walk, giving those ‘Great Santini’ speeches in a voice like he’d swallowed a cricket bat wrapped in barbed wire.” Now that’s a mental picture and a half to give one the giggles “My opinion changed some after we got terribly drunk one night, Mary had one of those duty dinners where Jenny and I came to break bread at Quarters One. Frightful bore, right up until John and I went to his office for cigars and brandy, opened a bottle of this stuff he’d picked up in Virginia, called ‘Apple Jack’. Which we proceeded to get very VERY drunk on.

Now this promised to be the best kind of story; funny, embarrassing and good blackmail material for later on. “So what happened?” Crept in closer till our knees were touching.

“We did silly manly things of course. Told stories that would make Baron Munchhausen jealous, mostly about our bravery and squaring the ladies. Then of course we pulled down our pants, showed off our battle scars and compared willies. He won that one of course, the flash ass bastard.”

I casually reached over and put his in my palm. “You have a very fine willy.” Then leaned forward, pulled back the foreskin with a thumb and placed a kiss on the bulbous head. “Like touching a butterfly’s wing, strong yet velvety.”

“Really?” Alphas! They turn into such pups when talking about their dicks. Doesn’t matter what age or primary gender, they all just seem to be caught up in this ALPHA bullshit about ‘how big’, ‘how thick’, can I impress the girls or omegas. But in the mean time, didn’t do anything else but leave his ever stiffening self in the palm of my hand.

“Truly,” I said, with a shy smile and a down turn of eyes. “So what did you think of John after that night?”

“Oh he was still a big git,” Lewiston said with a twinkle in his eye. “But a very likeable one.”

Choked back a laugh, “and now?”

“John Winchester became a truly capital fellow” now his whole demeanor changed.....”the day he came back from North Carolina after mating you. Though to be honest,” Lewistown looked a little sheepish. “Thought John lost his bloody mind when he picked an ‘Angel Novac’ and the only omega son of Naomi Elizabeth Westmoreland Novac to boot.” Good grief, had my family that bad a reputation? All things considered.....Naomi-Mom...Luci...Micheal...yeah, I see the issue.”

Yeah, that woulda given me second thoughts too.” Obviously something had altered these facts if he was willing to tie his family to the Winchesters, even with me a part of it. “My family was and still is a bit of a horror show,” I admitted. “But what was it that finally changed your mind?”

“What changed it my dear little Fledermaus, is meeting you both by proxy and when we went to dinner at the Fort Riley officers club.” Now he unfolded those ‘daddy long legs’ of his and gently pushed me on my back, then pressing his body onto mine. “The smell that carried on the winds of you and John making love out on that screen porch after dark.” Could feel his ‘turtles head’ rooting about to find entrance. “Mouse and I hadn’t shagged that much in years.”
“Anything to help jump start the fires of passion in the bedroom,” said with a snarky smirk. “And other bad Harlequin romance titles.” But that was the last bit of cheek I had, as the heat was starting to build up under my skin again and didn’t know how long could keep up the facade. Lewiston must have felt it too, or smelt it as the chuffing sound of scent being drawn in nose and pursed lips grew louder.

“You smell so.....delicious,” could feel his tongue dragging down my neck wetly from back of ear to collar bone. “And taste like apples and cream,” the thrust and bite happened at the same time. Threw my head back with a gasp and arched my body off the mattress. Lewistons mating teeth sunk into the scar he’d made the last time I was here. Can only pray that it won’t cause problems at jump school, but that was just a ghost of a concern that flitted at the edge of my conscientness.

“You were so beautiful that night back in Kansas,” he whispered through bloodied lips. “Dressed in Jennys grandpapa’s omega gown, barefoot and belly just starting to become round with pup.” Could feel his knot swell as he pumped and sweated, as I moaned, clung and bled. “Then to learn you’d risked life, limb and that of your unborn to try and save the ‘Lost Trooper’ of the Ghost Cavalry, that’s when I knew John hadn’t made a mistake. You were worth the risk.”

Now could feel the knot catch, the vaginal muscles closed in, milking and fluttering along his thick member. Making sure every drop of seed was spilled and caught inside my womb. “John loved you truly, openly and honestly, letting the consequences be damned. That’s the kind of alpha I want at my side, one who was a brother in arms and spirit, a defender of hearth and home, of alpha/beta and omega. He may be named for a brigand, but there was no one else I’d want to bind our family and fortunes to.” And he punctuated that pretty speech by biting into my shoulder again, this time next to Johns mark, not as a challenge but a promise of care. Now the good general has raised his flag (in more ways then one) should there ever be a pup conceived from he or Jesse, the babe would not be a bastard but a living breathing representation of the Profound Bond. He or she would be considered an equal with pups in both families.

If I weren’t pressed into the mattress, would be on my knees presenting, pledging my life, body and house Winchester to House Reynolds. To he, Jenny and my First. Wrapped arms and legs about Lou holding on even though his knot caught he still bucked and writhed, until our bellies were painted white with my cum. Then it was done. The emotions that floated me to a great height on a blistering up draft, now fell away. We came, we cum and now have nothing left in the gas tank to hold us up. Clung to the big alpha as if my life depended on it. “Would go to the cross road and sell my soul,” heard him whisper. “To breed a pup with you.”

“Don’t say that,” Have to tell him before drop sets in. “Please! You never know what’s listening.” But before I could say more, the darkness pulled me away.

What woke me the next morning was not only the ache in my shoulders (Holy Baby Jebus, those bites better be almost healed by Friday) or the plug in my pinks (how did that get there....oh yeah. Can be such a moron before coffee) but the warmth and scent of two of my most favorite people. May have awoke alone but Jenny and Lewiston were there in spirit and in the perfume of a contented alpha and his omega mate. I was in their bedroom, must have been carried there after......ewwww. The guest room must be a mess. Will get that cleaned up toot sweet today. Looked at the bedside clock, 09:00 AM. Shortest drop I ever had. Good. Won’t be wasting the
holiday asleep.

Started to stretch when I noticed my hands were loosely bound together by.....curtain ties, if the drooping window curtains are any indication. Wow, wish I’d been awake for some of this, looks like it must have been a really good time. Jenny does so love a good ‘tie me up’. Pulled the knots open with my teeth and set the ties aside to put back on the curtains a little later. Then stretched, listening to the joints crack from toes to finger tips and every bit in between. Oooo, that felt great! After a long day in a small car, pretty darn good sex and then some well deserved rest, I felt a million bucks.

Sat up, swung my legs over the side of the bed and stood up. I’m naked, which is okay, better to fuck me silly with. Caught sight of myself in the mirror on the back of the bedroom door. I may have felt like a million but looked like five cents. Gads, haven’t been like this since John came to see me in April, though it took a while to get down to the nitty gritty. I came away looking like, well, kinda like this.

There were hand shaped bruises on my hips, scratches on my back (Lewiston, you need a manicure) and my nipples were tender and leaking. Come on guys! Those babies were almost dried up, now you got em dripping again. My arms and legs didn’t leave untouched as there were more bruises, scratches and bite marks. Damn! The stuff I was awake for was pretty darn good, geeze, Jenny and Lou must have really gone to town after I dropped. It’s not fair! Why does my subconscience always get to have all the fun? < /p>

The shoulder bites were bandaged of course, carefully pulled off the gauze to have a look. Hissed, they were deep, oh man. That is not going to anywhere healed by Friday. Will have to buy some sanitary napkins, they’re thick enough (hopefully) to provide padding, that when ‘tower week’ comes round the bites will be mostly healed up.

My other shoulder was bandaged too, good gravy....Lewiston wasn’t fooling around last night. Well, at least if I ever have a Bond pup some day, some how maybe in a few years or a decade or two, the little guy will be taken care of. Geeze, I’m a mess. Bruised, bit and...touched the bits.....woosh, they’re sore too. There was a bathrobe tossed on the bench in front of Jennys vanity, need to get to the bath to get cleaned up. Slipped it on, mmmmmm, silk....this is nice. Slippery and cool on my poor tortured skin. And I’m getting hard. Focus Novac! Jump Schoo!

With thoughts of dead fish, Ben in a brides maid gown and Naomi-Mom banging hookers on police cars, went to the bathroom to get washed. The upstairs was quiet, no one in the hall way. The rest of the family must be up and doing whatever they do this time of day. Will have to check in on Jesse. But in the mean time, filled the tub with warm water, stepped in and then reached down, pulled out the plug. Out of my drain, not the tub’s.

Globs of jizz ran thickly down my thighs and into the soapy water (had added a bit of suds. What? A guy can’t enjoy a manly bubble bath?) How many times did he go to the well? Must have been a few judging from the amount of puppy juice Lewiston packed up there. Carefully fingered my sack and neither lips, they were both were puffy and sore. So were the pinks, looks like everything got quite the work out. Lay out in the tub for a while, letting my thoughts drift and the water cleanse, until was jolted back by a pups wail.

Just about killed myself trying to get out of that bathtub, “coming Sweetheart! Papa’s coming!” Only to remember, oh yeah. Jeff’s in Rochester. Now that hot iron of longing and guilt is back. Will call home tonight. Don’t care if I have to leave the whole $30.00 bucks in hard cash money on their kitchen table, need to hear MY pups voice. Even if it’s just ‘Irv’.

Since I’m out, let’s get the day going. Pick up a towel, oh good, they still use the thin ones.
Lessons learned from the Far East. Thin towels dry better then the big fluffy ones Americans seem to go nuts over. Thin towels weigh less, dry faster and don’t take up so much room....lessons learned from moving a million times. Put back on the robe....dead fish...Zachariah naked...that did it, then with some trepidation, head to the guest room to get my shaving gear, tooth brush and Ovatheram.

Opened the guest room door hesitantly and peeked in. Oh thank the Alpha God, the bed didn’t look like someone had butchered a pig on it. The sheets was striped off, there was a plastic cover over the mattress and a pile of fresh linen on top of the dresser waiting to be put on. Will take care of that after breakfast. But for now, pulled the duffel bag out of the corner to the middle of the room where I could rummage through for the shaving kit. There it is, right at the bottom, next to the boots. Also pulled out a pair of jeans and.....okay....I brought one camisole. Just the white cotton one, with the scalloped neck line, the one John always liked, the one that went with the lacy cotton panties, which were packed too. Oy Vey. I am a little hard ass in ribbons and lace whether I like it or not.

Pulled on the nice panties and camisole, then a pair of jeans. Skipped the foot wear for the time being, then headed back to the bathroom. Unzipped the kit, then took out the razor and shaving cream. Mays well get that done first. The idea of ‘mowing the infield’ came to mind, then left. Had enough on my plate without the itch of a newly shaved crotch. Next came the tooth brush and paste, nothing like a ‘Pepsident smile’. Lastly, the Ovatheram. The thing that keeps off the heat and the pregnancy. Or as funny guy George Carlin always called it: ‘papa stopper’ or ‘heat be gone’ or ‘not-knot joke’.

Got out the pack, Ortho Pharmaceutical had now repackaged the pills in a wheel like dispenser, just like the birth control alphas and beta women get. Only their package was white and ours was blue. Guess the little dust up at the Mirra Pharmacy wasn’t so little, as it changed the way the drug was marketed. Clicked the cover so the opening would be over the Tuesday pill, then noticed the little words along side...SUN. Sunday? What?! Sunday and Monday were still full. OH SHIT! Had been so busy and worked up, had forgotten to take them. Did I go into heat last night? Pushed out all three pills and gulped them down with some water from the tap. What have I done?

Sniffed myself, no changes I could smell. Grabbed my gut. No flutter. Tried to think of what my last heat felt like. Uhhhhhhhh, don’t remember. Other then it was awful. WHAT? I was 11 years old at the time. And last time I got pregnant it was because of mating fugue. Calm down Novac, you took the pills, it’s gonna be okay. You’re NOT pregnant! You hear that God? I’m NOT PREGNANT!


Jenny and Erika were sitting at the kitchen table, both reading the newspaper, but different ones. Reynolds the Elder.....er....more mature....was perusing The Times of London, while Reynolds the younger had the entertainment section of the Washington Post. “Oooooo, Mummy! ‘Heaven Can Wait’ is playing at the cinema, can we go......”

“Tomorrow,” her mother said automatically. “Everything is closed today, it’s a holiday for our American cousins.”

“But not for us,” Erika whined. “And why are you reading that bum wad? It’s two weeks old! I don’t know why you and daddy, get the thing. It always shows up late and you already know what’s going on.”

“Yes dear. We get this paper to get the news back home, even if it is a bit late. And as for the cinema, you shall do what we British have always done, even through ‘The Blitz’,” her mother
looked up over the rims of her reading glasses (when did Jenny get glasses?) “We shall persevere.” That’s when Jenny noticed me standing in the door way. “Good morning Darling, sleep well?” Her face was a mask of perfect innocence.

Before I could answer, Erika piped up in a surly tone. “Can’t see how he could, what with you and Dad shagging like shoats half the night.”</p>

“Only half the night?” I asked sweetly. “I dropped like the dead. You would’ve tied me up, smacked my ass...er...butt and called me Sally. Never would’ve known the difference.” Then snapped my fingers, “darn it.”

“You guys are disgusting,” the teen groused, tossing down the newspaper. “I’m going to get Sir Winnie, he’s prolly ready for a nappy change by now. At least THAT is less disgusting then you two.” Erika got up and flounced out of the room.

Her mother sighed, rubbing her eyes. “I really should’ve sold her to the gypsies when I had a chance.” Then she turned a bright face to me, “hello Fledermaus.” Walked over quickly and into her arms. Our kisses were wet and shameless. Tongues rolling over the other as our hands roamed the others body. We pulled apart with a pop and gasp for air. “Hello Ladyship,” put a few more little kisses on her cheeks, forehead and nose tip. “And who’s Sir Winnie?”

“Bryon,” Jenny gave me one more quick kiss before turning round and pouring me a cup of coffee from the percolator on the counter. “He’s a stout little fellow, with not much hair and a fierce pout that is all but lacking a cigar to make him the very image of Sir Winston. Hence the name.”

Took a sip of coffee, then another...then with a sound that was almost orgasmic...“café negro.”

“You are so easy to please,” my hostess laughed, taking the plate of left over curry chicken and sticky rice out of the fridge and dumping it in a frying pan. “A cup of black coffee, a kiss, a few swats on the bottom and you’re set for the day.”

Took another sip before putting down the cup. “Speaking of swats, wish I could’ve been awake for all the fun last night,” come up behind my sweet omega, cupping her bottom through the material of the summer dress she was wearing, giving those globes a squeeze. “You could have waited.”

“Sorry Darling, but we just couldn’t help ourselves. You looked so sweet and fuckable, and even in drop you listened so well to me.” Jenny tried to look guilty, but it wasn’t working for her. “You were so beautiful, back to the bed post, arms out stretched, arching you body just so...” Now she looked embarrassed. “Am getting the fair slicks just thinking about it.”

“Really?” Wasn’t angry or anything they did it. Just kind of pissed I missed out. “Think we can make up for it later?” My stomach took that opportunity to growl. Loudly. “What’s going on today?” Eat curry first, then her Ladyship second. Sat down at the table.

“Well,” Jenny, set the plate of curry down in front of me. “Lewiston is at work, as is your brother. Jesse is spending the day with the Boy Scouts helping plant flags on the graves at Arlington National Cemetery and Erika has decided to be a perfect pill.”

“The embassy isn’t closed for the holiday?” Oops, realized the faux pas the moment it slipped out. Her Ladyship lifted one eye brow, “Happy Treason Day, you Ungrateful Colonials. We give July 4th the same celebratory consideration as August 15th.”

“What’s August 15th?
“Indian Independence Day.”

“Well moving right along,” thank the Alpha God, Erika chose that moment to walk back in with the her little brother. “Ohhhhhhh, he’s beautiful!” Held out my arms to hold the little bugger.<p>

Later that day, there was a picnic over at the Observatory Circle put on by Mrs Mondale and the staff of the Naval Observatory. Ever the good neighbor, the Vice Presidents mate invited the staff and their families of the British Embassy to come celebrate. Apparently in the spirit of good Anglo-American relations, the Brits stuffed their faces with hot dogs and hamburgers, ate watermelon and when darkness fell, lay out on blankets on the lawn to watch the fireworks down at the National Mall.</p>

I sat on the blanket watching the rockets red glare, with Jesse leaning against my shoulder and holding hands with his mom. Little Byron was asleep in his willow carrying basket and Erika trying to be cool and not impressed with the fire works, but failing miserably. Lewiston and my brother were standing protectively behind us.

Family, every now and again (even when it isn’t blood), it’s okay.

Chapter End Notes

Where did Bry-Ann and Sharon sneak in to? Why the Saratoga Preforming Arts Center in Saratoga, New York of course. Summer home of the NYC Ballet, Philadelphia Philharmonic and venue for some killer rock shows. I went in the 70’s to see the Beach Boys, Carpenters and even the Philharmonic. Of course the guy Cas is trying to think of is Yo Yo Ma.

Chicka Boom (Don’t ya jes love it): is a song from 1971 written by Janice Lee Gwin and Linda Martin and performed by Daddy Dewdrop. -Wikipedia

The white deer of the Seneca Army Depot are still there even if the depot itself was shut down in 2000. To see more go to www.senecawhitedeer.org

Cowboy Killers: Marlboro cigarettes

Retard-o’s: what active duty people at that time called retirees

In commisaries of any branch of the service, your groceries are bagged for you by people who work only for tips as they are considered private contractors and not government employees. Most are either retirees or the teenage children of active duty personnel.

Auslese weine mit prädikat! (literal meaning: "selected harvest"; plural form is Auslesen) is a German language wine term for a late harvest wine and in this instance, a white wine The grapes are picked from selected very ripe bunches in the autumn (late November-early December), and have to be hand picked. Generally Auslese wine can be made in only the best harvest years that have been sufficiently warm. -From Wikipedia. The wine can be sweet or semi-sweet, and best served within one to three years of being bottled. 1976 has been acknowledged at a historically great year for these types of wines.
A 201 file is a set of documents maintained by the US government for members of the United States armed forces. 201 files usually contain documents describing the member's military and civilian education history. A 201 file may also contain personal information such as home of record, and awards documents. Typically, a 201 file contains one or more of the following:[1]

Promotion Orders
Mobilization Orders
DA1059s – Service School Academic Evaluation Reports
MOS Orders
Awards and decorations
Transcripts
SGLV 8286 – Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance Election and Certificate)

PCS: permanent change of station
The song of course is Shadow Dancing. Written by Andy, Maurice, Barry and Robin Gibb, it came out in 1978 and stayed at number one for seven weeks.

AFN: Armed Forces Network. The radio and tv stations serving US military installations

Radio Luxemburg: at one time one of the largest ‘pirate’ radio stations in the world. Begun in 1933, its location in the nation of Luxemburg afforded it the perfect spot for wide broadcast to England and Ireland and later all of western and eastern Europe. During WW2 it became a German propaganda tool but at wars end, was taken over by the Americans who eventually turned it back to its owners. It became the place you went to hear British rock and anything in pop. It was one of the few stations not blocked by the communist governments of eastern Europe. It was number 208 on your radio dial. Sadly, they went off the air in 1992.

Quartier Asiatique: the district in Paris with a large asian population.

The Hammer films in question were ‘Curse of the Werewolf’ and ‘Devil Ship Pirates’.

2-60 air conditioning: two car windows open, going 60 miles an hour

The Great Santini: a novel by Pat Conroy about a bombastic Marine fighter pilot and his relationship with his family, especially his oldest son. The character was based on Conroys father and his relationship with Pat and his family. The book was turned into a movie starring Robert Duval.

café negro: Spanish for ‘black coffee’
There are Two Things That Fall Out of the Sky....

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The next two days seem to fly by much too fast. Wednesday drove out to Annapolis with Balthazar to drop off my boxes of ‘things to keep but they weigh too much’ in Dad and Mummy-ships basement. They weren’t back yet from England, guess they’re really having a good visit with Lady Bela’s brother. Wonder if I’ll ever get to meet him? Will be nice to have an aunt and uncle. Never met any of Naomi-Moms or Zachariahs brothers or sisters as we were always overseas. Besides, I don’t think any of them ever got along, as we never got letters or a single Christmas cards from em. Or not that I know of.

“Nice place,” Balthazar commented as we pulled up to 1508 Gordon Cove Drive. “Wouldn’t mind settling down to a place like this in another 10 or 15 years. What did you say he retired as?”

“A Lieutenant Colonel,” I said casually turning the car up the driveway. Know what he is thinking, cuz I’ve thought it too on more then one occasion. How could you afford a house in a neighborhood like this on a retired light colonels salary? I don’t like to think about it much, having heard Dad called ‘the King of Hell’, don’t really wanna know how he earned the title. Maybe her Mummy-ship had some bread stashed away somewhere.

Walked the boxes of albums and books, the record player, vacuum cleaner and the foot stool/coffee table inside, down the cellar stairs and into a corner of the basement where the stuff wouldn’t be too intrusive. I’ll have 1500 lbs for house hold goods when I go to Germany, so can collect my stuff in six months when it’s time to pack up. Hopefully, will remember it’s still down here.

After emptying the car, using the bath room and I stop Balti from drinking up too much of Dads scotch, we drove into Annapolis proper to walk around. It was nice to do something with my brother that didn’t involve stealing food, helping him pick up girls or running from the police. Which come to think about it was most of what Gabe and I did together. Made up my mind there and then, would try and pay back some of those venders we stole from as pups. If they’re still around, those push carts, candy trucks and in der Bäckerei er bakery, will owe the last two big time. Gabes sweet tooth was always getting us in trouble.

The day, which had started out with sun and a clear blue sky, clouded up, began to sprinkle, then turned into a full fledged deluge by the time we got to the city dock. But it didn’t matter, growing up in Panama and Germany, rain was a fact of life and was just water off a ducks back. We stood with the men who unloaded the barges under the canopy at the canteen, eating a workmans lunch; sandwiches piled high with meat and veg, washed down with cups of steaming hot coffee-strong enough to float a bullet. They were a jolly group of alphas, their speech was coarse and common, yet not too rough as there were ladies and omegas present. Rough men, yet gentlemen all. The sun had burned them dark, bronze if white, mahogany if black or deep olive if a son of the Mediterranean.

They talked about the days when the barges would bring in the strawberries and watermelons from up Cecil County way in summer, apples in fall and come winter would be spruce trees for Christmas. Spring time would find them off loading sweet peas and parsnips. “Wouldn’t think a little sweet pea would be heavy,” one fellow said, pinching my cheek. “But get enough of em together and you think you’s hauling lead.”

The storm let up soon and they had to go back to work as Balti and I had to start back to the
embassy. “What was it like for you to jump? I mean, you must like it. You’ve got three foreign jump wings, so there must be something about it.”

“Terrifying, exhilarating.” My brother commented as we wondered back through the twisting streets of the historic district where the Bug was parked. “Being part of a great tradition of men, of warriors, to literally leap into the great unknown. Also, wondering if I lost my bloody mind for doing something so insane.” Then a wistful look came over his face, “but for those few moments you’re suspended in air, hearing nothing but the rush of wind in your ears, your heart trying to knock its way out of your chest, looking out across the sky and seeing where it kisses the land.” He shook his head, “there’s nothing like it.”

“I didn’t know you were so poetic,” Color me impressed. “Didn’t think you had it in you.”

“Just goes to show I’ve got depth and range of a warrior poet.” Balthazar strutted down the sidewalk, stroking his mustache. “I fight with intellect, purpose and skill. And look beyond the blood and gore to the full meaning of life.” Then he smirked, and “it gets the birds every time,” Balt was immodestly preening. “Guarantees a night of insane rumpy pumpy.”

“Assbutt, I should’ve known better.” Punched him on the arm. “When are you ever going to settle down?” Unlocked the door to the Bug, yanked it open, got in and leaned over to unlock the passengers side door. “Find a mate, have a few pups?”

“Et Tu Brute? I hear that all the time from Mom. Get mated, settle down, I want more grand pups.” My brother did a fair impression of our Mother who art in Schenectady. “Will tell you, the same thing I tell her. I will get mated, when I find someone that I like better then myself.”

Uh boy. Then he’s NEVER getting mated.

The next day, spent time with Jesse. We went for a jog around the Observatory Circle early in the morning, had breakfast, got cleaned up and then some of his friends came over to meet me. Guess he kind of mentioned, he had a Madam First and now had to put up or shut up. So about 10:30, I answered the door to Viv, Sid and Asa. Fellow ex-pats, whose parents lived and worked either at the embassy or somewhere around DC.

They were typical pups about 13 or 14. Curious, full of bravado and misinformation. Two alphas and Asa was a beta. Glad Jesse just didn’t pal around with alphas. Usually, during their early teens, the secondary genders tended to flock together, until about 16 or 17, they discovered the opposite primary gender. Sadly, by this time most of the omegas they knew were either mated, courted or cossetted away. So unless they had an omega brother or sister, most alphas or betas at this age never got to interact with an omega. Had hoped Washington DC was different, but apparently not.

I chose my wardrobe carefully for today, borrowing from the absent Eric’s closet. Made sure the khaki trousers and white oxford shirt were washed to get out his alpha stink. Was not unhappy to learn that the oldest Reynolds pup stayed in England over the summer. Personally, it was no great loss. Jenny was a much better (and fun) person with out Eric around.

Polished my brass mating collar till it gleamed and snapped it into place around my neck, no head cover (I am mated but want to look modern) but in a nod to tradition, no shoes.

Got the boys settled in the living room, then brought out Jennys good Hester Bateman silver tea service and Shelly china, setting it on the coffee table. “Shall I be Mother?” (Finishing school. Spent three days on the proper etiquette of the tea party) Poured the tea, dropping in sugar, lemon or cream and handing over the cups. Give those boys credit, they knew how how to handle those cups and saucers, good on their mothers for teaching them manners. Which kind of flew out the
window when they opened their mouths.

“Did you really shag Reynolds there?”

“Do omegas really present to any alpha who demands it?”

“Are you really in the American army?”

Oh man. ‘The Three Questions Game’ goes ‘British Junior Set’. Took a deep breath, “I’ll answer in order:”

“Madam First does not kiss and tell, and a First who’s a gentleman doesn’t either

Holy Baby Jebus NO!

Yes I am and will be heading out to Jump School tomorrow morning.”

Spent the next half hour fielding questions, pouring tea and pulled out my wallet to passed around pictures of Jeff. Had to show off my little man. “You really had a pup back in February?” Asked Sid, “did it hurt?”

“Like a motherfu.....like a...a mother...” caught myself in time. “Yes, a lot actually.”

“You’re mated,” Viv asked through a mouthful of biscuit. “How could you be his Madam First?”

“That’s a very good question,” I paused behind my cup. It was a complex answer to give adults and even more so when the questioner is basically still a pup. “My mate gave his permission but also, let me ask you this, so I can frame an answer. What do you think a Madam First does?”

Viv shrugged. “He or she is the first person an alpha gets to have sex with. They teach em how to do all the tricks and stuff.”

“Anything else?”

You could almost hear the little cogs clicking away in his head, “um, maybe they cook for em, give em a massage or bath like you see in the cinema.” The boys were grinning and elbowing each other and starting to stink up the room with alpha/beta phermones. “Come on you guys, spread out.” Jesse stepped up using his alpha voice. “Knock it off ya lame brains.” (Some body’s been watching ‘The Stooges’) And just like that they settled.

“How’d you do that?” Sid looked awed and confused in equal measure.

“Watched my dad,” Jesse sat up a little straighter. “Talked with my mum and remembered what Cas told me about what it means to be an alpha.”

Now I was proud, “and what does it mean to be an alpha?”

Jesse set down his cuppa, “to be an alpha means having the confidence to be able to take command of a situation even when the rank on your shoulders is less, equal or non existent to the people around you. To look beyond the primary and secondary genders, even when it’s hard and your biology is telling you not to. But most of all: treat people the way you want to be treated.”

The three boys looked a little stunned. “That’s it? But that’s not what everyone says.”

“Yeah, I know. That’s why I’m lucky to have a Madam First.” My little First looked thoughtful. “It’s not that hard, once you get passed all the things everyone says you should be and to where
YOU want to be.”

“Bravo Darling! Bravo!” Jenny had been standing in the door way with refill plate of biscuits and obviously heard her son. “You’re a tall iron steamed poppy just like your Father.” She strode in and set down the full plate and took the empty.

“Can a beta have a Madam First?” Asa asked quietly. “You never hear about that.”

Looked knowingly over at Jenny, immediately she took a seat on the couch next to Jesse, while I stood and motioned Asa to come with me. Took him out into the kitchen where we could have a little privacy because what he was to hear was not for alphas ears. Once seated, knees touching, I leaned forward. “No, betas do not have Madam Firsts.” Waited just a heart beat, “not because you can’t but because you don’t need one. Betas are the twilight betwixt the dark alpha heart and the light of an omegas soul.”

The pups face went from zero to 60 in a space of second. “Is that good?”

“Let me put it another way. Do you get ruts or heats?”

Asa snorted a laugh, “of course not.”

“Lucky you. I’m going to be on suppressants and birth control for most of my life. Your friends are going to be stuck in their rooms a few times a year missing out on everything because of their ruts. Does that sound like fun to you?”

“No! Huh,” from the look on his face, don’t think he ever thought about it like that. Hmmmmm, this one might just be... “But I’m ever feel any thing the way you guys do.” What? “Alphas and omegas are suppose to ‘feel’ stuff stronger.” Oh little one, who’s been feeding you a load of bull shit?

“Kiddo, did you ever have someone close to you pass away?”

Now you’d thought I’d said the worst thing in the world. He bowed his head and fist the material of his trousers, “my gran. She lived with us for a long time. When she died, it felt like a part of me went away too.” A tear rolled down his cheek. “I tried not to cry, cuz my two brothers who are alphas didn’t....” His eyes welled up and spilled over.

“Or not have around you,” I interrupted. “You felt pain of her passing just as much as your brothers did, maybe more so, as she was a beta like you.”

“How did you know?”

I smiled, “your scent changed and you were thinking about her so hard, could almost see her standing with you.” (Actually I could) He whipped around quick, “no she isn’t there. She’s here.” Reached over and patted his chest over his heart. “And always will be until the time comes when you will enter the spirit realm.” But also, “no playing with Ouija boards, they’re more trouble then they’re worth.” Now more then ever, I think this pup might be worth my time. Got up and walked over to pull a few sheets from the roll of paper towel. “Dry your eyes and blow your nose.”

He blew great gusts into the sheets, “so if I can’t be your First, can I at least be your friend?”

“I’d like that very much ‘Sa’.” He was surprised at the nickname and by starch in his back bone, rather liked it. Now let’s see if the boy could keep a secret. “You heard what Jesse had to say about being an alpha. Do you know what it means to be a beta?”
He didn’t even hesitate, Asa shook his head. “No, I don’t.”

Knowing that he knows nothing, good. “Can you keep a secret?” He nodded quickly. “Being a beta... is the exact same thing as being an alpha. Only with two things better.......as a beta, you have the patience an alpha lacks and the freedom of movement an omega is denied. Though that part is slowly changing.”

“Really!?” His eyes were big as saucers. “A beta is all that?”

“Really, really. All that and a can of beer.” Now let’s see if Sa can keep his mouth shut. “Come on there Bud, let’s go back to the others before they eat up all the cookies....er biscuits.” So we trooped back out to the living room to find Jenny regaling the boys with tales of our adventures in Kansas. Or at least the ones outside the bedroom.

“Can you believe it? The worlds largest ball of twine.” Ahhhhh, she telling about our trip out to see Mrs Fizzles parents in Smith Center. We’d stopped at Cawker City, to see worlds largest ball of twine, with a side trip to Lebanon. Which was the celebrated center of the continental United States. Geez, there wasn’t much to that ‘Dogpatch’, except a tiny ‘downtown’ some homes, a water tower and what looked like an old abandoned power station, a mile or two out of town. Which was weird, considering the size of the thing versus the number of people in the area. It was over kill.

“So what were you guys talking about?” Asked Viv.

“Stuff,” I said casually.

“Come on,” the nosy alpha insisted, turning to Asa. “What did he say?”

“A gentlemen,” my new friend said loftily. “Does not kiss and tell.” That sealed it, before they left, exchanged addresses with Sa, promised him a letter from jump school or the very least, a post card or two.

Packed up that night, leaving my khaki uniform hanging on the back of the guest room door. Since I would be active duty starting tomorrow, might as well start it right. But there was one thing I didn’t pack, not because I was going to wear it but because I needed to leave it behind. Ribbons, lace and cotton pretties had no place where I was going.

“Hold on to these for me,” handed the little bundle over to Jenny. “Until I get back?”

“But of course Darling,” she understood and tucked them away in her vanity with the rest of her lingerie. “They’ll be right here waiting for you.” Then with a twinkle in her eye, “they might have gone through the wash a few times by the time you return. Lewiston has been a bit more randy of late.” Speaking of, said my goodbyes to him before heading off to bed to try and get a little sleep before the 04:40 alarm went off.

Leaned into his body, enjoying his heat and exotic aroma one last time. Tonight I’m just an omega saying farewell to an alpha with whom a bond is shared. Tomorrow at ‘oh dark 30′, I’m Lt Novac and he’s Maj General Reynolds, anything other then a salute or hand shake would be improper.

“Goodnight My Lord Alpha.”

“Sweet dreams my little Fladermaus,” the kiss was almost chaste, placed on my lips with great care. “Come back to us. Come back to me.”

“I will.” And with that, stepped out of his embrace and into the guest room. Closed the door slowly until it clicked shut in bitter sweet finale.

Like I figured, ‘oh dark 30’ came with a loud wail of the alarm clock and a lot of cursing. Stumble
to the bath room; shit, shower and shave AND remember to take the Ovatheram. There is no way I’m gonna forget to take these suckers and go into heat in the middle of Fort Benning. Look at my shoulders, the bites are healing nicely but not fast enough. Had bought a box of Kotex to pad the bites in training, hopefully it will be enough. Had my overnight bag ready also. A set of fatigues, a pair of boots, blousers, the pant weights John gave me, socks, soft cap, belt, t-shirt and boxers. The 201 file went in there also, along with the 10 copies of my orders.

Dressed myself carefully, gig line straight, butter bars shining, name plate on the correct side of my chest. Hefted the duffel and overnight bag, picked up my overseas cap and went down stairs. Jenny and Jesse were up and waiting in the kitchen. My poor little First was yawning and about ready to fall back to sleep in his Cheerio-O’s. “What can I get you Cas?”

“Just some of that coffee and cereal,” set the bags down by the door. “Don’t think I could stomach any more then that today. Even though prolly by noon I’ll be starving. Hope they feed us down there.”

“Knowing the army,” she said indigently, “and it doesn’t matter whose. They will bloody starve you until it’s too late to get you any thing but ‘piss and punk’.” At my raised eye brow, “what? A lady can’t eavesdrop on a few of your marines and learn a few new expressions?” Her Ladyship went to the fridge, hummed and hawed till she came out with a Tupperware container. “I can send you off with some tiddy oggie…”

“Tittie what?” If I wasn’t awake before I am now….. “not that I wouldn’t like to see yours one more time but….” Nodded toward Jesse, who now had dozed off, head in hand.

“T-I-D-D-Y not T-I-T-T-I-E, you ridiculous colonial.” She tut tutted, “you army men are all alike, ‘burn, pillage and ruin the village omegas.” Opening up the container, Jenny dumped out what looked like some kind of weird pastry on to a sheet of tin foil. “Then off you go, you never write, you never call…”

“No, that’s ruin, pillage and burn, not burn, pillage and ruin. It’s a little hard to do the first two when your pants are on fire.” Sided up to her and planted a few kisses on that soft slender neck. “Wanna play ‘pillage the village nunnery?’ I could be the big bad viking and you could be the virtuous novice. Oh I’m pining for the fiords!”

“Bloody viking,” she groused. “Don’t start anything you can’t finish.” Damn it. “Your brother will be here shortly to get you over to Dulles.” Which of course is when there’s a knock at the kitchen door. Shit. My luck is running about true to form. Open up to find Balthazar is standing on the stoop in civilian clothes. Leap into his arms, uniform be damned. He gave me the opportunity to say goodbye as his little brother not Lt Novac.

“You ready to go Cassie?”


“Be careful.” He sniffled and just about broke my spine with his hug. “Don’t want you to get hurt.”

“I won’t, don’t you worry. Will bring you back a souvenir from Fort Benning.”

“Come on Cassie,” Balti picked up the duffel and overnight bag. “Chop chop, you have a flight to catch.”

“Here, take this.” My dearest Ladyship shoved the tittie…EXCUSE ME…tiddy thing and a half
cup of coffee into my hands and then a longing kiss on the lips. “Come back to us, Castiel. Come back to me.” Then she blew a bit of her beguiling scent across my nose, then pushed Balti and I out the door.

It wasn’t until we’d climbed into my brothers 69 MGC GT, (next to Major Sam’s Gull wing Mercedes, I love this car...okay and the Impala.....and Black Betty....happy now?) tossed the bags in the back seat and were well away from the embassy before brother Balti decided to comment. “Sooooo, anything you want to tell the class?”

“Not really.” My love life, unlike his, WASN’T up for discussion.

“Looks like there’s a little more then just a ‘profound bond’ going on back there.” He turned off Massachusetts Ave NW on to the George Washington Parkway, crossing the Potomac before getting on to VA 267 out of town. Traffic was still light this time of day, even as most people would be headed into DC not out. “No one kisses like that and says ‘come back to me’ unless....”

“This falls under the heading of ‘none yur’.” Don’t want to start the day with a fight or end a great visit with being pissed at my brother. Pulled back the growl starting in my throat instead, “I’m her Charge, she’s....our relationship...is....special.”

“So I see,” he said dryly. “If what I’ve read about the Profound Bond”....brother dearest looked offended when I snorted a laugh through my nose. “What? I read more then just Page 3 of The Sun. So before I was so RUDELY interrupted, there are certain protocols as to when and who gets to....know you....biblicaly speaking of course. Does this mean there is going to be a ‘bond pup’ in the offing? It’s a bit old fashioned in this day and age. But not without its charms in the procreation stage.”

“Oh fuck no,” it came out a little more like a prayer then I’d planned. Crossed my fingers, come on little orange pills, do your thing. “Yes there are certain ‘things’ and ‘protocols’ that must be met, but it’s kind of hard to explain....”

“Try me.”

“Oh look, the turn off for the airport.” The good thing about Balthazar was that he had a lead foot and a fast car to gratify said foot. So, it didn’t take long, once we were out of DC proper, for him to put the petal to the metal and....SHAZAM.....here we are. “Oh, by the way. Are you going to be here in November? I know the Reynolds are moving to Germany some time that month, so if you wanna, we can go up to Naomi-Moms together for Thanksgiving.”

The little green car dodged an airport limo and a couple of checker cabs, to slip into the only space in front of the Southern Airlines out door check in luggage desk. “Sorry Little Brother, but I won’t here either. I’ve accepted a position as a staff officer for the General at 1 Corps. Will be moving in November too.”

Wow, wasn’t expecting that. On the upside, I’d be in Germany too in January. Will have family and friends on the continent, so won’t be alone. “That’s great! I’ll be in K-town, we’ll be neighbors.”

Opened the car door and clambered out of the low seat. As much this is a great car, riding in it is like being dragged down the street in a bucket. Balti had already pulled out the duffel and overnight bags from the back seat. He handed me the overnight and dropped the duffel at the check in desk.

“Watch your step down there,” Balthazar was in full big brother mode. “There’re a lot of knot heads, snake eating cunts and jumping junkies.” Then gently, “ring me when you can, here’s my
number.” He pressed a piece of paper into my hand, “my address is on there too.” Then with a quick kiss to each cheek, Major Novac strode back to his car, dropped in and roared away in a cloud of exhaust.

“Hey L.T.! L.T.!” Huh? Oh, that’s me! “Where you bound for?” Turned to the baggage man behind the desk.

“Columbus, Georgia”. I said quickly, handing him my ticket. “By way of Atlanta.”

“Been to Fort Benning myself years back,” the older alpha said, scribbling his initials, then slipping a luggage tag on the duffel and tearing off a portion to hand back to me. “Jus before they sent me to that ‘garden spot of the Far East’. He slapped a hand to his shoulder, “still got bitty pieces of shrapnel coming out from time to time. And can tell you when it’s gonna rain almost to the hour.”

“Drive on,” put both Baltis address and the luggage ticket in my wallet and pushed em into my front pocket. “Thank you Sir.”

“Don’t ‘sir’ me, I work for a living.” His growl was playful and the automatic response of any NCO, active or non. “But you listen up to your brother,” the guy turned serious. “There be strange and bad things happening down there. Stay on post when you can, don’t go in them woods and say your prayers at night. There’re too many things that walk in the dark, if you catch my drift and seeing them beads, I think you do.” Was wearing my elkies. “That might think a little ‘mega all alone is easy pickens. But if you’re here and going there, you just might not be.” When he handed back my plane ticket, the official mask of the Southern Airline employee fell back into place, “have a pleasant flight sir.”

Walked through the grand swooping architecture of the main terminal that made the Dulles International Airport so unique and recognizable. Really didn’t get a look at it when I was here last time, passing through to get out to Fort Riley. Dear Alpha God, was that only a year ago? Stood in the short line at the Southern Airlines check in desk. This place is gonna be jumping around 04:00 er 16:00 when people were gonna try to get home for the weekend. Got a seat assignment, ticket stamped and then ambled toward the gate to wait for the mobile lounge to arrive. On the way, noticed the gift shop and decided to stop to get a few post cards. Bought three of them, one for Asa, another for Jesse and the last for Ben. They were each different views of Dulles International Airport. What I wanted to write to John, Dean and the Reynolds would go in sealed letter, definitely not something for the curious post man.

Wrote was basically the same on all three post cards:

Hi Asa/Jesse/Ben,

Am at the airport, waiting to board the plane to jump school. Can’t believe today is finally here. Will keep you posted on my progress and what’s happening down at Fort Benning.

Very Truly Yours,

Cas
7 July 1978

Will buy some airborne stationary at the PX when I get down there. Tore off and licked the stamps, putting them on the post cards, then dropping them off at a near by mail box. They should have them in a few days.
The loud speaker suddenly crackled and came to life, “Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Southern Flight 3210, non stop to Atlanta, Georgia. We would like to start boarding the mobile lounge now, would those with seats in the smoking section please board first, then non smoking, thank you.” Look out at the planes lined up on the tarmac. Ours was a the DC-9, looks like there was going to be a full contingent headed to Atlanta today, if the number of people jamming themselves in the lounge was any indication.

Once everyone was seated, the beast slowly lumbered away from the terminal, across the tarmac with a few of its brethren and up to the DC-9. When the door opened, people filed into the plane, smoking first and then non. When it was my turn, side stepped down the aisle, till I got to seat 10D, slid in and buckled up. Oh this is so much easier when you’re not pregnant. Took the cunt cap off and hung it on my belt. Before sliding the overnight bag under the seat, took out the book I brought to read a long the way. ‘The World According to Garp,’ never heard of the author. But it had gotten some good reviews in the news paper, so what the hell. Which was about my reaction with the first chapter. What the hell? A beta nurse has sex with an alpha comatose ball gunner to get pregnant because she doesn’t want a man or alpha but wants a pup. So she jacks him up, does the deed and a then little while later he dies. Conveniently weird.

“Welcome to Southern Flight 3210,” the way too cheery voice said loudly. Looked up from the pages. “Non stop to Atlanta, Georgia. For your safety.......” Blah, Blah, Blah...... “a complementary breakfast will be served.” Breakfast? I’m down for that. Still have the titty....tiddy.....oogie thing. But wanna save that for later, just in case dinner is going to be a ways off. “Our flight time will be around two hours. So sit back, enjoy our flight today, my name is Joyce, your other two stewardesses are Patty and Kitty. Once we’re in the air and leveled off, breakfast will be served. Thank you.”

Take off was a little bumpy, not unexpected but nothing to worry about either. I’d been in worse. Looked at the paled face of the woman to my left.... “barf bags are in the pocket on the back of the seat in front of you,” she gave a thin smile but she also reached in casually for the bag. The bumps and shakes were over in a few minutes, the quiet noise of a lost breakfast took an even shorter amount of time. Thank goodness someone in the back had lit up early so the smell of vomit was covered by the smoky aroma of a Pal Mal.

The bright morning sun cast a cheery pool of light on my lap. It was happening, finally happening. My life was starting. Not that stuff didn’t happen before, but MY LIFE. The one I PICKED and worked towards was finally baring fruit. Okay, going to college was all me. I worked for it, slaved for it and finally, that sheepskin was in my pocket. But college wasn’t ‘real’ life, granted the first two years were a lot more real then the second, as I had to work to pay for school....but even then.....BUT THIS WAS REAL! It was grown up stuff. I was doing something to help my pup. Though I suspect most people would question how jumping out of a perfectly good airplane would do that.

‘It’s an investment for the future,’ said to the invisible audience of naysayers. ‘Part of a plan to get those jump wings, then go Pathfinder-as Quartermaster was the only non combat arm that was allowed in the course, then Air Assault School. Yeah it’s tough, 50 percent drop out rate. But I could do it, hell I’m tough. Pushed out a 10 pound pup AND kicked the doctor across the room. So yeah, ‘day zero’ my big fat omega ass!

“Sir? Lieutenant?” Huh? What? Patty, the stewardess was standing in the aisle with two plates in her hands. “I have your breakfast. Would you mind lowering your tray?”

“Oh, yeah sure.” Quickly unlatched the seat tray in front of me, so the stew could set the plate down. Today we were having....scrambled eggs, some little dick sausages and grits. YUM. And
that’s what I like about the south. “Um, could I have some butter or oleo for the grits please?”

“Of course Sir,” she reached on the cart and handed me over two small pats of butter. “We have juice; orange or cranberry. Also coffee or tea. What would you like?

“Orange juice, coffee with cream and sugar. Please.” It’s airline coffee but who cares, it’s coffee that I didn’t have to make. The eggs and sausages were a little rubbery, the grits weren’t bad and I was finally hungry enough to eat it. Left the coffee last, this is the first opportunity to just sit back and read my book, sip coffee and not have to worry about anything or be jumping up to care for Jeff. Now feel guilty. Am I being a bad papa for enjoying a little time away from my pup? Love him to death but I love me too. Oh how do other people do this?

Set the book and coffee cup down. Closed my eyes and sunk back in the seat. Was so up this morning and now my enthusiasm took a nose dive. Am still a little hormonal, dear Alpha God, when will that stop?! A tear rolled down my cheek. “Excuse me? Lieutenant? Are you alright?” The woman sitting next to me held out a tissue.

“Sorry....I.....I’m fine.” Oh crap. Being such an omega pussy. “Had something in my eye.”

“Uh huh,” the lady tisked, “my sister is an omega. She gets like this when she’s away from her pups too.”

“How did you know I had a pup?”

“You still have that new papa smell,” she said knowingly.

Now was starting to smile through the tears. “By the way, what does a new papa smell like?”

She tapped a finger to her chin, “it’s kind of a cross between apple pie and new car.” Then she did the best Groucho I’d seen in a while, “wanna go for a test drive?”

“Ass!” Now laughed, the kind of laugh that comes up from the toes, ends in the belly and is so strong you forget to breathe. Now was crying (but in a good way) and snottig and really needed the whole pack of her tissues to get looking presentable again. The alpha Ezra Moore was on her way to Atlanta and like me was there to catch a connecting flight. Unlike me, she was headed for Miami to help her omega sister with the new babe. “It’s her fourth pup,” Ezra explained. “Good Catholic girl married to a good Catholic boy equals lots of visits from Auntie Ezra. Her mate’s in city government and kind of a ‘wheel’ in the Cuban community.

Yikes! Four pups. “I can barely handle one, how is she doing it with four?”

“Her mate has a sister and some cousins in town. The rest of the family is still over in Cuba. Alex and Maria made it out during Operation Pedro Pan. So any who, I took a few weeks off from work to go down and help out. Maria and the cousins are watching the older pups.”

“Hope your mate is the self reliant type,” I joked.

“I never mated.” Oooops, insert foot A in mouth B. She patted my hand. “Not like I didn’t have the opportunity, but liked my independence too much to mate a man and was too broke to get an omega. So, I’m the worlds greatest auntie to my sisters pups.” She look out a ‘brag book’ from her purse and began flipping through. Course I had to take out my wallet and show off Jeff. Was so engrossed in puppy pictures that the both of us jumped when the stewardess came around to pick up the plates as the plane was going to landing in a little while.

As bumpy as the take off was, the landing into the William B Hartsfield....whew...Atlanta
International Airport...was as smooth. Good grief, could they shorten up that name a little? There was a bit of congestion as we wended our way through construction at mid field, apparently they are putting up a new terminal. Who puts up a terminal in the middle of the run ways? Looks like Atlanta is. Weird ass city.

The plane pulls up to the Southern concourse and the breeze way is rolled over, a few moments later the door is opened and the stink of Avgas, exhaust and burned rubber invade the cabin. Not like the smell of recycled air, tobacco smoke and vomit had been any joy for the last hour fifty. The passengers shuffle off as Ezra and I gather our things and wait our turn to get out of our seats to head off to our respective flights. “Really glad to meet you,” I shook her hand gratefully.

“Thanks for the tissues and the ear.”

“You’re welcome,” she said. “And know you’re not alone trying to be papa AND dad. Lots of folks are in your shoes and feeling the same way. Even my sister, with all the help she has and on her 4th pup, still has moments of doubt. You’re a member of a pretty big club.”

Maybe not one I ever thought of joining but am a card carrying member now (have you now or ever been a member of the.....yes Mr Senator, I have been a member of the ‘parents club’. Sorry couldn’t help myself). At the end of the breeze way, with a final wave, Ezra walked off to the Eastern Airline Concourse to catch her flight to Miami, while I stayed behind here with Southern. Checked the big board, my flight to Columbus was going out of gate 26A in about an hour, so have just enough time to hit the head and buy a few more post cards.

Found the mens room, looks like the uniform is confusing any alpha enough into not hitting on me. Say what you will about the south, they still respect service men. Any place else, I’d travel in civilian clothes. Those hippie pinko assholes are still around, as evidenced by RIT wanting to pitch the ROTC office off campus but not being able to because the army brought in too much money. Even had ‘Nazi slick’ tossed my way once or twice, when I was walking across campus in uniform.

Found the news stand kiosk, bought a few more post cards and scanned the head lines: Israeli Planes Buzz Beirut in Warning to Syria, some judge is held in contempt, unemployment lowest in four years....blah, blah, blah. What else is here.....Newsweek and Time is talking about Supreme Court decision of Regents of the University of California vs Bakke. People Magazine has Ed Asner on the cover talking about his show Lou Grant.....Purposely ignored Mega Magazine and oh! The latest issue of The Knot. Let’s take a quick look to see who Beatrice Knight Niitza picked for ‘Mr Knot Lacking for Anything’ for August of 1978.

Flipped it open and then quickly put the magazine back. I didn’t need to see THAT. NEVER wanted to see THAT. Now all I wanna do is scrub my brain with bleach. ‘Mr Knot was Ms Knot Lacking for Anything’ AND IT WAS NAOMI-MOM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Not like I can really say anything............BUT MY MOTHER IS SHOWING OFF HER DICK IN PUBLIC! Or a magazine anyway. Oh gross man, this is worse then the whole banging hookers on police cars or Luis the Beast story she keeps telling over and over and over......Oh God and she even had a hard on. Took one quick peek, couldn’t help myself. Have to admit, Dean was right when he said Naomi-Mom was impressive.

BUT! Put the magazine right back. Why can’t she be like ‘normal’ parents and embarrass me on a tiny scale......instead of on a state, local AND national level?

“You gonna buy that, Lieutenant or you just gonna diddle with it?” The old beta news guy was starting to look a little pissed.

“Uhhhh,” busted. “No...um.....just want the post cards and....these M&M’s. Thank you.” Handed
him the cards, candy and a dollar and waited for my change.

He took his time ringing it up on the ancient register. “Where you bound for Lieutenant?”

“Fort Benning Sir,” I said proudly. Took the cards and the quarter change. “Jump school.”

“Well sonny,” the old beta said, scratching his ass. “There are only two things that fall out of the sky. Fools and bird shit. Which are you?”

“Leg!” I hissed contemptuously, turning on my heel and walking back to the Southern concourse.

At a little after ten in the morning the Fairchild Metro II, its 19 seats full, took off for Columbus, Georgia. There was not a civilian on the flight except for the pilots and the one stewardess who, once the plane leveled off, came out with a small cart with sodas or coffee. Every branch of the service was represented and even two guys whose uniforms will have to get a better look at to see what country they’re from.

Was sitting next to an Naval ensign named.....Chickadee. Oh no! “Where are you from?” Like I didn’t know where the answer was going to take me.

“Out Oklahoma way,” he said. “Small town, prolly never heard of it.”

“Brooksville?”

The look on his face was priceless, “how did you....? Nobody has EVER heard of Brooksville!”

“And your people came from Friars Point, Mississippi, cuz Grandaddy he got around?”

“How did you know that? Who the fuck are you?”

Now I put my voice to a whisper. “A friend of Caleb.....” then put my lips against his ear. “And Calvin.”

Will give the man credit, he kept a straight face, “I’m sorry but don’t know who you’re talking about. No body in town with those names.”

I suppose if a complete stranger told me shit about my family and stuff that was suppose to be a deep dark secret, I would put on that face too and lie like a rug. “Sorry about that, guess I got the wrong town, maybe it was Brooksfield.” That gave him (and me) a graceful way out, to just sit, drink our sodas and wait to land.

Which wasn’t long. The whole flight lasted about 25 minutes, just long enough to drink a can of Coke, have the stewardess collect the garbage, tell us to buckle back up and then we were on the ground. The Columbus Metropolitan airport was like most you’d find near any small city anywhere in the country. It was bitty thing, one gate, two rent a car companies (Avis and Hertz) and three airline counters (Southern, Delta and Eastern). Could see there was a bus from Fort Benning waiting out in front at the curb. Was half expecting to be grabbed by a sheriffs deputy for being an unaccompanied omega. Luckily the only deputy was standing at the Avis counter trying to make time with the woman who worked there.

After collecting the duffel bag, walked out into a light drizzle, overcast skies.....good God, could go swimming in the air, the humidity was so bad. What am I, back in Panama?

“How many of you are here for Officers Basic?” Hollared the driver after the lot of us boarded the bus. A goodly number of hands shot up. “How about Ranger School?” Two hands went up.
“Airborne school?” The rest of the hands were raised, including the foreign officers, air force, marines and Ensign (I’m no relation to Caleb or Calvin) Chickadee. “Alright, I’ll drop the ‘wind dummies’ off first, then the ‘90 day wonders’ and you ‘snake eaters’ go last. Welcome to Fort Benning, hang on to your asses gentlemen, you’re in for hell of ride.”

The bus took off like a bat out of hell and didn’t slow down a wit even after getting off the 185 express way and past the ‘Welcome to Fort Benning’ sign. “The fort is named for Henry L Benning, a general with the Confederacy as is most forts south of the Mason Dixon are.” The bus driver called out over his shoulder. “Except for Fort McClellan, which was named for George B. McClellan of the Union Army. But I digress, there are 50 thousand military and 10 thousand civilians on Fort Benning at any given time.” The base was huge, looked out the window in awe of the ant hill of activity; haven’t seen anything like this in years. The bus suddenly came to a screeching halt. “AIRBOURNE!” The driver yelled. “Good luck, you’ll need it.” Half the bus climbed off to stand in front of a large one story aluminum sided building with a sign that proclaimed: Welcome. Central Receiving Point. So this is the 4th Airborne Training Battalion. Not very impressive.

The rain had stopped but it was still overcast and since it couldn’t get any worse, but yes it could, the rain had made the air even heavier and more humid.

“EXCUSE ME SIRS!” Just about jumped out of my skin. A rather large, very dark E-6, strode over, saluted and didn’t even wait for any one to return it. “I AM STAFF SARGEANT BLAKE. YOU AND YOUR LUGGAGE WILL KINDLY GO AND FORM UP WITH YOUR CLASSMATES OVER YONDER IN THE COMPANY STREET.” Wonder if this guy has an ‘inside voice.’

“YOU WILL GO IN 10 AT A TIME TO BE PROCESSED. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS SIRS?”

One of the marines spoke up, “is there a mess hall close by or a snack bar? Came in from Guantanamo Bay this morning with nothing but a bitty piss ant box lunch to tide me over.”

“NOON DAY MEAL IS FROM 12:00 to 14:00. THE MESS HALL IS IN THAT BUILDING,” he pointed to a cluster of three story barracks. “IT’S THE ONE IN THE”.....then his nose twitched. Then twitched again.....he looked like Samantha Stevens from ‘Bewitched’. What’s he gonna do, turn one of us into a toad? Uh, oh looks like he’s following his sniffer to..... “YOU!” He pointed at me. “YES SIR, LT NOVAC. YOU. COME INSIDE.”

Oh crap, what have I done? Haven’t had time to do anything, except exist. Shifted the duffel on my shoulder and got a tighter grip on the overnight bag, then followed Sargeant Blake into the receiving point building. Thought I was going to fall over coming in from the super heated soup of humidity into the blast of cold air from the three air conditions that hung in the windows. When the stars and black fuzzies pulled back from my field of vision, could see the sergeant had walked over to one the in processing tables, spoke to the people sitting there and then pointed at me.

“Lt Novac,” a captain seated there, motioned me over. “Do you have your orders, 201 file and medical records?”

“Yes sir,” pulled the files out of the overnight bag and handed them over to the captain. He and the Spec 4 sitting next to him flipped the jackets open and began turning pages. Some how I really don’t like the looks of this.

The specialist had my medical record, he was seemed to be mesmerized by a certain page, cuz he
kept flipping back to it. “Excuse me Lt Novac,” Specialist.....looked at his name tape.......Jones, asked. “Is this correct? You gave birth in February.....as in this year February?”

“Yes Specialist, I did.” Course had to whip out my wallet to show them a picture of my little man. Gotta get me one of those ‘brag books’ like Ezra had. The few snaps in the wallet just didn’t do him justice. “His name is Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin Win...Novac.” Okay, officially he’s a Winchester, but they don’t have to know that.....yet or at all.

“Thank you Lieutenant,” the Captain said dryly, leaning over to look at a picture. “I’m sure he’s a very.......Christ, he’s a big one. Pup is gonna be a full back for Georgia (the bulldogs of course) when he’s a bit older.”

“10 pounds, 2 ounces, 23 inches long when he was born.” I said proudly. “And Jeff was a month early.”

“God bless America and all her satellite countries,” Spec Jones hissed through his teeth. “And I thought my momma had some big pups. You got her beat all hollow.”

“His daddy is a big man,” winked and smirked. “Especially where it counts.”

“Captain, is there a problem here?” A rather large specimen of airborne major, had suddenly lumbered up to the processing table. “Why isn’t he over at the hospital with the other omegas?”

The captain had popped to his feet, “sorry Sir. He just arrived and we were reviewing his medical records.”

“Pardon me Major sir?” The cold blue eyes, turned themselves on me. “With all due respects. Why do I have to go to the hospital?”

“Because we have to make sure you aren’t pregnant. There is no way the US army is going to be liable to some alpha for ‘ruining’ his property.” He snorted, “Uncle Sam has paid for enough southeast Asian water buffaloes, trees in Germany and fucken Carolina beef cows to start paying some jumped up alpha for ‘loss of consortium’.”

“What’s ‘loss of consortium’?” Specialist Jones stage whispered to the captain.

“He can’t get fucked for pups any more,” Captain......read his name tape......DeAngelo whispered back, watching the little drama start to build before their eyes.

“Oh, like Nurse Jenkins on Doctor De Amor MD.”

It’s now official. My life has become a soap opera. “Sir, WITH all due respects. I’m not pregnant.” Oh there are days I wish I weren’t such a high minded sap, who didn’t use their family name or who my alpha is or Dad is the King of Hell or Naomi-Mom who’s a perfect bitch on wheels when pissed off or that Major Sam is a lawyer or any number of things that stayed on my tongue instead of jumping out my mouth.

“Lieutenant,” the major was now close enough were I could smell what he had for breakfast, lunch and the brand of beer that went with those two meals (Budweiser—you cheap ass son of bitch). “Are you trying to tell me how to run this battalion?” There was a low growl in his throat.

“No Sir.” Would like to tell him quite a number of things, including that just because he has a small dick, dainty feet and an inferiority complex, is no reason to take all this out of the omegas in his command.
“Then you will get over to the Martin Army Hospital, piss in a bottle, let the vampires draw some blood, then spread your legs and let the good doctors over there look up your snatch. Get going.”

“Yes Sir.” Assbutt.

As I was leaving with Sergeant Blake, could hear the Major say, “that slick will prolly wash out the first day any way.”

Oh like fun I will! Will show that male chauvinist pig of an alpha what kind of tree grows apples.

The Martin Army Hospital was a large 9 story ‘L’ shaped facility that we’d passed on the way in. Sergeant Blake pulled the staff car into the ‘East be by Jebus’ lot, parked and lead the way into the main entrance. Walked a zillion miles till we got to the clinic. Course Blake doesn’t help me with my bags, so a trudge across that hot black top, all the humidity in the air, then the insane air conditioning and now I’m thirsty. Please let there be a drinking fountain somewhere.

Found the other omegas, two E-3 males and a female second lieutenant sitting in the clinic waiting room. They’d gotten their results and were just waiting to go back. “We’re not pregnant,” The lieutenant said flatly. “Nor do any of us have the clap.”

“Yes Ma’am,” Sergeant Blake said dutifully. “Will get you back as soon as Lt Novac here is finished.

“That’s okay,” said quickly. If ever there was a time for a command decision, it was now. “I can call a cab to get back, no sense in holding the others up.” They looked at me gratefully, just wanting to get out of there.

“Wellllll,” Blake hesitated. “Alright, if you insist Sir.” And with that, the four of them took off and I was left to deal with my grand gesture. First thing, find a drinking fountain. There was one a short distance down the hall that actually worked. The water tasted a little muddy, but who cares it was wet and better then drying out. Tanked up, then went back to the waiting room, plunked down in the seat and of course that’s when my stomach started to complain.

The tiddy oggie was a little squished but it was actually tasted pretty good. It looked like a turn over but was filled with beef, potato and carrots. Ate slowly, didn’t know when my next meal would be, so wanted this to last a while. “Lt Novac,” The nurse came out from the lab, “I need draw some of your blood and if you’d go to the bathroom over there and fill this up.” She handed me a dixie cup with my name on the bottom. “Leave it on the back of the tank.”

At least she was efficient, found a vein without too much jacking around. Geez, I didn’t even have to get a Wassermann to get mated, but need one to jump out of a perfectly good airplane? The army is a fucked up place. That done, now had to pee in the cup. Which was a problem cuz......I couldn’t pee, not a drop. Was still too dried out and my body was hanging on to every ounce. Crap! So, went back to the drinking fountain and guzzled like this was five cent beer night at the NCO club on pay day.

Took a while but was finally able to piss enough into the cup so these mother fuckers could finally do the test. Next came the pelvic exam. There is nothing more invasive and embarrassing, then having your feet up in stirrups and being bore scoped by a total stranger. Granted, not like that hadn’t happened during my pregnancy, but didn’t think Uncle Sam had a vested interest in my snatch. Imagine my surprise, he does. “When did you give birth?” The doctor (or at least I hope he is) asked, slipping in the speculum and cranked it open. A nurse was standing next to him to take notes.
“February 15th,” I replied. “My babe was a month early.”

“Hmmm, vagina has scars consistent with sex and birth, cervix is low and open, uterus is about normal size and uterine walls smooth, with mucus, there is no thickness that belies pregnancy. Belly is still somewhat soft and supple.” The doctor droned on a while, until finally, he pulled out the speculum and told me to get dressed. “You’re healthy with no preexisting issues I could see. Now we’ll just wait for your test results to come back.”

After putting my uniform back on, came out of the exam room and flopped down in one of the plastic waiting room chairs. All that water, the prodding and the tiddy oggie was not sitting well on my stomach. How bad do I really want those jump wings? Was it worth going through all this bull shit? The majors smirking face came to mind.....oh hell yeah it was! About hour later the nurse came out, “congratulations, you didn’t kill a rabbit and your Wassermann was negative.” She handed me the reports that proclaimed my reproductive innocence. “Go forth my son and be a wind dummy.”

Oh crap, just let me outta here! On the other hand....OH THANK THE ALPHA GOD I’M NOT PREGNANT!!!! Did a little James Brown twirl.....“I feel good! I knew that I would!” And with that, picked up my crap, went out the admissions desk and sweet talked the secretary into letting me use the phone to call a cab from the list of numbers she had in her Rolodex.

The cab ride back cost me three bucks but it was worth every penny to pull up in front of the receiving point, step out, bags, orders and reports that state, I’M NOT PREGNANT and I don’t have the clap. Did I mention I’M NOT PREGNANT? Because I’M NOT PREGNANT! Waltzed in and put the reports down in front of Spec 4 Jones and Capt DeAngelo. “Here are my reports, my orders, 201 file and you’ve seen my first born pup. Can I NOW let you guys torture me for the next three weeks?”

The captain glanced at my paper work, scribbled his name on a few forms and handed me back an orientation package. “If you need money now, you’ll collect your TDY pay at the pay masters office over there. If not, then as your paper work request, those monies will wired directly into your bank account. We recommend you don’t keep any more then 50 dollars in cash on you at any given time. Any other funds should go into the company safe. Officers are housed over at Olson Hall, a few blocks that way,” he hooked a thumb over his shoulder. “You’ll go over there and get checked in.”

“What about food, where do we eat?” Not that I was hungry at this second, but sooner or later was gonna feel a little peckish.

“You can eat in the consolidated mess hall, it’s $2.00 per meal for officers and E-7s and above. But there’s a snack bar, The Leaning Rest has some okay pizza (it ain’t New York or Chicago) and the ‘Running Shit..I mean...Chef’ is floating around the battalion area. Speaking of, there’s enough to keep you busy here in our little neck of the woods; there’s a theater, bowling alley, library, swimming pool......”

“Have you had any issues with people.....like me.....omegas......people complaining about omegas swimming in the same......” Considering all the trouble I had last year out at Fort Riley when Krissy Chambers and I were asked to leave the Custer Pool because we were a ‘distraction’ or mothers didn’t want their pups to become omegas (ignorant sons of bitches). Or that it took John as commander to come out to the pool, put the fear of God in everyone and fire the pool manager. Boy did that guy disappear quick.

“Lieutenant,” The tone of Captain DeAngelo’s voice ran some where between amused and confused. “This is only the third year omegas have been allowed into Jump and Pathfinder schools.
We haven’t had enough of you people to know or care if or when you swam or went skinny dipping in the Chattahoochee. Though I suspect more then a few alphas wouldn’t mind that bit of information.” Okay, moving right along. “In any event, congratulations, you’re in the Second Platoon, 42nd Training Company. They will form up each morning in front of the company barracks. Theirs is the first building as you’re coming down Riordan Street. Training starts Monday at 05:00 AM with a PT test. There after, first hour of the day, every day is PT. Cuz if you think you’re in good shape now? Son, you’re gonna look like Charles Atlas by the time we’re done.”

Okay, that’s a good look. Though a small nagging voice creeping in from the little dark corners of my mind, wondered how John would like bedding down with some macho hard dick. Prolly would like it fine as long as the hard dick was in a pair of blue silk panties with ribbons and lace.....

“Lt. Novac?” Huh, what? “Get out of my building, you’re starting to smell a little too nice.”

Oops. “Sorry Sir!” Saluted, picked up by bags and hurried outside. Thank the Alpha God, the cold air kept the smell of ‘happy omega’ down to that one table. But now that I’m outside, gotta get moving, cuz the heat and humidity along with my own hormones were gonna get me in trouble. Saw there were a couple of beta officers getting into a Checker cab and jogged over. “Are you guys headed over to Olson Hall?”

“Yes,”the driver said. “Two bucks, front seat.”

My cash money was going fast. Will have to find the PX or O’Club and cash a few of my travelers checks. Dropped two crumpled bills in the dudes hand and he threw the car in gear, we were off. The trip was over took only a few minutes, I could’ve walked it, but it was 03:00...er....15:00 in the afternoon, hotter then hell, with luggage and the day I’ve had, it was worth the two bucks.

Olson Hall. Didn’t know what to expect the place to look like, but wasn’t expecting the stand of huge three sided buildings we were driving up to. I’d seen some good sized barracks in Germany, but not this big. That’s when the cabbie turned tour guide, “they’re called cuartels, that’s Spanish for...”

“Barracks,” I supplied. “I grew up in Panama, that’s what they called some of the police stations.”

“Barracks,” the beta cabbie gave me the stink eye and continued. “They were constructed between 1929 and 1933 and meant to house a battalion. Olson Hall was converted to visitors and student quarters for the airborne, pathfinder and infantry officers basic courses. Welcome to Building 399, your home away from home.” He pulled the car in front of a rather grand looking entrance and we piled out, dragging our crap. Went inside, the lobby was air conditioned to death and a bored looking beta female civilian was sitting behind the registration desk. You could see the rabbit ears of the small TV set poking up from the desk top. Sounds like Days of Our Lives, Secret Storm or some such shit was playing softly.

“Orders please and id cards,” oh crap. I don’t have one. Well, I do. My dependent id. Hung back till the others signed in, got their key and left.

“Uh, have a small problem,” handed the woman my orders. “I don’t have the green active member id card yet. I have my orange dependent id.”

“That will do,” she said and I fished the card out of my wallet. After a moment, “the last names on your card and orders don’t match.”

“The card has my mated name and the orders have my legal name.” Didn’t see this coming, didn’t
even think of it. “The social security number on both documents are the same.”

The woman gave it another look and then walked back in the office to get what I assumed was the next link up on the food chain. Sure enough, out came another silly-villian, some GS-something or other was holding my orders and id. “Sorry Lt. Novac, but you are going to need either an active or temporary military id card that matches the last name on your orders.”

“Can I at least get a room to put my stuff in, so I don’t have to lug it all the way back?”

“I’m sorry but we can’t check you in until your paper work is cleared up.”

I hate government employees. Paper pushing, bean counting mother fucking.....Oh, this can’t be happening! “How much would you charge a retiree passing through to stay here?”

“Twenty dollars a night.” The woman automatically answered.

I took out the last bill in my wallet, was down to pocket change now. “Here,” slapping it down.

“Gimme a room and a receipt cuz I want that Jackson back.” Being there was nothing they could argue against and really didn’t want to leave my stuff in their inept hands, they took my $20, gave a receipt and a room key. Was on the second floor on the back side of the building. Dragged my ass up the stairs and after a few fits and starts found room 201. Unlocked the door and flipped on the light, only to watch a few roaches skitter under the bed. Lovely. On the upside, at least they weren’t the big honken cucarachas I was used to seeing Panama.

There was a bed, night stand, writing desk, swivel chair, dresser and easy chair with a floor lamp next to it. Nice size closet, the bathroom had a tub/shower combination, sink, toilet all in basic white, prolly the cheapest the government could find. The room had that shabby, too well lived in look and smelled musty with alpha spunk, pee and mildew. Poured the contents of the duffel and overnight bag on the floor, hanging up the fatigues, putting the boots next to the bed to shine up later, then the civilian clothes in the dresser. Will take care of the rest AFTER I get back from getting that id.

Come back down stairs and walk out the door. Geez, it’s nasty hot. The upstate NY winters have thinned up my blood. Better get used to this walk over to the training area cuz I only have so much money and gotta make it last for the next three weeks. Wander down Gillespie Street, to World Ave, then Edwards Street then finally Riordan Street down passed the jump towers and enlisted barracks. Back to the Central Receiving Building.

“Excuse me Specialist Jones?” Waited my turn to step up to the table.

“You back again?” He looked me up and down. Guess I was looking a little worse for wear, plus my feet were starting to hurt a little. If these shoes weren’t broken in before, they are now. “Can’t stay away from us huh, Sir.”

“I need a temporary id. Just a copy of my orders is not enough for the pencil pushers over at Olson Hall.”

“You don’t have one?”

“No, I’m not active duty yet. I go to OBC in late August, so no green id yet.”

The E-4 pointed at a short line in front of a near by table. “See them over there to get a temp id that will get you into the commissary, PX and O-Club....which reminds me....you WILL be joining the officers club. That table over there.” He took WAY too much pleasure in mentioning that.
Joined the line of cadets from West Point and Annapolis midshipman to get my id and then took a step to the right and into the line for my officers club card. Then went back outside and walked the mile back to Olson Hall. Now I just wanna take a shower and a nap but not before I get my 20 bucks back. Stopped at the check in desk, showed the stupid little hunk of card board, got ‘officially’ checked in and President Jackson back in my pocket.

Climbed the stairs and went to my room. The air was a little stuffy, so turned on the window air conditioner. It was elderly Westinghouse that shook, rattled and rolled but at least spit out some cold air. Stripped off the khakis, they were disgusting. Had sweated through every inch so they were soaked, white with salt and smelled goatish. Will have to do laundry tomorrow. Went to the bath, got the water running and after a few minutes, found it didn’t get much above tepid. Oh joy, oh fun! Thank the Alpha God, am only here for three weeks and not six months like those guys at Infantry School.

Came out and about jumped out of my skin when there was a knock at the door. “Just a minute,” I called out. Pulled a pair of sweats out of the dresser and quickly put them on. “Who is it?” Think I’m opening the door automatically? You better shit in your mess kit I ain’t. Naomi-Mom didn’t raise no fool. Also don’t have Snubby or the Lovers Kiss, they’re back in Washington with Jenny. But have the mating knife in my hand and it snicked open with a loud metallic click.

“Captain and Mrs Paul Dutton,” came the voice from the other side of the door. Opened it carefully, ready to slam it shut if need be. And almost did, as they looked like Jehovahs Witnesses. Was half tempted to say I’ve been bathed in the blood the lamb and slam the door.

“Can I help you?”

“Omega Winchester? You are Castiel Winchester correct?”

“Who wants to know?”

“I’m sorry, really should’ve said more up front. I’m Capt Dutton and this is my mate Janet. I’m an aid to General William Livsey.” The name meant nothing to me and after a moment of continued blank stares the captain added. “He’s the base commander.”


“The General and his mate are extending their official welcome to Fort Benning to the Omega Winchester with an invitation to dine tomorrow night at Riverside, the commanders quarters.”

“Uh, okay. But how did you know I was even here?” Did John let them know?

“Mr Roberts,” the captain explained patiently. “The civilian who runs the day to day operations here at Olson Hall, he likes to keep the command staff abreast of VIP guests, pups of fellow commanders and other notables attending our schools. People, that should have a special welcome extended to them.”

That must have been that guy when I tried to check in the first time, who got a look at my dependent ID and saw Johns name and rank. Little bastard is a spy. Meaning he also knows about all the shenanigans, dirt and ‘who’s fucking who’ going on in this oversized outhouse. Doesn’t matter the size of the post, it’s still just a little Peyton Place. Better mind my step, but in the mean time... “thank the General for me. I’d be honored to have dinner with he and his mate.” Not really, but I guess ‘duty dinners’ were a part of being a generals mate.
“Wonderful,” the captain smiled. “I’ll pick you up downstairs at 18:00, it’s coat and tie by the way. You have one don’t you?” Not so subtle request that I BETTER.

“I will by tomorrow,” great. Hope the thrift shop is open on Saturdays. If not, I’m stuck either going into Columbus or hope the PX has something that doesn’t look too horrific. The Duttons said their goodbyes and left. Shut the door and flopped on the bed. Just wanna sleep. Rolled over and checked my watch sitting on the night stand, it was a bit after 17:00. Think there’s enough change to call Karen, even if all I get to hear is Jeff say ‘Irv’.

Slipped on my sandals, policed up some nickles, dimes and quarters, then went in search of a pay phone. Found there were a row of them down in the lobby. Waited my turn, as there were quite a few men trying to call home too. Finally stepped into a booth, closed the folding door and sat down, dropped in a quarter, dialed the number and heard the nasally voice of a Southern Bell operator advise to please deposit $2.75 for the next 3 minutes. Could hear the connection being made, then the buzz of the phone ringing and then: “Singer residence.”

“Hi Karen, it’s me Cas.”

“Castiel, was wondering if you made it down to Georgia okay. You ARE in Georgia, right?” Launched, “yes I made it.” Then, more important, “how’s Jeff? Is he awake? Can I talk to him?”

“He’s awake and full of piss and vinegar. I’ll go get him” Heard the clunk of the phone being put down and quiet. Then a moment or two later....“Say hi to your papa Sweet heart.”

“Hi Puppy, hi Jeff honey.” My voice went a few octaves higher and in the tone you reserve for small pups and babes. “Papa loves you and misses you so much!”

There was silence from the other side as I babbled on, then heard........“papa.”

Now I’m in tears. “That’s right honey, it’s papa, it’s papa and he misses you so much.”

“Papa!” Now all I wanna do is run home and wrap my arms around my little boy and never let go. “Papapaapapaappa! Gook!”

“We’ve been reading ‘the Mohicans’ today,” Karen came back on the line. “We’re up to Chapter Nine. I’m waiting for him to say: La Longue Carabine!” In the back ground I hear.... “Irv.”

“He’s still saying that?”

“A lot.” About that time I hear the operator come on and say to deposit another $3.00 for the next three minutes.

“I gotta go, thank you so much for looking out for Jeff, tell him I love him........” And the line went dead. Put the phone back on the hook, then wiped the tears away with the back of my hand. Opened the door and there was a couple of grinning alphas, obviously amused by my breakdown. “What are you looking at Assbutts?” Pushed by them, could hear Zachariahs sarcastic voice in the back of my mind ‘don’t be such a pussy Castiel’. Involuntarily flinched as that statement would usually be punctuated with a vicious slap on my back. He wouldn’t touch my face, not when there was a chance of damaging my price.

No, couldn’t flinch like that any more. Not here, not any where, not ever. Gotta be tough, which means I can’t call Karen until next Saturday, when I can allow myself a weak moment. Ohhhh, still have to get those post cards out to the boys. Need to buy some stationary to write John, Dean and Jenny, find a coat and tie for tomorrow....sigh.....I’m so screwed. And not in the fun way either. But
in the mean time, squared my shoulders and strode with purpose back to my room. I swear by the Alpha God, WILL NEVER BE HUNGRY AGAIN....oops right state, wrong movie...aw shit. Let some other poor bastard die for his country? Better movie, wrong situation.

Fuck, I’m going to bed. Will deal with this shit tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone, Happy Labor Day. Welcome back, thank you all for coming to visit, commenting and tossing a kudo my way.

Shall I be Mother: meaning who gets to pour the tea.

Hester Bateman was a female English silversmith during the Georgian Period in Great Britian. Her silver teapots, dining utensils and other creations, are collectable and command high prices.

Piss and punk: US naval and Marine term for water and bread. Used as a punishment when you were sent to the brig.

Of course in British racing green.

Page 3 of The Sun: a British tabloid newspaper, that in the mid 1970’s began showing pictures of nude women on page three. Which lead to the joke: what’s the hottest part of The Sun......Page 3.

The World According to Garp: was the fourth novel by John Irving and became a movie in 1982 starring the late Robin Williams.

Day Zero: first day of training at Air Assault School, that is so rigorous, there is a 15 percent drop out rate. Of the 10 day course, only 50 percent will manage to graduate.

Operation Pedro Pan: a program run by Catholic Charities for parents to get their children out of Cuba and to the United States. It ran from 1960 to 1962. I knew a major who came to the US as a teenager as part of the program. He and his sister lived with relatives and didn’t see their mother again until she came over in 1980 as part of the Mariel Boat lift.

The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is much different now then it was in the 1970’s. First off was the name, it was the William B Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport and secondly was the terminal building. Construction of the present day facility began in 1977 and opened in 1980. The airport at the time was this story had a main terminal with 6 concourses branching off. Here is a link to an article about that time and a map of what the it looked like: http://www.sunshineskies.com/atlanta1970s.html

The Knot and its editor Beatrice Knight Niitza: was inspired the wonderful series ‘The Knights and their Bees’ by Niitza. THE KNOT in actually is a bridal magazine. It was a comment in her tribute story about the Supreme Court decision allowing gay
marrage, I had mentioned there was now a gay bridal magazine similar to The Knot.
She had written back saying that it sounded like a porn magazine from an a/b/o story.
And so became the inspiration for 'Honey Bee’ Niitza and her magazine.

Leg: non airborne personnel. Not a complement.

Wind dummy: a dummy that is tossed out over the drop zone to see which way the
wind is blowing. Also an affectionate or insulting term for a paratrooper.

Snake eater: Army ranger. Called such because during Ranger school and on
missions....well yeah, they do eat them. I’m told rattlesnakes taste like chicken. But
then again, so does everything else.

Dr De Amor MD: my version of Dr Sexy, MD. Since it didn’t exist yet, we had to
have a sexy soap. However, we will see the first Dr Sexy novel when Cas leaves for
Germany in January of 1979.

Charles Atlas: long before there was ‘Body by Jake’ there was ‘The Insult that Made a
Man out of Mack’. Charles Atlas and his Dynamic Tension was seen by school boys
and young men on the backs of comic books from the 1940’s right up to the 80’s.
Atlas was the classic 90 lb weakling who turned his life around with body building,
his body being so perfect, he was the model for a lot of the statuary in 1920’s.....even
one of Alexander Hamilton that now stands on the south patio of the US Treasury
Bldg in Washington DC.

General Schedule (GS) payscale, the payscale used to determine the salaries of most
civilian government employees. From www.federalpay.org/gs
Hi there, welcome back. WARNING, if you are easily offended by sexual jokes, rude songs or any of that crap, you might want to avoid this chapter.

I HAD A GIRL
SHE HAD TWO TITS
ONE GAVE BUD
AND THE OTHER GAVE SCHLITZ....

The rain was warm and thick, like blood falling from the sky.

AIRBORNE AIRBORNE WHERE YOU BEEN?
I BEEN TO THE LZ AND BACK AGAIN
WHAT’S YA GONNA DO WHEN YOU GET BACK?
TAKE A FEW TURNS ROUND THE AIRBORNE TRACK.....

The steady thump of boots to road and water provided the back beat for the voices of the 27 men and 3 women who moved steadily along in the semidarkness. It was shirts and skins, the men ran bare chested, women and I in t-shirts. Was still in a nursing shirt and had better titties then half the women in the company. Though there was one dude who could give Victor Mature a run for his money.

JESSIE JAMES SAID BEFORE HE DIED
THERE WERE FIVE THINGS HE WANTED TO RIDE
A TRICYCLE, BICYCLE, AUTOMOBILE
’MEGA WHORE AND A FERRIS WHEEL.....

Our instructors were the ones running along side in the black baseball caps. They were a ferocious lot of NCO’s. Most, if not all, saw action in Vietnam and didn’t take kindly to bullshit from any one, especially shave tails lieutenants or PX cowboy PFC’s. They do not have names. Their name tapes say they do but to us they are ’Sargeant Airborne.

I DON’T KNOW BUT I BEEN TOLD
ESKIMO PUSSY’S MIGHTY COLD
HERE WE GO
ALL THE WAY
EVERY DAY......

Was climbing into that mental blank spot where I could forget where I was and not think about the rain, the sound of boots hitting macadam and the distance we’d yet to go.

PT, SO GOOD
WHISKEY, NO GOOD
ONE MILE, NO SWEAT
TWO MILE, BETTER YET......

It was only Tuesday and the 42nd Training Company had already lost 12 people. Two were
dropped last Friday for medical conditions. I on Saturday and two on Sunday because they suddenly realized (all bravado aside) this was not what they wanted to do and the rest on Monday because they couldn’t pass the PT test. The 10 second hang and then pull up took most of them. The sour face of that major told me that carrying around a 25 pound pup and all his crap for months gave me the upper body strength to ace that part. HA! Take a gander at that you chauvinist ass butt!

Our company commander, one James K Carriker, in his welcome to the 42nd Training Company speech, commented we’d lose a few more by the time the fifth jump was made three weeks from now.

And speaking of Saturday, that had been interesting. Had gotten up early, jogged over to the central mess hall, paid my two bucks for breakfast in pennies, nickles and dimes. Had me some 'shit on a shingle’, coffee that could put hair on your chest (and any other location) then bummed a fag and a kiss...a cigarette and a touch from the other guys cigarette to get it lit. (Sigh. This is what happens when you hang around Brits. You become one by way of injection. Sner.) After getting back to Olson, called a cab, as I had a lot of shopping to do. Pulled an old Naomi trick, for $20 bucks and a five buck tip, convinced a cabbie to drive me around for two hours and then wait while I went shopping. Amazing the powers a dead president has.

Stopped at the bank on post and cashed a crap load of money orders. Will put the rest of my money in the company safe on Monday. Got lucky at the thrift shop, as I caught it on the one day it was open on the weekend per month. Found a summer weight camel colored suit jacket and cream trousers I could fit into. Label says: Hector Powe of Regent Street. It was older English cut (thank you finishing school) but even now still fashionable. The white poplin oxford shirt had a small stain on the sleeve that no one would see as long as the coat was on. Then pawed through the rack for the least ugly tie in the joint that would go with it. Got out of there spending only $20 bucks. Glad some little old retard-o’s mate had good taste in clothes.

Then made a run over to the PX to get some stationary, spray starch and an electric kettle, then the commissary for sugar, Pop Tarts, Tang and powdered creamer. Then a stop at the florist gotta have flowers for my hostess and finally ending at the Officers Club for a bottle of wine. Credit where credit was due, the club manager had excellent taste in wine and gave me the heads up as to the commanders favorite. The left bank red Bordeaux, 1971 wasn’t a bad year, but since they didn’t have the 1970-which was a great year-the one they did have cellared would have to do. After that, went back to the BOQ, filled the sink, put in the flowers and lay the wine in front of the air conditioner.

Set about ironing the wrinkles out of the suit next. Borrowed an ironing board from the front office, they had several and you had to sign them out. Filled the iron I’d brought along from home with tap water, got a towel from the bathroom and proceeded to steam the jacket and pants. Put a little starch on the collar and cuffs of the poplin shirt, then gave the tie a good going over.

Must have worked well enough cuz at 18:00 when Captain Dutton came to pick me up, he ran an appreciative eye over my ‘new’ threads. “Nice suit”, he commented as we walked across the parking lot to the belch fire of a 1974 Ford Fairlane Station wagon. “Looks good on you.”

“Thank you Sir,” but inwardly groaned. Oh Christ on a crutch, what an ‘mom-mobile’. This model even had wood paneling on the sides. Must have been how his mate convinced him to buy the thing. Guess it gave him the illusion that he was cool, manly and still wore the pants in his family. Yeah, sure, right. Not like a VW beetle hollered ‘manly’, but if Paul Newman could drive one, (granted his was a bit more hopped up then mine) so could I.
Captain Dutton also nodded approvingly at the bottle of wine for my host and a bouquet of flowers for my hostess. “Cherokee Roses,” the captain was impressed. “State flower of Georgia and Mrs Livsey’s favorite. Good choices.

“My parents sent me to finishing school,” I said modestly. “We were taught, with flowers it’s always a safe bet to go with the state flower. Unless it had an inappropriate meaning or the person is allergic.”

“That was some money well spent on your parents behalf.” The big engine roared to life but the air conditioning vents roared louder.

All I could think of when looking Riverside, the base commanders quarters, was Tara, the fictional home of Scarlet O’Hara from ‘Gone with the Wind’. “Wow.” It was a large white plantation style building with a square two story front porch, broad green lawn and flags of the US, Army, Airborne and infantry flying from the pillars. Granted, I stayed at Quarters One out at Fort Riley, when John commanded the Big Red One, but have to admit. This place beat that one out all hollow.

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“Impressive isn’t it?” Captain Dutton said softly. “Even though I come here almost every day and should be used to seeing that house, I’m still moved by its history and majesty.” He pulled the car along side where several other vehicles were parked and we got out, walking along the path through beds of flowers, well tended and blooming even in this heat. Was willing every pore in my body not to sweat, so I’d look snappy and not soggy going into Riverside.

The commanders mate herself came to the door. Bena Sue Livsey had aged gracefully the way only good southern omegas can. She wore a partial head covering, sandals instead of bare feet and a well worn silver collar that looked like it had never left her throat since the day it was snapped on. “Omega Winchester,” she smiled sweetly (that patented slight upturn of lip that you could hold for hours and prolly had) and held out her hand. “Welcome to Riverside.”

“Omega Livsey,” I bowed taking her hand and kissed the finger pads. “You were most kind to think of this poor stranger in a strange land.” Then held out the wine and bouquet of flowers. “Just a small token of appreciation to you and your mate.”

The lady nuzzled the blossoms, “Cherokee Roses. My favorite. Thank you.” Then she glanced at the label on wine bottle, “My goodness. The general does like a red Bordeaux from time to time. You must have have ‘the sight’. ” Mrs Livsey stepped back to allow us in.

“I do have flashes of things,” said modestly, as the captain and I stepped across the threshold.

Was lead into formal living room, where folks were perched in over stuffed chairs, a rather hard looking davenport. For all it’s formality, it looked like any other home of a career solder. A German shrunk, the coat/hat/umbrella stand that was near the door, small Italian marble plant stands, and knick knacks from hither and yon. The other people there, I soon found out, were command staff and their mates, including Col. Frank Walton, Director of the Airborne Airmobility Department. Oh shi.....er....darn. Not the way I wanted to meet the man. All I wanted to do was be one more hand to shake on graduation day or one more chest to slap for ‘blood wings’.

“Darl’in”, the fellow holding court from a leather wing back chair with a low ball glass in one hand and a long thin cigar in the other, stopped in mid sentence to look up. “Sorry to interrupt. This is Second Lieutenant Castiel Novac, Omega Castiel Winchester.” Interesting, the introduction she gave allowed for status as Johns mate and under my own right as an officer, even if it is as a lower then whale shit second Lieutenant. Hey, we all had to start somewhere. I walked up smartly to his chair, as the General didn’t move an inch, and held out my hand for him to either shake or kiss. Of which he did neither. General ‘Lipp’ Livsey handed me his half full glass.
For a moment stood there wondering if I was suppose to get him a refill, hand it off to some one or.......then thought of Gabe and his interview to be on Admiral Rickovers staff. Oh....of course. “Cheers,” and I knocked it back till the ice cube banged against my nose. Then licked my lips, chuffed the glass.....good bourbon, Woodford? The branch water even came from Kentucky.”

The man was looking at me like I was some new, yet interesting form of cockroach. “And you know this because?”

Well, if I’m going to screw up, am gonna do it monumentally. “It’s been lime filtered Sir. Most of the lime rock streams are in Kentucky, which by the way is the best way to have bourbon and branch.”

General Livsey unfolded himself from the chair until he stood just a smidge above eye level. “Lieutenant Novac, if I had my way, I’d kick your ass from here to the Chattahoochee for that stunt you just pulled.” That’s it, I’m dead. Ship me home in a pine box. “On the other hand, Omega Winchester, you have good taste in bourbon and from what I hear, a passable golf swing. Now you got any pictures of that pup of yours? I understand he’s a damn bigg’en.” And the room (and me) breathed a collective sigh of relief.

The rest of the evening went just as well, dinner was.....manly. Slabs of beef, bloody rare, baked potato slathered with butter and sour cream, then peas with even more butter. Our water glasses were filled with sweet tea, “none of that Yankee instant stuff.” Mrs Livsey sniffed. “No offense.” Course those of us from north of the Mason-Dixon all mumbled that none was taken. Then came humming bird cake and chicory coffee for desert. Talk was....oh who am I kidding, the General did most of it. Nobody was going to tell him to shut up, so we stuffed our faces instead and answered when called on. Gave the ‘fit for polite company’ story of how I met John. That his son Dean was my ROTC instructor, that I met his father down at Fort Bragg when he came to visit his son. He bought my contract and we were mated soon after. Everyone seemed to buy it.

Then came that awkward moment after dinner when the men peeled off to head for the Generals study for brandy and cigars, while the women were back to the front room for sherry and gossip. I was stuck, which way do I go? As a man and officer, should be going with the men, but then again, as Johns mate, do I go with the ladies? Mrs Livsey noticed my hesitation and then said aloud, “Olivia,” a tall slender black lady who was the executive officers mate snapped to her side, “would you mind getting the ladies settled, I’ll be there shortly. Want to speak with Castiel alone for a moment.”

She lead me down a hall, through a swinging door and into the kitchen. Omega Livsey walked over to the refrigerator, opened it and pulled out a couple of bottles of grape Nehi. She banged the tops off against a near by counter with the ease of an infantryman opening a beer. “Now,” the lady said after a healthy pull off the bottle. “Your ‘First Party’ out at Riley, tell me ALL about it. Who was there, what you wore and how much was in your bowl. There hasn’t been an old fashioned First Party here on Benning, since Georgie Patton was going to roll the tanks into Phenix City.”

C-130 ROLLING DOWN THE STRIP
AIRBORNE DADDY GONNA TAKE A LITTLE TRIP
JUMP UP, HOOK UP SHUFFLE TO THE DOOR
WE GONNA JUMP AND COUNT TO FOUR......

I’m snapped back to reality when the ‘black hat’ called for us to suddenly stop. Apparently someone had fainted and fallen out of formation, hitting the pavement pretty hard. One of the long legged loose limbed PFC’s who could run like a gazelle, was dispatched to fetch the ‘meat wagon’ that followed the training companies everywhere. Just for this kind of occasion.
So we waited, standing in the rain, catching our breathes, as our instructor was assessing the damage to the man on the ground by the dim glow of a small flash light. The other platoons stomping by, their ‘black hats’ stopping long enough to see what was happening, comment on the situation (fucken pussy leg) and then take off to rejoin their platoon before they did something silly. As the meat wagon pulled up, the NCO made a command decision, “WASHINGTON! YOU, THE TALL BLACK ONE, NOT THE SHORT WHITE ONE! ROUND EM UP AND MOVE EM OUT! FOLLOW THE OTHER PLATOONS BACK TO THE COMPANY AREA! NOW MOVE YOUR ASSES BEFORE I MAKE THE LOT OF YOU DROP AND GIMME 10! NOW GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY SIGHT!”

Washington (the short white one) was called on by Washington (the tall black one) to call cadence.

I SAY HEY BO DIDLEY
HEY HEY BO DIDLEY BO
BO DIDLEY BO DIDLEY
HAVE YOU HEARD
I’M GONNA JUMP FROM
A BIG IRON BIRD....

The guy who fell didn’t come back. Must have been hurt bad enough to be washed out and sent home. The rest of the day the instructors ran us through drills on how to do a proper PLF, which you’d think would be pretty easy. It wasn’t not by a long shot. And worse, we had to do it over and over and over from various heights into the saw dust pits.

“Your body needs to remember,” the black hat yelled. “Even if you don’t have time to, your muscles will.” They went on to tell a story about a WW2 veteran of the ‘Screaming Eagles’ who’d jumped at Normandy, many years later while out riding his motorcycle, had a car pull of in front of him from a side street. He crashed into the drivers side front fender and was thrown over the hood of the car. Even after 20 years, the old paratroopers body remembered and it tucked, rolled and PLF’d on a patch of lawn. He was fine, the woman who hit him, not so much. She’d gotten out of the car, thinking she’d just killed someone and promptly fainted, smashing her face on the pavement.

Now what should be happening when you fall is a five point hit:

1. the balls of the feet
2. side of the calf
3. the side of the thigh
4. the side of the hip, or buttocks
5. the side of the back

Is that what’s happening? Of course not. Mostly that first day was a three point hit: heels, ass and head. Think I was one enormous bruise by the time everything was all said and done. Shortly after ‘Retreat and To the Colors’ sounded at 17:00, we were released and I limped over to the company office, to pick up my wallet from the Spec 4 Jones (he had collected them in the morning for safe keeping) then went over to the Leaning Rest. “Two slices of pepperoni and a Cheer-wine please.”

Got my slices and bottle, found a table and sat down to eat in semi peace. “Hey LT, mind if we sit?” It was Otterford, Eismann and Alice, the trio of remaining females left in second platoon. Otter and Eismann were E-4’s while Alice was a newly minted buck sergeant with the bruises on her arms where she was ‘tagged’ to provide it. In training there’s no rank, outside of that the difference is obvious.

I live at Olson Hall and they are in the barracks. There is a maid who come in every day to clean
my room, while they have to scrub latrines, they get to eat for free in the mess hall and I have to pay. But right now, we’re just four people trying to push down a slice of pizza without falling asleep in our plates.

Between bites, we talk about the day, the guy who fell out of formation during the morning run and the scuttlebutt that always seems to run rampant when ever you get a couple of solders together. “Think they’ll run us up ‘The Stairway to Heaven?’” Eismann said taking a sip of her cola.

“Maybe not this week,” I picked a stray piece of pepperoni off my plate, then popped it in my mouth. “But prolly by the end they may run us over there. Can’t be any worse then Misery Hill at Fort Knox.”

“Wanna hear something completely bananas?” Alice leaned forward and looked around conspiratorially. “Dave Waxman said he overheard two of the black hats talking......”

“You lost me when you said ‘Waxman’. All he talks is shit for the birds. Otterford snorted. “I knew him from my last duty station. Dude is such a bullshitter.”

“Maybe,” Alice continued. “But do you wanna hear it or not?”

Otterford sighed, “okay hit me.”

“He said there’s a generals omega mate here at the ‘University of Gravity’. ” That’s when she stopped and the three of them started laughing. “Knew I shouldn’t have even taken the time to even listen, but....it was just such a good story and I know Waxman was so full o crap that it runs out his ears. But now that I’m saying it out loud, the idea that some general would let his little precious omega jump, is so ridiculously bogue.”

“Preposterous,” I nodded in agreement. Somebody ran their big mouth. Bet it was one if not ALL of the mates at that dinner. The men knew enough to keep their traps shut (though give the right circumstances, alpha men can be the biggest gossips around), but army mates had a better intelligence network then the CIA, KGB or DNIP. “Who’d believe that for a second?”

“Don’t you know it,” Eismann piped up. “But I got some poop that is absolutely true. The Siren is dancing down at the Inferno Club and Suzie Wu’s....”

“Wait.....Suzie has a place down here too?” Damn, that momma san got around. “Been to her joints on Hay Street in Fayette-nam and Ninth Street in Junk-town, Kansas.”

“Then you gotta get to her place down here, it’s a few doors down from the Inferno Club,” Eismann said. “Suzie Wu’ s Menage a Trois. The dancers there are hubba hubba good looken bubba and the bibimbap is pretty good too. Some of the guys who took AIT here, were down at Suzies last Thursday night. One of them boys said Siren was such a stone fox.......he’d drink his bath water by the gallon.”

Only ‘Siren’ I know who dances is Nick Munroe, wonder if he’s down here from Kansas? Nah, can’t be. Must be someone else calling themselves by that name. Would think it’d be a common enough stripper name, like Bambi or Trixie. Not like I’m an expert in stripper names. But in the mean time, I’m bushed. Just wanna go back to Olson Hall, boil some H2O and see if I can get the tub water hot enough to soak out some of the aches and pains. Excused myself, tossed out the paper plate and bottle, then shuffled on down the road.

It was later when I was standing naked in front of the bathroom mirror that I could assess the extent of the days activities. Bruises, cuts, scrapes. Stared at myself in the full length mirror and was
appalled. Was paved in black and blue from ankle to finger tips. The bites on my shoulders were looking better but will need to use the Kotex to pad them pretty soon. Dear Alpha God, what would John think of me now? He gave me what I wanted but who wants a mate who’s just as macho as you? Hopefully, he does.

Had to laugh at Waxman, prolly the first story he ever told that was true and nobody believed him. The electric kettle started to whistle, so I took it off the toilet seat where I had it plugged into the outlet next to the medicine cabinet and dumped in the boiling water. Then refilled it and set it back to wait the next kettle full. It took four more to make the water even half way hot enough for a good soak but you work with what you’ve got.

The next morning woke at the sound of the alarm clock blaring at.....04:30 and dragged myself out of bed. Oh cripes, everything hurt. Put the water to boil to make a cup of instant coffee and gobbled down a Pop Tart. Took a couple of Tylenol and willed the kettle to hurry the fuck up. Blah, instant coffee is like barf but it’s barf with caffeine in it. Got dressed, brushed my teeth but didn’t have to worry about putting a comb through my hair. Didn’t have any. Got my head shaved Sunday at the barber shop. But shove a couple of Kotex in my pants pockets, to pad my shoulders if we’re going to be harnessed today.

Made sure my gig line was straight, gave the toes of my boots a pass with a nylon then grabbed my helmet, web belt, canteens, keys and wallet. Then headed out the door. The night cooled things down a bit but didn’t make any never mind as the humidity was so thick you could chew it. As I walked toward the company area could see the jump towers standing sentry behind the battalion. Next week the black hats are gonna drop us from em. Do I really wanna think about that? Not really. Got to 42nd Company and went inside. Spec4 Jones was working on reports when I came into his office. “Morning Specialist, just here to put my wallet in the company safe for the day.” Had taken out a couple bucks to pay for lunch and incidentals.

“Morning Lieutenant,” he took the wallet, taped it shut, then wrote my name on the tape. Watched carefully as Jones put it in the company safe. My dependent ID was hidden inside one of my shoes back at the BOQ. No way anyone was going to see that even by accident. Went out on to the company street to wait everyone to fall in from breakfast or come over from Olson Hall. Didn’t take long for everyone to fall in, take off our fatigue shirts and helmets to march out to the PT field.

“YOU’RE GOING TO LOOK LIKE CHARLES ATLAS BY THE TIME WE’RE DONE WITH YA’LL!” The black hat bawled out. “EXCEPT YOU WAXMAN, NOTHING CAN HELP THAT FAT ASS OF YOURS!” Poor Waxman, not only was he a bullshitter, the dude was built like an ostrich. But credit were credit was due, son of a bitch could run like one.

We did PT in covered saw dust pits. Kept off the rain and I would’ve said sun if it were up, which at Oh Dark 30, it wasn’t. It’s itchy and there are bugs the size of ponies crawling around. Was shaking grubs and beetles out of my nursing shirt between repetitions. Pull ups, sit ups, push ups and this really rotten exercise where you lay on your back with your feet in the air and arms outstretched. Then you bring your legs together and lower them down slowly first to your right side, then your left. “DOES IT BURN? DOES IT HURT?” The black hat yelled. “GOOD! CUZ THERE’S A WHOLE LOT MORE THAT’S GONNA HURT A WHOLE LOT WORSE!” Oh I wanna throw up. Could taste strawberry Pop Tart in the back of my mouth.

Then after that, the run.

I KNOW A GIRL ALL DRESSED IN BROWN
SHE MAKES HER LIVIN GOIN UP AND DOWN
ELEVATOR OPERATOR ELEVATOR OPERATOR
LEFTY RIGHT A LEFT.....

It’s now starting to rain again.

WHIP ME, BEAT ME, I NEED LOVE
LET ME FEEL THAT LEATHER GLOVE
SWING IT ROUND AND LET IT CRACK
LAY THAT WHIP ACROSS MY BACK.....

One mile, two miles, three miles....when we get back, our fatigue shirts are soaked through. Doesn’t matter. It goes with the rest of the ensemble.

Most of the enlisted went off to breakfast in the mess hall, the rest of us crowded around The Roach Coach that had pulled into the company street for a cup of coffee and danish. “DON’T EVEN THINK OF BRINGING THAT POGEY BAIT INTO MY COMPANY!” First Sargeant Roy bellowed from the door way. Okay, no problem. Went to eat under the covered ‘monkey bars’ that stood next to the mess hall doors. Thought about now retired Sgt Dominic DeCharo and his wife Marie out in Kansas. Wonder how he’s doing, she’s prolly had her pup by now. Should write Smelly Toominelli to find out if it was a boy or girl.

Didn’t take long for everyone to finish breakfast, fall in and then shuffle off to the training area. Put on the chutes packs, the straps went over the shoulders, between the legs, then one chute in front and the other in the back. Slipped the sanitary napkins under my uniform blouse to pad the straps to keep them from digging into the bites that were still healing. They helped, but it still hurt a little. Waited in line in the model of the C-130, then stood in the mock door and jumped. Three feet. “DON’T CARE IF IT’S THREE FEET OR A THOUSAND! KEEP YOUR FEET AND KNEES TOGETHER!” The black hats yelled, “DO IT AGAIN! So ran back and got back in line.

Jumped those three feet and kept jumping until I got it right just to be able to do something else. Which was back to the covered area where we did PT to do more PLF’s. After a while, they decided they’d tortured us enough for a little while and broke for lunch. Course we had to double time over to the mess hall.

UP IN THE MORNING BEFORE THE BREAK OF DAY
I DON’T LIKE IT, NO WAY
EAT MY BREAKFAST TOO DAMN SOON
HUNGRY AS HELL BEFORE NOON....

Got in line, paid my two bucks and stuck out my tray. In return got bowls of Chicken stew, sticky rice and fruit cocktail. Got a glass of milk, then looked for a place to sit. Figured there wouldn’t be much time to eat, so need to sit down pretty quick. “This seat taken?” The three alpha second lieutenants looked up just long enough from stuffing their faces.

“Nah,” One of em said. “Pop a squat.

So set down my tray, dropped in the chair and began spooning the stew into my mouth. It could’ve used salt, seasoning, soy sauce, more chicken....but at this point, just shoved it in. No one talked, we just ate, the sound of metal spoon hitting plastic bowl was all you could hear. On the whole, the stew and rice sucked and the fruit cocktail, well, there’s nothing you can do to that. Got up, took the tray, bowls and utensils to the drop off window. Then went, hit the head and went back outside. It was still drizzling.

Later that day after we were dismissed, collected my wallet and started walking back to Olson Hall. Every bit of me ached. How depressing, it was only Wednesday. Two more days of this
before the week end. Was hungry but too tired to stop at the Leaning Rest or flag down the Running Chef. Just kept walking. Finally got there, dragged myself up the stairs and opened the door to my room. “I love my job, I love my job, I love my job.” Plopped face first on the bed and fell asleep.

The next day, it was still raining.

I GOTTA A GIRL IN KANSAS CITY
SHE’S GOT FRECKLES ON HER TITTIES

I KNOW A GIRL ALL DRESSED IN RED
MAKES HER LIVING ON A FEATHER BED...

This time there’s a bit of thunder and lightning to go with it.

I WANNA GO TO VIETNAM
I WANNA KILL SOME CHARLIE CONG...

Hmmmm lightning and big metal towers. Prolly not the best things to be running around. But who am I to say anything? It would be kind of interesting to watch the platoon in front of us get turned into crispy critters.

GOODS IN THE OPEN MAKING HAY
BUT I CAN HEAR THE GUNSHIPS SAY
THERE’LL BE NO CHIEU HOI TODAY
NAPALM STICKS TO KIDS.......  

Looks like the black hats finally noticed that unhealthy combination, but only after one particularly stupendous bolt that must have hit a transformer, turned the sky green and knocked out power to half the battalion area. That it was quickly decided this morning the run would be cut just a tiny bit short. The Running Shit was waiting back in the company area (we still had power Ha Ha.) but this time was too wet and miserable to stay out there for coffee. It was worth the two bucks for the ‘shit on a shingle’ and the safety of being indoors.

Training resumed after breakfast. We did PLF’s in the training sheds until the rain (but mostly the thunder and lightning) stopped long enough so they could get us up on the first tower. It was kind of like a ‘slide for life’, only that first step was a lulu. The tower was 35 feet up and the drop before the line caught was 8 of the scariest feet you would ever experience. Yes, the line would catch you, the straps between your legs pulled so tight that you’d think your balls were being yanked off....Hey! They didn’t say anything about THAT in the guide book. Great we’re all gonna squeak like mice that got kicked in the nuts.

The slide had us do our PLF’s in a sawdust pit that was soggy and after the first ten people, turned more mud then ground wood chips. When it was my turn, hooked up the line, stood in ‘the door, geeze that’s a long way down and hesitated, “GET OFF MY TOWER SIR!” The black hat screamed in my ear and slapped me on the ass. Screeched (a very manly screech I’ll have you know) and just about dove out the tower. No there was no tuck, no keeping my knees together, just a big old strap burn on the side of my neck when I finally reached the ground. That is gonna bruise up and look bad.

Needless to say, AFTER I got up from the mud, had to do it over and over and over until me and every last one of us sorry sons of bitches got it right. Even if some of us got it right after 3 times (without the slap on the butt-thank you very much). 17:00 hours came, we stood retreat and to the colors before the company was dismissed for the day.
Specialist Jones lips curled up as his clean floor was tracked up by a long line of walking balls of red Georgia clay who came to the office to collect their wallets. “Take it and get the fuck out of my office....with all due respect Sirs and those of you who work for a living.” Stopped off at the head, washed my hands and walked carefully back to Olson Hall. My balls ached. Maybe tomorrow I’ll put the Kotex down my pants too.

Didn’t even bother to take my clothes off once I got in to my room. Just got in shower and let the tub turn into a mud puddle.

It’s Thursday morning and I’m really sick of rain.

CHILDREN SUCKING ON A MOTHER’S TIT  
WOUNDED LAYING DOWN IN A PIT  
DOW CHEMIAL DOESN’T GIVE A SHIT  
NAPALM STICKS TO KIDS.....

Well on the upside, my boots are now broke in.

BORN IN THE BACKWOODS, RAISED BY BEARS,  
DOUBLE-BONED JAW, THREE COATS OF HAIR,  
CAST-IRON BALLS AND A BLUE STEEL ROD,  
I’M A MEAN MOTHER-FUCKER  
A PARATROOPER BY GOD......

Is it just me or are the bugs in the sawdust pit getting bigger? And they get EVERYWHERE! Shook em out of my nursing shirt, boxers and even swallowed one doing push ups. Do I really need that much protein? No! Could’ve used a little Tabasco though.

We were back at the tower again, didn’t matter if you got it right yesterday, you needed to get it right today and every day there after. “IT HAS TO BE SECOND NATURE” Bawled the black hats. “YOU GOTTA PLF WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT.” Then added, “IF YOU THINK THIS TOWER IS HIGH, WAIT TILL NEXT WEEK!” Oh crap, that’s right. The towers we’ll be hauled up and dropped from are 250 feet high. Bit my lip, how bad did I want that stupid little hunk of metal? That majors face suddenly came to mind. Yeah, wanna rub those jump wings in that fuckers face.

Lunch time, ran back to the mess hall.

AND IT’S ONE, TWO, THREE  
WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?  
DON’T ASK ME, I DON’T GIVE A DAMN  
NEXT STOP IS VIETNAM  
AND IT’S FIVE, SIX, SEVEN  
OPEN UP THE PEARLY GATES......

Got the colossal stink eye from the mess sergeant and Spec 4 Jones, as we left a trail of red mud that was worse then yesterday. “You sons of bitches are going to clean this up before you leave!” First Sargent Leon Roy the Fourth (Oh my Alpha God there’s three more of them?!) walked in like a man on a mission. “Captain Carriker wants this gang way cleaned up chop chop!” He scanned the crowd and then began pointing....“you, you, you....yes you Waxman and you Lt. Novac!” Otterford, Waxman, Alice and I..... “Thank you for volunteering. Mops and fuck its are over in that closet. Get moving.”

“But I haven’t finished eating yet,” Waxman whined. Top walked over and snatch up his tray,
sending it flying across the room like a Frisbee. Good aim, it flew through the drop off window for dirty dishes.

“You are now. You can get more later and finish it in your copious free time, AFTER you’re done with the floor.” took note of the NCO’s Ranger tab, CIB and master jump wings. Copious free time, my ass. Thought a moment took a big hand full of sticky rice (today was beef stew and rice) crammed it in my mouth and then got up.

“Yeth Thargenth!” Gave the Top Kick a sticky rice handed salute, which he returned with an amused smile, then I turned to go find a mop. Otter and Alice looked at each other, shrugged, took a hand full and followed suit. Looks like the sticky hands carried the day. With four of us working, it didn’t take long to get the floor mopped, even with people tramping in and out. The trick was to keep it clean after the worst of it was took up. And here is where an old trick Naomi -Mom used to use came in handy.

Was able to get a couple old bed sheets from Spec 4 Jones and wiped the excess water and stray bits of mud up off the floor. And would keep wiping until the last student was out of the mess hall. Mom would make a game of it by having us drag each other around on the sheet. We had wet butts but she had a clean floor.

Tossed the sheets in the dumpster on our way back to training. Never got back to the mess hall to finish our meals. Well, there went two bucks down the drain. Waxman wouldn’t shut up about his missing lunch until Alice told him he’d get a knuckle sandwich if he didn’t stop jaw boning and close his yap.

It was after we were dismissed for the day, I avoided the mess hall, the Leaning Rest and any place where anyone could really see me. Besides being a walking mud ball, had more bruises to add to my ever growing collection. It’s a good thing John isn’t going to see me until August. He’s suppose to be flying over some time about mid month for meetings and then coming up to Rochester in early August. More tired now then hungry. Think there’s still one more Pop Tart, left in the box. Will have that, a bath and then just go to bed.

JESSIE JAMES SAID BEFORE HE DIED
THERE WERE FIVE THINGS HE WANTED TO RIDE....

Oh fuck Jessie James. It’s Friday, not raining for a change and need this day to be over. I’ve got saw dust up my back, beetles down my front and a black hat dogging my ass. For some reason, Sargeant Derek Singleton has decided to be my own personnel devil. The beta NCO was running at my left elbow, “COME ON SIR! MOVE IT MOVE IT MOVE IT! MY GRANNY CAN RUN FASTER THEN YOU AND SHE’S BEEN DEAD FOR 20 YEARS!”

Knew I should’ve kept my mouth shut but it slipped out before I could stop myself. “You got zombie granny doing PT now Sargeant Airbourne? Even my Madraina couldn’t do that.”

“PLATOON HALT!” The stop was abrupt we fell all over each other trying to put the brakes on. Oh shit. “LIEUTENANT NOVAC SEEMS TO THINK HE’S A COMEDIAN.” He got up in my face, “OKAY FUNNY MAN TELL ME A JOKE!”

Thought fast: A lawyer is stand in a long line at the movie box office. Suddenly he feels a pair of hands kneading his shoulders, back and neck. The lawyer turns round, “What the hell do you think you’re doing?” The guy in back of him sez, “I’m a chiropractor and I’m just keeping in practice while I’m waiting in line.” “Well, I’m a lawyer,” the other guy sez. “But you don’t see me
There there a couple of snickers, “or did you hear the one about the three sergeants who were driving a long on a back road in Germany when they saw this sheep with it’s head caught in a fence and its ass toward the road. One of em sez: ‘geeze I wish that was the bar maid down at the bierstube’. A few miles later, the second sergeant said, ‘wish that sheep was Elke Sommer’. When the third sergeant didn’t say anything after a while, his friends asked him, ‘what did you wish for?’ After a moment the third sergeant said, “That it was dark out.”

“Run.” The NCO said quietly. “Run far and fast before I change my mind. And take the rest of these sad sacks with you. GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY SIGHT THE LOT OF YOU!” Skip trying to do the airborne shuffle, we just beat feet out of there until we hit the company area. Some day I will learn to keep my mouth shut. But apparently not any time soon.

I must have done something right however, because later that day over heard Singleton telling the sheep joke to some of the other NCO’s. Course he made it a whole lot dirtier.

Did better at the tower today. Still hated that drop, even though I knew it was coming, made my stomach do flutters and was so nervous almost threw up. Was on auto pilot by the time training was called at 17:00 hours. “GET SOME REST, PRACTICE YOUR PLF’S, JUST NOT OFF THE BAR AT THE INFERNO CLUB. IT’S SCUFFED UP ENOUGH.” We were dismissed....but just kept standing there...just kind of numbed out....that’s when First Sargeant Roy (and there are three more of them) bellowed “GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY AREA! AND FOR YOU KNUCKLE HEADS LIVING HERE, I WANT QUIET! YOU WILL BE AS SILENT AS A RAT SHIT’EN IN HIGH COTTON! OUT! OUT! OUT!” Okay, now we got gone. But only after I collected my wallet from the company safe.

Was half way to Olson Hall when I finally stopped running and slowed to a trot. Want a drink, a bath, some food and my bed in no particular order. Wanna call Karen tomorrow morning and check in with her and talk to Jeff. Even if all that comes over the line is ‘Irv’. I’m tired, a mess of ground in red clay and added some new bruises to the collection, though you’d think there wouldn’t be any more room for them.

Was crossing the parking lot, when someone called my name. Or Omega Winchesters. Turned and saw Captain Dutton getting out of his belch fire station wagon. Oh shit, what does he want? “Captain,” I stopped, came to attention and saluted.

He returned the salute, “Omega Winchester, glad to have caught you. General Livsey is getting up a foursome for tomorrow morning.”

I looked at him stupidly. Was too tired for this crap. “Uh, I’m not that kind of omega Sir.”

Dutton pinched the bridge of his nose. “The General is going to be playing golf.”

“That’s nice.” Took a step toward Olson Hall, to slowly get away from the dude.

“I don’t think you understand.” An edge now came into his voice.

“Captain, you’re right. I don’t. It’s been a long week. With all due respect, what the fuck are you trying to tell me?”

“The General wants you to join him and two others to play golf tomorrow morning.”

Just as long as he doesn’t wanna play ‘hide the salami’ I’m down. Sighed, “okay. But I don’t have any golf togs or clubs.”
The Captain tut tutted, “not to worry. The General already thought of that. You’re about his oldest sons size. You’ll be borrowing his. He’s away at West Point going through ‘Beast Barracks’.”

Yippee. Took a deep breath, you can do this Novac. “What time?”

“I’ll be here to pick you up about 08:00 AM, you’ll breakfast at Riverside, then go over to the club for a 09:30 tee time.”

“Then what?” Oh please tell me that will be it for the day.

“Then you’ll lunch at the ‘19th Hole’ and after that what ever you want.”

“No chance of getting out of this is there?”

“Not in the least. Suck it up Lieutenant, you’ll be doing a lot more of these before your career or your mating is over.”

WHAT?! Now all I want is a drink and don’t give a fuck where I’m gonna find it. Prolly wasn’t a great idea but since when has THAT ever stopped me. Which is how I ended up down at Suzie Wu’s.

Chapter End Notes

This is the outfit Cas is wearing. Wanted a Cary Grant/Roger Moore/Micheal Caine kind of vibe
https://www.google.com/search?q=1930's+men's+suits&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi-09nzk5zWAhVHL5YKHVlBB5kQsAQIZA&biw=1732&bih=816#imgrc=sSuJRi7HQnZV3M:

For a picture and history of Riverside go to:
https://www.army.mil/article/22649/Riverside_marks_its_100th_year_at_Benning

Col Frank Walton: West Point class of 1955, in a successful career that span 28 years was with the 4th Student Battalion at Fort Benning, Georgia from 1977 to 1980. He passed away on September 12th 2003 and is buried in the West Point Cemetery.

Blood Wings: a right of passage (some say hazing) where the wings are pinned on and then slapped so the prongs go into the persons chest. It’s suppose to not happen any more officially, unofficially what people do on their own time....

For the recipe for Hummingbird cake:
http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/hummingbird-cake-0

Phenix City, Alabama. Now a quiet southern town, but in the 1930's, 40's and 50's definitely not the case. It was a wide open cesspool of corruption where what ever vice you had, could be catered to immediately. Troops from the near by Fort Benning routinely were fleeced and jailed on the flimsiest of charges. And yes, in 1942 George Patton took his tanks to threaten the chief of police to get his men out of jail. There was even a film noir made about it called The Phenix City Story.

Absolutely true story about the old paratrooper smashing his motorcycle into a car. He was a friend of my dad.
Otterford, Eismann and Alice: just a little shout out to Otter4, Iceman (Eis is German for ice) and Miss Alice

Tagged: old army tradition when a person became a corporal or an E-5 you ‘tagged’ or punched their new strips.

Shit for the birds: old army slang for nonsense or drivel

DNIP: National Police Intelligence Directorate, the intelligence gathering agency of Panama

The Inferno Club: did exist at one time. http://www.topix.com/album/detail/columbus-ga/6RO455CBPE70G0IN. Suzie Wu’s third location like the second never existed outside of my imagination.

Pogie bait: unauthorized food items.

PLF: parachute landing fall

bierstube: beer garden

Elke Sommers: a German actress, sex symbol and centerfold in the 1960’s and 70’s.

Of course you recognize the ‘I Feel like I’m Fixen to Die Rag’ by Country Joe and the Fish.

Beast Barracks: its the seven week transition period during the summer for students entering their first year at West Point. This is the time where civilians become cadets.

At the time this story is set, the Vietnam War was only over for three years. So it was not unusual to still be singing cadences associated with that war. I remember singing that ‘I wanna go to Vietnam’ cadence in 1976 at Fort Knox, KY.
WARNING: there is period homophobic language, sexist references and if you like Gilbert and Sullivan.....well....hope you will forgive me.

“SOMETHING THE MATTER NOVAC?!?” Don’t these guys have inside voices? “YOUR HARNESS A LITTLE TIGHT?!?” Staff Sergeant Singleton was standing in front of me rocking to and fro on his heels.

“Oh no, everything’s fine. Just. PEACHY. Sargeant Airborne.” I LOVE spending my Monday mornings just hanging around having my balls reduced to chutney and sounding like a 45 being played on 78 speed. “I ADORE the smell of Ben-Gay in the morning.” After ground week, me and everyone else was reeking of the stuff along with keeping Johnson and Johnson in business with all the Tylenol being passed around.

“Oh AND TRY TO KEEP YOUR KNEES TOGETHER WON’T YOU?!! DON’T WANNA HAVE SERVE UP ‘KNEES IN THE TREES’ ON A STICK.” Oh you are a witty one Sargeant Singleton. I hate you.

The fun little device I was hanging from was called the suspended harness trainer, otherwise known as the ‘nut cracker’. An aptly named instrument that could’ve easily found itself at home beside the rack, iron maiden, thumb screws and other various objects one usually finds in a torture chamber. But anywho, this was to give you an idea of what it was going to feel like when you’re suspended from the chute after jumping out of the C-130.

After they let you down, two other students get to drag you across the training field to simulate that wonderful moment after you land, should you NOT have control of your chute right away. Cuz if you don’t, any little breeze can fill the silk and drag you ALL the way across the drop zone. Usually on your face. This is just a little reminder of what NOT to do. I suppose it’s a more practical then tying a ribbon on your finger.

Now just want a moment to recover, catch my breath and limp back to the 35 foot tower to get in line for the mass jump. Last week the black hats were letting us get used to just jumping one at a time. Now, it was going to be like next week, one long unbroken line of bodies jumping. And we had to do it over and over and OVER all week because Friday we’re being dropped from the 250 foot tower.

GLORY BE I AIN’T NO FOOL I AIN’T GOING TO RANGER SCHOOL BUT SARGE SAID IT IS GOOD FOR ME A RANGER I AM GOING TO BE THEY SHAVED MY HEAD AND THREW ME IN A DITCH CHANGED MY NAME TO SON OF A BITCH WHICH IS REALLY OKAY CUZ I NEVER LIKED SYLVESTER ANYHOW....
Running back to the company area for lunch, I had the opportunity to contemplate my sins. Which was about the only way I wasn’t focusing on my bruised balls and broke dick. Okay, it wasn’t broken just pinched but tell THAT to the poor little fella. Took a quick look around and noticed the way guys were running. So I wasn’t alone in my misery. But back to contemplation......maybe I should go to mass and confession this coming Sunday. This past weekend alone would prolly put me on my knees with enough ‘Hail Marys’ and ‘Our Fathers’ for at least an hour.

After my run in with Captain Dutton in the parking lot of Olson Hall last Friday night, I needed a drink and to do something manly....or stupid.....sometimes it goes hand in hand. Just one of those....depending on where you are....since we’re in Georgia.....‘hold my beer’ moments. And knew just what to do. Went upstairs to my room, shucked off my dirty clothes, showered, put on my jeans, pulled the poplin shirt out of the closet. Pulled on a clean t-shirt instead of the nursing shirt, as my tits were now small enough where I could get away with that ‘Victor Mature’ look.

Took a big guzzle out of the bottle of vinegar I’d stole.....er...borrowed from the Leaning Rest. If it can throw off the smell of pregnancy, it should defuse my omega scent. Laced up my jump boots, might as well keep them on, with the lack of hair and bruises, couldn’t hide I was a troopie, so might as well run with the look.

Counted out $50 bucks, put $30 in the wallet and $20 in my boot for emergency money. Then shoved the wallet in a front pants pocket. At least there I can hook my thumb in the belt loop to look cool and keep a hand over the opening to the pocket to keep nasty little dick skinners from lifting my wallet. Went downstairs, it was still early yet for going out, but wanted dinner, so maybe could see how the bibimbap was and catch the matinee.

Went down stairs, found an empty phone booth and looked at the list of phone numbers posted on the body of the pay phone. Hmmm, Radio Cab Company, FA2-5411, good grief how long has this been hanging here? So called them, asked if they knew were Olson Hall was, which they did and to pick one Castiel Novac, I’d be outside waiting on them. The dispatcher said to give them 10 to 15 minutes.

Hung up and went outside to wait for the cab to arrive. Watched the other guys walk in and out. Alphas and a few betas who, without a thought in the world of having to hide who they were, were headed out to have a good time. None of them had to guzzle vinegar, or worry that they might get confiscated if they get caught without their mate. (Yeah, this part of Georgia was like North Carolina, so had to watch my step) Why am I doing this? What am I trying to prove? Then came the life time of people who doubted, sneered and belittled me for being an omega came to mind. This week added a couple of new faces.

15 minutes later, the hack pulls up. “Where to Airborne?” The driver turned round, he was worrying a plug of chewing tobacco against his cheek the size of a golf ball.

“Suzie Wu’s,”

“Looking for a little action?” The cabbie smiled, his teeth brown from years of tobacco juice. “I know a place where the girls are fresh off the farm and hot to trot.” I’ll bet, ‘fresh off the farm’ translation: underage teen runaway, soon to be syphilitic knocked up dope addicted chippie, no thank you. I may have been born on a Thursday, but it wasn’t yesterday.

“Sorry dude,” I leaned back in the seat. “Just want a little kimchee and see if Siren is working tonight”

“Joint should be jumping if Sirens dancing. Those college and solder boys do love him. Got them college pukes coming all the way from Alabama Poly Tech....oh excuse ME.....AUBURN
University...la de fucken da.....just to get a gander at that slicks fat belly.” Now that’s rude to point out a persons weight gain. The cab pulls out the parking lot and away from Olson Hall.

The cabbie kept up a steady patter most of the drive. Trying to sell me the idea of going to the whore house or if not that he knew a couple of ‘mega’s who do it in the cab for $15 bucks. He’d toss in an extra ten spot if he could watch. Dear Alpha God, this guy is one stone ass freaky deek!

“Uh, that’s okay, I’m not into a group grope.” Unless it’s Jenny and Lewiston. Wonder how they’re doing. Had written letters last Sunday to the Reynolds, John and Dean. Post cards went to Ben, Sa and Jesse. Need to buy a few more to send out.

First Ave is down a few blocks from the Chattahoochee River and looks like any ‘combat zone’ near any military base anywhere. Strip clubs, bars, pawn shops, enough flashing lights to give anyone a seizure, hookers, pimps, drug dealers and not a cop in sight. Could tell the college boys and townies by the length of their hair and their shoes. Troopies of course had little to no hair and most were wearing their combat or jump boots. Yet here they all were, trying to get drunk, laid or stoned. The trifecta of stupidity.

The taxi pulled up in front Suzie Wu’s joint and stopped. Passed a five spot to the cabbie and stepped out of the car and into the malay of a Friday night in Columbus. Wove my way passed a couple of women hawking their ample wares (wanna date?) and up to the entrance of Suzies. “Five bucks,” the bouncer growled. He was a large well built alpha with the scars on his knuckles where he’d prolly scraped em on peoples teeth as he pitch em out the door.

Pull another five spot out of my pocket and handed it to him. “Who would I talk to about getting some kimchee and bibimbap?”

“Kitchen,” he growled, pocketing the money. “Swinging door to the right of the stage.”

“Thanks man,” walked in and stopped to get my bearings. There was a horse shaped bar that looped through the middle of the room, with chairs and tables to either side. Against the far wall was the stage with two runways that came off and ran about 15 feet into the audience domain. No body was dancing yet. It was only 19:30, so it was still early. But there were a few customers seated at a table or at the bar, having a drink or a plate of food. Went through the swinging door and into the bustle of the cooks, bus boys and wait staff.

“Excuse me,” tried to get the attention of a passing bus boy but he was moving like his ass was on fire. Could hear the Momma-San screeching at the help from another part of the kitchen, so she must have lit him up good for that kid to be motor-vating like that. “Pardon me...”

“You! What you want?” Turned to find I was looking down at the part in someones hair. It was black with streaks of gray and pulled back tightly into a bun. Took a step back so I could see a face and the body. She was tiny oriental alpha, couldn’t be more then four foot nothing (but had a six foot attitude), dressed in hanbok, similar to the one I’d seen on Suzie Wu last summer at her joint out in Junktown.

“Pardon me Momma-san Alpha”, I bowed. “I may call you Momma-san, yes?” Finishing School always taught, ‘good manner at the start will open most doors. A sledge hammer takes care of those a bit more stubborn.’

“My name Mrs. Pak,” her speech was heavily accented but I had the feeling the good lady could break into perfect English if the need arose. And right now there was no need. “What you want solder boy?”

“Dinner. Some kimchee, bibimbap, sticky rice and tea....”
“If you eat here, must have booze.”

“And a beer. What cha got?” She rattled off a bunch of the usual. “Do you have any Hite?” Had always heard about this brand from folks who’d been in Korea and now wanted to see if it was really all that and a bag of chips.

“We got some, not cheap. Made for Korea people, not that import slop that you get at package store on post.”

“Then, I’ll have one bottle of Hite, a pot of tea and what I mentioned before.” Bowed again and this time took her hand and kissed the back. “Thank you Mrs Pak, you’re most kind.”

“And you full of bullshit, at least somebody taught you good manners solder boy.” She sniffed, then waved her hand in front of her nose. “You smell like salad, use blockers next time omega boy.”

Busted. “And if they weren’t so illegal here in the states, I would.”

“I know, byeong shin law.” She waved a hand toward a table were what looked like some of the dancers were eating. “Go sit with them, know you won’t be grabbie grab like the knot heads at the bar. Go sit. Will put your order in.” Mrs Pak turned and began yelling in the direction of the cooks.

Walked over to the table, “good evening ladies. Do you mind if I have a seat?” Even if Mrs Pak said it was okay, would rather error on the side of caution.

“Knock yourself out,” one of em said. Then they went back to stuffing their faces and talking amongst themselves. Well, this isn’t awkward at all. The bus boy brought over the tea and set it in front of me. “Big spender,” one of the girls said sarcastically.

Was about ready to tell them all to go fuck themselves and go sit at the bar, when an unhappy roar flew across the kitchen. “WHICH ONE OF YOU BITCHES TOOK MY GOOD EYE LINER!?” Which was followed immediately by an extremely pregnant omega who came storming across the room.

“Nick? Nick Munroe?” Oh dear Alpha God, He’s huge.

“I LEFT MY EYE LINER ON THE DRESSING TABLE, NOW IT’S GONE! WHICH ONE OF YOU ASSHOLES TOOK IT!?”

“Oh Christ,” one of the girl bitched, tossing down her fork. “What’s’His Highness’ problem now? He prolly left the goddamn thing in his pocket again.”

Nick came stomping over in bunny slippers and a blindingly pink bathrobe that couldn’t even begin to cover his belly. I’d been big in the last two months of my pregnancy but Nick looked like he was going to birth an elephant. He went up one side and down the other of the girls sitting there, and then turned a nasty eye to me. “How do you know my name, numbnuts?”

Ooooh, man. Are those hormones raging. “Um, we met in Junktown last summer. I was that ROTC cadet who rubbed your feet. Remember?”

The look was priceless, as the dime fell into place. “CAS!” He pulled me up out of the chair into a bear hug. “SO GLAD TO SEE YOU! THESE BITCHES ARE SO MEAN, MY FEET HURT, I CAN’T SLEEP AND DWIGHT’S MOTHER IS JUST DRIVING ME CRAZY!” Well, hello to you too.
“Here, sit down.” I gave up my seat. “Let me pour you some tea and then rub your feet.”

He gratefully took over the chair and looked ruefully at the cup of tea before swigging it down. “I’d kill for a beer.”

“Know the feeling.” Snagged another chair, sat down and put his feet in my lap. Poor baby, those suckers were swollen, wide as water wings and black from broken blood vessels. “There were times during my pregnancy, wanted booze so bad. Then after Jeff was born......”

“You had your pup?” Nick squealed. “You got a picture? What the fuck are you doing here?”

“Well, had him last February. His name is Jeffery,” took out my wallet and pulled my favorite picture of him out. “I’m down here for jump school and friends are taking care of him. His alpha is over in Europe, we’ll be joining him in a few months.”

“Holy shit,” one of the other dancers looked over Nicks shoulder. “He’s fucken huge. Who’s the father, the ‘Jolly Green Giant’?”

“Well, his daddy’s a big guy.” I held out my hands in the classic fishermans pose. “In all the places that count. He’s a bull alpha.”

“Oh man, you slick bitch, I hate you!” The dancer sighed.....“wish my man were built like that.”

“Now dear,” Nick said with a sly smile and conciliatory tone that was a fake as most of the boobies in that room. “We all can’t be bulls, some have to be ‘needle dick the bug fucker’.”

It was about that time (before the fist fight broke out) that Mrs Pak and the bus boy carrying my dinner arrived. “You!” She pointed at all the girls.... “dinner time over! Get out on stage! You! You! You! (she pointed at three of the girls specificity) Get dressed for culture. MOVE IT! MOVE IT! MOVE IT!” Geeze, took everything I had to still sit with Nicks feet in my lap. That little alpha sounded just like every black hat in the battalion.

The dish boy laid out the plates and bowls on the table, set down the bottle of beer, along with three small dipping plates with sauces. He also handed me a hot damp towel to wipe my hands. “What are these?” I asked, pulling my chair up to the table and taking the paper wrapper off the chop sticks. The foot rub had been temperately suspended until after I ate.

“That one is soy and wasabi, this one is chili paste and peanuts, the third is sesame oil with salt and pepper,” Nick pointed out each one. “Go easy with the wasabi, it’s a killer.”

Fished out a piece of meat, swished it in the chili paste and stuffed it in my mouth. And immediately grabbed the beer and chugged it down. Wish now I’d gotten a Miller instead because I guzzled down that Hite and didn’t get much a taste of it, what with it fighting the burn of the chili.

“Hot?” Nick asked innocently sipping his tea.

“Son of bitch, I’m gonna need ice cream before I dare take a shit.” Grabbed the tea pot and guzzled out of the spout. “Jesus Christ, why didn’t you say the chili was going to be that hot?!!”

“Because it’s chili, numbnuts.” The dancer picked up the Hite bottle and licked the mouth. Then up ended it to get the last few drops. “The name alone would kind of imply that.” Then he smacked his lips. “Damn, that’s tasty stuff. Think I want some after I push the pup out. There is no way I’m breast feeding, can’t afford to ruin my tits.” And of course, that’s when the dish boy shows up with a glass of ice water. Son of a bitch! He couldn’t have shown up before I stuffed that hunk of meat
in my mouth.

After putting the fire out on my tongue (am so gonna have to find a place for ice cream, hopefully there’s some all night joint that has Drumsticks) carefully go back to my meal. “By the way, how is it that you’re down in Columbus and not still up in Kansas? And who’s Dwight?”

“Dwight’s my mate,” Nick said happily, taking one last lick of the bottle. Dang, that slick has a talented tongue. “He bounced up in Junktown at Suzies, think you met him. But anyway, we ‘bit the big one’ after I got knocked up and before coming down here. I’m the Omega Pettybone.”

And you certainly are, right to the bone. Checked his shoulders, “I don’t see a bite.”

“Got it covered with make up,” he said pointing to the usual spot where a bite would go. “Better tips that way.” Makes sense, the lunk heads out front would be less likely to toss their cash if they knew their arm might be taken off by his mate in a fit of possessiveness.

“So, where’s Dwight?” This time tasted the sesame oil before shoving it in my mouth. Mmmmm, tastes pretty good, so drizzled it over the sticky rice. Picked the bowl up, added a little meat and vegetable, then shoveled it in. Now that’s tasty.

“He’s bouncing next door at the Inferno Club but his momma (Deloris Pettybone is that big girl who could have ‘Kelvinator’ written across her forehead) is tending bar here at Suzies on weekends. Her day job is head cashier down at the Piggly Wiggly across town. We moved here to be near family, Deloris is going to be watching little Billy Joe or Mary Sue at night when I can dance again.”

“Is Dwight’s dad in the family business too?”

“Mr Pettybone was a long haul trucker who got killed in a fertilizer explosion on the docks in Texas City, Texas back in 47. Dwight was just born and his poor momma had to dance in one of those jute joints over in Phenix City to make ends meet.” Nick sniffled and blew his nose in the paper napkin the bus boy brought over, “Deloris took it as long as she could before she got out and over to Columbus to work at the Piggly.”

“Wow, that’s rough. So what are you going to do after the pup is born?”

“Well, it will take me a while to get back in shape, so I’ll be home with the babe for the first few months. Deloris said she could get me a job down at the Piggly a couple days a week, so between that and dancing, along with Dwight bouncing, we should be able to get enough for a down payment on a little house. Dwight has a cousin working for Georgia Pacific in Cedar Springs, who can get him a night watchman job to start. Wanna chance for the apple pie life and get away from the military and places like this. No offense.”

“None taken.” Wow, the ‘American dream’ in full force. Who woulda thought, ‘The Siren’ would want to be June Cleaver.

“Eat up,” Nick got to his feet awkwardly. “You don’t wanna miss ‘the culture’.

“Culture?” Was still contemplating another try at that chili paste. “How much culture can there be in a place like this other then what’s prolly growing in the mens room urinal.”

“Ha ha. Really funny. In order that we’re not shut down by the bible thumpers as being ‘without social redeeming importance’, we have to have at least an hour a week, more or less, of classic literature or music.”
“So, what’s on for tonight? A reading of Shakespeare in the nude?”

“No. Show tunes. A rousing selection from The Mikado.”

Gilbert and Sullivan? Oh, this I gotta see. Picked up my bowl and followed Nick out to the swinging door. Up on stage is Mrs Pak...... “SHUT UP YOU SHIT HEADS! WE GOT CULTURE NOW! WE PRESENT MR GILBERT AND SULLIVAN’S MIKADO! And with that, three of the girls come out and the scratchy sound of phonograph music begins.

Three little maids from school are we
Pert as a school girl we can be
Filled to the brim with girlish glee
Three little maids from school

Well this is kind of different, they’re dressed in Catholic school girl uniforms. Their hair was done in pigtails and they look kinda of sexy cute in those white shirts, short plaid skirts knee socks and saddle shoes.

Everything is a source of fun
Nobody's safe for we care for none
Life is a joke that's just begun
Three little maids from school

Whoa, joke’s on them. They forgot to put any underwear on. Damn, that’s a big strap on one of those ‘school girls’ is sporting.

Three little maids who all unwary
Come from a lady's seminary
Freed from its genius tutelary
Three little maids from school

Some how I don’t think this is quite how Gilbert and Sullivan imagined how one is ‘freed from genius tutelary. Unless those are the smartest tits in Georgia. Wow, if size were smarts....that one girl in the middle would be Mensa material.

One little maid is a bride, yum yum
Two little maids in attendance come
Three little maids is the total sum
Three little maids from school

Oh my, think Yum Yum is not going to be a virgin on her wedding night, oh boy, they’re cumming alright. Oh look, there’s guy dressed like a priest came on stage. Man, that’s one big butt paddle. He must be KoKo, the lord high executioner.... Wonder if he’s going to taking anyones head? Nope, but it looks like he’s getting some. The song ends shortly after that with mad applause and shouts of ‘author author!’ Okay that last was me. Nick had turned round and headed back into the kitchen. “I’m up next after this next number. You would never think those Gilbert and Sullivan dudes were such dirty old bastards, until you hear the song and watch it in just the right way.” The next song was a little ditty called ‘Please you Sir, We much Regret’:

So please you, Sir, we much regret
If we have failed in etiquette
Towards a man of rank so high--
We shall know better by and by.
The three girls were all lined up on stage with their naked butts toward the audience. All they had on were saddle shoes and knee socks. Damn, if that didn’t make it look all the dirtier.

But youth, of course, must have its fling,
So Pardon Us
So Pardon US

The ‘Monsignor KoKo’ doesn’t look like he’s in a pardoning mood.

And don’t, in girlhood's happy spring,
Be Hard on us
Be Hard on us

Oh my, looks like KoKo sure is. He’s walloping those butts with that paddle and making em wobble like Weebles....what? Irv sent Jeff home with several of em. ‘Weebles wobble but they don’t fall down’. So the act ends (excuse the pun) with the girls now all red assed running off stage and KoKo taking himself in hand and singing:

As she squirmed and struggled,
And gurgled and guggled,
I drew my snickersnee,
My snickersnee!

Thus ended The Mikado. The crowd seemed to like it, certainly the few female alphas in the group cheered the ‘snickernee’ and in the words of of the girls watching “I’d dearly loved to have seen it get angry again.”. I was still hollering ‘author, author’! “Thank you ladies and germs!” KoKo has now turned master of ceremonies. “We have one last bit of culture for ya’ll.......” There were a few groans, “shut up you assholes or I’ll have Bruno came in.” (Bruno must be that man mountain taking money at the door) Well, that shut everyone up. “So, as I was saying..... “Let us all go to the plantation at Twelve Oaks, where Miss Scarlet O’Hara is going to the ball....”

Out on to the stage sweeps Nick, dressed up like Scarlet O’Hara, complete with wig, wagon wheel hat and hoop skirt. “Ya’ll looken at me like you know what’s under my shimmy.” He simpered and fluttered his fan at the crowd. “Shall we go to the ball?” That’s when AC/DC blared from the speakers, his clothes flew off and he was down to G-string and bra that was barely able to keep his tits and balls from tumbling out. Or maybe that was the plan.

I'm upper, upper class high society
God's gift to ballroom notoriety
And I always fill my ballroom
The event is never small
All the social papers say I've got the biggest balls of all
I've got big balls
I've got big balls
And they're such big balls
Dirty big balls
And he's got big balls,
And she's got big balls,
But we've got the biggest balls of them all!

That is SO not fair. Nick’s junk didn’t pull inside his body. In fact, it looks like if nothing else, they got bigger.

And my balls are always bouncing
My ballroom always full
And everybody comes and comes again
If your name is on the guest list
No one can take you higher
Everybody says I've got great balls of fire!
I've got big balls
I've got big balls
And they're such big balls
Dirty big balls
And he's got big balls,
And she's got big balls,
But we've got the biggest balls of them all!

He strutted, jutted, two stepped and had the crowd in the palm of his hand. Along with a slew of their money. They were stuffing his bra and g-string full of bills and not just George Washingtons either. Damn, that’s a lot of green going into that bra, man he went from a B cup to a D, toot sweet. So the act went on a little longer, until the music came to a close and Nick left the stage looking more like ‘Chesty Morgan’ then Vivian Lee.

There was one more dancer that came out before there was, I don’t know, an intermission? I’d found a chair near one of the runways and this time, got a Miller. My dinner and drink had come to 15 bucks, so now I had to be real careful on how I spent the rest of the money, or I’d be walking back to post. And of course, that’s when this guy slides up to me.

He was young, prolly in here on a fake id, with earring in both ears (hey, I might wear pretty undies and garter belts but definitely draw the line at earrings) and a smooth line of patter. He also was trying to sell me dope. And worse yet, fake dope. “Get lost pup,” I hissed quietly. “I don’t do that shit, besides, I can tell the difference between lawn clippings, oregano and rabbit turds and the real stuff.” Ah, the benefits of a college education. “Beat it or I’ll tell Mrs Pak.”

“Hey man, let’s just be chilly most. No need to get Momma-san hot and bothered.” He slides off to hit up the drunk college boys sitting at the table a few feet away. Morons, looks like he’s got a sale with them.

Watch the dancers for a little while longer, until it gets boring (guess Nick only dances once a night) and besides gotta 09:30 tee time tomorrow. Stand up to leave, finish the Miller, then weave my way through the tables till I could get to the door and head out on to the street to flag down a taxi. Course the way my luck runs, there aren’t any cruising by but the whores are.

“Wanna date?” One of says. The lady or I think they’re a lady....who knows at this point because her Adams apple.....okay Kinks strike up the band in the key of G and play ‘Lola’.

“No thanks, I’m good.” Oh my Alpha G-d, why did I think this was a great idea? At this point just wanna get outta here.

‘She’ takes a final drag of the cigarette she was smoking and tossed it at my feet. “Then get off my ‘stroll’ asshole. If you ain’t buying, you’re just taking up space and my time. Bad for business man.”

“Your stroll?!” Now I’d just enough to drink to loosen my tongue a little and besides had been on good behavior for a little too long. So ‘Lola’ here just called in a verbal mortar strike on herself. “You got the deed for that piece of sidewalk puto? If not, callate you hijo de la verga nianio!”

The whore turned to one of her colleages....... “what did that motherfucker just call me, Maria?”
Oops. Didn’t think of the other ladies knowing Spanish.

“Oh Mommie, he just call you a whore and said for you to shut up, you son of a dick queer.” Oops. And she knows Panamanian Spanish too. Oh crap.

“You nasty little honky son of a bitch,” Lola snarled in my face. “Our man will fix your ass but good!” Then the whore, turned and stalked off down the side walk into the crowd.

“Go ahead vete pa la verga cara e cula!” Oh man, why can’t I keep my mouth shut? Maybe I should just get while the gettings good. But of course that’s when the other ‘ladies’ started blocking my path. That’s when an angry familiar voice rings out over the din:

“THAT’S HIM! THAT’S THE SON OF A BITCH!” Oh shit. Looked down the street and saw Lola with a tall lanky dude in a canary yellow suit moving just as fast as the three inch heels on his shoes would take him. Crap on a cracker, didn’t take long for Lola to find her pimp.

The angels must have been looking out over my squirrelly ass, cuz another familiar voice shouts out......”NOVAC! OVER HERE! GET IN!” Turned to see Ensign Chickadee leaning out the window of a taxi waving his arms. Don’t have to tell me twice, fainted then dodged and then ran like hell to the cab and dove head long through the door as it swung open.

“Step on it man!” I yelled at the cabbie. “Huggy Bear looks like he’s packing!” And the taxi shot off down First Ave.

It wasn’t until we were safely out of town and half way back to Benning did I ask the obvious. “What were you doing in ‘the vil’?”

“Same as you,” Chickadee answered leaning back in the seat. “And you’re welcome by the way. Came down to blow off a little steam, only I was over at the Inferno watching these two chicks play ping pong.”

“What’s so exciting about that?”

“They weren’t using paddles or their hands if you catch my drift,” he smirked. “Those chicks could fire mortars if you drop em down their bore holes.”

I suppose that would just beg the question if they were rifled or smooth bore. “I came down to watch Siren dance and get some bibimpap. Thank you by the way. You saved my ass back there.”

“It’s not just a job, it’s an adventure.” The ensign grinned. “By the way, do you normally piss off everyone everywhere you go? Sargeant Singleton’s got a case of the red ass about you. Heard him talking to one of the other NCO’s about what an insubordinate little prick you are.”

“Well...............yeah, kinda sorta.” Oh great, this is turning into a repeat of last summer. When will I learn to keep my big trap shut? “Not that I mean to.”

The cab pulls up in front of Olson Hall and I pull the $20.00 out of my boot. “Keep the change dude,” handed over the Jackson to the driver. “You earned it.” Chickadee and I got out, walked in through the main lobby and started up the stairs.

“You got a minute?” The swabbie asked. “Got something I need to talk to you about.”

“Yeah,” I stopped in the stair well. “What’s up?”

“Not here. Too many ears. Where’s your room? Or we can go to mine on the 3rd floor.”
Do I chance it? What if all he wants is to get in my drawers? But then again, he could’ve tried that shit down in the cab. “I’m on the second floor. Come on.” So we trotted up the stairs, walk through the now silent hall to my room, unlocked the door and stepped inside. “Can make you some instant coffee or Tang.” What? I’m nothing if not a gracious host.

“The coffee please, cream and sugar.” He said. “And my name’s Cody.....Caleb Chickadee is my younger brother.”

Oh. My. Tried to keep my hands from shaking as I picked up the kettle and headed to the bathroom to run some water.

Cody waited until I returned .“Got word finally that you’re okay. Spec 4 Jones is a cousin thrice removed on my momma’s side and he let me have a look at your wallet.” Oh thank the Alpha God, I took my dependent ID card out. “My other cousin Charles, on my daddy’s side, he’s head chef over at the Supper Club here on base.” Well that’s nice, I’ve never been over there. “He was at Riverside cooking those steaks the night you were over there.”

Christ on a crutch! “Mine was delicious.” I said weakly. “My complements to your cousin.”

“I’ll let him know.” Cody sat down in the swivel in front of the desk and leaned back. “So you’re really mated to a general, it’s not just some story that’s being kicked around.” Then he studied me hard. “Calvin really liked him, thought he was funny as hell that morning you guys were standing in the door way of your apartment, your general blowing the smoke rings.”

“Oh,” the kettle started to whistle. Pulled the plug and poured it into the mug I’d bought for a nickle at the consignment store last week. “Here you are.” Made myself a paper cup of Tang, stirred it slowly. Do I trust this guy or.......? “Listen, no offense but how do I know you’re who you say are? And this isn’t just a trick?”

“Knew you wouldn’t just take my word for it.” Cody reached into his pocket, pulled out his wallet and then fished out a piece of folded up line paper. “Here, this came a day or two ago. Was trying to figure out of way of getting you alone long enough to give it to you. Tonight was a happy accident.” He held out the paper, “hey. Trust me.”

Gingerly took the paper and unfolded it. Recognized the hand writing immediately.

11 July 1978

Dear Cas,

When Cousin Cody called home and said he met you on the plane to Columbus, didn’t believe it. But then he described you and knew is was you. I’m okay and five months a long now. Remembered how weird you acted when you were pregnant, now I know why. The pup is fluttering a lot and I fart and a burp like crazy.

I miss Ben lots, does he miss me too? I’m in school out here and learning all kinds of neat stuff. I’m also the only omega in the whole school. There are only about 100 pups going here in the whole junior and senior high. They like me because I’m so different. The teachers are really nice and tell me if I work really hard, I can get a scholarship someday and go to college. Me in college, cats ass!

Just wanted to let you know I’m okay.
Your Friend,
Calvin Chickadee

PS: How mad was Uriel that I left?

“Oh Uriel was pretty upset. Mad enough that he slapped her Mummy-ship,” I said folding back up the paper. “Then he got tossed out the window by Naomi-Mom. AND he’s going to The Rock in Turkey.” Held the letter back to Cody, who shook his head.

“Okay,” the swabbie said. “I only understood half of what you were going on about. But anyway that’s yours to keep or destroy. But if you do keep it, make sure it’s hid well. Don’t know how many alphas would take kindly knowing you helped another omega escape to the ‘North Star’ or that my family is hiding him and going to be raising the pup.”

“Prolly not a whole lot,” even the most open minded alpha can get a little touchy on the subject of parentage. Biology is a bitch to overcome. Folded the letter and tucked it in my pocket for the time being. Will hide it with my dependent id in the closet. Sat for a little while longer sipping our drinks and talking until the bedside clock showed 2:00 AM. “Sorry, I gotta get up in another few hours, there’s this thing I got in the morning, that I can’t get out of. But, thanks for everything and trusting me.”

“No problem. See ya round the zoo.” Cody got up and went to the door. “Thanks for helping Calvin. He’s a great little guy and never would’ve had the chance he did to escape, if it weren’t for you.”

“It as all him and some friends,” said modestly. “All I did was teach him to walk with a tea cup on his head.”

“You are the weirdest ass omega,” and with that, he was out the door.

Didn’t get a whole lot of sleep the rest of the night. Kept rolling over and looking at the glowing red numbers from the clock on the night stand. At 05:00 AM, finally gave up, rolled out of bed and got the shower at least a taste above tepid. Washed off the stink of cigarettes, cheap booze and cheaper women. There are times when I wonder why I go to extremes to show I’m just ‘one of the alphas’.

Got dressed and walked downstairs to watch the sun come up. Went through the front door, passing some guys who were just coming in, must have been one helluva night judging by the lipstick on their faces. The air was warm as the full blast of a Georgia summer day had not set in yet and the humidity was still at tolerable levels. Wish I had a camera, would’ve liked to have gotten some pictures of Olson Hall, the towers, the company areas and just everything. Walked down to the main road and soon found myself in front of the 42nd company area. Wonder if I can just get a cup of coffee without paying for a full meal? So figured, what the hell can’t hurt to ask and went in the kitchen door.

Watched the few cooks and assistants move about getting breakfast made, then looked about for the mess sergeant. Figured the guy with the E-8 rockers pined to his collar and a cigar in the corner of his mouth must be the guy. Better wait a moment as he was berating the dish washer, so when it appeared he’d done venting his spleen, wandered over. “Pardon me Master Sergeant? Is there a way I can get just a cup of....”
The NCO turned slow, chewing his cigar a bit, “what are you doing in my kitchen Jack Wagon? Get out!”

“Just looking for a cup of coffee and......”

“YOU MAKE ME BELEIVE IN REINCARNATION BECAUSE NO ONE IS THAT STUPID IN ONE LIFE TIME!”

“So, I’ll take that as a no.”

“DAMN RIGHT PISSANT! GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY KITCHEN!”

Walking back I considered my options with what just happened. Granted, he didn’t know who I was and I did wander into his domain. However.......you know of course....this DOES mean war. Hmmm, what would Naomi-Mom do?

And bright and early Monday morning General Livsey showed up at the mess hall, walked into the kitchen for a cup of morning coffee. Course everyone was jumping through their asses and the Mess Sergeant was not about to tell the base commander to get the fuck out of his kitchen. Yes, yes I did tell General Livsey about my sojourn into the consolidated mess hall kitchen (on the fairway of the 6th hole of the George Patton Golf Club) right after I asked him if he knew Naomi-Mom.

Course ‘Lipp’ did and politely asked about her health and whereabouts. Obviously relieved to learn she was out of country but not thrilled where she’d gone.

So after nine holes, (Why is it that men can dress like a Hay Street pimp for a round of golf and not look out of place?) lost like a champ. Not that the general wasn’t a good golfer (he was) but beating the commanding officer on his own base was not a good start to my career....but didn’t let him win by much. Just enough to let him know how good I was. Told the story of my honeymoon golf game at Fort Bragg and then the two jokes about the sheep in the fence and the lawyer in the movie line. Then added the one about Captain Crunch and how you knew his rank.....he’s the only one with three crunch berries on each shoulder.....

“QUICK TIME, MARCH!”

And now to reality when the platoon was called to a walk then halt in the company street. Lunch was rather uninspired, baloney sandwiches and chicken soup. The mess sergeant was grumpy after this mornings visit by General Livsey. Awww. Next time jerk wad, think before you open your mouth......maybe I should take my own advice.

Every day that week was the 35 foot tower, over and over until I was bored spitless. The thrill was gone and this height was nothing. Though swinging two and fro from the ‘nut cracker’ could live without. But even that had it’s purpose, this is where we learned about pulling the risers to bear left or right or pull up to slow a bit before hitting the ground.

But today was Friday and we lined up in front of the 250 foot free fall towers. Wasn’t bored any more and now WAS scared spitless. The thrill was gone and this height was nothing. Though swinging two and fro from the ‘nut cracker’ could live without. But even that had it’s purpose, this is where we learned about pulling the risers to bear left or right or pull up to slow a bit before hitting the ground.

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all did it) to the beta and alpha guys.

My gut was in a flutter as I was hooked up. Course that’s when I had to puke. Oh man, there goes two bucks of good ‘shit on a shingle’. “DON’T YOU GET ANY OF THAT ON ME!” Yelled the NCO in charge of the tower..... “SIR! BECAUSE WITH ALL DUE RESPECTS TO YOUR RANK AND PRIVILEGE, I WILL TEAR YOUR ARMS OFF AND BEAT YOU TO DEATH WITH EM!” He kicked some dirt over the pile of puke, “don’t land on it.”

Was surrounded by people checking the harness, pulling it tight, making sure I wouldn’t fall out of it, then they stepped away. Looking braver then I felt, gave the thumbs up, as an engine whine filled the air and then was yanked up into the sky. You know that feeling you get on a fast elevator or a roller coaster? That moment where your stomach goes one way, your brain goes another and your ass just sez...”I’m outta here!” Can hear the black hats on the ground through the bull horns: “KEEP YOUR HEAD AND EYES FOCUSED ON THE HORIZON!” You mean I have to open my eyes?

Then it stopped and am just hanging there. That’s when I hear......“CAN YOU SEE COLUMBUS?” The black hat yelled.

“I CAN SEE THE FUCKING NINA, PINTA AND SANTA MARIA!” I screamed back. “GET ME DOWN!”

“Your wish is my command,” I hear. Oh shit. “Slap your heels together when you’re ready.” WHAT? Where do you think I am? In motherfucking Oz? But slap my heels together I do. “Let him go.” And suddenly I’m headed down. “KEEP YOUR KNEES TOGETHER. DON’T SPREAD YOUR LEGS. KEEP THOSE KNEES TOGETHER!” It’s happening but it feels like it’s happening to someone else. I can see the buildings in the distance, the wind rushing in my ears and my heart wanting to pound out of my chest. “PULL UP ON THE RISERS!” Pulled just as hard as I could and then looked down long enough to see the red Georgia clay rushing up to beat my feet.

Well it wasn’t the best PLF there ever was, but did hit on my toes and fell sideways. Holy Mother of Alpha God that hurt! The 35 foot tower slide didn’t hurt like this. That was just a thump and a new bruise. This was a crash and every nerve ending from foot to the top of my head just started screaming and pushing in the needles. Laid there for a bit trying to catch some breath, stop seeing stars and get this nasty metallic taste out of my mouth before having enough where with all to get up.

The others and the NCOIC came around. “You alright? You ain’t dead? Please say you’re not dead. I hate paper work.”


We lost two more out at the towers. One guy broke his ankle when he landed wrong and another took one look at the tower and walked off the training field, never to be seen again. For the rest of the exercise, would occasionally hear coming from the bull horns “COME ON (put name here) THE GIRLS AND OMGEAS ALL DID IT! EVEN WAXMAN DID IT!” Yeah he did, even if that ostrich assed son of bitch screamed like a sexually assaulted orangutan all the way down.

After that came the worst part, if THAT were at all possible. Sitting in a dark class room watching a safety film. Otterford commited it reminded her of the ‘drivers ed’ movies from high school. “All you need now is the busted up prom queen who didn’t use her seat beat.” It was enough to put you to sleep, but heaven help, if you dozed off....because that’s how the company lost three more. They not only went to sleep, they freaken snored. Well, two privates and one first lieutenant were crying all the way to the battalion commanders office to beg their case to stay. Sucks that they...
made it this far only to wash out because they couldn’t stay awake during a movie.

It was shortly after ‘Retreat’ and ‘To the Colors’, that I started walking back to Olson Hall. Heard the sound of feet pounding up behind me, “hey Novac.” Turned to see Cody Chickadee and another Naval ensign, trotting up. “Come on, we’re going over to the Leaning Rest for some of their nasty pizza and flight deck buzzard. Hopefully that geedunck bar has something other then near beer.”

“Yeah,” the ensign chimed in. “Stuff almost makes you wish for Koolaid and horse cock at midwatch”

“I think I understood....ohhhhh....at least a quarter of what you just said. But you lost me at geednunk, you silly belly button type persons.” The two of them had some colorful things to say about my parentage, half of which was true and the rest a total exaggeration.....but considering Her Mummy-ship, Dad and Naomi-Mom......maybe not.

We got rather drunk, magnificently drunk I might add. Did PLFs off the table, sang ‘Blood on the Risers’ and got asked to leave by management. “I will have you know,” Cody said drawing himself up grandly. “I have been kicked out of places better then this outside the gates of Subic Bay.”

“Yeah,” I slurred. “What he said.” Then turned to Cody, “where the fuck’s Subic Bay?” The three of us, wove our way back to Olson Hall. It was amazing we weren’t run over by every passing vehicle, but then again, it’s a Friday night. The drivers were prolly as drunk as we were. But made it back and climbed the stairs, carefully as not to fall backwards and break our necks. But then again, we’re plastered, nothing ever happens to drunks.

Peel off at the second floor and make it to my room, then try to put the key in the door. And kept missing, damn it. “Think of Jenny,” sucker went in like it had eyes. Stumble in, shut and locked the door. Then fell face first on the bed, cut loose a loud beer belch and fart before sleep takes me away.

Chapter End Notes

45 being played at 78 speed: that 45 of course if a 45 vinyl record and 78 rpm was the speed the older albums from the 1930’s and 50’s were played at. Record players had four speeds: 16, 33 and 1/3, 45 and 78. Of course a 45 set on 78 sounded like The Chipmunks or someone hanging from ‘the nutcracker’.

Radio Cab Company, phone number FA2-5411, came from a little pamphlet called ‘This Month in Columbus, Phenix City, Fort Benning’ from February 1960. Amazing the things you find on E-bay.

bygone shin: very offensive way of inferring stupidity in the Korean language.

The Korean sauces came from https://mykoreankitchen.com/three-ultimate-korean-bbq-dipping-sauces/ I changed the pistachio to peanuts, because at the time, the pistachio shells were dyed red and most people didn’t wan it do bleed into their cooking. The dye always came off on your fingers and mouth. There is even a scene in one of the Naked Gun movies that celebrates it.

Drumsticks: prepackaged ice cream cones with chocolate and nuts. Originally created in 1928 by I.C. Parker, the Drumstick Company of Fort Worth, TX, the company was
sold to Nestle Company in 1991.

The Mikado: a comedic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan. It opened in 1885 and was set in Japan even though it was a satire of British institutions and politics. Tom Lehrer, singer, song writer and math professor, was right when he said, ‘when correctly viewed, everything is lewd’.

Chesty Morgan: was born Lilana Wajc in Warsaw Poland in 1937. She gained notoriety and her name because of her 72 inch bust line. And no, there was no surgery, it was all her. Miss Morgan is now retired and lives in Tampa Florida. http://www.tampabay.com/features/humaninterest/chesty-morgan-a-life-more-than-skin-deep/1058097

The next five lines are Panamanian Spanish, very rude Spanish:

Callate: shut up
Hijo de la verga : son of a dick
Nianio: queer
Vete pa la verga: piss off
cara e cula: ass face

It’s not just a job. It’s an adventure: recruiting slogan for the Navy from the 1970’s.

Flight deck buzzard: Naval slang for chicken of any type
Horse cock: more Navy slang for baloney or kielbasi. The kind of sandwich most often given at midwatch, the time between midnight and four AM in the morning.
Near beer: low alcohol beer
Geedunk bar: further Naval slang for the snack bar found aboard large Naval or Coast Guard vessels. They are open before and after the mess hall or galley closes.
Subic Bay: former US Naval base in the Philippines. Prior to closing in 1992, it was was a major ship-repair, supply, rest and recreation facility of the United States Navy located in Olongapo, Zambales, Philippines. The base was 262 square miles, one of the largest naval bases America had at the time.
On Tuesday the 25th of July in the year 1978 at 08:00 AM eastern standard time, I stood in the door way of a C-130 waiting for the jump light to turn green and a tap on the shoulder. As it was explained too us tender souls: The first week was to separate the men from the boys, week two culled out the men from the idiots and this week.....the idiots jumped out of a perfectly good airplane.

There were supposed to five jumps: three Hollywood day lights and one night (‘Hollywoods meaning no field equipment) and then one combat jump with a full load of gear. They were supposed to be one a day, like vitamins. The way it’s suppose to go, was we’re loaded up, the C-130 Hercules takes off, they fly over the Fryar Drop Zone in Alabama, (Fort Benning is so large, it needs two states to hold it) then stand up, hook up the static line, stand in the door, get tapped off and out you go.

Except that’s not what happened. Monday morning came and after PT, the 42nd Training Company sat out on the tarmac in a light rain in front of the hanger at the Lawson Army Airfield, waiting for our turn to board the C-130. It took off with the 43rd Training Company into a mass of low hanging clouds. As the rain started to come down a little harder, the wind picked up and the clouds became darker taking on greenish tint.....never a good sign....that’s when that big Herky bird came back still full.

And speaking of green, there were a lot of guys who looked like they puked up breakfast all over themselves. Hope the plane gets cleaned up before any of us gets on.

It was shortly after that first bolt of lightning, that they herded us into the hanger in hopes that we could go up some time today. But no. It rained like a cow pissing on a flat rock and by 15:00 hundred hours, the jump was called for the day and we were loaded back on the bus’s. So tomorrow, weather permitting, we’d jump twice. The first time to bust our cherries and then since it was one of those things that seemed like a good idea, the night jump.

Turned in our chutes both main and reserve, they’d be opened dried and repacked. Hoped who ever packed mine wasn’t at the bottom of the class at rigger school. But then again, even the ‘goat’ had to pass the final exam, which from what I’d heard, was jumping with a chute you’d packed yourself. Yeah, that’s kind of the ultimate pass-fail test. Then ran back to Olson Hall in the driving rain. There was nothing but a sticky trail of red Georgia clay from the front door across the lobby and to the stairwell. Got the worst stink eye from the housekeeping staff as they tried to keep up the mess.

Unlocked the door to my room and immediately the hair on my arms stood at attention and had goose bumps on goose bumps. Had forgotten to turn the air conditioner down to a dull roar this morning (had a few other things on my mind) so it was like a fucken freezer in there. Got it shut off and went straight into the bathroom, turned on the hot water and room heater (it does get chilly in Georgia come winter from all reports) and tried to warm up. Freak en July in Georgia and I’m cold.

The room had warmed up enough by the time I was done showering, not like that helped much. Took off my glasses and peeled off the band-aid from the bridge of the frame. This is how those of us ‘four eyes’ kept our noses in one piece when the rim of the helmet slams down on the top of the glasses. You looked like a nerd, but a nerd with unbroken glasses and noses. Thank the Alpha God
for Spec 4 Jones with that little bit of useful advice.

Put on some sweats and sneakers, then looked over at the time it was after 17:00, the phone rates had changed, so could call up to New York without it costing an arm and a leg. Besides, if we’re jumping twice tomorrow, I wanna hear my pups voice. One more time. Just in case. Something happens. You never know. Even if all he says is ‘Irv’.

Gathered up the roll of quarters, had gone on Saturday to the bank on post and got a couple of rolls. Used up one two days ago for laundry and a phone call home but now wanna talk to my little guy. Don’t care if I have to use the whole roll along with every ounce of pocket change to do it.

Went down to the phone booths, waited my turn, looks a few other folks had the same idea. Could hear, “I love you Baby,” and “You’re everything to me” and “we’re gonna fuck like minx in a wool sock when I get home.” Well, how romantic.....but then it was my turn. Pump in the quarters, dial the number and listen to the ringing over the miles.

“Singer residence,” the gruff voice of Sergeant Major Singer came across the line.

“Bobby! You’re home?!”

“Yeah, what of it? Who’s this?” Ewww, that tone is cold as a witches tit.

“It’s me, Castiel. Castiel Novac.”

His voice warmed up considerably. “Hey there boy, how goes things at ‘Gravity U’?”

“Fine. We were suppose to make our first jump today but the weather kind of threw a monkey wrench into that plan. So there’s double jump tomorrow. A Hollywood day and evening performance.”

“Those are the days when being a ground pounding leg isn’t such a bad thing.” Bobby didn’t have jump wings but considering the riot of fruit salad, two star CIB and numerous unit citations that decorated his dress blue uniform, he didn’t need one to say ‘he been there and done that’. “But I suspect you didn’t call to hear me jaw jacking. Tell you what pup, save your quarters. It’s after 05:00, call me back collect. We can settle up when you get back up here.”

Didn’t have to tell me twice. So I hung up, by this time the lines had thinned to the point where everyone had their own booth, so I didn’t feel so bad making this a long conversation. The nasally voice of the Southern Bell operator came on, so I rattled off what I wanted, gave phone number and then waited for that nasally little southern woman to put through the connection and hear Sergeant Majors voice say.... “yes I will accept the call.” Then came..... “Irv!”

“Hi Sweetheart, it’s Papa! Say ‘papa’. I love you. I love you. I love you!” The tears were starting to roll down my cheeks.

“Papa.”

Now I was bawling. “Yes Puppy. It’s Papa. Papa loves his little man so much!”

“Uncas!” Well that’s new. Karen must still be reading ‘Last of the Mohicans’. Wiped my nose and eyes on the sleeve of the sweatshirt. “Cora!” Damnation, that pup is good. “Papa!” Now the waterworks start back up.

I blubber my way through the next few minutes until Sergeant Major comes back on. “The interesting things that come out of this pup. Tried reading ‘Green Eggs and Ham’, the only thing he
sez is ‘Irv’ and pushes away the book. So it’s back to the ‘Mohicans’. Apparently we are now on our second run through, pup loves that waterfall chapter.’

“Might wanna try ‘The Deerslayer’ next, since he’s still on his Fedimore Cooper kick.” Okay, get a hold of yourself Novac. Change the subject or you’re going to sit here and attract the kind of attention you’ve been hoping to avoid. “So, how was camp? How’d everyone do?”

Top went on to describe who did well, who didn’t do as expected and had one guy who actually quit. Then said conversationally, “ran into Hugh Ashton too.”

“Oh, how’s he?” Haven’t heard from him lately. But then again, I haven’t been the greatest correspondent of late either.

“Good, asked about you and the pup. Had a favor to ask.” Well, as one of my Firsts, that was his right. “Asked to send a note out to someone named....Benny? And these are his words, not mine....put some good Saint George mojo in it.” Uh oh. If Hugh’s got a bad feeling, but he’s a pow wow doctor, why wouldn’t he......cuz he likes Benny....I....yes I still do.....Alpha God help me.

“Did he give you an address? Hold on, gotta get a pen and paper.” Put the phone down, ran over to the front desk and begged a pen and scrap of paper off the clerk. Dashed back and wrote down the address. So Benny is at Fort Knox going through OBC. We talk a little more but didn’t wanna run up their phone bill, figured it was prolly high enough with all the calls Bobby made from North Carolina. Said goodnight to Jeff, got ‘Irv’d’ one more time and then said my goodbyes to the Sergeant Major, give my best to Karen.

Waked back upstairs to my room, turning back on the air conditioner as it was now hotter then hell in there. Pulled out the little box from the desk drawer, took off the lid and pulled out the silver chain with the little metal of Saint George attached. “Well, now I know why the orisha were so insistent I get you too. The main PX did a brisk business in Saint Micheal metals, patron saint of paratroopers but they also carried a few of the others including Saint George. Patron saint of armor. Had the two of them blessed yesterday when I went to confession (ended up with a good half hour of penance) and mass where the priest blessed the metals for me.

The next morning after breakfast, (AT THREE FUCKING OCLOCK) and another safety briefing, just in case the first one didn’t stick. Just so no one would forget all the horrible things that would occur if something went wrong. We went the building housing the chutes where we were strapped in, checked out and then boarded the buses as ‘Blood on the Risers’ played on the loud speakers:

He was just a rookie trooper and he surely shook with fright,  
He checked all his equipment and made sure his pack was tight;  
He had to sit and listen to those awful engines roar,  
"You ain't gonna jump no more!  

Glory, glory, what a hell of a way to die,  
Glory, glory, what a hell of a way to die,  
Glory, glory, what a hell of a way to die,  
He ain't gonna jump no more!  

"Is everybody happy?” cried the Sergeant looking up,  
Our Hero feebly answered "Yes,” and then they stood him up;  
He jumped into the icy blast, his static line unhooked,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.......
I’d sung this song before, laughing and harmonizing on the chorus. But now it rang in my ears as a dower warning of the lunacy I was about to take part in. There was not a sound on the bus, no one felt like talking or doing anything but try to put on the bravest face they owned. Those big green devils rolled up to the hanger and came to a stop. “OUT! OUT! OUT!” The black hats yelled. “DON’T TOUCH YOUR EQUIPMENT, FALL OUT AND FALL IN ON THAT SIDE OF THE BUS! IF THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR EQUIPMENT, TELL US NOW SO WE CAN FIX IT! IF YOU DO NOT, WE CAN NOT FIX STUPID OR DEAD!”

As we got off, looked around quickly and flicked the salt from the packet I’d gotten from The Leaning Resting in the four directions. Did not want to see the guy that haunts Lawson Field today. He’s suppose to be a trooper who got killed on his first jump or so the stories say. People have seen him or had their equipment touched or moved, so if it’s just a story....fine. But I’m not taking any chances. Not today.

The day dawned without a cloud in the sky but the air already thick with humidity. As I sat there, not only had the Saint Micheal metal but my rosary. “Hey Lieutenant,” Alice was sitting next to me. “Put in a good word for me?” No problem. “Me too,” Eismann leaned back. “Put in the good word for me too?” Waxman nudged my shoulder. Put in an extra good word for him, cuz as big a trouble magnet as I am, that guy is 10 times worse.

The Airborne Sergeants checked our equipment one more time on the ground, the harness were on right, the helmet on tight and chutes were signed off on our helmets. “Don’t move, don’t talk, don’t mess with your equipment or YOU WILL NOT BE JUMPING!”

Well, finally came our turn to get up and walk up the ramp into the ass end of the plane. Alice, Eismann, Otterford, Waxman and I were at the end of the line, meaning we’d be the first to go out the door. Again, the black hats figured if we were going to wash out, the five of us would do it quick and they’d be done with us. The interior of the plane was light gray and seemed to on forever. Along the sides were pull down seats and the overwhelming smell of fear, urine and vomit. Oh please let me hold on to my breakfast, that slice of toast and hard boiled egg cost me a whole two dollars. The last thing I wanna do is blow chunks all over the reserve chute. Don’t wanna piss off the rigger.

The turbo props were spinning, could tell by the hum they were just kind of idling until every was aboard.....except for that one guy who dropped out of line and went to sit back on the tarmac. In one way kind of a waste after putting up with all the shit for the last two weeks to give up now. On the other hand, he knew his limits and rather then gum up the works, bailed when his decision caused the least harm. Still thought he was a wimp though.

So when the company was aboard, the ass end door closed and we took seats. The pitch of the propellers changed and the Herky bird started to move.....Hail Mary full of grace......it rumbled out to the end of the runway.....the Lord is with thee.......started rolling slowly......blessed art thou amongst women.....and then started to pick up speed.....and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus......the nose tipped up.....Holy Mary Mother of God.....could feel the plane leaving the tarmac.....pray for us sinners.......and the pilot throwing on the coals to get this big son of bitch into the air.....now and in the hour of our deaths......the roar is deafening......amen.

After a short time that seemed to last forever, the call was made, the light was green......“STAND UP!” The jump masters slid open the doors, don’t know how it was possible but everything was even louder. “HOOK UP” This was it....do I yell ‘Geronimo or not? Nobody said anything about it. “STAND IN THE DOOR” Oh, that’s me. Could feel my brain screaming STOP while my feet just
slowly walked up. Felt a pat on my shoulder, looked at the jump master and he nodded toward the open door, slid my foot slowly across the metal deck and was immediately sucked (or pushed) out the door. What was the name of that Indian? “IRV!”

I was suppose to be counting, was suppose to count to four....when I finally remembered to, the chute had already deployed. Looked up, okay. No broken static lines, no holes in the silk that weren’t suppose to be there already.... and no Mae West. Now took a moment to look around, wow. There was no noise other then the wind and the blood pounding in my ears. Could see the other jumpers floating down, it was kind pretty and poetic....in a weird kind of way. Like watching sheets and pillow cases on a clothes line, moving in the breeze on a summers day. Only the sheets and towels were green.

Looked out over the horizon, earth and sky met in a big open field surround by trees and what we were told was a swamp. Please, please, please, don’t want knees in the trees. Or the swamp for that matter. Now started to hear voices, ones that were calling: keep your knees together.....KEEP YOUR FUCKING FEET AND KNEES TOGETHER!!” The jump cadre were on the ground with bull horns, shouting out advise. “PULL UP ON THE RISERS! NOW! NOW! NOW! LOOKING GOOD AIRBORNE!” Oh my, how did the ground get this close? Yanked hard and then hit the dirt. Again, not the best PLF in the world, but didn’t hurt as bad as it did falling from the 250 foot tower.

Scrambled to my feet, pulling and bundling the chute as fast as I could. Before boarding the plane, we were given a rally point where we’d better shag ass to once getting to the ground. Wadding up the silk in an untidy bundle, balancing it on my shoulders and started pelting across the drop zone, keeping an eye to the sky so someone wouldn’t drop in on me.

The rally point was near the road where the buses were parked, so got to turn and watch the olive drab chutes paint the robins egg blue sky. It was an amazing sight and made me wish all the more for a camera. One by one or in groups, people run in. See Alice, Eismann and Otterford. “Where’s Waxman?”

“The dumbass is in a tree,” Alice pointed about half way down and to the right of the drop zone. “The black hats are cutting him down now.” Sure enough, a little while later, Waxman comes dragging in covered in pine needles, twigs and peck marks?

“Goddamn wood peckers.” He was almost in tears. “Wasn’t my fault I landed in their tree and my foot got stuck in the hole their nest of was in. Big mother fuckers attacked me, they were friggen huge! The size of a buzzards.” Then he really lost it, “the black hats all stood at the base of the tree and laughed! Took em forever to come up and get me!”

You could tell the black hat NCOIC of the rally point was desperately trying not to crack up. “Go have the medic take care of your.....injuries......so they don’t get infected.” Waxman nodded and the sad sack trudged over to the meat wagon. When he was out of ear shot, or it didn’t matter if he was or not, the lot of us started laughing. It was awful mean....prolly.....unbecoming in fact....of an officer....oh who am I kidding? It’s hilarious!

“What kind of wood pecker do you think it was,” Eismann said between giggles. “If it was big as Waxman thought it was,” the NCOIC was the first to calm down a bit, but not much. “Pileated Woodpecker more then likely. Have a lot of em down here on post. There’s enough unpopulated land, abandoned training areas and indigenous pine where the birds can find enough food and places to nest.” He looked a little embarrassed. “I’m working on a bachelors degree in zoology with a specialty in ornithology over at Auburn University.”
He then gave a short lesson on the birds of Georgia, using Fort Benning as a microcosm representing the various species found in the entire state. Including one that’s on the endangered list. “The Red Cockaded Woodpecker was put on the list five years ago. This post currently has the second largest population of this bird in the state. My self and few others are trying to get the post commander to put aside some of the acreage for conservation of this bird and others. Did you know that bald eagle is here too?” Huh, didn’t know that.

When everyone finally made it back, the causality count was one broken nose, a lot of scrapes, cuts and welt marks, pecker holes (snert, I said pecker) and a dislocated elbow. That poor son of bitch didn’t jump far enough out the door and was smashed against the side of the plane. He was hauled away to the hospital in tears but promised that he would get a chance to come back after healing up. The dude with the busted nose, the medics just taped up his snout and gave him was aspirin.

So, we boarded the buses and were brought back to the company area to turn in our chutes, get fed and then since it would be a while before the night jump (and we needed to be kept busy) the enlisted folks got invited to a ‘GI Party’ (meaning they had to clean their barracks again) while the officers either where handed paint brushes to go paint the rocks that decorated the edges of the parking lot and sidewalks or go on KP. Just to be a bastard, I went on kitchen police.

The Master Sargeant took sadistic glee in having a group of officers to boss around. Well, right up until I innocently asked for a cup of coffee. Just a little something before starting. Up until that moment he’d just seen the ‘butter bar’ on my collar, then the Mess Sargeant got a good look at my face and made the connection. Oh yes, it may have take so me time from ‘flash to boom’ but never let it be said that this guy couldn’t see through a brick wall given time. “Why yes SIR,” he said between gritted teeth, “What a ‘lovely’ idea SIR. It’s on the house....SIR.” From the looks on the other officers faces, they knew something was up, but wisely decided to take the free coffee and keep mum.

So after a bit of java, was sent to scrub pots, which was not the worst thing in the world. Looked up from time to time and would see the Mess Sargeant glaring my way. Finally just stuck out my tongue and gave him the Bronx cheer. Didn’t bother to look up at him for the rest of the time it took to scrub all the pots in the big ass sink.

Dinner was bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwiches and fruit cocktail. It was light, easy to digest and even easier to leave behind, depending on which end it left. Because before we went to the chute barn to get saddled up, there was a call to hit the head cuz there was no way the black hats wanted to check us twice. If someone didn’t need to go now but later, tough-ski shit-ski as the Southern Russians would say. Shit in your pants.

Loaded up the buses and we were driven back out to Lawson Army Airfield, but instead of a C-130 waiting for us on the tarmac, there was a C141....cargo jet. Oh shit. It would be a little while before darkness fell, so we settled down on the ground to wait. Hurry up and wait, the song of the army. Speaking of....could hear music coming from inside the hanger, someone had on the local radio station: ‘WCQG-107.3 FM Home of the Rock Revolution!’ And then the familiar guitar riff began and the sexy scratch of Steven Tyler echoed through the hanger.

Backstroke lover always hidin’ ‘neath the cover
‘Till I talked to my daddy, he say
He said, you ain’t seen nothing
‘Till you’re down on a muffin
Then you’re sure to be a-changin’ your ways
I met a cheerleader, was a real young bleeder
All the times I can reminisce.........
Music always made the time go a little faster but it also could put you to sleep. As there was many a night growing up would lay in bed with the radio tuned to Caribbean Forces Network in Panama or AFN in Germany. Was sitting back to back with Alice, when the day caught up with me and combined with the music, ‘walked this way’ off to short visit to the Land of Nod. Of course, THAT’S when the angels decided to have a little ‘fun’.

“Major!” What? Where? Me? Was inside a plane, only it was rock’en and rolling all over the place. In the tiny amount of light in the ‘belly of the beast’ could see the faces of young men, faces darkened with camo but eyes bright in fear and fury. Except those don’t look like any uniforms I’ve ever seen, looked down at myself. I’m dressed the same way. Camouflage fatigues and a ruck so heavy couldn’t believe how I could move it. “We’re over the drop zone.” The voice belonged to the captain of the 82nd Airborne, if the double A patch on his should is correct and I appeared to be along for the ride. “Looks like we’re visiting Rio Hato, hope the ‘snake eaters got the locals pacified a little.” Then he smiled and motioned toward the door... “After you Sir. Let’s go give old ‘Pineapple puss’ a taste of canister round.” He nodded toward the Sheridans waiting to be dumped out the back. “All the Way Sir!”

Woke to find I was laying on my stomach, “you okay?” Was looking into Otterfords puzzled face. “One minute you were sound asleep and the next you rocked up and pitched forward saying something about ‘fuck that pineapple?’” She looked amused. “Would think a watermelon would be a lot easier, but what ever floats your boat Sir.”

Oh how do you explain a dream that vivid where you could smell the rot of the jungle and feel the wind just long enough and then the yank of the chute and the bone crushing thump as you hit the ground. “I.....er......um......nothing. Nothing at all.” Now don’t dare fall asleep.

Finally, the lights went out and we sat in the darkness for little while. “GET YOUR NIGHT VISION.” The black hats cautioned. “TRY NOT TO LOOK AT ANY LIGHT.” In a while we boarded the C-141, hanging on to the person in front of us, shuffled into the aircraft. There was a tiny amount of light in the plane, just enough to let us find our way to a place to sit. Once everyone was in and seated, the Star Lizard....er.....Lifter took off. Now the inside of the plane went completely black.

Needless to say, it got to the Alabama side of Benning a lot faster then the C-130 because almost after it was in the air, the call to stand came. The green light flashed dimly, “STAND UP!” Could feel the vibration of 400 boots hit the metal deck. “HOOK UP!” The jump masters went to each person, checking the lines and harnesses of our chutes by feel. “That’s not a buckle, Sargeant Jump Master,” as my nipple got a squeeze. Son of a bitch...will kick his ass when I get on the.....oh fuck. Could feel a small dampness soak into my t-shirt. And here I’d been dry as a bone these last two and a half weeks. Well, didn’t touch myself either, didn’t want the smell of slick or milk sliding out to the hallway and every knot head in Olson Hall knocking at my door. But right now have a few more pressing issues.

This time, was in the middle of the stick. Don’t know which is worse, being first but getting it over with or being at the end or middle and having to wait. Could feel the roar of the plane increase and the wind howl its way through, blowing everything not tied down all over the place. “STAND IN THE DOOR!” And one by one the line moved forward and then stopped. The aircraft had to make another pass at the drop zone. So the big girl made a long lazy turn over the skies of Phenix City and then back over Fryar. Then came the order again...”STAND IN THE DOOR!” Now I was closer and in a moment, it was my turn. Got tapped, mind went on auto pilot and with two steps, was knees in the breeze.
This time, counted to four and...there....felt the chute deploy and the hard jerk as canopy opened wide. If day was surreal, night was supernatural. Was suspended in the heaven against a field of stars and the face of a partial moon. Would the creatures of the night find me up here and what would they do if they did? Pushed that thought aside as I twisted round to see the glow in the distance of main post and the lights of the buses on the far end of the field. We’d been told to use them as a guide as to when to pull on the risers for landing. Now can hear the black hats yelling through their bull horns. “KEEP YOUR FEET AND KNEES TOGETHER! WATCH OUT FOR OTHER STUDENTS! KEEP THOSE KNEES TOGETHER!”

Was a little too close to the ground, when I pulled the risers and hit hard. Ohhhhh, crap, that hurt. Felt every nerve scream as I tried to stand up, so sat right back down. Thank the Alpha God there was not a breath of wind that evening, so the canopy just lay there like a pool of still water on the ground. “AIRBORNE WHY ARE YOU JUST SITTING THERE! MOVE IT! MOVE IT! MOVE IT!” Just about jumped out of my skin, the bull horn came from right behind me.

“Clear Sargeant Airborne,” I struggled to my feet. “Right on it Sargeant Airborne.” Oh gonna be drowning in Ben-Gay tonight and Tylenol the minute I find water.

But then in a softer gentler voice, “you alright troop? You didn’t get hurt did you?”

“I’m fine Sargeant Airborne, just hit a little hard is all.” Prolly shouldn’t have even said that. “I’m clear Sargeant Airborne.”

“Good, glad to hear nothing’s busted.” He helped me gather up the chute, roll and balance it on my shoulders. “Get going little ‘mega. You got three more jumps to make before Friday and that last one is gonna be a motherfucker.”

He was right of course. That last one was. Wednesday saw us jump once in the morning and then in the afternoon. Praise the Alpha God, both were Hollywoods. But oddly enough it was getting harder to jump out. Not because I was scared to go out that door, that was the easy part. It was the landings that were starting to get to me. Did the damn PLFs right, but it still fucking hurt each time. How on earth could Balthazar love to do this shit? Worse, almost fell out of formation on that mornings run. Was just so tired and everything hurt. Took every little bit I had, plus some encouraging words from of all people, Waxman: “don’t give up now you dumb bastard.....Sir. You’re almost there.” Well shit fire and conserve matches, if HE can make it, I can.

Thursday morning not only got chutes, but about 40 pounds of ruck sack that we were jumping out with. The ruck would be dangling on a line between our legs about ten foot down. “Don’t land on it.” The black hats were going to issue us M16’s to carry down too but then decided against it. There was too much paper work, too much time accounting for each weapon going out and coming back in, so that part was scraped. But not the 40 pound ‘douche bag’.

As the lot of us stood in line to board the C-130, you could feel the tension yet relief in the air. This was it, last jump. After this, we’re paratroopers......well......“you’ll be nothing but ‘five jump chumps’,” one of the black hats called out. “Come talk to me after 16 jumps and AFTER I bitch slapped some master jump wings on your pathetic little chests.”

Once we were in, seated and the bag between our feet, the big engines roared and the plane taxied down the runway, gaining speed before flinging itself into the clear blue Alabama sky. I was back in the middle of the stick, just wanting this over with so awfully bad. Get my wings, go home to Jeff and never jump again. Will be flying out of Columbus about 01:15 to Atlanta and then catch the flight to Dulles. Tomorrow night will be at the embassy. Taking a long hot shower and sleeping in a comfortable bed (hopefully between Jenny and Lewiston) with no cockle roaches as room mates.
After a few minutes, the red light went off replaced by the green. “STAND UP!” Wearily got to my feet. “HOOK UP!” The jump masters walked through one last time checking our equipment, can’t afford to lose anyone on the last jump. “STAND IN THE DOOR!” And one by one, the stick went out. This time no one was tapped on the shoulder. This was a mass jump, everyone through the door. My turn came and out the door; the ruck first and me after it. For once a good exit.

One, two, three....four! The parachute jerked open. Oh shit! There’s someone right below me. Pulled the riser hard to the left and kicked the line between my feet to swing ruck away from the other guys chute. Unfortunately it pointed me towards the wood line. No trees, no trees, no trees...ooo...green area. If I can aim this baby just right won’t get caught up in the tree limbs. Was maybe about 20 feet off the ground when suddenly the chute collapsed. You know those things that happen so fast you don’t realize it until its over, well....that’s what it was like. One second was in air, the next was splashing INTO A FUCKING SWAMP! Sending showers of muddy water, frogs, snakes and Lord knows what else in every direction. That ‘green’ area was just algae floating on top of the water. Course it was Waxman, who else, who’d crashed my chute.

“I WILL END YOU! VOS BULTO! AWEBAO! MASCABOLA!” The object of my rage of course was dangling upside down from a pine tree . “I HOPE YOU GET ATE BY THE WOODPECKERS!” The black hats had arrived in the mean time and were busting a gut laughing. Slogged to solid ground out paved in horrificly stinken mud and swamp rot. The ruck sack had hit pretty hard and sunk in so deep that not even with the black hats helping me pull, would it come out. Finally after if became apparent the bag was going nowhere, one unsheathes the rather impressive jungle knife hanging off his belt and cuts the line. “Sorry Sir, but you now owe Uncle Sam about.....$50 bucks.”

“ME? You cut the line!”

“But you landed in the swamp. Suck it up Sir.”

“I FUCKING HATE YOU ALL!” Balled up the sopping parachute, seething at the unfairness of it all and stomped away before the tears start. Damn hormones. Wait. What? There. Are. No. HORMONES!

On the upside, could hear Waxman begging the black hats to stop laughing and get him down before he got sick.

Odd that no one wanted to sit next to me on the bus ride back to the company area. They all had the windows open too. “What? Is it my breath?” I asked innocently. “Anybody got a Tic Tac?”

Eismann spoke on the behalf of all concerned, “with all due respects Lt Novac. For an officer, you’re a fairly (only fairly?) decent guy. But Sir, with all due respects to your rank and privilege......right now, you’d knock a buzzard off a shit wagon at 50 feet with the stink coming off you....Respectfully Lt Novac , Sir.”

Was about to protest, when....“touche.”

When the bus’s pulled in front of the company area, Sargeant Singleton didn’t even let me get in formation but pointed in the direction of Olson Hall. “Take off your gear and get out my sight. You have an hour to get cleaned up, dressed and back here. BEAT FEET SIR, THE CLOCK IS TICKING!”

“YES SARGEANT AIRBORNE!” Took off at a dead run down the road and didn’t stop until coming to a stumbling halt in front of the BOQ. The desk clerk looked up from her soap operas, mumbling something about ‘what died’, pulled out a can and sprayed a choking cloud of Air-
Wick. Got up stairs to my room and stripped off my clothes and boots. Yuck. The fatigues were paved in blackish green half dried mud, don’t know if the t-shirt will ever come white again, so might just wanna shit can it. Got in the shower, ran the water till it got warmish and then lathered myself up. Streaks of mucky water were rolling down my body to puddle at my feet before heading down the drain.

Wouldn’t have been surprised to have pulled a frog out of my hair, if I had any or a snake out my asshole. When the water was finally running clear, shut it off and stepped out of the tub. Caught a look at myself in the mirror on the back of the door. Holy baby Jebus, what a mess. Bruises, scrapes, cuts.....look like I came out on the losing end of a fight. So glad John or Dean can’t see me now.

Pulled a clean set of fatigues out the closet and get dressed as fast as I can. The blousers were wet and smelled a little like swamp but needed to look strack. Wrapped them around my legs put the elastics in place and then tucked in the pant legs. Got out the other pair of boots, quickly lacing them up, shirt on, gig line straight, keys in the pocket, hat on head and out the door I go. Make it back to the company area with five minutes to spare.

The rest of the afternoon was spent doing the out processing paper work which included paying for that ruck sack. Grrrrrrrrrrrrr! Though on the bright side, it appears Waxman ‘lost’ his ruck in the swamp too. So he was coughing up a picture of President Grant also.

There was also someone there hawking cycle books. They’re the Armys version of a high school year book. If you wanted to commemorate the occasion (be it basic training, jump school or ROTC basic) one could order a copy for $12.50. There had been a photographer on site during ground week taking our pictures as we did the stand in the door exercise. Figured, why not. Wanted to remember the people more then what actually happened. So laid down my cash and gave them Dad and Mummy-ships address in Annapolis, figuring I had a better chance of getting it, then sending the book to Naomi-Moms in Schenectady.

Thank goodness they didn’t require the omegas to go and get bore scoped again. Go figure, this is where you’d think they’d wanna make sure that some alphas ‘property’ wasn’t damaged or had the potential for ‘loss of consortium’. But this being the army, they do things ass backwards.

Graduation was going to be at 09:00 am over at Eubanks Field. I was up early that morning packing. This would be the first time in three weeks, wouldn’t be at PT or doing the airborne shuffle around the ‘airborne track’. I could get used to that. Had washed fatigues last night and this morning was starching the ones I was going to wear to graduation within an inch of its life. Shined the jump boots till they shone like mirrors. Shaved carefully, then ran a hand over the three weeks growth of hair. There may have been a whole inch up top, better watch out or I’ll look like some ole hippie.

Brushed my teeth, then dressed taking extra care with my appearance then admired my handy work in the mirror. I showed em all. Everyone from that condescending Major at in take to everyone who said an omega had no place....anywhere....but in the bedroom.

“There is one fine looken airborne.” Told my reflection with a wink and chick chick of the tongue.

Walked over to the company area, instead of running. Didn’t wanna sweat up the uniform. Got in line for breakfast, but only felt like toast and coffee. Would treat myself to some good eats later at the airport in Atlanta. Besides couldn’t chance dripping anything on the fatigues. At 08:30 the buses were in front of the company area, the other companies would go an hour apart, as the ceremonies were short. No more then 20 to 25 minutes each. There would be remarks from the Director of the Airborne Airmobility Department, maybe even a few words from a visiting veteran
of Normandy or Market Garden. Then our wings would be pinned on, maybe even tagged if we’re lucky, handed a certificate and dismissed.

When the company off loaded from the buses and formed up in front of the podium, there was something I wasn’t expecting to be there at the graduation site. There had to have been about 30 civilians sitting on lawn chairs or blankets, woman with their babes in arms, moms, dads and papas. Fellas who prolly hadn’t jumped since Normandy or Sunchon during the Korean conflict but squeezed back into their jackets for the occasion. Their silver wings shone brightly in the morning sun. All there to see the new members of the brotherhood of those who dared the sky.

Alice who was standing to my left, had tears in her eyes. “That’s my mom, grandma and grand dad over there. The old fella with the DeKalb hat on and the lady standing next to him in blue flowered dress....yeah that’s grand dad and grandma.” She quickly nudged away the tear drop running down her face. “They drove all the way from Michigan to watch and then I’m taking leave for a few weeks so we can be together before my next duty station.”

Scanned the crowd, no familiar face I could see. Not like I really expected it. Though kind of hoped Balti would be there or Lewiston. “Where is your next duty station?”

“Fort Lee,” she said. “I’m going to riggers school.”

But before I could say anything like, ‘maybe I’ll see you there’, the call to come to attention rang out. We snapped to and our company commander came to the podium. Captain Carriker looked out at us: “solders, officers, members of the Air Force, Navy and Marines, officers from our allied nations. You have spent the last three weeks proving to yourself, not me nor your instructors that you are worthy of this day. Congratulations to those of you made it here to stand before this podium. It is now my privilege to introduce Col. Frank Walton, the Director of the Airborne Airmobility Department. Thank you.

Col Walton didn’t speak long, he knew what was important. He held up the silver wings. “They’re only $4.00 at the PX but you paid for them one hundred times over in blood, sweat and skin. You’ve paid with the fear you overcame, the secret tears you shed and the time away from those you love. Today you’ve joined a long proud tradition......” He said a bit more and then... “A member of that brotherhood has agreed to say a few words to you. He was visiting friends in the area and was prevailed upon to share a little advice on command, airborne and life. He enlisted in 1941, went to OBC jumped at Normandy with the 101st ‘Airborne and commanded Company E until the end of the war. Ladies and Gentleman Major Richard Winters.”

The man who came up to the podium was in pretty good shape for his age, a quiet kinda fella for an alpha but had presence of a man who’d been to hell and back and did everything in his power to bring as many of those he lead back with him For a moment, you had the feeling he was seeing not the young solders and officers of 1978 but those of 1943.

He didn’t speak long but what was said in those few statements meant a lot. “The key to being a successful combat leader is to earn respect, not because of rank but because of man you are.....” He went over a few quick points, “Strive to be a leader of character, competence and courage. Lead from the front. Say, ‘follow me’ and lead the way.” Then Major Winters smiled. “I think that’s enough for one day. You want your wings and you’ve certainly earned them.”

Then Captain Carriker came back and called us to attention, then called the names of 10 our company to come forward. Both Alice and Otterford stepped out and formed up with the eight others. And their families got to pin on their wings. Watched one of the West Point guys just shake with emotion (or pain) as what looked like three male relatives gave him his blood wings. Then one by one Col Walton and Captain Carriker, pinned those silver wings to our chests, then slapping
them down hard. “Good job Omega Winchester,” the Colonel said quietly as he pinned then pounded those wings down.

“Thank you Sir,” haven’t felt like this since my mating night at Fort Bragg, when John sunk his teeth into my shoulder. My gut fluttered and was about to throw up with happiness.

After it was over, we recited the Airborne Creed and sang the Army Song. Then were dismissed and climbed back aboard the buses. Wow, this reminded me so much of the first time I had sex. All kinds of gyrations and build up for just a little prick. Speaking of little pricks, those pins were starting to hurt something fierce. Took hold of the seam line and quickly yanked. There we go, just like pulling off a band aid. “Hey L.T.” Eismann leaned over the seat. “They didn’t give females blood wings,” she grinned. “How about it Lt. Novac? Tag?”

.” It didn’t seem fair she didn’t get that part of the experience. “Are you sure? It’ll hurt some.....” Prolly a whole lot less then what we’ve been through for the past three weeks. “Move em up a little further and I will.”

She moved the wings up her blouse a few inches, “fire away.”

“Airborne,” and I tagged her wings.

When we got back, the 42nd Training Company fell in one last time. Of the 200 people who began three weeks earlier, 170 would graduate. Some were lost through injury, others not being able to physically keep up with the demanding schedule, or like the idiots who fell asleep during the training film and finally those who just gave up and quit. The captain and first sergeant had a few final words and then we were dismissed. A cheer went up as we pounded each other on the back, or tagged each others wings or just had tears of relief that it was over. Said my goodbyes to Otterford, Alice and Eismann, then even said farewell to Waxman. Even if the son of a bitch cost me $50 bucks, I wouldn’t be here if it hadn’t been for him.

Ran back to Olson Hall and one last time up the stairs into my room. Changed into my khaki uniform and lovingly pinned on the wings. The khakis fit a little snugger to my body now, almost a month of non stop exercise does change ones shape for the better and I looked a fine fox. Picked up my bags and sent down to the desk to hand in the keys to check out of ‘The Cockroach Hilton’. The beta desk clerk who didn’t give me the time of day since I arrived, looked like she was going to eat me alive and spit out the pits. “Ooooo, so nice to have you with us Omega Winchester...er Lt Novac. Hope you come back to Fort Benning soon.” She smiled hungerly, “sure you don’t wanna linger....just a little....the boss doesn’t come back for another hour.”

“Oh that is such a kind offer.....” LET ME OUTTA HERE! Glanced outside, a taxi had just pulled up in front of the building. “Oh gee whiz, there’s my ride.....gotta go, bye. Thanks again!” Ran out into the thick steamy air of a late Georgia morning like the hounds of hell were nipping at me. “You going anywhere near the airport?” Had leaned in the window of the hack. “Yup,” the cabbie said, hooking a thumb at the three guys sitting in back. “Need a lift?”

“Hell yeah,” I climbed in the front passengers side, set my duffel and overnight bag on the floor next to my feet and leaned back. “To the airport James.”

“Who’s James? My name’s Howard.”

Okay, what ever works. “To the airport Howard.”

Turned to watch the jump towers become smaller and smaller out the back window as the cab drove away from Olson Hall and on to the main drag across post. Last night had penned and
dropped in the post box a short letter to General and Omega Livsey thanking them for their kindness and hospitality during my time here. Also, as promised, would write once a month to their son Tim at West Point. Plebe year was hard enough and tougher at mail call when you don’t hear you name.

It didn’t long to get out to the Columbus Metropolitan Airport as Howard took the I-85 expressway at its meaning and expressed the hell out of it. That Checker should have had US AIR FORCE written on the side, cuz it was flying low. It screeched up to curb and one of the guys in back yelled “LIGHT IS RED! STAND IN THE DOOR!” We jumped out and shelled out the five bucks each with a two dollar tip for the captain of our flight, then grabbed my stuff and walked into the terminal. Such as it still was. Yup, still small. Still only two car rental booths (the sheriffs deputy still making time with the woman behind the counter) and the three airline check in desks. The only thing that changed is that someone dusted the ‘arrival and departure’ board. Thing had cobwebs on it before.

Checked in at the Southern desk, handed over the duffel and walked over to the gate, there was no x-ray machine, just an old security Wackenhut dude dozing in a chair, who’d riffle through your stuff, yawn and wave you through. Found a place to sit down and as I had about an hour to kill, pulled out ‘The World According to Garp’ and picked up where I’d left off on the plane three weeks ago. Had been too tired in the evenings up until now to do anything but eat and fall into bed.

A while later as we were being called to board the plane, Cody Chickadee came skidding up behind me. “Jimmie Crickets, thought I was gonna miss the flight.” He panted and pulled the ticket out of his back pocket. “Company commander would NOT SHUT UP! Kept going on how we were the best group he ever had, he’d think of us often...blah, blah blah. Personally, I just think he’d miss that female second lieutenant he was banging on the side.”

We boarded the Fairchild Metro II, found our seats and settled in. “Where are you headed for now?” I asked, “Oklahoma?”

“Hawaii,” Cody said. “Going to frogman school for the next few weeks.”

“Better you then me. Going back to Rochester, hug and kiss my pup, sleep for a month and then it’s off to Fort Lee, Virginia for Officers Basic.” Anything else we were going to say was lost in the roar of the engines as the plane backed up from the gate and taxied toward the runway.

Think we circled the Hartsfield Airport for about as long as the flight took get here. Now just wanted to get down and have SOMETHING to eat. Damn, I’m hungry. When they finally got permission to, those pilots took and dropped this sucker like a rock. Was automatically looking for a parachute to strap on and jump out before we kissed the dirt.

Once on the ground and at the gate, Cody turned and wrapped his arms around me in a great slapping bear hug. He also slipped a hand into my back pocket. “The address is for my dad.” He whispered, “if you need to get in touch with me or our mutual friend, send the letter there.”

Promised to write the minute I got to OBC, so they’d have the address in Virginia. Wanted to have lunch with him but his flight on TWA to Oahu was going to be called soon. He was in for a long mother fucking flight, as he was going from here to Frisco then on to Honolulu. “Take care of yourself ‘frog dude’. Thanks for everything.”

“Just doing what the Navy does best,” he grinned. “Saving Army ass for almost two hundred years.” Ensign Chickadee took off running down the corridor before I could ask him (speaking of ass) how did his last turn in the barrel go......“See ya on flip flop Airborne! We be 10-4 and out the door!”
Strolled up to the terminal, The Dobbs House restaurant looked like my best bet, as it had counter
service and I only had an hour and change before the flight left to DC. Slid into a seat at that
sideboard and perused the menu. When the waitress came up, I ordered the double burger, Pepsi
Coke and black bottom pie. Instead of writing down the order, she simply turned and yelled to the
cook “burn a double!”

She brought over the soda first and I drank it slowly. Tasting it right down to the molecules. As
this was really the first time got to do anything slowly or not worrying about who was watching or
minding my manners (and smart ass remarks) in three weeks. Being around the General and his
mate, you had to mind your p’s and q’s, although Miss Betty was a good ole Georgia girl, who
couldn’t say ‘shit’ if she had a mouthful, but knew ALL KINDS of interesting ways to tell you to
gofuck yourself without ever saying the word. Kinda reminded me an awful lot of the Omega
Chickie Rogers. Wonder how he and Elliot are doing? Elliot should be graduating pharmacy
school in another year or two and Chickie should be starting med school at Georgetown this fall.
Better buy some more writing paper.

The burger looked amazing when it arrived along with the pie. Took off the top bun, put on the
ketchup, some mustard, then a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Picked it up with both hands and took a
bite. Ohhhhh, that’s good! Gave a near orgasmic moan. “This just makes me sooo happy!”

“Nice to see a young man enjoy his food,” the waitress laughed. “Though don’t you go sound’en
like that too loud. Folks will think the cook put ‘Spanish Fly’ in the food.” Her name plate said
‘Elizabeth’ but “folks just call me Punk, cuz I was a bitty pup when I was born. Lived here in
Hapeville all my life. It’d be easier to go work over at the ‘Dwarf House’ but the tips are better
here.” Punk kept talking even as she took orders, shouted them out, then picked up full plates and
empty. Had a lot of questions but the talking with the mouth full was rude and this burger was just
too good. Ate it down to the crumbs, then licked said crumbs and grease off my fingers, then
turned all attention to the pie.

Chocolate, real cream whipped cream, a hint of rum in the custard. Punk modestly said it was her
grandmas recipe. Told her if I weren’t mated, I’d ask for her hand right then and there and the rest
of her too. Punk was prolly 70 if she was a day, a beta with a worn gold band that looked like it
hadn’t left her finger since the day it was slipped on her left hand. But hey, for pie like this, would
over look it. She laughed and said, she’d wear me out to a nub, then gave a flip of the hip that was
worthy of even Nick Monroe. My meal came to $4.75, left a ten spot under the glass, picked up my
overnight bag and sauntered back to Southern gate 26 to wait for the flight to be called.

“Welcome to Southern Flight 1578, non stop to Washington DC.” The clerk behind the desk
announced into the microphone. “We’re running a full flight today and we’ve been overbooked. If
there is anyone who wants to give up their seat, Southern will give you $200 and a seat on the next
flight to your destination.” It was tempting, but the next flight wasn’t out until after 18:00 and no
way in hell was I gonna have Balthazar or Jenny fight there way out of DC on a Friday night. As it
was, we wouldn’t be getting in until after 17:00 and in the phone call I’d made last night to the
folks on embassy row, offered to catch a cab back, but then again Jenny insisted and said she’d be
there.

The flight left shortly after 15:00, oh yeah I can now think in civilian time again....a little after
03:00 pm. This time, there was peanuts, pretzels and whatever was on the drink cart. Which was
okay, after that burger, really wasn’t hungry. The DC-9 was packed to the gills and the
stewardess’s were kept hopping. Just wanted this lumbering pig to get across the sky, okay Novac-
just keep cool in the motor pool. You’re wound up tight as a tick. So just want the two hours to
pass quickly and THAT LITTLE SON OF BITCH SITTING BEHIND ME TO QUIT KICKING THE SEAT! Turned and growled at the little turd. Got the stink eye from his mother but he did sit quiet after that. Come on Novac, it ain’t their fault they’re just a bunch of dumb legs.

This time didn’t wanna say a word to anyone. Was not up to any small talk and figured the way I was feeling, wouldn’t make anyone good company anyhow. The person sitting next to me, thank the Alpha God, must have felt the same way because they had their nose in a book (hmmmmm ‘If Life is a Bowl of Cherries-What am I doing in the Pits?’ Tell me all about THAT, Erma Bombeck) and didn’t look up once during the whole flight.

Took forever but finally, the no smoking and hook your seat belt lights came on at long last. “Ladies and Gentleman,” the Captain came over the loud speaker. “We are making our final decent into Washington DC. It’s a balmy 89 degrees with 97 percent humidity. We should be on the ground shortly, hope you’ve enjoyed being with with us as much as we enjoyed being with you.” Well, it was a smooth flight, no turbulence and the dude knew how to take off without bumps and set this bird on the ground the same way.

Now I wanted out. Had the overnight bag on my lap and was ready to book. Course that’s when every one took their sweet old time, COME ON! I WANT. OFF! The mobile lounge was rolled over to the side of the plane and then the door opened and people started getting up. The smell of Av-gas, burned rubber and exhaust rolled into the cabin. Yuck. Stood up (automatically my hand went to hook up the static line that wasn’t there. Oops.) and shuffled down the aisle. “Don’t feel bad pup,” turned to see a middle aged alpha business man, doing the same thing. “Can’t help it and it’s been over 15 years since I left ‘Gravity U’.” He reached over and gently tagged my wings. “Airborne,”

“All the way Sir.”

Finally got aboard the mobile lounge, found a seat and it rolled slowly across the tarmac. OH MY ALPHA GOD! I COULD PUSH THIS THING FASTER! But the critter finally made it. The door opened, we gratefully piled off and into the concourse.

She was waiting at the gate. My Jenny. Standing there in the throng, looking beautiful in a white and blue cotton summer dress that fell just below her dimpled knees. A half head cover adoring her long lovely dark hair. There was still a bit of puppy weight around the hips (OH how I know that one!) but on her, it made the whole ensemble look demure yet sexy and bold. Venus of Willendorf had nothing on my girl. “JENNY!” Dashed and dodging the multitude of people meeting their loved ones or those hurrying toward their connecting flight, but as for me...just wanted to get to her side, fall to my knees and pledge allegiance to that sweet omega...maybe in private....tonight....with lots of red mating cord.

Dropped the bag, took Jenny by the waist and spun her around. “Oh I’ve missed you Ladyship!”

“Goodness,” Mrs Reynolds gasped. “Jump school has done wonders for you. But do put me down darling, all this whirling about is making me nauseous.” Gently set her sandaled feet immediately to the floor, no yarking allowed until I’m out of uniform. We walked down the corridor arm in arm to baggage claim. “There’s something different about you, besides all those lovely muscles, which I must see later on. It’s like you’re glowing.” She kissed my cheek and then sniffed.....what is that lovely aroma?” Then a pregnant male omega walked swiftly around us, trying to keep up with the mate who was striding much to fast for the poor thing to keep up with. Traditionalist chauvinist alpha pig. “Oh, prolly that was it.” Jenny sounded almost disappointed.

Waited at luggage claim for the duffel to come round and then had to sort through at least five of them to find mine. “There! That one. The green one! (Smart ass.) It had my name and social
security number written across the side.” Pulled it off the baggage carousel and slung the duffel over my shoulder. Walking out to the car, caught up on the latest news and gossip floating about the embassy. And of course, how the pups were doing.

“Jesse and Asa both received your post cards. Poor things, they were rather concerned about you this week, jumping out of a perfectly good airplane and all. But your brother assailed them with enough stories that the little scamps were doing PLF’s off my dining room table.” Then she smiled coyly, “Lewiston and I also received your letters. Would’ve loved to have seen the reenactment of the Mikado. Do find art SO stimulating.”

“Maybe we could stage our own production. You can be Yum Yum and I can Pitti-Sing, Lewiston would be a perfect KoKo....”

“You are SUCH a wicked creature,” Jenny lightly slapped my arm. “I DO so like that in a person.”

Really need to think of something else before I toss her on the hood of a car and do a little muff diving. “Have souvenirs for everybody; got the boys t-shirts that say ‘Airborne School, Fort Benning, Georgia on them. And a little one for ‘Sir Winnie’, a couple of jars of chow chow from the commanding generals mate, bottle of corn liquor for Lewiston (the cabbie on the way to town couldn’t sell me sex that one night, but the driver on the way home had a few bottles of home made corn that I passed over a few bucks for) and a snow globe for Erika.”

Jenny made a rude noise through her pert little nose. “Oh dear. Erika hates them actually....”

Oh shit. “Oops.....but I saw a whole row of them on her dresser....”

“Her grandmother buys them for her, so Erika feels obligated to keep them. Or at least until the next move when she can dump the lot of em into the dust bin, then claim they were lost.” Oh well, she’d got another one to deep six.

The car was parked all way out in ‘East be by Jesus’. “I see the beamer is back, haven’t bashed anybody lately over a parking spot?” Jenny is a car park terror and had once, when someone stole her space, had rammed the offending vehicle into the guard rail.

“Oh no,” she said gayly, opening up the trunk, so I could drop in the duffel bag. “Haven’t had to recently. Came close a few times but considered my dossier over at CIA was quite thick enough, I decided to behave, for the time being.” Jenny had not let any opinions go unvoiced while she’s been in DC and at a reception, compared President Carters teeth to that of a lion tailed macaque. This observation had not endeared her to the current administration. Hence, I suppose, the thick file.

Her ladyship slammed down the trunk lid and unlocked the passengers and driver side doors. Mmmm, those leather seats were as buttery as I remembered. “Have you been here long?” The big engine roared to life, love the sound of German engineering. “Did you run into much traffic?”

“Not much,” Jenny shifted, double clutched and put the pedal to the metal. The car lurched backward, spun and then leapt forward. Oh boy, ‘Josephine Chitwood’ rides again. “Mostly because, I left two hours early, so had plenty of time. Found spot to sit, got to have a coffee, catch up on the London Times, think my own thoughts...” She sighed happily. “It was glorious.” The car screeched up to the toll gate and Mrs Reynolds handed over the ticket, some money and then took off like a bat outta hell.

Like the ride out to Dulles a little over three weeks ago, the ride back to the embassy was equally as quick. Jenny had a lead foot, a fast car, nerves of steel and new contraption that let her know
where the police radar was set up. “Passport,” I leaned forward to read the name of the device sitting on the dash board. “Cincinnati Microwave Inc. Does it work?”

“Oh indeed it does. It’s already paid for itself 10 times over.” She smiled coquettishly, “They are just a tiny bit illegal in Washington DC and Virginia, but then again...” Lady Jeanette Jerome Reynolds stomped on the gas in emphasis, “what ‘Old Bill’ doesn’t know what kill him.” And the Beamer shot down the express way like a rocket.

So it didn’t take us long to pull up to the guard shack, get waved through the security gate and into the parking lot for staff residence. Oh. Man....mench...opened the door and unfolded myself from the seat. I was back. Tossed my arms in the air and stretched, letting every vertebrate snap, crackle and pop like a bowl of Rice Crispies. The tension that was keeping every nerve and muscle alive and at the ready was starting to ease away. This was good, it was fine and needed to come down.

Got the duffel bag out of the trunk and slung it over my shoulder, her ladyship took the overnight bag, never did the front door to anything look so inviting. “Oh, I should tell you....” Jenny began as I swung open the door..... “Your mate is....”

“JOHN!” And there he was, standing in the kitchen. John Paul Winchester is handsomely sexy in khaki pants, bare feet and possibly the ugliest Hawaiian shirt on this or any planet.

“Hiya Lambkin.” Oh my life has officially become a Dolly Parton song, cuz he’s looken better then a body has a right to.

Now the tears came, “Shepherd?, mein huschelbar?”

“Yeah, it’s me. Come here Baby,” held out his arms. “Want my little hardass in ribbons and lace.”

Let the duffel fall from my shoulder with a thud and took a step toward my mate. The months of tension, worry, anticipation and pushing myself till I was nothing but a spring coiled to almost breaking...are....over. Now it let loose all at once, the spring sprung and suddenly was standing dumbly as every bit of energy leached out of my body, mind and spirit. With that, with the world turning grainy black, I dropped.

Chapter End Notes

Hi Everyone. Welcome back and thank you for reading, commenting and just being the greatest bunch of folks on the planet.

Blood on the Risers: an airborne song that came out of World War Two. It was a dark humored cautionary tale of a young jump student, whose equipment failed and why ‘he ain’t gonna jump no more.’ And being it’s dark humor for which the services are famous for, it’s played before your first jump. The best rendition of the song is from ‘Band of Brothers’, you can find it on You Tube.

Mae West: a parachute that partially opens and the suspension lines divides the canopy into two sections resembling a large bra. Named for the well endowed actress from the 1930’s.

The Red Cockaded Woodpecker: an endangered bird found mostly in the southern United states. In the 1980’s Fort Benning did set aside land and funds to protect the
small population of this bird. For more about the program, there is an article: https://www.army.mil/article/33369/fort_benning_spends_about_1_million_annually_to_safeguard

Walk this Way: was written by Steven Tyler and Joe Perry as part of their 1975 album, ‘Toys in the Attic’. It was released as a single in 1977 and became a hit again in 1986 when covered on the Run DMC album ‘Raising Hell’ with Tyler and Perry guesting on guitar and vocals.

Rio Hato: On December 20th 1989, as part of ‘Operation Just Cause’, U.S Army Rangers launched a surprise attack against the Panama Defense Force at Rio Hato, the largest PDF military base, approximately seventy miles south of Panama City. The objective of the raid was to capture the PDF garrison at the base, secure the airfield runway. A normal combat jump is 800 feet, the Rangers jumped from only 500 feet, with a lot of injuries suffered. They were followed two hours later by members of the 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg. Appears like the angels are giving Castiel another look into his future.

Pineapple Puss or Pineapple Face: the nickname for Manuel Noriega, one which he hated.

Vos: Central American dialect for the word ‘you’.

Panamanian slang
BULTO: A person who you don't want around you since he/she will just give you inconvenience.
AWEBAO: Idiot
MASCABOLA: Cocksucker

In the army if you break it or lose it, you pay for it. I’ve paid for a compass ($30.00), a desk ($60.00) that was accidentally shipped to Nebraska, ROTC brass ($2.50) and a couple of other things I can’t remember off the get go.

Major Richard Winters: at the time of our story was 10 years away from his meeting with author Stephen Ambrose and the book that would make him and Easy Company famous. But for this day, I wanted an unknown Major Dick Winters, just a guy on vacation, who look a little time to share some wisdom with young men and women who might in the future, be jumping into harms way.

Going to frogman school, sounds like Cody Chickadee is on his way to becoming a Navy Seal.

Dobbs House was a restaurant chain found mostly in the south in the 50’s through the 80’s. Their cuisine ranged from tiki to burgers, then switched to supplying food to the airlines.

Burn a double: diner slang for cook a double burger

Dwarf House: for those of you in Atlanta, this is old hat, but for the rest of us, a little explantion. Chick-fil-a was begun in 1946 as restarant called the 'Dwarf House'. Chicken wasn't even served there until the 1960's. The original store and it's little door is still there and called the Dwarf House Chick-fil-a. Chick-fil-a has become the fastest growing fast food chain in the country.
Thought this would be a lovely dress for Jenny: https://www.etsy.com/listing/533935470/gunnesax-cotton-dress-bridal-gown-hippie? a_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=vintage&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=blue%

There was a time when your social security number was your service number. It was written on the side of your duffel bag, on post cards, on your checks. There was one guy who had it tattooed on his arms and legs just to make sure if he got blown up, at least there’d be something the graves registration people could put in the coffin. I had my social written inside my hat. Yeah, the whole concept scares me now.

Josephine Chitwood: Cas is referring to Joey Chitwood of course, stunt driver and showman extraordinaire.

Radar detectors were introduced to the public in 1978. Of course the public loved them and law enforcement had a hissy fit. Found these advertisements for about that time period including one for the radar detector. The rest will just help set the stage. http://vintagelounge.tumblr.com/page/9

Old Bill: British slang for police
**Why Walk When You can Ride, Why Ride When You can Hide and Why Whisper When You can Scream Your Damn Head Off.**

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**WARNING!** Discussions of suicide and murder. No disrespect to the Muslim faith or Turks was intended. If you're from Shreveport, LA....sorry for tweeking your nose.

**Part One: Nuclear, Biological and Chemical**

Class Room #5
Bldg 1002
204 1st Cavalry Regiment Road
Fort Knox, Kentucky
2nd of August 1978 11:45 AM

This was one of those weeks we were sitting behind a desk in a classroom, our khaki uniforms so crisp and clean that I hardly knew what to do with myself. Usually we was out in the field dirtying our fatigues, riding the M60’s down Misery Hill to go blow shit up on the range. Oh those are good days to be an alpha in Uncle Sams Army.

But today, Armor Basic Officer Class 78-104 got to idle our engines whilst our instructor droned on about the nuclear, biological and chemical battlefield. “What doe MOPP stand for? Mission Oriented Protective Posture.” I looked down at the manual everyone got, the blinding yellow cover with the big green letters that spelled NBC DEFENCE: Armor Officer Basic Course. It had a picture of the uniform insignia for the tank and chemical corps. Wake me up when it’s time for lunch or to grind some Russkis under my tracks. “What are the proper procedures for covering yourself during a chemical attack? First you stop breathing and close your eyes....”

“Then you bend over and kiss your fucken ass goodbye” I thought gloomily. Unfortunately the thought jumped out my brain, on to my tongue and then did a magnificent swan dive out my mouth. The class found it funny as hell and the instructor called a halt for lunch and gave us an hour to be back in our seats. Think he was just as bored with the subject as we all were. ‘Sides it gave him some time to laugh outside our earshot.

There were 50 of us in the class, from almost every state and territory in the Union along three dudes from Liberia, Argentina and Zaire respectively. Nice enough fellas. Accents as thick as a Yankees. Most of the big schools were well represented along with some joints I never heard of. Where the fuck is Gonzaga? Anywho, There are at least 10 of us from The Citadel, 6 from VMI, Norwich contributed 3, 20 Hudson High Boys and the rest from the smaller programs.

“They’re doing the Italian buffet over at the O’Club for lunch,” Rich Kent, one of the guys I graduated with and fellow ‘tread head’ commented as we got up from the desks. “Most it’s so so, but the pizza is actually pretty good and beer’s cheap.” We limit ourselves to one beer at lunch, it’s not becoming an officer and gentleman to come back to class drunk. Plus it be rude to puke in the desk drawer. But before any one could set outside into the hallway, the administrative NCO came in with the mail. We all gathered around as he called off names and either handed or flipped the letters over to our waiting hands.
“Only two letters and a bitty piss ant package Lt Lafitte,” the E-6 looked over his glasses. “Your mate is slipping.” Andrea does tend to use up a lot of stationary. She also seems to think I’m starving up here, because she sends box loads of canned goods, gator jerky and pralines. Okay, must admit I do get lonely for the taste of home. Huh, this package is smaller then the ones she usually sends. And the return address is Fort Benning, Georgia. Who do I know down there? Well, other then half the Citadels graduating class.

Tore off the brown paper and the familiar smell of apples, peaches and sweet cream tickle my nose. No, it can’t be. Opened the little jewelry box to find a holy medal of St George on a silver chain. Nestled with it was a small folded piece of paper. “Hey bay bay, who else knows your coon ass, besides your mate, who can write and smells that good?” The ring knocken Hudson High boy who said that was from Shreveport, (so obviously he don’t know no better) so I only showed a bit of tooth and snarl. You’d figure after 4 years at that fancy Yankee academy somebody would knock some sense in that hard Ark-La-Texian head but again, he from Shreveport. Nothin change them. Had it been anyone else from even an inch out the state line, the merde woulda found my fist in their face for say’in that disrespect.

“Oh my, look at the time.” Rich was pushing me out the door. “We gotta high tail it if we’re gonna have some chow and get back on time.” His hand was on my collar pulling me along until the two of us were out the door, down the hall and before I knew it, leaning against one of the many tanks scattered around post as static displays. “Come on, let’s go to the snack bar in the PX annex over at the basic training division area. It’s just as far as the O’Club but it’s quicker service.” My friend sighed, “thought you were over that ‘mega.”

“Thought I was too,” said honestly. “But mais, the aroma of him, the memory of the way he tasted and felt. My Little Dove is like a water lily, hidden beneath surface until they suddenly spring up with tender petals smelling fresh and sweet. Like being baptized on a Sunday morning in June in the River Jordan.”

“And poetry too. You got it bad my friend.” We get out to the parking lot and drop into his Cadillac Mirage. Werid ass car. If you’re gonna have a caddy have a caddy not some jumped up ‘I wanna be a pick me up truck too’ kinda car. But it fit Rich’s personality, gumbo ya ya and asides, the car Andrea and I bought with the money from the weddin is with her. In the mean time, took the little note out of the box and unfolded it carefully.

“Benny,

I’m down here at Fort Benning going to jump school. It’s week two and we are jumping off the towers. Heard from Alpha Hugh that you were at Knox, wanted you to have to this, keep safe. Had the metal blessed by one of the priests here and I put my blessings in it too.

Jeff is growing up so fast and seems to have a taste for Tabasco. Guess we know where that came from.

Castiel’

Couldn’t help myself. Brought it to my nose and breathed it in like a 10 year old with a mimeograph test paper. Oh that smelled good.

“Dude, would you mind not popping a boner in my car.” Rich was rolling down the window to let the smell of arousal out. “You’re my best friend, I love ya like a brother, would prolly even take a bullet for you but.....I am seriously NOT going sit here while you jack off.”

Quickly folded the letter back up and tucked it in the box. “Sorry mais. I so honte honte, me!”
Stuffed in my pocket fast, then thought of dead fish, my mother in law naked, mam maw in her nightie......oh that killed it right there. “Really thought I was over him but.....”

“It’s okay man, he’s in your blood and soul.” He kicked over the big V-8 and pulled out of the parking lot. “Your friend is radioactive, but in a good way” Rich added quickly. “There’s just no half life to the way you feel about him. Just don’t let Andrea find out.” Drove up to the PX annex off Eisenhower Ave; it was a large one story wooden building in the middle a cluster of two story wooden WW2 barracks. Went inside and ordered up some hot dogs, fries and Cokes from the snack bar. Found a table to sit at, there were a few drill instructors taking a few minutes from their charges for some food and a smoke. Couldn’t imagine running troopers all day and half the night. Nine months of yelling at knobs was bad enough, couldn’t imagine doing it as a living.

Rich sprung for lunch, “tell you what. Feed me tonight. If you got any of that soup and corn bread left over from the other night, we’ll call it even.” I’d cooked up a bunch of Sunday gumbo and been eating on it for the past day or two. Had taken a cab into Elizabethtown to pass by the A&P last Saturday to pick up some Wiesenberger corn bread mix and a few other things the commissary didn’t carry well.

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After a couple of ‘tube steaks’ and fries, wandered over to the magazine racks, let’s see what’s going on in the world Perused Time, Newsweek,’Mega and Playboy...just the big ones. And YES I read Playboy and ‘Mega for the articles. Went over to the soda cooler, looks like they had every kinda pop there was for the homesick GI. Rich picked up a bottle of Ale-8-One to take back to help him stay awake, while I just went with the RC cola. Oh maiz, what I wouldn’t do for a Delaware Punch. We made it back to class on time and spent the rest of the afternoon surviving the nuclear battlefield. Rode back to the BOQ with Rick, most days ride with him, but some times just like the walk to clear my head from the day.

The BOQ was up off Able Street, behind the Otto Gym on North Delaware. Seems like everything was a six minute drive (or a 30 minute run) from the ‘school hall’. My room was up on the second floor, Rich is on the first. It was small studio apartment, you walked in and the immediate left behind the door was a wide closet. To the right was the door to the bathroom. Basic tub shower, sink and crapper. On the right hand side of room was the kitchenette; some cabinets, a small four burner stove, ice box and sink. The left side of the room held the bed, a couple of overstuffed chairs, coffee table, credenza that held my radio and portable TV. Think I can pick up all of 2 stations outta Louie-ville.

Change out of my uniform, tossing it in the closet for the wash pile. Looks like there’s no waiting for ‘red beans and rice’ Monday, will be fix’en to do a laundry day tomorrow. Put on some jeans and an LSU sweatshirt (my little brother warms the bench for Tigers football) then set about to cooken. Got the corn bread mixed together an in the oven, then pulled out the gumbo pot. Hmmmm, looks like there should be enough for the both of us, with a little bit more tossed in. Got out the onions, bell peppers and celery, then got them chopped up good, then fried and into the pot. Then some pork sausage and a splash or two more of Tabasco.

Rich was est Apr cogner à la porte as I taking the corn bread out the oven. “Smells great in here. Damn, most alphas I know can’t cook to save themselves.”

“Ma mere always said, don’t matter what you are. Ever body gotta eat. Difference is, do you just stick food in your trap or do you dine?” Lifted the lid of the gumbo pot and let fine aroma of generations of Cajun know how waft through the room. Got a spoon, dipped some up and let him have a taste.

“Oh that’s good. And it tastes better then it did on Sunday. You gotta write it down, so I can send
it to my mom. She cooks great, but honestly. You cook better.” Rich was between girl friends at this point, so nobody cook for him ‘cept his ma mere and me.

So we ate, talked about the day and about going into Louie-ville this week end to catch a picture show. “I hear ‘Animal House’ is funny as hell.”

Later after Rich leaves, pull the box my Little Dove sent me out of the drawer in the credenza where I keep my wallet and 201 file. Lift the lid and take the delicate silver chain between my fingers, bringing it up to allow the little figure of Saint George fighting the dragon dangle before my eyes. Fell back on bed, “oh cher. Thank you. but why can’t I let you loose from my heart?” Took the metal and let it fall to my lips. And for a moment, could almost feel the lips of my Little Dove on mine.

Part Two: In Vino Veritas, In Aqua Mortem
Hugel Housing Area
2231 Platenstraße
Apartment 3B, Second Floor
Frankfurt, West Germany
4th of August 1978

The train whistle blew shrilly as the big red diesel engine slowly pulled the long line of passenger and freight cars bumping and thumping against one another, east bound out of the Kaiserlautern Hauptbahnhof, set to arrive about an hour and change later at the Frankfurt südbahnhof or southern train station. Am going to spend a long weekend with Sam, Jess and their pup Annie. Finally took my brother up on his invitation to come over, eat some of his mates good home cooking, play with my niece and review the case files we brought from Paris. Since I hadn’t taken any leave since coming to Germany in January, decided it was prolly just the cure for a case of the GI blues. As Cassie Robinson was starting to look better and better every day, my resolve was starting to crumble, so it was better to blow town for a while.

Had finally moved out of the BOQ and into family quarters on post. My name had come up at long last, so when Lisa, Ben and Emma arrive next month, at least they have something better then the dumpy old guest house to stay in. Will have to get over to K-town High and get Ben registered for the fall term. That and have a chat with the football coach, see if he needs a good strong player in the back field or as quarterback.

As nice as it was to get away from the drama of the BOQ, it also had it’s down side. Like they say in the old western movies: ‘it’s quiet, too quiet.’ Had gotten tired of rattling around those mostly empty rooms (with the exception of a bed, nightstand and a lumpy davenport, the place didn’t have a stick of furniture) alone and Sam had been after me for weeks to come over to Frankfurt. He had a nice apartment on the second floor, with a balcony that over looked the street, a Edeka nah und gut on the corner and the fence that separated us from them.

So, I took leave from Friday morning to Monday evening. Got on the train (won quite a few D-Marks off the suckers at cards) and arrived richer, drunker and happier then I’d been in weeks. My brother picked me up from the station, “why didn’t you come in to the Main Train Station across the river”, he bitched pouring me in his Benz. “It’s closer to home.”

“By five minutes,” I smirked as Sammy drove my drunk ass to their quarters. “The Main station is too crowded and you would’ve spent 10 minutes trying to find a place to park and then another 15
fighting every fat kraut and his uncle trying to get outa there. No. With the Southern station, you’re in, you’re out and back across the river. Yatzee.”

“You know you’re just being a JERK!”

“Only cuz you’re being such a BITCH!”

“I out rank you, Warrant Officer Winchester.”

“Only cuz your feet stink worse then mine, Lieutenant Colonel Winchester.”

And we went on like that for the rest of the ride to his place.

Jess met us at the door, kissed my cheek and immediately ordered my drunk ass to the guest room for a nap.

Besides having some family time, the weekend also gave us a chance to review the files Old Man Moore had given us and the ones that he’d sent to Sam in the weeks following our meeting in Paris. Had been working with Cassie on the black market angle and so far we’d picked up some pretty low level types. They were a fairly closed mouthed lot for the most part, except for one guy, a pill poppen hop head, who spilled his guts after we left him alone to ponder his sins for a day or two. Didn’t do much for our investigation but it lead to the arrest of the local pill pushers, an airman and his captain in the pharmacy dept of the Ramstien Airbase Hospital. We turned that matter over to the Office of Special Investigations, the zoomies version of CID. Assholes took all the credit.

Didn’t get down to business until Saturday night, after one of Jess’s great dinners (nobody makes red cabbage, potato pancakes and zwiebelfleisch quite like my sister-in-law) and a lot of wine. You’d think that looking at grisly pictures and autopsy reports wouldn’t be too conducive with dessert, but considering that both Sam and I had tours in Vietnam, seen enough dead slicky boys in Korea and know how stupidly GI’s can kill themselves, this stuff was nothin.

Even Jess cast an experienced eye to the reports. She’s a registered nurse and did part of her training at the St Marys Medical Center in San Francisco. After several Saturday night shifts in the ER, the carnage she witnessed had toughened her up to the point where even burn cases didn’t even make her twitch. It was because of Jess that we got our first big lead. She’d picked up one of the photos (talk about an odd picture) wine glass in one hand, pic in the other and studied on it for a bit, then read the autopsy report on the back before saying: “this boy killed himself.”

“What? How?” Sam and I did that THING. The thing Jess loves to bust on us for, when we come out with the same words together at the same time. What? I lived with the guy like forever, it just slips out.

She took a quick sip of wine to keep from giggling, as it would’ve made her look a little ghoulish. “The injuries. Lacerated aorta, liver, spleen and heart. Broken ribs, clavicle, pelvis and neck. Skull fracture. This is what happens when you go from 80 to zero in the matter of a second or two. Landing in water is like on concrete unless you come in at the right angle. Ever watch the ‘Wide World of Sports’ when they show the cliff divers in Mexico? The only way they don’t kill themselves is the way they hit the water at the correct angle. This is what people look like after they’ve jumped off a bridge and landed on their sides. While I was at St Marys Medical Center, we had a woman brought in who’d survived a jump off the Golden Gate Bridge only to die on the operating table. She looked like this. So did the others who were brought in DOA.”

“Well, this guy looks like that.” I handed her another photo.
Jess squinted at the picture, then read the report. “Nope, murder. The trace drugs where still in his system. Poor thing was prolly dead before he hit the water. Damage was done all post mortum.”

Looked through the reports, there was nothing mentioned of the possibility of suicide and it pissed me off. “If Interpol is suppose to be so fucken great, why wouldn’t they have made the connection?”

“Prolly because the Old Man is trying to keep everything on the down low to save his grandson. That’s why he gave the file to us.” Sam grimly sat back. “They got all the information but it was up to us to come up with the answer. But there’s something more we’re missing. I know it.”

We went through the files, carefully. Picking out those that were obviously murdered to set in one pile, while putting to the side those who’s deaths appeared to be by their own hand. Went it was done, one thing became apparent. Most of the betas who killed themselves were from the Far and Mid East. The European and those from the Americas almost to a man, were murdered, along with a sprinkling from North Africa.

What was it that drove those poor pups to kill themselves?

Sam tapped the murder pile. “My question is, why water? Wouldn’t have been easier to bury them? Nobody would’ve found them.”

“Easy,” Jess took a big swallow, draining her glass. “No one thinks twice about about a dead omega in a river. Suicide is very conman among their kind, but more among those past pup bearing age. But still, a dead omega floating in the river, no one thinks twice. It’s like hiding them in plain sight. Which is prolly why no one figured out what was going on for so long. No body did an autopsy, they assumed.”

Now, the song ‘Patches’ came unbidden and definitely not requested. Skipping like a scratched 45 and repeating……”floating face down in that dirty old river...” Now just wanna bust up this ring and kill the bastards who are running it. Even if it means taking down the Old Mans grandson with the rest of em. Profound bond be damned.

Part Three: Special Delivery
52 Courtfield Gardens
Flat Two
South Kensington
London, England SW5
The 3rd of August 1978

It was nice to get out of Turkey, even if it was just for a few days. Granted the work we do at the station, keeping on eye on those godless hordes across the border, is important. But truth be told, I’m am bone tired of the caterwauling five times a day coming from the minarets, the ineptness of the Turkish army and just am sick of being alone. There are no woman or omegas assigned to this post. It’s all alpha or beta men. The only females are local and are of the wrong religious persuasion. Am still trying to figure out how I ended up at my assignment before even getting attend officers basic at Fort Belvoir. Every time I get a class date, something happens, the class fills up and I end up in a later class.

So imagine my surprise when a bit of good news is tossed my way. A letter arrived from father
announcing he’d purchased a new omega for me. “One that is obedient and guaranteed not to run away.” Have no idea how you guaranteed such a thing, unless there’s insurance for it now, but since Calvin.....no. The letter crumpled in my hand. I promised myself I’d never speak his name again. That little traitor is dead to me now. When he ran away, taunting me with news of a pup, I swore to find him, take back my child and leave that little defective dead at my feet. Father had reported the loss to the Henrietta Sheriffs department but the dolts were less then useless. They took a report and said they’d get right on it. That was six months ago and there’s been nothing.

Even the detective he hired came up empty. No one saw anything, heard anything and the only thing they saw was me being tossed through the window of Novacs apartment (damn college students). It was as if Calvin Chickadee, walked out the door and into thin air. What did he do, go become room mates with Judge Crater, DB Cooper and Jimmy Hoffa?

But I digress.

So Father had gone through a private foreign agency this time, instead of a broker in the United States. Apparently there were fewer questions, less paper work and a better rate. He’d sent a bankers check of $10,000 for the contract, the conditions for courting gifts were waived and a $500 knotting fee would be charged upon consummation. What kind of omega could you get for THAT kind of money?

Kind of a nice one I found out. Had caught a hop out of Incirlik Airbase to Croughton outside of London, on Thursday afternoon. Got in shortly after 20:00 and spent the night in the visiting officers quarters on base. Damn Air Force, they do have the nicest things. The next morning, for the first time in two months wasn’t woken by my temizlikci (the cleaning lady who drowns my bathroom in bleach but also leaves the windows sparkling) pounding on the door. “Tegmen You-man, I clean, yes?” Then she comes in, makes the coffee and usually by the time I’m ready to leave, is hacking a lung in a cloud of chlorine.

After breakfast at the officers mess, caught the train down to the Marylebone Station, London. From there, caught the subway, or ‘The Tube’ as the locals call it, to the Gloucester Road Station, then asked the young beta girl at the information desk for directions to Courtfield Gardens. She was a chatty thing, but helpful, pulling out a tourist map and marked off the directions with a grease pencil.

The walk was pleasant, it was nice to see ‘civilized’ people wandering about for a change. Even if they drove on the wrong side of the road. The neighborhood was even nicer then I expected. A row of well kept flats on a quiet street, no garbage blowing about, pups in their prams being push about by their nannies...and English being spoken.....sort of. In any event, found 52 Gardenfield and rang the bell.

A young alpha male, prolly in his early 20’s came to the door. “Something I can do for you?”

“I’m Uriel Youmans, your people have been in correspondence with my father. I was told you ‘have something for me’?”

“Oh yes, quite.” He stepped aside and let me in. “The name’s Reynolds, Eric Reynolds. Have been expecting you. And oh yes, we have quite ‘the thing’ for you.” There was an air of self importance about him but if he has what I want, can put up with it just long enough to pick up the ‘package’, sign any paper work and leave. Nice place this guy has, the living room was large, bright and the furniture sleek and modern. That Danish stuff people seem to go nuts over now a days. Some one has nice taste and a wallet to back it up. Well, considering what Father (and prolly others) were paying, he could afford a place like this with all the trimmings. Looked over at the wet bar in the corner. Even from 10 foot away could tell by the color and shape of the bottles, the booze was top
Reynolds saw me looking, “have a drink. I’ll be right out with the papers and your ‘package’.

The omega he brought out of one of the side rooms a minute or two later was exquisite. His gown was of muslin, thin enough yet thick enough to only whisper at the treasure beneath. Big brown doe eyes on a face with skin as smooth and the color of milk chocolate. The hair that formed a halo about those lovely features was a blue black and shone like the wing of a raven. “He’s from Brazil, they do know how to train their omegas over there.”

“How old is he? I don’t want to wait for him to turn 16.” Don’t think I could wait for him any further then the next three seconds. Oh damn, the scent. Mahogany, salt water and some spice that is just driving me crazy! Want to tear that robe off him and knot the boy right here and now.

“Just turned that exact age last week,” Reynolds oozed like a used car salesman. I some how got the impression I should be looking under the hood and kicking the tires. There was something ‘off’, he was pushing too hard. Then there was.....I don’t know......couldn’t put my finger on it. Something wasn’t quite right about this omega that was cooling my lust. Maybe I should leave. Reynolds must have smelled my distress. “Speaks some English, can cook, clean and as you Americans say, ‘suck the chrome off a bumper’.”

OKAY! “Who do I make the check out to?”

“Knew you’d like that. You’ll make it out to Morningstar Export Ltd.” Then he nodded toward the bedroom. “You can stay the night and make out the check for the knotting fee in the morning. Do you want the ceremony too? Just a few quid more. I know a vicar down the row I can knock up fast as bobs your uncle.” Guess the look on my face made him, repeat himself but only in English. “I know a minister that lives in a flat down the street. I can get him very quickly.”

Hesitated for a moment, then the boy shimmied off the robe.

“Yes, go ‘knock him up!”

“Right you are Mr Youmans.” Then the little bastard smirked all the more, “if it matters. His name is Lucus. Or you can change it if you want. Most people do.”

Part Four: Pay up is a Bitch
Jump School Intake Bldg
Fort Benning, Georgia
The 28th of July 1978

There’s a part of me that wants to put my fist in the wall or Captain De Angleos smart ass face. But then again, a bet’s a bet and I lost. Never let it be said, I’m not an officer and a gentleman. I keep my word, pay my debts and dine on fat Georgia crow with grace, dignity and the correct fork.

“Here,” dropped the ten spot into the Captains out stretched palm.

“Thank you Major Sir.” He snapped it happily before giving Mr. Hamilton a kiss on the lips (with tongue) before slipping the bill into his wallet.

Damn it. Who woulda figured both Waxman AND Novac would manage to graduate? It was five bucks on each. Staff Sargeant Singleton made out like a stripper on a pay day weekend with his bets. Some how he got everyone believing that Novac was a pampered generals mate and Waxman was such a moron that neither of them could make it through all three weeks. So every NCO in all
four training companies bet against him. Except Specialist Jones, he not only wagered that slick Novac would make it but went double or nothing on that lard ass Waxman. Needless to say, the dude cleaned up.

I’d asked him what he was going to be doing with the money (prolly off to Suzies or the Inferno) but he surprised me. “Got a cousin who’s having ‘a little chickadee’ in few months and needs some maturity clothes.”

Well that’s a nice thing to do.

He also said with a smirk, that this weekend he’d be going down to Suzie’s to contribute to The Siren’s ‘Maturity Fund’.

I just rolled my eyes and walked off. Huh, Siren’s dancing this weekend? Maybe I’ll just make my own contribution.

Part Five: Birth Announcement
Saint Francis Hospital
Birthing Room 2
2122 Manchester Expressway
Columbus, Georgia
31 August 1978

“You better be giving me drugs right now mother fucker or I’ll be screaming out how much you stuffed in my bra the night I danced at your brother-in-laws bachlor party! And when it gets back to your mate...oh yeah, that hit the spot. Excuse me Sister, I don’t believe in cussing in front of nuns, but giving birth is no strawberry social.”

“You best be putting those salad tongs down before I kick your scrawny ass across the room! Oh don’t you ‘oh siren me!’ I’m Omega Pettybone and you better get that through your thick head or Deloris will let Dwight come in this room and take you out in the parking lot for a coming to Jesus party! Well, that’s not too bad, your hands are a little cold but that’s okay. Not the first time some bodies little ice cubes have been down there before. Deloris, make sure he doesn’t do any cutting. I’ve got some picture taking coming up with Mr Cole Trenton in month or two. Last thing I need to worry about it any black thread that makes me look like a cheap quilt. Again, sorry Sister. Pardon my language.”

“I am pushing you pencil necked chicken biting geek! Deloris honey, could use another ice cube. I’m as dry as Wyandotte County on a Sunday.”

“Oh for the love of the alpha god! You get this pup out of meeee! Sister, you got a good prayer coming out of those beads? Cuz I swear.....swear......holy motherfucking shit....sorry Sister.”

“Oh my. A girl. I had a girl and she’s just screaming her little head off just like her papa. “Deloris! You get Dwight in here right now to see his new baby girl!”"
Hi everyone. Thank you again.

Gonzaga: is Catholic University in Spokane, Washington. Like a lot of little Catholic institutions of higher learning, they love their basketball and every year you hear the name Gonzaga during ‘March Madness’.

Honte: Cajun for embarrassed, mortified, etc.

A-8-One: a ginger citrus soda made in by a family owned company in the town of Winchester, KY.

Delaware Punch: a non carbonated soft drink. It’s a grape heavy beverage created in 1913 and favored by a lot of folks in Louisiana and Texas.

est après cogner à la porte: Cajun french for ‘is knocking on the door’

In Vino Veritas, In Aqua Mortem: Latin for ‘in wine, truth. In water, death.’ My take on the old Latin saying of In wine, truth. In water, health.

Edeka nah und gut : Edeka is a German supermarket chain, that ranges from little neighborhood convenient stores (nah und gut meaning ‘small and good’) to the large mega markets.

Hop head: drug addict. The phrase originated in 1895, popularized in the 1920’s and then continued as slang for a drug addict up through the 60’s and 70’s. The phrase is still around but now more used to describe someone who likes a beer made with predominately hops.

Zwiebelfeisch: is a German roast beef dish with onions. Here is where you can get the recipe:

Sadly, you can find all kinds of information on internet, including what a suicide looks like after jumping off a bridge:

Patches: from 1962 written by Barry Mann and sung by Dickie Lee, tells the tragic tale of a girl wrong side of the tracks in love with a boy from the right side of town. Kept apart, she kills herself and the boy resolves he can’t live without her. The theme of suicide kept the song from being played by many radio stations.

Tegmen: Turkish for Leutenant

This is where you can see the place where I visualized Erics flat to be like:
http://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent/property-62503687.html

I’m as dry as Wyandotte County on a Sunday: up until 2003, when the Wyandotte County District Court and the Kansas Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional, you could not buy liquor of any kind on a Sunday in Wyandotte
County, Kansas.
By Guess and by Golly or HOGC What the Heck Just Happened to Me?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Warnings: mention of minor character death and bad language. If I missed anything else, gimme a heads up.

There are times when the angels can be real pains in the ass. Like right now. The dream they sent. Was sitting in a lawn chair on the Million Dollar Beach in Lake George. Sky was blue, sun was shining, sand was cooking the soles of my feet but in the distance could see ‘thunder heads’ rolling in over the mountains. “Looks like a storm’s coming,” turned to see Dean sitting in beach chair that had definitely seen better days, as his ass was almost through the canvas. Geez, what is it with Winchester men and ugly Hawaiian shirts? He fished a bottle out of the cooler that was between us. “Have a beer and.....” then raffled about the ice to pull out.....“you’re gonna need these.”

What the fuck? “The beer I could see, but why do I need gum boots?”

“You’re right,” he snatched the bottle back, popped it open with a church key and took a long pull. “Too late for rubbers. ‘O papagei, o papagei, wie grun sind deine Federn’....Oops, sorry. Got do it in English. ‘Twinkle twinkle little bat, how I wonder what you’re at.” Dean reached over and patted my belly....hey, who ever heard of a flannel Hawaiian shirt? “Oh about four weeks I’d say.”

“It’s not too late and gimme back that beer.” I protested grabbing the bottle from him.

“You’re late,” Dean pulled a large pocket watch from out of his shirt and snapped it open. “I’m late. We’re all late. Deal with it. Smell ya later got a wedding to go to.” And he jumped into the cooler and disappeared. But not before the son of a bitch snatched the beer out of my hand as he disappeared into the ice.

“Son of a biscuit!’ And that’s when I woke and sat up straight up in bed. I can’t see! Oh, it’s dark out. Oh I can be such a moron before coffee. Looked over at the dim red glow of the clock radio on the night stand next to the bed. 01:23 AM. Crap. Missed dinner. Ooooooo, and gotta piss like a race horse. Swung my legs over the side, put my feet on the floor and got up....and my knees crumpled like load of soggy toilet paper. Hit floor with a thump and squish. Ick, couldn’t hold my water.

“Lambkin?” The bedside lamp came on. John crawled across the bed and looked over the side. “Oh, thank the Alpha God, you’re awake.” Then his nose wrinkled, “have a little accident?”

“No thanks, just had one.” Okay, that kinda slipped out. Hey, it’s an oldie but a goodie. “Uh, hi. Can I have some help here?”

“I don’t know. Can you?” Who would’ve thought we could be such assbutts at this time of night. John got up and walked around the other side of the bed. “Not the first time I’ve ever picked someone up from a puddle of pee and suspect not the last.” Then he grimaced, “or stepped in it in my bare feet.” He held out his hand, “come on. Off and on, let’s get cleaned up and then have ourselves a little GI party here.”

Got my legs almost working, till they folded like an old card table, oh crap. Put an arm over Johns shoulders as he put a steadying hand on my hip. Walked out slowly to the bathroom where he set
my squirly ass on the toilet. “Um, could you...this is really embarrassing.....wait for me.....” Gimme a little face, please?

My Shepherd nodded and stepped outside door. “But if you need me, I’ll be right here.”

Oh man do I have to use the crapper. Flush once, twice and a final time. How long have I been out? Tested out my knees, okay better now. Opened the door, John was standing by the side of door, back against the wall, patiently waiting. “Come on in, I’ll get your feet washed and then we can clean up the bedroom.” He nodded, walked in, closed the toilet lid and sat.

“This is not how pictured getting a little time alone with you,” he said ruefully. “But then again, I suppose you didn’t plan on dropping for three days either.”

“What!??” Dropped the wash cloth I was soaping up in the sink. “I was out for three days?!” Well that would explain the whole pissing like race horse thing. Now panic set in. “What’s today?” Did a quick mental count.....“August 1st?! I was suppose to be home by now! Karen and Bobby will think something happened to me! Jeff will think his papa isn’t coming home!”

“At ease troop,” John reached over and snagged my arm to get me to stop pacing. “I called the Sargeant Major the next morning and explained the situation. Our son is fine.” Then he looked happily smug, “Jeff said ‘Dada’. He also said ‘Hawkeye’. Think they’re still reading ‘Last of the Mohicans’ or watching MASH, either/or I suppose.”

Alright, feel a little better, at least Sargeant Major knows the score and that I will be back, just not when we figured. “My bet is he’s still being read the Mohicans, our pup loves running around the Adirondacks, literally speaking of course.”

“I can’t wait to see him. But in the mean time, let’s get things cleaned up and talk. We REALLY need to talk.” What is it with my life and ‘talks’? Thought I’d gotten away from them when I left Naomi-Moms house. Guess not. Got his tootsies wiped off and then raided the linen closet for a bucket, mop and healthy dollop of Spic and Span. Also got out a wash rag to take care of the wet foot prints that went from the bedroom to the bath. John got the mop and bucket, I was on my knees wiping up the pee tracks. Got everything cleaned up and put away, then sat down side by side on the edge of the bed.

“Uh, hi.” Well, that was just lame. But didn’t know what else to say.

“Hi yourself.” Not like he had anything better either.

Before all that talking junk, just want a little loven. “Um, think I can have that welcome home kiss now?”

“Think that could be arranged,” Shepherd smiled. “But AFTER you brush your teeth. No offense but your breath is a little ripe. Use mine, it’s the red one in the holder.”

“None taken.” After three days and a burger with onions at the Atlanta Airport, yeah. Maybe a little time with the toothbrush might be in order. “Be right back.” Hopped off the bed, wobbled just a moment, then straightened up. Holy baby Jebus, I can jump out of airplanes but not off a bed? Oh I’ve gone down hill. Went to the bathroom, scrubbed my teeth for all their worth and in a few minutes came back with a ‘Pepsident smile’ and breath that wouldn’t make a skunk blush. “Now, where were we?”

We leaned in for a kiss like it was our first one ever. Light, almost a brush of the lips. Trying to find the fit again without bumping noses. Then a second pass, feeling the press of his mouth to
mine. Then a tip of the tongue skimming the seam of my mouth, a request for entry. Parted and allowed, mmmmmm, I do love the taste of tobacco, tooth paste and a hint of bourbon. Now slid a leg over and straddled his lap.

The kisses now are more urgent, demanding, with ‘not right now’ an answer that was not going to be taken by either of us. Could also feel things starting to pay attention. Considering I’ve been three weeks without release (the evening at Suzies didn’t do anything for me), a sneeze could’ve got me hard and a nip of the lip...cumming like a teenager with their first wet dream. John was taking his time, slowly inflating that big ole pocket monster, until his pajama bottoms were sporting quite the GP medium. Hell, what am I saying? That’s one GP large!

“Mein cuddlebear,” I whimpered. “Mein General.” Reached between us and freed his cock from the confines of the pajamas, now damp with the slick that was running down my thighs. “Bitte, Herr General....plant thy banner and take what thee has won.” Could feel the bulbous head root its way between the fold of nether lips and through the pinks to push aside flesh from flesh and muscle from muscle. It hurt, but in that delicious way good pain and sex does when mixed together in the correct measure.

“Mein Alpha Gott,” he hissed as his fingers dug into my hips, bringing them up and then slamming them down with a possessive smack of skin to skin. “I’ve missed you!” John fell back and rolled us over to the middle of the bed till he was covering me like a heavy steaming blanket of flesh. Couldn’t help it, came right there and then, wetting our bellies and appetites. Wrapped my arms and legs around his broad back, then scraped my teeth across his shoulder. “My little Lambkin likes it rough,” his voice came in short huffs in my ear. “Just the way I like it...” Then the son of bitch took a deep breath and....... “but not right now. I want to fuck you nine ways to Sunday and knot you for hours......but don’t want you dropping again, not after you just woke up.” THEN SON OF A BITCH PULLED OUT AND ROLLED OFF!

“Shepppppppheeerrrrd!” I whined blowing scent and presenting for all I was worth. “Pleessseeeee! I haven’t seen you in ages and now you just do a little pushen the cushion AND STOP?”

“None of that now.” My alpha gave my butt a swat. “Pam said you’d prolly be looking for either sex or food or both the minute you woke up. But with sex you’d drop again where as the food you’d stay awake. So, as much as I want you right now, we’ve got other things to do.”

SHIT! Now that’s control. No wonder he’s a general. Take a few deep breathes and fight for my own control. But in the mean time....“And just who is this Pam person?”

“You should remember her from out at Fort Riley, Professor Pamela Barnes, MD. She’s in town for a medical conference. Lucky for us. After you didn’t wake up the next morning, I called her office out in Manhattan, Kansas and her secretary said she was at a Washington DC conference as a guest speaker. Got the name and phone number of the hotel she was staying at, gave her a call and Pam was more then happy to come over. Said it would make a marvelous demonstration.” John got up, wiped my cum off his stomach with a discarded t-shirt and put on the Paris smoking robe that was back of the door. “Brought half the damn conference too.”

Oh great, more strangers seeing me naked. Let me try a different tact to get laid. “You look very Nick Charles,” I said appreciatively, catching the shirt he tossed over, to give myself a quick wipe. “All you need now is a pipe, a drink or pistol.”

“Though, that would mean you’re Nora. Here, brought you a little something from Brussels.” my lover tossed a silky midnight blue robe my way. “With the exception of all the cuts and bruises, your legs could give Myrna Loys a run for the money.”
Slipped the robe on, oh this makes me feel me hot and cold all at the same time. “I might wear a
garter belt and stockings, but I do draw the line at high heels.” Sauntered over, “unless of course,
they turn you on.” Wrapped my arms around his neck and pressed my silky self against him. “Let’s
stay here and find out.”

“Later,” he unwrapped my arms. “You need something in your stomach and we need to talk.”

“Again with the talking. Oy vey.” About that time, my stomach decided to do some yakking and
made a huge growl. Now I’m hungry. Ouch, I’m running between empty and ‘you’re not kidding’.
Guess it was as tired of my foolishness as John was. “Okay, lets eat.” Opened the door and just
about jumped out of our skins, as there was Jenny standing in the hallway, waiting for us.

“About time you two got yourselves put together. Come now. Tea’s on the boil and the Scotch
Broth is warming.” She leaned over and kissed my cheek, “nice to see you up Darling. Gave us all
quite the scare until Dr Barnes and Company sussed every thing out.” Jenny turned and lead the
way downstairs. Dear Alpha God, what went on around here?

Got to the kitchen and sat down at table. John took a seat next to me and reached over for my hand.
“Sweet Thing, Pam ran about every test under the sun on you, including a pregnancy test. It came
back positive.”

“WHAT?!!!!!!!!!!” NO! IT CAN’T BE! “John, I......I......ohhhhh shit.” The memory of the two days
of missed pills came back. So much for ‘wishful thinking’ being any kind of contraception.
“I......I......screwed up. Was so busy trying to get into shape and get everything ready the last two
days before driving down here, that....I missed taking my birth control and suppressants. There
must have been a heat and Lewiston...”

“And I had quite the.....’discussion’ about that,” John commented taking a sip of his tea. Pinkie
finger at the proper 45 degree angle of course. “After Pam ’s announcement of your condition,
Jesse remembered how nice you smelled and then Lewiston said your blood tasted....and that’s
when we went outside to further the ‘discussion’. I think the entire embassy and Observatory circle
heard us. And placed bets.”

“Oh yes,” Jenny said happily. “Won five dollars off Mrs Mondale and 10 quid each from half the
embassy staff. Even got a few dollars off the secret service. I went for the tie, Mrs Mondale backed
John and the staff put their money on Lewiston. Sorry Darling,” she kissed him on the head. “But
the sight of two middle aged alphas fighting was just too deliciously silly but at the same time very
sexy.” She gave a slow flirtatious wink. “After a bracer and a nap, you two were such a delight in
the sack. Haven’t been ‘rogered’ like that in ages. Plus from what Mrs Mondale said the next
morning, when she came over with a thank you apple pie, Walter hadn’t been that ‘frisky’ in
years.”

Damn it! Why do I miss all the fun? “So, I’m knocked up? But the mandatory pregnancy test they
made me take down at Fort Benning was negative. And there was no morning sickness or
fluttering.” Well I did blow chow at the tower but anyone would (and did) being hauled 250 feet in
the air by a thread. There was a little flutter but again, figured it was just nerves.

“I suspect the test was done too early.” Her Ladyship was pouring refills on the tea. “There wasn’t
enough HOGC in your urine to set the test off.” She offered the sugar and cream, dumping a bit in
each of our cups. “The soup will be ready in a moment.”

Stirred the concoction listlessly. “What the heck is that? HO..GC?”

“Human omega chorionic gonadotropin,” John had taken a piece of paper out of his pocket. “I
wrote it down because I wanted to get it right, the way Pam described the whole SOP. That’s the hormone that tells you if you’re pregnant or not. Apparently there’s always some present in the body but more is created at the start of pregnancy. There wouldn’t be enough in your blood or urine during the first 12 days after conception to show a positive result. But any who, once the egg is fertilized, it sits in your fallopian tubes for about 6 days before dropping down and attaching itself to the wall of your uterus."

Which would explain why the doctor saw nothing. As a male omega, we don’t have periods, the walls of the uterus wouldn’t have started to thicken with blood until after the egg came out of the tube and attached itself to the wall of the uterus. What? I paid attention in high school health class. “But with my first pregnancy, I knew almost immediately something was off. You knew two weeks in.

John shrugged, “every pregnancy is different. Your first one was due to mating fugue, the process was accelerated. Also some women and omegas just have the feeling immediately. This time, the process was slower.” Then he turned to Jenny who was standing at the sink having her tea. “Um, I’d like a moment to speak to Cas alone.”

She set the cup down, “of course. I understand completely. A bond pup is a large thing to put one’s head around. There hasn’t been one between our countries since your General Eisenhower and the Omega Summersby,” Jenny sighed, “Their pup Annie was such a sweet girl. Poor little dear. Mamie wronged her so by giving her away to another to raise.” My dearest Brit gave each of us a kiss and patted John on the shoulder, “I promise on my life, that will not happen to our Ulysses or Ulyssia.” She took the pot of soup off the stove, poured the contents in a tureen and set it on the table. “You know where the bowls are.” Then left the room. Could hear the sound of her bare feet on the stair as she left us to each other.

“Ulyssia?” Not that it isn’t a ‘nice’ name, but....ULYSSIA?

My mate tossed up his hands in defeat, “I couldn’t talk her out of those names, neither could Lou. When her ladyship gets something in her head, you know you can’t stop her. All we could do was nod and get out of the way. Either that or dodge the plates and saucers. That ‘Mega has a mean pitching arm.”

Well, I know that one for a fact. What ever Jenny wants, Jenny gets. But now comes the hard part, how we got to this point. What can I say......“I’m sorry. I screwed up.”

John sat quietly for a moment, “the logical part of my brain is desperately trying to tell my alpha side to shut up, quit posturing and not demand an abortion. As your alpha, I can do that. I can have that pup swept from your body, break the profound bond and never have any further contact with the Reynolds or you. In which case, it’s the easiest way out and would solve a lot problems. I could give you back to Dean a few years early and be done with it. Mary would be happy and my home life would be a lot less strained.”

“So, is that it? Are we over with?” I want to cry, is that all he thought our mating was? A temporary fix to Deans problem? The omega part of me wanted to either beg for the life of my pup or go get ‘the Lovers Kiss’ from out of the glove box in the Bug and shoot this son of a bitch dead as smelt. Then run next door and ask Ambassador Jay for asylum. Karen shouldn’t mind hanging on to Jeff a few more years. “Is that what you want?” I ground out between clenched teeth and tears ready to boil over and track down my face. “Is me gone?”

“Oh fuck no.” John looked at me with a mischievous grin. “I wanna live a few more years. You’d blow my goddamn head off with that blunderbuss you keep out in the car. I just wanted to rile you up a little and see what you’d do. Besides, you’re so damn sexy when you’re mad........ow!”
I punched him of course, right across the chops. “You son of a bitch!”

“Mmmmm, now that’s my little lambkin. Full of piss and vinegar.” My erstwhile mate, touched his jaw, “damn you hit hard. That’s gonna leave a bruise.” Put the cup against the lump that was now forming. “But you should know me by now, I’d never do anything to hurt you, Jeff, her Jenny-ship or the ‘Admirable Crichton.’

“Good,” I grumped. “But you deserved a pop in the chops, saying all the crap about it would be easier to give me back to Dean and break the bond.” However, in the back of my mind, there was a little voice that asked, “but wasn’t that the plan all along? To go back to Dean? Don’t you want that?” Pushed it away, there’s time to deal with that question in four years.

“There’s too much to be gained by keeping the profound bond. For both sides.” Huh? What? Oh, John’s talking. “But mostly, I wouldn’t want to hurt you. Or worse, lose my little hard ass in ribbons and lace. Come here.” Shepherd set his cup down, got up to go over to where I was standing and pushed aside the silky blue robe from one shoulder. “Yes, I wanted the next pup to be mine. Was I a little disappointed it wasn’t? To be honest, yes. But I was never disappointed in you. Would I EVER dream of taking this child from you? Never. Did I have to fight Lou? Course I did, we had to put up a good show for everyone.” He snickered, “We were like a pair of magpies in the Spring. All fluffed up, yelling and grappling.......Jesus, Lou gave me such a hard on.”

As pleasant a thought as that was, “show? That fight you were talking about earlier was just an act?” Don’t think I will ever understand the alpha mind.

“As your mate, I had to put on a display to the ‘collective him’ to show whose alpha you belonged to. As the father of the pup and defender of the profound bond, Lou was obligated to posture and put up a fight. And Jenny cleaned up on the bets as she chose the tie option.’

“YOU. GUYS. FAKED. THE. FIGHT?!”

“Course we did. Had to go through the motions so that everyone saved face. The only question any one really had was, how you came into heat.”

Leaned into my mate. With supurb prior planning like that, now wonder he and Lewiston are generals. “I forgot to take my pills. Plain and simple. Got so caught up with Jeff, just literally running myself ragged trying to get in shape and thinking about everything else....that the pills just kinda fell through the cracks. Then I get down here, was just lucky didn’t go into a full blown heat while on the road.” Now that was a scary thought.

“Which is why I’m driving up with you in a few days. So you’re not alone. Your brother Balthazar was saying that you got lost....”

“I was just temporarily disoriented.”

“If you say so Lambkin,” John rolled his eyes. “But I’ll be driving up with you. Your mother was most insistent on it.”

Was about to ask when Mom got back from the Middle East, oh, wrong mom. Still getting used to thinking in relation to either Naomi-mom and Her Mummy-ship. “Which mother are we speaking of?”

“Both actually. Naomi breezed through on her way back to New York, left you something. And Lady Bella was here also. She went home,” he checked his watch. “A couple of hours ago. Wouldn’t leave your side, until Crowley....er....your dad made her go home to catch some sleep
and eat. She brought you back a couple of nice little trinkets from England. Said they were things passed down to the omegas in their family.”

Now felt awful. Worried so many people because I was an idiot. “I’m sorry, Baby. That I made such a mess of things.”

“You didn’t make a mess of anything. Shit just happens and we deal with it. You’re going to have a bond pup. From the way folks in the know are going on, it’s a pretty big deal.” He kissed the scar of the mating bite he put there last year and ran a thumb across the one Lewiston put next to it four weeks ago. “So we go along for the ride and see where it takes us. Come on, eat up. Jenny went to the trouble of warming that soup for you.”

Drank up two bowls of Scotch broth and had another cup of tea. Now I’m awake, it’s three in the morning and am not in the least bit tired. Didn’t want to try having sex because I didn’t want to drop again. Boy, I am screwed and not in the fun way. So we wandered upstairs and after a pit stop, went to the guest room. John had climbed back into his side of the bed, plumped the pillows and lay back. I just sat on my side with the boxes from the moms. Opened the one from Naomi-mom first and lifted out from the newspaper it was wrapped in, a really pretty...paper weight? It looked like a big glass jewel set in silver metal with rhinestones. There was a note tucked in with it:

29 July 1978

‘Castiel,

I brought this out of Tehran and entrust it in your care. Don’t let anyone know you have it. It’s called Daria-i-Noor or The Sea of Light. Something bad is going to be happening in Iran soon and certain things had to taken out the country for safe keeping.

Take care yourself and the new pup.

Love,

Mother’

Oh Holy Baby Jebus, it’s real! Of course that’s when the stupid thing slipped through my fingers but caught it in my lap. Had heard things were going a little crazy over there, that the people were protesting against the Shah and some religious dude named Khomeini was egging them on from where he was exiled in France. It must be bad if the Shah is having stuff like this snuck out.

“Let me have a look,” handed the jewel and the note over to John. He picked his reading glasses off the night stand, perched them on his nose and read the brief lines. “Naomi is right, you know. The country is headed toward a revolution. From everything we’ve been told by intelligence on the ground, the Shah will be lucky to hang on until the end of the year before he and his family will either flee or end up like the Romanovs.”

“How’s Naomi fitting into all this?”

John looked over his glasses, “I suspect she’s a mule. Went in, picked up a few gee-jaws and got them out. Prolly keep em hidden until the Shah or his son are back on the throne or a government friendly to the west is in power. Because from what I’ve heard about the people trying to take over, is that they’re not fans of the western world. The United States in particular.”

“Still trying to wrap my head around the idea this thing’s real.” Took the jewel back and turned it carefully between my fingers. “So why would she leave it with me?”
“Because she trusts you” (considering Luci, Mike and Zachariah, well that’s a gimme) “and I suspect she’s spreading the treasure out, so if someone is looking for it, they won’t know where to start.” My mate sighed, “wouldn’t even wanna hazard a guess on how much it’s worth. Both in monetary and historical value.” Oh great, and Naomi-mom plopped it in my lap. Set the jewel and note back in the box, then went to her Mummy-ships gift.

The necklace box was old, covered in red velvet, worn with age and the oils from the hands that touched it. “Oh my,” the collar was lovely. Yellow citrines and pearls set in gold and held together on fine chains with a jeweled clasp to hold it in place on the throat. ‘R.J & S Garrard, Threadneedle Street, London’ was stamped on the silk interior covering the back of the lid. Was half afraid to touch it. That the collar would fall apart in my grubby little hands. “Who the hell are these people to have such a thing?”

“A very old family,” John said nudging the clasp with the tip of his pinkie. “Amazing what you can get with the right connections, a few wars and a ‘five finger discount’.” Yeah, considering how he paid for my contract, heaven knows what else he had stashed away, the necklace, brooch and ring couldn’t have been all he ‘found’. “Speaking of ‘five finger discount’...the other box held a collar that looked more of Chinese design, similar to the one I wore last summer for Jesses First Party. “Bet someone went ‘shopping’ at the Emperors Palace during the Boxer Rebellion. The jade dragon inlay has five toes and two horns”

“How do you know that?”

My mate winked. “Grand-dad went ‘shopping’ there too. Grandma had a brooch with a similar design. My older brother’s mate now has it.”

Considering Naomi-mom comes from an old military family, wonder how many things they accumulated over the years. Or why I never saw Mom ever wear anything other then the occasional rhinestone brooch or her mating ring. Unless Zachariah or my brothers tried to pawn it. Wouldn’t put it past em. Who knows, someday that ‘Sea of Light’ thing may end up as a Winchester family heirloom.

The clock radio was now glowing 04:23 AM and I was suddenly tired. Considering I’d been out for the last three days, you wouldn’t think so but considering the enormity of what was contained in the boxes and the implications of one in particular, the pregnancy and the roller coaster that is John Winchester.....it’s amazing I wouldn’t drop for another three days. Set the boxes on the bedside table, crawl under the covers and cuddled into my Shepherds arms. “Do you love me still? Even after everything you know about me?” Hate sounding that needy, but sometimes just have to hear it.

“I love you like salt and fire.” Could feel his hand stroke from shoulder to hip and come to cup an ass cheek. “Same question to you, knowing what you do and especially what you don’t. Do you still love me?”

“I love you like the sun in the morning and the rain at night,” I yawned. “But you’re still an assbutt and a big git.”

That earned me a nip on shoulder. “Get some rest, ya little wise acre. Pam and the convention will be here later today. Be ready for the invasion.” A couple of kisses and caresses later, had my back to his chest and his half hard cock pillowed in cleft of my bottom.

John was right of course about the invasion. We came downstairs about nine-ish after a shave (looked like some damn hippie) shower and a killer blow job, to find Dr Pam and Company in the kitchen having tea and brummie cake. Also there was Her Mummyship and Dad. “I’m so sorry for
worrying you guys!” Hugged Mom then Dad, then both. “I’m so so sorry for....for just being so dumb.”

“You did nothing wrong Darling,” Lady Bela picked a napkin up from the table and dabbed the tears from my cheeks. “You’re going going to have another pup and a bond pup at that. Now, have some breakfast and drink your milk. Ulysses is going to need strong bones and teeth.”

“How do you know it’s going to be a boy?”

She smiled, “your scent. You have that lovely peach aroma. the same one I had when I carried you.” Now we both started to bawl. Looked over, John and Dad were standing together dumping the contents of a flask into their coffee cups and talking in low voices. Wonder what they’re going about?

“I’m sorry to interrupt,” it was Doctor Pam. Apparently an article in The Lancet was good for one’s image, because gone is the college professor/midwestern doctor look, she was now sporting a new hairdo, make up that was more then just a dab of lipstick, to go along with some expensive new clothes. “But now that you’re awake, can get a verbal history of the conception, your time at Airborne School and the period of time before drop.” She turned to her colleagues, “Alright let’s go upstairs and have the exam.”

She was interrupted by growls coming from various points of the kitchen. John, Dad, Jesse and even her Mummyship filled the kitchen with the angry smell of burnt metal and wet dog. “You didn’t examine him before without one of us being there,” John snarled striding over and putting a protective arm around my waist. “And you aren’t gonna do it now.”

“Of course not, Johnny,” Pam said quickly. “You know I wouldn’t do anything disrespectful. You know me.”

“You’re right. I know you,” he eyed the other doctors standing there who withered under his gaze. “But I don’t know them and am not at all sure of their intentions.”

“I can vouch for my colleagues,” she said, but also sent out a glower that told the lot of em she’d BETTER be able to trust them OR ELSE.

“Come along Nene,” Her Mummy-ship gently pried Johns hand off my hip. “I’ll be there with you, and should any or all do something you don’t like. I’ll call our alphas.” My mother also gave the doctors the stink eye. “Or I’ll shoot them.” Right on Mom! “Give us about 15 minutes and then come up.”

We went to the guest room and I slipped out of my clothes into the boring terry cloth bathrobe. Looks like someone had unpacked the duffel and overnight bag as they were empty and heaped in a corner of the room. Hope everyone liked their presents. Erika should appreciate it’s not every snow globe that has a paratrooper in it and plays ‘Blood on the Risers’.

The silky new robe had been tucked away in the closet, no need for any ones eyes by Johns to see it on or come off of me. Except for maybe Jenny and Lewiston. (Internal goofy giggle) Lady Bela was sitting on the bed holding the citrine and pearl collar up to the light. “I wore this at my first cotillion, just after I presented. It’s Georgian, either George the Second or Third, forget which. It was created as a mating gift and handed down through my family. As my brother didn’t have any omega pups and I did, it was mine by right.” The smile on her lips took a sardonic curl, as if there was more to the story that she wasn’t telling.

“What about the Chinese collar? How old is that?”
“We’re not quite sure,” her Mummy-ship said offhandedly. “It was part of a trove that grandfather brought home after the Boxer Rebellion. I always liked and wanted it and finally brother dear saw it my way.” The smirk was back. Considering ‘Daddy dearest was known as the ‘King of Hell’ one wonders how much much fire and brimstone rained down on brother dearest to give up this trinket. Prolly a lot. Then there came a tapping (as if someone were gently rapping....sorry. No I’m not. Hey, if you’re gonna steal, steal from the best.) at the guest room door.

“Just a minute!” Put everything back in the boxes and put them, along with the Shah’s knick knack in the closet. Closed the door, dashed over and jumped on the bed. “Ready as I’ll ever be Mom, open the door.”

She did and the doctors trooped in. There were about six of them not counting Dr Pam. They introduced themselves and found out that each of a specialist in different fields of omega medicine. Apparently this was an up and coming field, as there was an uptick in omega births and an increase of omegas not only reaching middle age but living past it. Sadly in the past, life expectancy for my kind was early 50’s and then illness or suicide took them. But things were starting to change medically and socially, thank goodness, so there was a possibility of me seeing my late 60’s or early 70’s.

For the next hour, was poked, prodded, questioned and bore scoped to an inch of my life. They questioned what medication I was on, details about my heat (what I could remember) anything about the conception (none yur goddamn business) and my time at jump school. “Tenacious little chap,” one of the doctors commented as he pressed his fingers against my belly. “Ah, there he is, the Amina flutter is steady, about what one would expect at 4 weeks.”

Tenacious, kinda like that as a middle name. Ulysses Tenacious....uh...Novac Winchester Reynolds? Wow, and here I thought I gave Jeff a handle that he’s gonna have to live up or down to. Ulysses is going to hate us by the time he hits puberty.

“I was hoping Upjohn had gotten FDA approval for the injectible Depo-Provera this year,” huh? What? This is what I get for not paying attention for a minute to these guys. “But they were turned down again. Apparently the trials had the birth control working fine but it was the suppressant that still had too many side effects and break through heats to make it completely effective. Upjohn might be better off not combining the two and just concentrate on creating separate injectables.”

“How long was the shot suppose to last?” I asked as the doctors continued to push here and there on my belly. Something like that would be great. Wouldn’t have to worry about forgetting to take it, no once a month trip to the pharmacy or dispensary.

“Two to three months,” the one doctor commented. “But the studies of those taking the drug over the three year test period show loss of bone density and a few other troubling things that make Depo-Provera unsafe for prolonged use.”

Figures. Anything that sounds too good to be true, usually is.

So the crap goes for a while longer, until they’re out of questions, or took enough blood, urine or skin samples to walk out the door with half my ass. At last, Pam shoo’s the other doctors out the door and sits down on the bed beside me. “How’s it hang’en kiddo?”

“Low and to the left. Sorry. Uh, I don’t know. Still trying to wrap my head around being pregnant again. Guess the correct answer is...shocked...scared....happy....relieved John still loves me and Jenny isn’t pissed.”
“I’ve known your alpha for a lot of years. No, don’t ask how many because I don’t like thinking about it. Seen him with Mary, with Kate and lot of other women and omegas.” This better be going somewhere because so far, I’m hating every minute of this conversation. “But no one has made him as happy or exasperated, angry or prouder, then you.” Okay, that’s better, I think. “You bring out the best, worst and everything in between. You’re his brass ring, little hard ass in ribbons and lace, so don’t doubt for a moment that he won’t fight to keep you. No matter what that paper says that he signed with his son.”

Oh my. He wants to keep me? But....what about.....Dean....in four years from now....Oh fuck it. What will I do?

“Cas, don’t think so much.” The good doctor patted my shoulder. “Can hear your wheels spinning and the smell of burning rubber. Take your days one at a time, because you have a long way to go with pregnancy and your Winchester men. This time, it’s going to be a ‘normal’ pregnancy , not like that little monster you had first. He’s all evolutionary throw back. Good thing/bad thing. Will definitely want to be following him through the years. So if you don’t mind if I check in on you guys from time to time?”

“I guess not. Can’t hurt anything.” So now Jeff is a science project. But it could be kinda cool when he turns 18 to give him a copy of The Lancet and any other publications that carry his story. But now, I’m tired and just want the comfort of my mate.

Her Mummy-ship can smell my distress and sends Dr Pam on her way. “Get under the covers, I’ll go downstairs and collect the General.” She got up, walked out the door and left me to myself. Slipped out of bathrobe, opened the bed and slid under the covers. “Oh what am I doing? I fought Zachariah tooth and nail not to be mated or have pups. To get an education and stand on my own two feet. Look at me now. I’m mated with a pup and another on the way. And a bond pup at that. How old fashioned omega is that? And I’ll be giving him up to Jenny and Lewiston for the first 10 years of his life before I can get him back for the next 8 or 10 years. Or that’s the traditional agreement, they don’t have to follow it. But think they will. I hope.

There was a knock at the door and Lewiston poked his head in. “Hello Fladermaus. May I come in for a moment?”

“Of course my Lord Alpha,” He walked in and sat on the edge of the mattress. Could see the fading evidence of cuts and bruises on the knuckles of his right hand, so that fight Lou had with John may not have been as staged as I was lead to believe.

“How’re you feeling?” Lewiston caressed my cheek with gentle fingertips.

“Okay, tired.......you really didn’t sell your soul at the cross roads did you?”

“What?” He looked a little surprised, then....“Oh, that. What I said that night. No, I didn’t. But did pray to the Alpha God when you came back and collapsed, that you’d be alright. And that our pup would survive.” Lewiston lay back on the bed, “Funny how things come round, didn’t expect at my age and station to be dealing with newborns, changing nappies and everything that came with it. It’s not that I don’t love Sir Winnie and now Ulysses.....”

“But like they say: nobody expects the ‘Spanish Inquisition’. ” At his puzzled look...“Monty Python? Ministry of Silly Walks? Oh for pete’s sake, you’re the Brit around here.”

“I have a job that demands me all hours of the day AND night, two teenaged pups and a mate addicted to ‘The Match Game’ (for some reason Mouse finds Gene Reyburne sexy, I don’t see it actually) so how often to I get to watch the telly?”
“Good point.” Then sighed, gave up and got on topic. “Me neither...” patted my stomach, “expecting this.” (I share his view on Gene Reyburne, though that chap Richard Dawson, who’s a panelist on The Match Game is kind of a good looking head. He should have his own game show.)

“Two years ago, if you told me I’d be mated, have a pup under the age of one and another on the way, would’ve laugh in your face.” Flopped next to him. “It’s my own dumb fault, forgetting my pills, going into heat and here we are. A bond pup.”

“And here we are.” Lewiston leaned over and put a kiss on my forehead. “But know this, my desire for a bond pup wasn’t just all talk in the heat of passion. It was real. I know it’s a bit old fashioned in this day and age but some traditions are worth keeping. Even if to most people, those traditions a little behind the times. Mouse is rather excited about it, called her Mother at Consulate in Chicago immediately after the tests came back positive. Phone charges be damned.” He smiled, my Lord Alpha needs to do that more often as he has to be so serious so often. “Get some rest Little Flutter Mouse, John will be up shortly and I’ve got be back to the office.” He lay down as Lou but now has to come to his feet as General Reynolds. “Know that I do care for you very much and you will be supported physically and financially during the pregnancy.” He patted my belly, hopped off the bed and strode from the room.

John came in shortly there after. “Hey Lambkin, how you’re holding up?”

“Hanging on by my finger nails. If I hadn’t been asleep for the past three days, think I’d dropping for another three.” Got up and walked over, just about draping myself in his arms. “What are we gonna do?”

“Well, for tonight at least, we’re going out to dinner. Just you and me.” He nuzzled into my buzz cut. “Considering the last time we had dinner out together, just us, was …..our honeymoon.” Thought about it, yeah, basically John was right. We had dinners at Quarters One but a dress up dinner out, was at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. “As for the other, we’ll play it by ear.”

“Sounds good, where are we going?”

“The Army and Navy Club.” SHIT! From what I heard about that place it’s strictly suit and tie. At least they’re not that traditional where omegas have to be nude except for their slippers and collars.

“Oh damn, what do I wear? Or do I?”

“Clothes, definitely clothes.” Shepherd ran his hands over my back and bottom. You’re for my eyes only, not some overstuffed, self important ‘chair borne danger’ from the Pentagon or Capital Hill. Let’s see if her Ladyship can lend you that pretty blue gown that you wore last summer to the officers club out at Riley. Then match it with one of those new collars your mother brought you.” He nuzzled my throat, “but before that.....” The last sane thought I had before we fell back on the bed...“that gown should work”.

Of course it didn’t. That blue omegas gown was NOT built for a male omega with muscles. “I look like a transvestite!” I wailed, pacing in front of Jennys bedroom mirror. “I looked so good last year and now....now....I look a cross dressing witch on Altweiberfasching!” Took the gown off as quickly and carefully as I could.

“Now, now.” Jenny tutted, taking the satiny bundle to lay back on the old steamer trunk, where it’d been stored. “You don’t look that bad.”

“No, he looks bloody worse.” Her Mummy-ship said darkly. “This isn’t good, not good at tall. And Jenny, I’m right here, stop ogling his bum.” Didn’t have anything on under the gown, figured we were all omegas, so what was the problem? Jenny had seen me nude (hell, she’s got me naked
enough times) and Lady Bela is my mom for Alpha Gods sake. Oh, yeah. I guess scoping out someones ass in front of their mother wasn’t kosher.

“Oh you are spoil sport Bela.” Her Jenny-ship gave my back side a quick swat.

Okay, moving right along before these two got in a snit fit. “I have a suit coat and white pants. Bought them down in Fort Benning. That might work.”

“Well, let’s have a look at it,” the ladies shrugged. “It can’t be any worse then what you had on before.”

What hooked them in at first sight was the label. “Ooooo, Hector Powe of Regent Street,” Her Jenny-ship was holding the coat up admiring the cut and material. “Father purchased suits from them for years. They’re very well made and smartly tailored.” Then I made like some store mannequin and that sold it. “Just a touch up with a damp towel and iron. The Chinese collar instead of a tie and it will be perfect my darling.”

The reservations were for 07:00, er....19:00 and I dressed carefully. Made John get suited up first and go downstairs to wait. Slipped a white silk camisole on over my head and settled it in to place. Immediately had the nipples come to attention. Mmmmm, this early part of pregnancy I liked. Where my skin was sensitive to almost everything. Then pulled up the matching panties. Damn, did they make my ass look good. I’d do me right now if we didn’t have dinner reservations. Red knee socks borrowed from Erika, just to feel wicked in. A dab of ‘My Sin’ behind the ears and knees. Now I really feel like a sexy slick.

The shirt and trousers next, then the collar. Was he or she an imperial courtesan, the omega who wore this collar? An emperors favorite or concubine? And then the plunder of the ‘Forbidden City’ the treasure ripped from its coffers, did someone in Mummy-ships family get to wear this or was it locked away when royalty came or only to be brought out for show or pawned when ever quick cash was needed. That last thought came with a bit of proof as I found a pawn ticket in the velvet bag the collar came in dated June 3rd of 1959 marked ‘redeemed’. The collar settled about my throat and clicked into place. It was icy for a moment before seemingly warming up to the idea of being worn again.

Slipped on the suit jacket, buttoned it up, then sliding on the two tone brown and white wingtips liberated from Erics closet. Tied the laces, then went to check myself out in Jennys bedroom mirror, where she was there waiting for me. “My don’t you look handsome.” Her Ladyship brushed her hands over my shoulders and then down the front of the jacket. “Will definitely want an opportunity to explore all those new muscles now that you’re awake. Not that I didn’t get a feel for them as you slept, but it’s ever so much more fun with your eyes open.” She leaned in and kissed me, her tongue finding easy entrance between my lips.

Couldn’t help myself (Jenny had me too well trained) slid a hand down to lift her skirt. Surprise, no knickers. Just a soft plump belly, pubics shaved smooth for my touch and those pouty lips now wet with a line of slick. “Lady Reynolds,” my voice came out broken as a prayer, plea and a beggar before a queen. “Are you trying to seduce me?”

“Who has to try?” She hissed with all the seductive charm of Edens snake. “Oh my dear little Charge, you smell so good. All bred up nice and proper with Lewistons pup. Too bad you’ve got reservations to make, because otherwise, would tie you to this bed, impale myself on your cock and use you slowly...terribly.....eroticly.....until.......oops time to go.” She slapped my hand away and pulled down her skirt. “Off you get, wash your hand first...” Jenny smiled wickedly. “Or not.” Then she patted the bulge tenting out my trousers. “Johnny’s going to have fun with that. From what I understand, the club has an ‘invisible room’. You can go and have a fast fuck between
“Jennnnyyyyyyy!” I whined piteously. “Can’t we just....”

“Come now, I’ve done my part. Your mate will find you irresistible and the alphas at that club will be green with envy.” She turned me about and slapped my ass. “Don’t worry. We can play later.” Oh this woman is going to be death of me. But what a way to go. Can see my tombstone now: ‘Here lies Castiel Novac Winchester. He done got fucked to death’.

John was standing in the kitchen having a drink with Lewiston. “Shepherd,” I came in and did a pirouette, then tipped my head to a becoming angle. “Do you like it?”

My mate turned, set down the drink on the table, then walked over and kissed my finger pads. “You look good enough to eat.” His nose twitched, there was an aroma of arousal, My Sin and Jenny.

“Take you up on that later,” I said coquettishly.

Lewiston tossed John the keys to the Beamer. “Don’t stay out too late.” He mock cautioned.

“Don’t worry Dad,” mien General leered. “I’ll have him home before he turns into a pumpkin.” And with that, we were out the door. “You know,” he said as the two of us walked across the parking lot. “I’m almost tempted to call and cancel that reservation, order take out from that Japanese joint down on Connecticut and stay in for the night.”

Was half a mind to agree with him but.....man does not live by screwing alone. Even though I’d like to test that theory some day. “Oh no. You promised me a night out together and I’m holding you to it.” Took Johns hand and held it to my cheek, “besides there aren’t many occasions I get to show you off.” And he was show worthy. The finest kind of US Grade A Midwestern bull male alpha, forged in battle, tempered in command, a mans man and alphas alpha. Dressed in a navy blue gaberdine suit, white shirt and scarlet tie, smelling of lightly of expensive Italian lemon cologne, would be a fool to waste this moment on mere sex. (I’m out of my fucken mind) Not when I could have the envy of all to go along with that sex.

The ride to the Army and Navy Club, didn’t take too long but the tease and touch didn’t last long enough. Found a parking spot and stepped out onto Farragut Square. We walked hand in hand across the park, dodging traffic and up to the door. “Good to see you again General Winchester,” the uniformed door man touched his cap as he let us through. “Thank you Jefferies, good to be back.”

The beta maitre’d looked up from his reservation station, “good evening Sir. Reservations?” Was biting my tongue to keep myself from saying: ‘why? Do we look like Indians?’ But was trying very hard to be good tonight.

“Yes, two under the name of Winchester.”

“Very good. Come this way please.” He lead us through the vestibule into a waiting room of sorts where people were seated on over stuffed chairs and couches, waiting to be brought to their table or just sitting back enjoying an after dinner cocktail and conversation. Ah, there were those envious looks I was hoping for from various alphas, scandalous glares from their beta wives and side long glances from the omegas kneeling at their mates feet. (Boy this is an old fashioned place.) The maitre’d stopped in front of the elevator that would take us to the third floor, pushed the button and the door slid open for us to board.
A few moments later, we stepped out into a hallway and soon found ourselves at the Club library where a table had been set up in a corner in front of a marble bust of...some navel type dude. Now I was really aroused. BOOKS! On every subject that had to deal with the military. Dashed about the stacks and tables looking at the titles, caressing the leather bindings, breathing in the scent of old paper and knowledge.

Picked up a first edition of Ulysses S. Grant's memoirs, holding it as reverently as I would my own pup. The man wrote this in the last months of his life, in excruciating pain from cancer but did it to ensure his legacy and the financial future for his family. How badass is that? Turned to see John watching with a bemused look on his face. “I remembered how you got off on education,” he casually pointed toward a nearby bookshelf, “think there’s a few volumes of Erwin Rommel....”

Son of a Bitch remembered! Set the other book down and pelted across the room to the shelf he pointed to "Gefechts-Aufgaben für Zug und Kompanie : Ein Handbuch für den Offizierunterricht"! Combat tasks for platoon and company: A manual for the officer instruction in infantry training) Oh God! Think I’m gonna cum right here. All that’s missing is a leather couch!

The matièr’d was straight faced watching the whole thing, suppose he’d come in on worse. “Your waiter should along shortly with menus and aperitif suggestions.” Then said quietly, “there is a small invisible room through that archway and to the left. There’s no attendant but a nice array of tie downs, switches and accoutrements that should suffice your needs.”

“I’m sure it will,” My Shepherd said grandly. He slipped the man a few dollars. “I would prefer a private dinner thank you.”

“Oh course General.” And with that, the matièr’d d disappeared as if he were The White Rabbit diving down the tunnel into Wonderland.

John came up behind me as I was sucking down the advice of the master strategist. “Interesting reading?” He reached around, unzipped the trousers and slipped in a hand, cupping my balls.

“Oh yes,” I squeaked.

His fingers gently patted and squeezed. “Learning anything new?”

“Enough that if we don’t get to that invisible room RIGHT NOW, my pants are gonna be a mess.” Slipped out of his grasp and duck walked just as fast as I could over to it, stepping in and slamming the door. Kicked off my shoes, then off came the pants and panties. Ooooooo, got a hard on that could pound nails. John arrived a few moments later carrying a glass full of amber liquid.

“Scotch for me, there’s a ginger ale waiting for you back on the table and don’t make that face. You can have a sip of my wine at dinner. I’ve taken the liberty of ordering us a dozen grilled oysters, porterhouses done rare, baked potato and salad with roquefort dressing.” He took a sip of the scotch. “We won’t be bothered for about 20 minutes, so...take of the rest of your clothes, except for the collar and knee socks, oh. And put the panties back on.” My mate undid the buttons of his jacket, settled into an overstuffed leather easy chair and sipped his scotch. “Come on up here on the arms of the chair for a moment. Hands at your sides.” Bossy alpha....okay.

Climbed up, the slowly damping panties that were straining to keep in my hard on, was now at his nose level. “You’re at your best when you’re pregnant.” John took a finger and traced a line between my naval and the top of the panties. “Braver, stronger....sexier. If I had my way, I’d keep you with pup always.” Could feel the pups soul flutter against his.....uncle....godfather....have to look up some more on this. Finishing school didn’t do much more then a mention of bond pups (maybe if I took the two year course) other then to say it something done to further bind families
together. That the practice was more of a thing done for business now a days in certain parts of the world, if it was done at all. Will have to write Miss Francois for more information.

As sexy as that whole ‘keep you pregnant thing sounds’, oh hell no, I don’t want to. But...for right now....ooooh, that white velvet voice is just such a turn on!

He trailed his finger up my chest, to the scabs where the pins from the jump wings were punched in. “God, you’re such a fucken little hard ass. Balls to the wall hard charging just to prove you’re better then good, that you’re the best in what ever you do, even when pregnant. Be it commanding troops or a home.” Ooooooo, for talk like that, would consider being knocked up a few more times. “Wish I could’a been there to watch you jump.” Glad you weren’t, last thing would want you to see is me doing terrible PLF’s or landing in that swamp.

“I love the thought you, the feel of your skin, how your eyes close when you get close to cumming.” Now his finger tips ghost over my nipples, a tear of milk appears on the tip. “Your body wants this, it craves having milk in your breasts and a pup in your womb. As much as your mind is leading you one way, your body keeps taking you back on to this path.” Oh dear Alpha God, can’t hold on much longer.

“Shepherd, please.” I want him now, but even in all this insanity of emotion, a small thought pings in the back of my mind. Why can’t I do it all? Why can’t I combine both paths, so it’s not a constant struggle? Course, that’s when Mein General leans in and sends a warm breath of scent up my body to tickle my nose and turn my brain to mush.

“Shhhhhhhhhhhhh, you’re almost there. Almost perfect in your passion.” So trembling, panting like I’d run a marathon, moaning like the dead, arms clasp about myself as I let go. Cum and slick soaking those delicate silks till they could hold no more and sent rivulettes down the insides of my thighs. Pushed off the arms of the chair and collapsed on the floor at his feet. Could see my reflection in those mirror toes, almost like a fun house mirror.....good name for this room.... “You alive down there?”

“Yup, give me a moment.” Could hear the crackle of cellophane, the click of a lighter and the delicious smell of good tobacco leaf. A moment later a cigar appears in front of my lips.

“Not something to make a habit of, but figured you’d need a little pick me up right about now.” Meaning to rest up moment, because it’s his turn to be perfect in his passion. Took the cigar, rolled over on my back and puffed. “It’s Cuban. Can buy’em in England, stuck a few in the diplomatic pouch, so no one’s is the wiser.” I’m a sticky mess laying at my alphas feet, so traditional looking, yet I’m the one with the cigar.

John pulled himself out of the chair, stepping over me carefully and went over to the sink. Unzipped and pulled out that magnificent pocket monster. If my cock could pound nails, his could drive railroad spikes. It was reddish purple, veined and big as two cans of Campbells soup set one on top of the other. Could remember how it felt, the head pushing through my pinks, rising and falling till his knot locked inside my body. He jacked it a few times, then white ropes painted the bowl of the sink. My Shepherd hissed and bucked, then turned on the water, washed his hands and the sink, then walked over and sunk to his knees beside me. His cock now at half mast outside his trousers.

Challenge made.

Took a puff or two more. Challenge accepted. Looked about and pulled over the artillery shell ashtray, can’t be leaving ash on the floor, must be a good guest before handing John back the cigar. “Lay back,” put a hand on his chest and pushed him slowly onto the carpeted floor. Crept between
his legs and took the defining part of this man into my hand like it was the finest creation of Cuban leaf from 90 miles across the Straights of Florida. Let’s see if my fingers can be as clever as those that made the cigar now between Johns teeth.

His cum was salty, earthy, sticky....so much like the man himself. Let’s see if I can tease the flag up the pole. Put that monstrous head in my mouth, gliding my tongue over the slit, fisting the skin against the muscle as it hardened under my grasp. Unbuckled his belt, “lift up”. He raised up so the trousers could be pulled down to the knee.

Got slowly to my feet and slid the panties wetly down. “Cigar please. Thank you.” Took it back and blew a few smoke rings into the air. “Open your mouth,” I ordered. John was right you know.....about me and pregnancy. I did secretly love it. Don’t tell anyone. On one hand, as needy for an alphas touch as I was during that time, pregnancy more then compensated by give me a rush of power. I could do what ever any alpha could do; only better, faster and carrying a pup. Which drove a certain Rochester police sergeant to distraction.

“Open your mouth,” John loved me like this. For at these moments, he could allow himself a moment to be submissive, to ‘bottom’ for me, to even wear the lacy black panties I imagined him in. Shoved the sticky, slicky mess of silk between his lips. The look of submissive joy on my mates face as he sucked and chewed got me hard all over again. Took a few more puffs of the cigar, before setting it in the ashtray.

Then teed up his cock, was gonna make him explode like an old golf ball when his knot took hold. “You know I’m one of ‘those omegas’.” I said conversationally, oh dear Alpha God, this is good. There’s just enough slide but not enough stretch, so there was just right level of pain. It deliciously pulled me apart. “My junk gets absorbed and it almost looks like a womens pussy down there.” My shepherd in sheeps clothing groaned and twisted. “No prick, no balls....just a mound and lips.....with just the cock head sitting there like a button. I’m the best of every world....”

Ground down and let his knot catch for a moment before pulling it out. Oh that hurt so good! “You’re right. You old son of bitch. I do like being pregnant. And come the day, I DO want to be filled with your pups. DO want to be bred and DO want to lay at your feet! But. Not. Right. Now!” Slammed down, left the knot catch again and pulled, letting every ounce of cum, pain and pleasure fill my body. Oh yeah and came all over his belly as his cum dripped out from my channel.

Now came that moment of coming down, where there was no sound over that of panting and gasping like fish out of water. We lay there, boneless and sated on the carpet until there was a light knock on the door. “Your first course is ready.” Oh shoot, forgot about dinner.

As I pulled John to his feet, he spit out the underwear, catching it in midair. “Thank you, be right there,” The General was back in command. “Um, we better get cleaned up and out there before those overpriced hunks of barbequed snot get cold.”

“Good catch with the underwear.”

“I still have a good eye, was on the baseball team at Norwich, played first base too. Will show you my pictures some time.” Got cleaned up, dressed, butted out the cigar, sprayed a little Airwick and back out into the library. Our waiter was standing next to the table when we arrived. If he had any opinions or comments about what he might have overheard or smelled, the beta kept it to himself as his face was a mask of bland indifference.

He pulled out Johns chair and then asked if I would also be having a chair or sitting on a pillow to be hand fed. Was just about ready to go tell him to go fuck himself, when John quickly let the man know, I would be sitting. Oh like hell I’d be perched on a pillow like some over pampered
Pekinese, not after I had my alpha on his back, mouth full of my panties and at my command.

The waiter pulled out the chair, I sat down, the wine list was presented, suggestions made and dinner commenced as the first course was presented. The oysters were very good, grilled then poached in butter and white wine, served on the half shell. Wish we could have some raw ones, but not good for the pup, so they had to be cooked. Speaking of wine, wish I could drink or at least more then just a sip from my Shepherds glass. Damn it. This means I gotta face another Thanksgiving with the family...sober. Had so planned on being drunk as a skunk that whole weekend.

The porterhouse steaks came next. They were good sized, thick, done medium rare and almost as good as what I had down at the commanders quarters at Fort Benning. “Did you ever meet General Livsey and his mate?”

John chewed a bite of his steak, washing it down with a sip of red wine before answering. “I seem to recall working with him back in ‘67 when we were both with the 4th infantry division in ‘Nam. He and I were both on staff to the G-3 at the time, even though I spent a little more time in the field then behind a desk.” Oh, this is where he and ‘the marvelous Kate’ had their ‘fun’ out in the bush. (Yes, yes I am being sarcastic and petty.) “Good staff officer, competent commander, kinda quirky though.”

Quirky was a good word for it. Went on to tell him the story of the dinner at Riverside and my first meeting with the General. “I held out my hand, he handed me his drink and I drank it down, then proceeded to tell him the brand of bourbon and complemented him on choosing branch water instead of just water from the tap.”

“What did ‘Lip’ say?” Johns eyes had a wickedly merry gleam as he gazed over the wine glass.

“That he was gonna kick my ass from there to the Chattahoochie for pulling such a stunt. But then he complemented me on my knowledge of bourbon and heard I had a passable golf swing. Then he asked to see pictures of Jeff.”

“Sounds like something ‘Lip’ would do. How many strokes did you let him win by?”

“How did you know?” I didn’t write him about that. Got out one letter to him, Dean and the Reynolds, along with a few post cards to the boys that first week. The rest of the time was just too tired to do much else but spend my off hours sleeping.

“If he mentioned golf, then Livsey was going to have you out on the ‘dance floor’ toot sweet.”

“We went the following Saturday. Must have figured he had a pretty good chance of beating me after ‘Ground Week’.” Now do I tell him about going into Columbus to Suzies? Oooooohhh, maybe not. “He ‘won’ by two strokes. Figured that’d be close enough.”

Shepherd nodded, “respectable.” About that time the waiter reappeared to refill John’s wine glass but also with a request. “General David Jones sends his apologies but requests a word with you General Winchester.” SHIT! Who the hell is that?

“Where is he?” The merry look on my mates face disappeared and he was on his feet in an instant at the mention of this man’s name.

“The small conference room on the second floor,” the waiter set a cloche over the plate to keep the food warm. “I’ll escort you there.”

“I’m sorry Lambkin, but duty calls.”
“How long will you be gone?” Why does this ALWAYS HAPPEN?! Last summer out at Fort Riley we couldn’t be together because of the alert, then him getting called to Washington.....is it always going to be like this?

“No idea, but if it runs long, don’t worry about the bill, I’ve got a tab.” He tossed me the car keys, “you take the beamer, I’ll catch a hack.” Then Shepherd gave me a quick peck on the lips and followed the waiter out the door and down the hall. I sat back looking at the empty chair, the covered dish and his half finished drink. Reached over and picked up the wine glass, knocking it back in a few gulps. Ate the rest of my dinner slowly, hoping that John would reappear and ready to continue ‘date’. An hour passed, then two. The waiter was no help, just said it was a closed door meeting. No one in, no one out. At two Hours and 15 minutes, I’d had it.

Got up, tossed my napkin on the chair and walked out. Didn’t want dessert or coffee or whatever else this goddamn place had to offer any more. Now just wanted to go back to the embassy and sulk off to bed. Yeah, I’m being unfair, a brat and everything everyone says I am....well frankly my dear...I don’t give a hydro electric damn. (Poet and I don’t know it.) Pushed my way out the front door, Jefferies was still there with his pasted on smile, “have a good evening Omega Winchester’. Yeah, right. ‘Great evening’. Gave him a half hearted wave as I brushed by. Found the BMW, got in and started it up. Listened to those beautiful six cylinders rev, was of half a mind to take it out on the beltway and let it loose. Except, not my car, if I get stopped, there’s no real way to explain why I had it, why I was in it and no real desire to spend the night in the DC jail.

So drove sedately, with only a few wrong turns, back to the embassy. Came in the kitchen, quietly, hung the car keys on the key rack beside the door and turned off the light. John could stub his toe on chairs and would serve him right. Jenny was up watching Johnny Carson when I passed by the living room. “Have a good night?” She called out.

“Yeah,......it was okay.” Was just tired and pissed to tell anything but a short polite lie.

“Darling, what’s wrong?” Jenny got up, came into the hallway and looked around. “Where’s John? Is he parking the car?”

“In a meeting at the Army Navy Club.” Sat down on the stairs all while trying not to cry. Damn hormones. ‘The evening started out great. Shepherd had reserved the library, we had sex....really good sex too in the invisible room. Then came out for dinner, there were oysters for the first course, we played footsie under the table and then the steaks came out. The waiter came back and said some guy named...named....Smith? Jones, that it. Some General Jones wanted to talk to him.

“General David Jones?” My hostess perked up like an Airedale terrier being offered a Milkbone.

“Yeah, that’s the guy. Who is he? You ever meet him?”

Jenny nodded, “at a cocktail party put on by some defense contractor a few weeks ago. Lewiston and I were invited, he was there with his mate and we were introduced. He’s the head of your joint chiefs of staff.”

“Oh. It wouldn’t have been so bad if he came right back. But I waited over 2 hours for Shepherd to come back, but gave up and left when he didn’t.” Wonder what top secretry thing that guy wanted with John. “Does this happen with you and Lewiston a lot? Where all of a sudden he gets called then ups and goes?”

“All the time,” she said sagely. “Why do you think there are such gaps in ages with our first three pups? First few years of our mating I rarely saw him. It’s only after we came here that I saw him on a regular basis. Even at Riley, he would have to jump up from dinner or sex or mending a stopped
up loo when duty called.” Jenny took my hand, “Castiel, more then anyone, you should know what this life is like.”

“You’d think, but I saw it as a pup. Could’ve cared less that Zachariah was gone and he was gone most of the time.” Now had some sympathy for Naomi-mom. She had all of us to deal with (with help from Madraina or a maid, depending on where we were stationed) along with trying to keep house in lousy neighborhoods and put up appearances. Which explains why information was her friend, ally and weapon of choice. You needed that to put the fear of the Alpha God in people, so they were too afraid to look that closely at your life. “But you came from a military family too. didn’t you see it differently?”

“No,” she sighed. “In my family, we were taught duty to crown and country right from the pram. So it wasn’t a shock to have father or.....other family members pop off from the table or the middle of the night to heaven knows where.” Wonder what she was going to say and didn’t? About then, heard the kitchen door open and close, a curse when he must have tripped over a chair in the dark, (HA!) then the slam of cabinets.

Got up and walked into the kitchen. John was out there, going through the cabinets... “where does Lou keep the brandy or whiskey or...cuz....cuz...I need a drink.”

“He keeps some sherry here,” Jenny pulled a bottle out from a small cupboard. “Though I’d say you prolly already had quite enough. Are you alright? What happened?”

“Stow it ‘Mary Poppins’, I’m having a wake,” he slurred, then his voice wavered. “Mal’s dead. The bastards killed him. Nur Taraki’s people hunted him down after the April coup and.......I told him to get out. But he wouldn’t listen. Mal said he could hide up in the mountains forever. Stubborn son of bitch wouldn’t listen.”

“Oh Johnny, I’m so sorry.” She gently took his arm and led him into Lewistons office set him on the couch and then quietly closed the door. Heart rending sobs and howls so terrible came from behind that door that I just wanted to rush in and comfort him, but Jenny pulled me away. “No, let him be. If anything, let me get Lewiston. He knew Mal also, though not in the same way John did.”

What was THAT suppose to mean? Stood there dumbly as she padded away and came back a few minutes later with Lou in tow. He must have been asleep as his hair was a fright but being a military man and veteran of many a late night wake up call, his eyes were bright and ready to take command or comfort. “Thank you Mouse,” he kissed her on the forehead, “I’ll take it from here.”

Now I felt less then useless. “As his mate, shouldn’t I be in there giving John the comfort and support he needs?”

“Come away,” Jenny said softly. “Come away to bed darling,” her mouth worked as if searching for the right words.... “there are things you’re very good with, have a grasp of and do well for someone with your age and experiences. But in this instance, you’re too young, you weren’t there and are not what John needs right now.”

Oh doesn’t that make me feel great. “Who IS this Mal person that has him all worked up?”

“Muhammed Malack Daoud Khan,”he was a cousin in the Royal Afghan Family. The Royals were deposed in a fairly bloodless coup in 1973. The king escaped with most of the immediate family, except Mal who went back to try and work with his relative, Muhammaed Daoud Khan, the person who initiated the coup in the first place. Actually, the new regime worked out as well as things do in that part of the world, until April of this year when there was another coup, a far bloodier one.
Daoud Khan and most of his family were killed,” here she gave a bitter laugh. “The new government leadership claimed he’d ‘resigned’ and went into seclusion for ‘health reasons’. But anyone in the know, knew the lot was dead and prolly buried in some shallow grave.”

We reached the top of the stairs but instead of going into their bedroom, Jenny guided me to the guest room John and I shared. “I’ll stay with you tonight. Lewiston will be caring for John. They both knew Mal and can mourn together.”

“But what was this guy to John?” Took off the suit coat, hanging it in the closet carefully unclipped the collar and laid it on the bedside table. Slipped out of the rest of my clothes and put them over the back of the chair. Jenny came over and touched her finger tips to my belly.

“Who would think a little part of us was in there. In the midst of death, there’s life. And that’s the thing you need to remember and hopefully your silly alpha will too once he’s past grieving.” She took her clothes off and climbed into bed beside me. “John was assistant attache at the American embassy in Afghanistan back in 1959. He met Mal when both of them were tasked to find a calf that would be perfect for a game of buzkashi between two rival villages. Of course, one village asked John while the other asked Mal. It was rather important assignment as it would stop the escalating violence between the rivals. Long story short, they were trying to buy the same calf, got in a fight over the fool thing, pulled knives, only to be set on by brigands who tried stealing the calf, fought said brigands together, swore eternal gratitude....etc, etc, etc.”

“So Louie, this is a start of a beautiful friendship?”

“Something like that.” Then she hesitated, “and more.” Jenny leaned over and turned off the light on the night stand. “They found out they enjoyed each others company, as men....as alphas.....as.....people who really cared for one another beyond the boundaries of race, religion, culture and primary or secondary gender.”

Was starting to get a picture, but didn’t know if I liked it. “Sooooooooo, John liked him or ‘liked him liked him’?”

“Yes to both.”

“So he’s a hom.....”

“No, of course not. John is just Malack-sexual.” Could hear the huff and sigh of her voice and the warm breath of her against my face. “Sooner or later there is someone you will care about that doesn’t fit the norm. At finishing school there were times I found solace in the arms of an omega Sappho. But I do, for the most part, prefer men.” She giggled, “as you well know.”

Well yeah, thought of Jenny with another woman.....okay that was sexy. “But how can he?” The thought of John with a man...it weirded me out but it also got me a little hard.

“In the usual fashion I suppose. But let me ask you this....what are you more upset with.....the last three hours or the last three minutes?”

Had to really think......“well, kinda the combination of the two. But how will I ever look at him the same way again?”

Her ladyship patted my belly. “I suppose the same way he can look at you, even though you’re carrying another alphas child..for the second time.”

Ouch.
“Darling,” Jenny cuddled up. “You’ve had a very long day. Know that John does love you but he’s also is a very difficult man to love return. You’ve only been with him a relatively short time. Mary, Mal, Kate even Dr Barnes have known him in one way or the other longer then you’ve been alive. It’s not a reflection on you, it’s simply a fact. And may I remind you, you’re not that easy to love either. You’re willful, head strong and disobedient. Which is prolly why I like you. Go to sleep. John may be more in a mood to talk in the morning.”

“I hope so,” settled in against her soft warm body and lay awake, till she couldn’t stand the wiggling and blew scent that put me to sleep.

Woke up the next morning at a little after 07:00 and padded downstairs. John was in his khaki uniform sitting at the table with a cup of black coffee, looking a little worse for wear.

“Um, hi.” Poured myself a cup and sat down across from him. “How’re you feeling?”

“Like shit.” Okay, where do we go from here?

“Uh, sorry about your friend.”

“Thanks”, he took a sip of the coffee and rested his forehead against the cup.

“Anything I can do?”

“Not really.” Looks like Shepherd wasn’t up to talking. “Got a meeting with General Jones in another hour, don’t know when I’ll be back tonight.” He got up, checked his watch, “they’re sending a car for me.” John leaned over, dutifully kissed me on the cheek and walked out the door.

In the mean time, politely ignoring us, the Reynolds had come downstairs to breakfast and start their day. Jenny was marshaling the troops for a shopping trip as school would be starting soon and Erica and Jesse would need new school clothes. Lewiston was reviewing his schedule of meetings before heading to the office. So what was I going to do? Was invited to go shopping but..... “think I’ll just hang around here.”

So after they left, put on a pair of running shorts and sneakers and went for a jog around Observatory Circle. Figured if three weeks of jump school didn’t shake the squirt out of me, a slow easy jog would hardly do it.

“Airborne Airborne where you been?” I automaticly started singing. “I been to the LZ and back again.”

Looks like you could take the man out of Benning but you couldn’t take Benning out of the man.

John didn’t come home that night or the next night either. Thursday morning after Jenny had left to run an errand and Lewiston to the office, I’d started called the local emergency rooms to see if John had been brought in. It was in the middle of the second inquiry that there was knock on the door. Opened to find Capt Delassandro showed up for a change of clothes for his boss. Hadn’t seen him since last year and didn’t miss the creep one little bit.

“Hello Hole,” he said toothily, as he leaned against the jam.

“Wei gehts arsch mit ohren,” I hissed. “What do you want?” Tried the close the heavy oak door on his foot but he pushed his way in.

“The Boss needs a clean uniform and his shaving kit.” He looked around the room as if trying to figure out which way to go.
“WHAT! Where is he? Does he know I’ve been worried sick?!”

“The General’s over at Fort Meade, in his usual suite. Don’t get your panties in a twist.”

“Why didn’t he call me?”

“Beats me, maybe he had better things to do.” Delassandro snapped his fingers at me, “get a move on and get his stuff, some of us have an actual function.”

“How GODDAMN DARE YOU! GET OUT!” Was starting to look around the kitchen for something sharp, heavy and throwable. Course the yelling brought Jesse and Erika downstairs. My little First immediately growled, as the room was filled with the stench of angry omega.

“You shouldn’t be here,” Jesse took a step toward Delassandro. “You need to be gone!”

“Yeah, right. Get lost pup. Let the grown ups talk. Just get the shaving kit Hole.”

Now the teen was furious. “You will NOT speak that way to my First!”

The Captain started laughing, “this is the little brat you put out for? Damn kid, you got rooked. Couldn’t your daddy buy you a better whore then him?”

The meat cleaver that Jenny usually used to dismember chickens went flying across the room and came within an ace of parting Delassandros hair. It hummed and vibrated as it sank itself into the thick wooden door. “JESUS CHRIST!” He screamed. “WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU!!?”

Never taking my eyes off Delassandro, “Jesse. Go upstairs, get the 45 from under my pillow in the guestroom and bring it back here. Erika, call your father. Tell him what’s going on and to get over here fast. Use the phone in his office.” The two hesitated, “Now! Go!” They were off like a shot.

The snake in captains clothing glowered at me, “what is your problem Hole?”

“My problem, really doesn’t concern you Jackass. It’s been between the General and myself.”

“Too bad that he’s busy fucking Kate to REALLY CARE about your little problems.” Now I saw red.

Jesse came back in time to find Delansandro and I rolling around the kitchen floor, trading kicks and punches, knocking over everything in our path. The explosion of the gun going off in the enclosed space was deafening. The bullet pinged into the linoleum next to my shoulder. “Sorry,” he shouted. “Was aiming for the other guy.”

Figures, that’s also when Jenny, John and Lewiston come bursting through the door. “WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK YOU’RE DOING TO MY MATE!” If kitchen had looked bad before, it was completely trashed by the time the fight ended. Delassadro obviously didn’t stand a chance against three enraged alphas and after a very short defense, which took out the most of the chairs, the table and four of the lower kitchen cabinets, the captain screamed he gave up and showed his throat.

“Get out,” John snarled. “I’ll deal you later.” Delansadro got up quick and scuttled out as fast as he could, before someone changed their mind about ripping him limb from limb.

“Well,” Jenny righted a chair and sat down. “That was enlightening. Naomi will be sorry she missed it. John, Castiel....I do believe it’s time for you two to talk and then go home.” She picked
up the sugar bowl at her feet, regarded the large crack in it and then tossed it over her shoulder into
the sink, where it smashed into a million pieces. “Castiel, are you alright? That brute didn’t harm
our pup did he?”

“Didn’t lay a finger on him,” I said proudly, then grimaced as I touched the small cut under my lip
where a punch had forced my front teeth through the skin. The blood was dripping down my chin
and staining the shirt front.

“John,” she sighed. “Take your mate upstairs, talk...fuck each other stupid...I don’t care. But you
two need figure out if your mating worth being in or call it quits. Because my furniture can’t stand
much more of this.”

“Here, here.” Seconded Lewiston as he righted what was left of the other kitchen chairs.

The two of us got up sheepishly, left the kitchen and went upstairs to the bathroom for a bit of first
aid to the cuts and gouges, then to the guest room. We stood there for a moment until the tension
was too great, I finally said quietly,”we messed up.” Gee, that was an understatement Novac.

Ever the master of words of wisdom, John added......“Kinda.”

“You wanna talk about it?”

“Not really, but this isn’t working.”

“Our mating? You wanna call our mating quits?”

“No. Unless you do.”

“No! Do you even love me?” Oh good grief. I remember a conversation like this with Dean back
at RIT. What is this, the DC revival of Fiddler on the Roof?*

“Yes, of course I do.”

“Then why did you leave me?” Was in tears. “Why wasn’t I good enough?” Yeah, Jenny explained
everything but wanted to hear it from him.

“Oh Lambkin, it’s not that you weren’t good enough, it was because I got to hear as part of a
report, how someone I loved was brutally tortured and murdered, dumped in some nameless grave
and I had to sit there and act like nothing was wrong. I couldn’t deal with it...and didn’t think you’d
understand. Just didn’t know how to explain that you, that I loved another man...who’s an alpha.
So I lost myself in meetings and work and.....”

“Kate?”

He hung his head...... “yeah. She knew Mal. So did Mary.”

Wonderful, he figured Mary would sympathize but not me. “And you thought I wouldn’t
understand?”

“Pretty much.”

“Oh thanks tons for the vote of confidence.”

“It wasn’t personal, it was just too......too, just to used to keeping it on QT. You know what
happens to homosexuals in the army.”

“Yeah, I do. They don’t last long, if they’re found out.” Thought of the two guys at advanced camp
Ty and Hunter**. There one day, gone the next. Maybe I wouldn’t have got it before talking to Jenny...but...that’s when Ulysses fluttered. And the whole absurdity of the situation came home.

“Soooo, lemme see if I got this right. You didn’t try explaining why your long time female omega lover would understand better why you’re mourning the alpha male lover you’ve known on the down low for 20 years rather try to explain the whole misuganha to me, your young male omega mate who’s newly and accidentally pregnant by his Firsts father with whom our family shares a profound bond. Did I miss anything?”

For the first time since that night, a real smile quirked Johns lips. “Well, since you put it that way......nope you pretty much got it down pat G.I.”

Began laughing and fell back on the bed, “oh dear Alpha God, we deserve each other.” It also came to me at that moment, what kind of person have I turned into? A year ago I nearly broke up with Dean after catching him in bed with what’s her face.......Jo...schoo...whatever the fuck her name was. Now, am I any better? Tony, Sam Colt.....Benny. On the other hand; my relationship with Jesse, Lewiston and Jenny isn’t cheating. They’re part of the profound bond. There’s a difference. And Hugh Ashton is my First, so that’s not cheating either.

Also knew what I was getting into with John. With him, came Mary and Kate.....and now Mal. On the other hand, also knew I’d never have a life like Jenny...Mary or Lisa for that matter. I wasn’t ever going to be a traditional mate. Being little ‘Suzie Home maker’....ewwwww. Would never have what they had and maybe....didn’t want it. So did the only thing I could do......“If you wouldn’t mind, Mal.....what was he like?”

Now my alpha’s smile wasn’t bitter. Maybe bitter sweet.”he was funny, smart and now that I think about it Lambkin, reminds me a lot of you.”

And as he talked, I listened and together we alternately laughed then wept for the loss of a good man.

Chapter End Notes

Twinkle Twinkle Little Bat: the poem recited by the Mad Hatter in the tea party chapter of Alices Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll. Now at the time of the German translation in the 1870’s, the vast majority of German speaking people didn’t know the song ‘Twinkle twinkle little star’. (I don’t understand the cultural reference) But they did know Oh Taunnebaum, so think of: O papagei, o papagei, wie grun sind deine Federn’ or: ‘O parrot, o parrot! How green are your feathers!’ with the rest of the nonsense going like this: ‘You’re not only green in times of peace, But also when it snows plates and pots.’ Which at the time made more sense to them, then ‘like a tea tray in the sky’.

GP Medium tent: General Purpose tent. They came in three sizes, small, medium and large.

The Admirable Crichton: of course John is talking about Lewiston. The Admirable Crichton was a stage play written by J.M. Barrie (better known for writing Peter Pan) about an aristocratic family who is shipwrecked on a desert island and only survives because of the butler, Crichton. Social roles are reversed as the butler becomes leader of the castaways.
The Sea of Light: a very large diamond (182 carats) that is currently in the Central Bank of Iran and is part of the Iranian crown jewel collection that backs up their currency. But for the intents and purposes of this story, the one currently there is a good fake.


Five finger discount: nice term for stealing

Brummie cake is a savory breakfast cake made with bacon and cheddar cheese. It can be eaten warm or cold, alone or part of a larger breakfast.
http://www.cookuk.co.uk/cake/brummie-breakfast-cake.htm

Amina: Latin for soul

Upjohn: a pharmaceutical company founded in 1886. Upjohn also sought FDA approval of intramuscular MPA as a long-acting contraceptive under the brand name Depo-Provera (150 mg/mL MPA) but the applications were rejected in 1967, 1978, and yet again in 1983. However, in 1992, the drug was finally approved by the FDA for this indication -from Wikipedia

Altweiberfasching: ‘old womans fasching’, where women dress up like witches or crones and wonder the street drinking, singing, storming city hall and cutting off men’s neck ties with sissors.
Artillary shell ashtrays. An artillary shell (depending on what size cannon it was made for) was made of solid brass and during the two World Wars, Korea and Vietnam were usually disgarded after use. This created a canvas for bored GI’s and enterprising locals who carved or reshaped the brass tubes.
The link is to an example of this so called ‘trench art’. At one time, when people smoked more inside, was not at all uncommon to see a large artillary shell ashtray standing next to a persons desk.
https://www.pinterest.com/pin/360499145144050630


Dance floor: golf slang term for the green

Air Force General David C. Jones: head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1978 to 1982. Afghanistan has always seemed to be a place of unrest and not just since the Soviet invasion in the 1980’s or the US war on terror after 9-11. The Nur Taraki John was talking about was Nur Muhammad Taraki the ‘president’ of Afghanistan-From Wikipedia: “On 19 April 1978 a prominent leftist named Mir Akbar Khyber was assassinated and the murder was blamed on Mohammed Daoud Khan's Republic of Afghanistan. His death served as a rallying point for the pro-communist Afghans. Fearing a communist coup d'etat, Daoud ordered the arrest of certain PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan) leaders, including Taraki under house arrest.[13] On 27 April 1978 the Saur Revolution was initiated, Khan was killed the next day along with most of his family. The PDPA rapidly gained control and on 1 May Taraki became Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, a role which subsumed the responsibilities of both president and Chairman of the Council of Ministers (literally prime minister in Western parlance). The country was then renamed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), installing a regime that would last until April 1992. Taraki would not be alive at that point as he was murdered by a political rival on or
around the 8th or 9th of October 1979.
Wei gehts arsch mit ohren: German for ‘what’s up arse with ears’
See Chapter 24 of Cadet Novac. Fiddler on the Balcony of Kate Gleason Hall
** Chapter 43 of Cadet Novac, Womb and Boarded
Suzie Homemaker was a line of toys by The Topper Company in the 1960’s and 70’s. There were small working versions of ovens, clothes washers, dryers, in short a complete kitchen for little girls. The term ‘Suzie Homemaker’ also over time, became an insult.
Hi everyone. Thank you for joining us again. Warning: there is mention of a minor character death.

Pack up day at my Riverton apartment was an obscene affair of boxes, two burly alphas who had nothing nice to say about the couch, swoop chair or bed they had to drag down the stairs and load onto the moving van. Oh I’m prolly going to have to pay Uncle Sam for some of this move, as that stupid couch was at least 600 pounds by itself. Had to be careful with Jeff, as the little devil has started to crawl. Dr Mosley had warned he was about two months ahead of all the other pups his age, development wise, so be ready. Ready for him to creep into a box and get packed up is what I’m afraid of.

Since I got back to Rochester on August 6th it’s been flurry of preparations for this day, August 22nd 1978. Life is finally starting to happen.

It kickoffed when we were still in DC earlier in the month. John and I took the rest of that Thursday to get our collective shit together (at least for the time being) relationship wise, pay for the damages to the Reynolds kitchen and get back into her Jenny-ships good graces. Not that we truly ever out of it but green backs went a long way to ensure John and I would welcome back to visit, just not too soon. “I love you both truly,” Jenny said as she gave John his goodbye kiss and grind the next morning about eight-ish. “It’s just I need to have you gone so I can miss you. No offense.” She had served up a quick breakfast earlier; coffee, toast and a bit of grab ass.

“None taken.” John replied grandly as he made ready to put our baggage both literal and figurative into the Bug.

Jesse and Asa were there to say goodbye. They both liked their gifts and post cards. Wished that things had been different so that the last few days had been happier. But on the bright side, Jesse had gotten to fire ‘The Lovers Kiss’ (Sa was so jealous), granted he almost hit me, but Lewiston had promised both boys that he would take them out to the range at Quantico to really learn how to shoot. “Be good for me My First, and you too My Friend.” Kissed them both, “I’ll be back before you both leave in November.” Sa’s family was being transferred to Cyprus, to be part of the diplomatic liaison at the main base of the British Forces Near East on that troubled island.

“Must you go so soon?” Sa cuddled into my arms.

“’Fraid so.” I gave him a nose nuzzle before pulling away. “After yesterdays.......‘coming to Jesus party’, it’s better for everyone that we go home. Besides, haven’t seen my pup in a month and it’s been longer for his father. So, it’s time.”

Balthazar was there to see us off. “Sorry I missed all the fireworks,” he said admiringly. “Always knew you were a right mean bastard Cassie. Which is what I always liked about you, Little Brother.”

“I always liked that you were a right bastard Balti,” I said in return. “Don’t do anything I wouldn’t”

“Some how I think I can avoid pregnancy whilst falling out of the sky.”

“Assbutt.”
“That IS the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard.”

“Okay, how’s about ass hole?”

“Much better.

Ah brothers. Can’t live with em, can’t push em out of perfectly good airplanes.

My second to final goodbye was to Lewiston. “My Lord Alpha.” My eyes were down cast, looking every bit of the penitent omega. I’m sorry for the trouble I brought to House Reynolds.”

“But the pup in your belly far outweighs that minor inconvenience” (Lou had to do some fast talking to the Ambassador about the gun fire) and is truly a gift from House Winchester.” Bullshit over with, “will miss you Fladermaus. Come back to us soon.” But then added with a twinkle in his eye, “AFTER we get new kitchen chairs.” Yeah we kinda wrecked most of em in the fight.

And last was Jenny. She who holds my heart willingly in the palm of her hand, my dearest Brit. “Take care of yourself Darling.” Her Jenny-ship put a light kiss on my lips, “come back to me soon.”

“But not too soon?”

“Silly Colonial.” She smiled, “soon enough. We still didn’t get a chance to play.” Gulp. One more kiss, then John took shot gun and I got in behind the wheel of the Bug and we’re off in a cloud of exhaust and a horn blast of ‘shave and a hair cut, two bits.’

The drive back up seemed to take less time then the ride down. Plus, it was nice to have company other then just the radio. John and I got to talk some more serious stuff, but also got to find out if we’d make good traveling companions. You discover just how much you can stand each other when you’re cooped up in a small car for 8 hours. Thank the Alpha God that included food and bathroom breaks. Stopped in Lewisburg for a quick lunch at a sandwich and ice cream joint called Bechtel’s. The chicken sandwich was bordering on mediocre but the ice cream was sublime! This place could give Buckmans over on the Greece town line a run for its money.

John had the peanut butter ice cream and I went for the hot fudge sundae. Creamy vanilla, thick chocolate sauce and chopped nuts. I groaned orgasmically. “Oh this is almost as good as sex!”

“I’ll remember that for the next time,” John licked the back of his spoon suggestively. “When I wanna get you into bed.”

“And you’ll remember I did say ‘almost’ oh alpha mine.”

We switched drivers and John took us back on the road. We wended our way on Route 15 up through the hills and valleys, following the Susquehanna for a while, until we crossed the Market Street Bridge into Williamsport. There we left the river behind and continued north. Took a few more hours but made it to the New York State line. At Lawrence, the last town on Route 15 in PA, we stopped for gas, I took back the drivers seat and continued on. John was dozing and I was getting tired by the time the car rolled into Painted Post.

Know Rochester is just a few hours away, it’s only a little before 03:00 but I’m running between ‘empty and you’re not kidd’en’, Shepherd isn’t any better. The vacancy sign was out at the Lodge on the Green when I pulled into the parking lot. “Are we there?” John woke up dozily.

“No Baby, we’re still aways away. But even if we did push on, there’s really no food in the house, so would have to go shopping to get a little something in the fridge. Then bring Jeff home and get
him settled, hope this doesn’t make me sound like a bad papa, I just can’t deal with all that right now.”

“No more then it would make me a bad father,” he said tiredly. “Let me go get us something for the night.” The room John got us was on the second floor over looking the courtyard swimming pool. The room was clean, the king size bed comfortable, had a color TV and a bathroom with tub and shower combination. "The room was clean, the large bed comfortable, had a color TV and a bathroom with tub and shower combination. Speaking of the pool..... “the pamphlet here,” my dearest mate had picked up from the bedside table. “Says it’s heated. Wanna go for a swim?”

Just wanted to crash, but...the water did look inviting. John had some swimming trunks in his luggage and I just wore jeans and an OD green t-shirt. There were some truck inner tubes, air mattress to float around on for those who wanted the waters but not the swim. Luckily at this point in the day, we’d be the only ones there, so didn’t have to deal with jerky teenagers splashing about or squalling pups. Oh yeah, with that kinda attitude, I’m gonna be a ‘great’ papa.

Before getting in the water, went back to the room to get a couple of bucks out of my wallet. Poor thing was looking mighty flat these days. Had just enough for gas to get home and groceries once we got there, before hitting the Marine Midland bank. You’d think $500 would last a while. Not when you’re trying to drive some where, then live there for three weeks. Gas was between 65 to 71 cents a gallon depending on what state, county or town you were in. DC was ridiculous at 73 cents a gallon, can you believe it?! Talk about gouging the public. Then trying to eat, paying for laundry services (I broke down after the first week, for a dollar a day the fatigues, socks and t-shirt were washed, dried and left in neat bundle at the front desk. For a buck fifty extra, they’d be mended, starched and ironed. Took’em up on that too.) then there was the night at Suzie Wu’s, yeah that money went quick.

On the way up, did finally tell John about my night of ‘culture’ at Suzies and how the Navy, by way of Ensign Cody Chickadee came to my rescue. He laughed and snorted, “oh those ‘Squids’, they do show up at the right time on occasion!” Then my erstwhile mate smirked, “want me to show you MY ‘snickersnee’?”

“All of us gurgle and guggle.”

ANYWHO, took a few bucks out of my wallet and went down to the bar to see what they had in tiki drinks. The ‘Suffering Bastard’ although not a REAL tiki drink, did have all the ingredients my mate liked: bourbon, dry gin, ginger beer (okay, maybe not that one so much) and a little umbrella. Okay, so the bartender only had ginger ale, but that meant I get to have a sip. Hey, it’s got ginger ale in it so I’m allowed. Paid, then stopped in the office and bought a bottle of Coppertone. Don’t want John to burn his fish belly white skin to a crisp. Went back out to the pool, slathered him up, so he and his drink could lay back on the air mattress and float about.

Tossed in one of the tubes, did a quick judge of the distance and then dove through. Yup, still got it. Used to do this all the time, when I was younger at the pools on base in Germany and Panama. Well, until we’d get thrown out for whatever Gabe, Balti, Mikey or Luci did. Okay, so there was that time, I tossed in that smidgen of magnesium I stole.....borrowed....yes I borrowed it....from the science department of the private school I went to. No one got hurt. But was it MY fault there was a small gas leak in the line that went to the concession stand grill and the whole thing went up in a ball of flame? Course we were immediately suspect. ‘Those damn Novac pups’, my brothers and I were ‘Pecks Bad boy’ incarnate times five. Well, actually three by that time. Cuz Mikey and Luci had moved out for college but people at the MP office and rec center remembered them from years past, so their antics were tossed in with Balti, Gabe and mine.

We all lied like rugs.....protested our innocence, Mom backed us up which caused Zachariah to
volunteer for duty at ‘The Rock’ for a year just to get away from us. Good times, good times.

I did a few laps, dove through the tube a couple of more times and then floated around till my fingers and toes got pruney. Plus the grum-bellies threatened to cause a tidal wave. Swam over to the air mattress John was on and dumped it over. “Hi Sweetie.” He was sputtering and splashing as he came to the surface. The high ball glass was now sitting at the bottom of the pool, he would’ve been more pissed had it been full. But, it’d long since been emptied and the ice was just about melted.

“Was that REALLY necessary Lambkin?”

“Yup.”

“You know that deserves a good spanking.”

“Oh promises, promises.”

John ducked underwater and I started with the theme from ‘Jaws’. Damn, he’s fast and even when I could obviously see him and I was a pretty darn good swimmer, that ole bastard was better. And that’s that when I found my pants around my ankles being hefted over Johns shoulder and walked out of the pool. Full moon came out early guys. Guess bare assed omegas weren’t a big thing in this neck of the woods because the few people who were now at the pool, didn’t say a thing, nor report us to management or cover their eyes. Enjoy the show, because that’s all folks! Wow the pamphlet was right, the rooms were sound proof, cuz we were noisy as hell and there was no knock at the door from management tell us to keep it down.

Dinner was Yankee pot roast for Shepherd and the stuffed Cornish game hen for me. The wine was actually pretty good for a New York state product. Took a sip, “Bully Hill? Red Goat?”

“ Weird name,” our waitress commented after pouring us each a taste and then a full glass. “Walter Taylor thinks he’s hot shit, pardon me for saying so, but can’t blame him really. He got kicked out of Taylor Wines, when Coca-Cola bought it a couple of years ago, so Walter went bat shit and started his own vineyard and new company. Been promoting it like crazy ever since.” She left us the bottle then went back to the kitchen to get our side dishes. John in the mean time snagged my glass and set it next to his.

“Just a sip, he cautioned. “Can’t have that pup coming out some kind of alkie.” Sighed, back to the purgatory of ginger ale, root beer and peppermint tea. Gonna hate going to Schenectady for another sober Thanksgiving. No booze, no cigarettes, no coffee. Holy Baby Jebus, this sucks canal water big time!

Later that night was awakened to the sound of sobbing. The strongest man I ever knew was crying in his sleep and calling for Mal. Had thought John had gotten most of his sorrow out over those days he went AWOL with Kate. Guess some things are harder to let go of in the dark of night, then in the light of day. Slipped over and tossed an arm over his side, pulling him close hoping even this small comfort could help. “I’m sorry Baby, I’m so very sorry,” whispered in his ear and blew scent, as the sobs continued until they died away into light snores. Stayed awake for a while longer until it was clear that my dearest was going to be alright, before turning over and drift back off.

The morning light came through the break in the curtain, running across the carpet and up the side of the bed. Rolled over on my back, stretched and yawned. Opened my eyes fully and found I was alone. There was a note on the night stand under my glasses.

‘Lambkin,
Have gone downstairs to see about some breakfast. Will be back shortly.

John’

Cool, breakfast. Got up went to the bath, did my business and then turned the water on in the shower for it to warm up. Looked in the mirror on the back of the door, turning left and right to check out my stomach. Still flat, but then again am just under five weeks. Don’t expect to start showing for another few months. “Hey in there,” could feel Ulysses fluttering a bit. “How you doing pup?” Still trying to get used to the idea of being pregnant again. It’s just so soon, was expecting to have a few years before the next pup and yet here we go again. Only this time, I’ll be giving him over to Lewiston and Jenny. Maybe we can trade, I’ll have him the first ten years and then give him to....that would suck too. Maybe I can keep him.

“Papa loves you,” I whispered. “Will always love you, no matter where you are or who you’re with. Know I will always, even when I can’t be at your side.” Now the tears are threatening to fall, so got into the shower, so no one would see them, not even me. Stayed in the shower maybe a little longer then necessary, but after three weeks of tepid trickles at Olson Hall and then the one bath for six people with limited hot water at the Reynolds, you could hardly blame me. The simple luxury of hot water was too much to resist, so I didn’t.

Steamed up the bathroom to the point where you could hardly see a foot in front of you, which was fine. Breathed in all that warm steamy air, ahhhhhhhhhh! Opened up the sinuses and cleared out all that pollen and goop collected in Georgia. Came out of the bathroom in a cloud, rosey pink and slathered in Nivea, John had left a tin on the back of the toilet for me. Mmmmm, wish we could get it over here in the states. Will have to stock up when I get over there in January. That and gummy bears, Coca Cola too. Loves me some German Coke. “Besser geht’s mit Coca-Cola!”

John was back and sitting on the bed sipping coffee out of a Styrofoam go cup. “Got some Sanka for you.”

Made a face, “I hate you.”

“No, you love me.” He held out his cup, “one sip.”

“You’re right, I love you.” Made the most of that sip, taking as big and careful a gulp without burning my tongue too badly. “Blah, you need to put sugar and cream in there.”

“Bitch, bitch, bitch.” He took the cup back. “I learned to drink it black during the wars (pick one) when there was not a grain of sugar or cream in sight.” John held that bit of molded plastic like it was the finest Waterford crystal, “there were too many mornings, when coffee in a tin mess kit was the only warm thing that anyone had that day. The Ardense, Chosin”......then came the thousand yard stare.

Okay, can’t have him stay like that too long. Went down on my knees. “Please Sir,” my Cockney accent was horrible. “Can I have some more?” The movie ‘Oliver’ had been my sister Anna’s favorite, so I got dragged to it a lot.

“What? No.” Yeah, it was stupid. But ‘stupid’ works, which was what I’d hoped for to pull him back to 1978 and away from 1945 and 1950. Had seen Naomi-Mom pull The Colonel out of shit like that enough times to know the more outrageous the statement, the better. “Here, eat your breakfast. Got you huckleberry pancakes and sausage.”

Opened the lid of the ‘to go box’, took a few bites of pancake and then a big suggestive bite of that meat dirigible. Things did not end well, it hit my stomach and promptly had a return engagement.
Beat feet to the toilet before everything came back up. Well almost got there before Vesuvius erupted. Hope the puke stains come out of the carpet. Threw up on, around and finally in the crapper. Christ on a crutch, this is gross!

“Lambkin!” John was knocking on the bathroom door. “Are you alright?!”

“Don’t come in...lahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” was having quite the discussion with ‘Ralph’. “Please just leave me alone for a minute............lahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh....or two.” Was half expecting to see the remnants of that hamburger I had in Atlanta come flying up too. Continued until there was nothing but dry heaves and bile, then finally quiet. Well, Ulysses made it quite plain, no sausage. Damn. And here I was headed to the land where sausage biscuit was considered an art form in another few weeks, fuck a duck.

Took another moment or two to stop shivering, as now I’m freezing. There was another gentle tap on the door, “Lambkin, I’ve got housekeeping here.”

Oh shit. Can’t have that poor cleaning lady handle this. It’s so gross. “Just hand me a rag and Comet, I’ll get it.”

Then came another voice, “Baby. You’re not the first pregnant ‘mega or woman I’ve cleaned up after and you won’t be the last. Besides, your mate here and Mr Jackson was rather persuasive.” Ah, nothing sez loven quite like a crisp $20 dollar bill. Shakily got up off the floor, grabbed a wash cloth for a quick wipe down of myself and the worst of it off the tile behind the toilet, then opened the door. The cleaning lady just shook her head, “Baby. Whatever that was, it sure enough didn’t like you.” John tossed the Paris robe over my shoulders, helped me put my arms in the sleeves, tied the front and left the cleaning lady to do her thing.

We sat outside on the steps leading up to the second floor, leaning into each other. “How can you even stand me right now?” I sobbed into his shirt sleeve.

“Could ask you the same thing Little Flock,” Shepherd said reasonably. Hate it when he does that. Be so damn reasonable when I’m not.

“But I puke and stink and...and....this isn’t your.....”

“True, but he’s part mine because of you and I love Jenny and Lou in equal measure. So how could I be mad at you? Especially after the last four days?”

Hate it when he’s right and all I want do is to be miserable. Damn hormones. Then, couldn’t help myself: “how do you make a hormone?”

“How?”

“Don’t pay her.”

“What?!” Then John laughed in spite of himself. “You know that joke was old when I was a pup?”

“So you mean you fell off your dinosaur laughing?”

He pulled me over his lap, “I’ll ‘dino-sore’ ya!” And gave my butt a few healthy swats. Oohhhhh man, that cleaning lady better hurry up cuz there was some morning wood floating to the surface. Thank the Alpha God, she was coming out as we were rushing back in.

She looked at us over her glasses, “now don’t you go and make that poor ‘mega give you head,” she called after us as the door slammed. “I don’t wanna be back to clean up again.....unless you
gimme a fifty!” No, there were no return engagements, as check out was at 11:00 AM and we had to get back on the road.

Made good time coming back up Route 390 and then to 15A, so it was slightly after 01:00 when the Bug pulled into the parking lot of Southtown Plaza. Figured would pick up some groceries, get home, air things out and then call the Singers to let Karen know we were home. John stood outside the Star Market smoking a cigar waiting for me to get some bread, milk, hamburger, lunch meat and a few other things for a couple of meals, till I could get a more complete shopping trip. Even then, would only buy for a few days, didn’t want to waste money by having to throw anything out or find a home for half a bottle of ketchup.

Came out with a couple paper bags, handing one off to my mate as I passed. Dropped them into the back seat with the duffel bag and other luggage, then kicked over the engine and made the last leg home. ‘Home’, what a temporary concept. Drove up East River Road, as we came on to the Fairwood Apartments sign, I slowed. “Do you want to stop and see Ben and Emma? You haven’t seen her since she was born and Ben needs to see you too.” Really didn’t want to be this gracious, as John has be to back in DC tomorrow and have to have him out at the Monroe County Airport in the morning. But, I know how it feels to be left out and didn’t want my First and his sister to know that slight.

“I really should,” mien General motioned to the turn off. “Let’s see if they’re even home.” Well, they were. Handed over Ben’s present, deciding to stay in the car as John got out, knocked on the door and found himself covered in family. “I’ll phone when you can come and get me,” he called over his shoulder, as Lisa pulled him into the apartment and slammed the door. Yup, I still don’t like you, you Kraut bitch as much as you don’t like me.

Actually it wasn’t a bad thing leaving him off there, will make things easier getting the apartment back in order without having to find something for him to do. Continued up East River Road until pulling onto Scottsdale and then up Countess Drive. “Home again, home again jiggity jig,” the car glided to a stop in front of my building. Got out and stretched, hearing and feeling my spine have its ‘Rice Crispies moment’. Snap, crackle, pop.

Went up the walk, stuck the key in the lock and flung open the door. Was hit in the face by a wall of warm stale air. Yuck. Was so glad I didn’t bring Jeff home to this. Trotted upstairs and went from room to room flinging open windows and putting the air conditioning on fan just to get the air moving. Granted, Rochester in August isn’t much better then DC heat and humidity wise but needed to get the place aired out before even thinking of turning the setting to cool. Took a few trips to the car and back to bring everything in, so was sweating my balls off by the time it was almost done. Ahhhhh, shoot. Still had the mail. Had delivery only stopped until the 1st of the month, so there was prolly something in the box and then had to go on Monday to the Post Office to collect the rest of it. Fuck it. What ever was in there could wait. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh, fuck it three times in a bucket. Went back downstairs, pulled out the key to the mail box and yup, there were a couple of letters.

One was from Readers Digest, did I want a subscription...not really. Another from the Columbia House Record Club, get 10 albums, cassettes or eight tracks for 1 cent. Pass. The last was from the Rochester Police Department. Huh, what did they want? Ripped open the envelope and pulled out the letter. Huh, Detective Howard wants to talk to me in reference to an investigation of a suspicious death. Wonder who got whacked? Should I just toss the letter or....might as well call him.....tomorrow. Right now have too much to do.

Got the groceries put away, pulled the sheets off the bed and put on fresh. Then unpacked my bags, got the dirty clothes out of Johns suit case and got a load of wash going. Anything to get the stink
of ‘other omega’ out of his duds. Yes, yes I am petty and small and anything else you wanna say about me. The new collars and the ‘paper weight de Noor’ went into the underwear drawer. Figured it was safe enough there, who was going to look through my panties for an Iranian crown jewel? It was then my stomach decided to put in it’s opinion....loudly. All I’d had since this morning was a cola to settle my gut and now was being reminded of that fact. Went out to the kitchen, got out the bread, peanut butter and strawberry jam. Mmmmm, crunchy. Stood at the sink, eating the sandwich and drinking milk right out of the bottle.

After lunch, called Karen. “Singer residence.”

“Hi Karen, Castiel here.” Licked a spot of jam off my fingers.

“Well hello there, how’re you or more important.....where’re you?” Could hear the back ground noise of the TV and the sound of something banging on a pot.

“I’m back home, rolled in about an hour or so ago. Would like to swing by and pick Jeff up.”

Was it my imagination or was there a hesitation in her voice for just a second before she chirped, “why of course. I’ll have his things ready when you get here.”

“Brought something back for you and Sargeant Major,” it was more chow chow from Mrs Livsey and the moon shine that I bought coming back in the cab from my night at Suzies. Talk about ‘Hello Life, Goodbye Columbus’. We talk a few more minutes before hanging up, better call over to Ben’s and let John know I’m off to pick up our son.

The line rings a few times before, “Hello, Winchester residence.” Oh boy, get to talk to Lisa (yes, that is sarcasm you sense).

“Uh, wie gehts. Is Herr General there?” Nothing says awkward quite like talking to Frau Lisa Winchester.

“Ya,” she said flatly. “Please hold.” The receiver clunked loudly in my ear. She didn’t like me any more then I liked her. Even the time we were forced to spend together when she came home from the hospital after having Emma didn’t improve our relationship. It was like France and Germany between wars, just eye balling each other to see who did ANYTHING ‘funny’.

After a minute or two, could hear John’s voice getting louder, till the receiver was picked up and “hiya Lambkin.”

“Hello mien Shepherd, I’m off to go collect Jeff from the Singers. Do you want me to pick up on the way back?”

“That’s okay,” he said. “I’ve been invited to stay for dinner here and then Ben’ll drive me back over.”

Counted to 10 quickly, had wanted to have a quiet family dinner, just the three of us, but then again it looks like we’re both going to have one. Only in different places. Okay fine, time to be the bigger person. Again. They hadn’t seen their grand-dad and father-in-law in months, while I on the other hand, had just gotten to spend the last day and a half in a small car and hotel room with him. “No problem. Will see you later then. Love you.”

“Love you too. Bye now.” And John hung up.

The laundry, in the mean time, had gone through the spin cycle and stopped, tossed it in the dryer then made ready to go. Got the Singers presents out of the duffel, picked up the keys, shoved the
wallet in my back pocket, then went down stairs. Oh joy, more time in the car. On the way over, began plotting....er....planning the move at the end of the month. Hmmm, pack up is on Monday the 22nd. Will strike out the next day to drive down to Annapolis on Tuesday, rest up Wednesday, start out again on Thursday to get to Fort Lee, then report on Friday. If everything goes right, will be assigned quarters, sign in, meet my classmates, see if any of their mates wanna earn a few bucks watching Jeff. It’ll be perfect.

Yeah, right. I’ve been around long enough to know that NEVER happens, but a guy can dream can’t he?

Drove over to Riverknoll, anxious to see my babe. How much had he changed in a month? Taller, stockier, more little boy like? Is he saying anything other then ‘Irv’? Chugged up the hill, past my old apartment building, (looks like they fixed the window) to where Karen and Bobby lived. Pulled up and stopped, then just sat. The fear that had me worst kept me stuck to the seat, Jeffery George Hugh Ashton, Benjamin Novac Winchester would’ve forgotten me.

Then straightened up, come on Novac! You’re a paratrooper. A big strong man who jumps out of perfectly good airplanes. Should have that tattooed on my chest, except officers don’t get tattoos, it’s gauche. Picked up the presents from the passengers seat, stepped out, slammed the door manfully and marched up to their door. Pressed the bell and automatically fell into parade rest.

The door swung open a moment later, “Cas, it’s great to see you.” Karen exclaimed, as she stepped aside to let me through. “My goodness, airborne school has done you a world of good. Look at those muscles.” Karen tossed her arms around me for a hug, then she stiffened, planted her nose on the side of my neck and inhaled like it was a fattie of ‘Toledo Windowbox.’ “You’re pregnant! Again!”

“Kinda sorta.” Well didn’t that just blow my manly man thing all ta shit. “Forgot my pills for a few days and saw John down in DC on the way.....SHAZAM....here I am. The bat’s back in the cave.” Did not want to have to explain the whole ‘bond pup’ and that Lewiston was the father and it was a ‘great honor’ and all the rest of that stuff. No. Just want to breeze on through this, give their gifts, grab my pup and the other valuables I left with them and leave.

But Karen wasn’t hearing it. “You MUST stay for dinner. Bob’s been wondering how you’ve been and to be a little selfish, want to spend just a little more time with Jeff.” Now I feel two inches tall in three inch jealous heels. Bigger person, need to be that bigger person....again. Speaking of that little rascal, felt a tug at my trouser leg. Look down and there he is, Jeff was hanging on and yanking himself up to stand on his little bare feet. He giggled and then fell back on his diapered butt. Course that’s when little lower lip started to waver.

“Baby boy!” dropping the bag with the presents as I swooped down and picked him up. “You loooooking good!”

Course, that’s when he lets out a howl, squirms and reaches for Karen. “Maamaaaa!”

Mama? Put a knife in my heart and twist. Now I wanna cry.


His little brow furrowed. “Maamma?”

“No Sweetie, Papa.” She took a step closer to me. “Your Papa is home.” Karen slowly settled the whiny pup in my arms. “Put him to your neck so he can catch your scent. Think he was startled there for a moment. All he needs is just a moment to remember.”
Jeff wiggled a bit but then his little nose mashed up against my neck and he reared back, his little face lit with surprise. “Paapapapapapapapa! Kisssth!” And a sloppy kiss landed on my lips. “Irv.”

“He’s still saying that?”

“Never stopped.”

Now I held my boy and took in his milky puppy scent, the softness of him, the weight....damn this pup is heavy. Sat down on the couch, settled him on my lap and took stock of Jeff. His hair was dark brown and decorated his head in soft ringlets, freckles danced across his nose and apple cheeks like the host of heaven came down just to kiss him. Eyes like the jungles of Panama, green and shining looked back at me. That was Dean’s contribution to the genetic miracle that was Jeffrey George Hugh Ashton Benjamin Winchester. His face was an expressive palate of wonder, curiosity yet with a bit of trepidation that would either set him laughing or crying at a moment’s notice.

Held him now, rocking to and fro. “Love you Sweet boy, love my puppy. Will never leave you again.” Even as I said it, knew it was a promise impossible to keep. But will do my best to have him at my side for as long as I was able.

About that time, the front swung open and Sargeant Major came in. “Hey there boy, good to see ya! Looks like Gravity U did.....” he stopped dead... “you...a...world”....his nose wiggling like an excited rabbit. “You smell like........idjit......you’re pregnant again aren’t you?”

“Well if you’re gonna put it that way,” I said in a mock cheery voice. “I’ll just say that there’s a uterine parasite that the doctors found. Don’t worry, he’ll be outta there in 8 months.”

Bobby ran a hand through his thinning hair. “Boy, you don’t make things easy do you?”

Dropped the charade, “No. suspect I don’t.” Sighed and leaned back on the couch, Jeff cuddled on my chest. He’s tucked his thumb in a comfortable spot in his mouth and was happily drooling on the front of my shirt. “I messed up on my birth control pills and went into heat down in DC. Only, I didn’t know it at the time.”

Top was aghast. “How do you not know you were in heat?!”

Now was a little hot under the collar, “because the last time I had one, I was 11 years old. All I remembered from that time was that it sucked canal water mit vigor. John was over from Europe, we bumped uglies and I went through jump school pregnant.” Okay, the small embarrassing truth covered up by the big not so embarrassing lie—that I don’t have to explain in any further detail. “It just kinda happened.” Now the horribly sad fact is that my two favorite people will never know the truth and what’s worse, I was just fine with that. “So, there was no real point of reference I could point to. And John was just VERY happy to see me.”

“I’ll bet,” Sargeant Major growled. He dropped down on the couch beside me. “It’s not like you shouldn’t have the opportunity to have pups if you want. But who’s going to take care of em when you gotta go to the field? And you WILL go to the field. Heard next years REFORGER is going to be planned to start in January. Some ‘brain child’ in the ‘Puzzle Palace’ decided NATO had to learn how to fight Russians in the snow. That our troops were not going to be like Napoleon’s or Hitler’s and go unprepared into a winter campaign. So you’re going to get there five or six months into your pregnancy and your commander will not give a shit if you are or not.”

Oh. My. Alpha. God. This answer had to have more confidence then I actually had. “John or Dean will taking care of Jeff and if they can’t, Lady Reynolds-she’s the mate of General Lewiston
Reynolds. He’s going to be second in command at British First Corps and our families have a
Profound Bond, she can.” Or cross my fingers that I can get at least one to do it.

“You mean will their MATES watch over Jeff.” The NCO snorted. “Cuz your Warrant Officer and
General will be neck deep in REFORGER, the same as you. Are you trusting enough to leave my
godson with those harpies?”

“I’ll have to,” my voice was so soft as I pulled this precious bundle to my chest. “The same way
I’d have to trust them or a total stranger to get Jeff and Ulysses to safety should ‘the balloon go
up’.” To be stationed in Germany is to be living on a powder keg, never knowing when a spark
could set the whole thing off. Knew if that happened, would lucky to survive the first assault and
impossibly lucky to ever find my boys again.

“Aw Pup,” Now Karen sat to either side of Jeff and me. “I’m just worried that you bit off more
then you could chew.”

“I know,” sometimes I wonder that likewise. “But then again, made it this far. If I can go through
summer camp, an internship and jump school pregnant, can do OBC and REFORGER the same
way.” Well, enough with the heavy stuff, “brought you something from Benning.” Put Jeff on my
hip, got up from the couch and went over to where the bag I’d dropped on the floor lay. “Chow
chow from Omega Livsey, she’s the commanders mate. And a bottle of home made corn liquor, I
bought....er....I bought.” Think we can safely skip, how I got it.

Sargeant Major opened the bottle, sniffed, then took a sip, then a gulp. “Mmmmmmm, that’s some
good corn.” He smiled. “Haven’t had that anything like that since my last tour in Nam. Had this
good ole boy from the eastern mountains of Tennessee, who made this still that was a
work of art. Apparently his family been doing it for close to a hundred years and that beta could
brew up some mighty fine booze outta a number 10 can of creamed corn.” Then came the 1000
yard stare, “too bad that son of a bitch stepped on that mine.”

Could figure really easy how that turned out. Okay, on to bigger and better things. “Um how’d
everyone do at camp this year?” And Bobby was back.

Karen got dinner put together while her mate and I talked about camp, who did well, not so well
and oh crap-have you considered a different field of endeavor? “Have you heard from any of the
guys that graduated?”

“We got a few post cards and letters,” Top Kick took one more sip from the bottle before closing it
up. “Larry and Big Mike are out a Fort Sill going to cannon cocker school, Lilith is in Germany
assigned to the ‘Berlin Brigade’ and this is one for the books. Uriel is in Turkey, but he’s still
waiting to go to OBC. He’s found an omega to mate.....”

“Uriel is mated?” Okay, this is interesting. And makes things a little safer for Calvin but not much.
Uriels family could still go after him to recoup the money they lost when he ran, but only if he’s in
a state that recognizes the Fugitive Omega Act. Thank the Alpha God, Oklahoma don’t, which
means Calvin has to lay low out there in Sooner State. “Wow, he got over Calvin fast, not that
that’s a bad thing or anything........considering........sooooo, Turkey huh? The Rock really inhales
canal water mit vigor. Who’s dick did he step on?” Okay Novac, cool it. You’re babbling and
Bobby’s too fast of the up take.

“You never can tell,” he said, eyes narrowing. You could see by the look on his face, the NCO
wanted to ask a few pointed questions but that’s about the time Karen called us to the table for
dinner. Pork chops, peas and mashed potatoes. Got to try out the chow chow (pickled cabbage,
green tomatoes and green peppers-yum) and tell the story of how I came by it. “You ended up at
General Liveys for dinner because the ‘cheese eat’en’ civilian running the ‘Q’ ratted you out to the commander?"

"Yup. Apparently, they like to keep tabs on who’s visiting and if they should be pointed out for a ‘warm Fort Benning welcome’. Made a face, ‘can also see that running the other way too. That if you screwed up royally, the commander would know about it for a ‘warm Fort Benning ass chewing before you went as the Army’s representative to Greenland.”

"Ah government employees,” Top sighed. He took a big bite of chow chow, then added a touch more to the plate. “Can’t live with em, can’t kill em cuz they multiply like roaches.”

Dessert was strawberry rhubarb pie, mmmm. Will miss Karens pies. Not that I couldn’t make something just as good, but it’s nice to have someone else bake for a change. Jeff sat on my lap all through dinner, as I spooned mushed up peas into his mouth, meat cut up fine along with some of the chow chow. Which he liked and wanted more of. “Irv Papa Irv!” Guess when you’re this age, you kinda double up on what you know how to say. “Gook!”

“Chow chow.” I said absently tucking a bit more into his mouth. He was like a baby bird, all mouth and flutter. Of course that thought brought up....“wanna hear the epic tale of Waxman and the Woodpeckers?” It didn’t take long for the lovely dignified Karen Singer to be on the floor braying like mule, she was laughing so hard.

Took a little while after dinner to round up all of Jeff’s and my stuff and got it in the car. Then came the goodbye. Felt a little bad for them, Bobby and Karen had cared, loved and adored my little man for the past month and now had to give him back. What’s worse, we’ll be gone at the end of the month. Which was the part I hated about being a brat. But it was also the part I loved about being a brat, especially when my family had pretty much wore out their welcome. Karen and Bobby kissed and cuddled the pup until together they laid him in my arms. “Take care little one,” Karen put one more kiss on his brow.

“Mama,” Jeff said sleepily. “Baba.”

“Baba?”

“That’s me,” the usually tough and stern Sargeant Major turned a becoming shade of pink. “He couldn’t wrap his mouth around ‘Bobby’.”

John hadn’t gotten back yet by the time we rolled up in front the apartment. Could hardly fault him for wanting to spend time with his family. Except Jeff and I his family too, and yeah that sounds rather selfish but there you have it. Now am kind of tired. Had spent way too much time on the road, then shopping and a bit of an emotional dinner. “Come on kiddo, let’s take a nap and when we wake up Daddy will be here.” Or let me put it this way, HE BETTER BE.

Carried Jeff into the bedroom and lay him down on the changing table. “Okay Dude, let’s take a look at the diaper.” Peeked in...“Oh Jesus, Mary and Joseph!” He’d filled his nappy and it stunk to high heaven. Peeled the shitty thing off and tossed the reeking mess into the near by diaper pail. Wiped off the worst of it before heading off to the bath. Checked the diaper bag, mench! There’s only two left. Will have to get more first thing tomorrow morning, before or after taking John to the airport. His flight leaves a little after 10:00, so have to get him there at least by 09:30.

Took my little man to the bathroom, “come on kiddo. Let’s get that butt washed. Get you nice and clean and smelling sweet again. Okay?”

“Bumpo.” He waved his arms and laughed. Then peed all over my front.
“I love you dearly Jeffery and would die for you if need be. But to be honest.” Looked down at the shirt soaked in puppy piss, “I REALLY didn’t miss this. Will have to see what Doctor Spock says about toilet training.” Also made a mental note to see where Karen stopped off in ‘Mohicans’ or get another book in the Fenimore Cooper series. Got the water running in the shower then lay Jeff down on the bathmat while I shucked off my clothes. Stuck my hand in, there we go, just right. Picked him up and stepped into the warm stream.

Got him soaped up and rinsed off, blowing raspberries on his plump belly. Karen must have made sure the pup didn’t starve cuz he sure is a heavy weight. “Okay Champ, you sit right down there while Papa gets clean, okay?” My little guy just laughed, splashed and babbled. Some of it was babe talk, but in the mix were actual words.

“Bbbbbbaabababa, Bumpo........bbababbbbb.....llaaaaaa....Mamamamaa.......Irv........bababababa, Papa........Irv......bababababa......Bobby,” Then he grabbed my leg, dug in his fingers (crap, gotta trim his nails. Geeze Wolverine, do I look like the Hulk to you?) and pulled himself up on his chubby little legs. “Wuv ‘ou Papa.”

“WAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!” Dropped down to my knees and looked into that little pink happy face with those big banjo green eyes. “Say it again.”

“Irv.”

“Come on, say ‘wuv ou.”

“Baba.”

“Shit.”

“Thit.”

Oh shi....er....dam...hydroelectric....darn it. Now have to be careful around him. Or little ‘Pol Parrot’ here will pick up all the things I don’t want him learning to say.

“Wuv ou Papa.” THAT’S MY BOY!

“Love you too Jeff. With all my heart and soul.” Wrapped my arms around his soft, pudgy body and held him to my chest. Our love-fest was cut short when the water turned very cold very quickly. Oh man, forgot the hot water tank wasn’t all that big here. But at least it was better then Olson Hall. Geeze I hope the BOQ’s at Fort Lee are better then what was at Benning. Got the water shut off, pushed back the shower curtain and stepped out of the tub. Sat on the toilet seat, snagged a towel, letting the little guy stand on my thighs as I rubbed him down. He giggled and ‘Irv’d’ and I just drank it all in. Catching up on every little nuance of the Jeff that I missed these past five weeks.

He grew an inch or two, got a pound or two or three or four. A part of me wished I’d never gone to jump school, to miss even a few weeks of his life, was to miss so much. Now memorized the curve of his ear, counted the freckles on that little button nose, the way his dark hair curled, those Panama green eyes. Picking out the bits of Dean and myself, then those blends and things that were as unique as his name, Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin Winchester.

After a little while got up because my legs were falling asleep. “Come on there Sunshine, let’s get some three cornered britches on you.”

“Irv.”
“Whatever you say.”

Got back to the bedroom, set him on the changing table, then vaselined, powdered and diapered his butt. Glanced over at the clock radio on the bedside table. It was a tick before 09:00 PM and John wasn’t back yet. At this point, figured he’ll get here when he gets here (since I gave him a key) and I’m not waiting up. Settled into bed with Jeff at my side. Shut the bedroom door just in case the little scamp climbs out of bed to crawl around. The last thing I need is to have him take a tumble down the stairs. Had the feeling this pup was going to be no stranger to the emergency room and didn’t want to start his career early.

Had drifted off to a light doze when a dip in the mattress brought me around enough to slide a hand under the pillow to grasp ‘the Lovers Kiss’. “Stand down,” heard Johns voice come softly. “It’s just me Lambkin. Go back to sleep.”

Course now I’m awake. “Careful, have Jeff here with me.” Don’t want him to rolled on by accident.

“Close your eyes and cover up my Little Bull’s, I’m gonna turn on the light.” Could hear the bedside lamp click on and see the light seeping in under my eye lids. The blood rushed noisily as I opened my eyes and tried to adjust to the brightness. John was in the process of taking of his shirt and sliding out of his shoes.

“Hi.” I said sleepily. “What’s up with the family?”

“Every ones good,” he said, unbuckling his belt and letting the pants and boxers slide to the floor. “Emma’s growing like a weed, girl is gonna be a toe head just like her dad. Ben is looking forward to the move, got a letter from Dean, apparently the K-town High foot ball coach is an old brat friend of his and is always looking for a good ‘field general’ quarterback.” There was pride in my Shepherds voice, that his grandson was going into a leadership position, as what else would a Winchester be, but up in front, leading the way. “Oh, and he liked the t-shirt you brought him.

“Cool, glad Ben liked it and hope he gets the spot.” A part of me wondered how John would feel about me up in front leading the way. Or would he not want his favorite piece of ass going to the woods? Not something to bring up right now. Or, what he doesn’t know, won’t kill me.

“Oh, their pack up date is next Wednesday,” John mentioned offhandedly. Almost like it was an after thought. “Mind giving Lisa a hand?”

‘Would like to give her a fist’, but smiled sweetly and said of course. Would LOVE to help. Sigh, Ben is my First and part of the whole deal is to be there when he needs me. And part of it would be to clean out that ‘hog hole’ he calls a bedroom. Ben’s got a little slippy with cleaning his room since his dad went overseas and Lisa has been busy with the new pup. Speak of the devil and look who shows up, Jeff decided to join the party and make his presence known. Our pup let out a beller that would wake the dead.

“Shhhhh, shhhhh, Sweetheart. Daddy’s home. Go back to sleep.” Kid wouldn’t shut up until something went into his mouth, so put him to my breast. Jeff latched on to the nipple and began to suck like crazy. Pregnancy had got the milk flowing again and the little guy was making the most of it. John watched for a moment, a tender look on his face, before sliding under the covers.

“You’re so beautiful, when you’re nursing. It just brings out....” John shook his head ruefully. “Oh this is going to sound silly. But it brings out the alpha in me. It’s home and hearth......family.” His lips were winnowing my shoulder, the growl coming through was low, protective and pulled up the pheromones from that primitive side (the one, no omega could control) that called for mate,
“Not silly at all, Love. Had turned over on my side to get into a more comfortable position. He reached over my shoulder, cupping a hand to our son’s head, stroking the dark hair with a thumb pad. “Just makes me want to ‘do’ for my Alpha all the more.”

“There’s something very very alluring about it too”, his growing erection pillowed in cleft of my bottom confirmed his words. “Move your leg up a bit.” Shepherd repositioned himself and gently pushed his cock head between my neither lips, letting the slick build as he nipped and sucked my neck. Till the area was wet enough for that ole pocket monster to be in the pink. He rocked to and fro, until his knot took. “Know you may not wanna hear it, but pregnancy so becomes you.”

This whole thing was sexy, but not. Nurturing but had me cumming into the sheets without him using anything but his voice, teeth and knot. Never had I felt so loved as a mate and a papa. Remembered something her Mummy-ship had said about a moment like this. Hadn’t believed her at the time but now I do.

It was a little while before John’s knot went down and was able to get up and put Jeff into his crib. My little starfish on a rock lay sprawled out, snoring softly, his tummy full of milk. The sleepless nights, the pain of pregnancy and child birth and the extra work just to stay even with every man jack alpha/beta was worth it. “He’s really something, our little miracle.” John had gotten up and joined me at the crib, gazing down at our pup.

“Yes he is,” took a moment to wind up the mobile over his crib. The giraffes and zebras went round and round as the lullaby sang, ‘Talk to the Animals’. “It took everything I had to drive away and leave him for all those weeks. What am I gonna do during REFORGER or worse... his first day of school or when he leaves for college?! Or when he brings home that girl or omega he wants to mate?! Nobody is good enough for MY boy!

John laughed, “I don’t think you have to worry about his first day of school or college for a few years yet. REFORGER, that.....ahhhhh....that....we’ll figure it out. It’s not for another five months. Don’t worry until you get there, your future ulcers will thank you.” He chucked my chin, “I’ll make sure that Jeff’s either with me, Dean, Sam or Jenny.....or there is someone else.” My Alpha looked thoughtful, “an old friend who retired in Germany, he and his mate occasionally puppy sits. Bet ole Red Ball could do it in a pinch.”

“Red Ball?” Interesting nickname.

“Retired First Sargeant Rufus Turner,” John smiled. “Best, bravest and craziest driver who ever drove the ‘Red Ball Express’ from Calais to Marseille. Think I can ask him. Just have to bring some Johnny Walker Blue though to get him to open the door. He’s turned into a cranky old cuss in his golden years.”

“Unlike you of course,” I elbowed him in the ribs. “You who’s mellowed with age, like good wine and sauerkraut.”

“I’ll sauerkraut ya!” Earned a swat on the butt, which got him another poke in the ribs which turned into a wrestling match on the carpet which I happily lost.

A little while later.....“You know you have a flight to catch in a few hours,” glanced at the clock radio that was now on the floor. It had been a grand match up, in the almost mythic tradition of Naomi Novac vs Luis the Beast in Havana. We kinda rocked and rolled the bedroom and knocked over the bedside table and had shaken up everything else. How Jeff slept through it all, have no idea, but the pup did. Can see it now this little guy is going to be a joy to drag out of bed in the
future to get him to school on time.

“I’ll sleep on the plane,” John said lazily. His knot was locked in my pinks again, so we had a while before either of us was going anywhere. He reached over and pulled down a couple of pillows and a blanket, so we’d be a bit more comfortable. “Don’t get a chance to see you that often, so gotta make some hay while the sun shines.”

“When do you think you’ll be back?” Got myself settled into a position where my vaginal muscles could milk that big cock of his.

He sighed, “not for a while.” Then John looked surprised, then smirked. “Oh my, keep doing that and I’m going be missing my flight and not a soul is gonna blame me. Um, ah hem, think you’ll be in Germany the next time we can get together. Too much happening right now, was lucky to be able to come this time. The boss isn’t gonna let me come back to DC anytime soon. Though, he’s got a trip planned to California within the month. But you never know. The political climate is changing and anything can happen. That ‘Peanut Farmer’ isn’t gonna be in the White House forever and when he’s out, you are gonna see something interesting start to happen.”

“Interesting, like how?”

He tapped a finger to the side of his nose. “Haig told me to keep it on the QT, but it has a lot to do with a fella named ‘Ronald Reagan’.”

Made a rude noise, “the ‘Bedtime for Bonzo’ guy?” The post theater at Fort Amador, Panama had played that movie as a co-feature for three months straight and had gotten really sick of it. Gabe memorized most of the lines from it and could do a spot on imitation of that Reagan fella.

“And the president of the Screen actors guild and former Governor of California. Yeah, that guy. Holy crap, you keep doing that and I’ll be walking bowlegged for weeks.”

“Do what?” I said innocently and of course did it again.

“That, you little minx.” John gave my ass another light swat. “Will you let me finish a coherent thought before we need to take this out to the living room?” His voice took a very serious tone. “This goes no further then your ears. Can you promise me that?” I nodded quickly.

“Reagan is going to be making a run for the presidency in two years. The boss man is in talks to be part of his inner circle. If he becomes president, this guy is my ticket to a third star and command of Eighth Army in Korea.”

Huh? Bonzo’s Dad can do that? “Wow. Got my fingers crossed.” Knew that things got political once the starts fell or to get them to fall on your shoulders. But talk like this was just way above my head. Knew John was ambitious and talented, he had to have been to have gotten this far but talent and ambition only got you so far. The rest came from knowing the right people and a word put in the right ear. Which also means, I’ve got to distance my career from his, or no one will take me seriously or will be able to get anything on my own merit. Until the time came when I wanted a bird or star on my shoulders. Then I will name drop till the cows come home.

But anywho in the mean time.....the cows could wait as the wild rumpus continued till the sun came up to find us both bleary eyed and walking like we’d been rode hard and put away wet. Which was a pretty good description considering. Ulysses was a happy little boy as he fluttered about my womb, all nice and full of John’s essence. Didn’t help me much as I tried to keep down some toast and tea. John was nodding into his instant coffee and Jeff was banging his spoon on the table as he squirmed and bounced on my lap. Glad the squirt got some sleep, his parents done fucked themselves silly most of the night.
Got my mate to the airport a while later, “love you Shepherd.” We stood in the parking lot, lips locked, clinging to each other and our pup. Geeze, add some sappy 40’s music, turn everything black and white then change out to a train station and would think John was going to war. But I didn’t care what we looked like, all I wanted was take in his scent, that lemon aftershave and the smooth feel of that ugly Hawaiian shirt. My mate, lover, father of our pup, Shepherd to his little flock.

He pulled away for a gasp of air. “Love you Lambkin, love you my Little Bull,” John kissed me fiercely again. “Write, send pictures.....suppose you need a camera first, when you do...take lots of pictures. But take care of yourself, Jeff and the new guy”. People walked around us, on their way to....where ever. Need time, wish there was all kinds of time to really get to know this man. Tiny bits of time, here and there, it’s just not enough. But I’ll take what I can get.

“Daddadadadaaad!” Jeff bawled out, drooling and scenting, looking up into his fathers face with those big green eyes. The eyes that said, ‘stay, don’t go’.

Drove down the road, making a mental check list of the things I had to do today. Had to pick up some more diapers at Two Guys...check. Got there, found a cart and put Jeff in the pup seat and wheeled him up and down the aisles. Dumped in a couple of boxes of diapers, a shirt and overalls that were on sale as my little man grown out of what he had, then a sippy cup. Cuz he needs to learn how to drink from a cup instead of a bottle or boob. Alphas, snickered with the thought, they all revert back to bottles and boobs once they hit puberty and never look back.

The Star Market was the next stop, pick up some more milk and a few groceries. Then to the post office to pick up the mail Not that there was a lot of it. Some bills, come ons for stuff and a letter from my sponsor in K-town. Opened it up, huh. Her name is First Lieutenant Meg Masters. Welcome to Germany and the K-town area. She’s put my name in for base housing, made suggestions as to what to expect on arrival, can’t wait to meet you....blah, blah, blah. Will have to write her back.

Now was getting tired, the marathon sex of last night into the morning had gotten to me. “Come on kiddo,” Glanced over at Jeff who was in his car seat gumming on a red plastic doughnut from this pile up Fischer Price thing Karen had gotten for him to play with. She’d picked up a few toys for him, like the play telephone and some more stuffed animals. He had a couple of rattles already, a teddy and ball but hadn’t gotten him too much more in the toy department. As bad as it sounds, hadn’t thought much about it, hadn’t grown up with that many toys because of having to move all the while. Maybe I can fix that now.

“Come on Kiddo,” let’s go home. “Daddy and Papa played way too hard last night.”

Jeff looked over and tipped his little head to the side quizzically. “Papa pay?”

“He is now. But yes Papa played.” Oh my Alpha God, the pup talked!

We got home shortly there after, hauled the groceries bags up the stairs, my little man chattering like a magpie. Got Jeff cleaned up, changed and put him down for a nap. Was putting the groceries away, when I noticed the letter from the police department sitting on the counter. Picked it up and
was half a mind of tossing it out, no. This won’t go away if I don’t do something about it. Detective Donovan Howard was not the kind a guy who’d just go away. So make the call, get the crap over with.

Took a deep breath and dialed the number. There were a few rings and then.....“Detective Howard.”

Froze up just at the sound of that voice, “hello? Anyone there?”


“Well, wondered when you’d finally pop up.” That doesn’t sound good. “Yeah, need to talk to you. When can you come down to the department?”

“Would you mind telling me what this is about?”

“I prefer to discuss that once you get here.” Son of a bitch. Should’ve tossed that letter. Agreed to come down to the department tomorrow around 10:00 am. Told him would see him then and hung up.

Shit! I don’t know anything more about Paul Mirra Jr’s death now then I did at the time. But, this will be a great opportunity to show Jeff off to the folks at the front desk and up in the Tech Unit.

Tim and Sam Colt hadn’t seen Jeff since he was born. But in the mean time, am just tired and joined my little guy for a nap. Later put together dinner for the both of us, settled in front of the TV just long enough to watch Walter Cronkite and see there was nothing but crap there after, switched it off and went to bed.

The next morning, did the shit, shower and shave thing, dressed Jeff in the new clothes I’d bought for him yesterday, tried to have some breakfast and threw it up a minute later. Oh come on pup! Granted Jeff didn’t let me eat breakfast either but had hoped the FNG would’ve been different. Managed to keep down some milk and soda crackers. Being the best when I’m pregnant, my ass. Easy to say John when YOU’RE NOT the one carrying the pup for nine months or praying at the porcelain altar. “You ready Freddie?” Jeff was sitting on the floor with his telephone and red doughnut. He tossed his arms up, “Papapapapapaapapa! Irv!”

“Come on there ‘Irv’ let’s get this over with.” Hoisted him on to my hip, slung the diaper bag over the other shoulder then headed downstairs and out the door. Whew, feels like it’s gonna be a scorcher today. Blah, the humidity is almost as bad as in Georgia. Went to the Bug, opened the doors, rolled down the windows to get some of the heat out, then covered the car seat with a towel, so Jeff won’t burn his little legs. Strapped him in, shut the door and then climbed in the drivers side. And climbed back out when the red doughnut went flying out the window. Okay, no open windows for you. Tossed the hunk of grass covered (the lawn had just been mowed) plastic in the back seat, kicked over the engine to head off down Countess Drieve.

The drive down Mt Hope Ave was rather pleasant. Rush hour was way over so, traffic was light into the city. Maybe will stop for dogs at Nick Tahoes and have a picnic up in Highland Park. The good feelings left when I got to the Public Safety Building and couldn’t find a place near by to park. Fu....phewie a duck. Had to park about five blocks away, pumped a slew of dines in the meter, hoped we’d get back before times up and there’s a ticket slapped on the windshield.

It was hotter downtown the out in the ‘burbs. More humid too. Jeff is fussing a little and Ulysses was fluttering like a little mad man, okay pups, I’ll get you (Jeff) inside and (Ulysses) will find a Coke machine for a ginger ale. Geeze he’s been like a moth around a bug zapper since I got up this
morning. Must be Johns essence, that stuff kicks ass like a Missouri mule. Was a sweating, soggy mess by the time we were walking up the police department steps. Flung open the door and just about was ready to drop after hitting a wall of cool air. Oh man, gotta sit down a minute. Plopped down on the bench next to the door, the one I always sat on when waiting for Sargeant Warren to come and get me for the new assignment when I started as an intern here last August.

The lobby hadn’t changed any, the front desk on one side, bank of elevators on the other, Sargeant Warren standing in front of me......what?!

“Novac? That you? Ya’ll looking strack in that high and tight, where’d all the muscles come from?”

“Hi Sargeant Warren. The muscles and hair cut are curtsey of Fort Benning. I went to jump school last month.” Stood up for a moment, turning slowly around, letting him have a good look at what three weeks of grueling exercise could do for a body. Grinned, snapped my fingers and gave my hips a roll, that would make Flip Wilson’s Geraldine jealous. “Parachuted out of a perfectly good airplane five times, got my wings, had em slapped on tight and now I’m just a super duper para trooper! Alright!”

He looked approvingly at the good Gravity U did for me before wiggling an index finger at Jeff. Course the pup thought this was a great game and reached over to catch it in his little fists.

“Dada!” The look on the black NCO’s face was priceless. Shock, surprise, a hint of guilt and finally...amusement. But not before he’d looked around quick to see if anyone was in earshot.

“Don’t ‘dada’ me pup,” he waggled the finger Jeff was starting to gnaw on. “You don’t have a good enough tan to be one of mine.”

Snorted back a giggle, “I think it’s the uniform. His daddy’s in the service, so anyone in uniform is going to be ‘dada’ to him.”

Warren smirked, “oh I can’t wait for him to meet Sam and say that. Sam’ll shit a brick. It will be beau-te-ful!” Then he yelped and pulled back his finger. “OWWWW! Pup’s a damn crocodile.” The sergeant reached over and gently lifted Jeff’s lips apart. Sure enough there were two little teeth starting to poke through on the top and bottom. Which explains why the red doughnut became his favorite toy. No more breast feeding for you kiddo. “My momma always used a piece of wet cloth to help with teething or a little whiskey on the gums. So might wanna get a bottle.” Then his nose caught the scent of..... “you pregnant again?”

“Can’t stay away from it,” I joked. “Yeah, kinda messed up on my birth control and yup here we go again.”

“Better you then my ole lady,” the good sergeant sighed. “So what brings you down this way?”

Back to business, “I’m here to see Detective Howard. He sent me a letter regarding an investigation into a suspicious death. Guess he has some questions, even though I told him everything I knew already about Paul Mirra. So have no idea what he wants and wouldn’t tell me, so....here I am.”

Sargeant Warrens eyes narrowed. “Come on. Let’s get you a visitors badge and leave ‘Jaws’ here with Miss Clara. Am sure she’d love to see him and wouldn’t mind watching the little tike while you’re upstairs.” Course she was happy to see me, she, Sargeant Longueville, Penny and Audrey were all still there. Jeff of course was in his glory. He had a new fan club; people to adore him, spoil and bend to his every puppy whim. So he didn’t even look back as I walked away and over to
the elevators. Little brat.

Went up to the second floor and got off the elevator. As I remembered the detective division was to the left and down a long hall (When had this place got so creepy with all the flickering florescent lights?) then should be right at the end. Yup, there it was. Tapped on the door then opened it, peeking in. Everything looked the same as was the last time I was there. The desks, file cabinets and all the rest of the shit was in the same place. Including Howard Donovan. Still as mean and grumpy looking as ever.

“Novac, well slap my ass and call me Sally. Really didn’t expect you to show up.” There was that smirk and intimating stance. “Since you’re here, have a seat. Got a few questions for you.”

Considering the last time I was here was just for typing and the time before that, he had me cornered against a file cabinet, thumping a finger on my belly all but accusing me of having something to do with Paul Mirra’s death, had no idea what to expect this time. Sat down on the wooden chair he’d pointed to across the desk from him and waited. I’m patient, can beat their lie detector, so will just zip my lip and wait for the detective to start talking.

Det. Howard sat down and began flipping through a file, then causally tossed an 8 by 10 photo across the desk. “Remember him?”

It was Tommy Didio. Some mug shot from one of his many arrests. “Yeah, so what?”

“Heard you slicked for him and Sam when they butted heads that day over at the Blue Gardenia.” Howard leaned back in his chair, “he thought you were a hot little piece of ass. Especially when you were ready to pin his hand to the table with that little toad sticker you carry. Tommy was ready to bend you over the table and knot you into the linguine. From what I hear he wanted to see you again.”

Could feel my cheeks start to burn. How would’ve known about me slicking.....Sam wouldn’t have told......bet dollars ta donuts though Tommy or one of his men did. Didn’t care much for you before Detective, but now I really don’t like you. Will give you a couple of more seconds and then I’m sooooo outta here. “Again, so what? Haven’t seen him since that day and don’t wanna.”

“Well, ain’t this your lucky day.” The detective pitched another picture across the desk. “You got your wish.”

The photo was of a room and a body a wash in bullet holes and blood. OH SHIT! Knew that spray pattern. Had made it in targets enough times when Lucky Lucino’s retired body guard had taught me how to fire a Thompsons submachine gun. Someone had taken out Tommy Didio and didn’t spare any expense on the ammo. “Damn. When did this happen? Where did it happen?” Tommy had been an ugly pug in life and death didn’t improve his looks any. A Thompsons never did that for a body. Dear Alpha God, he looked like he’d been ripped in half.

“Over in the town of Victor, at the Exit 45 Motel. Little dump of a place out there just off the Thruway. Kinda joint you go if you wanna meet someone for a little bumpen uglies and don’t want anyone to else know. Coroner and witnesses fixed the time of death around 03:30 AM on August 6th.” Howard leaned back in his chair. “Where were you about that time? July 6th between 03:00 and 03:30 AM?”

Opened my mouth to say where I was but instead out came with, “what do you care since this happened in another town?”

Howard should never smile, really....never. He’s not the most attractive guy to start with and those
teeth yellowed from years of cigarettes and coffee, made him look feral. “Hey, we’re all one big happy family out here in Western New York. We got the State Troopers, FBI, Ontario County Sheriff, Canandaigua Police and Rochester all working together on this one. Besides, outside of the FBI, the Rochester police have the most information about the guy. So here we are.” Now he leans forward. “So, what did you do? Play ‘lady in red’ to his John Dillinger?”

So this is what it’s all about. Was more then a little hot under the collar for this guy would think I could do that or even wanted to. “I was in Washington DC, at the quarters of General and the Omega Reynolds. He’s the military attache at the British Embassy there. I was visiting them on my way to jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia.” Course I remember where I was at 03:30 AM and could’ve said, ‘yes was in bed letting Mrs Reynolds ride me like Trigger, while she was playing ‘Rule Britannia’ on Mr Reynolds ’skin flute’. But let’s not be any ruder then the picture of a shot up mobster.

“You were in DC, at the home of some Limey General at their Embassy, after which you went jump school?” He snorted disgustedly. “Not the biggest pile of horse shit I’d ever heard but I’ll bite. Suppose you have proof at least some of that?”

“Can give you the Reynolds phone number right now,” I said hotly, flipped over the photo and grabbed a pen off the desk. Here,” scribbled their home number on the back of the picture. “Call em. Her name is Lady Jeanette Jerome Reynolds and he’s Lieutenant General Lewiston Reynolds. I suggest you be polite or you’ll not believe how fast shit can roll down hill.” Okay, so I’m laying it on a bit thick but he pissed me off. “Can mail you a copy of my orders to Airborne School, along with the name of the company commander and first sergeant along with the company phone number.” Handed the picture back roughly. Even if I didn’t like Tommy Didio and he was nothing but a murdering pug, really didn’t wanna him dead bad enough to kill him. “They can prove my whereabouts on that day and time.”

“Think I will,” Detective Howard said lazily. “And make sure you get the rest of that information to me toot sweet. But keep yourself available just in case for a while.”

“Oh, I’ll do just that.” In a pigs valise. He doesn’t need to know I’ll be blowing town at the end of the month. “If you’ll excuse me, need to tear my pup away from his adoring public at front desk, home and fed.” Slid forward in my seat, “is there anything you wanna know?”

“Not at this point.”

“Can I go now?” The detective waved me off and then turned back to the file as if he forgot I was ever there. Stumped out the door and stalked down hall. How DARE Detective Howard think that shit on me! Not that I wouldn’t have thought something like that, given the right set of circumstances, BUT I WOULDN’T DO IT! At the elevator, there was someone waiting but not for the car to come. “Warren called the minute you got in the elevator to come up here,” Sargeant Sam Colt punched the button and when doors to the car opened, he pulled me inside and waited for them to slide shut before continuing. “Come here idiot.” I fell into his arms and just let the anger and fear melt away. The elevator dinged and we pulled apart to walk out on to the fourth floor, then down to the photo lab.

“Okay,” he said locking the lab door and motioning me to a seat on the bench where we’d done a bit of canoodling in the past. “What are you still doing here in the area? I thought you left town after graduation.” The NCO set himself down beside me.

“‘I stayed because......really, there was no where else for me to go until the end of this month. Had enough in savings” (Sam rolled his eyes, he knew how I got it) “So I hung around, got ready for jump school. The orders came down for me to report on July 7th, so I left Jeff with friends, spent a
few days at the British Embassy and then flew down to Columbus, Georgia.”

Sam looked surprised, “why the British Embassy? Who do you know?”

“My older brother is on staff to the Military attache. And I’m the First to the Attache’s youngest son. Our families share a ‘Profound Bond’.”

“Holy Christ, I thought that shit was only in movies.” His nose had been against my neck, moving up and over the mating collar. “It’s real?”

“It is.” Smiled fetchingly, “it’s not a practice found much any more, but it’s still done from time to time.” Maybe this would be a bad time to try and explain a bond pup. “So, anywho got this letter...”

His snuffling stopped “And you had no idea what it was about or our little mob war that was going on here most of the spring and summer?”

“A little on what was happening in the spring because I wrote a paper on that meeting over at the Blue Gardenia. Not a clue after graduation, didn’t watch much TV or read the papers. The letter Donovan Howard sent just mentioned an unresolved suspicious death. I just thought he was gonna hassle me some more about Paul Mirra Jr. Instead it was Tommy Didio.”

“He thought you had something to do with offing Tommy?” Sam found that thought amusing. “Not that farfetched. ‘The dude used to sign in over at the Exit 45 Motel often under an assumed name for a little ‘bang bang Mary when he didn’t want his wife or mistress to find out he’d picked up a little action on the side.” Good grief and here I thought the stories Jenny told of the French ambassador, his wives, mistresses and side dalliances got crazy. Tommy Didio was totally Koo Koo for Coco Puffs. “So if he got word you want to bounce the covers....”

“Hey, it’s not even funny!” Stood up and took a few steps away, geeze even Sam thinks I could do something like that. “Obviously I didn’t because I wasn’t even in town.” There was a knock at the photo lab door. Sam went over to unlocked it and Reggie, one of the Tech guys, poked his head in.

“Thought you like to know Melissa is here and is kinda chomping on the bit for you guys to go to lunch.” Then he noticed I was standing there, “oh hey Cas. Long time, no whatever. Damn you look good, you been working out? Too bad Tim had court today, he’ll be ticked he missed you.”

“Gimme a minute Reg,” Sam was trying to close the door.

Reggie winked “No sweat Boss. Give ya a little clean up time.” Well, so much for our little rendezvous being on the down low.

“Melissa?” Knew Sam had a bigger wondering eye then 10 alphas put together, so this shouldn’t have surprised me. But in a sad way, it did. Pinged right in the old ego that he could forget me about as fast as I forgot him.

Sargeant Colt just shrugged, “life goes on in the ‘Flower City’ and I’m just a busy little bee.”

Well, that summed up everything quite nicely. Leaned over and kissed his cheek. “Bye Sam, can see myself out.” And with that I left the photo lab, went down the hall to the elevators and back to the lobby, where Jeff was happily holding court. “Hey there little guy, let’s get you home.” Got him back from Clara to go out into the sunshine and heat of Rochester noon time. Blah, it’s nastier out here then it was before.

Got back to the car to find the meter expired and a ticket on the windshield. FUCK! They can kiss my dimpled ass before they’re gonna see one red cent outta me! Took the ticket, crumpled it and tossed the offending yellow hunk of paper into the glove box. “Come on Sweetie, let’s you and
Papa blow this Popsicle stand.” Didn’t bother putting Jeff in his car seat, just balanced him on my lap and drove outta town. Not a great idea I suppose but he was happy to help me drive.

And with that, spent the rest of the month just kind of hanging around with Bobby and Karen, helping Lisa and Ben pack up, even got to spend my 23rd birthday with Sharon and Bry-Ann. The newlyweds had come back to Rochester early to set up house keeping. After looking and not finding any apartments to their liking, Sharon got a lead on a little two bedroom house on 117 Milrace Drive in East Rochester. “Friend of my mom’s owns it,” Sharon explained the night Jeff and I went over for dinner. “It’s only three years old and she had it built as an investment property.” It was close to St John Fisher but about a half hour from RIT. But for the money, $150 dollars a month (and low utilities—for the moment) was quite reasonable and worth the drive. “She wanted someone in here would’d be a good tenant, so she gave us the friends and family rate.”

Mated life had done the two of them good and they were still in that goofy lovey dovey newlywed stage where everything the other did was cute. Which in a few years those same actions will drive them crazy. But for the time being, they were so sweet I was gonna puke. Got to hear about their honeymoon in (Montreal (lucky bums) living with Bry-Ann’s parents (oh that must have been a regular old laugh riot) till they were able to move out here and set up housekeeping. Their furniture was nice, if you like the heavy Mediterranean/Spanish style (or how Sears or Montgomery Wards envisioned it) but the stuff did beat the crap I had all hollow. Apparently Sharons mother had gotten new living room furniture and had this stuff shipped up for her daughter and daughter in law to use (must be nice to have parents with major buckaroos).

Seeing it was my birthday, they had cake and even gifts for me.....one of them being a compass. “So you’ll always find your true north.” Bry-Ann smiled. “And your way home, no matter where it is.”

That was a fun night but now my time in Rochester is almost done. Pack up day is over and I’m sitting on the top step of the staircase watching Jeff crawl around an empty apartment. Tomorrow I load up the Bug with the suitcases, duffel bag, toys, diapers and other shit we’ll need at OBC. Will stop by the Singers to say goodbye and congratulate Bobby on his retirement. He’s calling it quits at the end of the 1979 school year. He and Karen will be moving out to Sioux City, Iowa to take over her brothers salvage business.

Jeff and I are driving down to stay a few days with her Mummy-ship and Dad, before leaving the day before the August 25th check in date for class. Wanted a little time for them to get to know Jeff and me better. Also.....maybe...even see Jenny. Maybe....if the new kitchen furniture arrived....and the cabinets were repaired.....and she has a new sugar bowl....maybe I’ll just stay in Annapolis.

It will be another goodbye to join the others in long series of goodbyes in my life. But it will also be my new hello. Goodbye Rochester. Hello Fort Lee.

Chapter End Notes

www.Alcohol Professor.com: The Suffering Bastard

1 oz bourbon
1 oz gin (use a dry style for best results)
1 tsp. Lime juice
1 dash of Angostura Bitters
approximately 4 oz of chilled ginger beer or ginger ale

Shake all the ingredients with ice except the ginger beer for 15-20 seconds. Pour unstrained into a double Old Fashioned glass. Sirt in ginger beer. Garnish with mint spring and an orange wedge.

Peck's Bad Boy, is a fictional character created by George Wilbur Peck (1840–1916). [1] First appearing in the 1883 novel Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa, the Bad Boy has appeared in numerous print, stage, and film adaptations. The character is portrayed as a mischievous prankster, and the phrase "Peck's bad boy" entered the language to refer to anyone whose mischievous or bad behavior leads to annoyance or embarrassment. - From Wikipedia

Walter Taylor thinks he’s hot shit: that was actually written above the urinal in the mens room at the Bully Hill Winery back in the 1980’s. My dad saw it when he and Mom went for the wine tour back in the day.

If John seems to drink a lot, well, that’s what men of that generation did. I saw it in my own father and other men of that time. You drank a lot because it was socially acceptable and to be self medicated at a period was preferable to seeking mental help as that was a death knell to your career. Ever hear of Vice Presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton? Prolly not, as he was only on the McGovern ticket back in 1972 for a very short while, after it was leaked he’d been hospitalized for depression.

Besser geht’s mit Coca-Cola: German ad slogan from 1968. Translation: ‘It’s Better with Coca-Cola. Coke has been in Germany since opening up the first plant and office in 1930, even remaining open during the Second World War. Out of that time came another soda whose name you all know...Fanta. As there was a trade embargo with Nazi Germany, cola syrup was limited, so fruit juice from apple peels, cores and stems was used. Production stopped after the war but resumed in 1955 with obviously much better ingredients.

Hello Life Goodbye Columbus: lyrics from the song ‘Goodbye Columbus’, written by Jim Yester, performed by the band The Association in 1969 as part of the movie of the same name, ‘Goodbye Columbus’.

Prior to this millennium, officers in the Army and other branches did not have tattoos. The few that did were those who came up from the enlisted ranks. It was considered gauche and low class. Re-watch the movie ‘Officer and a Gentleman’ some time, just to give you some perspective.

The balloon goes up: the announcement of some thing serious that’s going to happen. Originating during the WW1, when observation balloons were launched to track troop movements. Continued during WW2 when barrage balloon were used to protect British cities against low flying German aircraft.

Red Ball Express: after the D-Day Invasion on June 6th 1944, the American army needed a steady flow of supplies to keep the advancing troops equipped. The only way to do it to all locations, was by truck. Millions of tons of supplies were carried for the first 83 days after the invasion. 75% of the drivers were African American, sadly the white and black troops who drove or were mechanics were kept segregated from each other for fear of ‘problems’.
Flip Wilson was a comedian popular in the 60’s and 70’s. One of his best creations was Geraldine Jones, a sassy sexy young lady who took no lip from any one. Who also explained why she did things because: ‘the devil made me do it.’

The murder of Thomas Didio still remains an open case.

This is what Bry-Ann and Sharons living room would’ve looked like.
It’s Not Always a Holiday at the Holiday Inn, Petersburg, Virginia

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hi everybody, thank you for joining us again. Sorry the chapter took so long. Had a bad bout of life and have caught the bug that’s going around.

It has been said that around this neck of the woods, ‘there’s no ‘peter’ in Petersburg and no ‘hope in ‘Hopewell’, a claim I’ve found to be true or at least when dealing with my first two weeks here at Fort Lee. Or should I say the Holiday Inn, Petersburg, Virginia. And just good measure, I haven’t seen neither my son or my car in the past two weeks. Maybe I should explain so let’s step back a few days.

On August 22nd, we rode out of Rochester into a not so bright but early driving rain. The clear but humid weather of the past month had quickly flipped to a soggy humid thunder storm that followed us all the way to the Pennsylvania border. The ride south took longer because of flooded sections of Route 15A, slow traffic in the detours and a 6 month old pup howling tearfully through most of it. Jeff was miserable from teething and more then once was tempted to mix a good slug of whiskey (was rubbing just a dab on his sore little gums) in his bottle just to knock him out for a few hours. That or just pull off to the side of the road to join him in sobbing.

Oh and did I forget to mention that I puked my breakfast?

Jeff had pretty much cried himself to sleep by the time we hit Chambersburg. Had stopped a couple of times already to change out his diaper, mostly because I was gagging on the toxic fumes coming out of his butt. Dear Alpha God, I know what I feed you pup, but why does it turn into something so horrible, Russian spies would be clambering to see your ass? Made the command decision to wake him up to get a little something on his tummy and hope it didn’t end up biting me in the butt. Stopped at Betchels for some ice cream, which was good on my stomach, Jeffs gums and Ulysses fluttering. It even stayed in my gut and Jeff didn’t spit it up either.

There is nothing like being pregnant and traveling with a teething pup in a small car. I would recommend it right up there with a root canal or having a wisdom tooth extracted. Didn’t have any, wisdom teeth that is. Suppose that explains a lot.

The sky was overcast but the rain held off through out Pennsylvania. The clouds hung low over the mountains, covering some of the tops of the taller peaks. Had turned the radio on softly to keep from getting ‘highway hypno’ and ending up off the road in a gully or the side of a cliff. Must have been a pretty wide ranging system because we were picking up a station from Sylvia, North Carolina, where ever the hell that was. “WRGC, 680 on your AM dial.” Then they launched into Hank Williams singing those ‘Long Gone Lonesome Blues’. Spent the next 20 miles listening to ‘Mountain William’ music until the station faded away and a Philly soul station took its place.

Bootsie Collins was singing he was the worlds only rhinestone rock star doll baba. “Oh wind me up Bootzilla!”

A few hours later the fat splat of a rain drop flattening itself on the Bug’s windshield was the first indication that our luck had run out weather wise as we drove past the ‘Welcome to Maryland’ sign on Route 450. The sky opened up and the rain came down in sheets. It was coming down so hard
the wipers could barely keep up. I had to pull off at Exit 23 and sit under the under pass for about an hour before being able to push on. So of course I end up in bumper to bumper rush hour traffic, inching my way along a stretch of highway that should’ve only taken me minutes now was almost into it’s first hour. The gas coming from Jeff’s diaper was burning the hair out of my nose and sucking up exhaust fumes, which smelled only marginally better, made my stomach heave. Had to open the car door to get a head soaking and the stink eye from the people in other cars as I ralphed. So it was about 06:30-ish (the trip started about five that morning) when the Bug rolled up the drive way of 1508 Gordon Cove Drive, Annapolis.

Turned off the engine, leaned forward and rested my forehead on the steering wheel. Sat there for a little while, trying to collect the mental wreckage and reshape it into something vaguely human. Jeff was stewing in his own ‘juices’..... “Irrrrrrrvvvv!” He was wailing. “Irvvvvvvvv!” The little guy was so tired that he’d given up waving his arms and just tipped his head back, flung open his mouth and ‘Irv’ed.’ Could see the two little teeth that came in and a third that was just starting to show itself. No wonder the poor thing was crying. That’s when the tap at the drivers side window that made me jump, honk the horn and about scared me out of my skin.

“Hello Darling, sorry if I startled you.” Her Mummy-ship was standing there holding an umbrella against the storm. “Come along in, you’ll will feel much better in a moment or two.” Then she turned toward the house and called out, “Fergus! Do come out and help with the bags. You’re a sweet man, but you’re not made of sugar and aren’t going to melt.” Then she turned back to me, “you on the other hand, look about knackered out and will melt in the rain.” Tiredly got out of the car, walked around to the passengers side and unstrapped Jeff from his car seat.

“Good heavens child,” Lady Bella nose wrinkled and looked like it wanted to crawl back inside her face at the biological weapon that was my pup’s dirty diaper. “Rotting carcasses in the noon day sun in Bombay don’t smell this bad. What has this boy been eating?”

“Whatever I put in his mouth and it all turned to radioactive sludge at the other end.” Was half a mind to just take off his clothes and let the rain hose him off but didn’t think Dr Spock would approve nor Mr Spock would find it logical. Dad was coming out the door to help with the bags, flung out his arms to take Jeff, caught a whiff, backed up and pointed toward the door. “Let’s get the little darling cleaned up first and smelling less like a hell hounds breakfast.”

“Papappappapa!” He sat in the sink with the water up to his little belly button, happily splashing and watching the water fly all over. “Bumpo!”

“Oh isn’t he such a precious wee bairn!” Turned to see an older lady with a startling shock of red hair and dress tighter then most women her age even think of wearing, standing in the door way with a camera. “He looks just like Fergus at that age!” She snapped a picture. “Right down to his little bod!” Okay, that’s a whole lot more information about Dad then I need right now, so who the fuck are you? Looked around quick to see if there was something I could heave at this nut case. Shi.....er...shoot. Nothing but those fancy little guest soaps. Maybe could smack her with a towel. DON’T PANIC! Sorry Ford Prefect, couldn’t help myself.
“Uh, hi?” Noticed a plunger next to the toilet, maybe I can plunge her to death. “And you are?”

“Oh Darling!” She spread her arms open as if I was suppose to run into them for a welcoming hug. “I’m Rowena, your grand...grand......” the word would form and then she just couldn’t put her mouth around it. “Fergus’s mother!” Rowena finally spat out and even that was quite the push.

Greaaaat. “Oooooooohhhhhhh....so you’re MY grandmother and Jeff’s GREAT grandmother....yes?” I’m such a little prick on occasion.

“Why it would, wouldn’t it Mother?” Dad came up behind her, an evil grin on his face. “Great-Grandma Rowena.”

“Oh Darling!” Rowena finally spat out and even that was quite the push.

And from the looks on both their faces, I stomped on my wiener with both feet with cleats. “No, the bloody damned bastard died five years ago, may his soul rot in Hell.” Dad had suddenly changed from an unassuming little alpha to a large scary man whose eyes were shot with through with red and menace. “He and that conniving bitch he married....”

And from the looks on both their faces, I stomped on my wiener with both feet with cleats. “No, the bloody damned bastard died five years ago, may his soul rot in Hell.” Dad had suddenly changed from an unassuming little alpha to a large scary man whose eyes were shot with through with red and menace. “He and that conniving bitch he married....”

Yike! To say this was an obviously rather sore subject was a bit of an understatement and being I don’t know enough about the Crowley family to dodge the emotional land mines that litter this battlefield, maybe I’ll just quit while I’m ahead. But the damage was done, Jeff smelled the sulfur and burning carrion pouring off Mater Crowley and Son, and started to whimper in fear. I wasn’t much better, instinct took over (protect-protect-protect) plucking him from the water I took him to my chest, picking up the only weapon in sight....the plunger.

“Oh for pity’s sake Fergus,” her Mummy-ship came walking up between her mate and mother-in-law. “I know that smell. Somebody’s got you all lathered up about the fool George again haven’t they? Well stop it. I don’t care who started it,” she glowered at Rowena. “You two are scaring our son and grandpup. And heaven knows what wee one inside of him is doing.”

The fandango, I can tell you that much.

“Sorry, my love.” Dad looked much chastened. “But that man makes me so angry....”

“I know Darling.” Lady Bela nuzzled her mates cheek, gently blowing her sweet breath across his nose. “But you have a son and grandson, and that worthless cow Wallis he gave up an empire for, could give him nothing.” Wow, she calmed him right down, to the point where the so called ‘King of Hell’ was the ‘Prince of Pussy Cats’ all purring, cuddly and showing his belly.

“It was my fault Mum,” I blurted out. Whoa! Where did that come from? I grew up denying anything that would even vaguely get me into trouble. Too many whippings from Zachariah over the least little offense had taught me to either beat feet or have my ‘Mission Impossible’ moment: disavow any knowledge-you are so on your own Mr Phelps. But now, I’m a parent, responsible (god damn it), have to set a good example for my pup (oh jump’en Jesus, he better not do even a tenth of the shit I pulled) and so I....Castiel Demetri Westmoreland Novac Winchester (whew, that’s a mouthful. No, John is a mouthful, I just have a long name) am confessing and there isn’t a priest or confessional in sight. “Kind of started it by accident trying to be a wise guy......I’m sorry.”

Her Mummy-ship gave Dad one more kiss, a side glower to her mother-in-law and then came over to me, picking a towel from the rack as she moved along. “You couldn’t have known my little love, so it’s not your fault.” She plucked Jeff away from me, wrapping the slippery wet pup it the fluffy terrycloth. “Do put down the plunger. It won’t kill anyone but it will give em a right good
suck.” Kind of stupidly looked at the thing in my hand and quickly put it down. “And as for you,” she kissed her grandpups pudgy tummy. “You smell all nice and sweet again. So let’s keep it that way just long enough to take those naked puppy pictures your papa will embarrass you with in years to come.” Lady Bela sailed out of the loo with Rowena in her wake protesting her innocence in the matter.

And there stood Dad and I for a little man to man talk. “Sorry about that son.....”

“No problem Dad.......uh, maybe I need to get unpacked.”

“Right, guest room is this way.”

For those of you waiting for more.....sorry...that’s it. In ‘guy shorthand’ that WAS a heart to heart talk. He said he was sorry for the whole reason behind his anger (absent father, abandonment, mother like Rowena..blah...blah...blah). I said it was no problem because I understood a lot of those issues (father like Zacharah, mother like Naomi, only omega pup...blah....blah....blah). So there’s at least a half hour of talk packed into those two sentences. Next, a guy hug, pat on the back, light punch on the shoulder and there we have it, all done.

Was lead down the hallway to a nondescript bedroom, the way most guest rooms are. The furniture is hand me downs from heaven knows where, the mattress was prolly on sale from Two Guys and the pictures on the wall looked like they came from a yard sale. But the crib in the corner of the room was new. I’d seen a picture of it in the latest Sears catalog that had come just last week. It was top of the line and not cheap either. The Winnie-the-Pooh bedding looked new also. Felt bad that we were only going to be staying until Thursday. They’d gone through so much trouble for such a short visit. I’ll be at Fort Lee for almost six months, we can come up on weekends from time to time.

Put the bags in the corner and went to find the rest of the family. The ‘grands’ and the ‘great-grand’ were in the living room, my pup posing for the camera and soaking in the love of his adorning fans. He looked like he was in good enough hands, so I went back to the guest room, kicked off my shoes and flopped on the bed. Christ, I was tired. Was running on nerves the last hour on the road, then the little dust up in the bathroom and now just ran out of gas. Could feel Ulysses flutter softly, as if making himself comfortable to nap also. “Hey pup, how’s everything going in there?” Ran a palm over my still flat stomach and felt his little wings tap against the skin. “Good, let papa get some rest. Got a long road ahead.”

Woke a while later to find a blanket had been put over me, my alpha God. Haven’t been tucked into bed since I was maybe five years old. Reveled in the feeling for just a moment, to be loved and cared for; just to be someones pup, someones son, even at 23 and a ‘responsible adult’ with a pup of my own. Course that all flew out the window when Jeff started to cry. He’d pulled himself up and was hanging on to the rails of the crib, bawling his eyes out. “Irrvvvvvvvvvvv! Paapapaapapapa!”

“I’m up, I’m up! What’s the matter Big Guy?” Responsible adult back on duty. His diaper was soaked and drooping, the pungent smell of puppy piss in the air. “Come on let’s get you clean and changed.” Ohhhhhh, am so gonna read up on how to get this pup potty trained toot sweet. So got him wiped up, Vasalined, powdered and forgot to drop a towel on his little piddler. Oh, he got me good, right in the face. Yuck! Got him done, then tucked the little rascal under my arm and went to the bathroom to get the dripping puppy piss off my face and front. Set him on the floor to crawl around, took off my shirt....oh crud....will be back in a nursing shirt before I know it. Took a wash cloth, took one of those fancy guest soaps, blew the dust off and lathered it up.

Cleaned off my face and chest, then got the arms and back. Just to get rid of the feel of the road.
Okay, that’s better. Rinsed, then rung out the shirt. Will take it outside to hang on the clothes line, if they have one. Looked out into the back yard, half lit by the setting sun. Nope. No clothes line, but a nice swimming pool with deck chairs along side. But still raining. Sigh, will have to hang it off the shower head here in the bathroom.

Jeff in the mean time had crawled out into the hallway, “come back here you rapscallion.” Oh man, he’s fast, heaven help when he’s able to walk. Come out to find him in her Ladyships arms. “I’d come to find you, dinner’s on the table. You need to get proper food and rest, now that you’re with pup again.” She herded me in the direction of the dining room table where the food was laid out and the others were waiting. “The first pup can live on air and essence, a First pup is going to take a bit more out of you.” There was a large glass of milk and vitamin pills at my place setting. “Drink up. We can’t have you break a bone or lose a tooth.”

So I swallowed the pills and drank the milk.

Dinner was lamb stew cooked in Guinness stout and a loaf of fresh bread with a crunchy crust from the bakery there in town. Yeasty, dense and delicious, it sopped up the gravy like a sponge. Jeff was sitting in a brand spanking new high chair between her Mummy-ship and I. Wow, have been so used to having him sit on my lap for dinners, this is just like down town! Spooned gravy along with mushy peas and carrots into Jeffs willing and open mouth. “Papapapappapa! Bumpo!”

“He likes ‘Last of the Mohicans’.” Told the story of how the little guy first heard it, which in turn explained where ‘Irv’ came from.

“So ‘Irv’ is the father of the bride,” Rowena was smiling thoughtfully. “Is he a widower by any chance? No one should be banging about that big cottage or house in Scarsdale all by their lonesome.”

“He’s mated,” I said quickly. Celia Franklin, looked like a beta who’d waged more then one campaign to keep her alpha right where she wanted him. If he did stray, it was not far enough where she couldn’t reel him back in and make him grovel some. And judging by some of the big diamond rings on her fingers the day of Sharon and Bry-Ann’s mating, she took his groveling by the carat. “VERY mated.”

“Oh, too bad.” And Granny Rowena went back to her stew. “But if she’s in ill health....”

Before I could say Celia was in the pink the last time I saw her.....“Leave it set Mother,” Dad said quietly. “Remember the last time? The problems it caused. This is why you aren’t allowed to set foot in Argentina.”

“But she was ill and just about eaten up with the cancer. It was a mercy and Juan needed some comforting.”

Don’t think I wanna hear the rest of this...... “Now Fergus, Mother Rowena.” Her Mummy-ship said firmly. “There are far more pleasant dinner conversations then the Perons.” Then she turned to me, “I want to hear all about your time at Jump school.” Thought Dad was going to blow scotch out his nose, he was laughing so hard at my misadventures on ‘culture night’ at Suzies Wu’s.

After dinner, helped Mum clear up the table, dried dishes as she washed and then collected Jeff and went to bed. Was dead tired just wanting to catch some sleep without any dreams. For once, the angels cooperated and I fell into that soft darkness without a dream or if there were, they were to be forgotten at the break of day.

Was too comfortable the next morning to wake early. Too content with the new feeling of family to
jump out of bed and be all rough and ready at the drop of a hat. No, the morning light was coming in the window, bathing me in sun beams. Tossed off the sheet and blanket, stretched like a happy cat before opening my eyes to find Jeff’s crib empty. Oh crap, where’d that pup get off to? The door was shut, so he couldn’t have gotten out by himself. Look over at the bedside clock, it’s 08:23….oh crap, it’s late! Looks like the ‘rents’ took care of him so I could sleep. Oh could get so used to that.

Got up, rooted around the duffel for a pair of running shorts, t-shirt and sneakers. Figured a quick run up the road and back, then breakfast. Met Rowena in the hallway, “good morning dearie.” She was in a brightly colored sun dress that showed way too much of her ample charms Or maybe that was the idea. “Out for a bit of a jog? Good idea, while you still can.” Then she reached over and patted my breasts. “Might want to think about putting on a nursing shirt. Don’t want to be flopping the wee chebs about the neighborhood.”

Why does everything this woman has to say comes out of her mouth and into her left hand? “Thank you,” it took everything I had not say what I really felt…and it weren’t ‘Merry Christmas’. “I will......if you will.” Okay, that just slipped out. Stepped around her quick, down the hall and escaped out the front door into the bright Annapolis morning. About half way down Gordon Cove Drive, was wishing I’d put the nursing shirt on cuz my tits and nips were starting to get sore and leaky. Great, to go along with this, had already gotten a few appreciative glances from the neighborhood alphas and one beta who hollared to ‘shake it but don’t break it, wrap it up and he’d take it’. Holy baby Jebus, can’t an omega take a jog in peace?

Cut my run short and headed back to the house.

Once there, showered, then got a clean pair of jeans out along with a nursing shirt, poor titties. Sigh. Looks like my pretties are going further down into the depths of the dresser drawer. Wonder if I’ll fit in them again or kilt and jacket John got me to celebrate our first dinner together as man and omega over at the Pope Air Force Base officers club. That was a nice night; good food, being introduced as the Omega Winchester and of course the great sex afterward. Course the next day had to give back the glass slippers and turn into a pumpkin again.

Pulled on an oxford shirt, buttoned it up, rolled the sleeves to the elbow, then tucked it in the jeans. There. Ready to start the day. Padded barefoot out to the kitchen, where her Mummyship was catching the last of the Today Show on a small black and white TV that was set up on kitchen counter. “Good morning Darling,” she came over and kissed my cheek, while putting a glass of milk in my hand. “Drink up.”

“Coffee bitte?” I put on the big puppy dog eyes. “Pleasssssssee??!”

“Just a tiny cup,” Bela admonished. “With cream and sugar.”

“Oh come on,” put on the pouty face to go with the puppy eyes. “Last month I was jumping out of airplanes and drinking mess hall coffee by the gallon....”

“And then dropped for almost three days when it was over. You had everyone worried sick.” She said firmly. Ooooops, wanted to forget that part. “Doctor Barnes said it was sheer luck that you kept that pup and didn’t lose it.” Now I felt like three kinds of an idiot for making a fuss over a cup of coffee. Mummy-ship handed over a demitasse cup and saucer. “Oh Sweetie, I just want you to be able to have a good pregnancy, so if I seem a little pushy on the subject, it’s just that I had to watch you all those years from the side lines.” She sniffled a little.

Put the cup down and hugged my mom. “But you were there for me when it counted. Because of you guys, I got to go to Finishing School, you walked me down the aisle on my mating day and
were there for the First Party. And my commissioning and graduation at RIT.” Hugged her tight. “Know you missed out on a lot but you not gonna any more.” Or at least while I’m still in the states.

“You turned out to be such a good man,” she said with pride in her voice. Huh, now that’s something I’d never considered myself in a million years. Not being a Novac, not after everything I’d done. But maybe, maybe.....in Mom’s eyes.....I can still be a good man. Ulysses started to flutter about that time, as the boy was hungry and wanted his breakfast, was just hoping he’d let me keep it. Her Mummy-ship still had some of that good bread left over from last nights dinner, that she’d sliced up for toast. “Do you want a poached egg to go with that?”

Before I could answer, “Irv!” Came the happy crow of Jeffery (let’s skip all those other names for the moment) Winchester riding on his grand-dads shoulders. “Pop Pop!” The shit eating grin on his grand-dad’s face spoke volumes. Now it was really gonna suck tomorrow when we had to leave. But this was life I picked and hope maybe someday Jeff and Ulysses and Clare......wait. Who’s Clare? Don’t tell me, I’m having another one? Shit, angels. Gimme a break.

He swung Jeff down and into the high chair. “Good morning all. My Grand-pup and I went for a drive around town. Went down to the beach, watched the sea gulls and he learned to say ‘Pop-Pop. What an intelligent child. Must get it from our side of the family.”

“But of course my Love,” Lady Bela pecks him on the cheek then a saucy nip on the ear. “Where else would he get it?”

This turned out to be a really nice day. The sky was blue and clear of clouds, a breeze came off the Chesapeake bringing with it the promise of adventure and family. The kind of day that you remember for years, sometimes wishing you could forget because it was so good and your current life is so crappy. We go as a family (Rowena even tagged along. Guess the thought of a free lunch was enough to bring her out of her snit from earlier this morning.) to walk around the Naval Academy, pushing Jeff in his brand new stroller, watching the bald headed plebes march, or try to. A couple of em got dropped to push away Annapolis when they paid more attention to Great-Grannys boobies then their instructor. (Well, she put em out there, what did you expect?)

The sun was warm on our skins as we walked the grounds and breathed in the salt air of the Chesapeake Bay. We pass monuments and statues, one that was surrounded by pennies. What the hell? “That’s Tecumseh,” Daddy Crowley picked up one of the pennies and flipped it on to the pedestal. The ‘middies’ call him the ‘God of 2.0’. They toss a penny his way for luck on exams and for the Army-Navy game.” Weird tradition, but whatever floats your boat. HA! Made a witty one. Floats your boat at the Naval Academy. Hello? Tap. Tap. Tap. This thing on? Anyone out there? Everybody’s a critic.

Lunch was at the Middleton Tavern at the city dock, our table was outside over looking the bay where we watched sail and motor boat glide to and from the dock. I had crab soup, an oyster po boy and shared a Bananas Foster with her Mummy-ship. Jeff slurped his soup, gummed at an oyster and pieces of banana. Ulysses found everything enough to his liking that I didn’t have to sprint to the dock to blow chow into the bay. Looked longingly at Dad’s beer, it was golden, a big chewy head, apparently made locally and had the glass sweating like a whore in church. He only allowed me one tiny taste, good thing too, because I was ready to down the whole thing it tasted so good. After lunch, did a little window shopping at the tourist joints along the pier before heading back to the house to put both Jeff and myself down to nap before dinner.

Lay there in bed listening to my son make soft puppy noises and the occasional ‘Pop-Pop’. Wish we could stay longer. I wanna get to know them better and for Jeff’s sake, to have his grandparents.
But have to be in Richmond tomorrow, to be ready to sign into school first thing Friday morning. There will be a ton of things to do that day, get my id card, post id sticker for the car, get housing and a raft of other shit I watched Naomi-Mom and Zachariah do first thing where ever we were stationed. Now it’s me that’s doing it.

As lunch was a noisy, talkative affair, dinner that night was quiet. There was conversation but it more centered around just small talk and even Rowena was not her usual snarky self. Okay people what’s going on here? Finally, Lady Bela quit moving the chicken croquette around her plate to come out with what was on her and everyone else’s mind. “Castiel, I don’t want to seem like putting my oar into your life, but can I make a suggestion? Promise you won’t be cross with me?”

Must be something big if it took this long to spit it out and to end with that caveat. “Uh, no I wouldn’t get mad. What do you wanna say?”

She took a deep breath. “Leave Jeff with us. At least for the weekend.”

What?! Okay, wasn’t expecting that. “Huh? Why?”

Now that the first volley was out and there was no return fire, her Mummy-ship took the bit between her teeth. “Fergus and I have talked it over. You need to report in on the best possible foot. Do you really think you can do that, no offense, holding a pup on your hip. Or go to your first day of class like that also?”

Well, uh.... “I figured I’d find a sitter there.....” A part of me was agreeing with her, while the more unreasonable egotistical part was insulted. “But I need to do this on my own. I can’t impose on people forever.”

“And you won’t Darling,” she said gently. “But while we’re here, while you’re still in the States, let us help you.” A tear trickled down her cheek. “Please let me, let your father, help you.”

Oh Christ. Now I feel like an inch tall. I made my mother cry. Naomi mom never cried. Well, there was that once but other then that..... “I just....wanna be able to take care for him...” and show everyone that I can. Not be just some helpless little omega who has to rely on their alpha...who isn’t here. Or their family, who is......and she did hit the nail on the head. How is it going to look showing up with Jeff on my hip? And a bun in the oven.

“Son,” Crowley Dad stepped in for his part of this intervention, he didn’t mince words either. “It’s an unhappy fact that as an omega, you have to work twice as hard to just stay even.” I nodded grimly, been fighting that my whole life. “Your commanders, class mates and instructors first impressions of you will be difficult to challenge and will be time consuming to change. There is a very good chance that quarters will not be available when you get there and being this school posting, family quarters will not be offered. So that means you’ll be in a hotel and even when post housing opens up, it’s the BOQ.” He took a sip of scotch, before forging on. “What we’re proposing is this: have Jeff stay with us for the week, so you can get set up in quarters, have a full week in class to put your best foot forward and find a sitter for your son. Does that sound reasonable?”

I wanted to say no. That I could do this alone and was stubbornly going to say that, except what he was saying was right. Was taken back to all those shabby hotels and guest houses the Novac family stayed in at every new posting. And that balcony incident at the Bremerhaven guest officers quarters....thank the Alpha God we were only on the second story. Still have the scar on my knee from that one.

“Sweetheart,” Mummy-ship laid a hand over mine. “Please take our help. There’s going to be
“enough times in the future where there’s going to be none and the world is a hard place for an omega alone with pups.”

Opened my mouth to really say no, but yes came out instead. “Okay, but I’ll be back next week to pick him up.”


“Irv.” he looked adoringly up at his ‘Pop Pop’ through those big green eyes.

“If you say so Darling.”

The next morning, I loaded the car with just my stuff. All of Jeff’s clothes, toys and piles of diapers were back in the guest room. Even though it was for the best, it still felt wrong. Was constantly saying goodbye to my pup and leaving him in someone elses care. How was I suppose to be a good papa to my pup if I can’t be there for him? Stood in the driveway holding his soft heavy body to my heart. “Be a good boy for Grand-mum and Pop-Pop.” Kissed the downy dark hair on his head, “piss all you want on Great-Grandma.”

“I heard that!” Her indigent voice came floating out the front door.

“I certainly hope so!”

Now reluctantly handed him over to Lady Bela. “His nap times are at 10:00 in the morning and 03:00 in the afternoon. Bed time is at 07:00.”

“You wrote it down for me darling,” she said patiently.

“He needs his bear and the mobile playing before he can get to sleep.”

“That was written down also.”

“And he likes Last of the Mohicans at his 03:00 nap.”

“The waterfall chapter, I know.”

“And don’t let him......”

Lady Bela opened up the car door and pointed to the drivers seat. “In. You’re stalling.” She smiled and kissed me on the forehead. “Go, Jeff will be fine and you’ve got a world to conquer. He’ll be here waiting for you.” One more touch, one more gasp of his milky puppy scent and then flung myself into Dad’s arms for a hug.

“Don’t worry son,” his voice was strong and reassuring. “He’s safe, so you can succeed. Go on.” Granny-Rowena had said her goodbyes earlier over a breakfast of cigarettes and Bloody Marys. Bitch. Smoking those cigs in front of me and here I can’t even take a puff. You ‘haven’t come a long way baby’. Okay, I can do this. Will be back up next week to get him any way.

“Bye Dad.” Oh why are goodbyes getting so hard? They never were before. Mostly because I was trying to get away from the family I had, now all I want to do is be with the family I’ve now got. Square my shoulders and stand up straight. Zachariah’s admonishment of don’t walk like some pussy omega now comes to mind like a suggestion not a command. “I’ll be back next week.” Step away and climb in the car. Start her up, wave to everyone and with a blast of ‘shave and a hair cut’ was off.
Except when I wasn’t.

Backed to the bottom of the driveway, pulled into the street, put the gear in first and went two feet before there was a nasty snapping sound and the car shuttered to a halt. “What the fuck?!?” Oh this can’t be happening. Gunned the engine and moved a couple of inches before the nasty burnt smell of metal on metal came rolling in from under the dash. I quickly cut the ignition and got out. Dad was already on his knees looking under the front end of car.

“Your tie rod snapped,” he said after a moment looking back over his shoulder. “You’re lucky it happened here and not out on the road.” That was a horrible thought. Made even worse had I demanded to have had Jeff with me. We could’ve been hit by a truck or cars or.......Ulysses fluttered nervously in my gut......there goes breakfast all over the front lawn. “You’re not going anywhere today.”

Calmed down a bit, both pups are safe, but now how would I get to Fort Lee? Rent a car? I don’t have a credit card and besides Dad would have to co-sign as car rental companies notoriously don’t rent to omegas. They feel we are ‘unprepared for the rigors and responsibility of driving’. Be pregnant, raise pups, be responsible for a house hold yes. But drive a stupid car? No. Besides, it’s prohibitively expensive anyway and there’s still the issue of getting this car fixed.

Bus, train.....plane. One of them will have to do. But in the mean time, my parents were already started taking care of things. Her Mummy-ship had gone inside to call a tow truck to have it taken to a shop they use, while Dad was helping me push the car to the side of the road. Pulled the bags out of the back seat and walked them back up to the house. Once in the guest room, opened up the duffel and got the lock box I’d bought to put important papers, money, collars and the Shah’s paper weight in. Had pulled out most of the money from the Marine Midland bank account and converted most of it to travelers checks (the bank lady hated me, as she had to sign every last one of those checks) but had $500 in cash. Hoped what I had would be enough to pay for repairs and along with living expenses until the Army’s per diem check showed up.

The tow truck showed up a half hour later, $50 bucks and a five dollar tip, the Bug was hoisted up by the front end and hauled off down the road like a dog on a leash. Now the problem of getting me to Richmond. Went inside and found the phone book in the drawer of the ‘gossip bench’ along with a tablet and pen. Started flipping through the yellow pages for ‘Airlines’. Got lucky with the first try, there was a flight out on Piedmont from the Baltimore Airport to Richmond tomorrow morning at 10:00. It was a 45 minute flight, so there’d be plenty of time to get to post and sign in.

It would be $100 bucks one way, but what the hell. On short notice, I was lucky to get the seat, even with a military discount. So now it was just a matter of getting down to the shop, checking out the car, see how much the estimate was and leave enough money with Mom and Dad to get it out of hock.

The guy at the shop said it would be a few days to get the part in, being an older car and all. Plus, he’d give her the once over just to make sure she was ship shape to head back to the ‘Fatherland’. Especially if I wanted to take a gallop down the Autobahn. Which I did of course. Now went back to Gordon Cove Drive to hang around until tomorrow. But this reprieve gave me the chance to spend every minute with my pup. Come to find out, he loved ginger ale and saltines as much as I hated them. Jeff would take a sip, laugh at the bubbles then burp like a trooper. His Pop Pop’ was so proud.

Spent part of the day floating around in an inner tube in the back yard swimming pool with my son perched on my stomach. Personally I couldn’t see why you needed one (a pool that is) if the whole Chesapeake was less then a mile away, that is until Great-Granny Rowena came out to take a dip.
She shucked off her robe and dove in buck naked. OH MY EYES! “Hey Grandmaw, your birthday suit needs ironing!” Geez for her age, that woman has a bodacious set of tatas.

“Go boil your head dearie.”

“Love you too Great grandmaw.” She paddled around a bit before climbing out, but not before getting a few appreciative wolf whistles from the neighbors.

“Great art,” she said grandly picking up the robe and not putting it on. “Should always be admired from afar.” And with that, Rowena swept grandly into the house.

“And having seen the Mona Lisa up close;” I informed Jeff. “She’s right. From a distance you don’t see the cracks, paint globs and mistakes.” Took his little hands and kissed the tiny wiggling fingers. “And if you ever do what your Uncle Gabe tried to do (put a mustache on Mona) will fuuuuu.....freaken ground you for life!”

That night, did something I hadn’t done since I was a small pup. Was on my knees beside the bed, hands clasped together in prayer, rosery entwined in my steepled fingers. Hadn’t done this down at Benning, although I went to church the Sundays of Tower and Jump weeks. Confessed every sin I knew of and even a few I may had fudged a little on. Was’n’t taking any chances. But now, in the silence and privacy of the guest room was praying harder then in my whole life. “Alpha Father in Heaven. Please watch over my pup. Please care for him, protect and love him. And care for the pup I carry. Love and care for him also.” Was wearing the blessed dime on the red string Benny gave me last year. Nope, not taking any chances.

I was carrying a life again and needed to be a more responsible and careful adult. Kinda sorta.

The next morning crawled out of bed early as I hadn’t slept all that great anyway. In the dim light padded over to the crib where my little one was sprawled in his crib like a star fish on a rock.

“Papa’s gotta go away again, but only for a short while. Her Grandmummy-ship and Pop Pop will be watching over you. They’ll make sure you have fun and read to you and do all the things your Papa does.” Now all I wanted to do was chuck officers basic and stay. Or better yet, take him with me. I could walk into class with Jeff on my hip......and have him scream in the middle of a lecture. Oh that would go over like a fart in church.

No. He has to stay here, at least for the week, till I can find a puppy-sitter for him. Carefully picked up my babe, kissed those chubby cheeks and nuzzled into his short neck, taking in his milky puppy scent. All while leaving mine over his soft skin. Ulysses soul beat his little wings against my belly, wanting attention too. There I was, the picture of omega domesticity, a pup in arms and one on the way. Oh if all the people I boasted to three years ago that I’d NEVER get mated, NEVER have children, NEVER depend on anyone but myself. They’d laugh their fuck....freaken....asses off.

But today is August 25th 1978, the day I’ve been waiting, working and slaving for all my life. Today Lieutenant Novac, not the Omega Winchester, walks in to whatever office in Mifflen Hall, hands them however many copies of my orders they want and reports for duty as a student of Quartermaster Officers Basic, Class 101-78. Course at that moment I had to throw up.

It was 45 minutes over to the Baltimore International Airport, the ride over and the wait for the plane to board was longer the actual flight to the Richard E Byrd Airport in Richmond, Virginia. Desided to go in civilian clothes. Easier for traveling and hid the tears and spit up better. Had left the jewelry and lock boxes behind, taking only my birth certificate, money and money orders, mating papers (Virginia isn’t North Carolina—but you never know) and the Chinese collar. Figured one posh symbol of my mating servitude (just kidding) was enough. Just in case there was some
command social function.

Dad drove me to the airport. He’d had skipped the ‘midlife crisis-moble’ and drove a big black tank of a 64 Chrysler Imperial. It reminded me of Baby the Impala with a touch of Black Betty. It had some get up and went without the howling engine that told absolutely everyone that it did. We talked on the way over, mostly army stuff but there was one thing I wanted to know.

“What were you thinking when you first met Mom?” I knew the ‘Once Upon the Time Story’ by heart and heard the tale her Mummy-ship had told last year over the Christmas holiday, but wanted to hear what Dad had to say.

“Considering she had just chased off this fellow whom I......was conducting a transaction with...” He laughed. “I was thinking of biting her head off, but.....she stood there so beautiful, in a yellow dress that showed her shoulders and form.....looking like a piece of the sun had fallen from the sky and landed to earth. That’s when the saucy minx blew me a kiss and batted her eyes and said, “well are you going to just stand there gaping like a cod fish or you going to introduce yourself?” Dad sounded like he was a goner from the first second.

“She said you gave a fake name at first.”

“I said something what I thought was dashing. But your mum saw right through it.” Dad blushed like a beta school girl. “She said she quite liked the name Fergus.” He grinned even wider, “took me for every Balboa in my pocket but it was the best time I’d had in Panama and worth every last cent.” The smell of contented alpha filled the car. They went through so much just to be together and now on Glen Cove Drive, Annapolis, Maryland, US of A, the King of Hell found his little corner of Eden with Heavens Daughter. Damn, it’s like a country western song come to life.

The Baltimore Airport as an anthill of activity this time of the morning. So Dad just pulled in to a ‘no parking zone’ let me out and helped put my duffel on my shoulder and overnight bag in my hand. “Do well, don’t worry about Jeff, take care of the little one......” and he stopped..... “was going to say avoid cheap scotch and cheaper whores, but that’s what I usually tell Gavin. But do your best, as long as you do that, you’ll never disappoint me and importantly yourself.”

“Thanks Dad.” Gave him one more hug, shifted the duffel on my shoulder then stepped up on the curb and walked toward the entrance with the Piedmont sign over the door. They automaticly slid open taking me into the comings and goings of a swirling humanity trying to get somewhere. Got in line for the Piedmont desk and slowly inched my way forward until it was finally my turn.

“Hi, I’m Castiel Novac. I have a reservation for the 10:00 clock flight to Richmond, Virginia.” The alpha woman behind the desk, looked up briefly, spent (what I thought) way too much time going through her computer, until....... “that will be $150.00 which includes tax. Is your alpha here to pay for it?”

“That was not the price I was quoted,” I said pleasantly. “And this is was military discount. I’m Lt. Novac on my way to Officers Basic at Fort Lee, Virginia.” Then in a mock German accent, “if you’d like to see mien papers Frau Platzhirsch” (someone behind me coughed back a laugh) “would be happy to show zem to you.”

The woman frowned, went back to her computer for a few more minutes, then.... “$100.00 even LIEUTENANT Novac. You do have a way to pay for this don’t you?” Took out my wallet, opened it and pulled out five crisp ‘Jacksons’ on the desk.

“Made em fresh this morning.” Gave her a big gummy smile. She snatched them up, counted them (wow, you can count to five without ‘Rex the wonder horse to help you’) and then tossed the ticket across the counter. “Gate 10, THANK YOU for flying Piedmont Airlines.” Since there was no way
I was gonna let her lose my duffel bag, was going to figure a way of keeping it with me aboard the aircraft.

Followed the arrows and signs to the Piedmont concourse. On the way had stopped at the kiosk selling magazines, newspapers and candy to check out what was happening in the world. Time and Newsweek are reporting on the search for a new pope. Well, considering Pope Paul had passed back on August 6th, it would behoove the cardinals to get on the stick. Wonder if he’ll be Italian? Of course he will, is the pope Catholic? (Snert, I kill myself some times) Let’s see, People Magazine is going on about Elvis, yippie skippy. Death was the best career move this guy had in years. The Baltimore Sun...Rebels are released from Nicaragua, 50 guerillas of the Sandinista National Liberation Front were released as part of hostage negotiations and allowed to fly out to Panama. Another reason NOT to go to Panama. Which hurts, oh my dear country, when can I go home to you?

Checked out the cover of ‘Mega, oh thank the Alpha God, this wasn’t Naomi-Mom’s issue. It must have been pulled already, so don’t have to worry about running into it down at school. Dropped a quarter on the counter for a Hershey bar and stuck it in the overnight bag.

Got in view of the x-ray machine and stopped dead. Oh crap. Now I remembered the Lovers Kiss and Snubby were packed at the bottom of the duffel. How am I going to do this? Okay, I remember seeing baggage check out at the curb but didn’t check my bag because I didn’t have a ticket yet. So walked all the way back out and turned in my bag there. No problem with the sky caps, they checked my ticket, took my bag and roped a claim ticket to it, then ripped off my half. There. The pistols were were safe. Besides, my name and social security number were written on the side of the duffel and it was padlocked shut. Easy peasey lemon squeezy.

Now walked back into the terminal and the over night bag went through x-ray with narry a beep or two or three. Well, that two or three was me walking through this doorway thing. Had to untuck my shirt to show the dime around my waist. The brass mating collar really set that sucker off. Found Gate 10, got a seat in the corner to watch the world wonder by and wait for the boarding call. Took out the chocolate bar and nibbled on it. Had left my breakfast to fertilize the rose bushes in front of the ‘rents house earlier, so was a little hungry. Oh I hope this morning sickness passes soon.

“Ladies and Gentleman,” announced the clerk at the desk next to the door leading out to the tarmac. “Flight 2591, non stop to Richmond, Virginia will be boarding shortly. We have a full flight today, so please have your carry ons ready to go under the seat and let’s step lively.” Smoking was called first, then first class and then the rest of us cattle. The clerk was right, that DC-9 was stuffed to the gunnels. It was hot out on the tarmac, the smell of Av-Gas and burned rubber was.......broke out of line and dashed behind a baggage truck. There goes the Hershey bar. Come on Ulysses! Let me keep something here!

Got back in line, holding my nose and breathing through my mouth. Found my seat and settled in. “First one?” The little old alpha lady sitting next to me asked.

“Second,” I was making sure there was a barf bag in the seat pocket.

“My omega was sick with every last one of our pups,” she held out a tissue as my nose was running a bit. “He’d be tossing up for the first three months and then be right as rain for the rest of the time.”

“How many pups did you have together?”

“Eight,” she said. “Being the big RC back in those days meant no suppressants or birth control unless you sneaked em. And after eight pups,” her eyes twinkled. “We went on a lot of camping
trips to Canada.” Oh Canada, the true north strong and free.....and willing to sell suppressants, birth control and scent blockers to desperate American omegas.

We had a nice chat during the flight, she’d come up to Baltimore to visit some the grandpups. Their pictures filled her ‘brag book’ to the bursting. Don, her mate of some 50 years was not feeling well (which surprised me that he was still alive considering most omegas died between their 50th and 60th birthdays) and had stayed home under the care of one of their daughters who was a nurse. “I love that ole pain in the posterior,” she said tenderly laying a finger on a photo of a pile of pups with their grand-papa. “More then anyone or thing on the Alpha God’s green earth. And was gonna make sure that man lives as long as the good Lord lets him.”

Nice to hear that for a change and not that he’s interchangeable. I guess there are other couples, besides Mom and Dad and the Reynolds that are in it for the long haul.

Being it was only 45 minutes, this was ‘monkey flight’ so they hauled out the peanuts and drink cart. Drank the ginger ale carefully not wanting to upset my stomach any more then it already was. Damn, even airline coffee smelled good this morning. Ate the peanuts with even more care. One by one, hoping with each they wouldn’t come flying back up. But Ulysses must have liked everything because his flutterings settled down and the nausea with it.

The stewardesses came round, picked up the garbage as the captain came over the load speaker to let us know it was a balmy 87 degrees in Richmond and that the tower had given them clearance to begin the descent toward the Richard E Byrd Airport. “Please buckle up and put out your cigarettes. Thank you.” We were on the ground a few minutes later, not a bad landing, a bump or two but nothing that sent me looking for the barf bag. Said goodbye to my seat mate, side stepped my way (all while trying not look like I was automaticly trying hook up a static line) down the aisle. Come out of the plane and down the passenger stairs, crossing the tarmac and into the terminal.

Boy, the air conditioning felt good. Trudged through the corridor to baggage claim and waited for the duffel to show up on the carrousel. In the mean time, took stock of the airport. It was a medium-ish kind of place, not too big nor too small. It had a mezzanine where there was a restaurant and cocktail lounge, on the ground floor on one side were the desks for United, Piedmont and Delta Airlines. Then off to the side the car rental agencys had set up shop and in the middle between the two, a magazine kiosk with several racks of the latest in news and paper back books for sale.

After several duffels went by, mine finally showed up and I hoisted to my shoulder and walked out the front door to see about catching a cab out to Fort Lee. At the moment there was just one hack at the curb but it looked like he already had a fare. Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained. “Hi there,” said with a toothy grin to the driver. “Are you headed anywhere near Fort Lee?”

“Yup,” the guy reopened the trunk of the cab. “You and my Spec 4 friend here,” he nodded toward a tall lanky alpha black guy who was standing off to the side fiddling with a Polaroid camera. As I was lifting the duffel into the trunk heard a voice say, “hey, turn around.” Looked back and the guy snapped a picture. It spat out a moment later and after a shake or two, he handed it to me.

What came in to view first was my butt. Not bad, I’d do me in a heart beat. The rest came a moment later and showed a young omega man in maroon bell bottoms, white cotton oxford shirt with the sleeve rolled to the elbow, black leather belt and black penny loafers with a two inch stack heel. Had bought these last week, wanted something special to travel in. So splurged at McCurdy’s Department Store down town for the pants, belt and shoes. My hair had grown back some and was starting curl. The glasses had slid down my nose a bit, so looking up over them the moment the
picture was taken. “Oh wow, thank you.”

“No problem man,” the Spec 4 said easily, turning on the charm. “Wanted to check out my new camera and you were the perfect subject.” Oh, pshaw. We got into the cab and took off down the strass. The guy was chatty, not to the point of annoying but just on the edge. He’d just come in from Fort Carson, Colorado and was going to typewriter repair school. After which he’d be shipping out for a year in Korea. “Then who knows, after that. Maybe Georgia or Virginia. Will need a soft winter after 2 years in the Rockies and a year up on the ‘Z’.”

I nodded, uh huh’ed and asked a question here and there to keep him from asking about me. Not that I was ashamed of being an officer, just didn’t want him freezing up and making the ride uncomfortable for either us until I had to. Hitting on a mated omega was one thing, hitting on a mated omega officer was another. Which came soon enough as we rolled passed the sign that said ‘US ARMY Quartermaster Center FORT LEE’. “Where do you two need to be dropped?” The driver asked.

“I’m here for Officers Basic.”

“Okay, will drop you off first. Building 8000. You sign in there.” The Spec 4 quickly gave his destination and immediately shut up. The smell of unhappy alpha filled the back seat.

The cab drove along a wide boulevard with athletic fields and a gym on one side, while on the other were modern brick and wooden WW2 buildings dotting the landscape. We came to a stop in front of a one story brick building that sat along side of what looked like a rather large motel. Must be the BOQ. Swung open the back passengers side door, thanked the chatty Spec 4 again for the Polaroid and got out. The driver had flipped open the trunk and pulled out my duffel and overnight bag. “That’ll be $20 dollars please.”

A Jackson and two Washingtons went into his palm. He then slammed the trunk lid shut, got back into the cab and was off in a cloud of exhaust. “Okay,” I picked up my luggage and squared my shoulders. “Here we go.” Marched in, presented my orders to the clerk at the desk and was immediately told ‘welcome to Fort Lee’, there would be no BOQ housing for another two weeks until the class ahead of us graduates.

My mouth and heart dropped. SHIT! After all these years being dragged around the world, I should’ve expected something like this. But it’s one thing to be a pup of a service member and quite another when you’re the service member. Luckily, as the old adage goes: the Alpha God love pups, fools and drunks (two outta three ain’t bad) cuz the next thing I hear is: “Hi, I’m Libbie Burgos, I’m staying at the Holiday Inn in Petersburg. Wanna be my room mate?”

Second Lieutenant Levon C Burgos (call me Libbie) was a 22 year old omega guy, a recent graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez. He’d arrived in Petersburg last night and took a room at the ‘Peters Patch’ Holiday Inn thinking it was just for a night or two. SURPRISE! Gonna be a little longer and more expensive stay. Libbie was shade taller and stocker then me, he stuck out his mitt and we shook on the deal. Immediately, he called out, “Mary! I got a room mate! We just have to find you one now.” Mary turned out to be Second Lieutenant Mary Kelso of the Idaho National Guard, she would also be our ride for the next two weeks. As long as we kicked in for gas, the sporty red Camaro with the potato on the license plate and the bumper sticker proclaiming the car was paid for by the Idaho National Guard would get us to class.

With in minutes, Mary found herself someone to share a hotel room with, an other alpha girl from the Tallahassee, Florida National Guard, Tarah Buser. The four of us piled into Mary’s Camaro and drove over Mifflin Hall to report in to the school. There we found the administrative office and one at a time, each of us stepped forward to salute (even in civilian clothes) the officer in charge
and hand over a copy of our orders. One by one, the NCOIC at the desk beside OIC, checked off our names and tucked the orders into folders.

“You’ll report here tomorrow at 08:00 am in uniform for orientation, (khakis for men, green cord uniform for women) upstairs in classroom 210. You’ll meet the officers and NCO’s who will be in charge of teaching your class. After that you’ll get your photo id’s, then be marched over to the clinic for physicals. Training starts on Monday. Any questions?” Nothing any of us had at the moment, so we saluted and walked back outside to the car. “What do we do now?” Tarah asked.

“Well, it’s about 14:30,” Mary checked her watch. “Let’s head back to hotel, get settled in and have lunch. There’s a Waffle House across the street from where we’re staying.”

Waffles? That sounds good. So, back into the car and down to Petersburg. The Holiday Inn was, well, what can one say about the Holiday Inn other than it’s the ‘McDonalds’ of hotels. They were everywhere and brought mediocrity to new heights all for $40.00 a night plus tax. But it had a pool, restaurant and working air conditioning. Which was a plus considering how humid it was today. Stopped at the front desk to check in and have my name added with Libbie’s and get a room key. The room itself was on the third floor on the back end of the hotel overlooking the pool and the interstate.

Tossed the duffel on the bed, then took out my uniforms and hung them in the closet next to Libbies. Was careful to put the overnight bag on the credenza, my hats were in there. Bad luck to put a hat on a bed. The wrinkles should hang out of the khakis by morning, but just in case, can touch them up with the iron the hotel provided down at the front desk. Is it almost 05:00 o’clock yet? So wanna call her Mummy-ship and Dad to let them know I made it okay and to hear Jeff’s voice. Even it it’s just ‘Irv’. Damn it. No where near.

So collected the others, walked across the street and sat down at a booth. The coffee smelled heavenly, one cup. Just one cup won’t kill ya pup. Ulysses fluttered then as if to give a warning, just a quick hit of nausea. Fuck it 10 times in a bucket! “Ginger ale please.” As the four of us filled up on waffles, bacon and eggs, each of us told our stories of where we from, college, family and if there was anyone back home or somewhere waiting for us. Course, I fudged a few details; like my mate, where he was, being pregnant until I had to absolutely had to tell some one. But other then that I told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.....that I liked waffles.

Funny thing was, for four people from the four winds, we all had one thing in common, none of us had put in for Quartermaster. “I wanted Adjutant General,” Mary sighed, fiddling with a strip of bacon. “Finance or Transportation. My degree is in business administration. Yet, this was the only branch offering me a commission.”

“Same here.” Tarah piped up. “I majored in Pol Sci with a minor in psychology. Figured an easy fit in Military Intelligence, MP’s or the legal beagles.”

“I’ve got a criminal justice degree,” took a large bite of waffle. “Wanted MP’s so bad, could taste it. Wanted that, MI or Transportation.”

“Would you believe I have a degree in Horticulture,” Libbie regarded his plate with a combined look of ‘oh joy’ and ‘oh crap, because I know what goes in this stuff’. “And yet....”

“Here you are.” I finished. “Sitting in Peters-patch.....”

“With you cabrooooon (I looked at him sharply.) “Uh..you speak Spanish? “

“You damn betch’um Red Ryder.” May be hunting for a new room mate PDQ if that’s his opinion
of us. Let loose a burst to let him know I wasn’t just another stupid pretty face gringo.

Libbie looked embarrassed. “Back home, cabron is either an insult or you know...a friendly insult...like..... hey asshole! Long time no see.”

That’s better. “Oh, okay. Panamanian Spanish has quite a few words like that too, I’ve had to do some fast talking because the other Spanish speakers were from Cuba or Mexico and ready to knock my teeth in.” Cuz what I said would’ve been fine in Panama, not so much any place else.

“Any who,” he continued. “So I’m up my ass in student loans to the tune of $6000.00.” He pushed the slice of waffle through the yellow goo of the eggs sunny side up. “But at least I’ve got a three year deferment before I have to pay it off. Can have the money taken out of my check every month to pay off the loan, interest free. So, not only have a job to pay it off, but get see the world at the same time.”

“Like they say in the Navy,” I said sarcastically. “It’s not a job, it’s an adventure.”

“Has anyone ever told you that you’re an asshole?” Mary asked sweetly.

“All the time.”

Got back to the hotel and laid down for a rest, but the second the bedside clock flipped to 05:00, was on the phone dialing furiously. It only rang twice before Dad picked up and it all came out in a rush. “Hi, it’s me Castiel. I made it okay. You were right, there is no housing for at least two weeks.” The tears were prickling at the corners of my eyes, “…can’t…”

“Son,” his soothing baritone came through the phone filling my ears with comfort. “I knew something like this would happen. It always does. Jeff can stay here with us until you can get on post housing, and a bit longer if there’s a problem finding a sitter.” The logical part of me was relieved, all while my omega heart broke. “Speaking of the little devil, your mother has him right here waiting to talk to you.”

There was a momentary silence and then could hear Lady Bela’s voice say….. “Papa, your papa wants to talk to you.”

“Hi Sweet heart,” I blubbered. “It’s papa! Papa! Papa loves you so very much. He misses you and loves you and just wants to blow kisses on your tummy....”

“Papa.”

Now the tears, snot and spit spilled down my face. “That’s right it’s papa! Papa! Say papa again. I miss you so much already.”

“Gook.”

“Grandma and Pop Pop reading you ‘Mohicans’? That’s so good honey.”

“Babababababababa...Pop Pop!” Then he laughed and Irv’d, then could hear his grand-mother, “say bye bye. Bye bye”.

Please no, not yet! “Wait.....Bye bye.” Now my heart was really breaking. My son was growing up without me. He’ll be walking in a minute and I’ll miss those first steps!

Then her Mummy-ship came on. “Nene, dry your eyes darling.” Wow, she must have the ‘sight’. “Your son shouldn’t hear you cry, he should only hear how you love him.” Then she took the bit
between her teeth. “You’ll be back up here before you know it, besides you can call us every
evenings to talk to him, so you’ll never be that far away.”

Knew she was right but it didn’t make it any easier. “I’ll be back up next week,” was babbling
now. “I’ll get a plane ticket to come up and see him.”

“No,” Mom said firmly. “You’re not. You are going to stay there and put your best foot forward.
Get a good start with your studies and your classmates. Because in a few months, you are going to
be dealing with the more physical aspects of your pregnancy and a nine month old pup all at the
same time. While you’re here in country we’re going to help. You need a good head start because
as much as you think you can do it all, you can’t.”

“YES I CAN!” Oh shit, I yelled at Mom. Automatically cringed and ducked my head. Back talked
Naomi-Mom only once. I was 12 and sick of always being the designated dish dryer. I threw the
dish towel at her and yelled “I ain’t doing this!” Apparently it was ‘THAT TIME’ of month and
she back handed me hard enough to send me across the room. Got a bloody nose, a sore butt and
dish drying duty for the rest of my natural life. “Sorry, sorry, sorry!” Please still love me!

But instead of being angry and hanging up or yelling at me....“It’s okay Honey,” Her Mummy-ship
said soothingly. “You’ve had a long day and you got some longer ones ahead. Get some something
to eat and some sleep. We can talk about this further tomorrow. Alright?”

“Okay.” Sniffle.

“Aright, let’s not run up your phone bill.” She kissed the phone. “I love you Nene. Good night
Sweetheart.” Heard the click and buzz. Set the phone back into the cradle as Libbie came out of the
bathroom with a wet wash cloth. Was so caught up in the conversation, hadn’t even noticed him
walking out of the room.

“Here,” he handed over the rag and sat down on the bed beside me. “Sooooo, you got a pup?”

“Uh huh.” Cripes, I’m a mess.

Then his nose twitched. “You’re pregnant?”

“Yup.” Guess the vinegar I drank this morning wore off.

“Boy are you screwed.”

“Tell me something I don’t know.” Wiped my face and blew my nose into the wash rag.

“Can they kick you out of OBC?” He reached over, “may I?” Nodded and Ulysses soul beat his
little wings against Libbies finger tips.

“Can’t see how they could. I went through jump school pregnant, so was already on active duty
there.” About that time, Ulysses made it known he was hungry with a large flutter and a larger
stomach growl. Okay, somebody wants their dinner toot sweet. Took a moment or two to compose
myself, and clean up enough so the crying jag wasn’t quite so obvious, then we left to get the
others and walk back over to the Waffle House. Got the feeling they’d be seeing a lot of us in the
next two weeks.

That night, lay awake listening to Libbies even breaths before he took that long exhale that said he
was asleep. Got up quietly, pulled on the blue terry bathrobe and slipped outside on to the balcony
walk way. There was a half moon shining bright and the traffic had slowed on the interstate to the
occasional semi roaring through town. “What the hell I am doing here?” My life finally got started,
I wanted all this like forever and now that I’ve got it.......was this what I really wanted, since Military Police was now out of my reach? Hell of time to think of that. Stood out there a while longer, wishing I had a cigarette and some who I could confess to.

Chapter End Notes

William Earl ‘Bootsie’ Collins, come to prominence as the consummate bass guitar player in funk music during the 1970’s, first with James Brown and then with Parliament-Funkadeic. His song Bootzilla was released in January of 1978. He is still with us and still making music.

Bod: Scottish slang for penis

Chebs: Scottish slang for breasts

Tecumseh: or more correctly, Tamanend-chief of the Delaware Indian Tribe. His figurehead was on the USS Delaware, a ship that was destroyed during the Civil War. The figurehead was given to the Annapolis where the midshipman renamed him Tecumseh after the Shawnee Warrior Chief.

Gossip bench: a combination bench, desk and phone stand

The Crowley Dad car
https://www.google.com/search?q=Imperial+crown+coupe&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjGksb4mJPZAhUCOKwKHfi9CroQsAQIOg&biw=1426&bih=721

Platzhirsch: German for male top dog. Yes, Cas is being rather insulting.

Yes, you are all aghast that a social security number should be so openly displayed. As I’ve commented before, no one thought back in those days there would be a problem. A social security number was also your service id, so it was on everything.

Walking through a door way thing: of course is a metal detector. No id was needed at one time to get on an airplane, or any screening nor baggage checks. But with the rash of bombings and hijackings in the 60’s and early 70’s (my ex-mother in law was on a flight that was hijacked to Jordan. She brought back an ashtray from the Amman Hilton, where the passengers had been put up) people finally realized something had to be done. From the LA Times article dated June 12th 2011 ‘ The 1974 Air Transportation Security Act sanctions the FAA’s universal screening rule, which spurs U.S. airports to adopt metal-detection screening portals for passengers and X-ray inspection systems for carry-on bags.’
So yes, Cas is walking through something very new.

Big RC: Roman Catholic

Yup, for years I had a Polaroid of me half turned, looking back at the camera owned by a chatty E-4. Short brown hair, big ass glasses. Was wearing a white polyester pull over blouse, maroon bell bottom dress pants and three inch stack heels. I was all of 22 years old and 130 pounds sopping wet. And yes, it’s the 70’s, men wore maroon bell bottoms too.
“Hi I’m Libbie Burgos” Swear to God, true story. That is exactly how it happened. And there really was a Mary from Idaho.


From the website Gritty Spanish:

Cabrón
Literal: dumbass, asshole.
In Spanish, “cabrao” is male goat. But for most Latin countries “cabrao” is used to insult someone. For a Latino, a “cabrao” is a man who knows that his wife is cheating on him; he knows it, without defending it in order to keep his woman. Depending on the situation, in Puerto Rico the word “cabrao” can be used in a friendly or offensive way, just as in English you could use “dumbass” to mockingly call a friend.

Yup, there is a little sentence in a student loan contract that defers your payments for three years if you join the military, VISTA or the Peace Corps. Six grand may not sound like a lot of money now, but then...it was a small fortune.
Let me see, any warnings...enforced 'fun'. But thank you all for being here through this long winding road through the late 1970's.

The invitation to the cocktail party was for Saturday evening at 20:00 on the 2nd of September 1978. It was passed from hand to hand as the class all crowded around to get a look. The part where it said ‘hope to see you there’ was crossed out and replaced with ‘YOU WILL BE THERE’. Just the first in the long line of command happy hours, dinners and New Years day receptions an officer was expected to go to. I remember Zachariah bitching and moaning about them and Naomi-Mom just telling him to shut up, suck it up and smile.

Course the invitation set the female officers to talking about shopping, the need for a new dress, shoes and hand bags for the occasion. Some of the guys groaned at the prospect of being dragged through the stores by their mates and I just hoped the suit coat and pants I got down at the thrift store at Benning still fit.

The Quartermaster Officers Basic Class 101-78, we were a lively group of 50 some people: 10 women and 40 men. 15 betas, 30 alphas and five omegas. 15 West Pointers, 3 Citadel, 5 VMI, 4 Ninety day wonders and the rest from various college ROTC programs. A few of the guys were mated, of the omegas, I was the only one with a mate while everyone else was single or had a boyfriend/girlfriend back home.

Saturday August 26th had reminded me a lot of any first day when dealing with the Army. A ton of paper work, introductions and ending up flat on my back, heels in stirrups with a total stranger scoping my borehole. Earlier that morning, Libbie had tossed scissors to my paper and had gotten the shower first while I'd put on a pair of cut off shorts and a t shirt to go downstairs and do a few laps in the hotel swimming pool. For supposedly being heated, someone must have forgot to put on warmer as it was a little nippy when I stuck in a big toe, what the hell, I’d swum in worse.

Dove in and began swimming just as just as fast as possible to warm up. After a few laps the water didn’t feel as bad. A few more and was warm as toast. Phew, that got the heart going but better head back up if I didn’t want to be late. Found Libbie out of the shower and in front of the bathroom mirror shaving. “Missed a spot,” I pointed to the dab on his neck, which I immediately, scooped up and glopped on his nose.

“Jackass,” he muttered but did scrape the razor over the spot I’d pointed to.

Had shucked off my soggy clothes, waited till Libbie had finished shaving for the most part before, putting on the shower and stepping in. Oh that felt great. Hot water, good pressure, just hope the BOQ’s had the same and weren’t like Olson Hall down at Fort Benning. Oh dear Alpha God please, don’t let them be like Benning.

Ulysses loved it of course. My little man happily fluttered and beat my belly like a tom tom. He’d been quiet in the pool a little earlier but here in the shower, the pup was doing the back stroke. Soaped up from head to toe, was going to be squeaky clean, no toe cheese or belly button lint or ring around the ass hole. In a little bit, shut off the water, step out and opened the door to let the warm damp fog roll out and the cool dry air rush in. Had goose bumps on my arms and legs as the towel went over them briskly, followed by some Nivea cream. Wiped the condensation off the
glass to be able to shave and was rather pleased with what was looking back, I am one fine looking ‘mega. The cuts, bruises and other jump school mishaps had faded or healed and still had some of the muscles that only pushups, gut busters and chins ups could bring. Yes, yes I would do me.

Came out and dressed carefully. Wanting nothing but the best impression. Comfy cotton panties, nursing shirt, gleaming white t-shirt, black socks and then the khakis. Lastly snapped on the mating collar, gave it a once over lightly with a polishing cloth. “Hey Cas,” Libbie had been getting dressed himself. “Is my gig line straight?”

Checked him over, yup. The edge of the shirt lined straight as an arrow down his front to the flap over the zipper. His belt buckle shown brightly, Brasso’d to an inch of its life and the toes of his shoes were like mirrors. “You’re strack dude. How about me.?”

Libbie circled me carefully, “your gig is straight, shoes look good, name plate and jump wings on right,” then he stopped and sighed. “Your pants are a little tight in the rear, you can see the underwear lines.” SHIT! Oh man, I’m only just shy of two months pregnant and my butt is getting bigger already!? Dropped my drawers and stepped out of the panties. Looks like the boys are going be swinging free today until I can get a slightly larger size in trousers. Pull em back up, got myself looking right again to pass muster.

Took out the saucer cap from its hat box, lovingly brushed off some lint that wasn’t there and set it lightly on my head. Then made sure it was two finger tips from the top of my nose. “Let’s get the others and get some breakfast before heading out.” Mary and Tarah were two doors down and answered after the first knock. “You guys ready?”

“How’d you get pregnant?” Tarah looked aghast.

“When a daddy alpha and a papa omega love each other very much.....”

“Asshole,” she lightly punched my arm. “You know what I mean.”

Finished the glass of water and handed it back, “I was going to jump school in July, got so caught up in trying to get ready for it, that I messed up on my pills. Had a really great night with my mate” (there is no way I’m getting into bond pups with this group) “and Shazam, bun in the oven. Went all through jump school pregnant, though to be fair, I didn’t know it either.”

Mary was equally appalled, “how couldn’t you not known?” The alpha in her came out, protective yet angry at a ‘wayward’ omega. Couldn’t blame her really, biology is a bitch, but it didn’t stop me from cringing a little. Now she was embarrassed by her outburst, “sorry, I didn’t mean to have it come out like that.”
“That’s okay,” (not really but will have to be more aware of what I say) we were walking toward the elevators. “We did the dirty deed on a Wednesday (well it was lot more then that) and I was in Benning two days later. It was so early, the pregnancy tests didn’t even catch it.” Pushed the buttons for down and impatiently waited. There was finally a ding (fries are done) the doors slid open and we stepped in.

On the upside, those waffles covered in stewed peaches hit the spot, only stole a tiny sip from Libbies coffee and drank three glasses of water. Down side, I’m gonna be pissing like a race horse.

After breakfast, the four of us piled into Mary’s car and drove over to post, finding a parking spot in the rear of Mifflin Hall. A quick check of shoes, gig lines, brass and caps, then we went inside to find the class room. Room 210 was up on the second floor, it was large, built like a small stadium with office desks on the wide step levels descending to a lecture stage, chalk board on the wall and screen for over head projections or films. As the other students started arriving, heard accents from all parts of the country; eager faces that were black, white, oriental, brown; male and female, alpha, beta and omega. We were all represented.

Including a familiar face. “Hannah Seeglar?” The daughter of a Special Forces NCO turned at the sound of her name being called. Looking at the jump wings and pathfinder badges on her chest, could tell the girl had been busy this summer. “Hey, good to see you!”

“Same here.” She came over and shook my hand, “how’re you? What’s happening in your life?”

“Got mated, had a pup, graduated, went to jump school and here I am. How about you?”

“Broke up with the alpha I was courting after he’d hit me because I was selected for jump school and he wasn’t. Daddy came up from Bragg, beat the shit out of him, I graduated, went to jump and path finder schools.”

“Cat’s ass!” That guy learned the hard way not to piss off a big alpha daddy who loves his little omega girl child and has no problem teaching some knothead a hard and long lasting lesson. Those were some courting gifts that dude will never get back.

At eight o’clock sharp the Quartermaster Officers Basic Class 101-78 came to attention as 50 pairs of feet hit the floor as our Captain, two Lieutenants and three NCO’s marched into the room, down the stairs and turned to face the class. “Take, seats.” being senior officer of the group, the captain spoke first. “I’m Captain Ennis Ross, welcome to Quartermaster Officer Basic. I will be your class adviser during your stay here. Any issues you have both professional, academic or personal, you can come to me or Second Lieutenants Marlon Chickadee......is there something funny Lieutenant......” squinted at my name tag. “Novac?”

“No Sir, sorry Sir.” Good going Novac. “It’s just that..... I’ve been meeting Lt. Chickadees relations in different places over the country for the past two years. They tend to pop up when you least expect it. Kind of like the Spanish Inquisition.”

The good Lieutenant took it in stride and the correct voice, “Cardinal Fang.....sorry....my grandfather....”

And of course I finished the Chickadee family mantra....“he got around.”

He cocked an amused eyebrow, “you really have met us, haven’t you.”

The captain took control of the class again and continued his welcome speech. Forms were then
passed out concerning our pay and what bank we wanted it sent to, CHAMPUS coverage, death benefits and multitudes of other things. Up until this point Jeff and I were covered as John’s dependents, not anymore. I was the service member now and Jeff would be covered as my dependent. Wonder how this was going to work out with Ulysses? Would he be covered under CHAMPUS or whatever the fuck the Brits call theirs. Plenty of time to figure that out. On Monday we’d be receiving our per diem checks. This was the amount given figured on a daily rate for food, lodging and other out of pocket incidentals while on temporary duty somewhere or school.

Captain Ross advised us to deposit that check in a local bank, as it would be easier to pay for things with a local check at stores off post rather then with an out of state check. Hinting broadly that the United Virginia Bank here on post was a good idea and within walking distance. Okay, but my monthly pay check was still going to Marine Midland. Also recommended, was a getting a credit card. Visa or Master Charge for those staying state side and American Express if you were going overseas.

“Don’t spend that per diem in the first month,” the Captain warned. “It has to last you the whole time you’re here.” Luckily I still had some left over from the settlement and the four grand from ‘Mega.....oh damn. I forgot about that. My issue will be out in another couple months. Well, hopefully I can do a ‘Clark Kent’ (glasses and bad hair cut) and nobody will recognize me.

So we spent the morning filling out forms, getting our id cards (I’d seen better looking mug shots) and then being told to head over to the officers club for lunch, where we WOULD join. Dues were ten dollars a month or we could pay the full $60 dollars for the time we’d be here. Not everyone looked happy, but the smart ones (brats, Hudson High boys and the academy twits) knew enough to keep their mouths shut. Ten bucks a month to a place you’d only go to may once a month tops, was a small payment to an insurance policy with a big pay off later on.

I bit the bullet and paid the sixty bucks. The food was officers club typical, not horrible and better then mess hall but not by much. Sat with Libbie, Mary and Tasha but also two new classmates. Yon Burkehead, a West Point grad from Victoria, Texas and Laurie Ashecroft all the way from Washington State with a degree in Business Admin from Gonzaga.....where the fuck was that? It was ‘Italian Day’, so buffet table had chaffing dishes of spaghetti, meat balls and sauce, green salad and Italian bread. Ulysses was only luke warm to the whole thing so ended up only having a few bites before politely excusing myself, leaving the Old Dominion Room and breaking into a run once outside to the corner of the building to throw up lunch. Pup, you’re kill’en me here!

Stopped in the mens room to clean up, then return to the table, where lunch consisted of saltines and ginger ale.

After wards, we were marched over to the Kenner Army Hospital for physicals and review of our records. Just my luck, my shot record was missing. Having been responsible for the damn thing since I was 10 years old, never losing it or at least being able to tape it back together after every......accident....mishap, that time when Gabe ate it. I don’t know but now it’s missing. “Since you’re pregnant,” the old alpha bird colonel nurse who’d been reviewing my records and of course followed her nose, “we can only give you the flu, tetanus, typhoid and diphtheria shots. You’ll have to get the others after you have your pup.”

I hate flu shots, they give me the flu. Or that’s what it feels like. Problem is, without that shot record, I have to get them. “Oh let’s get this over with”. Stuck out my arm and gritted my teeth. After which, of course ended up on exam table, heels in the stirrups, explaining about the scars on my thighs, (no my alpha didn’t abuse me) details of my past pregnancy (yes, there really is such a thing as mating fugue) autographing a copy of Dr Pam’s issue of The Lancet (glad you found the article stimulating) and having everyone and their dog look up the family bush. So needless to say,
I was not in the best of shape when it was all over and the class formed up outside for one final exhortation from Captain Ross before being let go for the day.

Oh man, I don’t feel so good. Please, please, please shut up! Quit beating your gums and shut up! The shots I’d had were starting to get to me, plus the meager lunch and now am too hot and thirsty. Our adviser, after a few more ‘words of wisdom’, finally decided that he’d imparted enough said ‘wisdom’ for the day, calling us to attention with the final admonishment that class started at 08:00 AM on Monday, not 08:02 or 08:05 but we were expected to be in our seats, looking strack, ready to learn as our first exam would be next Friday on the subject matter of that week. Oh fuck a duck.

Now I really don’t feel good.

Mummyship was right, this was going to be harder then I expected.

The second the order to ‘dismiss,’ left his mouth, was off like a shot back inside the hospital to get cooled off and find a drinking fountain. Libbie found me a couple minutes later sucking down water like it was going out of style. “You ,now, I’m feeling a quart short too but what you’re doing is bordering on ridiculous dude. Besides, you got water all down your front.”

Stopped long enough to see that he was right, the front of my uniform blouse was dotted with water spots. Took one more long pull before giving up the fountain to my room mate. Now just wanted to get back to the hotel room, lay down and get some rest. Called shotgun and rode back to the Holiday Inn with my head out the window. Promised Mary profusely that I wouldn’t wreck the paint job if I yarked. Oh man, that shots were hitting me bad.

Back at the hotel, just threw off the saucer cap in a chair and took my khakis off leaving them in a heap at the foot of the bed, then climbed naked between the sheets. Libbie carefully took his uniform off and hung it up, setting his cap in the closet. “We’re going to hit up to that Chinese joint on the way to post, are you coming?”

“No, I just wanna see if I can sleep this off. But thanks anyway.” Sat up, reached over to my pants and pulled out my wallet. “But can you bring me back some Hunan beef and a couple of of egg rolls?” Handed him a 10 spot then lay back down, closed my eyes.

“No problem, get some rest. Hope you feel better.”

“Thanks man. Sorry for being such a party fart.”

“No sweat-ee da. See ya later.” Libbie turned off the light and locked the door behind him as he left. Took a deep breath and let it out in long slow sigh. This was not how I imagined today would go. On the upside, at least I didn’t fall over in front of people or blow chow in Marys car. Turned over a few times, got comfortable on my stomach and dosed off.

Woke up a while later, the TV was playing softly in the back ground and Libbie was talking on the phone. There was also the smell of Chinese food perfuming the air. Looked over at the clock/radio on the night stand. It was a little past 08:00 PM. Was still feeling kind of.....well, iffy but oh that wonderful greasy goodness of beef, onions and cabbage....my stomach growled and fluttered. Looks like Ulysses was hungry too.

Sat up and reached for the bag, there was three dollars, few dimes, pennies and a quarter sitting next to it. Reached in and took out one of the egg rolls and inhaled it in three bites. Who cares if it was just lukewarm and prolly would give me heartburn later on, right now it was just perfect. Next came the boxes of beef and rice. Oh good, they put in chop sticks. Propped up the pillows against the headboard, leaned back and started shoveling. A few bites of beef, then rice, then back to beef. Oh I needed this. Looked up at the TV, oh fuck, ‘Charlies Omegas’. Just what I wanted to see,
three omega bouncing their tits and asses around, all while solving ‘crime’. Who ever this Aaron Spelling guy is, he needs to have his head butt stroked......with a rifle butt not an ass type butt.

“I love you too,” heard Libbie say tenderly. “Ya little ‘gun bunny’. Bye baby.” Then hung up the phone. “That’s Roger,” my roommate had a silly grin on his face. “We’re courting,” unbutton his shirt to reveal a small courting mark. Just one too, no ‘tick tac toe tits’. “He’s out at Fort Sill going through field artillery officers basic.” He held out his wrist, there was a mighty nice watch gleaming on there. “It’s a Seiko Panda,” Libbie bragged. “Roger wanted nothing but the best for my courting gift. What did your mate get you?”

“A car key,” thinking back to that snowy day at RIT, when Dean cut the courting mark on my breast. How much it hurt was under cut (excuse the pun) by how well he cared for me in its aftermath. The big jerk did give me back Baby’s key after I threw it at him at Bragg when I caught him and Lt Harvelle together, it’s still on my key ring.

“What’s your mates name and where is he, she....?”

“John,” he’s in Belgium at NATO headquarters. Prolly some glorified coffee boy.” Oh would he kick my ass if he’d heard that. “I’m assigned to K-town, so we won’t be that far apart. And after a year, could prolly get assigned up that way.”

“I’m going to Germany too, some place call Hof.” Lt Burgos leaned over and snagged one of the fortune cookies that came in the bag. He cracked it in half and then pulled out the message.

“Fan mail from some flounders?” I quipped.

“Diamonds in the rough are found in the easiest of places, like in front of your nose,” he popped the cookie in his mouth. “What the fuck does that mean?”

“Beats the shit outta me,” opened mine. “Woman with skirt up runs faster then man with pants down.”

“Words to live by,” Libbie stretched and yawned. “I’m gonna take a shower and then hit the sack. Last few days have been killer dillers.”

“That’s a ‘rog’, I said tiredly. “Gonna call the ‘rents and see how my pup is doing. Pulled out a Polaroid picture of Jeff that was taken a couple of days ago when we were walking around the Naval Academy. “This is him.”

My roommate whistled, “damn Poppi, he’s huge! How old is he?”

“Six months, but he is about two months ahead developmental wise. So he’s like an 8 month old.” Kissed the photo, “His name is Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin....Novac. He’s with his grandparents up in Annapolis, gotta find a sitter and have quarters before I can bring him down here. Hope on Monday can see if one of our class mates spouses wants to earn some money watching the little booger.”

“Good luck with that one.” Libbie handed back the picture and headed toward the bathroom.

Put in a call to Dad and her Mummy-ship. Talked to them for a few minutes and then Jeff. Thought I was gonna lose my shit when he said, “Wuv oooo Papa!”

“I wuv....love you too Baby. Oh Honey, Papa loves you so much! Papa loves you! Miss you Sweetie.”
“wuv ooooo, Irv.”

“That’s right Baby, love you too.” Oh have got to find a way of knocking Irv out of his vocabulary.

“Effffff! Pop Pop.”

“Did you say your name? Jeff. Jeff. Your name is Jeff.”

“Pop Pop.”

“We’ll work on it.”

Course the conversation didn’t last too much longer. Couldn’t run up the phone bill too much more. So said good night and cried myself to sleep. Sunday came and had to get the wash done. The hotel had a small laundry room so the four of us commandeered a washer pooled our dimes and did khakis, cords and underwear. It was slightly embarrassing that Libbie and I had prettier and sexier underwear then the girls did. “Grannie pants?” I snarked as they tossed their clothes in to the shared washer. “That’s sad girls.”

“Oh Mommi,” Libbie tut tutted. “You’re old man has got to do better. Time he go to Frederick’s not Falis.”

“Shut up,” Mary growled, tossing the offending underwear into the machine. “Okay smart asses, I know how to belly dance, wait till you see me in that ‘uniform’. Then we’ll see who has grannie pants.”

“Oooooooo,” Tarah, Libbie and I perched on the other washers. “Put your money where your mouth is girl. Let’s see what cha got.”

She had a lot actually. Even better moves then the ones Lewiston had that night at the embassy before the costume ball when he was strutting his stuff for her Jenny-ship and me. Of course, the three of us whooped and hollered and pounded the washing machines as Mary sang, undulated her hips, belly and shoulders as she danced around the laundry room. Wow, was she bendy.

“Damn woman, you’re a stone fox!” Tarah clapped and beat her heels on the side of the washer. “That was incredible!”

Mary laughed, “glad you all liked it.” She sniffed the air, the aroma of VERY happy alpha and omega was intermingled with Oxydol and Rain Barrel fabric softener. She smirkingly tisk tisked us, busted, as Libbie and I were sitting there red faced with our legs crossed, using laundry products to cover our hard ons. “You’re all very very bad.”

Tarah just shrugged at hers, “it’ll pass. Like hurricanes and sand spurs.”

Afterward with laundry washed and in the dryer, went back across the street to the Waffle House for lunch. Sat there munching on french fries looking at my new friends. Nice folks, good people, too bad after school is over we may write for a few months, or send Christmas cards for years and may even run into each other in some future posting. Not likely though. Why did I choose this life? Knew the ups and downs. But.....Maybe because it doesn’t feel right NOT to move every two or three years. Or be able to make new friends immediately. Or if someone asks where I’m from, at least for the last four years had been able to say ‘upstate New York’. Before that and now, the is answer going to be ‘everywhere’.

Maybe I picked this life, because.......at the end of the day, it’s the only one I know.
Later, was writing letters with half an ear listening to 60 Minutes on the TV. Mike Wallace had ambushed some dude in his office and was giving him the third degree. Whew harsh. You know it’s gonna be a bad day when there’s a 60 Minutes film crew in your waiting room. Had finished letters to John and Dean, then hesitated a moment with the next sheet of airborne stationary and wrote, ‘Hi Benny.’ Prolly was a bad idea but.....oh hell. I miss him. So wrote a nice, kinda general letter letting him know about Jeff, the pregnancy and my new life down here in Virginia. There, just a friendly letter to a friend.

There were some Holiday Inn post cards in the credenza, so wrote short notes to Jesse, Ben and Asa. Went downstairs to the front desk and bought some postage stamps, walked outside and found the mail box down the block at the corner.

The next morning was a flurry of getting ourselves put together and looking strack. Also having pens, paper (will have to use hotel stationary and pens until am able to get supplied at the PX) and a manila folder to carry it until I can invest in a briefcase. Piled into Marys car and made it over to Mifflin Hall with plenty of time before class. So, went to the cafeteria for breakfast. Mmmmmm, grits, ham and red eye gravy. It was so good, the smell of sausage didn’t even bother me or more specificity, Ulysses.

Class started at 08:00 sharp, Captain Ross was our instructor for the day but before class began, they passed out the per diem checks ($1500, oh thank the Alpha God). Will have to get over to the bank at lunch time to set up a checking account and put in an application for a credit card. He also had us stand up one by one, to introduce ourselves to the class. “My name is Castiel Novac, I’m an army brat. Graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a degree in Criminal Justice. I’m mated and have a pup named Jeff. Oh, and if anyone’s mate wants to earn $70 dollars a week to watch him, we can talk after class.” Even Capt Ross’s ears pricked up on that last statement.

So each in their turn stood up, there was a West Point golfer with the nickname of Bear, a girl who first runner up in the Miss Mississippi beauty pageant, another girl who was the New England regional college backgammon champ, and another West Pointer who’d been on the foot ball team last year when they beat Navy. We had a pretty interesting crew.

Then, pens and note paper at the ready. Class is in session. At the first break, was approached by Lt Chickadee. “Were you serious about the offer of $70.00 a week for watching your pup?”

“As serious as a cardiac infarction,” I said. “My son is 6 months old, he’s a good boy and I need to a sitter who’ll love him as much as I do.”

“I assigned here after OBC and my mate has been looking for a job, but there is not a lot out there right now unless you’re a hotel maid or a waitress or wanna drive all the way to Richmond.” We talked a little more and I would get to meet Mrs Chickadee tonight after class. Break over, went and sat back down.

Lunch time came and about a third of the class dashed over to the United Virginia Bank to get a checking account. The ladies at the bank must do this thing an awful lot because they had four clerks on it, creating our checking accounts and taking in our applications for their Master Charge, although for people going to Europe, the card was American Express as they had offices all over West Germany. On a whim, I filled out the paper work for both, figuring if I didn’t qualify for one, maybe I would the other.

With in 45 minutes, they had the lot of us done and out the door. Being they were right across from the PX, dashed across the parking lot to grab a quick lunch. One of the guys said there was a snack shack there with foot long hotdogs, big salt pretzels and soda (pop, seltzer, coke-what ever you call it in your neck of the woods). Went over, got in line, was handed my soda and dog, course that’s
when some smart aleck trainee (Fort Lee had several large enlisted training battalions) saluted me. It was a prank junior enlisted pulled on shave tail lieutenants as said shave tails always wanted to be saluted in the worst way. So they were obliged and yes, at the worst possible moment. Like now.

Ain’t my first rodeo, remembered seeing Zachariah handle this situation a few times (oh my Alpha God. I’m taking a leaf from his book...oh fuck a duck...hell...sigh....it works) “hold this.” Shoved the hot dog and soda into the startled troopers hands and returned his salute. Then grabbed my stuff back. “Carry on.” As the commercial sez: ‘it’s not nice to fool mother nature’ or an army brat for that matter. Made it back to class with a couple of minutes to spare.

At the end of the day, packed my notes and pens in the manila envelope, then let Mary know I would be getting a ride back to the hotel with Lt Chickadee as I was going to speaking to his mate about pup sitting. Also let Libbie know that I’d be back at the room in another hour or two. Riding over to the lieutenants quarters, asked him where he hailed from. “Hot Lanta, down in Cabbage town.” Seemed to remember Calvin mentioning family down that way, but that was on his mothers side. But then again, grand-dad, he did get around.

“I’ve met the Chickadee contingents from Oklahoma, Maryland, Friars Point Mississippi and a couple of other places.”

Marlon Chickadee laughed, “Yeah, I’ve got to meet the folks from out Chicago and Oklahoma way, If the whole family ever wanted to have a reunion, the only place that would hold us would be the Houston Astrodome.” We drove across post to the housing area, looked pretty much like another on any post in CONUS. Rows of two story duplexes, two unit ranch styles and apartment style buildings.

“My folks moved when my dad got a job opportunity to run his own kitchen. He was a line cook in one of the big hotels downtown Atlanta, but is currently up at Fort Benning, he’s the head chef at the supper club there. But still when the mood hits, Dad will take over the grill, he turns a mighty fine steak.”

Before I could stop myself, “think I had some of his handy work. The steak was top shelf.” Damn pregnancy hormones. “Was at Benning last month for jump school and a bunch of us went over for dinner at the supper club. We’d all got tired of pizza slices at the Leaning Rest.”

“Drive on,” we noticed the other cars stopping and pulling off to the side. 17:00 hours, Retreat and To the Colors. Got out of the car and came to attention. Then saluted when To the Colors began. Afterward got back in the car and picked up on the conversation where we’d left off. “Mama always cooked every night but it came to barbeque and grilling, Daddy would take over and there wasn’t the cheapest piece of meat, that he couldn’t tenderize, rub or marinate into the most delicious thing you’ve ever had.”

“Well, it was wonderful.” I said as the car pulled into the driveway of a ranch style home that was divided into two units. Wow, this isn’t bad. Nicer then the places I lived in growing up. Got out and followed the Lieutenant up to the door and into his quarters. It was pretty much Sears/Montgomery Wards standard furniture wise. No shrank or foreign knick nacks as they hadn’t been overseas yet. Basic stuff on the wall, their college diplomas in frames (huh both poly sci from Morehead) and his commissioning statement bronzed and on a wooden plaque.

“Well, hello there,” Mrs Chickadee....or I’m assuming it’s her....came out from the kitchen. “I’m so glad to get to meet you.” Then she turned to her mate, “I have the best news. I got a call back from Charles Hardway Marks office, he’s a representative with the Virginia House of Delegates. He represents the district in this part of St Georges County and I got the job to be on his staff! I be
working out of his Hopewell office, there’s no running up to Richmond every day.” Then she
turned back to me, “I’m so sorry, tried to call Marlon to let him know before bringing you all the
way here. But he must have been in class and didn’t get the message.”

Oh shit. Thought this was going too easy. Forced a smile on my lips, “Congratulations on your new
job.” Well, at least one of em is the field they studied in college.

“Would you like to stay for dinner?” Oh yeah, Southern hospitality dictates an invitation, let’s
make this all the more uncomfortable.

“Oh, thanks but I don’t wanna impose.” There was a momentary look of relief on her face. “You
don’t have to take me all the way back to the Holiday Inn. Just drop me off at the Officers Club,
can get a cab from there.”

Lt. Chickadee was adamant on driving me back to the hotel, so, who am I to get in the way of
progress?

Sadly, no one’s mate wanted to pup sit. They were all college alphas and beta girls (damn Vassar)
who wanted careers (good luck with that, mated to an army officer) and thought pup sitting was
beneath them or that’s what their politely worded replies implied. My classmates at least had the
good graces to look somewhat embarrassed. Looks like for now, Jeff has to stay with his
grandparents.

Our course of study for the week was on the logistics system, the role of the quartermaster officer
and basic functions of the quartermaster company. I read the hand outs, made notes and did my
best to pay attention, even though at times would have killed for a nap.

Friday came round and we had the first test. It wasn’t too bad. Knew the material, memorized the
order of retreat…..no that’s not right. It’s a retrograde operation. Yes, the US army never retreats
but will retrograde like hell. We’ll get the results posted on Monday. But in the mean time, the
underlying flutter was about the cocktail party on Saturday. Even the guys were kind of talking
about it now, as the dress code demanded coat and tie, and apparently not everyone had brought
one. I knew better, especially after the command performance at Benning, but still maybe a
shopping trip wouldn’t be the worst idea.

It turned into a great idea because that night when I tried on the trousers that went with the Hector
Powe of Regent Street suit jacket, they were tight. Not busting out of the seams tight, but more like
’suck in the gut and keep it like that all night’ tight. The jacket still fit but those pants, need a new
pair pants along with some new khaki uniform britches. There was a mall out on Crater Road that
had a JC Penny’s, some local department stores that should do the trick. Personally, I hate
shopping. It’s a necessary evil and never as much fun as when you had money in your pockets.
Yes, I do know how to shop lift, not only were the Novac pups banned from swimming pools, but
10 PX’s, 30 PX Annexes, 7 snack bars in three separate countries along with every candy truck and
store in Wurzburg, West Germany.

So, come Saturday morning, Mary, Tarah, Libbie and I piled in the Camaro, forked over a few
bucks each to cover gas for the week and rode over to the Walnut Mall as it opened at 10:00
o’clock. It was….a mall. Like any of the ones back home, with the big stores we knew, (J C
Penny’s held the anchor store here) the small store chains like Spencers and Thom McAn’s then
the local contributions like Thalhimers and Rucker-Rosenstock’s. We split up, figuring two hours
should be enough and then meet in front of the Country Cooken’ restaurant for lunch.

Didn’t bother going to Penny’s. Not for good clothes anyway. A refrigerator or basic nursing shirt,
maybe, but their mens clothes were just okay and their omega department was almost non existent.
Now Thalhimers, that was more to my liking. Good quality and an omega department that was just not tie downs and overpriced underwear. Oooo, even some male maturity clothes, will back in a few more months for a closer look those. In the mean time, wondered into the mens suit department, as I’m looking for some pants that would complement the jacket I already had. Was looking through the rack for a pair of worsted wool trousers in tan plaid, when a salesman walked over.

“How can I help you Lieutenant?”

“How did you....?” The guy ran a hand through his own long hair, “okay. Kinda obvious.” Even with it grown back some, it’s still shorter then most of the men walking around here. Got to get back to sporting a high and tight. “Anyway, I’m looking for suit trousers, to go with a jacket I have already.”

“We have a very nice selection that fits most price points; Hickey Friedman, Johnny Carson, Botnay 500, just to name a few. Let me see what we can do for you.” He eye balled me for size before turning and walking over to a rack of suits and pulled out one in navy blue. “It’s Botnay 500,” he said, stroking the jacket like a much beloved cat. “100 percent worsted wool, it’s a very smart fully put together look, guaranteed to impress at any social or business situation.” Then added knowingly, “the waist can be made to expand to accommodate your pup as the pregnancy progresses.” It is nice, but......

“The suit which includes the jacket, vest and two pairs of trousers, is $350.00 plus tax.” Ouch, that’s half a months salary. “Maybe I’ll just take the pants. Got this function tonight....”

“Lieutenant,” the salesman said earnestly, his beta scent on full honesty mode. “This is an investment in yourself. The cut is a classic, so it will not go out of style any time soon, and there will be functions where you will need more then just a uniform. And depending on if you’re not going to make the service a career, you’ll need clothes for that job interview.” Then he went in for the kill, “we do in store alterations and can have it ready for you before 06:00 o’clock tonight.....”

“Well, I....” oh damn, that suit looked nice.

The salesman slipped the jacket off the hanger and held it up for me to put on. “We’ll even include a dress shirt and tie as a welcoming gift from Thalhimers.” He pulled a tape measure from his pocket and whipped it around my neck. “About a 15,” then walked over to a display rack, flipped through and pulled out a light blue oxford shirt and passing a tie rack, snagged one. “It’s a Wembley, 100 percent silk.”

“Oooohhhhhhh, okay.” I know I shouldn’t. This ate up a good chunk of that $1500 bucks. Jeff is going to be needing clothes, I need uniform trousers, still have another week at the hotel, plus the phone bill.....but...damn, did I look good. Stood in front of mirror as the tailor took my measurements, then made the appropriate notes and chalk marks on the suit. “We’ll put some extra material and buttons here,” he pointed to the waist and trouser seams, “so you can wear them comfortably even up to your 9th month.”

The suit would be ready around 06:00, so just have to get myself back here to pick it up. Wrote a check for $375.00, then pulled out my license and military id as store policy needed that plus my social security number. Walked out of the store with the check book another fifty dollars lighter as they had a sale going on shoes and that pair of Chelsea boots was just too good to pass up. Strolled the mall for the next hour, bought an Orange Julius and window shopped, stopped to check out the display for the movie theater next door,

Eyes of Laura Mars (eh, Faye Dunaway) and Hooper (Burt Reynolds was always good for a laugh)
were currently playing but the coming attractions were some Cheech and Chong movie called ‘Up in Smoke’ and then a prison movie...Midnight Express. Okay, nothing I wanted to spend two bucks on anyway.

Met up with the guys a short time later at the Country Cooken. The girls were shopped hard and ready to be put away wet, just judging from the number of bags they had between them. Looks like they hit every ladies store in the joint and then some. Bobbie Brooks, Thalhimers, Rucker-Rosenstock’s and Lerners. Libbie had a suit bag over his shoulder from Chess King.

“Wow, you guys have any of your per diem left?”

“Hey,” Tarah protested. “They were running some pretty darn good sales. Got a camel jacket, pants, shirt and vest for $150 bucks. Plus this outfit I’m wearing tonight. It’s a black satin jump suit and I look to die for in it.”

“Or disco,” Mary smirked. “That too,” she said. “Gotta make things do double duty. That camel suit is going to be my traveling outfit. My boyfriend got a job out in Ohio as a sales man with this place called Cincinnati Milacron. They make these weird pink grinding wheels, but he says companies like em. So, I’m going to go up next weekend to see him.” Tarah sighed, “it’s gonna be a long distance relationship for a while, but we’re gonna make it work.”

The waitress sided over, handed out menus and took our drink orders. Sigh, back to ginger ale. She came back a few minutes later drinks and pad in hand for to take our lunch requests, it was chicken fried steak all around with baked potato and cole slaw. We admired each others purchases until our food was put down on the table.

“My fella is out in the Midwest too, Fort Ben Harrison.” Mary pushed a piece of the chicken fried steak through the milk gravy. “He up there for Finance OBC. We rode out together, was nice to have company for a drive like that, would hate to think of doing it alone. Dropped him off in Indianapolis before coming down this way. After crossing over half the country, the last leg was a snap.” And she tucked the gravy covered bit of fried meat in her mouth. “Good steak.”

Libbie and I nodded sympathetic. We were all dealing with long distance relationships the best way we could.

The four of us ate, talked about what happened during the week and just general bullshit. Then paid the pill, figured a tip and left to go back to the hotel.

Once there, unloaded, Libbie sacked out for a nap and I went for a quick dip in the pool then a shower to get off the chlorine. Settled on the bed to call Annapolis to see how my little guy was doing. Thank the Alpha God for lower rates on the weekends. “Crowley residence,” the smooth brogue of the Highlands came through the wire.

“Hi Dad. How’re you and Mummyship doing?”

“We’re fine,” there was a hesitation in his voice. “Jeffrey is feeling a little under the weather.”

“What?!” My pup is sick! “What’s wrong with him? Does he have a fever? Do I need to come back?” I’m a bad papa! How can I even think of even doing anything like a cocktail party when my pup is sick. “I’ll be on the first flight I can get.”

“He has a small temperature from an ear infection. We’ve taken him to our doctor, it’s nothing to be concerned about. He’s gotten antibiotics and is on puppy Tylenol.” Trying desperately to keep
my shit together, “Jeffery will be alright in a few days. You need to stay there at school.”

“But I can’t, not my pup needs me!”

Now Dad put on his gentle but stern voice. “You stay put, that’s an order. What Jeffery needs you to do, is the very best you can in your classes, with peers and superiors. In that way you can secure a proper future for him.” Then he changed gears before I could say anything else, “now, there’s a little man who wants to talk to his papa.” There was a clunk and then…. “Papa.”

Course I lost it. “Hi Sweetheart, it’s papa. Papa loves you so much. I do, I do, I do! Papa sorry you’re sick.”

“Wuv oooo.” My little one laughed and said things I knew and other things were brand new. Like ‘cat’, ‘mama’(that’s still like a knife through my heart) and ‘scotch’. Huh? Well, if he could say ‘Bumpo’, he coulduss out scotch. Now, I’m missing him all the more as these little moments were lost to me. He went on a bit longer before those horrible words...”bye bye” and Jeff was gone. My heart was breaking, wanted to go home so bad, but what would or could I do once I got there? It’s already been done. My pup went to the doctor, has the medicine and is now on the road to recovery. He’s also being cared for by people who love him, not a whorehouse puppiesitter like I had. Not to say that wasn’t interesting.

“I’m back,” Dad said. “Oh one other thing, your car is repaired. Apparently there were more then a few other things wrong with it, then just a tie rod. The bill came to $400.” Oh man, this is getting expensive. At least, along with the per diem, the monthly pay came in, all $695 of it.

“I’ll mail you a check.” Oh man, the money is going faster then it should. The funds from the settlement from Mirras Pharmacy and the photo shoot with.....ohhhhh crap. I kinda sorta had been purposely ‘forgetting’ about that. My issue of ‘Mega was coming out in a few months. Will just have to get a buzz cut, wear my glasses and hope like ‘Clark Kent’ no one recognizes me. Will have to send Cole Trenton a letter with my new address, so he can send that check he promised me to the right place.

We talked for a little while longer and then called it a day, as it was getting late and needed to get back out to the Walnut Mall to pick up my suit.

Had gone next door to see if Mary could give me a lift, but she had a head full of curlers, so instead tossed me the keys to the Camaro with the warning she’d kick my ass from here to Jersey if there was even a scratch on it. Okay, not a problem. Drove over carefully, didn’t wanna bring myself to the attention of the local ‘county mounties’, got to the mall and found a parking spot near the main door to Thalhimers. Stepped out in the broil of a late summer afternoon. Blah, it’s humid, nasty and the heat coming up from the macadam is making it worse. Hope, for all the money I’m spending for this monkey suit, it won’t look like a limp wash rag by the end of the evening. Walked in and found a salesman in the mens department. “Hi,” pulled out my receipt. “I’m here to pick up a suit I bought today and was being altered.”

The guy looked at the scrape of paper, went into the back and appeared a few minutes later with a garment and smaller paper bag that held the shirt and tie. “Here you are,” he unzipped the garment bag to display the handiwork of their tailors. It was beautifully done, the pants were cleverly crafted to hide the extra material that would cover and conceal my belly in future months. The jacket was pure art, the color, workmanship and material. The Botnay 500 and Thalhimers labels gleaming brightly on the satin lining.

As the salesman handed me the bags, “by the way, do you have cuff links? Because that shirt has french cuffs.” I do, but of course they’re in the jewelry box up in Maryland. “Because we do have a
very nice selection if you don’t. The salesman lead me over to the jewelry department, where there were a few cases of mens watches, cuff links, id bracelets and, tie clasps. Found and bought an inexpensive gold tone cuff links set with a blue stone.

Walked out carrying the bags over my shoulder. The cocktail party was prolly all going to much a do about nothing but as Dad and Mummy-ship said, ‘best foot forward.’ Driving back, stopped at a Sinclair station and put a few more bucks in the tank as a thank you to Mary. A quick drive up Defense Road and pulled into the parking lot at the Holiday Inn and put the car back in the same spot I got it out of. Then went up stairs and knocked on Mary and Tarahs door. “Thanks,” handed Mary back her keys. “Got a quarter tank for you.”

“Cool beans,” she said. “Now hustle your bustle. This here train leaves in a half hour.”

Libbie was coming out the bath in a damp cloud as I was coming in door. “There any hot water left?”

“Just a smidge,” his voice was muffled though the towel on his head.

“At this point, I’ll take what I can get.” Blah, because at this point, I was a big sweaty mess. Shucked off my clothes walking to the bathroom, turned on the water and got in. Yeah, he was right, there was just a smidge of hot water left but along with a few more minutes of luke warm and a couple of seconds of cold, was lathered rinsed and ready to get out. Ulysses had been a quiet presence for most of the day, but decided at that moment to wake up and make his presence known.

Thank the Alpha God, was standing next to the toilet cuz I had to pee. Took myself in hand for some proper aim....oh fuck. It’s started to happen again. My dick and balls are starting to be absorbed into my body. FUCK! This being a ‘hot climate omega’ just reeks out of its mind! My pups soul happily fluttered, bouncing a few times off my bladder. Course all that came out were a few drops. Oh not this again. Before I used sanitary napkins to catch the drips, only I don’t have any sanitary napkins...oh no, this is embarrassing......but I know who does. Tossed on the blue bathrobe and trudged next door.

Course the girls were ready, Mary was right about Tarahs outfit, it did have that disco thing going for it, but would work for tonight rather well. Mary was in a green silk cocktail dress (Finishing school remember? I know what I’m looking at) modest enough to cover the knee yet daring with a plunging neck line. But not too plunging as it was stopped just before the cleavage with small expensive looking brooch. “Uh, um.....”

“What’s up Doc?” Tarah looked up from the mirror she was using to put on her lipstick.

“I.....um.....” Oh just stop it! You’re being a stereotypical stuttering little omega who can never be ready for anything on time. You’re a man, for Alpha Gods sake. You’ve jumped out of perfectly good airplanes, know how to cuss a blue streak in five different languages without using the same word twice, just spit it out! “You wouldn’t have a sanitary napkin I could have?”

Now Mary stopped dead in her tracks. “Would you mind repeating that a little slower please?” She asked sweetly. Oh you know what I said. Now you’re just being an assbutt to yank my crank.


“Don’t look at me,” Tarah was desperately trying not to laugh. “I use tampons. Though I suppose you could try....” She smudged her lipstick laughing. Assbutt.
“You want some Midol to go with that?” Mary was enjoying herself.

“Come on girls, gimme a break.”

The good lieutenant from Idaho decided to quit ragging on me and went to her suitcase, popped the lid and pulled out the box of maxipads. “Here,” she handed me two. “Is this enough?”

“Fine, perfect.” Grabbed them and slammed the door behind me. Didn’t wanna hear anything from anyone, including Libbie, even though he was a perfect gentlemen, doing nothing but raising an eyebrow. So went to the bath to pin....hey, these things are stick on. Better yet! slapped em on the panty and pulled em up. Esh, not great but better then smelling like wet sheep piss. Came out, put on some socks, a nursing shirt....was not taking any chances north or south....and then...began pulling pins out of the shirt.

You always knew the quality of a shirt by the number of pins in it. Arrow makes a good shirt, but mensch! Did it have to be this good? Course missed one as it pricked my neck. Anxiously looked in the credenza mirror to see if it broke the skin. Nope, no blood...outstanding. Then the tie.....

“Caaaabron!” Libbie reached around from behind me and pulled it from my inept fingers. “You’re driving me nuts watching you try and hang yourself. Here, let me do it.” He stood up against my back and draped the bit of silk around my neck. “How do you want it? Windsor, half Windsor, Prince Albert?”

“It’s a good occasion, Prince Albert please.” Of course the thought of Lewistons ‘Prince Albert’ came to mind, how it clanked against my molars, the metallic tang, cold steel on the sensitive skin of the crack of my...

“Dude, you’re scaring me.” Libbie gave the knot a tug into place. “You’re not one of those weridos who like it ‘that’ rough are you?” Ooops, too many happy thoughts make happy sex smell.

“Oh no no no! I just was thinking about this alpha I knew.....before I was mated.....who had a Prince Albert.....on his cock.”

“Really?” There was a whiff of aroused interest.

“Yeahhhhhhhhh!” Then went on in some detail of Lewistons ‘appliance’ and then for good measure causally mentioned I mated a bull alpha, a VERY imaginative bull alpha. “Dude,” I wheezed. “You got that knot a little tight.”

“Oops, sorry.” Libbie loosed it enough so I could catch my breath. “Uh ami.....”

Think I’d better take over from here. Snugged the knot to a comfortable spot, then smoothed that strip of material down the front shirt, Libbie also helped with the cuff links, as they were being stubborn or I was being a klutz. Returned the favor as he had French cuffs too. Put on the vest and jacket, buttoned them up, snapped on the brass mating collar, then tucked my wallet in the breast pocket. Brushing off a bit of invisible lint, then turned and asked, “well? How do I look?”

Lt Burgos looked me up and down, “Bond, James Bond. Connery not Lazenby. If I were ‘that’ kind of omega I’d eat you up like a empanada.” Then he grinned and struck a ‘cultured pose’.

“How do I look?”

“Like Ruben Blades,” I purred. “Sing ‘La Mora’ and I’d give some thought to being ‘that’ kind of omega.”

“Caaaabron!” Laughing, we punched each other manfully on the shoulders and then went to find the girls.
The cocktail party was exactly what I thought it was going to turn in to. Much a do about nothing. It was in one of the banquet rooms at O Club. There was a cash bar, a table with cheese, crackers, fruit and other finger food. Everyone was dressed in their stiff new best and trying to mingle. There were a few senior officers and their mates who got roped into being there, prolly administrators of the school, who were doing their due diligence. (And prolly wishing they were at home in their underwear with a beer) Had entertained the idea of mentioning Naomi-Mom just for ‘shits and giggles’ but decided against it. Didn’t need any brown nosing or land mines these officers ‘ladies’ could toss in my path,

So, with ginger ale in one hand (25 cents for a glass half filled with ice. Highway robbery I tell you!) and a cheese cube on a toothpick in the other, I mingled. Introduced myself to one of the guys from the Citadel, one Joe Kingman of South Bend, Indiana and asked (‘Small Talk 101’-try to find common ground) if he knew Sgt Ashton, Benny Lafette or Elliott Rogers. As I’d met the three of them at advanced camp the year before.

Lt Kingmans answers were stunning, “everybody knows First Sargeant Ashton. He’s been there long enough to know everything, where every juicy bone is buried and people pray he can keep em that way too.” Then he gave me an alpha manly smile, “Sergeant Ashton has the nicest beta wife and kids you’d ever hope to meet.” And with envious sigh, “he even has a Madam First.”

“Really?” You don’t kiss and tell but there’s no hard and fast rule against saying you have a Madam First. “My goodness, I didn’t think that practice was around any more.”

“It’s alive and well,” he crowed. “My older brother who’s on the commanding officers staff out at Offiet Air Force Base in Nebraska, said he even got to tag along to a First Party down at Fort Riley.” Ah the armed forces. For as big as they are, it’s still a small incestuous tribe. “The commanding generals omega mate became the First to the son of the British general who was serving as his second in command. They now share a....a....uh...some kind of band?”

“Bond. Profound bond,” then added quickly. “Or at least that’s what I’ve heard it called.” Smiled sweetly, “did you know Benny Lafette?”

“Sure do, even went to his mating.” Kingman popped a cheese cube into his mouth. “He kicked ass down at camp, even in a company full of sli.....very good people.” Obviously caught himself before he stepped on his dick. “He was student battalion XO and graduated with honors.” Touched the dime on the red string around my belly. Always knew he’d do well. “Then went to his mating. Nice ceremony, for a being Catholic.” (Dirt bag) “And Andrea was absolutely beautiful and the bar was open all night” Not what I wanted to hear....about Andrea....the open bar was okay.

“And Elliot?” I asked. Had gotten a letter from his mate Chickie before I left Rochester. The big belle was in the middle of summer semester at Georgetown Medical School. Elliot had taken the summer off from classes and had come up to spend the time with him. Chickie was living at the BOQ on Fort Lesley J McNair, so Elliot got his spouses ID card and tags for his car. He was seeing the sights and giving into his nesting urges, as he’s turned into a rather good cook and decorator. The studio apartment has gone from spartan military to cozy den and popular study pad for Chickies friends and classmates. The letter just radiated the pride he had in his mate and that Elliot’s at the top of his class at pharmacy school.

“Oh he flunked camp, then dropped out of school and is prolly living in a box under a bridge somewhere.” Kingman said dismissively.

“Not what I heard,” smiling toothily. “He left camp and the Citadel to win the freedom of his true love. He’s at the top of his class at the pharmacy school at the University of Athens, Georgia.” Let out a bit of challenge scent, “got a letter from his mate before coming there. The omega mate
who’s on a full scholarship to medical school at Georgetown.” Yeah, I was being a right bastard and hormonal but Elliot Rogers deserves respect from his former classmates.

Kingman was in a quandary, he was being challenged by an omega and as an alpha, he could hardly let that stand. But he could smell the pregnancy hormones too and took better part of valor. “I need a drink,” he mumbled and walked off toward the bar. That little display was prolly not the best way to put my best foot forward and not going to hold me in any high stead with some of my classmates. Will prolly see it during peer review, but sorry, won’t throw my friends to the wolves just to score some brownie points with an assbutt.

Especially not Chickies ‘Young Lochinvar.’

Wandered from group to group, listening to conversations, wishing I could have a smoke and that my drink had a bit more kick to it then plain ginger ale. That’s when I decided to head outside for some air and better company, even if it was just myself. There was a long canvas awning that ran from the front door down the sidewalk to the parking lot in front of the officers club. Walked to the end and watch the light rain prickle the water standing in the lot. The August air was warm and wet, “a Panama kind of night,” I said out loud, longing to be back in my country.

“He pulled a pack of Newports out of his breast pocket, tapped one out and then tucked the rest back under his coat. The lighter came out next and in the smooth dance of the well seasoned smoker, flipped open the top, spun the wheel and a Zippo came to life. Flame kissed tobacco and the lighter clicked shut disappearing back into his pocket. “Two tours, ‘66 and ‘69. It was enough that it makes sleeping hard on nights like this.”

“Sorry to hear that.” Having held John through a few nights as his dreams took him through the frozen wastes of the Ardennes and Chozen, then losing Malak, had some pity for the alpha standing before me.

Blondie took a drag on the cigarette and let the smoke out slowly through pursed lips. “Makes it easier when I’m not alone.”

AND now that’s gone. Pretty ballsy considering I’m wearing my mating collar. Was hoping for more of a conversation, then a pass. But the comment could also be taken just as it was...a comment. So let’s just keep everything cool, “I can imagine,” my voice was neutral. Don’t know who the guy is but let’s not piss off every idiot tonight. “Well, think I’ll go find my friends, it’s been about an hour and a half. Should be able to leave without ticking off the brass.”

“Good plan. Never a good idea to end up on the ‘shit list’ so early.” He took another hit off the coffin nail, “name’s Otis by the way. Jim Otis.” He held out his hand to shake.

“Castiel Novac,” reached out to take his mitt, but he caught my hand and brought it palm up to his lips to kiss the finger pads.

“Mmmmm, apples, peaches and cream.” Otis smiled. “Mmm, now I need a trip to the Waffle House. I do love the smell of a pregnant omega. All round and ripe.” One more kiss and then he let
go before I was going to yank it back. “Material Management or Petroleum?” He asked suddenly for my MOS.

“Material Management,” I said automatically. Not like it should make any difference to him.

“Good, I’ll see you in few months, if you make it. I teach one of the courses for that MOS.” Took one more drag and flicked the cig out into the parking lot. “Nice suit by the way, looks good on you,” then Jim Otis turned to head back up the walk. “but I’d rather see how it looks off you.”

Stupid horny alphas. Hopefully he’ll be transferred out by the time that course starts in November. Went back in, found the guys and we left soon after. Being cheese and crackers did not a supper make, had to stop at the Waffle House on the way back to the hotel. There too was Jim Otis and a beta woman who must have been his mate. He was gobbling up a plate of waffles smothered in apples, peaches and whipped cream. Otis looked up once as the four of us came in, licked the juice off the fork and continued the conversion with his mate.

Oh I hope you choke on all that peachy applely goodness. Problem is, it did look good. Of course that’s when Ulysses kicked up and so...I had the same thing. But I didn’t enjoy it, not a lot....okay, the whole combination was incredible. Son of biscuit.

Chapter End Notes

90 Day Wonder: better known as a graduate of the Officers Candidate School, where an enlisted person with a Bachelors or within a few credits to their bachelors degree can become a second lieutenant. The school was 90 days long, hence the name.

Mifflin Hall: named for the first Quartermaster General of the Continental Army Major General Thomas J. Mifflin. It was designed to be the most state of the art teaching facility of its time. The building remained active from 1960 to 2007 when a new teaching facility was built near by and the old Mifflin Hall was torn down.

Yeah, I lost my shot record. Had to get every damn shot and almost passed out in formation from the reaction.

Seiko Panda: in the 1970’s and 80’s, Seiko was one of the more sought after brands. The Panda has a black and white face, date and two extra dials. It wasn’t cheap back in the day and for the serious watch collector it will set them back well over $1000 now. https://www.fratellowatches.com/top-vintage-seiko-watches/

Hof: a small American outposting on the West German/Czechoslovakian border.

The minimum wage in 1978 was $2.65, waitress’s and waiters made less because of tips. $2.65 x 40 = $106. Now take out taxes, FICA and anything else and you did end up with roughly $70.00

‘It’s not nice to fool mother nature’: tag line from the Chiffon Margarine commercials from the 1970’s and 80’s. You Tube has a few of them, so you can get the idea.

Walnut Mall: at the time of this story, it was the largest shopping area in the Petersburg/Hopewell area. Sadly, the mall fell victim to changing tastes and larger malls, closing in 1991. It remained vacant a number of years before being torn down.
and a Food Lion Supermarket built on the site.

Thalhimers: was a Richmond, Virginia based department store chain. The family began the store in downtown Richmond in 1842 and remained there until 1992 when it was purchased by Hecht’s. It was on a par with Macy’s in quality and in fact became a part of Macys in 2006.

Botnay 500: was the clothing of choice for game show hosts and sitcom stars from the 60’s to the 80’s. If you watch the credits from the Dick Van Dyke, Joey Bishop or Danny Thomas shows, you will see the words Botnay 500 as the supplier of these gentlemans clothes. It was certainly a favorite of Kissing Bandit Richard Dawson.

In today's money, $350 dollars would be 1304.56 and $50.00 would be $186.00. So Cas is buying a very nice suit and boots. And at one time not only did you see the label of the manufacturer but also of the store that sold it. One of my favorite episodes was when Dean goes back in time to the 1940’s and meets Elliot Ness. That suit Ezra made for him was stunning.

The camel wool traveling suit and black satin jump suit were real and I loved them. Before flying became the hassle it now is, people used to dress up to travel and had a particular outfit to do it in. I can’t tell you the number of times in from 1978 to 1979 I ran (in high heels) from one end of Washington National or LaGuardia Airports (back when you could do that) to catch my flight.

Rubén Blades was born in Panama City, Panama on July 16th 1946 and is a singer, songwriter, actor, Grammy winning musician, activist, and politician having made an unsuccessful bid for the Panamanian presidency in 1994. Most people might know him now for playing Daniel Salazar on ‘Fear the Walking Dead’.

MOS: Military Occupational Specialty
People are Strange When You’re a Stranger

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

People are Strange: written by Jim Morrison and Robby Krieger in 1967, Morrison was suffering a bout of depression when he decided to go for a walk in the Laurel Canyon of California. What ever happened during that walk is unknown, what is known is that Morrison came back with the lyrics for ‘People are Strange.’

I promised you dear readers, Eric Reynolds would leave us soon, I keep my promises.

Faces Look Ugly When You’re Alone
52 Courtfield Gardens
Flat Two
South Kensington
London, England SW5
Sunday Sept 3rd 1978 09:00 AM

It was a combination of the damn church bells and the insistent pounding on my front door that finally got me up from bed and the bird.....what’s her name now......Judy, Jill...oh who gives a fart....I’ll push her out the tradesmans door after coffee any way....and a bit of the old rumpy pumpy of course. No sense in wasting a piece since it’s here. Oh alright, I’ll get up! Oh wakey wakey, eggs and bacc-ie!

Had to think a moment, was anyone scheduled for a pick up this morning? Come on brain, you didn’t drink or blow that much last night....this morning....alright....I did but what’s a few brain cells when you get to the best ‘knees up’ in town with a posh crowd? Hef had flown in on ‘Big Bunny’ for the do at the Playboy Club last night and Lucifer had wangled us an invitation.

Stumbled down to the front door, pulling up my trousers and getting a shirt almost buttoned up. Deep breath, smile and.....Open the door to find three men who didn’t look like customers and more like coppers. “Selling tickets to the Policemans Ball?” I said cheekily.

They held up their badges and identification (course that’s when the whole ‘Treasure of Serria Madre scene flashed through my mind in glorious black and white) Squinted at them, Lawrence Fine, Maurice Howard and Curland Lee Howard. Sounds like a solicitors office. Fine was from Scotland Yard, M. Howard was.....FBI? What the hell are they doing here? C. Howard (dear lord, he’s tall) was with......Internal Revenue? What the fuck is that?

“Mr Eric Reynolds?” The chap from the Yard asked. “You are Eric Reynolds, correct? And please don’t lie to us as it would only take a moment to go back to the car and get your picture from my case.”

The lie that was about to come out of my mouth, died upon my lips. Propped up the smile and leaned nonchalantly against the door jam. “In the well used flesh,” Steady there Reynolds, think.....all the naughty things put away?

“We’d like to discuss a few little matters with you.” Fine was getting down to business.

Made a gesture towards my dress or lack there of, “course, come round later when I can make a better show of it and we can.....” was starting to close the door. “Talk then.”
Almost had it shut when the FBI chap, who looked like he should be modeling underpants in GQ, put a rather large foot out in the door and then straight armed it open. “Don’t think so Sport. You’re here, we’re here, so let’s do it like Sonny Pruett.” I’d rather not. “Talk now.”

“Are you going to arrest me?”

“I don’t know, should we?” Asked the Cleopatra’s noodle...er... needle with legs.

“Listen, I’ve got better things to do, so if you’re not going to tell me what this is about and if you don’t have a warrant, bugger off.” Rolled my eyes to the heavens, why does every copper act like he’s James Hazell? "My name is James Hazell and I'm the biggest bastard who ever pushed your bell button." Oh my Alpha God spare me!

Inspector Fine added his foot to keeping the door open. “All right, we can stand right here and talk about the omegas you sold that turned up dead in at least six different countries across the continent and have started to show up across the pond.” Then he leaned in, “one of them survived. Sweet little beta boy, all doctored up to look like an omega. And he talked.”

Uh oh.

The good Inspector raised his voice, “I’m quite sure you don’t want your neighbors to hear this conversation, but....” Course that’s when nosy parker, Mrs Filbert from across the way was standing on her door step trying to look all busy digging through that suitcase she called a handbag and had those radar ears of hers listening in.

“I want my solicitor.” Have got to get this stopped or else this will be talked up......

“Why, have you done anything wrong?” Oh cripes, Mrs Filbert isn’t even pretending anymore.

“No but...” have to get this over and done with fast before that viper in sensible shoes can get to church and chinwag this to the whole congregation.

“No but what? Are you guilty of anything?” The Bill from Internal Revenue, was that like Inland Revenue, asked softly.

“Of course not.”

Howard of the FBI smiled charmingly, “then let’s just get this over with right here and right now, then we’ll be on our way.” And he stepped into the foyer followed by the other two. Now they’re a formidable wall of muscle and there is nothing I can do but lead them upstairs.

“Nice place you have here,” Inspector Fine commented. “Must cost a bomb.”

“Not really.” Hope Jill, Joan...what ever her name is, is still asleep. “I’m flat minding for a friend who travels a lot.” And of course she isn’t.

She’s standing there in nothing but a tea towel......which ordinarily I would say she looked smashing in, but not this second. Oh....damn.....she does look......like my way out of this. Especially since M. Howard was giving her the big eye and smile. “Darling,” I walked over and kissed her on the forehead.

“Let’s get you dressed,” and waltzed her back into the bedroom and closed the door. That’s when I dashed to the window, flung up the sash crept out on the fire exit, haahahaha! Ya bunch of right Joeys! Dropped the ladder down and swung my feet over, then climbed down. HA! Trotted down the passage and came out on the side street, to realize I’d made a little bit of a nasty error in judgment.
No shoes, no wallet.

Now what do I do? Can’t go back, damn it. All that nice LSD I won at the gambling tables last night is in my wallet and that’s in my coat pocket flung over a chair in the sitting room. The only thing I have is a gum change fob with a few pence and charge card receipts. Now who’s the Joey? Wait, can hoof it over to that friend of Lucifers. The chap I meet last night at the Bunny Club. What was his name? Caught? Ketch! Arthur Ketch. We hit it off rather well, so think I could go there for a bit until coppers get tired of waiting. Or at least could borrow a few quid to get a coffee and biscuit. Remembered that he lived only a short ways away, so a brisk walk would have me at his door in no time.

Thank the Alpha God it was still early enough, people were either still in bed or the few that still went were in church. Here we are, 25B Earls Court Gardens. Rang the bell and waited. Had to ring it a few more times before the door opened and Arthur Ketch stood before me looking as rumpled and unshaven as I. “Is this important?” His voice had a genteel eloquence with threatening edge just below the surface.

“I’m terribly sorry for coming round so early,” put on the smile that made the beta birds think about dropping their knickers for. “But had a little problem back at the flat.”

“What? She wouldn’t go home?”

“In a manner of speaking.”

Ketch sighed, “alright. But I too have a guest, so allow me a moment to see her out.”

“But of course,” we’re alphas of the world after all. I moved off his front stair and set myself down on the stoop of the neighboring flat to wait. It was the start of a lovely morning, but could tell in the air rain was in the offing. It’s London, when is it not? A bit of time passed when this older blonde alpha woman walked out his front door. Still nice looking for someone her age. Though Ketch could’ve done better then this old duck considering last night we were up to our navels in Playboy bunnies. She looked my way for a moment, then with a dismissive sniff as if I was common drunk, strode down the foot path. Bitch. After she’d trotted herself down the court a bit, Ketch come out to collect me. “Do come in. You do look like you’re on the bum.” Normally I wouldn’t put up with such guff, but when one is in a lurch..... Followed him into the hall to his flat, looked around. Not bad, a bit too ‘granny’ for my tastes, with the exception of the motorbike in the parked in the living room. A Norton Commando, now that’s a bike.

“Look with your eyes not with your hands,” Ketch remanded as he motioned me away from it and to a chair. “Coffee or something stronger?”

“Both,” I said automatically. Need just a little bit to calm my nerves. “Brandy would be nice.” Then quickly, “but only if you have it. Anything would do.”

“Think I might have a bottle laying about,” my host said archly. And indeed he did. Poured a good dollop in my cup and it felt lovely burning down my throat. We sipped in silence for a bit, chatted about the weather (tut tut, it looks like rain) then I let slip about the blokes back at my flat.

“Said they were from Scotland Yard, FBI and something called ‘Internal Revenue’?”

“Really?” Ketch asked, looking over his coffee cup. “Why would they want to speak to you?”

“Some nonsense about omegas turning up dead on the continent and over across the pond. Have no idea why they’d want to talk to me about it. I’m just a uni student after all.”
A uni student who’s got a flat in Courtfield Gardens and is invited to a posh knees up with Lucifier Novac?

“We’re good mates,” I said grandly. “I help him out...here and there. With a little bit of his business.”

“How interesting for you.” Ketch took a sip of his coffee. “Pardon me for a moment, will be back in a jiff.” He got up, walked into another room and closed the door. Could hear his muffled voice, must be making a tinkle on the blower. Leaned over and ran a quick finger across that Norton. There, you big git, I touched it. Course that’s when there was a crack of thunder and I just about jumped out of my skin. Felt like a kid getting caught doing something I shouldn’t. Kind of like that time Mum found me cutting up that toad. But it was fun to watch it’ s eyes bug out and make those funny noises.

The rain started pelting against the window. Looks like a rum kind of day. The kind you just sit round the flat, watching telly or if Jean...Jill.....that bint hangs round we could have us a bit of rumpy pumpy. Walked over to the window, the water on the glass was distorting the buildings, making everything run and drip like something by the Dali chap. Watched the umbrellas with legs parade up and down the foot path, not a face to be seen except that one chap who looked up. He was no thing of beauty to start with but the rain made him look uglier.

Ketch comes out of the other room with an odd smile on his face. “I say, are you up for a bit of something special?”

“Depends, but I’m not THAT kind of alpha.”

“Don’t flatter yourself, you’re not my type.” He dropped a plastic baggie with what looked like fags in it. “Thought you might like a little pick me up. Was able to procure some last night at the party. If you noticed there were more then a few people from Iran at the club. Most with money are getting while the getting is good. The Shah is not going last much longer and so, off they pop to Paris or dear old London. That new fellow, Khomeini, looks like he’s not the partying type.” He pulled two fags out of the baggie and handed me one. “So they brought some interesting customs with them.”

Oh, that explains all those Arab chaps. One was waving a wad of pound notes about calling: ‘I gots money for bunnies!’ Idiot. But more then enough of em did go. “What is it?”

“Just a common fag with cocaine and just the barest smidgen of heroin. The wogs have some fancy name for em but round here they just call em flamethrowers.”

Heroin!? “Isn’t that dangerous and addictive as fuck?”

“Now would I give you something that would hurt you?” Well, I guess he wouldn’t. “And it’s just the tiniest bit and you can’t get addicted the first time you try it.” Ketch flicked his lighter and kissed the end. “It’s mostly cocaine and you didn’t seem to mind that yesterday.” Oh yeah, had a suck of the old ‘nose candy’ along with all that nice booze and broads. I was bloody James Bond with the ladies and omegas. ‘Mr Kiss Kiss Bang Bang’. Anyone I wanted I got. So this should be fine. Took a hit, oh yeah, now that’s a nice smooth rush. Lay back in the chair and felt it envelope my body. So clear, so clean...everything is soooooo outlined. Wanted to get up and do something, but it just felt so good to lay back and feel like a king.

“Can I borrow a few quid?” Okay, a king who needs to fill the treasury.

“I suppose, why?”
“Left my wallet back at the flat.”

“You don’t have it on you? Not even your identification?”

Joey. “That’s where I usually keep it.” Could hear the phone ringing in the background. This time Ketch didn’t even bother to close the door....... ‘Yes, you saw them? One big bloke and two shorter ones. Did you recognize any...DAVIES?! Are you sure it was Mick Davies? Oh bugger! Get away from there then, get the merchandise loaded and down to Cornwall. Nobody would notice em this time of year at Lands End.”

The rush was fading now, maybe I’m not Bond, James Bond. Could no longer hear the blood rushing about and my heart just decided to take a rest too. But it’s alright. Nothing to be concerned about. Felt my arm move by itself, then a numbness (funny body doing things like that) the prick of a needle only made me mildly curious. “Just a little more to help things along,” Ketches voice seemed rather far away now. Not that it mattered. Nothing matters. Will get up in a little while, see if those chaps are gone and then.....funny I don’t remember Ketch having a toad. Mmmmm, tired. Stupid toad, sitting on my chest. Those big eyes blinking at me. Stupid face. Will have to gut him like a trout when I get up. Too comfy and this chair is just too soft. Mmmm, when I wake up......later.

The Times (of London)
November 3rd 1978
Page 56

Eric Reynolds, son of General and Lady Lewiston Reynolds was laid to rest today in the family crypt at the Brompton Cemetery in Kensington Chelsea. He passed on into eternity after a brief illness. He is survived by his father Major General Lewiston Reynolds, mother Lady Jeanette Jerome Reynolds, sister Erica, brothers Jesse and Bryon.

The Daily Mirror
November 3rd 1978
Page 12

Eric Reynolds, the son of General and Lady Lewiston Reynolds was laid to rest today in the family crypt at the Brompton Cemetery. Reynolds, a student at the Imperial College for Engineering, was found dead of a drug overdose after his body was discovered by workman in the docklands of the recently closed Canary Wharf.......

Chapter End Notes

Lawrence Fine, Maurice Howard and Curland Lee Howard: are of course Larry, Moe and Curly, the Three Stooges.

Until 2015 there was an IRS office at the American Embassy in London, UK.

James Hazell: a fictional British private detective in the hard boiled tradition created by P.B. Yuill. The quote was from the book: ‘Hazell Plays Solomon’.
Joeys: An imbecile. Derived from the name Joey Deacon, a physically handicapped (cerebral palsy) guest on a British children's TV programme called Blue Peter in the 1970s; consequently his name was cruelly adopted by children as an insult.

Chinwag: gossip

Cost a bomb” cost a lot of money, expensive

Tinkle on the blower: making a phone call

Lands End: Furthest most point in Southwestern Britain. Think of the most expensive tourist trap you’ve ever been to and that’s Lands End.
It was the Friday of our second week at Fort Lee when Lt Chickadee announced, as he was handing out the exams to the class, that we’d be given two hours for lunch that day. “For those of you awaiting on post housing, space has now become available in the BOQ’s, so you need to report to the housing office for your quarters assignment. Move in will be on Monday.” HOT DIGGITY DAMN! We can get out of the Holiday Inn. Not that Libbie hasn’t been a great roommate and I love the swimming pool, but we’re both ready for a little time apart.

Not that we’ve been fighting, but Libbie has this thing.....clicking his teeth when he sleeps that just drives me nuts! There were so many nights I wanted to shove a wash cloth in his mouth to get him to quit it. That and he always throws rock or scissors, whenever I throw paper or scissors, so he gets the shower first and hogs up the hot water. Not that I do anything (do I?) that would send anyone over the edge. I’m the picture of perfection. Yeah and I can fool a polygraph too.

Tried not to hurry through the exam, but it was hard not to. Made myself consider each question, write the answer: Geneva Convention, 1776......fraternization. Part of the week had been spent on code of conduct. Easy thing to talk about, hard thing to live up to. Finished the test, turned it over and then sat quietly waiting for everyone else to finish. The only sound came from the back row, the soft voices in Spanish of the Rodriguezes, Jorge the tall and Santiago the short (no relation). They were both from Puerto Rico but only Santiago had a good command of English, so he translated and wrote what answer Jorge chose.

When the last person turned over their paper, Lt Chickadee called us to attention and then released us for lunch. Course there was a mad dash to the door, down the stairs and out to the parking lot where we piled into a buddy’s vehicle and headed across post to the housing office. You could tell who was un-mated by the car, especially the West Point guys. They drove the Firebirds, Mustangs or Mazda-RX7’s. ROTC pukes drove things that were about as old as the driver, but then there was ‘Boss Tweed’. Who was in a class all by himself.

Matteo Salvini, native of Hoboken and member of the New Jersey National Guard. Called Matt to friends and family, Boss Tweed or Tweed to our class. He was a tall solid piece of Italian Jersey-ite with a receding hair line, thick mustache and a five o’clock shadow at eight in the morning. At 30, Matt was the oldest member of our class, with a mate and pups back home in Jersey. Apparently, he worked for his father in-law as a mechanic at the in-law’s Cadillac dealership. Which of course is what Tweed drove. A big gold convertible land barge of a Caddie. Someone had seen him out driving the thing one day, rag top down, loud Hawaiian shirt and a big cigar sticking out of his mouth at a jaunty angle. He looked so much like an old time city politician, that he was immediately christened ‘Boss Tweed’ after the head Tammany Hall. Matt of course loved it and wore the new title well.

So anywho, Libbie, Tarah and I pile into Mary’s Camaro and head over to the housing office. Once there, we lined up and in turn got the building and room assignment, signed for keys and are advised that move in was on Monday after 07:00 AM. Course we ended up in buildings all over post. Tarah and Mary were in the smaller ‘Q’’s out behind the Officers Club. Libbie got a room in the building attached to the housing office and I ended up at the transient officers high rise a block or two over from Mifflin Hall. So wouldn’t be begging rides from Mary any more as in another week would head up to Annapolis to get my car and hopefully my pup. Had a good lead on a sitter,
the mate of our admin NCO, her car just died and they were in need of money to make the car payments on a new one. Will be meeting her on Saturday to see their quarters and talk turkey.

In the mean time, there was the matter of the one thing we would responsible to pay for in our new digs, The telephone. We’d have to get over to the local ‘Ma Bell’ office of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in Petersburg, the office closed at 05:00 but always stayed open late for the rush of new lieutenants getting their phones and new service.

The weekend breezed by fast and yeaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa! I have a sitter. Patricia Harras, mate of Staff Sargarent Harras our admin NCO, fit the bill perfectly or close enough for government work. She had two pups already, a nine year old girl and a little boy of seven. It’ll be good for Jeff to be around other pups, even those a little older then he. Mrs Harras was fine with the few rules I had, nap times at 10:00 in the morning and 03:00 in the afternoon with two different books to be read at each time. ‘Last of the Mohicans’ at 10:00, as Dad-ever the good Scotsman, introduced my literary little man to Robert Lewis Stevenson and added the book ‘Kidnapped’ to the line up.

The $70 dollars would be paid on Fridays when I’d come to pick him up after class. Their quarters was a little out of the way, but I’d make it work. Would do anything to have my son with me at last.

Monday came and we were way passed ready to get out of the Holiday Inn. Not that it hadn’t been a slice, but the longer you stay at a place, the more you notice the flaws. Like the skin rag I found under my bed, with the pages stuck together. The cockroach that scurried down drain one morning while Libbie was shaving and of course the assorted drunks and weirdos who thought the two omegas on the third floor were just itching to have their company. Unfortunately for them, they found out the hard way, it wasn’t the case when the business ends of a 45 and snub nosed 38 pointed in their direction. Felt bad about the one I shot, but only because the motherfucker bleed all over and I was on the hook for the Stanley Steamer bill to get the blood out of the carpet.

The police showed up, took a report and the idiots into custody. Think the cops were embarrassed for the ass hole. Dude was an alpha who got his ass shot off (metaphorically of course, only nicked the bastard) by an omega and a Yankee at that. How mortifying!

Any way, the total bill, including phone calls and rug cleaning came to around $700.00. My part of the mess was $395.00. I had more phone calls then Libbie and while short, they did add up. Gads the per diem money is going fast. We filled the trunk and back seat of Mary’s Camaro with luggage bidding a less then fond farewell to the Holiday Inn, ‘Peters-patch’. We got to post an hour before class and I was dropped off first in front the eight story high rise that would be my new home.

My room was on the fifth floor, being considered temporary quarters, the buidling housed transient officers and civilians, people who were at Fort Lee for very short periods of time (a day to a few weeks) to attend meetings or school. But the fifth floor had rooms that were a little larger and outfitted with kitchenettes for those longer term stays like mine. Rode the elevator up, got out at fifth floor and walked down the hall. Unlocked the door to room 521, felt around the wall for the light switch and got a look at my new home. The room was taken up mostly by a single bed, night stand, an over stuffed chair and the credenza. The ‘kitchenette’ in reality was a two burner hotplate on top of a wooden storage cabinet with a small floor standing refrigerator sitting next to it. The only sink would be in the bathroom.

Eh, I’ve lived in worse.

My house hold goods were going to have to go to storage because there is no way any of that stuff wss going to fit in here Okay, the acid test: how was the water pressure and temperature? The bath
had a toilet, sink and shower/tub combination. Put on the water and let it run through my fingers. Ahhhhhh hot water. Now the problem is, where can I put Jeff’s crib and the few other household goods this room can handle?

Or maybe I should just go back to the housing office and ask for another room? Something closer to everyone else, a more traditional BOQ. Toss in the family name to get what I want....and then again, why do I wanna live close to the flag pole? The few weeks at Quarters One out at Fort Riley, although grand being THE Omega Winchester, also came with everyone knowing or trying to know your business. Some times it was just nice to be lower then whale shit Second Lieutenant Novac.

Dumped the luggage on the floor, would unpack tonight after class. Then went back downstairs and walked down the block and across the parade field in front of Mifflin Hall and up the broad set of stairs into the building. Went to the cafeteria to get some breakfast, Ulysses was hungry and making no bones about it. Mmmmmmm, grits and red eye gravy. Took my meal to a near by table to watch Tarah learning play backgammon from the girl who was New England champ of the game. I’d seen people play this for years, even tried it a few times, but the game never held my interest. Nice way of saying ‘it was confusing as fuck’.

At about five minutes to eight, the game closed up for the day(or until the first break) and we got upstairs to get to class.

At 16:00 hours 40 people beat feet out of Mifflin to run to the parking lot. The usual suspects plus one-Von the West Pointer from Texas, filled Mary’s car as Quartermaster Class 101-78 caravanned down to the C &P phone office in ‘Peters-patch’. Ohhhhh, it was a room full of wonder! Telephones of every type. Plain, fancy, practical, crazy......anything you could imagine. For a price of course. The Mickey Mouse phone was fun, but expensive. The French Provincial......too French whore house (that bit of knowledge courtesy of my runaway weekend with Gabe) candlestick phones, anything you wanted, if you were willing to pay for it.

Considering my funds and how I really needed to start conserving, picked a basic beige push button desk model. Paid the fees and the first month of rental, was handed the phone, then arranged to have the serviceman come out tomorrow to install it.

Drove back to post and was dropped off at the BOQ. It was after 19:00 and I was starved. Course there was no food in fridge, hadn’t had time to get to the commissary, will have to do that tomorrow. But for the time being, will hit the vending machines in the lobby for some candy bars and soda. “Sorry kiddo,” I stroked my stomach. “But this is it for tonight. Tomorrow will be better, promise.” Ulysses fluttered as if in agreement. After ‘dinner’, unpacked the duffel, hung the clothes up in the closet, any wrinkles should hang out by morning. Need to get an iron and ironing board.

That first night it took a little time to fall asleep. Like any new place, had to get used to the sounds, smells and the whole feel of it. The bed was not new, neither was any of the other furniture in the room. The stuff was all Quartermaster standard, prolly 30 years old if it was a day. Plain, very functional built to last. There was a small cheap electric clock on the night stand next to the bed, so at least I’d know the time. On the upside, unlike my classmates, in this BOQ, it came with maid service. Didn’t have to make my bed for the rest of the time I would be here.

Morning came too fast as it does when sleep doesn’t. Was up out of bed to shit, shower and oh my tits are sore. Touched them carefully, hissing as even the smallest pressure was painful. Oh man, I hate this part. Usually the only way to make them feel better was to have them touched by...ohhhhh no. Not this time. Am not gonna make the same mistakes down here as I did in Rochester with Sam
Colt. Though that Otis guy was kinda easy on the.....oh no. Shut up and stop thinking like that. Will try and see Jenny and Lewiston this weekend when I go up to collect Jeff and the Bug.

Got out of the shower and carefully dried off. My belly and hips were starting to pudge out a bit, two months and it looked like three. Remember hearing the people in the waiting room talk about this up at the Strong Memorial Women and Omegas clinic. That they got bigger faster on the second and third pup. Oh joy. Was able to hit the thrift shop the one weekend it was open to get a bunch of stuff I needed. Bought up a lot pup clothes; jumpers, shirts and such. Then picked up 4 sets of khakis, a couple of fatigue uniforms and two green class A’s, all in various sizes. Also some bowls, plates, sliver ware and a cast iron fry pan. Not a bad haul for $50 bucks.

Still had Johns Korean War overcoat. Don’t know if they’ll let me wear it when it turns cold, does it even snow in Virginia? But don’t care, they’ll smell my alpha on that coat and know he loves me enough to keep his mate and pup warm, even from far away.

Got dressed carefully. Snapped on the mating collar, had used Brasso to put a shine on it so everyone would know, that even though alone, I was a mated omega. Put the brass on my collar, name tag and jump wings on my chest. Sang a small snatch of Ballad of the Green Berets ‘put silver wings on my sons chest, make him one of Americas best....’ or in this case, ‘Britannia’s Best’. Picked up the framed pictures from the credenza. One of John and I on our mating day and the other of Jeff that I had taken at Sears, when they were running a special in their photo department. Two large pictures, four medium and a bunch of wallet sized all for $20. He was six months old and for that moment he would be always frozen in time. My little boy would always be six months old, even when he was old and gray.

Stood there like that, tears rolling down my cheeks, holding those pictures to my chest like one of those omegas in those old movies whose mate just went off to war in Europe or the Pacific. Holy baby Jebus, all I need now is a train to run after.

After a bit, set down the pictures, dried my eyes then picked up my briefcase and saucer cap. When I walk out that door, it’s 2nd Lt. Castiel Novac who steps out into the hallway, ready for a day at class. Two hours later, Staff Sargeant Harras, came into class and handed me a note. The technician from Chesapeake and Potomac was on the way to install my phone. Break was in another 15 minutes, so fidgeted through it until the instructor called out to ‘smoke em if you got em.’ Let him know I might be back a few minutes late and the reason. The captain nodded and said to hurry back.

Took off as fast as I could, one arm pumping and the other cradling my belly. Could see the phone truck in the round about in front of the BOQ. “Hi,” was trying to catch my breath. “I’m Castiel Novac, you’re here to install the telephone?” The tech nodded and climbed out of the truck. He was a tall middle aged black beta, a belly the size of mine at eight months, only I suspected it was more from his mates cooking and the local beer. Pulling his tool bag from out of the vehicle, he followed me inside and up to my quarters.

Once there he looked at the phone, looked at me with a bemused expression and then scanned the walls of the room, coming to focus on some kind of outlet behind the bedside table. “Here’s your problem,” the technician said picking up the end of the phone line and snapped it into that funny outlet. He then took the hand set and put it to his ear. “You have dial tone.” Then made a call to his office to let them know he was done with this job.

Ohhhhhhhh, don’t I feel like three kinds of an idiot. “Phones aren’t hardwired into the wall any more?!”

“Nope, haven’t been for a few years.”
“Every where I’ve lived, the phone was either there or a tech had to come out and do the hard wire thing.”

The guy looked like he was doing everything not to laugh. “Yup, and I used to have to do that. Still do it from time to time when something happens to the wall jack. But isn’t technology wonderful. Have a great day Lieutenant. And thank you for being a customer of Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone.”

Son of a Bitch.

After class, walked over to the commissary that was a few blocks behind Mifflin Hall. It was another one of those World War 2 buildings, prolly a warehouse that was now covered in aluminum siding and transformed into the Army’s grocery store. Got in line at the check in window to show my id, then grabbed a cart and began pushing it down the first aisle. Have to be careful because whatever I buy, will have to carry it back to the room. A couple cans of peas and carrots. Box of spaghetti, jar of sauce, package of hamburger, Poptarts, milk and cereal. That should do it for a couple of days and won’t kill my arms.

Or so I thought. The bagger did a good job packing and had doubled the paper sack to prevent me losing it all on the sidewalk. Dropped a dollar in his tip can and walked out.

Was half way down the block when the bag started to get heavy. Trying to carry it and a briefcase was worse then I thought. Plus it was hot, the air was thick with humidity and was feeling a quart short. Stopped for a moment to set everything down for a moment to catch my breath, when a big maroon car glided to a stop by the sidewalk and the driver step out. Saw the major leaves first and then the face. Jim Otis, or should I say….. “Major Otis.” Straightened to attention to salute.

He causally returned the salute. “At ease there. Need some help Lieutenant?”

“No Sir, I’m fine.” Last thing I need is being beholden to this guy. Picked up the bag and briefcase, “just gotta be toddling off now.”

“I can see how ‘fine’ you are.” Major Otis took the bag from my grasp. “Ya’ll about ready to fall on your face, get in and I’ll get ya home. Where do I drop you?” Well, guess that settles that. A very small part of me was relieved (an alpha was looking after me) the rest was mortified that I needed help from anyone, but especially him.

But considering the spot I put myself in, will take help from Major Otis just this once. Because anything else would be a long side down a slippery slope full of razor blades and broken glass. “Thank you Sir, very kind of you. It’s not far. Just over at the transient BOQ, cross from Mifflin Hall.” Got in the passengers side and put the grocery bag and brief case between us on the seat.

“Ahhhh, that place.” Uh oh. Do I wanna know why he said it like that? Nope. “So, how do you like class?”

“Fine, it’s very interesting Sir.”

“You’re doing well from what I understand.”

“I hope so.” Major Otis checked up on me? This can’t be good. The big car pulled into the round about in front of the BOQ and came to a stop. Put my hand on the door latch, “well, thank you Sir. Very kind.”

“You’re welcome, I got that.” He got out of the car, walked around the round and opened the passengers side door, then followed me over and opened the front door of the BOQ. “Have a good
evening Lt Novac.” Then a pause, “give my best to your mother.”

“You know my mom?” How would he know Her Mummy-ship? Oh wait, he would know...

“Naomi Elizabeth Westmoreland Novac.” Major Otis grinned. “Saw her in action a few times in Wurzburg. Thought the post commander was going to need a whip and a chair to get her to back down when she was on a tear.” He sighed, “She was magnificent.” Then he eyeballed me, “also remember you and those brothers of yours. Though you were a scrawny little shit in those days.” Oh crap. “Who ever that John Winchester is, who’s your mate, he is either awfully brave to take on your mother or really well connected.”

“Oh he just loves me.” I snipped and strode away, trying to keep my composure. He peeked at my records obviously. But didn’t make the connection from flash to boom. Which is a good thing, especially if he’d been in Wurzburg too. Last thing I need is for people to find out who John is. Being Omega Winchester is fun but not when trying to be Lt Novac. Will be staying just as far away from Major Otis as I can. Oh man, can’t wait to get my car back.

Wednesday morning came round and was getting myself put together to get to school. Tonight have to call the airlines to get a flight out on Friday after class to get up Baltimore. But at lunch time would go to the transportation office to arrange a new destination for my furniture. Had spoken with Mummy-ship and Dad last night (of course was Irv’d by Jeff), they offered their basement to put my household goods in rather then simply putting them to storage. “I’ve heard too many horror stories of what happens to peoples belongings in places like that,” Lady Bela was most emphatic. “Will have it come here until you ship out for Germany.”

Dad was on the extension in the bedroom. “Don’t argue with her, Darling. After 22 years of being mated to your mother, I’ve learned it’s a lost cause and surrender is the safest avenue.”

“But Fergus,” came that sweet teasing voice of hers. “You said you always loved it best when I’m a bit of a bossy boots.”

EWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW! Things I really didn’t need to know. This was almost as bad as thinking of Naomi-mom and Zachariah, or Naomi-mom banging hookers on the hood of police cars or Naomi-mom ‘inspecting’ Dean as part of our (never filed defunct stupid son of a bitch, sorry it still gets me pissed off) mating contract. He never told me the details of his inspection. Only that Naomi-mom was ‘almost as impressive’ as him. I didn’t ask any further.

Anywho, Jeff can sleep with me until I can get his crib set up. There’s a perfect spot in the corner of the room, just have to move the sofa chair and lamp over a smidge. Or into the TV lounge down the hall. It depends. But in the mean time, took one last look in the mirror, looking strack there Novac, grabbed the briefcase and headed out the door.

Friday came round and I was a bundle of nerves. Yeah, the test was a piece of cake, but my flight was going out of Richmond at 18:00 and the clock was ticking a quarter past 16:00 and I NEEDED TO GET OUTTA HERE! The instructor finally shut up and I was up and out the door like my tail was on fire. Didn’t even say bye to anyone, just took off and ran as fast I as could across the parade ground in front of Mifflin Hall and to the BOQ. Didn’t even bother with the elevator, took the stairs. Was breathing hard and Ulysses was beating on my belly like a drum. Can it kid, I’m trying to get things done here.

Had the page in the phone book marked for ‘taxis’. Dailed 732-9176 just as fast as my fingers would take it. “Travellers Taxi,” came the dispatchers voice. “How can I help you?”

“Hi, my name is Lt. Novac.” was holding the phone in one hand and unbuttoning my uniform
blouse with the other. “I’d like transport from Building 3400, the transience BOQ to the Richmond Airport. My flight leaves at 06:00.”

“We’ll send someone right over. If you’d be down in front that would be helpful Sir.”

“Thank you, will do. How much is it to the airport?”

“Twenty dollars one way.”

“Thank you, will be ready. Goodbye now.” Hung up and pulled on the same traveling clothes I’d worn down here three weeks earlier. Wanted to look great for my little boy. And....of course they’re tight. Mensch! Could suck in my gut but didn’t wanna squish Ulysses. Changed out to the navy suit trousers, white linen oxford shirt, oh that’s better, then put on the Hector Powe jacket. No tie, too hot. Grabbed up the overnight bag I’d packed this morning, turned off the lights and out the door, locking it behind me. The big orange Checker cab from Travellers was just pulling into the round about when I walked outside. An older beta lady was behind the wheel, “hey there L.T. how’re you tonight?

“Not bad, glad it’s the weekend.” Got in and set the overnight bag on the seat beside me. The name on her license read Julia Wilkinson. “Hope you’re doing well Miss Julia.”

“Oh passable, passable.” She put the Checker in gear and we rolled out. On post, she kept it at 30 mph, guess the MP’s are death on speeders but once passed the sign welcoming one and all to Fort Lee, Julia Wilkinson romped on it. Adding a few cents to the ‘double nickle.’

On the way the airport in her low flying rocket, I learned that Miss Julia was a widow, her alpha mate had gone to glory ten years earlier after a bout of cancer. Which left her with five pups to feed, a mountain of medical bills and $50 dollars to her name. “The only thing I could find at the time was driving cab here on post and here I am 10 years later.” Her pups, bless their little hearts helped out with paper routes, pupsitting and bagging at the commissary. Her two oldest sons were now in the army, one in Germany and the other out in Fort Lewis, Washington. Her daughter was going into the nursing program up one of the teaching hospitals in Richmond and the other two were still in high school. “Their daddy would be proud as to how his pups are turning out,” she said with a slight sniffle in her voice.

Gave the censored ‘Readers Digest’ version of my existence up to this point and before I knew it, we were pulling into the access road to airport. Dang, she’s good. Got out a twenty along with a five spot for getting me here so fast. The cab joined the other vehicles at the curb, as I stepped out and handed her the bills.

“Thanks Lieutenant..” she said pocketing the money. “Will you be needing a ride back on Sunday?” Julia handed me her card.

“You’re welcome. No, but thanks for asking because I’ll have my car. But if I ever need a ride somewhere, will ask for you.” Tucked it in next to the one still in my wallet for Augustine Bonaparte Jones, (Augie for short) the driver up in DC who took me between airports back last year. “Thank you for the great ride. Bye Julia,” I waved and walked into the terminal. Was flying Piedmont, so went over to their desk and waited my turn in line.

“How may I help you today Sir?” The clerk behind the desk asked.

“I have a reservation for the 06:00 o’clock flight to Baltimore.”

The clerk tapped on her computer for a moment, “Yes Lt Novac. Window or aisle seat? Window,
that’s good. May I see your military ID please?” Took the green card out of my wallet and handed it over. “Very good, thank you.” She tapped a little more, “$70.00 please.” Counted out the bills and handed them over. The clerk took the money put it in the register then handed over my ticket and boarding pass. “You’re leaving on Flight 275, departing in about 25 minutes from Gate 3. Thank you for choosing Piedmont Airlines.” Picked up the overnight bag and wandered down to Gate 3.

The hour flight wasn’t too bad. Soda and peanuts on a DC-9. Now just wanna get on the ground and see my pup. Must have had a tail wind, because 40 minutes into the flight, the captain came on the horn, “we’ve made some good time today with the wind at our backs” (I knew it!”) “and will be arriving about 10 minutes early into the Baltimore International Airport. The stewardesses will being coming around to collect the empty cups and waste paper, then trays up, cigarettes out and make sure your seat belts are on. Thank you for flying Piedmont Airlines today and in the future if you find yourself with the need to be somewhere, sincerely hope you’ll think of us to get you there.”

The landing was a touch bumpy, but who cared as long as we were here, he could make like Meadowlark Lemon and Curly Neal running down court, just as long as this here bird ended up at the terminal. The plane rolled down the tarmac and come on! Kick this thing in the ass! What are we doing? Driving to Annapolis?

Well, it took em long enough but was finally at the terminal and pulling up to the breeze way as it came rolling over to the hatch. The smell of av-gas and burnt tires wafted in, as I got up and automatically reached to hook up the static line that wasn’t there. Oh I’ve gotta stop that. Side stepped down the aisle and was finally out of the aircraft. Trotted down the breezeway, through the door and into the gate. Scanned the faces in the crowd who’d gathered there to meet their loved ones or business associates, until a loud little voice cut above the din “IRV!”

“Papa! It’s, papa!” I called back running toward the source of that wonderful sound. Standing there waiting was her Mummy-ship, Dad and on his ‘Pop Pop’s’ shoulders was Jeff. Threw myself into their arms.

“Papa!” Jeff clapped his hands and reached for me. No crying, no hesitation, he just launched himself off Dad’s shoulders and into my arms. That boy is going to be a jumping fool, no doubt about it. Just like his daddy, just like his papa.

And speaking of, “Papa.” Jeff was very matter of fact. “Papa.”

My little boy is seven months old. If you counted simply days, I haven’t missed that much of his life. Except, any day without him is too many. Even if it’s for our future. He changed a bit, his round pup’s face has a few more freckles from being out in the sun, especially if his little tan arms and legs are any proof. There’s another tooth too. Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh! I can’t take any more time without him. There’s going to be too future where I won’t be there, so let’s start making up for lost time. Kissed his cheeks and nuzzled that little button nose.

“Hello Son,” Dad had a comforting arm around his mate as her Ladyship was looking like she was going to start bawling any second. “Dearest Girl,” he took my overnight bag and Jeff back. “you get to hold your wayward pup too.”

And as I had with Jeff, Bela did for me. Kissing and nuzzling, blowing her mothers sweet scent across my nose and taking in the changes to my body. My hips had widened, belly plumped a bit and the smell of peaches more pronounced. “That was my scent too when I carried you,” her Mummy-ship cooed happily. “My sweet Nene.” She fussed over me for a moment or two more, “Is such handsome pup.” Now this is just getting embarrassing.....but in a good way.
“Maaaaaaaaaaaaaa,” I protested weakly. “Come on. I’m not five.” She laughed, still petting and fussing.

“Have you had dinner yet?” Oh thank you Dad, cuz any minute thought Mummy-ship was going to put me over her shoulder and burp me.

“No, just soda and peanuts on the plane.” Time to get this show on the road. Took my son back, (heavy little sucker) balancing him on my hip, let Mom put a protective arm around my waist and Dad could carry the overnight bag. Now there we go, just a happy little family at the airport. Where reunions, open mouth kisses and heavy scenting were common and allowable sights.

“You know,” Dad wove us through the crowds of people. “There’s a place not too far from here, where the German food is pretty good. Blob’s Park.”

Weird name, but mmmmm, could do with some good Kraut chop. “I’m in, let’s go.”

The place was a big ole beer garden where ex-pats, service people and locals could get their fix of wiener schnitzel, sausage, red cabbage and potato served up any which way you wanted. It was good....or the best that could be had outside the ‘Fatherland.’ The oom pah pah music playing in the back ground was traditional Bavarian and speaking of traditional....the white wine looked awfully tempting. Was allowed only the tiniest of sips of course. Oh dear alpha God, I wanna get drunk someday when I’m not pregnant, nursing or being the responsible adult.

We left a while later after I paid the bill. Pulled out my brand new Master Charge card (it arrived yesterday) and grandly handed to the waiter. Wanted to show my parents I could be something more then a mooch (real or imagined) and could pull my own weight. So, with bellies full, Jeff sound asleep on my shoulder (was ready to fall asleep myself), the three of us trudged out to the car. The week had caught up with me at last and just wanted a little time to rest, put my head on straight, get reacquainted with Jeff and go through the stuff in the basement to see what to bring back to the BOQ.

The stereo is a definite, miss my tunes in the morning. Must have dozed off because the next thing I know we’re pulling into the driveway at their house. Drowsily got out of the car, carrying my son and the overnight bag to the front stoop, rocking him to and fro as Dad unlocked the door. “Good night all,” Then walked to the bedroom. Had just enough where with all to get Jeff out of his clothes, cleaned up and slap on a new diaper, before taking off my clothes to collapse naked in bed.

The angels must have been in cooking mood because the dream was about French toast. Thick pieces of crusty bread, soaked in egg and thick cream dripping eroticly, then laid in bubbling puddles of melted butter, cooked in a cast iron skillet. Then the maple syrup was poured on, oh my Alpha God, this dream as so good, could actually taste the sweetness on my lips. “Wake up Darling,” a dream Jenny Reynolds whispered.

“Why?” I moaned. “Don’t wanna wake up.”

“Yes you do. Because,” she whispered dragging a syrup coated finger across my lips. “I’ve got your breakfast here and besides, I really wanna fuck.” My eyes flew open, Lady Jeanette Jerome Reynolds was sitting on the edge of the bed holding a plate of French toast on her lap.

“How?” Reached out and touched her knee, just to make sure the dream was over and reality had taken its stead. “Oooooo, either this is real or the best dream ever!” Pushed the bright cotton skirt up her leg, till I could see the white lacy panties. “Oh please don’t be a dream! Please don’t be a dream!” Fell out of bed and crawled on hands and knees between her legs. Mmmm, the warm wet smell of omega pussy, tongued the strip of cloth that covered that golden gully, tasting and soaking
it. Finding her little man in the boat and giving him what for with lips and tongue.

My dearest Brit groaned deliciously and leaned back to set the plate on the bed side table before something happened to it. Now I just wanted her, hooked my thumbs under the elastic of the panties and pulled them down her tan thighs, passed those dimpled knees and away from those manicured toes. Where that soggy bit of lace and white silk when after that, will find em later. Don’t care where those feet had been, licked that gorgeous instep and gave each little piggie the kissing and suck it deserved. Then dove back for a little more tri-hair-pie.

Worked her pinks open, was each finger joined the other to finally get her supple and open enough to fist fuck as she cursed and hissed. Scratching and writhing like a wild cat. MY wild cat. What was left of my dick was hard enough to pound nails and weeks of cum blew its way out to soak into the shag carpet as the slick ran down my thighs. We came loudly and wetly, collapsing in puddles of our own juices and by the Alpha God were we juicy. Flopped on my back and licked her slick off my hand and fingers.

Jenny moved first, she rolled over on her stomach and looked over the side of the bed. “Lady Bela called yesterday to say that you were coming to visit this weekend.” She smiled saucily, “and she knew that you needed some ‘touch’ time.”

“Wow,” didn’t mean to have my voice come out that high. “Wow,” there that’s better. “Thank you Mummy-ship.” Okay, that didn’t quite sound right but nice to know in a creepy kind of way that Mum knew what her pregnant omega son needed. Freud would have a field day with my family.

“Come on up on the bed and let me take a good look at you.” Jenny patted the mattress and with a groan, clambered up to flop down beside her. “Hello Ulysses,” she cooed, letting her fingers do the walking across my belly. “Are you being a good boy for Castiel?” He fluttered wildly in response. “Yes, you know your Mummy. And Mummy loves you.” She leaned in and planted a kiss, “oooooo, you tickle.” Jenny petted and patted, then asked..... “what has your obstetrician say about his progress?”

“Uhhhh,” oh crap. I’ve haven’t been to see a doctor in about four weeks. Checked in with Doctor Mosley about mid-August and she said things looks looked okay. “Well, I.....uhhhh......”

Jenny looked up sharply. “You have seen a doctor haven’t you?”

“Doctor Mosley said everything looked fine.”

“And that was?”

“Fourweeksago,” blurted out. Why I can’t lie to this woman? “I haven’t had time during the day because of class and up until now I was living at a hotel off post and haven’t had a car to get over to the Kenner Army Hospital......and my foot slipped and shoe untied and....please don’t kill me.”

My dearest Brit got up off the bed and started hunting for her panties. “Eat your breakfast, get cleaned up and get dressed. I’m going to ring up Dr Hirsch’s service and see if we can get him to see you after sun down tonight or early Sunday morning.” She found her underwear where they’d landed under Jeff’s crib. They were a little too wet still to put back on, so Jenny just slapped them in my hand. “You can give them back to me later after they’re dry.” Gulp, walking about with no underwear, smelling deliriously of sex...looked down at my cock. It’s busted out and wants to play.

“Oh my,” Jenny looked seductively over her shoulder. “We must do something about that....later.” And she was out the door.
“Bitch,” I muttered, stuffing my yap with cold French toast.

“Only the best kind!” I hear from the other side of the door. Damn, that slick has some good ears.

“Caabbrrroon,” I groaned.

It turned out Dr Hirsch’s son in law would actually get to see me at 03:00 that afternoon. Letty Hirsch apparently had married outside the faith, which came in handy, as Leonard O’Dowell newly minted MD in obstetrics and omega medicine turned into the best Shabbos goy son-in-law a family could ever have. He was an excellent chef, adored by his mother in law and could pick up those occasional Saturday ‘emergency’ appointments. “My life ain’t ‘Abies Irish Rose’, the good doctor said happily, as he cranked open the speculum. “More like ‘Memorial Day in the Hebrew Himalayas’.”

He hummed and hawed. Asked about the scars on my thighs (next time, I’m going to see if some face powder will make them less noticeable) and seemed alright enough with my answer. Asked about my last pregnancy, then got his copy of The Lancet with Dr Pam’s article autographed and seemed alright with the way this pregnancy was progressing. Drew some blood, “you’re low on iron, but that seems to be normal with you,” Dr O’Dowell commented, filling a syringe and then sending the needle into my ass cheek. Youch! That stung.

“So what do you think Doctor?” Jenny was perched on a near by chair reading a 3 year old copy of National Geographic. “Will he every play the piano again?” When my dearest girl knows that many bad ‘American-isms’ she has lived here wat too long.

“Prolly not. But judging by the Amina flutter and way you’re showing at this point, which is natural for a second pregnancy, the pup is prolly going to be about 7 or 8 pounds, a normal weight.” The doctor had taken out the speculum, gotten up and was now washing his hands. “Everything seems to be progressing well, even with the lapse in direct medical care.” Now he looked at me hard, “don’t do that any more, by the way. Have your weekly appointments, even if you have to come up here to do it.”

Oh crap, not like I wouldn’t want to come up every weekend, but I need to study, as we were informed our tests would now be given on Mondays so we’d have Saturday and Sunday to study. Will have to figure out how to be seen down at Kenner Army Hospital. But then, the thought of Major Otis flashed to mind, damn need for an alphas touch, okay maybe every other weekend until the Reynolds move to West Germany in November isn’t such a bad idea. Will have to hit the books during the week. Dr. O’Dowell wrote two prescription, one for iron tablets and other for prenatal multi- vitamins. Same stuff I took the last time.

Left my CHAMPUS information with the doctor, so his girl could bill out the visit on Monday. We stopped at a near by drug store and got the scripts filled then went back to the embassy. Being that it was late in the afternoon and was bone tired (but not too tired to be boned), Jenny called the ‘rents to let them know I’d be staying the night in DC and would be back in the morning. “Hello my First,” had fallen back against the hood of the Bug, oh it’s so nice to have my car back, as I lost my balance when a solid hunk of teenage alpha boy slammed into my arms. “Please let me up, you’re squeezing your little brother.”

“Ooops, sorry” Jesse got up and helped me to my feet. “But it’s just so good to see you! Asa and me got all your letters and post cards, hope you got our letters.” It all came out in a rush and he had to take catch his breath. We dispensed with all the formalities, bowing and correct phrases, we’re family and I’m at the point where a short nap would be wonderful.

“Yes I did the other day and sent out more post cards.” No overnight bag to carry in, hadn’t figured
to be staying the night, so left it with the change of clothes back in Annapolis. Will have to either borrow or wash what I’m wearing. Came into the kitchen with some dread, as the last time I’d seen it the place was not in the best shape. (The memory of Delassandro on the floor with the shit kicked out him was one of my happier ones. Hopefully John got rid of him by now.) The cabinets were repaired, the furniture was new and so was the sugar bowl.

“John wrote us a lovely check,” Jenny set her purse down on the side board. “I do so love walnut, it’s good strong wood. Can imagine it can take a pounding.”

I smiled sweetly, “glad to hear that. Would so love to test that theory out.”

“The both of you are gross,” Erica had walked into the room carrying her littlest brother. “Hi Cas, you staying for dinner?”

“Yes, and overnight too.”

“I’ll going to have my earphones on tonight.” She handed me ‘Sir Winnie’, “you people should act your ages. We’re impressionable young people,” Erica just glowered at her mother and me, “and you two are sex fiends.”

Jenny pulled the bottle Beefeater out of one of the cabinets along with a water tumbler. She poured a healthy slug and knocked it back. “I should’ve sold you to the gypsies when I had the chance. But sadly, they would’ve brought you back.”

Sir Winnie yawned at the whole tirade, snuggled into my neck and drooled. It looks like he could do with a bit of a lay down too. Saw his play pen in the living room, glided over (There, see. Learning to walk with a tea cup on your head does have real life uses) and put the sleepy pup in. Now to put myself down for a short rest. “Little First, would you like to keep me company?” Course he did and we trotted upstairs, his mother promising to get us up in about a half hour.

It was nice to be held. To have a familiar body in bed and an arm around my waist. Course when I woke, the pants was open and Jesses hand was protectively cupping my belly.

Dinner was Chinese take out from a local joint a couple of miles away. Egg rolls, pork fried rice and Kung Po chicken. “Completely bastardized for you Americans and certainly not as good as what you find even on a Hong Kong street corner,” Lewiston sighed, picking up a greasy egg roll “But oh for shame, I do still like it.”

That night, I slept with Lewiston and Jenny, doing everything but sleeping. For all his commanding presence to the outside world and even in the bedroom to some degree, it was the Omega Jeanette Jeromite Reynolds who was truly in command. I could hardly say anything, as I was just as under her thrall as her mate. Even to the point where I willingly had myself buckled into an old fashioned mating stand. “I found it in the corner of the cellar one day,” she said as Lewiston dragged the thing out of the closet. “Perfectly barbaric piece of alpha domination over omega kind. Should’ve tossed it on the fire last Guy Fawkes Day, but......” Jenny smiled wickedly, “just the thought of you strapped to it, was just too delicious.”

The thing gave me a case of the dreads, like the kind you get when all your buddies drag you on the Lockness Monster at Busch Gardens. (That was last Sunday. Oh thanks Tarah.) But also like the roller coaster.....it could give you a wild ride. Had to admit, it was rather well made. Somebody put a lot of work and craftsmanship in to this thing. “It’s Teak wood, Spanish leather, springs in the seat for extra bounce and even a belly plate that could be removed to accommodate even the most pregnant omega.” Lewiston said proudly. “Prolly made in the 1890’s and then refurbished in the early 60’s, judging by the leather work it’s a Cooper, Webb Jones and Company. They were
famous for their saddles and cycling seats’”

I...am....oddly impressed that he would know such a thing by sight. But anyway, a mating stand was evil, sinful and everything we as the modern emancipated omega was suppose to fight against.....tomorrow... in the light of day. But right now in the dark of night: tie me up, tie me down and fuck me silly three times round!

And we kinda sorta did. If I needed some ‘touch time’ with Lewiston, I got it in spades.

The next morning of course Erica was glowering at her mother and father, “I was adopted, there is no way I’m related to you people.” Her brother just sat hunched over his bowl of Sugar Frosted Flakes shoveling them into his mouth as fast as he could. “Asa’s father is taking us over to the rifle range at Quanico,” milk and soggy flakes were running down Jesse’s chin.

“After church,” his mother added looking up over the week old copy of The Times (of London) she was reading.

“Mummmm!”

“Oh, let him go Mouse.” His Father was nose deep in the Sunday Washington Post. Took a quick glance at the front page, today 17 September 1978. The head lines were about a 7.7 magnitude earthquake that destroyed the city of Tabas, Iran. Twenty thousand people were dead and more were missing and presumed dead. Was selfishly glad Naomi-mom was out of there. “The good Alpha Lord will find him no matter where he is. Let the pup have some fun, in two months time, he won’t have the opportunity.” Apparently they had been checking out boarding schools for Jesse and Erica. Trips to a rifle range would be out of the question there.

“Thanks Dad!” Jesse rocketed up to give his father a quick hug and dashed out of the kitchen to get dressed. Lewiston picked the stray flakes of cereal off the shoulder of his dressing gown, regarded them for a moment, then in one of those ‘waste not, want not’ moments, popped them in his mouth. Like John, I suspect he’d eaten less under far worse conditions.

I was sitting gingerly on a pillow sipping peppermint tea. Things had gotten a little rough last night...early this morning, but then again, sadly or happily....I do like a little pain with my pleasure. Tied to that mating stand, being helpless to whatever they wanted to do to me....ohhhhhh yeahhhh! My Lord Alpha had taken his pleasures after his Lady Omega slowly had taken me apart with her lips, hands and riding crop.

Ulysses of course had thrived in it. Endorphins, hormones, more spunk and essence. His little soul was beating like a hummingbird the size of a 747. Had a soft plug in my pinks, though it had a few jingles hanging from it, just to let everyone know, the old alpha dog still had it. Was wearing an old kilt that somehow had been dragged around the world a few times and was too large for Jesse, not cool enough for Erica, too small for Lewiston and Jenny..... “Campbell ancient? I look abysmal in that shade of green.” So I got it.

Which was fine, kilts were still in fashion for omegas and always liked them anyway. But back to the real world. After breakfast (and one more fast fuck) said my goodbyes, got in the Bug and drove to Annapolis. The trip back was uneventful in one of those nice, quiet ways that you want after a big night of....stuff. Now you just want ‘no stuff’ Once away from Washington DC, its suburbs and sprawl, there really are spaces of green fields, small towns and open road. Also, now got a chance to think my own thoughts.

Made mental lists of the things I needed to get at the commissary. Had already over the course of the last week gone there to pick up jars of Gerber pup food, pablum and diapers. Wanted
everything in place when he got there. Hope the diapers fit. Jeff was growing quick and prolly would be out of his clothes and diapers as fast as I buy them. Had managed to avoid running into Major Otis during those shopping trips and hoped to keep it that way.

It was shortly before noon when I pulled on to Gordon Cove Ave. Had stopped at a roadside stand for some apples, raspberries and peaches. Figured a little fresh fruit would be a treat for Jeff and a nice thank you to Dad and Mummy-ship. Oh man, could use a short nap too. Didn’t get a whole lot of sleep last night, along with feeling a little sore in the sit down department.

“Well, look what the cat dragged in,” Rowena drawled as she opened the door to let me in. “You look, sound and smell well dragged across the flames.”

“Jealous?” I stifled a yawn.

“Hardly,” she sniffed. Ignoring her, went out to the kitchen where Mummy-ship and Jeff were watching what looked like some old Betty Davis movie.

“Oh Judith.” Mummy-ship was sniffing in a hankie. “To have wasted your life only to find love with Frederick Steele at the end of it. Your victory is dark indeed.” She blew her nose gustily.

“Irv,” Jeff agreed. He was sitting in his highchair, picking up the Cheerios scattered about the tray in front of him one at a time and tucking them into his mouth. Then he looked up, “Papa!” The cereal went flying as my pup banged on the tray, wiggling and squirming to be picked up.

“Hi Mum, hello you big sweet wonderful thing you!” Set the bag of fruit down on the table, plucked Jeff up from the highchair and holding him up above my head, whirled him around. He kicked and crowed happily, not the least bit afraid of the height or speed of his travels. “Jump up, hook up, shuffle to the door,” I sang, “we gonna jump and count to four. Whhhhhhhhhheeeeee!” Then pulled him close and peppered his little cheeks with kisses.

My little man laughed and giggled, then nosed planted into my neck. When his whole attitude changed. A frown replaced the smile. “Bad!” Well, that’s a new word. Then what happened next really surprised me, Jeff chomped his three front teeth into my neck. “Yewch! What’s with you pup?!” Yanked him away and back into his highchair before he could get a good grip.

“He did that to me too.” Lady Bela opened up her blouse to display a small bruise and dents on her shoulder. “According to Dr Spock, one of the early indicators of alpha presentation is a possessiveness of omega family members. It’s territorial not sexual.” Mum leaned over and breathed in, “oh my. No wonder the little fellow was marking what’s his. You have the scent of a strange (or at least to him) alpha all over you.” She smiled wickedly, “and in different clothes then what you left in. That’s my darling boy, sated and satisfied. Go take a nap, I’ll wake you in a few hours. Can’t have you dozing off behind the wheel now.”

“Thanks Mum,” now I’m dragging. Walked to the guest room, kicked off the sandals and flopped into bed. Will need to take a shower before leaving. Can’t afford to smell like this on a three to four hour trip. Got enough looks at the fruit stand that ranged from disgusted to way too interested. The jingling under the kilt didn’t help that along any.

Need to get some gas, a couple of bottles for Jeff.....fell asleep making mental lists. Instead of ‘TALKS’ my life has turned into ‘LISTS’. It seemed like my head just hit the pillow when her Mummy-ship woke me up but it was a little after 02:00 in the afternoon. Really have to get a move on. “Come on there slow coach, you have to get yourself put together.” Rolled reluctantly out of bed, went to the guest bath and got a shower. Mmmmm, that felt good. Even with a sluice off at the Reynolds, the aroma of sex; possessive alpha, dominating omega, cum and slick after the jingle.
plug came out, was a bit strong. No wonder Ulysses little soul was flapping away so strong, pup was like a Huey in a hurricane.

After getting dried off and dressed, filled the back seat with Jeff’s things, including a small crib mattress. He’ll sleep on that on the floor next to my bed until his crib arrives in another week or two. There was barely enough room for the stereo and records, but I made it fit. “Okay, Sweetie,” I said as we were getting ready to go. “Say bye bye to Pop Pop and Nana. Bye Bye.” They loved my pup, but could tell they wanted their lives back. It was hard enough to have Rowena about (she was suppose to have gone back to Scotland months before but delayed her return seemingly indefinitely) and take care of seven month old all at the same time. Dad had mentioned finding his mother a nice little house near by or dropping her into the bay. Personally I thought the Chesapeake was the better option.

“Bye bye,” my little man waved, kissed and giggled. Missed this. Time with my child, watching him grow and change and go from pup to boy to man. And knowing in my heart of hearts how much of this I am going not to see. So have to hang on to all the time I have with him. Strapped Jeff in his car seat and then turned to Mum and Dad. “Thanks for everything, you guys were a life saver.”

“Glad we could do it,” Mummy-ship gathered me in a warm loving hug, and for a moment savored being a child in my mothers arms. Dad was next. His hug was fierce, protective.....an alpha defending his omega son against the evils of the world. Didn’t want to leave this, but....I have my own pup and life to contend with. But it didn’t mean that for one moment more......there. That will have to do. Pulled away from his arms and walked to the drivers side of the Bug.

“Bye now,” I said, opening the car door and dropping into the drivers seat. “Will be back up in about two weeks. Will be seeing Dr O’Dowell for a check up.” Started up the car and then with a wave and toot of the horn, pulled away and down Gordon Cove Drive.

Even leaving shortly before 03:00 and taking I-95 most of the way, we didn’t get in until shortly after 08:00 that evening. The remains of a 20 car pile up near the Fredericksburg exit had blocked traffic for miles and took forever to get through. Course it was hot, humid and oh yes, Jeff was filling his diaper with abandon. Now was changing him more in self defense as the stink of the radioactive sludge coming out his ass was scorching the hair out of my nose. Oh mensch, this was worse then the drive from Rochester. Could’ve kissed the Fort Lee sign when it finally come into view. Pulled into post and drove the short distance to the BOQ. Rolled to a stop in a space in the parking lot behind the building. Man, I’m beat but have to get Jeff upstairs and to bed. Don’t really want to advertise I’m bringing my little man in, so take the stairs, all five flights. Had Jeff on my hip and the duffel over the my shoulder, was fagged out by the time I yanked opened the door from the stair well. No one was in the hall way so hurried to my quarters and unlocked the door. The room was a little warm and stuffy, but got the air conditioning running, so that will clear it out in a moment.

Oh crap, where do I put you Jeff where you won’t get into any trouble while I go back to the car to get the rest of the stuff? There was too much in the main room for him to pull down on himself, so the only thing left was to set him in the bath room, cover the edge of the tub with towels. That should keep him from smashing his head on anything. Set him on the bathmat on the floor and then carefully shut the door. Then stuffed the keys in my pocket, locked the door and then ran down the hall and down the stairs.

Pulled the mattress out of the back seat, along with the shopping bags full of toys, clothes and a highchair. The mattress was from the crib in the guestroom, Mummy-ship and Dad will use the one
from Jeff’s other crib when it arrives. They also loaned me the high chair with the admonishment to bring it back the next time we came, this was their not so subtle hint to buy my own. Will have to hit the thrift shop next weekend to see if they had one before checking out the PX or J.C. Penny’s. I kinda sorta put in for their credit card and a Thallmers card while I was at it......hey they tossed in 15 percent off coupon when card arrived last week.

But anyway, this time took the elevator, if anyone asked, I was holding stuff for a friend. Dumped everything in the room and went back for the stereo. Then a third trip for the records. Didn’t want to leave them in the car to get warped by the heat. Okay, that’s done, now to check on Jeff. Opened the bathroom door to find the pup didn’t hurt himself, thank the Alpha God, but he did managed to be sitting in a pile of confetti that used to be toilet paper. “Heee heheee heeee!” Jeff must think this was the best fun ever, unrolling every sheet, then ripping it up....and shitting in it. He’d wiggled out of his diaper and now was sitting in a pile of shitty confetti-ized shit paper!

Took another hour to get everything and everybody cleaned up and set to rights. Flushed the worst of the mess down the toilet, while the rest I snuck down to the dumpster out in back of the building. Lay his mattress on the floor beside my bed. Will slide it underneath during the day. The clothes went into the credenza and the crazy number of toys stuffed in the closet. Would worry about the stereo another day.

Now I’m exhausted and that’s when I finally remembered the notes and hand outs on the desk that I was suppose to have been studying today. There was a test tomorrow and had planned to study for it when I got back here. Except, that would’ve been three or four hours ago. I’m so boned and not in the fun way either.

“Sniffle.” Jeff was wide awake and nowhere near going to sleep. “Papa? Irv? Bumpo?” Oh, please pup I’m so tired. That’s when he gives the big puppy eyes. I’m doomed.

Sigh, all his books were in the diaper bag ready to go in the morning. Oh cripes, the pup won’t sleep without his stories. Picked up the book I was currently reading off the bed side table, not that it was prolly appropriate for a seven month old, but it was the only thing I got:

“We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold. I remember saying something like "I feel a bit lightheaded; maybe you should drive..." And suddenly there was a terrible roar all around us and the sky was full of what looked like huge bats, all swooping and screeching and diving around the car, which was going about a hundred miles an hour with the top down to Las Vegas. And a voice was screaming: "Holy Jesus! What are those goddamn animals?"

Chapter End Notes

Hey folks,glad to see you all. And thank you for stopping by to see what Cas and Company are up to.
Patricia Harras is the actress who played Sam and Deans babysitter Donna in the episode Swap Meat.

Living near the flag pole: military expression. On base, the flag is usually near the command building or home of the base commander. To live near it designates how high up the totem pole you are, downside is that you have to put up with a load of petty crap to stay there.
Yeah that was me being all embarrassed with the phone technician. Having grown up with phones hard wired into the wall, had no idea about phone jacks until that day. Boy was my face red.

Meadowlark Lemon and Curly Neal: the best known players of the world famous Harlem Globetrotters from the 60’s into the 80’s. There was even a Saturday morning cartoon about them.

*Emil Hersch, concentration camp survivor and ob-gyn to Jenny Reynolds and Castiel. We first met him in Cadet Novac, Chapter 71: The Gathering Storm

Abies Irish Rose: originally a stage play from the 1920’s, that became a movie, a radio show and then on TV as ‘Bridget Loves Bernie’. It told the story of a Jewish boy who falls in love with an Irish Catholic girl and the wackiness that ensues when their families find out.

Hebrew Himalayas: the Catskills of New York

This is Jenny’s new kitchen set: https://www.pamono.com/walnut-oval-dining-table-1970s

Of course Lady Bela is watching the 1939 movie ‘Dark Victory’ with Betty Davis, George Brent, Humphrey Bogart and a young Ronald Reagan.

The Bell UH-1 Iroquois (nicknamed "Huey") is a utility military helicopter powered by a single turboshaft engine, with two-blade main and tail rotors – from Wikipedia. It and its variants were produced from 1956 to 1987. It was the work horse for all the branches of the US military during the Vietnam War and could still be found in the First Gulf War.

Cas of course is reading ‘Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas’ by Hunter S. Thompson.

Oh Give Me a Home of course if from the song ‘Home on the Range’ and a nod to the movie about Hunter S. Thompson entitled ‘Where the Buffalo Roam’. 
It’d seemed like I’d just closed my eyes, when the alarm clock started screaming away and no matter how hard I pounded, the damn thing wouldn’t shut up. It was only after I’d put my fist through the plastic face that it suddenly dawn on me that it was not the clock screaming but Jeff. Looked down to see he’d rolled off the little mattress and laying on the floor bawling his eyes out. “Okay Big Guy, shhhhh, shhhhhhh!” Fell out of bed to crawl over, pick him up and bounced him on my lap to stop the screaming. “Please Baby, don’t do this!” Last thing I needed was to have the people to either side of us start complaining.

Glanced over to the night table, even though it took a pounding, the clock was still working (must be a Timex or a GE) and it was 06:30!!!!!!! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! We’ve gotta get going if we’re gonna get ready, across post and then to class.

I hate Mondays.

Got Jeff’s diaper off and we both went into the shower. Lathered myself up first as Jeff sat on the floor of the tub splashing in the water and then bent over to run the wash cloth over and around his plump puppy body. The water ran warm long enough to get us both clean and prolly enough for me to shave. Turned off the facets, pushed the shower curtain aside and stepped out. Grabbed a towel, patted him dry, then set Jeff on the bath mat, while I took care of myself. Shaved and then happened to catch my reflection in the mirror on the bathroom door.

My butt was crisscrossed with red marks from Jenny’s riding crop. She’d started out light and caressing, progressively letting the blows get a little more stinging. Till the point came when the slick was pouring out and Lewistontook me hard and fast. His fingers leaving bruises on my hips. Jenny promised I could put her in the mating stand next time. Or Lewiston......I’m not fussy. The ‘flick of the lash’ was something second years learned in finishing school.

Okay, so it made for a slightly uncomfortable ride back here yesterday. To be honest, it wasn’t so bad until the traffic jam near Fredericksburg and that’s when the endorphins really wore off. Don’t even wanna think about trying to deal with this during a test.

Got Jeff diapered, then dressed in a little shirt and shorts, didn’t have the time nor patience to put shoes on him, so my little colt will go bare. Shoved half a Pop Tart into his hand while I gobbled down the other half. Got on the uniform, the brass was pinned the blouse already, snapped on the first mating collar I laid a hand on, not really paying attention to which one. Gig line....straight enough, saucer cap, diaper bag with all his crap and I’m out the door. And back in......put your shoes on Novac. Took the stairs down, unlocked the drivers side door and got in. Screw trying to put Jeff in his car seat. Would just hold him in my lap.

Traffic was still kind of light but had to avoid the training companies out for their mornings PT run. Better you then me guys. Took only one wrong turn but got back on track pretty quick, so was at the housing area in good enough time. Enlisted housing was a slight step down from officer
housing but a huge step up from most of the places I lived in growing up. I promise you Baby, you’ll never have to look in the toilet first before sitting down to make sure there were no spiders, snakes or rats that would bite your butt. Pulled in to the parking lot of the duplex where the Harras lived. It was a block of ‘up’s and down’s’ that ran the length of the large parking lot. They had the down stairs quarters so don’t have to worry about anyone taking a header down a flight of steps.

Left the car running while I ran to the door and knocked. Mrs Harras was still in her bathrobe and curlers, the TV in the back ground was blaring some local news program and her son was peeking around her hip with a piece of toast in his hand. “Morning,” I said quickly, handing off my pup into her arms. “Here’s his diaper bag, everything he’ll need’s in it.” Leaned in and planted a kiss on his chubby cheek. “Be good for Mrs Harras. See you tonight about 16:30.” Turned quick and ran back to the Bug, hoping Jeff wouldn’t start crying. Of course the little brat didn’t, he was way too interested in the curlers on Patrica’s head.

I was the one sniveling on the way across post. Had my pup back, only to hand him over to someone else. But at least would see him again tonight. Had to stop back at the BOQ to collect the materials for the test in the briefcase that I forgotten in the rush to get out the door. Pulled into the parking lot, sprinting into the building and up the stairwell. Passed the cleaning ladies in the hallway, fumbled for the keys before crashing into my room. Kicked the little mattress under the bed, grabbed up the brief case, locked the door and ran down hall. Crap, I’m a mess.

Drove over to Mifflin, found a parking spot and got inside. Stopped at a men’s room to take a quick piss and get myself put back together. Tucked in the blouse then gig line straight, sweat wiped up and not stinking like a freaked out fruit salad. Was yanking open the class room door at the tick of eight and hustling to get set down before........ “Lt Novac, so nice of you to join us.” Captain Ross strolled over and looked me up and down. “That collar is a little too fancy to be regulation.”

My hand few up, oh crap. It’s the Chinese collar. At least it’s not the czars or Mummy-ships coming out collar. “Sorry sir, will change it at lunch.”

“Good idea Lieutenant.” He turned and strode back down to table in front of the room, picked up the tests and began to pass them out. The fact I hadn’t studied for the test was glaringly obvious with each question. I just couldn’t remember anything the instructor talked about last week. My hormone soaked brain was pulling up every answer but the ones I needed. 42, Willy Brandt......Geneva Convention? Then peeked at Mary’s paper, who was sitting next to me. Oh, okay.....’first in last out.’ Granted that sounded like my weekend but it jarred my brain and was able to pull up some better answers.

And for those of you in the ‘peanut gallery’....I did not cheat......I simply used all available sources of information.

Done finally, turned the test over and rested my chin on my hands. The sounds of pens on paper, the low melodious hum of Spanish as Santiago translated for Jorge and just the lovely quiet........ “are you a sleep in my class?” Captain Ross was right at my ear, his voice an ugly hiss. Jerked awake and of course hormones being what they are, went automatically into defense mode, I whacked the captain in the nose with the back of my fist.

“No Sir! Sorry Sir!” Oh cripes! I’m gonna get an Article 15 and drummed out of the service! Looked around fast, the class room was empty, everyone had gone out into the hallway to smoke, joke and toke.

Capt Ross took a handkerchief out of his back pocket and touched it to his nose. Thank the Alpha God it wasn’t bleeding but it was prolly going to swell and bruise before long. “Lieutenant, I will give you this one shot, as I should’ve known better then to startled a pregnant omega. BUT!” He got
down close again and in my face, “if there is a next time, you will be outta here so fast it will make you drop a pup. Do you understand me?”

“Yes Sir,” I squeaked.......manfully squeaked mind you, not any girly squeak.

“Good, get out of my sight for a few minutes.” I was up and out like a shot to join the others out in the hallway. Got out there and noticed right away something wasn’t right. The smell in the air was not only from tobacco but fear, anger and worry. Mary, Libbie and Tarah were huddled with some of the other girls and omegas, speaking in low voices. The guys were trying to look cool, but you could tell all the alphas were just a second away from full on protection mode as was every last beta. What the hell is going on out here?

“It’s Joan,” Mary answered my inquiry as to all the hubbub. “She was raped some time late Saturday night, early Sunday morning. Some alpha guys followed her back to her quarters and when she opened the door to see who was knocking they pushed in and did it to her. She’s still in the hospital recovering.”

Oh dear Alpha God! My first thought was that ‘I hoped she’ll be okay’, but then the second-which was rather unkind about my classmate and made me feel a little guilty, ‘wow, didn’t even notice she was missing’. And to be honest, it wasn’t hard to miss her. Second Lieutenant Joan Blackburn was kind of an unremarkable beta woman from Upstate New York. She was short, dumpy and kinda frumpy. Not that she was unattractive, with the right make up and hairdo, Joan wouldn’t look too bad. But she didn’t and there was this clingy......something.....in her personality that just made you wanna automaticly turn the other way or duck into the mens room whenever you saw her coming. But right now, pushed all that aside. Considering what happened to me down at Fort Bragg where my near rape was hushed up, this at least was being talked about and something done.

“The MP’s caught the guys who did it,” Mary continued. “They were out of one of the AIT companies.” She went on to say there was a panic across post, female and omega officers as well as enlisted did not feel safe. The base commander had been notified and we’d learn soon what security measures were to be taken. Tell you what, I’ll be carrying the ‘Lovers Kiss’ from now on. Got a holster for it and ‘Snubby’ back in Rochester from a store the Rochester Police got their equipment from. Sam Colt took me there one day to get outfitted. Wish it were October, we’d be in class A’s and would be easier to carry a weapon on my person then in the brief case. No place to conceal it wearing khakis.

We worried this bone a while longer before heading back into the class room.

At lunch, had to go back to the BOQ to change out my collar. Took my briefcase along to put in ‘the Lovers Kiss’, will take Karl Malden’s word for it, ‘don’t leave home without it.’ Was trotting down the stairs in front of Mifflin Hall, when heard footsteps coming from behind me. “Hey wait up there Lieutenant.” Oh crap, that’s Major Otis, do I really want to stop? No, he out ranks me, so have to stop, salute and then will keep going.

“Let me walk you,” he said, pausing long enough to return the salute. What am I a dog? “Make sure you get to..........where you going?”

“My room, have to change out my collar.” Oh great, that did make me sound like a dog.

“Ahhhh, no problem. Let’s go, hup two three four and three quarters.”

“It’s broad day light Sir, I don’t think anything could happen. Besides, wouldn’t want to keep you from anything important,” don’t wanna be beholding to you either. Automatically fell into step on his left side as we got to the bottom of the stairs and headed across the parade ground. “Honestly, I
Don’t think I could run into any problems in the middle of an empty field.”

The Major started to laugh. “I read your file, heard how you shot up the Holiday Inn and saw Capt Ross’s nose before coming out here. Problems and trouble follow you like ticks on a hound. Damn boy, did you really go through advanced camp pregnant?”

“Yes Sir,” it bothered me that he poked his nose into my life, when he really had no business. Let me see who do I tell? Thumbed through the mental Rolodex. Dad? (maybe a little too ‘wet’) Naomi-Mom? (could’nt see Major Otis lasting two rounds with her) John? (he’d prolly buy him a drink at the club, then rip the majors throat out with his teeth). Then snapped it shut, if I couldn’t handle this on my own, the six months I spent at Finishing School would’ve been a waste of time and her Mummy-ships money.

“Awful thing that happened.” The major commented. Huh, what? Oh yeah.....Joan, the reason why he’s here. But then Otis said something that pissed me off big time. “But that kinda thing wouldn’t happened if she hadn’t gone to the Enlisted Club.”

Oh, so it’s gonna be like that. The old saw: ‘He shouldn’t be in (name a place) because you know omegas put out for the first alpha that tells em to bend over. You know she deserved to get raped because of the way she was dressed to the....Huh? Enlisted Club? Joan is an officer. “Didn’t you mean OFFICERS club?” I said in a nasty nice voice.

The major shook his head. “Nope. Now between you, me and the fence post, I know a little something about this....if you can keep it on the QT.” Meaning I’d better or he’d know where to come looking. “Gotta buddy over at CID leading the investigation. The guys who did it, said that Lt. Blackburn was at the enlisted club drinking with em, being all flirty and gave em the idea she’d pull a train back at her place. So they followed her there and even when it got rough, they just figured it was part of the game.”

Could Joan be into having some pain with her pleasure too? Or humiliation? Nah, that’s ridiculous. Couldn’t even imagine her having sex much less kinky sex. Okay, that was a little rude.

“Anywho,” Otis continued. “Those guys all swore up and down they had no idea she was an officer and that they were all too drunk and horny to realize it was the BOQ they were at. Yeah, I know. It’s the most incredibly dumb unbelievable story imaginable but these guys are swearing to it.”

Of course those guys would say anything to save their own skins. “They prolly lied about her being there at the club.”

“Nope, the witnesses, which includes the barkeep and a couple of off duty MP’s, put her there between 22:00 and 23:10.”

“But....what was Joan doing at the Enlisted Club?” Ah the enlisted club, a place where anyone from E-1 to E-4 could go, get sick on ‘near beer’, eat lousy pizza and pickled eggs, then get themselves in trouble. The only time I ever went there was with Gabe or Balti when we were broke and rolled drunks on pay day. Never went inside, just hung around outside to wait for the troopers to stumble out then pass out in the alley. Not like it was ever really worth it. They never had more then a few pfennigs or paper nickels. Most times would out take just enough to leave them with bus fare. Once or twice we actually put money in their pockets.

Major Otis just shrugged. “Slumming? Happens every now and again. Mostly with brand new second lieutenants who believe all that bullshit their commie pinko professors taught them in sociology class. Everyone is equal, power to the people, the proletariat shall rise up against their
masters...blah, blah, fucken blah. Horse shit.” He let fly a loogie that went an impressive distance as if to get a bad taste out his mouth.

Remember seeing a lot of this crap in Germany among the university students there. Mostly the ‘professional students’ the ones who change majors every few years so they can stay a student like forever. Vorwärts im Kampf für die Rechte der Arbeiterklasse und des Volkes-Forward in the struggle for the rights of the working class and the people. Yeah, Wurzburg being a university town there was a small satellite office of the Communist League of West Germany. Gabe and I went to a few of their meetings just for the free beer and sausages.

Major Otis was getting warmed up on the subject, “so any who these pukes only come to find out the hard way why there’s a ‘caste’ system for a reason. There has to be a chain of command, the army is a benevolent despotism and people may not like or respect the person over and responsible for their stupid selves, but they better respect the rank.” Then he gave a tired snort, “thus endth today’s lecture. Do-dah Do-dah.”

And he’s right of course. Granted the whole ‘caste’ thing can and has been abused. Zachariah was a great one for it, Naomi-Mom only when it suited her purpose and other people just because they wanted to make someones life miserable. But then, you did so at your peril because sooner or later those same people would either out rank or frag you. But in the mean time, the mystery of Joan at the Enlisted Club had awakened the criminal justice major that had lay dormant to perk up and pay attention. “But in her statement, did she say why she was there?”

“Said she thought it was just a bar.”

What?! “The clubs have signs in front of em. You’d have to be blind not to have seen it.”

My erstwhile escort shrugged, “that’s what the initial report stated. CID will investigate and make their recommendations.” By this time we’d gotten across the parade field, over a block and to the BOQ. Oh crap, now what?

“Well,” gave a big sincere (hey, I’m a Novac-Crowley remember) smile. “Thank you SO much for the company, but can I take it from here.”

“Nope, think I’ll wait down here in the lobby, just to make sure you get back to Mifflin alright.”

Briefly entertained the idea of ditching him by going out the side door, but have to live with the consequences in a few months. Besides, the major has been a regular old fountain of information and would be a shame to have it dry up now.

Took the elevator up to the fifth floor, then stepped out carefully into the small foyer and automatically looked both ways down the long hallway. The place was deserted this time of day and eerily quiet. Normally, it wouldn’t have bothered me, but with the specter of Joans rape (even with the questions raised) and Ulysses fluttering nervously against my skin, it was starting to freak me out a little. The brisk walk turned into a flat out run to the door as I fumbled for the keys, trying to get the door open. Wrong key, upside down, wrong side up........“think of Jenny”....went in like it had eyes. Stepped inside, slammed the door and locking it tight.

Now looked nervously about the room, pulled the ‘Lovers Kiss’ out of the bottom drawer of the credenza, drew it slowly out of the holster and clicked off the safety. Stole quietly to the bathroom and clicked on the light. Nothing there. Raked back the shower curtain, still no one. Then went back out and went to the closet, pushing the sliding doors this way and that. No one. And now I felt like an idiot. Course there was no one hiding in here, let my imagination, fears and omega neediness get in the way. “Okay Novac,” put the safety back on, stuck it back in the holster and slid ‘The Kiss’ into the accordion file under the lid of the briefcase. Now for the collar.
Was half temped to wear the czars collar back but considering I’m now at the top of Captain Ross’s shit list, snapped off the Chinese collar and put on the plain brass one. There, now that’s more in line with regulations. Picked up the briefcase, squared my shoulders..... “I’m no omega pussy,” announced to the empty room and walked out into the hallway. Will show everyone, even myself, I am no easy target, no pussy and not scared. I ran around El Chorrillo in Panama, the Wurzburg foreigners district and even walked passed the Genesee Gateway apartments in Rochester alone....so this ain’t nothing. So why do I smell like rotten fruit?

Get back downstairs and Major Otis is leaning up against the wall eating a candy bar. “Whew, you smell like a peach orchard after pickings over,” he waved his hand in front of his nose. “Come on, let’s get something in your belly.” We walked back to Mifflin and down to the cafeteria where the special of the day was franks and beans. Which sent me running for the nearest mens room to throw up. (Note to self: Ulysses doesn’t like it.) Luckily didn’t get any on my uniform but got some looks and comments from the other people in the shitter. Mostly just.... “goddamn ‘megas....shouldn’t be in this alphas army. fucken delicate little flowers.” Assbutts. Would like to see them do what I’ve done, all while pregnant I might add.

After throwing up everything, including my socks, staggered out to rinse the taste of Poptart and bile away with hand fulls of water from the sink. Looked at myself in the mirror, a sickly white face with big blue eyes stared back. Oh man, this isn’t good. Pull it together Novac! After a moment, went out to find Major Otis waiting in the hall with some to go boxes. “Here,” he pushed one of the boxes and a bottle of Cheerwine into my hands. “It’s just a few slices of dry toast with a smidgen of butter. It should help settle your stomach and carry ya over till supper.” He also set the briefcase down at my side. “You forgot this in the rush of things.” Then the major winked. “Can’t have anybody finding that blunderbuss you got filed away in there.”

Son of Bitch, he peeked! But took the box, Cheerwine and briefcase, thanked Major Otis for his kind consideration, then went upstairs to sit in the empty classroom to try and eat my lunch. The dry toast did help and the Cheerwine......it just tasted good. All buzzy cherry flavor and it settled Ulysses down so as the little soul wasn’t bouncing off the walls.

Patricia Harras answered the door that afternoon carrying a butcher knife. “Haven’t seen a post this jumpy since we were stationed at Fort Dix back in 1970 when the Weather Underground was suppose to have bombed the joint. Thank the Alpha God, the numbnuts blew themselves up first while trying to make the da...darn thing.” She let me in and found Jeff sitting in on the kitchen floor playing trucks with Patricia’s son. “He’s been a good pup, took his naps, ate like trencherman, pooped like a cow and played with Jimmie here.”

I leaned over and scooped him up. “Twuck,” my little man said happily pointing at the Tonkas scattered under the table.

“Yes it is.” Smiled at Jimmie, “hi there. Thank you for keeping Jeff company.” The pup shyly ducked behind his mom’s broad hips.

“Oh sure, now you clam up,” his mom good naturedly cuffed him on the back the head. “Any other time you talk a mile a minute.”

“By the way,” I slung the diaper bag over my shoulder. “Do you know what time the outpatient services are open over at the Kenner Hospital? I need to get an appointment with the ob-gyn over there.”

Patricia made a bitch face that was worthy of Major...er Lieutenant Colonel Sam. “If you want some advice. Don’t bother to go there. They’re not all that great, slow as death and from what I’ve heard from some of the women who’ve had their pups there.....you don’t wanna know the things they
went through. But if you do go, they’re only open from 08:00 to 16:00 and the waiting room is crowded, disorganized and full of screaming pups and retard...er...retirees. If you can find a pup doctor off post, I’d go to them.”

“Thanks. Looks like Kenner is out of the question, not like I could go anyway, those are the hours for school and I can’t afford to lose any class time.”

That night I pushed the sofa chair in front of the door, put both pistols under the pillow and had Jeff sleep with me. Yeah, I know. Dumb. Especially after everything Major Otis said. But alone, when darkness fell, instinct took over. (Protect, Protect, Protect) No one was going to get in and hurt my pup or me. Not without getting a massive dose of lead poisoning. Didn’t stand for it down at the Holiday Inn and sure as shit will not EVEN entertain the notion here. Curled up around my boy and fell into an uneasy sleep.

The next day Joan was back in class. There were some bruises on her face and she was sporting a split lip. Every woman and omega all crowded around her, giving small gentle touches, soothing scent and sympathetic noises. The alpha and beta guys hung back but in their posture and scent let her know that they would protect and fight for her if the need arise. Everything said: “We the Class of 101-78 are here for you, if you need anything.”

Joan sniffled a bit, leaned into the touches and looked grateful to us. “Thank you and you’re all so kind. Just want forget this ever happened.” My conversation with Major Otis forgotten in the emotion of the moment.

Class was called to order and our tests where handed back. Ewwwwwww, I failed. With a 55. Not good. Was in the upper middle of class standings, well that took a dip to the lower middle. Gotta study or will be repeating OBC or get myself kicked out. Oh crap, then what? The horrible thought of trying to live with John and Mary.......or Dean and Lisa......WILL STUDY HARDER!

The next day, an order went out from the base commander that chain locks and fisheye peep holes were going to be installed on doors in all the BOQ’s, BEQ’s and all family quarters on Fort Lee. Everyone was told to buddy up when walking somewhere, keep track of your fellow solder at the local bars and clubs, and if there is someone at your door who is acting suspicious, call the MP’s.

Felt better when Jeff and I came home that Thursday to find a peep hole and the chain lock installed.

That better feeling was kicked in the ass the next day. On Friday the 28th of September 1978 two insane separate events occurred that seemed to flip everything side ways. Turned on the TV to the early morning news only to hear Pope John Paul was found dead in his bedroom. It had only been 33 days to his papacy and now he was gone. The cardinals had to gather again to battle it out and this time ya lunkheads ….PICK SOMEBODY WHO’S GONNA LAST A WHILE!

Now had the funny feeling there was another shoe that had to drop and it came down with a thud when I walked into the classroom two hours later to find out Joan had been raped again. She’d opened the door, only to have two alphas from a different AIT company, push their way in and take advantage of her.

But this time the reaction of the class was not as sympathetic. More like, ‘is she stupid or something? Why wouldn’t she have been more careful? Especially after what happened the first time?’ Okay, all a little harsh....but...now with chain locks and peep holes in the door, why would she still open the door to strangers? Joan had even been moved to another building so she wouldn’t have to deal with being in the same room where the original assault occurred.
At lunch time, did something I never thought I’d ever do. Went in search of Major Otis. Found him in the ‘bullpen’ (a break room and offices for our instructors) playing penny ante poker with some of the other officers and senior NCO’s. Stood watching until the hand they were playing ended and then asked if I could talk to the Major for a moment. He excused himself from the table, ushered me into his office and closed the door. Then offered me a seat before sitting down behind his desk

“Lt. Novac, to what do I owe this visit?” Otis leaned back in his chair and studied me intently with knowing eyes, “I’ll bet you’re here to get the skinny on Lt Blackburn’s latest ‘rape’.” Had no idea finger quotes could look so sarcastic.

“Yeah, I guess I am Sir.” There was obviously more to this story then he was letting on.

“Tell you what,” he said after a moment. “Meet me for lunch on Monday. I’ll give you the whole she-bang. Excuse the pun.”

“In return for what?” I eyed him suspiciously.

“The pleasure of your company. Lt Novac.” The major said sweetly. “Nothing more.....unless you want something.....more.”

“Just lunch Sir, I am a mated omega after all.”

“That you are, that you are.” He waved a dismissive hand. “But who knows what the future can bring. But in the mean time,” a copy of a medical dictionary was tossed in my lap with a slip of paper sticking up from one the pages. “Give it back when you see me on Monday.” Then the major stood up. “Now beat feet L.T., those bastards are into me for about 5 bucks and I wanna collect before they all disappear back to class with my money.”

Put the book under my arm and walked out into the bull pen. Made a bee line for the mens room where I could get a little privacy to see what was so important that it was marked off for me to find. Wow, guess he figured me from the get go. Drop a few tantalizing clues and here I am, willing to ‘dance with the devil in the pale moon light’. Hey, I like that. Will have to write it down. Found an empty stall, locked the door and sat down on the john. Then flipped open the book to the marked page, where there was an entry underlined in red pencil:

Attention Seeking Disorder : a type of mental disorder that can take the form of loud, dramatic or inappropriate behavior, exhibitionism, sexual provocation or promiscuity. The person will engage in blatant self-destructive acts like substance abuse, placement in dangerous situations or even self-injury.

Uh oh.

The next day, I drove down to the Petersburg Public library on South Sycamore Street to do a little more research. Research I didn’t dare try at the post library. One, because they wouldn’t have the resources a public library would and secondly.....didn’t want to have anyone think that I could be looking up something about myself. Last time I did any little private research like this was on Cole Trenton after my weekend with him.*

Flipping through the card catalog and about a dozen Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, walked through the stacks to pull books and magazines before luging them back to my work station. Jeff played quietly next to my chair with his blocks on a blanket on the floor, while I had medical books and back issues of Psychology Today and Psychological Review strewn about the table. Had always been good at research in high school and college, so it didn’t take long to get back into the groove. And the more I found, the more it didn’t look good.
There were several different types of personality disorders that were covered under the umbrella of ‘Attention Seeking’. Histrionic, Borderline, Dependent… and each fit a part of Joans behavior. The funny thing is, you knew something was wrong with her, but not on a physical or even the intellectual levels mind you. It was in that primitive lizardy part of your brain, the part that kept your ‘uncivilized’ ancestors alive, that was trying to warn you. And since I’d visited that part of me before, yeah…..mine was screaming. Made notes in a steno pad, and when I finished… ripped out the pages, wadded em up and tossed them at the waste basket. Two points! Had spent the last three hours here and all my work was in the trash. Why? Because who would I tell, other than Major Otis?

She was a danger to herself and others. But… it would be death to Joan’s career and did I have the right to do it? Then thought about what my parents (both sets) would do. Basically the same more or less. They would bide their time until the right moment to either destroy the person, push them gently out or……well I’m not gonna hand Joan a pistol and tell her to do the ‘right thing’. Besides, if Major Otis had that part in the medical dictionary underlined, the powers that be already know there’s a problem, what it was and I’m just being allowed to play catch up.

Put the books and magazines away, picked up Jeff and his stuff up off the floor, then went back out to the Bug. “Why do I do this sh……..crap to myself?” Just sat in the car for a bit with him on lap, running my fingers through his dark curly locks.

Jeff cocked his head and blinked those big green eyes. “Papa sad?”

Whoa, where did that come from? “Papa very sad.”

“Kith.” He planted a sloppy kiss on my cheek.

“You are going to make some girl or omega very happy some day,” nuzzled his little freckled nose. “But know, no one is ever going to be good enough for you.”

“Cluny Cage.” The tiny Scottish accent was adorable. No one could make me happier or sadder all at the same time then Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin Winchester.

“Come on, let’s go get some wonton soup and egg rolls at that Chinese joint near post.” It was going on 16:00, so just in time for an early dinner. With my little boy on my lap helping me drive, chugged our way over to the ‘Lucky Plum Dragon Gold Coin…….oh who the hel…..hello central, whatever it’s called. When we got there, were seated in a corner with a high chair and of course Jeff went on charm offensive to all his new minions. I ended up sitting alone as he’d been whisked out to the kitchen to be spoiled by the chef and his zumu. Ended up being charged for a soup, two egg rolls and five shrimp. Which they must have fed Jeff because I didn’t get em. Whatever else that pup ate I have no idea except that his diaper was even more toxic then usual. Couldn’t even leave it in the diaper pail, had to run it downstairs and into the dumpster. Swear to the Alpha God, I even saw flies keel over and die from the fumes.

Sunday, I spent studying. There was no way I was going to have a repeat performance of last Monday. Also, did a ton of laundry, who would’ve thought one little pup could make so many dirty clothes? Ioned my khakis and then hung them up the closet. As it was now October, will be in the Class A uniform or fatigues for the rest of my time here. Pulled out the dun colored long sleeve oxford shirt and tried it on. Okay a little snug, pulled out one I’d bought at the thrift store that was the next size up. Yup, that fit. So touched it up with the iron, then checked out the Class A’s. Found the pants that fit, the coat that didn’t look pinched, okay just need the brass, wings and name tag. There, all pinned on, good to go.
The next morning made sure I got up on time. Shit, showered and shaved, then made eggs and grits for breakfast. Got Jeff and all his stuff ready, diaper bag and briefcase are now at the ready. Snapped on the correct collar, dressed and even though it wasn’t regulation (being inside) put the saucer cap on as it was one less thing to carry. With Jeff and a spit towel over my shoulder, we went downstairs.

Got to Patricia’s a few minutes early instead of being late. Nice to be greeted at the door, without the “subtle threat of a butcher knife. From the way people I passed on the way over, men and women out for their morning jogs alone, it looks like the post had truly calmed down, instead of having that undercurrent of fear and anxiety. The second rape must have gone under the radar, unlike the first, so everything looked pretty much back to normal...whatever that was.

“Yeah,” Patricia poured me a small cup of coffee (knew there was a reason why I liked this woman). “When you’ve lived in the places we have, there’s always a threat of something. You just gotta learn how to handle it.” The lethal pressure of the ‘Lovers Kiss’ nestled at the small of my back, was testament to that.

And speaking of tests and what they meant, this one went a little easier this time. It definitely helped to have studied, the bruises on my butt had faded and stopped being a reminder of that crazy night and the brain wasn’t so hormone soaked that I could give the test my full concentration. The answers flowed out the pen tip onto the pages.

Major Otis was waiting for me out in the hallway after the exam. Not to make it too obvious, he was saying a word here and there to other people in the class. Including a mention to Bear that the post was having a golf tournament tomorrow, might wanna head over to the club house and sign up. “Meet me at my car, when you break for lunch,” he said quietly to me. I’d rather sign up for the golf tourney but that was neither here nor there. Mental note, someday I will buy a set of clubs.

When lunch time came, I walked out to the parking lot, scanning for the big maroon barge of a Chevy something or other (wasn’t really paying attention the first time). Want to get this over and done with so I can satisfy my curiosity and call it quits. Had thought about talking to Libbie or Mary or Tarah, but then they’d wanna know how I came by the information. Granted, I am a good...Ha! I’m a fucking er, freaking great liar, but the info would still be out there and sooner or later someone would accidentally spill it. So it’s mine to keep locked away.

His car was parked in the far corner of the lot in the shadow of a large maple tree. Walked across the macadam (whew, it’s still a bit hot and sticky) and the passengers side door swung open. I got in and slammed the door shut. “Here’s your book back.” Set it on the bench seat between us.

The Major put the car in gear, the air conditioning on a reasonable temperature that cooled the car but not the conversation and asked casually: “Find anything interesting?”

“Yeah, enough to know Joan has a problem, the brass knows about it and wanna it kept on the down low. Because if you didn’t, news of that second ‘rape’ would’ve been all over post, instead of just the class and they’re pretty ticked about it. Which is what you hoped for anyway.”

“You got all that from just that one little entry?” He returned the salute of the MP at the guard shack as we drove out the main gate. “I’m impressed.”

“Don’t be, I’m my mothers son. If I didn’t know where to put my ear to the ground, I wouldn’t be worth being called a Novac.” (Or a Crowley, but let’s not get into that.) Went to the, commissary, barber shop and PX on Saturday morning before going to the library down in Petersburg for the afternoon. If you were gonna hear the gossip on post it’s either at one of those three places.” If Naomi-Mom wanted to learn something, she either send Lucifer to get a hair cut (because alpha
men are worst gossips then a bunch of old beta ladies) or she’d send Anna to the commissary to cruise the produce section to listen to the women talk while they thumped melons or groused about the lack of toilet paper.

“Noticed you had your ears lowered. Jesus, that’s one ugly troopie cut.” Yeah, I know. But my issue of ‘Mega was going to come out soon and with this hair (or lack there of) and the glasses, I stood a better chance of no one recognizing me. Or in this instance, Cal State.

As he drove us to a Sambo’s a few miles up the road in Hopewell, I talked about what I didn’t find and then what I did. Watching Joan that whole week before the second rape, how she was treated like a piece of delicate china, all eyes and attention on her. But then after the first few days, when people had to live their own lives again, the attention tapered off, she looked like one of those stupid looking paintings of the girls and boys with the big sad eyes. Then she started to get clingy and needy and people were gently pushing back. Major Otis pulled the barge into the parking lot, found a spot and turned off the car.

We went in, were seated by the hostess and handed menus. Ulysses was being a good boy, so took a chance and ordered a triple decker BLT. The major went for the roast beef club. The waitress came over poured some water for us, then took the orders and left. “Okay Sir, tit for tat.”

Major Otis smiled wickedly. “Tat. Alright. Most of what you said is correct. The docs believe she proly has a personality disorder. But the fact that she’s high functioning makes doing anything about it difficult. CID called the college she went to and talked with the PMS there. He was more then willing to drop dimes the size of manhole covers once he heard what happened. Apparently this was not Lt Blackburns first time to ‘see the elephant’. She was ‘raped’ once at college and twice at advanced camp. The boy she accused at school almost landed in jail until he was able to prove he’d gone home the week end of the attack and was completely out of the state. Lt Blackburn recanted her story after that. Said it was a dream, or some bullshit like that.”

Oh, this is adding up to a whole lot of deep kimchee. “And down at Bragg?”

“No one was arrested. She said it was too dark to get a good look at her assailants.”

“And and after all that, they let her graduate?!”

“They had no choice. She scored well at advanced camp, kept a 3.0 average at school and there was nothing else anyone could point to in her behavior that would’ve disqualified her. If she was into a a obvious self harm like cutting, drugs or suicide attempts, then no. That would’ve nipped it bud but since she chose sex.....” The Major shrugged and took a sip of water. “There’s plenty of deny-ability and a piece of ass is a piece of ass, even if she’s a two bagger and you gotta toss in Old Glory.

I should’ve be offended on her behalf and a part of me was but the other half was agreeing with him. The waitress came back with our lunches and plunked them on the table. The Major bit into his sandwich and chewed lustily. I nibbled at mine, kind of lost my appetite. “So what’s gonna happen now to Joan and those guys in the stockade?”

He wiped the mayo from his lips. “Nothing.”


Jim Otis had picked up his fork and was carefully picking the carrots out of the little cup of coleslaw that came with the sandwiches. “Did you know,” he said conversationally. “The Womans Army Corp as of this year only exists on paper? Yup it’s true.” What has this got to do with the
price of tea in China? “Next year it won’t exist at all and everyone is considered just army. The ‘just’ Army needs women to succeed as well as any man and they need as many successes as they can get. And what they don’t need is a scandal, if you catch my drift.”

Oh I did for certain and had a bad feeling, “what’s going to happen to those guys, the ones who were suppose to have raped her? They going to be made an example of?”

“No. They’re going to get a general discharge and a one way ticket home.”

“That’s it?”

“Knowing what you do, did you think they deserved more? Say like 25 years in Levenworth, that’s what they would’ve been facing if they didn’t take the deal. And what did you think she deserves?” My mouth worked and brain frantically tried to find a right answer and nothing was right. The brass was ‘protecting’ ......nobody but their own asses. This is worse then what happened to me at Fort Bragg, every thing is only being covered up, swept under the rug and the problem that is Lt Joan Blackburn is kicked down the road to be someone elses problem. Just like what her PMS did, what the people at Fort Bragg did and now what they’re doing here. The reports will be buried, the witnesses transferred to other posts and everything will go back to ‘normal’. These are the days, I really don’t like the army, even if I know that’s how the game is played.

Now I’m really not hungry either.

Apparently this didn’t bother Jim Otis in the least, he ate his sandwich and then (ya’ll gonna stare at it or eat it?) finished off mine. “Waste not, want not.”

“So that’s all she wrote,” I said after we walked out to the parking lot. “It’s been hushed up, nobody is gonna talk.” I sure as hell wasn’t. Even John, Dad or Naomi-Mom couldn’t get my ass out of that crack if I tried to say anything. “Nice story with the strings all tied up.”

“Yup, pretty much,” Major Otis agreed. “Speaking of nice stories.....wanna hear the one about a captain who was caught doing it in a dumpster with his commanders mate?”

Know I shouldn’t, but what the hell. Need a good laugh. So not to be out done, I told him about how Jeff learned to say ‘Irv’. Why yes, yes I am a rat bastard. Then pulled out my wallet and showed him pictures of my little guy. Needless to say, the good man couldn’t get me out of the car fast enough.

Well, that’s that. Went back to class and walked in to find Sargeant Harras holding mail call. There were four letters and a manilla envelope waiting for me. Let’s see.....there was one from Dean, another from Ben, a credit card bill from JC Pennys. Charged a highchair.....Hey, the thrift shop and PX didn’t have anything I liked and Pennys did. Next was.....Wright Publishing. Turned and slowly walked towards my desk to open the envelope. Didn’t need anyone to see....the check for $4000.00. Oh, crap. It’s happening.

It wasn’t until much later, after class ended, after I collected Jeff, got him back to the room and fed. Lay him down to sleep, shut off the lights, save one and then turned my attention to the manilla envelope sitting innocently on the credenza. Can’t ignore it any longer, flicked out the mating knife and slit the envelope open. Took a deep breath and pulled out the magazine. And there I was on the cover, just like the famed picture that’s hidden down in Dad and Mummy-ships cellar. Big blue eyes, face framed in that fur hat, full pink lips that were open to take in a breath or some alphas ‘peerless part’. It was frightening, mortifying and......and......damn if I’m not a stone fox!
Chapter End Notes

Had thought about how to write this chapter for almost an entire year now. Considering it was based on true events, wanted to give it the best I could possibly do. It’s been 40 years and I still don’t know what to really think about it. The woman the story was based on was not a really bad person, just one with mental issues no one was willing or possibly knew how to face at the time. Her ‘Waterloo’ came when she was stationed in Korea and accused the wrong person of sexually assaulting her. The Army finally had to act and she was given a medical discharge.

42: of course we all know is the ultimate answer to life, the universe and everything. Douglas Adams, you magnificent bastard.

Willy Brandt: chancellor of West Germany from 1969 to 1974. He was a Nobel Prize winner, outspoken defender of the United States at a time when it was very unpopular but had to step down when it was discovered a top aide in his administration was an East German spy.

AIT: Advanced Individual Training. The next phase of training for enlisted personnel after Basic Training.

The actor Karl Malden did a series of advertisements for American Express Travelers checks back in the 1970’s. The catch phrase was: ‘don’t leave home without it.’

Pfennig: a German coin that was worth 1/100th of a Mark. Of course pre-Euro.

Paper nickles: Military payment certificates, or MPC, was a form of currency used to pay U.S. military personnel in certain foreign countries.....from 1946 until 1973. To reduce profiteering from currency arbitrage, the U.S. military devised the MPC program. MPCs were paper money denominated in amounts of 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents, 1 dollar, 5 dollars, 10 dollars, and starting in 1968 20 dollars. Unlike US currency, these certificates were issued under the authority of the Department of War (later Department of Defense) rather than the Department of the Treasury. -From Wikipedia

*Cole Trenton, publisher of Mega Magazine, see Cadet Novac, Chapter 64: After Midnight, Everything is Peaches and Cream.

Readers Guide to Periodical Literature: before there was the internet to look up anything, there was the Readers Guide. It was a compilation series of books, that came out once a year, with once a month updates that allowed you to find subject in any magazine. First published in 1901 it was and still is a staple in most libraries.

Zumu: grandmother in Mandarin Chinese

Major Otis is based on a real person. He did indeed take me to lunch and made passes during which I countered with stories of my fiance. Needless to say, he got the hint and moved on. To another one of my classmates.

Sambo’s: I kid you not, was a nationwide resterant chain in existence from the 1950’s to the 80’s. There is actually one left in Santa Barbara, California.
Welcome back and thank you again for tagging along on this trip through the late 1970's.

Was bent over the light table, eye pressed to a magnifying lens reviewing the rushes of the girl who was going to be ‘Pinkie of the Month’ for the January issue. Damn she’s got a set of knockers that should be on Castle Fronkensteen. Frau Blücher! Wheeeeeee! Sorry, couldn’t help myself. Had her posing in skates down on the ice at the Nassau Coliseum (got a buddy who runs the Zamboni out there, so it was a cinch to get in) doing some interesting things with a hockey stick.

Had the hifi cranking Sinatra in the back ground, so at first I didn’t hear the voices coming from out in the front office until they really got loud. That’s when Terry my ex-mate number 1, chief accounting officer (fancy word for book keeper and general penny pinching pain in the ass) came into my office the way she usually did. Without knocking, flinging the door open so that it bounced off the back wall (making the dents in the plaster made even larger) and yelling at the top of her lungs. Which were considerable. Her lungs, I mean. Or the tits in front to those lungs.

“COLE SYLVESTER TRENTON!” Oops, I’m in trouble now. The middle name came out, (always hated that name) but then again, when it comes to Terry Trenton, I’m always in the dog house. Automatically moved the blue and white Anthora paper coffee cup to the junk stand next to the light table. Having had too many negatives ruined in puddles of coffee, Coke or beer, burned by cigarettes and paved in mayo from her dramatics, I knew it was imperative to move anything liquid, flammable or hoagie related from the equation immediately.

For an omega in her mid 40’s, Terry Madeline (a Polish last name I could never pronounce) Trenton, wasn’t still half bad looking. Granted she’s gained a few pounds after having our son, there’s a line or two on her face and her hair’s done up like ‘Little Orphan Annie’ these days....but there are times I’d still lean her over the desk for a quick knot.....if I was sure she wouldn’t rip my dick off first.

A bill of lading with a very astonishingly large figure suddenly appeared in the lens instead of a naked slick in hockey skates.

“Hello Terry.” I said in a tone of voice that meant everything BUT ‘hello’. Not bothering to look up, took a finger to move the bill out of the way. “Scream then scram. I’m working. These jugs ain’t gonna pick themselves ya know.”

“You ordered a print run of a million copies?! ARE YOU FUCK’EN NUTS?! Do you know what
you’ve done?” She reached over and swept the negatives off the table, (yup, see, knew it. Am I good or am I good?) sending them flying all over the room. “You’ve bankrupted us! We don’t have enough in the bank to buy a burger at Wetson’s…..”

“They don’t exist any more,” I said absently, leaning over to pick up the negatives off the floor.

“And neither will we, if there isn’t some goddamn miracle where the angels come floating down on some pearly ass cloud right now!” She was pacing to and fro right through the middle of a weeks work. “We’re late on the Con Ed bill, the phone bill and how’re we gonna make payroll this week?!” The phone suddenly shrilled on my desk, interrupted the rant (thank you Big Alpha Daddy in the Sky) and she automatically picked it up, snapping into a whole new personality, that I always thought of as ‘Phone Terry’. That slick had more sides then Sybil. “Wright Publishing, home to Mega Magazine, finest in adult alpha male entertainment. You’ve reached the office of Cole Trenton, I’m Terry Trenton, CAO, how may I assist you?”

Watched as her eyebrows crept up her forehead. “Yes, really? You want 50,000 more? Well I don’t know…….the certified check is being sent over by bicycle courier as we speak? For how much?” Terry grabbed a piece of foolscap then rooted for a pencil and scribbled down the information in that awful handwriting of hers. She said a few more things, uh hu’ed a few more times before saying goodbye.

“Call from the ‘Pearly Ass Cloud Company?’ I asked sweetly. “The angels are personally delivering a miracle?” Had hoped for this to happen. Even stopped by Old Saint Pat’s on my way to work this morning…….”please big Alpha Daddy in the sky, I know you haven’t heard from me lately, except during sex….but ya gotta help me out here….please.” Even dropped a couple of bucks in the poor box to seal the deal and promised Father John I’d come back for confession, when both of us had a free afternoon….or two (Hey, it’d been a few years….decades since my last confession).

Any who, back to our regularly scheduled miracle….Terry was still gawking at the note when her legs gave out and she plunked to the floor on her well padded ass in the middle of the negatives. What can I say, that slick may have a set of hips just like two battleships, cuss like a bosons mate, have a temper like a stepped on snake but when she gets all quiet and submissive…..she could still ring my chimes.

“That was the distributor,” she sat there dazed and amazed. “The first printing sold out. They want another run of 50,000.”

“Only 50 thousand?” I took the paper from her hand…..HOLY SHIT! THAT’S A CHUNK A CHANGE! “We could easily do another million with this.”

“Nope,” Terry shook head, her curly hennaed ‘fro bounced. “And this is actually a great idea. The distributor thinks it’s better to create a ‘shortage’,” her fingers making air quotes. “Make people scramble to get the ’special’ (if you can believe this one) ’collectible’ edition, charge a buck fifty more and this will make people go nuts to buy a shit load of em! All we gotta do is create a new cover, put in a new page and we’ll make a mint!”

“Huh.” I’ll be damned if that isn’t a good idea. And this is why Terry is still with the company even though we divorced years ago. She was the first ‘Pinkie of the Month’, when I started the magazine and bought her contract from her drunk old daddy for a hundred bucks and a bottle of Thunderbird. Best money I ever spent. Found out there was a brain behind that pretty face pretty quick and had to step lively ever since. Took me to the goddamn cleaners for the divorce, but it was worth it to get her un-assed as my mate but she turned around and bought half the magazine and installed herself as chief pain in the ass...er....accounting officer. And we’ve turned a pretty good profit ever since. But this... this is ass kicking brilliant!
“We can also print posters.” She slowly got to her feet. “Marketed right, we can make this as big as Farrah Fawcett, Linda Carter or Adrienne Barbeau!”

Hadn’t thought of that either. Wow. Now I had to sit down.

“Need to use one of those early black and white photos that college puke....what’s his name.....ah, who cares.....took for the new cover.” Terry snagged a Newport from the pack off the junk table, lit the tip with a kitchen match and started puffing away like Old Engine Number 9 headed down the Chicago line. “Black and white makes everything look artsy fartsy and wicked cool as shit.” The bill of lading was now forgotten, stuffed in the blue and white coffee cup taking a bath in the cold dregs of a light and sweet from the Greek hole in the wall joint a few blocks over.

Terry is now back on the phone, cigarette between her lips, barking at Joey down in archives deep in the basement to bring up the entire Cal State file this second or she’d rip off his goddamn leg and beat him to death with it. Damn if this whole scene doesn’t make me harder then Chinese Algebra.

Quarters 2
Chievres Air Base
Chievres, Belgium
October 20th 1978
Friday 16:30

I was laying back on the couch enjoying a cocktail or two, listening to AFN on the radio. It’s the ‘Rat Pack Hour’.....Frank, Dean, Sammy and the rest of the boys crooning, swinging and swaying: ‘Set em up Joe, I’ve got a little story....’. Next hour and the rest of the evening till sign off would be that rock an roll crap. Jesus Christ, music has gone to the fuck’en dogs. Had decided to skip out of work a little early as the boss had been out of town for most of this week and next. He’d gone back to CONUS for meetings with the Joint Chiefs regarding current NATO operations. He’s also meeting with some egg head named Caspar Weinberger, course that little get together is all on the QT.

Mary is in the kitchen getting dinner put together. Thee fish monger in town had eel that was fresh out of the river this morning, so she picked some up to go with the green herb sauce that is favored in this neck of the woods. Some good dark bread, beer from the local monastery and that is some mighty fine eat’en right there.

Course, that’s when the phone in my office rings. Oh shit, what’s the problem now? Haul my ass off the couch and walk over to parlor just off the living room that serves as my home office. Sigh, straighten my shoulders and then pick up the phone. “General Winchester here.” The ‘this better be up there with the second fucking coming’ is implied of course.

“Sargent Williams here at the main gate. Sorry to bother you sir, but there is a Warrant Officer Dean Winchester here that claims to be your son. And he’d like to see you.”

Huh, wonder what he wants. “How did he get here?”

“He drove.”

“Describe the car.” Sargeant Williams described the Impala right down to the little plastic army man in the ash tray. “Let him through and give the directions to the house.” Then hung up. Left the office and went to the kitchen, “toss in a little more eel and set one more plate Darl’in. Dean will
be joining us for dinner.”

“Are Lisa and the pups with him?” Sighed as I watched her rip the skin and head off that last eel I’d planned on frying up and having for a snack later on.

“Apparently not, it’s just him visiting.” Wonder what’s on his mind to have driven up from K-Town by himself?

The familiar roar of that big engine and the crunching sound of gravel under tires could be heard coming from outside. Could hear the car door open and then slam shut. Strolled over to the back door, and in...three, two, one.....Dean must be bruising his knuckles on that thick solid oak. Opened it to find my oldest son framed in the door way, one hand clenched and the other clutching a rolled up magazine. “SON OF A BITCH! HOW COULD YOU LET HIM DO IT??”

Ohhhhhhh-kaaaayyy. Not the greeting I was expecting. “And hello to you too. Let who do what? And don’t cuss in front of your mother.”

“Cas!” Dean slapped the magazine into my chest and then apologetically head bobbed at Mary. “Sorry Mom.” Then turned back on me. “Why did you let him do it?”

“Again, do what?” Looked down at the rag he’d shoved at me, ah.....Mega Magazine. Then the dime fell....Mega Magazine. “Oh, that.” Damn. Had been so busy had forgotten about this.

Mary looked over my shoulder as a I leafed through the magazine. “Have to admit,” she said in a nasty nice voice turning back to pick up a butcher knife and start hacking that poor little innocent eel into chutney. “He is photogenic.”

Dean was looking at me sourly. “Yeah, ‘oh that. If he were my mate, this never would’ve happened.”

A few unkind thoughts came to mind, but decided for the sake of family harmony to keep a civil tongue. For now. “Oh really? And how pray tell would you have kept him from posing?......Ooooo, Pinkie of the Month,” held up the rag to let the centerfold fall open. “Hot diggity damn!” Party at the ‘Brownstone’! Or maybe not, but it was nice idea for the moment.

“Do you have any idea how much trouble he’s going to be in?” Dean was pacing to and fro, “you remember those beta sailors who posed in Playboy? The Navy kicked those girls out of the service.”

Flipped through the pages, “knowing him...now there’s a nice shot.....I predict no problems.” Mmmmm, my little hard ass in ribbons and lace knows how to strut his stuff. “The brass has to catch him first. Everyone knows ‘Cal State’, nobody knows Castiel Novac.”

“But someone back at RIT will talk.”

I smiled and walked over to the pot bubbling on the stove, taking in the aroma of that delightful mixture of herbs, white wine and eel. “Maybe, but who’d believe a bunch of college kids?” I spooned up some broth for a taste....oh that’s good. “Besides, from what I hear, Naomi visited Major Bartholomew, the professor of Military Science.....” I left the sentence hanging in air. Dean blanched, knowing what Naomi could do from personal experience. Would’ve loved to have taken her on, just once, just to say I did. Talk about a ‘clash of the titans’.

After a moment, Dean went back to fuming, “I’ve half a mind to catch a hop out of the Azores to Dover and go talk some sense into him.....” course I had a few choice words for that idea and about
that time the kitchen phone rang. Mary turned down the flame under the stock pot and went to answer. “Winchester residence, Mary Winchester here. Oh hello Lisa.” At the mention of her name we both stopped in mid-sentence. “Yes, he’s here.” She held out the phone to Dean. “It’s for you, she sez it’s important.”

My oldest took the phone, “is everything okay? Nothing wrong with you or the pups? Oh, thank the Alpha God. Call Mick Davies ASAP? Did he say which office? Manchester. Right. Thanks Babe....will see you in a couple of days. Ich liebe dich.” He hung up the phone and then turned to me, “Dad, do you have a secure phone?”

Argument momentarily forgotten, the two of us go to my office. I pick up the phone and call the operator. “General Winchester here, secure line please.” Dean wrote the number down on a scrap of paper from his pocket, handed it to me, which I read off to the operator. Gave it back to him, to which he took out a battered old Zippo and after a few tries got it to light. Then burned that little slip of paper in the ashtray on my desk. Interesting. Waited as the connection was made and then “Agent Davies here.” Handed the phone over to Dean and walked out of the office, closing the door behind me.

Agent Davies? Who the fuck is he and what has my boy got himself into?

“Did he tell you anything?” Mary was setting three bowls on the table as I walked in the kitchen.

I shook my head in the negative. “Not yet, hopefully Dean will let us in on a little bit of it when he comes back out.” Pushed the porcelain stopper out of the bottle of beer that Mary had brought out from the pantry and poured some into glasses. It was a rich brown with a frothy head that you could almost chew. A liquid bread, made for the grace of the Alpha God, “better days.” I said touching her glass.

A few minutes later Dean came in looking anxious, “I can’t stay. Have to get over the channel to London ASAP.”

Checked my watch, “you missed the last day ferry out of Brussels and even if you tore ass, you’d miss the one out of Calais too.” Went to the office phone and called the base commander to see if there was anything flying out tonight to the UK. Nope, all missions were to the Azores or Greece. Damn. But...... “We can get you on the Night Ferry from Central Station, that doesn’t leave until 21:00, but it will have you in London about 09:00 AM the next morning. Call your Agent Davies back and let him know.” Then took the bit between my teeth, “then come back, put something in your gut and if you can.....tell us what is going on?”

Dean disappeared back into my office to make the call. He wasn’t gone very long, but when he did return, there was a look of decision on his face. My son ran a hand through his brush cut and then took command. “What I’m gonna tell you can go no further then this room. A few months ago Sammy and me went TDY to Interpol.................”

Staff Quarters
Reynolds Residence
British Embassy
Washington DC, USA
October 24th 1978
Tuesday 11:56 AM
Had spent a rather tiresome morning with the transportation coordinator to arrange the pack up for our move to Germany next month. There were forms to be filled out, weight to be calculated and hopefully no fumble fingered oafs contracted to pack my good china. Considering I’m on my 5th set, the others being lost to poor packing, a sand storm in Aden, rioters in Cyprus and my favorite set (sigh) is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean. Damn tsunamai.

Then there is the whole mishugina of passports, visas, mating papers/contracts (the Germans are sticklers on that) and Byrons birth certificate (the Americans are a bit sticky on that). Have to have all the correct seals and signatures or can’t get the little nipper out of country. Had also filled out the registration forms and paid the 20£ fee (it’s an outrage I tell you! An outrage! Just another government filthy lucre dodge!) to ensure Bryon is considered a British citizen. Ridiculous, considering Lewiston and I are subjects of the Crown, there should be no question as to our pup being also.

I came into the kitchen and set the kettle on the stove to boil. Need a good cup of tea and a biscuit or two...no. Just the tea, still trying to get my figure back....though Lewiston seems not to mind my belly and bum being a little fuller. And Mr Crowley has been EVER so much more forth coming with information when we play ‘the Great Game’......maybe just one biscuit. Yo ho ho for an Oreo!

Ah the treasure and trophies set at my hand and feet, the reward for hard work and sacrifice over the years. Will miss my time here in the States, (Americans are such tall poppies) and did get so much accomplished in just two years. Who would have thought dear little me would find ‘Anastasia’ (and not the dreary old cat lady Anna Anderson) or have all the lovely secrets held on the ‘right hand of God’ just handed to me. (I made a witty one!) The Ministry was quite pleased and promised me within two years Lewiston would see the ‘queens crown’ upon his shoulders. As I set out the mug and tea ball, the kettle started to whistle, announcing the water is hot and ready.

My other treasures, my family. I have a mate who adores me....who has turned a blind eye all these years to the fact of what I am. Lewiston isn’t stupid and no doubt figured out years ago it was easier to pretend his mate is a sweet little omega, who cares nothing for the business outside her own home. Rather then come to grips with knowing he is bedding down every night next to an intelligence officer who in some corners of this old world, could be unceremoniously put up against a wall and shot if discovered.

Eric, my dearest first born. How I do miss him. Have not received a letter from him lately, but he must be studying hard at uni. Will have to ask Father to pop in on him when next we speak. Erica is a bit alpha boy mad at this point (the quote ‘get thee to a nunnery’ has come to mind lately) but she’s doing well in school and has made mention she wants to be a doctor. Specializing in pup medicine. She is so good with them. The chancellor at Kings College is an old school chum of Fathers, maybe a word in his ear.

My not so little man any more Jesse. Having a First has been all for the best with him. He is leader in his classes and out on football field (our football, not that silly American muck). Can see him very easily following his fathers footsteps into the Army. Oh BAOR, the pup I never saw coming, who made me a very happy late mum. Byron, my Little Sir Winnie. He has hair now and is chattering a like a monkey.

And now a bond pup, treasure upon treasure, luck upon luck. Poured the steaming water into the mug and dunked in the tea ball. Watched the water darken and the good aroma of Yorkshire Gold come wafting up.

Had already received a letter from the commanders mate welcoming us, ‘so glad you’ll be joining our First Corp, Bieldfeld family’, hope to meet you soonest and all that lovely rot. Things I’ve
written myself in years past. But right now, just want to take my tea and biscuit, go upstairs to bed and ‘read’ this months Mega Magazine. Picked up the last copy on the rack at the 7-Eleven convince shop on my way back from the market yesterday. It’s under my pillow currently. Even Lewiston hasn’t see it yet. No, I did a brief recce first, oh my....he does take a good shot. Wanted time alone with my charge to ‘read the articles’ as the American would say.

As I was about to leave to go upstairs, there was a gentle tap at the kitchen door. It opened and there was Lewistone, Father and some strange alpha who had copper written all over him. What is Father doing here? He hates to travel, even a trip on the ferry to the continent is a bother to him. He hasn’t been here in the states since Sir Winston was encamped at the White House having cocktails with the Roosevelts. “Why Father, what a lovely surprise,” looked over his shoulder to the man behind him. “And this is....?”

“Hello, my girl.” He leaned over and kissed my cheek. “This is my associate, Mick Davies.” I held my hand so he could either shake or....brought his lips quickly to my finger pads. At least this Davies chap has some manners.

Must be the good hostess, “tea or (glanced at the clock over the sink, just a bit after 12) something stronger?”

Father had this look of betwixt and between that always told that he was either in trouble with mum or there was bad news and he was about to take the bit between his teeth.“Something strong, I think.” He reached over and caught my hand. “Please sit down a moment darling, we need to talk.”

Looked over at Lewiston, he was pale but holding himself together as only a military man could before flying to pieces. Like John was at news of the Mal’s death, oh dear Alpha God! “Father, what is it? Has there been an accident? Is it Mother?” Mum had been taking a few too many chances of late, she’d gone back to Vienna and after a few incidents where the only thing that saved her was diplomatic immunity and an AK-47 she picked up after slitting the throat of its former owner.

“No Jenny darling, it’s not mum.” (Oh thank the Alpha God!) He took a deep breath. “It’s Eric.”

The world suddenly slowed to an agonizing crawl, as Lewiston knelt down, took me in his arms and started to weep. Now a great dark hole opened up and I tottered on its edge. No, not my little boy. Not my first born. Not the sweet child I nursed back from the clutches of the grave.......knew what Father was going to say but to hear it aloud....Oh dear Alpha God, please don’t let it be so! “Is he......?”

He nodded, “I’m so sorry.”

The roaring in my ears was deafening, could barely hear my own voice ask ‘how?!’

Was catching only a few words here and there as the darkness closed in......left uni.....drugs......Lucifer Novac.

Class Room #5
Bldg 1002
204 1st Cavalry Regiment Road
Fort Knox, Kentucky
25 October 1978
Tuesday 12:01
Why is it that every time we have to be in a class room, I’m ready to fall asleep? Out on the range, washing down the tanks, cruising up and down Misery Hill, I am awake and ready for action. But put me behind a desk in a class.......ready to catch flies. Merde! Our time here is almost done, in another month will be off to Germany and the 11th ACR in Fulda. Both Rich Kent and I both been assigned there as platoon leaders in different tank companies, but will be nice to have familiar face.

Though considering the number of Citadel graduates in armor, could prolly man the whole of the ACR no problem. Roll right through the Fulda Gap, kick some East German ass and be back in time for Happy Hour, gumbo ya ya, we could. As we broke for lunch, the admin sergeant came in with the mail, two letters from Andrea, one from my Little Dove and the Newsweek magazine. Huh, John Belushi is on the cover. That Animal House movie was a regular ole gut buster it was. Thought I was gonna laugh myself to death.

Cas and I have been writing, we’re just friends now. Oh I’m a fearful liar, but would rather have him in my life then out. Like an itch you know you shouldn’t scratch, but do anyway. Had talked to Daddy Ashton about it when he came out to visit last month. He makes a point to reconnect with many of the Citadel graduates, to see how they’re faring away from the confines of our ’little patch of heaven. Most do well, a few go down in the flames of ego, not being able to deal with being a little fish in a big pond. And then there is Elliot Rogers. Daddy even went to see him.

“Top of his class in pharmacy school, misses Chickie something fierce but never seen Elliot so content. Makes a mean chow chow too.” Daddy and I gone to the officers club for dinner, wanted to give back some of what he did for me. He’d had lunch with the other fellas that afternoon but wanted time alone this evening to talk to me. “Hear you’re doing well,” he said conversationally, scanning the menu. “Your instructors seem to like what they see.”

“I try to give it a good whack,” Rich and I were listed in the top three of the class, some ‘Hudson High’ boy was at the tippy top....ring knocken son of a bitch.

“Hear anything from Cas?” The waiter came and Ashton ordered the sirloin steak medium rare, baked potato and green beans. Along with another shot of Mr Jack Daniels please. “In his last letter, he did say you two were corresponding again.”

“Yeah,” I said carefully. “We are. Nothing that would get any apple carts upset. Just a hello, how’s class, how his pup’s doing, the funny things people say in class.” I picked the sirloin (just knock the ‘moo’ out of it) potatoes mashed and stewed tomatoes. And another shot of Mr Jim Beam s’il vous plaît.

“You know he’s pregnant again?”

“He did mention something about that.” Getting knocked up just before jump school. Oh Mon Deux, the things my Little Dove gets himself into. Unconsciously touched the holy metal about my neck, have worn it ever since it arrived in July. Daddy causally mentioned that he would be passing by Fort Lee in another few weeks to visit the Citadel graduates there. “Just tell him, hi and that, well....just say hi for me.”

“Alright,” looked like Daddy was gonna say more, but our steaks arrived and we tucked into em while they were hot. After wards, we were a little drunk......okay....alot a drunk, and whatever was gonna get said was kinda forgot.

But now, a month later, it was still Cas’s letter I read first afore Andreas. ‘Dear Benny, wanted to give you a heads up and please don’t be upset with me.’ Oh, this is never a good way to start a
letter. “Last year, I had a visit from Cole Trenton, editor of ‘Mega Magazine. To secure the financial future for my pup, I agreed to pose for Mega.....’ OH SHIT! LITTLE DOVE WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

About that moment, heard one of the other fellas, give a big ole wolf whistle, “goddamn, he’s built like a brick shit house without a brick outta place!” Looked over and saw that there fella from Ark-La-Texas (Shreveport for you that know no better) was hold’en up this months Mega with the center fold in full view. It’s my Little Dove. Course the other fellas were looking and making comments: “Man look at all those diamonds in the ‘M’, Cole Trenton nailed that slick like a two by four! Damn, I bet he’s a total nympho knot slut! Look at milk coming out of those titties! Look at the dime around his belly, bet he’s into that kinky voodoo shit!”

At that moment, all I could see was red and wanted to sink my teeth into their throats, rip them out and taste their blood. Before I could go all Drac-u-shit on em, could feel a hand on my collar and Rich Kents voice in my ear. “Outside, now!” Pulled back a fist to let him have it, when someone grabbed my wrist, “listen to Lt Kent,” oh crap it’s the class adviser Captain Jones! They hustled me out the door, down the stairs until we were outside leaning up against the tank in the front yard.

“You wanna explain what happened back there?”

Captain Fred Jones was a transplanted cannon cocker, who wore the red ascot of field artillery like a flag afore a bull. Right now he’s being a bigger boy scout dick wad then usual. “Do I wanna? Not really Sir.” Nobody’s business save mine.

“Benny,” Rich said quietly. “Tell him. You were gonna literally kill those guys up there. Your career is on the line here.”

Andrea, everything I worked for, fought for, struggled to be. Merde, he’s right. “That...person...in the magazine. Mega. I know him. He’s dear to me.”

“They conjugated verbs,” Rich said helpfully.

The Captain sighed and scrubbed his face with his hand. “Lt Lafitte. You have my sympathies, my respect, along with more then a pinch of envy. It must be difficult to see someone you care for in such a position. But conversely, you are no longer in a position to act upon your instincts to protect this person. He made a decision to pose and will have to live with the consequences. In the mean time, you’ll have to decide if this is going to effect your future performance. I suspect you’re going to be seeing a lot of your friends picture in the coming months. So better that you harden yourself now rather then be surprised later when you don’t have anyone around who will stop you from acting on your impulses.”

He’s right. Can’t have this ruin everything I worked for or hurt Andrea with my foolishness. Forgive me Castiel. Je ne peux pus t’aimer. Took a deep breath, slipped the holy medal off my neck “here, hope it brings you more luck then me” and dropped it into Rich’s out stretched hand. Then squared my shoulders, hardened my heart and walked back to the classroom.

Whitman Residence
117 Milrace Drive
East Rochester, New York
25 October 1978
Tuesday 07:00 PM

Traffic was worse then usual today, don’t know why. Maybe everyone just decided to go out and
be crazy before the snow flies in another month. Had stayed late to help plan the weekend exercises at Menden Ponds coming up this weekend, as I’m battalion executive officer. Had held the position for a few months when I was a freshman, then lost it as a sophomore and now as junior, got it back. Major Bartholomew decided to start training for Advanced camp early, so we’d stand a better chance of putting one of our own on the podium next year. Better performances at camp meant more recognition for the program (and the PMS), which meant more money for the program. So yeah, the Major’s pushing it hard.

And both Sharon and I are pushing ourselves hard too academically too. Gotta keep my grades up for my scholarship and she’s burning the midnight oil to get that chance for a slot in law school. She’s hot to trot to be accepted in Columbia or Syracuse but would take the Albany School of Law in a pinch. “We will make this work” became our mantra. Though lately, have added.....’even if it kills us’. Have been so busy and pulled every which way, haven’t have sex in weeks. Sex, what a concept.

Pulled into the driveway and shut off the car. ‘The Beast’, as it was lovingly known, was a 69 Pontiac Safari station wagon, that seemed to fit half the cadet battalion in. Which is prolly how I ended up as XO. The thing was a gift from Sharons Mom and Dad. (EVERYTHING seems to be a gift from those two.) Know I shouldn’t complain, but....but...they’re Sharon’s parents and they worry about her and......BUT SHE’S MY MATE DAMN IT! I CAN PROVIDE FOR HER! I suppose this is where I beat my chest and give a Tarzan yell. Me Bry-Ann you Sharon. Damn alpha hormones.

Collected up my books and files from the seat next to me, left the keys in the ignition so I knew where they were and walked into the house. Whoa, what is going on here?! Could smell agitated omega all over the place! “Sharon, honey?” I called out. “Is everything okay?” Though was half afraid of the answer I’d get.

She came storming out of the kitchen looking like she could chew nails and spit out thumb tacks. “Bry-Ann Whitman! (No middle name, so I’m not in that much trouble) What have you got to say about this?!” The love of my life slapped a magazine into my chest. “How could he do this!”

“Who do what?” I asked stupidly. “Baby, I just spent a full day in class, two hours in a planning session and the last hour in traffic. You really want me to think?” Fumbled a moment and then looked at the cover. Mega. The November issue is already owww.... (I still have my subscription....Hey, Sharon gets ‘The Knot’, so we’re even.) “Oooooooh my Alpha God! That’s Castiel Novac on the cover! A part of me was appalled, the other half......well hello there Sapphire. “Nice picture.” Shit! Did I say that out loud?

“Is that all you have to say?!” Sharon was really getting into it. Chest heaving, eyes bright and shining with that self righteousness that bugs the crap out of me most days but right now is turning me on. She snatched the magazine back and opened it to the centerfold. “Will you look at this! This magazine sets the cause of omega equality back years!”

Was now only listening with half an ear. The picture was magnificent. Taken on a beach, with the gray water and sky as a back drop. The photographer had caught him just as a gust of wind had taken the coat he was wearing and flared it up making it look wings. Cas looked like an angel. A very sexy angel. Full bellied and ripe. A drop of milk making that one nipple glisten. An appreciative growl slipped out from between my lips unbidden.

“What was that?!” Sharon was now beyond pissed. “How could you think this was anything but a pure example of alpha chauvinistic....” The problem with omegas is, they are at their sexiest when angry. That smell, her natural aroma of chocolate with the salty tang of an ocean breeze, mixed
with those eyes, her tone and.....

Suddenly just picked her up, slung her over my shoulder kicking and hollering that I’m an idiot, she was NOT in the mood and how could I act like some Neanderthal alpha who.....took her to the bedroom, tossed MY mate on the bed and before she could complain more then usual....tossed up her skirt and tore down those panties and went pearl diving. Yeah Baby, who’s your alpha now?

It was a little while later when we were passing a cigarette back and forth in that lovely fucked out after glow of REALLY good sex (like hell...IT WAS GREAT sex!)...Sharon finally found her voice.....one that wasn't cursing and screaming ‘knot me harder! goddamn it harder!’...she said and I quote: “that was prolly the most alpha swinish chauvinistic ......THING....you have ever done since I’ve known you!” Then she smirked......“Do it again!”

Our friends should show up in nudie rags more often.

Tech Unit
Rochester Police Department
Exchange Street
Rochester, New York
25 October 1978 07:09 PM

The Tech Unit was dark except for the small pool of light that came from the lamp on my desk. A mess of reports and finger print cards were scattered across the top, all in need of finishing or filing. In the midst of it was the November issue of Mega and my heart. ‘How do you mend a broken heart, how do you keep the rain from falling down?’ Damn BeeGees. Now I never wanted to hear them, or that song ever again.

“Tim, what are you still doing here?” The overhead lights suddenly came on and for a moment was blinded, (‘yes I was blinded by the light, revived up like a douche another runner in the night.’ Why would you rev up a douche?) to whom intruded on my misery. When I could finally see clearly now (why is my life turning into ‘Name that Tune’?!) Sargent Colt was standing in the doorway. Oh crud, casually pushed a report over the magazine, “just stayed to finish up a few things. Should be done in an hour or two, no problems.” Forced my lips to a smile.

Colt strolled over and gently pushed the report aside. “Yeah, I was a little surprised too.”

“But why?” The question came out with a little bit more heart break then I wanted. “Why would he do it?”

“There’s lots of reasons people do what they do. Money, fame, ego......though I thinking money was prolly his reason.” Colt picked up the magazine and let the center fold fall open. “Last thing I suspect Cas wanted was to have people know he was ‘Cal State’. Especially now, that he’s in the army.”

“You know the guys will blab, especially Reggie.”

Sam Colt’s smile was small, tight and brutal, “not if he knows what’s good for him.”

Uh oh. I know that look. Saw it a few times when he and Sargeant Warren would get together and talk about the ‘old times’ when they drove paddy wagon together. I’d just finished reading the ‘New Centurions’ but the stuff those two did for real made anything Joseph Wambaugh wrote
seem tame in comparison. Cas looked really....nice....on the cover shot. “I really liked him.”

Sam reached over and patted my shoulder. “I know you did. I liked him too. But he’s gone and we’re still here. There’s work to do, but not tonight. Come on, buy you a drink over at Eddies Chop house.” Was going to say no, but....on the other hand, what else did I have to do tonight? Closed the magazine and shut it in the desk drawer, then cleaned up the desk top. Turned off the lamp, then grabbed my jacket and followed Sam out the door.

Saint John Baptist Church
25344 Miller Ave
Tecumseh, OK
October 29th 1978
Sunday 10:00 AM

We visit with Calvin Chickadee

“Good morning brothers and sisters,” the preacher called out as he walked to the pulpit. “Praise the Lord for this wonderful Sunday morning!”

“Amen,” the congregation called back. The ladies in the ‘praise Jesus section’ as my brothers always called it, (Momma would always whack em in the back of the head with the church program) were warming up for an hour of praising Jesus. Though there was a strong bunch from the ‘amen section’, who liked to get their licks in too.

“But before we get started today,” the preacher held out his broad arms, “I’d like to welcome the newest member of our congregation. A little lamb has come into the fold, a child of God to be welcomed into the arms of the church until he is old enough to find his own River Jordan and be baptized with the word of Jesus Christ.”

That set the amen section to some powerful exhortation, followed by the praise Jesus folks.

“Will Lieutenants Caleb Chickadee and Marigold Sawyer Chickadee stand and come forward before this august body with their pup to be welcomed into the church and the fellowship of Jesus Christ.” My cousin and his mate were in their army uniforms and had come in from Fort Sill and Fort Waaa-waa-wooo-ka....Hoochie choocha? Something like that, to have my pup recognized by the church. Marigold had already spun a story about her mothers uncles brothers cousin twice removed from El Paso that had got in the ‘family way’ with this Mexican fella that her daddy didn’t approve of. So this make believe cousin went to stay in Brooksville till the pup was born and she could go home with the nosy neighbors none wiser. Marigold and Caleb would then adopt the pup. The papers were already made out, state and county seals attached and birth certificate just needing a date and if the pup was a boy or a girl. It’s nice to have relations working at the Shawnee county and Oklahoma City capital buildings. They just slide papers under their bosses noses to sign, just like Radar O’Rielly does on MASH.

Winchester Eiljah Enoch Chickadee came into the world on the 1st of October at five in the morning, at home, on kitchen table. Granny Lou from two doors down was woke up to come over and help out. Guess she’d brought more folks into this world then most of the doctors around here, besides the nearest doctor is over in Norman, an hour away, so she was always the first one called.

No wonder Momma was always hollering and carrying on what when it was time to be having us pups. IT FUCKING HURT! Excuse my language, ain’t good for a Sunday. Well, my water broke
and just thought I may have wet the bed, it kinda happened a couple of times when that big ole pup bumped up against my guts the wrong way. So just got up, pulled off the wet sheets and plastic mattress cover, slapped on some dry ones and went back to bed. It was only after the cramping really got bad that I went to wake up Auntie Beth and Uncle Charles. Been staying with them ever since I got out here from New York, except for that first week when I lived on the Seneca Reservation with Mr Mad Bears friends.

Uncle Charles ran over to get Granny Lou and Auntie Beth got me up on the kitchen table with a pillow for my head. Then got a pot of coffee going. Didn’t take long after Granny Lou came that so did Win. Had to do a lot of pushing and shoving, scream’en and hollaring before my pup was born. And they are messy, the whole thing is gooky and smelly, it’s worse then cleaning fish. The stuff that comes out after the pup is....yucky. And after it was all over I was cleaned up, diapered up and tucked into bed. But not before that ole witch pressed down on my tummy. “Sorry Sugar,” she said dodging a fist (that beta is fast!) but if’n I don’t do this, you’ll bleed to death right here and now.”

After she made sure that I wasn’t gonna do anything dumb, like die, Granny Lou walked back to her house with a good ten dollars was tucked into one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. Auntie Beth was sure she’d never see that cup again as Granny was a little forgetful about bringing such things back.

Lay in bed with Win in my arms. “Wish you could stay with me,” whispered in to his little ear. “But I can’t, on a account I’m just 12, have no mate and no money.” Sniffled a bit, “but with Cousin Caleb and Marigold, you’ll see the world, be loved and have everything good. They promised you’d know about me and that I loved you enough to put thee before me.” Win opened his eyes, yawned and then let loose a bellar. “You hungry? Bet you are. Being born is a serious business.” Put him to my breast and he latched on and sucked like vacuum cleaner. Huh, I’ll be, he’s got green eyes. Just like his daddy.

And so the amen and praise Jesus sections are hard at it, and I sitting watching it all, until it was my turn to come up as God papa. “Benjamin Chickadee, please come forward and hold your godpup.” Yeah, and since they were at it, a brand new birth certificate was made for me too. Now just have to get used to my new name......Benjamin Winchester Chickadee. Auntie and Uncle are sending me off to live with Marigolds momma and daddy up in Langston, they teach at the college there. Figure I’d be better off in a place where there were more omegas and smart ones too. Oklahoma being a constipated...no, that’s not right, emancipated state, so I don’t belong to anybody but me. Praise Jesus.

Chapter End Notes


Wetson’s: was a hamburger chain found predominately in New York City from 1959 to 1975. When Terry Trenton said they couldn’t afford a burger, it meant they couldn’t afford the 15 cents it took to get one.

Anthora coffee cup: the quintessential blue and white paper coffee cup found in the hands of New Yorkers of every social strata.
Con Ed: Consolidated Edison, the electric power company in NYC.

Wicked: 70’s slang for cool, can also be used as an intensifier, ie: wicked cool

‘Set em up Joe’: A line from....’One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)'' a hit
song written by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer for the movie musical The Sky's the
Limit (1943) and first performed in the film by Fred Astaire.[1] It was popularized
by Frank Sinatra’ -from Wikipedia

That spread in Playboy was actually in November of 1980, so I’ve used a little creative
license.

Ich liebe dich: German for ‘I love you’.

Aden: was a former British colony, now known as Yemen.

Yo ho ho for an Oreo: a jingle from the 60’s and 70’s for Oreo Cookies

The Queens Crown upon his shoulders: the insignia for a Lieutenant General in the
British Army is an image of Queen Elizabeth’s crown

In 1986, the 7-Eleven store chain banned magazines like Playboy and Penthouse from
being sold in its stores. And of course you know this meant war....soon after Playboy
came out with ‘The Women of 7-Eleven pictorial.

s’il vous plaît : French for please

Je ne peux pus t’aimer: French for ‘I can not love you anymore.’

"How Can You Mend a Broken Heart" is a song released by the Bee Gees in 1971. It
was written mainly by Barry and Robin Gibb and was the lead and first single on the
group's 1971 album Trafalgar. It was their first US No. 1 single.- From Wikipedia

What Calvin is trying to say is Huachuca.....pronounced ‘Waa-choo-ka. Fort Hauchuca
is in the state Arizona and home to US Army Intelligence and the Military Intelligence
branch. Go ahead, you’re thinking it.....George Carlins oxymorons....jumbo
shrimp....Microsoft works and Military Intelligence.
Hi Everyone. Sorry this took so long. Had a bit of life and it took longer then expected. Plus had to cut the chapter in two as it was running longer then expected. Yes there will be more of Mick Davies and the night at the Crystal City Marriot in the next chapter

“Come on Sport,” I wheedled hopelessly trying to put a spoonful of egg into Jeff’s unwilling mouth. “Eat up, cuz you and Papa have lots to do today.”

“No!” He shook his head and pushed the spoon away. My pup was sitting in his highchair, the tray covered in scrambled egg and grits. Oh crap, that was the one word I hoped he wouldn’t come out with that fast. Dr Spock had nothing to say about 8 month olds doing this, 10 month olds yes. Looks like Jeff is still two months a head of schedule. He’s a sturdy little fellow, who stands, crawls and seems to have had the time of his little life over with the Harras. Came to pick him up yesterday to find Jimmie, his sister and some of the neighborhood pups had a garbage can band parade going on in the parking lot and Jeff was in the thick of it, pulled in a wagon, happily beating an old pot with a stick.

“We all live in a Yellow Submarine, Big Sardine, Yellow Submarine!” Oh there is nothing like the sound of garbage can lids being clanged together like cymbals. Didn’t have the heart to rain on their parade, so sat down on the front stoop to watch, Patricia brought out some lemonade for us with a splash of vodka in hers. Did I so envy her for that. Handled her the weekly $70 bucks which she happily stuffed into her ‘bosom bank’. “Irv, Irv, Irv!” Sang Jeff from the wagon.

The parade made a few circuits around the parking lot, before coming to a halt after most of their dads came home and yelled at em to knock off the racket and put those trash cans back. The pups scattered and I collected Jeff from the wagon. He was a bit disappointed at having the pot taken away but made it up to him by letting him sit on my lap and beep the horn on the way home.

And now back to our regularly scheduled Saturday morning papa and pup time at breakfast. “Airplane,” I tried next. “Open the hanger, rwwwwwwwwwww!” Waved the spoon around and tried to get it passed ‘Johnny Tight Lips’. Course it wasn’t working. “Okay, I give.” Shoved the bowl onto the tray with a spoon. “Here, knock yourself kiddo.” The spoon went to the floor while his face and fingers were immediately paved in goo. Thank goodness, hadn’t gotten him dressed yet, so he’s just sitting there in a diaper, plastic pants and a t-shirt. By the time this is over, will need a bath like nobody’s business.

Okay, made a shopping list for the commissary (the fridge is almost empty) and PX. Have to see if the thrift shop is open, then get to the bank to open a savings account. The $4000 check that came this past Monday, is going into that account and I’m not going to touch it. This is money towards Jeff’s, Claire…….who the fuck is Claire? Real funny angels…..Ulysses, (will be sharing the expense for his) and any other pups I have, education.

I want my pups to know that there will be no question, be they alpha, beta or omega, that a college education will be within their grasp if they want it. Will be making arrangements to have $30 automatically going into that account from my monthly check. And if some day, there’s a little omega boy or girl….NO CONTRACTS! Maybe finishing school, but no registering them, no
putting them up for sale, they will date, not be courted. No courting marks, though it’d be a bummer about the presents BUT to save that boy or girl the pain and humiliation of being a ‘defective’, what’s a few courting gifts?

“Hee hee hee!” Jeff had turned the bowl over on his head. Thank the Alpha God, everything had cooled off, the eggs were like rubber and the grits a congealed glop that was stuck in his hair.

“Come on there kiddo,” got him up out of the high chair. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

“Wuv you,” this would’ve been a more touching moment, if it wasn’t combined with him blowing out his diaper with a blast of atomic shit.

“Wuv you too,” I said holding him out at arms length.

Took a little, but got him wiped up, washed up and in a new diaper, plastic pants, pull over shirt and corduroy overalls. They had snaps on the inside of the legs, just in case (oh who am I kidding? It’s never IF but WHEN) a diaper change is needed. Then got myself dressed, found a pair of pants that weren’t too tight and a greyish green cotton cable sweater, that wouldn’t show the spit up as bad. Holy baby Jebus, my ass is getting bigger, tits are sore and worse...I’m horny.

Oh it’s that wonderful stage of pregnancy where I WANT SEX! Wore out six sets of batteries in ‘Spurs’ the vibrator (cuz he makes me jingle jangle jingle) just this week alone and the plug in one the hospital supplied last year, died two days ago in a shower of sparks and a small fire. It looked like the 4th of July going off between my legs. Ooooo, need to get up to DC to ride Lewiston into the sunset for a night or two. Worse, Major Otis is starting to look good again. Which has made me avoid him all the more.

Got the diaper bag packed, wallet, check book, keys, pup and anything I’m forgetting? The mail. Had written letters to Dean and Ben, one to Benny...I should prolly let him know about the Mega magazine issue, that he won’t be totally surprised. Nah, will do it next letter. Prolly should send a letter to John also. Will write that one tonight.

Got to the commissary and found a parking spot. Walked in to stand in line at the check approval window, showed my ID then went to grab a shopping cart. Should have enough cash to cover the groceries. Or hope I did. Hamburger, canned peas and corn, laundry soap, dish soap along with other necessities dropped into the cart. Just wanted to get in and get out. Being this was ‘pay day’ weekend. The troops and retardos all got paid this week, so every one and their freaken dog is here to get their groceries for the month. Naomi-Mom was really good at shopping for the month, right up until her 5 boys one after the other, turned into bottomless pits in their teenage years. After that, she couldn’t keep food in the house for more then two weeks. After that, we were on our own.

Checked off most of the stuff on the list and got in the check out line that stretched almost the full aisle as the four registers were going just as fast as the ladies could push the buttons. Wish they could get those scanning registers, like I saw up in Rochester. Had gone over to the mall in Greece and stopped in at the Wegmans supermarket to pick up some milk. It was the darnedest thing you ever saw. There was this little box on the side of the can or package with wiggly lines and numbers that the clerk passed over this little window at the end of the conveyor belt. This red light flashed and the register tallied the item. Then the checkout lady said....’paper or plastic’? Was kind slow on the up take....“paper or plastic...what?”

NOW DON’T YOU GUYS LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT! I didn’t know. The commasarys always had paper bags that some teenager or retiree would pack for you. So it was weird to get that question and watch the checkout person do the bagging. At least now, I’m back in the world that makes sense. It took a little while but made it slowly up the line until it was my turn at the register.
The old beta lady’s fingers flew over the register keys as she picked up one item after the other, read the price, typed it in and pushed it item down to be bagged. The dude bagging had a stool beside him where he leaned what was left of his leg on. His crutches were stashed away in the storage bin under the check out counter. Not the first nor the last time, I’d seen something like this. Missing limbs, deep scars and men held together by bubblegum, chicken wire and lots of booze were a common enough sight around a military base.

The cash drawer popped open, she took my money and gave back the change. Stuffed a couple of bucks into the guys tip can and pushed the cart out into the parking lot. Even in early October, it was still rather warm and muggy, needed to get this stuff to the BOQ before the milk and meat died in the hot car. Went straight back to the ‘Q’ and took Jeff and one bag up first, then put him in the bathroom, made sure the toilet paper was up and out of the way, then went back down for the rest of the groceries. When I checked on him again a few minutes later......he was paved in tooth paste. Had left the tube of Pepsident on the back of the toilet tank and of course my dearest son found it.

Off came his clothes, got him washed, re-diapered and into some new duds. But on the upside, he did smell minty fresh.

Now had to get over to the United Virginia Bank here on post, before it closed at noon. The lady doing the paper work for the savings account raised a questioning eye brow at the check from Wright Publishing, “I won a contest,” I said smiling sweetly. Jeff was getting a little fussy, as he missed his 10:00 nap. So let’s put a little urgency to this lady if you don’t wanna see my pup have a complete melt down at your desk! If I didn’t need batteries and now tooth paste so bad, would’ve have skipped the trip to the PX altogether.

By the time we got out of the bank and were walking over to the PX, Jeff had enough of my ‘foolishness’ and was letting the whole world know it...at the top of his lungs. Well, that is until I got him a pretzel at the snack shack. One of those big soft German ones, with hunks of salt the size of your finger nail stuck to em. Yeah, those. So at least he was going to be quiet and happy for a little while. Got in the PX, showed my ID and got a check approved by the lady behind the desk just as you came into the vestibule before the automatic door swung open to the full PX. Put in the date (7 October 1978), signed my name and stamped the ‘FORT LEE POST EXCHANGE on the pay to line. Found a shopping cart, put Jeff in the basket. At least now, he can stretch out and fall asleep. Oh please Alpha God, let him go the fuck to sleep!

Once in the cart, he looked about, waved to his adoring public (course the little shit is looking cute as hell) and then finally.......FINALLY..... Jeffery George Hugh Ashton Benjamin Winchester, dozed off. The ladies we passed all coo-ed and aw-ed that he was such a sweet looking little pup. I just smiled and said ‘thank you, yes he is’ (when he’s asleep). Okay, let’s just get this done quick and back home. First things first. Batteries. As they were right up near the registers, grabbed up a few packs of A’s and dropped them in. Ahhhhh, there’ll be a hot time in the old town tonight! Then walked to the back of the store where the shaving, tooth paste and over the counter medicines aisles were.

The rows of items were lined up vertically while up against part of the back wall was the magazine rack. Will have to see if the lastest Omegas Home Journal is out yet. Gotta have my fix of ‘Can This Mating Be Saved?’ But it was also then I found out the latest Mega magazine had hit the stands.

Was standing in the aisle closest to the side wall comparing the size and price of Pepident vs Gleem, when the smell of happy/horny alpha came wafting around the corner along with: ‘Hey,
the new issue of.......Damn, it’s Cal State.” The voice was familiar and the second voice even more so. “Waxman, you’re not suppose to take off the brown wrapper. Will you put that down. You’re such asshole.”

Oh crap, it’s Alice and obviously Dave Waxman. That’s right, she mentioned she was coming to Fort Lee for riggers school. But didn’t know ‘Shit for Brains’ was coming too. Stood frozen to the spot listening to the two of them talk. “Will you look at that.” Could hear the sound of pages flipping.

“Not if I don’t have to,” Alice replied testily. “Oh, come on, now you’re just being embarrassing. Go blind or get your palms hairy back at the barracks.”

Ewwwwwwwwwwwww.

Then came another familiar voice, “Jesus Dave. Either buy it or put it back. You’re stinken up the joint.” Otterford’s here too?

“Come on guys,” hate that whiny voice of his. “How could you deny a red blooded American alpha this simple pleasure?”

“Easily.” Otterford said. Then....“does this Cal State guy look familiar to you?” Please say no, please say no!

“Maybe he’s a cousin?” Waxman said hopefully.

“None of my omega relatives look like that.”

“Now that you mention it,” Alice mused. “Yeah, he does, but damned if I can think who.” YES! “Will prolly come to me at some point.” NO! In the mean time, they moved off down the aisle, but now the conversation had changed to what they were going to do later on, apparently Waxman had famly up in Richmond. So they were going up there, to some dance club on Grace Street and stay the night at his cousins place.

After a moment and letting the air clear, pushed the cart around the corner to see what they were looking at. There, between the Penthouse and Playboy, was my issue of Mega. At least 10 copies of the fool thing were there on the news stand, a part of me just wanted to grab them up quick and hide em behind ‘Field and Stream’ or behind......ANYTHING! But okay, there are only 10 copies and a couple of thousand people on post. Calm down Novac. Nothing is going to happen. And may we say: Famous last words.

Well Monday came and didn’t I just jinx myself thinking ‘nothing is going to happen’. Jeff picked up a cold somewhere and was miserable. Didn’t get a lot of studying done on Sunday night or sleep for that matter. You would think Mess Operations would be simple subject. Course it wasn’t. Oh crap. Every time, I lay him down on his mattress, Jeff would get up a moment or two later, crawl over to where I was sitting at the credenza trying to study and wanna cuddle.

“Paaaaaaaaaaapppppaaaaaa!” He wailed. “Paaaapppppaaaaaa!” Had to pick him up of course and get him settled down before someone started pounding on the wall. The pup Tylenol was helping some but not enough to help Jeff get more then a few minutes of sleep at a time. He’d nod off, then wake up and start crying. It was after a while that the notes I’d taken all blurred together. Time to give up for a moment while I was ahead. So, will just lay my head down for a second.....

“Pappppaaaaaa!” I’m awake! I’m awake! Course by the next morning, I had his cold. Now feel like shit and look like it too.
Almost threw Jeff at Patricia that Monday morning and to be perfectly honest, she wasn’t looking any better either. Whatever this was had knocked her daughter down too, half the pups in the neighborhood and had done a good job on her mate. Only Sergeant Harras had gone to work to tough it out, while Pat was doing the same at home. “Jebus Christ,” she nasaled. “You look like hell.”

“You don’t look like you spent the weekend at Lourdes either,” I was equally stuffy. Jeff on the other hand was full of puppy Tylenal and wanted to play. Didn’t feel one ounce of guilt leaving Patricia’s today. Usually had a small case of em when ever I left him there to get to class. Not today. Today, just wanted Jeffery George.....oh you know who the fuck he is.......to be someone else’s problem. Half way across post the sky opened up and the rain came down in sheets. Course traffic was crawling, so the time I got to Mifflin Hall, it was five minutes before 08:00. The parking spots near the door were all taken, so was parked out in East be by Jebus. So not only was I feeling like crud, by the time I ran in, dashed up the stairs and flung myself into the classroom, had the added pleasure of completing the ensemble.

“Nice of you to join us Lt Novac,” the captain drawled. “What did you do? Fall in a rain barrel?” Course at that moment Ulysses decided to let everybody know just how unhappy he was with the whole situation. Barely made it to the waste basket in the hallway. Had hoped to reach the mens room but that wasn’t in the cards. Just happy there was a garbage can next to the door instead of tossing my cookies (well, toast and peanut butter) all over the fake marble tile.

After everything came up and out, had a quick drink at the water fountain then went back into class. The room of course was dead silent, everyone was watching and more then likely judging. Except my friends. At least Libbie, Tarah and Mary were a bit more sympathetic to the cause. “Alright,” Captain Ross hollered. “If we’re all ready, Mr Novac, at your convenience?” Okay, that was uncalled for, or maybe it was. At this point, I really didn’t give a hydroelectric damn. “Alright, pens out, notes and briefcases put away.” At that moment noticed one of the guys in the next row had a copy of Mega in his briefcase. Oh shit! Course that just blew me out the water completely. No way could I even put together a coherent thought after seeing that. Looked around quick, nope, no one was looking at me. Okay, safe for the moment but paranoid. So anyway, tried to do my best, even peeking at Mary’s paper and trying to look at the crib notes on my wrist, that didn’t help. They’d been washed off in the rain. Was so screwed and not in the fun way either. There was not way Mess Operations was going to be a high point in my educational career.

So, muddled my way through. Snorting and sneezing, nose running like crazy. Oh this was just working out so well. At the end of the test, set the pen down, looked at the paper and knew I was going to fail. Had brought my grades up a bit from the last test I blew, but this one was going to send me right to the bottom. After it was over and the last person turned in their test, we were let out to take a break. That’s when Captain Ross asked to see me for a moment.

“Do you know what the penalty is for cheating?” He asked quietly.

“No Sir, but suspect it’s not pleasant.” Oops. Guess I wasn’t as stealthy as I thought I was.

“It’s termination from class and administratively separated from the Army.” Then he looked at me hard. “Did you cheat on that exam Lt Novac?”

“No Sir, I did not.” Oh yeah, right. Sure I’m going to say I cheated.....er.....’reconnoitered’ on a test after hearing that.
“Are you sure? Because I think you did.”

“Begging the captain’s pardon, but no, I didn’t.” Then, since a good defense is to be as offensive as possible, took a page from the Naomi Novac playbook of hit-and-run living. “Why don’t you grade the test and find out if I did or not?”

The Captain was surprised but, “okay. Let’s have a look.” He dug out my paper from the pile, pulled a red pen from his pocket and went to work. For the first time in my life, I prayed to fail a test. After he’d finished, it looked like he’d killed a chicken on it. “You got a 44.” Wow. Honestly, was surprised I did that well, all things considered.

“Why would I cheat to fail Sir?”

His face worked in many a strange and unhappy (for him) way. “You wouldn’t. Lieutenant, in the future, if I EVER catch you with even the tiniest hint of dishonesty, FOR ANYTHING! You’ll be outta here so fast the dust won’t settle for a week! Do you understand me!?”

“Loud and clear Sir.” Whew, that was close.

“Good. Get out of my sight.” Turned and walked out of the room, then once in the hallway, ran to the mens room to throw up again. By this time, nothing came out but bile. When finally my stomach stopped heaving, came out of the stall, stumbled to the sink and turned on the water, letting it fill the basin and then when full, sunk my face to it. Held my breath and let the cool water come up over my ears. Oh that felt good; was feeling too warm, too tired, too everything. When I ran out of breath, came up to find Major Otis leaning up against one of the sinks.

“Never saw anyone get on a shit list and move to the top of the pack so fast in all my born days.” He handed me some sheets of paper towel to dry my face with. “Damn boy, you are a trouble magnet.”


The major snorted. “Yeah sure ‘Ich’. Ich is a big problem.” He cocked his head, “you look like shit. Are you sick?”

“My pup has a cold and he shared it with me. He was cranky and didn’t get much sleep, so I didn’t either.” Right now a part of me just wanted to lean into him and bury my face into his chest to take comfort there. “Couldn’t get much studying done either,” the major looked like he was ready to step in and do his ‘alphas duty’ for a poor suffering omega. “So failed the test and…..” why am I telling him this? SHUT UP NOVAC! Can’t look like some weak whiny omega in front of this guy. “And now….I feel so much better Sir…..gotta go…bye. Thanks for listening.”

Left the mens room as fast as I could without looking like I was running away. Which I was, but didn’t want to look insubordinate or worse….have the alpha chase instinct to click in. Went back to class and sat down at my desk. The guy a row down now had the Mega magazine out of his briefcase and was thumbing through. He wasn’t being obvious about it, just nonchalantly skipping the photos in favor of the articles and the ‘Patty Pre-Sents’ comic strip. Still, I glanced about, thinking that everyone knew it was me in that magazine. That they were going to point and stare and…..nothing’s happening. No one is doing anything except bullshitting with their neighbor, reviewing their notes or just sneaking in a short game of backgammon.

But then again, why would they think I was Cal State? No way could anyone even consider that cute little piece of ass in the magazine could be the lieutenant with the runny nose, watery eyes (I sound like a commercial for Contact-sic em tiny time pills) and failed exam, damn it. Class was
called to order and the new lesson plan started.

That night, got Jeff fed and clean up extra early. Wanted to get him (and myself) put to bed. Was dragging horribly all afternoon and there was no way I could do this again. Cuddled together in bed and by 08:00 that night, the both of us were dead to the world.

The next morning, I still felt like crap, but Jeff was bright eyed, looking tons better and ready to play. Went to class with some trepidation, but no one pulled out a Mega magazine to ‘read’, so I’m good. Well, right up until after supper. Had fried up a pork chop with onions and mushrooms for myself, then warmed up mushed peas and some chicken glop that smelled worse then c-rats for Jeff. As, I was taking the dishes to the sink in the bathroom, there was a knock at the door.

Peeked through the peep hole to see Libbie standing in the hallway. Turned the latch on the dead bolt, then opened the door. “Hey, come on in.” Had put out the invitation to come over a few weeks ago but neither of us had gotten our collective dance steps together to do it. “Good to see ya. Wanted you to meet my son. This is Jeffery.” Course he clapped his little hands together happily, here was a whole new person to adore him.

So of course my little man put on a big smile and came out with ‘Irv!’

Libbie did a double take. “Did he, just say Irv?”

“So right now, in the mean time can I get you anything? Have....Tang, peppermint tea, water....ginger ale.” Geeze, the problem with being pregnant is everything I have to eat or drink is geared towards the making of a healthy pup and or what can settle morning sickness. Libbie said tea would be lovely and as I set about making it, that’s that’s when he busted out with a frustrated......“Caaaaaaaabron!” Dropped the kettle in surprise at his outburst. “Sorry dude, but, can’t fiddle fart around all night.......“could you sign my copies please! I won’t tell any one. Cross my heart!” Out of the back of his shirt he pulled out four copies of.....Mega.

It took everything I had not to freak, but I’m a Novac-Crowley damn it. If I could fool a lie detector, and stand up to Captain Ross, can tap dance my way out of this without hopefully losing a friend.

“I’m sorry to bust your bubble man.” Picked up the kettle, filled it with some more water and set it on the burner of the hot plate. Oh shit! This can’t be happening! “Not that I’m not flattered you’d think so, but that’s isn’t me.” Pointed to my stuffy red nose and bleary eyes, “does this look like the face of a ‘Pinkie of the Month’ to you?”

“Not right now, but......Dude, I understand why you’re denying it,” my friend tickled the bottom of one of Jeff’s feet. My little guy giggled and kicked happily. “But.....I lived with you for almost three weeks. I know what you look like naked and without those big ole specks you hide behind.” Libbie smirked, “you got the cute little mole on your right ass cheek.” He opened the magazine to one of the pictures taken from the back, “there. Right there.” Damn it Trenton. You couldn’t have air brushed that out?! “Honest dude,” Libbie leaned forward. “I won’t tell. If anyone asks, will just say heard Cal State was at the Gold Rush up in DC on 14th Street and went up for a weekend and had copies signed.”

“How do you know about the Gold Rush?”

“My older brother went there once when he was visiting our tio who was assigned to Fort Belvoir at the time. How do you know about it?”

Oh man, he got me fair and square there. “My older brother goes there from time to time.” Oh hell,
Balthazar could make that joint his second home. Okay, have to make a decision here, “I’m not Cal State, but if you tell ANYONE, where you got these signed other then the Gold Rush, I will kill you in your sleep.”

“I can dig it,” he said quickly. But before Libbie could say anything else, there was a knock at the door. He quickly shoved the magazines under the pillow.

“Just a minute!” I called out. Checked the peek hole. It was Mary and she was quickly stuffing something down the back of her shirt. “Dude, if you didn’t tell anyone, why is Mary outside the door?”

Libbie had that expression on his face of ‘CAAAAAABBBBBBRONNNN!’ (Translation: Really? Oh come on asshole. Think about it.) “It’s not that hard to figure out for anyone who lived with you for even three seconds let alone three weeks.

He was right, as much as I hated to admit it. Guess I didn’t think this through as well I as should have. Jesus Christ Novac, for a smart guy, you do some dumb things. “Okay, you’re right.” Sighed and opened up the door.

“Hi,” Mary said brightly. Then saw Libbie, “oh didn’t mean to intrude, I’ll just......”

“Come on in,” was about to shut the door when the sound of and elevator sliding door made me look down the hall out on a hunch. Yup, there was Tarah. “Oh, uh, hi.” She smiled weakly. I crooked a finger and she came hesitantly down the hallway. When Mary and Tarah both in the room and the door closed turned and in one breath proclaimed:

“IfyouFUCKENtellanyoneIwillFUCKENkillyouinyourFUCKENsleep!” Then smiled sweetly, “is peppermint tea alright with everyone?” All three nodded like those little plastic dogs that people have in their car back windows that bob their heads up and down.

“Fucken.” Jeff said happily. Oh great, could this night get ANY better? “Irv,” I said quickly. “Say Irv, Papa, Bumpo or Cluny. Anything but that.” To which he smiled that beguiling little pumpkin grin of his and said “Barstow.” I’ll take it.

Well, actually, it wasn’t as bad as it could’ve been. “I figured out it was you because of the pool pictures,” Mary explained. “Had seen you down in the hotel swimming pool enough times to know what you looked like wet and without your glasses. That picture of you, that one coming up out of the water like a dolphin.” Mary sighed. “It was sheer poetry.” I got the feeling it was prolly more of a dirty limerick but decided it would’ve been rude to mention it.

Was pouring the tea into mugs and bowls, “so if I do sign them and I’m still not Cal State by the way. How would all of you explain to anyone how you got em autographed?”

“Simple, dude.” Libbie leaned forward. “Like I said before, if anyone asks, will just say we heard Cal State was at the Gold Rush, went up for a weekend and had our copies signed.” Obviously someone put some thought in this before coming here.

“Come on Cas.” Tarah smiled winningly. “You know us. We wouldn’t say anything that would get you in trouble. Besides, you shoot people.” Well, that’s true enough.

“Listen, I’m already on Captain Ross’s shit list and he wants me out and this would do it....if I were really Cal State of course.”

“We know. But you’re not like those girls from the Navy who got kicked out. You didn’t use your real name or were wearing your uniform.”
“Moment of truth. Got up, walked slowly over to the credenza and picked up the pen sitting there. “So ooooooo...if I were Cal State, and I’m not, who do I make them out to?” Skin rags came flying out the back of everyone’s clothes and from under the pillow on the bed. Well, now I know where those 10 issues of Mega went to.”

“My brothers, El-mer, Mar-veen and Sylvester.” Libbie shrugged. “Dad liked Warner Brothers cartoons. I was lucky mom put her foot down, or I would’ve been called Bugs.”

So I signed em and prayed my friends would keep their word. Course had to tell the story of how it all started. Like a lot of things, innocently enough and a good deed that definitely didn’t go unpunished. “So it was your scumbag room mate who sold your pictures to Mega and then forged your signature on the release form? That’s low dude. Tarah took a sip of the tea and then added a bit more sugar to the drink.

“So what was it that made you decide to pose?” Mary asked. Then she pointed to the diamonds in the ‘M’, “and did you guys really......you know. That many times?”

Who ever thought up that whole number of diamonds meant the number of time Cole banged the ‘Pinkie’ really needs a good ass whippen. “Actually Cole Trenton was nothing but a gentleman” (oh that was a bit of a stretch) “hate to bust up your wet dream. But nothing happened. There was no sex, nobody got banged. Those are distribution marks.”

“Damn it.” She had the good graces to immediately say...... “Er....damn it, that someone would think of all those diamonds would mean that.” Good save there girlfriend.

“And why I decided to pose was because of the money. Prolly shouldn’t have, but eight thousand dollars is a lot of good reasons........”

“You got eight thousand dollars?!” Libbie was aghast. “That’s almost a years salary! What did your parents say? Your mate?”

“They were a little unhappy.....Mom because all she got for posing in the The Knot was $2000 and my mate was only offered four.”

“Your MOM posed in The Knot? Wait a minute.” Libbie was now bouncing on the bed. “Your mom was July’s ‘Ms Knot for Nothing’?!”

“Yeah,” got up and opened the window. “Dude, that IS my MOM and you’re WAY too happy about it.”

“Sorry, CAAAAAAAALAAAAAAABBBRONNNN!” So, signed their magazines, drank tea, told the story about the night Cole Trenton surprised me in front of the my apartment, how we were stopped by the police, the morning at the beach and the night at the hotel pool. Tried to play it down, that the whole thing wasn’t that big a deal.....even if it kinda was. Later, after they left and it was just Jeff and me..... “what do you think kiddo? Think we’ll be okay?”

“Barstow.” Good enough for me.

The next day Captain Ross announced that on Tuesday the 17th of October, we’d be going on a field exercise to Fort Pickett. A smaller base about an hour and change south and west of Fort Lee “Monday, after the exam, you will be given two hours for lunch and to pick up your field equipment from Building 3000-T in back of Mifflin Hall. You will be signing and responsible for it. Any equipment missing or lost, you will be reimbursing the Army for.” Oh goodie gum drops (please note there was nothing but the HUGEST amount of sarcasm associated with that
statement). “We’ll be in the field from Tuesday until our return on Friday.” Are there any questions?”

Yeah, one....what am I going to do with Jeff? Knew things like this were going to be in our future. John had mentioned REFORGER would be in full swing this coming January. So, have to make arrangements before I even get there for Jeff to be taken care of. So, in the mean time have to figure out where my son can stay for those few days. Could ask Patricia if she’d take care of him, but to be fair, would mean at least another $70 dollars on top what I give her every week, to keep him over night. Will have to call Dad and her Mummy-ship to see if they could keep him for the week.

That night called Dad and asked if he and Mum could watch Jeff next week. “I’m sorry darling,” she was very apologetic. “But we’re going to be out of town, across the pond for the next 10 days and I don’t think Rowena would be up to the task.” Oh fuck no she wouldn’t! “You could always call Naomi, see if she could.”

Not that I wouldn’t be thrilled to visit with Naomi-Mom. BUT (reach around and grab a handful) do not want Zachariah anywhere near my son and then the expense of a plane ticket to get up to Schenectady......by the time it was all said and done would be spending more money then the $70 to pay Patricia. Plus with all that travel time, wouldn’t be able to study and can’t afford to fail any more tests. Will talk to Pat tomorrow.

She’d do it for $80 and for ten bucks more, it was a bargain at half the price.

Thank the Alpha God, that I was feeling little better each day. A hit of the pup Tylenol in the morning and once in the evening was enough to get me through class during the day and to sleep at night. That and a few forays into ‘wander lust’ with Spurs. Each night, after making sure Jeff was sound asleep, would sweat and moan into the pillow, thinking of John, Dean, Lewiston, Benny and even once or twice Major Otis. Although, tried to keep his appearances down to a bare minimum. Alphas can sense these things some times and the last thing I wanna do is encourage the big idiot. Although, if he has as big a wondering eye as Sam Colt did, then he will be setting his sights on someone else pretty quick, if the major hasn’t done it already.

On Saturday had packed us a lunch with every intention of having a picnic over near a local attraction called The Crater. Fort Lee sat on the edge of the Petersburg battlefield, guess there was some heavy duty fighting around here during the American Civil War. Apparently, Northern troops from the coal mining region of Pennsylvania, had dug a tunnel under the main encampment of the Southern forces, then piled up a crap load of explosives. It was a good idea, except for the part when the black troops they trained to go around the edge of the hole created by the explosion, were not allowed into the fight. They were swapped out for units who, instead of running around the edge, ran right into the newly created crater.

It was a duck shoot. Didn’t take more then a few minutes for the Southern commanders to rally their troops and start firing down into the hole.

Needless to say, Jeff and I didn’t stay long. Even after it’d been all prettied up and grass grew green on the blood of men in blue and gray, could still hear the echoed screams from that awful day. My pup was looking off towards the gentle dip in the ground where a huge gaping hole once had once exploded up from the depths of the earth with a horrified expression on his face. Even on a beautiful day in autumn with the blue cloudless sky above us and the trees turning gold, red and brown, was hearing, seeing and smelling the trauma still locked into the very air. His eyes welled up and Jeff started to wail. “Irrrrrvvvvvvvv! Irrrrrvvvvv! Paaaaappppppppaaaaa!”

“It’s okay Baby, it’s alright. Papa is here.” Picked him up and rushed him away. “The scary men
won’t touch you.” So our planned picnic on the battlefield was canceled due to......spooks? Paranormal occurrences? Residue? Don’t know, don’t care, it was terrifying my pup. So piled into the Bug and went back to post where I spread a blanket out on the well manicured lawn of the head quarters company building. It was another one of those ‘temporary’ World War two buildings that seem to be a permanent part of a lot of bases here in the States. In Germany, the US Army took over the old bases, kaserines and airfields of the German Army of the First and Second World Wars.

On Sunday, went downstairs to the BOQ’s lobby, pumped a few quarters into the news box and pulled out the Sunday Richmond-Times Dispatch. Spent the next hour lounging in bed, plate of cold toast on my stomach, with a pen in hand reading the newspaper. Along the way was correcting the spelling and grammar of the articles. Dear Alpha God, didn’t these people hire an editor who could read?

Afterward, gathered up all the dirty clothes and did the wash. Had to make sure all of Jeff’s clothes were clean, so he’d have enough to wear at the Harras. He sat on the floor next me playing with his blocks, as I sorted whites and darks. Paused in mid sort for a moment to really get a good look at him. Jeffery George was a lovely combination of Dean, myself and then things that were distinctly just Jeff. The dark hair was mine, the green eyes and freckles were Dean’s but that little snub nose was something that came up out of the genetic ooze as something new and different. Will be playing a lot of ‘got your nose’ in the near future.

Which of course got me thinking of Dean. How in....what....four years, he was suppose to get me back? Back to what? I’m not the crazy college kid he used to know and he’s not the fun loving NCO I knew. So what are we? It’s been over a year since I’d seen him, granted we’ve written letters back and forth during that time and he’s taken more responsibility financially for Jeff. It’s not the same. Not the day to day interaction. Not the same as living together. Granted, I’m not getting that with John either. Not that getting to ‘play house’ for a few weeks out at Quarters One in Kansas, wasn’t educational. There is nothing like seeing the ‘great man’ himself standing in his polka dot boxer shorts in front of the refrigerator drinking milk straight out of the bottle in the middle of the night. All the while belching, farting and scratching his ass. When he was home anyway.

That’s when the germ of an idea came to mind. If Dean wants me back, first....I will have to want to go back. Granted this doesn’t let John off the hook. Maybe.....in four years....I may not want to stay with him either. I’m an emancipated omega, no matter what those contracts and forms say. Secondly, Dean will have to date me. Not court me, date me. Just like I was a beta or alpha. A social contract, not one on paper with cutting and gifts (I will miss those courting gifts) where he can take me out for a drink, a movie or dinner to win my heart. Not buy it. Yes, that’s how it’s going to be. Punctuated that decision with a fancy flick of the wrist, tossing a shirt with a stain of something that I couldn’t even begin to tell you what was, onto the pile of lights.

After getting everything sorted, got the darks and box of laundry soap rounded up in a sheet off the bed, then with Jeff on my hip, walked down the hall to the laundry room. Now really have to get studying for the exam tomorrow. Can’t afford another failing grade, last thing I need is to get recycled. Was feeling better, the cold had boiled itself down to a cough that was prolly going to hang around for the next few weeks. Sadly, was still horny as hell and had gone through half the batteries from last week already. Damn it, I gotta get laid.

A while later went out to check on the laundry. Someone had taken mine out of the washer and tossed it in the dryer, then filled the washer with their clothes. Looks like we’ll have to wait a little while longer to get the whites going.
The next day actually got to class early, set my stuff down when Mary came in and slumped into her seat beside me. The normally strack female alpha was shockingly in a rumpled set of fatigues, unshined boots and looking like utter hell. “Holy Baby Jebus, what happened to you?” Her eyes were red and puffy from crying and the smell of birth and death hung on her like a shroud.

“Cleo had kittens in the middle of the bed at three this morning.” Cleo was a stray cat Mary had adopted a few weeks ago. She’d been hanging around the BOQ’s begging for food and Mary had been leaving her scraps on the door step before taking the little gray and white kitty in. “None of them survived...now she’s now yowling her head off looking for them.” Oh man, that sucks canal water. Then the tears really started to fall......“my ass hole boy friend called about an hour ago to say he’s dumping me. He meet this beta chick in his class and they’re getting mated next Tuesday!”

Oh dear Alpha God, I really have nothing to complain about EVER. “I’m so so sorry.”

“And to top it off.... have a run in every pair of stockings I own!” She ran the back of her hand across her eyes, “Why does everything have to happen now!?” Put my arms around her and let her snot and cry on my shoulder. Tarah and Libbie came in the room and then hurried over when they saw something was wrong. They keened and leaned in, scenting and comforting.

“Oh I’m so sorry,” rubbed Mary’s back. “Are you gonna be okay? Is there anything we can do?”

“Oh other then kicking that rat bastard’s ass” My friend sniffled. “Not much. But there is something I’d been thinking about and wanted to bounce off of you guys thought. Dinner at my place? 18:00 hours? Bring a side dish, drinks or dessert.” The three of us nodded and then got to our desks.

The test was rough, even with studying, hoped I was going to pass Storage Operations with some kind of grade that would lift me out of the bottom third of the class. Kept my eyes on the paper and didn’t even let them stray off once. There was no way I was going to give Captain Ross any reason to suspect me of anything.

Even after I’d finished and turned over the test, still didn’t raise my eyes until the call was made to ‘smoke ‘em if you got ‘em.’ Handled in the exam, then walked up the aisle and out into the hallway. The class now had two hours to get our field equipment, lunch and get back here for the afternoon session. Went down to the Bug, got in and drove the short distance to building T-3000. Wasn’t sure how much stuff they were going to give us, but knew I didn’t wanna trying carrying it back.

Got there early enough so that the wait wasn’t too long, but then again the people issuing the equipment made it obvious this was not their first time at the rodeo. We signed for compasses, shelter halves, steel pots and liners, a duffel bag, sleeping bag, poncho and assorted other shit that made me very glad I brought the Bug. Waited on Libbie to get his stuff and drove him over to his place to dump off the duffel and then head to the O’Club for lunch.

It was Italian day.....again.....and we filled our plates with spaghetti and meat balls. Though it prolly should’ve been kielbasi, the cardinals in Rome got their collective defecation in sequence and had elected a new pope. And goddamn a bear and knock me over with a feather, they picked some guy out of Poland named Wojiyla. Or his new pope name, John Paul the Second. Will see how long that guy lasts.

For some weird reason, unlike what happened the last time with O’Club fare, Ulysses was quite happy with lunch. He fluttered about taking in all the Ragu-y goodness. “How do you tell the difference when the little guy is good with all this and when he’s not?” Libbie asked after he’d filled his plate with pasta and we’d found a place to sit.
“Chemical reactions. He’s like a little science project in there,” I said with a mouthful and from behind a napkin. “When he’s happy, so am I. But oh man, when he doesn’t want something, does Ulysses let me know it in spades.” Stabbed a few of the marble sized marble balls on to the fork and cramped the whole thing into my mouth. “E mac me ralph.” Chewed like an anaconda and then swallowed, “but right now. This makes me happy.” Patted my belly, “and the little guy too.”

“Whatever gets you through the night,” Libbie was watching with an amused look on his face. “So what is this pup’s full name going to be?”

“Ulysses Tenacious Lewiston Reynolds Novac.”

“Tenacious? Lewiston? What the hell kind of name is Lewiston?”

Weird that my friend would have more questions about the name Lewiston and not Tenacious. But what ever floats your boat. “Tenacious because the little sucker hung in there all the way through jump school and didn’t get shook loose. And Lewiston is for Lewiston Reynolds, he’s the father of one of my Firsts.”

“How many Firsts do you have?”

“Three, how about you?”

“Two so far, they became my Firsts as part of their Quinceañera.” So of course we had to compare parties, omega gowns and bowl contents. I may have had the better gown, but Libbie had me beat all hollow with the amount collected in the bowl. “They had to dump out a punch bowl to collect all the money,” he said proudly.

“Caaaaaaaaaaharanovrooonn!” Now that’s impressive. “What did yours go toward? Mine went to help an old solders home.”

“Mine went toward my Firsts down payments for a house. Can never start saving too early to buy a home, no matter where you decide to settle down. Either on the island or main land.”

True enough there, I guess. Never thought about buying a house, even though had heard Naomi-Mom carry on about having one forever and amen. But now that she’s got one, she hardly seems to be in it. Trotting off here, there and everywhere. Last time I called up there to Schenectady found out from Anna, (yes we had a brief thaw in the cold war) that Mom had gone to visit our neighbors to the north to give Pierre Trudeau a piece of her mind. Hopefully not too big a piece, as she burned her bridges south of the American border and now is on her way to scorching the Great White North.

In true military fashion, we gobbled our food, paid the check and were out the door. The whole business of lunch only lasting 20 minutes tops from sit down to get up. So we had a little time to kill. Seeing there was a dinner invite to Marys, wanted to get dessert started so could have something in hand. We stopped back at the BOQ where I put water on the boil, opened a box of cherry jello, a can of fruit cocktail and dumped the whole mess into the big Pyrex bowl I’d bought for a quarter at a moving sale one of Patricias neighbors was having last week. Shoved it into the fridge and hoped the stuff should set by the time 18:00 rolls around.

Made it back to class in time for mail call. Two letters, one from John and a love note from C & P Phone company, lovely. Then there was another manila envelope from Wright Publishing. Oh crap, what do they want? Took it back to the desk before tearing it open and peeked in….oh shit! It’s a couple of Mega magazines, only the cover’s different. It’s in black and white. What the fuck? Noticed there was a note along with it. Fished out the note and read:
Hey Cas,

Wonder if you’d autograph these for me. Hef and Bobby G wanted a signed copy. There’s a SASE to send em back in.

Thanks,

Cole Trenton

WOW! Those guys wanted an autographed copy of little old me?! I don’t know whether to be excited or skeeved out. Will get them signed and tossed in the mailbox tonight. The afternoon session of class was more about what we were going to do down at Fort Pickett, if we need to bring money (the answer was $6.00 to pay for our dinner meals at the mess hall) and the schedule of events. Oh wonderful, live fire with the M16. Which of course meant the ‘charlie foxtrot’ of weapons cleaning. Also handed out was a basic load list of things to bring besides what was issued to us: three pairs of fatigues, extra pair of combat boots, socks, underwear, o.d. green t-shirts, blah, blah, blah.

Guess the cadre wanted us to get used to going to the field, especially those of us headed to Germany, or Korea or units like the 82nd or 101st Airborne. Those guys were forever humping the boonies. (Again, something that sounds more fun that it actually is.) Felt a deja Vu moment at the thought of the 82nd and it nothing to do with Ulysses but more of the dream I had at jump school. Short sharp dreams were messages from the angels and the one about jumping out over Rio Hato brought the hot wet smell of sweating bodies and…….. “NOVAC!”

“All the Way SIR!” Jumping to my feet, was reaching for the static line that wasn’t there.

The Captain was standing in front of me with an amused grin, safely on the other side of the desk and out of arms reach. “Thank you Mr Novac for the offer, but not today. Thought you’d like to know, class had been dismissed 15 minutes ago.”

Oh crap. “Sorry Sir.” Now am going to be late to pick up Jeff. Threw the notes and hand outs into my briefcase, slammed it shut and ran out the class room. Course, I got stopped by the MP’s on my way across post.

“Good afternoon Sir,” the E-5 MP with no eyes (Cool Hand Luke reference here), as I could see myself reflected in the lenses of his sun glasses. “Do you know why I stopped you?”

“Prolly cuz I was driving just a pinch fast to pick up my son before I owe my sitter another 10 bucks for being late.” Put on a winning smile.

“Sorry Sir, but you’ll be owing your sitter that 10 dollars.” Son of a Bitch! Took him forever and amen to write the ticket, plus had to get out to stand for retreat. Was sooooo tempted to let him know who I was and John is, course it took every bit of will not to say….. ‘My mate is General John Winchester, so if you know what’s good for you…..’ Sigh, no. I can’t do that, as much as it would be fun to see that guys face. Took that ticket like a man, with a lot of swearing after the cop left.

And so, time marched (or stumbled) on, made it to Marys quarters just a few minutes late, but we were immediately forgiven when Jeff laughed, coo’d and wanted to be held by our hostess. Then he cocked his little head, “Maaa sad?” My kiddo can be rather perceptive but seems to be selective in his pronunciations. ‘Maaa’ was the best he could wrap his little mouth around saying her name.
How he could pronounce ‘Barstow, Cluny and Clara’, but not ‘Mary’ was beyond me.

“Maaa sad,” Mary nodded.

“Kith,” and he planted a big wet one on her cheek.

Now she had a smile that reached her eyes and whole self. “Maaa feel better.” Dinner was meat loaf, empanadas-Libbie brought them, Tarah brought something she called a 1905 salad—‘it’s the specialty at the Columbia Hotel in Tampa’ and I brought the jello. There’s always room for jello.

We sat around and ate, talked about this and that, fed Cleo bits of meat loaf, then Mary brought up an opportunity that had been offered her. “Captain Ross had mentioned the possibility of me transferring out of the National Guard to active Reserve status. So instead of going back to Idaho, could go on active duty to where ever I wanted, or (more then likely) where the army needed me. Turned him down before,” the reason was obvious. “But now, seeing that I don’t have that reason anymore...(stupid son of bitch ex-boyfriend) “I think I really want to do it.”

“You sure?” Tarah asked, licking her lips after a sip of beer. “And this isn’t something you’ll wake up tomorrow and change your mind?”

“I don’t think so,” Mary picked at the Michelob label on the bottle she was holding. “Had actually been thinking about it for a while but with....what’s his name in the picture.....just was ready to give it up to settle down and.....well.” She smiled and took a sip, “now I don’t have to.”

It was later that evening after getting Jeff bathed, read to and laid down to sleep, that I pulled out Johns letter. It was an update on how he was doing, his bosses foibles and funny stories about life in Belgium. Familiar homey things that I remembered from growing up with in West Germany; the bread, beer and sausages that would make up a simple dinner. Okay, for me, it was having to listen to some ass butt talk about the eventual take over by the proletariat, but what the hell, you got to eat and meet beta girls. Those commie frauleins, Gabe found out the happy way, would fuck you into the middle of next week if they thought you’d convert. Thanks to Karl Marx, Gabe got laid a lot.

Set the letter back on the night stand and lay back on the bed. A familiar ache of loneliness filled my heart, it may have been after 10:00 but picked up the phone anyway. Need to talk to someone, anyone who would understand. “Reynolds residence,” Jenny’s sleepy voice came over the wire.

“Hi Your Ladyship,” tried to keep the tears out of my voice and failed miserably.

“Hello My Charge,” she said gently. “Bit of a rum go tonight?”

“Yeah, sorry to bother you guys. But....”

“No bother, I’ve seen enough nights like that myself over the years and had no one to call. Mostly because the phone service was horrific or non existent. Why I remember once in Cyprus......” Just to hear that voice, to know she was out there, telling the now funny story (course if wasn’t at the time) of how she tried to make a phone call from Cyprus to Malta where Lewiston was TDY or whatever the Brits call it. Fell asleep listening to her tell what was basically a shaggy dog story, but it worked. Dozed off with the receiver to my ear and woke up to it making that annoying sound that tells you to hang the fuck up. It was around 05:00 AM and obviously wasn’t going back to sleep.

Quietly got up, went to the bathroom and took a quick shit, shower and shave. Have no idea where we’d be staying, or even if there’d be a shower facility, so clean up could get a little dicey. Might be stuck with a whores baths out of a helmet and cold shaving for a few days. Got out of the tub to
dry off, then got a look at myself in the mirror. My belly and bosom had gotten larger, not to the
point where I looked pregnant, but more like was some frat boy who’d spent too much time
pounding back brewskis and eating Campi’s subs. In short, I didn’t look pregnant as much as I
looked fat.

Not the best way to start the morning and checking out my butt didn’t add to it. It took up the
whole mirror. Great. Just fucken great. Looked like the back end of ostrich, “I look like Waxman!”
Now I really wanted to cry. Ah, nothing snaps you right back to reality quite like a pup wailing and
the smell of toxic diaper. Oh Jesus, Patricia is gonna want triple for this.

“It’s okay Baby, Papa’s here.” Dashed out to the other room, flipping on the light, to find Jeff
sitting on floor next to his mattress, his head back, mouth open and face red as a beet. “There,
there, shhhhhhh, come on Little Man, let’s get you cleaned up.” Then started singing:

Que llueva, que llueva,
la Virgen de la Cueva;
los pajaritos cantan,
las nubes se levantan.
¡Qué sí! ¡Qué no!
¡Qué caiga un chaparrón...
para lavar mi camisón
con agua y jabón!

Had sung him ‘Virgin in the Cave’ and a few other ditties Madraining Ada used to sing for me, and it
always seemed to calm him down. Stripped off the dirty diaper, then set him in the tub and in a few
minutes had a spanking clean pup. At least for a short while. As I sat on the bath mat drying him
off, Jeff whimpered a little and then put a chubby cheek against my breast. Then came the big sad
eyes. Had been weening him off breast milk and on to just plain old ‘cow juice’, but right now,
needed some comfort for him and myself. “Mind those teeth kiddo.” Jeff gave a contented sigh,
latching on and suckled. Ulysses beat a gentle tattoo against my skin, letting his bond brother know
he was there too.

What a set up! Holy cow!
They’d never believe it,
If my friends could see me now!

I sang softly. Might as well toss in a show tune and Sweet Charity seemed just right. Most of the
people I knew from just four years ago, especially my ex-beta girl friend Nora, would never
believe this. Had sworn up and down, I’d never get mated, never have children and never let some
alpha lord over me. And now here’s all three, I got mated, am pregnant....AGAIN....and this little
alpha has me right around his little finger. Brought his tiny hand up and kissed each wiggly digit.
Oh life, she am a bitch.

We sat like that for a while, until my legs fell asleep and the alarm clock went off. “Come on there
Sport,” popped him off the nipple. He gave a burp like a trooper on Sunday morning after a
Saturday night, that’s my boy. “We gotta a couple of big days ahead of us.” Got him dressed first
and then got myself into fatigues. Did a quick check around the room; no water running, the hot
plate was unplugged, nothing in the fridge was going to die anytime soon, the weapons and other
valuables were stowed in the lock box and on the little shelf I installed in the closet. You’d have to
look immediately up as you put your head in the closet to notice the shelf, and being most thieves
don’t have the luxury of time, would tend to miss it. Unless they were good and knew where to
Okay, check list continues, mattress under the bed, toys in the closet and finally the 80 bucks for Patricia. Better to pay her up front then not, cuz after a few days in the boonies, all I’s wanna do is grab Jeff and get back to soak my stinky ass in the tub. With that complete, shouldered our duffel bags (one for me and the other filled with Jeff’s stuff) locked the door and headed on down the hallway.

The rally point was the parking lot in back of Mifflin Hall. Three deuce and a halfs were waiting, their engines growling, as they idled in the cool morning air. Course they were that lovely shade of olive drab, a white star painted on the doors to the cab and a canvas over the back, making it look like some weird covered wagon. One truck would carry our gear, while the two would take the class. The shrill sound of a whistle topped the sound of the truck engines. “Fall in,” Lt Chickadee had the clip board and whistle that proclaimed him ‘god’ of the formation. “Form up,” and after a moment, “stand at ease.” He consulted the clip board, “for the next three and half days we will be training down at Camp...er Fort Pickett. Take in as much as you can from this experience, as many of you will be using it in the not so distant future.”

A few of the guys already found out they’d be leading Bath and Laundry platoons, so they are going to be paying extra attention. While others discovered they’ll be mess officers (the extra duty as assigned), so feeding troops in the field is going to be at the top of the list for them. Mine was going to be supplying equipment (clothes, ammunition, vehicle parts and a million other things great and small) from a fixed point to the field.

Had let my gaze drift to the First Infantry patch on the sleeve of the guy stand in the squad in front of mine, when suddenly the parking lot disappeared and found myself standing in the doorway of a plane, but instead of jumping into the wet heat of the jungle it was the cold sting of rain overlooking a dark expanse of wet sand. Either this was the biggest beach I ever saw or......

“NOVAC, YOU JUST GONNA STAND THERE LIKE A STATUE?! IF SO, WILL FIND SOME PIDGEONS TO SHIT ON YA!” Huh, what? Lt Chickadee? Was standing in the parking lot alone, as everyone else was sitting in the duece and a halfs.

“Cas, over here.” Libbie leaned out the back of the truck. “Get in quick.”

“Sorry Sir,” Embarrassed as hell, ran over and was quickly yanked up and aboard.

“What happened to you?” We settled down on the hard wooden seats that lined the inside of the truck as the vehicle lurched forward. “You just spaced out back there.”

“Sorry,” oh this is gonna sound weird. “Some times the angels let me see what is going to happen or what I think is going to happen.”

The others of course thought I was full of shit, except for my friends. Tarah asked, “what did you see?”

“Rain, sand, I think it was a desert.”

“Are you sure? It doesn’t rain in a desert. That’s why it’s called a desert and not....well...anything else.”

“Beats me dudette, I’m only telling you what I saw.” Now really wanted to get off the topic before everyone just thinks I’m batshit crazy. So quickly asked Mary if she spoke to Captain Ross about going into the Reserves. Well, that took up some time but after a while, talk slowed and stopped as everyone got tired of trying to shout about the roar of the diesel engine. So we road in silence the
The place was pretty much like what I expected; World War 2 buildings, dirt or cracked macadam streets and acres and acres of sand and scrub oak. Damn, why is it the army can build a fort, base or camp anywhere in the world and it will have sand and scrub oak? Just one of those great mysteries of life. The truck rumbled to a stop and Lt Chickadee banged on the side, yelling for us to get out and form up on the company street. The class came pouring out of the back of the duece and a halves on wobbly legs, helping each other up and out of the way as the others tried to jump out. I got out carefully, as this was the beginning of my second trimester and wanted nothing to happen to my pup. Poor guy had been through enough already.

Jenny is going to kill me. Haven’t seen a doctor since my last visit to her and Lewiston. Just haven’t found the time, what with class, studying and taking care of Jeff. But I’m taking vitamins, trying to eat the best I can and getting rest (okay that last one is a little hard to come by). And so far so good, Ulysses seems to be thriving, judging by how strong his soul flutters about. It won’t be long now before that soul joins his body and then he’ll start to move and kick and.....keep me awake at night because of it.

“Welcome to Fort Pickett ,” Captain Ross took command of the company. “We will be staying here in the barracks behind me for tonight. Tomorrow and the nights there after, we will be in the field. The mess hall is that building over there,” he pointed toward a long one story building with faded sun yellowed paint. “You will have your lunch and dinner meals there today. The rest of the time, you will either be having c-rations or food from the mobile mess kitchens. Those of you who have assignments as Mess Officers, pay attention to those in particular as you will be responsible for this equipment along with the care and feeding of troops in the field.”

Think I better keep an eye out. Never know when this could be an ‘extra duty as assigned.’ Meaning, ‘give it to the FNG and let them handle it.’

“You’ll have the next 30 minutes to find your equipment, get it settled and back out here on the company street. We will then march over to the mess hall for lunch, afterward you will be assigned a weapon that you WILL be responsible for, don’t lose it. As I will be responsible for that loss,” he looked out at us darkly, “but know this, if I go down.....I will take you with me.” I’d heard for years of captains losing their commands as well as NCO’s from the top kick on down busted a stripe, over lost weapons. “Anyway,” Captain Ross continued. “The rest of the afternoon until dinner will be spent at the rifle range, firing for familiarization.”

Our duffel bags had been dumped off in a pile in the middle of the company street, so a squad at a time got to go and sort through the mess (hope the tags with our names and social security numbers didn’t come off) to find theirs and go to their assigned barracks.

The omegas were all in the same two story building, must have been a ‘WAC Shack’ at one time judging from the heavy gauge steel chain link screening over the windows. There were five of us for that one big building, Hannah and the other female omega took the upstairs while Libble, Jonesy (an omega from Brooklyn) and I were downstairs. It was an open bay with the bunks lined up side by side the entire length. No wall lockers, so people must used foot lockers instead. Gotta get one of those, think Naomi-Mom has one or two in the attic. Will have to snitch....er...borrow one...when I go there for Thanksgiving next month.

The walls were a dingy white with crumbling posters saying ‘no smoking’ and ‘lose lips sink ships’. The room was in a dull half light as the windows heavy with dirt and fly specks. The floor was wood that had the veneer worn off with the trod of decades of boots both black and brown. Checked out the latrine, it had metal showers, just like Fort Drum, an open row of toilets with no
dividers and concrete floors. Wonderful. Checked out the water pressure...it was okay but the water temperature never got much above tepid.

Picked the bunk nearest the door and unrolled the sleeping bag the stowed the duffel under the bed. Sat down on the thin old mattress and listened to the springboard creak and squeak. Geeze, these must have been here since the place opened. Going to feel weird not to have Jeff around tonight. To reach down and touch his soft little hand or tuck the blanket back up when he kicked it off. Sniffled a bit and ran the back of my hand across my nose. No. Gotta be tough, this won’t be the first nor last time going the field. So gotta get used to it. ‘Don’t be some pussy omega’, could hear Zachariah’s words echoing in my ears.

So got up, squared my shoulders and walked out onto the company street.

Lunch was two dollars of uninspired chicken soup out of a number 10 can and baloney sandwiches. Thank goodness my little fellow traveler liked it and I wasn’t blowing chow outside all over the crabgrass beside the mess hall. Drank a big glass of milk and had a piece of yellow cake for dessert. Glad was able to eat this much and keep it down, as it looked like we’re in for a busy afternoon, with no idea of when dinner was going to be.

We drew weapons next, “you will be handing them back on Friday morning.” The armory sergeant growled as he checked each serial number on the M16, then wrote our name in the log book before each of us signed after it. “You will have this weapon with you every waking and sleeping moment. Take it to the shower, crapper and if you find someone to fuck......this better be slapped your ass.......Sirs and or Ma’ams.”

So, after that inspired little proclamation, our class was loaded back on the trucks and drove off to the range. This time I sat on the floor, leaning on the tail gate, watching the scenery (such as it was) go by. Now it really reminded me a lot of Fort Drum, the dirt roads, lots of woods, with stretches of sand and scrub oak, along with all the ‘temporary wooden buildings’ that weren’t so temporary. Course with a full stomach, the continuous noise and rocking motion of the truck, went into a light doze. The angels, little bastards that they were, decided to come to visit again.

The angels, little bastards that they were, decided to come to visit again.

No deserts or jungles this time but a hotel room. It was nice in an upscale cookie cutter, impersonal kind of way, just judging by the sheet I had wrapped around my body. It was smooth, not scratchy, nope, this was not a ‘hooker sheet’ at some ‘no-tell motel’. Was standing at the window watching planes take off from a near by airport. Must be Washington DC because I could see the Capital Dome in the distance. “Sorry I have to pop off so soon,” heard the British accented voice coming from behind me. “But need to get General Reynolds and his family to the airport. The old man will skin me alive if I’m late. Too bad about his grandson, even if he was gombeen, no one should die like that.”

The alpha who said that was coming out of the bathroom, towel wrapped loosely about his hips, body glistening with water droplets. He was just shy of model handsome, the roughness of the streets covered by the thin veneer that good schooling and expensive cologne can give. Mick (his name is Mick?) had a nicely build frame and the interesting scars which were always my weakness. Scarred alphas with a bit of danger to em; someone who’d make love to me fiercely, thoroughly and judging by the bruises and bites littering my body, with just the right amount of controlled ferociousness. Obviously English but the lilt of the ‘Emerald Isle’ was still in some of his words.

“Think you’re through enough of your heat to get home alright?”

“Yeah, I can manage it from here.” Could feel a plug in my pinks. Just the way they deliciously ached and even my back end had a plug there too (dude obviously liked to drive up the old ‘Hershey Highway’) the sex must have been momentous. “Thanks for being there, a pregnancy
heat can really inhale canal water vigorously.

“Just doing my bit for Queen, Country and international relations,” he grinned boyishly, reaching over to cop a feel. “Mick Davies at your service.” Course that’s when the truck hits a rut in the road and we’re all sent flying and when everyone lands, I end up at the bottom of the dog pile.

“Get off me ya weirdos!” I elbowed and kicked my way out from under. “And whoever is pinching my ass, I will drop kick you in the nuts into the middle of NEXT WEEK, ya perv!”

The deuce and half soon pulls off the road and comes to a stop with a hiss and shutter as the engine is turned off. The quiet is almost startling in its intensity, so that we are frozen there in the back. That is until Lt Chickadee comes round, banging on the side of the vehicle, yelling for us to get out and form up.

The rest of the afternoon the class spends plinking away at various targets. Some of us are good (Hannah is freaken Annie Oakley) while other of us are.....not. Joan Blackburn couldn’t hit a bull in the ass with a base fiddle. I, of course, was one of those who landed on the side of ‘good’. Modest person that I am. Snert. Could tell these were the older models of the ‘16’, fuckers were jamming left and right. The range NCO’s had their rods at the ready (not that kind of ‘rod’ you freaky bitches) to pop down the barrel clear the spent cartridge.

Course after a few hours of wasting tax payer money, came the round of weapons cleaning, which was more make work then it was actual work. Yes, the weapons had to be cleaned. Yes, they needed to be in good working order for the next person. But did they really have to send people back to get rid of the ‘excess’ oil in the barrels if there was too much or put more in if there wasn’t enough? Dry, wet, make up your stupid minds.

Not like it mattered. After about an hour, the command came down to slap em back together and move out.

Dinner was beef stew and sticky rice. Ulysses hated it. Barely made it out the door and around the back of the mess hall before sending a gross mix of rice and gravy into the weeds. Yuck. Oh man, really don’t feel like trying to go back inside to get something in my gut. Think will just walk back to the barracks. Had packed a couple of candy bars in the side pocket of the duffel bag, they’re prolly smashed flat and melted but all things considered....eh...I’d eaten Gabes half chewed MaryJanes, so this was no big.

The sun had gone down and the shadows were playing ‘catch me if you can’ in the moon light. Any warmth from that mid-October sun had gone with it and there was now a slight chill in the air. Wonder if there’s something out there, like at Fort Drum, that’s floating around. Didn’t feel a presence back at the barracks (still brought salt and Florida water though) and really don’t feel anything now. But it was eerie to have sound of my boots on macadam be the only thing I could hear. Was also praying like crazy that the angels wouldn’t show me any more of what was to come. October was when the astral veil was thin and everything andanything could come through. Granted, if they were strong enough or you were in their territory, a spirit could be seen any time of year, but now in the mid October the gates began to push open.

Course when you think about them.......a glowing white mist is crossing the road in front of me. “Swamp gas,” I said out loud watching my breath steam out. “You are nothing but swamp gas. With all due respect.” The mist didn’t seem to take offense and just kept going on its way, crossing into the woods and disappearing into the thicket. Yeah, am definitely salting the doorway tonight. And blessing the mirrors in the latrine, you never know if one of those tricky devils will try to come through there.
Made it back to the barracks, went inside and felt around for the light switch. Found it and flicked it on. There were some hanging florescent lights coming from the ceiling. They flickered, buzzed and came on giving a dull yellowish light. Went to my bunk, pulled out the duffel bag, fished around and got out the salt and Florida water.

“Gee it smells nice in here,” commented Hannah as she and Libbie came back from dinner a little while later. “Did you spray some Airwick?”

“You could say that.” Libbie just gave me a knowing look and pulled a rosary out of his duffel and hung it on the nail in the wall over his cot. He knew the smell of Florida water, as he’d borrowed mine a few times to bless the mirrors in our hotel room those first few weeks.

Now just wanted to get some sleep. Would be getting up at ‘Oh Dark-Thirty’, so best get to bed. Untied my boots and put them under the bunk, then unbuckled the blousers and dropped them in the boots. Slipped off the jacket, fatigue blouse and belt and hung them over the dusty wooden chair next to the bed. Looked around the room, there were no heat grates, just a rusty pot bellied stove in the middle of the room that didn’t look like it had been fired up in years. The bucket laying on its side was full of cobwebs without a stick of wood nor lump of coal.

Crawled into the sleeping bag with the M16, zipped it up, then reached over for the jacket and wadded it up for a pillow. Then curled up, putting an arm around my belly and tried to fall asleep. Flipped over a few times and finally dozed off when the lights were finally turned off. If there were dreams, they were big nothings and the angels left me alone.

Just seemed like a second had gone by when there was pounding on the door and Lt Chickadee yelling “OFF YOUR ASS AND ON YOUR FEET! YOU HAVE 15 MINUTES!” Course the three of us were running around like chickens with our heads cut off. Geeze, it was cold in here. A fast shave (Jonesy looked like he’d been in a cat fight) faster whores bath before tossing on the fatigue blouse I’d worn the day before. Gave my boots a quick once over with a nylon stocking before grabbing up the M-16 from the bunk and running out the door to formation.

“Ya’ll look like shit!” Was the summation of Capt Ross as he surveyed the lot of us. “Turn your sorry selves around and get strack. For those of you who forgot,” and he glowered at those without their new found high caliber friend, “we will have a memory jogger.” Which meant they would be running a round the area a few times. Everyone else would be given another 20 minutes to get ourselves in order, bags packed and back out in the company street. “NOW GET OUT OF MY SIGHT! DISMISSED!”

We all took off running, most to the barracks but five were starting their ‘memory jog’ around the block. “I better hear you singing!” Yelled Lt Chickadee, who was going with them to make sure they didn’t slack off. “I wanna be an airborne ranger, live a life of sex and danger....”

This time, I washed up a bit better, remembered my belt, put some polish on the boots and packed up. Now, was really tired and just wanna go back to bed. But the sun was just peeking over the horizon and there was no way that was gonna happen. “Saddle up Sweetheart,” I ran a hand over my belly. “It’s gonna be a long few days.”

And it was.

Out to the woods, sleeping on the ground in a shared tent with Libbie (he took of most of it) and eating out of a can or off a paper plate. Actually, the food coming out of the mobile mess kitchens was pretty darn good. They were set up with grills, burners and stoves where you could actually bake a cake if the mess sergeant was so inclined, and luckily for us, he was. Chocolate cake with chocolate frosting, even Gabe would’ve been impressed.
We also got to see how a bath and laundry platoon operated with an active demonstration. The NCOIC took our fatigue blouses to show how the washer and dryer worked. Which was good, as most of em could’ve jumped off, saluted and hopped in the washer by themselves. The showers were basically poles staked into the ground with four shower heads and a hose running to them from a water source, to a heater to warm it up some. “When you get back,” Capt Ross held up the manual. “You might want to study this operation in FM 29-3-1, Direct Support Supply and Service in the Theaters of Operations. You all have a copy, I suggest to take a glance at it.” Meaning set it to memory as it was gonna be on a test.

The last night we were out in the field, I couldn’t sleep. My back hurt, Ulysses was wide awake and fluttering up a storm, plus Libbie was snoring like he’d been on a three day bender. So gave up trying, slung the rifle on my back and crawled out to sit in front of the tent in the hopes that maybe if I sat there long enough would get tired. The sky was overcast so not a star was showing through. Took a while for some night vision to come but as it did, one by one the other pup tents materialized as darker lumps against a deep gray backdrop that was the open field we were set up in. The air was cool and damp with the promise of rain, prolly at sun up. Great.

Hadn’t sat there too long when another restless sleeper crept out of a tent, stood, stretched and walked over to sit down next to me.

“You up too?” It was Boss Tweed.

“Yeah, my back was bothering me. The ground is a little bit too hard to get comfortable on.”

“You said a mouthful. Getting too old for this sleeping on ground stuff.” He sighed, “that and am missing my family. As much as mi fanno impazzire, I miss the whole wacky bunch.” Tweed went on to tell funny stories about his mate, in-laws, parents, pups, aunts, uncles and tons of extended family that made me wonder if he was related to everyone in Hoboken. Kind of reminded me of ‘Smelly Toominelli’ and his uncle out at Fort Riley, Kansas. Wonder how they’re doing?

About an hour later, Tweed stood up stretched and yawned. “Think I might be tired enough now to give sleep another try. Night there Cas.”

“Night Tweed.” Maybe I can get a little shut eye too. Crawled back inside and dropped off almost immediately.

In the morning, the rain held off just long enough for those of us smart folks to break down the shelter halves, pack up (have done this before in a driving rain and don’t wanna do it again too soon) and toss the duffels into the back the equipment truck. Course it was coming down in buckets by the time I’m standing in line for breakfast. Didn’t bother trying to find a place to eat, just shoved the food in my mouth almost immediately as it was slapped down on the paper plate. Skipped the plastic forks and used my fingers, licking them clean at the end of the line. For some reason, Ulysses didn’t turn up his nose once at c-rats or what came out of the mobile mess kitchens. Looks like this boy was born for the field.

Once everyone ate and packed up, the class was loaded on the trucks to head for weapons turn in, have an early lunch and then head back to Fort Lee. Farewell and good riddance ‘Mattie Mattel and your sister Belle, you could tell it’s Mattel it’s swell.’ Now that we were back in garrison, Ulysses hated the food and I ended up in back of the mess hall watching two dollars worth of greasy burgers and fries come flying up and into the mud. Sure pup, you loved spiced beef and ‘mystery meat’ but this you have trouble with? Uck, I feel lousy.

The ride back was a misery. You’d think 25 bodies squished in the back of a deuce and a half would generate some heat? Nope. Or at least not enough. I was sitting on the floor, knees against
my chest, pressed up against Libbie trying to stay warm. He wasn’t doing well either, “I’m not built for this,” he hissed through chattering teeth. “Should’a put in for Saudi instead of Germany.

“Better buy some long johns, if you’re going to Hof,” my teeth were going like castanets. “It’s colder then a well diggers ass out there on the Czech border.” Come to think of it, I’d better buy some too. K-town isn’t exactly balmy.

An hour later, the deuce and a half came to a halt. “Okay people,” Lt Chickadee banged on the side of the truck. “Move it, move it, move it! Form up!” We crept out of back of the vehicle, helping each other down. Was so stiff and sore, had hold on to the bumper for a moment to get my balance and some inner fortitude before running over to my place in formation. Captain Ross had a few words of wisdom, only a few of which I caught. The equipment would be turned in Monday at the same place it was picked up. “Clean and in working order. If you lost or broke it, you owe Uncle Sam.” Yeah, yeah, yeah. There would also be a test on Monday morning on what we saw and supposedly learned. Better dig out that manual the Captain was waving around and take a better look at it.

A few more things and then the class was called to attention and dismissed. We were released early and now all I wanted to do was get in the Bug and get back to the BOQ for a bath and change of clothes. Knew there was more to do, like picking up Jeff. The ‘little man who came to dinner’ had prolly wore out his welcome by this time. Then get some food in the house, or....for tonight anyway, order take out from the Chinese joint a few miles from post.

Dragged myself and the duffel to the car, unlocked it, letting all the hot stale air roll out before tossing the duffel into the passengers seat and dropping into the drivers side. “Please start, please start, please start” and thank the Alpha God, she did. Drove slowly back to the BOQ, knew the Bug needed a longer drive then what I was giving her to blow out a few days of just sitting. But I couldn’t, was tired, dirty and just wanted to get home.

Getting back to the ‘Q’, parking in my usual spot and dragging my ass into the building, knew a nap would be the agenda sooner or later....but it had to be later. Took the elevator up and stepped out on the fifth floor. Oh ‘Q’ sweet ‘Q’. Walked down the hall, pulling the duffel along like a stubborn dog. Pulled the key ring out of my pocket and opened the door, letting a wave of warm lemon scented musty air roll out. Who would think lemon Pledge would smell that funky?

Shut the door and locked it, left the duffel in the middle of the floor before stripped out of my fatigues and boots. Now just wanted to climb into the shower and stay there. Got the water running to the right temperature, stepped in and putting my hands on the wall, leaned in and let the hot water cascade down my back. Took a while before the chill washed down the drain with the dirt, stickles and other flora and fauna that decided to hitch a ride back. Soaped and shampooed, then did it again. My hair had grown back in soft and curling waves, thanks to the pregnancy hormones. Will have to get it cut again toot sweet. Ran my fingers through the soft nest of public hair, my dick had cooperated just long enough out in the field so I didn’t have to squat to piss, but now it was noticeably shorter and balls smaller. God bless America and all it’s satellite countries, it’s starting to pull in.

After a while, shut off the water and stepped out of the tub. Now, I’m really tired. Would like nothing better then to flop down on the bed and go to sleep. But can’t, there’s just too much to do. It’s now 15:00, gotta get moving and pick up Jeff. Oh, it was so tempting....but...can’t. Dragged on a pair of jeans, that kinda sorta fit. They hung on my hips as my belly spilled over the top. Damn it, I’m only three months pregnant and look at least four or five! Put on a nursing shirt and pulled on a cable sweater. Got down the lock box from it’s perch in the closet and took out my mating collar. Had left it home, didn’t want to lose it out in the field. One of the guys at advanced camp had lost
his mating ring out in the boonies and the whole company had lined up on hands and knees to
crawl across a field to look for it, course we didn’t find it. Didn’t envy him that phone call home.

Stuffed the wallet and check book in my back pockets, slipped into loafers, then locking the door
behind me, set off to relieve Patricia of my pup. Drove across post trying to make a mental list of
the things I needed to pick up tomorrow from the commissary, but nothing was falling into place.
Was just too tired, too stressed, too everything to put one thought in front of the other.

Got to the Harras and found Jeff had a big ole scrape on his cheek. “He was trying to walk,” Patricia
explained. “Took a step and............there there, come on. Sit down a minute. Have a drink of water
and towel.” Was bawling my eyes out. My pup took his first step and I wasn’t there to see it.

“Why’s the Lieutenant cryin?” Jimmie stage whispered to his sister.

“Cuz Jeff walked and he wasn’t here to see it,” his sister said matter of factly.

“I don’t get it. All he did was take one step and then fell on a bunch a ‘Hot Wheels’. Got the
Mongoose car almost shoved up his nose. If Jeffy flew then that would’ve been cooler.....ow! MOM!”
His mother sent a well aimed tennis shoe across the room that thumped against his chest.

“Grown ups are weird. OW!” The second shoe was just as accurate.

“Papa” looked down to see Jeff was standing, clinging to my knee. “Papa sad?” Then he held up
his arms. “Kith!” Snatched him up and rocked to and fro, sobbing all the harder. Patricia just kept
rubbing my back, allowing all the hurt and frustration to play itself out. Got the feeling this was not
the first time, she’d done this for friends, family or total strangers who’d wandered in and out of
her life over the years. Took a little, but after a while was all cried out and feeling a whole lot
better.

“Thanks,” Was more then a little embarrassed. “Guess I should be getting out of your hair.”

“Grown ups are weird. OW!” The second shoe was just as accurate.

Spent that weekend sleeping late, washing clothes, cleaning up the equipment, studying for the
Monday exam but most importantly, trying to find that damn compass I’d been issued. “Where is
that fool thing?” Had gone through the duffel bags three times, through the pockets of every
uniform, even felt around in the boots. Nothing. Tried to think of the last time I saw it, um......was
putting up the shelter half and thought it was put back in the bag...or pocket....oh crap. Wonder
how expensive a compass is?

“$30 dollars American,” the supply sergeant announced Monday afternoon, when we were turning
in the equipment. “We take cash, check or American Express travelers checks, but you ain’t
moving on to your next posting till we get paid. So some time between then and now.....cough up
the shekels comrade....Sir.”

Will have to budget in the $30 bucks for next month. Car insurance, phone, food, gas, Patricia,
credit card (bought Jeff some more Buster Browns. The pup needs a good pair of shoes for healthy
feet, cripes those things aren’t cheap) and all the other little things that have me scraping for pocket
change by the end of the month.
Our time in the basic course is ticking down fast. In another two weeks, we will graduate and then go on to our specialty courses. About a fourth of the class is going to petroleum management, while the rest of us are going to ‘beans and bullets’ school. Material management, for those so incline. Which means, at some point, Jim Otis was going to be the instructor and grading my test. Oh lovely. Although, he’s not been around lately, so maybe he’s been transferred or moved on to bother someone else.

So Wednesday the 25th of October dawned bright but with the TV weather girl warning of thunder showers in the afternoon. Fine, will get out the rain coat. Got Jeff to Pats house and made it to class on time. Chatted with Mary and kibitzed over her shoulder as she played one of the never ending backgammon games that had sucked in so many. The instructor soon arrived and class was called to order.

It was later that day when Sargeant Harras came up for mail call, that he handed me two letters but along with them, a pink ‘while you were out’ note. “They seemed kind of anxious for you to get back to em.” Mick Davies? Who the hell is that? Except the name in a dream...........oh crap. Checked my watch....... “would it be possible to use the office phone?” Might have just enough time before class starts back up. “I’ll be quick and...and...I’ll even pay for the call.”

Got permission from Captain Ross to be a little late back to class and to even use the office phone. Amazing what happens when you mention the call is from your ‘friends’ at the British Embassy in Washington. Strode down to the office at a trot and was pointed to the phone on Sargeant Harras desk. Dialed the number and listened as the call rang through, was picked up and then an oddly familiar voice answered. “Reynolds residence, Davies here.”

“Uh, hi. Castiel Novac here. If you’re Mick Davies, got your message. Is something wrong?”

“Lieutenant Novac.” There was a silence and then, “the General and the Omega Reynolds wish to inform you of the untimely passing of their son Eric...........”

Chapter End Notes

Ich bin kein problem: German for I am not a problem

The Gold Rush: a Washington DC strip club back in the 1970s

Tio: uncle in Spanish

Quinceañera: a coming of age party for girls in the Latin American community. Kind of like a Bat Mitzvah only more so. Can be celebrated at ages 15 or 16.


By the way, Pyrex from the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s is now collectable. So if your mom or grandma is trying to get rid of her old Pyrex.....grab it!

Hef and Bobby G: are of course Hugh Heffner (Playboy) and Bob Guccione (Penthouse)

Charlie Foxtrot: army slang for ‘cluster fuck’

1905 Columbia Hotel salad:
Sweet Charity is a musical with music by Cy Coleman, lyrics by Dorothy Fields and book by Neil Simon. It was directed and choreographed for Broadway by Bob Fosse. The central character is a dancer-for-hire at a Times Square dance hall. The musical premiered on Broadway in 1966, the musical was adapted for the screen in 1969 with Shirley MacLaine as Charity. - from Wikipedia

The difference between a ‘camp’ and a ‘fort’, is that a fort is a more permanent location and a camp was suppose to be tempery. Which is why places like Camp Pickett and Drum were renamed forts when their missions changed and they came to house and support permanent troop functions.

Sounds like Cas is getting to see his future again and this time it’s the night of November 7th 1990, the first day of Operation Desert Storm. And yeah, it fucking rained.

Army boots and shoes from World War One up until the 1950’s were brown. They changed to black in the 1960’s and then changed again in the late 1980’s to the soft brown suede you see solders wearing now with their fatigues.

Gombeen: Irish slang for an unscrupulous person, usually used for business men or politicians.

Mi fanno impazzire: Italian for they drive me crazy

‘Mattie Mattel and your sister Belle, you could tell it’s Mattel it’s swell: the hand grip for the early versions of the M-16 were made by the Mattel Toy Company. Which included their logo on the grip. Needless to say, the troops were not amused. Mattie Mattel and his sister Belle were the company mascots.
There is nothing like waking up in a strange bed to give one the heebeejeebees right off the get go. Taking in the sight of the early morning sun sending a shaft of light through a break in the curtains. Seeing the impersonal yet oddly personal furniture and wall art a really nice hotel tries to bring to its paying guests. Not that I’ve woken up in that many nice hotels, but heard about this from other omegas who’d had done it back in finishing school. Rolling over, I automaticly reached down to the little mattress and pup that weren’t there, as Jeff had spent the night in the hotel nursery. Oh yeah, now I remember: this is the 10th floor of the Crystal City Marriott, the heat floor, that’s where I was.

Tossed off the covers and shivered a little. The central air conditioning was still set at 65 degrees, making the room a bit chilly, but when you’re in heat, it’s the little things that make it easier to get through. Sat up slowly, taking in the scratches, bruises and bites. No challenge bites of course, even in a fucking frenzy, my erstwhile partner in crime had enough on the ball not to want to test his luck against two older alphas, both generals, one bull and the other a cunning strategist. There was not enough luck in Ireland to have made him test that theory.

Wrapping myself in a sheet, went to the window to have a look round and out, the 10th floor gave a wonderful view of the planes taking off and landing from the Washington National Airport just about a mile away. Mick Davies had apparently already gotten up and from the sound of running water and his baritone voice belting out ‘Everybody loves somebody some time.....’ was in the shower getting himself ready to leave. He was meeting the Reynolds over at Andrews Air Force Base to fly back with them to England for Erics funeral.

Ambassador Jay had called the White House, pulled in a couple of political IOU’s and the family was on the first hop out of Andrews to Greenham Common at 10:00 o’clock this morning. Saturday the 28th of October in the year of our Alpha Lord 1978.

Okay, I suppose we should start back from the phone call Davies made three days earlier that Wednesday afternoon. After the official announcement, Mick dropped any guise of authority and the helpless voice of someone trying to do the right thing replaced it. “When’s the soonest you can be here? Omega Reynolds is having a bad time of it, her father is trying but not doing well. Her mother is flying in from Vienna but won’t be here until Friday!”

Which was the soonest I could be there. Three hours away and I can’t be there any sooner then her mother coming in from Europe. Promised I would try to be there as fast as I could before hanging up and heading back to class. Maybe can explain it to Captain Ross, that Jenny is pining, our families share a ‘Profound Bond’ and that I had to leave early.

“You share a what?” Captain Ross said incredulously as I broached him on the subject in his office after we were dismissed for the day.

“A Profound Bond,” I said again, and now a little slower. “It’s an ancient tradition that binds families for the mutual benefit of both. You see, I’m the First to....”

“I really don’t give a shit, if you’re a Second, Third or Fourth to Mary Fucking Queen of Scots.” Ross interrupted. “You think that fancy omega shit lets you come and go as you please just cuz you know some uppity up Limey at the embassy?” (Wonder what he would’ve said if he knew WHO I
was mated to) “That got you a phone call and that’s about all it gets you. You’re an ace away from failing this course and being recycled. Is that what you want?”

“No Sir.” I can’t fail. Would never be able to look John in the eye if that happened.

The captain leaned forward in his chair. “Cuz I could let you go and believe me I want to. I wanna see you fall on your sword so hard, I could taste it. But, in good conscience, as an officer and a gentleman, I can not. Plus, the guy who saved my bacon back in ‘Nam is the adviser for the next class coming in behind us, so I couldn’t stick him with you. Your request for leave is here by denied.” He stood up and leaned over his desk. “Now get the fuck out of my sight.”

I disappeared faster then a magicians rabbit. Course, that’s when I run head long into Major Otis out in the hallway, knocking the papers from his hands and scattering them about. “Hey there, you in trouble again? What am I saying again.....still and continuous?”

“Excuse me SIR,” said between my teeth as I picked up the papers. “Sorry SIR.”

“You know that tone you got there is just this side of ‘fuck you SIR’.

I’m being insubordinate, “sorry Sir. I....I....had some bad news, requested leave and was turned down. Want to be there for my Firsts family......but there is nothing I can do about it.”

“Welcome to the army Son,” the Major said not unkindly. “Can’t tell you the number of missed birthdays, funerals and divorce hearings I missed because duty calls.” He sighed, “thought you knew that, being a brat and all.”

“Yeah, I know.” But having Zachariah as a father meant him being away was the blessing not the curse of him being there. But now it all comes home, I’m missed my son’s first steps. I’m late to helping Jenny, I’m not at all sad at Eric being dead. Whoa, does that make me a bad person? Damn hormones. Start to sniffle a little.

“Come on there Lieutenant,” the Major said, patting me on the shoulder. “Buck up. You have a pup who’s counting on you.”

He’s right of course. “Yes Sir. Thank you Sir.” Plus, didn’t wanna pay that extra ten bucks for being late.

After I got back from picking up Jeff, getting him fed, bathed and laid down, was able to take a moment to fix myself a baloney sandwich and put a call in to the Reynolds. Jesse answered after the fourth ring. “Reynolds residence, Jesse Reynolds speaking.” Could tell by that tone of voice he was stepping up, trying to be the brave and stoic alpha.

“Hello my First.”

“Oh Cas it’s awful!” The stoic alpha gone, replaced by a scared pup. “Mum won’t stop crying, Dad is holding it together by a thread, Erica won’t stop bossing me around and......and.....is it so bad, I don’t miss him at all?”

“No Baby, to be honest, I don’t miss him either. Just don’t tell your mother.” Oh, that didn’t sound right. Let’s try this again. “It’s okay not to miss Eric, but it’s okay to miss your brother.”

“But how do I do that? He’s the same person. Billy-o! It’s so weird!” Poor thing, know how he feels. Now just have to put it in words he’ll understand.

“I know My First. I have brothers that I can’t stand as people. But I remember what they were like
when we were little; when we were family, unpresented and just pups.” Even Lucifer I loved at one time, before he fell under Zachariahs sway and became the man he is now. “Did he ever do anything nice for you?”

There was a pause. “He showed me how to tie my laces.”

Surprised there was even that much good Eric did. Course I’m not gonna say that out loud. “Remember that part of him, not the rest. The rest you can deal with when you get a little older and have a bit more perspective.”

“Is this stuff always this hard?”

I sighed, “yeah. And it gets worse.” The two of us talk a long time. I promised to be there on Friday as soon as I as could.

The next two days crawl by. There was nothing in ‘em that would’ve mattered had I missed them. I didn’t have to be drown proofed. Even pregnant, I could swim like a crocodile....but apparently some of my class mates couldn’t. Not a stroke. They stood on the edge of the pool with ashen faces and a round scared eyes. These folks were given life preservers and told to get in the shallow end. If they refused, that ended their careers right there. So, dutifully they went to the shallows and nervously edged in. Once each found out they weren’t going under, a look of wonder replaced the terror and they paddled up to join the rest of the class.

I kept my glasses on the whole time, even underwater. There was no way, was going to give anyone the opportunity to even connect the dots between me and Mega Magazine.

And speaking of......On Friday, really didn’t have to go over to the Riggers School. I jumped out of perfectly good airplanes. Also didn’t need Waxman to see me. He was there as one of the demonstrators showing how to pack a chute. Which was really interesting to watch, but I didn’t get myself to the post barber shop yet and, the last thing he needed to see was Cal State standing in front of him. I suppose I should be a little more worried about some of the guys in the class recognizing me, but then again.......who could expect to see ‘the pinkie of the month’ sitting next to them at their Quartermasters Officers Basic class? Well, other then Libbie, Tarah and Mary. Maybe I need to get a cut pronto Tonto.

Which reminds me......on Thursday, we found out that Mary and Cleo the cat were headed for Germany in January. She did talk to Captain Ross, put in her paper work and it didn’t take long for her to be transferred out of the Idaho National Guard to active duty in the Reserves. She was going to Bremerhaven, a port city on the North Sea and a big material transfer point. Cleo in the mean time got ‘fixed’, her shots and lots of toys to make up for the indignities visited upon her person.

On that same day, Libbie was called down to the admin office as an envelope arrived that he had to sign for. In it were his courting contract and other legal documentation annulling the courting. There had been no warnings anything was wrong, no slow down in letters or phone calls.....just this. Sargeant Harras had put in a call to the Catholic chaplain when the envelope arrived, not wanting to take any chances, as in his experience, no good ever came from a letter you had to sign for from a lawyers office. So Capt Father Francis and a bottle of bourbon (Sergeant Harras was nothing if not prepared) were waiting for Libbie when he got down there. Libbie came back to class about an hour later red faced from crying, a smidgin tipsy but holding it together.

It was later that night, when Tarah, Mary and I with Jeff in tow went over to keep our friend company as he got really, really drunk. Apparently, his intended found an omega who was more the stay at home type or who was a whole lot cheaper and now was courting them. “Bet it was one of those streetwalking putas from Lawton,” Libbie wailed. . Ah, Lawton, Oklahoma, where old
Burger Kings go to die and a lot of ‘working girls and omegas’ who ‘married’ G.I.’s overseas came back, got a quickie divorce and were now plying their trade on Cashe Street. What Hay Street is to Fort Bragg, Cashe Street is to Lawton. “He IS NOT getting this watch back!”

Which in the long run didn’t matter, as an hour later, we all took turns stomping the Seiko Panda to little pieces. Libbie went back to his ‘dollar watchee Timex’, which prolly told better time any way and dumped the remains into a box to mail them back to his ex-intended.

Tarah was on her way to Cincinnati next week end. With half the girls in class getting the female version of a ‘Dear John’ letter or phone call, she wasn’t taking any chances. The ticket was going to take a chunk of her monthly pay, even with a military discount, but for a little piece of mind, would be worth the price.

At the tick of 16:00 Friday afternoon and the words ‘dismissed’ not even half way out of the instructors mouth, I was shoving stuff into the brief case and was bolting out the door. Sprinted down the hall and out the main door, one hand holding the case, the other cradling my belly. Took the steps two at a time before hitting the ground running. Made it across the parade field, access road and parking lot into the BOQ in record time, skidding to a halt in front of the elevator. Thumbing the button impatiently, “come on, come on!” The doors finally sliding open, discharging some middle aged beta men. They were civilian government employees (just a guess from their hair cuts, pot guts and posture) prolly here to take classes over at the Logistics Center.

“Hey there, where’s the fire Lieutenant?” One of em said as I tried to squeeze past. “How’s about having a drink with us?”

“Thank you no,” said quickly. “Places to be, things to do....bye.” Was in the car and pounding on the 5th floor button.

“No it isn’t,” I called back. Assbutts.

Once in the room, stripped out of my uniform, kicked off the shoes and left them in a pile on the floor. Dressed quickly in the most comfortable jeans, I owned. Shit, they were the ones with elastic in the back, pulled a rugby shirt out of the closet and tugged it over my head. Slipped on the loafers, then slung the duffel bag over my shoulder, locked the door and ran down the hallway.

Got over to Patricia’s, handed her the money for the week and picked up Jeff from the floor, where he was stuffing Hot Wheels in his mouth. “Spit em out kid, we gotta go.” As I was walking out the door could hear Jimmie complaining that Jeff had bit the tires off his Shelby Cobra. “I’ll get you a new one,” I yelled over my shoulder. I really gotta get this pup a teething ring before I buying out the entire Hot Wheels department at Woolworths. Hope Jimmies sister keeps her Barbie up off the floor or I’ll be buying her, Midge, Skipper, Curly...Moe...Larry....who the fuck cares!

Strap Jeff in his car seat and then take off for DC. Of course we hit rush hour traffic around Richmond, everyone is driving like a maniac trying to get home for the weekend. I suppose having the radio blasting ‘Ball room Blitz’ didn’t help matters and just added to the whole ‘if you can’t beat em, join em’ mentality with a smidge...oh who am I kidding....a lot of Autobaun tossed in for good measure. My dearest little boy thought this was the greatest thing ever, cuz he was bouncing up and down, waving his arms and singing along.

“Waaaaawaaaaawaaaa...blitz.....blitz....Irv!”

“It’s, it’s a ball room Irv!” I sang along, dodging the Bug in and out of traffic going 70 miles an
hour in a double nickle. Holy Baby Jebus! At 70 mph was just barely keeping up with the rest of em. Well, on the upside, it did get us around Richmond toot sweet and on to I-95 where everyone slowed to 65 as the Virginia state police seemed to be everywhere. Well it is the end of the month and they’re trying to catch their quota.

So the music has got to match, and the good folks at WLEE (1480 on your radio dial. Yes, I would like to win $14.80) were not helping. Oh thanks for playing ‘Hot Rod Lincoln’, sons of bitches. “Son, you’re gonna drive me to drinken, if you don’t stop driving that hot rod Lincoln!” Oh tell em Commander Cody!

Between the police, another traffic jam outside of....crap, missed the sign for the name of the exit and having to stop to change a diaper or two.....yeah there was a third. We didn’t pull into the embassy parking lot until almost 08:00 that night. Oh man, I’m hungry, tired and thank the Alpha God, Jeff had fallen asleep after his bottle and a couple of Zwiebacks with a drop or two of Tabasco for taste. Found a parking spot and rolled the Bug in to a stop, put it in park and then turned off the engine. Sighed and leaned back in the seat, now I just wanna get inside, have a little something to nibble on....like Lewiston ...and then have something to eat. Snert, oh, crap I’m tired.

Got out of the car and carefully shut the door. Let’s just let sleeping puppies stay asleep. Jeff’s pushing a few new teeth and is having trouble sleeping which means I’m having trouble sleeping. Also explains why Jimmies Hot Wheels cars are taking the brunt of those new teeth. Opened the passengers side door and carefully lifted Jeff out of his car seat, “it’s okay Baby, stay asleep.” He snorted and snuffled a bit but didn’t wake up. Just lay there drooling on my shoulder.

Now if we can just have to keep the racket down to a dull roar, he’ll sleep right through anything. Using my best ‘tea cup on my head’ walk (see, it comes in handy) glided across the parking lot to the Reynolds door and rang the bell. Funny, usually the porch lights are on after dark. Most times I knock, but figured this is quieter. When no one immediately came, punched the button again. Waited a bit longer before the door suddenly whipped open..... to reveal.....who the hell are you? A tall alpha was framed in the doorway with the light behind him so he was just a featureless silhouette. “Uh hi.” Did I end up at the wrong door by mistake?

Took a step back off the stoop, the Lovers Kiss was in the glove box, so had a straight shot back to the car if I needed to make a break for it.

“Can I help you?” The tall alpha asked tiredly.

“Um, is this the Reynolds residence?”

“It is. I’m afraid they’re rather indisposed at the moment”, which of course opens up the definition of ‘indisposed’, as the sound of angry female voices erupt from the back ground. From my vantage point outside could see Jenny gliding ghost like into the kitchen, with an older alpha woman trailing after her. For the first time ever, Jenny looked old, worn out and unkempt. The sweat and food stained shapeless house dress she had on made her look like a low rent Lady MacBeth. The only thing missing was a head full of curlers and her crying ‘out damn spot’.

The arid smell of wet dog, brunt metal, rot, sorrow and anger, came barreling out the door like a wave. Oh dear Alpha God! What’s happening in there!?

“You have to buck up my girl,” the older woman barked. “And get your head out of the sand.”

“Why can’t you just let me alone?” Jenny wailed. “Why can’t you just let me grieve?” Oh no, have to get to my Jenny. Have to be there for her. Tried to push passed the alpha but he grabbed my shoulders and forced me back out. “My Eric is gone!”
“Your Eric is gone because you mollycoddled the boy into thinking he could do no wrong, nothing could hurt him and there were no consequences for his actions!” Ouch, that hit the nail on the head, though I wouldn’t have pointed that out at this second.

“You’re a mean, spiteful old woman Mother!” Jenny hissed. “Who never loved us and only used us …………..” Oh that’s her mom and………..owwwwwwww! That old beta is fast! Bet that right hook hurt like a mother fucker. Her daughter ended up knocked back against the kitchen cabinets, holding her eye. That is gonna be a ugly shiner in the morning.

“Don’t you ever say that again,” the old lady said angrily. “I miss your brothers every single day. There’s not a moment that I don’t think of them or that my heart breaks for their loss. But at least they were heroes, who died with honor in the cause of the Empire. Eric” died because of his own greed, debauchery and stupidity!” She balled a fist again, “Heroin, my girl. He died of a heroin overdose and what was left of him was found in the mud at the Canary Docks. The only way the authorities could identify Eric was because the gum fob found on him that kept the credit card receipts in it dry and legible. Thank the Alpha God for that small mercy.”

Whatever anger Jenny had that stiffened her spine bled out as her mothers words took hold. “Please, don’t say those things. Please.” Even though I REALY didn’t like Eric, I never felt so sorry for anyone in my life.

“Someone had to. Your father won’t because he loves you too much and Lewiston is too far in the bundu right now to deal with you. So it’s left me.”

“Eric wasn’t a bad boy,” Jenny whimpered. “He fell in with bad company and was led astray by Lucifer..”

“He was not a boy he was a bloody man!” Her mother shouted. “He didn’t fall in with bad company, he did a bloody swan dive! If it hadn’t had been Lucifer Novac, it would’ve been someone else.” (Luci?! What’s he got to do with this?!) “You’re grieving for the memory of a pup that never existed.” (WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON IN THERE?!) “And I’m not going to stand by and watch you pine to death, not when you have a perfectly good mate and pups who need you!” Watched as my dearest Brit ran from the room with the other woman following after her, “Jeanette Jerome Reynolds, I raised you better then this! We are NOT done here yet!”

Now, I have to get in there. “Let me in! Jenny needs me!”

“Actually, she doesn’t.” The tall alpha said firmly. “Lady Moore is handling her daughter and I’m under orders to keep you out.”

“Who’s orders?” The nerves vanished, adrenalin kicked in and I’m getting royally pissed. “Lewiston would never do that to me. Besides, why would I be invited to come and then be kept away?”

“Actually it was General Reynolds who told me to keep you out. He wants to apologize for the whole muck up. He tried to ring you up several times today to cancel but apparently you’d left already.” The alpha sighed. “Oh, I’m Mick Davies by the way.” He held out his hand, which I purposely ignored. Davies shrugged pulling his hand back but not moving.

“Mind if I get that from the General himself?”

“He’s…………..indisposed.”

“I don’t care if he’s playing naked polo with that jug eared cocksucker Prince Charles and who
ever he’s trying to propose to this week. I WANNA SEE GENERAL REYNOLDS!” And before he could protest, I simply pushed Jeff into his arms then slipped by and into the kitchen. Oh my Alpha God, the stink of sorrow and sadness! Tears just welled in sympathy and tracked down my face. Picked up the slip of a Lewistons scent and followed it to his office.

In the same room where I’d met Eric that Christmas week last year, stretched out on the leather couch, a bottle of Old Grand Dad clutched to his chest was Major General Lewiston Reynolds. Except he didn’t look much better then his mate. Unshaven, uniform in disarray, hugging that bottle of booze like his life depended on it, Lewiston lay there, a picture of abject misery. When a strong alpha man falls apart, they fall hard and it’s never a pretty sight. “My Lord Alpha,” shook him gently. “Lewiston, please. What’s going on?!”

The General opened his eyes, ewww, they’re red and blood shot, “Good evening Castiel. I am not in a position to receive guests at this moment, I’m very sorry.” No kidding. Course it didn’t stop him from automatically reaching over and cupping a feel of tit. Looked down, his pants were starting to pitch a tent. Figures. Sex is the remedy for everything with an alpha, even if they’re not actively thinking about it. Unfortunately for me, the bitch sisters of genetics and biology decided to tag team like Jerry and Johnny Valiant (What? Had to watch SOMETHING in the middle of night to get Jeff back to sleep and wrestling was the only thing on) and together suddenly..... “is it hot in here? It’s hot in here.” Oh please don’t let this kick in a heat. Distressed alpha, horny willing pregnant omega, nothing brings up a heat faster then that.

“You smell nice,” Lewistons voice was a throaty purr. “Better then nice.” Then seemingly surprised with himself and that I’m still standing there. “You’re wearing too many clothes.” He raised himself up on an elbow, scenting the air, the purr is morphing into a growl. “Mine,” and his fingers closed painfully around my wrist.

“Lieutenant Novac,” huh? What? That’s when I noticed there was someone else in the room and what set off the bout of possessiveness in Lewiston. An older alpha dude (who called ‘Central Casting’ for a stuffy old English spymaster type?) was seated in the leather arm chair to the immediate right, just as you just walk into the room, which explained why I didn’t notice him right off the get go. “If you wouldn’t mind calming him down a trifle, we have a bit to talk about.” Oh, oh yeah. I can do that. “My Lord Alpha,” leaned in and kissed his ragged face. “You need to rest My Lord, you need your strength to take me long and well. As I am but a simple omega at the service to my Lord Alpha.” Yeah, poured it on a little thick, but with a few shots of scent across his bow, Lewistons eyes closed, the bottle fell from his grasp and rolled on to the floor as he dropped in to a deep scent induced sleep. Set the half dead solder upright and corked it. Boy, considering the shit show I just witnessed, wanted to polish the rest of the bottle rikki-tick.

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Since you’re here and in the thick of it,” the old man filled the pipe he’d pulled out of his pocket and then with a flick of a thumb on a kitchen match, lit it and started puffing away. “I suppose you need an explanation.”

“You mean other then Eric is dead from a heroin overdose, my brother Luci has something to do with it, Jenny’s doing a great Sarah Bernhardt impression, Lewiston is drunk as war lord and............. Where are pups? Where’s Erica, Jesse and Sir Winnie? And by the way, since we’re at it, who the fuck are you?”

The old man a few puffs off his pipe, “I’m Richard Moore, Jenny’s father. You seem to have the gist of why things are in a bit of a state around here. The pups were sent to stay at the ambassadors residence until tomorrow morning, when we’ll be leaving to fly back to bury Eric.”

“You think so huh?” After what I’ve just seen, the chances of that are slim and none and none just
“I know so,” Richard Moore replied rather matter of factly. “They will be ready to board that aircraft by 10:00 AM tomorrow morning. Duty will win out over all. And my daughter and son-in-law are nothing if not dutiful.”

“Not from what I’ve seen tonight.” I leaned forward, gripping the bottle by the neck. Will not feel too guilty butt stroking this guy up side the head with it. Will just explain that it slipped from my hand five or six times and ‘accidentally’ whacked the dude in the noodle.

The old man snorted a bitter laugh. “Oh I’ve seen men sodden with drink, passed out from opium-pipes still in their hands, knots deep in women or omegas, leap up sober and ready for the fight when duty calls.”

Sadly, knew this was true. Had heard enough stories over the years and had seen it with Zachariah, who would be passed out piss ass drunk on the living room floor at 03:00 AM but be cleaned up and ready to walk out the door by 06:00 AM. “So what now?”

Richard Moore sniffed the air, “now. You leave. You have a heat coming on and need it taken care of. Mr Davies!” Mick Davies quickly appeared in the doorway. He was still holding Jeff, but at arms length. Yeah, the smell of Love Canal’ came through to tickle....okay, burn our nose hairs.

“What did you feed this pup!” Was kind of sadistically fun watching the alphas’ nose try to crawl back into his face.

“Cow juice and Zweibacks with a smidge of hot sauce.”

“Dear. Alpha. GOD! Slaughter houses don’t smell this bad.” He just about tossed Jeff into my arms.

“You a stinky puppy,” I cooed, nuzzling his little snub nose. “You a silly stinky puppy and Mr Davies is just a big wussy.”

Mr Moore blew a lot more smoke into the air before turning to Davies. “Take the two of them back to your room at the Crystal City Marriott. Lieutenant Novac has a heat coming on and it needs to be attended to. As for the boy, I believe the hotel concierge has a pup minding service, so he will cared for during that time. Dismissed, off you go.”

“Yes Sir,” Mick Davies looked about as thrilled at the prospect, as I was.

Changed Jeff’s diaper outside on the hood of the non nondescript embassy staff car, that I’d parked next to...the verbal sparring began. “We’re taking my car,” I said tossing the messy nappy into the diaper bag, along with at least half a roll of paper towels I’d used to wipe up the crap. Had washed him off in a pail of warm water that Davies had brought out from the kitchen. Had no desire to be in that house any longer then I had to.

“Right.” The dildo with a body attached, crossed his arms and stepped back on his heel. “Like I’d trust you to know where to go. I think not. We will take my rental.”

After a bit more arguing, it was agreed I’d follow him to the hotel. Even if he thought I wouldn’t be able to drive with a heat coming on. Told him off in several different languages and at least three separate dialects, I was more then capable. Well, was half right any way. Was able to keep my mind on the road long enough to follow the tail lights of the Pontiac Sunbird that Davies had rented through the thinning DC traffic. It was crossing the Potomac that a few drops of slick trickled through, dampening my pinks. Oh shit! This can’t be happening! Come on Novac! Keep it
Didn’t realize how bad it was until we got to the parking garage, found a spot and I leaned in to get Jeff out of his car seat. His little nose twitched, looked over at Mick Davies and with just as much fierceness as he could muster, Jeff growled and showed his little teeth or what ones he had. The growl was so high pitched and cute, couldn’t help myself from laughing. “Who’s the ferocious little man? Who’s Papa’s protector against the big bad alpha. You are. You are.” Then peppered his cheeks with kisses.

“Shall we?” There was a strain in Davies voice. “Unless you want to go into a full blown heat down here in the car park. Would really hate to kill the riff raff unnecessarily.”

Yeah, maybe I do need to get my head out of my ass. So took the elevator up to the main lobby and stepped out. He pointed to an overstuffed chair and advised me to sit. (What am I, a dog?) “Here, let me have your pup. Will arrange for someone to watch over him tonight and get a switch to a heat room.” Well, that would a good idea. Considering every Tom, Dick and Harry would have an ear or nose glued to the door if he didn’t.

The desk clerk was a rather stoic middle aged beta fellow who’d prolly seen every thing walk in and (enough old dudes who died in the saddle and carried on a stretcher) out of this hotel. So he didn’t raise an eye brow at the request for a heat room and a pup sitter for the night. “Will you be requiring tie downs, paddles or gags?”

“No,” Mick said loftily. “I’m perfectly capable of rogering without. Perhaps a bowl of popcorn, a couple bottles of Guinness, pitcher of lemonade....”

“A Reuben sandwich,” I called over. What? I didn’t have dinner. Which reminds me. Got up and walked over carefully, squeezing those kegel muscles just as hard as possible. Was trying to keep in the slowly growing sea of slick that was gathering in my channel. Now was trying not to think of needing a Dutch boy with a big finger to put in the dyke.........which set off a whole other set of jokes. MICK MAKE THIS FAST! “Here,” I threw Jeff’s diaper bag across the check in desk. “Diapers. Food. Last of the Mohicans...waterfall chapter. We gotta wrap this up fast or someones gonna need a mop and bucket!”

There were more then a few alpha faces lighting up around the lobby at that announcement.

The desk clerk quickly handed Mick a room and elevator key. “Use the furthest car to the right, Room 10, 10th floor. I suggest you hurry. We will send an omega bell hop with your order once it’s ready.”

We made a break for the bank of elevators as did a few of the more aggressive alphas, that is until the door slid open we stepped in and before the others could elbow each other out of the way, I’d pulled out the ‘Lovers Kiss’ from my waist band. “Don’t even think about it, cuz I’ll drop the lot of ya like a bad habit.” They stopped dead and took a few steps back. “I’ve just enough ammo for each of you, so don’t even think you can rush me.” The door slid shut.

As the car started up, the elevator version ‘I’ve got you under my Skin’ came on and Mick leaned over, “you know the safety is on.”

“It is?” Clicked it off. “There now...all better.”

“Would you’ve really pulled the trigger down there?”

To quote that great philosopher, Bugs Bunny.....’he don’t know me very well, do he?’ “You better
shit in your mess kit I would. Wasn’t about to count on you to protect me.”

Mick pulled out a rather impressive revolver from the holster beneath his coat. “I do alright.”

I guess you do. “Nice. Colt?”

“Sig Sauer P210-3’, Swiss design and manufacturer. This is the Swiss police version chambered in 9 mm Luger and .30 Luger, with wood grips, fixed sights, and polished blue finish. They built only 900 specimens for the police of Basel, Lausanne, Glarus and a few units for sale to private individuals.”

Now I’m really wet. “Cats ass.” What can I say? The power and danger that just the description of this weapon excites me. Plus the name, Sig Sauer. It just oozes sex. And Mick noticed.

He nonchalantly, worked the mechanism, “The SIG brief of building a Browning-style, short recoil, swinging barrel autopistol with the accuracy of a Luger, inspired one key design improvement, whereby SIG engineers dispensed with the barrel swinging link, faithfully adapted from the M1911 Colt.”

Oh Shit, oh Alpha God, that is the most erotic thing I’d ever heard in my life!

“I got this little beauty off a Provo in a back alley in Belfast.” Mick gave the weapon a kiss. “Caught me unawares and had it right to my head, right like this.” Micks English accent melted away like a Spring snow as he moved behind me and put the barrel of the Sig to my right temple. “Be ye Protestant or be ye Catholic?”

The cold metal sent an electric shock down my spine as did the implications of the question posed. Couldn’t hold that flood of slick if my life depended on it. The trouser inseam was immediately soaked from crotch to hem. “Had to think quick because I was right on edge of the districts.....sooooo”

Could feel the hot breath move across my neck until his lips pressed to my ear. “What did you say?”

“That I was a bloody Jew.” Micks hand traveled down the front of sodden material of my shirt and trousers and give the basket a squeeze. “Oooooo, you be a hot clime omega. They do tend to be so versatile.”

I whimpered, slicked all the more as his hardness rocked to and fro into the cleft of my bottom. “What did he say next?” I whispered, hung suspended between the anticipation of his words and the promise of his body.

Mick laughed evilly. “He said that he was the luckiest Arab in Belfast,” Could hear the hammer pull back with a deafening metallic click. “It was the worst kind of devils trap. No matter what I said, it would be wrong and I’d be dead.”

“What did you do?” The Lovers Kiss was hanging loosely in my fingers. Could’ve put a stop to the insanity in a heartbeat, but there was no way I could’ve brought this to a halt any more then I could’ve asked to stopped breathing.

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“Asked for one thing before he pulled the trigger, if he had a lighter. Said I didn’t want him to miss.” Provo thought it was funny as hell. So he pulled the Zippo out of his pocket and after a few tries got it to spark. “Now says he, I can watch you die good and proper Jew boy.”

“And then?”

“Obviously I got to see him ganked instead.” The elevator slowed to a halt, ready to open the door.
but Mick reached over and hit the stop button. He nor I were ready to end the moment. Now I
turned and went nose to nose with the alpha. Pressing my body into his. “It was a set up. Had
reports of someone leaving bodies willie nilly all over both districts. Didn’t matter, orange or
green. The Sig was his calling card, so we knew it was him what done the killing. Had to find a
way to flush him out and what better way then to put out some bait.” He buried his nose against my
neck then wetly licked a strip along my wind pipe. “Would’ve surprised him if he knew it was his
own people what give him up and put the bullet in. Kill’en for the cause is fine, kill’en for your
own pleasures.....nah...bad bit of business don’t you know.”

“You were bait.” This news shook me right down to the core. It was scary, sexy and stupid all at
the same time.

“Yes, I was. The Provo and Red Hand found something they disliked more then each other and
even asked the Glenanne Gang for a volunteer. So I did, till we got him.” He pushed me back a
little to open his jacket and shirt to reveal some long nasty scars across his chest and belly. “More
then once did I have a bit ogeous handlin with the wrong fellas till the right one showed up.” Mick
snorted a laugh. But that was in my younger wilder days, before I met Old Man Moore and
changed me wicked ways.”

Mmmmm, Think I want to see a few of those wicked ways. “You would make such fine bait,” his
voice was breathy and full of want. “Half the men and alphas in Londonderry would line up to be
sent to their doom with a smile, a stiffy and a full knot if you roamed bout after dark.”

OH THAT DID IT! Leaned over and pushed the button for the elevator doors to open. “You better
get me to that room right now, while I’ve got a couple of brain cells to rub together.” As the car
doors slid open we stumbled out and down to room 10. Oh it must have been a sight; half naked,
pawing and clutching, pistols at the ready to blast anyone who might try anything ‘funny’. The two
of us slam into the door of Number 10, Mick was having the worst time trying to shove the key
into the lock. “Think of me,” I whispered wetly into his ear, the key of course went in like it had
eyes. We fell through the door and it slammed shut behind us. The lights came on and our clothes
hit the floor in messy wet splats. The Sig and Lovers Kiss were set together with in easy reach on
the night stand in case they were needed.

Now could see the scars on full display on his body as my growing belly was there for his eyes.
“Now me fine Omega, what do ye have for your alpha?”

I bent over the bed, so that he had a good view of pink, slick and choice of places he could use.
“Well, you just gonna stand there? Apparently not, as he simply wrapped his arms above and
below my expanding belly rammed himself home. No foreplay or kisses, just blind need. The knot
tried to catch but pulled painfully, deliciously out with each stroke. Knot popp’en. Oh dear Alpha
God! Make it hurt! Make it hurt!

The first round was quick, down and dirty. Waiting for the knot to go down took longer then the
actual event. But it calmed as did the heat and for a moment, before it would come roaring back up
from the embers, we rested. When I could slide off, got up and went to the bath to wash off the
slick and cum that painted the inside of my thighs. And to tank up on some water. Can’t afford to
go dry now. Filled one of the water glasses that sat next to the pretty soaps, shampoo and lotions,
on the vanity. It took a few glass fulls before it even put a dent in my thirst. Then wet a wash cloth
and cleaned myself up.

Ran some water in another glass for Mick, bringing it and a warm wash cloth out. He was in bed
where I’d left him, laying flat on his back, an arm tossed over his eyes. “Alpha,” I called softly.
Really didn’t want to startle him. Not after hearing about his connection to ‘The Troubles’ in
Northern Ireland. “May I touch you now? Just want to tidy things up.”

“Yes, thank you.” Micks voice was low and come out in a sigh. “That would be nice.”

Set the glass down on the night stand in easy reach and set to work. So I wiped down his cock and balls, treating them will all the respect due to them. It also gave me time to reflect, now that in the eye of this ‘heat storm’ I could put a few relevant thoughts together. Was Mick good? Yes. Was his cock big? Big enough to do the job. Was he going to be a tender lover? Obviously not. But I didn’t want that. That’s what Benny, Tony and Hugh were for. To take me sweetly, carefully as if my body were made by the angels, tender flesh to be worshiped and adored. John was there in the middle as a good mate should, to fuck me with that big bull alpha cock of his. Dean fit in with...with ...I can’t remember, it’s been so long. Jenny and Lewiston, my Lord Alpha and Lady Omega, allow my submissive omega instincts to come out in the dark all while allowing me the strength and independence of a modern omega in the light of day.

For the next several minutes, went to and fro from the bath to rinse out the wash cloth and draw more warm water. Covering him each time with the blanket so there wouldn’t be a chill. Gotta keep those big sacks warm. They were ripe as Georgia peaches and just as heavy with seed. After I was satisfied the bits were neat and tidy, covered them with a soft towel and began to wipe the dried sweat from his chest, tracing the scars and leaving kisses on those most deep and dreadful. Followed one that ran up and across his left pec that split the nipple in two. Couldn’t even begin to think of how painful that must have been.

“It was either that or me bollocks, I was given a choice.” Mick opened an eye from beneath his arm. “Not the best, but not the worst, so here I be.” Then with a roguish grin, “is it true what they say about omegas milk? That it makes an alpha virile enough to give it a go all night?”

“So I’ve been told,” I said coquettishly. Noticed that another part of him was starting to take interest in the conversation. “But then again it could be simply an old story to lead unwitting alphas down the primrose path into an omegas cunning trap.”

“A cunny trap you say?” The lilt of the my wicked Irish boy was back in full force. “Well lets see what kind of wee trap ye have here. He sat up, lay me back and parted my legs. “Do so love a hot clime omega. All the bits are put away so nice and tidy.” Then running a hand across my belly, “well hello there. Wondered when you come up to say ‘how’d you do’.” Ulysses fluttered against Micks finger tips. “So you’re the bond pup. My, aren’t you a beeezr wane.”

“His name is Ulysses Tenacious Lewiston Winchester Reynolds.” I said proudly.

“Tenacious? What the devil kinda name is Tenacious?”

“The kind of name that when you yell out the window he’d know what kinda trouble he’s in.”

Mick looped his arms under my thighs and tipped me up to shout down my pinks. “Ulysses Tenacious Lewiston Winchester Reynolds! You get your arse home this minute! Ooooo, can hear an echo. Hello? Hello...hello...hello.”

“You ass butt,” I reared a foot back and hooked a toe up his nose. Ewww, booger toe. About that time there was a knock at the door. “Must our food,” tossed a blanket over myself as Mick pulled the sheet off the bed to cover up toga style and went to answer the door.

“Mr Davies?” The male omega bell hop smirked as he looked Mick up and down as he pushed the delivery cart into the room. “I have your order for you. Everything to your liking? Anything you need? And I mean ANYTHING?” Son of bitch, he’s flirting with MY alpha! Okay technically,
he’s not mine. But tell that to the lizardy part of my brain. Involuntarily, a growl escaped my lips. The bell hop glanced over toward the bed and then his eyes glued back to Micks rather shapely legs. They were a lightly covered in hair from ankle to part way up the thigh and speaking of thighs; he must have rode a bicycle like Eddy Merckx. Because they were well muscled, strong and built for holding an omega against a wall and nailing em like a two by four.

Uh oh, that smirking son of a bitch better get the hell out. A pregnancy heat is the most intense of all, a person gets all nesty and protective over what they think is ‘theirs’ and well.....ready to do some stupid stuff. Like get up out of bed stark naked, pick up the Sig and Micks pants, “give him his tip.” Tossed over the britches for Mick to get his wallet out. “Then tell em to scram....oh.....and take the rest of the clothes....you do have a laundry service right?” The guy nodded quickly, eyes big as saucers. “Good, have them back in front of the door by morning, thank you.” Guess I must have been a sight. Chinese collar, jutting belly and that big honking Sig Sauer.

After everything was out of the pockets, the bell hop grabbed up the clothes, the five buck tip in his mouth and didn’t let the door hit him in the ass as it slammed shut behind him.

“That was a bit excessive,” the Irish alpha said casually as he popped open a Guinness. Watched his Adams apple move up and down as he drank the first of the three bottles down to the dregs. “Ahhhhh, mothers milk.”

“Not really that excessive,” setting down the pistol and picking up the Ruben sandwich, wolfing it down in a few bites. Okay, maybe it was but.....by the Alpha God, I was hungry! Then poured a glass of the lemonade from the pitcher, downed it and then filled it again. Oh, that’s good. “He was challenging me for you. What? You didn’t see it? Of course not, alphas never do. Oh don’t give me that look, of course it doesn’t make any sense. I’m running on hormones in the middle of a pregnancy heat. That jolly jerk off is lucky I didn’t shoot him.” Picked up one of the remaining Guinness bottles, the whole episode got the slick running like sap in a February Maple. Popped the top off and slid it between my legs, letting the cool glass mouth run over the hot neither lips.

“Here,” I handed Mick the bottle. He took it, grabbed up the bowl of popcorn and lay back down on the bed. “Let’s see what we can do about getting you back in fighting form.” Climbed on between those fine thighs and was about to take his length into my mouth when he called …

“Wait, let me take this in for a moment.” He propped himself up with several pillows, grabbed up a hand full of popcorn, then took a sip of the ale and licked the mouth of the bottle. “I have the pregnant omega mate of an American general, the Madam First to the son of a British general, made pregnant with bond pup by the aforementioned British general, wanting to gobble me langer.” He held up the bottle as if to toast the universe for his good fortune, “it don’t get any better then this.”

“Assbutt,” and with that, rolled back the foreskin and took a lick of his knob. “You’re about as Jewish as a ham sandwich.”

“True,” Mick admitted, getting himself into a comfortable position. “But then again, I didn’t think the Provo was gonna do a reach around and how’s your father, to inspect the work of the mohel......Oh! You do have a talented tongue there boy-o.” Had taken him fully into my mouth and was working him up one side and down the other, then swirling round like a a peppermint stick. This did get him up in a nice dignified manner, which was good because the mindless part of the heat came back and I took that fine bit of man meat, slammed it in and rode him like Trigger.

There were several times during the night when he simply tossed me a toy, “have mercy on a poor man trying to get a bit of shut eye.” Except he’d turn on the light to watch. Or he’d try out the curative effects of omegas milk, which during this heat I was more then fruitful. “Oh that’s good,”
Mick groaned after a long pull. “Like drinken the finest of County Cork.

And so come morning, I stood at the window watching the planes taking off from Washington National, the Capital Dome in the distance. “Sorry I have to pop off so soon,” heard Micks voice coming from behind me. “But need to get General Reynolds and his family to the airport. The Old Man will skin me alive if I’m late. Too bad about his grandson, even if he was a gombeen, no one should die like that.”

Mick was coming out the bathroom, towel wrapped loosely about his hips, body glistening with water droplets. Now I can admit, now that the heat has been tamped down to give me some perspective, that my wild Irish boy was just shy of model handsome. The roughness of the streets covered by the thin veneer that good schooling and an expensive cologne can give. Scarred alphas with big guns, oh they are such a weakness with me. Some one to take me fiercely, thoroughly and judging by the bruises and bites covering my belly, bottom and breasts, with just the right amount of controlled ferociousness.

“Think you’re through enough of your heat to get home alright?”

“Yeah, I can manage it from here.” The plug in my pinks was holding in his seed, looks like Ulysses is going to have a good load of essence to take in. We even had a ride up the old Hershey Highway, Mick was most thorough in his administrations. “Thanks for being there, a pregnancy heat can really inhale canal water vigorously.”

“Just doing my bit for Queen, Country and international relations,” he grinned boyishly. He reached over to cop a feel of tit. “Mick Davies, at your service.”

Didn’t mean to have the next bit come out, but it was as if someone else took over and started talking. “I saw you......this.....two weeks ago.”

“I don’t know how. Two weeks ago, I was......well....I wasn’t here.”

Now wished I’d shut up but was too far gone now not to continue. “No, had a dream of this moment. The angels have kind of been fucking around with me that last few months.....well...years actually. I got to see my self going into Panama, some desert....then here with you....this moment......and that.....I’m supposed to die at the Fulda Gap.” Looked up at him through my lashes. “Go ahead, call me crazy.”

“No.” Mick sat on the bed, “you have ‘the sight’. Can hardly say anything. I’m from a land where holy wells and the banchee live side by each. Where a man would go out killing like the devil on Saturday night and be in church on his knees praying like a saint on Sunday morning. No, I do believe you.” Sat on the bed next to him. “But know too, not everything is cast in stone. The visions can be warnings, so that you can avoid but if you can’t...to be at the ready and prepare.” He kissed my forehead. “Come on. I gotta go and you need to pick up that wee darlin wane of yours and get back home.”

“I should, but since I’m up here, might as well drop in on my brother Balthazar.”

Suddenly Mick found a patch of carpet very interesting. “He isn’t here.”

“Well, of course not HERE. But tell me what blonde he’s shacked up with and I’ll go kick his ass out of bed and take him to lunch.”

He sighed, stood up, went around the bed to stand next to the pistols on the night stand. “He’s not in DC anymore, in fact, he’s out of the country. Your brother was reassigned, he was given a
command in Londonderry....Northern Ireland.”

“What!” Mick quickly opened up the drawer in the night stand and shoveled in the hardware, quickly slamming it shut. “Why?”

“He felt his presence was going to cause an.....unease....and asked to take up the assignment.”

“Why would his presence be a problem?” And why would Lewiston allow such a thing? Now I just wanna go shoot something or somebody.

“Think about it,” Mick put a knee against the drawer of night stand. He wasn’t taking any chances. “Use that pretty little head for something other then a hat rack.”

Was rather insulted that he’d use that ‘look down your nose’ tone with me. Was pissed at him, Lewiston and oh, let’s just throw in the whole alpha race! “Balthazar did nothing wrong! It was Eric’s own fault he fell in with Luci.......oh.......right....brother Luci.” For an allegedly smart guy, I can be three kinds of stupid sometimes.

“Your brother knew he’d be a problem, so he did the right thing and took that assignment. General Reynolds knew it wasn’t Major Novac’s fault but it doesn’t make it any easier to have him about.”

“So I guess they don’t wanna see me again,” that broke me where Balthazars transfer just ticked me off.. Sat down on the bed as my knees gave way. “So much for the profound bond.”

Mick sat down at my side. “Oh no, you’re fine. You’re not a Novac.....well you are in name but not where it counts. The General and her Ladyship just need a little time to organize their brain boxes to that everything fits just so. The bond isn’t broken, just bent a little.” He tossed an arm over my shoulders and put a finger under my chin. “No tears lad, get your pecker up. We’ll collect the pup, put a few spuds in your bellies and then..... go home. There’s nothing in this town to keep you here. The Reynolds aren’t coming back. They’re going straight to Germany a few days after the funeral. The Ambassador is arranging the pack up of their household goods.”

He was right, there really was nothing in DC to hold me now. Besides I have a test to study for and really needed to pass it. Even still, there was a hole in my heart with the seeming loss of my Jenny. Or at least, that’s the way it felt.

Our clothes were in a paper shopping bag in the hallway in front of the door. Cleaned, pressed and ready to put back on. At least now, we could go down to the lobby for a quick breakfast looking like a respectable couple instead of debouched, rode hard and put away wet omega and their alpha.

Jeff had obviously been treated like the little prince he felt he must be, as when I picked him up from the nursery, he rewarded his loyal subjects with smiles and kisses. The little shit. On the darkest day, Jeff could tease a smile to my face. “Papa!” All others forgotten, his love was just for me. Swung him up into the air and whirled him around. “Jump up, hook up....out the door! Wheeeeeee!”

And so the three of us went for breakfast. And life did look a little better on a full stomach, a plug in my pinks and no heat. Gave Mick a kiss goodbye and left the Crystal City Marriott in the rear view mirror. Yeah, it’ll be okay, maybe, hope so. Or like Scarlet O’Hara said from Gone with the Wind....”I don’t give a hydroelectric dam cuz tomorrow’s another day”....or something like that.

Chapter End Notes
Hi everyone. Thanks for coming back to the 1970's. Also wanted to thank Iceman12 for wanting to see a bit of Cas/Mick smut.

EveryBody Loves Somebody: a song written in 1947 by Sam Coslow, Irving Taylor and pianist Ken Lane. Even though it had been around for almost 20 years, it became a hit and signature tune for Dean Martin in 1964

There really as a Cleo the Cat.

Sarah Bernhardt: a French stage actress from the late 19th and early 20th century, best known for her VERY dramatic over the top performances

Bundu: a word from the Bantu people of South Africa, meaning to be away in the grasslands or civilization. Or in this case, out in La La land.

“The SIG brief of building a Browning-style” was a comment from the website Forgotten Weapons about the Sig 210 and gentleman named Micheal Zeleny from December 4th 2011. So Mr Zeleny where ever you are, you get a writing credit.

Provo: short for Provincial Irish Republican Army. an Irish Catholic republican revolutionary organization that sought to end British rule in Northern Ireland, facilitate the reunification of Ireland and bring about an independent socialist republic encompassing all of Ireland. It was the biggest and most active republican paramilitary group during the Troubles. From Wikipedia

Red Hand: The Red Hand Commando (RHC) is a small secretive Ulster loyalist paramilitary group in Northern Ireland, made up of Protestants,which is closely linked to the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Its aim was to combat Irish republicanism – particularly the Irish Republican Army (IRA) – and to maintain Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom. From Wikipedia

Glenanne Gang: was a secret informal alliance of Ulster loyalists who carried out shooting and bombing attacks against Catholics and Irish nationalists in the 1970s, during the Troubles.]] It also launched some attacks elsewhere in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. The gang included British soldiers from the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), police officers from the Royal Ulster Constabulary(RUC), and members of the Mid-Ulster Brigade of the Ulster Volunteer Force -Wikipedia

Ogeous handlin: Northern Irish slang for a tricky situation with some complications.

Wane: Northern Irish slang for a child or baby.

Beezer: Northern Irish slang for good or fantastic
Laid my son to rest today. Eric was 19 years, 10 months and 3 days old. He left behind a grieving mother, a bewildered younger brother, a baby brother who never get to know him and an angry sister who by her own words: ‘will never forgive the big git’. As for myself......may the Alpha God forgive me, but it’s a relief he’s gone.

Eric was my first born, I’m suppose to love him and I do or did. But deep in my heart of hearts, I knew something was wrong. That he wasn’t quite ‘right’ after his bout of scarlet fever as a pup and no matter what we did, he would come to a bad end. And the dirty business he was caught up in, just confirmed it. My father in law showed me the evidence; the flat no uni student could afford, the closet full of posh clothes, the fancy liquor and worse, the ledger. Record of ‘omega’ contracts sold and to whom. Not that the brokerage of omega contracts was illegal, but the fact that they weren’t really omegas and were turning up dead by the score is what was disturbing.

I’ve sent men into battle with less trepidation then the idea of telling Mouse the truth about her son.

Eric had no girl friend or omega to snifflie into a hankie. No mates or school chums, not a soul who knew him to carry the coffin into the crypt. It was professional mourners supplied by Brompton who did the job. It looked good, four beta men in gray mourning clothes, top hats and black arm bands, slowly following the hearse down the main avenue. Passing graves and monuments to the great and small. Somewhere here are Victoria Cross recipients, Mrs Pankhurst the suffragette and several red Indians who were here with Buffalo Bills Wild West Show.

Now it includes my son. These total strangers taking up the coffin upon their shoulders and walking in step to the door of the Gothic design edifice that housed the Moore family for generations. The sharp corners of the Old Red Sandstone had been soften by time, wind and rain. Willows, broken Roman columns sheeted in mourning cloth carved into it’s side, all the outwards symbols of grief. The crypt reflected the importance of the Moore family going back hundreds of years. They were heroes, blaggards, drunks and statesmen. Many all at the same time.

Richard Moore took the key from his pocket, nudged the cover aside and inserted it in the tarnished brass key hole. The key was large, from bow to bit prolly 17 centimeters long, made strong to last the centuries. The locking mechanism groaned, protesting the interruption of its slumber until a sharp kick from the old mans boot, got the gears turned and doors swung open. A dank musty smell of old bones, dead leaves and damp decay rolled out.

My family was buried in marked and unmarked graves all over the Empire. My parents resolved to retire back to the Bahamas after fathers service was over. It was there they lived out their sunset
years together driving each other lovingly mad, and it’s there father died last November and mother followed him soon after. Under a simple stone in the Nassau War Cemetery is where they lay.

Jesus Christ, I need a drink.

Mouse is swathed in a black omega mourning gown and head cover. It was sheer and showed everything yet nothing as under garments gave only a tantalizing glimpse of my mates glories. A veil conceals her face while sun glasses hide the black eye her mother gave her. Even after all these years, there are times I forget what a force of nature Mother Moore truly is. I want to comfort my mate, but she will have none of it for now. Jenny is too caught up in her grief still and will pine for Eric until she is done or her mother dukes her about again. Privately I’m hoping for the return engagement of her mothers hard knuckled fist. That old beta’s like Henry Cooper in a floral dress and sensible shoes.

There is a chill in the air, gentle fall has turned to bitter autumn. The gnarled trees are bare of leaves and dead grass crunches under our feet. I should be glad to be back......home? Sadly this foggy old isle has never felt like it to me. Too cold, too close....too everything. I could stand in the busiest market places from Hong Kong to Kingston Town and never feel as closed in as I do standing on even the emptiest street in London. Besides, there is a disquiet in the land, the government is foolish, run by a fool and his party. I remember what Mr. Crowley told me back at the Old Ebbitts*, about a ‘winter of discontent’. We need to be well away from here before Novembers end.

Tomorrow, our family has been invited to dinner at the home of the head of the Conservative Party. We had visited her once before last year as guests at a large dinner gathering. This time it’s small, something personal and a way of helping our family with its mourning. That and coalescing her base of power, Mrs Thatcher is nothing but sweetly thoughtful....in a calculating political kind of way.

Will be fighting her husband Dennis for the gin bottle.

Speaking of, I did not leave things on a good note with Castiel. I was drunk, boorish and didn’t have the where with all to tell him about Balthazar. That I didn’t put up enough of a fight to keep him at my side, but allowed him to make the noble sacrifice and take a command with 1 Para in Northern Ireland. If something happens to him, how will I explain it to my dear omega? If the Major survives the year, will have him transferred to somewhere quiet for a few years, like the Falklands. Nothing ever happens there.

Have to send Castiel a letter explaining......we didn’t blame him for his brother......who really isn’t his brother.....that our bond is not broken and we still want him to carry our bond pup. Oh does Hallmark make a card for that?

It is then I notice Mr Davies standing off to the side, a polite distance from the goings on. He’s Richards ‘man Friday’ and at times the lad is a bit TOO Irish for his own good. Stand down Reynolds, you already punched him on the tarmac before boarding the plane from America for carrying even the faintest aroma of Castiel, heat and sex. Davies was honor bound to take the first hit but not a second. A second would mean a fight for possession of Castiel and Mick Davies had the air of a man who’d tasted the manna from heaven and wanted another bite.

The anger of the whole situation has boiled up in me and now the only thing I want is to feel alive and know there is life in this field of cold stones and death! The vicar has finished his droning and got to the ashes to ashes part.......when I slipped up behind.... “Mrs Reynolds,” my alpha voice came out softly but firmly. “A word, if you don’t mind.” To my surprise, she docilely obeyed. Usually she tells me to sod off. We walk a short distance before I pull us behind the Courtoy
mausoleum. Bloody thing looks like a police box. All you’d need do is paint it blue and have Tom Baker standing there asking if you fancy a jelly baby.

“Lewiston,” she said coldly. “If you’re here for a quick snog, I am not in the mood.”

Now I growled and showed my mating teeth. “I love you Mouse!. More then life, then limb or even hope of my immortal soul for heaven. But enough is enough! You’re the one who’s alive and not in that pine box with Eric!” Pulled up the veil and sun glasses and my anger quickly melted. Even with all the face powder and paint, her lovely countenance was marred red from weeping and the bruised eye her mother gave her. And for some odd reason, it took me back to a day long ago in Bermuda. Pulled a handkerchief from my pocket and held it out. “Do you remember that time when that little brute ‘Spotty’ Shellworth wouldn’t let you on the cricket ground because you’d just presented as an omega? I think you were all of 10.”

She looked briefly annoyed and then a smile ghosted her lips as the memory came back.

“He called you all kinds of beastly names and then he blacked your eye.”

“I remember.” Now Jenny had a tiny grin as she took the handkerchief and dabbed her tears, “as I recall, you blacked both Spottys eyes and then kicked him in the bollocks. Told him I was a much better batsman than he’d ever be along with some language I’d only heard from our gardener when he mashed his thumb with a hammer. That’s the day when I started to think you were a little bit of alright and not as big a git as you seemed.” And suddenly we started to laugh. Everything pent up in us since that awful day came out. We leaned against the cold stone of the mausoleum and laughed our selves silly until the tears came again and the two of us truly cried. The pup we held in our arms, the promise of innocence lost and the poisonous fruit that knowledge can bring. “I miss him terribly,” she whispered. Our legs gave out and we sat upon the cold dead grass.

“I know.” Jenny handed back the hanky, it was smudged with face paint. Found a clean spot to wipe my own tears away. “But you have three other pups who need you. Who are just as lost and hurting and need their mum. We also have that move to First Corp, a bond pup coming.” I sighed and held my head in my hands, “Which reminds me, how do we make things right with Castiel?”

“One disaster at a time,” she said with a new firmness in her voice, retaking the bit between her teeth.

Pomp and Circumstance
March Number 4 in G Minor
All men must be free
Fort Belvoir, Virginia
Nov 6th 1978

Today is the day. It’s finally here. I’m going to my first day of class at the Engineers Officers Basic Course here at Fort Belvoir. No more squalling from the minarets, gagging on a cloud of bleach (though I will miss how clean everything was) or dealing with the local tradesman who were bound and determined to over charge US serviceman at every turn. They hated us but loved our money, dollars were valued over that ‘Monopoly Money’ the Turks used.

My orders for school had come in three weeks ago and this time, I immediately put in a request for leave, went to the transportation office, arranged for a pack up, made sure Lucas had his dependent
card, birth certificate and mating papers in order. Getting him into Turkey was no problem, just making sure that getting him out went equally as smooth.

Ah Lucas, it was nice to have a sweet little mate who was obedient, loving and didn’t have any interests outside of me. He could write a little, his English was just enough to get by and he could cook, clean and fuck like a minx. In short, he was the perfect omega mate.

Just wanted out of ‘The Rock’ so bad, three days after the orders arrived, the movers were there and packed up our belongings. There wasn’t a whole lot to pack up other than our clothes and books, as the BOQ came fully furnished. But had bought a few things locally: a couple of brass wall plates, two mosaic Syrian end tables and a large Turkish carpet I’d spent an hour arguing the price for. It took a full 60 minutes, two cups of tea and a plate full of almond cookies to finally come to a price. Prolly would’ve gone on longer but it was getting close for afternoon prayer, so the shopkeeper thought it was better luck to stop there and take the $25 dollars American.

So anyway, after pack up day and the ‘hail and farewell’ party at the officers club that night, the next day we were on a hop back to state side riki-ric. We flew out of Incirlik Airbase to the Azores and then stayed for the next two days in a little cottage on the beach. Think I’d like to come back here on leave next summer, it’s too beautiful not to want to return to. Lucas and I swam, ate, walked the white sands and made love. Was sorry to leave, but had to get my life back on track. Caught the hop to Andrews Air Force Base and seven hours later set down in Virginia. Oh it was great to be back in the US of A. Had to spend a couple of days at a Holiday Inn a few miles down the road in Alexandria. Luckily someone in the class a head of ours, went AWOL and his quarters became available, so we got it.

This morning Lucas is in the kitchenette making breakfast. Two eggs, sunny side up, three strips of bacon and two slices of toast-lightly brown- with just a smidgen of oleo. Just the way I like it. Since we got back from Turkey, couldn’t get enough bacon or pork chops or ANYTHING pig related. I would cast swine before pearls just to get some Carolina barbeque. Lucas had also learned to make coffee just the way I like it from our temizlikci before we left. Strong enough to float a bullet and black as a lawyer’s heart.

He was looking a little peep today, actually he’d been looking kind of sick all week and had a cough like a Turkish cleaning lady. “Are you alright? You’re looking a little ashy My Omega.” (Love saying that. MY OMEGA) Especially since he only picked at his breakfast.

“I’m fine Tegmen You-man,” she is so sweet. That was the other thing Lucas picked up our temizlikci. It sounded just right, especially when we’re having sex. “It nothing but stomach ache.”

Well, we can’t have that. So am dropping him off at the Dewitt Army Community Hospital clinic. We’d been trying to get pregnant and am hoping maybe that him not feeling well was the first sign of pregnancy. Besides his belly was not as flat as it used to be so hopefully there is a little alpha in there. So with breakfast finished up, Lucas getting the dishes done and room swept for the day, I pack my brief case and call a cab. This weekend will be flying home to Rochester to pick up my car, so won’t have to depend on taxis or the shoe leather express to get around. Had left the car up on blocks in my parents garage, so it would be ready and waiting when I got back.

So, the hack shows up, we get in and the first stop is the clinic. Admonish the cabbie to stay put at the curb, also slip him a couple of extra bucks to ensure it and then take Calvin...............where did that come from? Prolly cuz the last letter from Father said they had a lead on where he might be and that the private detective would be following up on it. Good, cuz I want that little defective groveling for mercy at my feet. Anyway, get Lucas signed in, we’re early so there are only a few squalling pups and retirees to deal with, so he can be seen fairly quick. “I’ll be back at noon, so
wait here after your appointment.”

“Yes Tegmen You-man,” leaned over and gave him a quick peck on the lips, then walked out of the clinic, into the waiting taxi and away to Abbott Hall where our class would convene. Walked into the room where I surveyed my classmates and rivals. There were 30 of us. A lot of 90 day wonders from the National Guard, at least 10 foreigners and a few ROTC types who must have had to make up college credits to graduate over the summer. Ugh, what a motley crew. If this is what I’m up against, being head of the class is going to be a snap. Hmmm, then again, there is that cute little red headed omega female Linnea, think I wanna get to know her. Professionally of course, I am a mated alpha after all. But, wouldn’t mind a quick hop in bed with her...just to see if everything is still where it should be.

So we spend the morning getting the ‘Welcome to Officers Basic’ speech, filling out paper work, getting course materials and basically introducing ourselves. Lunch time came and we’re marched over to MacKenzie Hall, the officers mess to ‘join’, like we had a choice. It was Italian day and the class was treated to spaghetti, meat balls and tossed salad. Honestly, if the truth be known, the officers club over at The Rock had better food. The club officer was trying to make up for a less then perfect location with perfection when it came to food and drink. Beer from Germany, goat and lamb from local herders, even vodka from across the border. Apparently the Russian border guards had no problems occasionally trading a few bottles (or their belts-a big prize) for blue jeans, ball point pens or American cigarettes.

It’s about 15:00 that I remember Lucas is back at the clinic. Shit! Oh well, class is over in about an hour so can go get him then. But at 15:30, the admin sergeant pokes his head in the door and says there is a message for me down in the office and no it can’t wait. Okay, it must be Lucas wondering where I am. So will get him calmed down and then see if I can get out of class to go over and pick him up.

Only it wasn’t a message waiting for me but three officers. There was a captain and a first lieutenant with the crossed pistols of the military police on their uniforms. The other captain was chaplain. What the fuck is going on? “Something I can do for you Sirs?”

“We need a word with you my Son,” the chaplain said quietly. “I’m afraid there is news about your mate that is not good. You need to come with us.”

“LUCAS!? WHAT’S WRONG? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!?” It was as if the ground fell out from under me. No! NO! Life has just started turning around for me. I was going to graduate with honors, we were going to have a pup, a family. “WHERE’S MY MATE!”

“Lieutenant,” the chaplain gently took my arm. “Please. We’ll take you to him. But you need to get a hold of yourself.” Then he played a bit of a dirty trick, “you must be the alpha for your omega.”

Of course that did it, I must behave like the proper alpha. Father always said ‘decorum first in the face of adversity’. If he could in the face of ‘Jim Crow’, I could in these better days.

The four of us walked out of the building, into an OD green staff car parked at the curb and away to the hospital. Or not. They drove instead to the Provost Marshalls office. Oh no, someone did something to Lucas. He was kidnapped or raped or......get ahold yourself together Youmans. You have to be strong. Once there, we went inside and to a nondescript room with a large reel to reel tape recorder and a mirror on the wall. What in the name of the Alpha God’s going on here?

The MP captain motions me to sit and turns on the recorder. “This is Captain Bass Reeves, serial number 324703580 Military Police CIB, Fort Belvior, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, please state your name and rank for the record Lieutenant.”
My fear flipped to anger. “I will not! I came in good faith, not to be treated like a criminal! Tell me what happened to MY OMEGA!”

Captain Reeves left the recorder running. “Alright Lieutenant Youmans, as you wish.” He nodded to the chaplain who began: “My son, it’s with a heavy heart that I must tell you, your mate left this world at 11:13 this morning. There were.........unexpected complications with his surgery.......”

The world again was reduced to a vortex of silence and confusion as I was sucked into it. That is until something cool and wet was hitting my face. Snapped back to find the First Lieutenant flicking water at me. “It was either this or dumping the whole glass on you,” he said not unkindly.

“What surgery?” Blurted out when I finally found a voice.

“When the doctor first examined him, he thought it was appendicitis or inflammation of the fallopian tubes causing the abdominal pain and fever. So exploratory surgery was preformed. But then they discovered that his appendix was healthy and that he didn’t have any fallopian tubes.....or a uterus for that matter.” Then Captain Reeves took a plastic bag out of his pocket and tossed it on the table. “But he did have this rammed up through the wall of his, well I guess you could all it a vagina.” In it was a large brooch, covered in red stones, shaped like a snow flake. Didn’t have a uterus......and why would that pin thing look so familiar?

Over the course of the next hour I learned my omega.......wasn’t. Lucas was a surgically altered beta who maintained his omega characteristics through the use of drug Preomerine, an omega hormone therapy medication. He died from an infection, something called peritonitis which caused sepsis from having the brooch pierce the vaginal wall and cut into the intestine releasing wastes into the body. Or so they thought, they won’t know for a couple days, until the tests come back.

I also found out, he was a thief. And that brooch, the reason it looked so familiar was that the base commanders mate wore it on the night before we left at my ‘hail and farewell’. Oh shit. Also found out, the MP’s got a search warrant for my quarters, pulled all the paper work on my purchase of Lucas and found a false bottom in his suitcase. In it was money, jewelery, watches, a page from the telephone yellow pages for local pawn shops and a DC train schedule with the ‘Silver Star’ to Miami, Florida circled.

It appears he was going to run away. Now I just wanted to be sick.

“His birth certificate is a good forgery,” Captain Reeves tossed it on the table. It slid across the surface to stop in front of me. We had a records clerk from the Brazilian Embassy take a look at it. Said the paper and seals were wrong but impressive. Only someone who knew what they were looking at would know something was amiss. Then the parents names.....Jose and Maria de Silva.....think of it like the John and Mary Smith of Brazil. From the looks of it, he was a meniños da rua, child of the street. Lucas was prolly abandoned or ran away from home. Pups like that don’t last more then a few years on the streets, they tend to die young and bloody. Usually by the police because of the criminal activity they get into to survive.”

My head was spinning. I brought this......this....VIPER....into my home. Into my bed!

“Oh, don’t think of trying to go after Morningstar Ltd,” the First Lieutenant piped up. “Interpol sez they closed up shop, emptied their bank accounts and lit out for parts unknown. Plus the guy who brokered your deal? He’s dead. Drug overdose.”

Thank the Alpha God there was a waste basket in the room because I just barely made it. Threw up and then couldn’t catch my breath. I lay with a MAN! I sinned with a MAN......a BETA! Now I’m really sick. Guess they figured throwing up, hyperventilating and fainting kind of put me out of the
running for being an accomplice to Lucas’s crimes.

“We’re going to return your property to you after our investigation is complete. As for your mate, we can release him for burial.............”

“NO! HE’S NOT MY MATE! NOT ANY MORE! YOU CAN KEEP HIM, THROW THAT....THAT...THING IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE, I DON’T CARE!”

“My son,” the chaplain began. “He was your mate, even if the circumstances were less then perfect.”

“Less then perfect?!?” Fucking understatement of the year!

“So you don’t want his body?” Captain Reeves asked in a tone that implied more then what was on the surface.

“NO! You can keep him!” And with that, the Captain pulled out a piece of paper and I released my claim to one Lucas Youmans to the custody and control of the United States Government. Good riddance to bad rubbish. Then had a prick on conscience, borrowed a pen and a scrap of paper.

“This is the name and address of the commander and his mate at the base in Erzurum, Turkey. Could you see the brooch gets back to her. Say that you found it in a cache of stolen items.”

Captain Reeves nodded and took the paper. “You’re free to go. But one question. Uh, how do I say this but......how did you not notice something else was......up there?”

Now I blushed. Um, I......uh......just thought he had put up there that little thing he......” trailed off.

“I gotta go.”

As I left, over hear the Lieutenant snicker, “looked like he done fucked that fake slick to death.”

Now I just want out. Didn’t bother with a cab, walked all the way back and went to the officers club to have a little drink.....a lot of little drinks. The next morning I woke up with a head ache and that little red headed omega Linnea in my bed. She had been at the club last night and wanted to comfort me over the loss of ‘my omega’. Hmmmmmm, I wonder if she makes coffee?

Pomp and Circumstance
March Number 3 in C Minor
10 November 1978
Auditorium, Bldg 1002
204 1st Cavalry Regiment Road
Fort Knox, Kentucky.

“Second Lieutenant Benjamin Lafitte,” that was MY name getting called out first by General (Ret) William E. DePuy. Me. Not that ring knocken SOB from Ark-La-Texas or even Rich Kent. Sorry Rich ole buddy but I just do a better out in the field then you. Look out into the audience, at the faces of my classmates, ma’mere and daddy watchen their son walk across the stage to graduate top of his class. Andrea was sitting out there too, fit to bust with pride.

The folks and Andrea came up from New Iberia not only to watch the graduation but to tell me the good news......that was I was gonna be a daddy! Looks like something took from all the ‘he’in and she’in’ on our honeymoon cuz we’re gonna have a pup long about March of next year. Andrea
waited all this time to be sure but also she wanted tell me in person. Not just in a letter or phone call, cuz news like that is too too much much not to do face to face.

I strut across that stage like a ‘cock of the walk’ or a cavalry man, same thing. It’s dick forward, balls to wall and sound the bugles cuz if you ain Cav you ain’t shit kinda walk. Got the yellow scarf about my neck, saber at my hip, stetson back at my seat and even got spurs, though I can’t wear em till I earn em in my first fight. And speaking of first, being first, got a years subscription to ARMOR magazine and my diploma set in a kinda nice frame. And now I got a pup on the way, C’est magnifique!

Andrea ain’t show’en yet but can feel the flutter of our little one inside her belly. “je t’airme mon petit”. I whispered and kissed that spot over and over last night when we were in bed. “Be you boy or girl, alpha, omega or beta. You be a Lafitte.”

“Course it’ll be a boy and an alpha,” Andrea was not taken no for an answer. Even from the Almighty his self. “I expect nothin less.”

Which brought me back to the present, the problem with being number one is that you now gotta wait on everyone else. Which is fine, they worked hard too, some a little more then others. Even the guy who brought up the tail end as the billy goat deserved his little bit of sunshine. Afterward, we pass by the officers club for a celebration supper. Take Rich along as his family couldn’t be there and he’s my brother in all but blood.

Daddy was impressed with the officers club, thought it looked right smart. Me’mere not so much. “No wonder you look fair starved to death, with cooking like this.” She sniffed at the offerings from the kitchen. “Maybe I should show’em how to put the an ahnvee in their cooken.” Took everything Daddy and I had to keep her from marching through those swinging doors to give a piece of her mind to the chef. I left an extra sized tip and was glad I weren’t coming back too soon.

As for Andrea, she’ll go back home with the folks so she can be supervising pack up of our house hold goods and then join me in Germany next month. Had gone to the transportation office and filed the paper work, so the local moving company will give her a call in a week or two for the pack up time. Hope she don’t bring any of those fancy electric can openers, crock pots or toaster ovens we got for wedding presents. They run on different current over in Germany, so unless I pick up a load of adapters, those things are gonna be fair useless.

She drove our car so up, so I can get it ready to get shipped overseas. Rich and I will be heading out to Norfolk, Virginia tomorrow to drop our vehicles off at the shipping yard. We’ll pick em up in Bremerhaven in about month or so. But in the mean time, will head up to Washington DC for a couple of days before catching our flight out to Germany. Figured we’d pay a social call to Chickie Rogers, Elliot’s mate, bring some chow chow and catch up on the ‘talk talk’ with him. He’s in med school at Georgetown. Last letter I got from Elliot is saying he’s got a year and change left in pharmacy school and will be commissioned as a Captain some time next December.

Love that boy like a brother, but there are days that he makes me wanna pass a slap.

I look across the table at my family, my mate and friend. Taking in a mental picture of them all at this moment. Life can be good as gold or hard as a bankers heart, but right now is the twilight time where good and bad hangs off to either side and contentment slides in a sliver of rose and gold. Rich was right, I do wax poetic, I do.

Pomp and Circumstance
Okay, I wasn’t at the very bottom of the class, but pretty darn close enough to hear the goats bleat. BUT, I’m graduating that’s all that counts. Look out into the audience and see Patricia Harras holding Jeff up so he could see. He’s dressed in his best little corduroy jumper and sweater for the occasion with a just in case change of clothes in the diaper bag at Patricia’s feet. Her pups came along too. Jimmie and his sister Rosie got to play hookie today to come to my graduation and then lunch afterward.

Sam Everson, a West Point dude was first in our class. He more then deserved it. Worked hard, passed his exams with flying colors and was aces in peer review. My peer review was no different then what happened at camp, either they loved me or thought I was a total fuck up. Sam also had the heart of Hannah Siegler. They hit off from the second week of class and became quite the item. She was taking him home to meet her parents at Thanksgiving and then at Christmas they were going to meet his folks. They’re a great couple but.....he’s scheduled to go to Fort Hood, Texas and Hannahs off to the Berlin Brigade.

Oh yeah, did I forget to mention he’s black and she’s white? So it’s going to be ‘Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner’ twice over.

But anywho, the opening remarks from base commander General Fred Sheffey were blessedly short and prolly the same speech he gave to every class. But it was just long enough with a bit of personal information tossed in to make us all feel special. In turn we each got up, to have our moment in the spot light as our names were called and our destination given. Fort Hood, Berlin Brigade, Fort Amador, Fort Carson, Camp Humphreys (where the fuck is the Watervliet Arsenal?) and so on.

"Second Lieutenant Castiel Novac, Kaisersluatan, West Germany.” Then it was my turn to walk across the stage, shake General Sheffey's hand and be given a diploma. Also to hear my son yell out ‘PAPA!' That’s my boy! Also...“Goddamn Aminals! BATS!” Never saw that pup before in my life. Gotta stop reading ‘Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas’ to him. Jeff loves it just as much as ‘Kidnapped’ and ‘Mohicans’. His future grade school teachers are going to hate me.

Afterward, took Patricia and the pups out for lunch at the Chinese joint just outside of post. We were up to our ankles in Moo Goo Gai Pan and pork fried rice by the time it was done and Momma-San was ready to bust a gusset. But thank goodness, Jeff is cute, Jimmie and Rosie have dimples and I left a tip that was almost as much as the meal, so we were at least allowed back, in another month or two. Afterword, we drove out to the Petersburg Battlefield to let the pups run off the sugar and caffeine from all the Pepsi they drank before going home. They ran amongst the monuments and ghosts of the fallen, a reminder of life in a place where so many lives were lost.

Later after Jeff and I were dropped off back to BOQ, had a moment to just reflect and think my own thoughts. Looked at the diploma I’d set down on the credenza. It had my name, todays date and the signature of the commanding general. “Halfway there Baby,” kissed the top of Jeff’s little head. “We’re halfway outta here.”

“Bats!”

“Papa, say papa.”
Lisa, Emma and I are in the stands waiting for the home team to come out of the locker room and run onto the field. It’s chilly, a bit rainy and Emma is bundled up like a mummy but the whole family turned out to cheer for Benjamin Winchester, quarterback of the Kaiserslautern Raiders, field general extraordinaire. Sammy, Jessica and Annie came down from Frankfurt to watch, even Dad and Mom took time out to come for the weekend.

They were playing against the Stuttgart Panthers, who were pretty hot this year, having come off three consecutive wins. The Raiders had two wins and one loss in their last three games, so this was going to be a big deal for them. Would stink if they lost again and speaking of stink......my darling little Emma, light of my life, apple of my eye.....needs a diaper change. Considering women of any stripe tend to migrate to the ladies room together, Mom, Lisa and Jess all went to get the pups changed.

Which means we men had a moment to ourselves. Mostly to bitch about the cold, bemoan that beer was not allowed in the stands and the newest development in the phony omega case. The ledger we found at Eric Reynolds apartment was a huge break but we needed more. It gave us names, dates and money but no one was willing to talk and the problem was, there was nothing illegal about the sale of omega contracts.

What was illegal was how these pups ended up dead and considering some of those ledger names were of some pretty well connected people, there was pressure to find a guilty party (didn't care who) and close the investigation quickly. If Sammy and I have anything to do with it, that’s not gonna happen. The big question here is are these pups considered omegas or betas under current laws? If betas, a lot of people are going to be in trouble, if not, everything will be swept under the rug.

“We got lucky again. There was seminar at Quantco last week where a representative from Interpol had lectured on the phoney omegas showing dead in Europe. Well, apparently someone from CID at Fort Belvior attended,” I said quietly. “We got a teletype last night, they’ve got a fully intact body of a surgically altered beta who died in their hospital. Preliminary tests gave enough reason to have the body sent to ‘Walter Wonderful’ where they’ve done an autopsy.”

“And?” Dad said lighting up a stogie. If we were looking for privacy, that cheap ass stinker hanging out of mouth guaranteed it. People were sliding down the bleachers to get away from us.

Took a sheet of line paper from my pocket, notes I’d taken from the teletype. ‘Male, estimated age between 12 and 16 as his wisdom teeth had yet to drop. Outward physical characteristics were those of an omega, but early lab tests reveal beta chemical make up and large amounts of the drug Preomerine. An omega hormone therapy drug. Enough of it to produce breast enlargement, slick production and scent change. But the pathologists figure the change were only temporary and if the drug is stopped the body would revert back to its beta characteristics.”
Sammy asked for the paper and re-read that last line, “Which would explain the trace amounts found in the other bodies. They must have run out of the medication and didn’t have access to anymore.”

Dad took a long draw on his stogie and let the smoke curl out his nose. “What killed him?”

“They’re waiting for tests on tissue samples to come back for certain, but it could be sepsis brought on from Toxic Shock Syndrome. The boy had a perforated vagina and large intestine from the stick pin off an antique brooch that was lodged in the wall his vagina. But by the looks of things, even if they got to him in time, he wouldn’t have survived anyway. His immune system had broken down; his white and red blood cell numbers were almost nonexistent. Which was weird, considering with sepsis your white blood cell count is so high it’s off the charts. He also had a lung infection like he’d been exposed to high amounts of an irritant like bleach or some other caustic.”

“Any information on how he got to DC?” Sammy asked.

“Oh you’ll love this,” I huffed a laugh. “He was brought there by one of my former students at RIT. One Uriel Youmans. He was stationed in Turkey and had gone to London to buy the contract from.....wait for it.....Eric Reynolds. Son of Lewiston and Jenny Reynolds.”

“Damn it,” Dad hissed and tossed the cigar savagely under the bleachers. “Little Fucker, knew he was trouble the minute I laid eyes on him. Met the SOB just once before he was packed off to school in London and hated him on sight.” Wonder what the guy did to rile John up? Steal his bourbon? “Will ask around when we get back to Brussels, if Lou and Jenny are in DC or where they are now. It’s been radio silence since that night you came to the house.

Yeah, I remember that night. It had started out about Castiel posing for that magazine, (my son has been in three fist fights already about that. Beat the snot out of those other pups....that’s my boy! Ahem...Ben really shouldn’t have done that.....aw fuck, who am I kidding? I took him out for beers after the last one.) And ended up with me telling Mom and Dad about the case, then taking the night ferry across the channel to meet up with Mick Davies. Cas, hadn’t had much time to think about him lately. Been too busy and......it’s too painful when I do.

My son is growing up not knowing who I am. Cas sends me pictures of Jeff, talks about the funny and not so funny things he does, then there is this whole ‘bond pup’ thing. I don’t like it. Don’t care if this is some kind of ‘great honor’, I’ve never met these people, don’t know if I want to. Dad thinks the sun rises and sets with em, Mom doesn’t however, so think I’ll go with her assessment. Dad thinks with his dick too often.......

“And what do you think Dean?” Sammy is looking at me for an answer......to what?

“Sorry, what did you say?” But before he could repeat the question, the ladies came back and any conversation was lost to the roars of the crowd, as MY SON lead his team out of the locker room, on to the field and into battle.

Pomp and Circumstance
March number 5 in C
615 NE 14th Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
13 November 1978

We check in with Benjamin Winchester Chickadee aka Calvin Chickadee.
I like school. I’m in seventh grade. I don’t to wear a head cover any more and won’t ever again. I’m on suppressants and drink a tea from Mr Mad Bear that makes me smell like a beta. He can do that without the tea and promised me the next time he comes to visit that he’ll show me how. He’s a medicine man with the Tuscaroras and he and Mr Yukar (he’s with the Senecas) got me out to Oklahoma.

I’m living now with Mr and Mrs Sawyer, they’re Marigold’s mom and dad. Marigold is mated to cousin Caleb Chickadee, they’re raising my son Winchester as their own. I call the Sawyers Uncle and Auntie as they told folks that I’m an army brat and grewed up all over. But my mom and dad wanted me to stay in one place for my high school years so I could....could.....develop a sense of belonging to a community and knowing my roots. Or some bull shit. Ben and Castiel told me enough stories of brat life so it’s easy to spin a story a mile long to anyone who asks. My new birth certificate says I was born in Oklahoma City, my ‘parents’ were passing through to Fort.....somewhere.....when I decided I wanted to come on out. My school records ‘got lost’.

Uncle and Auntie Sawyer teach up at the college in Langston, Uncle is a professor of agriculture (that’s plants and stuff) and Auntie teaches literature. Boring literature. She tries to get me to read it and I do like Langston Hughes poetry:

‘He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man’s soul
O Blues!’

Ow! And that’s the gospel truth right there. But the rest of the stuff she wants me to read just is kind of dumb. Florynce Kennedy wrote lots about black womens rights, but nothing about omega rights. That’s just a wrong riff. But Uncle lets me sneak in comic books and Shaft novels.......HE EVEN TOOK ME TO SEE THE MOVIE! Course Auntie thought it was ‘the exploitation of our culture by the white Hollywood alpha male chauvinist capitalist system’. But Uncle said that was nonsense and that sometimes a ‘cigar was just a good smoke’. What ever all that means.

So anywho, I like school. I have friends, we play football and basketball, and my gym teacher thinks I should try out for the football team when I get to high school. But right now, I’m on the JV Pop Warner, my friend Greg Johnson he’s really good and we’re gonna go to college and then get picked for the NFL. I’m gonna be like Gale Sayers or Joe Greene.

Or like Shaft..... ‘he’s a complicated man, but no one understands him but his mega’s....John Shaft’. Or like The Falcon in the Captain America comic books, or Luke Cage-hero for hire. They are sooo super bad. That means good.

Heard from cousin Caleb. Win is fine and growing like a weed. Also heard some detective man showed up in Brooksville looking for me. Looks like the trap Mr Yuker set got sprung, so everybody was ready for it. They just said Win and I died, the sheriff took the man out to the reservation to where I was ‘buried’. Course the jive turkey wanted to dig me up. But the rez police said no. ‘That would be disrespectful, upset my journey into the spirit world and piss off the warriors in the Camp of the Dead’. The Senecas adopted me and Win, so that’s why we’re buried out at the rez. So, if someone ever did find us, they couldn’t get a paper to dig us up.

So anywho, I live in a big house now with my own room. Auntie sez it’s a ‘monument to bush-wha-ze values’ but she also is the one who nagged Uncle into buying it. He sez it’s a money pit but spends a lot of time out in the yard gardening. The house is always in the middle of something being done to it but I like it and wanna stay here forever.
On Sept 1st 2014, I posted the first chapter of Cadet Novac. Thinking that it would be just a few chapters and that would be that. Instead, the story took a life of its own and became a big part of my life. Just as you, those who’ve come along for this trip through the 70’s and soon to be 80’s, have of part of mine. For which I am humbled and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Pomp and Circumstance was a series of five marches composed by Sir Edward Willima Elgar, an English composer, between 1901 and 1930. The sixth march was put together from sketches and a few pages of score left by Sir Edward, who died in 1934, by Anthony Payne another English composer. He’d been contacted by the Elgar Will Trust in 2005 to finish the final work. The Sixth march made its debut on August 2nd 2006 with Andrew Davis conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall.

The best known of the marches is the first one, most of us know it as the ‘Graduation March’ having heard it played in high school or college. It had lyrics also:

Land of hope and glory, mother of the free
How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee?
Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set
God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet
God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet

17 centimeters is about 7 inches

Henry Cooper: a British heavy weight boxer of such renown, he was knighted in 2000. The only boxer ever to receive the honor.

*Chapter 67 Interlude Four: Conversations, an Interview, and Mrs Robinson, Cadet Novac.

Hail and Fairwell: are traditional parties given when an officer arrives at a post to introduce them to the community and then when they leave that posting to say goodbye.

Temizlikci : Turkish for cleaning lady

Tegman: Turkish for lieutenant

Peritonitis is inflammation of the peritoneum — a silk-like membrane that lines your inner abdominal wall and covers the organs within your abdomen — that is usually due to a bacterial or fungal infection. Peritonitis can result from any rupture (perforation) in your abdomen, or as a complication of other medical conditions. - From the Mayo Clinic website

Sam and Hannah were based on two people from my officers basic class. They were such a sweet couple......but she went to Berlin and he went to Fort Hood.
A quick lesson in antique brooches. The roll clasp was invented in 1910, prior to that, most brooches had a ‘C’ clasp with a long pin. Brooches from the Georgian and Victorian eras had this. Pins with the roll clasp were more Edwardian or Art Nouveau periods.

Ahnvee: Cajun for ‘a hunger’. Ex: I have an ahnvee for gumbo

Walter Wonderful: nickname for Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington DC

The Weary Blues written by Langston Hughes (born 1902 and died 1967)

Florynce Kennedy: African American Feminist, lawyer and activist.

Greg Johnson: Oklahoma City native, who played for the University of Oklahoma starting in 1983 before he was drafted by the Miami Dolphins in 1988 where he played in only one game.
Let Thy Congregation Escape Tribulation—Yet Another Novac Thanksgiving

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The pie making was in full swing even if it was close to midnight. WTRY was the radio station of choice and it was cranking tunes even as the clock struck 12:00.

Don't pull your love out on me, baby
If you do, then I think that maybe
I'll just lay me down, cry for a hundred years
Don't pull your love out on me, honey
Take my heart, my soul, my money
But don't leave me here drowning in my tears 1.

We came ‘home’ for the holidays and the pie making ritual almost the minute I walked through the door of Naomi-Mom’s house on Rugby Road, in ‘beautiful’ (cough, hack) Schenectady, NY.

Earlier that Wednesday afternoon at Fort Lee, our current instructor called time about 15 minutes before the official scheduled end of instructions as he wished us all a Happy Thanksgiving and to get out of his sight. NOW! Everyone from the Quartermaster Troop Support Material Management Basic Class were taking the guy at his word and were sent scrambling to get their brief cases (and more then a few backgammon boards with game in process) packed and beating feet out the door.

Had packed and loaded the Bug this morning so it was just a matter of picking up Jeff from the Harras and then taking off. Libbie hitched a ride with us up to the Richmond Airport as he was headed to Miami for the holidays with relatives there. “Wish I could get down to PR,” Libbie sighed as he took over the shot gun seat and Jeff was sent to the back seat, much to his surprise and chagrin. He tried a few ‘Wibbies I wov ooo,’ and the 'dimples of death' but all it got him was ‘I love you too Sport, sit down’. Libbie appeared to be immune with a killer set of his own. “But seeing we have to be back by Monday, there really isn’t enough time get home for a good visit.” Then he smiled, “but still. It will be nice to out of the cold for a few days.”

It had been in the 60’s the last few days, dipping into the low 40’s. If my friend thought these temperatures were a touch nippy, he’s is gonna freeze his ass off in Germany. It gets cold there, especially when the storm clouds and freezing temps come whipping in from Russia. Told him he’d better invest in some long johns or his hot house ass was in trouble. Libbie had a few kind words in my direction….and it wasn’t Feliz Navidad.

Made the 20 miles up to Richmond in record time, apparently everyone in town had the same idea and the highway was packed and fast. Got to Byrd Field, put the car in long term parking and made it inside the busy terminal to the Piedmont desk as Libbie headed over to the one for United Airlines.

The DC-7 turbo prop took us to Washington National and then had to do the ‘OJ run’ through the terminal to get to the other end to catch the Allegheny flight. Except Mr Simpson never had to run carrying a diaper bag, a wiggling pup who weighed a frick’en ton OR BEING PREGNANT! (Okay rant over, I’m back now). Flight 210 to Albany was jammed to the gills, people were short tempered, the joint stunk of angry/nervous/anxious men and women of every secondary gender. There was going to be a fight any second, until the stewardesses came out holding bottles of champagne over their heads, hollaring “HAPPY HOLIDAYS!”
Calmed everyone right down. Even I got a little sip (made my ‘womb mate’ do lazy circle around the old embryotic sack) and Jeff got a taste. Dipped my finger in the glass and let him lick a drop or two off. Little boozer wanted more right there and then.

Got into the Albany County Airport shortly after 08:00 pm, rented a car (thank you plastic fantastic) and headed down Route 7 for Schenectady. Thanksgiving dinner was at Naomi-Mom’s house on Rugby Road. Found out she had gotten the assault charges dropped from last years fiasco at my sisters house in Scotia by paying the vet bill for the dog she nicked, apologizing to Anna’s mother-in-law and promising never to set foot across the Western Gateway bridge into the village of Scotia ever again. As far as the presiding judge was concerned, the rest of the state was on its own.

We were staying with Naomi and Zachariah until Saturday, when our flight left at 01:00 that afternoon. Wanted at least one day to recover, do laundry and get some food in the fridge. I had not fully buried the hatchet with my sister Anna, so was bunking in my old room, even though it was just an air mattress and sleeping bag on the floor. Now wished I’d just stayed down at Fort Lee, but had promised I’d be here as this was the last time we’d prolly all be together. (Thank the Alpha God for small favors.) To further liven the visit, Jeff had started crawling and cruising, taking a few steps hanging on to the furniture before ending up on his well diapered butt. He’s discovered the staircase to the second floor and is bound and determined to go up. I swear that pup has a death wish, or wants to give his poor old papa a heart attack.

Gabe and Kali were here too and drafted for pie duty. Lucky sons of bitches are half in the bag from water glasses full of scotch and soda. Their daughter Marlene was bedded down in the living room with the rest of the pups. Blankets, pillows and sleeping bags were tossed all over the floor as the cousins from one year on up were finally asleep after way too many cookies and scary stories. Marlene is a sweet little thing, with a mop of curly black hair, caramel skin and big light brown eyes. My brother had made it off the USS ‘Forest Fire’ unscathed and was now headed to Rota, Spain. Most of the family I like are going to be in Europe......well almost all. Lucifer has been assigned to Berlin. Luci and family waltzed in here like they owned the joint and it took almost everything I had not put a bullet in him on sight.

Had kept away from each other until he came slithering in as I was sitting at the kitchen table peeling apples and keeping an eye on the lemon curd thickening in a pan on the stove. The finished pies were in the pantry cooling; pumpkin, blueberry, strawberry rhubarb and a banana custard. “If you go anywhere near those pies, I’ll gut you like a fucking trout.” I growled without looking up.

He fished up a pear slice from the pie shell Kali was artfully arranging them into. “Oh, did the ‘slut of the month’ say something?” Luci popped the slice into his mouth as he walked toward the pantry. “Did Cole Trenton really nail you that many times or did they run out of room on the ‘M’?”

The knife left my hand before I could think and caught the loose bit of material of his shirt, pinning him to the wall, knocking out a hunk of plaster.

Well, I’m hot blooded, check it and see
I got a fever of a hundred and three
Come on baby do you do more then dance?
I’m hot blooded, I’m hot blooded. 2

“Hey, that’s a Brooks Brothers,” Luci reached over and yanked the knife loose. “You know how much this cost?” He sent the knife flying back, it landed with a metallic hum next to my hand. The blade burying itself into the table top.

“Oh I don’t know......two or three phony omegas?” Mick Davies, like a lot of alpha men liked to
talk after sex. One of the instructors at Finishing School once commented that the sexist part of an omegas body were their ears. To lay in bed, ready to listen to a sated satisfied alpha, one could hear the most INTERESTING things. He talked a lot that night, including the case he was on. This time the knife drove itself into the door jam to the pantry along with just a smidgeon of Luci’s ear. “Awwwww, such a pity. A little cold water will get the blood out if you hurry.”

“Guys, let’s take it back a little,” Gabe said rather worriedly, when he saw the double take our brother made to that last jab.

“Oh why do that now,” Luci’s grin was toothy and without an ounce of warmth or humor. “Considering it never stopped us before. Isn’t that right little...oh that’s right, it’s now official, you really aren’t my little brother.” The grin got feral..... “does that mean I can fuck you? I mean” he gestured toward my belly. “Everyone else has.”

‘Oh Johnny get angry
Johnny get mad
Give me the biggest lecture that I ever had
I want a brave man, I want a cave man
Johnny show me that you care, really care for me’ 3

The pan, complete with lemon curd was in my hand and across the room in a heart beat. Luci was fast and dodged it but not fast enough to get out of the way of the heavy cast iron skillet that went flying next. That caught him right in the ribs. Oh there was a satisfying crunch of bone and yelp of pain. But he had just enough where with all to grab the front of my shirt and throw me through the picture window looking out over the back yard. Thank the Alpha God for jump school. I tucked, rolled and did a perfect PLF. Damn it, why couldn’t I’ve done something like this down at Benning? Ulysses, the little shit, must have thought we were back to jumping out of perfectly good airplanes because, he was fluttering like a little mad man inside of me. Got the feeling he was saying ‘do it again Papa! Do it again!’

Prolly would’ve been a little happier with my landing if the ground wasn’t so hard. It was freezing out here tonight and could see my breath came out in long feathery puffs from the light streaming out of the gaping hole in the venetian blinds and picture window.

“What’s going on down there?” Heard a window sash slide up and Naomi-Mom stick her head out from her second floor bedroom.

“What’s the number for that glazier you use?” I called back up.

“It’s in the pop up Rolodex next to the phone stand in the living room.” The hair curlers glistened in the moon light. “Look under ‘G’.” Then, “how did you end up back there?”

“Luci tossed me through the window.”

“Tattletale” came an outraged whine from the kitchen. “You started it!”

She disappeared before I could say ‘did not’. And about a minute or so later as I got to my feet and brushing off the glass and wood slivers, Luci came flying out the window. His landing was not as graceful and prolly stung a lot more on that frozen ground from the damage the skillet did to his ribs. “Owwwwwww! That hurt!”

“Got ya a big ole ‘hurtz donut’ ya dumb ass butt!” What? I was just adding insult to injury.

“I’m going to tap dance on your head till all the squishy parts come out,” Luci growled as he was
trying to stand. Course he didn’t get far, as I kicked him in the knee cap sending him crashing back to the cold wet ground.

“Rah rah ree, hit em in the knee,” I sang happily. “Rass, rass, rass.....hit em in the other knee! Oh this a great night sports fans, with Bruiser LaRue.” I was winding up for another kick when Naomi-Mom came stalking out the door in her bathrobe, fuzzy slippers and head full of curlers. “ENOUGH!” She bellowed. “I don’t care who started it, but I’m ending it! Now!”

“He started it,” Luci wobbled to his feet.

“Did not!” I protested.

“Did to!”

“Did snot!”

“Did to, did to, did toooooo!”

“I SAID KNOCK IT OFF!”

“Yes Mom,” we both said quickly..... “But he started it.”

“And I’m finishing it.” There was a note of finality in her voice that neither us wanted to dispute as we’d seen what happened when any of us tried. Things never ended well when we were 5 or 6. so I doubted being in our twenties the outcome would be any different.

I walked back inside leaving Luci to either rot in Hell or go the emergency room. At this point, I could care less what he did. Gabe was cleaning the lemon curd off the wall as Mom had come in and was already pulling a piece of plywood up from the cellar to cover the broken window. Damn, she’s gotten good at that. Practice and perfect and all the rest of that shit. “Kali darling, would you mind calling the glazier. See if he can do an early morning appointment. Also ask about a discount, we have been using them for years.” Naomi-Mom said as she quickly nailed the plywood into place before tossing the hammer into one of the kitchen drawers. “I’m going back to bed.” But then added darkly, “no more fights or I’ll toss the lot of you out the window.”

“Yes Mom!” We all chorused. The pups in the living room luckily had slept through the whole thing. So no explaining why ‘grand-ma tossed Uncle Luke through the window.’


“Did it?” I righted a kitchen chair that had been over turned in the scuffle and sat down. “I thought it fit in just right with a ‘typical Novac Thanksgiving’. The only thing we’re missing is gun fire and the squad cars pulled up in front of the house.”

“True,” he admitted. “But I hate to be the adult here,” the laugh coming from the other room, confirmed the absurdity of that comment. “Ha. Ha. Real funny. See if you’re gonna get any ‘boom chicka boom boom’ tonight.” The laugh got harder. “I swear, you’d think I was Rodney Dangerfield. No respect, no respect. ANY way,” Gabe continued in a put upon tone, “You shouldn’t push Luci’s buttons like that. You know what he’s like.”

“Of course I do,” got a clean paring knife out of the silverware drawer and got back to peeling apples. “Years of his ‘kidding around’, along with the whipping he gave me in the ‘invisible room’ at The Budapest Resteraunt out in Rochester* insured that. All while The Colonel watched and enjoyed his tiramisu. Prolly whacked off for....seconds afterward.”
Gabe was not happy. For the most part he got along with Luci, in small doses and knew his father was a total dick. But when it came down to who the favorite brother was.....it was me of course. He and Balti were more mother and father to me, then Naomi-Mom and the Colonel ever were. Except for story time, when for some reason Mom was there for ‘Once Upon a Time’. “Just watch your back,” Gabe warned. “The only thing that’s keeping him check is he’s still afraid of Mom.” To be honest, I’m still scared of Naomi. “What was the crack about costing an omega or two?”

Made him promise he wouldn’t tell: ‘cross your heart and hope to die, step on a snakes tail and spit in his eye’. Course he’d tell Kali, who’d tell her mother, who’d tell her father, and on and on and on. All of which I was counting on. But anywho, as part of the whole story...told him how I found out......

“Aw Cassie, you really could’ve left that part out!”

Oh sure, all this from the man whose wife I helped conceive their pup. “I had to lay there and listen to you two make noises worse then any coming through the walls of my dorm room.”

My brother grinned, “son. You were witness to the master class in the ‘School of Love ala Gabriel Joseph Novac.”

“Sounded more like a bad porn movie. The only thing missing was the pizza man spanking the babysitter.”

He waggled his eyebrows like Groucho Marx, “THAT was the next night.”

“Can I stab you now? Cuz if you can’t keep it in your pocket.....”

Gabe stuck his tongue out at me, “sez the omega who’s preggers AGAIN in not even two years.”

“This is a bond pup,” I said rather airily. “It’s a great honor and not been seen since the days of General Eisenhower and Kate Sommersby.”

“I’ll remind myself of that ‘great honor’ when you’ve got your head in the toilet from the morning sickness.”

Now, I’m just plain tired. Screw it, set down the knife and apple, we’d have a small apple pie this year. Sugared and dumped in the spices on the slices, put them in the shell and then turned off the oven, shoved in the pie and let it just cook low and slow. “Come on guys let’s call it a night.” Shoved all the dirty dishes in the sink, will do em in the morning and switched off the light. Could hear the radio still playing as we picked our way carefully through the mine field of sleeping pups in the living room:

Too many broken hearts have fallen in the river
Too many lonely souls have drifted out to sea
You lay your bets and then you pay the price
The things we do for love, the things we do for love 4.

The next morning, I wake up because a little puppy finger was picking my nose. Was sharing the air mattress with Jeff and he’d woke up before I did. Since the bedroom door was locked and he couldn’t toddle out to destroy himself on the staircase, my son found other ways to amuse himself. “Pup, do I mine your boogers?”

“Wuv oooo Papa.”
“I love you too.” Course, true to form, that’s when he filled his diaper and put those booger fingers in his mouth. “Oh man, that’s gross!” Tried to sit up and with a groan, lay back down. Oh crap, I ached all over. Even doing the PLF, hitting that frozen ground had done a number on me but was too hopped up on adrenalin to notice...until now. The only saving grace was Luci was going to feel worse.

Granted, sleeping on an air mattress on the floor didn’t help any as I got up slowly to check out the damage in the mirror on the back of the bedroom door. Yup, bruises on my arms, legs and back. The ones put there from Mick Davies had just faded, now I got a new crop. Ulysses had lived up to the ‘tenacious’ part of his name because he was fluttering about happily. I was four months pregnant and looked like six. Cripes, by the time nine months comes along, am going to be fu......freaken huge.

Could hear the grandfather clock downstairs in the living room chiming the hour. One, two...and it stopped at eight. Come on Novac, get your ass moving.

Dug out the blue terrycloth bathrobe from the duffel and dragged painfully it on. Then with a groan, picked Jeff up, unlocked the door and took him to the bathroom to get cleaned up. Once there stripped off the shitty diaper, wiped away the mess but also got a good look at my boy. He was growing and changing so fast. Jeffery George is almost a yard stick tall, stocky with a bit of puppy fat on the cute little belly of his. A head full of dark hair, green eyes and a galaxy of freckles across his nose. There were times it hurt to look at him, because some day he would grow up, become a man and leave me.

Sat down on the fuzzy pink toilet cover, holding my pup and drinking in every ounce of this little miracle as if it were the last day I’d see him.

“Papa sad?” He tipped his head quizzically to the side......just like me!

“No, Papa just love you lots.”

“Kith!” And he laid a wet smacker on my cheek. Which made me rock him too and fro as the tears came welling up. Now my heart went out to her Mummy-ship. To have to watch me grow up from the side lines, perhaps knowing she could never reveal herself...... “Kith, Papa sad.” Cried for Lady Bela, for myself and just because....for just a moment......I could be weak.

Wept until I finally cried myself out. Okay, feel better now. Got him cleaned up, then myself, raided the medicine cabinet for some Tylenol, then got back to the room to get dressed. Came downstairs with Jeffery on my hip to find Naomi-Mom chopping onions, celery and peaches to go into the cast iron skillet I’d clobbered Luci with last night. Speaking of, his mate Kelly was sitting at the table shelling pecans. The glazier had already showed up as the room was warm and a brand spanking new window shone brightly.

“You’ll love these,” she said looking up to see me walk in. “Sugar coated pecans, I learned to make them when we were stationed in Buenos Aires.” Ah Kelly Kline Novac, book smart and people stupid. She and Luci have been married for about 10 years, have three pups of their own and then adopted little Maria about 2 years ago out of Argentina. Cute pup, but.....there is just something about her that’s off. She has too much of a Novac look about her.

“How’s Luci this morning?” I cheerfully picked up one of the nuts and popped it in my mouth.

“Oh good, you’re up. Here you are,” Naomi-Mom hands me a jar of instant Sanka and a cup doctored with condensed milk and sugar. Nice try there lady.
“Luke wasn’t feeling well, this morning,” Kelly sighed. “Said he tripped and fell last night on the stairs.” (Ooooo, liar, liar, pants on fire) “So he went over to the emergency room at Saint Clairs Hospital” (now that’s irony) to get checked over.”

“Awful, just terrible.” But I looked looking enviously at Naomi-Mom’s full mug of real coffee. Just by how rosy her cheeks were, suspect it was more then a spoon full of brandy in it. Resigned I poured in the hot water from the kettle on the stove in to my cup and took a sip. Then spit it all out in the sink. “This stuff tastes like ass!” Blahhhhhhhh, gotta get the taste out of my mouth! Grabbed Kellys coffee and took a quick swig. “Ahhhhhhhh, that’s better.” Okay, Ulysses is going to be bouncing off the walls in a little while, but will deal with it then, as for now....wanna see if I can score a sip from Naomi’s cup.

“That’s all for you,” she said as if reading my mind and downing the contents of the mug. “Now let me see my favorite Grandson.”

“No-Me” Jeff said happily, just about jumping out of my arms. Little brat. About that time, Zachariah came in the room. Jeff looked over at him and pointed.....”Fart!” Then he grinned obviously proud of himself.....”No-Me and Fart!”

Laugh, thought I was gonna friggen die. The look on Zachariahs face was priceless and made worse as the ladies tittered. Then he made a mistake, instead of taking it with some semblance of good graces, Zachariah growled and raised his hand to hit Jeff, the same way he used to hit me. To which he suddenly found himself knocked on his ass to the floor as his mate had busted him across the chops with a solid right hook.

“Castiel sweetheart,” Naomi-Mom said, never taking her eyes off the Colonel as the blood was pouring out his now swollen nose and was dotting the lime green linoleum with bright red. “I hate to do this, but I think you and Jeff really need to leave. Too much bad blood, excuse the pun, has happened for this to be any kind civil affair today.” Oh come on Ma, since when has a Novac Thanksgiving been anything EVEN resembling the word ‘civil’? War maybe but not civility. But I suppose she’s right. Kinda kicked the hornets nest with both Luci and The Colonel, they’ll both out trying to get back at me for this.

Took my son and carefully walked around the glowering Zachariah and went upstairs. Yeah prolly it wasn’t the best idea from Ford to have taught Jeff to say those things......oh am I kidding! To see Naomi-Mom do her Mohammad Ali impression.....It was worth getting kicked out. As I was tossing our crap into the duffel bags, there was a light tap at the bedroom door. “Who is it?” Now wish I’d brought ‘Snubby’ or ‘The Lovers Kiss’. But thought I didn’t need that much fire power and only brought the mating knife. Security took it away at the x-ray machine and sent the knife up in a separate envelope, that I picked up from the baggage carousel. The blade flicked open with an ominous click.

“Take a chill pill dude, it’s just me, Gabe.” Carefully opened the door to make sure no one else was standing there. Yup, it was big little bro. “Great work down there Cassie,” he came in and flopped on the bed. “Wished I thought of something like that to get kicked out this clam bake.”

“Come on! It’s not too late!” Stuffed Jeff’s little pull over shirts into the duffel and snapped on the locks to keep the bags closed. “You’re the man who wanted to put a mustache on the Mona Lisa, drove in Paris traffic the wrong way at rush hour on a stolen.............”

“Borrowed.”

“I stand corrected....borrowed motorcycle and banged all those commie beta chicks we met at that
dumpy cafe at the edge of the oriental district”

Gabe looked well pleased with himself, “the proletariat certainly did rise that night” Then the smirk faded to be replaced by a look of resigned acceptance, “nah. Kali has been looking forward to this and after everything that happened on the ‘Forrest Fire’, I just glad to have gotten off the tub with my skin. So, just wanna spend some quality time with my mate, pup and the patients here at the ‘Novac Home for the Injudiciously Insane.’ So, where you gonna go?”

Put Jeff in the ‘new’ jacket I’d picked up at the thrift store the other day, he was swimming in it now but in a couple of months should be just fine. I put on Johns Korean War overcoat and then hefted the bags on my shoulders and then picked up my son. “Up north. Got an invitation from some friends for dinner, so figured, hey might as well take em up on it.” Gabe stood and did a quick one armed hug about my shoulder.

“Take care little bro. Here, let me help with that” He took one of the duffels.

“Thanks, I will.” Put my nose against his neck to take in the scent of caramel popcorn and fire crackers that was my brother. “Do me a favor, don’t get too old that you forget how to do something crazy.”

He laughed and held out his hands. “Dude, I may be getting older but I’m NEVER growing up.” Now that’s the Gabriel Novac I know, love and watch my chair before I sit down. Too many years of tacks, whoopie cushions and mashed potatoes make me look first before putting my butt down and even then gotta hover over for just a moment before settling in. We go downstairs and are met at the door by Naomi-Mom.

“Goodbye my Sweet omega boy,” she kissed my cheeks. “Take care of that grand-son of mine.”

“No-Me!” Took Jeff’s little hand to wave ‘bye bye’ That little face and big green eyes would melt even a heart of stone, took bad Zacharahs was made of piss and puke.

“Say bye bye No-Me, bye bye.”

Naomi-Mom kissed each of his little wiggly fingers, then as if suddenly remembering.... “Oh, by the way.” She walked over to the dining room table and plucked the dried flowers from this really cheesy looking flower frog (yes, I know what one is-finishing school-remember?) and came back to hand it to me. “Thought you might like this, it really doesn’t go with my china set.”

Alpha God, this was ugly. It looked like the cheapest thing to come of any ‘dime store’ ever. The thing was made to look like a crown, silver colored covered in rhinestones and fake pearls. Was about to turn her down as politely as possible when she said “oh this will look so pretty next to that ‘paper weight’ I’d left for you down in DC over the summer..............

Smiling sweetly I asked, “Mom, did you pick this up in the same ‘gift shop’ that paper weight came from?” There are days I’m a little faster on the draw then others.

“Why, yes. How did you know?” Her face was a mask of ‘pure’ (hack, cough, choke) innocence (wheeeeeeze). Words that do not go together....hit it George Carlin....jumbo shrimp, military intelligence and innocence-Naomi Novac.

“Just another example of your ‘good taste’ in airport presents,” I said taking the ‘flower frog’ and stuffing it into the diaper bag. Good Alpha God! Just how many of these ‘do-dads’ did she sneak out Tehran? With that, Gabe and I were out the door, down the stairs and to the car. Typical rental, a little shit box of a Pontiac, but it had enough get up and went to get up and went. Let me
see...how to I get to the Northway? Gotta get over to Nott Street then Rosa Road to Balltown Road, left on Balltown, then all the way to Route 146 in Clifton Park and catch the Northway there. Hey, I still know my way around.

Put Jeff in the backseat and told him to sit still, which of course he didn’t, even with a seat belt on. But he had his bath ducky, a Hot Wheels car which prolly he ‘borrowed’ from Jimmie and assorted other odds and ends that should keep him occupied for at least five minutes. Opened the trunk, tossed the duffels and diaper bag in and got one more hug from Gabe. Then settling myself behind the wheel, started up the shit box and set out for Lake George. Had gotten a letter from Irv Franklin a few months back that if I wanted to come to Thanksgiving dinner, there was an open invitation to come up to their place on Lake George.

Had written back saying that I’d prolly be there for pie, ‘blah, blah, blah, thank you for the invite, blah, blah, blah, hope everyone is okay...............and well, looks like I’m going to be there for dinner after all. Have to wrangle an invite to stay the night or find a cheap hotel somewhere in the area. Was suppose to fly back on Saturday, but think I’ll try to get my flight changed to Friday, no sense in sticking around.

It was just as the sign announcing the first Saratoga exit came into view, that I flicked on the radio, played with the dial for something to listen to and came on the thing I’d heard about like forever but never actually got to hear......

We walked in, sat down, Obie came in with the twenty seven eight-by-ten Color glossy pictures with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back Of each one, sat down. Man came in said, "All rise." We all stood up And Obie stood up with the twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy Pictures, and the judge walked in sat down with a seeing eye dog, and he Sat down, we sat down. Obie looked at the seeing eye dog, and then at the Twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with circles and arrows And a paragraph on the back of each one, and looked at the seeing eye dog And then at twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy pictures with circles And arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one and began to cry Cause Obie came to the realization that it was a typical case of American Blind Justice.”

Alices Resterant was one of those elusive prizes in a Cracker Jack box of music that you know is out there, the album is in any record store, but you never can find it, think about when you’re browsing and you know the words to.....other then...... ‘you can get anything you want at Alices Resterant’. It was a hippie dippy protest song, so we brats were not allowed to have it, so we coveted it all the more.

And right about the time we get to the part where Arlo was sitting on the bench with the mother stabbers and father rapers talking crime, mother stabbing and father raping, that my stomach let out a huge growl followed by a sniffle coming from the back seat. Which transformed into a howl and tears, that would’ve made you think Jeff hadn’t been fed in like forever. Last night we’d stuffed him full of bananas, strained carrots and the gross mushed up beef that Beech nut makes. Being that it’s now, glanced at my watch, almost 09:30, he filled his diaper, yeah we’re both a little peckish.

Thank the Alpha God, there wasn’t much traffic on the road, as I was able to pull off to the side, get Jeff out of the back, get the nasty diaper off, cleaned up to a point where he wasn't too disgusting and then settle him to as comfortable position as possible before opening up my shirt to let him nurse. At least it will quiet him down long enough so we could get some where to have breakfast.
Got to Lake George Village and found the only thing open was the Howard Johnsons. Okay, I could deal with some bacon and eggs. Pulled into the mostly empty parking lot and found a spot near the door. “Come on kiddo, off you get, let Papa get buttoned up.” He came off the nipple with a pop and a dribble of milk rolling down his chin. Jeff yawned, burped, then his eyes went to half mast before letting out a fart and dozing off. Oh yeah, you're definitely an alpha.

Opened the door and cold mountain air rushed in to make me gasp and shiver. Unlike the Bug that was air cooled and took forever to warm up, the heater on the shit box worked so well had to take our coats off. So now it was easier to dash in rather then take the time try to put them on. Found the dining room empty except for a bored waitress watching the Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade on a small black and white TV next to the hostess desk.

“Hi, welcome to Howard Johnson’s,” she said automaticly, picking up a menu. “How many?”

“Just the two of us please,” looked around. “Could I have a booth and high chair please?” On the way over, grabbed the newspaper laying on one of the other tables. Followed the waitress to a booth in the corner and lay my sleeping pup on the seat before setting down. For a moment, argued with the angel and devil on my shoulder when coffee was offered and reluctantly went with the hot chocolate. Smirking little tree topping son of a bitch. “I’d like the eggs sunny side up, bacon and white toast.....ummmm, and Indian pudding if you've got it.”

The waitress took the order and left. Picked up the newspaper and scanned the front page.. ‘Cultist charged with murder’ Larry Layton was charged by the Guyanese government of five counts of murder in the deaths of Congressman Leo Ryan and four others......” Flipped the newspaper away. Not exactly what I wanted to read this morning. The past several days the local papers and evening news was awash with the pictures of the bodies of men, women and children laying dead, scattered all over the encampment and jungle of Jonestown. Considering how fast a body can break down in that kind of heat and humidity, did not envy the people sent down there to collect the remains. Man, they’d have to police them up with snow shovels.

Luckily, the waitress came back with my hot chocolate, so got to concentrate on that instead. Pulled out the second section of the paper and read the local news, the in fighting at city hall (pick one) the Union College Hockey team pulling an upset victory over....some body. Let’s see what’s at the theaters......Magic, Paradise Alley, Lord of the Rings, The Wiz......Maybe Lord of the Rings when I get back to Virginia....if the local theater is playing it. Was snickering over the antics of Maraduke on the comics page when breakfast and the high chair arrived.

Picked up a piece of toast to break open the yoke and sopped up the yellow runny goodness. Wanted to eat while everything was still hot, as I’d eaten enough meals over the last few months that had gone stone cold on the plate while trying to get my son fed. Mmmm, bacon fried crisp, toast done just right. What is it about diner and resterant toast that makes it so good, that we can’t duplicate at home? Ulysses fluttered happily, beating a light tattoo along my belt line. He hadn’t been this active since that night and morning at the Crystal City Marriott. “Good sex makes the pup,” I remember Jenny saying once.

Jenny. My heart felt heavy in my chest. There had been no word from her, Lewiston or even Jesse as to how everything went with Eric’s funeral. Guess maybe the bond was broken after all. “Looks like it’s just you, Jeff and me.” Did get a post card from Balti though. A short note to let me know he was okay, the scenery was lovely and the ‘customs of the local populace were quaint and lively’ . Family code meaning ‘locals were all huge bags of well armed dicks’. The front of the card had a smiling leprechaun sitting on a mushroom, proclaiming ‘luck of the Irish.’

Time to think of something else before I wanna just curl up in a corner and maybe not die, but
waste a lot of time having a pity party. So shoved the last bit of egg and toast into my mouth then turned to look down at my sleeping pup. “Wake up Jeffy,” I whispered softly, gently shaking him. “break-fast, break-fast, time for break-fast. Time for the best little boy in the world to get up.”

“Irv,” he said with a yawn and stretching out.” Oh boy, need to buy him some more overalls. The ones he has on are kind of high water now. The hems were touching the tops of his feet two months ago were now are above his ankles.

“No not Irv, break-fast,” now tickling his chubby cheeks, so that he laughed out loud. The room filled with the sound of a happy puppy. My son wiggled and kicked and clapped his hands, “come on there kiddo. Let’s get some pudding in that puppy belly.” Picked him up, blew a raspberry into his tummy, then settled him into the high chair. “Let’s have some pudding. Yummmmmmm.” Spooned some into his eager mouth. “Isn’t it good? Yum, yum, yum.” He was like a baby bird, head tipped back and mouth open. Jeff must have liked it a lot because there was no.....“NO!”....or trying to grab the spoon away. He end up wearing some of it on his hands and face, but on the upside, he wears it well.

The waitress came by with the check a bit later, let’s see....$1.95 for the eggs and bacon, 75 cents for the pudding and 50 cents for the hot chocolate. Pulled out the wallet from my back pocket, counted out four Washingtons and dropped an extra dime along with them. Got Jeff’s face cleaned off and lifted him out of the high chair. Wow, did you gain an extra five pounds since we got up? Man, you’re heavy Pup. “Happy Thanksgiving,” I called to the waitress as we passed the hostess station where she was back to watching the Macys parade. Her hand went up to give a slight wave, while her eyes never left the screen.

In the vestibule, set Jeff on the bench against the wall and told him to sit....stay....don’t fall off. Then pulled a couple of dimes and a nickel from my pocket. Pulled the slip of paper from my pocket where I’d scribbled the phone number for the Franklins home here on the lake. Pumped the coins into the pay phone and then dialed the number. It hummed, said ‘thank you for using New York Telephone, a subsidiary of AT&T’ and then connected the call. On the third ring, someone picked up. “County Morgue, you stab em, we slab em.” Came a waaaay to happy voice. Oooooo, somebody got into the cooking sherry early.

“Uh hi, is Irv Franklin there?”

“UNCLE IRV! PHONE FOR YOU!” Ow! Ow! Ow! Geeze, what a moron. There was a clunk as who ever this nitwit was dropped the phone on the table. Couple of moments later, “hello? Irving Franklin here.”

“Hi, Mr Franklin. Castiel Novac here.” God, why do I sound like Henry Aldrich from those stupid old movies?

“Oh hello Castiel, what a surprise. How’re you?”

“Fine Sir. Thank you for asking. Do you think Jeff and I can take you up on that offer you made a few months back to come for Thanksgiving dinner?”

“Why of course son, we’d love to have you and that little scamp. Where are you?”

“At the Hojo’s over in town.”

“Do you still remember how to get here?” Thought back to that day last June when Ben and I came up for Bry-Ann and Sharon’s mating ceremony. Gave what I remembered and Irv corrected me in a few spots, also that it was 41 not 42 Cramer Point Road.
“Are any of the area hotels still open this time of year?” Crossed my fingers. “My other plans kind of fell through for a place to spend the next two nights.”

“Not really, any of the ones that are still open, I wouldn’t let a dog stay in,” he said. “We’ve got more then enough room, you can stay with us. Sharon and Bry-Ann will be so surprised to see you.” Whew, didn’t know what to do if he gave a name of a hotel. I didn’t bring a whole lot of cash and vouch for how many hits the credit card could take after the plane ticket and rental car.

“Alright, you get on over here. I’ll let Celia know to set out another place for dinner.” Oh boy, considering the ‘interesting’ relationship I had with Celia Franklin, wonder how many carats her mate was going to have to cough up for me to be welcomed.

“Okay, see you soon. Bye now.” Hung up and automatically stuck a finger in the coin return to see if anything was there. Hey, found a dime. Cool. Looked down to see Jeff chewing on a leaf from the dusty plastic plants that were posing as decoration in the vestibule. Oh yuck. “Get that out of your mouth!!” Yanked it away. “You don’t know who’s touched it.” Pulled out the paper napkin I’d stashed in my pocket from breakfast, spit on it and wiped the ring of dust from around his lips. Nice thing about papa/mom spit is, it cleans anything.

Now that Jeff is back to looking presentable, take him out to the car and get in. Geeze, it hasn’t warmed up much at all even with the sun well up in the sky. Drive through the village of Lake George, which is pretty well deserted this time of year; stores and attractions boarded up for the season, the tourists all gone, the town for all intents and purposes was dead. It was kinda eerie, like that dumb ‘Night of the Living.....whatever it was movie’..... “They’re coming to get you Barbara”.....punched Gabe in the nose for jumping out from behind my bedroom door and scaring the shit out of me, the night AFN played it. Now just wanna get outta town all the faster.

Took only one wrong turn and righted myself pretty fast, so that it didn’t take too long before the mailbox with ‘Franklin’ appeared and turned onto the road leading to their lake house. Damn, that thing was as big as I remembered. The Tutor style ‘cottage’ was three stories high and sat grandly on a bluff over looking the lake. It was built by Irv’s father back in 1924 and they must have had enough stashed away to keep it even after the stock market crash, the world war and changing tastes.

Parked the rental car next to the ugliest station wagon I’d ever seen and that’s saying a lot. It was huge, lime green and prolly could fit an army. And must belong to Sharon and Bry-Ann as there were RIT and St John Fisher parking stickers festooning the windows. Got out of the car, put on our coats, set Jeff on my hip, then went to the trunk and pulled out the diaper bag. Didn’t wanna pull out the duffels just in case our invitation to stay the night got pulled by Celia.

Went up to the front door and rang the bell. Waited a few more moments, then rang it again. Okay, maybe dinner was canceled too, but just before I was going to turn around and go back to the car, the door swung open. “IRV!!!!!!!” And Jeff wiggled and leapt into the waiting arms of Irving Franklin. And here I was afraid he was going to clam up or say ‘bats’. “Kith!”

“Well hello to you too.” Irv allowed himself to be puppy kissed, neck scented and then the little booger just settled into the crook of his arm and neck to doze off. “Come on in before the Mrs says we’re trying to heat up the Adirondacks.” Followed Mr Franklin into the house and into the normal insanity of a non Novac Thanksgiving. Recognized some of the family from earlier this year and of course Sharon and Bry-Ann.

“Oh My Alpha God,” Sharon must have been helping her mother in the kitchen, when she came out and carefully wrapped her arms around me avoiding getting her sticky hands that smelled like...salt and dead fish all over my clothes. “It’s so great to see you!” Then she whispered in my ear, “you
gotta autograph your poster for me. It’s for Bry’s Christmas present. I brought it along on the chance you’d come.” Poster?

“Uh, what poster?” I whispered back

Sharon laughed, then looked both ways to make sure we were alone or at least out of earshot. “Why your poster, Silly.” Then she paused, “what? Didn’t you know?”

“No, I’ve been too busy at school. Where did you get it?"

“Spencer’s or you could send away to Mega. It’s $6.95 plus $3.95 shipping and handling.” SON OF A BITCH! I didn’t agree to that! I’ll sue........I’ll murder the bum.......I’ll.....I’ll...shut up and keep my head down. To say anything would mean everything I worked and slaved for would go up in smoke. Maybe should just let sleeping dogs lie and let it blow over. Note to self: Cole Trenton is no gentleman. Well that’s a goddamn understatement.

Looked around quickly as if the poster was hanging over the grand ebony mantle of the huge fireplace in the living room. “Does your family know?”

“Of course not. Daddy doesn’t read anything as trashy as Mega and Mother wouldn’t know such a thing exists.” I like Sharon, but there were times, she could be a condescending assbutt. “Come on, everyone is in the kitchen and I gotta finish helping Mom with the oysters.”

Followed her through the swinging door into the hours of bustle that it takes to create a half hour of Thanksgiving dinner. Coming from the dark wood and sedate colors of the living room and dining room into the shock of bright lights, burnt reds, yellows and bronze from the walls, windows and appliances almost made me want to turn around and run back into the gloom. Plus the kitchen was overly warm, except if you were in the way of a wicked ass draft from the ‘pneumonia hole’ some one had open.

“Where’s Bry-Ann?”

“She went out rowing on the lake with her dad.” Guess I’ll be seeing her later.

There was TV in the corner with a snowy picture of what looked like the end of the Macys parade; the guy on screen is either Santa Claus or Gene Shalit, at this point it was hard to tell which. One of the cousins had half his body out the window yelling to another cousin up on the roof to try and move the antenna left or right or tape on a couple of more coat hangers to get in better reception. “Come on man, the game is going to be on is a little while!”

Don’t look at me, I still don’t understand the American alpha/beta male obsession with football.

Celia Franklin was up to her elbows in oyster shells. She and a few of the other ladies were shucking for all they were worth, while fending off the greedy fingers of her husband and a few of the other men who were circling like buzzards trying to grab some. Personally it’s thing I don’t understand. John loves them but to me it looks like snot on the half shell. “Now you keep your nasty little fingers to yourself,” she slapped her mates hand as he tried to grab one. “Or there won’t be any for the oyster stuffing.”

“Come on Honey,” her mate whined. “Just a couple raw ones for me and the guys here. Plus we gotta get some meat on this pups bones.” Since they were talking food, Jeff was wide awake and making hungry noises.
Celia snorted through her nose. “That boy doesn’t look like he’s missed a meal ever in his life.”

Hey! Is she insinuating my pup is fat?! Lifted my lip and showed off a canine tooth, MY pup isn’t fat. I’ll have you know lady, he’s in the 95th percentile.

Course that’s when Jeff gave her those big green puppy eyes, leaned over to give her a hug then said..... “Cee....Cee.....kith!” Little devil. Course all the guys are just egging him on. “Come on Celia, how can you say no to that.”

“Fine,” she said exasperated, tossing down the shucking knife and moving the other ladies to clear a path. You could smell the stench of pissed off beta over the briny smell of oyster as Mrs Franklin turned to open the oven to baste the turkey. “Don’t blame me when someone is looking for the oyster stuffing and there isn’t any.” And so Celia Franklin washed her hands of the whole mess and let the guys swoop down on the oysters like the walrus and the carpenter from ‘Alice in Wonderland’.

“Nobody but Celia liked the stuff,” Irv stage whispered as he stuffed a small hunk of goo into my son’s mouth. “We only eat a smidge to be polite.” Kind of figured that’s what happened. So, in the mean time, need to get on the lady’s good side and asked if there is anything I can do. “Can you bake a pie?” She said in a half serious voice. “We got caught in traffic last night coming out of the city and got in so late, I didn’t have time last night to make any.” Now really took a look at her and the other ladies. They all looked tired and just on their last nerves. The whole oyster mishugana had just pushed Celia Franklin to the edge.

Well, can Dean Martin drink? Is the Pope Polish and do wild bears do it in the woods? Smirked and cracked my knuckles, “oh I think I can muddle through and toss one or two together.” Crisco, vanilla, flour, apples, canned pears, cream, walnuts and even a frozen fruit cake along with some other stuff, nothing says it can’t become something. They became vanilla custard, apple, pear and walnut pie with a fruit cake crust. I think Celia may like me a little or until something else happens to put me back on her shit list.

Thank goodness she had an extra oven built into the wall because the turkey was taking up all the room in the stove. Dang, that thing’s the size of an ostrich. Got everything in when the turkey came out and all hands on deck to get the food dished up and on the table. The large dining room table was loaded to groaning and even the pup’s table had enough food to fill even a teenage belly. Jeff was still ensconced on Irv’s lap, so I put between Bry-Ann and one of the cousins. Looked enviously at the wine glasses being filled with Mateus, mine was filled with milk. Might as well be sitting at the pups table.

When everyone was finally seated, there were 20 grown ups at the dining room table and 10 pups ranging in age from prolly 5 to mid teens at a smaller one set up to the side. Irv and Celia were sitting at both ends of that long hunk of hard wood and now each of them got to their feet to raise a glass. “Thank you all for being here,” as master of the house (nice of his mate to let him think so) he spoke first. “This holiday always means so much to us, even more then Christmas as it’s about family, friends and those whose time with us has been cut short.” Which explains the empty place setting to his right.

“We come together as House Franklin to share the joys and sorrows, success and failure, birth and loss that come with our walk upon this Earth. We may get caught up in the everyday things big and small but it is this day that reminds us of the importance of family. And that even though we’re spread far and near, we always keep each other close in our hearts.”

Celia spoke next, “we ask the Alpha God to bless this food and the people at these tables, The men, women and pups. Alpha, beta and omega. For they are all good in the eyes of our Lord Alpha
God, his Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Amen,” we all repeated.

“To House Franklin,” and 30 glasses were raised, clinked together and then drank dry. Not as much fun with milk. Next year, I’m getting drunk as a war lord for Thanksgiving and NOBODY is gonna stop me. Ulysses fluttered and butted against my skin, the boy is hungry and wants his food. Breakfast was fine but now he wants turkey and pronto Tonto.

The food was good, the company great.....but a part of me is kind of missing the gun fire, the Schenectady Police showing up and Mom tossing someone through a window. I’ve gotta be nuts......or just a Novac. Caught up with Bry-Ann about the happenings at RIT. Sargeant Major Singer retired and left to go out to Sioux City, Iowa where he and Karen were going to run a salvage yard. Sargeant Major Dalton had taken over training to get the juniors ready for camp. “He’s a hard ass but because of that, I think we’re gonna do well down at Bragg this summer.” Bry spooned some black olives on to her plate and smothered them in gravy. “We lost a few folks,” apparently Hester was one of them. No great loss there.

Hester, who I could never figure out what I did this woman to get her to hate me so much, dropped out of the ROTC before she had to sign the paper to commit to going to camp. Apparently something about it not being ‘her thing’. Or maybe because Uriel isn’t there any more to run interference. Aww.

“So how’s mated life treating you?”

Bry picked at her turkey. “Good, fine, tiring.” Then she leaned in and kept her voice low with an eye out of eavesdroppers...... “just wish Irv and Celia would give us a chance to be on our own. Whenever we need anything, or when Sharon thinks we need something, she calls and they jump in to get it for us. It’s not that I don’t love em, I do. I think Irv is the nuts and couldn’t ask a better mother in law then Celia, but.......wish they’d just butt out.”

Wow, that sucks canal water vigorously. Of course Dad and Mummy-ship help some....but I wouldn’t dream of asking them for STUFF. Babysitting–yes, storing my household goods in the basement–yes but a car, furniture and rent on a house? Even if it was all second hand......I would really hope I could get it on my own.

She also said they were spending Christmas with her folks, had to flip a coin to see which holiday they’d spend with who and Bry-Ann ‘won’ Christmas. “Hadin’t seen my family since the mating, not that we hadn’t heard from them, but would be nice actually see em in the flesh.” As a side note, her omega brothers Jared and Jiff were still getting letters from Ben. He’s doing well in school, loving Germany and is quarterback for his football team. “They’re trying to save up to go see him, but it’s tough that would find a place that would hire an omega teen and flights to Europe are super expensive. Plus Mom and Dad are not thrilled with them traveling unchaperoned.” Then she quickly added, “not that they don’t trust your First and his family. They just don’t trust anyone else.”

And having been hassled in airport bathrooms and grabby fingers in a zillion other places, since I presented at age 11, yeah, can see their point.

Bry changed the subject quickly back to talking about the cadet battalion and classes, when Sharon looked over at her from her place across the table next to her mother when a small part of the conversation must have floated across the table to her ear. Did not envy my friend when her mate got her alone in bed tonight. Excused myself and went out to the kitchen to check on the pies. Opened the oven, grabbed the pot holders sitting on the counter and pulled out the pear, vanilla and
walnut pies. The apple still had a little ways to go but should be running over shortly. Best way to know an apple pie is done is when the juice runs out. Then leave before you get stuck cleaning the oven when it bakes on.

Set them on the racks Celia had left out me as she didn’t want her Formica counter tops scorched. Looked at the four pies and even with the apple that would be out shortly, it just didn’t look like enough for 30 people. Need something else, But what’s simple and fast? Looked through the cupboards again and came upon a jar of peanut butter. “Cookies,” there is nothing kids love more then cookies and peanut butter were the easiest of all to make.

Got a mixing bowl out of the drain board, then eye balled two cups of peanut butter, two eggs and two cups of sugar into the bowl. Greased a cookie sheet, got everything mixed together and then just dumped it out on the tin and flattened out the dough. Will just make cookie bars, it’s faster and wouldn’t be standing out here forever. Was swapping out the pie for the cookie sheet, when Irv came into the kitchen carrying Jeff at arms length. Oops, know what that means.

“Think the little guy here needs a changing,” he held out my son and all but dropped him into my arms. Yup, he stinks to high heaven. The diaper bag had been shoved under the kitchen table, Irv got it out for me as I tried to whip off the dirty diaper as fast as possible before our noses denigrated and tossed the nasty thing outside onto the patio. Will get it picked up after this part of the process is finished. Used paper towel to wipe off the toxic sludge (will never feed you Indian pudding AGAIN until you wipe your own ass) and Irv whisked the garbage can out side the minute the worst of it was off Jeff’s hinnie. Took off his clothes and stood him up in the kitchen sink. Drizzled a squirt of Palmolive on his butt and used the sprayer to clean him off the rest of the way. Irv opened up the bag to get out a diaper and along with one, he found the ‘flower frog’.

“Christ, this is ugly.” He turning it over in his hands before setting the thing on his head. “what do you think?”

“It’s just so you,” I said lightly. “King Leonardo, Lord of the Bongo Congo, tis I your loyal adviser, Odie O. Cologne.” Gave a grandiose bow, “what is your command your Majesty?”

“Confound it,” he roared. “Where is my brother Itchy?”

“In the dungeon,” I said solemnly drying Jeff off with a dish towel. “Prolly becoming the ‘Maytag’ to Biggie Rat. Amazing the lingo you pick up hanging around the police for a few months.

“Good,” Irv took the crown off his head and tossed it back in the diaper bag. “Stupid son of bitch.” Got Jeff rediapered, back in his little jumper and shirt before handing him back to Irv. “Come on there Sport. Let’s go back out and have some more cranberry sauce.”

“Irv!”

“That’s my boy!” Mr Franklin smiled, “bright pup you have there.”

“I tend to think so,” watched as Irv tossed Jeff over his shoulder and went back out through the swinging door. “Bye bye!” He waved. Whew, fell back against the counter. That was close. Thank the Alpha God, that thing looks so damn cheap that it should’ve had ‘Made in Japan’ stamped on the bottom instead of Van Cleef and Arpels. About that time, the oven buzzed to announce the peanut butter bars were done.

After dinner, joined Celia, Sharon and the other beta ladies in clean up as the alphas, both male and female and beta guys went off to watch football or went to their bedrooms to sleep off the turkey coma. Must be nice to be them. Geeze there were a zillion dishes. This was worse then being KP
(kitchen police) on the 4th of July 1976 when I was in Fort Knox for ROTC Basic Camp. The Bicentennial and where was I? Up my elbows in greasy pots and pans.

Was starting to limp as I dried and handed off plates and cups to the sullen teenage beta girl be put away. Hey, at least she knew where they were suppose to go, even if she bitched every inch of the way about why couldn’t her brothers be out here too helping. You are preaching to the choir there girlie girl But now my feet were killing me. Swollen even in my most comfortable shoes, my feet and ankles were balloons. Ulysses only gave the occasional flutter and burp (ick, ambrosia salad isn’t that great the second time around). Lucky little bum had turkey coma too. As the last spoon and fork was put in the silverware drawer, Celia looked over and decided I’d about had the meat.

“Why don’t you go have a seat over at the table and put your feet up,” she said. “We can take care of getting dessert staged.” Gratefully set down the damp dish towel and limped over to the kitchen table and pulled out a couple of the straight back wooden chairs. Plunked heavily into one as I toed off the loafers and socks to put my poor sore tootsies in the other. Yuck, they were a delightful shade of black and blue, soon to be green and yellow. Peachy, bet the varicose veins will be making an appearance also. Wiggled my toes, ahhhhhhhhhhhh, that’s better.

Even though it was a wooden chair with a thin seat cushion, didn’t take long to get comfortable and doze off. If I can sleep on the ground with nothing but a poncho between me and the dirt, the back of gun jeeps and army cots, a wooden chair in a warm kitchen was like a feather bed. Course the angels had to come visit.....

“You don’t owe anything to them,” the radio room was in shambles. Blood and broken chairs made floor slick and splinterly. The air thick with the smell of anger, fear, sweat and urine. “You always said Panama was your country.” My childhood friend Jose Bordanea, now a Colonel in the Panamanian Defense Force stood a few feet away, pistol in his hand pointed at my heart. Which was fair I suppose, as ‘The Lovers Kiss’ was aimed at his head. “You just need to turn around and walk away. Tell your superiors you never saw me.”

“I can’t do that Orejito (the childhood nickname still slipped out of my mouth. ‘Little Ears’ was a cookie that he always loved and a friendly jab at his ears, that stuck out like the handles of a loving cup.) “I took an oath when I put on this uniform, the same as you did.” The weapon was starting to shake, “please. Just put the gun down and surrender. Don’t make me do it. Don’t make me shoot you.”

“Oh Asp my friend,” he said with a sigh pulling back the hammer (Okay, this is how that went.....Novac went to Vac to vacuum cleaner to aspirdora-Spanish for vacuum cleaner to Asp. Good tough name for a street pup.) “Life was so much simpler when we were pups, was it not? But men must make hard choices and alphas the hardest of all. I’m sorry my friend but we must end this now” The explosion in the small room was deafening as I watched his head explode in a shower of bone, brains and pink goo.

“NOOOOOO!” floundered, kicking over chairs and falling to the floor on my knees, gasping for air. The vision of my one time friend dying playing and replaying nightmarishly. Looked around quickly, oh thank the Alpha God no one else was in the kitchen. They must all be out in the dining room having pie or whatever these people do on Thanksgiving. Got slowly and carefully to my feet, Ulysses was bouncing off the walls and oh crap, he got a direct hit on my bladder. Shit, now I’ve got a wet zipper. Padded barefoot out the back door and around the side of the house to the car. Damn, the stones and concrete were cold! But felt oddly soothing on my swollen feet. Not so great was that frigid mountain air hitting those pee soaked trousers.

Think that’s when the rest of my balls jumped inside my body, kind of like ‘screw you. See ya
again when the pup comes out...maybe’. Hope I’m not like one of those omegas whose junk doesn’t come back down after their pup is born. Oh no, I’m not gonna look like a ‘Ken doll’.

Bouncing from one foot to another, opened the trunk to the rental car and fished out the duffel bags. Slinging them over my shoulders, jogged on tip toe back around the house to the kitchen. Of course Celia had to be there. She was bringing the empty pie tins back out to be dumped in the sink. Oh shit, another round of dishes.

She took one look and her face became one of understanding and sympathy, “powder room is over there,” She pointed to a door to the right of the kitchen table.” I didn’t dare laugh when I was carrying Sharon for fear of an ‘accident’. Will be running a load of wash shortly. Half the pups were bounded and determined to wear their dinners instead of eating them.”

“Thanks, Jeff does that too.” Pulled out a pair of clean pants and underwear from the duffel bag and went into the bathroom. Flipped on the light as the pants I had on dropped to the floor with a ‘chunk’, weighed down by keys, change and wallet. Glanced in the mirror and a young-old face looked back. Her Mummy-ship said this pregnancy was going to be hard on my life and sadly, she wasn’t kidding. School has been almost an unmitigated disaster; with not being able to see a doctor (well I could but would’ve missed class-can’t afford to do that) almost being kicked out of officers basic for chea....reconnoitering and now trying very hard in the material management class not to be ‘That Guy’.

‘That Guy’ was this lieutenant who suddenly appeared on the first day of class. Nobody knew him and our good Captain Adviser didn’t say anything as to how he got there. But of course, by the end of that first day we all knew. News that juicy couldn’t stay buried long. Come to find out he had failed Material Management twice and Petroleum once, so that’s how he ended up with us. Apparently his daddy was good friends with base commander General Sheffly, so ‘That Guy’ was going to stay there until he passed. Which at this rate, was gonna be never. Now the big difference between him and me was, you could tell, he didn’t wanna be there, where as I did. But he prolly couldn’t tell his old man that, so he was going to fail until somebody got the hint.

Soaped up a wash cloth to scrub my.........aw crap, I really do look like some Ken doll ‘down there’. The only difference is the tip of my dick was sticking out just enough so could take a leak. Fuck a duck. “You guys better make a grand reappearance when this is all over.” I hissed. This is it, the ‘Last of the fucken Mohicans’ am NOT going to get pregnant ANY MORE! Right after Claire.....and Ephraim. Goddamn angels. Now who the fuck is Ephraim?

Jesus Christ, I’ve always had the ‘angel dreams’ but now with this pregnancy they’ve become visions and show up more frequently. What’s going on? Lewiston, who the fuck are you and what have you done to me? Dried off then pulled up the clean trousers, sucked in and tugged up the zipper. Sigh, I feel fat.

Came out of the bathroom to find Celia determinedly striding through the kitchen with a laundry basket full of food stained clothes. Boy, she was right. The pups must have bathed in turkey gravy. Followed her out to the laundry room, where I dumped the trousers and underwear into the washer with the rest of the duds. My hostess glanced over her shoulder as she set the controls to ‘hot’ and dumped in a cup of Duz. She also opened the rip tab on the box to make it large enough to put her hand in and get the glass out. “Why don’t you take your bags up to that guest room, the one on the third floor where you stayed over the summer. Get some real rest.” Celia tapped the water tumbler against her palm to shake off the excess soap into the machine.

I’ll need it, considering it’s like climbing Mount Everest to get there. Now should really be finding Jeff. “Does Mr Franklin still have my son?”
Celia now giggled. “The two of them are holed up in his office reading ‘Last of the Mohicans’.”

Good grief, that pup still can’t get enough of that book. I think Patricia Harras is on the second go around with it, but on the up side, Jimmie and Rosie are now into it and she has to wait until they’re home from school until they can all sit down to hear the adventures of Uncas and Nattie Bumpo. So during the day, ‘Kidnapped’ is the literature of choice.

Better go give Irv a break from pup duty. Found the correct door to his office after one or two kind of embarrassing starts-caught one of the cousins flexing his muscles in the mirror naked and another jerking off. Talk about a night mare version of ‘what’s behind door number one Monty’? So anywho, got to the office, peeked in and my heart melted. Irv Franklin had dozed off, stretched out on the leather couch, the book still open on his stomach and Jeff equally asleep, laying on Irv’s chest. It was such a Kodak moment, had to rush back to the kitchen to dig the Polaroid camera out of the duffel and get off a few quick pics. As I watched the images come to light, wished so much that it was John or Dean who were in these pictures, cuddling their son.

Gently picked Jeff up and set the book on the coffee table beside the couch. Shook the open afghan and covered Mr. Franklin. Went back out to the kitchen, shouldered the duffel and diaper bags, then went to the staircase. Took a deep breath, “I can do this.” On each landing would stop, catch my breath and start again. God, thought I was gonna freaken die by the time I drug my overloaded ass to the third floor.

Got to the guest room, dropped the bags with relief and then laid my sweet boy in the crib. “Love you.” Pulled off my clothes, stripping down to the nursing shirt and tap pants. They were the most comfortable thing right now and the silky feel made me feel sexy ..........or as sexy as a beached whale could feel. Whine, I feel fat. Climbed in bed, burrowed under the covers, flipped over a few times and fell asleep.

Woke up because SOMEBODY’S mining my nose again. Cracked the eyelids to find Jeff standing by the bed. One hand hanging on to the mattress, the other letting the fingers do the walking up my nose. “How did you get out of that crib Pup?” Looked over at it, the rail was still up but there was a big stuffed teddy bear pushed in the corner, so that was prolly just enough to give him a leg up to go up and over the rail.

“How didn’t you hurt yourself?” Sat up and looked him over. There were no scratches, bumps or red marks that would show that he’d injured himself on the way across the rail and on to the floor. “How did you do this?” Easy enough to find out. Wallowed myself out of bed, hefted Jeff up and back into the crib. Then stepped back to wait, which wasn’t very long. Just as I thought, he used the teddy bear as a step stool, then grabbed the railing putting a leg up to hook his heel on it, then pulling himself across on his stomach. Then hung on the rail till he dropped to the floor doing doing a near PLF. He must have watched me a whole lot closer then I thought the day I did a few of them off the low bar of the jungle gym to entertain Jimmie and Rosie.

“How didn’t you hurt yourself?” Easy enough to find out. Wallowed myself out of bed, hefted Jeff up and back into the crib. Then stepped back to wait, which wasn’t very long. Just as I thought, he used the teddy bear as a step stool, then grabbed the railing putting a leg up to hook his heel on it, then pulling himself across on his stomach. Then hung on the rail till he dropped to the floor doing a near PLF. He must have watched me a whole lot closer then I thought the day I did a few of them off the low bar of the jungle gym to entertain Jimmie and Rosie.

“Damn,” oops......”darn, I mean, darn.” It was rather impressive, in a parental heart attack kind of way. Oh have the feeling this is just the start of all those times when Naomi-Mom would give Gabe and Me the ‘hairy eyeball’ after some exploit she pulled us out of and then would say: “wait till you have pups of your own. If they do half the shit you two to do, count your goddamn blessings!” If that’s the case, I’m so fucked and not in the fun way either.

Course Jeff was proud as punch looking up at me with those big green eyes of his, “Wuv you Papa.” Oh how could I be mad at him after that? Course that’s when Ulysses decided all this lovely dovey shit had to go and oh crap ..........had to run to the john to puke dinner. Well, that moment was fun while it lasted.
Got cleaned up, dressed and went back downstairs. Thanksgiving Round Two was being setting up in the kitchen, the left overs from dinner were prepped for hot and cold turkey sandwiches. Left overs, what a concept. Usually I’ve skipped town by the time, so this is a total novelty for me.

Heaped piles of white and dark meat on to slabs of dark rye bread, some lettuce and tomato slices, then a slather of mayo. Hint of salt and pepper. Wiggled my mouth over the tail end of the whole mess and took a big bite. These were the times when having a bull alpha for a mate came in handy.

This part of feast took place out in the kitchen with folks either sitting at the table or just leaning against the counters. Adults drinking beer from the bottles between bites of sandwich, teens standing in the corners watching their parents with the eye rolling disdain of someone who knows EVERYTHING and the pups who ran around leaving a trail of turkey, bread crumbs and spilled soda in their wake. Jeff was crawling after them, drumstick in hand and face covered in cranberry sauce. The whole scene was laid back, almost tribal in its familial ritual and just everything I wanted for my little family in the future.

Sharon sided up to me and we slipped out for a couple of minutes for me to sign the poster for Bry-Ann. Have to admit, it was rather nice even for cheese cake. It was my favorite pose from that day on the beach out at Lake Ontario with Cole Trenton. The one where the gust of wind took my coat and blew it up, making it look like wings. Only they altered the photo just a smidgen, so that the coat covered the nipples and pubis. Nudity is one thing, but the broader appeal (and money) was with the tease.

Slid back into the kitchen, when Irv came up and wanted a word with me in his office. Well, that word turned out to be.....“could you sign my copy of Mega please?” Out of the bottom drawer of the big mahogany desk came my issue of Mega. Also noticed a nice stack of Playboys, Penthouse and Mega magazines in there also. So much for Sharon and her ‘my father don’t read that trash’ horse shit. The problem with most pups of any age, is that they don’t think of their parents as sexual beings. Not that you’d really want to.....yuck, the thought of Naomi-Mom and Zachariah.....the whole her banging hookers on the hood of police cars.....there is not enough bleach in the world to get rid of that image!

John Hancock’ed the center fold and regaled Irv with some stories of that weekend with Cole Trenton.

The next day drove down to the Glens Falls Hospital with Sharon and Bry-Ann for a doctors appointment for Jeff and myself. Celia had called a friend of hers who was some mucky muck in the outpatient obstetrics department there. I was in like Flynn with an appointment for a guy who was usually booked months in advance. Dang, Celia Franklin is almost a big a force of nature as her Mummy-ship or Naomi-Mom.

The city of Glens Falls was one of those places with a mixture of old and new buildings, parks and unforced quaintness that sat on the banks of the Hudson River. It’s also one of those places you hear about if you’ve lived in the area for any length of time but don’ go to unless you have to or got lost on the way to somewhere else.

So, here I am. Saying ‘ahhhhh’, giving the vampires my blood (it floats), peeing in a cup (you gotta be kidding) and having that cold speculum slid up my snatch (warm it up a little next time will ya?). The doctor of course was not at all pleased after I finished giving my medical and past natal history. “You really should have regular check ups this far into your pregnancy,” he admonished. Dr Bonesteel was a tall good looking alpha with dark hair and that gray at the temples that says distinguished instead of old.

“Is there anything wrong?” Oh please, don’t let there be anything wrong! The last thing I need is
to have my stupidity harm this poor little soul.

Sensing my anxiety, Herr Doctor patted my knee. “Actually, other then you’re a little anemic (knew that already) and should be getting more rest (yeah, sure, like that’s going to happen any time soon) the pregnancy itself is progressing nicely. You’ve transitioned into the second trimester seemingly without an issue, though I don’t know how, considering what you’ve told me about the first month of that pregnancy. Jumping out of airplanes?!”

“What can I say?” Shrugged, “This pup ain’t called ‘Tenacious’ for nothing.”

“Okay, let’s get you hooked up to the ultra sound and see how the little guy is doing.” Again with the cold goo, can’t they invent some stuff that’s warm? Oy Vey! The machine is huge and noisy, the screen could be a bit bigger but there was my pup. He was about five inches long and could also see the little flutters of his soul. “Won’t be long now for this body and soul to mesh.” The doctor looked approvingly at the screen. “Would you like a picture?”

“Yes please,” maybe this would be my way of reconnecting with Jenny and Lewiston. Who wouldn’t wanna see their pup?

The nurse pressed the button, “okay, pup. Smile for the birdie.” Then the doc give Jeff the once over. “Bats!” My son giggled and waved his arms. I smiled sweetly and said we were looking at a picture book earlier. Then he came out with.... “goddamn animals!” I hate you Hunter S. Thompson.

Course he would say that. “There was this terrible person in the park lot....” I tut tutted waving a disapproving finger. “He had the worst language.”

The little rat is still in the 95th percentile, 25 pounds and about 30 inches tall. Which explained why most of his clothes looked a little tight and pants were high water. Oh my gosh, my baby isn’t gonna be a baby much longer. After I got cleaned up, dressed and went out to waiting room, had the ultrasound picture in hand to show off. Sharon and Bry-Ann were sitting in the waiting room reading old magazines killing time.

“So what’s the verdict? Bry-Ann looked up from the copy of National Geographic she was reading. Sharon had her nose in the US News and World Report.

“Look Ma, no cavities!” I held up the ultra sound picture of Ulysses.

“Oooooo, let me see, let me see.” Bry-Ann plucked the picture from my fingers. “Will you look at that. It’s amazing.” She’d turned to her mate, “Isn’t this amazing?”

“Looks kind of like a blob,” Sharon really wasn’t bringing up much enthusiasm for the picture nor did she really want to be here but the promise of a shopping trip to the Aviation Mall over in Queensbury got her to come along. “But, yeah, uh, I can see it’s a pup now,” she said quickly after noting the surprised looks on our faces and figuring a little bit of positive would go a long way. Considering her mate and father adored Jeff and pups in general, it behooved her to show a little in the way of enthusiasm. So good save there girl. Guess she’s not warmed up to the idea of having pups herself yet.

Don’t see this boding well for the future. Could see how Bry-Ann interacts with her relatives pups and with Jeff. She’d make such a great mom, Sharon......not so much. Which is a shame, Bry does love her so much, but will that love stand time, separations and just the little things that drive people crazy? Or that’s what people tell me anyway. I’ve yet to find out myself.
So, we went to the Mall, being it was the day after Thanksgiving, the stores were full, people were walking on top of each other and Jeff was starting to get cranky. I wasn’t far behind. Was hungry and could could care less what J.C. Pennys had on sale or wouldn’t it be cute to have Jeff sit on Santas lap. Oh sure, stand in line forever with a bunch of squalling pups just to have my son take one look at this guy and prolly scream ‘goddamn aminals!!’

Sharon on the other hand, traipsed happily through the crowd, Bry trailing behind her, sullenly carrying the bags. “Isn’t this wonderful?!” Sharon called out happily. “So happy and festive!” Her mate and I glowered at her like prisoners in a chain gang. About that time, Jeff had enough. He tipped his head back as hot angry tears bubbled up from his eyes and started to scream. “WAAAAAAAAAAAAAA! IRVVVVVVVV!” Even Sharon had a pause at that, guess the last thing she expected was her fathers name being used as a verbal weapon. Hey, the pup still has a limited vocabulary, so he has to double up.

Oh shit. “Meet you at the food court,” I turned right around and jogged off into the throng, for something to eat. The line at the Chinese joint was the shortest, so joined it and did my best to calm my screaming pup. A few minutes later a tray with a few soggy egg rolls and a bowl of egg drop soup was being shoved across the counter to me in self defense. Can’t blame the people for wanting to be shed of us. Screaming pups not being great for business. Picked up the tray, found a seat, settled him in my lap and started spooning soup into his mouth.

After a moment or two, “wuv oooo Papa,” that’s the kinda thing I like to hear. Took a couple bites of egg roll to spoons of soup till it was all gone. Those things were greasy as hell and prolly going to give me heart burn in a little while but at least for the time being Jeff is off of ‘defcon one’. That is until Sharon and Bry-Ann came. They’re ‘discussing’ this dress Sharon saw in Denby’s and wanted. Bry-Ann pointed out they couldn’t afford it but Sharon countered that her mother would get it for her, which sent the ‘discussion’ into overdrive and slowly up the defcon scale.

When we finally get back to Cramers Point a while later, Sharon and Bry were not speaking to each other and I am ready to pack our shit and leave. Don’t care if we’re spending the night in the crappiest motel room in town (I’ve lived in worse) have had my fill of the Whitmans and Franklins for one holiday...forever. Had to put up with the antics of my own family for years and really don’t care to deal with someone elses. Marched up ‘Mt Everest’ and started throwing stuff into the duffels. There was a gentle tap at the door that I first ignored but since who ever didn’t go away, reluctantly went to see who it was.

Irv Franklin was standing there looking a little embarrassed, “understand you had a less then perfect day at the mall.”

The term ‘no defecation Holmes’ was on the tip of my tongue, but since he was my host and had really done nothing to warrant being the target of my anger, the comment stayed put. “You could say that.”

He walked over to the ladder back chair that stood in the corner of the room, turned it around straddling it with his chin on the top rung. “Sharon, like Mrs Franklin, can be a tiny bit high maintenance.”

Irv, you’re kill’en me here. “Oh really?” Was about all I could say without expletives in at least three different languages.

“I love my daughter with all my heart and soul, but know she can be also be a rip roaring bitch when she gets going.” Now that was a little unexpected. “Bry-Ann will have to come to grips with this fact, just as I have with her mother.” He looked at the duffel bags packed and ready to be loaded into the car, “Know I’m asking a lot, but stay the night. It’s been nice having you and the
little guy here. You can escape first thing tomorrow morning, promise.”

Plunk down on the bed, “if I do, can I toss Sharon through a window?” Had to explain that old Novac family Thanksgiving tradition.

Irv kind of liked it.

No, Sharon didn’t got through a window but she did have to apologize for her less then ‘hospitable’ behavior at the mall. Which from the look on her face, going through the window would’ve been preferable.

The next morning, Jeff and I left with hugs and kiss’s from the Whitmans and Franklins. We gave empty promises of doing this again next year to the quiet relief on all sides, knowing this was not going to happen. Riding down the Northway turned on the radio:

….Take It easy, take it easy
Don't let the sound of your own wheels
drive you crazy
Lighten up while you still can
don't even try to understand
Just find a place to make your stand
and take it easy.... 5.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this took so long. Had a bout of life, that kind of got in the way of things. Thank you for hanging in there.

When it comes to family, we get older but don’t grow up.

1. Don’t Pull Your Love song written by Brian Potter and Dennis Lambert. The song was originally released in 1971 by Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds. A rather good cover can be found on You Tube done by voice actor Ron Paulsen for the straight to dvd animated movie ‘Batman and Harley Quinn’.


3. Johnny Get Angry: written by Hal David and Sherman Edwards and sung by Joanie Sommers in 1962. It’s one of those songs that tell you just how far we’ve come as a culture.

Bruiser LaRue: was a swishy football player created by the 1970’s comedy team of Hudson and Landry.

4. The Things We Do For Love: released by 10cc as a single in 1976 and written by Eric Stewart and Graham Gouldman

5. Take It Easy: from 1972, the lead cut off The Eagles album...Eagles. Written by Jackson Browne and Glenn Frye. And yes there is a ‘flat bed Ford’ at ‘Standing on the
Corner’ Park in Winslow, Arizona and it’s such a fine sight to see.

*Chapter 6: Family: That Ties That Bind and Gag

That ‘flower frog’ is the coronation crown worn by the last queen of Iran. There is also a picture of the ‘paper weight’ It was created by the jewelry company Van Cleef and Arpels. https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/xtjstAqTfUSGKJz4F0stwM/The-crown-jewels-of-Iran.html


King Leonardo: was a perfectly awful cartoon (by today’s standards) from 1960 about a rather inept lion king and his faithful servant a skunk named Odie O. Cologne. The villians of the piece were the king’s beatnic brother Itchie and his friend Biggie Rat. The cartoon was put out by the Total Television company and sponsored by General Mills as a platform to sell their cereal.

That Guy: true story, he didn’t wanna be in the army but couldn’t convince his father. So he failed officers basic until he passed and then failed his way through Material Management and Petroleum. Yeah, he ‘deep sixed’ my class too.

Duz: a laundry detergent that from the 1950’s to the 1970’s put either glassware or towels in their boxes. Kind of like Crackerjack for housewives. My mom had a complete set of Duz-wear, went nicely with the glass wear from the Mobile Station.

What’s behind door number one: is of course from the 60’s and 70’s game show, ‘Let’s Make a Deal’ with host Monty Hall.

‘Look Ma No Cavities: the tag line from Crest Toothpaste from the 1940’s to the 80’s.

Defense readiness conditions (DEFCONs) describe progressive alert postures primarily for use between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders of unified commands. DEFCONs are graduated to match situations of varying military severity, and are numbered 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 as appropriate. DEFCONs are phased increases in combat readiness. In general terms, these are descriptions of DEFCONs: DEFCON 5 Normal peacetime readiness DEFCON 4 Normal, increased intelligence and strengthened security measures DEFCON 3 Increase in force readiness above normal readiness DEFCON 2 Further Increase in force readiness, but less than maximum readiness DEFCON 1 Maximum force readiness.
Days of Dark and Light- A Decembers Tale

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

The pictures were haunting; piles of corpses, American soldiers in surgical masks surveying the carnage and then the cover was shot-a wash tub full of what looked like grape Kool-aid was worst of all. Because you knew it was loaded with cyanide. That single picture on the cover of Time Magazine was graphic in its simplicity and meaning. There were five or six of us standing around Boss Tweeds desk reading over his shoulder.

Jim Jones took the cowards way out with a bullet to the head. The pistol still clutched in his lifeless fingers when he was found on his ‘throne’. Men, women, pups even infants weren’t spared. Every color, race and secondary gender was represented and joined in death. Authorities estimated around 900 people died, any survivors were the ones who ran into the jungle and escaped to Georgetown. Not the way to start the first week of December. The month that should remind us of peace on Earth—goodwill towards men.

Why do tragic events like this seem all the worse during this time? Not that they’d be any less horrible if happening any other time of the year.

As class was called, Tweed closed the magazine and dropping it into his briefcase, one of the other guys made this comment: “if some one comes up and offers you a cup a grape Kool-aid, I’d really be thinking of turning them down about now.” It was funny, in a kinda dark, you had to be there sorta way. The kind of ‘funny’ stories that I used to hear combat vets tell and few others would understand.

Major Otis was lecturing today. Wonder if he’ll try to flirt, drop double entendres and innocently pat my shoulder. And no he didn’t. The louse didn’t even look my way! Don’t know whether to be relieved or insulted. So watched if he did this to someone else......nope. Professional all the way around. Guess he must have given up on our class and is trying to be the good little husband or (which is prolly more likely) hitting on someone in the class that just came in.

So just sat there listening, taking notes and in the margins scribbled gift ideas for Christmas. Which I really should be paying more attention. His class was on depot operations which I was going to be doing at my duty assignment. But in the mean time....back to the margins......question marks next to Jenny and Lewiston as I hadn’t heard back from them yet. Granted I’d just sent the ultra sound picture last week, so at the earliest might get a letter back in mid to late December. Really didn’t have a good address either, just MG Lewiston Reynolds, 1 Corp, Bielefeld, West Germany. Stuck a fuck ton of postage to the envelope, so hope it gets there.

Now for John, last year sent him the John Jakes book series, wonder if I can do a little better this year? ‘American Caesar’ got some pretty good reviews, can’t lose with a book on MacArthur. Dean, will have to see if Vonnegut has a new one out this year. If not, will have to see what else might tickle his fancy. Maybe a mystery. Dad and Mummy-ship....I have no idea. I mean, it looks like they have everything all ready, so what would you give them? Will have to call and get some ideas. Will go out to the Walnut Mall this Saturday to do some shopping then get the books out. They’ll be late, but at least they’ll get there.

Break is called and Sargeant Harras comes in with the mail. Two letters for me, one from Dean and the other from C & P Telephone. Looks like they want their monthly pound of flesh. Tuck the envelopes in the breast pocket of the uniform jacket and head out to the mens room. These days, all I have to do is look at a glass of water and gotta take a pee. Am now five months into this and look like nine. Trudge there, sit down, piss a few drops and then trudge back.
My feet hurt, back aches and nipples are sore and leaking. I want my alpha! Yeah, right, like that’s gonna happen. Come on Novac, grow a pair. Oh yeah, don’t have any until the pup comes out. Christ, this sucks canal water vigorously. Dropped in the chair and then leaned forward to put my head on my arms and maybe, just maybe. catch a moment of rest. Jeff was antsy last night as Jimmie had filled him up on a whole Milky Way bar before his mother could stop him and it took forever to get through the sugar high. If he didn’t sleep, neither did I. Then when he finally did, I couldn’t get comfortable, so flipped and tossed most of the night. “Hello there Mr Novac,” jerked up. It’s Major Otis, pop to my feet as fast as my expending waistline and new center of gravity would let me. He is a superior officer, so need to show respect even it’s just to the rank and not the man.

“You look like shit,” he said patting the air, motioning me to sit back down.

“My son had a little trouble falling a sleep last night.” Fell heavily back into the chair. “But I’m fine Sir, just....just fine.” Last thing I need is to show I can’t hack it.

“You used to be a way better liar,” the major commented rocking back on his heel. “How far along are you any way?”

“Five months.”

“You look more like 9, damn that’s gonna be a big pup.”

“Yes Sir.” What do you want?

Apparently nothing. Major Otis checked his watch, “okay everyone. Coffee break’s over. Back on your heads.” And with that, the stragglers got to their seats and the major walked to the front of the class to pick up where he’d left off.

Lunch time came and everyone took off to either the snack bar, officers club or their quarters to stuff their faces or get a drink to fortify themselves for the afternoon. As for me, I stayed put. It was easier then trying to go anywhere and whole lot cheaper. Took the tin foil wrapped peanut butter and jelly sandwich out of the briefcase along with the apple that I’d tossed in this morning. Got the letter from Dean out, opened it and read.

Dear Cas,

Sorry for not writing in a while but things have been jumping here in K-town. Drug deals, assaults and murder oh my. Never a dull moment for ole Ich here in the Vaterland. Got your last letter with the latest picture of Jeff. By the Alpha God he’s gonna be a big pup. That boy is going to be a quarterback just like his big brother Ben. Who by the way won their last game against Berlin American High. Glad you’re doing well in school (okay so I lied a little bit...a lotta little bit on that front) and will be over here next month. Bring your long johns, it’s already colder then a well diggers ass along the pipeline in January.

Know I haven’t said it lately, but I do love you. Know I screwed up and hurt you but wanna win you back and make a life with you and Jeff....... Whatever else he had to say, didn’t wanna know. Closed the letter and put it back in the envelope, what am I gonna do? A part of me wants to love him so much and go running back.....but to what? Sharing him with Lisa, (no matter how much he’d bitch and moan about her, he’d never leave) just like I’m sharing John with Mary. Don’t really want to be playing second fiddle to anyone anymore.....but Jeff needs a father and a last name that means something and has some status.
Well alright Mr. Dean Winchester, if you want me back, you better do it the right way and with some pretty serious wooing. I’m not some cheap little beta, my contract was worth it’s weight in gold, literally. I’m one expensive piece of ass.

But what if John wants to keep me? He did promise to turn my contract over to Dean in five years, four years now. But does that mean a divorce? In most cases, the pup is taken away and given the alpha as most omegas have problems earning enough to care for a family. What am I going to do? Shoved the letter back in my pocket, really didn’t wanna think about anything right now. Went back to the sandwich, slowly tasting the crunchy peanut butter, tangy black cherry jam and soft white bread. Mmmm, can taste it right down to the molecules.

In the mean while people began drifting back into the class room. Could hear the shake of dice in the cups, as the backgammon games started up again. Looked up to see Tarah coming through the door and walking slowly down the steps to her desk, her nose deep in a letter. Saw the return address on the envelope was from her beau in Ohio. “What do you hear from Cincinnati?” I piped up as she passed by.

“He’s doing great,” she said absently. “We’re getting together at Christmas down home.” Tarah looked pensive as she tapped on the letter, “he’s asking me what I thought about moving to Cincinnati next month. He’s checked out houses, talked to the local national guard center.....”

“Sounds like he’s pretty serious.”

She blushed. “he’s hinted at talking to my father about something being a home run and diamonds

“You sure he’s not just talking about baseball?” See, I know what to ask. Don’t know shit about football, but do know Mr Doubleday’s game.

The eye roll was pretty epic. “No, but if he was, he’d better have season tickets to the Cincinnati Reds. I wanna see Pete Rose knock one out of the park.”

Okay. And there you have it sports fans, a little ‘paradise by the dashboard light’. Finished up the sandwich and began on the apple, when something inside my gut took a dip and flip. Oh Christ! What just happened? And that’s when the flutters I was so used to stopped and the kick replaced it. Ulysses body and soul came together, he’s on his way to being a pup! Can’t wait to write Jenny and Lewiston! Uh oh yeah. Maybe will have to wait on that, or at least write John and let him know.

Got home that evening after class ended, picking up Jeff and then going to the commissary. Being it was the first week after pay day, the joint was still mobbed with retard-os and mommies. Bought milk and bread, along with a couple of other things for tonights dinner. Got in line to cash out, tipped the bagger and then was out the door. Once back at the BOQ, carried Jeff under one arm, the grocery bag in the other and had the brief case balanced on my head. Thank the Alpha God for Finishing School. Rode the elevator up to the fifth floor, got off and went down the hall. Dipped my head, letting the case fall forward and catching it with my foot before it crashed to the floor.

Set the bag down, fished the keys out of my pocket, got the door open and kicked the brief case into the room. Picked up the groceries, came in and dropped both Jeff and the bag on the bed. Oh gosh, I’m tired. Put the milk in the fridge, the dry goods in the cabinet and filled a sauce pan with water to warm up the Beechnut bottles, then after they’re heated, will put in some rice to boil. Gonna do red beans and rice for supper tonight. It’s good, cheap and filling. Gotta make sure to have some money for Christmas but also for moving next month. Depending on if Lt Masters sends me a letter about quarters availability, I’ll either be in on base housing or out on the economy, which means, money for first and last months rent. And I am done living in slums. May
have to touch that four grand in the bank after all.

Jeff was still sitting on the bed blinking up at me. “Papa sad?”

“Papa tired.” Oh dear Lord Alpha God am I tired.

“Me sorry.” Okay, that’s new. Looks like having him with other pups is paying off. “Kith.” My little man held out his arms and I bent low so he could leave sloppy puppy kisses on my cheek. Then came the giggle and laugh that was a little burst of sunshine and rainbows in the world of Cas Novac.

“You are my sun shine, my only sun shine,” I sang picking him up to waltz him around the room, or in this case over to the two burner hot plate to take the pot of boiling water off the element. “You make me happy when skies are gray. You’ll never know dear, how much I love you. Please don’t take my sunshine away.” Oh please don’t grow up too fast. Want this part of you to last always. Okay, have to get dinner going in earnest. Set Jeff down on the carpet and went to the closet to get him something to play with. Let’s see, his favorite toy right now is a cardboard box.

Had rescued it from the officers club when there was some ‘command happy hour’ I had to go to and there was no parking in front so had to park out in back of the club. Noticed a janitor was flattening cardboard boxes to toss in the dumpster. Rescued this thick walled whiskey box before the guy stomped it flat (gave him a buck to stop) and tossed the box in the passengers side seat of the Bug. Well, you woulda thought I brought home the most expensive toy ever, the pup loved it. He hid in it, chewed on the sides, pretended to be driving a car, boat, plane....whatever his little heart desired could be found in that empty cardboard box.

Best toy a buck could buy.

So as he played, waited for the bottles of Beechnut goo to cool down as the rice went on the boil. I liked it sticky, the fluffy crap most Americans liked was for the birds. Opened up a can of red beans, drained them in the bathroom sink and then dumped them into the pot. Sliced an onion, salt and pepper, some chili powder and set on low. The puppy goo had cooled down enough so Jeff could eat. Set down on the floor and then pulled his box over. “Come on, open wide. Let’s fill that tank with gas!” One spoonful at a time, got him to eat the strained peas, mushy chicken and apple sauce. Feeding the pup has gotten so much easier since the box came. He would eat anything as long as he gets to sit in it.

Though can honestly say Irv Franklin got Jeff to eat a lot over the Thanksgiving holiday. Turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, stuffing and of course those damn oysters. Pup couldn’t get enough of em, thanks Irv, you’ve created a ‘snot’ monster. Course it was all turned into radioactive, swamp sludge that prolly the KGB would wanna get their hands on. Which of course lead to thinking about Dimety Krushnic*, wonder what he’s up to these days?

“Lieutenant Dimity Krushnic of the Peoples Army of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, late of the 9th Tank Division , 1st Guards Tank German Democratic Republic.” I said in perfectly horrible accent, swinging the spoon to and fro. He’d showed up as part of the Russian delegation to Jesse Reynolds First Party back at Fort Riley and then actually got to met him in person last New Years Eve at the British Embassy costume ball. He’d ‘helped’ (himself mostly) me when shortly after finding out the truth about my family* and who I was truly related to, went out a balcony and stood in a freezing rain. Yeah, not one of the really bright moves of the night. He found me passed out on the rug after I’d stumbled back in.

Wonder if he was still bedding the idiots who were trying to ‘save’ him from the grips of communism? Prolly is, that line is just too good and seems to work almost every time. Also
thought about that promise I made him about becoming his First when the Berlin Wall came down. Boy, was he a dope to accept that offer. Pigs will fly before that thing falls. And if it does, I’ll be long dead and gone.

“Papa!” Jeff reached out and grabbed the spoon. “Eat.”

“Sorry Little Guy. Papa was thinking.” Dipped the spoon into the peas and then into waiting mouth.

“Papa tinking?”

“Yeah, Papa tinks.” The answer and the fact he was now being fed without interruption seemed to satisfy him, Jeff now settled into some serious eating. After which, got him cleaned up, rediapered and then pulled out his mattress to settle him in to sleep. For which, thank the Alpha God, he was more then ready. Then remembered my dinner. By this time, the red beans and rice had cooked itself into a mush, which was kinda the way I liked it anyway. Put a big glop in a bowl, added a little more salt and pepper, then settled down to eat. Got in a few bites and put it down on the night stand. Was just too tired to eat. Toed off the shoes and socks, tossed my uniform over the desk chair and flopped down in bed.

Set the clock and curled up, arm protectively over my belly, then dozed off. Course woke up the next morning to the sound of a shrilling alarm and the sight of Jeff paved in cold red beans and rice. “Hee hee.” Glad he thought it was hilarious.

“Why you little.....OW! Grabbed my side......ick.” Ulysses kicked me in the bladder, there was a spurt and damp sheets. Just love it when the first thing I have to do this morning is strip the bed, flip the mattress, get the sheets off Jeffs mattress as they were paved with my dinner AND THEN get the both of us into the shower. Holy Baby Jebus, if this was any indication of how the day was going to go, I was in deep kimchee. Well, the day wasn’t as bad as it could’ve been, not that it was any worse. The lone bright spot was when Major Otis handed out a bunch of PS: Preventive Maintenance Monthlys for us to look at.

“When my dad used to bring these home, thought they were the weirdest comic books I’d ever seen,” he began. “Didn’t understand a thing about what they were talking about, though Connie Rodd was a good looking head and made it worth it.” I’d seen these little magazines for years too, any army brat had. They were postscripts to the maintenance manuals that the army seemed to have hundreds of. The manuals themselves were dry reading, these PS Monthlys were entertaining, well drawn (considering that Connie was a product from the mind of Will Eisner, it better be) and informative. The older ones from the mid 60’s were definitely more sexy as Connie, a blonde bombshell type, wore a lot fewer clothes in those issues.

“The information here is good and is always worth your while to read,” the major walked through our rows. He even stopped, shook the dice cup at several of the backgammon games going on through out the class. The boards were balanced between two open desk drawers usually where the instructor couldn’t see em, except for today. Then Major Otis would move a piece around the board, to the joy or misery of whose ever side he chose.

Lunch time came and I took the Tupperware dish of red beans and rice out of the briefcase. Had scraped enough left overs out of the pan for lunch. Could eat it hot or cold, with a spoon or fingers depending on if I was on the run trying to escape Gabe, Luci or Balti because I got to the fridge first. There are times I really wonder how any Novac pup learned table manners, considering how we ate like little savages. Ulysses decided he didn’t care much for it cold because I was running for the waste basket to toss the whole mess up after a few bites. Covered the puke with some trash from another basket and hoped it wouldn’t smell too much.
Well, that left that one lonely apple until dinner. Ate it slowly savoring every bite because it had to last me all afternoon. Course that’s when Major Otis came in with his turkey club sandwich, pickle and cole slaw. Could smell it right down to the last pickle chip. He settled himself down at the instructors desk at the front of the room, opening up the bag and took out the sandwich. How many years in Levenworth would I get for assaulting a superior officer for his sandwich? Course the son of bitch knew the effect he was having. “How’s it going Lieutenant?” He asked with his mouth full.

“How’s it going Lieutenant?” He asked with his mouth full. du arsch mit ohren. Gritted my teeth, “and yourself Sir?”

“Great.” There was a bit of lettuce hanging off his lip, watched as his tongue slipped between his lips and dragged the smidge of roughage into his mouth. I hate you. Then a sly smile came to those lips, “care for half? The sandwich shop gave me way too much.” Course that’s when my stomach growled and Ulysses was doing back flips. “You are eating for two. Plus you didn’t cover up your mess in the trash can as well as you thought you did.”

Shit. That sandwich looked so damn good, but the problem is......it came with more strings then anything I ever stole, faked interest in the communist party for or fought over in the streets. No, squared my shoulders. “Thanks, I’m good. Can go down to the annex downstairs and pick up some chips.” There was a little PX annex on the first floor of Mifflin Hall. They had paperbacks, note books, stationary, cheap briefcases (and when I mean cheap-they were made of plastic) candy bars, soda and chips, along with a lot of other nabs and nabs. Think I can spring 25 cents for a bag of potato chips. Turned and walked....okay waddled out the door.

Came back up a little while later and the major was gone but noticed the bag with the half the sandwich and coleslaw was in the trash can next to the door. Looked around quick and then fished it out quick, gobbled the thing down as fast as I could. No one was going to know, pride is one thing but half a turkey club is another. Was stuffing the empty bag into the desk drawer when people started drifting back in from lunch. Major Otis was smirking when he walked by, guess he looked in the trash can and saw the bag was missing. Plus those dill pickles were pretty garlicky, so he knew right off what happened, or knew he planned right.

Son of a biscuit.

The rest of the week wore on until Friday when class was called and we were 10-4 and out the door. The mail had produced nothing else for me but a credit card bill from JC Pennys. Was still paying off Jeff’s highchair......what? I got the really good one. Have to get that paid off before heading to Germany next month. So anywho, Patricia is going to watch Jeff (there goes another 10 bucks) for a couple of hours tomorrow, so I can get out to the mall to get the Christmas shopping done. Will take a cab out there, so won’t have to deal with parking.

Oh yeah, just the thing I wanna do after the whole debacle with Sharon and Bry-Ann at the Aviation Mall over Thanksgiving. Hate crowds, hate shopping, hate the whole forced ‘Christmas cheer’ shit. But the PX dosn’t have a great selection of books and I wanted to get my guys something nice. So it’s off to the mall whether I like it or not.

And so bright and early Saturday morning woke up to get myself and my little ‘Sunshine’ out of bed. However, he was not at all sunny and down right stormy. But got a grumpy Jeff up anyway and ready. He was out of sorts, teething and just wanted to sleep. I had no time for this and didn’t care at that moment if his face was screwing up until the angry scream came out. It was loud, raw and hit that one nerve just right. Then the little bastard hauled off and slapped me on the arm. “Bad Papa! Bad!”

Oh I am NOT one of those omegas who allow their pups to disrespect them at any age! Slapped
him back lightly with a cupped hand that made more noise then pain. But it was enough to bring home the message of ‘don’t’. “Bad! Bad to hit Papa!” Rather nip this in the bud now, then deal with it later when he’s a whole lot bigger and we’re out in public. Jeff’s screaming had dissolved into sniffling and feeling sorry for himself.

Back to getting myself put together. Really didn’t have a good pair of pair of jeans that fit, other then the pair that had patches on the knees. The loafers hurt my feet, so put on the ratty pair of Converse I’d had forever and the gunky sweater that was the color of puppy spit. Usually got a little more dressed up when shopping but nothing fit any more and didn’t wanna spend the money on maternity clothes.

Jeff was still sulking when we got over to Patricia’s. Fine, I didn’t care if you’re still pissed at me or not. Have too much to do and you gotta learn boy that life is not cater to your every whim. “He’s cranky from teething and that he didn’t get his way this morning,” let Patty know as I handed him, the diaper bag and a ten spot over at the door of their quarters. “There’s a pint of whiskey in the diaper bag, put some on his gums or your coffee as needed.”

Drove back to the BOQ and parked the car. Went upstairs and called the Travelers Cab Company to send someone around to pick me up. Went back down to wait in the lobby and it wasn’t too long before the hack showed up. “Where to?” The cabbie asked as I opened the door and climbed in the back seat. “The Walnut Mall please.”

“Sure thing Sir,” the cab moved forward and away from the BOQ. Leaned back in the seat and had the opportunity for the first time in the last 6 days to think my own thoughts or even better......think of nothing. Just wanted a couple of minutes of not being responsible parent, trying to memorize the ins and outs of how a depot runs or trying to put food on the table. No wonder Naomi-Mom and The Colonel always looked stressed out and frazzled when us pups were growing up. Always broke, bad neighborhoods, pups in trouble and host of other crap that I really didn’t start to think about until now.

Being a grown up sucks vigorously. Here I always wanted to be older and on my own. Now kind wish to be a pup again, with no responsibilities (other then making my bed or drying dishes on my dish night) and all the fun. Like watching the snack bar blow up, clinging to Gabe on the back off the stolen.....’borrowed’ motorcycle or getting my machete when I reached the age to be ‘a man’. Course the next day I had my first heat but still had that machete.

Which reminds me, the dime Benny gave me (funny, haven’t heard from him in a while) is hanging up over the door of my BOQ room, the window sills have salt and cayenne pepper on them, did a blessing on the mirrors and windows, along with having a spray bottle of holy water next to the bed. The couple of things that tried to come through didn’t get far not after a couple of shots of holy water spritzed in their directions. After what happened to me down at Fort Bragg with the evil animal spirit, am not taking any chances.

The cab coming to a sudden stop suddenly brought me awake to where we where. Traffic was backed up at the entrance to the mall, as the cars inched their way through the traffic lights. Oh man, this sucks. Just wanna get this over with. “Tell you what dude, just let me out here and I’ll walk the rest of the way.” Will be warm enough, Virginia isn’t that cold this time of year and have Johns great coat on. Prolly will be sweating before I’ll freezing. The cabbie seemed to be okay with it, he didn’t wanna deal with the parking lot either. So handed him over a ten spot, opened the door to step out and on to the sidewalk.

Strolled along the sidewalk into the parking lot (keeping an eye out for people too busy looking for parking spaces then pedestrians) and down to the mall entrance. Okay you bastards, put on my war
face, get the fuck out of my way because......oookkkaaayy, Orange Julius! Want one! Got in line and paid for a large one. Also checked to see where the nearest mens room was, cuz will be needed one prolly before I get half way through this sucker. Mmmmm, good. Found a bench to sit, sip and people watch. Ahhhhh, slurped it up.....that’s better. Okay, stood up and tossed the empty paper cup into a near by trash can. Now let’s find that bookstore and get hell outa here.

American Caesar by William Manchester, found that right off the bat, once I got in the store. Now something for Dean. Started out looking for Vonnegut but got distracted by these detective novels about an Indian policeman. “Tony Hillerman, huh.” never heard of him before but the stories looked interesting. So picked up the three books he’d written so far. Then found a book for me. “Fadeout,” it was a story about an omega insurance investigator who.....liked other omegas? Set the book right back down.....then picked it up ......then set it down....then nonchalantly dropped it on the pile of books I was carrying.

Was standing in line at check looking at the piles of stuff on the impulse tables, when I noticed a familiar name on one of the books. “Becky Rosen?” Picked it up and went to the authors page in the back. Well, I’ll be damned, it was Becky the geeky secretary from RIT, or there’s another woman out there that looks just like her. Let’s see what she’s writing about....’More then Brothers’. Catchy title. Looks like it’s about spook hunting brothers Dean and Sam Westchester.......oh no! What a hoot! Dean is gonna flip his lid and Ben is never gonna let his dad live this down. Any who, they’re out to avenge the death of their mother at the hands of a demon and along the way fight the evils found in the supernatural. Oh brother. Alright, let’s check out this epic. Flip open the book to a random page:

Sam shivered as he leaned against the splintered wooden wall of the barn. His shoulder ached from his fight with the demon spawn Mar-Delok and his clothes were soaked from the cold rain which fell outside. He let the knife fall into the dust and turned to his brother. Dean was shaken up. His chest was heaving with exertion and his shredded shirt was barely clinging to his muscular frame. Sam could see he was hurt. "Hey. Are you ok?" Sam stepped closer and put his arms around Dean. "We're going to get out of this, they can't keep us here long."

The brothers huddled together in the dark as the sound of the rain drumming on the roof eased their fears of pursuit. Despite the cold outside and the demons who, even now, must be approaching, the warmth of their embrace comforted them.....**

You gotta be shit’en me.

Could feel a smirk start on my lips and move to my whole body. Watched my fingers reach over and start grabbing Oh yes, we MUST pick up a few of copies of this. One for Dean, one for Ben, gotta toss one in for John and I MUST MUST MUST have a copy too. Just for shits and giggles. Though it turned into a rather expensive joke as the cashier rang up about $45. Ewwwww, that’s kinda cringe worthy.....oh what the hell, it’s worth it. And being it’s going to be mailed out so late, I may even be over there by the time to see these packages arrive. Ooooooooh, yes!

Okay, now that’s over with, wanna get the fuck outta here and back to post. Think I’m about all ‘holidayed’ out. Damn, turned into such a garbage mouth today. Well, after being so good for so long, because what goes in little ears comes out a big mouth, guess all the cuss words were bottled up and just wanted an out. Alright, now where did I see the payphones? Over by the coming attractions for the movie theaters. Invested a quarter and put in a call to Travelers Cab Company, the dispatcher said it would be about 30 minutes due to traffic, would that be okay?

Yeah, sure, whatever. Just as long as they showed up and got me outta here. Would be in front of Thalmers. I’ll be the one in the anchant army over coat and bad hair cut. Hang up and automatically
stick a finger in to check the coin return. Crap, nothing. So, what do I do now? Might as well go outside and find a place in front of Thalhimers Department Store to sit and wait. Have enough to read, so that’ll pass the time. There was a park bench there in front of the store, so popped a squat and pulled out a book.

Was half way through the first chapter of ‘More Than Brothers’ (geeze, who would’ve thought that under all those neat little sweater sets beat the heart of a perv-ed up freaky deek? Which completely bugged me right out.) when I looked up to see a Petersburg police car cruise by. Having ridden with the Rochester Police all those months, having a cop car go by didn’t cause any great shakes. When it went by again, no problem but finally it came to a stop at the curb and the officer getting out, did I get my first indication that something was amiss.

“Hey you.” Obviously not talking to me. So, not paying much attention, went back to reading.

“You on the bench,” the cop raised his voice. “Come over here.” Looked to either side, no one else was sitting on the bench but me.

“Me?” Okay, dog eared the page and put the book back in the bag, then walked over to the curb. “Something I can do for you officer?” Always figured this part of Virginia was a bit more omega friendly then North Carolina, but still carried copies of my emancipation papers and mating contract out of force of habit.

“May I see some identification?” Huh? Okay. Pulled out my wallet and got out my military ID card. The cop studied it like he was trying to decide whether this was really me or did I steal it.

“Is there a problem Sir?” Let’s get this over with.

“Yeah,” the officer was still giving my ID the hairy eyeball. “We’d gotten reports that a vagrant from the local nut house was smashing car windows in this parking lot.” Then he looked at me hard, “his description is pretty close to yours. Old overcoat, ratty tennis shoes, pot gut.”

“ME?! I’m not some bum! I’m an officer in the US Army going through school over at Fort Lee! AND I’M NOT FAT I’M PREGNANT!” Oops lost my temper a little.....“uh Officer....Sir.”

The cop took another step forward and sniffed, guess he didn’t smell omega at first. But now that he did, there was a change in tactics. “Do you have money on you?”

“Yes Sir I do,” At first I thought was.....he wanted a bribe, almost pulled out my wallet to offer him at least $40 dollars, that was the going rate for the police in Panama last I knew. But remembered in the nick of time where I was, at least now he can’t bust me for having no visible means of support.

“Do you have any other ID?” Got out my New York drivers license, emancipation papers and the mating contract. Which kind of surprised the dude that I could pull out that much paper work that quick. “Where’s your alpha......Omega...... he squinted at the mating contract.....Winchester?” So out came the dependent ID.

“He’s in Europe serving with the army. But as you see Sir, I am emancipated and free to make my own decisions in his absence. There is an addendum.” Unbeknownst to me at the time, Her Mommy-ship had made sure that little bit of paper was added to that contract on my mating day. Damn it, forgot to put on the mating collar this morning. Jeff was being such a little shit, that it slipped my mind. “I kept ‘Novac’ as my professional name even though I am a part of House Winchester.”
But it didn’t look like he was satisfied with that answer. “Hmmmm, I think we might have to take you in anyway until we get this cleared up. Is there anyone you can call locally to vouch for you? An alpha, some one in authority?”

Now stood there clutching that bag of books to my chest like a shield. Oh crap, who was there? Captain Ross? Oh hell, he’d say he’d never knew me just to get me out of his hair. Lt Chickadee? I lost his number. Major Otis? Oh hell no! Dad and her Mummy-ship, oh dear Alpha God I don’t want them to see me like this! Maybe Sargeant Harras could come and bust me loose from the slammer? At least I have their phone number memorized. But about that time out of the corner of my eye saw a taxi pull up to the curb and the driver get out.

“Hey troop!” Came a loud voice. “Got your ride here.” Turned to see a large black alpha male striding over like an avenging angel. “Let’s go, chop chop!” He had the voice, bearing and buzz cut of any drill sergeant I’d ever known. He dropped a hand heavily on my shoulder. “Is there a problem officer? I know this troop, he’s a good troop. Cuz if there is a problem, let’s radio your chief and get him out here to suss this out.”

The cop suddenly blanched as if calling his chief was the last thing he wanted to do. “We got reports of someone looking like him breaking car windows in this parking lot.”

“Well, is it him?” It was amazing to watch this exchange. The cop seemed to be shrinking in size and authority as the cabbie seemed to be getting bigger and quietly fiercer. It was like watching Larry Talbot turning into the Wolfman, only without all the hair, snarling and claws. Plus it was in living color.

“Um we’re not sure.”

“Well, if you aren’t sure, let’s just call this one a draw. You know where my trooper friend here is at and can come visit him at any time if there are any more questions.” Now he grabbed a handful of my coat, “come on, your First Sargeant is chawing nails and spitting tacks.”

The officer reluctantly handed back my id and other papers. “I suggest the next time you come out here, you dress appropriately Omega Winchester…..or whatever the hell you people wanna call yourself.” Oh I’ve heard that tone before, the one that calls me a ‘defective’, ‘knot slut’ and ‘omega’ like it’s a dirty word and soils their tongue. “Or I will run you in just on general principles.”

Before I could with a snotty reply, was dragged off to the taxi and bodily tossed in the back seat. The cabbie got in and drove off just as sedate as if nothing had just happened. Now I wanted a cigarette, something to calm my nerves, as I was shaking like a leaf in a whirl wind. Especially since the police cruiser was in our review mirror for about the first mile just waiting for an excuse to pull us over, before he turned off on a side street and disappeared. “You okay back there troop?”

“Yeah,” okay stop squeaking now, manly voice. “Yeah,” that’s better. “I think I’m gonna make it. Thanks for the save back there. Didn’t know what I was gonna do if they dragged me in.”

He shook his head, “the Peters-patch Johnny Law tends to come down hard on troopers, not like some of em don’t deserve it. But they do tend to pick on troopers that they think they can get away with locken up. Mostly the Black and Spanish fellas from the AIT companies but Smokey must have thought you were easy pickens sitting there all alone. You would’ve had a hellva time getten busted loose no matter who came to get you.”

That scared me. An omega all alone at a police station with no one knowing where they were. Remembered the horror stories from Chickie and the other omega cadets when they were detained
on their way to Fort Bragg last summer. Wow, was that only a year ago now? At least they were in
a group, couldn’t imagine being alone. The horrid things that could of happened, or like what
happened with the Omega Joan Little when she killed the deputy that tried to rape her in her jail
cell. Oddly enough, it was the thought of doing violence that calmed the shakes enough for me to
pull myself together. The rest of the ride went quickly and quietly until the cab glided to a stop in
front of the BOQ.

The cabbie got out and opened the door for me, “Thank you, what’s your name Sir?”

“I ain’t no Sir, I work for a living.” The classic NCO answer jumped out his mouth before he could
stop it. “Um, it’s Sampson, Sampson Jacks. No offense Sir.”

“None taken Sargeant Jacks. I take it then you’re still active duty?”

“Yeah, I’m a platoon sergeant over at one of the AIT companies. Even with the wife working, I’m
moonlighting for a few weeks before Christmas. Got five pups who got lists to Santa a mile long.
My oldest boy wants the deluxe Gilbert chemistry set and those suckers aren’t cheap.”

Well, that settles that, pulled a $20 out of my wallet along with Johns calling card, a lucky stroke or
stroke of luck from last summer at Fort Riley out on the golf course had won me the card and it’s
one favor. Had kept it tucked deep behind a few other business cards, figuring the thing would be
simply a pleasant souvenir of a really kick ass day. Handed over both the Jackson and the card with
a quiet, “keep the change”.

“What’s this?” The cabbie said squinting at the little piece of expensive stock paper.

“Think of it as a ‘get outta jail free’ card,” I said quietly. “My mate is Major General John
Winchester, former commander of ‘The Big Red One’ and current chief of staff to General
Alexander Haig of NATO. It’s a ‘one time favor’ anytime any where.” Then pulled out my
dependent ID and handed it him, really wouldn’t believe that story without a little proof either.

“Sheeeeeeeeeee-it!” His eyebrows climbed up his forehead like it had an escalator.

“You would call the phone numbers on the back of the card, if you wanted to use them. The first
one is his office number the other for his home. Don’t use the home number unless you REALLY
and I mean REALLY need to.” Then added a small caveat, “would appreciate you not flashing it
around and or saying how you got it. Nobody knows I’m here and wanna keep it that way.”

“Oh hell no I won’t tell any one.” Then half to himself, “don’t know if anybody’d believe me
anyhow.”

Decided then to honor him further. “My pups name is now to be Ulysses Tenacious Sampson Jacks
Novac Winchester Reynolds. My mates family shares a profound bond with House Reynolds of the
United Kingdom.”

“That boy is gonna know for sho when he’s in trouble.” Then got Sgt Jacks home address to give
Jenny so she knew where to send the birth announcement.

“Do you mind if I hug you?” The good man nodded and in an instant was caught up against the
broad chest and wrapped in the strong arms. “Know you’ve earned the eternal gratitude of House
Winchester.” This felt waaaaay too good. The scent of scared omega that had dogged me the whole
way back, drifted off and one of contentment and security took its place. Felt his hand on the back
of my head.”

“There, there,” was all Sargeant Jacks needed to say. “There, there.” We stood like that for a while,
until his radio went off, calling for him to do a pick up over at the PX.

Back to reality, he let loose and I stepped back. “Thank you again,” then waved and walked into the BOQ. My knees didn’t give out until I got in the room and collapsed on the bed. Dear Alpha God! That was a close one! A little later, when I went to pick up Jeff, told Pat Harras the story of my adventures at the mall.

“You are one lucky SOB,” Patty took a swig from her coffee cup. “Those Petersburg cops can be a bunch of assholes when it comes to the people here on post. Not that half of em don’t bring it down on themselves for having a chronic case of head up ass. Plus having to deal with 60 years worth of numbnuts, yeah the town doesn’t like the military much, but they do like our money.”

Ran into that a lot in Germany and Panama. They loved the American dollar, just didn’t like the Americans whose pockets it was in. And yeah, considering how many years these two places alone put up with some pretty jerky American GI’s, there were times they had the right to be pissed. Just my family alone, we kinda sorta left a trail of ticked off MP’s, pissed off German politzi, Zonian police that were beside themselves and Panamanian cops who’d shoot us soon as look at a Novac, in our wake. And that’s not even counting the ones in Schenectady and Scotia.

In the mean time, Jeff’s attitude had changed dramatically since this morning. The clouds had passed and my happy little ray of sunshine was back. “Papa!” He took a few hesitant steps toward me and then dropped on his well padded butt to crawl over the rest of the way. “Wuv oooooo Papa!” He puckered up to kiss me, then his eyes went wide and the cutest little growl rumbled out. Jeff then tried to sink his new teeth into my shoulder. Apparently he smelled strainge alpha and wanted to show the interloper, that Papa was his alone and nobody elles.

“Take it easy there Count Chocula,” thank goodness for that gungy turtle neck. “You don’t have to get all territorial on me.” Shook my head and sighed, “it’s the bull alpha in him coming out. It’s nothing sexual, he just doesn’t like the idea of other alphas around me.” Nuzzled his nose, “silly puppy.”

“Thank the Alpha God Rosy hasn’t presented yet.” Pat poured herself another cup of coffee from the carafe on the table, then glancing up at the kitchen clock, it’s after 02:00 n the afternoon. Then added a good slop from the whiskey bottle that I’d packed for Jeffs gums. “Or started riding the cotton pony. Am so NOT looking forward to that.”

Remembering what both my sister Anna and Naomi-Mom were like during ‘that time of month’, I didn’t envy Patricia in the least and pitied Sargeant Harras most of all. After that statement, figured it was time to get going so I could get in a nap, do some laundry and then dinner. Maybe squeeze in some studying. Gotta keep my grade up if I wanna blow this popcicle stand. Was hovering near the bottom again, not at the bottom mind you, but close enough where I could hear those damn goats again. Had dozed off in class one day and missed a vital bit of information, blew the exam and now need to pass every test from now till our final week in January.

“Okay, Sport.” I picked Jeff up and slung the diaper bag over my shoulder. Pat looked a little disappointed when the whiskey bottle was dropped in to the bag next to a small pile of soiled diapers. sorry about that G.I. but I need it to keep Jeffs teething pain to down to a dull roar. “Say bye bye to Mrs Harras.”

My little man, wiggled those pudgy little star fish fingers. “Bye, bye Mmmm Harr, bye bye.” He’s learning to talk so fast. “Bye bye ‘Immie, bye bye Rosy.” It always surprised me the things Jeff could say versus what he had trouble with. He could say ‘Cluny cage’ with a tiny Scottish accent, ‘goddamn bats’ like a drunken gonzo journalist and of course ‘Bumpo’.
As we drove across post back to the BOQ, Jeff was sitting on my lap as we looked out at the lawns that were still green, even at this time of year, dotted by the brown and yellow leaves that were not immediately raked up after they fell. General Sheffey seemed to have an on going war with the Fall season and any leaves that were malingering on the parade fields or in front of headquarters building had to get gone. So you’d always see a bunch of troopers from the AIT companies out there with their rakes, baskets and blankets to haul away the offending dead foliage.

Got to the BOQ, found a spot to park the Bug, “come on Pup.” Perched Jeff on my hip, then reached for the bag of books on the passengers seat and went inside. Now I was tired. The whole day now came to a head and now was so bushed could barely keep my eyes open. Set the books in the closet on the top shelf, last thing I need is for Jeff to find them and start tearing pages out because of the fun sound it makes. Had to tape back together some of the class notes from last week because I’d forgotten and left them out on the credenza. It was like putting together one of those 1000 piece jigsaw puzzles. I hate jigsaw puzzles.

Lay down on the bed and cuddled my son. “Jeffy tired. Jeffy needs some sleep.” Of course he’s looking at me like I’ve got a screw loose. Prolly a look I better get used to seeing once those teenage years hit.

“Play!”

“No, sleepy time.”

“NO! Play!” Shit, had hoped the ‘no phase’ wouldn’t come until he was at least two.

“PLAY!” Did you just try to use your ‘alpha voice’ on me?!

Okay, time to stop this nonsense right here, right now (on our stage is Topo Gigio, that little Italian mouse). Blew scent in his face and Jeff dropped like a rock. (Oh yeah, kiss me good night Eddie) Dirty pool? Course it is, but I’m the adult and he’s the pup, so I rate. The little shit is out for the count and I can get some rest without worrying that he’d get into something or try to open the door. Yes, friends and neighbors, he’s figured out how to flip the door lock Thank the Alpha God for that chain lock, because that’s been the only thing that’s stopped him from heading out into the hallway one morning.

Wearily lay my head down on the pillow, closed my eyes and perchanced to dream:

The hotel guests looked kind of nervous, not I couldn’t blame them. They were dressed to the nines (even in the middle of an invasion) waiting to be ushered to their tables for dinner when in come a platoon of American solders looked like death warmed over with a hangover and armed to the teeth. But I wanted the best for my boys, and the Hotel El Panama was just that. Strode up to the marble check in desk and tapped the ornate bell. The desk clerk stammered through a greeting, trying to make like having 30 people with guns in his lobby was no big thing. I asked politely if the manager was available and that I’d like a word with him. The clerk backed slowly away and ran to the door with the shiny brass plate proclaiming ‘Gerente’, knocked and then stepped inside slamming the door behind him. A nervous and balding beta man in a tuxedo came out from the office to stand behind the desk.

“Si Señor......?” he looked for my rank and name tag, finding neither of course. No rank or names in a war zone. “What can I do for you? I fear we are booked up and have no room.” How apropos, considering what day it was.

“I’m Major Castiel Novac.” Handed off my M16 to Spec 4 Chickadee (yeah, I know. Great-grand dad. He got around) and then removed my helmet with a flourish and bow. “If you please kind sir,”
thank goodness I remembered enough of the polite Panamanian Spanish to make this request possible. “On this special night when our Blessed Savior was born, I ask a huge favor, not for me but for my men. That we might borrow your telephone, so they could be able to call home to their loved ones to wish them Merry Christmas.”

“A great favor indeed,” the manager nervously ran a finger across his lower lip to hide its tremble. “I would think nothing of it on this holy night, except we are a poor hotel now” (uh huh, right, I can see glint of diamonds on the fingers and necks of the women in the dining room) “and its cost would be prohibitive and would send my dear family and those of our employees into the streets penniless.”

“Indeed that would be a terrible thing, especially on Christmas Eve”, then reached into the side pocket of my fatigues and pulled out the wad of cash I’d ‘found’ in one of the homes of General Noriega. “Would this be enough to cover the charges?” The managers eyes went wide as I dropped several thousand dollars in American currency into his out stretched palm.

“Si Señor Major Novac. I think it would.”

“And at least 10 rooms for the night?”

“Well I don’t know......” pulled out a few more bills and the Lovers Kiss.

I turned over, smiling in my sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Welcome to the first week of December 1978

Du arsch mit ohren: German insult. Meaning ‘ass with ears’

*Chapter 70: Cadet Novac- Masquerading as Real Life

**From the episode ‘Sympathy For the Devil’ writen by Eric Kripke

And yeah, I almost got busted by the Petersburg Police. The one and only time I ever dressed down to go shopping (people used to dress up to shop) and I get hassled because I looked like some crazy lady who’d been breaking car windows in the Walnut Mall parking lot. Thank God for the moonlighting NCO from one of the training companies who was my cab driver who showed up in the nick of time. He convinced the cop he knew me and that I was a good troop and to get while the getting was good.

Joan Little: an African American woman who in 1974 was charged with the murder of a white jail guard, in Washington, North Carolina. It was alleged the guard tried to force himself sexually on her in the jail cell she was being held in. The case became a national referendum on civil rights, womens rights and prison reform. The trial following in 1975 the jury acquitted her of murder and Joan Little served the time remaining for breaking and entering, the original charge she convicted of.

Before there were cell phones, email or texting, there was Ma Bell and land lines. If you dialed enough numbers, had enough patience and the overseas connections
worked, you could phone home from any where. Even in a war zone like the invasion of Panama over Christmas of 1989 where Cas dream has dropped him.

Gerente: Spanish for Manager
There was a bough of oak on my parents mantle, entwined with holly and ivy. Ancient symbols of strength and protection, male and female. The oak could be both male and female at the same time, revered for its power and majesty. Holly and ivy were also symbols of fertility, wonder if this was a subtle hint that the folks wanted more grandpups? But for now, sitting in my parents home on Glen Cove Drive, listening to her Mummy-ship play the baby grand and Dad accompanying her on the snare drum, this is what I’ve dreamed of my whole life.

Maybe not quite exactly like this, but the whole amazing love and acceptance in this room that made this night so special.

It’s Christmas Eve and like a lot of first generation immigrants from Europe, they opened their gifts not on Christmas morning, like most Americans, but the night before. So their living room was awash in colorful wrapping paper, toys galore and Jeff asleep in the box that was more exciting then what came in it. I was practical, knowing that his grandparents would shower him in toys, bought him clothes instead. Boring, but he was growing out of the ones he had and needed more. His old clothes went to the post thrift shop. Rowena had one too many egg nogs and was passed out under the tree (I’d stuck a bow on her forehead with a tag that said ‘Return to Santa’) and I was on the couch. Stretched out, belly comfortably full from dinner, a tiny brandy and gifts.

Huh, didn’t know her Mummy-ship could play jazz because she was doing the ‘Charlie Brown’ version of ‘Oh Christmas Tree’. Next to last year, this was the best Christmas ever.

Ulysses liked dinner, thank the Alpha God. No running to the bathroom to throw up, no case of the ‘runs’, just a kick here and a kick there (one little trip to the bedroom to change pads, yes, I back to wearing sanitary napkins THANK YOU cuz the little bugger was spot on my bladder). There was ‘cock-a-leekie soup’ (okay it only sounds like a urologists petrie dish) a roast beef-bloody rare with the burn end that Dad and Rowena both claimed but had to cut in two to share. Roasted potatoes, brussel sprouts and a thing that looked like a brown popped ‘Jiffy Pop’ called a ‘Clootie dumpling’. It’s like a plum pudding, except it’s not a pudding in the American sense, but more in British sense and served with custard. Which is more like My-T-Fine.

But it was great. Tomorrow we’ll go for another Scottish tradition, Chinese take out. Though I always thought that was a Jewish tradition. Dad shrugged and all he said was: “Y’ell hae a drap o’brmfen. Ye ken: Nem a schmeck fun Dzon Beck.” Dad can sometimes be as weird as any other parent.

But right now, I’m happy to just to sit here on the couch. There is a yule log burning in the fire place, the lights are dim and the music is vibrating through my body. Had asked earlier about going to Midnight Mass but Mum said no, they hadn’t been in years and had their own traditions. Rowena was more direct, “Fergus would go up like a funeral pyre if he stepped in church. So we dare not tempt fate.”

Dad had a comment about she getting her religion by direct infusion by the laity. Granny gave him a look that should’ve put him six feet under.

Ah family, ain’t they grand? And to think just a few days earlier, was at Fort Lee taking a test on automated supply techniques. We actually got to work on these Raytheon computer terminals that
simulated supply flow in a warehouse. This was the first one I’d worked with a terminal since leaving RIT. Which brought up thoughts of the RITCUS guys and Spock* and I really don’t wanna think about it. So, anywho...was crowded into little rooms with three people to a terminal, we tapped and pecked and quite honestly, stunk up the joint. Literally. Most of us had never been on one, the West Point guys yes, they had. But for us ROTC pukes, we were sweating and swearing just trying to get the screen up.

So, first in-first out, correct paper work with original signatures and then putting the information into the computer. Or something like that. Far as I know, accounting out in the ‘real army’ was still done with cards, tickets and ledger trays. Suspect there’s a lot of tricky old supply sergeants that are really gonna hate this, that is until they figure out how to gin the system. Like they always do.

Oddly enough this is the test I ace. At least it gets me up off the bottom 10, ‘That Guy’ was dead last of course. Wish he would finally just tell his old man that he didn’t wanna be in the army and that he’d be happier as a ‘silly-vilian’. But no, he’s stilling hanging in there just making himself and everyone else miserable. Some of the guys make stabs at trying to chum up to him, but back off once they’ve gone out, had a few and the dude starts talking. Granted, there are days I don’t like the Army, but at the end of the day, it’s kinda the only life I know. But ‘That Guy’ has a full on hate for it, his old man and about anything in O.D. green. But is too big a chicken to pull the pin and leave.

Anywho, had planned on driving up to Annapolis for the Christmas holiday but Dad had called to say that my present from them would a plane ticket to Baltimore. Granted, it would be three hours no matter what from the BOQ to Glen Cove ,Drive but I wouldn’t be stuck in holiday traffic with ten month old. No, I’d be stuck in the holiday rush at the airport with a ten month old. Six of one-half dozen of the other. The flight left at 06:00 o’clock on Friday December the 22nd. Christmas was on a Monday and class didn’t start back up until January 2nd. So, I’ll be traveling on News Years Day to get back.

Wow, it’s almost over. Graduation day is January 17th. My report date to K-town is on 29th. Which leaves me a week and change to get the car shipped then myself and Jeff over to Germany, and into our new life. Had received a letter from Lt Meg Masters the other day saying there would be quarters available when I got there. Damn, never had that happen before. Maybe just lucked out. Also got a letter signed by some Colonel Somebody or Other at the HQ General Depot with the welcome to blah, blah blah and you will report to so and so and such and such on 29 January 1979.

Class was let go a half hour early that Friday, as nobody was really paying attention anyway; Libbie was off to Puerto Rico. A letter had arrived earlier that week with red and white First cards; a request from a close family friend whose son newly presented as an alpha. They wanted him to be brought in to the holidays the ‘right way’. Or some such shit. “Being La Primero Navidad is majorly good luck,” Libbe said fanning himself with the envelope. “It’s a huge honor because mostly I get a cut of whatever is collected in the bowl.” He laughed and clicked his heels. “That’s why it’s always such good luck.”

Tarah was going home to Tallahassee to be with family and fiance. Her boyfriend had proposed over Thanksgiving, got down on one knee, the whole nine yards. She got her diamonds in spades, hearts and clubs. In short, the whole damn deck of cards and she pulled aces. Tarah came back with ring on her finger along with season tickets to the Reds. “Get a piece of the rock!” She sang happily and waved her left hand at us. Whew, that was a nice hunk of carbon on that fourth finger.

Mary is taking Cleo the cat and going to Charleston, South Carolina. Or at least headed in that general direction. “I’m spending the holiday at the Kiawah Island Inn. This is my present to me, I’m going to play golf, eat some good seafood and let that son of a bitch ex of mine rot in hell.”
Apparently his mating kinda fell through when his beta girl friend flunked out OBC and now he wanted Mary back. He’d sent flowers, candy and passionate letters. All of which ended up the ‘circular file’. (Yes, I did fish out the chocolates when no one was around. Waste not want not.) So she didn’t wanna go home to Idaho for chance of maybe running into him, Lieutenant Mary and Cleo the cat were giving themselves a Merry little Christmas and a Happy New Year on the South Carolina shore.

In the mean time, as for me, I’ll be fighting my way through the Richmond Airport to get to the gate and on to a full DC-9. Had picked Jeff up Patricias, left Jimmie and Rosey their gifts, paid the weekly due and with a wave (“bye bye Mmm Ha, bye bye Immie, bye bye Rosey” Still wanna know how he does that.) took off toward the airport. Joined the rest of the holiday nuts on the road, had the radio cranked to Jose Feliciano singing ‘Feliz Navidad’, or as Gabe and I always sang: ‘the police took my car, the police took my car.’

Anywho, have the duffel, diaper and overnight bags packed with the presents in the overnight bag. Do not wanna risk losing them, should something happen to my duffel. Had gotten Dad some decent scotch and a big bottle of Joy perfume for her Mummy-ship. Hope they like it. Make it up to the airport in reasonably good time, only cussed once or twice but in Spanish so hopefully my little big ears won’t pick it up and say it at the wrong time to the wrong people. Get the Bug in long term parking and hope it starts when we get back. Well, at least have jumper cables so can offer a few bucks to a cabbie for a start. Make my way over to the Piedmont desk and get in line. After inching forward and taking their sweet old time, THAT I DIDN’T HAVE, I got to the counter. “There should be a ticket for me, my name is Castiel Novac.”

The airline ticket agent tapped on her computer and then looked up, “is there two in your party?”

Huh? As far as I knew they only got me one ticket. “No......why do you ask?”

The agent held up the ticket, “see. There are two names here, a Cas-steal and Jeffery Novac, for Flight 1290, seats 7 A and B.”

Hurmph. “It’s pronounced ‘Cas-T-el’ and that’s my son, Jeff,.....Jeffery.” Held him up, “this is Jeff.” He of course let loose with the ‘dimples of death’.

She looked over her glasses, “cute pup”. Don’t sound so thrilled lady, he’s the best looking guy ever born. But will forgive you for being blind to the fact my boy is a genius, handsome and brave....this time. Okay, so he has his own seat, neat-o! Tossed the duffel on the baggage scale and a porter put a tag on it and ripped off half and handed it to me. Stuffed it in my coat pocket so it won’t get lost. Madam Tickets pointed toward the gate entrance where humanity was boiling in every direction. “Gate 6, your flight leaves in 30 minutes.”

Snatched the ticket and boarding pass, diaper bag over my one shoulder, Jeff over the other and clinging to the overnight bag, galloped awkwardly toward the gates. I’m fucking huge, fucking hungry all the time and everything fucking hurts or leaks. Almost throw Jeff on the x-ray machine conveyer as my other stuff rides through to be seen and radiated. Got to the gate as smoking section was getting called, Holy Baby Jebus, I am driving next time. Joined the line, handed over my boarding pass and then walked out on the tarmac to the stairs and up.

Side stepped my way down the aisle to our seats, fall in and settle Jeff in his seat and being he was around strangers, my little man was good as gold. He smiled, showed off his dimples and charmed all the stewardesses and old ladies. “Oh you’ll be beating off the girls and omegas with sticks,” they cooed tussling his hair and chucking him under the chin. That’s what I’m afraid of. What am I to do when you bring home that ‘special someone’? Or worse, stinking of that girl or omega you banged because you could. Need to find you a First when you present. My boy is not going to be
‘love em’ and ‘leave em’ bull alpha. ‘Not like his father’, the nasty little voice in the back of my mind sneered.

Okay, not what I need to be thinking about now. Pushed the thought away and did everything to keep it back. Course for all the hurry up, we had to wait. It was another 20 minutes till push back and then once out on the run way, it was another 15 minutes till the bird was in the air. I should have driven. As soon as the plane leveled off, the stewardess brought out the drink cart. Watched with sour envy the people who got to crack open the little bottles of Vat, Old Grand-dad and Cutty-Sark. Next Thanksgiving and Christmas, am going to be drunk as a warlord.

Since it was a ‘monkey flight’, drank ginger-ale and ate peanuts. One of the stewardess’s put a nipple on the end of a small bottle of Coca-Cola and handed it to Jeff. His eyes went wide as he took a suck. Then he started sopping up that soda in earnest, am going to be in Hell in about an hour when that sugar rush hits that small body but just as long as he’s quiet for the next 40 minutes, I’ll deal with it then. Leaned back in the seat and closed my eyes for a moment, need just a second to collect myself for the insanity of the Baltimore Airport once we’ve landed.

“Irv!” Look down to see Jeff had drained that soda leaving just a brown crescent at the edge of the bottom of the bottle. He held it up and shook it a bit. “Irv!” Oh no you don’t. You need more of that stuff the way I need a big hole in the head. Handed him a peanut instead. Jeff stuffed in his mouth and then immediately spit it out. “IRV!”

Took the Coke bottle, ripped off the rubber nipple and poured in some of the ginger ale then slapped back on the nipple. “Here, knock yourself out.” With an eye roll that was worthy of....wait! You rolled your eyes at me?! What are Jimmie and Rosey teaching you? “Listen up there young man,” I hissed softly. “You are NOT ten months going on 16 and this eye rolling sh.....sugar tit.....is not going to continue cuz if it is. You and me are gonna fight.” Course about then, Jeff let loose a belch that was worthy of any trooper. It was long loud and prolly a 10 on the Richter Scale.

He must have sensed death and destruction his way because next he turns up those big green eyes and the dimples of death, “wuv ooooo Papa!”

“Caaaaaaaaabron!” I’m so screwed and not in the fun way. Love that pup so much, but have got to get this guy on the straight and narrow.....what am I saying? I have to get myself on the straight and narrow dealing with this heart breaker before Jeff Winchester turns into a spoiled brat. Not on my watch he ain’t.

“Okay kiddo,” quickly replaced the bottle with the pacifier I had in my pocket. “Enough soda or your diaper is gonna be taking on water like a submarine with a screen door.” Course about then Ulysses gives me a swift kick in the ribs. “Urk,” oh that is going to bruise, I just know it. There is no way I am EVER getting pregnant again......until after Claire and Ephraim. What the fuck is going on here?! Have had dreams and premonitions before, but NOT. LIKE. THIS! Who the heck are you Lewiston Reynolds? Guess there’ll be no answer to that until I see them again and that will or won’t happen until I get to Europe.

The captain comes on a few minutes later letting us know we are starting our decent into the Baltimore International Airport. “The stewardess will be coming around collect the trash, so let’s put your tray tables in the upright position, extinguish all cigarettes, cigars and pipes as the smoking light is now off. Please fasten your seat belts and we’ll have you on the ground in about ten minutes.” The guy was good, didn’t bounce us around much and brought that big bird to a slow roll across the tarmac and up to terminal where the breeze way was going to be brought over. “On behalf of the Piedmont Airlines, we welcome you to the Baltimore International Airport. I hope you had a pleasant flight and remember us when your traveling needs take wing. From the Captain
and Crew of Flight 1290 we wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and the brightest of New Years.”

Could feel the cabin pressure change as the door opened and a rush of cold air and AV Gas swept in to the cabin. Unbuckled myself and then Jeff’s seatbelt and waited for a break in line to.....

“Stand up, hook up.....” I said automatically reaching for that invisible static line.

“Shuffle to the door,” heard a voice finish the airborne mantra. Turned and saw a the big eyes, shaved head and the big jug ears of a PFC, wearing the Class A uniform and maroon beret of the 82nd Airborne. His hand was in the air too.

“All the Way, Airborne.” I grinned, giving him the thumbs up.

“All the Way Sir.” He replied blushing to the ears. Not every day a good looking (if I do say so myself) omega gives you a smile, the 82nd motto and the high sign.

The Trooper had gotten up and created a break in the line, so I could lift Jeff to my hip, clutch the overnight bag in the other hand and sidestepped down the narrow aisle. My belly hit every one of those seats on the way up and now on the way out. And Ulysses didn’t like it one bit. He kicked and rolled showing every bit of displeasure at the whole mess. Gritted my teeth and kept going. Waddled down the breeze way and came out into the boiling mass of humanity waiting for their loved ones.

“Here Darling, over here!” Could hear a familiar voice calling over the din. “To your right, my left your right. YOUR OTHER LEFT!”

“POP POP!”Jeff wiggled out of my arms and down to the floor, where he toddled a couple of steps head long into his grandfathers legs. He walked! My little boy walked without help! And I got to see it! Jeff was excitedly babbling to his Pop Pop, some of which were actual words, while others were just sounds and grunts. But Dad just grinned and nodded, proud of his grand pup and happy to have him there.

In the mean time, her Mummy-ship got into the act and wrapped herself around me like warm loving blanket, that smelled lightly of sex and expensive perfume. Ooooo, Mommy and Daddy were doing the nasty. Ick. Of course they do, how do you think you got here? Okay, time to think of something else.

“Oh Sweetheart I’ve missed you!” She planted kisses on my cheeks and patted my belly. “Oh you’re coming along so nicely. Like a little jam roly poly.” Oh great, any feelings that I looked good just flew out the window. To top it off, Ulysses tippy tapped against her fingers, feeling the pull of another nurturing omega. It was all cute and sweet until he did a tap dance on the old bladder. Oh crap, now I gotta go.

“Is there a mens room around here?” Was looking around kind of anxiously because was going to piss myself if there isn’t one close. “I kinda have to see a man about a dog.”

“Believe I saw one, down the corridor on the left,” Dad said tossing Jeff on his shoulders. “Let’s find it and by then the baggage brutes should’ve have man handled your luggage off the plane.”

Handing off the overnight bag to Her Mummy-ship, I just took off down the hallway, dodging people left and right until I saw the sign that said MEN, no designator and if there was an omega lavatory around here, they were always stuck way out in the ‘West 40’ So went in, found an empty stall and yanked down my britches. Sat and.....ahhhhhhhhh, made it in time.

Now had a few moments to myself to sit and not really think too hard.....White Standard Porcelain,
blue tile (nice grout job) Georgia Pacific two ply (nice) penis.................PENIS! Jumped up off the john so fast that I knocked against the bog roll dispenser, lost my balance and fell back on the toilet. Ewwwwwwwwwwww! It’s not even a good looking dick, it’s a pathetic thing really. On the thin side, with a bit of length but the skin was covered in flakey white patches. Like it had a case of dandruff of the dick.

“Lick it bitch!” A low rasping voice commanded from the other side of the partition. Wait....What?! Is this moron trying to use his alpha voice on me? This ass hole is trying to do that TO ME!? When my own mates alpha voice don’t work on me? “Come on, do it you little slick whore!”

“Just a moment,” I singsonged. Stood up and reached into my back pocket. There is something to be said for small airports, they might have x-ray machines but not metal detectors. Pull out the mating knife and flicked it open. Judged it would give this prick a prick from about a foot up, “okay. Here it comes.” Sigh, maybe in hindsight I should’v thought it through a little better. But are you thinking clearly when someone pokes their dick through a hole at you? No, of course not. Kinda sorta forgot I’d sharpened the blade the other day so even from only about a foot up, it kinda sorta surprised even me when it went straight through his dick right up to the hilt.

The guy screamed like a raped ape and began tugging and bleeding and making a real mess. Is it my fault this guy was real needle dick the bug fucker? No! He pushed his pecker through that hole and tried to use his alpha voice for a blow job. The jackwagon deserved what he got. Now could hear other people banging on the stall door and calling out to the guy to see what was wrong. Oh crud, I gotta get outa here! Pulled up my pants, yanked out the knife (ewww, with all the yanking it had cut a neat slice all the way to the head) and wiped off the blade with a piece of toilet paper. Closed it up, stuffed it in my coat and sauntered through the door acting like nothing was going on. Of course people were packed at the door of the other stall trying to get it open.

“Hey, you were in the stall next to his.” One man asked me as I pushed my way through the crowd. “Did you notice anything wrong?”

Other then ‘the Penis from Venus’? “Why no,” I gave him a look of wide eyed surprise. “He just started screaming and then noticed the blood on the floor. Must be a bad case of the clap.” Sure, I’m gonna say, ’that idiot poked his dick through, used his alpha voice and then I stabbed him. Oh right, in a room full of alphas, I’m going to announce ‘the voice’ has no effect on me. They’d tear me to pieces just on general principle. Ambled over to the sinks, washed my hands (please don’t start shaking) and yanked some paper towel from the dispenser. The 82nd Airborne troopie from the flight was standing at the next sink over washing up, he looked over and casually made the gestures for ‘you go’ and “I’ll cover.” And with that he casually turned and did a mule kick to the plumbing beneath his sink. The gushing water added to the maylay.

Now did a quick look at his name plate, ‘Doughney’ PFC Doughney.

Was losing the fight trying to push my way out as people were streaming into the bathroom to see what was happening, when I felt a hand grab up a bunch of material from my coat and was sending me forward. It was Private Doughney. “I was in the stall on the other side, heard what that guy said to you,” he stage whispered. Okay, “I gotta a little sister who just presented ‘mega.” Now that explains a bit more why the PFC got involved.

“We need to get outta here, the cops aren’t gonna look too kindly on what either of us did.”

“Something wrong Darling? We heard screaming.” Dad’s eyes narrowed. “Was that something you had a part in?” A growl rumbled deep in his throat. “And this young man is.....whom?”
“You might say that and this is Trooper Doughney, he’s the ‘good Samaritan’ who helped me to get out of there. Let’s get our bags and go go go!” Left unsaid was: ‘Before ‘Stabby McStabberson’ gets coherent or one of the bystanders puts two and two together and come up with three or ‘dangerous omega’. That’s enough to send the five of us head long into the mass of humanity and are swept away down the corridor to baggage claim.

Once there, handed Dad the baggage claim ticket so he could watch for the duffel, while her Mummy-ship whipped a head cover from out of her coat pocket, ‘here. I always keep an extra on me in case of emergency.’ She draped it over my head, wrapped the ends a few times and then tied it in the back. “Now, downcast eyes, modest demeanor and imaginary tea cup on your head.” She stepped back to admire her handiwork. “There, you look perfect. But take your glasses off....there. Now you look completely different.” Dad in the mean time had plucked my duffel off the baggage carrousel as Trooper Doughney found his. Mum then cast an experienced eye about the room and took command, “Ole Bill at 03:00 o’clock, Wackenhaut at 12:00 o’clock high. They’re on the hunt,” Mum looks way too happy with this situation. “Are we set? Right then, Private cover the rear, Fergus my love, you and Jeff take the point, Lead us out! Quick step, march!”

Dad and our new companion obeyed immediately. Damn, that’s impressive the way Mummy took mastery over the situation. He strode forward with Jeff on his shoulder, while her Mummy-ship and I followed in his wake. We walk sedately, the picture of dutiful omegas, who would never DREAM of stabbing an alpha in the dick after he’d poked it through a hole in the wall of a mens room stall. An elderly alpha Wackenhaut officer stopped Dad at one of the doors leading to outside and the parking lot. Dude must be a retired cop who couldn’t give up the uniform or the ‘authority’.

“Excuse me Sir,” the geriatric johnny law asked. “are those your omegas?”

“Yes,” Dad was the picture of impatient politeness. “They’re mine and with all due respect, I need to get them home.” He nodded towards us and in an alpha to alpha manner, “it’s almost ‘my time of the month’ (hint hint....rut). Is there a problem?”

The guard nodded, ‘man of the world’ that he was. “We’re trying to find the mentally disturbed omega who assaulted an alpha in one of the mens room stalls. Nearly sliced off the.....: he looked around quickly and placed a hand on the front of his trousers. “best part of a man. We’re trying to find him before he harms someone else.” Hey! That’s the second time in a month people thought I was crazy.

“My goodness. Then I’ll let you get on with your business. MY omegas have not been out of my sight for a moment. Come, let’s go home, the last thing I want is to be around a crazed defective.” Then he pointed to the PFC, “this young man has graciously volunteered to be our escort.”

“Good alpha, nice to see young’uns stepping up.” the Wackenhaut touched his cap. “Get your megas out of here and on home. A good whipping wouldn’t out of the question, just for a lesson in remembering how to treat their betters.” Male chauvinist alpha assbutt.

“I shall give your suggestion every consideration it deserves,” Dad said dryly. We sailed on by and out to the taxi stand. Then he turned to PFC Doughney, “how’re you getting home young man? Is someone coming for you or.....?”

Jeeze, looking at him now, the guy was not much more then a pup. Prolly 18 or 19 tops. “Was gonna call my Mom to come out and pick me up,” he began.

“Nonsense,” Dad barked. “Where were you headed?”
“Perry Hall, it’s about 30 - 40 minutes north of here.”

Dad turned and whistled shrilly. “TAXI!” A Checker cab screeched to the curb and the driver stepped out. “Driver, do you know how to get to Perry Hall?”

“Yes Sir,” the driver said quickly. “Just a touch over 20 miles from here, about a ten dollar fare.” Dad fished a Jackson out of his wallet. “See that young man gets home.”

“No problem Sir,” the driver quickly went over, took Private Doughney duffel bag and tossed it in the trunk of the cab. “Come on Troop, let’s get you home.”

“What’s your name son?” My father asked.

“James Doughney, sir. I’m stationed at Fort Bragg A Battery, 3rd Battalion, 319 the Airborne Field Artillery Regiment.” He spoke with obvious pride and it showed in his posture and aroma. Gone was the arid stink of angry/scared alpha and replaced with the interesting combination of steel and marigolds.


We watched the cab pull away and that’s when the wail of a siren came from a distance and got progressively louder as it got closer. Yeah, I guess someone would’ve called an ambulance sooner or later. The ‘meat wagon’, followed by a police car pulled up in front of the Piedmont Terminal. “Come along,” her Mummy-ship whispered urgently. “Time for us to go.” The three of us walked quickly across the road and into the parking area. Found the car, Dad took a sleeping Jeff off his shoulders and handed him to me. I got into the back seat as the ‘rents took theirs in the front. It’s only after the toll taker had gotten his ‘pound of flesh’ or .75 cents and we’d put some miles between us and the airport did Dad find a safe enough place to pull off to the side of the road.

“Mind sharing with the rest of the class what happened back there?”

“You see there was this hole in wall of the crapper,” Told them exactly what occurred from the minute I left them to walk in the mens room till the minute I came running out. “I was minding my own business, doing absolutely nothing but taking a piss, when this idiot poked his prick through the hole and tried to use his alpha voice on me.”

The car was dark save the dim greenish light coming from the dash board. As I told the story could see Dads face become harder and angrier. Now knew why people were calling Fergus Crowley the ‘King of Hell’, the smell of sulfur and suffering came off him in waves. At that moment thought back to the story Mummy-ship told about his fight with Roger, her former mate. Got the feeling Dad made sure Roger lived long enough to watch him rip off the old mating collar and knot a willing Lady Bella on the floor right in front him as his lifes blood oozed out of his torn throat.

When I finished the story, cracked open the window to let out some of the angry stink. The smell had even awoken Jeff and he whimpered at the scent. “Papa! Pop Pop!” And buried his head in my shoulder.

“There, there baby.” I soothed, blowing scent across his nose. “Pop Pop isn’t mad at you. Pop Pop is mad at the man who tried to hurt Papa.”

“Hurt Papa?” My little one’s brow furrowed. Then he growled, it was a low down in the throat angry sound. Which would have been a lot more fearsome if it didn’t sound like a pissed off rabbit. Bit my lip to keep from laughing. Dad reached back and tussled his grandpups hair. “That’s my boy, we’ll take care of things for Papa.”
This announcement both frightened me yet gave a grim satisfaction.

The next morning, there was a small article in the local section of The Baltimore Sun about the incident. Basically, it gave a rather prejudiced account of the attack where one Chester Warner of Essex, Maryland stated that he was ‘enticed’ to place himself in that awkward position by an unscrupulous omega and suffered the consequences when I allegedly demanded money and he refused. My description of course was less then flattering but happily equally less then accurate. The perpetrator was described as being an omega male in his 40’s, short, balding with a pot gut.

“My goodness, have a rough flight dearie?” Grannie Rowena was sipping on a Bloody Mary with her coffee, sausages and baked beans. Baked beans for breakfast? I don’t get it. Weird ass Scottish people. She leaned in to kibitz over her Mummy-ships shoulder. “You must have, for the stupid sod to have described you like that.”

“No thanks, had one last night.” It slipped out before I could stop it. Not like I would’ve anyway. Was eying the spiked tomato juice and coffee with more then just a bit of envy. “Not that I’m complaining, but that description doesn’t even come close. Would’ve thought the police would’ve talked to the witnesses.”

“What witnesses? The ones who really might have seen something prolly scattered after your soldier boy kicked the plumbing and turned the bog into a real bog. Besides, most of those people had places to be, planes to catch and couldn’t or didn’t want to wait for the police to arrive. Or just didn’t want to get involved. Simple actually,” Rowena sniggered into her drink. “Besides, Wee Willie Winkie there doesn’t want you to be caught. It would raise too many questions, like why would he’d be at the airport without a ticket.”

Okay, what am I missing? “How would you know that or maybe he’s an employee of the airport?”

“The article would’ve mentioned it if he did work there. And the mere fact he gave such an erroneous description, means he was there for......less then wholesome purposes, shall we say?”

“Mother dearest,” Dad come up behind her and planted a kiss on the top of her well hennaed head. “You have such a wicked mind and think so ill of people,” he smirked. “It’s probably the only thing I like about you.”

“Thank you Fergus,” she simpered. “Where do you think you get it from?”

But still, with a little paranoia being a good thing, after breakfast called Piedmont and got my flight switched to the Washington National Airport. Really didn’t wanna run into anyone who might have noticed a pregnant omega that looked like me in that mens room the day old Chet got his nob bobbed.

Later that day our family went down to the harbor, to walk the streets that filled with last minute holiday shoppers, carolers and just people getting into the holiday spirit. There wasn’t any snow, it was about 40 degrees, the sun was out and was walking around with my coat open. Jeff was riding in the super duper baby buggy that Jenny and Lewiston had sent as a gift when the little guy was born. It’d lived in the ‘rents garbage as I didn’t have any room for it down in Fort Lee and was now doubling for a shopping cart.

Wonder how they’re doing? Jenny and Lewiston that is. Haven’t heard anything from em since that weekend in DC after Eric died. Looks like the bond must have been broken after all. Unless John’s done something in the mean time to help mend it. Not that I went into a whole lot of detail when I wrote him about it, other then about the murder, the family grieving horribly and definitely left out the part about Mick. Mick Davies......okay, starting thinking about something different
The boats in the harbor were decorated for the holiday. Wreaths, garland and Santa Claus. Come dark, they were lit up like Christmas trees with bright lights galore. As we walked, I took it all in, saving it for when a good memory was needed. Like a bad day at work, too many bills or pups being sick. Needed that one little glow of light, like the star on top of the tree.....

“Do you know this one?” Huh? Oh. Right, Christmas Eve, Mummy-ship and Dads’ living room. Guess I drifted off in thought or fell asleep. Dad had asked the question as he handed her Mummy-ship a tin whistle. She protested a moment, saying that she hadn’t played one in years but after a couple of times up and down the scale, she easily followed him in the next song:

“Willie, bring your little drum, Robin take your flute and come! When we hear the music bright we will sing Noel this night, We’ll be joyous as you play......”

Patapan.....learned this one years ago when I was a pup, oh how did it go? “Tooralooraloo, pat-a-pat-a-pan. We’ll be joyous as you play On a Merry Christmas day!

Thus the men of olden days for the King of Kings to praise, When they heard the fife and drum, tooralooraloo, pata-pata-pan, When they hear the fife and drum, sure, our children won’t be dumb.”

One song followed the next, until the clock on the mantel was striking midnight. Christmas. It’s Christmas! “Was waiting until now to give you these.” Dad set down the drum sticks, stood, grimaced and stretched. “Used to be a time, I could do three sets in one night, then go out for a few pints with the lads till dawn.” He went behind the tree and pulled out two packages. “Your mate and the Reynolds sent these here as a surprise for you.”

They didn’t forget me after all. Oh I know it sounds childish, but when a box or card didn’t show up from John, thought he had forgotten me. Know he’s busy and all but he sent me a present last year, oh I hate being all hormonal and crap. Ripped the brown paper off the box and flipped it open. Oooo, Neuhaus chocolates! Am going to make sure Jeff doesn’t find these babies. Let’s see what else we have here. What is this? Lifted out a small well wrapped box in newspaper. Carefully took off the paper and opened up the box...to find more newspaper. Got rid of that to pull out.....a tea cup? Flipped the cup over to read: Made in Saxony, Dresden. Picture of a sheep? It’s nice, not my taste with all the flowers but it’s okay. Then found the card that came with it. “Lambkin,

Remembered your complete lack of good dinnerware. This came into my hands recently and will give you the complete set when you’re settled. Merry Christmas.

Love,
John

Okay, so my plates and cups are basically factory seconds and finds from the post thrift store. Yeah, knew that sooner or later would be buying something a little better. Even Naomi-Mom had a several sets of good dishes that never see the light of day except at Thanksgiving (which somehow had always managed to survive the gun fire and being tossed out the window) Christmas, New Years Day and Easter. And would have to buy the dining room table to set it all on and the china
closet to store the stuff in. Wonder if a silver tea set is still a thing? Used to be every officers mate had to have one. Naomi-Mom went through a couple after they were either hocked or dented when we boys got into fights.

“Let me see that Darling,” Her Mummy-ship had set the tin whistle aside, walked over and took the tea cup for a closer look. “Saxony was an independent state up until the 1870’s when Germany unified as a single state but even then maintained much of it autonomy until the Great War. Dresden was known for its porcelain before it bombed into oblivion. This was obviously an export piece as it’s in English. But has some age to it.”

I couldn’t add anything, as the six month finishing school course didn’t include much about antique dish ware, other then to say…..don’t break it.

“Your alpha sent you a very nice gift darling,” Her Mummy-ship helped herself to one of my chocolates. Looks like I’m gonna be hiding them from her too. “Depending on if the company is still in existence or not and how many place settings this cup is part of, this could be quite valuable. Now, why don’t you open the one from General and Lady Reynolds.”

Carefully pulled off the brown wrapping paper and slit the tape that covered most of the box. Opened it to find a letter on top of the wrapping.

“Our Dearest Castiel,

To say our last meeting was less then satisfactory would’ve been generously over stating the fact. We haven’t written not because the bond between House Reynolds and Winchester has been broken but because there are not enough words or the right words to say how sorry we are for any harm done to you. The death of our son Eric was a great strain upon us but should not have put you in such a position or content where you would think you were anything but greatly loved.

We are looking forward to seeing you when you arrive in Germany next month.

With Greatest Affection,

Lewiston and Jeanette Reynolds

Okay. Let my breathe out in great rush. Didn’t realize I was holding it reading the note. Guess I was afraid of what they might have thought or didn’t think of me. For a moment forgot the box was even sitting on my lap, that note being the only gift that meant anything. “Darling,” Mum asked quietly. “What did they send you?” Pulled out the wrapping and found a……..snow globe? In the ball was a little village surrounded by mountains. Noticed there was a wind up key on the base, so gave it a few cranks. The notes of ‘Climb Every Mountain’ came tinkling out. Okay, it’s cute in a cheesy kind of way and I don’t have any tchotchkes really.

Looked over at Lady Bela, she was smirking a bit, prolly because she could use this bit of tourist trash to bust on Jenny. Then put a quick glance over to Dad, he was giving it a more thoughtful look, like it was holding some secret that he had to puzzle out. Oh well, doesn’t matter. Checked the wrapping and there was one more thing in there…….a fork? With a little note on a ribbon:

“To go with your new dinnerware: The Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe’”

What the fuck?
“Oh that Jenny!” Her Mummy-Ship, took the fork and flipped it over. “I suspected she always wanted to be ‘Harvey Girl’ or Judy Garland or both. Ah ha! There it is, stamp right on the back. ‘Fred Harvey.’” At my confused look...... “It was the first hotel chain in the United States, kind of like the ‘Holiday Inn’. They was so famous, a movie was made about it, ‘The Harvey Girls’.”

“With Judy Garland, I take it?”

“Indeed,” Mummy-Ship said happily. Then sang...

Do ya hear that whistle down the line?
I figure that it's engine number forty nine
She's the only one that'll sound that way
On the Atchison, Topeka And The Santa Fe

I think her Mummy-ship kinda wanted to be Judy Garland too. But I’m tired now, it’s been a long couple of days. Picked Jeff up out of the box and slung him over my shoulder. “Well, think it’s time for me and Jeff to turn in. Night Mum, night Dad. Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas, my boy.” Dad got up and hugged me. Something Zachariah Novac never did in my entire life. Tears were now threatening to fall and held on to him like he was a life line tossed to drowning man in a stormy sea. “There, there.” He patted my brush cut, “am so glad you’re here with us this year.”

Dad walked us to the guest room and with one more ‘there there’ bid us good night. I lay Jeff in his crib. My little angel, my dearest little boy. He was snoring quietly as I slipped off his shoes and socks, then took the quilt and covered him. Leaned back and stretched. Listening to my vertebrae snap, crackle and pop like Rice Crispies. The living room was a mess, will help clean it up.....in the morning. Right now, just wanna go to bed.

But a guilty conscience got the better of me and went back out to help her Mummy-ship with the trash before picked up my gifts, bringing them back in the bed room and laying them on the night stand. Shook the snow globe and watched the flakes whirl around the little village. Dumb cheesy thing, would it make me look a big dope that I actually liked the thing?

Stripped off my clothes and crawled into bed. Turned off the light, then curled up around my belly and fell asleep.

The next morning, turned over and cracked an eye lid. The light was coming in softly through the window shade making a striped puddle on the carpet. Huh, Jeff is awful quiet. Looked over at the crib, empty. No wonder. Looked at the clock, it’s a couple of minutes after nine in the morning, wow. I must have been tired. Tossed off the covers and eased up into a sitting position. Then dug in my heels and side stepped across the mattress and onto the floor. Oh this is getting old real fast. Glanced over to my presents on the night stand and automatically reached over to the snow globe to give it a shake. That’s when I noticed something a little strange about it. The bottom plate was slightly ajar. Huh, it wasn’t like that last night.

Will figure it out later, as I pushed the plate back into place. Got a clean pair of sweat pants out of the duffel and a sweater. Caught sight of myself out of the corner of my eye in the mirror. Then took a hard look. My ass is huge, the stretch marks are running across my belly and legs like zippers! Eeeee uck! Put on the clothes as fast as possible. Dear Alpha God, I hate the way I look. How could John or Dean ever love me? I’m ancient at 23. Sat down on the edge of the bed …... hormonal this is just hormones. Wiped tears and snot on the sheet, just trying to pull myself
“Okay Novac,” stood up and squared my shoulders. “Stop being an omega pussy.” Okay, ready.

Walked out to the kitchen to find Mummy-ship sipping her coffee while reading the newspaper, Rowena nursing a hang over with a little ‘hair of the dog’, while Dad and Jeff were sitting on the floor with the new wooden blocks Jeff got last night from Santa building a fort. “What cha got there Sport?” Have to put on a good face for the family.

“Bwocks!” My little man crowed happily handing me one of them. “Pop Pop pay wif Effy. Papa pay too?”

Not with the way my ass looks, “maybe later. I’m not really hungry.”

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My little man crowed happily handing me one of them. “Pop Pop pay wif Effy. Papa pay too?”

“Papa needs to have his breakfast.”

Not with the way my ass looks, “maybe later. I’m not really hungry.”

Fat chance of that, ‘fat chance’????!!!!!! Now the tears were threatening to spill over. “Excuse me,”

Fat chance of that, ‘fat chance’????!!!!!! Now the tears were threatening to spill over. “Excuse me,”

turned and left the kitchen in a hurry and went back to the bedroom. Crawled into bed and pulled the covers over my head. Think I’ll stay there for....ever.

A few minutes later, could feel the mattress dip and a hand rest on my side. “What’s the matter Darling? Tell your mum.”

“Nothing,” came the muffled reply.

“Castiel,” the mom voice, more powerful then any alpha voice or a speeding locomotive.

Tossed back the blankets, “I’m fucking huge, full of stretch marks and nobody loves me.” Oh dear Alpha God, did that sound pathetic.

Her Mummy-ship tried to keep a straight face and was succeeding right up until she had to snort back a giggle. “You sound just like me when I was pregnant. You’re so much my puppy.” Then she puddled up. “Oh it’s so wonderful!” Wow, it’s like Private Doughney kicked the plumbing again with the way Mum was crying. Course now was feeling about an inch tall, making Lady Bela cry. So of course I started to bawl and the two of sat there, arms wrapped around the other crying our eyes out. Until after a few moments...... “oh dear. I suspect we do look rather dreadful.”

“You damn betch em Red Ryder,” wiped the snot and tears away with the back of my sleeve.

“You damn betch em Red Ryder,” wiped the snot and tears away with the back of my sleeve.

“How did you do it? How did you keep Dad from wondering off when you were pregnant?”

Mummy-ship blew her nose gustily into the sheet. “Those nine months were the best time of our lives.” She smiled in the glow of the memory. “We had this little cottage on the Pacific side over looking the ocean. Fergus would do his.....work and I would keep house, read puppy books and romance novels by the score.” Lady Bela sighed, “You were such an active little thing, I was huge and thinking I must be the most hideous thing on two wide feet.” Then Mum blushed, “Fergus couldn’t keep his hands off me.”

Yuck. Don’t need that mental picture thank you. Sniffled, “at least you had your alpha.” Holy Baby Jebus, I sound ridiculous.

“Yes, I was lucky, don’t worry about your alpha. Little secret though, pregnancy and just after is the time they want you the most. Anger and pregnancy make an omega beautiful and desirable. I
suspect Jenny is the happy benefactor of Lewiston's sexual frustration of not having you. Pregnant bellies and the big bums created are like cat nip to an alpha.” She stood up, “come on. Let’s go to the bath and get our faces back on. Make you a light breakfast and some coffee. Mostly, cream and sugar of course.”

I’ll take it! Would eat the slime out of a skunks asshole for a cup of coffee!

Mum made me a poached egg and bacon...nice greasy bacon......and there goes Rowena running to the bathroom to throw up her Bloody Mary. “Gee, was it my breath?” Dad was trying to keep a straight face and failing. Now for the coffee, okay....so it was half cream but it was a big cup and it was CAFFINE! Merry Christmas to me!

It was a quiet day, played with Jeff, the Simon he got was obviously not going to be used in the way the makers intended. But it lit up, talked and honked at us and Jeff loved it. He also liked his ‘Stretch Armstrong’ but again more as a teething ring then a toy. Hope this thing has a tough hide. Later, after settling Jeff down on the couch for a nap, I went to the bedroom and took one too. Alright, it wasn’t a nap as much as it was getting a little time with ‘Spurs’ the vibrator (cuz he makes me jiggle, jangle, jingle).

Decided to go with the biggest ‘forbidden flower’ in the patch (What? Can’t an omega read Nancy Friday’s books without being judged? Geeze people.) So, thought of Major Otis and being taken in the front seat of his car behind the BOQ. Oh he used his ‘alpha voice’ and ‘charms’ on me! Oh woe to this poor little touch starved omega, who screamed his name, fogged up the windows and left foot prints on the roof liner. Fell back on the pillow, sweaty, happy and for the moment, okay. And that you ugly mug is as close to fucking me as you’re EVER going to get.

Laid there for a while in a light doze, until a small case of the guilts came on. Sighed, really should be helping Mum with dinner. Toss on my blue terry cloth robe and went to the bathroom to get in a quick shower. Whew, am stinky but really needed that time with Spurs to get feeling better. Hadn’t had the opportunity to make shake the sheets as I didn’t want to wake Jeff as it can be a trial these days to get him to sleep. Mnmm, the water feels good. Nice soaps, loofah sponge, ahhhhh, don’t have to jump right out to make sure a certain someone was getting into things, this is good. Could get used to this too easy.

And with that, turned off the water. Can’t afford to get used to this. Especially after the week is over and it’s back to ‘pumpkinsville Cinderfella’. Got out of the tub and dried off. There is a lot to be said for a good cry, some time with a vibrator and now a bath. The person looking back at me from the mirror almost looked human.

Later on was making my contribution to dinner, an apple pie with one of those fancy lattice tops, while Mum sent Dad out to the Chinese restaurant to pick up our order. Rowena, in the mean time was stirred up a pitcher of Margaritas, “Esquire recipe of course,” she sniffed. “Not that frozen muck they try to pass off on you in the restaurants.” Have no clue why this would go well with Chinese, but what the heck. If I’m lucky, will get a small sip. Next year, I’m getting so plowed, they won’t find me till harvest time.

Dad came back a while later with Jeff on his shoulders, my son happily gnawing on an egg roll, the crumbs decorating his Pop Pops hair like crispy dandruff. “Egg rolls, won ton soup, mu shu pork, chicken fried rice and beef with broccoli.” Pops called out as he’d set the bag on dining room table and began to take out the cartons. “And of course those fried noodles with the mustard that will clear your sinus’s.” Ooooo, it all looked good.

The Sunday dishes was set instead of the holiday china. Mum lit the candles in the brass candle sticks instead of the silver from yesterday and a fresh table cloth went over the cherry dinning
room table. Rowena had brought out the wicker serving tray with the pitcher and glasses. She poured out four glasses (mine being the smallest...damn it) and handed Dad his (“as master of the house”, she snorted a bit through her nose, as we all knew Mum held the keys) And Fergus Crowley stood to make the holiday toast.

LIFE IS ONLY HALF A GLASS,
UNLESS 'TIS SHARED WITH A BONNIE LASS
SO DRINK TH' GITHER OF BLESSINGS SENT,
TO LOVE, AN' JOY, AN' SWEET CONTENT
Nollaig chridheil agus Bliadhma mhath ur!

Mum whispered, “that’ Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in Gaelic.” Looks like another language I’m gonna have to bone up on if I’m gonna be a part of this family.

Sat with Jeff on my lap spooning soup and fried rice into his willing moth. Never had to worry about this pup eating. Boy was little chow hound. Had a bitty glass of the margarita and looked around the table over the rim. Mum, Dad and even Rowena. This is my family. No gun fire, no one getting tossed through a window but enough snark to make the get together interesting. But then again, fire fights are more a Novac Thanksgiving tradition. Christmas we just ate oranges and stole each others toys.

The rest of the week, I slept late, played with my son, walked the beach, got to know my parents better and went through the my stuff in the basement to figure out what I was going to take to Germany and what was staying behind in the cellar. The furniture was coming, as was the stereo and records. Thought first of leaving them in the basement but then...ah heck. Need my tunes. Hope to pick up a china closet once I get to Germany, will have to park those new dishes somewhere.

Will have to take a weekend and drive up here again with the stuff from the BOQ that needed to go. Looks like it’s going to be mostly furniture, summer clothes and Jeff’s toys that are going to be traveling.

Ulysses seemed to enjoy the down time too. He kicked less, moved more and liked whatever I ate. Mostly because Mum did the cooking. Not that my skills in the kitchen aren’t bad, it’s just that Lady Bela’s were a touch better. Her soups, stews and good roast beef filled body and soul to the point where leaving this cozy den was almost painful. The primal omega urge to be protected and cocooned during pregnancy was coming out in full force, to the point where I had to remind myself that Lt Novac would have to be front and center in a few days time. Yeah, thanks ‘fugue cave ‘mega’, you’re the one who got me into this mess. Well, you and Mirra’s pharmacy.

New Years Eve found us driving to Washington DC. Mum and Dad had been invited to a dinner party at the home of Pamela Harriman, who ever she was. Mum didn’t seem all that thrilled (Pamela’s a ring tailed bitch and doesn’t like us in the least) and Dad agreed, (true, she is. But she HAD no choice but to extend an invitation, or else) which which made Mum smirk (Oh Fergus) and then they disapeared into their bedroom for an hour. I took Jeff and went outside for a walk to avoid hearing the oooooo’s and ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh’s and really disgusting noises coming from from the other side of their bedroom door.

Rowena was going to the party at the Harrimans also, not that she’d been invited but her son decided her mire presence would be enough to punish their hostess even further. Boy, they must hate that Pamela broad.

Jeff and I were ringing in the New Year at the Marriott Hotel in Crystal City. Wouldn’t be as much fun as it was the last time I was here, but it was close enough to the airport so it wouldn’t be a
problem to catch our 08:12 A.M. flight out the next morning. The ‘rents and Rowena had booked rooms also, though I suspect they won’t be up by the time we had to leave. So will need to say our goodbyes before they went to the party.

Dad looked rather sharp in his tux, while Mum cut a fine figure in a glittering peach gown with a matching head cover and Granny shimmered in silver. “Oh maybe I’ll find a rich husband tonight,” Rowena said as she primped. “Someone with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel.” Thought I was gonna laugh my ass off. “Go ahead, think it’s funny.” She said haughtily. “But I have something those young snips don’t have.”

“A years supply of Geritol and a case of scotch to get the old dude really drunk?”

“No, you burraidh,” Rowena leaned in close. “I have charm, maturity and the greatest power of all. Money. I didn’t get married five times, not learn that.”

Ouch. “Only five times?” Damn, this broad is just two shy of being Micky Rooney.

She shrugged, “there was a near sixth but he died before we were wed. Learned my lesson, not to have sex the day before the ceremony.”

Ewwwww, not what I wanted to know. “So what if the young snip has charm and money?”

Rowena smiled evilly,”oh me wee darl’in. The devil always gets their due.” And that was the night I learned that as scary as Dad could be, Granny MacLeod was absolutely terrifying.

“Come along Mother,” Dad was settling the mink stole around his mates shoulders. “We only want to be fashionably late not middle of the soup course late.” Rowena picked up her own fur coat and slipped it on. “Son, if we don’t see you tomorrow morning, it was wonderful to have you and the wee bairn this week.” He kissed Jeff on cheek and was rewarded with sloppy puppy kisses and screeches for his Pop Pop.

Hugged Dad fiercely and carefully put a kiss on Mums cheek, don’t wanna mess up her ‘war paint’. Waggled my fingers at Rowena and sent Jeff toddling toward her with a Hershey Kiss in one hand and spit covered Life Saver in the other. I could be quite the ‘Little Devil’ when I wanted to also. Damn, that old broad was fast when she wanted to be.

Later, had room service bring up our suppers, as I didn’t wanna put on a coat and tie, which I brought but only wore once when we went out for dinner during the week. And trying to feed Jeff, all while dealing with a bunch of drunks-New Years Eve is amateur night for people who don’t drink to excess the rest of the year-was not something I was looking forward to.

Didn’t stay up till midnight to watch people freeze their asses off in Time Square to the sound of Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians playing Old Lang Syne. I put my son down about 08:00 and followed him into slumberland around 10:00. 1979 came in without me and oddly enough, I was okay with that.

Chapter End Notes

Merry Christmas everyone and thank you.

Recipe for cock-a-leekie-soup
My-T-Fine began selling the first boxed pudding mix (chocolate) in 1918 in the United States. My-T-Fine continues today, marketing powdered pudding mixes in a variety of flavors. -From Wikipedia

Ye’ll hae a drap o’bramfen. Ye ken: Nem a schmeck fun Dzon Beck. Which is Scots-Yiddish. Bronfn (bramfen) is Yiddish for liquor (in Eastern Europe it generally meant vodka, but Edinburgh is whiskey land), while “Nem a shmek,” Yiddish for “Have a taste,” is a clever translation that preserves the rhyme of the first half of the advertising slogan “Take a peg of John Begg.” From: http://languagehat.com/scots-yiddish/ So what Crowley was trying to do in one of those parent trying to be clever way, was yes, there are Jews in Scotland and they brought their traditions with them. Hence, Chinese on Christmas.

Raytheon computer: Yes, scary looking isn’t it?
https://www.pinterest.com/pin/79376012153359415

*From Cadet Novac Chapter 9: Moondor and the Real Omega*

Get a piece of the Rock: one time tag line of Prudential insurance.

"Patapan" (or "Pat-a-pan") is a French Christmas carol in Burgundian dialect, later adapted into English. It was written by Bernard de La Monnoye (1641–1728) and first published in Noël bourguignons in 1720.
-Wikipedia

This is what those plates look like:
https://www.1stdibs.com/furniture/dining-entertaining/porcelain/36-piece-dresden-porcelain-dinner-service-12-ambrosius-lamm/id-f_6373983/

The mark on the back of the plate indicates it is an export piece from between 1887 to 1889
This is further information about the Ambrosius Lamm company:
http://www.internetantiquegazette.com/pottery_porcelain/1354_lamm_ambrosius_dresden_china/

"On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe" is a popular song which refers to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF). It was featured in the 1946 film, The Harvey Girls, where it was sung by Judy Garland.....It won the Academy Award for Best Original Song that year.[ The music was written by Harry Warren, and the lyrics by Johnny Mercer. The song was published in 1944, but the most popular recordings were made the following year—from Wikipedia

The margarita cocktail was the "Drink of the Month" in Esquire magazine, December 1953, pg. 76
1 ounce tequila
Dash of Triple Sec
Juice of 1/2 lime or lemon
Pour over crushed ice, stir. Rub the rim of a stem glass with rind of lemon or lime, spin in salt—pour, and sip.

And now a word about dishes from the 60’s and 70’s. I suspect a lot of you like me grew up with the every day melmac plates for the week day. But for Sunday dinner (or company came), a nicer porcelain was used and on holidays, usually Mom’s wedding china or grandma’s good dishes came out.
https://www.pinterest.com/pin/296463587968538107: the dresses that Lady Bela and Rowena wore

burraidh: Scottish Gaelic for idiot

Pamela Harriman: Washington DC socialite, Democratic Party activist and well known hostess of the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s.
And A Happy New Year

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Let me see, any warnings.....period bad language

A Battery
3rd Battalion
319 Airborne Field Artillery Regiment
Fort Bragg, North Carolina
January 4th 1979 09:32 A.M. EST

Jesus Christ, these radios are heavy. Had been loading the equipment for the fire control center tent into deuce and a halves, since after PT and breakfast this morning. The battery was headed to the field tomorrow and these mother fucking trucks were not gonna load themselves. Now, wish I’d taken that extra week off. But no, had to be the good little troopie and only take the number of leave days I had instead of going into the hole.

“Hey Doughney!” Sargeant Jockobowitz came around the corner of the barracks and into the staging area. “Doughney! The Old Man wants to see you!”

Huh?! I pushed the radio onto the truck and turned to face the E5. “What’s the Captain want? Did he say?”

“Do I look like his goddamn social secretary to you? Now move it move it move it! You needed to be there like yesterday!”

Pulled on the fatigue blouse I’d had stripped off as even with the chill in the air, was sweating my balls off and besides didn’t wanna get it fucked up or torn. As I was double timing it over to the captains office, was running through the list of misdeeds and fuck ups that would have brought my squirrelly ass to his attention. Trotted up the stairs, through the door, taking off my barrette...er..beret and stuffing it in my belt at the small of my back. Gave myself a quick look over; gig line straight, boots semi shined and hair......what hair? Okay, ready. Walk into the captains outer office where the company jerk.....er....clerk and the first sergeant sat.

The clerk looked up from his typewriter and jerked a thumb at the closed door behind him. “Knock, then go in.” Tapped on the timbers and waited for the ‘come in’, then pushed the door open. Captain Jedediah Stewart was sitting behind his desk with this weird smirky look on his dark face. He was this short little alpha shit, who was as wide as he was tall but every inch of it being ebony muscle. On the other end of the stick was First Sargeant ‘Couldn’t Steal a Base’ George Washington Case. That beta was so tall, thin and fish belly white, he would stand sideways, stick out his tongue and look like a zipper on a pillow case. Geeze, even DiBella my platoon sergeant was there. Oh man, am I that screwed, blued and tattooed?

“Private First Class Doughney reporting Sir!” Came to attention and gave him my sharpest salute. “All the Way Sir!”

“All the Way,” the Captain said after a moment. Then just to let me sweat, waited another heart
beat that seemed to last for fucken ever before returning my salute and to stand at ease. “Private Doughney, do you know why you’re here?”

“No Sir, Sir I do not.” Please don’t let be about that ‘little incident’ with that guy from the engineer company in the Old Division area. It was NOT my idea to toss wire coat hangers on to the power lines to watch them spark. Besides, we put the fire out in time and painted over the burned spots.

“It’s because you’re out of uniform Private,” Capt Stewart nodded at the First Sargent who took out the big ole honk’en jungle knife he always wore on his hip and cut the PFC rockers off my collars. Ohhhhhhhh watch the throat Top, that blade is sharper then shit! “Congratulations Corporal Doughney, you have joined the ranks of the Non commissioned officers corps. Lowest most rung, lower then whale shit but you’re now a non com.” With that, Top Kick and Platoon Sargeant DiBella safety pinned the corporal stripes to the sleeves of my fatigues. Then ‘tagged’ the crap out of them.

I think I lost most of what the captain said after the words ‘Corporal Doughney’ came out of his mouth. Well, right up until the clerk came in and socked me so hard thought was gonna fall over. Okay, now I’m awake. Geez, that hurt.

Captain Stewart came around the desk to shake my hand. My arm was so numb it just kinda flopped up and down like my baby sisters sock monkey. “Congratulations. Now you can go upstairs and pack. You’ve been selected for the NCO academy here on post. Your report date and orientation starts tomorrow and class begins the following Monday.”

“What?!” You mean I don’t have to go to the boonies? Suddenly felt really glad but a little scared at the same time. I was going into this alone without my friends, who I now out rank and so aren’t my friends anymore. Oh crud. A pile of papers was shoved into my hands. “What’s this?”

“You’re orders. Both promotion and assignment to the NCO Academy.” The Captain turned and went back to his desk, “why are you still here?”

“No Sir!, I mean yes Sir! All the Way Sir! Thank you Sir! I’m gone Sir!” And stumbled out the door with a quick salute.

Later on that day, was taken out to the NCO Club by Sargeants Case and DiBella for a drink to celebrate my promotion, a place where I would buy the first round and also have to join. “I don’t have a choice?”

“No,” First Sargeant said taking a long sip of his beer (course he picks that expensive imported shit.) “You have to be a part of this fine institution but I suggest not coming here to often if you don’t wanna be the subject of gossip of this little ‘Peyton Post’. But my dear little corporal, what I want to know is: who do you know or who did you blow to get a promotion and assigned to the NCO academy so fast?” He studied me intently over the rim of his beer glass. “How long have you been in this alpha’s army?”

“Uh,” had to think a moment and work it out on my fingers. “10 weeks in basic and 10 in AIT at Fort Silly in Okay-be-by-homa, then three in Jump School, then assigned here. So, about a year and three......no....four months.”

“16 months,” now DiBella was coming in on this. “Fuck, I was a PFC for two years before I saw corporals stripes. You had to know somebody.”

“I don’t know anybody,” I protested. “Certainly didn’t blow anyone. Ain’t that kinda alpha.”
“Well,” Top took a long pull of his beer. “I did a little checking. Orders for promotion to E-4 usually are decided and come down from Battalion. Yours came from Division. Apparently SOMEBODY with some pull called the Division Commander and recommended you. Said you were a fine innovative fellow who demonstrated quick thinking and decisive action in the face of unexpected adversities or some shit like that. And apparently felt that you had what it took to be an NCO. Which brings us to the reason why we are sitting here.” Then he slapped me on the back. “Be glad and rejoice there Doughney, the Alpha God loves your ass. Barkeep, another round.”

Somebody did, that was for sure (loved my ass, I mean). Momma and Daddy always said nobody does anything for nothing and had the funny feeling that there was a big giant string attached somewhere. And someday, it was gonna be yanked hard.

NATO HQ
Office of the Chief of Staff
Brussels, Belgium
January 5th, 1979
09:32 AM Central European Central Time

Was going over the Old Man’s schedule for the rest of the day with the generals omega secretary Stella (by Star light. She rolls her eyes whenever I call her that, so have to do it all the more.). Jesus, Mary and Joseph, he’s meeting with the French. Frog sons of bitches. They left NATO back in the 60’s yet they hung around like a cash strapped relative who’s always borrowing something. Well, they’re gonna go back to their little Froggie hide-y holes with nothing cuz it’s gonna be one short meeting. The Old Man hates em like fire hates water, so Stella better put a bottle of Maalox at the table, cuz he’s gonna be swigging it within the first five minutes.

Let’s see, after the French, he has the Germans, then the Belgians and finally a luncheon meeting with General EC Meyer. Had met Meyer a few times over the years and especially after getting the star on my shoulder. Interesting fellow, ambitious ring knocker and not some one to take lightly. He’s been floated as Chief of Staff of the Army, which is why the boss is meeting with him to give him the low down on US Army Europe. We don’t want to be forgotten at budget time.

The phone rings out on Stellas desk and she walks out to pick it up. Am not paying any attention until she’s at my elbow. “General, it’s for you. Says his name is Sargeant First Class Sampson Jacks from Fort Lee, Virginia. He would like a word with you if possible.”

Ran through the sergeants I knew over the years and the name Jacks was not coming up. Half of me wanted to just blow him off but the other half was curious, considering he is calling from CONUS and in the middle of the night. “Okay, patch it through,” Stella went back to her desk and transferred the call. “Winchester here,” I barked.

“Good morning Sir,” a faint voice came over the line. “Fine day to be in this alphas army.” Hmmm, no apologies no groveling, good start. “My name is Sargeant First Class Sampson Jacks and I’m stationed here at Fort Lee, Virginia with Second Platoon, Company A, 3rd AIT Training Battalion.”

“Good morning Sargeant and may I know the reason for your call and how you got my phone number?”

“It was on the back of the calling card that your mate Lt Castiel Novac gave me.”

Lambkin?! “And he gave this card to you because??” Then came the story of how my darling
almost got arrested by the local yokel police at a mall in Petersburg, Virginia and how he, Sargeant Jacks pulled Cas’s fat out of the fire. “Alright Sargeant, you rubbed the magic lamp, what is it that I can do for you?”

“Not for me Sir, but my oldest son Bill...William....Tecumseh Sherman Jacks. He’s a smart pup, great in math and chemistry and deserves a chance to go to college.”

“Okay,” I said slowly. Let’s see where this is going.

“He wants to go to Norwich University in Vermont, which is where you went I believe,” and there it is. “I ain’t asking for money,” good. Cuz I don’t have any. “Just a good word. I’ll figure a way to get the tuition money, if I have to drive cab for the rest of my life.”

A good word is all he wants. When that card could’ve gotten him a promotion and any posting he wanted in the world, he gave it up for his son. “You have it Sargeant Jacks. As long as his grades are good and his character is like wise, I can’t see why he couldn’t get in. Did he send in his application yet? He did? Good. Let me see what I can do. Thank you for calling.”

“Thank you Sir.” And he hung up. A proud man who kept his pride even with his hat in hand and spent a lot of money to make this call. Hmmm, it’s about three or four in the morning in Vermont. Do I? Oh hell why not. It’s been forever since I woke Loring ‘Harty’ Hart up in the middle of the night. Went to my desk and pulled out an battered old address book. It was stained with water, sweat age and mud, had pages ripped out and taped back in. Flipped to the correct page and then dialed the number. Took a little while for the connection and was in the middle of reading a report when it started to ring. It was on the fifth ring when it was picked up, dropped and then a raspy sleepy voice came on. “Hello?”

“INCOMING!” Could not help myself. Have been busting his chops since we were privates in Pattons 4th Armored together. Though can honestly say Harty can give as well as he can get. Could hear the phone and my friend fall to the ground with a yelp of surprise. Damn, this is a great connection.

After a moment and could also hear his wife Marilyn asking what was wrong, as he got back on the phone. “There is only one person in the world who’d call in the middle of the night and yell that. Winchester! This better be right up there with second fucking coming you stupid son of bitch!”

Ah Loring Hart, you have such a way with words. “Harty, them thar’s tanker words, you couldn’t spell college president when I first knew you, now you is one.”

“Winchester, is there a reason you called other then to be a pain in my ass, at...” could hear the scrape of glasses coming off the night table...“04:00 AM! Second. Fucking. Coming.”

Had to bust on him just a little longer. “Hey Harty, how’s it hanging?”

“Low and to the left. And it’s still four in the fucking morning and I gotta be in a staff meeting in another few hours. What do you want?”

“A favor.”

“You owe me a million of em already.”

“Okay I’ll owe ya a million and one. Did I or did I not save your scrawny ass from being run over by a piece of fine German engineering in the year of our Alpha Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-four on the 19th day of December in that charming stand of French woods....”
“Oh bullshit. I pulled your ass out of the way of that Tiger tank first.”

“True, true, but never the less, I got you out of the way so you could come home to Marilyn and become that esteemed educator that you are now.”

“Jesus Christ, it’s getting deep in here, will need my fishing waders in a minute.” There was a heavy sigh, “since you’re wasting the tax payer dime all way from Europe, I figure it’s gotta be some semblance of import to this call. What is it?”

“There’s this pup, William Tecumseh Sherman Jacks who recently applied to your fine institution of higher learning.”

“Okay. You want him in?”

“Yeah and if there’s any scholarship money to be had, can put some his way? His father is NCO in one of the training companys at Ft Lee and moonlights as a cabbie for extra money.”

“I don’t know, what’s this Jacks guy to you by the way?” Gave him the Readers Digest version of what happened. “Sheee-it. Had heard you mated that young omega Novac boy down at Bragg. Damn, knew you always had balls John but didn’t know you had big enough ones to take on Naomi Novac as a mother in law. So the cavalry came over the hill for your mate and this Jacks guy was leading the charge. Okay, let me see what I can do.”

“Thanks, Harty, I owe ya.”

“Oh kiss my ass.”

“Give my love to Marilyn.” And hung up.

Hugel Housing Area
2231 Platenstraße
Apartment 3B, Second Floor
Frankfurt, West Germany
6 January 1979 09:32 AM
Central European Standard Time

“I’M FUCKING GOING TO KILL BECKY ROSEN! SHE IS SO GODDAMN DEAD!” Jess had gone down stairs to the parking lot twice and Lisa once to bring back that....that.....AHHHHHHHHHH! That disaster piece of libelous........did I say that right Sam? Yes Dean that is the correct word......okay where was I? Oh yeah, libelous piece of shit she wrote and I tossed out the window three times and headed for a fourth.

“Oh come on guys,” Jess was trying to keep a straight face. “it’s not that bad.” We had come down to visit Sam and his family for the week after New Years, and brought the book with us to see if there was anything we could do about it.

“Not that bad!?” I opened the book to one of the dog eared pages. “She’s got me naked and describing my dick......or at least I think she’s describing it. The words are so fancy and $40 dollar that I don’t know whether she’s for it or agin it. Just.....just....that SAM SEEMS TO LIKE IT!”

“Hey, you think you have it bad?,” Sammy took the book and found the other offending page. “The
author seems to have written herself in ala ‘Kilgore Trout’ AND TIED ME TO A BED AND TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME!” He hugged himself, “I feel so used.” Jess grabbed the book and read the offending passage, “ooooooooo, me likee. Gotta try that.” Suddenly my skyscraper of a brother didn’t look so offended.

“You two are over reacting,” Lisa tapped her foot on the carpeted floor. “It’s not like this scheisse has turned up in the PX or the post library. And you only have it because....your fathers omega mate, sent it to you.” Lis still has a small burr up her butt about Cas.

“Come on Dad,” my son walked in with his little sister on his hip, steadying the bottle she was holding. Since football ended, Ben has stepped up to help around the house and take care of Emma. “It’s funny.” He took the bottle from her mouth, shook it and as it was mostly empty, settled my sweet girl on his shoulder to be burped.

Gave him a sour look. “Yeah it’s funny, only cuz you’re not in it. What if that half wit wrote about you and your buddy Jamal being ‘more then just friends’?” Jamal Jeffers and Ben were tight as ticks since the start of school, both being the ‘new kids’ and on the football team. His old man was an okay dude for an engineer bird colonel.

Ben mumbled something about not being gross and patted his sisters back til she let loose a belch that rivaled anything I’d heard in the barracks on a Sunday morning after a Saturday night beer bust. “Atta girl!” I crowed picking her from her brothers arms and whirlered her around. “That’s gotta be at least an 8 on the Richter scale.”

“Come on Dad,” Ben protested. “It’s at least a 9.5” Emma laughed and burped again. “Now, that’s a 10 for sure.”

“You two are just encouraging her,” Lisa plucked our daughter from my arms. “She’s a lady, not some grobian.” The old ‘ball and chain’ kissed our girl and proclaimed it was time for all good pups to take a nap,which included Little Anne Green Gables (those guys were in Canada too long) Sam and Jess’s daughter. She made a classic Winchester bitch face and was starting to protest when her dad lifted her up, stretched out those long ape arms of his and gently bonked her head on the ceiling. Anne screamed happily, yawned and then decided a nap wasn’t such a bad idea after all.

He came back a few minutes later, while Jess asked him sweetly if she had to clean foot prints off the ceiling again. Apparently Sam would swing his daughter (and any other small child in the vicinity) up to the ceiling so they could dance while he sang whatever ditty came into his head. Leaving Jess to come back with a mop and bucket or a paint roller. Being a good shyster, he pled the fifth and looked like he wanted one too.

“So what are we going to do about this book?” I whine......wait....I don’t whine, I was impatient is all.

“Nothing,” Sam went to his fridge and pulled out four bottles. Looks like the beer man must have come this morning. “Here, have a little liquid ‘bread’. Will make things easier.”

“What is it with you and the unfiltered weissbier?” I complained but took it anyway and flipped the top. “It looks like somebodies bad piss test.”

“Yet you drink it every time you’re over here,” Jess took the bottle her mate handed her, popped the top and took a long pull. “Ahhhhh, now that’s good.”

“Back to that book,” Sam took a swig from his bottle. “We do nothing. Because if we bring
attention to it, people will want to read it and make it a bigger thing than this piece of literary crapfest should be. So just let the thing die on its accord.”

Drained the bottle and glowered at the offending paper back. “Alright,” I hissed. “But that thing goes to the flames....”

“Right after I finish that one chapter about the killer truck,” Lisa chirped up. “What?” She protested innocently. “It was...........educational.”

Dead. Becky Rosen, you are soooooooo damn dead.

Observation Post Alpha
Fulda Gap
West Germany
7th of January 1979 09:32 AM
Central European Standard Time

“THIRD PLATOON, A TROOP, FRIST SQUADRAN! MOUNT UP!” I watched as my men ran toward the armored personnel carriers that were lined up in front the barracks. The APC’s were easier to maneuver in the snow, a bit warmer and could hump the fence line a bit easier this time of year. But the first warmish day when there is some fog....the tanks come out. Love rolling up through the fog, charging the fence and then coming to a screeching halt right a fore it. Those East German Guards would just piss they selves and run willy nilly like chickens with their heads cut off. Funny! I bust a gut every time.

I suppose we gotta have a bit of ‘laissez les bon temps rouler’ up on the border , cuz if the Russian tanks ever decide to come, we be dead. The whole 11th Armored Cav would last a whole 15 minutes, 20 at tops and that’s if we’re lucky. Everything would be gone, the base, the town of Fulda....our families. Behind the door of our quarters (like everyone elses) is a go bag; it holds a change of clothes, a set a boots, a box of crackers, beef jerky, thermos of water, an envelope with five twenty dollar bills and a loaded pistol. Told Andrea if balloon ever goes up, get out. Don’t wait for me cuz I’ll prolly be dead, just take the pup and run as far and fast as she can. If for some miracle I survive, I will find her.

After telling her this, I asked if she wanted to go home to the states and wait for me. Andrea just took my hand and said: “Benny Lafitte, I mated you for richer or poor, in good times and bad, as for the damn Russians, this too shall pass.” I do love that woman I do.

And if we ever thought that our ‘friends’ to the east were bluffing, the squadron First Sargeant had been on border duty in 1968 during that ‘Prague Spring’ when the Russian tanks rolled in and across Czechoslovakia. Said it was the scariest thing he ever saw, and this man was a feared of nothing gumbo ya ya. There was acres of tanks and track vehicles with seemingly no end in sight, they ripped Czechoslovakia a new asshole from one end of the country to the other. Hopefully the idea of nuclear weapons here in Germany and England would keep them Russki sons of bitches from getting any notion of coming across the border. Though I don’t cotton to the idea of calling in a nuclear strike on myself.

As it be Sunday, I stopped in on the way to the squadron at the chapel to have a bit of a word with the Almighty and Holy Mother. Got down on my knees and “Oh Alpha God, you be wise in all things. Help this poor servant in his duties. To be the best officer, husband and soon to daddy that I can be. Let me lead my man with wisdom and strength, my mate with patience and understanding and guide my pup to become the man a father would be proud of. Amen” Crossed myself and
began the Hail Mary:

“Je vous salue, Marie, pleine de grâce. Le Seigneur est avec vous. Vous êtes bénie entre toutes les femmes, et Jésus, le fruit de vos entrailles, est bénì. Sainte Marie, mère de Dieu, priez pour nous pauvres pêcheurs, maintenant et à l'heure de notre mort. Ainsi soit-il.”

Praying and discussing done, crossed myself again and left to get to the Troop barracks. Met my platoon sergeant at the front door, “Morning Lt Lafitte, weather reports a blustery day” he said with a grin. “With wind gusts up to 35 miles an hour.”

Hot damn! I Love days like today. We get to sit up on the hillside and watch the East German guard towers sway in the wind. And since it’s been so cold and some of the land mines have gone off, with any luck, this would’ve cracked the concrete pads supporting the wooden towers making them unstable, so a really good gust of wind will send the tower over like it was made of Popsicle sticks. It be the funniest damn thing you ever saw.

It’s a good day to be in this Alphas Army.

Class Room 3
Abbot Hall
Fort Belvior, Virginia
January 12th 1979
09:32 AM EST

It’s a great day to be in this alphas army! Because I, Second Lieutenant Uriel Youmans, am at the top of my class. Have aced both book and field work, leadership and management skills. I can lead people, manage things and make it look easy. My peer reviews are flawless and the cadre can’t find fault with any of my actions.

My little pet Linnea is at the number two slot. She’s so sweet and pliable. Would almost consider taking her as my mate.....but I think after what happened with my two previous attempts with omegas, I’m going to find a girl just like the girl who mated dear old dad. A nice beta girl. There’s one back home in our church that looks kinda cute, obedient and has a nice set a knockers.

On the down side, I’ve seemed to have caught the flu. Achy, tired, sneezing, cold sores. Even found one on my dick. (Damn it Linnea. So we’ve stopped having sex until SHE gets over her cold sores. Thank the Alpha God, I’ve been wearing condoms the whole time. Lord only KNOWS where’s she been.) but have picked up some Ny-Quil and aspirins so should be over this in two weeks or 10 days.

Anyway, today we’re reviewing....oh who cares what we’re reviewing. I’ll ace the test any way.

52 Courtfield Gardens
Flat Two
South Kensington
London, England SW5
January 13th 1979
09:32 AM Greenwich Mean Time

Great, even in the afterlife, I can’t get away from the bloody Yanks. Only this one is in an old army
uniform from the Second World War. So, I ‘woke up’ and found I was dead. The late Eric Reynolds. Apparently went toes up from an overdose. Did I wake up in ‘Heaven’? NO! Knew all those vicars were all lying ass bastards. Found myself back in my flat with all the furniture gone but a Captain Joe ‘no relation to that spook boxer’ Lewis, making himself at home there. Apparently he fell out the bedroom window here and broke his neck back in 1944.

He took a pack of fags out of his pocket and offered me one. I declined saying that it’s not good for you, to which he gave me a look as if I was simple. “What’s it gonna do ya ignoramus? Kill ya? You’re already dead.” Good point I suppose, so took one and he kissed the end of his to mine. Huh, so apparently you can smoke in the afterlife, which explains why I would occasionally smell tobacco when I lived here the first time. So we smoked as Joe explained his demise. “Was having my ashes hauled by Lois Filbert......she lives across the street now. Damn, she got plug ugly, makes me glad I bought the farm whist I was still young and good looken. Anywho, that dame was khaki wacky and a sharecropper. Too bad Mr Filbert came in and pooped the party. Went out the window and that’s all she wrote.”

I have no idea what he just said, but apparently from what I think he said, that old Mrs Filbert across the street was quite the slag in her day. “So why am I here with you and not sitting on a cloud playing a bloody harp?”

Lewis took a drag off the fag and blew the smoke out his nose. “Because like me, you were bad boy.”

“Then why aren’t I in Hell?” Not like I was really looking to be there either.

“Because like me, you didn’t go to the light to face the music and you’ve dodged the sneak, peeks and hooks that would’ve dragged you into the darkness to do the ‘Damnation Hop’. Congratulations, you’re in limbo with the pagan babies and me, in short......you’re a ghost.” Huh. I suppose I should more upset but oddly I’m not.

“So, what does a ghost do to pass the time?”

He shrugged. “Sleep. Watch people fuck. Smoke. Give folks the heebee jeebies. Occasionally get in on the action if they’re the right kinda people.”

Now that peeked my interest. “How do you know they’re the ‘right kind’?”

Joe smiled knowingly. “You just know, cuz you get sucked in to the sheiks body when he’s nailing his Sheba.” He laughed, “you were a great one for that.” I suppose I should’ve been more then a little put out but again, that thought suddenly was rather titillating. And I’m up for a rather good tittle.

“So, has anyone been living here in the mean time?”

My new friend shook his head. “Na, not yet. The coppers are still having a go at the place, though your folks have come by a few times. Or I think they’re your folks.”

“Middle-aged alpha, mustache with a broom up his arse with prolly some weepy omega woman?”

“Yeah, that’s about right. Your Ma is still a looker for a ‘mega her age.”

“My mother,” made a rude noise. “Like she really misses me.”

Joe whistled. “Damn, no wonder you’re here. But, beggars can’t be choosers.” He pulled a deck of cards from his pocket. “Rummy or poker?”
Oh man I’m tired. Sampson R Jacks you are getting too old for this shit. Was duty NCO Friday night and of course it just started out bad and went to hell in a hand basket from there. Had one of the female trainees jump off a pill bottle first thing. Thank the Alpha God it was just aspirins and her bunk mate found her early enough so that she threw up most of it. Got her bundled into an ambulance, rode to the base hospital where she got medical treatment and evaluation by a shrink. Made a note to have someone pack her locker contents in the morning. Saw the ‘Dear Jane’ later she got, no. I don’t think the girl will be back.

That was around 18:00 and got back 20:00. After that, had a moment to eat a couple of peanut butter crackers before heading up to the second floor bay to stop a fight. Idiots had taken the connecter rods out of the bunks and were going to beat each other with em. “DROP AND GIMME 10!” Thank the Alpha God, they were still so new from boot camp they automatic fell to the floor and started pushing away Virginia. Promised to kill them if they EVER tried it again. Now, put their bunks back together and make those racks tighter then grandma’ twat.

Then the defecation really hit the rotatory oscillator. Get a call shortly before 23:00 from a Sargeant Anderson of the Richmond Police Department. Apparently Privates Jones, Crabtree and O’Dell (oh shit, they’re all in my platoon) had gotten in a fight with some of the locals at a bar on Grace Street. Busted up the place pretty good and several people ended up being sent to the hospital. The injuries were mostly minor, though one guy had a busted arm.

The Richmond cops were not all that eager to let ‘Curly, Moe and Shemp’ loose and personally, if it were me, I would’ve let left their stupid asses in there to face the music. But the old man wanted em out, so ‘yes sir-yes sir-three bags full’, drove to Richmond with the company Executive Officer. Who was not thrilled to be rousted out of bed (bet it was ‘Fathers Night) to go pick up these clowns. Didn’t get up to the police station until around one or two in the morning, cops of course didn’t want to let em loose with out seeing a judge first as we weren’t gonna post bail. So had to hang around until a judge could be found, that wasn’t until 07:00 AM and finally walked out em out a little after eight.

Got the guys back to post and turned em over to the Old Man and First Sargeant. Could hear the Captain yell and the furniture crash all the way out to the parking lot. Oh there will be Article 15’s aplenty for those idiots. Alpha God am I tired. Could barely keep my eyes open long enough to drive home. Home was a long brick building of ‘ups and downs’ built sometime in the 50’s. There were 10 apartment units, two to three bedrooms, one bathroom and hell to pay with a teenage girl pup. Parked the car and got out slowly, feeling my back snap, crackle and pop like cereal and the bone in my shin aching where that round bounced off it in Nam. Cracked it in at least zillion places and took forever to heal. There are days it just aches to the point I wanna just saw it off.

Limped across the parking lot and up the three steps to the front door. Slipped in the key and swung it open to the riot of noise and bright colors that was Saturday morning cartoons. There was this guy who looks like a walking pile of bricks yelling ‘it’s clobbering time’ and then it changed to someone singing about ‘Adverbs and my three youngest pups were glued to it like it was a message from on high.
Walked into the kitchen and found my mate Pearl mopping the kitchen floor. The radio was on and she was scrubbing along to a rather catchy tune:

Once I had a love and it was divine  
Soon found out I was losing my mind  
It seemed like the real thing but I was so blind  
Mucho mistrust, love’s gone behind

Forgot how good that girl could dance, she could do a mean Jitterbug back when we were younger, cutting a rug at the juke joints. Those places were nothing to look at, mostly just shacks, but oh they were so much fun. She turned to me, smiled and set the mop against the counter and melted into my arms. Found just enough gas and forgot the pain to do a few turns around the kitchen before the tank ran dry. “Go to bed,” Pearl gave me a quick peck on the lips. “But before you do, Bill is in his room, he has something to show you.”

William Tecumseh Sherman Jacks. Named for the man who marched through Georgia and freed my great great grandfather. That man followed the Generals army all the way through the Carolinas and finally to Washington DC. Named his first free born son after the general and there’s been a William or Tecumseh or Sherman as part of the family name ever since. Okay, let’s see what Bill has to show me and then I’m gonna fall in bed and watch John Wayne movies on the backs of my eye lids.

Tapped on the bedroom door before poking my head in. Bill was was sitting on bed with a book on his lap reading. “Hey there kiddo, your Mom said you had something you wanted show me.”

He bounded off the bed and ran over to his dresser picking up a letter from next to the trophy he’d won for bowling. Pup captained his team last year to win the youth league championship for Virginia. “I’M IN DAD! I’VE BEEN ACCEPTED AT NORWICH ON A FULL SCHOLARSHIP!” He handed me the letter. Bill danced happily from one foot to the other, “I’m going to NORWICH this Fall!”

“Congratulations Son, I’m proud of you.” Should I tell him about..............no. Never. His grades and everything else were good enough to get him in without that phone call. But......never hurts to have an angel on your shoulder in this big bad world.

Shit. Speaking of which. I gotta lot of explaining to do to Pearl when that phone bill comes in.

Chapter End Notes

A Battery, 3rd Battalion, 319 Airborne Field Artillery Regiment at this point was still at Fort Campbell, Kentucky as part of the 101st Airborne. They didn’t become part of the 82nd until 1986 but took a little creative license and moved them early.

George Washington Case: baseball player with the Washington Senators who led the league in stolen bases from 1939 to 1943.

Peyton Post: a riff on the book and soap opera, ‘Peyton Place’. And yeah, a military base can be as gossipy a place as any small town or big city neighborhood.

Stella by Starlight: song by Victor Young that was drawn from thematic material composed for the main title and soundtrack of the 1944 Paramount Pictures film, The
Uninvited. - From Wikipedia. Recommend the film highly, it’s a really good movie about the supernatural.

Scheisse: German for shit

grobian: German for ruffian, lout or boor.

laissez les bon temps rouler: Cajan French for: ‘let the good times roll’

Prague Spring: was a period of political liberalization and mass protest in Czechoslovakia a Communist state at the time. It began on 5 January 1968, when reformist Alexander Dubček was elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), and continued until 21 August 1968 when the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact invaded the country to suppress the reforms. - from Wikipedia

Khaki Wacky: 1940’s American slang for a woman who liked a man in uniform

Sharecropping: 1940’s American slang for a woman who was very sexually active

Slag: British slang for slut

Of course the song is ‘Heart of Glass’ by Blonde. It was released as a single in January 1979.
“There’s nothing like the smell of newly made alpha,” Libbie said lazily stretching, letting his vertebrae pop one at a time like champagne being uncorked on New Years Eve. His skin shone with the golden glow of the Caribbean sun’s bright kiss and a week of epic sex. “It’s better then new car.” Lucky bastard. It was the first day back to class after the holiday and everyone was talking about what they did, family, friends and everything else. Course had to find out how the First Ceremony went off.

“So what did you wear, what did he wear, how was the party and how much was in the bowl? (“Bowls,” he corrected smugly. Son of a Bitch!) The other omegas crowded around to hear the juicy details. Apparently the family was rather well to do, so the party went on from Christmas Eve to New Years Eve and Libbie could take his time leading the new alpha out of the darkness and into the light. Showing him the ways of manhood, manners and how to be a good alpha. Apparently the boy’s name was Sebastian and he was quite the apt pupil. “We had dinner first, went to Midnight Mass where the priest blessed Sebby and me. Then went back the his home to change for the presentation ceremony. My gown and hood were yellow silk.......”

“Wait,” Hannah interrupted. “A First’s robe is red not yellow.”

“It is if you’re dealing with a VERY traditionalist family from my neck of the woods. Yellow is Oshuns color, a Madam First is automatically a child of the orisha Oshun and to do her honor, will wear her yellow robes and elkes. The young man will wear a simple white. guayabera shirt and white muslin trousers to represent his ‘virginity’ (air quotes here). The only other thing he has on is an azabache bracelet to keep off the ‘evil eye’."

With a shindig like that, a good idea. A lot of folks would be very jealous of the gifts showered on this boy, so a blessing from a priest, an offering to the orishas and that bracelet is not only a good idea, but a must. Interesting that his young alpha was dressed plainly while Jesse was in that fancy dress uniform. Different strokes for different folks I guess.

“There was the promenade, the presentation, our offering at Oshuns altar, the exhortation of the duties of the young alpha as the money and other things were dropped in the bowl.” He said that someone even dropped car keys in. “By this time everyone is hungry again, so we ate, danced and then are escorted to the Firsts Cottage away from the house and party, where....” Libbie gave a low sexy wink...... “you know Madam First doesn’t kiss and tell.”

Some of the alphas and betas listened in but most just turned a deaf ear, suppose it was like listening to a bride or omega obsessively talking about their mating plans. In short, they were bored within the first few minutes. Except for the Rodriguezs, short and tall, who nodded approvingly at the description of the party and had wistful looks at the description of the roast pig, dancing and the parrandas singing aguinaldos outside the window the Firsts Cottage. “Sebby and I leaned out the window to thank and toss some coins for them to move on down the path. We still had some.....lessons to finish, IF you know what I mean.” Wink, wink, nudge, nudge, say no more, say no more.

“I don’t get you guys,” there was suddenly dead silence as one of the beta girls was standing there with a puzzled yet fed up look on her face. “You get pissed off if some body treats you like ‘just’ an omega instead of an equal. That you can do anything any primary or secondary gender can. ‘I’m
omega hear me roar’.” The air quotes were in full effect. “But then, here you are perpetuating the whole omega stereo type with this ‘Madame First stuff. You’re fucking some pup just because an alpha tells you to and a tosses a couple of bucks your way.”

The air turned electric as five pairs of eyes turned to glare at her. I’ll bet she was a psychology or philosophy major in college (with all due respects to those psychology or philosophy majors out there.) “One has nothing to do with the other,” Libbie said slowly. You could tell he was just barely keeping his temper in check.

But that pesky little voice in the back of my mind reminded me of that time back at St John Fisher college when I went with Dean and some of the other cadets on a recruiting drive. Wow, was that only two years ago? And those snotty tree hugging commie bitch omega girls, who called me a pet and only wanted their rights when it benefited them and the rest of the time fell back on ‘I’m just an omega’. But, in some small way, did this beta girl have a point?

Well, she may have, right up to the moment where she said: “Well, you could’ve fooled me. This is just ritualized slavery with better benefits at best and prostitution at worst.”

OKAY! The gloves just came off and it’s bare knuckle time. “Excuse me? You call’en me a puto, puta? Oshuns spiritual representative in the flesh?!” Libbie stood and pulled out the wallet from his back pocket and tossed out five one hundred bills on the desk. “This was just a small part of my cut of the bowl, the rest went to the local orphanage and veterans home” (Sebby kept the car keys, I would too considering it was a Porsche 911) “Nobody told me to do nothing. I did it because it’s an honor, it’s a rite of passage and position of power. That boy’s family is rich, powerful not only on the island but in Miami. I have his ear.......and other things. I will have more say in his life in the future then who ever he mates.”

“But would you have done it if his family was poor and didn’t have that much money or prestige?” The girl shot back

“I have, twice.” I chimed in fiercely. It’s a righteous path and responsibility, not to be handed out lightly. I’ve turned down powerful alphas because it was too late to cull out their bad habits and nature. They received nothing but the ‘white card’ and the back of my hand.” Out of the corner of my eye saw Hannah and the other male omega nodding in agreement. Would’ve loved to have heard their ‘turn down’ stories. “Madam Firsts have died under torture rather then reveal the secrets entrusted to them. We were murdered in the camps during WW2, the Nazis wished to stamp the ‘defectives’ in their midst and the Madam Firsts were targeted especially.” The five of us automatically pressed our hands together, steepled in that simple prayer, “for those who’ve come before us.”

The beta girl stepped back, not expecting the intensity of the response. “Well I think...”

“Well obviously you didn’t,” Hannah growled and Sam Everson automatically stepped up beside her. They might have to part ways in a few weeks but until that time he was her alpha and ready to take on all comers. “Or you wouldn’t have talked shit like that without knowing anything about the cultural, mental, spiritual and physical aspects of a centuries old tradition you’re trying to pass judgment on from the vantage of your secondary gender and today’s standards.” I wasn’t EVEN gonna try and explain a ‘bond pup’ to this group.

The girl looked around to see if she was getting any support from the other betas or alphas, nobody really looked like they wanted to get into it. Not when Sam is growling and sending out challenge pheromones and besides we’re set to graduate on the 17th of the month. All we wanted to do (well almost all of us anyway...sic: That Guy) was get out and put our best feet forward at our first duty station. And a fist fight on our records was not gonna do that. Of course, she had to try and get in
the last word, “well, in my opinion, I still think you’re wrong and setting back your cause.” Luckily for all concerned the captain who was teaching the class that day came in and called everyone to take seats and settle down. Yeah, it smelled THAT rank in there.

“Well you know what they say about opinions and strings,” Libbie said sweetly as we all moved to our seats. “Every yoyo has one. And I’m a ‘No Jive-Three in One.”

Took my seat in a satisfied glow of self righteous indignation, but that nasty little voice in the back of my mind commented that the days of these rituals and ceremonies we omegas so enjoyed would disappear along with the registrations, contracts and sales—all the things we didn’t like as omegas. Equality had its benefits and it’s detractors. “Can’t have your cakes and eat it too,” the voice sang. “Shut the fuck up,” I growled, pushing the voice back into its little hidy hole.

It was during the first break, that the instructor made an announcement for the Citadel guys. “Your First Sargeant Ashton is up to visit with you. He’ll be down in at the snack bar for lunch to have a few words of wisdom for ya’ll.” Daddy Ashton is here?! It’s been forever since I’d seen him, though got a Christmas card from him and his mate. That beta is the luckiest woman in the world to be mated to that guy. Will have to wait until he is finished talking to his former students before I can get a word in.

Dug in my pockets and came up with just enough change for a couple of sausage biscuits and white gravy. Okay gotta pay attention to what the instructor is talking about if I’m gonna get outa here, but couldn’t help but remembering how that Daddys big strong body felt against mine. That was NOT the best thing to think about, could feel a drip of slick roll down my channel. Oh crap, it tickled in that ‘knot me alpha’ kinda way. Come on kegal muscles keep it from coming out and embarrassing the shit outta me. Squirm and fidget in my seat until class was called for lunch and I took off out the door as fast I could waddle to get the mens room, wet some paper towel and give my pinks a wipe.

Get in there and it seemed to be empty for the most part, as I ripped paper towel from the dispenser get a couple of squirts of green soap and then slam the door to the nearest stall. Yanked down my pants as a thin stream of slick poured out of my pinks into the paper towel. Whew that was close.

“Happy thoughts?” Came a familiar voice from the stall next to mine. “Need some help with that?”

“No Sir,” damn it. Why does Major Otis show up at all the worst moments? Wipe fast, pull up my pants faster and toss the paper towel into the john hoping that it does stop up the pipes and over cause an overflow. Come out of the stall, run my hands through the water quick and get out of there before the Major could yank his britches on because I could smell alpha arousal and didn’t wanna be there to find out how well he could control himself.

By the time I walk into the snack bar, have composed myself enough to nonchalantly pick a tray, set it on the slide rail and wait to order my food. Casually looked around the room.....there...right at the corner table. Daddy’s sitting with the guys from my class and must be some of the people from the class that came in after us because I’m not recognizing of those guys. “What can I get you? Hey Lieutenant, what do ya want?” Huh? Oh crap, the ‘lunch lady’ behind the steamer table was getting a little impatient.

“Two sausage biscuits with white gravy please.” She quickly picked up a couple of biscuits from the warmer, cut them in two, slid in the paddies and slopped the whole mess in gravy. Ulysses gave a twitch, not now pup, Papa has things to do. Paid a buck fifty at the cashier and went to find a place to sit where I could eavesdrop, watch the goings on but not make it obvious.

There was a table that was just right for snooping....er....observing....yeah...that’s what I’m doing,
observing. Set down the tray, take a seat and begin to listen. All while pushing the glop around the plate and taking small bites to make it last. Sergeant Major Hugh Ashton is just as handsome as I remembered even with a small changes that time brings. There were a few more laugh lines at his eyes and a sprinkle of gray at his temples. But that voice, the power he projected, all that stayed the same. My First looks good in Class A’s; he modestly only wore the CIB and jump wings, as a lot of senior NCO’s did, even though I knew there were prolly a lot more. The marks on his body said ‘Purple Heart with at least three clusters’.

Listened as he told stories of the new crop of ‘knobs’, how the prospects for advanced camp where shaping up and then the news of people who’d graduated in their class. Course I was only interested in Benny Lafitte and Elliot Rogers. Though being that Elliot didn’t graduate wasn’t expecting to hear anything, but had gotten a Christmas card from Chickie, saying that he was doing well at Georgetown and Elliot would be graduating next December but will do his internship starting in February at Walter Reed in DC. So they’ll be setting up house together.

After a bunch of yawn worthy reports on people I didn’t know/could care less about, jackpot. “Do you hear anything from Lafitte?” Ohhhh good, about time. “Yeah, I got a Christmas card from him.” Come on Hugh, what did he say? “Let’s see, he graduated first in his class at Knox, he’s with the 11th ACR, got his own tank platoon up on the Fulda Gap and is given the East Germans fits.” Sounds like something Benny would do. He could be a flash ass bastard when he wanted to be. “Says it’s colder then a well diggers ass and he’s going to be a father.” Father? “He and Andrea are going be parents come June, sez he can’t wait and can’t be happier.”

Now the gravy is sitting heavy and cold on my fork. That would explain why Benny isn’t writing me any more. Suddenly I’m not very hungry. Should be happy for him, Benny is someone’s golden boy, he’s got a tank platoon and is going to be a father. Chanced a look over at Hugh, he hadn’t so much as glanced my way the whole time. Why would he? I’m no ones golden anything, just someone on a perpetual shit list with everyone. Hate hormones. Know I’m being stupid and self centered and selfish. Think I’ll go back upstairs, guess Hugh dosn’t want to see me either. Pushed the chair back and tried to get to my feet. Course Ulysses was not cooperating. He kicked and squirmed like an eel, sending me falling back in the chair, bent over holding my side and gasping for breath. Damn, that hurt.

“You alright there Lieutenant? Here, let me help you.” Hugh? Shit fire and conserve matches, he’s fast. “Do you need to go to the clinic?” Daddy was down on one knee with a hand on my belly.

“Thanks Sargeant Major, I’m fine. The pup is just a little active is all. Don’t wanna bother you. You’re obviously busy visiting with your students.” Glanced over at the table he was at a moment before and the guys were all sitting there with their mouths open.

“No bother. How can I not help a pregnant omega, even if you outrank me.” He took my hand and gently helped to pull me to my feet. Then softly said, “if I can’t help my Madam First, there’s something wrong with me.” Daddy looked me up and down. “Your alpha didn’t let any grass grow under his feet.”

“You would never believe,” oh how do I explain this one. “But you don’t want to keep your friends waiting.” Looked down, “think maybe I should have my hand back.”

“Suppose that’s an idea,” Hugh let go reluctantly. “Having an early dinner with the guys over at the officers club. I’m staying over across the way at the high rise transient visitors quarters for the next day or two when I’m headed back to Charleston.”

“If you’re talking about that building across the parade field, that’s where I live, up on the fifth floor,” told him the room number. “Would love you to meet Jeffery George Hugh Ashton
Winchester.” Yeah, was being a little petty dropping Bennys name but he dropped me first. Yup, gonna be one of those days. Knowing that once alphas get together, stupid usually sets in, so am not really expecting him until either late or at all. “Well thank you Sargeant,” pausing for a moment to make a show of looking at his name plate. “Ashton,” I said loudly for the befit of the peanut gallery. “It was very kind of you to help me. “Gentlemanly alphas are so few and far between these days.”

Was heading back upstairs to the classroom, when I’d stopped on the staircase landing to catch my breath, dang pup, he’s pushing against my lungs making me short on wind these days. “Outta shape Lieutenant?” Heard the familiar snarky voice. Looked up the stairs and there was Major Otis standing against the railing, with his arms crossed in front of his chest. Well, ain’t we cool. “Or are you looking for your new ‘friend’ to hold your delicate lily white hand and help you up the stairs?”

Where the hell did THAT come from? Unless.....a little O.D. green envy monster is poking it’s head out from under a rock. “No Sir, when you have three pounds of pup pressing against your lungs, it does tend to cut your breath a little short.” Sucked in and needed to make it count. Come on Novac, don’t be a pussy. Took the stairs two at a time and made it up that one flight toot sweet. Now if those little black spots blocking the way would just get out of the way, it would be great. “See, just fine. No help needed from any one.”

Strode past him with stiff neck and back, walking into the classroom, to my desk and sat down. Blew and puffed until the black spots cleared away and I could breath easy and see clearer. Everybody trooped back in, including the guys who were at that table with Hugh. “You, uh, know each other?” One finally asked.

“Meet him once through Benny Lafitte at advanced camp down at Fort Bragg in 77.” Shrugged, “seemed like a nice enough alpha fellow then. Was certainly a gentleman today.”

“Uhhhh, yeah.” The guy wore a look and gave off the light aroma of disbelief, knowing there was prolly something more but was not going to get a straight answer from either the good sergeant or me, any time soon or like.....ever.

After class, picked Jeff up from Pattys, then went to the PX to pick up some beer. Now what was that kind he liked? Pabst? Miller? Or will splurge and get the Heineken. There, a pack of six bottles will do. Gad, this stuff isn’t cheap. $2.50? Ridiculous. I could go right to the factory tour (and have) in Holland and get blitzed for free. And it wouldn’t be the watered down stuff either. Another thing I have to do when I get to Europe (and not pregnant) get shit faced on good German or Dutch beer.

Get home, open a can of Spam and made a hash of it with potatoes. It was not my favorite food in the world, Naomi-Mom fed it to us a lot when we were pups. But when you have five boys who had bottomless pits for stomachs, you went through more Spam then a Honolulu mini mart. Jeff loved the stuff, thank goodness, so we didn’t have to play ‘airplane’, ‘choo choo train’ or ‘open the garage’. He just ate it down. Afterward, did the dishes, tidied up the room a bit (meaning I kicked all the toys back into the closet or under the bed) and settled into do some studying while waiting for Hugh to arrive.

Around 20:00, I tucked Jeff into my bed, read the last chapter (again) from ‘Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas’ until he dozed off. Then turned off the over head light but kept on the desk lamp, so I could study. Sat down at the credenza and put today’s notes in some kind of readable form.

21:00 hours, still no Hugh. Had kind of figured this was going to happen. Get a bunch of alpha ‘boys’ together; smoken, joke’n and toke’n, and they forget the time.
It was a couple of minutes before 22:00 when there was a light knock at the door. Got up from the credenza and peered through the peep hole. Hugh Ashton was standing there, looking at his watch with guilty look on his face. Counted to 10 and then took off the chain lock, unlatched the door and swung it open. “Hi,” I smiled. “Come in.”

“Oh...Hi, I’m really sorry, um I’m late....kinda lost track of time.”

“Uh.” Mentally counted to 10 again by 2’s, just to let him squirm a little before saying, “figured that’s what happened.” To be fair we didn’t set a time for him to come over. But still, 22:00 hours was pushing it a little. “Can I get you a beer?”

Hugh looked relieved, “yeah. That’d be nice.” As I went to the fridge, he saw Jeff cuddled up on the bed. “Is this him?”


The NCO sat down on the bed and gently ran the back of his fingers down the plump little cheek. “He’s a big one. Would make a great line backer for the Citadel.” Handed Hugh the beer and a church key. “That seems to be what everyone sez,” I sat on the other side of the bed, leaned over and kissed my son’s head. “Even if the schools change from person to person.” I’m drinking ginger ale....damn it. Okay, lets get the five hundred pound gorilla out of the way first. “Why isn’t Benny writing to me any more? What happened? Haven’t heard from him in months.”

“What happened is,” Hugh took a long pull of his beer, “he almost tore the head off of one of his classmates at Knox. Apparently the guy made a less then ‘gentlemanly’ comment about your magazine spread.”

Oh crap.

“His class adviser told him to get his priorities straight or he wouldn’t have much of a career for long.”

Now I felt sick. Didn’t think of that. Why is it with Benny I never think straight? Am I that selfish and thoughtless and just thinking of how his actions effect me, instead of the other way round? Yeah, I suck. And not in a fun way either.

“So that’s why you haven’t heard from him.” Was just a little peeved, Hugh didn’t have to be so blunt....or maybe he did. “So, you lost that round. Benny couldn’t afford your friendship anymore.” Felt a tear roll down my cheek and my heart want to break. What have I done?

“Papa sad?” Heard a little voice. Jeff was sitting up, took one look at Hugh and the angry bunny growl rumbled in his throat. “Bad man!”

“No!” I grabbed the little rascal back as he lunged toward Hugh, ready to sink those sharp little puppy teeth into Daddy’s arm. “Nice man! Papa’s friend. Like Libbie or Jimmy.”

My First had a big grin on his face. “Damn, he’s two pounds in a one pound bag.” He held out his arms, “here. Let me hold him. Him and me gotta pow wow.”

“I don’t know, he still may bite” but handed him over cautiously anyway. Hugh stood Jeff on his lap so they would meet eyeball to eyeball. There still a light growl and puppy challenge pheromones (ohhhh, his first challenge. Got write the date in his milestone book) coming out of the
little guy, so Hugh was treating the situation as if he were holding a live grenade. He gently blew his scent into the little alphas face. Jeff sneezed and then cocked his head to one side as if contemplating a fact. What fact, I don’t know, but he gave it some thought. My son then took a breath and blew across Hughs nose. It sounded more like he was giving the raspberry but the big NCO didn’t seem to mind. He then cuddled Jeff to his neck to let him scent and with that, it was if some invisible truce was signed and Jeff sighed, then snuggled in and dozed off.

“What did you do?” I gently took the pup back, lay him down and tucked the blanket in. “I’ve never seen anyone do that before.” Naomi-Mom would just yell at my alpha brothers with threats of death, destruction and an ass whipping.

“That’s cuz you prolly never had to deal with angry little pups who are peeved at you for leaving them and their momma, even f you had no choice because duty called.” He looked sad, “had to do it more then a few times with mine.” Hugh tipped his head back, “Lord I’m tired. Had to show him kind who was boss alpha while at the same time giving him a chance to save face and letting him know that I meant his papa no harm. He returned the favor by recognizing what I am but showing he trusts me.”

“All that from just two puffs in the face?”

“There’s a little more to it then that, but yeah.” Hugh set the bottle on the floor, toed off his shoes and lay back on the bed. “I love those fellas and it was fun to be with them again, see the men they’ve become from the boys they were. But after a while,” he sighed. “I’m their past not their future. You on the other hand are different.”

Yeah, sure. “I’m nothing but trouble.” Yeah, still feeling a little raw over the way he kind of run rough shod over my feelings.

“Yup, you are. Head strong, a little selfish and three kinds of an idiot.” Well, this is going to be one short evening. “But you’re also strong willed, more considerate then selfish and will work harder to get where they want to go then any alpha or beta bar none .” Well, that’s a little better. Hugh caught my hand and tugged me over to his side “and it’s not just being my Madam First, though that is part of it. You see me. You see the pow wow doctor, the man, alpha, your First and I’m an NCO last. It’s.....nice.” Then he nuzzled my cheek, “and when you love someone, they know they’re something special because you love with your whole heart and soul.”

Okay, he was forgiven, AFTER a few more hugs and kisses are tossed in.

“I wanna make it nice for you my First.” Stood and slipped out of my clothes, as a good Madam First before their First should. At least in the dim light of the table lamp on the credenza, he wouldn’t see the stretch marks, or spider veins or the feet that are so wide they should be on a duck. Walk over to the side of bed and pull Jeff”s mattress out from under. Then gently pick him up and settle my little man into his own bed. “Night,night Sweetheart.” He responded with a light snore and a little pop fart.

Turning to my other alpha, saw that he had stripped to his boxers, “you’re a pleasure indeed,” Hugh said with a tired smile. “But would you mind if we kinda.......table the bed spring gymnastics until tomorrow morning? I’m drunk and just too tired to make love to you in the way you deserve.”

Now that was quite the admission. I like it. Besides, I’m in no great shakes myself to do much else other then to present, fake some ‘ooooo and ahhhhhh’ and then roll over on the wet spot. “You just became more alpha then any man outside of John Winchester. And that’s saying a lot.” Climbed into bed, rearranged the pillows and then pulled up the covers. Took a moment to get a comfortable position going, my butt molded into his stomach and his hand resting on my belly. Could feel
Ulysses leaning into Hugh's palm, “hey there young' en. You be a good pup and let your papa rest.” Course the little brat listened to him and settled down for the night. “Right up there with a bull alpha and a two star general,” heard Hugh sigh into my ear. “Guess I ain’t done bad after all.” Dozed off and slept very well as I do when in an alphas arms.

The next morning, did we have shake the sheets? No, of course not. Not with Jeff using us like a human jungle gym and squealing happily. “DaDa!” He pointed at the alpha, “DaDa!” Oddly, Hugh didn’t look like that he was all that upset, like most other alphas would freak, that the pup would be calling him ‘daddy’.

“Not DaDa,” I said quickly, climbing out of bed, picking my bathrobe off the swivel chair and quickly slipping it on. Turned and wrestled him off the NCO. “Hugh, say Hugh” Jeff looked thoughtful, tasted the word and proclaimed.... “Who.”

I don’t get it. The pup can say, ‘Bumpo, Irv and Rosy.’ But can’t say Jimmy, Mrs Harras and now Hugh. Oh let’s not forget ‘BATS!’ But the NCO thought it was funny as he swung his feet to the floor. “Who works. You okay saying ‘Who’ there Short Shanks?”

Jeff clapped and launched himself into my Firsts arms. “WHO!” He sounded like a little owl. Hugh caught him in midair, “stand up, hook up,,,,,shuffle to the door!” He whirled him around before dropping Jeff on his bed. “Whew, that pup has some weight to him. He also ain’t afraid of anything. You’re gonna be a regular at the emergency room, I can see that now.”

Glanced over at the clock, oh man we have to get going. So much for a ‘morner’ Have to get in the shower, get something to eat and Jeff to the sitters. “Looks like you need to get dressed and back to your place,” planted a kiss on Hugh’s ample nose. “Day light’s burning.”

“I know,” he said. “But, come here.” He pulled me into the bathroom and closed the door. “Just gotta get a taste of you, even if it’s just a moment.” The kiss started at my forehead, his lips ghosting the skin and moving slowly down between my brows and eyes. Little nibbles, light kisses and just a scrape of teeth on the lip.

“Hugh.....” his name came out like a prayer to heaven. Now his scent was deep in my nose. Whimpered and bared my throat.

“You’re so easy to love, so effortless to want but so difficult to have.” And then he stopped. I love a strong alpha, as a strong omega, I need one and the down side of such a man is they have the strength to stop. Like John, Lewiston and Hugh, there are reasons why they’ve reached the points in their careers where they have command. These men can make the hard decisions, the unpopular choices and then have the strength to live with them.

“Alpha,” I began, my voice on the edge of begging and then heard the sound of something heavy hitting the floor in the other room. Well, that did it. Took a deep breath and opened the bathroom door. Jeff had some how got that big box of Cocco Puffs off the top shelf of the cabinet, opened and spilled it all over the carpet. He was sitting in the middle of the pile of cereal, picking them up off the rug and eating them. Well, wasn’t that like a bucket of cold water. “Jeff! What have you done?” He just looked up at me and grinned, his few teeth covered in chocolate moosh.

“Think that’s my cue to vamoose.” Hugh pulled on his clothes and slid into his shoes. “You free for lunch?”

“Yeah.” Oh crap, the pup has filled his diaper. Oh mensch! I’d be running far and fast as I could too.
“I’m in room 24 on the second floor. Will be there about noon, so we can have lunch together.” Hopefully will that will include me dining on some prime alpha. One more fast kiss then, he opened the door, looked both ways and was through with a click of the latch. Could feel a trickle of slick roll down the inside of my thigh. “Fuck.” I must have been a picture. Standing there in that old blue terry cloth bathrobe, big as a barn pregnant, morning breath, five o’clock shadow and a nasty case of bed hair. All while holding a pup with a diaper that smelled like a toxic waste dump. Oh yeah, I’m a catch.

Got Jeff cleaned up re-diapered and then corralled most of the Cocco Puffs into the garbage. There was just enough left in the box for one more small bowl, so I ate that, while made an egg for Jeff. He ate some of it but then again he was mostly full from the cereal.

A little while later was running out the door, brief case and diaper bag slung over one arm, Jeff under the other, clutching him like a grocery bag. Gotta get my head on straight, there’s just too much at stake in these next two weeks. There’s no room to fuck up. Made it across post to Pat’s and handed off my pup. “Morning Lieutenant,” she said brightly. Then looked curiously and sniffed. “Boy, can you tell the old pregnancy hormones are hollering today. You’ve got that ‘glow’ along with the smell to go with it.”

Huh? “Wish I could see that.” All I know is that Ulysses is tumbling like Nadia Comaneci on a good day, my back and feet ache and I wanted to get laid so bad I could taste it. “See ya tonight. Be a good boy for Mmm Haa.” Kissed his downy soft hair and went out the door. Pup will need a hair cut in a few weeks or now. Ohhhhh, my little boys’ first hair cut. Sniffled. Gotta remember to get a few of those soft curls for the envelope of his puppy book. Had started one with his hospital pictures, mile stones and other things. Even if other people got to see them before I did.

Got to class, sat down and took the note book out. Libbie sat down at the desk beside mine. “Hey, you got that pregnant glowy thing everyone goes on about.” Then on the down low, “you better get another hair cut quick. All those hormones are making your hair grow like you got a knob in your back.” My hand flew to my head, oh shit! How come I didn’t notice this before? Because school has been busy, had too good a time at Mummy-Ship and Dads and trying to keep up with Jeff, all I thought of doing with the old ‘mop’ was to wash it and run a quick comb through.

“After class, will hit the post barber shop to get my ears lowered.” Gotta keep up appearances, so no one will notice that ‘Cal State’ was any where near around.

So, anywho....time marches on.....actually it was dragging its feet. I really should care about the subject matter and was REALLY trying to pay attention. Graves Registration. Yuck. Being that is one of those wonderful ‘extra duties as assigned’ during peace time and a full time job during war. Sargent Arthur ‘Digger’ Clark was our instructor today. A charming little man who doing everything he could to calm the skittish, relax the superstitious, all while trying to teach a serious subject. One that was just as important as any in the service. It was just one of reminders of the business we all chose and the possible end consequence of that choice.

“Respect is the key,” he said solemnly. “This person was someones husband, father, uncle or brother. Even if all that’s left of em is a pile of guts and a left boot. In such cases, the casket will contain the correct amount of weights for a body and the uniform will be laid out on a display panel within, so if there is an open casket service, that is what they’ll see. It is up to you to make it right for that family.”

I remember playing at a friends house back in Germany, when the two officers came to the door to let my friends mom know her mate had been killed in a training accident. I had to leave and my friend didn’t come to school the next day. He moved back to the states few days later. Other people
moved into that quarters a month after that. I never went back there, even though I got to be friends with their daughter.

First break was called and I looked down at my notes. Yeah, they were all there, along with a lot of doodles. Would draw something and then make the notes over the top of it. Pay attention NOVAC! Went to the mens room and splashed some water on my face. Oh man, Libbie was right. Looking back at me in the mirror was Cal State. My hair had grown back and even though it was not that wind swept bed head Farrah Fawcett type, it was still close enough. Wet my hands and ran them through to give a more slicked back ‘Brylcreem’ look. “A little dab will do ya,” told my reflection.

Okay, back to the ‘morgue’. You stab em we slab em. We also did a practice notification. “If you are lucky,” Sargeant Clark said. “The family will already know before you show up at the door, if not.” He sighed, “have the chaplain with you or ask if there is someone she can call to come and stay with them.” The NCO went on to tell a few ‘war stories’ of the ones he was on during Vietnam. “It wasn’t a great thing to be on anyway but throw in an unpopular ‘police action’ and you got a bad mix.”

Lunch time FINALLY came round and I was up, coat on and out the door. A snow was lightly falling as I was walking across the parade field. It was so weird to have snow this late. I was still walking around most days without a uniform coat before Christmas. Could feel the big fat flakes landing on my cheeks, but it wasn’t a stinging little snow, not like Rochester but a gentle snow that gave a cool kiss before melting.

Got to the BOQ, stamped my feet to knock off the slush and went in. Went down the hall and waited at the elevator. Wished I could’ve taken the stairs, but didn’t want to be sweating and out of breath. Found room 24 and tapped on the door. “Well, hello there.” Hugh was standing at my elbow, holding a bag of take out. “Hope you’re in the mood for barbeque. There’s this place in town, Kings Famous, that the fellas say is pretty good.

“Hi, it smells great.” I held the bag while he opened the door and motioned me through. The room looked similar to mine but a touch smaller and with out the fridge, cabinet and hot plate. There was a bed, credenza, side table and easy chair. Set the bag of food on the credenza, took off my coat and lay it across the easy chair.

Hugh was taking everything out of the bag and giving a run down of lunch as he did. “Hope you’re hungry. Got a couple of pork sandwiches, potato cakes, collards and coleslaw.” It did sound awful good and Ulysses wanted his lunch pronto. “Couple of paper plates along plastic forks and spoons.” Set one of the sandwiches on a plate and added a few spoonfuls of each of the sides. Sat down on the bed and picked up the sandwich.

Took a bite and let the smoked meat, sauce and bun just cause an orgasm in my mouth. “Ohhhhh, my Alpha God! This is sooooo good! This makes me so happy!”

“You are easy to please,” Hugh laughed. “Never saw anyone get a ‘twinkle, twinkle little star’ from a sandwich.”

“Anything that makes me feel this good,” shoveled the mac and cheese in next. “I wouldn’t need Spurs.”

“Spurs? Ya’ll kinkier then you let on.” The NCO sat down next to me, swished the sandwich through the coleslaw and took a bite. “Mmmmm, that’s alright. Maybe not as good as Vietnamese South Carolina BB-Q, but not bad.” Ah ‘conflict food’, any place the US army went: we came, we fought, we ate, we brought it home. German, Italian, Japanese, Korean and now Vietnamese.
“Nooooo, Spurs is my vibrator. Cuz he makes me jingle, jangle, jingle.

“You named it?”

“Don’t knock it, I know a lot of people who name their cars.” Baby and Black Betty immediately came to mind.”

“True,” he admitted. “But the whole naming a vibrator is a new one on me but whatever floats your boat.”

We sat, talked and ate. I kept an eye on the bedside clock because I wanted a little time for nooky. But as the clock rolled to 12:30, I realized that was not gonna happen. “When are you heading back to the Citadel?” I asked, meaning ‘when are you leaving me?’

“Figured I’d get an early start, so around four or five o’clock in the AM will roll out.” Hugh answered simply. “I need to get home.” Meaning ‘I need to get home to my little beta’.

Okay, no need to stretch this out any longer then it needs to. I stood up and pretended to yawn. “Thanks for the lunch and everything. Gotta get back on time. The ‘Groovy Ghoulies’ are teaching class today and don’t wanna be late.”

Hugh crooked a smile. “I’ll walk you over.”

“No, it’s alright.” I stood tip toe and put a light kiss on his nose. “You have things to do and I know the way. Goodbye my First.”

“Goodbye my Madam First,” Hugh Ashton held me fiercely for a moment before letting go. But before I left, he pulled out a short stack of ‘Mega Magazines. “Mind putting your ‘John Hancock’ on these.” Hugh blushed, “I kinda sorta promised my brother-in-laws.” So, I signed them, putting my signature on various pages, most of them on my butt. Signing done, put down the pen and he walked me to entrance.

Stepping outside the door and hearing it shut with a click of the dead bolt, “goodbye Sargeant Ashton.” I doubted I’d ever be seeing him again. “Crispy’? Interesting nickname.”

“His real name is Omar Avila, he’s a retired NCO who came down here a few years ago but you’ll see why his nickname fits.”

“Okay,” but in the mean time. “I’ll have mine now so my son can see what a hair cut is like, so he won’t be scared.” Which, considering Jeffery George....I’m going to stop here, at least for today....Winchester....really can’t see him being afraid. But you never know. Sat down in the chair and let the apron settle about my shoulders and chest. Bent forward and picked my son up then settled him on my lap. “Papa is getting his hair cut. Jeffy is gonna get his hair cut too?” Pretended
to cut his locks with my fingers. “Okay?”

“O-tay Papa,” he nodded. But then again Jeff’s agreeable most days, except when he isn’t.

“Hey Crispy,” heard over the buzz of the clippers next to my ear, one of the barbers called out. “Gotta customer for ya.”

Tipped my head up enough to watch a large fellow limp into the room. Now I saw the reason for the nickname when former Sargeant Omar ‘Crispy’ Avila came closer. His fingers were seemingly frozen in a bent position from the burns that covered them from finger tip to forearm. Around his broad olive features were burn scars and dark marred skin that was mostly covered by a black bushy beard. He was a rather scary looking alpha and it was taking everything I had not to pull Jeff closer and away from this guy. That is until he pulled up a folding chair, sat down and began to talk to my son.

“Well hello there young fella, what’s your name?” His voice was deep but surprisingly gentle, his eyes were bright and compassionate like those of a dying saint.

“Effy,” my little one cocked his head to the side, studying the man in front of him and then reached out for one of Crispys hands. “Boo boo. Kith!” He landed some sloppy puppy kisses on those scarred fingers. “Gooder?”

Crispy wiggled them and grinned, ‘gooder”. Now he held out his arms, “now let’s get you a big boy cut.”

“Ump up, ook up, uffle ooo door!” And with that Jeff flung himself off my lap and into the strong arms of his barber.

“Woof, you’re a heavy one. Sir, looks like you got yourself a little paratrooper,” Crispy was looking rather impressed.

“I know,” said modestly. Both his father and I have our jump wings and his bon……er brother here,” gave my belly a pat. “Was conceived right before I went to jump school. So Ulysses Tenacious is gonna be a jumpen fool right out of the womb.”

“Drive on,” the NCO said. “Come here ‘Effy’, lets get your ears lowered.” Jeff laughed and clapped his hands. During the whole process, which of course didn’t last all that long, could hear Crispy talking to my son. Telling him a story about a little boy who grew up good and brave. Who drove his tank through enemy fire and flame to save people from harm. Think it’s definitely time to continue the ‘Once Upon a Time’ story into the next generation.

Let me see, Jueves and his mate Juan Cetme have a beautiful little boy pup named Jefe (as he is their little ‘boss’) and they live in a beautiful home along the Zuiderzee (okay, I know that’s Holland and not Belgium, but Zuiderzee sounds much cooler then Brussels, with all due respect to the Belgians.)Juan Cetme is a general in the armies of man and Jueves slips away from time to time to bring food and medicine to these armies. But he leaves his child safely with Fergus and Beautiful, his brave and loving grandparents. No harm will come to Jefe as Fergus is a slippery yet tamed by loving, demon and Beautiful a resourceful and equally naughty, angel.

Was so caught up in the story that I didn’t hear Crispy or the sound of clippers and scissors stop until there was a tap on my shoulder. “Excuse me Sir? Sir? You in there Sir?”

“Huh?! What? The answer is first in first out or 42. Oh, you’re done. Let’s see,” I of course looked like I’d just stepped off Paris Island. Had ‘white walls’ and an oval patch of hair on the top of my
head that was maybe, just MAYBE, a half an inch tall, if I was lucky. But Jeff, my pup, my baby boy, now looked like a little boy. His ringlets were gone and in it’s place a tiny crew cut.

Reached out and gently touched his soft hair. “Here,” Crispy handed me an envelope. “Saved those curls for you. Most folks want that for their puppy books.” Looked inside, the dark locks filled the bottom of the envelope and I pressed it to my chest trying very hard to hold back tears.

Oh please not now. Not in front of these guys. “Sorry, think there’s a bit of something in my eye.”

“Sir, I’ve had the toughest sons of bitches, excuse my French, break down when holding an envelope full of their pups first hair cut.” Crispy smiled fondly, “cried like some teenage beta girl myself, when I gave my boy his first cut.”

“And he cried when he saw the ‘Moe Cut’ you gave him”, called out one of the other barbers. Which lead to some good natured, (physically impossible acts unless you’re a contortionist) very manly ribbing and words I hope to the Alpha God, Jeff never repeats.

Come Friday afternoon after class, I loaded the Bug with everything I wanted shipped (mostly toys, books, the few house wares I owned and manuals) and drove up to Annapolis. The snow had melted in the Richmond area but the further north we went, the deeper the stuff was. Not Rochester in January deep, but the three inches on the ground was enough to make people kind of freaky. The three hours turned into four as these ‘Homer Dumb Fucks’ in DC COULDN’T DRIVE TO SAVE THEMSELVES! (I’m okay, I’m okay now) Plus an air cooled engine takes for fucking ever to get warm. Made sure we were bundled up; hats, coats and gloves, which really never came off, even when some heat finally made it out of the vents.

It was shortly after 19:00 that we rolled into the rent’s drive way. Jeff had fallen asleep in his car seat about half way there, so it was just me and the radio and it was pulling in the weird stations again because of the low cloud cover. “WGH-AM, 1310 on your radio dial. Newport News, the home of the Worlds Greatest Harbor and the Top 40 Hits!” And with that the husky scratch of Rod Stewart came out the speakers:

She sits alone waiting for suggestions
He’s so nervous avoiding all the questions
His lips are dry, her heart is gently pounding
Don’t you just know exactly what they’re thinking

Come on sugar let me know
If you really need me, just reach out and touch me
Come on honey tell me so......

“Oh shut up,” I switched it off. Don’t wanna hear anything about sexy right now. “Come on kiddo, let’s get inside. Can unload the car tomorrow.” Got the duffel and diaper bags out of the back seat and slung Jeff over my shoulder. He woke up just long enough to yawn and go back to sleep. At one point when we were stuck in traffic for about half hour, whipped out a tit, as he could nurse and stop crying ‘hungee!’. The after burp that flew out of his mouth along with some milk, paved me in puppy spit and breast milk. Oh nothing makes one smell more sweet then that.

Trudged tiredly up to the front door and rang the bell, moments later the porch light came on and the door flung open. “Oh Sweetheart!” Her Mummy-ship hustled us inside and I dropped the duffel and diaper bags in the front hall. “You were late, you’re cold as ice and I was starting to worry and.....” she stopped in mid-sentence. “I’m never really myself when your father’s away.”

The house felt wonderfully warm. “Where is Dad?” Went to the guest room and carefully lay Jeff
in his crib. He was snoring softly and really didn’t wanna wake him up. The sleeping pup is the happy papa. Half of me just wanted to crawl in there with him and nod off, but need something in my stomach first before heading off to the Land of Nod.

“He’s in London on business,” she said quietly and we made our way back to the rest of the house. “Are you a bit peckish? Can I make you some dinner?” Let her know that I could eat the slime out of a snakes asshole, was so hungry. Jeff may have gotten a little something on the way up, but I didn’t even have stale crackers in the glove box to munch on. So I was starving and just a touch cranky. Her Mummy-ship brightened considerably, rough military talk didn’t phase her and to have another person in this big lonely house was a blessing. Which reminds me.....

“Where’s Grand mummy Rowena?” Didn’t see that (Miss Clairol in a box) red headed witch skulking around any where. Unless she’s passed out in a bedroom. Yes, still don’t care much for Granny Rowena.

“Oh, she went with Fergus. Said there were a few people she needed to see about ‘things’.” Those are some heavy duty air quotes there Mum. “But she’s out of the house for the next fortnight and your father will be back on Wednesday.” She sighed, “I fear his trip to our dear England will not be a happy one. Almost everyone seems to be on strike. Lorrie drivers, coal miners, the trains, even the under takers. And that fool Callaghan is at a conference in Guadalupe with your president, along with the French and German leadership. He’s basking in the sunshine while the country is frozen. Literally.” Could see she was really getting hotted up on the subject. “Do you know that school children are sent to school long enough to get their book lessons and then are sent home because there’s no heat in the building?”

Noticed the newspapers and magazines spread across the kitchen table. Looks like Mum had done her home work. Looked at the pictures of garbage piled up two stories high in the streets, trains sitting idle on the tracks in the winter snows and Callaghan smiling with the other world leaders amongst the sunshine and palm trees. Oh is that gonna bite him in the ass when he gets home. “Elections are coming this May,” Mum said softly. “I think Mrs Thatcher has a good chance of winning the prime ministers seat.” Thatcher. I think Lewiston and Jenny mentioned her a few times, something about going to a dinner party or something like that.

But right now, my stomach is growling and I’m still a little cold. “Let’s get you warmed up Darling.” Mum put some soup on to stove to heat and the kettle to boil for tea. She also put the barest touch of sherry in the mug (‘just to help your blood’) before putting in the ball (those bags are fine for colonials but leaf makes a better brew) and hot water after the kettle started to whistle. I drank carefully, blowing on it but still burning my tongue a little. Right now it just felt good to have the mug between my palms.

In a few moments a bowl of beef barley soup was set down in front of me and spoon put beside it. “Eat,” Mum said sternly.

“Yes Mum,” I said obediently, picking up the spoon and shoveling the soup into my mouth.

“Elbows off the table.”

“Yes Mum.”

“Don’t eat so fast, you’ll send it right back up.”

“Yes Mum.”

Then she giggled. “Waited years to say that to you.” Which of course sent us both wailing into the
Don’t know whether it was the angels being sadistic or just a run of the mill nightmare but in this dream my little one was dead. In the dream, walked to the crib and found he was laying still and cold. “JEFF!” Picked him up and tried to wake him but he was gone. “No, no, NO!” Sat straight up and stumbled out of bed and to Jeff’s crib. Picked him up and glued an ear to his chest. Could hear his little lungs and heart beating strong. “You’re alive, you’re alive!”

“I used to have those nightmares too.” Turned and saw her Mummy-ship standing in the doorway. “I heard you scream. Don’t sleep well when Fergus is away.” She came over and kissed her grandpups chubby cheek. “Would dream you would be dead and there was nothing I could do. But I couldn’t be there to be sure you were alive.”

Suddenly I was five years old again, having scary dreams and cuddling up next to Gabe. Naomi-Mom and The Colonel didn’t like their sleep being disturbed by whinny pups. So we would comfort each other. Some nights in Panama, when the thunder and lightning would be too much, the five of us boys would be in a puppy pile on the living room floor, shivering under a blanket. Anna, for some reason, would sleep right through the storms. “This is gonna sound weird, but can we sleep with you tonight? After that dream, don’t wanna be alone.”

“Oh my Darling boy!” She wept like a monsoon. So carried Jeff and followed her back to her room and settled into the king size bed. We lay down, spooned Jeff to my chest and in turn spooned into Mums arms. “No more bad dreams Nene,” her Mummy-ship whispered and blew her sweet scent across my nose. Dropped back to sleep and didn’t wake back up until around 09:00 in the next morning. Took a moment to remember where I was and then got a chance to look around.

Mom and Dad’s room was painted a light lime green, with ruffly white curtains at the windows and the kind of furniture I used to see in Panama when I’d go over the homes of friends whose fathers were in the Defense Force. Not exactly what I imagined the bedroom of ‘the King of Hell’ would look like. Which means Dad is VERY domesticated (which I wouldn’t say to his face if I didn’t want an ass kicking) but this life seems to make him happy. The four post bed was dark wood with overhead beams making it look like a big box. Muslin curtains were draped over those beams giving a rather exotic Caribbean feel. On either side of the bed were night tables with clocks and brass lamps. Dressers and Mums vanity was against the other wall.

Wallowed my way out of bed and walked over to the dressers. On Dads (figuring it must be his because of the cuff link caddy and the bottles of rather manly cologne) was a black and white picture of Mum. She was very young in this shot, sitting at the table of an outdoor resterant, glass of wine in one hand, cigarette between her fingers. Her head was cocked to the side and she had a big toothy grin on her face. No wonder Dad fell in love with her so fast and was willing to fight ole ‘What’s his Face’ for the hand (and other good parts) of the fair Lady Bela.

Moved over to Mums vanity, on that were pictures of her and Dad on their mating day, John and I on our mating day at Fort Bragg, then a picture of Jeffery that I’d never seen before. They must have had it done during the first few weeks I was at Fort Lee. It was obviously a professional photo of him sitting in front of a white back ground with alphabet blocks that spelled his name. The photographer caught him in the middle of a happy squeal, arms up, with a rattle clutched in one chubby fist. Funny they never sent me a copy or maybe just wanted this one little thing for themselves. Still gotta remember to ask Mum for a copy.

Turned back to the picture of them on their mating day. The gown was the same one I wore, which was carefully washed and dried so it could be given back and tucked away again. Wonder if there will be another omega to wear it? Only he or she will wear a shift under it so no one will see them.
naked. No more of that. Mum and Dad looked so happy, John and I looked so...solemn...scared...uncertain. “What does it feel like to not be yourself when your mate is away?” I asked the photo. “Does it hurt, are you pining? Cuz I don’t know.” After that one bout of pining at RIT when Dean and I broke up for a while, it’s never happened again. John said it would, but.......I haven’t even pined for him. Not one ounce of lumber.

Horny as hell, yes. Missing them in the ‘oh I miss someone I care about’ kinda way, yes. What is wrong with me? Or maybe I’m just not the kind of ‘throw myself on the funeral pyre’ kind of omega. Course that’s when I hear the ear shattering screeches of my son coming from the kitchen, oh joy, what is he breaking, getting into or tossing on the floor now?

Come out to find his grandmother trying to pry a gold fish out of his grasp. Apparently he’s crept up on the counter when she must have turned her back for a second, reached into the bowl that sat on the window sill and grabbed the fish. “No, no, no!” Her Mummy-ship was desperately trying to save the poor thing. “Let Goldie loose! You’ll hurt Goldie!”

“Nooooooooo!” He screamed, clutching the fish in both hands.

“Jeff! Drop it!” I ordered. Course he didn’t but at least we kept the poor thing from going down pup’s gullet. When ever he don’t want to give something up, Jeff will put it in his mouth and try to swallow it. Which he was just about ready to, when we able to get the fish out of his hands and back in the bowl. Jesus to Jesus and eight hands round that was close. Goldie just took a few turns around the bowl and with the exception of slightly bent back tail fin, looked just fine. Shit, you can’t kill those little fuckers.

Packed up my pup to the bedroom and into his crib. “Now you stay put and be good. Take a nap.” And before he could protest any more or worse, pull out ‘the dimples of death’, I blew scent across his nose. TIMBER! Jeffery George dropped like a Redwood, caught him before he hit his head on anything and laid the little sucker down Yeah, call me a bad parent for taking the easy way out, I really didn’t give a hydroelectric damn at this point. You didn’t just wrestle your pup for the life of a goldfish.

Got back out to the kitchen to find Mum had hit the cooking sherry. Lucky son of a bi...buiscut.

After breakfast, a shower and a change of clothing, went out to the car to off load the stuff I’d brought up from Fort Lee. Then resorted the junk in the cellar, going over what was coming to Germany with me while making sure the crap staying behind ended up neatly packed away in a far corner. Cast an eye over the stuff going, the couch, swoop chair, footstool/coffee table, king size bed, along with various other odds and ends. Plus a mountain of Jeff’s toys. Most of which will prolly end up in some thrift shop in a year or two.

Trotted back upstairs to find Jeff and his Grandmother had gone outside to let the pup play in the snow and run off some energy. She had him in a harness and leash so he could toddle around but hauled back at a moments notice should the little Squirt head of the road. I gotta get me one of those harness things. Her Mummy-ship turned and kissed me on the cheek as I came up beside her. “Every thing squared away in the basement? You know what you want to take and what to leave behind?”

“Got it covered Mum.” Watched as Jeff sat on his well padded butt on a pile of snow. “Everything I’m not taking is packed away in the far corner of the cellar. Everything else is closer to the cellar steps. The movers are gonna have fun getting that couch up the stairs.”

“Oh they had a few kind words for it on the way down and it wasn’t Happy Christmas.” We snorted a laugh together and then, “your father and I will miss you two very much.”
“Will miss you guys too.” Reached out and entwined my fingers with hers. “But it’ll only be a few years and the time pass quick. And I’ll write a lot.”

“I know Darling,” Mummy-ship said. “Hopefully your father will get to see you when he goes on business to London next time. He could take the ferry across the channel and maybe meet you in Brussels or Calais.”

“I’d like that............No Jeff! That’s yellow snow! Don’t eat it!” So much for playing outside for a bit. Grabbed him up, knocked the snow out of his hand and figured it was time to go back in for a nap. Oh Jesus, I wanna drink.

Lay my son back down for a nap and lay myself down too. Ulysses was kind of active, so took a while to get in a comfortable position. Flipped one way then the other till finally just found that sweet spot on my right side where the pup stopped doing the ‘Albuquerque swamp stomp’ and settled down so we all fall asleep and watch John Wayne movies on the backs of our eye lids.

The next day, wanted to get a reasonably early start as I still had studying to do for the exam tomorrow that I really needed to pass. This was the last big push, as we graduated the following Wednesday, the 17th of January. Final exam was Friday the 12th in the morning, results that afternoon and then an all out rush in the following days to get packed up, cars to Norfolk and then plane tickets to our duty stations. All of which pivoted on whether we could pass the exam. I was teetering on the edge. Had to get decent enough grades on both these tests to get out of Fort Lee and not be recycled.

It’s not like I didn’t study or pay attention in class. It’s just that studying is not the easiest when your pup is sick all night, or active and wants to play or I dozed off in class.

The goodbye with Mummy-ship was tearful and kind of heart wrenching. “I feel like I got you back only to lose you again.” We stood in the driveway, a box of Kleenex on the roof of the Bug.

“You haven’t lost me Mum,” was fighting back my own tears. “I’ll be back in a couple of years. I’ll ether be on my way for Advanced Class at Lee or will get out of the army entirely. Move here, find a job and you’ll see us so much, you’d be sick of us.”

“Some how I’d doubt that,” Mum sniffled and blew her nose gustily into the tissue. “Though it would be interesting to try.” Then she straightened her shoulders, stuffed the snotty Kleenex in the pocket of Dads pea coat that she was wearing and gave Jeff and me a few more kisses. “Now be off before before I shove a potato up your exhaust pipe to get you stay.” And that was the picture I had of her as we drove away down that snowy street that Sunday morning. A thin little omega lady in her mates coat, woolen pants and slippers standing forlornly in the driveway of her home. A part of me just wanted to turn the car around and never leave, but life is too big of an adventure for that. And I drove away.

Monday came and barely scraped through by the skin of my teeth. Will need to pass the one on Friday with a good grade or there would be a chance of getting recycled. So Thursday night, paid Pat Harras forty dollars to keep Jeff overnight, so I could study. The people at the top of the class had been tasked to help those of us ‘goats’ to pass our final exam. My ‘study buddy’ was a beta girl named Caroline Johnson. She was a tall drink of water with shoulders like a line backer. Poor thing always walked around kind of stoop shouldered so they wouldn’t look so big. Course that only made it worse.

So went to her quarters in the same building Libby lived in after class, manuals and note books in hand to review the material. After about an hour of study, we took a break so I could pee and get my head wrapped around what we just looked at. Nothing like a little solitude, porcelain and water
to put things in perspective.

Came out to find Caroline had gotten out a big bottle of ginger ale and was pouring us glasses of the stuff. Oh joy, there’s another bathroom trip in about a half hour. But slapped a smile on my face, said ‘thank you. It’s just what I needed’ and drank. “So,” I said after a moment of guzzling. “Where are you headed from here?”

“Germany,” she replied. “Wurzburg, the 3rd Infantry Division. I’m a platoon leader for the Third QM Company.

“Cool, ‘Rock of the Marne’. You’ll like Wurzburg, it’s a really cool city and.......uh........what’s wrong?” Cripes, what did I say? Caroline had burst out crying and flung herself face first across the rug, bawling her eyes out. Looked around fast for something to hand to her; went back to the bathroom and got a fist full of toilet paper. “Here,” handing over the wad. “Can you tell me what’s wrong? Maybe I can help.”

“You can’t help,” she wailed. “I love him so much and now I have to leave!” Tried to think if I saw her with any of the guys or omegas in our class. Nope, nobody.

“Maybe if you tell me who this person is....”

That did it, Caroline sat up and grabbed me by the shoulders. “You can’t tell anyone, PLEASE! It would ruin his career!” By the way you’re carrying on, it doesn’t sound like it’d do much for yours either there kiddo. She wetly blew her nose into the toilet paper and brushed the tears away with the back of her hand. Swear you won’t tell anyone! Promise me!”

Raised my right hand and put the other on my belly, “swear on life of my pup, will NEVER tell another living soul.” Well, that seemed to have satisfied her, because Caroline’s whole demeanor changed on a dime and gave you nine cents change. She smiled through the tears and gave her nose another lusty blow before talking.

“I kind of fell in love with Jim.” The big beta gave her eyes another quick dab. “Didn’t mean too, but he made it so easy. He’s sweet and funny and that southern accent just knocks me out.” So, this Jim fella sounds like a peach. “And his mate just doesn’t understand him.” Oh yeah, he’s a real peach. “He said he was waiting for his son to be out of high school before leaving her.” Oh man, this is just sounding worse.

Knew I shouldn’t ask but..... “Can you you tell me who his Jim guy is?” And then it got worse.

“Major Jim Otis.”

My mouth dropped. SON OF A BITCH! “Major Otis?!” I squeaked.

Caroline nodded with a goofy smile. “He so sweet and kind. We talked at that stupid cocktail party we all had to go to back in September.” Oh yeah, I remember that party. The dude propositioned me that night right out in front of the O Club. “Then during that week when the post was in an uproar over Joan Blackburns rape, he drove me home almost every afternoon, even after things died down, for the next few weeks. He was so concerned for my safety.”

“How....thoughtful.” So he drove her for weeks, even after the threat died down and the second rape was just as phoney as the first turned out to be.

“He is.” Then in a conspiratorial whisper, “did you know Joans rapes were ‘questionable’? Jim told me ALL about it.”
“REALLY?!” I said in mock surprise. “Well knock me over with a feather.”

“I know, that girl has problems.”

Not as big as yours are right now.

Caroline continued, “then he took me to lunch at Sambo’s one day and confessed his feelings for me.” She sighed happily and her hand fluttered to her bosom. “And such a kind and gentle lover.” Ewww. Was half a mind to tell her just what a big creep Major Otis was, when I almost bit the end of my tongue off with how fast my jaw snapped shut. She was going to Germany in a couple of days, Caroline was going to be sad and miserable for a few weeks and then get over it. Plus, and for purely selfish reasons on my part, I need this girl to pass the exam. So, today my moral high ground is as solid as a sand dune.

Long story short, I passed the test and would graduate.

Monday morning came and I went to the transportation office to arrange for the pack up of my house hold goods up at Mummy-ship and Dads in Annapolis. Then went with Mary, Libbie and Tara to turn in our telephones back at the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone office down in Petersburg. Then out to the airport to rent a car. Chipped in for the rental, as Mary, being an alpha, had a much easier time renting a vehicle then Libbie or I would. Because tomorrow, Libbie would drive the rental as Mary and I would be going over to Norfolk to turn in our cars to ship to Bremerhaven.

Two nights later the four (well five actually, my little man rode on my hip) of us went to officers club for one last dinner together. As tomorrow after the graduation ceremony we’d be scattered to the four winds. It would be the last time more then likely we would see each again for a long time if ever. Libbie held up his wine glass. “To Tarah and her dashing beau. Long may they wave!” We clunked our glasses together. Tarah was tripping the slow fantastic in another few days. “Salud y un gran abrazo!” The other three downed their glasses of wine, I got stuck guzzling ginger ale. “So, you ready to get mated?”

“Oh, gosh, I was ready the minute he put the ring on my finger.” She admired the sparkler as it glistened by the light from the candle on the table. “I wanted to elope, but mommy would never forgive me. So we’re having the big church mating, the reception at the Tallahassee Country Club, she got the Magnolia room and then we’re going to Bermuda for the honeymoon. Then home to Cincinnati, where we just closed on a house.” She set her chin on her hands, “now that’s something I’d never thought I’d say. “Home being somewhere other then Tallahassee.”

‘What a weird idea,’ I thought, giving Jeff another saltine to gnaw on. He was perched beside me in the high chair our waiter brought out. So far, so good, the little rascal was being a good pup. ‘To live in one spot your whole life.’ Don’t know what to do with myself if I didn’t pack up and move every few years. Then gave myself a little shake. Tonight was not about being sad. Tonight was to celebrate the four of us. We made it (some of us by the skin of teeth) a lot of things happened good, bad and indifferent. But tomorrow, Libbie, Mary, Tarah and I will walk across that auditorium stage in Mifflin Hall one more time. Get our diplomas, say goodbye and then make a dash to the airport.

My flight leaves to Frankfurt, West Germany Thursday morning out of McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. Not the first charter flight I’ve been on and obviously not the last. Will be flying into Philadelphia and then take a taxi over there. The last (and rather expensive mid day call) I made before turning in the phone, was to the base guest house. Have a reservation for the night and then be up and out for a 05:00 AM wheels up. For whatever reason, Mary and Libbie will be leaving two days later out of Andrews Air Force Base up in DC.
But again, tonight it was about the four of us. Tomorrow, will be Jeff and me. After that, well...hello John. Hello Dean.

Chapter End Notes

To everyone who has followed Cas and company on this journey through the mid to last half of the 1970's I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. You've inspired me, given me the green light to go places with this story I didn't think possible and to bring some of you along to jump out of perfectly good airplanes or sit in officers basic class. For all this and more, I thank you.

We will start up again, hopefully soon, Lt Novac-West Germany-Cold War

Oshun in the Pantheon of the Yoruba/Santeria/Ifa beliefs is the deity of love, sexuality, the rivers and fertility. Her color yellow and she is synchronized with Our Lady of Charity.

azabache bracelet: it was a bracelet with a piece of black jet to keep away the evil eye.

parrandas singing aguinaldos: Parrandas are the Puerto Rican version of caroling. It is marked by singing traditional Puerto Rican music called Aguinaldos (Christmas Songs) and using traditional instruments, including Guitars and Cuatros, tambourines, maracas, palitos, and guiros. From the site Caribbean Trading.Com.

No Jive Three in One : In 1979, dentist and yo-yo celebrity Tom Kuhn patented the “No Jive 3-in-1” yo-yo, creating the world's first "take-apart" yo-yo, which enabled yo-yo players to change the axle. -Wikipedia. Think Libbie picked this one especailly for the double entendre.

Nadia Comaneci: a five time Olympic gold medal gymnst from Romania. The first woman to ever to award a perfect 10 in the Olympics. In 1989 she defected to the west, just a few months shy of the fall of the communist government.

The ‘Groovy Ghoulies’: is an American animated television show that had its original run on network television between 1970 and 1971. Produced by Filmation.....The Goolies were a group of hip monsters residing at Horrible Hall (a haunted boarding house for monsters) on Horrible Drive.

Omar ‘Crispy’ Avila: is a real person, hero and badass. In 2004, when his men were caught in an ambush in Iraq, with his humvee on fire, he covered his mens retreat, until the ammo in the vehicle exploded. Sargeant Avila jumped out, breaking both legs and having 75 percent of his body sustaining burns. Not being able to see from the dirt and chemicals in his eye, he was still able to lead his people back to their compound. Crispy would lose both legs below the knee but not his spirit. He is a power lifter, motivational speaker and spokesman for Black Rifle Coffee.

Of course those are the words to Do Ya Think I’m Sexy: a song by British singer Rod Stewart from his 1978 album Blondes Have More Fun. It was written by Stewart, Carmine Appice and Duane Hitchings -from Wikipedia

Would like to thank Cerdic519 a wonderful and talented lady from across the pond,
who gave insight into what life was like during the ‘Winter of Discontent’ 1979.

Yup, that whole confession scene with the study buddy was true. She blurted out that she was in love with this bum of a Major who hit on me (and prolly a few others). And yeah, I didn’t say anything, didn’t think it was my place and besides, I needed to pass that final test.

Salud y un gran abrazo!: health and a big hug

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